Eisenhower Agonistes

David's Path: From Granddaddy Ike to Götterdämmerung—And Beyond

By Trudi McC. Osborne

Like a coin struck with two profiles in the reign of a queen and her consort, Julie Nixon and David Eisenhower, since their marriage in 1968, have been presented almost as one personality. David and Julie were names as paired as Ferdinand and Isabella, Samson and Delilah or Hansel and Gretel.

It was as if in some fairy tale, Prince David, of fabled lineage, had married the daughter of a reigning king and Jonah-like had been swallowed up.

Then came reality and Watergate, and when Julie launched her public defense of her father, with David as usual by her side, it was perceived that they did not speak with the same voice and that they had very different styles. In the widely reported May 11, 1974, press conference in the White House rose garden, following the release of the excised tape transcripts, Julie, who has a wonderfully fluid way of turning questions into vehicles for rhetoric or points that she wishes to make, emerged as something of an old style politico.

David, without rebutting her passionate answers, gave different ones, addressed himself to what had been asked and tried to reply. It was apparent, for all his loyalty, that he was doing his own thinking and that it did not necessarily agree with Julie's.

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• Sample: The couple was asked where the blame lay for the "predicament" (public horror at the tone of the transcripts) in which the President then found himself. Julie replied, "You begin with a break-in—a third- or fourth-rate burglary . . ." David replied, "The decision to release the tapes was the President's, so if the transcripts create additional problems, to that extent, the predicament is his fault . . ."

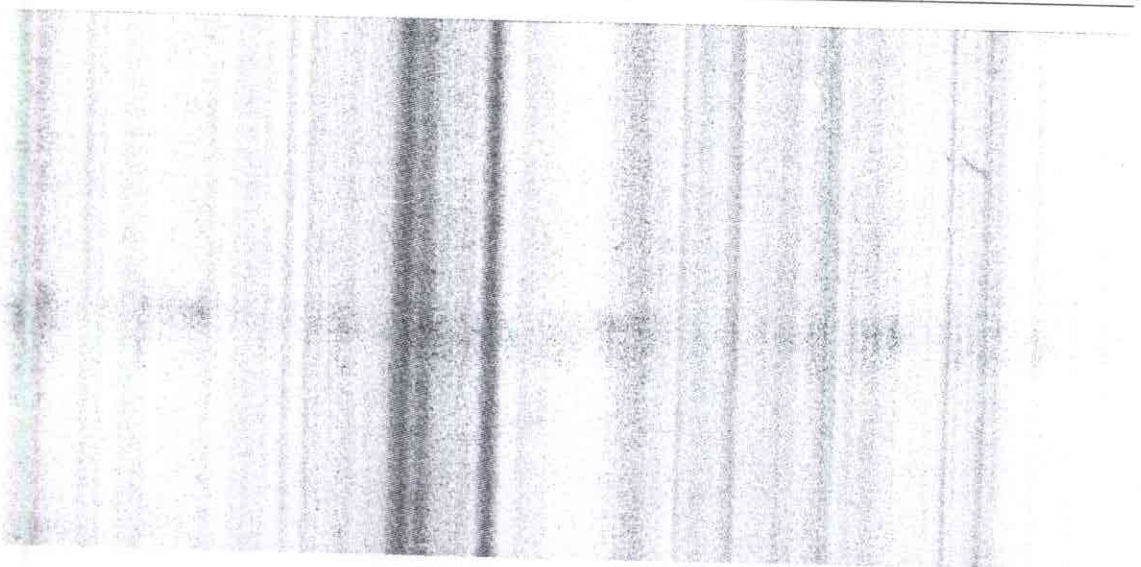
> "We are ghosts. People see us on the street and start: 'We thought you died last August.' "

