

The Fatal Shot

PRESIDENT ADMITS WITHHOLDING DATA; TAPES SHOW HE APPROVED COVER-UP was the double-banner headline across the top of the Washington Post's front page August 6, reporting Nixon's statement of the night before.

Nixon, finally and publicly, admitted he was a criminal. Explain it as he tried, "withholding data" was obstructing justice. If the least subversive of his crimes, it was a crime. A very serious crime and any crime by any president is most serious.

Even for Nixon, who by then had spent two years scraping intellectual barrels, his explanation was pretty limp.

He ignored his known and reported earlier "review" of the tapes - as though anyone could forget the kinds of solutions to the kinds of problems he faced - he claimed to have "made a preliminary review of some of the 64" subpoenaed tapes in May. "Among the conversations I listened to at that time were two of those of June 23. Although I recognized that these presented potential problems, I did not inform my staff or my counsel of it" because "I did not realize the extent of the implications which these conversations might now appear to have."

Having no choice, being faced with wholesale desertions by those who would no longer be the victims of his dishonesty, Nixon presented himself as a real decent, responsible man: "This was a serious act of omission for which I take full responsibility." Having protected his lawyers from the choice of being disbarred or quitting publicly, Nixon looked ahead to future disclosures of other xxx exposures of other crimes and dishonesties by alleging his "review" disclosed "no other major inconsistencies." The key word that pretends a lie is not a lie is "major." This typical Nixon semantics actually forecast more "inconsistencies" that in his mind are not "major."

Much more than with other released tapes conflicting emotions and reactions pumel the mind in reading these transcripts. This was a man of extreme pettiness who refused to concern himself with the real business and need of the nation. His worries were over the int faintest inconsequentialities. He confessed his inability to grasp the basic problems of economic and international life to the point where he refused to talk about them. His preoccupation was staging himself on TV cameras and whether the

hair of the women in his family would in place when they were on camera, not one strand blown.

To this man who posed and as and claimed time after time to be the great leader ~~was~~ basic, of the world, the/essential problems of the world were beyond his grasp, the bored him, he said so, and he displayed an ignorance of affairs of such simplicity a high-school student would be flunked for that ignorance.

Bracketing this secret display of incompetence and disinterest in secret he was vainglorious about his writing that was not his and the name of the ghost of which he could not even remember. All he could remember is that to him it was great and that he was so overwhelmed by "his" greatness that the night before he had lain awake and reread his words that were not even his. ~~He~~ He wanted his whole staff to reread them. He directed that copies be obtained so they all could.

The world on the verge of ruin and Nixon relived a fictitious past and looked forward to a phony future.

Maldeman, the real if unelected President, had to bring some of these urgent world problems to Nixon's attention. Here is a sample of the man's true greatness:

H...Did you get the report that the British floated the pound?

P. I don't think so.

H. They did.

P. That's devaluation?

H. Yeah. Finnigan's got a report on it.

P. I don't care about it. Nothing we can do about it.

H. You want a rundown?

P. No, I don't. ...it's too complicated for me to get into (unintelligible)...

H. Burns [Federal Reserve Board chairman Arthur] is concerned about speculation about the lira.

P. Well, I don't give a (expletive deleted) about the lira. (Unintelligible.)

Nixon didn't give a deleted expletive for his personal situation with his men having be caught in common political crime a few days earlier. Maldeman brought it up, without being asked. What was certain and was also unreported is the manner in which Maldeman did this. It discloses obvious knowledge. He opened it this way:

"No, on the investigation, you know, the Democratic break-in thing, we're back in the problem area because the FBI is not under control, because Gray doesn't exactly know how to control it..."

The solved problems did not stay solved because "we're back in the problem area"

-which says they thought they were out of it by whatever they had done - and because Nixon's hack Gray wasn't controlling the FBI.

After a long explanation, Nixon's concern was, "What about Pat Gray - you mean Pat doesn't want to?" (Meaning frustrate any real investigation.)

"Pat does want to," Haldeman told him. "He doesn't know how to."

Haldeman, of course, was looking ahead. There were "ambitious" people inside the FBI they could use ("Mark Felt wants to cooperate because he's ambitious") and they could blame it on "across the river," meaning the CIA, whose main offices were on the other side of the Potomac.

This is what he used to reach Nixon and get him cooking on the framing-up.

Haldeman's opening of the subject shows what anyone knowing anything of government should have assumed, that Pat Gray was keeping the White House fully informed. It is in this case, however, not merely that it was a safe assumption. It is more - and worse in terms of the failures of the so-called protections of society. Pat Gray's letter to Haldeman with the accompanying memo detailing all the FBI had learned, ready for Haldeman on his and Nixon's return from Florida, had actually been public domain from the time of the Gray confirmation hearings. There, in the printed volume, is where I found it, but it was entirely ignored! In that proceeding and in the other subsequent investigations, whether or not Gray was a witness, nobody -ever - went into it!

This was just the first of a series of Gray written reports to Haldeman so that Nixon would always know the state of the criminal case against Nixon. If not all, more than enough are public and were before the Watergate investigations began.

