

Why the White House Press Didn't Get the Watergate Story

by Charles Peters

One of the great remaining mysteries of the Watergate affair is why the White House press corps failed to get the story. From the time of the break-in, the investigatory momentum was not with the White House correspondents, even those of *The Washington Post*, but with two of the *Post's* metropolitan reporters, Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein. As the story developed last year, the big names from CBS, NBC, *The New York Times*, *Newsweek*, *Time*, etc. were reduced to reporting the *Post's* accusations and Ron Ziegler's denials.

The failure would be easier to understand were the White House not the most intensively reported institution in the world. The Watergate plans were conceived, carried out, and covered up in White House offices only yards away from the press lobby where at least a score of correspondents wait each day. The number of reporters triples for major presidential trips and soars into the hundreds for press conferences. Why didn't they give us any idea of what was going on in the offices of H. R. Haldeman and John Ehrlichman?

The word "prisoner" may soon replace "conspirator" in describing former members of the presidential staff. It is already an accurate description of some members of the White House press corps, for the constraints they work under make them captives not only of Richard Nixon, but of *Charles Peters is editor of The Washington Monthly.*

whoever holds the office.

"Your time is taken up by the large, regular flow of presidential news announcements, the campaign, summit meetings," says Robert Donovan, who became Washington bureau chief for the *Los Angeles Times* after serving as White House correspondent for the *New York Herald Tribune*. "There's almost always something going on that deprives one of the time to dig underneath." Donovan's predecessor at the *Herald Tribune*, David Wise, remembers that his editors put pressure on him to do those regular stories better than the AP, instead of looking for the story AP was missing.

As this spring's Iceland summit meeting between Nixon and President Pompidou retreats into the past, a reasonable man can conclude that nothing happened there that couldn't easily have been covered in dispatches from the Reykjavik wire bureaus or from Paris and Washington a few days after the meeting. But because the President was traveling, an entire press entourage accompanied him. The energy devoted to local-color stories about Iceland and TV shots of diplomats entering buildings might have been enough to break the whole Watergate case if it had been directed at the White House.

Since presidential election campaigns amount to a long series of Iceland summits, reporters are left exhausted and stupefied by the interminable string of staged events. When asked to explain their attentiveness to these ceremonial functions, reporters

often mention the “assassination mentality”—the fear that, if the President were killed, their paper might have to pick up the story from the wire services.

The assassination mentality is evident in the importance accorded the press secretary’s daily briefings. Reporters religiously attend the sessions because no one wants to miss the meeting at which Ziegler produces some big news. The correspondents are like a herd of seals waiting for the fish that are reliably tossed their way instead of looking elsewhere for sustenance. Russell Baker, who once covered the White House for *The New York Times*, says, “I was always fed enough information by [Eisenhower’s press secretary] Jim Hagerty to take care of page one. I wasn’t encouraged by my paper to get anything else.” Such behavior allows the White House virtually to choose the main story for the next day’s front pages by setting off for Iceland, importing Leonid Brezhnev, or announcing major appointments on the day that a scandal is breaking. As Bill Moyers, press secretary to Lyndon Johnson put it, “The White House press corps is more stenographic than entrepreneurial in its approach to news gathering. Too many of them are sheep. Sheep with short attention spans. They move on to tomorrow’s story without pausing to investigate yesterday’s.”

Moyers also notes that it is not so much that the press is kept too busy, but that they’re kept waiting all day in one room. “They sit and sit and shift a leg and sit some more.” It all seems to be very much like the “hurry up and wait” of the Army and jury duty.

“It saps initiative,” says Moyers. This suggests that the reason Nixon and Ziegler covered the White House swimming pool was to provide more room for more reporters to sit around while their initiative was being sapped.

Clifton Daniel, who used to cover London for *The New York Times*, says there was no press room at 10 Downing Street. “We used to get a

once-a-week briefing from the Prime Minister’s press secretary. The rest of the time I was free to dig where I thought best.”

Prisoner of the Source

Rare is the reporter who has not at some time or other felt himself bound by his news sources. The most difficult story to write is not the one that angers editors or officials but the one that dries up sources.

