

# Watergate Bring Tears and Joy

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Springtime and the Watergate scandals descended on this city today, leaving it elated by nature's predictable gifts but confused by man's penchant for trauma.

"I could cry," Mrs. Melvin Levinthal, a middle-aged Indiana tourist said somberly on the steps of the Capitol. "This place is so breathtakingly beautiful and so damned ugly—I could just cry."

She proceeded to do just that, and while her four teen-aged children watched her curiously, her eyes flooded and her hand reached for the tissues in her purse.

But in Lafayette Park, across Pennsylvania Avenue from the White House, William Middleton, a 34-year-old Government employe, waxed jubilant.

"Look," he said breezily, between bites of his brown-bag lunch, "it's spring and that's good, and the Watergate has busted wide open and that's good, and I'm feeling so good I could sing."

He chose instead to laugh—a small snicker at first, then a shift to a healthy chuckle, and finally a cynical chortle silenced only by a broad, face-wide smile.

Those were the extremes in Washington today, the reflexes and reactions of a community caught up in the joys of a seasonal transition and the passions of a Government scandal.

From Capitol Hill to the bustling street corners to the quiet ambience of the city's poshest clubs and restau-

rants, the mix was as consistent as biscuit-batter.

At the Metropolitan Club, an exclusive retreat for some of the city's more successful inhabitants, a half-dozen fellows took an informal poll on the President's motivations for his remarks Tuesday on Watergate.

Four believed that Mr. Nixon had really discovered some significant development in the case and the two others said that he was merely reacting as a politician who saw an issue threatening his party.

Later, one member wagered \$20 to \$1 that the President would be impeached. He was asked to broaden his odds, refused and got only one taker.

At the San Souci, where White House staff members regularly enjoy lunch in what has become the "in" spot for them, there was a paucity of Administration figures.

## Reservations Canceled

Gerald Warren, for instance, the deputy press secretary to Mr. Nixon, canceled month-old reservations this morning and only Herb Klein, the President's long-time friend and communications director, made an appearance there.

"Don't feel so bad, Herb," Art Buchwald, the columnist, told him. "After all, it could be worse. You could be the football coach at the University of Oklahoma."

Nearby, two well-dressed men entered St. John's Episcopal Church for a Maundy Thursday service with things besides religion on their minds.

"I had the feeling it was all there," said one. "I knew it—I sensed it—but now that it's out in the open, I still can't believe it."

His companion laughed. "I suppose now you're going to tell me again that we need Nixon, now more than ever."

Across the street, in the shadow of a statue of the Marquis de Lafayette tipping his tricornered hat to the White House, Deirora Coyne, a 24-year-old Government

employe, concentrated on the same subject.

"It just confirms what I've always believed about this Administration," she said, because—"and she pointed across the street to the President's residence—"it's him, not the godfather we're talking about."

As she talked, some of the more than 10,000 tourists who would walk through the public portions of the White House today filed out the north doors and headed toward the exit gates. Their cameras feverishly gulped up the brilliance of the scarlet tulips on the green lawn.

"Maybe that's the hope in this whole thing," said Jill Stock in the park across the way. "Despite all this, those people still want to see the place where the Presidents lives. You see what I mean: They still believe in the country no matter what."

One of the White House visitors agreed. "It doesn't matter to me who's living here," said Domenic Traci, a janitor from Trenton. "I always wanted to see it, and if everybody in there is a louse—then I still wanted to see it."

Liz Carpenter, Mrs. Lyndon Johnson's press secretary during her White House years, agreed as she relaxed before lunch at the Federal City Club.

"People will fight like crazy to preserve the image of their institutions," she philosophized. "Nobody, including me, likes the Watergate, but that doesn't mean I'm giving up on American politics and government."

Above it all, the Washington Monument's ivory shaft soared narrowly skyward, and as the St. John's chimes pealed the hour, the traffic thickened along Pennsylvania Avenue, sending squads of pigeons in retreat to the park.

Marlow Hinds, 83, laid his newspaper aside, reached into his pocket and produced a bag of peanuts. "I can always read about the Watergate," he said, "but you got to feed the pigeons when they're hungry."