

What's a President Without Secrets?



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AS HIS SUPPORTERS direly predicted, Mr. Nixon's impeachment drastically altered the institution of the presidency.

Elected by a landslide in 1976 was Winston Princeton, a 53-year-old Eagle Scout whose one claim to fame was that he had never kept a secret in his life.

Once in the White House, President Princeton, ever mindful of the fate of his predecessor, more than lived up to the public's expectations.

The bugs in every room were maintained. But now they were hooked up to a loudspeaker that blared constantly down Pennsylvania avenue.

Carbon copies of all White House letters, memos and doodles were immediately dispatched to the Senate, the House, the Justice Department and Jack Anderson.

The President donated 100 per cent of his income annually to the I.R.S., delivered his State of the Union Address while hooked up to a polygraph, and, as a Summer White House, erected a pup tent on the South Lawn, where he often retired with his pup, Checkers, which he had purchased with his own money. He even refused to drink milk.

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WHILE the loudspeakers, as the President freely admitted, tended to inhibit his connubial bliss, they proved a gala attraction for tourists and newsmen alike.

It was from the loudspeakers that the public learned of President Princeton's First Crisis — a stopped-up sink in the White House kitchen.

"Shall I call a plumber?" asked presidential assistant Horatio Alger.

"Jeepers (excuse me), no!" cried the President. "That's the last thing we want around the White House. I'll fix it myself."

There were other crises to be sure, but the Sixth Crisis almost ended Princeton's presidency. The daily audit of White House assets revealed a missing ten-cent stamp.

"As I have no funds myself with which to make restitution and as I would never borrow from my friends," said the President solemnly, "I have no choice but to resign."

A Princeton Defense Committee was formed to raise the dime, but the President refused to cooperate. "I cannot accept cash from those who might have an interest in pending legislation," he said.

When all seemed lost, the issue was resolved by a benevolent corporation which sent the President an anonymous ten-cent check.

So the public heard every word of the President's negotiations with foreign diplomats, his assessments of other politicians and his discussions with congressmen and aides on proposed new laws.

Just as Mr. Nixon had foreseen, the confidentiality of the presidency was completely destroyed.

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OF COURSE, the Arab and Israeli ambassadors, who each secretly wished the President to nuke the other, could talk about nothing but peace which eased the Middle East situation considerably.

Of course, the President and his aides couldn't slander or libel other politicians — which helped promote political unity. And, of course, the President had to think up valid, rather than political, reasons for vetoing or endorsing legislation. But that didn't seem to harm the country a whit.

In fact, as one historian later put it, "Whenever politicians conduct their dealings in public, it's always astounding to discover they have nothing to hide."