

# 'Paranoia' Topic on TV

By William Greider  
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One word kept recurring in Richard Nixon's TV conversation last night, as the former President tried to explain his behavior in the White House. The word was "paranoia."

"Am I paranoid about hating people and trying to do them in?" Nixon asked rhetorically. "And the answer is: at times yes. I get angry at people, but in human terms, as far as I'm concerned, I believe that in individual must never let hatred rule him."

He kept coming back to that subject in his third televised interview with David Frost, explaining his conduct of the war in Vietnam and, as Frost styled it, his war against domestic dissenters at home—the abuses of power that eventually became counts for his impeachment.

"Paranoia for peace," Nixon said at one point, which is as striking as any of the peculiar phrases which entered national usage from the Watergate scandal and Nixon's fall—"stonewall" or "limited hang-out" or the others.

Nixon mentioned the word six times during the interview, without any prompting from Frost. He attributed "paranoia" to his political enemies; he conceded it in himself. It was a moment of rare candor for any politician, especially a disgraced former President, to describe so vividly the fears and resentments that motivated his actions in the White House.

See NIXON, A16, Col. 1

## NIXON, From A1

The rest of the program was less compelling. Nixon repeated the defense argument of supreme presidential authority which was examined and rejected in 1974, both by the House impeachment inquiry and the criminal trials of his staff subordinates—namely, that anything a President does is automatically legal.

"When the President does it," Nixon declared, "that means that it is not illegal."

Frost endeavored to penetrate that defensive posture, but Nixon held fast to the formulation. In time of war, Nixon insisted, the President may order illegal acts like burglaries

to protect the "national security," to preserve the Republic.

What about murder? If a President could order burglaries, could he order a murder?

"No, no, no," Nixon protested. "... I don't know anybody who has been President or is now who would ever have ordered such an action."

Much of last night's program was a somewhat tedious reconstruction of war history—Nixon's version versus David Frost's. The arguments over Vietnam, the invasion of Cambodia, the bombing of civilians, the peace negotiations and so forth seemed to have changed not at all in the intervening years.

Nixon brought up the 22,000 rifles captured in Cambodia and called it

one of the most effective operations of the war. Frost accused him of dragging that neutral nation to ruin; Nixon said Frost and his friends in the news media were wrong on that.

This fencing was mostly unproductive. At times, it yielded more preamble from Frost than answer from Nixon. At times, the former President sounded like an old soldier reminiscing, describing once more to the nation how he had refused to take "the easy political path" in Vietnam but held out for an honorable peace.

When Frost turned to the domestic front, the illegal spying and other abuses aimed at political enemies, Nixon's responses revealed—not new facts—but additional insight into his personal resentments toward the Kennedys and Democratic liberals and antiwar protesters.

The opposition, he said, included terrible hypocrites—Democrats who started the war, then turned against it once they were out of power and made it more difficult for him to settle. These people had ill-treated him over the years; it seems.

"Let's take the Kennedys now," Nixon said. "Did you know that in eight years, after Mrs. Nixon and I had served in Washington for eight years—Vice President, I was Vice President and she as my wife—we were never invited to the White House to a dinner or to a lunch?"

The social slight hurt him. When

returned to the White House as President, he said he made a point of inviting Hubert H. Humphrey, the former Democratic Vice President, to dinner, and also the Kennedy family.

On a deeper level, Nixon said that he and his chief adviser on the war, Henry A. Kissinger, did build up considerable resentment over the leaks of government secrets. Nixon mimicked Kissinger's Germanic accent: "Henry said, 'I vill destroy them.'"

"We felt this way because the people on the other side were hypocritical," Nixon explained. "They were sanctimonious and they were not serving the best interests of the country. This is why . . . I must say, Henry and I felt so strongly about it. And call it paranoia, but paranoia for peace isn't that bad."

In the review of governmental abuses, Nixon made another concession — using the Internal Revenue Service to punish political enemies is wrong — though he insisted again that it was not illegal.

But the former President made an essential point about the White House misuse of government powers—these practices did not originate with him and presidential abuses should all be judged by a single standard.

"Two wrongs do not make a right," Nixon said. Then he added: "Two wrongs make two wrongs."

The siege mentality of the Nixon White House during those years of do-

mestic turmoil, the era of mammoth anti-war demonstrations and occasional violence, came through again in Nixon's voice, laden with feeling.

