

7 MAY 72

NIXON

WASH POST

In 1967, Richard J. Whalen, a "moderate conservative," joined Richard Nixon, still undeclared candidate for the Republican presidential nomination. Though Whalen had thought of Nixon as a loser, conversations with the man and a few advisers led him to believe there was a chance, and that Nixon shared Whalen's views, especially on Vietnam and disarmament. So he started writing speeches, position papers and advising on policy. But as the campaign for the nomination wore on, Whalen found that he had been mistaken: Nixon did not share his positions. In fact, Nixon's positions were a matter of expediency, not political belief. In *Catch the Falling Flag: A Republican's Challenge to His Party*, to be published this month by Houghton Mifflin, Whalen relates his full, enlightening experience. What follows is an excerpt from it, the first inside book by "a member of the winning team."

Running with Nixon and leaving him

By Richard J. Whalen



Leonard Garment: "He's given us almost no clues as to what he believes in."



John D. Erlichman: "I've seen writer and researcher types like you come and go."



Patrick J. Buchanan: "I hope you don't mind, but I've surfaced you as a brain truster."



Ray Price: Reluctant to judge Vietnam a tragic misadventure.



John Sears: "November is when all this stops."



Richard J. Whalen

ON a gray, chilly Sunday afternoon in early September, 1967, I took the 3 o'clock shuttle from Washington to New York and presented myself in the lobby of Richard Nixon's apartment on East 61st Street. A doorman with a delightful brogue whisked me upstairs and a white-jacketed butler ushered me into the Nixon duplex. In the gold and white living room, Nixon stood talking with Bill Safire, a member of Nixon's circle since his vice-presidential days and now a Manhattan public-relations man. "I enjoyed *The Founding Father*," said Safire as he left.

Nixon, with an air of cordiality, led the way into his small study and offered a drink. There wasn't any bourbon, so I drank Canadian Club. My host sat in an armchair, and I perched on the edge of a long velvet-covered couch in front of a window overlooking Fifth Avenue and Central Park. As we talked, the late afternoon sun streamed through the window. Nixon rose to adjust the shutters, and shadows filled the room.

He praised my *Fortune* article, referred knowledgeably to such points as the Soviet lead in testing for the defects of high-yield weapons, and expressed concern over the future of the "blue chip"—U.S. nuclear superiority. I produced an inscribed copy of my book on New York—"a city only outsiders can appreciate." He flipped the

2) pages, noting with approval that it wouldn't take long to read. This led into talk about his speech-writing procedure. He wrote, he said, in long-hand on yellow legal pads, several painful drafts, and needed a week for 2,500 to 3,000 words. After he was satisfied, he committed the speech to memory, then discarded the draft. He didn't recite the speech, but "saw" the text unreeling before his mind's eye.

Nixon seemed easy to talk with. He would ask a question and listen closely to the answer. Sometimes he would interject a phrase, then reconsider and correct himself in midsentence, revealing a feeling for the shade and weight of words. His quick intelligence was apparent: he was with you, or ahead of you or taking an interesting tangent.

We talked at length about each of the possible candidates—Romney, Rockefeller, Percy and Reagan. He wanted to know anything I knew, what I thought of each. He was detached in his comments—acute but dispassionate in discussing the strengths and weaknesses of the other men stalking the prize he wanted so badly.

Of his own chances, Nixon said with detachment that he must win impressively all the way to the convention, building momentum as he shed the "loser" label. If he stumbled, and he might in "cranky" New Hampshire, he was through, although he left open the question whether he would withdraw.

He recognized that a new tide of isolationism was running in the country as the result of the Vietnam war. He conceded that there was a shift in Republican sentiment away from all-out support of the war and admitted the practical wisdom of maneuver. He listened closely as I argued against the continued bombing of North Vietnam. I said the U.S. should mine Haiphong harbor and establish a naval "quarantine" of the coast, which, I suggested, should be coupled with a strong stand against the Soviets. He agreed emphatically that the Soviets, contrary to the administration's line, had no interest in seeing the war ended quickly.

Nixon seemed attracted to the idea of a two-prong maneuver—away from the administration's hard line on Vietnam, toward a firmer stand on the intentions of the Soviets, particularly in the Mediterranean and the Middle East. His reactions indicated that he was not as inflexible on Vietnam as recent articles in the press made him appear ("There are things you don't say in interviews"), but he wanted to work out carefully in advance the details of any demonstration of flexibility. He agreed that such a demonstration would help him with the unenthusiastic party professionals. But would it hurt him with the conservatives? "I am a conservative," he said, "at least as I define it."

We talked for a time about liberals and conservatives, about the enmity he aroused in the Alger Hiss case. "That was 20 years ago—they never forget, do they?" Nor would they ever forgive him, I suggested, for being a representative of the new American middle classes. The left-liberal intellectuals and journalists despised middle-class, "bourgeois" values and the "square" culture. Nothing that Nixon could say or do would appease them. He threatened their status as an antidemocratic elite in much the way that Lyndon Johnson did, and he could expect the same vindictive assaults that Johnson was experiencing. Beyond his political objective, I suggested, lay a cultural objective: the building of the foundation of a new intellectual establishment that would restore and conserve values under attack from the radical Left.

Our talk next turned to the missed opportunities of the Eisenhower years. Nixon spoke of Eisenhower without his usual reverence and

recalled the pain he suffered from Ike's famous press conference gaffe. Asked to identify a decision Nixon took part in, Eisenhower, who was on the way out of the room, said to howls of laughter from the press: "If you give me a week, I might think of one." Said Nixon: "He called me right after that hit the fan. He was being facetious, he didn't mean it the way it sounded." But nothing was done by the President or his staff to repair the damage to Nixon's credibility.

Nixon said earnestly that he wanted new blood and fresh ideas—not the tired, stale speeches he got from the Eisenhower holdovers in 1960—and praised the "grace notes" in the work of Ray Price, an acquaintance of mine from New York and former editor of the editorial page of the defunct *Herald Tribune*. This led into a discussion of the baleful effects of the traditional influence of big business in the Republican party. Businessmen, approaching politics as a necessary ordeal, fell naturally into lifeless, cut-and-dried formulations. They were afraid of unfamiliar ideas. And yet they had strong opinions on everything, said Nixon. "Just because they know something about their business, they think they know all about Vietnam. I get it all the time."

Nixon wanted a small research and writing staff—"no more than six"—young men who were skilled "generalists." (I noticed that he had picked up some of the jargon of the business.) Romney had a staff of 20. "I'll take my two researchers any time." Nixon, who had been over the road before, didn't need as large a staff as a newcomer. But, regardless of the number of men around him, would he delegate responsibilities? He didn't in 1960. This time, he assured me, he would let his staff run him. "That's why I want to pick it so carefully."

People with ideas, Nixon noted, were able to publicize them by assisting a political figure like him—a plain invitation. "Of course, you can have your say in magazines, and reach a national audience. But, when you're with a man going for the presidency, you have a chance not only to get your ideas across, but maybe to see them put into practice. That's a big difference." I agreed, and changed the subject.

I told Nixon that I hoped he would show the side of him that didn't come across in 1960. He was perhaps the best disciplined political technician of our time. Could he discipline himself to relax? He drew out my thoughts on the media, listening intently, almost too intently, so that I could almost hear the wheels whirring in his head. My only advice was: be natural. Could he turn it on and off, becoming politician-actor as our entertainment-oriented politics demanded? He was interested in thoughts on setting, lighting, audiences, length of speeches—the technical details of the image-politics in which he once lost so narrowly. ("I hurt my damned knee before the first 1960 debate," he recalled. "I was as sick as a dog.") He liked the half-serious suggestion I tossed out that perhaps he might rerun portions of the tapes of the second and third 1960 debates, in which he compared favorably to Kennedy. He recalled once again Kennedy's margin: only 119,000 out of 68,000,000 votes. "Of course they stole the election—and Johnson will do anything to win the next one, too."

