

ENTER FORD

Two hours earlier, the East Room had been the setting for Richard Nixon's farewell speech to his Cabinet and the White House staff. In the interim, pictures of Nixon and his family and scenes from his triumphant Peking and Moscow visits had disappeared from the corridor leading to the Oval Office. They were replaced by pictures of Gerald Ford and his family. Now the East Room was filled again with 250 guests, a few of them still red-eyed from weeping at the emotional Nixon farewell. But there were many new faces, Republican and Democratic alike: the guest list included the entire Michigan congressional delegation, Ford's staff, friends, his maid and driver and all eleven of the incumbent Congressmen who were first elected with Ford in 1948.

Several of Ford's political friends, either by their choice or Nixon's, had not been in the White House for years: former New York Republican Senator Charles Goodell, a long-time Nixon foe; Michigan Representative Donald Riegle Jr., who deserted the G.O.P. to become a Democrat early in 1973; and Democratic Senator Philip Hart. The stage was set for the transfer of the world's most powerful political office from Richard Nixon, even then airborne over Missouri on his way to California and retirement, to Gerald Ford.

Shortly after noon, everyone in the East Room rose as a military aide announced: "Ladies and gentlemen, the Chief Justice of the United States." Warren Burger, who had been

hastily summoned from a vacation in The Netherlands, strode into the room to administer the oath of office. Although his role was traditional, Burger's presence had special meaning. As Chief Justice, he was symbolic of the law and of the constitutional processes that, set in motion by the excesses of the President and the men around him, had inevitably led to the toppling of Richard Nixon. As Burger entered, the Vice President and Mrs. Ford were announced, and walked, amid thunderous applause, into the same stately chandeliered room Richard Nixon and his family had left a short while before.

The exit and the entrance were a poignant reminder of the smoothness with which the American system can transfer the world's most powerful office from one man to another. "Mr. Vice President," Burger intoned, "are you prepared to take the oath of office as President of the United States?" "I am, sir," Ford replied. Even before the Chief Justice asked him to do so, Ford raised his right hand, placing his left on a Bible held by his wife. It was opened to the *Book of Proverbs*, third chapter, fifth and sixth verses, which Ford says every night as a prayer.* Then, at 12:03 p.m., repeating the oath of office, Gerald Ford formally became the 38th President of the United States. (In fact, Ford assumed the presidency at 11:35 a.m., when Nixon's formal letter of resignation was delivered to Secretary of State Henry Kissinger.)

"Congratulations, Mr. President," said Burger, and the audience rose to its feet in applause. Ford turned and kissed his wife on both cheeks. Then he delivered the kind of inaugural address (*see box page 13*) that the U.S. surely needed—refreshingly candid, sincere, unpretentious and effectively crafted to ease national tension and clear the air of Watergate.

The President wrote his soothing, low-keyed speech—which he described as "just a little straight talk among friends . . . the first of many"—beginning late Wednesday night, with the help of his chief of staff, Robert Hartmann, and Speechwriter Milton Friedman. With genuine humility, Ford conceded that "you have not elected me as your President by your ballots," and asked that he be confirmed "with your prayers." He emphasized the need for truth and promised to follow his "instincts of openness and candor." Time and again Ford talked about his "friends," not once mentioning enemies, domestic or foreign. Implicitly, he criticized

