

Charles McCabe Himself

'Hounded Out of Office'

WHEN, one way or the other, Mr. Nixon finally goes, he will have left a lot of waste in his wake.

The national crisis of confidence, which Mr. Nixon has prolonged immoderately, has changed the complexion of most of our political institutions. By his passionate, protracted devotion to the safety of his hide, the President has come close to scuttling the Republican party. The Democrats, transfixed by the drawn-out Indian Rope Trick, have stayed still and slipped. Slip is what happens to political parties which stay still.

The scars of the Nixon agony will likely be most strongly felt by the American press. The country itself is likely to spring back from Mr. Nixon's eventual absence with a gasp of relief, and all signs of good form; but the press has been wounded deeply, lastingly.

It is astonishing how many people believe, and have believed for quite a long time now, that the press is "hounding" Mr. Nixon out of office. This is nonsense, pure and not so simple, but it is believed nonsense. It is Mr. Nixon's petty triumph that he has made it so.



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FOR YEARS NOW, the entire power and apparatus of the White House has been devoted to engraving on the public mind the image of Richard Nixon as victim, victim of the press, and especially victim of the Eastern Establishment press, which means chiefly the New York Times and the Wash-

ington Post. You do not have to have big ears to be reminded by Mr. Nixon's supporters that both newspapers are owned by rich Jewish Atlantic seaboard families.

Actually, the American press, including the Atlantic division, has made Mr. Nixon not only what he is today, but what he was when he was at the apex of his power in 1972, days when he was body-punching the media to death with IRS harassment and "enemies lists."

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NO MATTER what individual reporters may have thought, the publishers of the U.S. have been overwhelmingly on the side of Mr. Nixon from the day he entered public life until his bungling deceit about Watergate caught up with him. If Brother Nixon as a developing figure had been reported well and truly, he would never have made the Senate.

American publishers have always found in Mr. Nixon a rather useful public man who would keep intact the institutions and ways of thinking on which their continued success depended. The publishers, on the whole, identified with Mr. Nixon on a deeper level. Since the days of FDR most of them have thought of themselves as victims. They have been like babies who felt the one wish out of 5000 which they were not granted amounted to nothing less than despotic encroachment on their rights.

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FAR FROM "hounding" Mr. Nixon out of office, the press in fact came into the act far too late with far too little. The famed "digging" done by the Washington Post was mostly the tunnelling of information from within the Nixon Administration itself, especially from the FBI, which had felt badly used by the White House bodyguards, Haldeman and Ehrlichman.

After the edited tapes fiasco, a British journalist brought out the chestnut about Mr. Nixon being at heart "the insecure boy from Whittier who never made the first squad on the football team." Because the characterization is a chestnut does not mean it is not true. Mr. Nixon is paranoid about the press. Paranoia is terribly catching. Any newspaper more independent than one edited by the ineffable Ron Ziegler would have infuriated Mr. Nixon, at the height of his imperial power.