

Reaction to the Transcripts

What has happened to reality? Must we now fall back on our individual biases in order to come to some conclusion as to what happened in the Watergate affair? Each person involved tells a different story, each wishing for his truth to be believed. Multiply this by each American's wish for his or her individual belief in the matter to be proved, and you end cringing beneath a fallout of conflicting stories, each purporting to The Truth.

Perhaps, then, we reach a point where the victorious truth lies with the man who has the most endurance in insisting on his story, and the winning truth will be found in the mouth of him who has the most stake in being believed. Perhaps we reach a point where the only truths are those proclaimed by the people who can make themselves heard with a minimum of obstruction, especially if they are also in control of what proof is made known publicly.

Nixon has informed us that he is innocent, and he has conveniently chosen the evidence that will prove this fact. He has generously laden the public with voluminous, but judiciously edited, transcripts of the conversations which he deems relevant in this matter. He holds these transcripts to be self-evident. He knows what happened, and he is now telling us what happened. Of course, he realizes that there are different kinds of truths. He says that members of his staff may have technically broken the law, while they were morally right. There are moral truths, and there are those bothersome technical truths, which are different. There are Presidential truths, and there are John Dean truths. The President, i.e., Richard Nixon, holds all the cards, as well as an oversized saw, while Dean is out on a limb.

Perhaps the President (or P., as he is now known) can identify with the poet in this excerpt from an essay by John Masefield:

"There is another way to truth: by the minute examination of facts. This is the way of the scientist, a hard and noble thankless way. It is not the way of the great poet, the rare unreasonable who comes only in ten generations. He apprehends truth by power: the truth which he apprehends cannot be defined, save by a greater power, and there is no greater power."

JULIE SYMINGTON.

Washington.

Crucify him! Crucify him!

Millions of Americans are sick and tired of Watergate. Yet there are those, including the news media, who relentlessly continue to employ their best efforts to keep the pot boiling. Their primary objective is to crucify Richard Nixon.

In this connection two questions are raised that deserve consideration:

1. Why isn't Richard Nixon entitled to the same confidentiality of his sources as the press and the news media claim for themselves? The press cannot be forced to divulge their sources. Why should the President?

2. Why is Richard Nixon, the defendant, being required to furnish the evidence that his enemies and political adversaries hope will convict him? It's the job of the prosecution, not the defendant, to supply the evidence.

HELM H. HULBERT.

Washington.

If the House Judiciary Committee agrees to this vague compromise, it is negating the efforts over the past year of a vigorous free press, a courageous judge, two resolute special prosecutors, a principled attorney general, and the public as expressed in their telegrams, letters, and votes; and thus in one stroke the Judiciary Committee is allowing the President to mock every one of our political institutions, including the House of Representatives.

If, while presuming Mr. Nixon innocent, the House of Representatives does not impeach the President for withholding evidence from physical examination and legal scrutiny, not only is a fair trial denied other defendants in judicial proceedings, but what constitutional recourse will the people have between elections when a future President, regardless of his offense, cites this precedent to arbitrarily withhold evidence from legislative impeachment proceedings?

R. JAMES FRITSCH.
 RANDON B. FRITSCH.

Linthicum, Md.

Judging from what I see and hear, most citizens are sick and tired of writing letters, sending telegrams and raising their voices to cowardly Congressmen. It is long past time for the "confrontation," which only this morning, Congressman Larry Hogan was lamenting.

If Chairman Rodino, and the Judiciary Committee, are waiting for a great public hue and cry, I am afraid they will be disappointed. The "Saturday night massacre" outpouring represented the sentiments of the multitudes—and we have given up trying to get the message across to the vacillating, uncourageous ones on Capitol Hill.

If I am correct, what will ensue is a deafening silence, followed by the silent masses taking corrective action in November.

PHYLLIS MASON.

Reston.

As usual the tyrannical media goes ahead with endless trying and convicting of people before courts and judiciary committees have a chance to decide innocence or guilt.

I wonder seriously if courts or government appointed committees are now necessary since the media has taken over the job of deciding who is guilty and who is not.

MABLE B. BROWN.

Bonne, N. C.