Nixon conceded that his defeat in California, which he blamed on the Birchers, was compounded by his televised display of temper at the post-midnight "last press conference." It was "a great mistake," and it might haunt him. Still, he believed that he would be able to "get under Johnson's skin" and provoke him into losing his temper. "He didn't have to face that last time—Barry was running against himself."

Well past the three-hour mark in our conversation, Nixon took me by surprise by suggesting that I consider becoming his "press man." He was enthusiastic. "You have a good voice, you'd look well on TV, and you'd get along with the reporters. It would be a lot of fun—and a lot of work. You're on call at all hours, but you're always in on everything—the press man is always there—and you'd get quite a book out of it. You always have to consider self-interest. You'd get the book and the experience of being on the inside of a national campaign, which adds an extra dimension to you. You're at just the right age, too. Think about it and get back to me as soon as possible."

At 9:20 P.M., I broke off the visit—if Nixon had no thought for dinner, I did—and dashed for the airport.

I SPENT a bouncing flight back to Washington sorting out my reactions. The pathological Nixon-haters in the press, by denying his humanity, ironically gave him an advantage in personal encounters. Compared with Herblock's Nixon, the Nixon I had met seemed pleasant and engaging. Trivial discoveries about him—he swore expertly—assumed encouraging significance. There was no trace of the arrogant self-importance often found in politicians. He made no pretense, as some vain public figures did, of being drawn into politics reluctantly. He lived for it and took pleasure in analyzing himself and the other players. Of course, this kind of tactical analysis also afforded Nixon a measure of protection, for it steered conversation away from ends and made the listener feel that he was learning more than he actually was. One hesitated to ask Nixon, naively, just why he wanted to be President.

Staring out the window into the dark, I wondered how many times in the course of a career extending over more than 20 years Nixon had found it necessary to devote Sundays to meeting with useful strangers like me. All those years, while men of conventional ambition were playing golf or washing their cars or taking naps, Nixon had been soliciting support and services that would inch him closer to his goal. There had been no sign of anyone else in the 12-room apartment. I wondered what his wife and the girls did with themselves while Nixon received Sunday callers.

His suggestion that I become his "press man" sat oddly with me, like an invitation to join the wedding party of a casual acquaintance. Jack Kennedy's campaigns were run by the Irish Mafia that had come together like a hedgerow brotherhood over the years, and he was surrounded by a swarm of friends, classmates, and shipmates. Lyndon Johnson could call on staff, cronies and henchmen who went back with him to Texas and the New Deal years. As far as I knew, aside from his long-time secretary, Rose Mary Woods, Nixon was without retainers.

I marveled that he would offer to let me in on "everything" when we had never worked together for a day. His reputation as a solitary man, who in 1960 hoarded authority from his staff to the point, it was said, of whittling his own pencils, seemed to exclude the possibility of such an instant grant of confidence. But perhaps his undoubted capacity for self-analysis had prompted self-correction. He had had years to ponder the lessons of defeat. Apparently, his proposal was part of a compromise he was determined to make with his sense of self-sufficiency in the future. He would gather around him functional people whom he scarcely knew, and whom he did not want to know, except as instruments performing

Continued on page 25

Wholan, from page 12

I realized I was beginning to take his proposition seriously. The point about reaching the people with ideas was a hard-sell job description, and yet perhaps this time he meant it. He would be running free of the Eisenhower record and incoherent Modern Republicanism. Nixon had said: "I am a conservative, at least as I define it."

The following day I had lunch with three friends, two from New York publishing houses and the third a Washingtonian, Garth Hite, then publisher of *The New Republic*. I told them of my interview with Nixon and his offer, drawing the expected response from the Manhattan liberals. Hite said little, but sent a note that afternoon. "I don't know how you can refuse a challenge like that . . . There's one thing that was left unsaid at the luncheon table: Dick Nixon is qualified and he might damned well win! The world moves too fast these days to be hung up on the past."

Nixon heaped praise on his staff members, praise that subtly reflected back on him

A few days later, Nixon telephoned and asked if I would accompany him to the West Coast in early October. I proposed instead that I remain in the background for some time, as an adviser and writer, adding that this was the suggestion of our mutual friend, Arthur Krock. Nixon was somewhat puzzled and said of Krock: "He's never been inside a campaign, so he doesn't know what it's really like." But he said that he needed advice and had a specific question. Should he make another visit to Vietnam? I replied that it depended on what he used the trip for. If he returned only to reiterate his support of the war and the administration, the trip was pointless and probably counterproductive. I told him that he should go only if he had made up his mind

M. Stein
 "Specialist in Formal Attire since 1906"




Fine Formal Wear of Impeccable Taste for Members of the Wedding at M. Stein.

Quality fabrics, fine tailoring and perfect fit are the hallmarks of formal wear from M. Stein.

Featuring **LORD WEST and AFTER-SIX**

Send for Free Chart of Correct Formal Wear



m.stein & co.
 1823 M ST., NORTHWEST
 M St. Between Conn. Ave. & 19th St.
 Washington, D.C. Tel. 659-1434

All Major Credit Cards Accepted

Louis and Dan Brown 1332 G ST., N.W.



Stake a claim on comfort. The Hand-Shaped® Knit by Austin Leeds.

All comfort. Tailored to a tee and wrinkle-free. Gives when you move, packs without creasing and stays neat, wearing after wearing. Hand shaped, hand pressed and hand detailed, the double knit "Craven" looks like no other knit, fits like no other suit. Half belt with a center vent. In spring grey, tan, navy, black.

\$155

Other Austin Leeds Suits from \$140

Louis and Dan Brown

Washington's most recommended style shop

1332 G St., N.W. • RE 7-1396

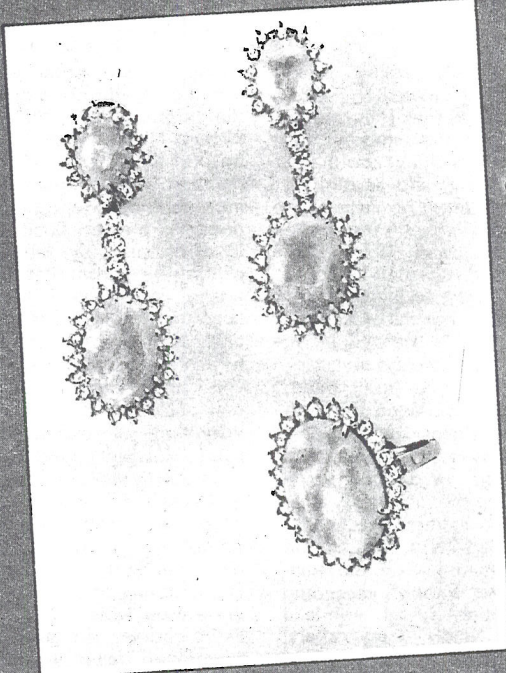
Open Daily 9:30-5:45; Thursday 'til 8:45
 ONE HOUR FREE PARKING



MAX Gershon
PRES.

