

'November

By Jules Witcover
Washington Post Staff Writer

A year ago, some of the hottest talents along Madison Avenue were deeply committed to the slickest, most professional political advertising campaign ever conceived and implemented.

Under the name "The November Group," they were involved in what they considered to be an elevated undertaking that would bring luster to their already glowing reputations in the world of advertising.

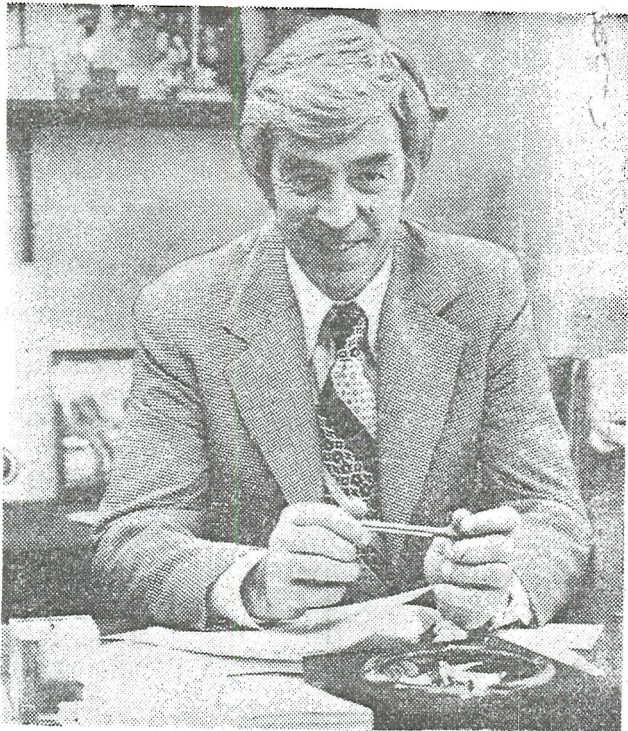
They were going to help re-elect the President of the United States, and do it in a way that would revolutionize the art of political advertising. Instead of an established agency contracting for the job, this was an unprecedented all-star team put together for this one very special assignment.

Today, the members of the November Group, older and wiser, are out of the political whirl, most of them back in the familiar surroundings of their own world of inanimate products and image-making.

They succeeded in their mission, and by the judgment of most of them succeeded spectacularly. But they look back at the experience with mixed emotions at best; some say they would not do it again.

The reason, of course, is Watergate—that catch-all word to describe corruption and wrongdoing in the electing of a President that in the minds of some has thrown a blanket of guilt indiscriminately over all who played important roles in the 1972 campaign of Richard M. Nixon.

In at least one instance,



United Press International

Bill Taylor: "We immediately opposed it as stupid."

JUN 24 1973

Group' Suffers Discontent

The Washington Post

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NATIONAL NEWS

E1

the zeal of a White House political operative, former special counsel Charles W. Colson, led to the placing of an apparently illegal ad in which members of the November Group were implicated.

They helped write copy for, and helped round up sponsors for, the ad in The New York Times on May 17, 1972 purporting to reflect independent public support for the President's decision to mine Haiphong harbor earlier that month. They say now they were duped, and that except for this instance,

ran a legal and highly efficient and effective ad campaign for Mr. Nixon.

But because of that incident, and the general disrepute into which the whole Nixon campaign fell as a result of Watergate, the innovations they brought to political advertising in 1972 have been obscured, and the image of their business tarnished—for the second time in two Nixon campaigns.

In 1968 as well, Madison Avenue jumped into Nixon presidential politics and came out with a black eye, thanks largely to author Joe

McGinniss and his inside account, "The Selling of the President, 1968."

McGinniss, functioning as an insider in the Nixon advertising team—posing, the Nixonites would say—caught the flavor and substance of candidate-making and candidate-shaping, and had the Madison Avenue boys gnashing their teeth. No industrial spy ever had come up with a more devastating dossier.

Partly as a result of the McGinniss experience, partly because of the general paranoia about security

that gripped the entire Nixon campaign, the November Group functioned throughout 1972 as a semi-mysterious enclave under the Committee for the Re-election of the President (CRP).

