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he would have chosen the ministry.”

1040	US Individual
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RICHARD M. and PATRICIA R. Federal home address (including post office, city, county, zip code, and state): "The Rylie House" One, Two, and Three, Six and Seven Washington D. C.	
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Discovering a Politician: The Answer to the Amateur's Dream



was Dick Nixon's favorite. Dick Nixon, who ever since has been especially sensitive to the death of his friends' own loved ones, describes how the dying Arthur called his mother into his room and recited the child's prayer: "If I should die before I wake, I pray the Lord my soul to take." Concludes Dick Nixon: "There is a grave out now in the hills, but like the picture, it contains only the bodily image of my brother. And so, when I am tired and worried, and am almost ready to quit trying to live as I should, I look up and see the picture of a little boy with sparkling eyes and curly hair; I remember the childlike prayer; I pray that it may prove as true for me as it did for my brother Arthur." Years later, Pat Nixon confided to a friend that if her husband hadn't gone into politics he would have chosen the ministry.

WHATEVER THE strength may have been of Nixon's spiritual anchor, he wanted to sever his temporal roots in Whittier. He returned to practice law after graduating from Duke, as his family desired, but friends remember that he talked vaguely of going other places, doing other things. The war gave him a way out. Out of respect for the pacifist sensibilities of his mother, Nixon first took a job with the Office of Price Administration in Washington, which he would afterward stigmatize as the model of bureaucratic ills. Then he slipped quietly into the Navy, which he subsequently described as the "breakpoint" of his life. His naval service gave him a useful campaign line about service in the "stinking Solomons" to use against the civilian Voorhis, and a knowledge of poker, which was as precluded by Nixon's upbringing as was military service.

But Nixon has often been proficient at what he was taught to avoid. He won college office at Whittier on the strength of a promise to introduce dancing, although he did not dance. As operations officer on Green Island, Nixon organized a commissary known as Nixon's Hamburger Stand, which was renowned for its whisky supply. When he left, the men gave Lt. Nixon a party.

After the war, as in the Navy, he took what was open to him. He talked briefly about becoming a bigtime lawyer and frequently about making a success of himself. He was unsure, at first, about politics, then attracted by the opportunity of becoming a congressman.

"Perhaps it was an accident that he went into politics," says Waller Taylor, a member of the Adams law firm. "Remember, they asked him to do it. And once he was in it, his drive and his ambition and his striving for success carried him. Maybe he could have gone into something else and never wanted to go into politics at all. It's hard to say."

Politics was an option available to Nixon in California as it would have been in few other states. He was not "a party man," as he came to be described, and in truth in California at this time there was really only one party, the incumbent party. The state's unique and since-discarded cross-filing system combined with an absence of party designation on the ballot to allow incumbents to run again and again with both parties' nominations. This was fine with the incumbents, who usually did all they could to see that their own parties put up hacks against their friends who were in office.

The regular Republican organization had put up a long series of hacks against Voorhis, a onetime Socialist who had become a popular and increasingly conservative Democratic congressman. A few people like Adams and Perry and insurance man Frank E. Jorgensen were tired of the Republican performance and put pressure on the GOP organization to finally come up with a candidate. This is what led to the famous fact-finding committee that selected Nixon. "The Republican organization didn't feel we had any right to do what we were doing," recalls Adams. "They were right. We didn't. We were amateurs."

DICK NIXON was the answer to the amateur's dream. He came into the University Club at Los Angeles on Nov. 1, 1945, wearing his lieutenant commander's uniform, accompanied by his quiet wife. He spoke softly, and with reserve. One of the people at that small meeting recalls that Nixon also raised the question about money and the financing of his campaign, a question that commended him to the prudent businessmen in the room.

For Nixon neither then nor later would get over the business about being poor. It was why his new friends, many of them only beginning to break through financially, would set up the fund for him that became the issue of the 1952 campaign and the Checkers speech. Voorhis came from a moneyed family; Helen Gahagan Douglas had more money than he had. Before Nixon came to talk dynastically of "the Kennedys" he talked of "the Kennedy money." The "theys" on the other side always had more money than he had.

The men around Nixon in those days were young men who would make solid careers for themselves in business and in law. They liked their prospective candidate immediately, but were hardly in awe of him. (Murray

Chotiner, who would mean most to him, was not yet in the picture. Despite what has been written about him, Chotiner had almost nothing to do with Nixon until his 1950 campaign) Nixon himself was attracted by the offer to run for Congress and he was anxious, as always, to make a good impression on others.

But if Nixon was attracted by his new friends—they had already talked to his mother and approved of his origins—he was also unsure that he would pursue a political career. The center stage simultaneously lured him and made him uneasy. The quotation with which this account began is from an interview with Bela Kornitzer in 1960, in which the retrospective Nixon perhaps revealed more about himself than he realized:

"I don't think any man can judge his own assets and liabilities. From my observations of others in political life, however, I can conclude that perhaps my major liability is—and this may sound incongruous—that I am essentially shyer than the usually extrovert politician ought to be. This seems to be an inborn trait which I cannot change or alter. I have a great liking for the plain people, but I feel ill at ease among the prominent . . . This is perhaps because in my early years I grew up with the same kind of people. One of the assets of a politician is his

quality of mingling with the great. Frankly, I'm a terrible mixer and this is considered a major liability in politics."

WHAT WAS THIS introvert doing in politics anyway? He had no political ideology as such (in the Harris interview eight years later he would describe himself as a conservative, a liberal, an internationalist and a pragmatist within the space of six paragraphs) and there is much to commend the view of his coach that he did not know his own party. But he had been given a unique opportunity in the California political system, and Dick Nixon had learned from an early age to make the most of his opportunities. When Frank Jorgenson suggested to him in 1950 that he should stay in the House of Representatives and accumulate seniority rather than running for the Senate, Nixon replied: "When your star is high, you better go with it."

Most of Nixon's friends, after 28 years, remain understandably scornful of much that has been written about those first campaigns. Even Nixon's most hostile biographers have failed to verify a single instance of the purported surreptitious telephone calls describing Voorhis as a Communist.

In contrast, the public red-baiting of the Nixon campaign that year was standard fare in California, where both Republicans and Democrats were

long accustomed to campaigning against the menace of Communism.

But if Nixon's campaign was unexceptional in this regard, it also was devoid of any ethical considerations. Lacking any real experience in politics, Nixon accepted without question the unstated assumption shared by many Americans that the only questions of campaigning are strategic or tactical ones. This is a doctrine sometimes preached but rarely practiced by professional politicians, most of whom realize that there are unstated boundaries beyond which strategy may not go.

Nixon was not a professional, and he did not realize this. He did not, in fact, really value politics, at least not in the sense that Morton Borden has described it as "an institutional cement joining Americans of every persuasion."

What Nixon valued was not politics, but political power and the purposes of statecraft, and he could be high-minded when genuine issues of governance were raised. Despite a variety of urgings from well-connected Republicans in 1960 to pursue the alleged vote frauds that produced the questionable victories of Kennedy in Illinois and Texas, Nixon refused to do so. "The President couldn't govern, not knowing whether he was really President," Nixon told friends in words that would prove prophetic. But that was after the