All Major Credit Cards Accepted

the magic of opals



the blaze of diamonds

Dulcet opulence of Australian Fire opals rimmed in a ransome of diamonds set in gold. Drop earrings surrounded by seventy brilliant diamonds set in white gold, \$2250.00. Opal set in yellow gold ring aspark with twenty-five brilliant diamonds, \$1585.00.

charles ernest
 jewelers of distinction since 1928
 1027 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.
 Washington, D.C.

LEAD THE SUMMER FASHION PARADE WITH FINE CUSTOM TAILORED Suits • Sport Coats • Slacks

To achieve the well tailored look that is an important element for fashion in the '70s, choose from our complete range of woolens from Britain and finest mills throughout the world. Select from hundreds of shades & patterns . . . and any style from traditional to contemporary. Our expert craftsmen and designers will cut and tailor your garments by hand at remarkably reasonable costs in our own factory, where quality has been our hallmark since 1920.

DELIVERY IN 3 WEEKS

Geoffrey Lewis, Ltd.
 (GRUE CLOTHING COMPANY OF BALTIMORE)
 1503 H Street, N.W. (Shoreham Bldg.)
 PHONE 638-6888
 OPEN DAILY 9 to 9:30; SAT. 9 to 5
 MASTER CHARGE & BANKAMERICARD ACCEPTED



Geoffrey Lewis

in advance to adopt a new position. He seemed to agree. (In the end, he did not go to Vietnam again.) "Flexibility is the first principle of politics," he said in closing. "I want you on any basis and whenever you want to come."

As acting press secretary, Patrick J. Buchanan was the first stop for reporters writing about the candidate; and as ranking newcomer, he was the prime source on the young men around Nixon. We had agreed that I should stay in the background for a while, but Pat was eager to promote the new team. He called one day and said: "I hope you don't mind, but I've surfaced you as a brain truster."

Now I found myself, for a change, on the defensive end of the interview game. With a little practice, I learned how to sound spontaneous on the telephone without exceeding dictation speed. While I sold Nixon to my callers, the situation also required

me to sell myself. This, of course, was what Nixon intended, for he well knew the rule laid down by Niccolò Machiavelli, the original image-maker: "The first impression that one gets of a ruler and of his brains is from seeing the men that he has about him."

After 22 years spent under intense and often hostile journalistic scrutiny, Richard Nixon seemed far beyond the point of making first impressions and incapable of altering old ones. Yet the very familiarity of the man, the feeling within the press that he was a completely known (and unappealing) quantity, gave him an opportunity to achieve surprise by advertising the circle of bright new faces around him. Why were we helping the most durable figure in American politics this side of Harold Stassen? Back came our answer: we're riding with a winner this time. Suddenly, the press found something fresh to write about Nixon.

Of course, the articles mentioned many familiar

names from Nixon's vice-presidential years and the 1960 and 1962 campaigns, but the emphasis fell where Nixon wished it—on the newcomers. We found ourselves admitted on his authority to first-degree insidership.

"I've come to the conclusion that there's no way to win the war," Nixon said. "But we can't say that, of course."

Quite apart from the services we rendered, Nixon valued our names, titles, and accomplishments. He invariably told interviewers that he had hand-picked his new "first-rate" staff, in contrast to the inherited "hacks" around him in 1960. When Nixon testified that we had his ear and confidence, a reporter was left to infer an implausible conclusion: that this group of talented

strangers somehow reflected the candidate's private mind and intentions.

By directing the spotlight toward the fresh supporting cast, the star of the longest-running road show in American politics not only spruced up the latest production, he also assembled several credible character witnesses. We were at once ignorant and unscathed, innocent and enthusiastic. Almost without exception, we had something else interesting and rewarding to do. Consequently our answers to the big question—"Why are you working for Nixon?"—commanded attention.

Later in the campaign, television completely overshadowed the writing press. In these early stages, newspaper stories served several useful, short-run purposes: politicians were impressed, along with pollsters, network news executives, magazine editors, and, of course, ordinary readers. The print journalists, who would be shut out later, enjoyed easy access to Nixon and his new staff—and thereby

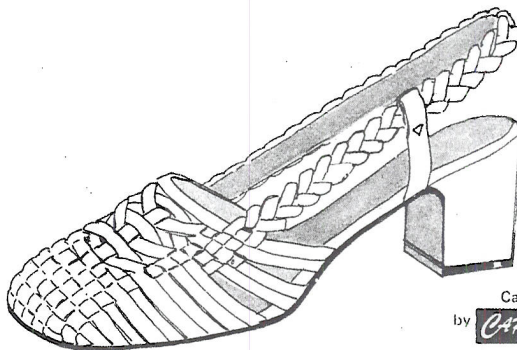
received and conveyed a false impression of the coming campaign. To Republicans skeptical of backing a two-time loser, Nixon played through the press this message: *This isn't the same old Nixon; and he won't blow it again. Stay loose and uncommitted and see what he and his young men do in the primaries.* For several months before the New Hampshire primary, we were Exhibit A in the case for giving Nixon another chance.

Nixon heaped praise on his staff members, *praise that subtly reflected back on him.* "The first thing they have is brains," he told Nick Thimmesch of Newsday. "They have high intellectual quality, character and courage. They're not for sale. These are guys that money can't buy. . . . And he had attracted them. They like challenge. They want to be in the battle. They are individualists and debate with each other." *And he was where the action was, the center of this free play of ideas and debate.* "It is vitally important for a man in public life to

MASSEYS HAS MORE SIZES THAN



Light 'n' Airy Straw and wicker handbags for summer - shown are just three from a fabulous collection. Natural and white as well as all the high fashion shades. Priced from \$7 to \$18



Canto
by CAPLEOS

Softest kid, woven into a delightful summer sandal. Styled with mid-low heel - available in bone or white. Imported from Spain.

Sizes 3 to 12 - AAAA to D \$19*

*Over size 10, add \$2

ANY OTHER STORE IN THE WORLD

Mail orders or Call 393 7800 Ext 72

Central Charge, Massey's Charge and Major Credit Cards

DOWNTOWN - F ST - G ST - 13TH ST NW

4477 CONNECTICUT AVE NW

1364 CHAIN BRIDGE RD MC LEAN VA

Free Park and Shop at All massey Stores

bridge the generation gap. You talk to the new generation through these fellows." And he was tuned in, listening to new voices.

Nixon knew how to massage our egos and how to capitalize on the sense of self-importance that comes from being publicly labeled important. ("I learned a great deal about weaponry from Dick Whalen," Nixon confided to Thimmesch.)

We were Nixon's New Frontiersmen, Republican style: basically conservative but probably younger. Commenting on this "youth movement," the friendly columnist John Chamberlain noted that Nixon was "tapping members of a generation that look upon Arthur Schlesinger and John Kenneth Galbraith as old fuddy-duddies. The staff-centered publicity raised an attractive, deceptive screen between the press and the actual Nixon campaign. In fact, the eager press deceived itself. Long after ideas had been devalued and the "youth movement" derailed, reporters continued to seek out the supposed "insiders" they had identified and, unwittingly, created.

In the early days of 1968, when only Lyndon Johnson knew his presidency was drawing to an end, Johnson's secret recognition of weakness, paradoxically, gave him enormous strength. When he chose to make known his stunning decision to withdraw from the race, the man who seemed to have lost control over the country would, at a stroke, gain immeasurable influence over both parties and the choice they offered to the electorate.

