

Nixon and His Brothers

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... We're Not the Kennedys but Ed Is a Very Nice Fellow?

By Jack Thomas

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IN THE AUTUMN of 1969, Donald Nixon, the errant brother of Richard Nixon, was in the Dominican Republic to enlist the aid of President Joaquin Balaguer in putting together some business deals that involved stock, real estate, mining rights and the construction of apartment buildings.

Traveling with Donald Nixon were John Meier, a former associate of Howard Hughes, and Anthony Haisis of Nevada, suspected by congressional investigators of having connections with organized crime.

Because Donald Nixon is the brother of the President of the United States his visit attracted a lot of attention in Santo Domingo. The newspaper *El Caribe* ran it as a lead story. The Nixon party took over the entire floor of a hotel, and President Balaguer assigned 30 armed guards to ensure their safety and privacy.

Everybody had a goal. Donald was interested in constructing apartment buildings on ocean-side property owned by the Dominican Republic. The others were interested in Donald Nixon.

Meier and Haisis thought Donald Nixon could influence President Balaguer to assist in obtaining mining rights for their Toledo Mining Co. of Nevada.

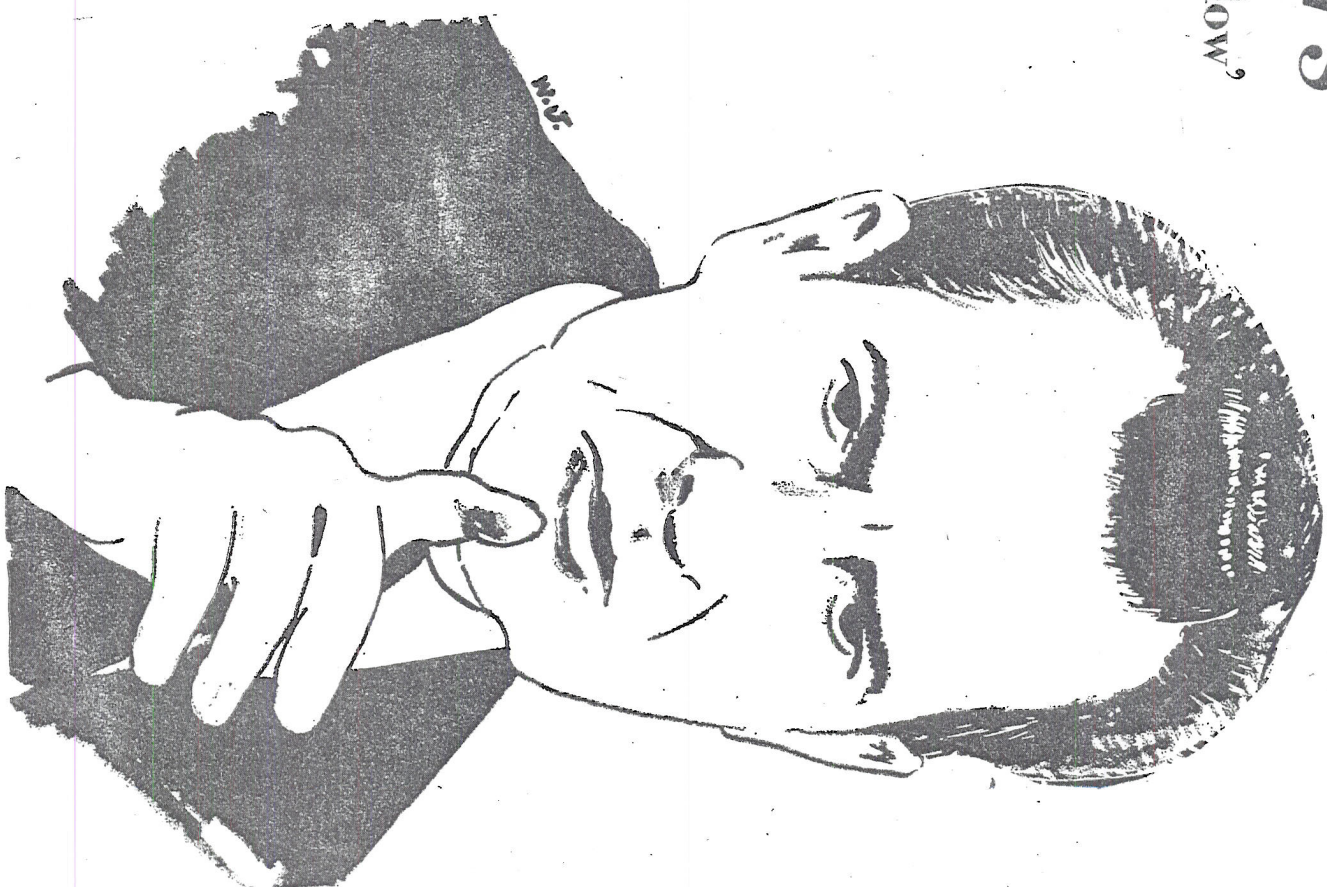


Donald

