

# 'Some Have Said, "Tough It Out" But One Thing I Am Is a Quitter'

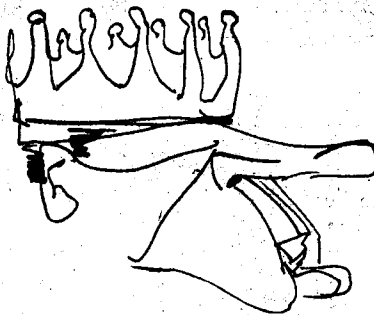
By Tom Donnelly

Whenever President Nixon addresses the nation on the subject of Watergate ("I pledge . . . a new level of political decency") I get this supremely unsatisfied feeling. There is a haunting elusiveness about his explanations. Maybe you've noticed? One gets an impression of issues un-faced, questions unanswered, corners unexplored. Corners? Why, one feels the whole vast middle of the terrain is left unexplored. What if, I got to wondering (what if some of the crucial speeches of history had been delivered in Nixon's Watergate style?

Take, for instance, the abdication speech of former King Edward VIII, that immortal ode to "the woman I love." What would a Nixonized version of that be like? I fancy it would leave many listeners feeling they must have missed some vital link, or clue.

It is 10 o'clock on the night of Dec. 11, 1936. The solemn tones of Big Ben (striking the hour, are heard over the British Broadcasting Company. Sir John Reith, director of the BBC, says

## Donnelly's Revue



Drawing by Bruce Roberts

simply, "His Royal Highness, Prince Edward."

"At long last I am able to say a few words of my own. I have never wanted to withhold anything, but it has not been constitutionally possible for me to speak. Now the time has come

when I *must* speak, and I do so with all my heart.

"For many days and nights you have been reading and hearing about what some people—not all of you, but some of you—have called the most shocking scandal in the history of the British Empire, one whose repercussions have been said to shake the very foundations of the throne. Some of you—a small, miserable, wretched minority I am glad to say—have been smacking your lips and relishing every detail as recently reported in the gutter press, and even in *The Times*. I am told that in America there is nothing else to read but tidbits about the great scandal, speculations about the great scandal, analyses of the great scandal.

"But in my mind's ear I hear you asking a question. 'Why did he not tell us months ago of the situation in which he has found himself?'

"Some of my advisers have said that is an excessively impudent question. They have said it transgresses the bounds of decency, and they have

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concluded that the *real* scandal of our time—the really and truly shocking and disgraceful and disgusting scandal—is that the people should ask such a question of a monarch.

"I do not feel that way. I think it is a perfectly natural question, and the people of the British Empire have a perfect right to ask it.

"The answer is a simple one. Months ago I did not realize the true nature of the situation in which I now find myself. I did not realize it because I did not attach sufficient importance to what I now understand were tell tale signs.

"Yes, I can see now that there was something different about that night, something that set it apart from hundreds upon hundreds of other nights. As the introductions were being made I felt sensations of the utmost singularity. My pulses seemed to be dancing, my breath in short gasps, I sensed that my blood was singing in my veins, and I actually heard bells ringing. Yes, bells. Ringing.

"I believe I can precisely anticipate your next question. Indeed, it is one that has been asked incessantly in recent weeks, and not only by those who love to wallow in what some are pleased to call a scandal. Your question is: 'Why, having suffered all those dangerous and alarming symptoms and manifestations, did you not do something about them?'

"Ladies and gentlemen of the British Empire, I *did* do something. I at once consulted my most trusted advisors, courtiers and sycophants. I said, 'What is happening to me?' The answers I got were mixed, but on the whole, reassuring. 'Probably just coming down with a cold,' said some. 'Could be a kickback from that second helping of Gooseberry Fool you had at the midnight supper,' said others. There were those who told me that trying to do the tango while simultaneously sipping a *pousse cafe* was a rash and unkingly thing to do. The latter group were immediately dismissed from the royal household without letters of recommenda-

tion.

"Tell me I was naive, tell me I was too trusting, tell me I was too quick to accept the ill-considered judgement of fawning imbeciles. The fact is, I did accept their judgment. After all, they had been fawning over me for years. I felt I must return their devotion. Call me, if you will, loyal to a fault. I plead guilty to that charge.

"In all other respects, I am guiltless. On that point I can assure you. Indeed, I have already assured you in the November 11 proclamation I prepared for reading at the opening of the bazaar and truffle hunt held for the benefit of the Saint Mary Meade Home for Indigent Orphans. My proclamation, as you will surely recall, was as follows: 'Let those whose tastes lie in that direction indulge in vicious gossip. We have more important fish to fry.'

"As I was preparing the address you are now hearing I was advised by some to reveal to the nation all of the intimate particulars of that moment when I first comprehended I was not suffering from a cold or from an over-indulgence in Gooseberry Fool but from something of a far graver and more thrilling nature.

"I spurned that suggestion with no little heat. To expose to the stares of the entire world the exquisite confidentiality of that moment in time would be a heinous breach of faith no gentleman could possibly commit, let alone a king.

"In conclusion, I want you to know that the decision I have made has been mine and mine alone. This was a thing I had to judge entirely for myself. I shall always follow the fortunes of the British race and empire with profound interest and in the future whenever I see evidence of excess—whether of excessive zeal, excessive duplicity, or excessive excess—I shall be the first to complain. God bless you all. God save the king.