Unaware of what was happening inside Johnson's White House, Nixon decided late in March that he should make a radio speech—indeed, a series of speeches—explaining his position on Vietnam. The speech was scheduled for the evening of March 31 and he came within a matter of hours of delivering it. It was as close as the Nixon campaign ever came to telling the American people how a Republican President would deal with the

5
issue tormenting the country.

I found Nixon alone in the farthest back-room of the New York headquarters suite, slumped in a chair, with both feet propped up against a battered desk. He had decided, he said, to begin talking "substantively" about Vietnam, generally along the lines I had been suggesting. But he had not yet settled his mind on precisely what he should say. His thoughts, usually so clearly organized when he discussed a speech, on this occasion cautiously circled the subject. It was apparent, as I scribbled notes, that Nixon wanted a speech drafted for size, so to speak, and he would decide afterward whether the text fit his requirements.

I borrowed a portable typewriter and settled down in a vacant cubicle. The next morning, Tuesday, March 26, I sent a draft of some 2,000 words around for comment.

Price, Buchanan and Len Garment, the organization's chief scout and recruiter of intellectual talent, were less than enthusiastic.

Nixon's silence on Vietnam invited wishful speculation in the press and much more favorable publicity than if he had given his talk as planned

Price was reluctant to challenge the Cold-War-is-over assumption quite so frontally as I had and equally reluctant to judge Vietnam a tragic misadventure. Parts of the draft were attuned to Garment's dovish sentiments, but he had qualms about putting the war in a stark context of U.S.-Soviet global rivalry. Buchanan, the hardliner, thought the context was fine—what concerned him was the risk of making such a speech. Yet Nixon wanted a draft, here it was, and none of them offered a satisfactory alternative. Finally, I incorporated some of Price's suggestions

into a second draft and gave it to Rose Mary Woods.

Nixon decided at once that it "fit." That afternoon, the press was informed that the candidate would make a nationwide radio talk—"a major address"—on Vietnam the following Sunday evening. I was surprised and pleased by Nixon's swift decision, for the draft contained implicit and explicit commitments. Implicitly, it committed Nixon to keeping the Soviet Union in the foreground of his future statements on U.S. foreign and defense policies. Explicitly, as he had instructed, it committed him to say a great deal more about Vietnam. From Price's prose stockpile, I had borrowed a self-challenging assertion—"We need a new approach and a new policy, but first we must speak with new candor and clarity"—by which Nixon's views would henceforth be measured. Fully as much as his "pledge," that statement bound him to tell the American people what he proposed to do and why, under pain of acute embarrassment if he tried to back away.

Now that the decision had been made to go ahead, Price and I shared the task of polishing the draft. The next morning, Wednesday, a new version, expanded but thematically unchanged, went to the Nixon apartment, and that afternoon we were summoned uptown for an editorial conference.

Nixon met us at the door and led the way to the small study off the living room. Tricia was reading there, and he displaced her with a paternal word of apology. Settling into an armchair, with his feet on an ottoman and the manuscript balanced on his knees, Nixon said he had marked a few passages he wanted reworked, but, first, he invited us to argue the text as a whole. Buchanan, the writer least involved in the drafting, assumed the role of devil's advocate and guardian of Nixon's consistency.

All the while, Nixon listened closely, as though we were lawyers and he an appellate judge. At points of dispute, he stood outside the text, waiting to be

persuaded to enter it. I soon discovered that he did not wish to be persuaded of the validity of our ideas. Rather, he sought guidance in the procedure that was the sum of his "centrism"—the pragmatic splitting of differences along a line drawn through the middle of the electorate. The line could go Left or Right, depending on the persuasiveness of claims made for the popularity of competing views. Nixon's aim was to find the least assailable middle ground. The grand theme interested him less than the small adjustment, which might provide an avenue of escape. The only major change made in the text was the inclusion of a section written by Price urging curtailment of "search and destroy" operations against the enemy and a shift to a "protect and expand" strategy centered on the South Vietnamese population. The rest of the changes were minor equivocations, often introduced by Nixon's admonition: "Let's copper that."

Nixon did not much care what his subordinates did to each other as long as he was spared the sight of blood

We met daily for the remainder of the week, and Nixon, who clearly enjoyed honing the cutting edge of words, allowed the sessions to run for two hours or more—longer, I thought, than was necessary for the actual work. Then it occurred to me that Nixon was getting himself "up" for this talk and that we served as an audience and cheering section. He would read lines aloud, praising the "good rhetoric." When he asked for a barbed reference to Robert Kennedy, we worked to come up with a crack that would satisfy him. After we did, the three of us didn't like it anymore. We then found ourselves in the unusual position of wanting Nixon to sound stuffer than he wanted to sound.

① At last he agreed to drop the line, complaining: "Oh, hell, why does Bobby get to be so mean, and why do I have to be so nice?"

Fresh rumors from Saigon told of an intensifying power struggle between Thieu and Ky, perhaps resulting in still another coup. Johnson, Nixon had been informed, would move within two months—and would probably "go for peace." "He's afraid of Bobby," Nixon said on the afternoon of Friday, March 29, adding that he thought Johnson would try to outflank his opponents by promising to "bring the boys home."

Nixon spoke more rapidly than usual, but this was his only sign of excitement. The developments he reported, though fateful for U.S. policy, seemed to have a calming effect on him, as though freeing him from an unwanted burden of choice and decision. Now he could think exclusively in political terms, preparing counters to Johnson's expected moves. As he spoke, I made notes, anticipating a request for further revision of the text. But as he announced the conclusion he had reached and the course he intended to follow, my pen stopped.

"I've come to the conclusion that there's no way to win the war. But we can't say that, of course. In fact, we have to seem to say the opposite, just to keep some degree of bargaining leverage."

I doubted that Nixon would be able to sustain such a misleading approach through the campaign—indeed, the talk he was preparing to give said nothing about U.S. "victory" in Vietnam, but instead beamed a message to Moscow emphasizing "realism" and encouraging a far-ranging deal between the superpowers. Hence I took Nixon's conclusion as sincere and remained skeptical of his declared tactics.

We met for a last review of Nixon's talk mid-morning on Saturday, March 30. At 2 o'clock that afternoon, he would go to the studio and tape the broadcast. Printing and mass-mailing personnel

were standing by. Supporters in Washington had been alerted and were waiting to be telephoned quotes from the final text. A press release was ready, and typists were waiting at headquarters to duplicate the final version of the speech for mail distribution. The well-oiled machinery needed only the go-ahead signal.

Buchanan told reporters that Nixon was doing fine. "He called this morning, said 'Send over more yellow pads,' and hung up."

A couple of minor revisions were necessary, and Price excused himself to use the typewriter in the small den down the hall. (There, the candidate preserved his glowing tan with the sun lamp he denied owning.) Buchanan and I sat with Nixon in the study, eating sandwiches and sipping beer. The Boss was in good humor, based in part on his belief that he had reliable intelligence on Johnson's likely moves and timing. Confidently, he questioned Buchanan about the probable impact of the speech. What would be the lead in the Monday papers? In wire-service fashion, Buchanan rattled off a crispy fifty words and even put a head on the story: NIXON ASKS U.S.-SOVIET SUMMIT TO END VIETNAM WAR, SEEK PEACE.

Whenever Johnson's Glassboro meeting with Kosygin came up, Nixon noted with amazement that nothing had happened there, yet Johnson's poll-rating jumped sharply.

The telephone on the desk rang, and Buchanan picked it up. He listened for a few moments, then put down the receiver and faced Nixon with a puzzled expression. "That was Frank Shakespeare. Johnson's called the networks and asked for television time for a speech tomorrow night."

