

Haldeman: No-Nonsense

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Guardian of Keys to the Kingdom

By Sally Quinn

One of those high White House officials was asked about President Nixon's chief of staff, H. R. "Bob" Haldeman. The official went on for several minutes describing his sense of humor, personality, professional demeanor, and other traits, then hung up. Yesterday he called back.

"I made a mistake," he said. "I was talking about Ehrlichman."

The confusion between Harry Robbins Haldeman and John D. Ehrlichman, the President's chief adviser on domestic affairs, is understandable. They were roommates at UCLA, both strong Republicans back in campus days, both Christian Scientists who don't drink or smoke, both secretive about themselves and their work, both extremely loyal to the President, both very powerful in the Nixon administration. They spend much time together, inside and outside the office and they both have similar sounding German names.

It was their power, their exclusiveness and their names that led other White House staffers to refer to them and their staffs — privately — as "The Berlin Wall," "The Germans," "The Beaver Patrol," and to call the two men — also privately — Hans and Fritz.

There are indications, however, that "Hans" (Haldeman) may be trying to push "Fritz" (Ehrlichman) aside, assuming the greater portion of the power with the President.

The jealousies between the staffs of Haldeman and Ehrlichman are immense," says one who has worked closely with both.

"The word around the White House is that Haldeman is very upset with Ehrlichman because he doesn't seem to do anything but generate volumes of paper that never go anywhere. As far as Haldeman is concerned, if you can't put it on one piece of paper, forget it."

Even more than Henry Kissinger, who is Nixon's highly regarded foreign affairs adviser, H.R. Haldeman is probably closest personally in the White House to Richard Nixon. He is the first man to see him officially every morning and the last to see him every night. His job is to protect the President, and that means from everything and everybody.



Newsweek

H. R. Haldeman: The first man to see the President officially every morning, the last to see him every night.



United Press International

“(Haldeman) does not have a joking, backslapping relationship with the President. ‘His relationship with Nixon is very serious,’ says Finch.”

Always careful to stay out of the public eye he has been thrust into rare prominence by charges linking him to a fund reportedly used in part to underwrite a sabotage campaign against Democratic presidential candidates. The White House has denied that Haldeman had access to such a fund.

When the President first moved into the White House, it was H. R. Haldeman and the crew of young proteges who came with him from the advertising agency of J. Walter Thompson in Los Angeles, who imposed precision and efficiency on the entire White House operation.

It was H. R. Haldeman who chose Ronald Ziegler to be the President's

press secretary. And he even picked Constance Stuart as Mrs. Nixon's staff director. It was Haldeman who clamped down on the accessibility of the President, discouraging even Cabinet officers and making it hopeless for congressmen and most senators. It was Haldeman who tried to move the President's secretary, Rose Mary Woods, out of the White House and into the Executive Office Building.

"The Rose Mary Woods thing was Haldeman's first tactical error," says a former White House aide. "Nobody's

closer to the President than Haldeman in his own mind, but the truth is that if you've got a pipeline to Rose Mary you can get in to see the President just as easily as you can through Haldeman."

It was Haldeman who was responsible for keeping Vice President Agnew hanging out on a limb over whether he would or would not be Nixon's running mate this year.

According to one White House source, and corroborated by others

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close to the situation, there was and still is a great deal of resentment on the part of Agnew's staff against Haldeman (and Ehrlichman too). Before the convention, Agnew was cut out of campaign plans and strategies that were being developed at the Committee to Re-Elect the President headquarters on Haldeman's orders. "Agnew's guys were really P.O.'d because they felt Haldeman didn't trust them enough to say, 'Look, if the polls show you're a liability we'll dump you,'" said the source.

Haldeman was the man who on the NBC Today Show last February accused critics of the Nixon administration of "consciously aiding and abetting the enemy." (That was "misinterpreted," the White House said later.)

Haldeman is the man who is partially responsible for setting the working image of the White House staff, going to work before 7:30 every morning, staying late into the night and working on weekends. It is Haldeman who has little time for the press and has let it be known he has little patience with those who do.

It is H.R. Haldeman who was largely responsible for the redecoration of the West Wing of the White House in the clean, classic Federal look. And it was Haldeman who bragged that after only a few months in the White House he had a fire crackling in every fireplace.

"Bob" Haldeman celebrates his 47th birthday today. He was born in Los Angeles, the oldest son of an upper-middle-class businessman. His father was head of a pipe and building supply company, then founded a heating and ventilating company. Both his parents were civic-minded and conservative, working actively in local campaigns. His maternal grandfather helped found the Better American Foundation, an early anti-communist organization, and was active in the Salvation Army.

