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## A Cottage Dweller

# Ehrlichman's Life in Santa Fe

By Larry Calloway

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John Ehrlichman, suntanned and bearded after six months of his new life among the artists along Canyon road here, might be writing about Watergate. But he's not talking.

His landlady says he's writing a book, and he did not deny a report that he is under contract with Simon and Schuster for a novel said to be autobiographical.

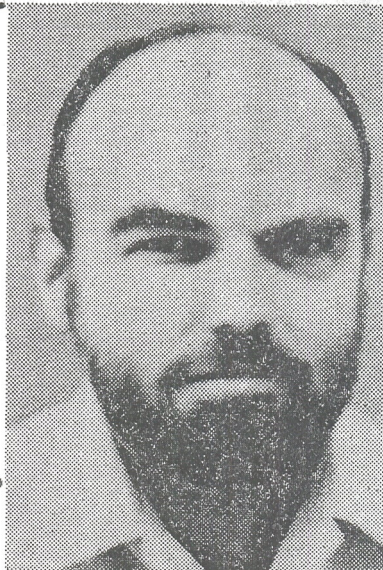
"I just wouldn't comment on it," was his response, made through the cracks in the plank gate of the high adobe wall at his fashionable hilltop cottage.

Unlike other main characters in the nation's Watergate drama, Richard M. Nixon's former chief domestic adviser and long-time political lieutenant has shunned the lecture circuit and refused interviews.

In a grocery store conversation — he does his own shopping — he reasoned that if he grants one interview he'll be hounded. "And I would have broken faith with about 20 others who have asked and have been refused," he said.

Ehrlichman lives alone here; his wife is still in Seattle.

*Former Nixon aide is growing vegetables and maybe writing a book*



AP Wirephoto

JOHN EHRLICHMAN  
Vegetables in the garden

Disbarred by the Supreme Court and facing two federal prison terms, he awaits the long process of court appeals. At age 50, he has traces of gray in his black beard and moustache.

He rents from Margaret Twyman, 60, who lives next door. "He strikes me as a very decent fellow. He's a good tenant. He's growing vegetables over there and taking care of the lawn," she said.

"He commented one time he was writing a book, and I guess

he is," she said. "I don't hear any typing over there, so maybe he's writing it in longhand."

Mrs. Twyman, incidentally, lived in the Watergate Apartments in Washington, D.C., before she moved to Santa Fe last October, leaving a job with the State Department for one with the National Park Service here.

But she said she never met Ehrlichman in Washington.

The Ehrlichman cottage has one bedroom corner fireplaces,

Mexican tiles and an impressive view.

This area's history dates to Spanish colonists in 1590, and many of the neighborhoods, including Ehrlichman's, are disorderly collections of old adobe houses and dirt roads.

The Spanish-speaking neighbors are slowly selling to newcomers, many of them artists or owners of stores specializing in craft items. A 90-unit condominium is planned across the road.

The beard doesn't hide Ehrlichman in Santa Fe, which despite its 40,000 population and cosmopolitan residents, retains a

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small-town neighborliness.

But there's a tradition of leaving people alone that has let other celebrities, from John Wayne to poet Alan Ginsberg, pass through seemingly without notice.

Ehrlichman plays tennis, goes to quiet parties and frequents the more intimate restaurants.

Meanwhile, his wife, Jeanne, has taken a job with the Seattle Symphony. She declines all comment about her relationship with her husband.

At least some of their five children have visited Ehrlichman here, and their youngest son, Robert, played guitar and sang for a while at a casual Canyon road restaurant called The Bistro.

William Kirschki, the young conductor of the Orchestra of Santa Fe, says on the basis of a conversation at a social gathering that Ehrlichman's knowledge of music is impressive. They talked about the Santa Fe Opera's production of "Falstaff," which Ehrlichman saw.

The ethic on Canyon road, expressed time and again, is you don't talk politics with John Ehrlichman or you'll ruin the party.

"He's laid back. He's got some dues to pay," said a bearded musician. "But who am I to say how much?"

His postman, Johnny Garcia, said, "He's nice to me. We talk about the weather. I think he's had enough problems as it is. Why try to bring Watergate up?"

Perhaps in response to this attitude, the Ehrlichman of the streets of Santa Fe is nothing like the scowling witness of the Senate Watergate hearings two years ago. He has a ready smile and a manner that one lady shopkeeper described as "very charming."

Neighbor Vint Blackburn, a remodeler-craftsman, said Ehrlichman, "lives very quietly and prudently in the manner of people who can afford to live here by their own means."

Ehrlichman's initial explanation of why he moved to Santa Fe was that he wanted to do personal penance by volunteering his legal knowledge of land problems to

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the Pueblo Indians. But the governing body of the eight northern tribes turned him down.

So did U.S. District Judge John Sirica. When Ehrlichman attorney Ira M. Lowe proposed the Indian service as an alternative to Ehrlichman's 2½- to 8-year prison sentence.

He was convicted on New Year's Day this year, along with former Attorney General John N. Mitchell and former White House Chief of Staff H. R. Haldeman, of conspiracy, obstruction of justice and perjury in the Watergate coverup.

He also faces a federal sentence of 20 months to five years for his part in ordering the break-in at the office of Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist.

That's heavy, as they say on Canyon road. But they also say at this time of year, "Viva la fiesta!" And like others here, Ehrlichman was involving himself in the annual fiesta that begins with the public burning of a huge effigy called Old Man Gloom.

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