Nixon put his head down for a long moment. Then he flipped the pages of

Continued on page 35

Whelan, from page 30 manuscript in the air in a gesture of resignation. "Dammit. We've got to cancel. That's all we can do."

Buchanan returned to the telephone while I went down the hall to break the news to Price. Mindful of his misgivings, I told him: "Ray, the governor's just called—you've got a reprieve."

Nixon sat slumped in his armchair, frowning. He pointed a finger toward Buchanan and demanded: "All right, Pat. What's Johnson going to say?" He would announce a bombing pause, Pat guessed. Nixon pointed at Price, who answered: "He'll wrap himself in the flag and answer Bobby." Now it was my turn. There wasn't any reason for Johnson to speak on Sunday, I said, except that it came two days before the Wisconsin primary, where Johnson had every reason to expect very bad news. If he wanted to make a move without seeming to react to defeat, I concluded, he had

"That was Clem Stone," Nixon explained after the two-minute conversation. "He's given us a half-million dollars."

to make it now. Nixon received our guesses in glum silence. Johnson had taken the initiative much sooner than expected. Before leaving Nixon, we talked about rescheduling the radio address later in the following week, but quickly agreed that nothing could be decided until after the President's speech.

On Sunday evening, March 31, Lyndon Johnson did as we anticipated, announcing a dramatic turn in war policy toward de-escalation and a limited halt to the bombing of North Vietnam as a means of getting talks started with Hanoi. Then he did the unthinkable and announced that he was not available for renomination.

A few minutes later, Price, who had had a hur-

ried conversation with Nixon, relayed his impressions of the speech and Nixon's reaction. "At first, it seemed to be a bid for a draft, but it was too Sherman-like. Johnson's looking at the history books—he wants to play the peacemaker. Can he do it? We don't know what moves have been made off the board"—the last was unmistakably Nixon. "Hanoi may never be in a better bargaining position than now."

The next day, Nixon's statement to the press exuded confidence. He tossed off a jaunty quip: "This is the year of the dropouts. First Romney, then Rockefeller, now Johnson." But he was privately shaken and uncertain. As one of the New York staff told me later: "For a day or so, RN couldn't understand it. He had expected to face a bloodied, beatable opponent, either Johnson or Kennedy—preferably Bobby, because he wanted to beat a Kennedy. Johnson's withdrawal left him a bit scared. Now he couldn't be sure whether it would be Kennedy or Humphrey."

Faced with this new situation, Nixon fell back on his do-nothing strategy. The important difference was that he now admitted it, although he took pains to make his silence appear to be synonymous with statesmanlike responsibility. He announced that he would observe a personal "moratorium" on Vietnam and would say nothing about the war or the peace-seeking initiative until he could judge the effects of the bombing halt and North Vietnam's response. "In the light of these diplomatic moves, and in order to avoid anything that might, even inadvertently, cause difficulty for our negotiators," Nixon told the press, "I shall not make the comprehensive statement on Vietnam which I had planned for this week."

The talk we had prepared, of course, had been something less than "comprehensive," and we would have been hard-pressed to go beyond it in detail, particularly if Nixon had insisted on saying the opposite of his basic conclusion about the war. But

the media did not know this, and his silence invited wishful speculation and much more favorable publicity than if he had given the talk as planned. His moratorium also allowed him to retire from the renewed battle between the lame duck President and his Democratic critics. Although Nixon's statement warned Johnson against "the temptations of a camouflaged surrender," his maneuver tacitly conveyed a friendlier message to the White House—"You can trust me not to make any trouble for you." Thus was laid the groundwork for a non-aggression pact between incumbent and challenger that would become increasingly apparent in the months ahead.

All in all, Nixon's withdrawal into silence was a brilliantly executed political stroke—and a cynical default on the moral obligation of a would-be President to make his views known to the people. But politics imposed no sanctions on maneuvers that worked, and Nixon's worked superbly. On the following Tuesday, the man whose views on Vietnam were unknown, and not likely to be made known, received a resounding 79.4 per cent of the Republican vote in the Wisconsin primary.

Money mattered decisively in the making of a President, as I saw illustrated in small and large ways. For a small example, during one staff meeting, Nixon told us that he wanted a full-dress statement on education, declaring that he proposed to spend "a lot of money on it." The staff, however, did not include anyone with credentials to write the paper. Pick the man you want, Nixon said, and pay him whatever you have to pay to get a good statement. "Don't worry—the money's there." A large example of the success of Maurice Stans's fund-raising effort, which gathered some \$30 million, occurred during our meeting. Although I had heard Nixon instruct Rose Mary Woods not to disturb him with calls, the telephone rang. Nixon picked up the receiver and at once ap-



SHELTON STROLLER'S WINDOWPANE CHECKS

20.00

It's your dress. . .made for everything you do. Bright windowpane design in red/white or navy/white. A snap to care for in machine washable, drip-dry nylon jersey, little or no ironing. Pops up fresh from your suitcase! Button-and-go style with shiny belt and side pockets. Sizes 10-20 and 12½-22½. Columbia Dresses: Washington 5th, and Chevy Chase, Prince Georges Plaza, Iverson Mall, 7 Corners, Wheaton Plaza, and Landmark Center. Telephone 783-7600 to order anytime. Out of town, call 800-424-8550 tollfree.

WOODWARD & LOTHROP

proved his knowing secretary's discretionary breach of orders. When the caller came on the line, the candidate fairly purred his gratitude and appreciation. "In all my years in politics, nothing like this has ever happened," he said, beaming.

"That was Clem Stone," Nixon explained after the two-minute conversation. "He's given us a half-million dollars." The self-made Chicago insurance multimillionaire—his fortune was estimated at some \$400 million—was by far the biggest single contributor to the campaign.

Clement Stone's staggering generosity put Nixon in a better humor, and he relaxed for several minutes tossing around a question of propaganda. "Should we put it out that we want Bobby as our opponent? Hell, we can beat him. Or should we say Hubert?" Bobby jokes were exchanged around the table and Nixon jotted down a couple to supplement the output of gag writer Paul Keyes, former producer of *Laugh-In*. Finally, the weighty question was resolved: we would tout Robert Kennedy to the press as Nixon's preferred opponent.

By removing himself from the competition for popular favor, Johnson, for the moment, recovered it. His critics, including even Sen. McCarthy, were lavish and magnanimous with their praise. The stock market leaped, and a wave of good feeling and optimism rolled over the country.

But the spell cast on the eve of April Fool's Day proved short-lived. Toward dusk on April 4, the false calm was shattered by a bulletin from Memphis. The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., who was leading demonstrations in support of the city's striking sanitation workers, had been assassinated, and police were looking for a white suspect. That evening, scattered window-breaking, looting, and arson occurred in the slums of the District of Columbia, the first large U.S. city with a black majority. During the next two days, the dis-

order in Washington grew into full-scale riot and spread to some 120 cities. Before the violence abated, 39 persons had died, all but five of them Negroes, and more than 3,500 persons had been injured. Some 20,000 persons were arrested. Property damage was hazily estimated in the scores of millions of dollars.

Compared with the capital—by far the hardest-hit city with more than a thousand fires burning—New York experienced only minor disorder. The eye of the hurricane was the Nixon headquarters. The staff argued worriedly without reaching any conclusions. The uncertainties

During the 1968 riots in New York, the eye of the hurricane was Nixon's headquarters

raised by Johnson's withdrawal had not yet been sorted out, and now the racial crisis had come to a violent boil. "There's no consensus," Price told me on the telephone. "We talked all around it. You know the positions—everything from law and order to compassion." Nixon had made a statement deploring Dr. King's death, but he showed no inclination to go beyond it. "At this point," said Price, "he doesn't feel the need to reach for attention, and I agree."