Haldeman attended the Hawthorne

Grammar School and the Harvard Episcopal School in Los Angeles, then went on to the University at Redlands, the University of Southern California and, after a stint in the Navy, UCLA for his business degree.

Anti-communism brought Haldeman together with Nixon. Fascinated by the Alger Hiss case and Nixon's involvement in it, Haldeman, on his first trip to Washington in 1951, visited Sen. Nixon's office. He began working in Nixon campaigns on and off through the '50s and '60s. (In between campaigns he returned to his job at the Thompson agency.)

Robert Finch, former lieutenant governor of California, former secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, and now counsellor to the President, was head of Nixon's 1960 presidential campaign in California. It was Finch who persuaded Haldeman to leave J. Walter Thompson at that time to become Nixon's chief advance man. It was also Finch who later got Haldeman appointed to the Board of Regents of the University of California.

"When the President decided to run for governor of California in 1962, I was against it," says Finch. "So Nixon picked Haldeman to run his campaign for him."

"Bob is a very organized person," says Finch. "His mind works too fast to tell long stories or jokes. His sense of humor is usually an aside, a quick thrust or a parry."

Haldeman didn't join the Nixon presidential campaign staff full-time until late May, 1968. He has stayed closely with the President ever since.

Finch says the only time Haldeman jokes about his bad guy image is when "he'll joke about the power he's supposed to have and doesn't really have."

He does not have a joking, back-slapping relationship with the President. "His relationship with Nixon is very serious," says Finch.

In 1949, Haldeman married Joanne Horton, whom he had known at

U.C.L.A. where they both had been politically active on campus. They have two daughters and two sons, ages 12 to 21.

Nobody claims to know H. R. Haldeman very well, even his close friends, and many of them won't talk. His mother, Mrs. Harry F. Haldeman, his sister, Mrs. Francis Raine, and his brother, Thomas Haldeman, all of Los Angeles, refused to discuss him.

"I don't think I can think of anything I did or he did that is interesting

at all," said his brother. "He's very human, though."

"I really don't know anything to tell you," said his sister, Betsy.

His mother could not be reached.

And of course Haldeman himself was "sorry that he could not grant an interview at his time."

Several of Haldeman's friends first assured a reporter they would be happy to talk about him but they were busy just then and would call back. An hour later they somehow found they "really don't know much about the guy at all."

But there were a few friends and colleagues who weren't so reluctant to answer their phones. Robert Finch was one of them.

One thing Finch can't understand is why people mix up Haldeman and Ehrlichman. "They are totally different all across the board," said Finch. "John works at being bright, aggressive and funny. Bob doesn't. John is more free-wheeling in terms of interest. Bob stakes out his own turf."

William Safire, special assistant to the President, is a New Yorker and hasn't known Haldeman nearly as long as the members of the "California Mafia." But the Safires live down the street from the Haldemans in the exclusive Kenwood section of Chevy Chase.

The Melvin Lairds also live there and so did the Walter Hickels until Hickel was fired as Secretary of Interior.

They live in a three-story, used-brick, double-wing house with six columns and a two-car garage in a neighborhood where \$130,000 is a minimum sales price. They have a live-in Spanish-speaking maid. Though both Haldemans used to garden a lot (he helped neighbor Bill Safire plant tulips), he doesn't have time anymore, and Mrs. Haldeman has been forced to hire a gardener. The house is done California antique in blues and golds by Mrs. Haldeman herself, with a downstairs recreation room filled with framed photos by Haldeman. Neighbors say they never see the Haldemans, that they stick to themselves. "They don't do anything but just work," said an admiring neighbor.

According to a number of the Halde-

mans' friends, the Haldemans entertain very little, with small groups of six or eight close friends, with some help and very informally. Though the Haldemans don't drink, they do serve alcohol to their friends. And they very often show home movies.

"If you go to the Haldemans," says Safire, "And he says how 'bout some home movies after dinner, you don't groan. Because, wow! they're always about the President. And wherever the President is, so is Haldeman. He is an excellent moviemaker, and he takes his camera along wherever he goes for historical records. He has the largest film library in the world of the President."

Safire says the Haldemans have a great collection of memorabilia, which they display throughout the house.

Mrs. Haldeman he describes as a "quiet, reserved, intense, lovely woman."