In 1971, *Newsday*, the Long Island newspaper, ran a series of exposés on the financial affairs of Bebe Rebozo, concluding with the editorial comment, “Let’s face it, the deals made by Bebe Rebozo and the Smathers gang have tainted the presidency.” Ron Ziegler would not speak to *Newsday*’s White House correspondent, Morton Schram, for three months afterwards and excluded Schram from the China trip. This was also enough to put *Newsday* on the White House “enemies” list; IRS agents audited the editor’s tax records and those of the paper.

Bill Moyers recalls that Lyndon Johnson once forbade him to give any White House exclusives to the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*’s James Deakin, simply because Johnson thought Deakin’s questions at press briefings were too tough.

At a presidential press conference in 1969, Stuart Loory, the *Los Angeles Times*’ White House correspondent, asked one of those questions that explains why there aren’t more Jim Deakins. In response to the President’s statement that he favored neither instant segregation nor instant integration, Loory asked whether the years 1954 through 1968 could be termed “instant.” The result was that Loory began losing his access to the news. He was dumped from the Air Force One press pool. On one Nixon trip to California, when the President invited several reporters to interview him while walking on the beach, Loory was left out even though his was the home paper and would have

devoted much more space to the event. And *Los Angeles Times* reporters were not invited to Administration background briefings held to discuss the next year's State of the Union message.

A journalist will hesitate to write tough criticism of Henry Kissinger because in the future Kissinger might give him that extra bit of information on our policy toward Cambodia. Peter Lisagor, White House correspondent for *The Chicago Daily News*, calls this a "psychological undertow that can obscure and minimize things that the public generally ought to be hearing about."

Even the President's press secretary can become a protected source. According to Bill Moyers, the White House reporters are reluctant to criticize the press secretary "because they are dependent on his beneficence for whom they see and where they travel—even for favors like getting their publishers a private luncheon invitation from the President. Some publishers cared more about that than any exclusive their White House correspondent could get."

The judgment of how long to coddle a source can place a reporter midway between a grand jury and God, as he calculates whether avoiding Kissinger's anger is more important than revealing what he has learned about the Vietnam "peace" deal. If the reporter writes the story, his sources will dry up and the public will be denied any further information. The question is, when does the reporter decide that the information he has is so important that he must jeopardize information he hopes to get in the future. "We will give immunity to a very good source as long as the information he offers us is better than what we've got on him," columnist Jack Anderson has said.

Prisoner of Objectivity

Shortly after the 1972 election, a Washington journalist—a veteran correspondent we knew to be totally

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AT ALL BOOKSTORES



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reliable—walked into the office of this magazine with a tip. He said a trusted source, who refused to be identified, had told him the Watergate burglars had been involved in two other incidents: a break-in at the Chilean embassy and an attempted physical assault on Daniel Ellsberg as he spoke on the Capitol steps. His source also said that the Cuban mercenaries had been given the impression that they were carrying out these assignments for high authorities in the government.

If these incidents sound commonplace today, it is only a sign of how much things have changed in nine months, for at the time they sounded fantastic. Although we trusted our source and accepted his trust of the people who told him, we did not publish the story. We went ahead with another Watergate story, “Why the Congress Didn’t Investigate Before the Election” (April, 1973), for which we did have identifiable sources. In making these judgments, we were following the traditional standards of journalistic objectivity and fairness. It was for seeming to ignore these standards in the handling of the Watergate case that the *Post* was criticized, even by its own staffers. Throughout the fall of 1972, its stories made serious accusations and then attributed them only to unnamed sources. Although it is easily forgotten, now that the *Post* has been proven right, the White House was not alone in labeling the paper’s coverage unfair, biased, irresponsible.

Behind these criticisms is a peculiar distortion of the notion of “responsibility.” For many reporters the goal in preparing a story is finding someone they can quote, someone who will say that the President has been deceptive or that a policy is not working. When White House statements represent a total contradiction of what has gone before, reporters often hesitate to say so, preferring instead to quote Senator Muskie.

This is the very opposite of real responsibility. The *Post* was far more

responsible in ascertaining the truth for itself, and then putting its own name behind the charges, than were the papers who waited until they could say “John Dean alleges” and “Ron Ziegler denies.” Responsibility is a different concept than objectivity and fairness, which the press should also maintain. But none of these standards should require a reporter to withhold what he knows to be true merely because he cannot find anyone to say it for attribution. How would the press have reported the Emperor’s new clothes?

