



A Fordian Fraud

Gerald Ford looked impressively serious during one of his final vice-presidential press briefings when he swore to Mr. Nixon's "ultimate innocence," and to the fact that he would be vindicated in the end. Maybe Mr. Ford really meant to say "pardoned." During that same briefing, Mr. Ford told an NBC newsmen, "One thing I value highly, politics aside, is my credibility."

Some serious questions about Mr. Ford's credibility have been overlooked by a press eager to get away from the stink of the Nixon fiasco. My own doubts go back to his control of the Warren Commission which covered up the facts of John Kennedy's murder in a domestic coup d'etat.

Few people know that Earl Warren asked the then titular head of the Republican party to suggest an appointee to his Commission. The GOP boss said without hesitation, "Gerald Ford is our man." OUR MAN. That GOP chief was Richard M. Nixon.

When Mr. Ford pardoned Mr. Nixon Sunday, many people were shocked, cheered, outraged, satisfied, or confused. Despite this strong Presidential endorsement of a double standard of justice in this nation, Mr. Ford's bosses, those stringpullers among the old mossback factions in Washington had done it again. The power to cloud people's rational minds triumphed again.

Above this, the Ford apologists will cry that he is his "own man." Nonsense. To be his own man he'd have to show creative, independent thought, plus the ability to plan beyond those who would control him. Gerald Ford has done neither.

People in Washington who've known Gerald Ford for more than a quarter of a century say he is basically a decent

man. He is totally faithful to his party, to a fault. They say he is simply not a broad-minded, intelligent man. He is not a Big Man . . . a leader. One man said "Gerry Ford is a follower, and I'd feel a lot better knowing who is doing the leading now."

A well-known Washington attorney who deals with the big names on the Hill daily told me less than a fortnight ago, "Ford's economic policies are still trying to catch up to the McKinley era.

His trying to deal with this recession will be a 'consumers' nightmare."

Mr. Ford's dealing with the Warren Commission ten years ago was another kind of nightmare. A slap in the face of honest reason, that Commission will live in history's hell as the men who allowed the murderers of a U. S. President to go free.

In that role, Mr. Ford did all that his bosses asked him to in the cover up of John Kennedy's murder. Is it a coincidence that the names of so many of the Waterbuggers are turning up with connections to the JFK case? It's no secret that the names Hunt, McCord, Barker, Sturgis, and even Jaworski, Jenner, and of course, Richard Nixon, are all tied in with new investigations into the assassination of Mr. Kennedy.

While Mr. Ford was not in on any murder or coup, he wittingly or unwittingly led the cover-up. Those who'd known Mr. Ford's native ineptitude were amazed to see him toss out red herrings which the rest of the Commission gobbled up like starving cats. "His" Commission studied and examined almost everything but the real facts and evidence of who really did kill Mr. Kennedy and why.

After building the Commission's facade, Mr. Ford got LIFE magazine to run a glowing support for the Commission findings. He had a book ghosted which pumped his role toward finding "truth," and someone conned CBS into supporting these faulty findings. Critics were simply silenced by media bosses who didn't allow dissent in print or on the air.

The Warren Commission—Ford's theater of magic and mirrors—fooled America, and protected the conspirators who assassinated a President.

Much later, one man who'd worked for the Commission would observe, "Gerry Ford just isn't that sharp on his own. Someone ran him and pulled the strings, cutting the orders. It was a helluva staged show, though . . . kind of like a caper by those CIA types."

He said this four years prior to Watergate.

Wondering if Mr. Ford still really believed that Lee Oswald killed anyone, much less JFK, I contacted his former PR man, a respected ex-newsmen named Paul Miltich. He told me that Mr. Ford, then Vice-President, had personally read my questions. His answer was "I believed then and I believe now that the Commission's report is correct in its conclusions."

As I listened to the news on Sunday, hearing that our new President was conducting a new cover-up for an old villain, I thought, "So much for Mr. Ford's credibility in my mind."

Yes, Virginia, crime does pay. Just ask Dick and Gerry.

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