The success of this country's constitutional form of government is due in large measure to the system of checks and balances. One of these checks, Congress' ability to impeach the President, assumes that the President must cooperate completely with any impeachment inquiry. Should any precedent contrary to this be established, no matter how small the concession seems to be, this vital check on our form of government will be jeopardized. Congress must not allow this to happen.

ROBERT BRAUNSTEIN.

Beltsville.

President Nixon is apparently attempting to set up the Watergate inquiry as a personal battle between himself and John Dean. Not only is this ridiculous in its concept, considering that there is far more evidence than that presented by Dean, but it violates every principle of justice and fairplay in the courtroom adversary system. Mr. Nixon is able to request and receive broadcasting time whenever he desires—Dean cannot. Mr. Nixon is able to decide which evidence he cares to present, and in what fashion—Dean cannot. John Dean will be cross-examined by Mr. Nixon's lawyer (at least in Mr. Nixon's plan)—Mr. Nixon will be cross-examined by no one.

President Nixon, by broadcasting out of context selected remarks from admittedly edited transcripts, has attempted to portray himself as the crusading champion of justice, trying desperately to "get the story out". Unfortunately his actions speak much louder than his words. Every inkling of information about Watergate has been dragged from the White House by requests, leaks, subpoenas, and the tireless investigatory reporting of newspapers.

Obviously transcripts prepared by Mr. Nixon, edited by Mr. Nixon, of tapes withheld from competent experts are useless as proof of his involvement good or bad. The chairman and minority leader of the judiciary committee are not competent experts, and could not make a competent judgment of the validity of the transcripts.

It is time to put this matter in its proper perspective: President Nixon is a defendant who has refused to supply necessary evidence for many months (and continues to). He has denied the prosecution the right of cross-examination. He has picked personally the men he wishes to investigate him (Cox, Jaworski). When these men ran contrary to his wishes he fired one and has denied the other necessary information. Any level-headed judge would have found the defendant Richard Nixon guilty of contempt of court. And no level-headed country would retain him as leader. MARC S. ZASADA.

Fairfax.

If nothing else, the \$12.25 paper-back bestseller of Richard Nixon's routine days at the office suggests great script material for a grade D comic satire on gangland activities. Until one realizes that Nixon's performance is perhaps the greatest tragedy to befall American democratic government.

MARY ANNE O'BOYLE.

Takoma Park.

Mr. Nixon's demagogic performance on Tuesday night was greatly disturbing. He is continuing to use all his power to prevent the Special Prosecutor and House Judiciary Committee from uncovering the truth in the Watergate and related cases. Although he professes belief and trust in the Constitution and judicial system, his sole object is to delay and hopefully confound all attempts to uphold the Constitution and judicial system.

It is particularly upsetting to see Mr. Nixon misuse his power to appear on nationwide television and present his personal one-sided version of this matter. Regardless of his self-righteousness, I am not interested in what he "meant to say" or meant to do, but what actually happened. The only satisfactory conclusion to this situation is for the impeachment process to run its full and unrestricted course.

Finally, I wish Mr. Nixon would stop his self-serving attempts to equate himself with President Lincoln. If he has a particular affinity for Lincoln quotes, he should remember that "... you can't fool all of the people all of the time."

JAMES E. BROMWELL.

Arlington.

As a citizen who is not completely bereft of all intelligence and common sense, I cannot remain silent in the face of Mr. Nixon's assault on both of these faculties of mine and, I hope, of yours and the American public in general, as enunciated by him last Tuesday.

I must raise my voice to do two things: (1) to say I believe he is concealing his criminal complicity in what is commonly known as "Watergate" and all its ramifications, which is self-evident from the fact he will not release the tapes. He has heard the tapes and knows what they have on them. Obviously, they confirm John Dean's testimony and criminally implicate him. That is the only conceivable reason for not releasing them that makes sense; (2) to implore you to continue to press for the tapes.

I fear if we all do not pursue this sordid affair to its logical conclusion of impeachment and removal from office of this unfit person, he and his kind will have succeeded in subverting the democratic principles of this nation and diverting us all on the road to totalitarianism. This will only serve as a green light to the other cynical, devious, dishonest, expedient and immoral individuals in our midst to go out and place themselves above the laws of this country, as he has so blatantly done.

DOROTHY R. M. GEE.

Washington.