



# Long Horror Story Ahead for U.S.

— Joseph Alsop

THE UNDILUTED horror of what lies ahead, unless President Nixon resigns voluntarily, is finally beginning to be honestly admitted. The chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, Representative Peter Rodino (Dem-N.J.), is still saying that the committee is "shooting at mid-July for its report to the House on the President's impeachment."

Other senior committee members are more realistically talking about a report to the House in August, and the possibility of an overspill into September is being admitted by some. Brief calculation is enough to show how long the Watergate mania and, worse still, the paralysis induced by the Watergate mania are therefore going to afflict the entire U.S. government.

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ASSUME a report by the Judiciary Committee to the full House by mid-August — which is optimistic. That means the House will have voted the bill of impeachment up or down no sooner than the end of August.

Assume the bill of impeachment is voted. That means the Senate, in its usual squalid disarray, will finally begin to tackle the President's trial no sooner than just after the Labor Day weekend. Senator Mike Mansfield of Montana has hopefully predicted that the Senate will then be able to complete the President's trial within two months. If the Senate majority leader is correct, the President will then be declared innocent or will be removed from office no earlier than the very eve of

election day in November.

As the world knows, however, Mansfield is a man far better fitted for a career in sainthood than a career of Senate leadership. A Senate under Mansfield's leadership will in fact require the kind of divine intervention that saints are said to be able to call forth in order to finish trying the President within two months. It is far more likely that the government's paralysis will last until Christmas.

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NOR IS THAT the end of the horror story. Just make the opposite assumptions. Suppose the present House fails to vote a bill of impeachment by a small majority. Or suppose the Senate refuses to convict the President by one or two votes.

On present prospects, the November elections should produce a perfect massacre of Republicans in Congress. The House minority leader, Representative John Rhodes of Arizona, has been known to talk in his gloomier moments of a Republican contingent in the House reduced to a hundred members or even fewer.

Furthermore, every new Democrat in the next Congress will arrive in Washington looking for a headline with a grandiloquent statement about his "mandate" to drive Mr. Nixon from the White House. If the President has just had a narrow escape — which is the most one can foresee — can anyone imagine that a renewed attempt to impeach and convict will not be made in the new Congress?