

Continued Support

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The night before John D. Ehrlichman was scheduled to testify in his own defense in U.S. District Court here, he gathered his family around him in a downtown Washington hotel for the first interview they have given together.

Whatever his troubles stemming from U.S. indictments charging him with crimes in connection with the Ellsberg break-in and the Watergate cover-up, Ehrlichman appears to have found strong support from his wife and five children. The same turn of fate that forced Ehrlichman to leave his job as President Nixon's top domestic adviser has given him more time to spend with his family.

Mrs. Ehrlichman and their three sons and two daughters took turns expressing their belief in Ehrlichman's innocence and their confidence that the federal jury will agree in the Ellsberg case. When asked how the family might have prepared for a possible unpleasant outcome to the trial, the youngest Ehrlichman, 14-year-old Bob, said: "I don't think we have to prepare . . . we think it is only going to be good."

Ehrlichman and his wife, Jeanne, have been taking cabs daily to the courthouse from the Mayflower Hotel, where they have a well-appointed suite with fireplace. Once they arrive at the federal courthouse, their entrances and exits are filmed by massed television crews. One cameraman accidentally bumped Mrs. Ehrlichman on the head during one of these filmed encounters last Friday.

She said the cameramen and technicians rushing toward them each day make her "feel sort of like an animal . . . but I understand. They are doing a job in the best way they can, but it is a difficult thing to live through. A year ago (the filmings) this would have been very offensive, but it has grown . . . it has been with us for a while."

Two years ago, Ehrlichman was one of a handful of men who saw President Nixon almost daily, who had direct access to Mr. Nixon and whose advice appeared to weigh heavily with him.

Now, Ehrlichman looks back on his White House years with apparent mixed emotions. Asked what he missed about the White House, he responded quickly, "Not a whole lot . . . the long hours." But he added that he misses "the people . . . We made a number of very good friends there and we miss

From Family



Associated Press

John Ehrlichman strolls toward U.S. District courthouse with his family. From left, Bob, Ehrlichman, wife Jeanne, and son Tom. In background, visible over Ehrlichman's shoulder are daughter Jody, son Peter and daughter Jan.

them. It's a hard job, it's a job that tears your family up, and after four-plus years of it I was more than ready to lay it down."

Ehrlichman, who worked on the 1968 campaign staff and was in the Nixon White House from the start, resigned as the President's domestic adviser April 30, 1973, as revelations about the Watergate affair forced President Nixon to reorganize his administration.

Although Ehrlichman would not specifically discuss the ongoing Ellsberg trial Sunday night, he did comment on various related political and legal issues.

In the abstract, Ehrlichman said he would have advised the President against releasing any transcripts of Presidential tape recordings. He said release of the material in any form created "incalculable" difficulties for

any future Presidents consulting with their advisers. He added that "the institution of the presidency is often overlooked in the zeal to achieve a result in a political context."

Ehrlichman said he was paying his own legal expenses—in the current trial and an estimated 17 civil suits—out of personal funds from his private law practice in Seattle, Wash., and from donations to a trust fund for his defense.

He said he doesn't "have much tolerance for the grand jury system, and one of the things I would like to spend some time on after we're clear of all this is a reform of the grand jury system . . . To see it in operation here as it has been conducted has opened my eyes as to the shortcomings of it." Three of the charges against Ehrlich-

man in the Ellsberg case relate to alleged perjury before a grand jury.

Early in the Nixon administration, Ehrlichman was spotted by the White House press corps as one of the few men close to the real center of power. Along with White House chief of staff H. R. (Bob) Haldeman, Ehrlichman's classmate at UCLA after World War II, Ehrlichman formed what was known as "the Berlin Wall," a barrier imposed between President Nixon and the outside world. Few persons were able to see Mr. Nixon on official business without clearance from either Haldeman or Ehrlichman.

After less than a year as White House counsel, Ehrlichman became assistant to the President for domestic affairs and later staff director of the newly created Domestic Council. In the course of these changes, Ehrlichman moved from a second-level posi-

Bolsters Ehrlichman

tion within the White House staff to one of pre-eminence, eclipsing Arthur Burns and Daniel Patrick Moynihan as President Nixon's top domestic advisers.

Some read Ehrlichman's rise as the triumph of form over substance, the takeover of *apparatchiks*. "He became sort of a value vacuum and all they were doing was moving the apparatus," according to one source who was on the White House staff at the time.

This source recalled Ehrlichman as "a pleasant fellow," perhaps even a "closet liberal," who kept his own views submerged in carrying out President Nixon's will.

"I always thought of him as the most decent of the bunch," said this source. "My personal recollections of him are all fond and I can't say that about a hell of a lot of people over there."

Although Ehrlichman was never easy to reach, he had a reputation among reporters for being more accessible than others on the White House staff, particularly Haldeman, who was virtually inaccessible to the press. Afable in conversation, Ehrlichman also developed an image of being tough, unsentimental and quick to disapprove the behaviour of others on the White House staff who moved easily in Washington's party circuit.

This side of Ehrlichman was revealed during the Senate select Watergate committee hearings last summer when he admitted that he had directed private investigations of politicians and private citizens for the White House outside of official channels. The investigations included inquiries into the domestic lives, sexual habits and drinking problems of the persons under scrutiny.

In justifying these investigations, Ehrlichman said that they were useful in removing unfit incumbents from office. "It is an uphill struggle for someone to take on an incumbent U.S. senator under any circumstances, and the press are not always as tough on others as they might be on the members of this committee in this setting," he told the Senate committee.

The Ehrlichman family was especially critical Sunday night of the press for, in their opinion, portraying Ehrlichman as being abrasive and argumentative before the Senate Watergate committee. "John knew more than they did and was telling them how it was," Mrs. Ehrlichman said. "It wasn't popular, but it was the only position he could have taken at the time."

During the trial, the Ehrlichmans have their five children staying here with them. Peter, 24, is a law student at Stanford University; Jan, 21, is a student at Principia College; Tom, 19, is a student at Stanford; Jody, 16, is a high school senior in Seattle, where the Ehrlichmans have resumed living after leaving Washington, D.C., and Bob, 14, is a sophomore in Seattle.

When asked what was sustaining them through the trial, Mrs. Ehrlichman and the five children answered almost in unison, "Love for God . . . religion . . . love for family."

They said that their DC. friends had been supportive to them, despite some reports that they had been ignored by former acquaintances.

Tom also said his friends had expressed admiration for his father "even if they don't agree with our position." Jan, serving as a camp counselor in Colorado this summer, said that her 12- and 13-year-old wards there had written letters to her father when she told them where she was going for a few days. Peter said his law school professors had been helpful "in the sense that they recognize that this is potentially a very troublesome time for us as a family."

"Once they see that we are all at ease sometimes they are amazed that we lead our regular lives," Jan added.

They also said that strangers who have recognized any of them universally have given their support.

"We have not been touched by people who have disagreed with us," said Mrs. Ehrlichman. "I guess they don't take the time or trouble to come up. The people who have said something have said . . . 'Boy, stay in there, we're all for you, good luck.'"

Mrs. Ehrlichman, whose front-row presence has been obvious every day of the trial, says she spends the time in court "praying a great deal—as I sit there—just to know where justice is. It's in the hand of someone . . . one God."

The Ehrlichmans said they felt that there is going to be some benefit from the ordeal being faced by their family and probably others who have become embroiled in the Watergate affair.

"People are thinking . . . they're really trying to search for the truth themselves," Mrs. Ehrlichman said. "I don't think we'll ever look at anyone and judge them quickly again. Nothing's all black and all white anymore."

"I think we'll all be better Christians, in other words."