

H. R. Haldeman --

The Latest Model

By Vera Glaser

Washington

H. R. Bob Haldeman, former advertising man and image-maker for Black Flag, Roach Killer, Sani Flush and Richard Nixon, has been quietly transforming his own image.

In U.S. District Court, where Haldeman and four others are defendants in the Watergate coverup case, he appears to be a changed man.

The crewcut, superloyal, tough-as-nails presidential chief of staff has disappeared.

Now he smiles, often, speaks pleasantly and sports a new, longer hair cut. He is tanned, relaxed and reportedly plays a guitar. These days the total effect is more like your friendly neighborhood brush salesman.

Several former White House colleagues feel the effect is calculated.

"Bob is very conscious of the effect. Even the skin-tight 'Hum' image in the White House was cultivated," said a former senior administration official.

"He's working on the new image with the same diligence. But he's the same guy underneath, and he's an SOB."

Another former White House staffer says Haldeman can change easily because "he has no individual entity the way most men do. He requires someone to latch on to. If he hadn't found Nixon, he would have found someone else."

Haldeman's transformation began last year when he testified before the Senate Watergate committee.

After former Nixon aide John Ehrlichman's belligerence irked the senators, Haldeman came on as conciliatory.

With an air of seeming candor and cooperation, he testified that Mr. Nixon was not involved in the coverup. These statements were later refuted by White House tapes and led to the present counts against Haldeman of perjury and obstruction of justice.

Haldeman, according to a former colleague, "was rough on the young guys he had under his thumb, but kind of sickening, sweet and sneaky with those whose future didn't depend on his whims."

"Haldeman cut people off short if they disagreed with him," a young former White House staffer recalled.

"He only took disagreements from those on his own

level, like Ehrlichman. (Treasury Secretary George) Shultz or (Secretary of State Henry) Kissinger. There was complete contempt for everyone else and I believe he had the same for those three. Privately, he made snotty remarks about Shultz and Kissinger."

Haldeman now has two useful assets:

- His former aide and close friend, Lawrence Higby, remains on the payroll of Budget Director Roy Ash. Higby visits Haldeman when he is in California on official business. Higby was regarded as Haldeman's pipeline to the White House after Haldeman's resignation, and he remains so.

- Movie film — thousands of feet of it — taken during Richard Nixon's five years as President, from privileged vantage points in the White House and during trips here and abroad, is in Haldeman's possession.



The different Haldeman image—then and now

These home movies may contain valuable historical material and could be worth money to Haldeman now or in the future.

Haldeman, a Christian Scientist, has the reputation of a good family man. In Los Angeles he lives quietly, shuns big parties, plays chess and tennis, works on his book or consults his lawyers.

Haldeman comes from a well-to-do California family

but the financial drain of his legal defense, which could run to \$500,000 or more, appears to be a serious concern.

Z. Wayne Griffin, a former film producer in Los Angeles, reportedly has been soliciting funds from friends and national political figures for Haldeman's legal defense.