

It is ironic and appropriate that what led to Nixon's downfall is what made him President to begin with, scheming to make something good out of something not good by the advanced techniques and methods of advertising and promotion. It was, as was virtually all of Nixon's public career, inherently dishonest. The basis of the entire project was control over the dishonesty without which there could not possibly have been success.

It was, in fact, the dirtiest, crookedest thing any President had ever done. Typical for Nixon, it was also illegal.

That the plot to make Nixon richer and add to fabricate a synthetic fame he would not and could not earn on his own violated federal law was the ~~last~~ least of its defects, the most minor of the many wrongs upon which it was based.

Typically Nixonian also is it that ethically and morally the project was flawed because it was based upon his doing and agreeing to others doing for him what was so ethically and morally wrong it could not in any sense be right.

Only sociopaths could have conceived what Nixon's worshipper/chief gauleiter H.R. Haldeman concocted with his background in advertising the useless and the harmful do people would buy it. Only sociopaths could agree to it, as two CBS newsmen, Dan Rather and Gary Paul Gates report Nixon did in their behind-the-scenes book on the Nixon White House, The Palace Guard. (Post 9/1/74) And only sociopaths could have had anything to do with any part of its implementation.

Haldeman, whose hobby was taking amateur pictures of his hero, Nixon, persuaded him to bug himself and tape each word automatically. Nixon's offices and his phones were wired for sound so that each conversation he had would be preserved on tape. All the White House and all the phones Nixon used were not and could not be included. Only those he used most.

His cabinet meetings, infrequent as they were, were included. His meetings with foreign dignitaries, reprehensible as was this violation of all international practice

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and decency were included. By their nature they are required and expected to be private. Even official notes on them are kept secret by governments for years.

His meetings with his advisers and his friends were included, violating the most basic principle of confidentiality that works both ways, not only so that the decision-making by the executive will be confidential but also so the rights of those who serve him will be preserved.

It was Haldeman's idea that after Nixon's term was over all these tapes would be reviewed. From them those that made Nixon look best would be selected. Then this selection would be gone over to eliminate the gutter-expressions so characteristic of this President of the most limited vocabulary; All the hesitancy that persisted despite his years of public speaking would be erased. All the limitations in his ability to express himself would be rephrased into fluid speech.

The cruddy stuff, the dirty politics, the nasty personal characterizations, the profanity gone experts would remake the limited language and the unimaginative expression into Churchillian prose. There would emerge of record of this fabricated Nixon in Churchillian prose that would be a towering monument to his non-existent greatness.

More than synthetic fame, however, was behind this conspiracy against truth and history.

It was also typical of Nixon and Haldeman that profit was a motive. Haldeman, who had made his living selling, saw how he could sell for profit. What during all of his life was typical of Nixon and was not reported or even ~~far~~ referred to during the two years of his Watergate travail is making a fast buck. This would make him many, perhaps more than all those shady deals that would in many instances have put ordinary men in jail. It is typical of the monarchical concept of the presidency that this permeating Nixon greed for money as well as fame was not recalled when the people should have known it. It was all publicly available, all reported, all readily available. In ordinary dishonesties it can be traced to his college days. In his willingness to seek and take the money of others when it is improper ~~it~~ it has been

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traced to his Navy career, when he took money from the contractor he was investigating. The Jack Anderson who reported both earlier did not report either during the two years of Watergate national tragedy. Without Nixon's having taken an illegal \$18,000 while Senator there would have been no Clackers speech in which he explained it away as the evil of his enemies picking on his kids's dog. He lost the 1962 attempt to be governor of California because he was caught buying a Beverly Hill lot for less than the mortgage on it. In that same election he, Haldeman and others were caught and afterward found guilty of soliciting and accepting and using money by pretending they were really Democrats.

All these and many more publicly-reported and confirmed instances of Nixon's personal crookedness with money were included in my first Watergate book that could find no publisher and scared an agent. We never admit these character flaws in a President. They describe the real Nixon, the Nixon who cost the government something like \$17,000,000, much of which went to enhance his properties, in what was not necessary to his presidency. And there was nothing not unusual about his purchases of these properties or his common graft in avoiding paying the taxes he owed. This story also could not be told while he was in the White House until it came out by an accidental error by a small paper. I knew of it and couldn't give it or the proof that was so understated away.

How much money Nixon and Haldeman believed they could make from this electronic spying on all who saw and spoke to Nixon and from the corrupting of what he and they said is not known. But an estimate can be reached from his expectation of \$2,000,000 for his memoirs after he became the first president forced out of office for misconduct that was actually criminal.

Often the question was asked after the incriminating nature of these tapes was established why he didn't get rid of them as soon as his agents were first caught in crime. The most obvious explanation was never suggested: greed. He took the chance required to carry through with his initial dishonest enterprise, keeping the tapes so they could be reworked and sold for millions, at the risk of his reputation in

perpetuity, at the risk of what would have put any other American in jail.

Because his entire life and all his successes were based on deliberate crookedness, the dirtiest and most dishonest kind of politics as well as dishonesties with money, it is appropriate that his ~~inability~~ own dishonesty undid him.

Had he not held on to the illegally made tapes intended for dishonest uses, had he not feared losing this great chance for dishonest ~~and~~ added wealth, Nixon might actually have gotten away with that unprecedented catalogue of crime that came to be known as The Watergate.

The greater ~~and~~ the hidden Watergate tragedy is that all of society's protections actually failed in this time of greatest crisis. The Congress was in terror and its investigations were whitewashes where they were not aborted, as the earliest were. The televised ~~Watergate~~ Senate Watergate investigating committee hearings that were and deserved to be a great popular success were actually restricted pretty much to what those with personal interests to serve by it leaked to the press and had been published. The committees that are supposed to keep an eye on the intelligence community and to prevent excesses and illegalities by it practised the wrong kind of "oversight," as specific illustrations and quotations will show. And the press, whose reporting was never finer or more accurate, which did a superb job of reporting, shunned real investigating - never doing it and refusing to do it - while awarding prizes to itself for "investigative reporting." Within my personal experience this includes much of the major media in all its forms, printed and electronic and printed, daily and weekly.

Fear and terror, not bravery, characterized the non-performance of all the institutions designed for the preservation of freedom, for the working of representative society.

The damage these failures did to freedom and genuine representative society and to the faith of the people in any kind of government or political life is beyond calculation. The cost in everyday need, to the economy, is daily paid by all as it has been since all those who saw profit in Nixon's desperate situation immediately perceived. The

cost of everything skyrocketed. From a land of plenty the country was made into a land of scarcities. To preserve himself Nixon had to and did make the most ruinous international trade deals that created instant scarcities from surpluses initially with grains and thereby instantly with all foods. There ensued a virtually endless spiraling as ~~the world~~ we all ~~we~~ spun in the whirlpool of his desperation, with what amounted to governmental and certainly economic chaos at best as the top echelons of government were devoted to keeping Nixon first unimpeached and then out of jail.

The whole world was in bail to his first need, to escape payment for his crimes.

It is the irony or ironies that when all else failed, when there was no real investigation, no real prosecution, no real punishment for those whose detection couldn't be avoided, in the end it was Nixon's greed and native dishonesty that made him the first publicly disgraced American President, the first forced out of office in 200 years.