Aside from this direct, written reporting there were various back channels, other officials and phone and personal conversation. The White House always knew and Nixon, whether or not interested, was always told because there was no choice.

So, in this long introduction to update Nixon, Haldeman laid out how the mex Mexican laundry had been exposed. By then it had been traced to both Barker (called (~~Barker~~ "this guy") and to the Mexican bank and to Ogarrio and to the Texans and Dahlberg/

In the explanation Haldeman credits Mitchell for cooking up "the only way to solve this."

Dean "concurs" and "we're set up beautifully to do it, ah, in that- and that-"

Stuttering a bit ^Haldeman switches momentarily to TV coverage of "a massive story on the Cuban thing."

Everything was a "thing" in the Nixon lexicon.

Whether ^Haldeman switched around here because he gagged inside at what he was about to propose, whether he wanted the unspoken notion to occur to Nixon or whether he wanted Nixon to get the full potential of the "massive story on the Cuban thing" is uncertain. But the ~~stutter~~ digression is not pointless. There notions to be planted in the imperial mind. One is that General Vernon Walters owed his entire career to Nixon, whose translator he had been in Vice Presidential days and who was then Deputy Director, Central Intelligence, by Nixon's grace. Another is that the Cubans could be blamed for the entire thing. NBC's legitimate coverage insinuated the crooked scheme.

^Haldeman resumed his outline of the plot:

"That's the way to handle itz this now is for us to have Walters call Pat Gray and just say, 'Stay the hell out of this - this is, ah business here we don't want you to go any further ~~into~~ on it.' That's not an unusual development, and, as, that would take care of it."

Irrelevant to the scheme to corrupt the entire system of justice and history and free elections that here was germinating but not irrelevant to the consciousness of those with a decent concern about the society in which they live is the disclosure of predictable crookedness by the federal intelligence and police agencies. Lying, covering for each other? "That's not an unusual development." Or, to the knowledge of the White House, crookedness and dishonesty are not unusual for the FBI and the CIA.

As ^Haldeman spelled the conspiracy out, Nixon was a little dense. Somehow he had trouble focusing. He went through Walters calling Gray "who will then have this basis." Gray would "call Mark Felt ["because he's ambitious"]...and say 'We've got this signal from across the river to put the hold on this.' And that will fit rather well because the FBI agents who are working on the case at this point feel that's what it is."

Nixon, who knew the truth all along, could not contain his excitement; "This is CIA? They've traced the money? Who'd they trace it to?"

^Haldeman had to disabuse him. But Mitchell, who ran CREEP, had told Nixon and that is one of the non-existing tapes.

Nixon knew this money was "from the committee," actually "from Stabs," so there can be no doubt he had been informed. Maldeman confirmed "It's directly traceable." But that noble Presidential spirit soared, his mind started putting it all together, and there emerged a obble representation of the heights to which the office raises the man:

"Well, I mean ther's no way - I'm just thinking if they don't cooperate [meaning the actual donors of the secret stack in illegal money used illegally] what do they say? That they were approached by the Cubans. That's what Dahlberg has to say, the Texans, too, that they -"

Maldeman had to haul Nixon down out of the heavens, warning him "we're relying on more and more people all the time. That's the problem," a danger they could eliminate "if we could take this other route." Nixon agreed, "All right."

Note that Nixon was aware that ~~they're~~ "we're relying on more and more people all the time." He didn't have to ask about the inherent danger. He knew it. Maldeman merely reminded him. Or, Nixon still other evidence that Nixon was informed and participating in the obstruction of justice politely called "cover up" all along.

"The other route" was getting the CIA to call the FBI off. Maldeman laid their planned scheme, already ~~laid~~ out in detail, for Nixon, how he and Ehrlichman would call Helms and Walters in and lay the law down. Nixon didn't nec details. He interrupted with one of the more fascinating and unexplained series of volunteered statements, none prompted by anything Maldeman had told him. The first is

"All right, fine. How do you call him in - i mean you just -well, we protected Helms from one hell of a lot of things."

"That's what Ehrlichman says," Maldeman replied.

What Nixon and Ehrlichman knew that Nixon's chief of staff did not know from which they had protected Helms was not leaked. Naturally, with so much of the leaking traceable to the CIA. It would be like asking the prosecutor to prosecute the prosecutor. One inference is that this "things" were in the domestic area. That was Ehrlichman's assignment, domestic affairs, of which he was Nixon's chief. We have seen a fair amount of this, all illegal.

Wt And here, of course, all that phoney CIS testimony already recounted and in particular Walters' secret offer to bribe the Cubans here ought be recalled for full comprehen

of what lay in the minds of the exalter men who led the nation.

Nixon continued without any prompting with these words as soon as Haldeman quoted Ehrlichman. ~~There~~ There had been no reference to any of this in anything Haldeman said. There had been no suggestion of it, no matter how remote. Of course there had also been no mention of Hunt's name:

Of course, this Hunt, that will uncover a lot of things. You open that scab there's a hell of a lot of things and we just feel that it would be very detrimental to have this thing go any further. This involves those Cubans, Hunt, and a lot of hanky-panky that we have nothing to do with ourselves. Well, what the hell, did Mitchell know about this?"

