

Fishbait Tells All



Jack Anderson

SHORTLY before Richard Nixon was forced to resign from the presidency, he came upon the familiar sight of William "Fishbait" Miller faithfully guarding the door of the House of Representatives. "Fishbait, how's your voice today?" the agitated Nixon asked the doorkeeper. "Is your throat sore? Is it hurting any?"

Suddenly, the beleaguered President unaccountably lunged at Fishbait. "He grabbed me by the throat and was choking me," Fishbait recalls. "I gasped for breath ... So I wrenched myself away ... The poor guy really got rid of a little hostility at my expense."

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THIS is just one of the revealing tales of life, love and liaisons on Capitol Hill as chronicled by the frog-throated former House doorkeeper. We have obtained a bootleg copy of the raw galleys of his autobiography, "Fishbait," ghost written with Frances Spatz Leighton. The pages are filled with spicy recollections of the colorful Fishbait's 42 years in the Capitol. For example:

• — Nixon and Herbert Hoover were the only Presidents whose dogs wouldn't come running when they were called. But ex-President Jerry Ford sometimes had his dog run into the office so he could change the subject and graciously break up a long interview.

FISHBAIT appears to have been a paragon of sexual virtue himself, but tells some torrid tales about congressmen who were loving when they should have been legislating.

• — As an unmarried congressman and senator, says Fishbait, John Kennedy had so much lust in his heart that he entertained some of his female visitors on his office floor. "I did not introduce him to any girls on the Hill when he pressed me to do so. I figured, let him get his own." In some earlier anecdotes, Fishbait recalls that JFK did just that.

• — The most renowned Lothario on Capitol Hill was the late Representative Frank Boykin, (Dem-Ala.), whose favorite decoration was a dried elephant organ which hung from his office wall. The giant 275-pound congressman often left the House floor for a "sex break ... His specialty was to have two pretty girls in bed with him at the same time." Boykin's campaign slogan, appropriately, was "Everything is made for love."

• — Until Liz Ray told the world that she was his publicly subsidized mistress, Representative Wayne Hays, (Dem-Ohio), would greet "pretty young things" by saying, "Hi, I'm Dr. Wayne Hayes, D.D. — Doctor of the Divan," recalls Fishbait. But Hays called the doorkeeper "Mister Potato Head."