Bob Haldeman's trademark is his 1950s crewcut, which he keeps closely cropped at all times. "If you ask him why he doesn't let his hair grow," says Safire, "He answers, 'Who'd know me.'"

Herb Klein, another old California friend, the former editor of the San Diego Union and the President's communications director, has known Haldeman since 1956. "One of the sides people don't see of Bob is his humor," says Klein. Klein described the daily White House senior staff meetings, which Haldeman conducts, as being very unstructured and occasionally tense.

"Bob will always break up the tension with a quip or a wry remark," says Klein. "He's not one to tell a story, though." Klein says Haldeman never gives his own opinion at the meetings, just takes it all down and then reports it all to the President. The reason Haldeman has a "bad guy" reputation, says Klein, is that he decides who gets in to see the President, and he has to say "no" a lot. "That doesn't make anyone popular."

There is a running competition, Klein says, between himself, Finch, Ron Ziegler and Dwight Chapin, all graduates of the University of Southern California, on one side and Halde-

man and Ehrlichman, both UCLA graduates, on the other.

It was Herb Klein who gave Haldeman the name of "Chief Frog Man" during the old advance days, and Haldeman became intrigued with the idea.

The "frog" was intended to symbolize how Haldeman was always hopping along, getting ahead.

Haldeman made the frog the symbol of the advance men, a former campaign colleague said. "Since then he and his wife have collected masses of frogs from all over the country. They

have an enormous frog collection."

White House sources say that Klein is at odds with Haldeman these days. In fact, sources say that a lot of people are at odds with Haldeman these days. Mrs. Nixon reportedly dislikes him. Henry Kissinger does not get on with him, and then there's the Ehrlichman situation, the Rose Mary Woods situation and the Agnew situation.

His zeal in guarding the President's time prompted an assistant to a Cabinet member to comment, "It's so difficult to get in to see the President these days that very few Cabinet members even try. And then it's not worth it because there's always a meeting with Haldeman afterwards without the guy (visitor). Haldeman's paper flow is so important to White House operations that if you're out of the paper flow you're just out of it."

A White House aide who has dealt directly with Haldeman, unpleasantly, on a number of occasions has had a few words to say about the President's right-hand man—but, understandably, off the record. "They'd roast my - - -", he said, apologizing. "I'm on their list anyway because I dare to disagree with Herr Haldeman and have some opinions of my own."

The aide has never noticed much sense of humor in Haldeman. "He probably thinks it's demeaning to show a sense of humor much around the office. When you're the President's alter ego or whatever he considers himself, you take yourself and your job seriously. It's a tense job and he's an extremely precise man, intolerant of bad staff work."

"I think his staff holds him in awe and regards him with great fear. I'd be surprised if anybody regards him as a person at all. The problem with Haldeman is that he is intensely devoted to the President. He can't see anything else. His staff is the same way. Everybody else is judged by how loyal they are and how long they've known the President."

The White House aide feels that "self-deception" is part of the problem with the latest alleged White House involvement in campaign irregularities. "If Haldeman issued a decree that you had to have clean shirts and somebody spilled soup on his shirt and you pointed it out to him, he'd tell you he wasn't wearing a shirt."

Haldeman's memos are apparently often terse commands in the form of questions, and a recalcitrant reply will elicit an even nastier response like "So what," and then the command-question repeated.

A major complaint of many people on Capitol Hill about Haldeman and his staff is an alleged lack of political astuteness.

When Sen. Russell Long (D-La.) had difficulties with the President over the

welfare reform bill, the Haldeman staff members were furious at the idea that Long was "playing around with one of the President's major policy decisions."

"They have absolutely no idea how to have good relations with the Hill," said the aide.

Another former White House intimate and Nixon sympathizer feels that Haldeman is "a dangerous man. His imprint is all over the White House. If Nixon is fully aware of his power, and I don't think he is, then it really says something about Nixon."

This person is quick to add, however, that Haldeman may be the only person capable of regulating Nixon's time properly, and that he alone manages to keep him from getting tired and irritable.

His imprint, according to this source, is seen in buzzer locks and televised hallways in the Nixon campaign headquarters and a general "vault" mentality.

There are other observers of Halde-

man on a more personal level. The father of a classmate of Haldeman's son, Hank, when he attended St. Albans School here in Washington, for example.

"Hank is a great kid," said the schoolmate's father. "Not at all like his father. He is warm, friendly, open-faced, talkative, an all-American boy without the Prussian-ness of Haldeman. One thing I must say about Bob, though, is that he let Hank run loose, didn't try to impose his values on Hank."

