

Nixon took blame for

WASHINGTON (AP) — Richard Nixon, ruminating on Watergate in his last years, grudgingly conceded "that what happened was my fault," a young aide said. The coverup "wasn't only illegal but stupid," she says he told her.

Nixon's confession, which he could not bring himself to utter as he sought to preserve his presidency, is reported in *Nixon in Winter*, a second book by Monica Crowley, 28, who worked for Nixon from 1990 until his death in 1994. It will be published in June.

In the book, Nixon regrets his "terrible"

treatment of William Rogers, his secretary of state, saying it was "inexcusable" to keep Rogers in the dark while Nixon and Henry Kissinger conducted foreign policy.

And Nixon engages in what was once a national pastime: speculating on the identity of "Deep Throat," the Watergate leaker. He says he has some guesses but doesn't name any.

He also tells Crowley he should have delivered a Checkerslike speech when the break-in occurred. The entire aftermath

The Columbus Dispatch

Watergate, aide recounts in

"could have been averted," she quotes him as saying.

The "Checkers speech" is a tag for the televised speech Nixon gave in 1952 after "slush fund" allegations were raised against him. Public reaction to the emotional speech, in which Nixon mentioned his daughter's puppy, Checkers, helped persuade Dwight Eisenhower to keep him as a running mate.

Nixon resigned as president on Aug. 9, 1974, after his audiotapes showed that he was an early participant in coverup efforts to

use the CIA to keep the FBI from unraveling the 1974 break-in at Democratic headquarters in the Watergate office building.

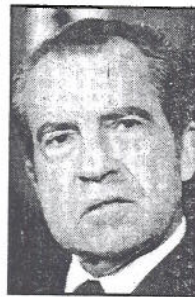
But Nixon denied wrongdoing as he left office, saying he quit because he had lost his political base in Congress.

In a Jan. 3, 1991, conversation recounted by Crowley, Nixon blames the press initially.

"No, that's not right," she quotes him. "It was partly their creation, but mostly my own. It took me a long time to accept the fact that what happened was my fault. ... The bottom

■ Friday, May 29, 1998

book



Nixon

line is that I brought it on myself. I knew that I was a (press) target."

Crowley, who could not be reached for comment yesterday, does not explain in the book how she got extensive quotations. In a statement issued by her publisher, Random House, she said she made notes during conversations, "fleshed out those notes" later and transcribed them.