

Ehrlichman Tells of

Beverly Hills

John Ehrlichman, the second-in-command in former President Nixon's White House, said he "declined a huge sum of money" from Nixon when the President told him on April 30, 1973 that he was being fired.

Ehrlichman then made two requests of Nixon.

"I asked him why I was being fired," Ehrlichman said. "He didn't

reply. I then said I had only one last request: that some day he explain it to my children. He didn't reply."

Ehrlichman, currently serving a 2½-to-8 year sentence at the Safford, Ariz., federal prison for his Watergate crimes, angrily reacted to Nixon's television interview with David Frost in a story written in his jail cell for New West magazine.

In it, Ehrlichman accused Nixon of creating a "revisionist" and false history in his interview with

Frost.

Ehrlichman, whose power in the Nixon White House was overshadowed only by that of H.R. Haldeman, recalled in the story the day he was summoned by Nixon to Aspen Lodge at Camp David.

"When I arrived at Aspen Lodge on April 30 to be fired," said Ehrlichman, "It was obvious that the President had been crying. He was overcome with self-pity. His account of the meeting in the Frost

Sat., May 7, 1977 ★★

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interview was partly correct.

"At Aspen he said he hoped he didn't have to wake up, but at no time did he so much as hint that he thought of resigning. On the contrary, he talked about how we would all return to Camp David in the coming years once the crisis was past.

"He offered me a huge sum of money," said Ehrlichman. "I declined it. He told me over and over that my judgment had been correct

on both (Charles) Colson and (John) Mitchell, and also on my repeated urging that a full disclosure be made on the origins of the break-in, and the later effort to avoid their exposure.

"He assured me of his belief in my innocence."

Ehrlichman, who was convicted in 1975 of charges of obstruction of justice, conspiracy and lying in the Watergate coverup case, said Nixon had several opportunities to

"tell the truth" about his own involvement in the scandal.

"There was a stylish and classy and effective way to tell the truth about all this," Ehrlichman said. "But that chance was lost in March and April of 1973. There might have been a way for him to tell the truth in May of 1977, too.

"Instead, I heard a summary, maudlin rationalization that will be tested and found false."

United Press