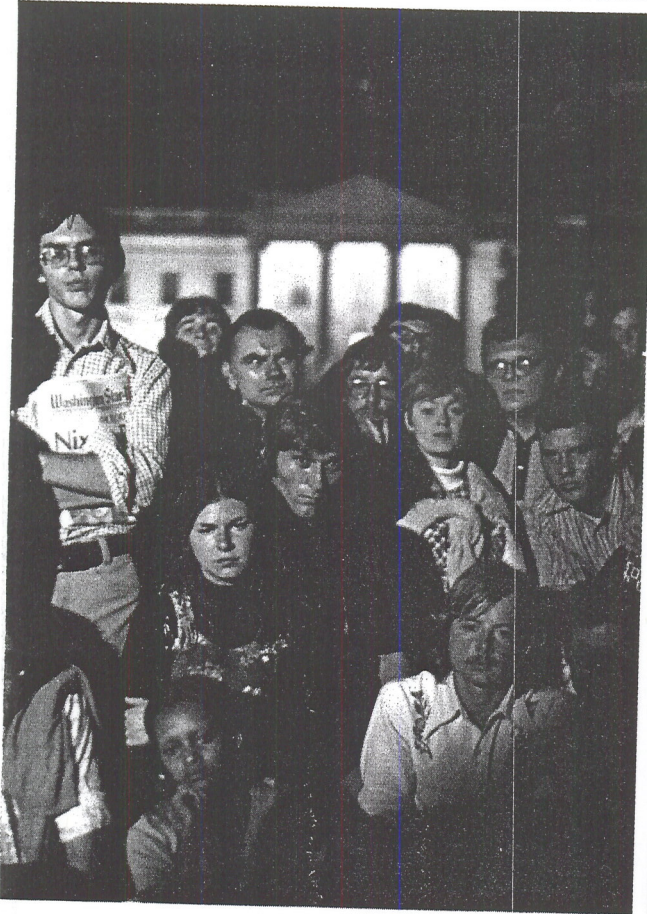
*"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."

IN THIS SPECIAL ISSUE:

THE STATE OF THE UNION, page 8. THE TRANSITION: ENTER FORD, page 10. COLOR: THE WEEK, page 11. THE RESIGNATION: EXIT NIXON, page 13B. THE LAST WEEK, page 15A. THE PRESIDENCY/HUGH SIDNEY, page 15B. COLOR: THE FORDS, page 23. THE NEW PRESIDENT, page 27. THE NEW TEAM, page 34. THE NIXON FAMILY, page 36. THE LEGAL AFTERMATH, page 39. THE NIXON YEARS, page 40. COLOR: NIXON'S CAREER, page 43. WATERGATE RETROSPECTIVE, page 53. THE U.S. REACTION, page 59. OPINION: WHERE THE U.S. GOES NOW, page 64. NIXON'S FAREWELL, page 68. FOREIGN REACTION, page 69. PRESS COVERAGE, page 73. ECONOMY AFTER NIXON, page 75. ESSAY: LEARNING FROM THE TRAGEDY, page 88.



