

# Haldeman on the

## Washington

In his forthcoming book, "The Ends of Power," H. R. Haldeman gives his interpretation of a number of critical aspects of the Nixon presidency and of the problems that led to the first presidential resignation in American history.

Among them are:

### Watergate

Haldeman's version of the seeds of break-in, which he himself labels a "belief" and a theory of the case, has to do with Nixon's feelings about Lawrence O'Brien and the celebrated ITT scandal, involving allegations of fixing an antitrust case and a subsequent payoff of \$400,000. O'Brien, then the Democratic party chairman with offices in the Watergate complex, had long been a key political adviser to Nixon's political opponents, the Kennedy brothers.

Colson, Nixon's White House counselor who had earned a reputation as the President's "hatchetman," also had what Haldeman describes as a long-time enmity toward O'Brien. Colson had worked for Leverett Saltonstall, a Republican senator from Massachusetts, while O'Brien was employed by the Kennedys in that state.

Haldeman's thesis about the break-in holds that both Nixon and Colson were passionately determined to strike back at O'Brien in the spring of 1972, in the weeks before the break-in in June 1972. They both felt O'Brien was striking unfairly on the ITT case. Nixon's tactic, always throughout his long political career, was to counterattack. And the conviction grew that O'Brien himself was vulnerable. It was public knowledge that O'Brien, a lawyer, was getting a large retainer from Howard Hughes — Haldeman cites the sum of \$180,000 a year. There, Haldeman suggests, was the weak point for O'Brien.

"Which leads me to my own theory of who initiated the Watergate break-in. Richard Nixon, himself, caused those burglars to break into O'Brien's office."

It's Haldeman's belief that Nixon passed the word to Colson "to get the goods" on O'Brien's connection with Howard Hughes. In turn, Colson dealt with E. Howard Hunt, who conferred with G. Gordon Liddy, who oversaw the bugging of the Democrats' office in the Watergate.

Haldeman's account of Colson is singularly unflattering.

"Dealing with Colson was no fun for White House staffers at any level," he writes. "If he was superior in rank, he would bully them. If he was inferior, he would smile — and remind them he had 'the ear of the President.' Which he did. Never more so than in the ITT case."

In another incident involving Colson, Haldeman recalls angrily dressing down Colson so severely that it left Colson sobbing. The point was that if Colson didn't stop charging off on his own, Haldeman was going to

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take his complaint directly to Nixon. And that would have been the end of Colson.

### The Tapes

Haldeman's theory on the famous 18½-minute gap on one of Nixon's crucial Watergate tapes is that Nixon tried to erase it, but was so clumsy he couldn't succeed and left the rest of the task to someone else, possibly his secretary, Rose Mary Woods.

"My own perception had always been that Nixon simply began to erase all of the Watergate material from the tapes when he started to worry that they may be exposed," Haldeman said.

"But Nixon was the least dextrous man I have ever known: Clumsy would be too elegant a word to describe his mechanical aptitude . . . So I believed that Nixon had started TRYING to erase the tapes, himself, but realized — at the rate he was going — it would take him ten years . . ."

After his resignation in April, 1973, as Nixon's chief of staff, Haldeman says Nixon referred to the 18½-minute gap as "Rose's 18 minutes." That could be a ploy on Nixon's part to place the blame on someone else, Haldeman suggests. Woods took public responsibility for the gap. It is not known whether the full Haldeman book describes what was on the 18½-minute gap.

### Deep Throat

In his book, Haldeman names Fred Fielding as the



Haldeman, crewcut loyalist in 1968 . . .

**'Richard Nixon  
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. . . has changed his view of Nixon

secret source for Post reporter Bob Woodward, dubbed "Deep Throat" in the Woodward-Bernstein book "All the President's Men" and subsequent movie of that name. Fielding, who was a White House staff assistant to John Dean, has denied the Haldeman allegation.

Again, Haldeman offers no evidence for this; it is his deduction. Woodward said he has never commented on the identity of any sources, and will not do so now.

### Kissinger

Haldeman's portrayal of Henry Kissinger is tinged with bitterness and venom. The Kissinger who emerges is a publicity-hound who courted the press, giving reporters one version of his role and in private taking another. Kissinger's presence clearly was irritating to many of the Nixon loyalists.

One of John Ehrlichman's gambits, Haldeman recounts, was collecting nude photographs of various starlets Kissinger had dated. Then over a period of time, the photographs would be dispatched, in official folders, to Kissinger with bawdy instructions on what to do with them.

Kissinger's actual advice on such things as wiretappings and prosecuting in the Pentagon Papers case someday may prove embarrassing to the former secretary of state, Haldeman suggests. By that, he means many of Kissinger's private words remain on Nixon's tapes and still may be played publicly at some future date. Kissinger, according to Haldeman, said

that Ellsberg used drugs and had "weird sexual habits."

But throughout this latest, inside account of the Watergate trauma and the Nixon years, it is Haldeman's view of Nixon that dominates the book.

The Nixon seen through Haldeman's eyes is a small man, keenly and obsessively aware of his personal legal vulnerabilities from Watergate and other illegal White House projects. Nixon comes over as haunted by the severity of his problems. He's a cold, distant and humorless leader frantically trying to protect himself and willingly sacrificing his top aides — Haldeman and Ehrlichman — in the process.

Ehrlichman seems to have come to the same conclusion. In an interview in The Post published in January last year, he said that had he known in 1968 what he later learned about Nixon, "I suspect I would have stayed home from that campaign."

