

An Inside Story

Nixon Talked About Quitting, Daughter Says

By Frances Lewine
Associated Press

San Clemente

Julie Nixon Eisenhower says her father considered resigning because of the Watergate scandal and asked the family's advice on the question.

"We said no," Julie reported, "because resigning would have been an admission of wrongdoing. And we also felt that he was the man for the job. He had started things and needed to finish them."

The President's younger daughter observes her 25th birthday today.

DISCUSSIONS

In an interview, Julie said the discussions took place at Camp David on the weekend after President Nixon made his April 30 radio-TV speech on the Watergate affair. At that time he announced the resignations of his two top aides, H. R. Haldeman and John D. Erlichman, and the firing of his counsel, John W. Dean III.

She said Mr. Nixon played "devil's advocate." Julie said her father, "who loves this country and would do anything for it," raised the question of resignation and whether it would be better for the country and help heal the wounds faster.

Julie said she believes that "events are going to vindicate" the President and expressed concern over the "negative atmosphere" created by Watergate.

DEFENSE

She defended her father, as she has in a series of public appearances in recent months, saying "I think he was just really in the dark" about the burglary of the

Democratic National Committee and the subsequent coverup.

Julie said her father failed to discover something was wrong months ago because "he just had complete faith in everyone around him. I guess that's part of the whole tragedy of this thing."

Mr. Nixon's problems came because he didn't run his own campaign in 1972, Julie said.

"He didn't keep close tabs on the whole thing," she said. "One of the real tragedies of Watergate is that the campaign organization is getting a black eye," and so many good, hard-working people "are brought down too," she added.

Julie said she decided to continue her busy schedule despite Watergate because she wants to be part of her father's administration and talk about his programs.

She said she wants to make a contribution "to the

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world and to my community." But she said of politics "I don't think I'd actively seek this kind of life myself." And she noted that when her father's term is over, "I think I'm going to enjoy the public not being interested."

Julie said her father's mood at the Western White House was "very good . . . He's moving ahead." Mr. Nixon has been able to get in some swimming and walking on the beach with his family while here.

NOSTALGIC

The President took the family on a nostalgic drive a few days ago to nearby Dana Point, where he proposed to Pat Nixon, Julie said.

She said the idea of a political enemy list is "so ludicrous . . . because everyone knows who's opposed to the administration and who's a friend. Writing about this just makes it sound so underhanded. I just don't feel it's fair representation because I know my father and the kind of man he is. And he's not that way. He's too busy to be consumed with petty paranoid concerns."

Responding to criticism over government expenditures of some \$1.3 million on Mr. Nixon's California and Florida homes, Julie said other presidents had similar amounts spent on their homes.

"President Kennedy had three homes and I'm sure that must have added up to more," she said.

'ETHICAL'

Julie said her parents are "so ethical." She added: "I just don't like to see anything written that implies that they would have personal gain because they just aren't that way. When my dad left Washington in 1960-61, he left with about the same thing he came in with. He didn't make a lot of money in government."

Julie said she thinks the press and the American people "should be disturbed at the whole idea of burglary and coverup."

"What disturbs me greatly," said the President's daughter, is that "the press made a hero of Daniel Ellsberg. He stole documents. It was a question of national security and that could have much greater consequences than bugging the Democratic National headquarters . . ."

"What's really sad is that Watergate in a way is the result of government being so big, so much power in the presidency. Government gets bigger and bigger. But this administration did try to really make a start . . . This administration has really, sincerely tried to make government less centralized, less powerful."

EFFORT

As examples of the effort, Julie cited Mr. Nixon's revenue sharing proposals and attempts to move more decision making to the state and local levels.

Julie reported some of the lighter side of the Nixon family.

She told how they got real delight out of Soviet leader

Leonid I. Brezhnev's visit to their San Clemente home. "We all got in and tested Tricia's bed after Brezhnev slept there" and now consider it "really very historical."

Julie was born in Washington on July 5, 1948, during her father's first term in Congress.

Since her marriage to President Dwight D. Eisenhower's grandson, David, in December 1968, Julie notes, she has moved six times.

'PEACEFUL'

Now she's finding it "really peaceful" living in a Bethesda, Md., home they rent from Mr. Nixon's close Florida friend, C. G. (Bebe) Rebozo. Julie became irritated when she was asked how much rent they pay, in view of reports it is much less than the \$125,000 home could command.

"That's part of my private business," she said.

Julie said the President visits them often. "In fact, that's one reason we're renting. It's so private. My parents can slip out there and relax."

Asked what one thing she wanted for her birthday, Julie said:

"A look into the future. To know more of what I'm doing with my life. And what David is doing and where we're going. I'm a very impatient person, and I don't feel I really know what I'm doing yet."

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AP Wirephoto

JULIE EISENHOWER
'We said no'