

# Diagnosis:

## Sociopath

Ehrlichman

A Commentary

By Nicholas von Hoffman

Lord God, it gave relief to the angry, apprehensive soul; it gave satisfaction to the frightened, indignant heart, and people in the caucus room laughed and cheered, as did others in front of a million television sets, crying out and screaming, "Go, Sam, tell 'im, rub his nose in it, tell 'im by God we're still free-born Americans, let the righteousness roll!"

And Senator Sam did. It was not politick. It could play into the hands of President Truthful and the regrouping Horribles who seek to picture the committee as a high-class lynching, but are the wicked never to be rebuked? Stans and Mitchell and Kalmbach and LaRue, a confessed felon, a conspirator, all had been thanked and told they were such able men, so distinguished, the carvers of great careers. Were we not to hear at least one of them excoriated and reproved with the staff of the Constitution and the rod of the law?

Abstinence was smart politics and it would have been smarter to continue in that manner with Ehrlichman, but justice is more than due process, or so an enflamed bowel shouts out to the more deliberative mind. Smite the man in King James cadences. Yes, it may be wrong to do so, but we needed Senator Sam to tell him, to plain tell him, to read it to him right out of the Constitution itself, to look at him straight and inform him that, "Nowhere does it say the President has the right to suspend the Fourth Amendment."

Sam did it because he was overcome by the smell in his nose. He needed to say it as much as we to hear it. It was, of course, wasted on the culprit for the dialogue between the aged constitutional avenging angel and the apparatchik could have been called The Senator and The Sociopath.

A sociopath doesn't belong in the taxonomy of medicine. He is sane by any usable definition, his hold on reality is as good as anyone else's, except he can't tell the difference between right and wrong. He can calculate but he can't understand. People and inanimate objects are indistinguishable. Use them as they serve the necessities of the moment, and forget them as Tony Ulasewicz, who may serve time in the pen for his misplaced fidelity, was forgotten: "My relationship with him, so to speak, ended at the time I shifted jobs, in early 1970. He was kind of a facility of the counsel's office and he sort of went with the job."

The Ulasewicz, in his testimony, told us in several different ways that he considered himself a social inferior. Once he even remarked of his Anglo-Saxon corporate bosses: "We were poles apart and I'm a Pole." But Ehrlichman doesn't regard Ulasewicz as the same category of mineral as the filing cabinet and the water

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carafe because Tony derives from the serving classes of middle America.

He treats Kalmbach the same way. Kalmbach is not only Nixon's lawyer, but Ehrlichman's old, long-time friend, to whom he was bound by every sentimental tie, from whom he borrowed \$20,000 without having to sign an IOU. But comes time in the hearing to help save Kalmbach, who's been forced to admit he was co-bagman with Ulasewicz, and The Sociopath's hand reaches over the side of the boat, takes Kalmbach by the hair and shoves him under the water.

Kalmbach had said under oath he'd gone to Ehrlichman while he and Tony were doling out a quarter of a million cookies in blackmail money, and had said, "John, I want you to tell me . . . John, I am looking right into your eyes . . . I know Jeanne and your family, you know Barbara and my family. You know that my family and my reputation mean everything to me and it is just absolutely necessary, John, that you tell me . . . that it (the cookies) is a proper assignment . . . He said, 'Herb . . . it is proper, and you are to go forward.'"

In deep legal trouble, Kalmbach must be in near desperate need of some confirmation of his assertions of innocence, but, in place of it, The Sociopath replies under repeated questioning, "What I denied was this very vivid and dramatic moment when we looked deep into each other's eyes and I said with solemn assurance that this was both legal and proper . . . I made no such solemn assurance . . ." Not only does he knock his old pal off, but he's gratuitously snide about it. That's more than each man for himself.

That whole day of Ehrlichman's testimony was past accepting. Elsewhere, on Capitol Hill, Schlesinger, the newest Secretary of Defense, refuses to show his face to the television cameras while discussing the Cambodian bombing cover-up, and as he shrinks back from the electronic eye, George Bush, the person occupying the position of chairman of the Republican National Committee, tries to counterattack with an incoherent 12-year-old story in which he thinks maybe or just possibly the dead Bobby Kennedy could have bugged Nixon, but in any case somebody ought to investigate it. At the same time, President Truthful and the Shah of Iran are telling each other what great leaders they are, reviewing the troops and acting out their own private meglodrama.

Not that the Chief Executive is without his defenders. The Sociopath is smiling his out-of-context smile and telling the committee, "From close observation I can testify that the President is not paranoid, weird (or) psychotic . . ."

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