

Tapes Reveal Calley's Frustration

By Jack Anderson

While the nation awaits the Supreme Court showdown over the White House tapes, we have listened to some secret tapes which may present President Nixon with another excruciating dilemma.

These tapes contain Lt. William Calley's lengthy, agonizing psychiatric interviews after he was accused of mass murder at My Lai.

Some psychiatrists have concluded from the interviews that he probably was "legally insane" when he led his company on the shooting spree. Other psychiatrists, while agreeing he had personality problems, found "no evidence of . . . mental disease, defect or derangement."

President Nixon has promised personally to review the Calley case. His final decision will have tremendous emotional impact. People around the world believe Calley was a monster who should be severely punished. But others feel he was a madman whose irrational behavior should not forever stain America's fighting men.

Calley looked upon himself as quite normal, except for one "irrational behavior happening." As he recounted the incident to psychiatrists, "I had all the troops in a truck, and there was no warm feelings for the Vietnamese people among the troops and me.

I had nothing but disgust. I had just, I won't say highly hostile feelings, to the point where I wanted to wantonly shot anybody or beat anybody up or anything like that. But I had no respect for them . . ."

"The truck came up to the village, at which time I went into the store to get some candles. And there was a bottle of Seagram's Seven there, of which I picked up and walked out — just wanton theft. Of which Mama San ran out — well not the Mama San, she was a young girl — ran out . . . I told the guard, the truck driver to go on.

"I just thought that was an extremely irrational behavior. It seems to me I did pay for the candles . . . I came back and I gave the booze to my troops. And I said, 'Joe, check it out for glass.' I don't think I'd personally drink it. I had no desire in drinking the booze because I was afraid of it because it was on the market.

"They didn't drink it (either) . . . The MPs and I gave it back to the girl. It was a matter of why I actually did that, for which I had no excuse."

Calley went on to describe his frustration over the difficulty of identifying the enemy in Vietnam. He confessed grief over the loss of men, anger at the war and constant fear.

He tried to explain his feelings: "I think the moral issues of the war — the question of when is a war right, when is a war good, when is killing right, when is it wrong and actually when is, what are we fighting — we shouldn't be there.

"Are we fighting the Reds, or a tribe of people, or a bunch of human beings beings they're in that situation? Or are we fighting an ideological philosophy that has been conjured in the minds of human beings?"

"What is your feeling about why are we fighting in Vietnam?" Calley was asked.

"Well," he replied, "everybody knows we're there to stop Communism. What is Communism? Today, actually Communism is not an animate object. It's a philosophy in the minds of men. So how can you go into an armed conflict and say we're going to save these people from (Communism). You've got armed combat troops in there to do a job, troops that were designed to fight a hostile enemy . . . We're not going to change your way of thinking. We're going to take your position and then endanger your way of life.

At My Lai, Calley felt he was merely carrying out or-

ders to shoot everyone remaining in the area because they had been identified as the enemy. He was "hyper" or "psyched up," but he felt he was in full control of his faculties.

Afterward, he was stunned over the murder charges brought against him.

"What is it," a psychiatrist asked Calley, "that you have actually been charged with as far as you know today?"

"One hundred and two cases of premeditated murder," he replied.

"And against whom?"

"Oriental people of mixed ages and races."

The accusation, he said, "suddenly presented me at this stage in my life with a cross few men have to bear in life. Now, people don't talk about the My Lai massacre, they call it the Calley massacre. All of a sudden, I have now become the personification of evil and horror, and everywhere I go, I must face these attitudes of people . . . It is difficult and hard to understand why it should have happened to me, and I singled out."