

The Final Cover-Up Scott Camil

Last week when Richard Nixon finally died, my 14-year old daughter Laurel who is an International Baccalaureate student at Eastside High School here in Gainesville asked me, "Why is Nixon being honored?" She wanted to know what kind of message society was sending to the youth of America by paying so much tribute and honor to a person who was so totally without honor. In seeking to come up with a good answer for her, I read all of the articles I could in the days following Nixon's death to see if I could figure out this total distortion of history which could honor the most dishonorable President we have ever had. So let's take a look at the record.

Nixon's 1946 "political career began as it ended, with deliberate duplicity designed for one purpose: to win."(sk/v 557) "He once confided to a friend, 'If you can't lie you'll never go anywhere'".(sk/v 557) In his first political race, he won by smearing his opponent, Congressman Jerry Voorhis, as a communist sympathizer. This was done with advertising, speeches and an anonymous telephone campaign where people were called on the phone and told, "This is a friend of yours, I just want you to know that Jerry Voorhis is a communist." (tfan/wc 55) The person would then hang up.

As a freshman congressman, Nixon was assigned to the House Un-American Activities Committee. His most infamous success on the committee was the attack on Alger Hiss, a state department official who was convicted of perjury and sent to prison. According to the book *A Tissue of Lies - Nixon vs. Hiss* (Morton and Levitt), "It is ironic that the tactics Nixon employed to ensure the conviction and imprisonment of Hiss -- lying, news leaks, midnight searches, attacks upon the press, invoking the separation of powers issue, suppression and faking of evidence -- were the same type of activities that toppled him from power a quarter of a century later." Even Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas later concluded that Hiss was "framed". It is also interesting to note that Jack Ruby worked for Nixon during this time.

By 1949, Nixon was ready to move up the ladder, the oil interest needed a friendly candidate for Senate in California, and Nixon was their man. He ran against Congresswoman Helen Gahagan Douglas. In California the election law allowed people who were running for office to cross-file, that is, to file as a Democrat and as a Republican. This would allow a person of one party, for example, to win the primary as both a Republican and a Democrat. Nixon sent out campaign literature to all the Democrats seeking their support and insinuating that he was a Democrat. The other side cried foul because Nixon did not identify himself as a Republican. Nixon also viciously attacked Mrs. Douglas as a communist sympathizer and dubbed her a "pink lady", and he won the election.

In 1951, Nixon was selected as vice-presidential running mate for Eisenhower. During the campaign, Nixon was accused of receiving money from a secret slush fund amounting to somewhere between \$17,000 and \$20,000 a year. At this same time, editorials started appearing in pro-Republican newspapers calling for Nixon's replacement based on these claims. In a move to save his butt, Nixon gave a television address known as the "checkers speech" in which he skillfully played on the emotions of the audience and asked them to tell the Republican National Committee whether or not he should resign from the ticket. Eisenhower, who saw the presentation with a group of Republican supporters, decided the speech was great and they let Nixon know that he could stay on the ticket.

In 1952, Nixon was involved in a scheme to circumvent the law concerning campaign

contributions. Nixon did not get in any trouble because the way that the circumvention was carried out, no law was technically broken. But Nixon did receive funds that he was not entitled to under the regulations.

As vice-president, Nixon endorsed Joseph McCarthy's witch hunts, blamed President Truman for the communist victory in China, sponsored a resolution in Congress calling for General McCarthy's reinstatement, called for the bombing of China, lobbied for the use of atomic weapons to help the French in Vietnam, and raised the possibility of sending American troops to Vietnam should the French troops be defeated. As vice-president, one of Nixon's jobs was to campaign for Republicans running for Congress around the country, and in this endeavor he sharpened his skills of labeling opponents of Republicans as communists and questioning their patriotism.

