

Finally, "Hehrlideman" on the Stand

Though they are not likely to, the two men who could do most to untangle the contradictions of all the Watergate testimony are due to face the Ervin committee this week. Until their resignations April 30, H.R. Haldeman as White House Chief of Staff and John D. Ehrlichman as Domestic Affairs Adviser were, along with Henry Kissinger, the men closest to Richard Nixon. Both are Christian Scientists; they attended U.C.L.A. together, share a passion for photography, a longtime friendship—and unswerving loyalty to Nixon.

Haldeman began doing volunteer work for Nixon in 1952, and has worked in every Nixon political foray since then, while becoming a successful Los Angeles adman. Ehrlichman was settled in Seattle with a reputation as an effective zoning lawyer and an avid conservationist. At Haldeman's urging, he joined Nixon's unsuccessful 1960 presidential campaign, then rejoined in 1968 and moved on into Washington with his political mentor. More than anyone else, the two made Nixon's White House work, but in an arbitrary and authoritarian fashion that made them a good many enemies and critics as well. On the eve of their Senate appearance, *TIME* Correspondent Bonnie Angelo sent this retrospective view of what life was like behind the "Berlin Wall" they created around Nixon:

If the Ervin committee drives a wedge between Ehrlichman, 48, and Haldeman, 46, in the course of next week's interrogations, it will be a first. Together they rose to their ultimate power and fell from it. Together they ran the White House. Together they became a superentity called "Hehrlideman." White House Insider Richard A. Moore spoke for many when he confessed to the Senate committee, "I always got them mixed up."

At the outset of the Nixon Administration, Haldeman was first among equals, the dour watchdog at the Oval Office gates who determined who and what the President saw and heard. Ehrlichman began as no more than an important secondary player. During that first year as the President's counsel, Ehrlichman was engrossed in working out details of the President's real estate transactions at Key Biscayne and San Clemente, and other peripheral matters and issues regarding possible conflicts of interest.

Haldeman was the undisputed power in the Nixon White House. The taut, crew-cut chief of staff had a finger in everything, from top-level staffing to deciding who should be invited to the Nixon parties. In his zeal for absolute power, Haldeman even tried to replace the President's personal secretary, Rose Mary Woods, who has been at Nixon's

right hand since 1951, and is almost a member of the Nixon family.

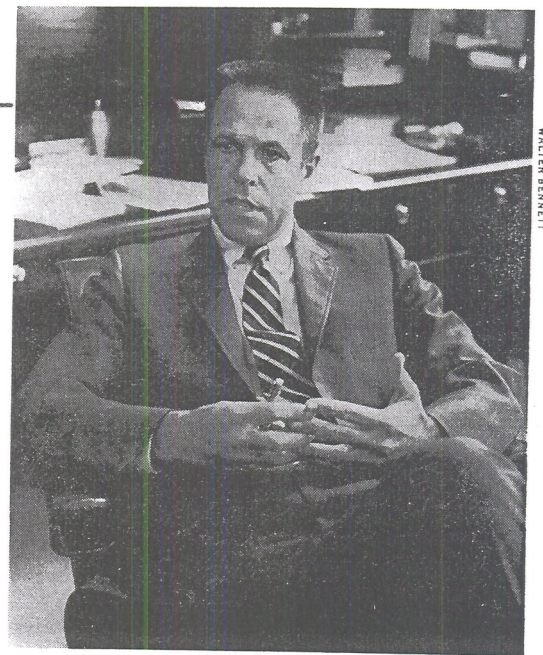
Soon Ehrlichman, with Haldeman's backing, began to rise in the White House hierarchy. Said one former aide: "The President was longing for a certain neatness and efficiency. He turned out to be a person the President liked and worked well with." But another former colleague noticed a weakness: "What hurt him was that he did not have the sensitivities he needed to have in the Washington community. As 'Uncle Joe' Cannon used to say, 'Keep your ear so close to the ground you get grasshoppers in it.'"

Although Haldeman and Ehrlichman have merged into one formidable figure in the public mind, "This is unfair to Ehrlichman," says one who knew both well. "Ehrlichman was a good person to work with; you always got a fair hearing from him. He has a nice sense of humor and was never curt—not that Prussian image. He would sit with his feet on the desk and talk ideas. But Haldeman—well, the public image is the correct one. I've never known him to crack a joke. I've never known him to seem relaxed."

Kenneth R. Cole Jr., Ehrlichman's former assistant, expresses the same view: "He is a much warmer human being than most people perceive. On Mother's Day, he sent boxes of candy to the White House telephone operators. It used to drive us to distraction the way he would constantly be meeting with people who had no relation to the business at hand. Like, maybe, a Boy Scout troop—he'd be over in the White House theater telling them about the place."

Ehrlichman is described as being unflappable. Cole remembers a flight they shared into Utah one day when the aircraft's hydraulic system failed. "The pilot was wrestling with it, and the other passengers were saying their prayers in a panic. But John was sitting back looking over his briefing papers. When we came in for a landing, all these fire trucks were alongside—and there was John with his Minox, taking pictures of the emergency equipment rushing to save the plane."

As the 1972 campaign began to gear up, there was bad blood between Ehrlichman and John N. Mitchell. When Clark MacGregor took over, the same friction persisted. Ehrlichman wanted a bigger voice in strategy, and his differences with MacGregor grew to the point that the two had to have it out, with Haldeman as mediator. Haldeman noted that Ehrlichman had made his point—and backed MacGregor. It was one of the rare times the two friends came down on different sides of a problem. As time went on, both seemed to



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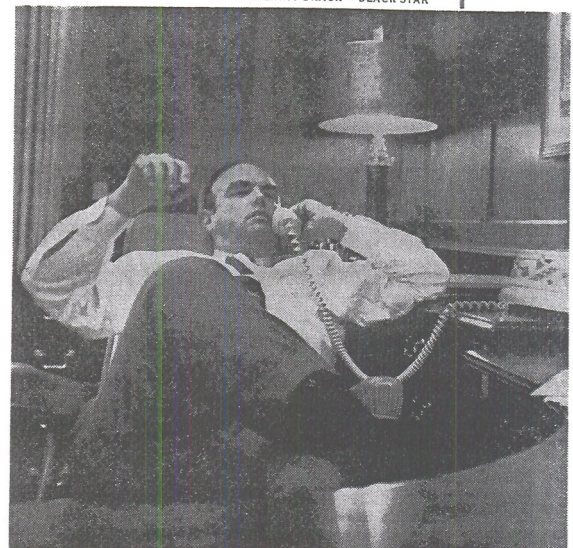
HALDEMAN BEFORE RESIGNATION

feel the Government of the U.S. was synonymous with the presidency. Ehrlichman once told a reporter: "The President is the Government."

Ehrlichman subscribed wholly to Nixon's oft-expressed dictum that the best defense is a good offense. He once responded to an inquisitive journalist: "Who do you reporters represent? Who elected you to anything?" The same biting attitude could be aimed at Congressmen—that "bunch of clowns," Ehrlichman once called them. And even the President's own Cabinet was denigrated as taking up Nixon's valuable time with "their show-and-tell sessions."

Such gibes saddened those who liked Ehrlichman. Long ago, the tight-lipped, buttoned-down Haldeman was written off as a man of blacks and whites, allies v. enemies, a man with no desire to be liked and not likely to be. But somehow, people expected more savvy from Ehrlichman, who seemed to move more easily in Washington social circles. But he never did learn to take the advice of Uncle Joe Cannon. He never had an earful of grasshoppers.

DENNIS BRACK—BLACK STAR



EHRlichman IN WHITE HOUSE OFFICE