Television was showing spectacular scenes from Washington—pillars of smoke rising above the cherry blossoms, machine guns mounted on the steps of the Capitol—but it seemed to me that the worst damage was invisible. This was the widespread collapse of confidence in authority. Panic-stricken white suburbanites, after fleeing downtown Washington offices, succumbed to another, equally primitive instinct: to stand and fight. From locked drawers and closet shelves came the long-accumulated arsenal of fear. The District of Columbia, according to conservative official estimates, contained "a bare minimum"

of 75,000 handguns alone. No one knew how many tens of thousands of lethal weapons were owned by the citizens of the surrounding Virginia and Maryland suburbs. While the target of the rampaging blacks was property, the anxious whites, hearing the wild harangues of Stokely Carmichael and other extremists, were prepared to take aim at black "troublemakers." The mob spirit was infectious. The looters swiftly produced their opposite numbers outside the law, the white vigilantes.

Garment dutifully briefed me on the altered campaign strategy. "Our revised target is the Democratic philosophy. None of the Democratic candidates has anything new to say, none of them offers a real choice, and none of them can unite the country—that's the theme." But he sounded no more convinced than I was that it dealt with the situation created by the riots. Those were Nixon voters arming to the teeth in the suburbs; what did he propose to say to them?

"I don't know. He may decide to make a speech soon. You know, something on the theme of violence and reconciliation, preserving the decent middle, whites helping blacks and blacks helping whites to keep the country going. He might make that kind of speech, maybe at some small Negro college like Hampton in Virginia."

I lost patience. "Len, there are troops stationed on my corner. The capital of the United States is being occupied in order to protect it against its own population. The whole goddamned world is watching and wondering whether the country will come apart at the seams—and you're telling me that Nixon may get around to making a speech. He's got to do better than that."

Garment responded with a question: should Nixon attend Dr. King's funeral in Atlanta? I was amazed to learn that the question was being seriously debated and that several senior advisers were opposed. Not only conservatives such as John Tower of Texas, but liberals too, including Ellsworth and Bob Finch. They

① were afraid, Garment said, that if Nixon went, some of the Southern delegates would bolt. "Even Eisenhower's advised him against it. I think Nixon wants to go, but he knows that the Southerners will call him a traitor if he does. He's in a hammer lock."

Whatever King had been personally, he had become a symbol of something greater, a dream of accommodation between races and classes. His vaunted "soul-force" had much less to do with the realization of that dream than the force of changing life-circumstances that brought Negroes and whites closer together in jobs, schools, and neighborhoods, compelling them, as individuals, to adjust to each other's presence with civility and restraint and mutual respect. If Nixon genuinely believed in the theme of unity, he had to behave in exemplary fashion and pay his respects to the murdered man's widow and children. "Tell him I think he has to go," I said. "Otherwise he can forget about the 'decent middle.' If he stays home, there won't be any moral difference between him and Wallace."

Garment answered with a mixture of sadness and disgust. "Things have come to some pass when a Republican candidate for President has to take counsel with his advisers about whether he should attend the funeral of a Nobel Prize winner."

In the end, Nixon attended the funeral and called on Mrs. King. Quite properly, he drew the line at joining the procession that trudged behind the mule-drawn wagon bearing the coffin—that was the other side's media politics. Yet Nixon, after having done the right and necessary thing, continued to be worried by the imagined perils. Several times thereafter, he rebuked those of us who had urged him to go to Atlanta, calling it "a serious mistake that almost cost us the South."

When Garment called again, he relayed an assignment from Nixon: review the first draft of the previous December's National Association of Manufacturer's speech and rework unused material into a fresh statement. That

speech, I pointed out, had been a warning against a possible war-in-the-making. What was needed now was a fresh judgment in war-like circumstances and in advance of what might be a nightmarish summer. What had been Nixon's reaction to King's death and the riots? Were there any thoughts to guide me as I worked on a statement?

"He's given us almost no clue as to what he believes," said Garment, sounding dejected. "He hasn't done his homework on the racial problem or the cities. I guess he doesn't know what to say."

The Nixon organization's operational environment was like that of a studio control booth: hushed, sealed off from distractions, all buttons and dials set for carefully timed, skillfully executed moves. The racial crisis was not part of the scheduled program. The man in the booth did not live emotionally in this time, in this country set aflame, yet he was determined to preside over it.

"I could no longer find phrases to express Nixon because I could not find him. He had eluded me; he was not there."

As our conversation ended, Garment said: "Either Nixon will move into the urban crisis now, or his candidacy will remain technically alive but sink beneath the waves." Whether or not that remark was for my benefit, to spur me to my task, I believed it, and set to work.

But it was no use. If Nixon had roared with anger, or been moved to weep; if he had telephoned the White House and volunteered his services—but he had said and done nothing and had given no sign that he felt anything.

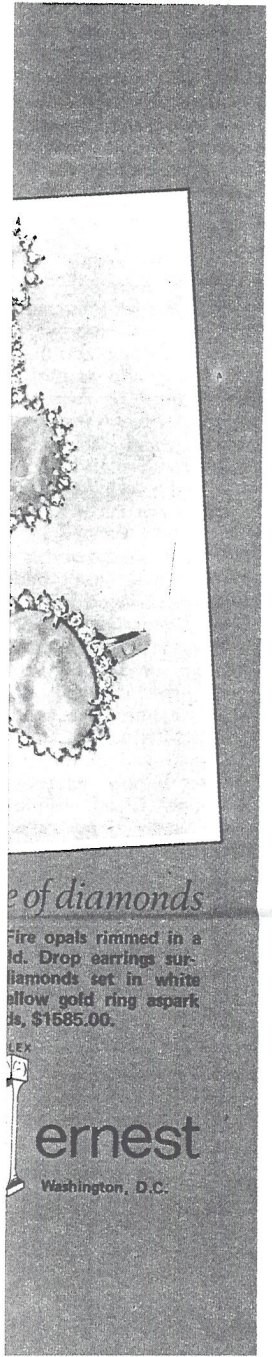
I could no longer find phrases to express Nixon

because I could not find him. He had eluded me; he was not there, a felt presence behind the words in my typewriter. I stared for a long time at the blank paper reflecting the sum of what I knew of his convictions. Finally I called New York and asked to speak with him. I learned that Nixon had gone to Florida and then on to the Bahamas, where his friend Robert Abplanalp, the multi-millionaire inventor of the aerosol can valve, had a villa. He would not return until the middle of the month.

By retreating into impenetrable silence and seclusion, Nixon doubtless was being politically shrewd. But why should ordinary citizens who could not escape to the sun trust and support him? Whatever I wrote would give the misleading impression that he understood and cared; that he should occupy the presidency when the racial volcano next erupted. I was no longer certain that he should.

As the date of the convention drew near, Nixon asked me to draft a comprehensive statement on Vietnam for submission to the convention platform committee. He gave no instructions on what it should contain. Yet neither did he give me—or, more important, himself—a free hand. The only clue to his thinking that I carried away was a parting admonition. "Remember," he said, "I want to keep Hubert lashed to the mast."

