

Nixon Calls Manson Guilty; Critical of News Coverage

Says That Defendant Appears in Media as a 'Glamorous Figure' — Ziegler Softens Remarks in 'Clarification'

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DENVER, Aug. 3—President Nixon called today for respect for the nation's "system of law and order and justice," and in the course of his remarks said that Charles Manson, a hippie cultist on trial in California, "was guilty, directly or indirectly, of eight murders without reason."

Mr. Nixon, with Attorney General John N. Mitchell at his

The text of Nixon's remarks is printed on Page 16.

side, spoke to reporters before attending a conference on law enforcement. He told them that the news media had a duty to maintain respect for law.

The President said that he had noted "the coverage of the Charles Manson case when I was in Los Angeles" each day on the front pages of newspapers and on the evening television news.

He then went on to say that Manson, "as far as the coverage was concerned, appeared to be rather a glamorous figure, a glamorous figure to the young people whom he had brought into his operations."

Minutes after the President had spoken, as reporters were filing their dispatches, the

White House press secretary, Ronald L. Ziegler, summoned them into a briefing room in the United States Court Building here and issued what he called a "clarification."

Implying that the President had made a slip of the tongue, Mr. Ziegler said that Mr. Nixon had meant to use the word "alleged" in referring to Manson's guilt and that his whole purpose had been to uphold the system under which a man is innocent until proved guilty.

When a reporter asked Mr. Ziegler why he could not simply "retract the whole sentence," the press secretary replied:

"I think I've done that."

[At the Manson trial in Los Angeles, defense attorneys moved for a mistrial because of the President's remarks. The judge declined to take action, contending there was no basis for a mistrial, according to United Press International.]

Mr. Nixon began his remarks by prodding Congress to pass the crime control bills he has sent to Capitol Hill. Then he turned to the general subject of "the responsibility of the

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American people and also of the news media," to do their part to sustain faith in the American system of criminal justice.

Launching into a long anecdote, he said he had seen a movie called "Chisum" starring John Wayne, last weekend at his private residence in San Clemente. He called it "basically another Western," and he said he got to thinking afterward about the long popularity of Westerns as an art form. The answer, he later concluded, was that Westerns carry a

simple but durable moral message:

"The good guys come out ahead in the Westerns; the bad guys lose."

Yet in modern times, he complained, the situation appears to have been reversed. The newspapers, he said, give heavy play to the explicit of criminals, and young people "tend to glorify and to make heroes out of those who engage in criminal activities."

As an illustration, Mr. Nixon cited the case of Manson, which has received heavy front-page play in the Los Angeles newspapers since the trial opened recently. Then the President made his comment about Manson being guilty and being treated as a glamorous figure.

Criticism of Lawyers

His voice rising, Mr. Nixon proceeded to condemn Manson's attorneys, two of whom spent a night in jail last week on orders of the presiding judge. The President said the attorneys had been "guilty of the most outrageous, contemptuous action in the courtroom." But the way the story emerged, he complained, the lawyers were made to appear "oppressed, and the judge seemed to be the villain."

Mr. Nixon, who also thanked the press for alerting the country to drug abuse and other criminal activity, then summarized his case as follows:

"Unless we stand up for the system, unless we see that order in the courtroom is respected, unless we quit glorifying those who deliberately disrupt, and unless we begin to recognize that when a judge necessarily, after intense provocation, must hold individuals in contempt of court, that that judge is justified, that he is acting in our behalf, then the system will break down."

"The innocent will suffer, but more important, and just as im-

portant, the guilty will suffer as well because in a society without law, the guilty then have no trials."

The White House went to some lengths to make reporters aware that this statement, and not Mr. Nixon's charge against Manson, represented the central thrust of his statement.

First Mr. Ziegler held his briefing to "clarify" the remark. Then — in the official transcript released by the traveling press office — Mr. Nixon's statement was followed by a little note reminding newsmen that Mr. Ziegler had "clarified" the remark in a subsequent briefing.

Mitchell Denies Charge

Finally, in response to questions later, Attorney General Mitchell said he did not think that the President "made a charge or implied one." For his own part, Mr. Mitchell said, he does not think it would be appropriate for an Attorney

General to comment on a case now in the state courts.

Mr. Nixon left San Clemente this morning to return to the capital after a 10-day working visit to his Western White House. A crowd of about 3,000 enthusiastic supporters met him at the airport here and the crowd lining his motorcade route into downtown Denver was large and respectful. He paused several times along the way, once stopping to chat with a group of young patients from a children's hospital who sat in wheelchairs holding signs along the side of the road.

There were a few peace demonstrators along the route and at the court building and at one point Mr. Nixon seemed to recognize them by saying "I hear the young people who call for peace." He asserted that his policies in Southeast Asia would bring the sort of peace that would lead to a wider "world order."