

Terrence O'Flaherty



To Watch or Not to Watch

TIME AND AGAIN during interviews with Hollywood actors I have been told that they never watch themselves on television. It is always difficult to believe.

Yesterday NBC told me that 35 million Americans saw a portion or all of the first day's Watergate hearings. The same number watched yesterday. But President Nixon was not among them—if we can still believe White House press secretary Ronald Ziegler, that is.



President Nixon

The last time the President wasn't watching the big story on TV was during the nationwide citizen's peace-march. That was difficult enough to believe. But during the past two days, when the scandal seems to be creeping through the Oval Room

and ready to go up the stairs, the President's ability to resist television is impressive in the extreme.

The audience claims for the first two days are based on quick checks by the A. C. Nielsen Company in New York City and Los Angeles and represent the total persons who watched the live telecasts on the three commercial networks. The night time repeats on the Public Broadcasting Service would undoubtedly increase the 35 million figure substantially. The hearings are scheduled to resume next Tuesday at 7 a.m. Pacific time.

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THE WATERGATE scandal will provide Congress with a magnificent invitation to clean up the campaign finance laws and make sure that it doesn't happen again. A sensible alternative to the massive and costly advertising campaigns would be the free use of the PBS network as a soap box for all candidates. But the Nixon attitude toward public service and news shows on PBS is well known. He's agin' 'em.

Will Congress accept the invitation to reorganize campaign finance laws? ABC's Howard K. Smith says no. He compared the Watergate situation to gun laws just after the assassination of President John Kennedy. The gun lobby simply outwaited the public anger and counterattacked with misleading propaganda. No effective gun legislation was ever passed.

"Without waiting for all the Watergate facts, our first priority ought to be the passage of a down-right brutal campaign finance law with razor-like teeth," said Smith. "Other nations have them and they work. Corruption scandals are almost unknown as a result. Watergate gives Congress its chance to clean up government. But Congress is adept at shrugging off its chances—unless citizens insist."



Howard K. Smith

TOMORROW three major network news shows deal with aspects of the Nixon Administration scandals. ABC's "Issues And Answers" interviews Senator Sam Ervin, Watergate Hearings chairman (1:30 p.m., Channel 7) . . . NBC's "Meet The Press" guest is Daniel Ellsberg (3 p.m., Channel 4) . . . "60 Minutes" goes back a half century to study the Teapot Dome scandal which was—until now—America's greatest corruption-in-government story of the 20th Century (6 p.m., Channel 5).

Also Unusual Tomorrow: The Emmy Award from the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences for good for unintentional laughter and teeth (6 p.m., Channel 7).

Unusual Today: Pimlico (2 p.m.) amines shot