

# Watergate's real lesson

By Garry Wills

White House reputations have become so shady that Frank Sinatra may have to boycott the place. We can almost hear some McCarthy of tomorrow: "Are you now, or have you ever been, a presidential aide?" A White House pass may become as incriminating as a Communist party card.

With the restlessness that marks public reaction, most of those who had any opinion at all on the matter let Gallup's interrogators know that they think Nixon knew. Knew about Watergate, even before it happened.

Well, he didn't. For several reasons—one of them being that his aides draw their salaries for not letting him know such things. The famous "pink sheet," which Branded Helen Gahagan Douglas as

disloyal in Nixon's first big campaign, has often been taken as a mark of the Nixon style. But Ralph de Toledano, who helped draw it up, told me that Chotiner and he did not let the boss in on what they were doing. If they had, he could not deny his involvement as credibly as that day's game plan called for.

There is no reason to think Nixon's lackeys are any dumber now than they were then. They still know what he does not want to know. Nor is he any dumber. He knows, generally, what it is they're doing that he should not know. In this sense, the exact moment when he found out about Watergate or the Watergate cover up does not matter. He knew, all along, the Watergate coverers up.

Some would make this the real point of the scandal. The Nixon defense must be

that he was betrayed—that his trusted minions lied to him. But in clandestine service for him, these types always felt they were paid for lying to him, for his own protection. Nixon's own culpability is for employing the type—for doing it more regularly than accident can explain; and for reemploying men (Chotiner, Colson, or Haldeman) when their tropism to such tricks was well established.

This might be called the characterological reading of Watergate—the revelation, not so much of the individual felonies, but of the whole administration's ethos. There is much to be said for this reading. It makes sense of the incredible from things known out of Nixon's past. It explains not only the odd things Nixon people did, but Nixon's odd first choice of these people. (Why should the man at a pinnacle of world power love to have third-

raters around him?) Each mystery corresponds with others; and from their symmetry we make sense.

But even this reading does not go deep enough. After all, this side of Nixon was known and acknowledged all along. Who ever thought he had stature, or the grace of choosiness? He was always the man who would undergo whatever he had to, to be chosen—chosen, it may be, as the fifth last survivor or alternative. The unchoosy desirer to be chosen. And, knowing this, America chose him—by a landslide. He was a popular winner, without being popular. That is the real mystery we have to plumb. America chose a shady character to do unpalatable things. What matters about Watergate is not what it tells us of Nixon, but of America. That is the lesson men will most resist learning—because it is the one we have to learn.

## Letters

### The Co-op five

This letter was supposed to have run Friday, April 27 but Emerald editors arbitrarily censored Co-op election letters because of their displeasure with ASUO elections. The following letter has been reluctantly revised in accordance with Emerald election policy.

After having served on the Board of Directors of the Cooperative Bookstore now for almost half a year, I have come to the conclusion that the only way to change the Co-op is for the Board to: 1. exercise its responsibility to control and supervise the operations of the store; 2. eliminate the recurring problem of low student membership and uncollected rebates; 3. lower book prices; and 4. increase the store's general responsiveness to the particular needs and interests of the University community.

The current Board is largely ineffectual for several reasons. A major factor is the apathy and indecisiveness of certain members who often skip meetings. Another important problem is the fact that the manager has his own lawyer while the Board does not, which means that Board members have inferior resources. The lack of managerial responsiveness is somewhat understandable because the Board frequently does not take itself too seriously. For the most part, the current Board does not understand its own powerlessness and has taken only vague and indecisive steps toward remedying its internal problems.

There is a solution to this horrendous mess, however, which involves electing a solid block of concerned people, who have the desire, knowledge and endurance to reorganize the Co-op to the benefit of the university community. There is a group of five people running as a block who I feel meet these qualifications, but the Emerald will not allow me to name them now.

