

THE NATION

Christ, a man persecuted for his purity. But the mood changed just after the transcripts were released. Said the Rev. John Wolf, of Tulsa's All Souls Unitarian Church: "People have seen the meanness and the ugliness behind the whole thing. Nothing could be more antithetical to our system. [The President and his men] seem to have no sense of what law and order really means. They don't seem to understand what America is."

In Kansas, the Topeka *Capital-Journal* broke ranks with Nixon. Wrote Publisher Oscar S. Stauffer, an activist Republican for nearly 50 years: "It's time to hand President Nixon his hat. The transcript of the tapes dips to sordid depths . . . Walls of the White House echoing with conspiracy reminds one that gangland has profaned America's most hallowed halls . . . May the President pass into oblivion and the nation again resume its true posture."

THE WEST

As in the Midwest, the week went fairly disastrously for Richard Nixon in the Western states. In Oregon, a former key Nixon political operative finished reading the transcripts, got up from his desk, and turned his autographed picture of Nixon to the wall. Leslie Dutton, a Nixon loyalist from Santa Monica who only two weeks ago was posing with Nixon in the Oval Office after giving him a petition of support from 10,000 admirers, confessed: "We got to start thinking about the welfare of the party, and where this leaves the President, I just don't know."

New Mexico G.O.P. State Chairman William Murray Ryan said bleakly: "The effect of the transcripts has been devastating." Los Angeles Republican Congressman Alphonzo Bell had mail running 55 to 45 in favor of Nixon after the President's speech. But then a second wave of letters came in reflecting reaction to the transcripts themselves. His letters were 5 to 1 against Nixon.

Republican leaders in California, Colorado, Oregon, Arizona and New Mexico agreed that while there remains a significant number of Nixon loyalists in the party, the majority believes Nixon should step down as quickly as possible. They also concur that many people found the transcripts too diffuse and confusing to significantly add to their previous judgments of presidential guilt or innocence. What disturbs the public, they said, was the bad language and the coarse, vindictive tone of the conversations. According to Nancy Mucken, a Portland, Ore., housewife: "I hadn't really made up my mind about Nixon and Watergate until I read the transcripts. But now I am very concerned. I think he is a very corrupt man." Whatever the truth of such suspicions, Colorado Republican State Chairman Bill Daniels undoubtedly expressed the opinion of most Americans: "The whole Watergate mess has gotten out of hand, and we've got to get it settled quickly."

"Nixon Has Gone Too Far"

A sampler of editorials and columns last week from newspapers calling, for the first time, for Nixon's resignation or impeachment:

CHICAGO TRIBUNE

We saw the public man in his first administration, and we were impressed. Now in about 300,000 words we have seen the private man, and we are appalled.

He is humorless to the point of being inhumane. He is devious. He is vacillating. He is profane. He is willing to be led. He displays dismaying gaps in knowledge. He is suspicious of his staff. His loyalty is minimal. His greatest concern is to create a record that will save

zarre, if it would help him do that.

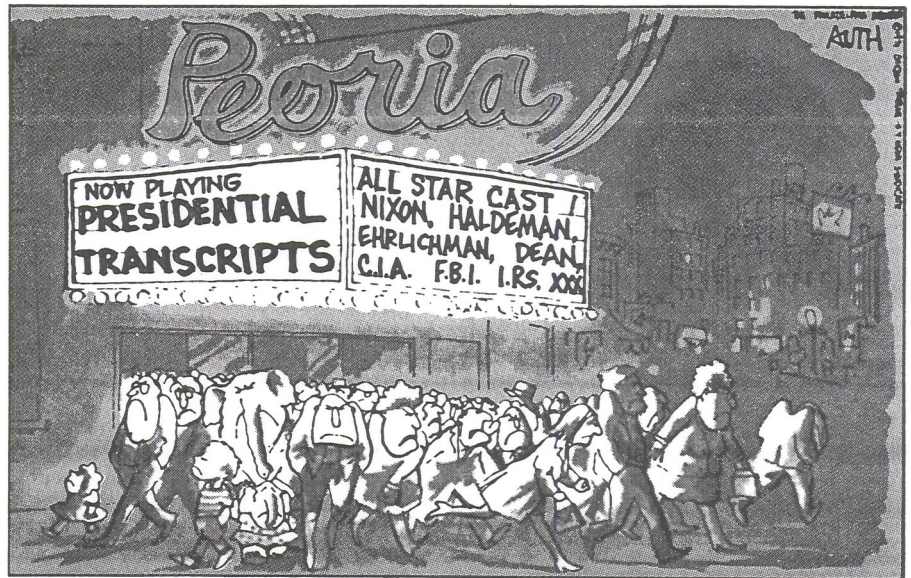
Some will ask what other Presidents would have done under similar circumstances. They will say that dirty tricks and Watergate break-ins and cover-ups are just politics. To which we would reply:

If the revolting picture of conniving and deception revealed by the White House tapes is just politics as practiced in the Oval Office of the President of the United States, it is time for the present occupant to vacate that office.

The President should resign.

LOS ANGELES TIMES

We said in this space last November that there was growing evidence to



him and his administration. The high dedication to grand principles that Americans have a right to expect from a President is missing from the transcript record.

... The evidence against Mr. Nixon is in his own words, made public at his own direction. There can no longer be a charge that he was railroaded out of office by vengeful Democrats or a hostile press. The fundamental questions have been answered. Filling in the gaps in the transcripts can only make the case against the President stronger.

It is saddening and hard to believe that for the first time in our history it is better that the President leave office than to fight and keep it. But things have reached such a state that Mr. Nixon's departure, one way or another, is the best course for the Presidency, the country, and the free world.

OMAHA WORLD-HERALD

The thrust of the 1,308 pages of the transcript is that the President was trying to save his own skin and would consider almost any option, however bi-

warrant the President's impeachment. But we did not then believe it was sufficient.

Since then there have been many new and damaging revelations involving Mr. Nixon, including the partial transcripts of presidential conversations [with aides] issued by the White House on April 30 . . .

The transcripts show that [the President's] strategy was:

—To "contain" the scandal by limiting the scope and frustrating the evidentiary rights of investigations . . .

—To "buy time" and "reduce our losses" by keeping his associates from testifying under dubious claims of executive privilege and national security.

—To "keep the cap on the bottle" by encouraging his associates to tell no more of the truth than they had to in public statements or in formal testimony.

—To contrive "salable" public relations explanations for his own failure to expose the guilty even when the evidence of their complicity was known to him.

Justice for the President and for the Nation now requires his impeachment.

CLEVELAND PLAIN DEALER

The House Judiciary Committee now has no choice but to recommend to the U.S. House of Representatives the impeachment of President Nixon.

... It is disheartening in the extreme to read the transcripts in detail and to gain the unavoidable impression that the President and his advisers were so unconcerned about the United States and its people.

President Nixon and his staff worried about saving themselves instead of showing concern about the preservation of the free American system.

President Nixon has gone too far. The transcripts of White House conversations clearly involve him in a cover-

the organic law. It is legal. It is orderly. It is decisive in joining the issue at a trial. Surely the nation is strong enough to stand the functioning of any part of its Constitution.

PROVIDENCE JOURNAL

Reading the transcripts is an emetic experience. Slogging through them leaves the reader drained ... from the spiritual stress of peering in on mean and self-serving men thrashing about for their own salvation.

One comes away feeling unclean, not by the barracks language hidden behind bracketed verbal fig leaves, but by the picture of the President keeping company with a squirming group of amateur political opportunists—barnstorming ways to help them beat the rap or pin it onto someone else ...

thing to suspect that an Administration could regard the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Central Intelligence Agency and the Internal Revenue Service as instruments of revenge. It is another thing to read a President's own words on getting back at political enemies through heavy retaliation. It is chilling.

The next move is Mr. Nixon's. If he cannot move, it is up to Congress to proceed swiftly and with resolution toward the constitutional remedy.

THE HEARST PAPERS

From a column by Editor in Chief William Randolph Hearst Jr. that appeared in all the Hearst papers:

... President Richard M. Nixon has made it impossible for me to continue believing what he claims about himself in the Watergate mess.

That's about the most reluctant statement made here in the last 20 years. It probably will disappoint, surprise, and maybe even shock a lot of people. If so, they will have nothing on the disappointment, surprise, and shock I have felt in reading those transcripts of the White House tape recordings during the past few days.

The real reason for [the President's] uncooperative stalling tactics is now abundantly clear. It is all in the tape transcripts he finally was forced to make public. Even in their heavily edited and possibly inaccurate form, the transcripts add up to as damning a document as it is possible to imagine short of an actual indictment.

