

To the Editor:

Walter Goodman's highly emotional reaction to my book, "Nixon vs. Nixon," which is subtitled "An Emotional Tragedy," a fact he never mentions, speaks for itself [Editorial Notebook May 16].

His accusation that my information about Mr. Nixon is "third-hand or unverifiable or dimly remembered or anecdotal" is unfounded. Had he read my book carefully, he would have discovered that it is drawn from primary sources, as expressed personally by Nixon, such as "Six Crises," his White House tapes, and "Self-Portrait" (one of his own 1968 campaign speeches, which I uncovered after lengthy searching). Other sources were family members who knew him and his parents intimately and with whom Nixon grew up, classmates from high school, college and law school, persons who served with him in the Navy and people — foes and friends — who worked with Mr. Nixon up to 1974. Except for some few persons who preferred to remain anonymous, every piece of information has been confirmed and is footnoted in the book.

In evaluating "Nixon vs. Nixon" it seems Mr. Goodman has read little and understood less. His out-of-context mockery of my psychoanalytic conclusions is indeed his own oversimplification and hostility. It hardly merits comment. Mr. Goodman has completely ignored the *conflicting* feelings in Nixon which I repeatedly pointed out and which in my professional view formed the roots of his personality difficulties and his downfall. There is ample material in my book to substantiate this and other of my psychoanalytic observations.

Oddly enough, when a psychoanalyst gives his impressions and observations about a public figure, Goodman and many who share his resentment protest loudly. Yet journalists and reporters have since time immemorial quite freely given their opinions about people's feelings and behavior.

The basic difference between the psychiatrist or psychoanalyst as an author and other writers—with certain notable exceptions—is that the former views the person from a differ-

ent angle and, because of his medical, psychiatric and psychoanalytical training, may often more clearly perceive the deeper tendencies and their significance within human behavior.

I am aware that a book of the nature of "Nixon vs. Nixon" may draw critical comment; Mr. Goodman's remark, however, about my being hostile toward Nixon certainly seems unwarranted. It is, in fact, contradicted by many reviewers who have expressed strong feelings that I have shown too much compassion toward the ex-President.

Nevertheless, Mr. Goodman has chosen to view my attitude toward Nixon as hostile. I see it quite differently. It is my effort to alert people to the threat inherent in possibly restoring to public life a man who has failed to live up to the ethical and moral responsibilities incumbent upon him when he occupied the foremost position of power not only in this country but also in the world.

The purpose of the psychoanalytical process is to expose the intricacies and distortions of the behavior patterns—whether in a person or a people—in the hope of preventing the repetition of painful history. And such an approach is in deep accord with the spirit of psychiatry.

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