Throughout the Watergate affair, but especially in the fall of 1972, the *Post* took responsibility for printing facts even when it could not name sources. We believe we should have done the same thing with our pieces of this immensely important story. They were small, but they could have fit with other pieces of the larger puzzle, particularly if other papers and magazines were publishing all they *knew*—knew without a doubt—regardless of whether they could name the source. In doing so, of course, the press has an obligation to give their readers enough detail to provide them with a basis for deciding on their own if the story “smells” right, just as you ordinarily want to give them the name of your source so they can make their own judgment of his reliability. But why can’t reporters and papers establish their own reputation for reliability? I would trust David Broder as much as any source he could name. In fact, if he says he stands behind a story, I’m more likely to believe it is true than if he simply quotes a source for the story and says the source “alleges” it is true.

Another ball and chain for the prisoners of objectivity is their reluctance to draw obvious inferences and to supply known background facts that will make the significance of a story clear.

By the end of October, the press knew that:

1. The President’s personal lawyer, Herbert Kalmbach, was involved to a

considerable extent in improper campaign behavior. Anyone with a knowledge of law would understand that the last thing a lawyer—especially a lawyer representing a public official in the middle of a campaign—would do is make a potentially embarrassing move unless he knew his client would approve. The average reader should have had the chance to consider this inference, but the reporters didn't supply the necessary background.

2. Dwight Chapin, the President's appointments secretary, had clearly been connected with campaign saboteur Donald Segretti. Chapin was Haldeman's protege in the White House, and insiders knew he wouldn't turn around without orders from Haldeman. If Chapin's relationship with Haldeman had been reported to the public, the people would have had some idea how high the scandal went. But to our knowledge, only a gossip-type story in the Style section of the *Post* pointed out this key fact before the election.

3. A federal court had found that Haldeman, Nixon, and friends had engaged in similar dirty campaign practices in California in 1962. Although the *Post*'s Sanford Ungar reported this before the election, it was pushed aside in the *Post* by "Peace is at Hand" and was buried in the other papers (*The New York Times* ran it far inside). From then until June of this year, this crucial information seems to have appeared only a few places, including a series by *The St. Louis Post-Dispatch*'s James Deakin, a story by Adam Clymer in *The Baltimore Sun*, a *New York Times Sunday Magazine* piece by R. W. Apple, and a May 20 story in *The Boston Globe*.

The point is not that the press should have launched smear campaigns, especially right before the election when false charges would be hard to refute. For the kind of "responsible" journalism we have described, meticulous fidelity to fact is even more important than when merely quoting. David Wise recalls that, shortly before the 1960 election, he got a

tip about the Howard Hughes loan to Nixon's brother; he wasn't able to use the story because he couldn't confirm its accuracy in time. Wise's hesitation was justified, but it was in a different category from judgments such as the one Walter Rugaber provided in a November 1 Watergate wrap-up for *The New York Times*: "There has been no public indication that either the President or any of his close advisors played roles in or had advance knowledge of an illegal assault upon the opposition party."

Another element in the journalists' Watergate failure is the trepidation which the presidency creates even in veteran reporters. "They get goose pimples when they hear 'Hail to the Chief,'" says Douglas Kiker of NBC. "They tend to believe a man with a big title and a big car. They very much want to believe the President of their country," which implies that they don't want to call him a liar.

James Reston cites two other reasons to explain why the press failed on Watergate:

1. The reporters paid too little attention to the tremendous growth of the presidential-national security power in the post-World War II era. "The atom bomb, the ICBM, and nation-wide network TV combined to make the presidential power enormous. . . . If the Republic could be destroyed before you could get Congress through the downtown traffic to Capitol Hill, obviously you had to give the President tremendous power over life and death." The more power, the greater the need for skepticism, and this is where the press failed.

The Nixon Administration brought a new strain of paranoia to the national-security mentality, according to Reston, "Because of their assumption that the press was hostile, I think there was a conspiracy of silence quite carefully calculated by this administration from the beginning. Whatever they did they were to keep the press out. This administration has not been as open with its friends as previous administrations were with their ene-

mies. Remember that Haldeman and Ehrlichman were there with Nixon that grotesque night in November, 1962, when he revealed his hatred of the press after losing the California governorship.”