*The oath of office:
President Ford is sworn in.*

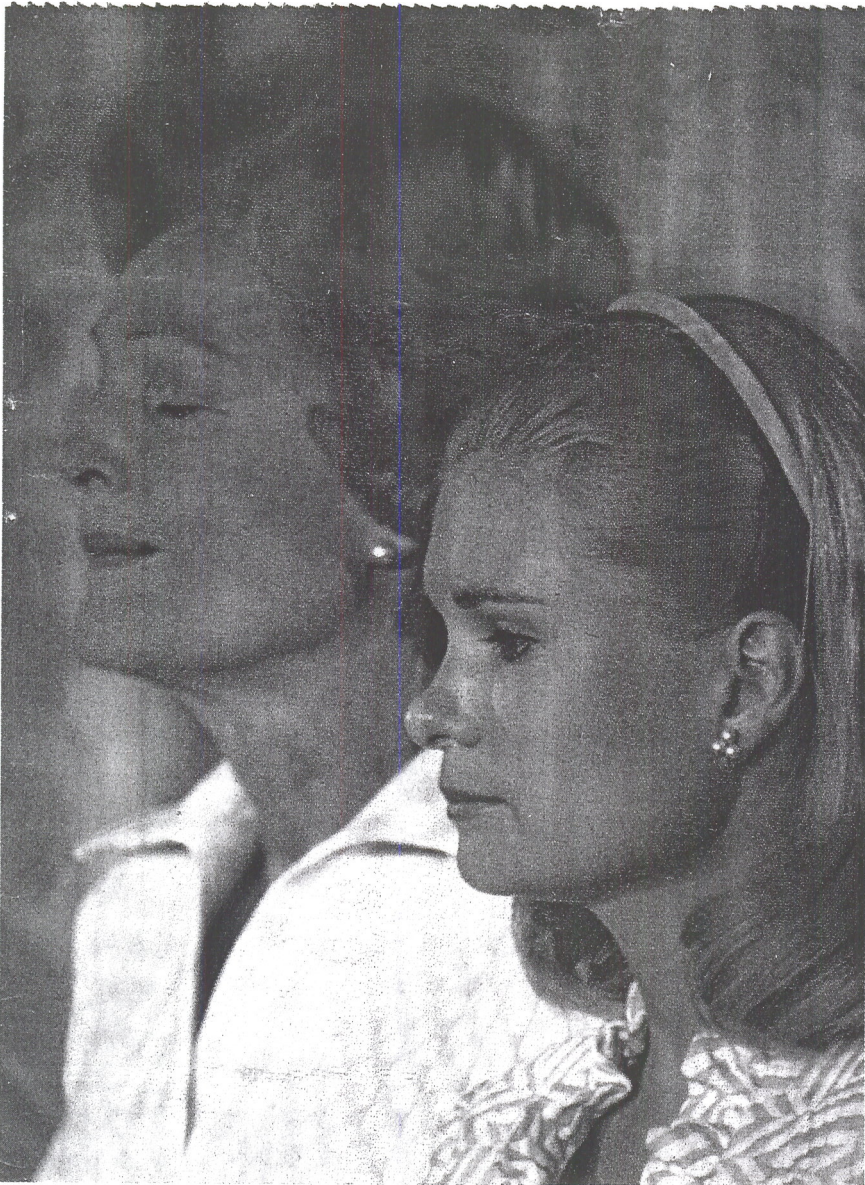


The contrasts of an emotional week: above, crowds outside the White House watch soberly as Nixon announces his resignation on TV; top, Cabinet families, in a somber mood, listen to President Ford's remarks (front row, left to right: Rachel and James Schlesinger, Carol and William Simon, Nancy and Henry Kissinger); at right, Nixon pauses in helicopter door for a last hurrah