In 1967 while campaigning for the presidency, Nixon promised that he had a secret plan for ending the war in Vietnam. During Nixon's campaign, he attacked Lyndon Johnson's method of conducting the war. During this time, a man named Henry Kissinger became an advisor to the Johnson administration. On the eve of the Republican convention in July 1968, Kissinger described Nixon as "the most dangerous of all the men running to have as President." After Nixon won the Republican primary, Kissinger secretly started giving information about the democratic strategy for ending the war to Richard Allen, one of Richard Nixon's foreign policy aides. "A clandestine channel was set up through Nixon's campaign manager John Mitchell and Kissinger guided the Republicans secretly on the Vietnam issue for nearly 2 months -- thus supplying Nixon with the ammunition to blast Humphrey for playing politics with the war." (SK /V 585) At the same time, Nixon supporters met with President Thieu of South Vietnam and tried to convince him to object to President Johnson's intention to halt the bombing of North Vietnam. It was explained to Thieu that he could get a better shake from Nixon than from the Democrats. Of course the purpose of this was really to foil the Democrats and help Nixon win the election. We see here that while Nixon is talking about peace, before he is even elected he is maneuvering behind the scenes to keep the war going. Nixon won the election of 1968 and Kissinger was brought on board as National Security Adviser.

In all fairness to Nixon, it is impossible to really determine from this point on who really called the shots in Vietnam because both Nixon and Kissinger were devout liars and manipulators and equally had problems with their own self-esteem and ego. Since Nixon was the president and had the power to make the final decisions, he bears the responsibility for the consequences of those decisions even though he and Kissinger are both partners in the crime.

In 1969 there was a peace agreement on the table for ending the war in Vietnam. The peace agreement that was formally signed in Paris on July 27, 1973 was virtually identical to the peace agreement that had been on the table since 1969. What this means is that from 1969 until 1973 absolutely nothing was gained by all the death and destruction that took place.

Some of the things that took place between 1969 and 1973 that Richard Nixon was personally responsible for were: the illegal U.S. invasions of Laos and Cambodia resulting in Cambodia alone in the death of two million Cambodians, the death of 20,327 Americans, the wounding of 110,968 Americans, 81,623 South Vietnamese soldiers killed, 273,130 South Vietnamese soldiers wounded, 412,996 North Vietnamese Army and Viet Cong killed, 619,494 North Vietnamese Army and Viet Cong wounded, over 2400 third nation allies killed, and over 5200 third nation allies wounded. These figures do not include the dead or wounded in Laos. Also not included in these figures are the North Vietnamese killed and wounded by our bombing. During this same period of time, over 165,000 South Vietnamese civilians were killed, over 410,000 South Vietnamese civilians were wounded, 2 million

South Vietnamese civilians were made refugees, 2 million Cambodian civilians were made refugees, and 194,000 Laotian civilians were made homeless. Also during this period, over 400 Americans became POWs or MIAs. Of the South Vietnamese civilians who were killed during this time, about 40,000 of them were executed without trial under the Phoenix program. The Phoenix program, if you remember, was a CIA-directed project to eliminate suspected enemy civilians. Nixon is also responsible for the Christmas bombings of 1972, in which for 11 days American aircraft flew 3000 sorties dropping 40,000 tons of bombs on Hanoi and Haiphong. That is the equivalent of five atomic bombs the size of the bomb dropped on Hiroshima (TTT/M page 310). The New York Times editorial referred to this as "stone age barbarism" and stated that "civilized man will be horrified." "Beyond all reason" said The L.A. Times. The Washington Post called this "savagely and senseless". What the foreign press said of the bombings was "nothing is more grotesque" -- Japan, "genocide"- Buenos Aires, "a crime against humanity" -- West Germany, "not the conduct of a man who wants peace very badly" -- the Times of London. Also during this time, the Bach Mai Hospital in Hanoi was bombed, and under Nixon's watch the massacres at Mylai took place. Under the rules established at Nuremberg, the senior person in command of the troops is responsible for whatever the troops do. Under this principle, German and Japanese high officials were executed for actions that they were not at. Nixon was the senior in command during the Mylai massacre. The only person punished was Lt. Calley who was effectively pardoned by Nixon. The horrific total of human victims in Indochina during Nixon's tenure is over 6 million human beings killed, wounded, and made refugees. Nixon's apologists claim that he should get credit for ending the Vietnam War. What ended the Vietnam war was the resilience of the Vietnamese people (also fighters) and the activities of the anti-war movement. In my book, Nixon gets a zero.