Maybe, technically, the President still is justified in claiming he knew nothing in advance about the Watergate break-in, or of the initial cover-up efforts. The point is that those shameful tapes reveal a man totally absorbed in the cheapest and sleaziest kind of conniving to preserve appearance, and almost totally unconcerned with ethics.

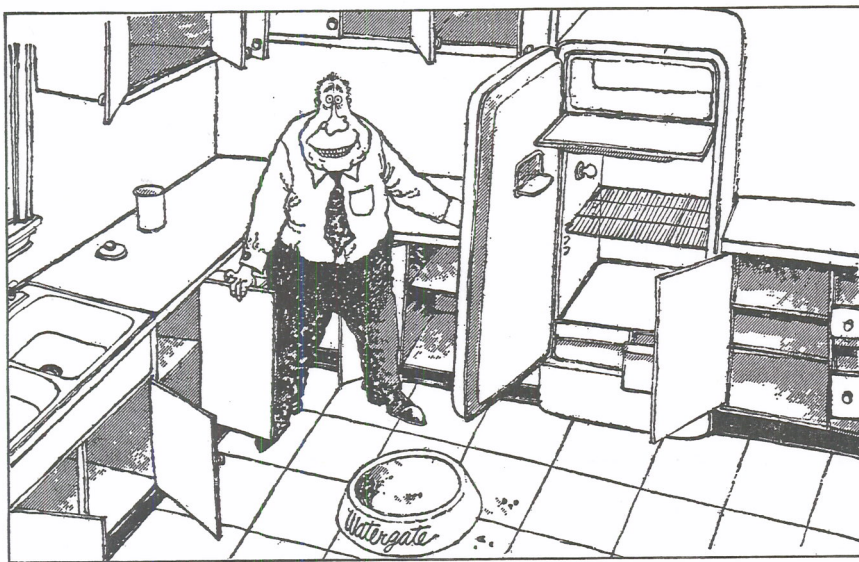
The man seems to have a moral blind spot. To me it is simply astonishing that he would make the transcripts public with the avowed belief that they would exonerate him. They may not actually amount to a conviction of criminal behavior. Perhaps the kindest way of putting it is that they amount to an unwitting confession, in which he stands convicted by his own words as a man who deliberately and repeatedly tried to keep the truth from the people.

He released them only because he had to, finally, and because he somehow thought the censored versions would do him some good with the public. God knows what the unexpurgated tapes would show.

Incredible? It sure is.

Sickening? Just read the transcripts.

Today, sitting here in a kind of stunned sorrow, it is hard for me to imagine why any informed person would not see the inevitability of impeachment.



"My goodness! Still hungry, big fella? ... But what else could you possibly ... Down boy ... Sit! ..."

up attempt to say the least. That and his refusal to comply with the subpoenas of the Watergate Special Prosecutor and the House Judiciary Committee have virtually assured that the impeachment of President Nixon will become a reality.

MIAMI HERALD

... Mr. Nixon cast his die with release of the White House edited transcripts of the Watergate tapes. It was a reckless maneuver, for the documents have appalled the country by and large.

Here was more than buddy-buddy talk of political cronies. Here we believe was conniving to cover up a crime. Here was instruction in how to evade the loss. Here was a submission of the nation's interest to a personal interest and greed. Here was a partial record and error that ruined lives, damaged the great profession of the law and confronted the nation with a crisis of leadership unknown in a century ...

Impeachment is indeed traumatic, but it has a precedent and it is part of

The transcripts may not show Mr. Nixon guilty of any indictable offense, but they display a shocking contempt—contempt not only of the courts and of Congress but of the people and the office Mr. Nixon holds in their name.

KANSAS CITY TIMES

The American Constitution ... is reflective of the hopes and ideals of mankind for justice and truth and a good life. It transcends the mere patriotism of geographical boundaries.

Can such values really be reconciled with the sleazy dialogue now emerging in the White House transcripts? Can the end product of the men who gathered nearly two centuries ago to frame the Constitution be a band of knaves who talk of advantage, revenge and adroit maneuver and never of what is right or wrong, or what is good for the country?

Along with an emerging picture of moral bankruptcy comes a frightening vision of basic contempt for the fundamentals of representative government and its sensitive institutions. It is one