He described Daniel Ellsberg, purveyor of the Pentagon Papers, as a "punk." The "best and brightest" of the Kennedy-Johnson years "proved to be the worst," he said.

"Nobody can know what it means for a President," Nixon explained, "to be sitting in that White House working late at night, as I often did, and to have hundreds of thousands of demonstrators around, charging through the streets.

"No one can know how a President feels when he realizes that his efforts to bring peace, to bring our men home, to bring our POWs home, to stop the killing, to build peace, not just for our time but for time to come, is being jeopardized by individuals who have a different point of view as to how things could be done. Now that's how I felt about it."

Last night's program—like the two previous ones, with two more scheduled—involved edited clippings from 28 hours of interviewing. Frost and his editors last night spliced together questions and answers on two subjects—the war and domestic dissent—in order to show the thematic connections.

Frost himself offered a maudlin closing—suggesting that Richard Nixon was the war's last casualty.

## Carter: President Not Above Law

President Carter took issue yesterday with former President Nixon's claim that the nation's chief executive has an inherent power to order burglaries and other illegal actions against dissidents.

"President Carter does not feel any President has a right to break the law," White House deputy press secretary Rex Granum said. "He feels very strongly that it is a tragic mistake to follow that philosophy as past events have shown so dramatically.

"He does feel there are adequate judicial means to prevent danger to the country."

Nixon, defending some of the illegal acts that took place in his administration, made the assertion during the third of his televised interviews with David Frost last night.

sketch. . . . that melodramatic

one of the casualties or the last casualty in Vietnam," he said, "if so, I'm glad I'm the last one."

# Excerpts From Interview

Following are excerpts from David Frost's interview of former President Nixon.

**Q.** Mr. President, America's involvement in Vietnam was regarded by many as a disaster that was splitting American society at home in a very grievous way for what seemed to many an obscure or even a mistaken reason. How did it look to you, though?

**A.** Well, it looked to me, first that, ah, the reason for our being in Vietnam had perhaps not been adequately understood by the American people. I thought first, that Kennedy and Johnson were right in going in Vietnam. I was very critical of the way the war had been conducted. I thought they could have done, particularly President Johnson, because of course, he had the major responsibility. We were in deeper by the time he was President. That they could have conducted it in a more effective way. I had some ideas as to what could be done, but I wasn't about to go down that easy political path, of bugging out, blaming it on my predecessors. It would have been enormously popular in America.

But that would have paid . . . had been at an enormous cost, eventually even to America, but particularly to the whole free world.

**Q.** But, wasn't staying there, I mean that was also at a massive cost, wasn't it? In billions of dollars; in 138,000 South Vietnamese killed; half a million Cambodians; half a million North Vietnamese, and so on. That cost . . . it's a question of weighing one cost against another cost isn't it? But, you thought that cost was worth paying for what you got?

**A.** It was worth it in terms of the period in which I had the responsibility. Ah, let me be quite candid about it. Ah, the most popular position to take on Vietnam, if I was simply playing to the votes and playing to the popular opinion in the world, was to bug out and blame it on Johnson and Kennedy. I know, and I didn't do it. Now, the most popular position for me to take now is to say the whole venture in Vietnam, all . . . everything that we did was a waste of men, that it . . . that it . . . it showed the United States at its worst. It cost us a great deal of money. We were morally wrong to be there . . . go there in the

Morally wrong to continue it as long as we did, and it wasn't worth it. And, I could say that. And, ah, many perhaps of those, and it's probably a

## With Ex-President

### Nixon

majority of our viewers who agree with that, might applaud even some of my critics, many of whom I have and many of whom I've earned . . . but, I'm not going to say it. I'm not going to say it because I don't believe it. I don't believe that this was a war that . . . that I, ah, ah, can, ah, tote up the advantages and disadvantages and say overwhelmingly, this is a war that had to be fought and that we had a successful outcome. I can't say that because it was a very complex situation. It was complex at the beginning. It was difficult throughout. I know it was, I know what Johnson went through and how he agonized over the war . . .