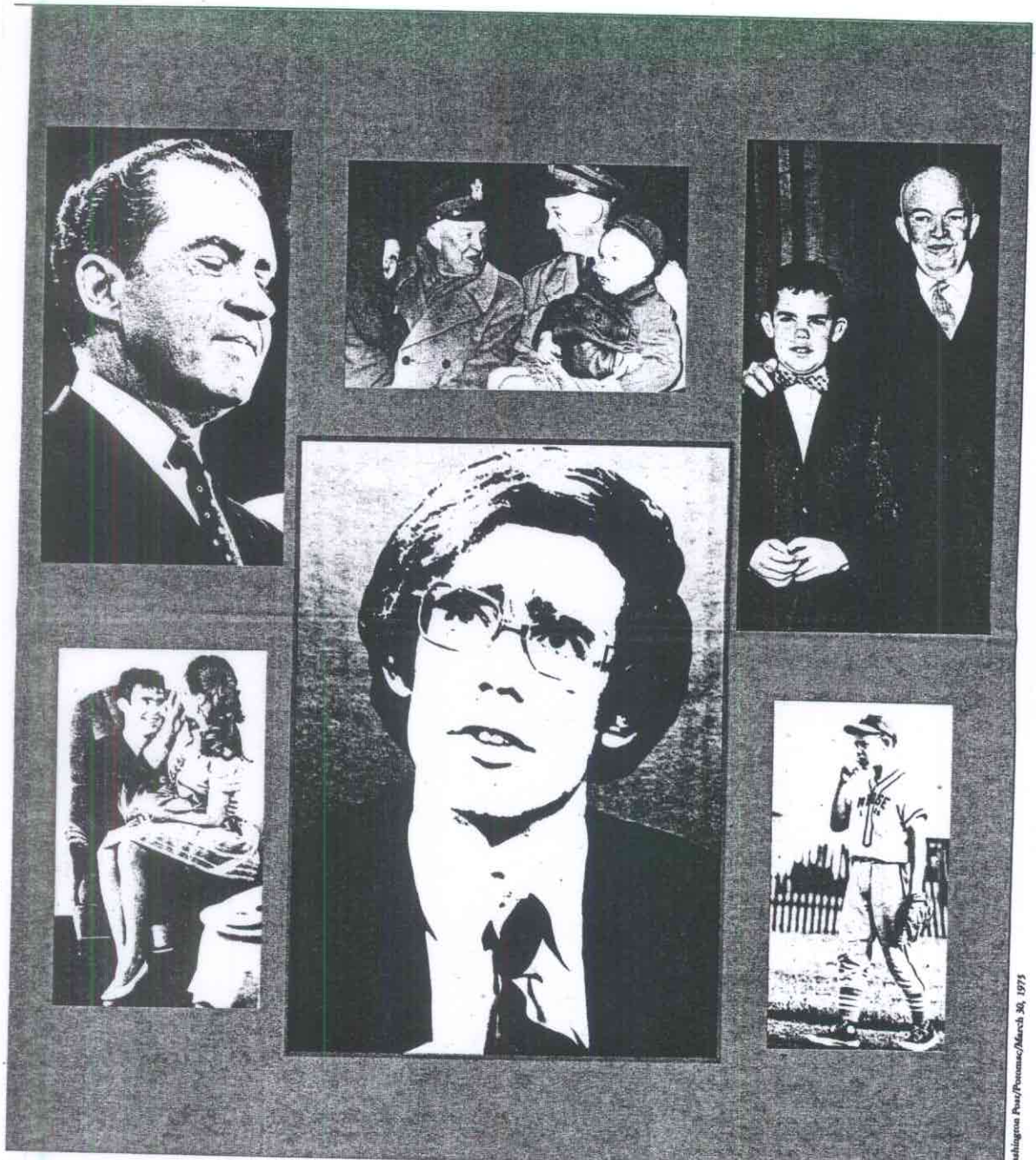
• Sample: David was asked, "Do . . . you have any regrets that they (the tapes) were released?" He replied, "No, I felt they should be released all along."

At no point during Watergate did David forsake his father-in-law, but neither did he forsake his own principles or his own reasoning, and in this airing, his coin image oxidized, and he ceased to be just David of "David and Julie." He resumed a political heritage and cachet that is uniquely his if he chooses not again to yield it.

Half the years of his life, since memory took hold, have been spent as a familiar of the White House. He has taken two traumatic leaves of it, and the months before the last leavetaking were "awful. They left a pretty deep scar," according to his best friend, Brooks Harrington, a classmate at George Washington University law school. David so intimately saw and sensitively recorded the torment and toll—perhaps not yet perceived in its entirety—that political debacle wreaked on Mr. Nixon, he presently is ambivalent about a political future for himself. He says, although he spent the last five and a half years training for politics, "I have lost my gut instinct for it. . . But I wouldn't rule it out." There is a strong suggestion that resilience and a competitive nature will reassert themselves, as did his temporarily mislaid identity. Any suggestion that he lost that is smilingly but firmly rejected by Brooks Harrington. "David's identity may have got lost publicly, but he kept a very good hold on it privately. He always knew who he was, and his grandfather's memory, which is almost a presence to him, was very much with him."

It was with him in his behavior throughout the ordeal of Watergate, about which he now allows himself to speak, and to which he refers as Götterdämmerung. "I saw triumph and tragedy in an intimate way. I'll never see it in that magnitude again." His humanitarian heritage was with him at the denouement when, on Friday, August 2, 1974, three days before the information was made public, he and Julie with their newly acquired knowledge





Scenes from an extraordinary life, clockwise from the left: David Eisenhower with Julie; the famous father-in-law; David with his famous grandfather, the military man; David with his famous grandfather, the President; David playing his favorite sport.

Collage by Allen Appel

of Mr. Nixon's involvement in the coverup "imposed ourselves" on him in the Lincoln sitting room.

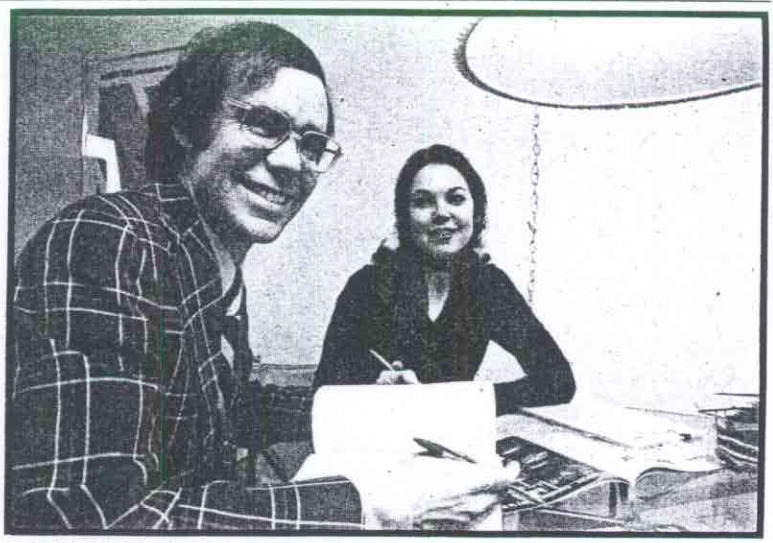
The first thing that must be realized about David Eisenhower is that, like his grandfather, he is far brighter than he is given credit for being. Harrington, a scholastic competitor, calls him, "incredibly bright, a very talented dude. . . . This is the first semester he has really been able to give his attention to his studies. He was always in the top quarter of the class, but now he's really going to make some grades."

