

## Nixon — A Year Later




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**Mary McGrory**

**W**HEN Harry Truman finished his term in 1952 and went home to Independence, he was asked what he was going to do.

"I'm going to put the suitcases in the attic," he replied with his usual succinctness.

It is not so with Richard Nixon, who departed Washington in disgrace a year ago. His luggage is still strewn across the national landscape. His needs and concerns — for a larger allowance, for the return of his tapes, for a future "role" in politics — still preoccupy a fair number of people.

He no longer occupies center-stage in the consciousness of the nation, but he is still prowling around backstage.

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**T**HE SPECIAL prosecutor's office is busy preparing a final report on Watergate. Debate was heard in the House Judiciary Committee as to whether this last word should include "factual evidence with respect to the possible criminal activities of Richard M. Nixon during his tenure as President of the U.S."

The special prosecutor, Henry Ruth, says no. Certain mysteries will remain inviolate — the 18½-minute gap on the tape of June 18, the first extended post-break-in conversation with H. R. Haldeman. Unless, of course, the former President tells us all about it in his forthcoming memoirs, which is not expected.

The former special prosecutor,

Leon M. Jaworski, during whose tenure the former President was named an "unindicted co-conspirator," has given it as his opinion that after the criminal content is combed out, Richard Nixon's tapes and documents should be returned to him.

you have only to ask yourself what the country would do with this spoken evidence of corruption in the White House to realize the good sense of his suggestion.

Muffled, murky anniversary reports issue from San Clemente. They indicate that the exile has not grown out of office. He still blames the press and his political rivals for his downfall. Error is acknowledged — mostly on the part of other people; wrongdoing is not.

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**T**HE NETWORKS and the book-p publishers are treating him as if he were a revered historical figure, not the first president to resign from office. Vast figures are flung about as television magnates negotiate for the film rights to his life story. He is being paid a total of \$2.5 million in advance royalties for his memoirs.

That book — tapes or not — will as surely be Nixon without Watergate as "The Vantage Point" was Lyndon Johnson without Vietnam and the New Hampshire primary. Johnson's memoirs, a compendium of his legislative triumphs, ended on the remainder shelf. It will be interesting to see how many Americans will be willing to pay \$12.50 or more to read that Richard Nixon is innocent.