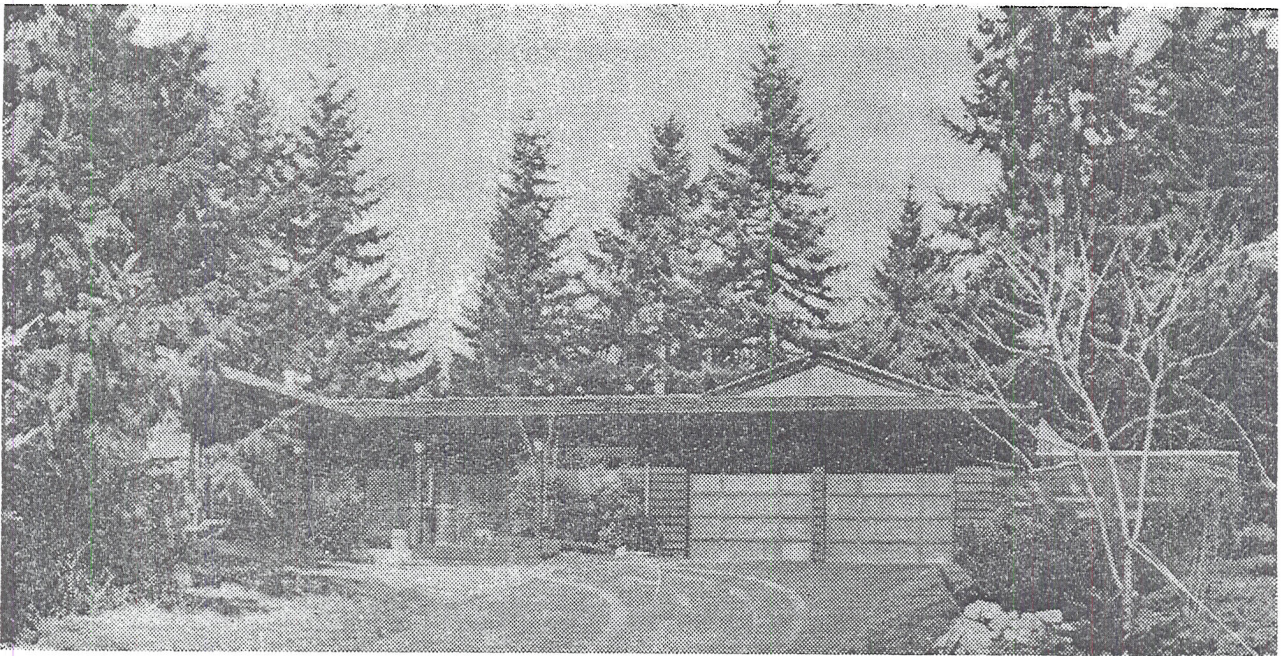


Edward

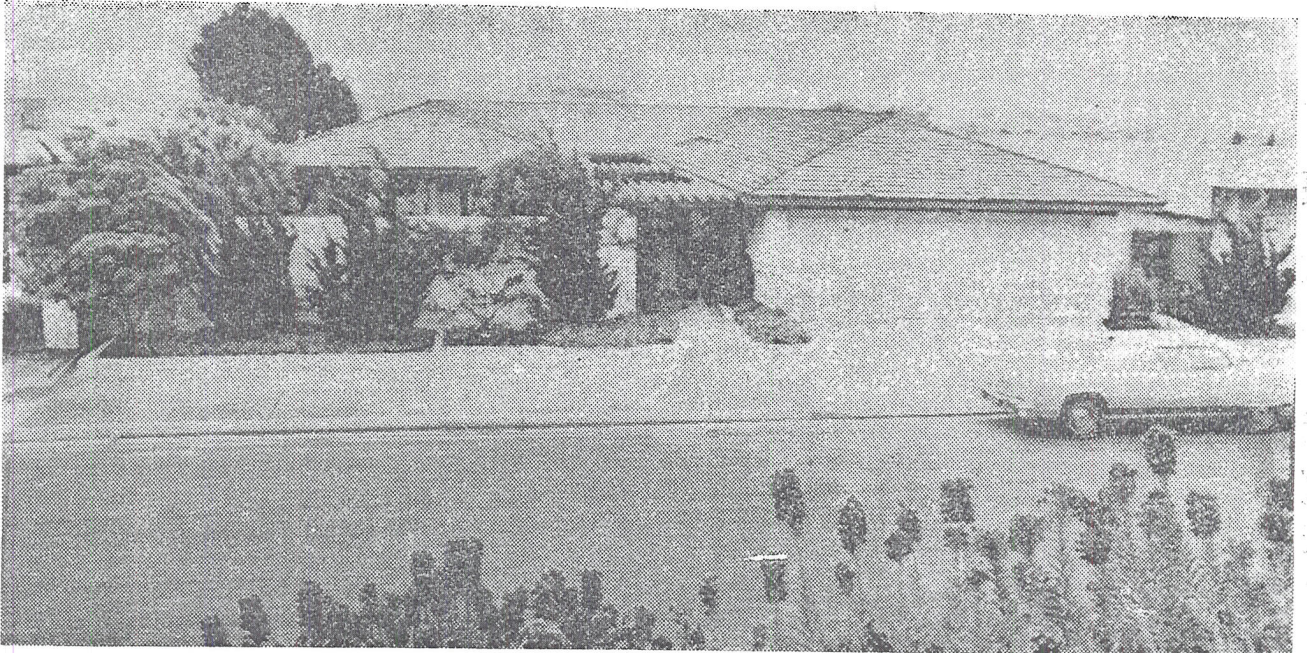
On Meier, see KPFA News and WXP 30 May 75, filed CIA. (WXP article is by Eric Walling.)



Richard



The Edward Nixons live in a \$40,000 brown frame house in Lynnwood, Washington . . .



. . . while the Donald Nixons live in a \$100,000 beige brick rambler in Newport Beach, Calif.

President Balaguer thought Donald Nixon could influence his brother Richard to increase sugar quotas and, perhaps, provide some help for Balaguer in the upcoming Dominican Republic elections.

While waiting for their introduction to President Balaguer, Donald Nixon noticed that Meier was carrying a package, and he asked about it. Meier said it was a gift for President Balaguer.

Donald Nixon, apparently embarrassed because he had brought no gift, urged Meier, "Tell President Balaguer that the gift is from you, President Nixon and me." Meier agreed.

As they were ushered into the president's office, Meier presented the gift to Balaguer, saying it was from President Nixon, Donald Nixon and John Meier.

President Balaguer opened the gift and discovered — to his bewilderment and to Donald Nixon's embarrassment — a bust of President Nixon's historic and sometimes bitter foe, John F. Kennedy.

Donald's Ventures