ABOVE: DENNIS BRACK—BLACK STAR;
TOP: DAVID HUME KENNERLY; AT RIGHT: BILL PIERCE

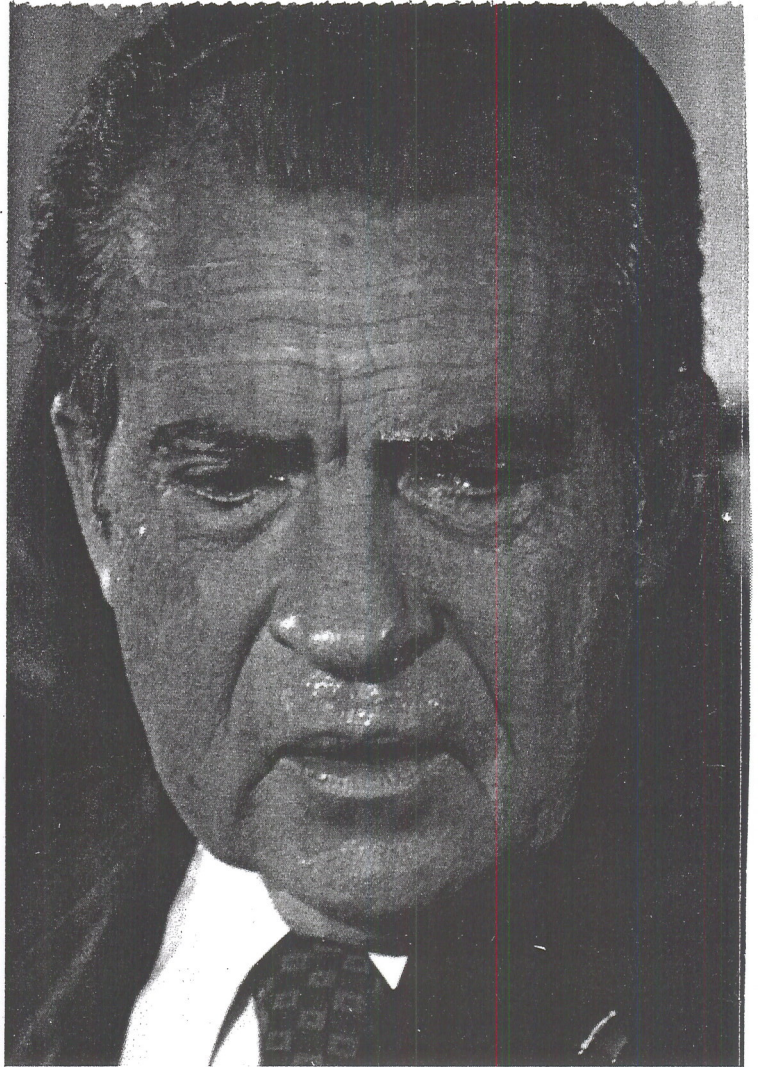
The ordeal of departure: Pat and Tricia, at left, listen stoically as President Nixon says goodbye to Cabinet and staff; below, the Fords accompany the Nixons to helicopter on the White House lawn; as it prepares for takeoff, bottom, soldiers roll up the red carpet

