

Safire's article, NYT 5 Jun.
Rebuttal by Frank Mankiewicz, WXP 9 Jun 75.

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The Nixon 'Never Dids'

To the Editor:

If prior Administrations perpetrated "dirty tricks," let's get it out in the open directly. For William Safire to develop that cause within the framework of "some of the things that Nixon never did" [column June 5] is sheer casuistry.

It is difficult to believe that even Mr. Safire knows everything that Mr. Nixon "never did," much less those things that he "did," especially when we recall that the fact-finding ma-



chinery was thwarted not only at every step but even at the end. Neat distinctions between how L.B.J. misused the F.B.I. (why didn't Mr. Safire mention this?) and how Mr. Nixon attempted to misuse the F.B.I. (and, to boot, the C.I.A.) will only soothe the strongest Nixon apologists; otherwise, they, and the list of "never did," merely serve to strain logic beyond acceptance.

MARK K. KESSLER
Philadelphia, June 5, 1975

To the Editor:

The press, led by The New York Times, was among the groups that sought and succeeded in removing President Nixon from his office. The so-called Watergate is gradually becoming history, not only of Nixon's mistake but also of the vindictiveness and hypocrisy of his attackers. Those of us who have this opinion were pleased to read Mr. Safire's article "Nixon Never Did," and we thank you for that.

JOHN ANTONIADES, M.D.,
Philadelphia, June 5, 1975

To the Editor:

William Safire's column [June 5] itemizing the awful things Mr. Nixon did not do and which he charges a series of other Presidents did do was a wondrous and easy effort.

Presumably he could extend the list to near infinity if he went back farther among the Presidents. Mr. Nixon did not, so far as I know, have a drinking problem; Grant did. Mr. Nixon seems to have had no marital strife; Lincoln did. Mr. Nixon did not sire a child out of wedlock; Cleveland did. Mr. Nixon's attempt to equip the White House guards with uniforms out of music halls was not nearly so dramatic as Washington's attempts at royalty.

There are a few of Mr. Nixon's achievements, however, which do stand alone on the lists of Presidential activities. For example: the series of bald-faced lies about public matters and policies and actions (waging war on Cambodia while swearing we had never violated her neutrality), about his complicity in the obstruction of justice in the Watergate affair; the selection of a Vice President, a series of Cabinet officers and a list of White House counselors and aides who were convicted in unprecedentedly large numbers of criminal offenses against the law they were sworn to uphold. In the end, of course, Mr. Nixon achieved that true pinnacle never achieved by any other President: resignation from office under fire and a Presidential pardon for all unlawful acts.

Mr. Safire is right to cite the objectionable activities of other Presidents, but he seems interested in them only as a means of removing tarnish from the reputation of his old boss. There are more useful reasons to review Presidential history.

ERIC P. SWENSON
Weston, Conn., June 5, 1975

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