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White House gives the word to 'nail' Anderson, Post

WASHINGTON — The word has gone out from the White House to "nail" Jack Anderson and The Washington Post. This language was used, according to sources who heard it, by President Nixon's crewcut chief of staff, H. R. "Bob" Haldeman.

The sources are too sensitive to be identified, but they gave us details known only to the President's inner circle. They said the President's private remarks about the press are often bitter and belligerent. He has even been heard, in reference to The Washington Post, to explode angrily: "We've got to take care of those people!" But it is Haldeman, said our sources, who has translated these remarks into direct action.

In defense of the President, they contended his hostility toward the press is justified because of the abuse he gets in print. They spoke of a "double standard" that many Washington correspondents apply in writing about him. He is badgered and belittled for taking action that would have brought praise for the late President John F. Kennedy, suggested our sources.

'Cold, calculated hostility'

But they contrasted his "touchiness" and "irritation" with Haldeman's "cold, calculated hostility" towards the press. Haldeman's idea of press relations, they said, is to tell reporters nothing. "He has an absolutely evil attitude relative to the press," acknowledged one source.

It may seem incredible to the public that the White House could be hostile to a press that supported the Nixon-Agnew ticket overwhelmingly in both presidential elections. A survey of press endorsements last November showed that Nixon-Agnew were favored 17 to 1 over McGovern-Shriver.

But the hostility is deep-seated. Those who know Richard Nixon say his feelings toward the press were hardened during his early struggle for political power.

Once in the White House, Nixon's attitude grew increasingly sour as the liberal press criticized his conduct of the Vietnam war.

'Hard but fair'

Always, the angriest barbs were aimed

at The Washington Post. Our sources claimed the President wasn't particularly hostile at first toward us but rather regarded us as "hard-hitting but fair." Not until

Jack Anderson

we exposed from their own most secret documents how he and Henry Kissinger had misled the public about U.S. policy toward the India-Pakistan conflict did the President turn his ire against us. He became even more enraged when we broke the ITT scandal linking a settlement of ITT's antitrust cases with a \$400,000 commitment to help finance the Republican convention.

Blind rage toward the Post

His anger at The Washington Post was fanned into a blind rage, said our sources, over its Watergate stories which exposed the White House involvement in the illegal espionage operations against the Democrats. The President was heard to complain that "these leaks have got to be stopped." Not long afterward, Haldeman gave out instructions to "nail" us and the Post.

The word was passed to the Justice Department, we were told, to try to make a case against us. Last week, Les Whitten was arrested while gathering news for this column. His notepad and pen were torn from his hands, cuffs were snapped around his wrists and he was thrown into a lockup.

Whitten's only crime

Let there be no confusion about it. Whitten's only crime was digging out critical information about the Nixon Administration's mishandling of Indian rights. We will prove in court that he had nothing to do with stealing any documents. His sole interest in the documents was to extract the news from them.

The right of newsmen to report and write critical stories about the government was established in 1735 after John Peter Zenger had been thrown into prison for criticizing the governor of New York. It's a right that is reaffirmed by the Constitution.