THE INCIDENT — in fact, the whole Dominican Republic trip, with its overtones of financial wheeling-dealing, political indiscretions and social bungling — illustrates the parasitic role that Donald Nixon has played throughout the long and tumultuous political career of his brother, Richard.

In the 1950s, Donald capitalized on their name by selling triple-decker sandwiches called Nixonburgers, and tried to incorporate himself to sell shares to Republicans who might want to find favor with the then Vice President, Richard Nixon.

In the 60s, Donald was embroiled in a national controversy over a suspicious \$205,000 loan from Howard Hughes, which some say contributed to Nixon's defeat for the presidency in 1960 and the governorship of California in 1962.

Now, in the 70s, Donald and another brother, Edward, emerge indefinitely in government scandals about influence peddling, suspicious defense contracts, questionable consultant payments and illegal campaign contributions.

Although Richard has endured 28 years of uninterrupted public attention, his two brothers, Donald and Edward, have, with few exceptions over the years, maintained their private lives.

Frank and Hannah Nixon had five sons, Harold died of tuberculosis at 23, Arthur died young of meningitis, and three survived: Donald, 59, of Newport Beach, Calif., a business executive; Edward, 44, of Lynnwood, Washington, a geologist and businessman, and Richard, 61, of Washington, D.C., the 37th President of the United States.

