

"Nixon . . . Has

Excerpts from the President's statement pardoning his predecessor:

I have come to a decision which I felt I should tell you, and all my fellow citizens, as soon as I was certain in my own mind and conscience that it is the right thing to do.

To procrastinate, to agonize, to wait . . . is itself a decision of sorts and a weak and potentially dangerous course for a President to follow . . .

The Constitution is the supreme law of our land and it governs our actions as citizens. Only the laws of God, which govern our consciences, are superior to it. As we are a nation under God, so I am sworn to uphold our laws with the help of God. And I have sought such guidance and searched my own conscience . . . to determine the right thing for me to do with respect to my predecessor in this place, Richard Nixon, and his loyal wife and family.

TIME, SEPTEMBER 16, 1974

Suffered Enough"

Theirs is an American tragedy . . . It can go on and on and on, or someone must write "The End" to it . . . Only I can do that. And if I can, I must.

There are no historic or legal precedents to which I can turn . . . that precisely fit the circumstances of a private citizen who has resigned the presidency of the United States. But it is common knowledge that serious allegations and accusations hang like a sword over our former President's head as he tries to reshape his life, a great part of which was spent in the service of this country and by the mandate of its people.

. . . I have been advised and am compelled to conclude that many months and perhaps more years will have to pass before Richard Nixon could hope to obtain a fair trial by jury in any jurisdiction of the United States under governing decisions of the Supreme Court.

I deeply believe in equal justice for all Americans, whatever their station

TIME, SEPTEMBER 16, 1974

. . . The facts as I see them are that a former President of the United States, instead of enjoying equal treatment with any other citizen accused of violating the law, would be cruelly and excessively penalized . . .

During this long period of delay . . . ugly passions would again be aroused, our people would again be polarized in their opinions, and the credibility of our free institutions of Government would again be challenged at home and abroad. In the end, the courts might well hold that Richard Nixon had been denied due process, and the verdict of history would be even more inconclusive.

But it is not the ultimate fate of Richard Nixon that most concerns me . . . but the immediate future of this great country. In this I dare not depend upon my personal sympathy as a longtime friend . . . nor my professional judgment as a lawyer. And I do not.

As President, my primary concern must always be the greatest good of all the people of the United States . . .

As a man, my first consideration will

always be to be true to my own convictions and my own conscience.

My conscience tells me . . . that I cannot prolong the bad dreams that continue to reopen a chapter that is closed. My conscience tells me that only I, as President, have the . . . power to firmly shut and seal this book. My conscience says it is my duty not merely to proclaim domestic tranquillity, but to use every means I have to ensure it.

I do believe . . . that I cannot rely upon public opinion polls to tell me what is right. I do believe that right makes might, and that if I am wrong ten angels swearing I was right would make no difference. I do believe with all my heart and mind and spirit that I, not as President, but as a humble servant of God, will receive justice without mercy if I fail to show mercy.

Finally, I feel that Richard Nixon and his loved ones have suffered enough, and will continue to suffer no matter what I do, no matter what we as a great and good nation can do together to make his goal of peace come true.