

If Richard Nixon's publication of secret tapes he made of his supposedly private conversations seems unprecedented, it is.

If it seems daring, it is only if the alternatives are not considered.

In two years they were not.

The truth is there is nothing he could have done or refused to do that would not have ~~harmed him~~ hurt him more.

He has disclosed that while publicizing his devotion to God and using the White House instead of the available churches for prayer meetings, he is a man given more than most to obscenity.

He has disclosed knowledge of crimes of which he did nothing, criminal for anyone other than the man who controls the administration of justice.

He has disclosed that he urged bribery to obstruct justice, but in word he now claims do not really mean that.

He has disclosed the intent to corrupt the machine of government, to use it against those he regarded as his "enemies."

These and so many other personal and character flaws so utterly opposite what Americans believe of their president and want of him Nixon actually recorded for posterity, perpetuating his profanation as some special kind of benediction for history, a precept for future generations of Americans.

If any other man in the country had bugged all to whom he spoke in pretended privacy, Richard Nixon would have had the steel bars yawning for him. It was criminal.

For anyone other than Richard Milhous Nixon.

So, for ~~two~~ a large part of the year after which this unique crime became known he defended it as a propriety and more, as the obligation he bore to all President's of the future - even those as yet unborn.

Only, one year to the day in commemoration of his first public comment on the concatenation of crimes come to be known as The Watergate, to announce he was releasing them.

Not all of them, mind you.

Not even all of those that had been subpoenaed.

Only of those he elected to disclose, those parts he elected to disclose.

For this he heaped praise on his unbowed head, all his partisans joining in it.

But nobody then asked why?

Nobody then or during the almost two years after his men had been caught inside his opposition's headquarters,

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It strained Polyanna-like charatability not to regard this as history's most public proclamation of the highest official crime by the first President to confess to any.

But Nixon said it was proof of his purity. ⁴ To assure this interpretation he first gave his own version to the nation by all TV and radio networks, then, while having announced he had made it public, delayed that further to first thing the next morning he could distribute a new account, 50 pages of his version again, all that was available until after the printing of the evening papers, where that Guarguantua of paper, all 13_ pages, was made available with too little time for it to be digested properly for the largest audience, that of the evening TV news.

If any interpreted it otherwise, he was deceived by the ambiguities, Nixon's description. When he recommended bribery with a million dollars, that was not recommending bribery or obstruction of justice. It was merely his way of asking penetrating question, thus the "ambiguity."

It was the 365th day after Nixon called his personal counsellor, John Dean, Caliban, and his two closest assistants, Harry Robbins Haldeman and John Ehrlichman the two finest public servants ever, fired Dean, let the other two resign with deepest regrets, that he disclosed to the world that under him his and all other conversation in his White House was of the kind nasty minds write on public-toilet walls.

Yet so unseemly as this alone is, that a President would advertise this manner of personal expression of the world's most powerful man and all his associates, he had no choice and he knew exercising this choice would meet none of his legal problems. Not even when he had already made the Supreme Court over into his own image.

His disclosure of these endless secret palavers - those of those he let out - dignifies fuck and shit into something he called "executive privilege." This is to say that it is the sacred right of the people for the president, any and all, to be able to confer in private; that the urgent needs of the people and the country can't otherwise be met.

But it is more, much more than shit and fuck and other exemplifications of the President's Nixonian mind and manner that he was keeping secret as "executive privilege."

It is that he actively conspired, that those he trusted, all those close to and around him, those he trusted most, those who did his bidding, actually conspired to do what they actually understood to be and actually, for all the fucks and shits, described as crimes.

And worst of all for any president, worse yet for this one who made all the pretenses, from Billy Graham as a semi-permanent decoration to law-and-order as the basis of his campaign and personal life, this one who had been a lawyer, his crimes and those in which he lustily collaborated were crimes against the state itself.

These were criminal acts against the sanctity of society, against all the people.

Why would a savvy, gutter-minded gut-fighter like Nixon, for all the piety which which he disclosed it, let the filth of his mind become so public, make a best-seller of it and guarantee this with his own personal shilling of it on prime-time TV?

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 , each day bound separately rather than in the single volume in which it was issued, so that the cameras would tell the people he was really telling all, this all stacked two feet high in two piles plus, of course, the erect one in the front to show the Presidential seal.)(Source, wire copy from Ian McDonald, IMF.)

Again why?

Why would any ruler of any land so besmirch himself?

Why would an American President do this? self-villification bit?

Why would this man of all presidents, the one proudest with least about which to be proud, disclose that of which men of decency would shame?

Only Nixon can say and what he had been saying for two years was proven by these transcripts to be a almost all lies, at best twisted interpretations or as he called them, ambiguities that different people would interpret differently. Even if he did say, who could believe him then?

He said it was to tell all, the laundered version of "let it all hang out."

It did not tell all, he knew it did not tell all, and had he ever had the attention of telling all there would not have been the public national agony of those two years.

And then why on that night so appropriate or inappropriate, however one views it, the night that marked the end of the full years since he had castigated Dean, who had ruined his life to protect Nixon from Nixonian crime, and raised to the highest level of all those who had ever served the country. Haldeman and Ehrlichman?

