

Nixon 'Deeply Anguished' by Conviction of 4 Ex-Aides

By JOHN M. CREWDSON

Special to The New York Times

SAN CLEMENTE, Calif., Jan. 2—Richard M. Nixon was described by an associate today as "deeply anguished" by the plight of four of his former White House and political aides who were convicted yesterday in the Watergate cover-up case.

The associate, who asked to be identified only as someone who has spoken with the former President after the verdict was returned, added that Mr. Nixon had been advised by a lawyer against making any specific comment, because the four defendants "have stated their intention to file appeals."

None of the newsmen who gathered here today in anticipation of some reaction from Mr. Nixon to the outcome of the 13-week trial were permitted inside the five-acre ocean-front compound, named La Casa Pacifica, where the former President is in seclusion.

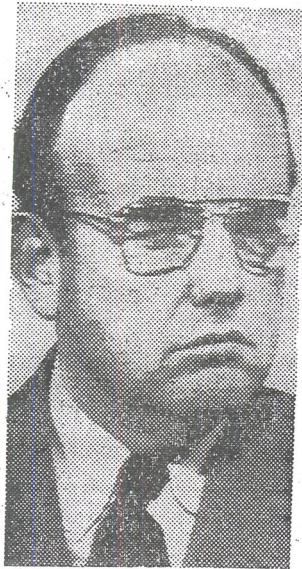
Statement Is Read

Instead, the following statement was read to them over a telephone in the lobby of a nearby motel:

"Former President Nixon's attorney has advised him against making any specific statements about yesterday's verdicts, because the defendants have stated their intention to file appeals.

"President Nixon is deeply anguished by Watergate, and that these men, who were among his closest aides, and their families, have suffered so much, and that their lives have been so tragically touched by Watergate."

When two of the convicted men, H. R. Haldeman and John D. Ehrlichman, resigned their White House posts in April, 1973, Mr. Nixon termed them



United Press International
John D. Ehrlichman discussing his conviction on NBC's "Today."

ment today on the convictions in the cover-up trial.

"I don't think it's appropriate for me to comment," he told reporters as he left here for Washington at the end of a vacation holiday.

Ehrlichman's View

WASHINGTON, Jan. 2 (UPI)—Mr. Ehrlichman said today that ever since he and the other Watergate cover-up defendants were indicted nine months ago, he was "pretty well convinced of the impossibility of securing an acquittal."

Because of the pretrail publicity, the impeachment investigation and Mr. Nixon's resignation and pardon, winning an acquittal "was like pushing a stone uphill," the former White House domestic adviser said.

Mr. Ehrlichman was interviewed on the National Broadcasting Company's "Today Show."

Mr. Ehrlichman, like the three other convicted men, said that he would appeal the verdict.

"There obviously were any number of rulings throughout the trial that would form the basis for an appeal," he said. "Perhaps the central one would be the judge's decision not to require the former President to give a deposition, but certainly the list will be as long as your arm."

Following the verdict yesterday, Mr. Haldeman told reporters:

"There's only one human being in the world who knows to an absolute moral certainty the truth of my innocence or guilt. I know that legally and morally I am totally innocent of each of the charges brought here. And with that certainty, I can live with myself, and I

can move ahead now with the processes of appeal."

Mr. Mitchell took the verdict with equanimity.

"Do I have any reaction? Can't you guess?"

Then he joked that he might "go to the moon."

Mr. Mardian brushed past reporters and refused to say anything.

Mr. Ehrlichman said that he believed Mr. Nixon had kept the White House tapes that brought about his downfall "in part out of a distrust of some of the people who were working for him, and also I think out of the genuine desire to have an historical record."

He then added that, "as a matter of historical perspective, you can make a pretty good argument that a bonfire on the South Lawn of the White House wouldn't have been a bad idea right about then."

"two of the finest public servants it has been my privilege to know."

Also found guilty by the Watergate jury were John N. Mitchell, Mr. Nixon's former Attorney General and Presidential campaign manager, and Robert C. Mardian, an assistant to Mr. Mitchell at both the Justice Department and the Committee for the Re-election of the President.

There was no word today on whether the former President, who has remained silent since his resignation last August, would have any further comment on the Watergate scandal.

Ford Has No Comment

VAIL, Colo., Jan. 2 (UPI)—President Ford declined com-