

NIXON

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# Terrence O'Flaherty

# Views TV

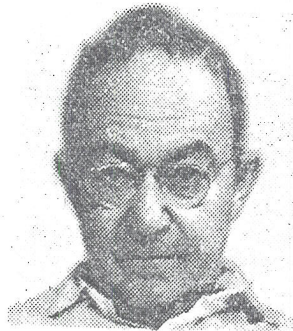
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## Why Did Big Daddy Go Bananas?

Writer Theodore H. White should be a sitting duck this morning for questions from Bay Area viewers who have read his curious new book, "Breach of Faith: The Fall of Richard Nixon." White is the scheduled guest of Bob Marshall on KGO's "AM San Francisco" sometime between 9 and 10:30 a.m. on Channel 7.

I can think of several questions I would like to ask.



Theodore White

In his book before last, "The Making of The President 1972" White had puffed Nixon's talents to the point where he appeared to qualify for statesman of the century for his intellectual range and his role as peacemaker. Those who expect a substantial reappraisal or a "gee whizz, he sure had me

fooled" will be disappointed.

Instead, White seems determined to explain that Nixon's morality was the result of circumstances beyond his control—his poor beginnings, a hostile press, his failure to be accepted by the Eastern Political Establishment, the fact that Eisenhower never allowed him to visit his private quarters, his turndown by the FBI when he was a young lawyer looking for a job, and so on.

In retrospect, these things seem to be a reaffirmation of the wisdom of eastern politicians, Eisenhower, the press, and the job application department of the FBI rather than a cause for Big Daddy to go bananas on us.

Don't men of real distinction survive early poverty, job rebuffs and such inconsequential things as Nelson Rockefeller's failure to ask him over for a drink when they both lived in the same New York apartment house? Honorable men also survive a critical press and the cool eye of television.

Is there not evidence that Nixon was a weakling from the start?

I believe there is. And once you accept that, "The Fall of Richard Nixon" becomes less a "Breach of Faith" on the part of a weak man than it is a remarkable demonstration of faith in the strength of a system that even a crooked President couldn't drag down with him.

White will also be a guest of Tom Snyder on NBC's "Tomorrow" show a week from today on June 18 at 1 a.m. on Channel 4.