David was cum laude at both Exeter and Amherst, then scholastically the leading prep school and college in the country. At Exeter he was among the top 20 in a class of 250. At Amherst he was "almost magna." He is thoughtful, persevering, and he is a statistical memory bank. His conversation suffers from the speed of his mind. He tends to leapfrog certain facts necessary to comprehension, assuming equal familiarity, as does one esoterist talking to another. It is conceivable that some of the omissions are deliberate. Thus his grandfather, whose syntax was at once the delight and despair of the White House press corps, sometimes may have utilized the intelligence for which he was undercredited. He confided to an associate, "If I don't want to answer their questions, I just confuse them."

David is politically sophisticated, but his integrity is unquestioned. "I'm sure," says William Safire, former Nixon speech writer and New York Times columnist, "he couldn't be conned into saying one word he didn't believe." Neither is he afraid to speak an affection he feels, however unpopular the view at the time. He is nice. *"Nice!,"* as he himself—snapping down fiercely and tenderly on the word—is wont to say of certain others: Dwight Chapin and Gordon Strachan. ("They were only carrying out orders. I don't equate this with Nuremburg.") David is more guarded than he used to be, but his nature and manner are open, and he is wholly without conceit. He is invariably genial, he has Ike's famous grin, and his sense of humor beats Elliot Richardson's.

Brooks Harrington who knows David so well he can say, "It is difficult to tell where he begins and I quit and where I quit and he begins," further observes, "if you remember two things about him you won't go far wrong. He is an Eisenhower. He is very conscious of his grandfather's memory. The second thing is allegiance—and that is the right word for it—to his wife and her family, because it is her family."

"I shouldn't think it would be easy being David Eisenhower," said a Washington matron at the time of Watergate. It wasn't easy being David Eisenhower before that.



David joins Julie in her Saturday Evening Post office between his law school classes.

"My identity is an issue of my life," he acknowledges. "I have to worry about what people will think—about not doing anything to besmirch the name." To be seen in an account of his growing up is the essence of that identity, burden or blessing. To be seen in his behavior during Watergate and in his private thoughts about it, is the measure of the man, his way of thinking, his judgments.

Norman Mailer once threw an effective left at William Scranton, former governor of Pennsylvania, by calling him "a young man who liked to please his elders." It would be easy to say the same of David Eisenhower and to label him square, but it is more precise to say he harks to a different drummer. It could hardly be otherwise. He was reared largely by a hero from another era, on precepts now rather faint in

During a visist to Brooks Harrington's apartment, David ponders a juridical problem.

Photographed by Matthew Lewis

American life. David was not only the grandson but the only grandson of the 34th President of the United States, who "doted" on him, who renamed Franklin Roosevelt's "Shangri-la" "Camp David" for him and took upon himself the fashioning of the boy's character.

During Ike's Presidency, David's father, Colonel John Eisenhower, author and former Ambassador to Belgium, was assistant to Ike's chief assistant, General Andrew Goodpaster. Like the sons of most famous men, John Eisenhower was dimmed by his father's eminence, but "Dad aided me," says David, "more than anyone else in my whole life. He warded off bad ideas and was a buffer between me and my grandfather to whom I was not personally close. I tended to think of them kind of as one.

"Grandfather was king of the clan, of course, the direct disciplinarian. There were all these "dos" and "don'ts," these "do it this ways." I had to take him my report cards. He paid me for A's and B's. I didn't get any C's. I had that through my whole childhood. When I was 5, I had to be on the golf tee every morning for lessons. (He has quit golf twice, but when he was 20, shot in the high seventies.) Then we graduated to horses, then to more serious things.

"Grandfather preached finding fulfillment in work and stressed achievement and caution—'the Eisenhower caution.'" David speaks of that as a tangible and plainly honors it. "Many things were drilled, but much was implicit. You learned by dealing with him. I learned that you didn't ask for anything, you earned it.

"I learned that justice was swift and sure. When I was nine and ten and living at Gettysburg, I worked on the farm grooming horses and weeding for 25 cents an hour. One day after lunch, grandfather found me and another 'hand' playing honeymoon bridge in the study. He fired me on the spot." David flashes the grin. "He had to make up though because we had a golf game that afternoon.

"He drilled it into me that life is to be lived in ordered progression. A man went to college, did his military service, got his professional training, married and had children, in that order. He was wary of a man who didn't go the whole route. Except for my early marriage, I've followed that progression. I would have been afraid to cut corners. I would have felt unqualified, though ever since I was 18 I've had offers for jobs and doing things that would have exhausted the reputation and the name." (In recent months, since Watergate, he has had offers to work for a magazine and to write a newspaper column. In 1973, he was sounded out about running for Congress.)

Until he was five, David more or less led the life of an Army brat, though he remembers visiting his grandfather on Morningside Heights when the General was president of Columbia University. "I knew there was something important and unusual about him("Granddad won the War"), and I remember specifically my first visit to the White House in 1953. I remember the weather, which was bad, I even remember the upholstery and carpets on the third floor . . . It was dark and kind of cold, but I knew I was in a real neat place . . . I was spoiled to death in that house. The maids let me do anything."