AT LEFT: DAVID BURNETT—GAMMA; BELOW: BRACK—BLACK STAR; BOTTOM: BRACK

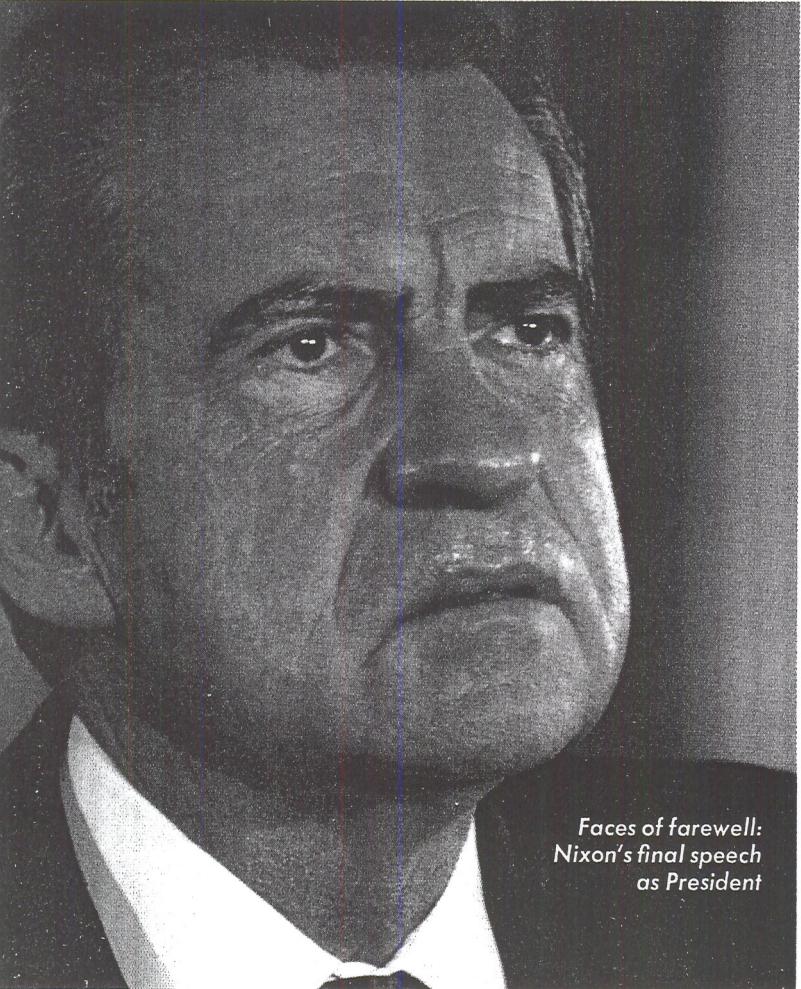




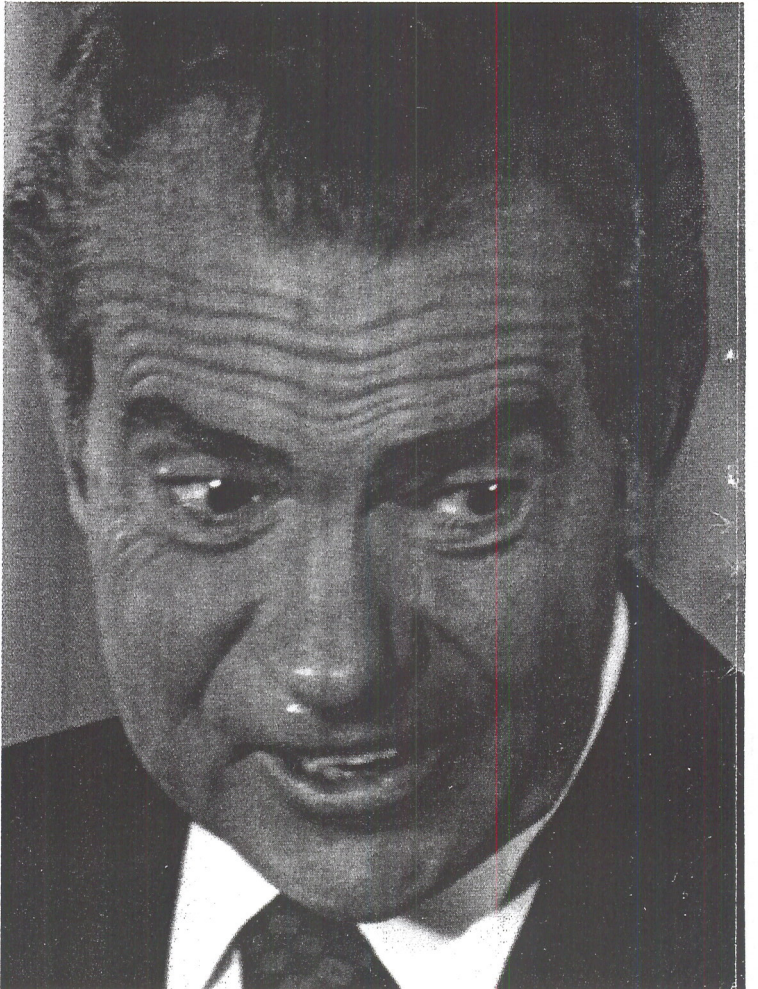
JEAN PIERRE LAFFONT—SYGMA



DAVID BURNETT—GAMMA



*Faces of farewell:
Nixon's final speech
as President*



was leaving because his "political base in the Congress" had eroded sounded as if he had been defeated in some policy issue under a parliamentary system, and the speech could have been a valedictory at the end of a long and generally successful term of office.

Secretary of State Henry Kissinger was the first to come into the room after the speech, shaking hands with his boss and accompanying him along the West Wing Colonnade to the living quarters. Nixon then rejoined his family, who had been watching the address on television. Across the street in Lafayette park, a group of youths had been loudly chanting "Jail to the Chief." Julie Nixon Eisenhower, her husband David and Pat Nixon appeared at the window, one after the other, apparently to see what was going on. When they realized that they were being watched from below by reporters, the shades were abruptly drawn. The family had ignored all messages and phone calls, even from close friends, during most of the week, and once again they were isolated in their special grief.

If Nixon's resignation speech was dignified, it was also almost complacent and inadequate as his final official address to the people who had called him their President for 5½ years. His extemporaneous farewell to the members of his own Administration Friday morning, however, was merely awkward and embarrassing, a stream-of-consciousness outpouring of self-pity and self-torment (for excerpts from this extraordinary talk, see box page 68). Gone was the dry-eyed restraint of the night before; in its place was a tearful emotionalism.

