

# NYTimes Impeachment Homework: Panel Hits Books

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WASHINGTON, June 22—Bill Cohen practices the piano at 2 A.M. these days. Larry Hogan has been able to get to the movies only once in the last six months. Tom Railsback has trouble sleeping. Liz Holtzman has suspended her Sunday afternoon office hours in her district.

These four — Republican Representatives William S. Cohen of Maine, Lawrence J. Hogan and Tom Railsback of Illinois and Democratic Representative Elizabeth Holtzman of New York — are among the 38 members of the House Judiciary Committee.

They are Washington's present celebrities, once relatively unknown names now enjoying the sort of national recognition most politicians only dream about. But they are finding their lives disrupted, not only by the three long days of hearings each week but also by the homework most of them feel they must do.

Mr. Railsback said recently that the hearings on the possible impeachment of President Nixon, and the accompanying burdens of work and celebrity "affect your whole style of living." Sometimes he has trouble sleeping, kept awake by a tiny detail that came up in that day's hearing or his own perusal of the black notebooks containing evidence organized by the committee staff, or by a sudden awareness of the magnitude of the undertaking he is involved in: "I've awakened to think about the fact that someday we're going to have to vote."

## "Trying to Understand"

Some nights, Mr. Railsback goes to the nearby former hotel that now houses the committee's staff to listen again and again to the White House tapes played earlier in the committee room in the Rayburn House office building. Listening for "content, voice inflection, unintelligibles — trying to understand." Some nights, and some weekends, reading on the plane as he flies to and from his western Illinois district and trying to avoid people who recognize him, he simply goes through the books.

He tries to read "every single word," in what he considers to be the important ones, like Book 2,

Volume 5, which deals with Presidential conversations of March 21, 1973. It is "the most important" of the 32 books of material the committee has come through so far in his view.

Hamilton Fish Jr., on the other hand, does not even take the notebooks out of the locked, guarded committee room. "When I want to go over a book," said the New York State Republican, "I look at it in the staff office at the luncheon break, or in the room" where hearings are held. "Very frankly, we get a concentrated dose [during the 9:30-to-5-or-later hearings], and I then have to come back here and run an office—get the mail out and not keep people here all hours."

"What concerns me," he said, "is that when you break and go on the floor you have such a short time to find out what the vote's about." Under the House Rules, members must vote within 15 minutes of the sound of the first bell calling a roll-call vote, and within 10 minutes of the second bell. It is often a perilous number of minutes past the second bell before the doors to Room 2141 open and the committee members start to lope and sprint to the House floor. "Once last week I had only 16 seconds," Mr. Fish recalled. "I know before this thing is over all of us will have an opportunity to make an awful mistake."

Representative John S. Seiberling, an Ohio Democrat, said that although he figures he is putting in about 50 hours of his 75-hour work week on the committee's work—25 hours of actual sessions and 25 "trying to keep up with the parade"—he is "falling further and further behind. I feel very inadequate. I hope we can have some time to just study this material in greater depth."

Mr. Seiberling said that a lawyer on his own staff was doing research for him on the "basic law" involved. "I don't think it necessary to commit a crime" before impeachment could be voted, he said, but "I want to know just how much could justify, for example, a charge of conspiracy to obstruct justice." The committee staff has not supplied the members with a memorandum of law, he said.

This is an election year, which means even less free time than usual for members

seeking re-election, as are all but a few of Judiciary's 38. Most of them go back to their districts on weekends now, so Trent Lott, the Mississippi Republican says, "To tell you the truth, there's not much time left to work on these notebooks. Most of the extra reading I do between 10 P.M. and midnight on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday. I'm a night person anyhow."

## "Order in Music"

Mr. Cohen, of Maine, also works "very late at night—reading, digesting, memorizing, integrating information," generally between midnight and 2 or 3 A.M., getting up again at 6 A.M. or so. He started taking piano lessons recently, and often practices in these early-morning hours to "take a break from the reading—it makes a nice diversion." He finds "a sense of order in music. A relief from what appears to be the chaos of the material, a nice release from the reading."

He is, he joked, "reading more and enjoying it less," giving credit for the line to the late President Kennedy, and adding: "I still long for the day when I go back to listening to music and writing poems."

Inflation, not impeachment, is the big issue in Mr. Cohen's district, he said.

Mr. Hogan, of Illinois, is "doing a lot of politicking" these days, and he said he believed being on the committee hurts a candidate's chances because of the high feelings the impeachment issue arouses. He dictates notes on the evidence into a tape recorder—but he has not had them transcribed, he said, out of respect for the rules of confidentiality. He has also forbidden his staff to tally the mail on impeachment lest his vote be influenced by it.

Mr. Railsback, also from Illinois, called the matter "a no-win proposition from a political standpoint." He turned down a White House invitation recently: "I decided not to accept because I thought it might be awkward—awkward to meet the President."

Representative William L. Hungate, a Missouri Democrat, complained: "I can't say partisan things," adding more lightly, "I'll have to postpone my partisan jugular attacks until after we're done." Mr. Hungate is organized; he has "color coded" his black notebooks "so I can find what Dean said or Petersen said on

any given day." Mr. Nixon's marker hue is black; John W. Dean 3rd is red; Henry E. Petersen is orange, and Charles W. Colson, purple.

Paul S. Sarbanes, a Democratic Representative from suburban Baltimore, has eliminated most appearances at evening meetings in his district, but said he believes his constituents understood: "I think that they appreciate that this is the reason. I still try to do a fair amount of weekend activity." But last Saturday, he entered his quiet office about 1 P.M. and worked straight through until 10 P.M. He said that he tried to go through and make notes on each notebook as it was handed out. "I will eventually have to go back again and pull out what I perceive as the really significant matters."

Joseph J. Maraziti, a New Jersey Republican, said he spent perhaps an hour or 90 minutes a night on the black notebooks. Miss Holtzman of New York, said she found it required far more than that "if you take it seriously." She has stopped holding office hours in her Brooklyn district on Sunday afternoons.

Representative Robert F. Drinan, a Massachusetts Democrat, said that "there's an awful lot of stuff you miss" during the hearings themselves, and has "a closet full" of the notebooks that he tries to review. But he also tries to read "the historical stuff" such as the book on executive privilege, by Raoul Berger, a senior fellow at Harvard Law School, and Drinan always goes back to his district on weekends. "The world," he said, "has to go on."

## Launching Delayed Again In Atmospheric Testing

WALLOPS ISLAND, Va., June 25 (AP) — The National Aeronautics and Space Administration postponed today for a third time its scheduled launching of 54 rockets to test the atmosphere.

The rockets were to begin blasting off at 12:50 a.m. today, but a N.A.S.A. spokesman said after a weather briefing this morning that the launchings had been postponed again because of cloudy conditions.

The spokesman explained that the forecast must call for clear weather for a 24-hour period before the launchings can begin.