There is a striking contrast between the Nixon brothers and the Kennedy brothers. They are as different fraternally as they are politically. The Kennedy brothers were intimate with each other, and, in times of crisis, they joined together for advice and support. The Nixon brothers are amicable, but

not intimate, and the President does not count Donald and Edward among his advisers.

The Kennedy brothers coveted publicity, sought public office, and exuded Harvard, Eastern wealth and Irish charm. They moved easily among the writers, musicians and artists of the world.

Donald and Edward Nixon avoid publicity, have no desire for public office, and struggle to cope with unwanted notoriety and financial insecurity. They lack skill in dealing with the nuances of political and financial power and they are less comfortable among people of authority and prestige.

Life in Newport Beach

DONALD NIXON and his wife, Clara Jane, live in a \$100,000 beige brick rambler which sits far back on a landscaped lot on a winding street in the exclusive Dover Shores section of Newport Beach, about an hour's drive south of Los Angeles.

The Nixon house is, by Newport Beach standards, a modest one. Homes along the harbor and on the bay islands cost as much as \$500,000. His neighbors are Herbert Kalmbach, once the personal attorney for President Nixon, H. R. Haldeman, once President Nixon's chief of staff, and movie stars like John Wayne.

Donald Nixon's home is protected by a burglar proof iron grilled gate, and his unlisted telephone number is changed every few months.

The Nixon boys grew up in Whittier, Calif. There never was much money, but because their father owned a grocery store, there always was enough food. The three brothers worked mornings before school sorting vegetables and lugging crates. After school they delivered orders and waited on customers. By car it is 45 minutes from where Donald grew up in Whittier to where he lives in Newport Beach, but in other respects, it is a million miles away.

Clara Jane does not forget her inauspicious beginning: "I was born in a tent over in Placenta," she said, "without benefit of a doctor. When we spent the night at the White House, I wouldn't let Don turn out the light. I kept remembering where I was born and thinking, here I was in the queen's bedroom."

Richard is treated deferentially. As Clara Jane confided, "Dick Nixon is the only one I let put his feet on my coffee table."

Donald and Clara Jane have two children. Their daughter is Lawrene Mae, who married an accountant, Thomas Anfinson, four years ago in a Newport Beach ceremony attended by the President. Their son, Donald, 26, spent some time in the late 1960s living in what was described as a hippie commune in the hills of North Carolina.

When the President became concerned that Donnie, as he is called, might prove an embarrassment, John Ehrlichman sent an emissary to lure him back to a conventional life. The White House obtained a job for him as personal aide to Robert Vesco, the international financier now under indictment in connection with allegedly illegal campaign contributions.

Donald became exasperated when he learned that his son had told a friend he would be working for Vesco. "That

dumb bastard," Donald said of his son. "John Ehrlichman talked to him for a couple of hours . . . and told him he had to behave himself . . . You know, he told him he was the President's nephew and couldn't do anything to embarrass the President."

Where is the boy now, Donald Nixon was asked.

"He's gone off," Donald said. (The son was married last week in Costa Rica.)

Donnie does not, however, share his family's respect for the President. In a letter from Switzerland to a friend, he complained about his job and the fact that "Vesco and I don't get it on. I got myself into this by letting my parents and the great god in the White House pull wool over my eyes."

Health Not Good

INVESTIGATORS who quizzed brother Donald recently are convinced his health is not good. Because of circulation problems, he sometimes walks with a limp. He attempted last month to quash a subpoena to testify in the Stans-Mitchell trial, complaining of a weak heart.

Friends say that Donald is sensitive about his lack of formal education in comparison to his brothers. Richard, of course, went to Whittier and then to Duke law school. Edward went to Duke and has a masters degree in geological engineering from North Carolina State College.

Donald graduated from high school, Guilford Preparatory in North Carolina, but his college education is limited to a few night courses at the University of Southern California.

At six-feet-two, 240 pounds, Donald has a weight problem. He likes to eat. A few months ago, he sat down with two business acquaintances at a fast food restaurant in Southern California and explained that he had already had lunch. Then he ordered a cheeseburger and a chocolate milk shake, winked, and admonished his friends not to tell Clara Jane that he had gone off his diet.