If Nixon seemed unable to keep his mind on a single subject, Haldeman told Nixon not what Nixon didn't know but what Haldeman did know, "I think so. I don't think he knew the details, But I think he knew."

This told Nixon that his old pal was ripe for a setup.

But let us go back to this semi-incoherent Nixon babbling about Hunt and probe its possible meanings.

First of all, Nixon's isn't kidded about Liddy and his alleged leadership. He makes no reference to Liddy and he does introduce Hunt's name.

This is not in connection with the break-in. That is not what is in Nixon's mind. Looking ~~xxx~~ into Hunt "will uncover a lot of things." Other than the break-in. He describes it as what will be ugly and visible if the Hunt "scab" is "open." Whatever he may have had in mind, there is no doubt he did have knowledge of Hunt, what Hunt and had been involved in, that it was pretty rotten stuff.

In short, no Nixon innocence and full Nixon knowledge and appreciation at this very early date - before the FBI had completed the trading of that illicit Mexican laundry. This was only the beginning of his third working day after his return to Washington.

What follows is ambiguous, the uncertainty magnified by the editorial "we" in "we just feel it would be very detrimental to have these things go any further." The interpretation of detriment to his interest seems least likely. That the detriment is related to "a lot of hanky-panky" seems more likely. In the context of pinning it all on the CIA it is credible. But with this there is a problem: how could Nixon pin Hunt, who had long since retired from the CIA in any way on the CIA? How could he expect to

connect Hunt and the CIA in any way? He had, obviously, knowledge of some connection, but he displays no knowledge of any current connection.

Unless we assume that Nixon was living in a dream world, making up whatever at any moment suited his purposes, we have to assume that Nixon had some basis for this combination, the seal of Hunt and the "detrimental" effect of lifting it.

There is a perfectly reasonable explanation in Nixon's ^{relevant} having/knowledge of Hunt's career not when their careers coincided at the time of the Bay of Pigs but as of the time Nixon became President and Hunt was with the CUA directly and what Haldeman gives no indication of knowing, indirectly, through the Mullen agency, which was CIA. He was not long in giving undetected and unreported confirmation of this, confirmation Haldeman seems to have missed, which is indicative of Haldeman's lack of knowledge of extreme cleverness in feigning it.

The two facts that follow also require exploration. Nixon links "a lot of hanky-panky" and "we have nothing to do with it ourselves."

There is no doubt that this is Nixon's admission of what he described as "hanky-panky" and there was "a lot" of it, again to his knowledge. Haldeman was not his course. Haldeman does not react to this in any way, but where he had knowledge he generally displayed it with a "yeah" or "sure" or some similar indication, when he did not add detail.

But whether or not Haldeman had knowledge of this extensive "hanky-panky," Nixon without did and at this extremely early date. If as can not be discarded this does not mean he knew before anyone was caught in any criminal act, it is without doubt that he did know, promptly and in considerable detail. What needs to be considered with this also confirms it. Nix

Nixon did not say "we have nothing to do with" all this "hanky-panky." What he says is "we have nothing to do with it ourselves."

It is not likely that he can have any indirect connection through the CIA. ^{is} The more probable alternatives are that he had in mind the CREEP, which he could imagine was not "ourselves" through the fiction that he had no relationship with his own creature, his means of separating his re-election from the regular Republican machine.

But "purselves" could also refer to two other connections. One through the Bennett operations at Mullen, which were connected with the White House. The other is a variant of this in which "purselves" refers to Nixon and Haldeman, those in this secret meeting at which there were no others.

There soon comes a point at which Nixon introduces some clarification. But first he limits further and makes what is at once a clear distinction between those doing his dirty work for him and an admission of knowledge still secret. It comes about when he and "He [Mitchell] didn't know retruns to the covering up on the Mexican laundry, whether ~~Mitchell~~ how it was going to be handled." The form in which Nixon addresses Mitchell, that "He didn't know," is not what "aldeman told him. There had been no conversation on whether Mitchell knew of the money. Haldeman has just said he believed Mitchell knew about the hanky-panky ~~had agreed with Nixon~~ but not the details and/that the money had been handled through Stans.

But there is no record of how Nixon knew Mitchell had nothing to do with the Mexican money or how he knew that Stans did. This means that someone told him prior to this meeting, that it was not Haldeman, and it can explain the "insider forces" that ended all record of Nixon's prior conversations with Mitchell himself. Mitchell certainly had the scoop before he spoke to Nixon, to whom as head of CREEP he had to report. The rest of the details account for the need for the disappearance of any and all records of this reporting.

This entire section can also be interpreted as Nixon's effort to learn what ~~Haldeman~~ Haldeman did know because it is clear that Nixon displays knowledge Haldeman seems not to have had.