He had eight boyhood years of it being Granddad's house. "There was a wall I ruined on the third floor where I used to throw a tennis ball. Then one day some men came along to paint it for Kennedy—and he wasn't even our guy." (David now lives behind the Kennedy Center in a duplex apartment.) He was not quite 12 when he was dispossessed and—given the impressionability of childhood and his unique position—the extremity of his reactions seems to him natural rather than otherwise. He stuck Douglas MacArthur "I Shall Return" notes behind mirrors and pictures. "I thought my life was over. I thought nothing ever would be better than that. Leaving affected me so much I didn't come back to Washington for five years, and I was living at Gettysburg only 70 miles away." When he did come back in

> ". . . it was well into the weekend before he (Nixon) could look any of the family in the face. They restored him by telling him they loved him—by touching him and hugging him. Kissing him."

1965, after a summer trip to Mexico with a school friend, they took a guided tour of the White House.

By then, David was at Exeter, the elite New England prep school known to many in prototype through John Knowles' novel, *A Separate Peace*. "It was a grind," says David, "but a terrific education. I loved the elan of knowing we were the best. I didn't think I was happy, but I was."

He was dubbed, "Duke Dave" (Julie still calls him that). "It was a term of derision," he says. "I was an awkward kid—I felt awkward anyway. I was a kind of target, and that was the style of baiting in those places."

Duke Dave loved Gettysburg and lived for his summers there where he followed the easy pattern of small-town life. "At Exeter, they couldn't understand that I wanted to practice law over Sherman's clothing store, and that would be my thing." A boy who knew David both at St. Stephen's elementary school, in Northern Virgina (where the youngsters believed the Secret Service kept machine guns in the locker room) and at Amherst college said, "I always thought David would have been happier if he had been somebody else."

At Exeter, he was a formidable junior varsity baseball pitcher, but on a day before he was to pitch an interschool game and while fielding balls at practice, he turned unexpectedly and caught a line drive hard between the eyes. It knocked him out, broke his nose and sent him to the hospital for two days. He continued to play baseball but didn't make the varsity. The accident unsettled his nerve and, he says, "when your nerve loses that fine edge, your game is damaged." Baseball is the abiding passion of his life.

It was at Exeter too, that he formed an addiction for that "immensely intricate" computerized game, APBA baseball, that gave him such solace as he would get in the last stages of Watergate. APBA is a board and card game of baseball strategy that exercises managerial skills. Aficionados of the game say, "It's like a 40-hour-a-week-job to play it well." On a recent February afternoon, David and Julie drove to Lancaster, Pa., to pick up the newest issue of APBA cards rather than wait for them to be merchandized.

Duke Dave's years at prep school were "down years," he says, but hair still was short, ties and jackets were worn and the war protest and social upheaval of the fin de decade was only a hint. Drugs were not to hit schools hard until '66 when he entered Amherst. He said then, "Many of my friends smoke pot, but I never have. Something in me just doesn't want to." Of that, "amorphous movement . . . the so-called student revolt," he says, "I think it was misread . . . I think it was more cultural than political . . . The vociferous demands of the '60s could not be satisfied by any political movement . . . Young people eventually became aware of this . . . They were coming into a society where by and large, talented people were going to succeed, and they feared the competition. As a result, they rejected societal values and chose to define their own . . . They were really substituting one set of values for another, but the new values were highly subjective—actually kind of an escape from the reality of competition."

David went to Amherst, as he had gone to Exeter, at the urging of his father, who was set against his going to Harvard. "Dad had hoped I'd 'find my way to West Point,'" says David, "but he didn't want to direct me to it . . ." Of the military David says, "I admire it . . . it's just . . . that I was part of a different world.

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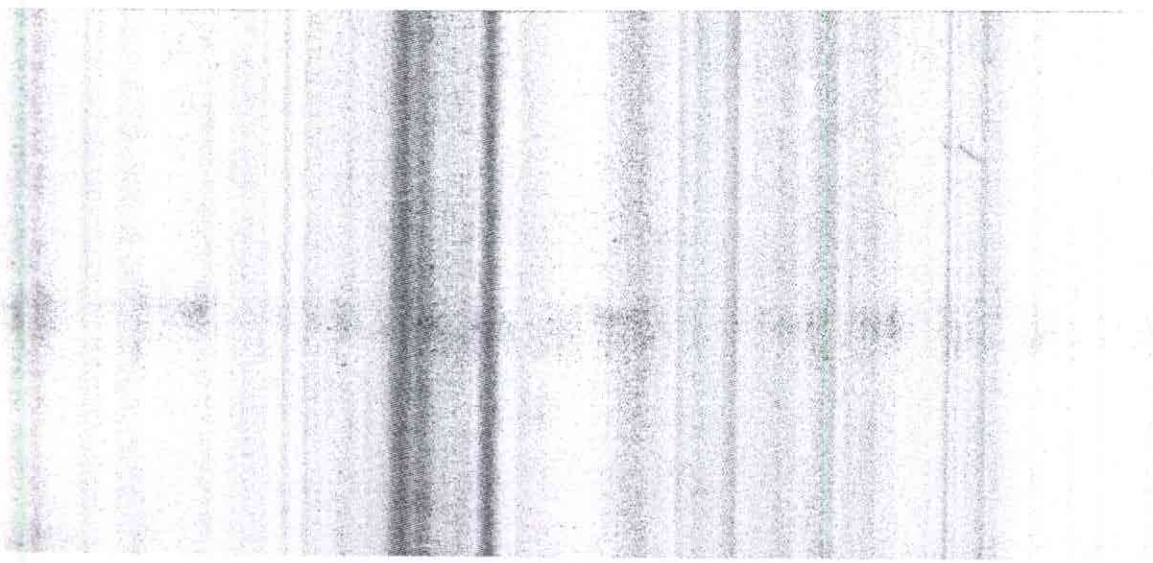

