

Outrider: Nixon's Watergate speech

By GARY WILLS

I guess we are all supposed to say "God Bless America," and forget it happened. After all, Mr. Nixon must worry about nuclear war and the Watergate case has already taken up too much of his precious time.

But taking up time is mainly what his speech did. How did he talk for half an hour, and say so little? Well, one way was to tell us how he spent Christmas Eve in the White House. He wrote himself a memo full of startling disclosures, on the order of "motherhood is beautiful." Maybe his character is worse than anyone has yet imagined. What kind of man has to write memos to himself to remember that peace is a good thing, or offers these exercises as proof of his virtue?

Anyway, we are not supposed to let Watergate distract him from these greeting card memos. Remember, he's only got 1,400 or so days left in office. How he got those days is now beside the

point — just as he once declared that how we got into Vietnam is a non-issue. Besides, look there next to his elbow, he is a family man with — count them — two daughters and only one wife. Besides, he used to have a dog named Checkers.

The speech said mawkishly what Ronald Ziegler had already announced briskly — three men were out, and Richardson in. But Nixon also took responsibility. He didn't do the easy, cowardly thing. He always tells us that when he is about to bomb or sack somebody else. It hurts him more than the citizens of Hanoi, but he won't spare his feelings.

So he made them walk the plank, shouting down as they drowned, "Don't worry — I'm taking the responsibility." I imagine they wanted to shout back: "No, you resign, and we will take the responsibility" — just as Ha oi's citizens wanted to say, "Go ahead, do the easy thing."

He called his top aides good friends still. How come? Did they lie to him (and so to us), or didn't they? If not, why desert them? If so, why not repudiate them? The pious answer is that he will not convict anyone in the court of public opinion before he has his chance at a trial. (Tell that to Manson.)

Yet Nixon did act prejudicially to John Dean, denying him the praise he gave to others, and the chance to claim his resignation was voluntary. Why is that? Why do to Dean what his friends say he could not do in the case of Haldeman or Ehrlichman?

Is it because Dean is threatening to sing, and seeking immunity — which Nixon has so far tried to deny him? Watergate is taking up precious time — but who dragged out the investigation, and tried to use executive privilege to thwart it? Nixon has done the very minimum he could at each stage, and at

the very last minute, and that was just as true of Monday's speech as of every other presidential act in the matter.

He deferred the big question — what does he know, what about a special prosecutor, what of immunity? — and said, by implication, he will not bother himself with these things anymore. (Got to get back to thinking about nuclear war.) He chose as patently honest a man as he could find who was also a loyal member of his team, and put off on him the responsibility for refusing (if possible) the demand for an independent prosecutor.

So, he did not come clean in any way — he just tried to save his skin. He did a hard thing, but it was the easiest thing left for him to do — and it was cowardly. If the American people let themselves be bamboozled by that Santa Claus list of a speech, then they deserve to have their nightgowns stolen right off them while they sleep.

Letters

Missed point

Joe Moreno, in his letter to the editor May 2, seems to have missed the point of Margo St. James' talk by praising the "prostitute-crusader" for providing services which he considers a commodity. Margo St. James emphasized that prostitution provides a necessary service in a monogamous society, stressing in her talk the need for the recognition of the prostitute as a human being. Also, the Nevada fun houses Moreno refers to are really dehumanizing factories that perpetuate bitterness among the women working there, according to St. James. The main concern of Margo St. James' effort to decriminalize prostitution is the prostitute, not the client. The Nevada form of prostitution, as well as the illegality of prostitution in most states, robs women of the right to control their income and their bodies.