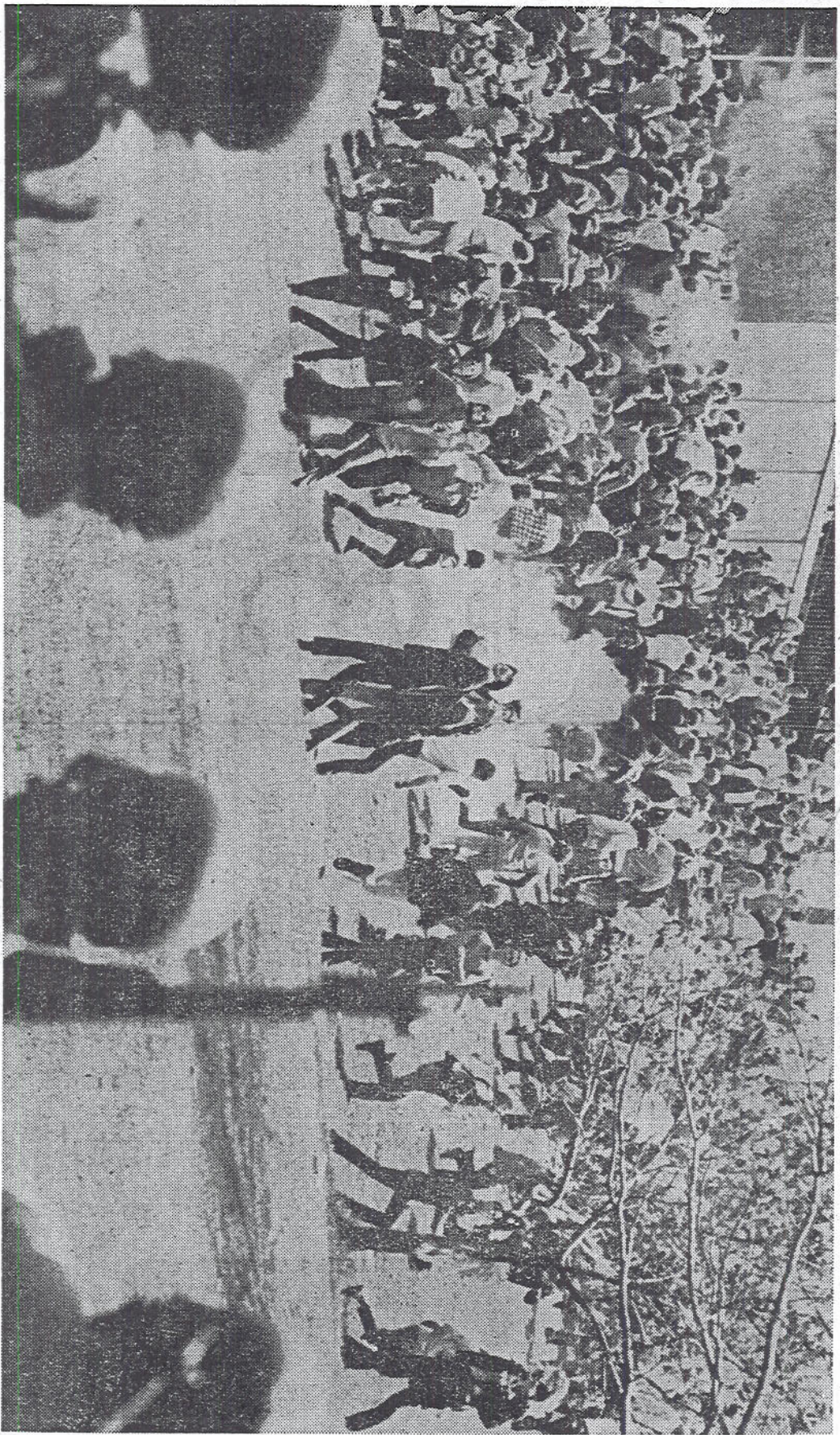
**Q.** Did the Russians not try and influence the North Vietnamese? Or, were the North Vietnamese genuinely independent of the Russians?

**A.** Well, the Russians told us that they couldn't influence them. Ah, ah, we didn't take that at face value. Ah, we couldn't. After all, they could have influenced them by cutting down the flow of arms to them, and their words, therefore, had a very hollow ring.

**Q.** (O)n April the 30th (1970) you stunned the public by announcing . . . (an) armed incursion into Cambodia. And, everybody that we've talked to, ah, has said that, ah, or claimed that they know of people, or they advised against the military effectiveness of this particular . . . people at the Pentagon say, they didn't think this would be effective. People, at the NSC said, they said they didn't think it would be effective. People at the CIA said they had a report proving it wouldn't be effective, and so on. I wonder on whose advice you decided to do it?

