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Nixon set own fate: Buckley

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LOUISVILLE (Ky.) — Conservative William Buckley, here yesterday to tape a segment of his television program "Firing Line," said President Nixon signed his own political death warrant a month ago when he called on authorities to aggressively seek out and punish the

guilty in the Watergate affair.

"Mr. Nixon signed his own execution warrant almost a month ago when he challenged all the judicial and congressional resources of America to find out exactly who's guilty of what and to mete out punishment unsparingly," Buckley said.

Buckley had previously said that the nation would "be better off if Mr. Nixon were not president."

The result of Nixon's challenge, Buckley told a convention of public television broadcasters, was to mold a posse of investigators through whose efforts the President was obliged to release the Watergate tape transcripts.

"What has been one," he said, "is that something not unlike a posse has been mobilized and it is that posse, which continues to breathe down his neck, that is responsible for the publication

of those remarkable transcripts."

Buckley also said he has been misinterpreted in his attitude toward the President. He said newspapers have quoted him as an advocate of presidential resignation rather than reflecting his attitude that the nation would be better served if Vice President Gerald Ford became President.

Though he is a past backer of President Nixon, Buckley has often been critical of the administration and has accused Nixon of not adhering to conservative principles.