

'Millhouse: A White Comedy'

Reviewer: Paine Knickerbocker

A Look Back at Mr. Nixon

What is most interesting and frightening about "Millhouse: A White Comedy" last night at the Film Festival, is how appealing the lack of integrity of the current President has been to the American people.

The documentary was made by Emile de Antonio, best known for "Point of Order" which concerned the Army-Joe McCarthy hearings during the 1950s.

He has gathered footage — both television and motion picture — tracing the long, uneven, and determined political career of Richard Milhous Nixon.

CLIPS

De Antonio admits that through the clips he has selected, he has not attempted to be disinterested. What emerges is not an objective portrait, but rather a warning of the flaws in the democratic system as it exists today in the United States (Bob Thomas's recent book on Walter Winchell makes a similar, unnerving comment).

Mr. Nixon's earnestness in much of the nonsense he expresses apparently accounts for his effectiveness. At one point, he asserts that his wife, Pat, was born on St. Patrick's Day, which of course he knew was a lie (she was born on March 16 and is several months older than the Chief Executive) but such a statement served his purpose.

RACE

Many facets of Mr. Nixon are recorded in this film, which is excessive but still unforgettable. From his first race for a seat in Congress, he has endorsed contemptible but persuasive tech-



CHECKERS AND FRIEND
Excessive but unforgettable

niques, which in retrospect are chilling because they were swallowed by a bamboozled public.

"When I make a pledge, I keep it" he says with the total lack of eloquence which marks his public addresses, but obviously it worked. He is a shrewd politician who has steadfastly refused to be anchored to truth, and in the last dismal decades, such an approach has proven triumphant.

Observe the celebrated Checkers speech, shudder, but marvel at how precisely right he was in such a counterattack. It has been said: "The effectiveness of a politician varies in inverse proportion to his commitment to principle" and to that doctrine, Mr. Nixon is the prophet.

—P.K.

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