**A.** Well, first, let's answer the question of whether it . . . whether they were right. They were totally wrong. As a result of that sanctuary movement, we picked up, apart from the casualties inflicted on the enemy, and they were . . . they were substantial: but, there were 22,000 rifles; ah there were, ah, 15 million rounds of ammunition; a whole year's supply; 150,000 rockets and mortars, 14 months of supply; ah, rice, other equipment and the rest.

And as a result of that operation,



1970 Kent State antiwar demonstrators face of Ohio National Guardsmen.

(C) 1970 Howard E. Ruffner

our casualties went down; we were able to continue and eventually to step up our withdrawal program from Vietnam. It was one of the most effective operations of the war.

Q. On the subject of Cambodia, em, let me put a philosophical, ah, thought to you, which I put to you particularly in a sense, as a, as a Quaker. I've read of Cambodia and this little nation that started perhaps 6,000 members of the Khmer Rouge and a population of 7 million, in neutrality, or flawed neutrality. That, nevertheless, with that flawed neutrality, was somehow surviving in the midst of a holocaust.

And, the . . . events that the administration were involved in: starting with the bombing; the armed incursion; the driving of . . . the driving of people, the North Vietnamese and others back across Cambodia; the continued bombing and twice the tonnage we dropped on North Vietnam. Em, that all of this embroiled this little country in a holocaust that started with this flawed neutrality, and it ended up at the end of this whole saga with, ah, you know, more than half a million dead . . . do you have in a Quaker sense, on your conscience, the destruction of this rather pitiful country?

A. If I could . . . if I could accept your assumption, yes. But, I cannot accept your assumption. Ah, I don't accept it because I know the facts. I think I know the facts at least. Ah, I do know that without United States assistance, that instead of having a situation as we have it today, in which Cambodia is not neutral, in which Cambodia is one of the most ruthless, cruel, vicious Communist dictatorships in the world.

500,000, according to The New York Times, not a particularly, one to find such atrocities in such areas as Cambodia, 500,000 dead, ah, a million and a half off to relocation centers, ah, the country is in pitiful shape. But, for five years, from 1970 'til 1975, Cambodia enjoyed, for whatever we may call it, ah, or at least had, "enjoyed" is not the best word. It had what you call a flawed neutrality. But, as far as that neutrality was concerned, yes, during that five year period, lives were lost, ah, but on the other hand, ah, they . . . as far as this savage, cruel, a virtual extermination of a people that has taken place, of a class of people since the communist took over. They avoiled that, and that was worth something.

Q. Yes, the argument, I suppose was though, that there were only 6,000 Khmer Rouge before the first bombing raids and that in fact, we created a monster. That we created the Khmer Rouge, because of the . . . one of the things about the bombing was,

I'm, I'm sure you've read this testimony which is so terrifying, but when the bomb . . . bombing spread out later, not the bombing, but . . .

#### The War Protests

Q. When you realized that all hope of speaking quietly and bringing everybody together, ah, was . . . was hopeless, and that in fact, you had a war on your hands at home as well. When was the moment when in effect, you said, "OK, no more Mr. Nice Guy?"

A. Well, as far as being no more Mr. Nice Guy, ah, I would not claim that, ah, . . . I never received that, ah, particular, ah, ah, description before. Ah, I tried to be what I am, and that is: I do the job that has to be done and I do it as fairly as I can, and if it requires being firm, I'm firm. Now, ah, when you say, "When was the time, ah, that I became convinced that we had to take, ah, what I would say a firmer line with demonstrations?"

Ah, I would say that after having met Thieu at Midway and started the process of withdrawal; ah, . . . after having made a speech in May, making a very generous offer to the North Vietnamese, ah, and, also to the Vietcong, ah, a, for a peace settlement; and to negotiate on some reasonable terms; ah, when in spite of those efforts and our efforts to bring the war to a peaceful conclusion as quickly as possible, ah, there continued to be a rising, ah, tide, not just of dissent, peaceful dissent, that's one thing. But, ah, dissent coupled with violence, and, ah, advocacy of violence, ah, then I had to make a choice. I had to make a choice: are we going to allow this group to first, where they were violent . . . violence prone, to endanger the lives of others within; but, second, even more important, are we going to allow our potential enemies, those that we were negotiating with in Paris, gain the impression that they represent a majority? In other words, are we going to have a situation where this war would be lost in Washington as the French lost, ah, in 1954 in Paris, rather than in Dienbienphu.