In this exchange on Mitchell Nixon then asked, "Well, who the hell is the asshole that did? [handle the money] Is it Liddy? Is that the fellow? He must be a little nuts." Haldeman's response, "He is," can mean Liddy is ~~the~~ nuts, that he is the asshole or both, but in context it is not really a response on who handled the money. Instead he tells Nixon that Liddy "was under pressure, apparently, to get more information." This has nothing to do with handling money. And of all the subordinates in CREEP above Liddy, when "aldeman refers to this "pressure" to "get more information," Nixon interrupted him for a single and correct guess, "Pressure from Mitchell?" Haldeman's

reponse, "Apparently," satisfied Nixon.

Here Nixon departs from normal human reaction in two ways. First, with this great calamity facing him, he expresses no ire, no resentment, spoke no single expletive to be deleted. And then he admitted what he spent the rest of his Presidency denying:

"All right. Fine. I understand it all. We won't second-guess Kitchell and the rest."

Another sentence follows without interruption, but here it should be recognized that Nixon ~~was~~ was without resentment at what had happened to him, which can be interpreted as subconscious recognition of his own involvement in it. And he admits "I understand it all."

This book began with the inevitability that Nixon had to "understand it all" at the least and probably had personal involvement. Analysis was enough to make these probabilities. Fact that was ignored made them certainties. But Nixon kept saying otherwise and kept getting away with it. As late as the House impeachment hearings there was still the alleged need for that "smoking gun."

The sentence that concludes the "I understand it all" paragraph is even more revealing. It was totally ignored and it may be the most important single sentence in all this transcript:

"Thank God it wasn't Colson."

Why in the world should Nixon be content that his right-hand man, close associate, campaign manager, former partner was so deeply involved in all this "hanky-fanky" and be grateful that it was not his assistant, Charles Colson?

It was better for the manager of the entire re-election campaign to have been implicated in all the dirty works than for a hired hand?

No, not at all. It is, rather, Nixon's gratitude that the man he knew was in actual charge of all his superabundance of dirty-works operations, Colson - not Ehrlichman - had not been implicated. It is an expression of Nixon's awareness that had Colson been implicated in any way, he, Nixon, was done.

So overwhelmed was Nixon at this great good fortune he didn't express the slightest regret at being caught or resentment over it. This departure from any normal, human

reaction - this complete obliteration of it in his mind - adds to the sense of real relief Nixon expressed in "Thank God it wasn't Colson." (Exclamation point removed in Nixon's transcription.)

His Presidency could be ~~xxx~~ tottering, his re-election could be made impossible, and Nixon was without resentment at being caught and is so lucky that Colson hasn't been connected with anything.

Allen Dulles used as the title of his book on the CIA, "The Craft of Intelligence." Intelligence is a "craft." But it is also an art. The art lies in analyzing available information and from it reaching a conclusion. Working around voids in available information is also an essential of the art of analysis, which is the essence of intelligence.

There never really was any secret that Colson was a key if not the key to the continuation of Nixon subversion and crime known by the rubric The Watergate. The reader has seen how this was woven together from what was discernible through all the efforts at obfuscation and how it was pieced together from the bits of tangible evidence that was so often misinterpreted and was ignored in the official investigations.

Nixon remained unimpeached and as President presided over disaster ~~xxxx~~ tumbling atop disaster as the spirit of the country eroded and the economy went to hell only because this Colson clue was missed and with it the Hunt clues were missed by those who did not see, missed by those who did, and rejected by those many to whom they were offered. With Hunt there were not all the gaps in evidence. There was solid fact, the most tangible. And it all led back to Nixon, to Colson, and to the Mullen-Bennett operation that again led to both Nixon and Colson.

Nixon returns to this in what may seem to be an incomprehensible expression but isn't. Prior to that he and Haldeman kick around how they are going to kick the whole country and the workings of justice around so Nixon may escape retribution.

It begins with Haldeman's ^{unintended} testimonial to Colson, interviewed by the FBI the day before and thereafter persuaded not to "think that there is anything at the elections committee" with a possibility that "it was a Cuban and the CIA" or perhaps something "non-political."

And after their interview of Colson yesterday, they concluded it was not the White House but are now ~~xxxxxxxx~~ convinced it is a CIA thing, so the CIA turnoff," the very

he and Nixon were at that very instant hatching, would work.

"I'm not going to get that involved," Nixon said, without praise for Colson's spectacular services. Without mention or comment, in fact.

"We don't want you to be involved," ^Maldeman/ assured Nixon.

"You call them in," Nixon ordered, meaning Helms and Walters.

"Good deal," Maldeman replied. Within minutes it happened. Nixon continued with his directives:

"Play it tough. That's the way they play it/ and that's the way we are going to play it."

and
There follows some dubious elation over a wanted resignation/ a directive to "start firing" (epithet deleted) government workers. I really mean it. Cut 'em off." These are followed by those deep worries about the financial plight of Britain and the impending Italian bankruptcy. More political criticism of Congress when it will not rubber stamp.