There have been veiled references to the November Group in the Senate Watergate hearings, but except for the Colson-inspired ad backing the President's mining of Haiphong harbor, no evidence has been uncovered that the group was in the

See NOVEMBER, E4, Col. 3

'November Group' Suffers

NOVEMBER, From E1
political dirty-tricks business.

In another political climate, the November Group might have been heralded as a major breakthrough in how politics and advertising can be wedded for maximum result.

Sometime in mid-1971, Jeb S. Magruder, then the standing director for CRP until Attorney General John N. Mitchell was to take over, undertook a study of the kind of advertising campaign the President should have.

Himself a graduate of the advertising business with the J. Walter Thompson agency in Los Angeles, Magruder worked in consultation with H. R. Haldeman, his old ad agency boss who then was Mr. Nixon's chief White House aide. Magruder conferred with six major advertising agencies and with Haldeman produced the idea of a separate in-house agency.

The approach had several advantages: it would create an agency completely under White House control, with hand-picked aides all of whom believed in the Nixon re-election; security could

be more easily imposed; individual stars of the ad business could be hired for each key job; the regular 15 percent agency commission would be saved.

A 41-year-old Los Angeles advertising man who never had worked in a presidential campaign, Peter Dailey, was hired in November, 1971, by Mitchell (who still was Attorney General). By Feb. 1, 1972, Dailey had assembled a staff of 60 advertising specialists in New York and 10 in Washington.

Dailey became president of the November Group (named that because it would work toward the Nov. 7 election) and Phillip Joanou of Doyle Dane Bernbach Inc. in Los Angeles was named executive vice president. These two worked most directly with the White House and with CRP, clearing advertising ideas with Haldeman, and others in the November Group say—fending off Colson's ideas, which they often found excessively harsh or in bad taste.

From Young and Rubicam Inc. in New York, Paul J. Muller, a man of 22 years' experience in the money side of advertising, was recruited to head the finance

department, on a par with Dailey and Joanou. Through him went all agency fees from CRP to the November Group and disbursements by check for all services, including time bought on hundreds of radio and TV outlets around the country.

About 60 individuals worked in New York, the center of the advertising business, under a senior vice president, Michael Lesser, on leave from Marschalk and Co.

In the New York office, at 909 Third Ave., the two essentials of any advertising agency were also housed—a creative department under Bill Taylor, on leave from Ogilvy and Mather Inc. of New York, and a media department under George Karalekas of the Canada Dry Corp. Taylor's department actually thought up, wrote and produced the ads; Karalekas' group placed them through a New York firm, SFM Media Service Corp. In Washington, a smaller office of about 10 was run by Bill Novelli, a marketing expert from the Wells, Rich Greene agency of New York.

The whole concept, says an alumnus who is now in his own advertising business

and not interested in any more publicity, "was exactly as in any marketing contract. McGinniss said in 1968 they were selling the President the way you would sell toothpaste. Well, that's exactly true, because the skills are transferable, whatever the product."

To a man, those interviewed who were part of the November Group are proud of the professional job they did for Mr. Nixon. And to a man, they have one main gripe—interference from "the politicians."

Some will not be more specific, but those who are agree that the interference came from Colson, not only in the celebrated Haiphong harbor mining ad, but in other instances when November Group officials held him off or ignored him.

According to Taylor, the ad was first drafted by Colson and submitted to him. As finally run, it was titled "The People vs. The New York Times," and it quoted from four polls saying the public backed the President. November Group executives, one of them says, were told "to drop everything and call our friends, suggesting

See **NOVEMBER, E6, Col. 1**

NOVEMBER, From E4
if they supported the President to send telegrams."

When the ad arrived from the White House, Taylor says, "We immediately opposed it as stupid" and sent it back. But according to another member of the group, Magruder urged that it be accepted in modified form to keep peace with Colson on what Magruder said was a minor matter. CRP official Herbert L. (Bart) Porter told the Senate Watergate committee last week he gave Joanou \$4,400 in cash presumably to pay for this one ad.

On another occasion, a November Group executive says, Colson submitted a

poster showing a hard-hat worker saying: "Hey, McGov! Do you still believe in amnesty for all the draft-dodgers? I don't. I fought for my country."

The November Group pros were similarly turned off by this proposal, which they felt demeaned McGovern and was not in keeping with the lofty theme of the Nixon campaign—the characterizing of the candidate as a working President, above the political battle.