Eisenhower, *from page 11*

At Amherst, David pledged Alpha Delta Phi, "the most arrogant house on the campus," according to another Amherst man of that period. "I always thought it was unusual that David joined it." The Duke David taste for the throne room is not denied by his present friend, Brooks Harrington, who says, "Dave likes it up there on the skyline." David agreeably confirms it. Asked how the advantages of belonging to a Presidential family weighed against the drawbacks, he replied, "There really is no contest. The benefits outweigh the disadvantages . . . Sometimes you weary of the trappings, the obligations, the sameness, the lack of privacy, but the price is trivial in exchange for what the identity confers." In his candor, it seldom seems to occur to him that he might be misunderstood.

The only case of his getting into trouble occurred at Amherst. At closing time, about 1 a.m., on a night of "perfect packing snow," a bunch of Alpha Delts bombarded customers leaving Rap's delicatessen in resentment over the high-priced shop's having "abolished its bottomless cup of coffee," says David. "Patronizing Rap's was like crossing a picket line." The police showed up and chased the boys back to their fraternity house, but no arrests were made. Once at Amherst, the police stopped David for speeding. He had to pay a $25 fine, and the story hit the metropolitan newspapers.

It was Mamie Eisenhower who suggested that David look up Julie Nixon at nearby Smith college, when he enrolled in Amherst. He did, and Julie took him over with the rapidity of Sir Francis Drake taking Cadiz. David is not remembered as going with any other girl. Persons unalterably sardonic, who viewed David as Granddad's boy, now viewed him as Julie's booty. He was chosen to be her escort at the International Debutante Ball in '66. In '67, candidate Nixon, on a pre-primary swing through Oregon, and without the young couple's foreknowledge, made public their engagement on the eve of the Linda Bird Johnson-Chuck Robb wedding, thus preempting national attention. The sardonics noted the heavy use of David to campaign for Nixon. It must be recalled

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Eisenhower, *from page 16*

that at the beginning of that campaign, Mr. Nixon's chances did not look very good (nor were his Eisenhower endorsements stereophonic). Governors George Romney and Ronald Reagan ran well ahead of Nixon, and brand new Senator Charles Percy was not far behind. At Nixon rallies it was adjudged that it was more advantageous to candidate to present Ike's grandson than, "my daughter Julie," who usually "just told a few jokes and introduced David." Finally, the sardonists cracked, it looked like an exchange of gifts when Julie impulsively kissed her father as he gave her in marriage to David Eisenhower.

For all that barbed facetiousness, Julie and David are devoted. "They love each other and are gentle with each other," says Brooks Harrington. "They compliment one another. They are a devastating team."

Apart from Julie and David, finding each other to be a beautiful rhyme, their coming together at college seemed to their classmates natural to the point of inevitability. Recalls one, "They had so many enemies in common, so many people had a predatory attitude toward them."

Their vulnerability was most acute at the last. Says David, "In '68 the war onus didn't attach to Mr. Nixon, but after a year, it was pretty much 'Nixon's War.'" In '69 Cambodia was being bombed and student demonstration was rampant. Set apart from others all his life, the President's new son-in-law, was further set apart. The brother of one of his best friends was killed in Vietnam, and David found that his friend "just couldn't talk to me any more, and we drifted apart." David cherishes friendship and appears to be more evasive and more sensitive to suggestions that he has had to forfeit it than to any other innuendo excepting the printed speculation that his and Julie's personal life was affected by Watergate. About that he does say, "It wasn't easy." Brooks volunteers that "there is occasional tension between the two, but it is *creative* tension . . . They will never be frozen in positions they have taken, like so many persons who take a posture and become petrified in it . . . They are not at all alike . . . They will never take each other for granted . . . Neither of those folks is about to be dominated." He adds, "They are anxious to have children. Oh, Julie's just knocked out over the idea of having children. They wait because Julie doesn't want to be a half-time mother. She's mainly supporting them now (by her job as assistant managing editor of the Saturday Evening Post)." David supported them when he was in the Navy by his salary and with the help of a diminishing trust fund. (David says, "I don't have to worry about tuition, and I have enough for maybe a couple of more years.")

"There were only three men in my class at Amherst who went into the military," says David.

"My draft number was 30. I didn't want to be a ground soldier in Vietnam so I went to Naval Officer Candidate School. I was fighting for my life. We all were. You made it or you didn't, and if you didn't, it was out and into the Army ranks as a private." He said it was "never suggested" (by President Nixon) that anything be done to shunt him aside from active service. "Neither," he said, did he ever "feel that combat in Vietnam was required of me as, I sometimes suspect it subtly was required of President Johnson's sons-in-law."