Then suddenly, disconnected from what they have been talking about and in the middle of a sentence to which it bears no relation, Nixon blurts out an order, "say 'Look, the problem is that this will open the ~~Bay of Pigs~~ whole, the whole Bay of Pigs thing, and the President just feels, ah, without going into details -- don't, ~~him~~ don't lie to them to the extent to say there is no involvement, but says this is a comedy of errors, without getting into it, the President believes that it is going to open the whole Bay of Pigs thing up again...don't go any further into this case/ period..."

Throughout there are scattered "(unintelligible) O" which may account for the shortness of the transcript compared with the time they talk or may be further deletions of the embarrassing. It appears that this is what Nixon orders ^Maldeman to lay on the CIA through Helms and Walters.

It wasn't even good greasy kid stuff in this sense because, so far as the CIA was concerned, that was far in the past, the least of its worries, and as Helms described it to the Senate, "completely liquidated." It was no way to lean on the CIA. It was the ~~best~~ argument least likely to influence them simply because it was all exposed, all that it cared about, anyway.

Nobody inside or out of the CIA believed that airing what really happened at the Watergate or really investigating it would "open" the unclosed, "the whole Bay of Pigs thing."

That Nixon could and did conceive this effect is rather a reflection of what lay heavily on his own mind, his own unreported involvement in "the Bay of Pigs thing." That was the only "new" part to come "open."

He and Haldeman met again at 1:04 p.m. The transcript is obviously incomplete. Two of the three paragraphs of Nixon's words deal with Hunt. In neither case did Haldeman mention Hunt or raise any question or issue leading to him:

"Just say (unintelligible) every day to have this fellow Hunt, and he knows too damned much, ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ ... If it gets out that this is all involved, the Cuba thing, it would be a fiasco. It would make the CIA look bad. It's going to make Hunt look bad and it is likely to blow the whole Bay of Pigs thing which we think would be very unfortunate... I would just say, lookit, because of the Hunt involvement, whole cover basically this."

"Goo move," Haldeman opined as he trotted off to do it, to return at 2:20 to report "No problem."

Now Hunt's name had appeared because of the records found in the Cubans' room. He had also disappeared. But he had been "involved" in Nothing to that moment. The illogical and the logical make an informative pattern. There was nothing "very bad" for the CIA in anything done by a former employee. There was nothing to "get out" about the Bay of Pigs or Cuba that could hurt the CIA. Books had been written about it, stories and articles without end and JFK had fired the Director over it. What could come out, what was not public, is Hunt's and Nixon's companion roles. But this was no "fiasco" for the CIA, would not "make the CIA look bad." It would make Nixon look bad. When details then not public were known it could make the man Nixon had just made commandante of the Marines look bad. The illicit aid the CIA had given the White House could look bad but Nixon would have had to have had knowledge of or involvement in that to have it in mind and again it would make him "look bad."

He knew the CIA would not go for this. But he also had to know that they would recognize that they were being blackmailed and they just could not be told, "lookit, you take a bum rap for Nixon." What could he use to lean on Helms and Walters with except fictions - or guilty knowledge, meaning still more personal, original activity?

This alone could be a tender CIA area. What Nixon may have known about the Hunt/Mullen/Bennett-CIA operation may be subject to conjecture, although there is enough to lead to the belief he did know all about it. The CIA certainly knew what it was into and there can be no doubt that by this time it knew it had a vulnerability because of its "assets" and "proprietaryies" still not publicly reported and never until now pu together.

Nixon probably trusted Maldeman more than anyone else in the White House. But he faced danger in telling Maldeman what Maldeman showed every sign of not knowing at all, the reason for that "Thank God it wasn't Colson," Nixon's involvement in all over which Hunt later black ailed through Colson.

In this babbling, logic being impossible, Nixon discloses still more about not less than guilty knowledge in saying Hunt "knows too damned much" and in saying that "the Hunt involvement" was over "the whole cover."

Even Nixon's saying "it's going to make Hunt look bad" is an expression not of concern over Hunt but of the consequences of any Hunt reaction over looking bad, Nixon really didn't care how anyone else looked. His own "looks" often ~~xxxx~~ weighed least in his scale of values.

The only way of making sense out of warning Helms and Walters about danger in making Hunt look bad was as a warning to them that they, Nixon, or both could be hurt.

One of those common "(unintelligibles)" in Nixon's transcripts of Nixon tapes precedes Maldeman's first substantive comment on his meeting with the CIA's top two, just ended. "Walters made the point," he says, the point relating to Nixon's "(unintelligible)" but it seems to be that the question Nixon asked related to Hunt- his first question. The reader can decide whether this interpretation is justified by the full Maldeman quote:

"Well, it was kind of interest. [sic] Walters made the point and I didn't mention Hunt. I just said the thing was ~~going to~~ leading into directions that were going to create potential problems....harmful to the CIA...."

