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The Court Nominations

In nominating Lewis F. Powell of Virginia and William Rehnquist, an Assistant Attorney General, for the Supreme Court, Mr. Nixon put an end to the furious speculation which seemed to have been deliberately set in motion. Mr. Powell admirably combines the fundamental requirements of legal and intellectual distinction with Mr. Nixon's insistence on political conservatism and Southern origin. Mr. Rehnquist, a Goldwater conservative, has a brilliant professional background but a questionable record on civil liberties.

Mr. Nixon's surprise choices, announced over television last night, were preceded by a national guessing game that unnecessarily exposed a number of "leaked" candidates to unflattering public discussion and even to unfavorable review by the American Bar Association. There should never have been any need for a cliffhanger should never have been any need for a cliffhanger announcement. "Presidents come and go, but the Supreme Court goes on forever," Mr. Nixon said quite properly last night. The irrelevant charade did little to enhance the selection process.