A few days later, John Sears, a young lawyer from the Nixon law firm who had begun writing speeches and performing chores for the candidate in the spring of 1966, and I lingered over dinner in a dim, quiet restaurant on Madison Avenue before returning to work. Until recently, he had seemed the very model of a modern young professional who enjoyed playing the game well for its own sake. Lately, though, he had revealed a side on which he asked the worth of winning the game. When I mentioned Nixon's apparent enthusiasm for spelling out his



of diamonds

Fire opals rimmed in a gold. Drop earrings surmounting diamonds set in white yellow gold ring aspart. \$1685.00.

ernest
Washington, D.C.

**MER FASHION PARADE
CUSTOM TAILORED
Sport Coats • Slacks**

important element for fashion in the colors from Britain and finest mills of shades & patterns . . . and any expert craftsmen and designers will remarkably reasonable costs in our own since 1920.

1 WEEKS

Wis, Ltd.

NY OF BALTIMORE)
Shoreham Bldg.)

1000
by SAT. 9 to 5
ERICARD ACCEPTED



position on the issues, yet his strange reluctance to do so. Sears smiled. When I spoke of the need for planning not only the campaign, but the program and personnel of the Nixon government, he laughed, aloud, a quick, mirthless laugh.

"Nobody's looking that far ahead," he said, draining his glass. "November is when all this stops."

At his apartment on Saturday, Nixon asked me to assist Robert Ellsworth, former Kansas congressman, and a key member of Nixon's staff, in working with the Nixon backers on the platform committee in Miami Beach. A week earlier, Mitchell had sent out a mimeographed form letter to the staff members assigned to the convention. It was stern on matters of punctuality, decorum, and diligence, and predictably concerned with money ("For practical financial reasons, you will not be permitted to charge meals in your room"). But the taskmaster's manner concealed a scoutmaster's solicitude. In the midst of the commands came a piece of sound advice: "Be prepared for warm weather outside and cold air conditioning inside."

Outside the Hilton, Nixon's convention headquarters, a hired man dressed in an Uncle Sam costume walked about on stilts. A hired brass band blared away, and a gaggle of Nixonettes, amateurs lured by the prospect of being noticed, pranced and cheered. The neatly dressed crowd at the entrance raised limp hurrahs, but mostly they gawked at the perspiring musicians, the stilt-walker, and the inevitable baby elephant.

Mitchell was right: it was cold inside. The chill came from regimentation as well as refrigeration. With the sea on one side and an inlet on the other, Miami Beach was a natural fortress. Road access could be pinched off by closing a couple of causeways. Yet, as I received "credentials"—a plastic badge bearing my photograph and mysterious numbers and markings—I saw that the Hilton itself had been fortified

against the intrusion of reality.

The corridors and stairways were patrolled by private guards from the Wackenhut Corporation in powder blue uniforms and snappy, Air Force-type hats. We at once dubbed them "the Wackenhut SS," which wasn't quite fair. Many of them were college students and all were unfailingly courteous. Indeed, they were a bit embarrassed to be jumping up and challenging us at every turn. (Soon, girls on the staff began fraternizing and passing soft drinks and sandwiches to the guards stationed on the sweltering stairwells, and our working environment became less "secure" but more human.)

The enormous Nixon staff had taken over three floors in the Hilton (the overflow was scattered among smaller hotels), and we were carefully sorted, filed, and labeled. My room was on the floor, reserved for Nixon's personal staff, and a large sign over the door bore my name.

Nixon had gone into seclusion in Montauk, there to walk the beach, inhale the salt air he loved, and compose his acceptance speech. Each of the writers had been asked to contribute material toward the speech, but Nixon intended to assemble it unassisted. (When reporters asked what the candidate was doing, Buchanan said that the Boss was fine. "He called this morning, said 'Send over more yellow pads,' and hung up.") At the Miami Beach end of the operation, Mitchell had matters well in hand. When Nixon called him to ask if there was anything he should know, Mitchell answered without hesitation, "No."

In the final version of the Vietnam statement, some of the original language survived, but Nixon now called for "phasing out" American troops. Ironically, the platform committee proved bolder and opted to call for "de-Americanizing" the war. Even in its watered-down form, the Nixon statement delighted the very dovish Tom Wicker, whose column in the *New York Times* on Aug. 6 praised the Nixon campaign as "masterful . . .

imaginative, forceful, and flexible," an extraordinary mouthful for a man whose heart belonged to McCarthy. This was the only published case of sunstroke at the convention. Within a couple of days Wicker, fully recovered, was blasting away at "the same old Nixon."

The Nixon machinery's efficiency was achieved at some human cost. Ellsworth laid down the law to me as it had obviously been laid down to him: We could not change so much as a comma in the statements we received. At that point Nixon's statement on the economy arrived. Buchanan, in rewriting my long paper, produced a version that economist Alan Greenspan pronounced factually wrong. To issue the statement as written would make Nixon look foolish. Assuming that the machinery would tolerate minor disobedience rather than stupidity, I began penciling in changes. Ellsworth turned pale.

"I told you not to touch a word," he said.

Why should he and I be afraid to use common sense in this situation? I ignored him and continued to write. Jeannette Lerner, Ellsworth's devotedly loyal secretary, put her hand to her mouth, as though sure we were about to come to blows. Greenspan edged away. Dr. Martin Anderson, 31-year-old assistant professor of economics at Columbia and one of Garment's prize recruits, stood silently near the door. Ellsworth repeated his command, demanding: "Didn't you hear what I told you?"

"Yes, Bob," I said, "and you shouldn't have told me that."

I finished revising the statement and gave it to Greenspan, who approved it. Ellsworth stared at us for a long moment, then broke into a smile.

"Goddamit, Dick, all right. But I hope you didn't change it *too much*."

This confrontation at once real and ludicrous, troubled me afterward. The conflict was not personal—Ellsworth and I shook hands at the door. The conflict was between the campaign we had waged together and the campaign in which we were separate

(13) moving parts. What made the scene ridiculous was the fact that the words meant essentially nothing. Nothing stood behind them and nothing would come of them. We had allowed ourselves to be reduced to automatons in a cause completely without substance.

The next day, Anderson closely inspected my badge and informed me that I had been demoted. "You're not allowed to go on the 18th floor"—where Nixon would be staying. More clearly than I, Anderson understood the importance of rank and place as we were herded into the mold of Organization. "You'd better get that fixed," he said. "There are guys from the law firm running around here with four stars who've never spent a minute with Nixon. Go see John Ehrlichman."

Ehrlichman, whose name was unknown to me, was in charge of convention arrangements and would be the campaign tour director. (Later I learned that he was Harry Robbins Haldeman's UCLA roommate and close friend, and like him a risen advance man. The advance men were the technicians controlling the organizational machinery and formed the close-knit elite corps of the campaign.)

The great imponderable in Wisconsin and elsewhere was George Wallace

Ehrlichman was a stocky, balding fellow in his 40s with a brusque manner and annoying smirk. I stated my business, he said he would check into it, and asked me to return the next day.

When I returned the next morning, Ehrlichman told me that there had been no mistake. He had gone to the trouble of calling Haldeman in Montauk, and my credentials were in order. If I was needed on the 18th floor, he said, I would be sent for and issued a pass. He returned to his paperwork, indicating that the interview was over.

When I did not leave Ehrlichman looked up. "Just who the hell are you?" I

asked. "I've never laid eyes on you or heard your name mentioned. And I'll be damned if I'm going to take orders from you." "Look," he said, his own temper rising, "I've been with Nixon a long time, and I've seen writer and researcher types like you come and go. You'll go where I say you go." "F--- you," I said, walking out.