Carol Reich  
Co-op Board Member

### Greatly bothered

"Play it as it Lays" is not a moral or political movie concerned with condemning materialism and Hollywood society, it is a philosophical movie. Moreover, it is an existential film dealing with the question of suicide, a cinematic Myth of Sisyphus. That Ms. Baldwin misinterpreted the movie matters little to me. That she, in her review, conferred her dull perceptions of theme and content on us, and then used the term "existentialism" (obviously unaware of the word's meaning), bothers me greatly.

I consider this film an inspiration to all those who find no rationale for god in their lives, yet continue to ask the question, "Why?" It saddens me Ms. Baldwin did not understand "Play it as it Lays." She missed an excellent film.

William McCoy  
Freshman, Philosophy

### Sexist Ads

The Emerald continues, despite all attempts to the contrary, to accept and run sexist advertising. This is despite provisions in the Emerald's advertising policy which prohibit discrimination in advertising on the basis of sex.

I refer you to an ad in the Emerald of April 26. The ad was for Gold Cross Discount Drug Store and appeared on page 3. Says the ad: "Oh, rats on this rattan!" cried Karen, the college coed . . . "Keep cool, Karen," calmed Clyde, Karen's cool campus companion . . ."

This is an excellent example of how the news media (and the professions of Journalism and Advertising) perpetuate oppressive stereotypes of women and women's relations with men. Ads like this continue the myth of the weak, helpless woman, and the myth of the cool, strong man. Ads like this should not be run.

David Sonnenfeld  
Independent Studies

### Pointless joke

Why, I ask, is this newspaper filled with so much petty, useless bickerings over such pointless jokes as the ASUO primary elections and religion? I ask you, what less significance? What means less in life than farces such as these?

Really, who gives a crap? Let's face it, Politics and God are not what's relevant. Now, a fat gallon of good ol' wine or an ice cold beer whizzing down my throat is definitely more pertinent. All I want is to

fall down slobbering drunk on the floor or to get some nice moist snatch. C'mon, what else is really RELEVANT? Stoned and laid is where it's at. It's THE ESSENCE, baby. Get real loaded and then let's hear your big answer. Have a good screw and then let's hear your great philosophy. Lemme tellya, you'll just want more of the same. If you don't buster, you ain't playing with a full deck.

Let's face it; who gives a crap? Right?

Jeff Walker  
Junior, Music Comp.

### Free choice

Now just how can one discriminate against a lettuce?

The real issue is the people picking the stuff. UFW, Teamsters, or whatever, the people picking it are the same—thus, support of one group hurts another identical group. You didn't think that a bunch of downtrodden minorities picked for the UFW and a select group of membership only aristocratic whites picked for the Teamsters did you?

One answer to the lettuce problem seems to lie in letting the pickers pick the union they want, if any, and then letting the growers pick the union, if any, they want. What could be fairer? You know, free choice and all.

Regardless of who does what, I'm buying the lettuce with the highest quality-cost ratio. Aren't you?

Joseph Vidali  
Graduate, Marketing

I ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THE CONSTITUTION HAS A RIGHT TO ITS DEFENDERS.



I RESPECT THAT RIGHT ALTHOUGH I DISAGREE WITH THOSE DEFENDANTS.

I ONLY ASK THAT THEY GRANT THE RESPECT THAT I GRANT THEM TO MY RIGHTS AS PRESIDENT.



LAST WEEK IN SAN CLEMENTE I SAW A LITTLE GIRL HOLD UP A SIGN:



"MR. PRESIDENT, DO WHAT IS RIGHT."

NOW I COULD DO THE POLITICALLY POPULAR THING AND IGNORE THAT CHILD.



OR I COULD DO WHAT IS RIGHT AND IGNORE THE CONSTITUTION.

SO THE BOMBING OF CAMBODIA WILL GO ON UNTIL I SAY SO.



THIS PRESIDENT WILL NOT BUG OUT TO THE CONSTITUTION.

