



Jaworski's Account

John Barkham

WHEN Leon Jaworski, a respected Houston lawyer, was appointed in late 1973 to replace Archibald Cox, who had been fired as Special Prosecutor by President Nixon in the "Saturday Night Massacre," there were those who expected him to become one of the "President's Men." They didn't know Jaworski.

Jaworski was one of the last Watergate personalities to publish his version of the affair, "The Right and The Power: The Prosecution of Watergate," but in many respects his account is the most revealing. Only General Alexander Haig, it seems, was closer to the affair and to Richard Nixon's guilty secrets than this blunt-spoken Texan finally became.

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AT 68, a busy and prosperous lawyer, Jaworski had no wish to leave Houston to undertake the disagreeable task of exhuming the skeletons buried in the White House. General Haig's "cajolery," however, prevailed on him to accept it provided he was guaranteed complete freedom in his investigation.

Once he began listening to the tapes the whole damning involvement of the President in corruption became clear. His lengthy quotes from the tapes, even at this late date, are still shocking. Having satisfied himself of what he considered Nixon's criminal conduct, he was nevertheless forced to remain silent for months because the matter was *sub judice* while Nixon "threw falsehood

after falsehood at the American people."

Jaworski writes not merely as a lawyer careful not to overstep the bounds of sworn statements but also as a citizen shaken by what he discovered to be the culpability of the President and others in high places. By the time he was ready to go to court he had accumulated enough evidence to indicate that the President might be chargeable with conspiracy to obstruct justice to commit bribery, and to obstruct a criminal investigation through bribery, plus the possibility of additional charges.

This is an honest, forthright, revealing look at a historic scandal we had deemed closed. But Jaworski in his conclusion makes the crucial point. The Nixon case, he says, showed that the Constitution worked (Reader's Digest-Gulf; \$9.95).

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CABRILLO COLLEGE will host a mystery writers conference at Greenwood Lodge, Soquel, Santa Cruz county, September 17-19, featuring a distinguished roster of panelists. Brian Garfield will be the principal lecturer and discussion groups will be led by San Francisco writers Joe Gores, Collin Wilcox and Bill Pronzini. The suspense novel (and film) rather than the classic mystery will be the chief topic. Further information: (408) 425-6229 or (408) 688-6466.