David graduated 17th in a class of 230 at OCS. "I was pretty proud of that." It is his pattern, he says, "to adjust to the competition. If it's stiff, I work terribly hard to get up toward the top. If it's not so stiff, I don't work so hard and stay about the same place." Asked why he never went for first position, he puzzled as at a new thought and replied, "As competitive as I am, I guess I'm afraid to try for first for fear I won't make it." Says Brooks Harrington, "He hates to lose *anything*."

Ensign Eisenhower was intelligence officer aboard the 19,000-ton guided missile ship USS Albany . . . "The Navy brought me down from the White House. I became aware of having lost touch. I began to wonder if I'd like to take another course in life when I got out . . . Sometimes I think I'd like to go anonymously to San Francisco and work the docks. I'm a little schizophrenic about the whole thing."

Along with other junior officers, when the Albany went into dry dock at the ebbtide of the Vietnam War, David was

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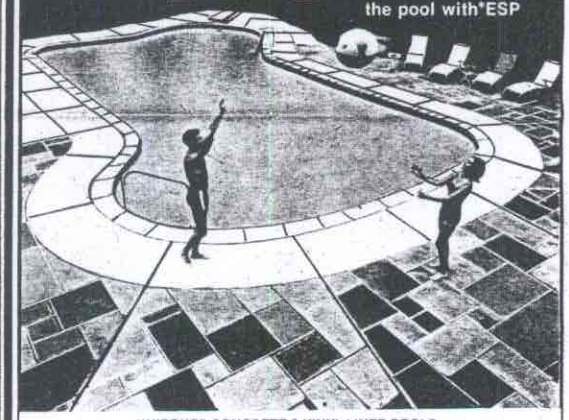

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demobilized and returned to Washington. It was March 28 of 1973, and at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue he says, "There was an odd sense of gloom and tension . . . It was like the atmosphere during the secret bombing of Cambodia but with no visible cause."

"I am apolitical by nature," David says, "I am not political by birthright. (Brooks says he is Machiavellian, particularly in foreign affairs.) I got caught in the crossfire of politics." That date, specifically, was February 2, 1968, when Julie's father opened his campaign at Manchester, N.H., with the riposte, "You're going to have Richard Nixon to kick around again." Julie was to be present, but her flight was fogged in, and David drove her to the rally. He was seen, and "there was a huddle to decide on the import" of his appearance or non-appearances in 34 states. His enthusiasms are wholehearted. Prior ones had been Egyptian history, German history and Naval Intelligence. Now, politics superseded them. "I wanted to learn everything about politics . . . apply it, live it." Within weeks after Julie and David became engaged, he wrote Mr. Nixon a six-page letter said to have weighed heavily in the candidate's final decision to run. "The question was whether or not to drag the family through another campaign," says David. "I assured him that the family was ready for the plunge.

"From the moment I started going out with Julie I was part of the family. It is this way with everyone in association with the Nixons. You become part of the team . . . I was politically intimate with them immediately. There was close exchange and talk—not personal conversation. Personal conversation was almost beside the point . . . My relationship with Mr. Nixon was always more business than personal. He didn't attempt to make personal conversation even to me until Watergate couldn't be ignored."

David's "we" is a GOP we. (He was never a part of the administration. The Bobby Kennedy law prohibited it, but for a while he was on the team.) "Here we were," he says, "having a good time, embarked on a high adventure, then everything blew up." The Eisenhower caution asserted itself. "I tried to stay away, out of view . . . It's the best way to kill yourself to get wound up in a controversy like that, so I tried to write sports that summer."

There has been much speculation that David's enrolment in law school signaled his ultimate decision to enter politics. Rather, he saw law school as a haven. "The sports column (for the Philadelphia Bulletin) and law school came at just the right time," he says. He supplements, "law is a basis for any journalistic or governmental work," and I've always had a hard time going out and promoting myself. A law degree does a lot of that for you . . . I thought going to law school would clear the air . . ."

On the contrary, in the juridical atmosphere David instantly "caught onto the dynamic of the Watergate situation—" that Watergate had to be resolved and in the government's favor if they were to govern effectively . . . By the end of '73 or the first of '74, it looked increasingly hard for the administration to come out of it well, to survive even.

"I thought I could see where it was irretrievably heading, and where everybody would get hurt . . . I saw enormous danger ahead if the family was unprepared for this. I think Mr. Nixon saw it too. I think we pretty much shared the viewpoint. I tried to get this viewpoint to Julie's attention. I told her that if it happened, we were going to be around to pick up the pieces, 'How does that strike you?' Julie wasn't interested in where it was leading. She was just concerned with her father. Toward the end, they said she was the only credible Nixon—meaning people didn't believe her but they believed that she believed . . .

"Eddie's role (Edward Cox, the President's other son-in-law) in the crisis is unwritten and largely unknown. From March of '74 on, he was very much at the family's disposal. He had the maturity to help and he was always available to them, right through to going to California after the resignation . . . that last week he was called in, like over the weekend, then he came back in the middle of the week, and he just seemed to be doing things for Mr. Nixon and kind of having business around . . . he was sort of a stabilizing presence, and it was nice to have him there. As far as Trish and Eddie are concerned, I could tell that the Nixon's had come to rely on them a good deal by the end of the summer. It was evident over that last week when Ed sort of had things to do and you know, he wasn't around, but evidently on business somewhere doing things." Asked outright if Cox had been in consultation or had participated at all in the pardon process, David understood the question before it was completed, but replied, "Well, I don't know. I honestly don't know." He veered off to, "Here's an example, remember the talk that Mr. Nixon gave Friday morning before he left?" He asked Ed to come up with a passage relating to Teddy Roosevelt from a biography he'd once read that made an impression on him. He wanted Ed to kind of put it together for him. So Ed did. You probably remember that morning Ed stepped up —he was carrying the book, and Mr. Nixon read from it. Little things like that, I know of.