Donald is aware that, as brothers of the President, he and Edward are watched by people in and out of politics. "We live in a fish bowl," he said. "We must be circumspect."

Donald's most enduring indiscretion, of course, occurred in 1956 while Richard was Vice President. Donald accepted a secret \$205,000 loan from billionaire industrialist Howard Hughes, whose businesses depended frequently on the good will of the government.

According to Noah Dietrich, Hughes' right-hand man from 1925 to 1957, Vice President Nixon approached one of Hughes' lawyers in 1956 and requested the loan to save his brother's failing chain of gift shops and restaurants in Southern California.

"To keep the loan secret," said Dietrich, "to make sure no one knew either Mr. Hughes or Hughes Tool Co. was involved in the transaction, the trust deed was turned over to an accountant, Philip Reiner of New York. The collateral—which no bank would have accepted — was a parcel of Nixon property in Whittier valued at considerably less than the amount of the loan."

Other Indiscretions

DREW PEARSON, the columnist, revealed the loan during the 1960 Presidential campaign, and although

there were denials that Richard Nixon had been involved, some of the loan documents had been notarized by Senate disbursement clerk William A. Ridgeley, whose office was next to Richard Nixon's.

Following the loan, Hughes enjoyed improved relations with the government. For example, one government agency reversed an earlier decision, and granted the lucrative St. Louis to Miami flight route to Trans World Airlines, then controlled by Hughes.

The government reversed a 10-year-old decision and allowed TWA to borrow \$5 million from Hughes Aircraft. The Securities and Exchange Commission approved a TWA stock transfer which it had rejected four times, and the Justice Department dropped an anti-trust suit against Hughes Tool Co.

The Hughes loan was not the only time Donald lacked circumspection.

Item: In 1961, while sales manager for Carnation Milk Co., Donald filed for bankruptcy, claiming debts of \$206,000 and personal assets of \$1250. Among those who lost money were his fellow employees at Carnation because Donald's bad debts included a \$6000 loan from the employees credit union to buy a 1961 Lincoln.

Item: As president of Ogden Foods, Inc., caterers, Donald negotiated contracts with airlines which also had to negotiate with his brother's administration for domestic and international airline routes.

Item: In the spring of 1970, with Boston's Thomas Pappas as host, Donald, then vice president of Marriott Corp., dined in Athens with top officials of the Greek military junta. They said they did not discuss politics.

Item: A California builder seeking federal contracts loaned Donald \$100,000 in 1971 and the firm later received a \$4 million subcontract from the Air Force.

Item: The White House—concerned about the Dominican Republic trip and Donald's association with Meier, who is under indictment for income tax evasion and an alleged \$8 million mining swindle—authorized electronic surveillance of Donald.

Help From Rebozo

THE PRESIDENT also asked his friend, Charles Rebozo, to assist in keeping Donald out of trouble. Rebozo contacted Richard G. Danner, then manager of Hughes' Sands Hotel in Las Vegas, and told him to keep Meier away from Donald Nixon.

In July 1969, Danner received a second telephone call from Rebozo. "I thought I told you to keep Johnny Meier away from Don Nixon," Rebozo reportedly said. Danner said the order had been given.

"To hell it has," shot back Rebozo. "They're meeting right now."

In fact, at that moment, Donald Nixon was meeting at an Orange County Airport with both Meier and Hatisis. Watergate investigators deduce that Rebozo learned of the meeting while it was in progress from Secret Service men who were following Donald. Hughes fired Meier a short time later.

affection for Edward, who is 17 years younger, than for Donald.

During the 1968 campaign, the President said to a reporter, "Some day, it would be nice if you did a story on Ed. Everybody is always doing stories on the Kennedys. We're not the Kennedys, but Ed is a very nice fellow."

For Edward, the President is more like a father figure than a brother. The President is five feet eleven, and Edward is six feet four. "But I still look up to him," said Edward.

Edward easily is the least controversial of the three brothers. He is more relaxed, easy going, warmer and wittier than his two brothers. "I'm the ectomorph (tall slender type) of the family," he said. Asked once why he didn't wear a campaign button, he pointed to his nose, which resembles the President's, and said, "Here's my campaign button."

In 1972, Edward took a leave from his firm, Ecoforum, Inc., a Seattle-based environmental services company, and worked on the President's campaign for \$1755 a month. He sprinkled his public speeches with homey anecdotes about how, when they were young, Richard would insist that all their games had to be played by the rules.

