

7 May 75

Nixon (mental health) - "The instinct of the President's staff to protect the President even when he acts in an irrational manner is best illustrated by William Safire's account of Mr. Nixon's activities on the night of May 8-9, 1970 - what Mr. Safire in his book 'Before the Fall,' calls 'the strangest, most compulsive, and perhaps most revealing night' of Nixon's Presidency. That was after Mr. Nixon's decision to 'clean out the sanctuaries' in Cambodia, after the Kent State campus tragedy and the ensuing student march on Washington.

"Between 9:22 P.M. on May 8, and 4:22 A.M. on May 9, Mr. Nixon made 51 telephone calls to members of his Cabinet, his staff, magazine editors, Foreign Service officers, newspaper reporters, repeating calls to one or the other, talking about his family, his grandparents, the Civil War - sort of a sleepless, compulsive nightmare of talk - after which, to the consternation of the Secret Service, he got into his car at dawn and drove to the Lincoln Memorial to argue with the startled young people who had come to Washington to protest his invasion of Cambodia."

Reston, in his column, comments on books by Theodore White ("Breach of Faith - the Fall of Richard Nixon") and William Safire ("Before the Fall"); it is unclear from which of the two Reston took the account above.

- See also entry 24 Jun 74, same heading.

NYT 7 May 75, James Reston

- For an account of Nixon's appearance at Lincoln Memorial, see transcription of KPFA News 9 May 70, filed Nixon.

- For a description of this incident, favorable to Nixon, see review by Christopher Lehmann-Haupt of "Before the Fall. An Inside View of the Pre-Watergate White House," by William Safire.