Q. And, so when did you make that decision, that you had to, ah, speak back; that you had to rally your own support?

A. Ah, I reached the conclusion after receiving reports from Kissinger on his first secret negotiations; ah, after getting reports from the negotiations in Paris; after seeing the developments within this country; ah, after reading, for example, in magazines and so forth, and so on, that, ah, statements by various people; that, ah, ah, that, ah, having broken Johnson, that, ah, the dissenters, many of them were now out to break Nixon.

Q. So that . . .

A. So I made that decision before November 3d. I decided I had to mobi-

lize what I thought was the majority in the country. I couldn't be sure. It was a big gamble.

Q. Let me try and just draw some of these themes together, and, ah, . . . and put an alternative scenario, in a sense, ah, to use one of your words.

Em, that is, as we've talked about the politics of polarization, and so on, there are a great many . . . there are a great many people who really feel that there were two stages really, that there was the stage of when, knowing that to continue the war would . . . would also continue dissent. Em, and, that you had to answer back to your critics, ah, and that you and Vice President Agnew answered back with . . . with full force and more. That in fact, the decision to continue with the war divided America; that you saw the division that had divided America into two groups, the Eastern establishment and the minority groups and the media, versus the, ah, middle America, the patriotic Southerners and the, ah, and the urban ethnic groups, et cetera.

A. And a lot of decent people too.

Q. Sure.

A. I mean, even though they may not have gone to college.

Q. Right. And, that you saw those divisions and that you realized that the war would continue with dissent; continue with a divided America; and, that also wherever you could in other policies, you tried to build that group that were your support, play to them politically, to increase your majority in '72, and that the result was that an America that was already divided, you divided even more on a principle of, that the only way is to divide and rule.

A. Ah, you can make that charge, and I don't say that in any personal sense. You can make it and you should because a lot of your constituency in media, do think that. But, they're wrong. In my view, I had a responsibility which was above everything else, to bring that war to the earliest possible conclusion, and I did it. And we got it finished and we got it finished on what I would say again, was an honorable basis and a peace that lasted for at least two . . . Over two years. The second point was: that in the meantime, I had to deal with the problem of dissent at home. Now, the reason . . . another thing . . . point that has to be made: without having enough support at home, the enemy, in my opinion, would never have negotiated in Paris, as they did. Because, I remember Kissinger reporting on the last meeting he had with Le Duc Tho before the announcement on January 23d. It was on January 15th, basically, of 1973, and he said Le Duc Tho said to him in a very resigned and in this time, ah, . . . at this

time perhaps, ah, offhand manner, not expecting that, ah, it would be quoted, but it is going to be now.

He said, ah, "Well, we've decided that, ah, President Nixon is not going to be affected by the protests, and that under the circumstances, that we have no choice but to make a settlement." He was right. Now, I don't mean by that, ah, that, ah, that I was sitting there in the White House, ah, with, ah, plugs in my ears not listening. Oh, I could hear. I could hear even if I had plugs in my ears. It was that loud at times with people marchin' around. But, the point is: that on the other hand, I knew that in order to get the enemy to take us seriously abroad, I had to have enough support at home that they could not feel that they could win in Washington what they could not win on the battlefield.

#### The Enemies List

Q. Now, we have this situation where we have the, em, the Plumbers dealing with, as you say, with leaks, or with people who are considered to be dangerous to the administration in one way or another, et cetera; and, doing these various activities that we've been mentioning. Also at the same time, ah, there were enemies' lists circulating, and conversations about the use of the IRS and all of that, also moving against opponents of the administration. [On Sept. 15, 1972] you talk about ah, using the IRS and you say, em, "I want the most comprehensive notes on all of those who've tried to do us in because they didn't have to do it; they're asking for it; they're gonna get it."

"We haven't used the bureau and the Justice Department yet, but things are gonna change now." Now, was that another part of the same war that you were waging with the Plumbers?

