

Revelations of Nixon's

'Hatchet Man'

By Vera Glaser and Malvina Stephenson

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PRESIDENT Nixon's close and sometimes mysterious relationship with Murray Chotiner, his controversial aide, will be aired in a forthcoming book by Chotiner's estranged wife, Mimi.

A sharp-tongued ex-model, Mrs. Chotiner plans to string together what she describes as "hilariously funny" vignettes about her husband's 25-year political association with Nixon, which ultimately broke up their marriage.

The tie between the two men has fascinated observers since 1946 when Chotiner managed Nixon's first Congressional race.

Chotiner dropped out of sight in the '50s after a Senate committee investigated him for alleged influence peddling. He then reappeared in Nixon's 1968 Presidential race.

Now 61 and a special counsel in the White House, Chotiner's political chores remain controversial and largely supersecret.

He was unavailable for comment, but has told reporters he cannot imagine what material Mrs. Chotiner might have for a book.

"I know plenty," Mrs. Chotiner said as she previewed her book in a telephone interview from her home in Newport Beach.

She revealed that her husband is holding in his safe deposit box signed memoranda from Nixon promising Chotiner the chairmanship of the Republican National Committee in 1969.

The position went up for grabs again when GOP Chairman Rogers Morton



RICHARD NIXON
Similar looks . . .



MURRAY CHOTINER
. . . and thinking

was nominated to the Cabinet.

Mrs. Chotiner said her husband told her he personally "fired" former GOP Chairman Ray Bliss in 1969 on orders from newly elected President Nixon.

Reached in Akron, Ohio, Bliss confirmed that Chotiner called on him at White

House request and asked for a desk at GOP headquarters. Bliss resigned soon afterward, but refused to confirm that Chotiner wielded the axe.

Chotiner expected to get the job, Mrs. Chotiner recalled, but she said Nixon "shafted" him by giving it to Morton after "using Mr.

Chotiner as a hatchet man."

To appease Chotiner, she said, John Mitchell, now Attorney General, and Robert Finch, now counselor to the President, offered Chotiner three other jobs which he turned down.

"It was so ridiculous; I'm still laughing," Mrs. Chotiner said. "First was Postmaster General. I said, 'Murray, you must be kidding, it is a losing proposition,' et cetera."

"He said, 'I didn't take it, I didn't take it.'"

"I said, 'Well, what was the second one?'"

"He said it was head of Selective Service. That was when Hershey (General Lewis B. Hershey) still had it. I said, 'Murray, you've never even been in the service.' He said, 'I didn't take it, I didn't take it.'"

"I said, 'I'm afraid to ask, what was the third?'"

"He said head of Civil Defense, at which point I laughed my head off. I said, 'Both you and Civil Defense have been a national joke for 25 years.'"

She said the Nixon-Chotiner relationship over the years was based on "expediency," and noted that the two men possess a number of similarities in looks and thinking.

Both are "loners, with many of the same habits. They even play the piano alike, the same type of rinky-dink music."

One of Mr. Chotiner's problems, according to his former wife, is a tendency to be "a blabbermouth." It caused him to be relegated

for a time to the obscure job of general counsel to the special representative for international trade negotiations.

Referring to the job as "political Siberia," Mrs. Chotiner cracked, "The longer the title, the lousier the job."

Born in Oak Park, Ill., Mrs. Chotiner's brief modeling career was pursued in Phoenix and Washington, D.C.

Her book will be titled "In Care of the White

House," she chuckled, "Because that's where I have been sending my unpaid bills."

Shortly before she wed Chotiner in 1965, she recalled, he showed her his press clippings. ("He saves every line of print about himself"). She said she was "horrified" at the critical blasts and extracted a promise from Chotiner never to return to politics, on which he later reneged.

She predicted "Nixon would shaft him again."