Richard Nixon is also responsible for the murder of Allende of Chile, and the death and suffering that has resulted under the dictatorship of Pinochet. Nixon's apologists give him credit for opening the door to China. In reality, it was through Nixon's anti-communist efforts that the doors to China stayed closed for so long. It is only because there was no Richard Nixon to attack Richard Nixon's patriotism, that he was able to open those doors. And in the opening of those doors, he sold out the people of Tibet, adding about 1 million more deaths to his total.

We now go from foreign policy, Nixon's strong suit, to domestic policy where his apologists agree that he was not quite so strong. Nixon authorized the Huston plan, an unconstitutional plan for a secret police that would engage in breaking and entering, provocation, infiltration, forgery, and acts of violence to persons and property. This plan included the kidnapping of American anti-war activists and people Nixon considered his enemies. I had the privilege of being on that list (FOIA Scott Camil). This plan called for taking those of us on the list out of the country, presumably to Mexico until after the elections. J. Edgar Hoover opposed the plan and Nixon claimed he then dropped it. He then created a White House unit called "the plumbers" which engaged in illegal acts against private citizens and the Democratic party. Among those acts were breaking into the offices of Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist, then withholding this information from the trial judge until the attorney general insisted it be revealed. During the trial of Ellsberg and Russo, Nixon sought to influence the judge by offering him the directorship of the FBI. Ellsberg and Russo were on trial for disclosing the Pentagon Papers, a secret Rand Corporation study on the war in Vietnam which revealed how much the American people had been lied to by the government. He tried to stop the publication of the Pentagon Papers, tapped the phones of members of the press, and had the FBI investigate the reporters who were tracking down stories of White House corruption. He violated numerous laws concerning the electoral process, including the collection and use of illegal campaign funds, through the use of fraud, espionage, slander, burglary, wiretapping, extortion, favors to big business, bribery and perjury, to interfere with the campaign of his Democratic opposition. He sold government favors to big businesses such as

Lockheed, ITT, Penn Central, Anaconda Copper, Armo Steel, and Manufacturers Hanover Trust. He was involved in other scandals including the wheat scandal, the dairy scandal, the carpet manufacturers scandal, the postal bond scandal, several anti-trust scandals, including Warner/Lambert, National Steel/Granite City Steel, and Ling/Tempco/Vought, just to name a few. Nixon also impounded over 40 billion dollars that Congress voted for health care, housing, assistance for children of working mothers, aid for handicapped persons and help for veterans. He gave contradictory and incomplete explanations about the way he acquired valuable property in California and Florida with the help of his influential friends. There are also unanswered questions concerning 10 million dollars in federal funds spent for security at Nixon's homes in Key Biscayne and San Clemente. (War Resisters League - of the period).

Nixon, who was known to be vindictive and to hold a grudge forever, had an enemies list of all those who ever crossed him and used every branch of government available to him that he could to cause problems for those people, including having them investigated by the FBI and audited by the IRS. The Black Power Movement, the Women's Liberation Movement, the Native American Movement, the Puerto Rican Independence Movement, the Student Movement, Free Speech, New Left, and the Anti-War Movement were among those subjected to surveillance, interference, harassment and sometimes death by the United States government under the Nixon administration.

