

Reinecke staff rolls with the

By Dennis J. Opatrny
 Examiner Capitol Bureau

SACRAMENTO—Their expressions changed from polite smiles to barefaced enthusiasm. Perhaps the first bright moment in months.

Lt. Gov. Ed Reinecke's staff had just been told government prosecutors may have bungled the perjury case against their boss.

High school intern Sandy Jenkins hustled over to the AP and UPI offices to pick up the latest wire service stories from Washington. Just 16, Sandy has the savvy and efficiency of a political veteran.

She quickly made copies of the wire stories and passed them around the office. Secretaries stopped pounding typewriters. Aides stopped looking busy. They all wanted to read the latest news.

Trying to remain pleasant to an interviewer, the Reinecke staff was nevertheless preoccupied with the news, and their eyes wandered to the Xeroxed copies.

Press Secretary Earl Parker, an earnest and open man like his boss, lit his fifth cigarette of the hour. Parker puffed and smiled.

What he read were stories telling of a clerical error which could cause a mistrial against California's embattled lieutenant governor.

Since Reinecke was indicted by a grand jury last April for lying to a U.S. Senate subcommittee, his life has become a political nightmare and his office a lonely outpost of despair.

Nestled in the southwest corner of the second floor of deserted 105 year old Capitol, which has been declared unsafe for earthquakes and

"I've always thought he's innocent," she said. "What they say doesn't matter."

Parker, a public relations man until he joined Reinecke a year ago, has no regrets, but like anyone passing through a downer in life is unsure he'd trip through again.

"I don't know if I'm going to stay in politics," he said, still dazzled by the power and the glory but fed up with critics inside and outside a campaign.

"It's a very irrational profession," Parker mused.

Ray Worsley, an assistant press secretary and researcher, found "it's a different world than what you read about in textbooks."

"I'm not disillusioned," Worsley said, but as a journalism student he was surprised at the different versions of the same story reporters would write.

"I think the media plays a bigger role than the public thinks," he said hastily adding he was not being a critic but just an observer.

"I don't think newspaper reporters are infallible," he said.

Sandy Jenkins did a year's internship in Reinecke's office and gained a career's worth of experience during

the lieutenant governor's tumultuous past 12 months.

The indictment, she said "just made me want to work harder" while she maintained her "faith in the justice of this country."

"I think there's room for improvement," she said without bitterness.

Joe Drachnik, a retired Navy captain and Reinecke's top aide for nearly two years, exhibits the stiff upper lip of a midshipman, which he was, who knows his team is losing to Army.

Rather than abandon a sinking ship, Drachnik is determined to guide it back to port while the skipper is away. He takes a detached view of things while the ITT scandal swirls around his boss.

"I haven't spent much time thinking about it," he said, preferring to spend his time representing the lieutenant governor at meetings of the 19 boards and commission on which he holds membership.

He conceded the seige of newsmen on his office since the indictment has "caused more than a few headaches," he has managed to guide the office through its daily chores.

"I don't consider my self an administrator whose function it is to carry on the state's work."

Asked if the indictment embarrassed him, he replied: "Am I holding my heed in shame? Hell no. I work for the lieutenant governor and I'm proud of it."

& Chronicle, July 21, 1974

punches

Reinecke's personal secretary, Lynda Nehr, said her