Mary Pauli
Terri Ebert

Confusion and defeatism

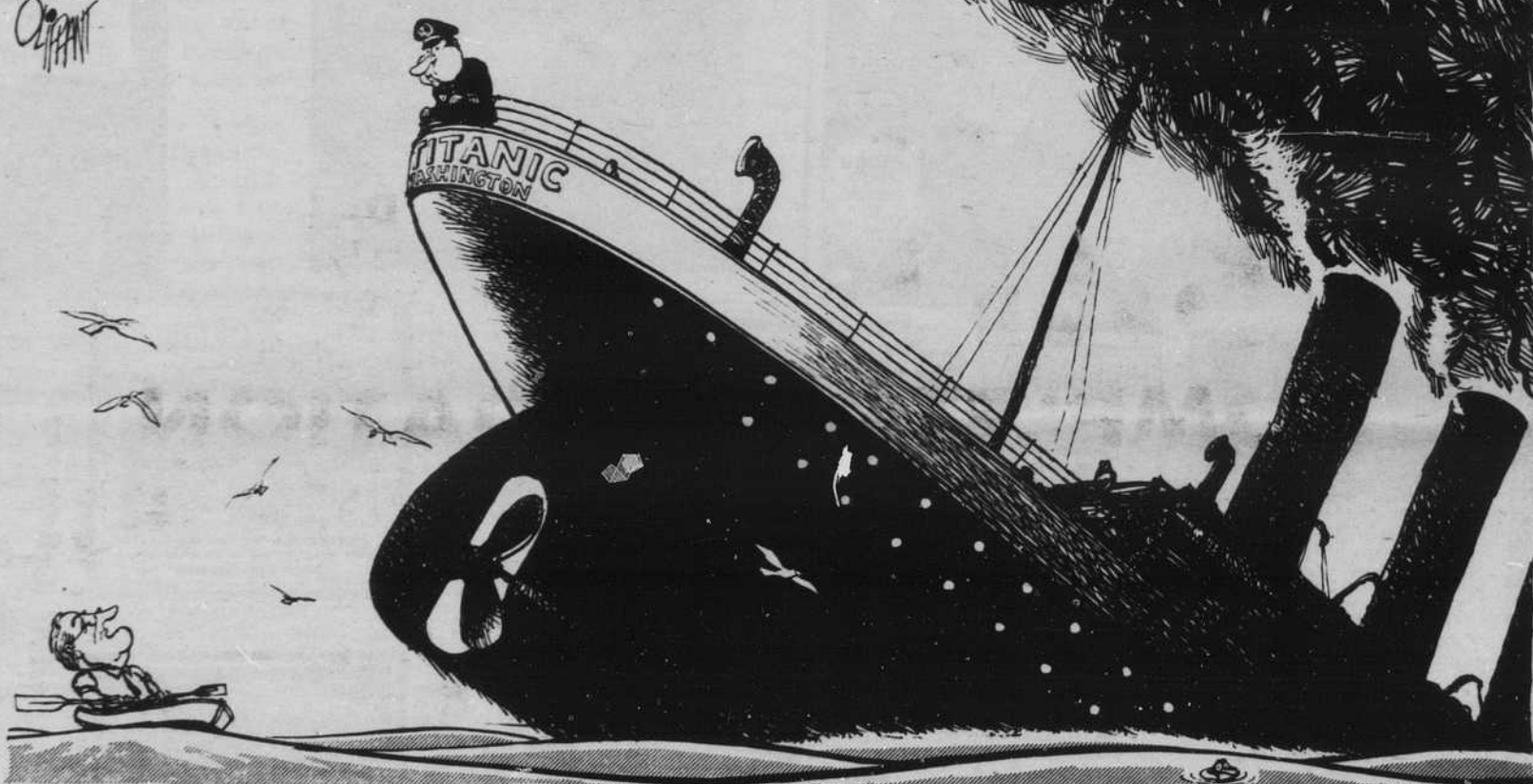
The Emerald's informal poll of students' views of Wounded Knee reveals a mixture of ignorance, confusion and defeatism. This impression comes, also, from the surprising absence from the beginning of discussion of the issue in the paper.

I believe that the current episode at Wounded Knee will turn out to be an historic occasion — the first of a probable long series of attempts to force the government to be accountable for its scandalous record of dealings with the Indian people. No doubt some persons after 64 days are tired of hearing about Wounded Knee and wish the issue would simply disappear. But it won't, any more than did the war issue even after the public finally tired of it.