When he returns with fuller detail it is again in a context that makes no sense in terms of any CIA fears over the Bay of Pigs/. Accidentally or not, the transcript immediately preceding this quotation is garbled:

Nixon's gratitude and relief that it was his former close friend, Attorney General, law partner, close adviser and then his campaign manager, Mitchell, who has implicated rather than just another hired hand in the White House is without official investigation and exposure. It is one of the larger defects ~~xx~~ among all the defects of all the investigations. That it was possible is still a other tribute to the resourcefulness and lack of ~~skill~~ scruple or which Colson lost naught in his claimed acquiring of the spirit of Christ.

When the House Judiciary Committee filed its official report on the "Impeachment of Richard M. Nixon President of the United States" on August 20, it had put together but done nothing else with a partial chronology of Colson's action, conversations and meetings known to it. This report, as all others of which I know, contains no reference to the phone call Hunt reported making to an unidentified White House official at about 4 a.m. June 17, 1972, considerably less than two hours after the five were in jail and after Hunt had taken care of many other details.

The committee did report, however, that ~~xxxxxxxxxx~~ ^{when} the Secret Service informed Ehrlichman of Hunt's involvement, that afternoon, Ehrlichman immediately called Colson." (p. 43) That afternoon "Ehrlichman and Colson talked about how to handle the records of Hunt's employment at the White House; and about Douglas Caddy." (p.43) No other committee went into this most basic matters. And this committee does ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ say that not until after talking with ~~Hunt~~ ^{Colson} did Ehrlichman call Key Biscayne, "in the late afternoon," when he talked to Ziegler. (p.43)

Based on Colson's testimony, ^{before it is secret,} perhaps the only testimony but certainly neither dependable nor in this case rational, the committee reported that "On June 18, 1972, the President also called Colson from Key Biscayne. He told Colson he had been so angry about the involvement of McCord in the Watergate break-in that he had thrown an ~~xxxxxxxx~~ ashtray across the room." (p.44) Odd how with this display of temper and the supposed-to-be-believed cause, McCord's involvement, just a few days later, in hours of conversations with Haldeman, Nixon never mentioned McCord's name and never stopped introducing Hunt's. Grown men actually believe this when both Lidfy and Hunt were known by Nixon to have been involved, McCord had never worked for Nixon, Hiddy had and

Hunt still did, as he had at the moment of the crime.

Of Colson's testimony that he and Ehrlichman and Dean had met on June 19, the first working day after the break-in, the C committee ~~states~~ says they talked about there being no record of Hunt's "termination" which is explained only by what the committee does not say, he had not been terminated; and of the contents of Hunt's safe. (p.44)

The committee's next accounting of a Colson involvement in the deliberations over the problems of The Watergate is, "On June 19, 1972, the President phoned Colson. They talked for approximately one hour about the break-in." (p. 45) With Colson supposedly not in any way involved, all that time talking about his non-involvement? Nixon spent ~~nine~~ nine minutes with Haldeman before ^{Haldeman met} on June 23 with Holms and Walters, and that was an important meeting for Nixon. (The transcript of these nine minutes is but a single typed page!)

The reason the committee appears to have swallowed is so that Colson could tell Nixon about "administration" meetings "to determine how they should react." (p.45). For this Nixon needed Colson when he had them all ^{reporting? The entire Department of Justice} beginning with ~~from~~ the Attorney General down?

Colson was not in on the Haldeman-Nixon meeting of June 20, early in the first morning after their return from Key Biscayne. Of it the committee repeats what had long been public and proven in court, that the erasure was deliberate and "obliterated that portion of the ~~transcript~~ conversation...referred to Watergate." (p. 46). However, ^{p. 46, 248} or converse Nixon did meet/with Colson this day also, this very critical day, from 2:20 until 3:30; from 8:04 until 8:21; and from 11:33 until five minutes after midnight on the 21st. Nixon spoke with Colson more on the 20th than he did with Ehrlichman. (p. 46)

Not, certainly, to learn what the "administration was still, planning to "determine how they should react" to The Watergate!

This day busy beaver Nixon who spent so much time with Colson and Haldeman ^{he} did not find a minute for his Attorney ~~General~~ or FBI Director while he was trying to learn what the administration of which he was boss was doing about Watergate? (p. 46)

Nixon did talk to Mitchell, but the tape of the conversation does not exist and

his formerly dependable dictabelt machine ^{just} ~~just~~ happened to ^{Not} ~~to~~ preserve his confidential ~~IX~~

later summary of his conversation with Mitchell, (p.46) ~~later dictation to it about what transpired between Mitchell and Nixon. (p/46).~~
~~XX~~

None of this is new. There is no reason to believe it is complete. It is cited ^{single} from an official source because others can satisfy themselves more easily from it.

If complete it has Colson an extraordinarily busy man during these crucial early ~~XXXX~~ early moments. One wonders how much inquiry throughout the government it took to require hour-long reports to Nixon on the results! One also wonders, with all the others engaged in identical pursuits and the White House in direct contact with the entire administration why Colson had to gather the readily-available information. And make such lengthy reports.

If he did, that is.

The flurry of Colson activity subsided as soon as he had persuaded others to create false records - the gentle committee does not put it this bluntly - that Hunt had ceased his White House employment "as of April 1, 1972." (p.48)

It was, ^{naturally} ~~naturally~~ for Colson, fabrication. Ho. ^{also} ~~est~~ to Christ save from this ~~XXXX~~ kind of past?