"Watergate," says David, "was a legal issue from time zero . . . The President was losing on the evidence. I see no question about it. I think that's why he resigned . . . He

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discussed resignation with us. I think he wanted reactions. He always wanted reactions. Maybe he wanted us to express horror. I didn't . . . You rarely intervened with Mr. Nixon except to confirm. He makes up his mind solely by himself on personal things . . . Influence was a matter of confirming him or of failing to resist a proposition.

- "He has the most fantastic memory I have ever encountered. Often he'd be sitting there seeming to pay no attention to the conversation going on around him. Then weeks later, he would come out with a precise quote of something that had been said.

"Fifteen years from now Watergate is going to look pretty small, and there will be other grounds on which to judge the administration . . . but someone's ox was going to get gored to check the unbridled expansion of executive authority, and it turned out to be ours. My attitudes varied from the early feeling that many of the manifestations of Watergate were not unusual, to later concern about how much longer our political system could stand it. Watergate was consuming Washington while the people Washington was supposed to serve were being forgotten.

"I always felt Mr. Nixon was within the bounds of legal defense. He might have survived impeachment, but after the tapes, he couldn't have turned the Presidency around . . . Watergate hasn't affected my respect for him in any way. There were coverups before Mr. Nixon, and covering up will continue. It was the *tone* of the transcripts that finished him, that and taxes," David says. "A lot of people could countenance the coverup, the tape gap, etc., but they couldn't countenance the tone of the tapes.

"I decided right at the first that it wasn't going to affect my affections for the family. I had great anxiety about them. I had great anxiety about Julie. I underestimated them all. I underestimated Julie. She is the toughest (read most resilient) person I have ever met in my life."

In the very beginning, David managed to compartmentalize his Watergate reactions, to separate persons and principles. He clung to this with the tenacity of a Sir Thomas More, that Man for All Seasons, who fastened upon opposition to Henry VIII's divorce of his Catholic Queen as a way to avoid addressing the issue of Papal Supremacy, implicit in the Act of Succession. Brooks Harrington says, "David understands the requirements of power and has a particular insight into the Presidency, but he didn't condone Watergate. He took a position. He drew a line between politics and people and kept it drawn. He suspended judgment."

"I came to terms with it," David says, "on the basis of *demeanor evidence*." He defines that as "the power of the jury to decide that the crime does or does not warrant the punishment . . . a jury can overlook elements of law. Criminal justice is very discriminatory and intentionally so . . . Justice is not blind. What is the worst thing that could have happened to Mr. Nixon? What he got.

"Watergate was a corruption of spirit— of the things we promised in '68, but it didn't make Mr. Nixon a corrupt man, a bad man. I knew he was a good man who meant well for the country. It crushed him when he was told he was dishonest. I always identified strongly with him. It was more than a headline to me. I saw the face of the Imperial Presidency, and it wasn't imperial at all."David's rationale of *demeanor evidence* fades perceptibly, however, when it comes to Tom Charles Huston, that "proponent of unlimited police power," as William Safire calls him in his book, *Before the Fall*, who authored the Presidentially approved plan "which for five days institutionalized burglary as a tool of law enforcement." As he condemns Huston, David wryly concedes, "Nobody is consistent, including me . . . Candidly it is easier to disapprove of the Huston Plan than to disapprove of Haldeman—because I knew Haldeman. The better you know a situation, the grayer it's going to be. I see faces . . ." His tone is haunted, "I see faces, and it affects the charges.

"When things progressed to the point that it was felt necessary to release the tapes 'to prove there was no criminality in the Oval Office,' I was for it," says David, indicating he was unaware of any real risk of criminality. "In fact, I did not know. Mr. Nixon didn't discuss it with us or with anyone else. How could we know?" Julie too indicated ignorance of what the indicting June 23, 1972, tapes would reveal. In February of 1974 she said, "If (my father) is involved in Watergate and has been lying to the American people he should resign because then he would be guilty of a cover-up. But he said he was not involved."

At law school, association with others was not a happy thing According to Brooks, "David is not a standoffish guy, even a little bit. There might be 100 conversations going on in the halls. David would walk up to to one of the little groups discussing things, and they'd shut up, just stop talking. The people who were his friends never mentioned Watergate. That was on the one hand, and on the other was hostility and distrust—even from some professors. David kind of withdrew into a circle—of one—me. All those quotes you read about friends saying this or that. They were all me.

"When the excised tapes were released on April 29th, we were studying for May exams. David came to class three mornings running red-eyed and tired. He was staying up all night reading the transcripts. At first he was inclined to say, where something was unclear, 'That could be read this way or that way,' but by the time he had read the transcript three times, he had drawn the only possible conclusion." David says only, "I reached the point where I just didn't want to think about it."

"As the chase got hotter," says Brooks, "when they really had Mr. Nixon treed, Julie stopped reading, and David read less than he ever had. I'd go over after school, tell him briefly what I'd heard on TV, and then we wouldn't talk about it anymore. We'd just play The Game (APBA baseball)."

The young Eisenhowers were very much around the White House in this period, and David speaks of the feverish 15-minute after-dinner walks he took and remarks that sometimes still, as he passes a given place at a remembered time, the torment of that period washes over him like a wave. He says his most painful recollection is the suffering of Mr. Nixon.

