

Spiro Agnew's troubles are the unintended byproduct of Nixonian corruption of the machinery of government for authoritarian political ends. Looking for dirt on Democrats their dragnet could not avoid Agnew's past. From that moment on, what happened and what did not happen was controlled by the Nixon administration.

To the day of Howard Hunt's testimony, which was more than six months after the dirt on Agnew was seized out of all the seized files, Nixon controlled it for a special extra reason, it provided an unprecedented means of Nixon's self-defense: making Agnew a surrogate devil, a substitute victim. Nixon's handling was exactly as he has always dealt with such matters, where someone else is always wrong, where another issue is always the one in focus. Agnew's vice-presidency became hostage to Nixon's Presidency. Could the country have both President and Vice President simultaneously under impeachment? It was not possible.

So, Nixon also controlled the days of climax.

Hunt, meanwhile, also presented considerable hazard. Suppose he really opened up, really said what he could have said, and that on coast-to-coast live camera?

With Nixon's long and consistent record, it became difficult not to conceive that there is not sinister motive in everything he does. That record makes the presumption of innocence impossible. It therefore can lead to unfair presumptions. Perhaps Nixon did not hold Agnew twisting in exquisite public agony, in Ehrlichman's figure for the tortured <sup>public</sup> ~~Ray~~, for the precise day in which he might need the flow of Agnew's blood. It is was no more than epincidence after half a year in which it could have happened, it is the fact that the day on which it was announced that charges would be considered by a grand jury to which Nixon's Department of Justice would present evidence against Agnew just happened to be the day on which Hunt's September 25 testimony before the Ervin committee was bound to be an attention-getter that would vie with all other news of that day.

With Nixon's luck, that was also the day of the return to earth of the astronauts who has spent a record-breaking two months in space. And to give that event more drama and more news potential, splashdown was near ~~the~~ a hurricane. The seas ran high and rough.