

See also SF8 26 Aug. 76

Book Tells Nixon's Plea For Mercy

Houston

A weeping Richard Nixon pleaded with a powerful Democratic senator to save him from criminal prosecution in the Watergate case, according to former special prosecutor Leon Jaworski in his book, "The Right and the Power."

At the time, Nixon had resigned the presidency and flown to San Clemente, and a national debate had started on whether he should be prosecuted for his part in Watergate.

Jaworski received a phone call from Senator James Eastland (Dem-Miss.), asking the special prosecutor to visit Eastland and Senator Roman Hruska (Rep.-Neb.).

Eastland said he had just talked with Mr. Nixon, that the former President had called from San Clemente.

"He was crying," Eastland said. "He said, 'Jim, don't let Jaworski put me in that trial with Haldeman and Ehrlichman. I can't take anymore,'" Eastland shook his head. "He's in bad shape, Leon."

In his book, which will be released in mid-September, Jaworski wrote:

"There was a touch of the pity he felt for Nixon in his voice, but not the slightest intimation that he was trying to twist my arm. He was simply telling me something about a man in whom we both, for differing reasons, had a deep interest."

The excerpts were published yesterday by the Houston Chronicle.

"Sen. (Edward W.) Brooke (Rep-Mass.), had withdrawn his plan for a resolution asking that no action be taken against Nixon because he considered the resignation speech an arrogant affront to the country. But others, in and out of Congress, were still calling for such a resolution. I asked Eastland if the consensus group had any plans in that direction. He said no decision had been reached. 'We'll think on it. We'll be in touch.'"

But no one got in touch, according to the book.

Columnists and cartoonists depicted Jaworski as deserted by Congress and President Ford.

"To them," Jaworski wrote, "I was in a position of being damned if I did or damned if I didn't prosecute Nixon. Experts of various kinds were interviewed about 'Jaworski's dilemma.' Various courses of action were recommended, some bordering on the exotic."

While Jaworski and his special prosecution force were deciding what to do, President Ford pardoned Nixon for any and all crimes he may have committed while President.

Jaworski is donating to charity all royalties earned by the book.

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