

SFChronicle

## 'Obviously, He Has Scars'

## A Look at Nixon Today

By Bud Lembke  
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## San Clemente

A white golf cart came bouncing around the bend of a peaceful ravine at the Shorecliffs Country Club.

Out stepped Richard M. Nixon, 37th President of the United States, and his golfing partner, Pepsi-Cola President Donald Kendall.

Under the watchful eyes of two Secret Service agents stationed in another golf cart, the two finished play at the ninth hole. Inside the rather grubby-looking clubhouse nearby, men at the bar were busy shaking dice.

None of the dice players paid the slightest attention to the scene out the window, where one of the world's biggest movers and shakers of only 27 months ago was climbing back into his golf cart.

For Richard Nixon, the old campaign trail must have seemed another world away. He was entirely out of it this year — for the first time in three decades.

Wearing a white golf shirt, beige pants that bulged minimally at the waist and black shoes with spikes, the former chief executive looked fit and relaxed. There was no evidence of the slight limp, a remnant of his near-fatal bout with phlebitis, which some who have visited him have noticed.

Mr. Nixon grants no interviews, but acquaintances who have seen him in recent months confirm that he was an avid follower of the presidential race between President Ford and Jimmy Carter and that, not surprisingly, he favored the Republican.

Physically, kings might envy his circumstances. He and Mrs. Nixon live at La Casa Pacifica, a 30-acre estate dotted with palm

The Shorecliffs golf professional, Jim Perrin, said the former president averages a respectable 85. Nixon plays for free at the somewhat rundown, elongated public course, courtesy of the owners, Mr. and Mrs. John Sepe of Santa Barbara.

His chief aide, former Marine Colonel Jack Brennan, is usually his partner. In the past year, other golfing partners have included former Attorney General John Mitchell; C. G. (Bebe) Rebozo, and his son-in-law David Eisenhower.

"The golfers are used to him," said Perrin. "He's cordial and congenial, and very cooperative in posing for pictures by amateur photographers."

Mr. Nixon is a man who likes a project, whether it is trying to trap Communists or trying to get elected to some office. Right

now, his project is writing Volume I of his memoirs. By all accounts, he is devoting himself to it with the self-discipline for which he is noted.

His New York publisher, William Sarnoff of Warner Paperback Books, said that about 250,000 words of the book's first draft are written, with 150,000 still to go. Subsequent revisions and editing will trim that total to about 200,000 for publication.

Jotting down notes on legal-sized yellow tablets and then dictating into a tape recorder, Mr. Nixon is said to be shooting for completion of the first draft on his next birthday, January 9. He will be 64.

He is being assisted in the writing project by a small staff, including Franklin Gannon, a historian and former White

House assistant but is unable to consult his mountain of presidential papers and tapes.

Those records are tied up in Washington in litigation. A U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals has upheld a district court ruling that the papers belong to the federal government and not to Mr. Nixon. The U.S. Supreme Court is expected to decide soon whether to hear Nixon's appeal.

Meanwhile, he is refreshing his memory of what happened years ago by phoning former aides for their recollections.

Former HEW Secretary and California Lieutenant Governor Robert Finch and Herbert Klein, a former Nixon Administration communications director, are among those who have received calls about information Mr. Nixon needed for the book.

Klein, now a vice president of Metromedia in Hollywood and a member of the USC board of trustees, said that he and others on the board's executive committee visited the former president early last August to discuss the library project. Afterwards, Klein stayed

*Is he keeping in touch  
with world leaders?*

trees on the opposite side of San Clemente from Shorecliffs Country Club. Two or three times a week, a black limousine, preceded by a brown-and-white station wagon containing his Secret Service escorts, takes him five miles north for his golf game.



Richard Nixon, here with old friends Herbert Klein (center) and Jack Brennan, plays golf about twice a week

on for a private discussion.

"There's no question that he's extremely alert mentally," said Klein. "He's very much up to date on a variety of developments in world affairs. It reflects the briefings that he gets from the State Department (a courtesy provided all former presidents). I suspect that he's also in contact with some of the world leaders, though I don't really know that.

"Physically, he seems to have weathered it quite well. You can see the stress, but he takes walks on the beaches, plays golf frequently and spends a number of hours dictating on his book almost every day.

"Obviously, he has a few scars. You can't leave office when you're very proud of having attained that office and have a great interest in your place in history to the extent that you even make tapes, and then have that place in history marred, without feeling it more deeply than anyone will ever know."

Former Press Secretary Ziegler, now a member of the management committee for an international engineering firm, Gennessy, Inc., in New York, said he has visited Mr. Nixon a couple of times in the last eight months.

"I've never seen him in a better state," commented Ziegler.

The Nixons have visited the Palm Springs estate of Walter Annenberg, former U.S. ambassador to Great Britain, have dined at the Newport Beach home of Mr. and Mrs. James Roosevelt and occasionally have eaten at El Adobe Restaurant in San Juan Capistrano.

They have not, however, been very active socially, and were not even before Mrs. Nixon suffered a stroke last July 7, four days after they attended a Bicentennial dinner in their honor at the Marriott Hotel in Newport Beach.