

The Great Watergate Stonewallers

By Art Buchwald

I think for me the saddest thing about Watergate is that members of the old Nixon gang have turned against each other. Who would have ever dreamed that on the David Frost show former President Nixon would have implicated John Ehrlichman and Bob Haldeman, whom he considered his "sons," in the coverup of a third-rate burglary?

Who would have thought that John Ehrlichman would write a novel based on President Nixon showing him in such an unfavorable light? How could anyone have predicted that Bob

Haldeman, one of the great White House stonewallers, would let down his hair and blow the whistle on

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Nixon, Charles Colson and Henry Kissinger?

Whatever they did in the past, I always said to my wife, "At least you have to admire them for their loyalty to each other."

I always dreamed the Nixon crowd would meet together on the tenth anniversary of Watergate and have a nostalgic reunion, reliving those wonderful days when they were all fight-

ing in the White House bunker. They would kid each other about putting on weight and tell outrageous lies about their Watergate war experiences. It would be a scene out of "White Christmas," with John Dean calling up everybody and saying, "Let's go out to San Clemente and show the old man that, while the rest of the country may have forgotten him, those of us who fought with him still really care."

I could see them gathering on the lawn overlooking the blue Pacific and everyone would break into "Hail to the Chief" as Nixon came out in the suit he wore when he was president. There would be tears in his eyes as he

Stonewallers Are Casting Their Stones

looked at those familiar faces, and then he'd say, "I want you all to shape up. I've never seen such a bunch of sloppy White House aides in my life."

Then they would all sit around the pool drinking California wine and listening to the tapes, once again thinking back on those wonderful days when it was "us" against "them."

But apparently the reunion will never come off, and once again the Nixon administration people have the media to blame.

If the newspapers, magazines, TV and book publishers hadn't dumped all that money on them, this great group of honorable men might never have ratted on each other.

The tragedy of Post-Watergate is that in order to pay their lawyers, all those involved in the break-in and the coverup had to go their own way to make their stories worth the megabucks their agents had gotten for them.

It is sad for all of us who sat on the sidelines to see these men who went through so much together now at each other's throats.

Those of us who thought that Watergate was behind us now realize that the wounds are too deep and the book advances too high for any of the people involved to stick together.

My wife has taken it harder than I

have. When the Haldeman excerpts from his book were printed, she said tearfully, "How could he have done it to Nixon?"

I said, "How could Nixon have done it to him?"

Then she said, "How could Colson have done it to Haldeman?"

And I said, "How could Dean have done it to all of them?"

Perhaps it's futile for people who weren't there to speculate why these fine, outstanding men would turn against each other at this stage of the game. My own theory is that it never would have happened if Checkers had been alive.