David was enrolled in summer school, which was to run through August 24. On Friday, August 2, he was in an evening class that ran from 5:50

to 7:40 when a call for Mr. Eisenhower came over the loudspeaker system. "I gathered up my books and left," says David. (He was not to return until the fall semester started.) That Friday was the day, David says, when he learned of Mr. Nixon's participation in the cover-up. He doesn't say how he learned, only that Julie "particularly wanted me home for dinner that night—the night we found out." He adds that "she had some indication" that afternoon . . "That evening Mr. Nixon preferred to be alone, but we learned that he was accessible. We got up our courage and went to him . . . We kind of imposed ourselves on him."

Brooks tells more. He says, "That afternoon Mr. Nixon gave Julie the transcript of the June 23 tapes to read. She called David out of class, saying the President wanted him to read it. When he had, they went up to Mr. Nixon in the Lincoln sitting room. It's a small room," says Brooks, "in the Southeast corner of the White House. Mr. Nixon was sitting before a fire in the fireplace, and when they came in, he couldn't look them in the face . . . I understand it was well into the weekend before he could look any of the family in the face . . . They restored him by telling him they loved him—by touching him and hugging him. Kissing him. David said he didn't see how Mr. Nixon could have withstood the physical pressure much longer—that it was amazing he had been able to withstand it that long. Nixon's really tough, tough as an old boot, but his whole world had crumpled down . . ."

Brooks Harrington is a vastly interesting young man for many reasons, not the least of which is that he is being allowed to speak—or not prevented from speaking—for David in a fashion that David can not find it in himself to speak. Perhaps one or both of them has seen the need to slowly, imperceptibly free David from the traces that held him prisoner during Watergate.

Harrington, 6-foot-2, attractive, authoritative, a Catholic convert, once politically ambitious, always sociologically concerned, a charismatic one-time activist, is from Texas by way of Yale and the University of Oklahoma. He spent three years in the Marines and has worked for various Democratic political figures including former Senator Fred Harris (D-Okla.). Brooks says, "My father's a farmer. I've worked cattle, and I know how to talk working collar." Pleasurably sounding the Populist note, he still is unable to make it sound as if played on a kazoo. He and and his wife, Carol, a Navy nurse, see the Eisenhowers two or three times a week. "Julie doesn't quite know what to make of me, but as couples we do very good."

Brooks knew David only slightly in 1973 when the incident occurred that made them friends. He and David and another law student, named John Foley, all ex-servicemen, were accustomed to sitting together in the back of a crowded classroom. On this day, David entered late and had to take a chair directly in front of the glass entrance doors. Behind him there appeared and positioned himself, "a kind of flaky guy in a tentlike overcoat," whom the other two boys had noticed hanging around earlier in the day. As David too became aware of the presence behind him, Brooke and John pointed the stranger out to a girl classmate. She said, "He's been around all day asking for David Eisenhower."

"John and I were out of our seats like that," says Brooks. "The spook began to run . . . We've both been shot at, and I'm a karate type. I wouldn't have minded knocking his head off. We caught him, and the first words he said were 'Are you Secret Service?' . . . The Eisenhower name hadn't been mentioned. I made him give me identification. He was a radical student leader at the University of Baltimore who'd been picked up twice for carrying a concealed weapon." David took the two young men back to the White House to meet the President, and their friendship began.

If, as it did, Watergate caused David Eisenhower immense pain, it released him to become his own man. Brooks says, "If someone asks David if he'd like to be President and he replies, 'no way,' he's not being presumptuous. You must remember that the Presidency is an everyday thing to him. Right now, I think David is more interested in living for personal goals and satisfactions than for politics. He might do something in baseball . . . It would give him management experience." (He also has long aspired to political journalism.) This summer he will clerk in the same law firm, Berry & Gipson, in which Brooks clerks.

David knows that his grandfather had Presidential ambitions for him, but he says, "He spoke of it only to others, never to me . . . No one rationally runs for President . . . I don't think anybody goes into politics for the fun of it. They go to be at the center of events. They go because that's where things are happening, that's the place to be. I have lost the impetus to practice law in a small town in order to become a Congressman, then a Senator to finally get a crack at the Presidency . . . I view politics now with a kind of fatalism. No one is indispensable. I really don't think about it much right now." Figuratively, he seems to have received another baseball—a 'political one— hard between the eyes.

Though presently disenchanted with politics he is not disillusioned. Asked what the deepest scars of Watergate were, he turned the question into an affirmation. "Look at how it helped me. I learned from it. Think of all I would have missed in the way of education. I'll be there when it's over. It was beneficial. I'm even a step farther along." Probably a good deal of time will have to pass, but it seems unlikely that his appetite for politics—or perhaps his sense of destiny—will not revive. It could almost be predicted that if it somehow became "expected of him" to aspire to high office, he would do what was expected.

In this instant, however, he says, "It is so good to be out of the White House, to be able to watch the news and feel as free and as critical as we want to be. It's nice to have the past over with. We are ghosts. People see us on the street and start: 'We thought you died last August.' Now we can relax and lead normal lives." Some way the thought does not seem to sit well. "But you can't be relaxed all your life . . . My pet nightmare is that I'll wake up at 45 with nothing accomplished . . . There is incentive now, tremendous incentive. Maybe even something to be proved . . ." ■