

# Nixon Foundation Skimps on Charity

By Jack Anderson

The Richard Nixon Foundation, which holds a tax exemption as a "charity," has made only one charitable grant in its four-year existence: \$7,500 to buy a painting of Richard Nixon.

The foundation has also bestowed \$21,000 upon the President's brother Ed to scout sites for a proposed Nixon library, thereby showing more charity to Ed Nixon than it has to the poor.

The foundation was established shortly after President Nixon took office in 1969. Its original board read like a Who's Who of business and government bigwigs.

Since those hopeful days, the Nixon Foundation has suffered much the same fate as its illustrious namesake. Several of its founders, including former Nixon aides H. R. Haldeman, John D. Ehrlichman, John N. Mitchell and Herbert Kalmbach, have been indicted or convicted in the Watergate case.

The lone grant was made to the Smithsonian Institution so it could buy a Normal Rockwell painting of Richard Nixon. The painting has been hanging proudly since 1972 in the National Portrait Gallery.

Commented painter Rockwell: "Nixon is no fun to paint."

Footnote: For a time, the foundation was under audit by the Internal Revenue Service. Its accountant, Arthur Blech, as-

ures us that it has been "completely cleared" by the IRS.

**Bird Chaser**—S. Dillon Ripley, the distinguished proprietor of the Smithsonian museums and galleries, has been chasing rare birds around the world at the taxpayers' expense.

At the same time, he also runs a private bird research business on the side. He assured us, however, that his business is devoted to preserving rare species, at a financial loss to himself.

Nevertheless, when he is in hot pursuit of a rare gull or goshawk, he travels in style and charges it to the Smithsonian. He might be found scanning the skies for wildfowl from a yacht in the blue Aegean or a safari in the high Himalayas.

We reported in 1970 that Ripley had sailed the seas around Greece in a \$480-a-day yacht, sampling lobsters and fine drink, while he inspected ancient ruins and chased a rare seagull, all at Smithsonian expense.

Now we have learned that he roamed the world for 28 weeks in 1973, with the Smithsonian picking up at least \$15,000 in travel bills. And the final cost still hasn't been toted up.

Unpublished documents turned up by Sen. Alan Bible (D-Nev.) and Ted Stevens (R-Alaska) show that Ripley's most extravagant expedition was "to observe the migration of birds through the Himalayas."

For this ornithological adventure, Ripley was accompanied by his wife and two daughters. They brought along more than 25 pieces of luggage containing tents, supplies and fancy clothes suitable for audiences with any oriental potentates they might encounter during the 12-week safari.

Ripley paid his daughters' travel fares out of his own pocket. But the taxpayers shelled out \$2,244 in transportation and \$464 in per diem for his wife. Explained the Smithsonian: she assisted her husband "in the preparation and taxidermy of ornithological materials."

In a sense that Ripley didn't anticipate, the safari turned out to be for the birds. He came down with dysentery in Bhutan and had to be helicoptered and jetted to India. The Indian government, which furnished the emergency military jet, has now asked politely who is going to pay for it.

Footnote: In three long talks with us, Ripley ably defended his long absences from the Smithsonian. His critics concede that his innovative management has transformed Washington's famous mall and its museums into an exciting center for art, music and festivals.

**Pain and prejudice**—Contrary to the angry accusations from the White House, the House Judiciary Committee was not prejudiced against President Nixon.

At the outset of the impeachment inquiry, all 17 Republicans were united behind the President.

At least three southern Democrats—Alabama's Walter Flowers, Arkansas' Ray Thornton and South Carolina's James Mann—were also in the President's corner. They represented solidly conservative districts which had voted overwhelmingly for the President in 1972.

This gave the President a solid 20 to 18 edge when the impeachment inquiry began. Even among the 18 anti-Nixon Democrats were some who felt impeachment was too drastic.

Then Chairman Peter W. Rodino (D-N.J.) closed the doors on the inquiry and let his staff present the evidence. The committee members were able to ask questions without the glare of publicity.

Having published the first developments that leaked from the closed sessions, we are in a position to know what happened. We can report it was the evidence alone that finally persuaded the 10 Nixon loyalists to vote against their President.

The 10 were subjected to extreme political pressure to stay in line. Local party leaders bombarded Illinois' Robert McClory and Tom Railsback with anti-impeachment demands.

But in the end, the majority of Judiciary members voted their conscience.