It's Haldeman's opinion now that Nixon was manipulating everyone at the center of all the many spokes to the Watergate wheel. And, in this blunt and unflattering portrait, Nixon's handling of Watergate especially shows him as the opposite of what he most wanted to be — tough and decisive.

Haldeman's writer in his book project, Joseph DiMona, has told The Post that at first Nixon's top former aide intended to write a totally different book. It was going to be pro-Nixon. But Nixon's performance

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in his interviews with David Frost on television changed Haldeman's mind.

As the drama unfolded, Nixon becomes totally preoccupied with his survival. Haldeman describes moments where he seemed to age visibly — and particularly of Nixon's sense of shock when Ehrlichman first suggested to Nixon's face that he might be impeached.

One of Haldeman's points, raised at length, has to do with what he terms the hidden story of Watergate. Nixon, as president, felt unable to take control of the federal bureaucracy. Pitted against him were four great power blocs of Washington — the press, the bureaucrats, the Congress and the intelligence community. Haldeman terms these power centers "the wolves."

All of these reacted against Nixon's plan to reorganize and gain control of the bureaucracy at the beginning of his second term in 1973.

Haldeman also charges that there were Central Intelligence Agency "plants" in the White House. But he does not offer any new evidence to support that allegation.

At length, he reviews old theories about the CIA setting up the Watergate arrests along with previously reported allegations that the Democrats and columnist Jack Anderson had advance knowledge of the break-in, but took no action to stop it.

Haldeman says he basically believes these theories.

### Haig

Another key figure in the Nixon White House who comes off unfavorably is Haldeman's successor as chief of staff, General Alexander M. Haig. (Haig currently serves as NATO commander in Europe.)

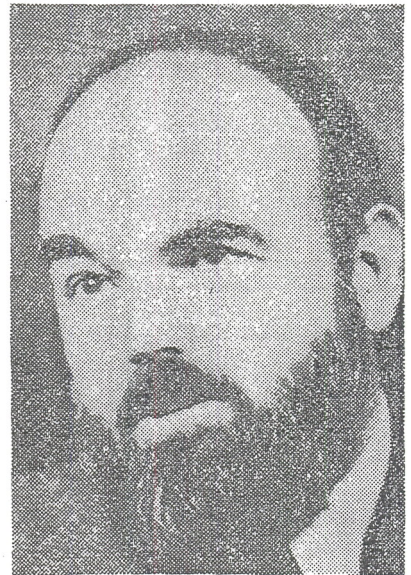
Haldeman says that he often discussed strategy for the Watergate defense with Haig. After the Saturday



**CHARLES COLSON**  
Unflattering portrait



**GEN. ALEXANDER HAIG**  
A strange phone call



**JOHN EHRLICHMAN**  
He taunted Kissinger

Night Massacre of Oct. 20, 1973, Haldeman says he got a call from Haig with the following warning:

"They have an uncanny intelligence operation in the Jewish community that is out to get you—and the Parade editor is a part of it."

#### On Himself

In his own self-portrait, Haldeman seems to be trying to fight his public image as the driven taskmaster on top of the White House staff. He sees himself as unaware, confused at times, unwitting, given to wry bursts of humor. This belies the Haldeman Washington came to know over the years—the loyal, unquestioning guard to the President's gate, the tough guy always in command.

Haldeman puts forth the idea that he was

handicapped throughout the entire affair because he wasn't a lawyer. He didn't see that what was supposed to be a political containment operation after the Watergate break-in was actually an illegal conspiracy.

By his account, Haldeman was surrounded by lawyers in the White House who plotted every move to protect themselves. He particularly singles out Nixon, Ehrlichman, Colson and Dean.

An analysis of the Haldeman material shows that he has drawn on the printed works of public testimony of the Watergate era. He cites, in paraphrase or by direct quote, previously released transcripts, the Watergate committee report, grand jury hearings on the tapes and other general material that stems from public testimony.

A careful reading shows that, among the other

works from which he builds his narrative, are: Fred Thompson's "At That Point in Time;" Dean's "Blind Ambition;" Woodward and Bernstein's "All the President's Men," and Colson's "Born Again." He also takes from Nixon's televised interview last year with Frost.

Haldeman does not pretend to give the definitive Nixon-Watergate story. He says he recognized that the public may never know the entire story, and that many mysteries remain.

Now 51, Haldeman received a prison sentence of from 2½ to eight years for his conviction in the Watergate coverup. Late last year, Judge John J. Sirica reduced Haldeman's sentence to to four years. He has been serving that sentence at Lompoc, Calif. Haldeman will be eligible for parole June 21, one year to the day after he entered prison.

His description of other aspects of his relationships come as a surprise, too. He and Ehrlichman always were linked to as the Watergate twins, inseparable and in tandem. But in his book Haldeman clearly tries to show that Ehrlichman was going his own way, and more than willing to let Haldeman hang alone.

Haldeman is also notably silent on other important unresolved questions about the Nixon administration. One of these has to do with the role of Charles G. (Bebe) Rebozo, Nixon's confidant. There is hardly any mention of Rebozo in the book.

There have been innumerable books and analyses of the ... Nixon administration. In years to come, there will be many more. Nixon's own memoris are scheduled for publication this spring.

Haldeman, like Ehrlichman, was one of the strongest Nixon defenders before their criminal trials. Both have undergone public changes in attitude. Unlike Nixon to date Haldeman now says he understands that the Watergate coverup was an illegal obstruction of justice.

Despite his disillusionment, he says he is still proud of his White House service and still grateful for the opportunities Nixon gave him.

Yet, as he also says, "I have paid a terrible price for that privilege."

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