

Nixon 'Slips,' Refers to Manson as Guilty

Criticizes Coverage of Trial

8/4/70 By Ken W. Clawson
Washington Post Staff Writer

DENVER, Aug. 3—President Nixon, speaking to newsmen today on the importance of respecting the judicial process, said hippie leader Charles Manson was "guilty, directly or indirectly, of eight murders."

White House aides accompanying Mr. Nixon to a meeting of the Law Enforcement Administration here quickly indicated that the President had not intended to presume Manson's guilt. Manson is currently on trial in Los Angeles with mem-

bers of his communal clan for eight murders, including Actress Sharon Tate.

Within an hour after the President's remarks, one of the defense lawyers in Los Angeles moved for a mistrial.

The President brought up the Manson case while discussing how the news media often makes criminals appear "glamorous" and judges, prosecutors, and police "villains" even though the latter are upholding the judicial system.

See PRESIDENT, A8, Col. 1

Attorneys Ask for Mistrial

By Jack V. Fox
United Press International

LOS ANGELES, Aug. 3—The defense submitted a motion for a mistrial in the Tate-La Bianca murder case today on the basis that President Nixon's remarks about the guilt of Charles Manson and his followers were prejudicial.

Superior Court Judge Charles H. Older, in a whispered conversation with all the attorneys at the trial at his bench, outside the hearing of the jury, did not take action on the motion.

The sensational murder trial continued quietly with

cross-examination of Linda Kasabian, the state's key witness against the 35-year-old Manson and three young women codefendants.

The news of President Nixon's remarks, however, produced a volley of vociferous protest in the corridors outside the room where the trial is under way.

As soon as the afternoon session began, the lawyers assembled at the bench and there was a furious whispered conference.

See MANSON, A8, Col. 5

Nixon Views Manson as Guilty

PRESIDENT, From A1

He said that during the weekend, he watched the movie, "Chisum," starring John Wayne, at the Western White House. Since then, the President said, he had pondered why Western movies continue to draw good audiences and remain popular movie fare.

"One of the reasons is perhaps, and this may be a square observation," the President said, "the good guys come out ahead in Westerns; the bad guys lose."

Mr. Nixon said he meant no criticism of the news media, but he was concerned that attitudes of the young seemed to be influenced by crime reporting that tends to "glorify and make heroes out of those who engage in criminal activities."

During his ten days on the west coast, the President said the Manson trial was on page one of the newspapers and received prominent attention on tele-

vision. Then Mr. Nixon added:

"Here is a man who was guilty, directly or indirectly, of eight murders without reason.

"Here is a man, yet, who, as far as the coverage was concerned, appeared to be rather a glamorous figure, a glamorous figure to the young people whom he had brought into his operations, and also, another thing that was noted was the fact that two lawyers in the case—who could read any of the stories could tell—were guilt lawyers who were, as anyone of the most outrageous, contemptuous action in the courtroom, and who were ordered to jail overnight by the judge, seem to be more the oppressed, and the judge seemed to be the villain."

Within half an hour of the President's remarks, White House press secretary Ronald L. Ziegler called reporters into session to "clarify" the President's remarks.

Ziegler started out saying that Mr. Nixon was really referring to "alleged charges" against Manson and that "his

intention" was to show the harm that could be done to the court system by media putting "dramatic focus" on a trial such as Manson's. Later Ziegler added: "I think I've retractel the sentence."

Reporters still seemed unconvinced that Mr. Nixon, who is a lawyer, could have made a flat statement of Manson's guilt while his trial was going on. In light of this remarkable presidential declaration, they asked at a subsequent briefing with Attorney General John N. Mitchell what the President's lawyer thought about it.

"I don't think it is necessary for the Attorney General to comment on a case proceeding through the state courts," Mitchell replied. Then he added, "I don't believe the President made a charge or implied one."

Mr. Nixon's apparent slip of the tongue came after a rousing entry into Denver, a stopover en route to Washington after his second prolonged stay on the West Coast.

A friendly crowd of about 3,000 greeted him at the airport and the reception got bigger and better during the nearly seven-mile motorcade to the federal building downtown. He got out of his limousine three times to shake hands, sign autographs and give away presidential pens.

His stopover was to meet with state LEAA planners from all 50 states and to seek their aid in pressuring Congress to enact 12 anticrime bills that Mr. Nixon proposed more than a year ago. In remarks just before the meeting, the President said it would be time "to get new batters at the plate" if Congress doesn't move on his crime package. The congressional batting average on crime legislation so far, he said, "is very poor."

A pocket of dissidents chanted during the President's remarks but a federal building audience of more than 10,000 drowned them out with shouts of approval.

Mistrial Sought by Manson On Basis of Nixon's Remarks

MANSON, From A1

It was learned that Judge Older had been shown in his chambers an informal account of President Nixon's comments to newsmen at Denver.

Deputy District Attorney Vincent Bugliosi pointed out that jury was locked up nightly with no access to newspaper, magazine, or television or radio accounts and therefore could not be influenced by whatever remarks the President may have made.

The President told newsmen after arriving from a vacation in Southern California that Manson "is guilty, directly or indirectly, of eight murders without reason." Presidential Press Secretary Ronald Ziegler hastily called reporters together later to tell them Mr. Nixon's "obvious intention was to refer to the alleged charges."

Irving Kanarek, counsel for Manson, told newsmen in the corridor outside the court that "for the President to make a remark of this type is incredible. One wonders if the President has lost his cool."

Another defense attorney, Ronald Hughes, said Mr. Nixon was a "contemptuous figure to make remarks about a trial in progress."

Hughes said after the motion for mistrial was filed the "judge asked us to hold it until we have verified press copy of Nixon's remarks."

Hughes, who is defending co-defendant Leslie Van Houton, expanded on his remarks with the comment that "when the President of the United States finds it necessary to comment on the guilt or innocence of a defendant, it indicates that de-

fendant is past the point of a fair trial."

Mrs. Kasabian admitted on the stand under cross-examination today that she did not try to flee that Tate murder scene, that she never tried to tell police what happened and that she accompanied the "Manson family" on a second savage foray the next night.

The 21-year-old key state witness conceded that she left her child with what she thought was a "band of murderers" and never contacted authorities until she was personally charged with seven slayings.

She spoke in a voice almost inaudible at times but she never broke under a pounding interrogation by defense lawyer Paul Fitzgerald as he took her step by step over the Tate-LaBianca killings.

Mrs. Kasabian said she



PAUL FITZGERALD

... presses witness

"begged with my eyes and my heart" not to go on the second night but that she was afraid of what Manson and his cult might do if she refused.

Other defense attorneys were to pick up the cross examination of Mrs. Kasabian later and it was expected she would remain on the stand until Tuesday.

Fitzgerald raised his voice almost to a shout at times as he inquired of Mrs. Kasabian's behavior after the Tate slayings.