

Nixon's A Shy Man

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United Feature Syndicate

LATE AT NIGHT, as Richard Nixon sleeps, he occasionally has a peculiar experience. "I have a feeling," he has told friends, "that I have something to tell the President. Then I suddenly shake myself awake and realize I am the President."

Few can blame Nixon if he sometimes must pinch himself to make sure his conquest of the White House hasn't been all a dream. Only a decade ago, he lost the governorship of California and announced bitterly he was through with politics. He even signed a pledge to his wife that he would never run for office again.



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But it was a promise he couldn't keep. Now, after his first term in the White House, Nixon appears to be headed for the most smashing Republican victory of the century.

GOP strategists confide that only one major obstacle lies in the way of a Nixon landslide in November. Not the economy. Not the war. It's Nixon's robot-like personality.

The President, with his sloping nose, jowls that he seems to rearrange like putty to project a mood, his tendency to sweat under the hot TV lights and his marionette hand gestures, is not particularly appealing to the voters.

His campaign managers, therefore, hired Wolper Productions, one of the best documentary film firms in the busi-

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ness, to humanize Richard Nixon on film at the Republican Convention.

WHAT is the real Nixon like? He is a very private person who once said: "You can't confide in anyone about your personal plans, your personal feelings."

The private Nixon, we have learned from intimates, is a warm, shy, sensitive man who could easily wake up wondering whether he was President.

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He is a devoted family man, who permits his daughters to intrude freely upon the Presidency. Not long ago, Nixon was deep in a foreign policy discussion with his top advisers when the phone rang. He spent several minutes on the phone carefully explaining a Vietnam problem.

"That was Julie," said the President after he hung up.

HE IS considerate, indeed, to all the people who are close to him, even his valet, Manolo Sanchez. During a worrisome night after the Kent State tragedy, Sanchez accompanied the President on his famous midnight wanderings about the memorials of Washington.

They wound up at the Capitol Building where Nixon ordered a cleaning woman to let them into the House of

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Representatives. From the back of the chamber, Nixon applauded as Sanchez slipped into the Speaker's chair.

The President dislikes personal confrontation, hates to ask favors of people and almost never applies political pressure. He leaves this to others less soft-hearted.

Remarkably self-disciplined, he seldom shows anger. Then it is usually a cold, frowning anger, not the lava-like outbursts of Lyndon Johnson.

OCCASIONALLY, Nixon will erupt for a moment, but it quickly passes. "Dammit," he exploded the other day after learning the Justice Department hadn't carried out an order, "when I give an order, I expect it to be obeyed."

He jammed a buzzer on his desk, explained his irritation to an aide and directed: "Find out who is responsible. If (my instructions) aren't carried out in 48 hours, I want the responsible people fired."

But this was a rare show of emotion. Far more typical is the cool, calculating political poker player who could match China's Chou En-lai in impassivity.

The two leaders spoke in normal tones during their secret negotiations in Peking. But when one wanted to make an important point, he lowered rather than raised his voice. Each knew the other would be more impressed with restraint than bombast.

NIXON HAS an extremely orderly mind. He has even set aside Wednesdays as the day for serious thinking. On Wednesdays, he keeps his calendar relatively free of appointments to allow time to meditate and ponder and study.

The President likes every problem reduced to writing, with every available option spelled out. Alone in his hideaway across the parking lot from the White House, he pores over paperwork, pausing only to dictate memos to himself or his secretary into a dictaphone.

He emerges from these study sessions deeply informed on the nation's problems. But he lacks a feel for the human undercurrents.

SINCE he has studied every possible argument his critics could raise, he feels it useless to listen to them repeat the same points. He understands the complaints, therefore, if not the passions of his opponents.

The subject that animates him is politics. During a political discussion, an aide made some point about logically developing an argument. Responded the President: "No, no, you're treating politics like prose. Politics isn't prose; politics is poetry."