While nostalgic views backwards are to no effect, it is neither unrealistic nor idealistic to take a hard look at some of those past treaties we violated. The so-called Great Sioux Agreement of 1868 is a good example inasmuch as it enabled the government to steal some 9 million acres which legally belonged to the Sioux people under the 1868 treaty. I say "steal" because the 1868 "Agreement" required the assent of 75 per cent of the adult male Sioux population before it could take effect, although in fact the government was able to obtain agreement of about 10 per cent of this population. Now, one may shrug this off as past history. But the fact remains that the government's legal position here is paper thin and we can anticipate that the emerging group of Indian lawyers will be able to tear it to shreds.

So far as I know, no one, beginning with any Indian spokesman, is proposing to "let them take over North Dakota and Oregon Daily Emerald

QUESTIONS THE US AMERICAN
THE DENVER POST



'WHY, YES, MR. CONNALLY, AS A MATTER OF FACT WE DO HAVE A VACANCY FOR SECOND MATE . . .'

Nebraska too." But it is clear that some economic adjustments are called for. Considering the disastrous economic conditions of the Indians as a group, such adjustments can't come soon enough. I'd be inclined to determine the value of those 9 million acres, for instance, either at current market value or as original value with compound interest. If the government insists on deducting the value of its crummy "services" and rations to the Indians over the years, so be it; but I imagine it would be ashamed to come up with any stated value for that. In any case this is properly a matter for negotiation, which the government has agreed to in principle as a result of Wounded Knee.

Most disturbing is the nightmarish possibility that the government may try to eliminate the problem posed by Wounded Knee by once again obliterating the people who are there. The tremendous firepower, the hordes of marshals, police agents and FBI already employed are totally unjustified and an irrational response. Not only would a 1973 massacre be an unmitigated tragedy. It would spawn innumerable new Wounded Knee actions.

What about the student who remarks, "The Indians aren't even together on it. How can anybody else be?" I would ask in reply, how often are most whites in agreement on an important issue, or most Blacks or most Vietnamese, for that matter? For the Indians there is a further divisive agent, the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Remember that 60 per cent of all

jobs available on the Pine Ridge Reservation are through the BIA. Not only on Pine Ridge, but elsewhere, the reach of the BIA is long and intimidating.

So, make up your mind. Support the Indian movement!

Ted K. Matthes
Assoc. Prof. Mathematics

Mindless boogie

Regarding the review of the Rowan Brothers concert in last Thursday's Ode. Mr. Spittal: I regard your review of the Rowan Brothers concert as what must be a symptom particular to the experience of other self-styled music critics. That is, you seem to be attracted to that peculiar style of music which revels in such "heavy" flourishes as sweat, tears and bulging trousers. You, like so many other rock critics seem to find more value in grunts, growls, moans and other thoroughly sexual displays that you can not distinguish between the man and the machismo, or should I say, the art and the artifice. Do not believe for a minute that I am saying the Chambers brothers are guilty of all these things, but you are. Indeed, to apply the crowd's approval or disapproval of the Rowan Brothers on the basis of whether they could boogie to them or not is to fundamentally deny the purpose of art. Besides, does anyone judge Bach, Gershwin or even Dylan in terms of whether one can boogie in time to their music? But wait I am getting away from

the subject. Even you Mr. Spittal and your obviously pedantic preoccupation with the physical should be able to gain something from the rich, even blend of voices that are characteristic of the Rowan Brothers. I agree, the Rowan Brothers are sweet but not in the sappy syrupy way that you view them. Rather they are sweet in that honest energetic way that is so conspicuously missing from the present world of "rock stars" with all the slouches, elegant decadence, and grade school theatrics, not to mention the million and one pseudo-sophisticates that try and pass for objective critics but turn out to be nothing more than mere cultists. It seems to me that the Rowan Brothers have taken a step in the direction of music that is all too often overlooked by the critics. That direction is one where for better or for worse, the Rowans are just trying to pass on and communicate their obvious infectious happiness that comes from simplicity of style and richness of content. Certainly my views are different than yours and most probably less fashionable than the boogiers, but thank God that I am not caught up in the mindless babble of the Uriah Heep, Deep Purple, boogie-band mentality that almost frantically tries to justify the "squeeze me till the juice runs down my leg" school of music where childish eroticism ranks above and beyond the timeless simple pleasures of honest inspiration.

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