Good Plumbers

For 19 rambling minutes Nixon talked of his mother, "a saint," and his "old man," who had never amounted to much in the eyes of the world, but who was a great person nonetheless. No job is too humble, Nixon said, and the world needs good farmers, good businessmen, good plumbers, good carpenters. There was an uneasy stir in the room when he mentioned plumbers—the word for the intelligence team assigned to plug information leaks and handle illegal operations like the Watergate break-in—but Nixon seemed not to notice.

As he had the night before, he quoted Teddy Roosevelt, whose famous bulldog courage seemed to be much on his mind in his last hours, describing how the young T.R. thought his life was over after the death of his first wife. Instead, Nixon pointed out, it was only beginning, because Roosevelt, despite his sorrow, was too much of a man to quit. "The greatness comes not when things go always good for you," Nixon said pointedly, "but the greatness comes when you're really tested, when you take some knocks and some disappointments, when sadness comes." Like much else in the speech, the point of his analogy was not clear when he first made it and in the end was not really appropriate, as none other than Alice Roosevelt Longworth, T.R.'s daughter, quickly noted. Her father, she said, had been a young man when his beloved Alice died, with his work ahead of him; Nixon, 61, has his own work behind him.

He emphatically claimed that "no man or no woman [in this Administration] ever profited at the public expense or the public till." A good many questions may still be asked on this score—on that very day, John Connally, his former Secretary of the Treasury, was arraigned in Washington's federal court on charges of bribery and other crimes—but in any

case it was largely beside the point. It has long been obvious that the real and profound corruption of the Nixon Administration consisted of the abuse of power and the violation of the Constitution rather than mere greed.

His face perspiring, his eyes red-rimmed, Nixon scarcely looked at his audience most of the time, his eyes focused down and to the side. In one stunningly incongruous and belated insight, considering that it came from a man who was brought down by his own congenital suspicion and mistrust, Nixon told his colleagues: "Always remember others may hate you. But those who hate you don't win unless you hate them—and then you destroy yourself."

Nixon immediately walked with his family through the applause in the East Room, out to the south lawn and into Army One, the olive-drab helicopter that the Army provides the President, which was waiting to ferry them to Andrews Air Force Base. There Air Force One, the silver-and-blue 707 that had taken him to his triumphant tours of China and the Soviet Union, was in turn waiting for the 4-hr. 44-min. flight to California. Betty and Gerald Ford walked with the Nixons down the red carpet that had been laid from the Executive Mansion out to the lawn, and the couples exchanged kisses and handshakes at the helicopter door; Nixon touched Ford's elbow, as if in final encouragement. Though Ford was not to take the oath of office for another two hours, the famous black box, the repository for the nation's military codes—an ugly talisman that signifies the transfer of power in the nuclear age—was left behind with a military aide. It was the first time it had been away from Nixon since Jan. 20, 1969, the day he had taken charge of it from Lyndon Johnson.

Air Force One was 13 miles southwest of Jefferson City, Mo.—Middle America by geographical as well as political definition—when Richard Nixon became an ex-President and a private citizen. It was the 2,027th day of his presidency—896 days short of a full two terms. Tricia Nixon Cox and her husband Edward listened to President Ford's first speech on a radio in the plane, but Nixon and Pat did not leave their separate compartments to hear it.

At El Toro Marine Base in California, a crowd of 5,000 was waiting, and Nixon's first words were "We're home!" He promised to work for peace, the legacy for which he wants to be remembered, and "for opportunity and understanding among the people here in America." Then, climbing into another waiting helicopter, Nixon sped with his family the 40 miles to San Clemente and Casa Pacifica. There, shielded from public view by the Bougainvillea shrubs and a cement wall that had been installed for him, Richard Nixon began his exile.



CHANGING EMBASSY PORTRAITS IN BONN

WHITE HOUSE SECRETARY PACKING TO LEAVE