His justice department under John Mitchell had an internal security department run by Robert Mardian that was responsible for seeking federal indictments against anti-war activists. There were 107 people indicted and jailed around the country and there were 107 acquittals resulting from those indictments. The Gainesville Eight case represented 8 of those people and I am proud to say that I am one of them. We were charged with conspiracy to disrupt the Republican National Convention of 1972 with automatic weapons explosives and incendiary devices. Seven of us were Vietnam veterans with a total of 120 months in Vietnam and 57 medals between us. We were all non-commissioned officers except for one staff non-commissioned officer and one officer, and we all had honorable discharges except for one medical discharge due to wounds suffered in Vietnam. In court, the government used our service records against us. They said, "Look at these men's records: silver stars, bronze stars, purple hearts, obviously these are violent men. They don't get medals like that being good guys."

Watergate is the word that reminds most people of Nixon and has come to stand for government corruption. There were other words and phrases like Tricky Dick, vindictive, duplicitous, mean-spirited, "your president is not a crook," and "when the president does it, that means it is not illegal." One of the most appropriate was CREEP, the acronym for the Committee to Re-Elect the President. I would say that this represents Nixon's greatest achievement: giving the people a peek at how our government really works.

James McCord, a 20-year veteran of the CIA and security coordinator for CREEP and one of those convicted of leading the Watergate break-in, said that they were looking for something to tie the anti-war veterans to the McGovern Campaign. The Watergate Hotel was the headquarters of the Democratic National Committee. Four Cubans with connections to the CIA were caught burglarizing and bugging the Democratic offices. It was Nixon's involvement in the lying and cover-up of this crime that finally led to his resignation in disgrace from the presidency of the United States in order to avoid being the first president impeached. Nixon was listed as an unindicted co-conspirator in the cover-up. The only reason he was not indicted was that the prosecutors told the grand jury that you cannot indict a sitting president. Before he resigned, he had his vice-president Spiro Agnew resign and appointed Gerald Ford to be vice-president. After Nixon resigned, Ford pardoned him for all and any crimes he may have ever committed. This is the same Gerald Ford who was on the Warren Commission which tried to make sure that the people would never get truth or justice in the assassination of President Kennedy.

Besides Nixon's resignation for Watergate, there were nine people convicted in the Watergate cover-up, seven convictions for the break-in to Fielding's office (Elsberg's psychiatrist), fifteen convictions for illegal campaign convictions by individuals, three convictions of individuals for aiding and abetting illegal contributions, fifteen convictions of corporations for illegal campaign contributions, two convictions for illegal campaign contributions by government contractors, three corporations convicted for conspiracy in campaign contribution violations, fifteen individuals convicted for conspiracy and campaign contribution violations, nine convictions for dirty tricks, seven convictions for the original break-in, four convictions for obstructions of justice and the resignation of one vice-president. These convictions included two attorney generals of the United States, the deputy assistant to the President, an assistant attorney general, and the deputy director of White House communications, to name a few.

There were many more people indicted and convicted of crimes in the Nixon White House, but I think I've made the point of the amount of criminals in this administration. There are also many other scandals involving criminality in the Nixon White House.

In searching for an answer to my daughter Laurel's questioning, I am not so much outraged that a crooked politician is being honored, especially since when you look up the word politician in the dictionary the second definition is "an elected official who lies". I am most offended that the press and the political pundits are so willing to overlook the international crimes of a person responsible for the deaths of millions of innocent human beings and the untold suffering from the wounding and homelessness of millions more. I can only think that the reason is the hope that when they die they will be remembered for being among the power elite instead of for the deeds they have done. They are protecting those who came before them in the hope that those who come after them will absolve them and to clear their conscience for not doing more to help prevent people like Nixon from gaining the power and legitimacy that enabled his crimes. Nixon once said that you won't have Nixon "to kick around" anymore, but he's wrong. He will live on in infamy as an example of the worst of humanity. If we allow the world to forget what horror and suffering this man brought to his innocent victims, we are paving the way for others to follow in his footsteps. A big dart to the politicians and especially to today's media who are so quick to cover up the enormous crimes of a person who was also against the free press and who did all he could to subvert the constitution and deny us our rights. One thing for sure, Nixon is finally in his element, dirt.