Perhaps the most provocative of all these strange and unexplained Colson activities is that when he spoke to Nixon he and Nixon were always alone. What they talked about was secret from all others, including those on whom Nixon depended most heavily. Colson himself was so secretive about all of this - even to hiding his true relationship with Hunt - that he had GSA crack Hunt's safe when he had the combination to it. ~~Admitting~~ Admitting he had the combination would have been admitting the closeness of their relationship to his colleagues. Only because Colson was really the one in charge of Hunt's ^{work} "seamy" ~~xxxx~~ for Nixon did Colson have to keep these dark secrets - to protect himself as well as Nixon. Colson's possession of this knowledge was a lever he had on Nixon. It accounts for Nixon's expressed apprehensions about Colson when he spoke to others in Colson's absence. And Colson could have been the source of much of what Nixon knew where the transcripts give no indication of how Nixon knew and Nixon's claims make it impossible for him to have known. Colson has to have been the hub. ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~

Hunt ~~was~~ and his gangs revolved around this Colson hub.

This Colson hub was also ~~the~~ part of the rack on which Nixon could have been tortured.

Colson reported directly to Nixon, in privacy. He is the one who could and did pass through the Haldean-Ehrlichman wall around Nixon.

He could have ruined Nixon, as Nixon could have ruined him. Each in protecting the other protected himself.

This also is that "too much" Nixon said Hunt knew. ~~Nixon~~ Thus Hunt alone could and did blackmail Nixon and thus the pressure for it was applied through Colson when the pretense was that Ehrlichman would pay if Hunt were not taken care of.

Extra space.

The June 23 transcripts are what

have been enough. Both together plus whatever else the CIA might have known were more than what it required to be persuasive, to get the CIA's top people into a new series of unpunished criminal acts, and offers.

~~This~~ ended it all, but in the end it still was not put together for popular comprehension. The press and the politicians were satisfied that these tapes were irrefutable proof that Nixon participated in the obstruction of justice. Satisfied, neither went farther.

Enough was too much.

The poor, childlike people just could not ask any more was the pretense. These are the same not childish people who had been clamoring for more- for all, and whose pressures alone gave the political forces the little courage they summoned for the too-inadequate exposures they made. There were exceptions, but not enough and none among the nationally known. In the crunch if not before then, when their own integrity was at issue if not before that, there was a corporal's guard in the Congress who joined the tiny number who had been making insistent demands for full exposure.

But not one was capable of that.

Yet it was all, as in the story of the Purloined Letter, there to be seen. If in Nixon turned it all around, as Through the Looking Glass, more than most was still out in the open as this book shows.

What even the fatal shot proves is that even it adds only minor detail. Its importance is that first-person admission, not the new information in it.

The press may heap prizes upon itself, easier with a little CIA help, for its "investigative reporting" when there was no real investigating. The Congress may be busy scaling the hillsides of pride for laurel with which to fashion wreathes for its noble head. But both failed. There was conspicuously good reporting. There were members of the Congress or the most exemplary behavior and highest dedication. But when there was this great crisis both failed.

Neither has admitted it. If any form of representative society is to continue, the people would do well to recognize this for daily authoritarianism, always dignified with a title of principle, encroaches more upon freedom. Daily the influence of the

people on their lives and their ability to exert any influence even when combined in the greatest number wanes.

This is not alone the story of The Watergate. It is also the meaning of the non-investigation of The Watergate and the unimpeachment of Richard Nixon.

Had Tad Szulc not lied the very day after the break-in, who knows what the difference might not have been? Had the Hunt story begun to come out the very first day, when it was possible, with all that we have seen woven into a tapestry of fact and incrimination, how different the world if not the country might not have been.

If the Pulitzer Washington Post had exposed the Mullen-Bennett operation instead of making a deal with it, given the truly superior effort and performance of the Post's other work, two and a half years of agony and their legacy of inflation and disgust and disillusionment could easily have been avoided.

And there are countless other examples each with real possibilities, each already recorded.

This is a record of failure, not of glory.

Of failure that goes marching on who knows to what destiny.

Extra space

This is also the story of a midget of a man magnified into something large, something he neither was nor could ~~handle~~ ~~those artificialities~~ and devices that have come to dominate American life, thought and actions and reactions.

Nixon, a nothing who knew he was a nothing, has as one of his sicknesses companion need, the paranoid, that the world was crammed with his enemies, his justification for any failure; and a compulsion to be forever assuring himself that indeed he was something. His life abounds in illustrations, from the public record.

