

A Man Disillusioned by Politics

By JAMES T. WOOTEN

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PRINCETON, N. J., May 17 —Early every weekday morning, a slight young man emerges from a saltbox house on the outskirts of this university town, climbs into a late-model sedan and drives 70 miles to his desk in an industrial complex in Philadelphia.

He is well-born, well-bred, well-educated, well-paid, well-traveled, well-spoken and well-dressed—a Princeton honors graduate with a good job, a promising future in corporate management, a pretty wife, a beautiful baby, a healthy relationship with his affluent parents, and a wide circle of close friends who enjoy his company and respect his opinions.

Yet, there is about Hugh W. Sloan Jr. a certain sense of sadness these days — a mantle of melancholy that lends to his voice, his eyes, his gestures and even his laughter a hint of grift. For, like a number of other bright young people who once worked for Richard Nixon and the Republican party, he has been caught up in the ever-widening swirls of the Watergate scandal and, like most of them, his life has been inexorably altered.

Not Really Bitter

"I'm not really bitter," he said here last week as he reminisced about his sunshine days at the White House, the happy challenges of two Presidential campaigns and his abrupt resignation last July from the Finance Committee to Reelect the President. "But I suppose it's also accurate to say that I'm not exactly happy about what happened."

That bit of understatement, characteristic of Mr. Sloan's low-key, soft-spoken demeanor, belies the enormous impact his friends and family say the scandal has had on him. But it does suggest his utter disillusionment with big-time politics and the gnawing, nagging fear he has that the wounds may never completely heal.

"He's down to skin and bones," his mother said.

"It was one hell of a kick in the teeth," said his father.

"He's down, way down," a friend confided. "He got locked into something he never quite grasped because of his idealism—and he's trying now to understand what the hell happened."

Vietnam Veteran

He came home from the Navy and Vietnam in 1965 when he was 24 years old and began groping for a career.

His father, a vice president of St. Regis Paper Company, Inc., suggested a career in diplomacy and Mr. Sloan tentatively agreed. He moved to Washington and enrolled in the Georgetown School of Foreign Service.



Associated Press

Hugh W. Sloan Jr.

In December, he quit and went to work for the Republican Congressional Campaign Committee, handling direct-mail projects, raising funds and, as he said last week, "enjoying the hell out of it."

"I remember saying to him when he told me he was going into politics that he'd have to watch out for himself," his father recalled. "I said, 'Take care of number one, old man, because that's what everybody else in that crowd will do.'"

His son moved quickly up through the national party's structure. He went to work for the Republican National Finance Committee in late 1966 and in 1968 became the assistant finance director of the Nixon-Agnew campaign.

After the election, he served briefly as Mr. Nixon's personal aide. After the inauguration in January, 1969, he was named to the White House staff, working directly under Dwight L. Chapin, the appointments secretary, and indirectly under H. R. Haldean ultimately the President's chief of staff.

"It was great," he said, remembering those days of his proximity to power.

"He was exhilarated by his

work," his mother recalled.

Then, in early 1971, he left the White House and moved to Mr. Nixon's campaign organization again—once more as a finance expert. By February of the next year, he was its treasurer, responsible as a custodian for a campaign fund that would eventually reach nearly \$50-million.

"That's the reason they wanted him for that job," a friend and former colleague said. "He was scrupulously honest and they had money rolling into that place right and left."

A part of the money — no one is certain yet precisely how much of it—was disbursed in cash by Mr. Sloan to some of the men now being implicated in the scandal, including G. Gordon Liddy, a convicted Watergate conspirator who allegedly masterminded a burglary and electronic bugging of the Democrats' national headquarters.

Then, according to Mr. Sloan, he was approached by Jeb Stuart Magruder and Fred LaRue, two high-ranking campaign officers and asked to come to some agreement with them on precisely how much he had paid Mr. Liddy over the months. Mr. Sloan was about to appear before a grand jury investigating the Watergate break-in.

"It was obvious to me . . . by what had been addressed to me in terms of suggestions that I tell an untrue story, a general atmosphere of suggesting a Fifth Amendment, that this was something I didn't want to be a party to," he said.

So after attempting "to get some guidance or justification for the money — to get an answer essentially to what the hell was going on," he quit the campaign.

"He called me and asked me to come down to Washington," his father remembered. "But when I got there, he had already made up his mind to quit. There was nothing to talk over. He had already quit."

A Rigged Election

When Mr. Sloan was a student at the Hotchkiss School in 1958, the student elections were rigged by a small clique of upper-classmen. He found out about it, gave a faculty member the details and some of those involved were punished.

"That's the way he always was," a classmate at Princeton said. "He never talked about it a lot—I mean about honesty and integrity and doing the right thing no-matter-what and all that—but that's what he was all about anyway."

His mother agrees. "I knew it about him even when he was just a boy," she said. "It's something that mothers sense about their children, and I knew early in his life that he was a strong, straight boy who would be that kind of a man."

His father and he never talked about honesty very much. "We learned to re-

spect each other because we knew that, among other things, we both respected honest people," his father said.

"This whole thing," Mr. Sloan said quietly as he relaxed in his father's chair in his father's house, "this whole thing is tragic — for the people involved, for their families and for the country."

'I Feel Lousy'

"I'm not going to get into recriminations and I'm not going to get into any of the details because, as you know, I'm a defendant in the Democrats' civil suit against the finance committee but I don't mind telling you how I feel.

"I feel lousy. I have a clear conscience personally, I believe I did the right things —but I feel lousy."

Nevertheless, he did talk a bit about his feelings toward the White House and its philosophy of government. "There was no independent sense of morality there," he said. "I mean if you worked for someone, he was God and whatever the orders were, you did it — and there were damned few who were able to make or willing to make independent judgments.

"It was all so narrow, so closed. Nobody listened to anybody who wasn't in a superior position. They were guys who had committed themselves economically to politics — you know, in a way in which it was not only what they were doing at the moment but what they were going to be doing all their lives, and because of that there emerged some kind of separate morality about things."

He paused briefly and glanced around his parents' home — a haven for him these days: A house full of oil portraits and gleaming silver and dark wood. His wife and infant daughter are still in Washington, waiting while he goes through a period of orientation before becoming assistant to the president of the Budd Company.

He met his wife while they were both working in the White House, and there is a photograph in his parents' den showing the two of them with President Nixon on the day they announced their engagement.

Other Mementos

There are other mementos around from those days: A picture of his family with a flag that flew over the White House, a picture of his parents with the President on his mother's birthday, and a note to his father on White House stationery.

"To Dad," it reads, with deepest appreciation on your sixtieth birthday, from your son whose one misfortune is to have shared but 28 of those years."

His father is very proud of that inscription. "He's a good kid. He's going to be okay now because he's still the same kid he always was. He's everything I ever wanted him to be."

His son sighed and concluded the conversation.

"I learned one thing in politics," he said. "If you go into it for a career — I mean as a matter of life's work and economics — then sooner or later you have to compromise. You either compromise or get out. It just, sooner or later, takes the edge off your values."

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John B. Barrett, top,
Washington police officer, taking the oath before testifying. Seated is
Sgt. Paul W. Leeper, who
also testified at hearings.