

TerHorst Says He Was Misled by Ford's Aides

Washington

Jerald F. terHorst said yesterday that he was misled by other White House officials in the pardoning of Richard Nixon. But he said he would have resigned as press secretary in any event because he disagreed with President Ford's decision.

In a telephone interview, terHorst said he would have quit even if he had been consulted in advance about the pardon.

"It was something which my conscience couldn't accept," said terHorst who returned to work for the Detroit News yesterday as a national columnist.

TerHorst unknowingly misled several reporters before Saturday, when he was told of the pardon to allow him to prepare for Sunday's public announcement by the President.

One newsman, David Kraslow, Washington bureau chief for the Cox Newspapers, said he stopped working on a story Friday about discussions between the White House and Mr. Nixon concerning a possible pardon after terHorst assured him that it wasn't true.

Writing in yesterday's editions, Kraslow said terHorst was apparently lied to by presidential counselor Philip Buchen with whom the press secretary checked out Kraslow's query.

"Ninety minutes before the President announced the pardon for Nixon, terHorst told me in a telephone conversation: 'I'm sorry, Dave. If I had known on Friday what I know now I would not have guided you away from that story,'" Kraslow said.

Kraslow also wrote that a long-time friend of the press secretary quoted terHorst as saying there were other reasons for his resignation, that terHorst "was put in a position where he was about to become another Ron Ziegler, that he had been forced to make statements to the press that were misleading."

But terHorst said he "couldn't recall any of that."

White House sources said terHorst, who won praise of White House newsmen for his candor, stayed up all night Saturday preparing his letter of resignation which

listed several reasons for leaving the White House staff.

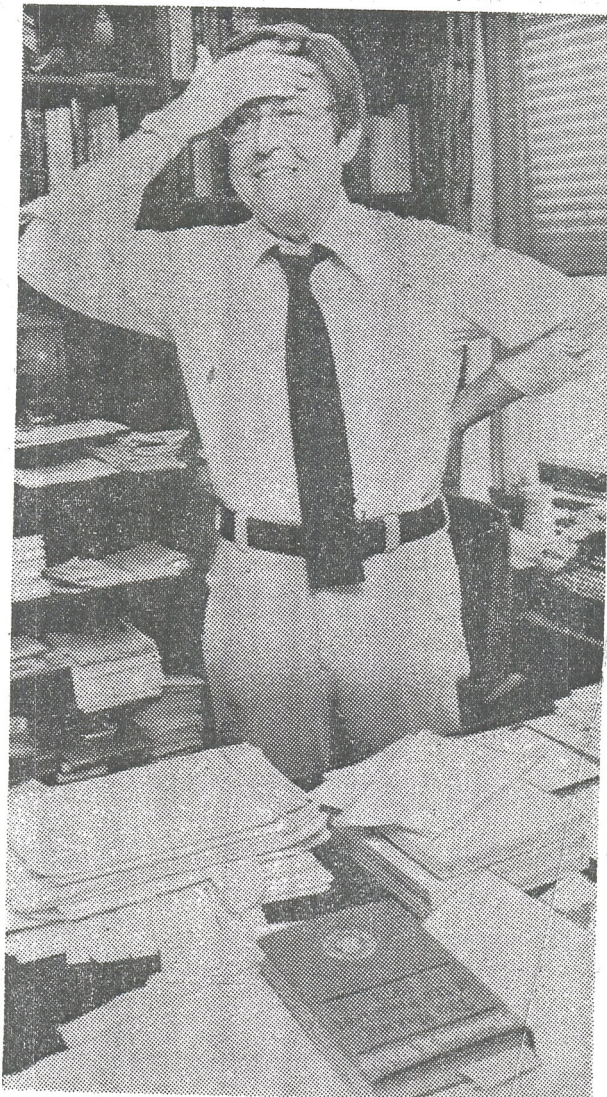
However, terHorst insisted that the "basic reason" was the President's decision to absolve the ex-president of all federal crimes, which was "something my conscience couldn't accept."

As for being shut out of the decision-making, terHorst said he felt this was something that could have been overcome in time by "educating" the White House staff to the fact that misleading White House statements are "deceptive and not necessary."

"The fact is that many people there at the White House are highly suspicious of the media and anybody who has to deal with them in a forthcoming way, meaning the press secretary," he said.

TerHorst, who like Ford is a native of Grand Rapids, Mich., was Washington bureau chief of the Detroit News before joining the new administration. He said he will now become a full-time columnist for the Detroit News.

Associated Press



EX-PRESS SECRETARY JERALD terHORST
Back in the Detroit News' Washington Office