Ostensibly the reason was that he was complying with a subpoena of the Judiciary Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives, which was considering voting impeachment of him. (Impeachment of a president is the equivalent of an indictment. If voted, it is then "tried" by the Senate, with Nixon's own pal and appointee, Chief Justice Warren Burger, acting as prosecutor.)

He knew and it immediately told him that he was not complying with the subpoena, which asked for no transcripts but the tapes themselves, among other items of evidence. He knew that his substitute for the evidence would not be acceptable in any court in the land, regardless of its content, as it would not be acceptable to the Congress.

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Thus one obvious answer is to appear to comply without complying and to launch his major public-relations effort to lend the appearance of compliance to his willful act of non-compliance for which any American save a president could expect to go to jail/

There is no single answer, no simple explanation of "why" in this case. Indeed, there rarely is with sociopaths.

If this partial disclosure of the filth that Nixon dumped ~~inside~~ inside the sacred portals does nothing else it does make perfectly clear that he and his minions were and are sociopaths. Why do sociopaths do what they do?

The tough-minded, coldly calculating Nixon, did this unprecedented in this unprecedented manner because anything else he did or did not do was more hurtful to him.

It was his lesser evil.

He ruined many lives in the doing, as he had cannibalized throughout his political career. He knew he was doing it and tried to put a prettier face on it in announcing what he was about to do.

But the lives of those he ruined, those he defamed in perpetuity, are not those who in turn could ruin him.

There was and there went unnoted in the media an interesting twist to the date of his speech and publication. In effect he picked it.

It was ~~due~~ five days later than the time called for by the subpoena. He had asked the House to give him five more days in which to respond and it had granted the courtesy.

In those five days, as he knew and as was no secret, there would be an end to the trial of two of his former cabinet officers and his two chief re-election campaign functionaries. His former Attorney General, John Mitchell, and his former Secretary of Commerce, were being tried on charges of personal and political corruption in New York City. When Nixon asked for the five-day delay the case was ready for the jury, which returned its verdict of "not guilty" (in that case not identical with "innocent"), on a Sunday, April 28, just two days before Nixon's self-exposure.

So, the first and the obvious explanation of his seeking the delay is not because he needed more time, the one he gave, but to keep the seamiest revelations about the crookedness and the obstructions of justice and the bribery that could have influence and surely

would have confronted the public mind and the judge in that case with the most serious problems.

This, however, does not explain the fact of the unheard-of, publication of all these quarter of a million of the words with which Nixon and his gang had conspired against justice, against the law, against any kind of decent society.

There are many explanations.

One is that in his extremity it was a typical Nixon tactic, to divert attention from what was central. He had done it all his life and he had done it or had it done in his name from the time his henchmen were caught on Democratic headquarters.

Neither the innocent dog Checkers nor wife Pat's alleged "Republican cloth coat" had anything to do with Nixon's taking of money under the table when he was a Senator and when he was running for Vice President with Eisenhower. It was what was already a typical Nixonian diversion, paralleling his calling the red-baiting Congressman Jerry Voorhis himself some special kind of red and the also-red-baiting Helen Gahagan Douglas, who he beat out for the Senate by the tactic, a "pink lady."

So, dumping this imposing load on the media, on the Congress and on the people served to divert attention and to cause a diversion, one he could argue in court almost indefinitely as legal compliance with the legal demand imposed upon him by the Congress and others already known to be coming from the Office of the Special Prosecutor in the case.

Another also attracted no attention. It was a break in what had been called his Berlin Wall because of the Germanic names and the Nazi-mindedness of those with whom he had surrounded himself, particularly Ehrlichman and Haldeman.

The break came when John Ehrlichman saw those steel bars coming closer and closer, gaping narrower and wider and about to close behind him.

Until then he and Haldeman had had the same lawyer, one so welcome to Nixon that he was Nixon's visitor at the White House and was on TV with Nixon from the White House, the aged, arrogant, bitterly reactionary and indubitably competent John Wilson. From the first, the inevitability of a potential conflict of interest between Haldeman and

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Ehrlichman was apparent. It was so apparent that it came up during the hearings of the Senate Select Committee unanimously voted to investigate The Watergate. Chairman Sam Ervin asked Wilson about this conflict and Wilson said there was none. (add citation from hearings)

Then there began to be tiny leaks to the press that Ehrlichman was engaged in plea-bargaining, the polite way of what ordinary criminals call "copping a plea." This means pleading guilty to a lesser charge, the least defense counsel can deal for, in return for testifying for the state.

Pick up with quotes from separate file on this.

So what Ehrlichman, formerly Nixon's second-most-trusted and his chief operator in multitudinous dirtyworks, actually did was float a rumor through friends that he was going to tell all and that he had come to see Nixon as something less than God's gift to the nation and to history. He then issued what was interpreted as a denial and a refutation but was considerably less. In fact, it denied nothing that was essential in the original leak from his friends. And in this studied avoidance was a clear message: if my throat is cut, others bleed with me.

And if Ehrlichman squealed, Nixon and everyone else was done in.

Nixon's immediate problem was to keep Ehrlichman quiet.

The only way to do this was to protect Ehrlichman.

The Jencks Act, never mentioned in those torrent of words about the disclosures of the excerpts from the tapes, is one of the legal means by which this could be accomplished.

This can best be understood by examining the Ehrlichman "plant" with the Los Angeles Times and his subsequent "denial" that was not a denial and Nixon's subsequent promise that was not once regarded as or described as a promise.