"We put it (the Colson poster) behind Joanou's door for eight weeks," one of his associates says, "and everytime they (the White House) asked about it we

See **NOVEMBER, E8, Col. 1**

ADVERTISEMENT

THE PEOPLE VS. THE NEW YORK TIMES

The May 10th *New York Times* editorial, critical of President Nixon's closing of North Vietnam land and sea supply routes, argued that the President's actions ran "counter to the will and conscience of a large segment of the American people."

BUT WHAT DOES THE PUBLIC SAY?

—A telephone poll, conducted by Sindlinger & Co. of Swarthmore, Pennsylvania, on May 10 found that 76% of the public supported the President.

WHO CAN YOU BELIEVE— THE NEW YORK TIMES OR THE AMERICAN PEOPLE?

Ms. Phyllis Borden
Edward M. Gouletianos
Mr. & Mrs. Alan Timpson
Ms. Patricia O'Leary, Coordinator
Scenic Drive
Croton-on-Hudson, New York
914-271-3175

This is the apparently illegal ad that has tarnished the reputation of President Nixon's 'November Group.'

NOVEMBER, From E6 said we didn't know where it was."

The November Group produced two kinds of ads—the positive, institutional ones that showed Mr. Nixon as President at home and

abroad, and the negative, attack ads criticizing McGovern, which in every case were run under the sponsorship of Democrats for Nixon, headed by former Secretary of Treasury John B. Connally.

Through 1972, the November Group spent \$7,272,498, according to a financial statement prepared after an audit by Price Waterhouse and Co. This amount included \$4,379,395 to buy media time and space (far below the \$14.4 million ceiling imposed by federal law), \$1,086,958 for operating expenses and \$1,552,090 for production expenses.

Payments, except for the \$4,400 Joanou paid in cash for the Haiphong harbor mining ad, were made by November Group check, Muller says. And for all the riches of the Nixon campaign, others in the group say, the in-house agency constantly was hard-pressed for funds.

"We always had to fight like cats and dogs for money," one of them says. "Sometimes we felt like whores who had to go down to Stans' office (Maurice H. Stans, chairman of the campaign finance committee) to plead for money to do this or that radio or television spot."

As a private corporation incorporated in New York, the

November Group was not required to file reports on income and spending with the General Accounting Office, as the campaign committees were under the 1972 election reporting law.

But Muller says the agency provided the re-election committee with spending data. Also, radio and television outlets must report how much time they have sold to candidates, and at what cost. In its own reports to the GAO, CRP lists a series of flat agency advances to the November Group, with no itemization of the spending.

Although the election is history, the November Group remains incorporated in New York, with Dailey as president. Some of the veterans, like Muller, say they would do it all again if Dailey asked them, and if the candidate was somebody to their liking. Muller is the only top executive of the November Group to land a government job out of it. He is now treasurer of the Overseas Private Investment Corp., a federal agency.

But others say they have had enough. Most of her November Group executives are back in the ad business, having worked for the President's re-election on an "anchor-and-loan" arrangement. Their own agencies kept them on their books, with all fringe benefit rights intact, and the November Group paid the agencies for the salaries of those on loan.

Some of the larger advertising agencies have barred political advertising work. The prohibition precedes Watergate. Two of the best-known agencies—Batten Barton Durstine and Osborn, and Doyle Dane Bernbach—have nixed political advertising for several years, and a third—Young and Rubicam—outlawed it outspokenly two years ago. Edward Ney, Y&R's president, went on television and said his firm was quitting because it was not appropriate to use advertising skills to sell candidates.

Mark Strook, vice president for public relations at Y&R, says advertising clearly has been hurt by the Watergate—not by anything

done by the November Group, but by the fact some of the leading figures in the case, like Haldeman, come from advertising backgrounds.

Of the whole experience, one ex-November Group executive now says:

"These people (the Nixon politicians) were very efficient in their own way and weren't used to leaving a stone unturned. But they were used to having a lot of yes-man around, and we said no."

Colson particularly won a special place for himself in the hearts of the advertising pros who joined the Nixon campaign. One of them sums up his feelings about Colson and his White House political associates this way:

"We didn't hold these people in high regard. We knew we were better than they were."

But the advertising pros were, as they say in their business, part of the package. And in politics as in merchandising, truth-in-packaging can be elusive.