

Nixon's Sex Symbol: The Enigmatic Kissinger

San Clemente, Calif.

HENRY KISSINGER, sex symbol of the Nixon Administration, steps out of his office onto a sun-drenched San Clemente terrace with a cup of black coffee and sits in a white deck chair with his legs crossed.

The man who has pressured Moscow, drafted State of the World addresses, advised the President to enter Cambodia and paved the road to Red China appears as something of an anachronism in his baggy, midnight blue cotton trousers, black-tie shoes, bright blue unfitted blazer, blue and white striped shirt and striped tie.

"What are you trying to do? Seduce me?" Henry will tease as he notices his visitor's HotPants. "You know I like these HotPants very much." Then he'll light your cigarette, touching your hand as all Continentals do, offer you a cup of coffee and discuss trivia as readily as he would a Sino-Soviet entente.

The impeccably tidy image is perfect for dealing with Alexei Kosygin or Chou En-Lai, or lecturing at Harvard, but one cannot help wonder if the movie stars mind that the ankle socks of Washington's

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greatest swinger are falling down, that his wiry chestnut hair, which flashes golden in the intense white sunlight, is too close-cropped to run their fingers through or that at least 10 of his 178 pounds protrude over his thin black belt, somehow shortening his 5 feet 9 inches.



GLORIA STEINEM
"I have great respect"

particularly with women. Whether on the telephone, at parties or in person, this man who commands more of the President's attention than almost any other living person, is gentle, boyish, even a bit insecure. And he pays rapt attention to every question as though he had nothing in the world more pressing to consider.

When it is Henry's time to answer, he speaks slowly in deep, mellow Wagnerian tones, carefully weighing words and revising them himself.

He talks about his job, his hours, his relationship with the President. Foreign policy adviser was not a job Henry sought or expected, he says. After all, he had counseled two Democratic presidents — Johnson and Kennedy — and had a veritable fleet of Democratic friends. Strangely, it was Nelson Rockefeller who suggested Henry take the post.

And when the offer was made, Henry did not jump at it. "I told him I'd have to think about it." But Rockefeller persuaded Henry. "He said, 'Never talk to me again,' if I didn't accept. He thought it was my public duty." Henry dutifully accepted and ever since he's been working round the clock from the minute he reaches the White House at 7:45 a.m. to the time he leaves ("Never before 8:30 p.m.").

But suddenly an electric twinkle will flash through the intense blue of his eyes and one catches an inkling of that movie star magnetism . . . that special quality which causes some people to call him "Cuddly Kissinger."

Henry is always friendly,

Henry probably spends more time than anyone in Washington with the President. He is in the Chief Executive's office every morning, and sometimes as of

ten as four or five times a day. He dines with him once a week. On trips abroad, he is with the President constantly. Attorney General John Mitchell once told WWD Kissinger sees everything that goes to the President, including reports from the CIA and FBI.

Although Henry denies he sees anything "except those things that concern foreign policy," he admits he screens whatever messages or reports come from "lower level" department types. Whatever Henry considers irrelevant never reaches the President.

Henry scuttles away from the subject of Vietnam except to assert that he does not believe war has "a positive side. It is, at best, the lesser of two evils." And he generalizes about China. "I was very moved and impressed by my experience. I look forward to returning so I can see the countryside and meet some of the ordinary people." He will not discuss his background as he does with friends who sit next to him at dinner parties either. But those friends tell you that Henry's past was not easy. Henry was not always the swinging single he is today.

He was born May 27, 1923, into a Jewish middle class family in Furth, just outside Nuremberg, and from 1930-38 during the Nazi occupation, Henry was a social outcast. He was kicked out of his school by the Nazis, forced to attend an all-Jewish school, and was often beaten up along the way. He was forbidden to use the public swimming pools or to mingle with other German youths. Eleven members of his family died at Nazis hands.

By the time Henry escaped to the United States with his parents he had become a withdrawn, suspicious young man. At George Washington High School in New York's Upper West Side, he avoided his classmates.

"He was totally withdrawn," says Fritz Kraemer, director of a military government school for officers of the 84th Division of the U.S. Army, which Henry entered as a private in 1943. (It was Kraemer who discovered Henry's extraordinary mind and ad-

vised him to continue his education. Henry's greatest desire in life until then had been to become an accountant.)

In 1949, Kissinger married Ann Fleischer, who also had come to this country from Germany. The marriage lasted until 1964, when they were divorced.

When Henry went to Harvard his intellectual enlightenment began, but the social awakening did not. "He was a total introvert," says a classmate, "brilliant but shy. It's hard to understand his popularity now."

Henry avoids that topic, but when it comes to discussing his life as "Playboy of the Western Wing," he lights up. It is a subject that has great appeal to him. As someone who has known him for 15 years says, "Henry likes to believe that although he's a serious Germanic scholar, he's really a frivolous playboy, that he's Metternich, the Papillion, light, gay and 18th Century."

In fact if you ask Henry how he likes being called "Washington's greatest swinger," he replies unabashedly, "That's no compliment. That's faint

'Washington's greatest swinger'

praise." Tease him about the bells in Jill St. John's alarm system going off recently when Henry and Jill walked out to her pool and he'll say, "What did you expect? . . . I was teaching her chess."

Henry says, "I like women who are intense, intelligent and warm. And any woman who survives with me has to be very independent. It would be suicide for a woman to try and find identity through a man absolutely absorbed in his work."

Henry is certainly attractive to some people, if not for his Tarzan physique, then certainly for his gifted mind, quick wit and adaptability. Joyce Haber, the society columnist he



"Washington's greatest swinger" with Jill St. John

often visits on the West Coast says: "In his brilliance Henry has a way of adjusting to any level. He can adapt to anybody. He is worldly, humorous, sophisticated and a cavalier with women."

Barbara Howar says, "I have great respect for him as a human being." Gloria

Steinem says, "Henry's the only interesting person in the whole Nixon Administration."

As Margot Hahn says, Henry will indeed talk about almost anything, even an affair. He'll tell you the best way to begin one is "with an intense conversation" and that the

best way to end one is "abruptly...but always remain friends." He'll tell you he gets his clothes at Brooks Bros. in New York but also has some custom made. He'll tell you he realizes he is overweight, but that his 165-pound figure has rounded out to a somewhat paunchy 178.

When Henry wants to end a conversation, he can sometimes use his children as an excuse, and when he does, a totally new side of Henry Kissinger emerges. He'll introduce you to Elizabeth, 12, wearing a black T-shirt and slacks. She has Henry's curly hair, only darker, and her eyes are brown. Then he'll introduce you to 10-year-old David, who looks like a German choir boy with shoulder-length, curly white-blonde hair and Henry's piercing blue eyes.

"This is my Beatle," Henry will say, tousling David's curls, proudly examining the sketch of a long-haired rock star David has just completed with considerable skill.

"He's an excellent painter too," says Henry. "Except he ruins all my relationships with movie stars. I once introduced him to Lana Turner and he said, 'Who's that?'"

Then Henry heads for Disneyland with the two kids in tow, and suddenly "the playboy of the western wing" becomes a much more familiar entity.

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