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Leaked-Memos Author

William Patrick Dixon

By CHRISTOPHER LYDON
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, June 20—Bill Dixon smiles shyly, without protest, at the description "Nixon-hating partisan"—the phrase that one White House spokesman used when Mr. Dixon's memorandums on potentially impeachable offenses began leaking out of the House Judiciary Committee.

After all, he remarked this morning, "This is the third full summer I've devoted to getting Nixon out of the White House." Late in 1970, at age 26, he was among the first volunteers for Senator George McGovern's Presidential campaign; in 1972 he ran the McGovern organization in Wisconsin.

Yet there is little of the "character assassin"—another White House phrase—in Mr. Dixon's soft-spoken manner, in his carefully deferential legal briefs, or especially in the manner of their leaking, which by all accounts was not Mr. Dixon's doing.

And he emphatically denies the charge from Ken W. Clawson, the White House director of communications, that his memorandums were "written for the purpose of slandering President Nixon."

Portrayal Called Fair

"The memos I wrote were based on the President's own words," Mr. Dixon said in an interview today. "They are a fair and accurate portrayal of information presented to the committee, written in response to requests from members of the committee on the assumption they would be read and held in private."

The Dixon papers, however, were the only written form of the committee version of White House tapes that committee members were free to examine outside their hearing room; the committee's own transcripts of the tapes are confined, by committee rule, to members' desks.

Thus the Dixon papers found their way to newsmen—first through Democratic hands and now, in a flood, from a Republican, and what appear to be important charges against President Nixon were being attributed to Mr. Dixon. It was a "distressing surprise," he said today, for a young lawyer who came to Washington last summer—after a year as legal counsel to Gov. Patrick J. Lucey of Wisconsin—intent on enjoying nonpolitical anonymity again.

He is still nominally staff counsel to Representative Robert W. Kastenmeier, Democrat of Wisconsin, who is chairman of the Judiciary Subcommittee on Courts, Civil Liberties and the Ad-

ministration of Justice. But in fact his first real assignment last fall was directing the Judiciary Committee's staff investigation of then-Representative Gerald R. Ford's private life—a job in which he won praise for discretion.

Immediately after Mr. Ford's confirmation as Vice President, Mr. Dixon was assigned to the impeachment question—working for the Judiciary Committee at large, not for the impeachment counsel, John M. Doar.

An Early Republican

William Patrick Dixon, born on Dec. 12, 1943, in Buffalo, had the conservative upbringing of a second-generation Irish-American family and the strict education of Roman Catholic schools. As a young man he called himself a Republican and dreamed of being a banker.

His strenuous course through college and law school at the State University of New York at Buffalo was the sort of experience President Nixon could identify with. He worked full-time on the side as a loan collector, garbageman and private investigator, grinding his way to the top of his law school named him one of the "10 outstanding young men" in 1967.

But the war in Vietnam made him a Democrat. "We had no business over there," Mr. Dixon said today. "It was barbaric."

When he set out to practice law in 1970, Mr. Dixon chose a firm in Milwaukee partly because he foresaw that the Wisconsin primary could be crucial in the next Democratic nomination. "I just decided I was going to play a part in electing an antiwar Democrat in 1972," he said.

Gene Pokorny, the McGovern campaign's roving Midwest organizer, lived in the Dixon house for most of two years and sometimes had only Mr. Dixon's credit card for financing. "For a long time," a Wisconsin Democrat recalled today, "the Dixon household was the McGovern campaign."

Transplanted now to Alexandria, Va., the Dixon household includes a wife, the former Wilhelmina Shannahan, known as Willie, from Endicott, N. Y., and three children, William Joseph, 9; Michael Shannahan, 6; and Meaghan Patricia, 4.

Mr. Dixon hopes to settle again someday in Milwaukee but not before he has done some of the work he came here for in fields like prison reform and the protection of privacy. "I enjoy being a lawyer more than I enjoy being a politician," he said. "I look forward to getting back to work on legislation."