

# Is Ehrlichman writing

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SANTA FE, N.M. (AP) — John Ehrlichman, suntanned and bearded after six months of his new life among the artists along Canyon Road here, might be writing about Watergate. But he's not talking.

His landlady says he's writing a book, and he did not deny a report that he is under contract with Simon and Schuster for a novel said to be autobiographical.

"I just wouldn't comment on it," was his response, made through the cracks in the plank gate of the high adobe wall at his fashionable hilltop cottage.

Unlike other main characters in the nation's Watergate drama, Richard M. Nixon's former chief domestic adviser and long-time political lieutenant has shunned the lecture circuit and refused interviews.

In a grocery store conversation — he does his own shopping — he reasoned that if he grants one interview he'll be hounded. "And I would have broken faith with about 20 others who have asked and have been refused," he said.

Ehrlichman lives alone here; his wife is still in Seattle. Disbarred by the Supreme Court and facing two federal prison terms, he awaits the long proc-

ess of court appeals. At age 50, he has traces of gray in his black beard and moustache.

He rents from Margaret Twyman, 60, who lives next door. "He strikes me as a very decent fellow. He's a good tenant. He's growing vegetables over there and taking care of the lawn," she said.

"He commented one time he was writing a book, and I guess he is," she said. "I don't hear any typing over there, so maybe he's writing it in longhand."

Mrs. Twyman, incidentally, lived in the Watergate Apartments in Washington, D.C., before she moved to Santa Fe last October, leaving a job with the State Department for one with the National Park Service here. But she said she never met Ehrlichman in Washington.

Thomas A. Brown, a remodeler and craftsman, said he sold her the houses for about \$65,000. The Ehrlichman cottage has one bedroom, corner fireplaces, Mexican tiles and an impressive view, he said.

This area's history dates to Spanish colonists in 1590, and many of the neighborhoods, including Ehrlichman's, are disorderly collections of old adobe houses and dirt roads. The Spanish-speaking neighbors are slowly selling to

newcomers, many of them artists or owners of stores specializing in craft items. A 90-unit condominium is planned across the road.

The beard doesn't hide Ehrlichman in Santa Fe, which despite its 40,000 population and cosmopolitan residents, retains a small-town neighborliness.

But there's a tradition of leaving people alone that has let other celebrities, from John Wayne to poet Alan Ginsberg, pass through seemingly without notice.

Ehrlichman plays tennis, goes to quiet parties and frequents the more intimate restaurants. Meanwhile, his wife, Jeanne, has taken a job with the Seattle Symphony. She declines all comment about her relationship with her husband.

At least some of their five children have visited Ehrlichman here, and their youngest son, Robert, played guitar and sang for a while at a casual Canyon Road restaurant called "The Bistro."

William Kirschke, the young conductor of the Orchestra of Santa Fe, says on the basis of a conversation at a social gathering that Ehrlichman's knowledge of music is impressive. They talked about the Santa Fe Opera's production of "Falstaff," which

## a book on Watergate?

Ehrlichman saw.

The ethic on Canyon Road, expressed time and again, is you don't talk politics with John Ehrlichman or you'll ruin the party.

"He's laid back. He's got some dues to pay," said a bearded musician. "But who am I to say how much?"

A waitress who has served him at a coffee house said, "I don't like him, but that's just politics. Heck, all he does here is eat."

His postman, Johnny Garcia, said, "He's nice to me. We talk about the weather. I think he's had enough problems as it is. Why try to bring Watergate up?" Perhaps in response to

the "live and let live" attitude, the Ehrlichman of the streets of Santa Fe is nothing like the scowling witness of the Senate Watergate hearings two years ago. He has a ready smile and a manner that one lady shopkeeper described as "very charming."

Politics can be serious business in this state capital where 37 per cent of the jobs are with state government. Watergate drew more interest than in some other places since this is the home town of Sen. Joseph M. Montoya, D-N.M., of the Senate Watergate Committee.

Montoya says he hasn't come in contact with Ehrlichman here and, "It hasn't come to my attention that any

problems have come up because he's living here. As a private citizen he's entitled to his privacy, and I hope he gets his matters with the courts straightened out."

Ehrlichman's initial explanation of why he moved to Santa Fe was that he wanted to do personal penance by volunteering his legal knowledge of land problems to the Pueblo Indians. But the governing body of the eight northern tribes turned him down.

So did U.S. District Court Judge John Sirica when Ehrlichman attorney Ira M. Lowe proposed the Indian service as an alternative to Ehrlichman's 2½-to 8-year prison sentence.