

# Nixon Set Style for a Watergate

By Jack Anderson

During the summer of '36, Richard Nixon knew his grades at Duke Law School had slipped. He needed high grades to keep his scholarship, which paid the tuition he could never otherwise afford.

"I'm scared," he confided to an upperclassman. "I counted 32 Phi Beta Kappa keys in my class. I don't believe I can stay up top in that group."

Typically, Nixon studied hard. But he also broke into the dean's office, along with two roommates, to find out their academic standing. A Duke law school official told us such a break-in today would "surely" be grounds for disciplinary action and possible expulsion.

Nixon's accomplices were Fred Albrink, now a real estate lawyer in Norfolk, Va., and Bill Perdue, a corporate executive in New York City. As Albrink recalls, "Dick grabbed one of Perdue's legs and I grabbed the other, and the two of us sort of boosted Perdue through the transom of the dean's office door."

Nixon confirmed that he had dropped from his third-place class standing but had not lost his scholarship. He worked to improve his grades and graduated third in his class.

The opportunity to run for Congress came to Nixon while he was awaiting discharge from the Navy. He was a Navy lawyer renegotiating Navy contracts in Baltimore. He was so eager for a crack at Congress that he borrowed \$150 from the manager of the Erco Co., whose naval contract he was renegotiating, for the plane fare to California. Nixon won the Republican nomination, and the Erco Co. got a refund from the Navy.

## Nixon Tactics

By his own boast, Nixon ran a "fighting, rocking, socking" campaign. He portrayed his Democratic opponent, Jerry Voorhis, a staunch anti-Communist, as "soft in communism." Later, Nixon used similar tactics in his race for the Senate against Helen Gahagan Douglas.

As the vice presidential nominee in 1952, Nixon threatened to use the Red smear brush on the late Drew Pearson if he wrote a story about the \$18,000 slush fund businessmen had raised to pay Nixon's expenses while he was a senator. The warning from Nixon was phoned to me by Bill Rogers, now Secretary of State, from the Nixon campaign train. I passed on the message to Pearson, who replied quietly: "All right, I'll change the story. I'll make it stronger."

Both Nixon and his disciple, H. R. Haldeman, were de-

nounced from the bench for their tactics in the 1962 campaign for the governorship of California. In a biting commentary on Nixon's political methods, the late Adlai Stevenson described "Nixonland" as a "land of slander and scare, of sly innuendo, of a poison pen, the anonymous phone call and hustling, pushing, shoving—the land of smash and grab and anything to win."

Out of this background, President Nixon set the style that led to the Watergate horror. However, we have spent several days talking to White House aides and Watergate investigators alike. We have also had access to the grand jury findings. At this writing, there is no evidence implicating the President in the Watergate crimes.

Not a single witness, so far as we can learn, has offered any testimony that would incriminate the President. On the contrary, our White House sources have assured us he stayed aloof from the dirty work of his subordinates.

They say the Watergate break-in and bugging came as a shock to him, and he responded with a profane outburst against the culprits. His anger over the stupidity of the Watergate foolishness, suggest our sources, had an intimidating effect on his aides. This may explain why they frantically attempted to cover

up their tracks even from him.

As for the spying-sabotage campaign against the Democrats, however, our sources acknowledge that the President not only knew about it but approved it.

One source recalls that the President referred at political strategy sessions to "a Dick Tuck operation." Tuck was an irrepressible Democratic operative who used to play political pranks on Nixon. Once he dressed in a trainman's uniform and signaled Nixon's campaign train to leave while the candidate was in the middle of a rear-platform speech.

This was the sort of sabotage, say White House sources, that the President had in mind. But to the humorless men around Mr. Nixon, Dick Tuck became Niccolo Machiavelli.

The President has a vindictive streak that may also have encouraged the excesses of his aides. A former Cabinet member told us that the President, in pantomime, once plunged an imaginary knife into an opponent. "After you get the knife in," said the President gleefully, "you twist it."

One thing all his close associates agree on: Richard Nixon is not a quitter. Talk of impeachment or pressure to resign is more likely to increase his determination to stay in the White House.