All his non-secret tapes overflow with endless repetitions. This earliest of the undestroyed/ tapes repeatedly show him repeatedly telling himself and Haldeman how great he was in his great vision that wasn't his in the book that wasn't his, Six Crises. With ~~xxxxx~~ his world about to collapse around him, still again out of nowhere, for no apparent need and connected with nothing, with all there is for a real President to do,

Nixon launches into the book, without shame, without awareness of the self-disclosure to his top assistant, without feeling important enough even though he holds the office of President of the United States:

"I was thumbing through the, ah, last chapters of (unintelligible) last night and I also read the (unintelligible) chapters (unintelligible). Warm up to it, and it makes, ah, fascinating reading.... So on and so on. I want you to reread it, and I want Holson to read it, and anybody else. ... And anybody else in the campaign. Get copies and give it to each of them. Say I want them to read it and have it in mind. Give it to whoever you can... Actually the book reads awfully well - have to look at history. I want to talk to you more about this later in terms of what it tells us... Could find out from him what chapters of the book he worked on... But you could find out which ~~specific~~ chapters he worked on. Also find out where Moscow is - what's become of him - what he's been doing ten years. Say hello to him (unintelligible) future despite the (unintelligible). You'll find this extremely interesting, ~~and~~ read (unintelligible)..."

This is but a fraction of the first time he wasted so much time in the midst of these terrible and crucial events selling himself and his past as others recorded it for him in his name belaboring the man who acted as president for him. What was poor Haldeman to do or say? When he could not avoid it, he injected an occasional "Yeah," "O.K." or "Sure will."

Just before Ron Ziegler interrupted to discuss the regular briefing Nixon was back at it again, this time with his defamations of an old friend and loyal worker, Herb Klein. (He just sort of blubbers around" and "He just doesn't really have his head screwed on."):

...that Six Crises is a damned good book and the (unintelligible) story reads like a novel - the Hiss case - Caracas was fascinating. The campaign if course for anybody in politics should be a must because it has a lot in there about of how politicians are like... [several "unintelligibles"] and how you do things... Wonderful item to put in."

Haldeman asked, "Is that in the B book?"

"It's in the book! Hell yes. It's in the book."

As though in disbelief, Haldeman again, "It is?"

"(Unintelligible), Nixon told him, "Why didn't you ^{ever} read it? ~~XXXXX~~."

Even after Haldeman pocketed the CIA for Nixon and reported the capture, Nixon returned still again to what he alleged Dulles had done to him in his book. Dulles had told him the truth and because Nixon had lied, as we saw earlier, Dulles became an "expletive deleted" that is worse than "SOB" which is not deleted.

From this collection of the crude and the crass, of proof of his conspiring in crimes and connivings to inderminate others in them, of his lack of honest ^{for} or the decent regard of men, it should not be believed that Nixon was without awarrness of what it means to be President of the United States, the most powerful man in the world running what was the world's richest country when he took it over. Nor can it be failly alleged that he was not conscious of what it means to be the man the push of whose finger could incinerate a large propertion of the world and ruia what was not totally destroyed. He displayed a statesmanship no whit inferior to Warren G. Harding's and when great emotion over the most pressing of veents of transcendental importance siezed him he was ~~an~~ of an eloquence not in the least inferior to that Of Calvin Coolidge.

Once the expletives were deleted he was not a man without warmth or unaware of what is really important in life or to the presidency or where the most urgent needs of the country lay or that after five years of his rule there were still these uncounted thousands ill-fed, ill-house and ill-educated and prepared to live in decency.

May, never should it be said or believed that Richard Milhous Nixon was a man without compassion, a man on whom the most urgent needs of others did not weigh heavily.

Immersed as he was in the great travail that become the greater travail of two and a half years of The Watergate, his bugs caught and his tapes preserved for posterity the coursing of his blood and the rise of his spirit when he became aware of the most dire of human needs.

Before sending Maldeman off to take the intelligence est_ablishment into camo and make it responsible for Nixonian crime the great mad found time to remind Maldeman how impirtant it can be for a candidate to have his picture taken with a celebrity. Even Democrats could come it, be photographed with Nixon, and go out and use the picture in their campaigns. No suggestion that this would help Nixon, of course.

With all this new oiris meant and all the time he'd spent rereading his own masterpiece of those endless earlier Nixon crises, he had still found time for a long talk with Pat and Tricia over the problems they would face at the upcoming conven_tion.

hen Tricia was not received as she'd have liked there were "labor thugs out boozing."

How terrible/ In Allentown!

In Boston "the press were pretty vicious...one even refused to ~~shake~~ shake," meaning the hand of the princess. But Tricia has a "good brain in that head." After disbelieved she restricts herself to safe "Republican groups."

Haldeman though it was nice, "Julie giving that time to the Museum in Jacksonville." But Nixon was less sure: "The Arts, you know - they's Jews, they're left wing - in other words, stay away."

Loyal, faithful Pat was also worried the night of these troubles that could make her husband the first President first kicked out and then jailed. She, too, is intensely human: "First, she says the moment they get the helicopter and get off and so forth, it destroys their hair and so forth." Her "second point," Haldeman appraised it as "the big point," was Pat's "doing" the delegations of the states. "On TV," of course. But Nixon had had word from "some of our strategists...not to overuse them and cheapen them" by overexposure." Haldeman, "couldn't agree more."

No, the cares of The Watergate did not dehumanize Richard Nixon!