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The Cost of Nixon



The Investigators

SINCE his tearful farewell address on August 9, 1974, Richard Nixon has been portrayed as a pathetic figure living out his days in self-imposed exile at his Casa Pacifica retreat.

But from a financial point of view, Richard Nixon doesn't have it so bad at all.

We have learned that since he left the presidency, Nixon has received more than \$2.5 million in benefits from the taxpayers.

First of all, his pension has jumped from \$60,000 a year to a very comfortable \$66,000, keeping pace with the salaries of cabinet members.

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THEN there's the \$59,000 Nixon has spent for staff aides and expenses. The government provided \$77,470 per year worth of rental office space to him, along with \$14,500 worth of furniture to put in it. In addition, the former chief executive has received \$52,815 in stationery supplies, \$12,000 for stamps and \$6505 for telephones, news teletypes, magazines and newspapers.

Nixon puts much of this to use in writing his memoirs and preparing for his "oral history" television interview with David Frost. He stands to make millions from those ventures.

The largest single item from the federal treasury, however, is Nixon's Secret Service protection. By law, the Secret Service is responsible for assuring the security of Richard and Pat Nixon for the rest of their lives.

by us, the cost of these services from August, 1974 through January 31, 1977 ran to \$1,895,557. The figure includes both personnel costs and other expenses "related to the maintenance of security equipment and communication services."

On an annual basis, the cost of this protection is running about 20 per cent higher than the original estimate submitted to Congress for funding.

Nixon also received other services free of charge. His personal butler, maid, three chauffeurs, a medical corpsman and 48 other federal workers toiled for him during his transition period. The government paid them \$265,580 in salaries.

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OTHER Nixon expenses picked up by the government include moving costs. General Accounting Office investigators discovered that the government had spent \$118,076.93 to "deactivate" the Nixon property in Key Biscayne, Florida, so it could be sold.

Of this, \$10,800 went to dismantle and replace the bulletproof glass installed to protect the first family. Another \$6604.57 was spent just to remove a hedge, and \$15,950 was allocated to restore the walls surrounding the property.

The government even had to pay for Nixon's hasty exit from the White House. The bill for crating and moving his personal effects was calculated at \$3147.

By Jack Cloherty and Bob Owens