A. That's an entirely different matter. The point is: that when an agency is asked by a President or anybody else to do something that it has a responsibility to do; that's not illegal for them to do it or for it to be ordered, even if the motivation is political, but it's un . . . in my opinion, it's wrong. It's bad. But, let's get away from this hypocrisy, ah, where we have a situation saying, well, it's all right if you're going after, ah, a ah, as far as IRS returns, ah, it's all right to go into H. L. Hunt, and and as Robert Kennedy did ordering, ah, IRS investigation of 17 right-wing organizations in order to get their tax exemptions removed. It's all right to do that, but, it's wrong when you go the other way.

Q. No, I . . .

A. I want a single standard.

Q. Yeah. . . I think . . .

A. And, so that's one of the things we should get out of this.

Q. I think that you have an absolute

right to make the point that the IRS has been abused before and so on, ah, and that this is not something. . .

A. And, that two wrongs do not make a right. And . . .

Q. . . . And

A. . . Two wrongs make two wrongs.

Q. Yes, think that's true.

A. And, so we should stop it in the future, and it is not an abuse of agencies; it is not illegal.

Q. Because, I mean, the thing is that I think that the scale is the important thing. As you mentioned, Robert Kennedy—17 organizations, and I think in fact 47 organizations, probably in fact, more than that, during the Kennedy period. But, with that, ah, special services staff that, ah, Huston, Tom Huston was involved with, about which he said, that, ah, quote about "What we cannot do in the courtroom via criminal prosecutions, the IRS could do by administrative actions." That ended up with . . .

A. They never did it.

Q. Well, it ended up with 11,458 files didn't it? On 8 thousand, 8 hun. . . 585 people and 2,873 organizations, so it . . . it became pretty big, you know, and that was, ah, and it had . . . and it had on it Shirley MacLaine and Jimmy Breslin and the National Urban League and the entire University of North Carolina was under suspicion, ah, and Gregory Peck and Carol Channing and Joe Namath, so that I think, I think it did get, ah, the people working under you were more successful than you're giving them credit for.

A. Well, let me say this: they were more successful, they may have been, but let me say, what was put out; what we're talking about here is this: that, ah, ah, they shouldn't have gone into this, yes. Ah, I have never seen, let me say this, and, ah, except for Eisenhower, I think I'm the only President in recent times . . . I have never seen anybody else's tax return except my own.

Q. But, as we look at the overall picture and those things about the comprehensive notes "on those who've tried to do us in" and all of that, and, ah, talking in that same conversation about Edward Bennett Williams, and Haldeman says, "That's the guy we've got to ruin." And, you say, "Yes, I think we're going to fix the SOB, ah, believe me we're going to." And, so on. Isn't there in that whole conversation . . .

A. A paranoid attitude?

Q. Yes.

A. Yeah, I know. I understand that and it gets back to the statement that I made, ah, rather an emotional statement the day I left office and I said, "Don't hate other people because hatred destroys yourself." Yeah, I . . . I

want to say here, ah, that I, ah, I have a temper, ah, I control it publicly rather well. Ah, sometimes privately I blow off some steam, but also as I've indicated, if, ah, and this is very hard for people to believe, but I think you can believe it after our session a few hours ago. My weakness is perhaps, ah; where personal factors are concerned. Now, let's . . . let's take the Kennedys now. Did you know that in eight years after Mrs. Nixon and I had served in Washington for eight years, Vice President, I was Vice President, she as my wife; we were never invited to the White House, to a dinner or to a lunch. I remember Rose Mary Woods, my secretary, who made up the invitation lists went out of her mind when I put Hubert Humphrey on the list for White House dinners; ah, when I put, for example, invite Jackie Kennedy and her two children to come up for a private dinner without any publicity so that they could see where their father had . . . where they'd grown up and all the rest; when Mrs. Nixon had Rose Kennedy over; ah, OK, that takes care of that. What I'm trying to tell you that this whole business of, "am I paranoid about hating people and trying to do them in?" And the answer is: at times yes.

I get angry at people, but in human terms as far as I'm concerned, I believe that an individual must never let hatred rule him. I . . . Dolores Hope, Bob Hope's wonderful wife, once said something to me when we first came to California after the resignation, she said, "Remember, Dick," she said, "one person who loves you is worth 10 who hate you." And so there's a love-hate complex in all of us, and I just hope that then they tote 'em all up before you go to St. Peter's or the other way down, that maybe the, the ledger's going to come out reasonably well in that respect.