However, as testimony in the Vesco trial revealed between homey campaign stories, Edward was shuttled by plane to New Jersey to represent the President's interests in making sure that Vesco's \$200,000 campaign contribution remained secret. After checking with the White House, Edward suggested to Vesco that the way to ensure anonymity was to contribute in cash.

Edward, whose physical appearance and hand gestures resemble the President's, feels the pressure of the public spotlight. "For me," he said, "it goes back to high school and early adult life. My life has never been my own."

Edward and Donald share Richard's interest in sports. Edward was a track star in high school. Part of his training came from his youth when Richard would send him to the store for milk, and time him against the clock. Edward now owns 3 per cent of the Seattle Kings football team.

Family Has Horses

EDWARD NIXON and his wife, Gay Lynne, live with their daughters, Amy, 15, and Beth, 13, in a modest \$40,000 one-story brown frame home about 18 miles north of Seattle. The family owns three horses and most of the back yard is a riding area. Gay Lynne, a former Mardi Gras queen, teaches mathematics at Meadowdale Junior High School.

After graduation from Duke and North Carolina State College, Edward moved to Seattle in 1960 and accepted an ROTC post as assistant professor of naval science at the University of Washington.

In 1971, the White House planned to leak a story that Lawrence O'Brien, chairman of the Democratic National Committee, received an annual public relations retainer fee from Hughes.

But in a Feb. 1, 1971 memo to then presidential counsel John Dean, John Saulfield, a White House aide, urged caution.

"Forced embarrassment of O'Brien in this matter might well shake loose republican skeletons from the closet. In this connection, it should be remembered that Don Nixon visited the Dominican Republic with a group of heelers-dealers in September, 1969, who assertedly were connected with Hughes' interests."

The White House has been suspiciously sensitive about any connections between Donald Nixon and Hughes-eier. One theory about the motive for the Watergate break-in is that the republicans wanted to find out how much the Democrats knew about Donald Nixon and Hughes.

Donald Nixon is retiring as the Marriott Corporation's vice president for immunity and industry relations. The company cited ill health as the reason.

It is generally accepted that the president of the corporation, J. Willard Marriott, a long-time Nixon supporter, provided the job for Donald as a favor to the President.

The President seems to feel more

Edward does not flaunt the fact that he is Richard's brother. In fact, he was on the university campus for several weeks before anyone realized he was the brother of the vice-president.

He worked as a middle management consultant for Northwest Bell Telephone, and took a leave of absence in 1967 to help with his brother's campaign. Richard assigned him to head the mail operations in New York.

Like Donald, Edward does not drop by the White House to call on Richard. Both make appointments through the President's staff.

In 1971, Edward's daughter, Beth, sent a letter to Richard Nixon, asking if she could spend a night at the White House. The letter was mislaid for nine months, and when the President discovered the oversight, he sent Air Force One to bring the entire Edward Nixon family to Washington for a four-day visit.

Job Fell Through

IN 1969, the Nixon Administration named Edward to a \$30,000 Federal job in Alaska for which he was eminently qualified both in education and experience. Edward and his wife arrived in Anchorage on a Monday to look for housing but returned on Tuesday because the White House had discovered a one-year-old anti-nepotism law that made the appointment illegal.

"My feelings weren't hurt," he said, "but it was difficult to explain to the press."

Edward has demonstrated more sensitivity about his public image than Donald. He resigned as director of Oceanographic Mutual Fund when the Securities and Exchange Commission charged the company with gross misconduct practices.

Edward's most embarrassing joust with the press occurred last year when the Los Angeles Times revealed that, as a trustee of the Richard Nixon Foundation, Edward was paid \$1500 a month to select a site for the Nixon library.

After 14 months and \$21,000, Edward had narrowed the selections from six to three, all of them in Orange County, Calif., where the President has a home.

Throughout the Watergate crisis Edward has remained steadfast in his loyalty to his brother. At a Christmas service at the White House, he dismissed the scandals as a tempest in a teapot.

"I wish," Hannah Nixon once said of her three sons, "that they had not been burdened with such hardships as they endured as boys. They should have had more fun."

Now, in the twilight of Richard's explosive political career, one wonders, with all their prestige and access to power, whether they've achieved the contentment Hannah hoped for them.