

Erlichman's Political Life Linked Exclusively to Nixon

By Edward Walsh

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Since he came to Washington, John Daniel Ehrlichman invariably has been compared to his old college roommate who also bears a German surname, H. R. Haldeman. The comparisons almost always favored Ehrlichman.

"Hans" and "Fritz" they were called, irreverently, at the White House where the two men were President Nixon's closest and most trusted advisers. But while Haldeman ("Hans") was reputed to be the most powerful presidential aide inside the White House, Ehrlichman ("Fritz") was said to come off the better in public, seeming more personable than Haldeman.

To a large extent, Ehrlichman owed his association with the President to Haldeman, his roommate at UCLA and fellow Christian Scientist and nondrinker and nonsmoker. At Haldeman's urging, Ehrlichman worked in three Nixon campaigns.

They came to Washington together in January, 1969, assuming important positions in the Nixon administration. Yesterday they left the White House together under the lengthening shadow of the Watergate scandal, which first touched Haldeman and only recently implicated Ehrlichman.

The allegations against Ehrlichman are that he was involved in an alleged White House coverup of the affair.

On March 20, according to sources, White House counsel John W. Dean III told the President that "to save the presidency" he (Dean), Ehrlichman and Haldeman would have to tell what they know about the bugging and alleged coverup and face the consequences of going to jail. Associates of Dean say he is prepared to testify under oath that Ehrlichman and Haldeman directed him to report to them on the

coverup operation. Two other high White House officials say they have concluded that Ehrlichman and Haldeman supervised the coverup.

Last Friday it was reported that Ehrlichman and Dean gave acting FBI director L. Patrick Gray III documents belonging to Watergate conspirator Hunt, and told him the documents were "never to see the light of day."

Gray resigned Friday afternoon, Ehrlichman and

Dean three days later. Denying he asked Gray to destroy the Hunt documents or that he was involved in "the Watergate matter," Ehrlichman told the President in his letter of resignation: "I intend to do what I can to spend truth's discovery."

Ehrlichman, 48, was the President's chief adviser on domestic matters and head of the White House Domestic Council—the companion to the Foreign Policy Council headed by Mr. Nixon's chief foreign policy adviser, Henry Kissinger.

While Haldeman, the President's chief of staff, handled internal White House matters, controlling access to the President and supervising White House staff work, Ehrlichman's position as chief domestic adviser thrust him much more into public view. Whatever the domestic issue—the annual budget message, government reorganization, school desegregation, the energy crisis—Ehrlichman would play a crucial role, sifting through ideas, providing the President with the ideas and options from which, eventually, domestic decisions would be made by the chief executive. Unlike Haldeman, Ehrlichman frequently appeared at White House press briefings to help explain the President's domestic programs.

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The men under Ehrlichman also were responsible for liaison with Congress, and Ehrlichman, along with Haldeman, often was blamed by congressional Republicans for the increasingly sour relations between the White House and Capitol Hill.

"The Germans," it was said, were too protective of the President, arrogant in their dealings with senators and representatives, politically naive about the realities of dealing with a Congress controlled by the opposition party.

Ehrlichman entered politics almost 10 years later than Haldeman and, like Haldeman, has devoted his political work exclusively in the service of Richard M. Nixon.

An only child, he was born in Tacoma, Wash., on March 25, 1925, the son of a successful investments expert who retired early and moved his family to southern California. Ehrlichman was a decorated officer in the Army Air Corps during World War II and, following the war, enrolled at UCLA, where he earned a degree in 1948.

He graduated from Stanford Law School in 1952 and established in Seattle a successful law firm that specialized in zoning and land development work.

Ehrlichman first worked for Mr. Nixon under Haldeman as an advance man during the 1960 presidential campaign and again, briefly, during the 1962 Nixon California gubernatorial campaign. In 1968, he was director of Nixon activities at the Republican Convention and "tour director" for the campaign—earning a reputation for efficiency in controlling Mr. Nixon's schedule and public appearances. After the election, he came to Washington with his wife, Jeanne, and their five children. The family lives in Great Falls, Va.