"Hank's father is the type who gives you a warm, toothy come-on at first and then lets you do the talking. There are a lot of lapses in the conversation. Mrs. Haldeman fills them. She is very conversational and warm, but there's a sternness in her eyes," the father of Hank's friend said.

"The Haldemans are a strongly led, parentally close-knit family."

The elder Haldeman, he continued, did not circulate around town, did not go to press luncheons, and tried to stay physically fit. He found Haldeman sharp, quick, a man who picks up humor but doesn't give much back, "a

man with a cold, level stare which intimidates people. I don't know anyone who knows Bob that well personally. They are very staunch, moral, upright Americans."

Reached at the Young People for Nixon section of the Committee for the Re-Election of the President (he took a semester off from his sophomore year at UCLA) Hank Haldeman talked readily about himself, his father and their lifestyles.

"I have very long hair, about two inches below my shoulders," said Hank. "My father kids me about my hairstyle, and I kid him about his. I decided to let my hair grow about 2½ years ago when I walked past a barber shop needing a haircut and decided it's now or never."

Hank, 19, has lived away from home for quite a while. "I'm the most independent member of the family," he says. "But I do go home Sunday for our family dinner. We don't really do that much together as a family because it's hard for all of us to get together." The family does attend a local Christian Science church together.

"I feel I'm closer to my father than

my mother because we have much the same interests. But he works so late at night. Work consumes most of my father's time. I feel I get along very well with him on a discussion level. We had a long discussion Tuesday night on Vietnam. He offered me insights. We agree on an overview—but when we get down to specifics I'm quite a bit more liberal than he is. During the time of the mining of Haiphong I was not in favor of it. I had several long discussions from California with my father about it on the phone. We disagreed but we understood each other's viewpoint. And that's the same with my lifestyle. We both feel it's important to understand and we always have a good ending to our discussions that reaffirms our relationship."

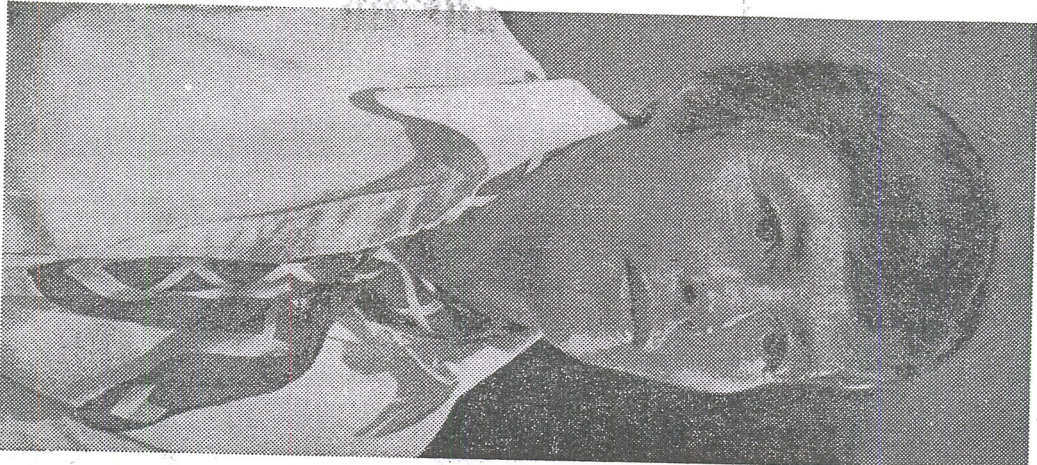
Sometimes, to be together, the whole family goes to Camp David on the weekends when Haldeman goes there with the President.

Hank says his father plays the guitar in his spare time, loves country-and-western music, is not a practical joker at all but tells short anecdotes very well. "He's very quick to laugh but he's not a great prankster," says Hank. He doesn't keep a party in stitches by telling jokes. I guess he's just very cynical in a funny way."

Though Hank and his father have frequent serious political discussions, they are always on a philosophical level. Does his father ever mention his daily duties at the White House or his public image with his son?

"We don't talk about that end of his job at all," replied Hank.

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Haldeman's wife, Joanne, with whom he attended U.C.L.A., left; Haldeman photographing crowds gathered to meet President Nixon at the Columbus, Ohio adviser John D. Ehrlichman.



By Craig Herndon—The Washington Post
Ohio, airport, center; presiden-



By Harry Naltchayan—The Washington Post

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