The wounding reference to "writer and researcher types" hurt precisely because I knew it was true. The issues men who had put their brains and pens at Nixon's disposal in former years had indeed come and gone without a trace. I decided to stand my ground.

I had addressed Ehrlichman as though he were the architect of the grim minipolice state fastened on the Nixon staff. As my anger faded, I realized that he, like the rest of us, was only a functionary, a part in the machinery designed to serve and protect Nixon. If he and I faced each other as hostile strangers, rather than allies, it was because Nixon put people into slots, as separate individuals, and did not wish to concern himself with coordinating and connecting them—or even introducing them. Nixon followed a survival-of-the-fittest personnel-relations policy. He did not much care what his subordinates did to each other as long as he was spared the sight of blood. Indeed, he went to some lengths to insulate himself.

I reported my exchange with Ehrlichman to Ellsworth and Garment, implying that I would take the matter up directly with Nixon the following day. They assured me that Ehrlichman must have misunderstood Haldeman—I was sure that he hadn't—and they offered to intercede "upstairs," presumably with Mitchell. Within an hour, the word came down: my credentials were to be changed admitting me to the holy of holies on the 18th floor.

After the convention Nixon left for a week-long stay in California. The announced purpose of the trip was to plan the forthcoming campaign. In fact, the operational plans were well advanced. The actual purpose was to yield the

spotlight to the Democrats and the inevitable civil war at their approaching convention in Chicago. Nixon intended to project an image of calm, order, and unity as Republicans of every ideological stripe came to pay him homage.

Within a day of our arrival, it was evident that the organizers, led by Haldeman and Ehrlichman, were firmly in the saddle. When the research and writing staff met with Haldeman, I reminded him of our mid-July request for security clearances so that we could receive classified briefings from the White House, the Pentagon, and the State Department. By sharing the same fund of information as Nixon, we could better serve him. Haldeman had agreed, writing: "We will make sure to initiate formal clearance procedures immediately after the convention." Now, however, he withdrew that promise. As a member of the California Board of Regents, he said, he had security clearances and that would be quite sufficient.

Next I asked when the writers would meet with Nixon. Most of us had not seen him privately for two weeks. (The extent of my communication had been Nixon's hurried remark at a victory party: "Did you see that I used some of your lines in the acceptance speech?" I said that I had, trying to look pleased.) Now it seemed necessary that he meet with us to discuss and assign the major speeches he would be making during the next ten weeks. "Put the request in writing," said Haldeman. Meeting adjourned.

The kind of planning being done at Mission Bay indicated beyond a doubt that the campaign would continue to duck the issues and would rely on merchandising the "new" Nixon. One morning Garment, Robert Finch, and I sat for the better part of two hours contemplating a pair of advertising layouts. The headline on one paste-up read: THIS TIME, VOTE AS IF YOUR WHOLE WORLD DEPENDS ON IT. On the other, ad-English was used: THIS TIME, VOTE LIKE . . . The weighty subject of our debate was whether Nixon should be

Continued on page 59

14

Whelan, from page 41

sold like a cigaret. I objected to the transparently slick "like," but Garment had the advertising agency's market research, showing that a majority of those polled preferred "like"—they thought "as if" sounded wishy-washy. Finch had the last word. No matter how you said it, the message was true: "With Agnew on the ticket, this time, your whole world damned well does depend on Nixon."

I was ashamed of what I was doing. I was ashamed of being in the company of mediocre merchandisers behind a facade concealing a sad mixture of cynicism, apprehension, suspicion, and fear—especially fear. Fear of the next man higher up, fear of being found out by the encircling press. Ambition kept worried and discouraged staff members in line. However, my world did not depend on going to the White House with Nixon. The absence of a desire for a mite of personal power freed me to leave the winner's cheerless camp.

Over dinner one evening at Mission Bay, several of us talked about two worrisome meetings scheduled for later in the week. Purely image-making productions, they presented hazards the organizers ignored. Our meeting would assemble Republican mayors, whom the press would observe "advising" the candidate on urban problems. The cast of Republican mayors was rather small, and so it had been padded by inviting such luminaries as the former mayor of Pompano Beach. Conspicuously *not* invited was New York City's Mayor John Lindsay, whose exclusion would surely backfire in the press. The other meeting was potentially even more damaging. It would parade before the press Nixon's "national security advisory panel," a letterhead outfit made up of retired senior military men. The thought of Admiral Arthur Radford briefing reporters on Nixon's Vietnam policy, as he understood it, was disquieting, to say the least. (Admiral Arleigh Burke, sensitive to the dangers of the mission, called from Washington and asked, "Why does Nixon want the old poops'

squad out there?")

The man with all the answers, Mitchell, had dined that evening at another table in the Inn, and he now came over to greet us. His manner was deceptively hearty, and I ventured to raise the subject of our conversation. Wouldn't it be a good idea to invite Lindsay? And wouldn't it be safer to put the retired brass on display another time? Mitchell's smile vanished and his face clouded. "You goddamned liberals are always worried about Lindsay," he said with surprising vehemence, his speech a bit thick. Why, he and the state party people were going to carry New York for Nixon without Lindsay. As for the generals and admirals, perhaps said Mitchell with heavy sarcasm, you think they should be coming out here to see you.

Other diners, including some reporters, pricked up their ears at the sound of Mitchell's voice. But he went ahead beating down what he evidently regarded as insubordination. Finally, he broke off and lumbered away.

Unaware of what was happening in Johnson's White House, Nixon decided to explain his position on Vietnam

Obviously, I had made another enemy, this one the most powerful of all. (To make my offense more unforgivable, I was soon proved at least half right—the meeting with the retired military was cancelled.) That evening, I recalled what Nixon had said in our first conversation about the kind of staff he wanted and his subsequent praise of his young men for their independence. "You can't go with just good people," he continued to tell reporters. "You have to go with the best, really first-raters." The treatment we had received since the convention was more indicative than Nixon's words. We were under the heel of men basically unsure of themselves, second-rates play-

ing over their heads and fiercely resentful of anyone who dared approach them at eye level. Nixon's own insecurity caused him to need the protection of men willing to do whatever he wished. In return they wielded unmeasured influence. By controlling the environment in which he moved, every person, paper, and choice presented to him, they exercised power beyond argument or appeal. If I remained, I would no longer work for Nixon, but for those men whom I did not respect. Yet they were only incidental foes. The true conflict was between my desire to serve Nixon and his inability to accept service on terms that were not humiliating to the servant.

At breakfast the next morning, after Garment had shared the latest Agnew joke, I told him that I had decided to resign and go home. Thoughts of resignation were part of the cloud of gloom hanging over the Nixon staff, and he showed no surprise. After our session with the advertising layouts the previous day I protested we were wasting our time—let the ad men do the job. "At least it's work," Garment had replied, tacitly admitting that it was all the work there was to be done. The issues men were now superfluous. "The trouble with you, Dick, is that you care too much," said Garment as we shook hands. "You're really a Jew."

I wrote two letters of resignation, addressed to Nixon and Mitchell, and left them with Rose Mary Woods' assistant, Shelley Scarney. Anderson was waiting to drive me to the airport. Like a pair of daylight burglars, we stealthily emerged from the side door of the motel, each carrying a suitcase, and made our ways across the parking lot. Mitchell had given orders that no one could leave without written permission, and we wondered whether the Secret Service men lounging in the shade would enforce the headmaster's edict. They nodded as we passed. "Hey, where are you guys going?"

It was Haldeman, calling from the third-floor balcony.

"Don't worry, Bob," I replied. "I'll write." ■