

About New York

A Sad Day in Bay Ridge

By FRED FERRETTI

Out on 86th Street between Fourth and Fifth Avenues in Bay Ridge, where they voted for Richard Nixon each time he sought national office and where they still know in their hearts that Barry Goldwater was right, there was anger yesterday, and a sense of betrayal, and a disappointed belief that they had been dealt double on the day that their President was to resign.

Frank Chip thought it was unjust and Salvatore Tarantola thought Mr. Nixon was being "railroaded." Diana Sayegh thought "there is not much more that they can do to the poor man," and Mike Noone allowed as how "I always liked him, but he should have got out before this, knowing what he knew."

Bay Ridge, Brooklyn, a football-shaped neighborhood of attached homes, moderately clean streets, and Republican and Democratic conservatism, is one of the few places in New York where Mr. Nixon felt comfortable. In 1972 he polled 68 per cent of Bay Ridge's Presidential vote and in 1968 drew 51 per cent, more than Hubert Humphrey and George Wallace combined. As Mike Noone said, "We liked him here."

Mike Noone is one of Bay Ridge's symbols of rectitude. Two years ago, before he closed down his saloon, he ran "the cleanest place around." It was known that if a fellow came into Mike Noone's with a woman who was not his wife, he would not be served a drink, so that when Mike Noone says he was disappointed, he spoke, he said, for quite a few Bay Ridgers.

"You know," he said, "it's been hard lately to like the man. He has to go out. I think it's what we want, although at the same time it's hard to say it. But knowing what he did all this time . . ." He shrugged.

A visitor to Bay Ridge yesterday could find no great political change being wrought, no deep political philosophy being discussed, no mad rush to the Democratic party because their President was about to resign.

People in this neighborhood take their politics seriously, but they take them personally. They say they "vote for the man not the party" and within the clubhouse limits of their politics that is what they do, although the only Democrat in recent memory to consistently win there is Representative John Rooney, and he's retiring. For most of Bay Ridge, Nixon was the man, their man, who let them down, but for others he was still the man.

Mrs. Sayegh, over in the 86th Street Key Food Supermarket, was "still loyal," she said. "They've done it all,

haven't they. If he's guilty of anything, it's only the cover-up. He'll resign to spare the hardship on his family, that's what I think," she said pulling her children after her from the crowded store.

Vicki Lodato said that her experience yesterday showed that a good part of middle Bay Ridge supports Mr. Nixon still. Miss Lodato is a volunteer for the Democratic-Conservative candidate for Representative Hugh Carey's 15th Congressional District seat, Leo Zeferetti, who, when he's not running for Congress, is president of the Correctional Officers Benevolent Association.

"The ones taking our buttons mostly say they want him to stay, but I guess he's not going to. Is he?"

Mr. Zeferetti's opponent, Republican Austin Canade, was not at his home headquarters, the Edmund Seergy Republican Club yesterday. The doors were locked, but it was reported that Republicans had other things on their minds than the President yesterday—local survival. Republican Councilman-at-Large John Gangemi is challenging Councilman and Minority Leader Angelo Arculeo for the presidency of the 49th A.D. Republican club, the Edmund Seergy Club, Bay Ridge's Club, and both men are having petition problems.

Down 86th Street, past the Golden Superman Health Spa for Men, the OTB parlor was peppery melange of horse talk and President Nixon.

Mario Volpe said that as far as he was concerned, "Nixon didn't do nothing that nobody else didn't do, except he got caught," but Allen McNulty said, "We need Nixon now like we need a hole in our heads. If he stays in, we go down the drain."

Mr. Tarantola pushed into the knot front of the OTB parlor. "He's being railroaded. There's too many big guys with their hands in the till. It's like they're blackmailing him. He's being railroaded out. You know what they should have done? They should have investigated before he was President. And if he goes, we're gonna have a lot of problems."

"They give Ford \$315,000 to fix his house," Frank Chip said. "Why didn't they give that to the President? He's going to jail for fixing his house. Who doesn't want to have a nice house?" And Mike Calandra said, "If he admitted his guilt, he wouldn't be in office. He stood this long. He must be telling the truth."

Gerry Seymour, however, who has lived his whole life on 84th Street in "The Ridge" as he calls it, said that "Nixon has had it. Where else is there to go for him but out? Out. Out. Out."

John Curry is on Vacation.

8-9-73

n yr