2. Some reporters found that their trusted sources lacked the courage to speak out on Watergate. This happened to Reston, whose knowledge of what the CIA was up to had included before-the-event awareness of the U-2 incident and the Bay of Pigs. I asked him why he thought his sources failed him on the White House attempt to use the CIA to cover up Watergate. His reply was that fewer and fewer government officials facing the possibility of losing office agree with Joseph Kennedy’s “Home holds no terrors for me.” In other words, the seductions of office keep them from resigning and letting the public know what is going on. Reston described a lunch he had with former CIA director Richard Helms in January, where he asked if Helms had been bounced from the CIA and if so, why. “Helms was obviously angry at the White House clique, but not one thing did he say about the Watergate connection. He took the easy way out, a job overseas (ambassador to Iran), and didn’t seem to feel he had any obligation to disclose.”

Hoping It Goes Away

While anyone who had ever observed a pack of reporters in a press lounge questioning each other to make sure no one had a special angle might think that their professional camaraderie dominated their inter-paper jealousy, petty rivalry among the newspapers also influenced the Watergate coverage. Conformity did, of course, play a role: “Because you all gather together in one place, because you all focus on one man, because all of you travel together, there is a herd instinct to report the same things the other guys are reporting,” says R. W. Apple.

But rivalry among papers takes

over when the herd instinct leaves off. It has been described by Russell Baker as “the tendency to piss all over the other guy’s story, to hope that the story will go away because it makes you look bad for missing it.”

Apple notes, “There is a tendency, if you can’t confirm it independently, not to run a story that begins, ‘*The Washington Post* said today. . . .’ My impression is that there is an effort to hold that sort of thing to a minimum. . . . I think a case can be made that the *Times* did not devote the resources it should have to Watergate until the second month of this year.”

One factor may have been the leadership transition in the Washington Bureau from Max Frankel to Clifton Daniel. The change took effect on January 1, 1973, but was announced several months before. While Frankel is a first-rate journalist, such announcements almost always detract from or undermine the motivation and authority of the man to be replaced and may have accounted for the *Times*’ failure during this crucial period.

What Can Be Done

Remedying the press’ defects is important not simply in terms of preventing another Watergate. As Apple observes, “Watergate is but one example of the kind of story that’s missed by the White House press corps.”

The *Post* and the *Times* now cover the White House with two-man teams. One is supposed to watch the trees, the other the forest. But both Clifton Daniel of the *Times* and Benjamin Bradlee, managing editor of the *Post*, say that these efforts need to be supplemented.

Everyone agrees there is a need for more investigative reporters. But most think it would be futile to assign them to the White House. Hugh Sidey of *Time* can’t imagine a Seymour Hersh being welcomed by Ron Ziegler. Mel Elfin of *Newsweek* says the lesson of Watergate to him has been to beef up

Newsweek's coverage of the Department of Justice, particularly the FBI, where *Time's* Sandy Smith had been beating *Newsweek*—and of the lobbyist-trade association-superlawyers group where so much of the town's hanky-panky originates.

Certainly many of the best reporters are convinced that you can't find out the truth about the White House from the President's staff. Bob Donovan says, "The White House staff is a perfect source for letting you know how great the Administration is. I got most of my good White House stories from the Hill. The congressional staffs are full of bright people, each of whom has a piece of what's going on and is freer to talk about it than the White House staff."

James Reston says, "I worked in this town for 20 years as a scoop artist. The way you did it was to work the periphery. If you knew the President was going to bring out a tax bill, you knew there would be consultation with Wilbur Mills and other leaders to see if the Congress would go along. Again, in foreign policy, you knew Acheson would try out ideas with the British and French ambassadors, so you would call up Wilbur Mills and the ambassadors. I knew Acheson went to drink whiskey with Senator Arthur Vandenberg every night so I went to see Vandenberg in the morning."

"It is in the narrow space between the formulation of policy and the announcement of policy that scoops are to be mined," says Reston.

Russell Baker translates this into: "When I was covering the State Department, I always looked for the sorehead, the guy who was coming out of the meeting defeated and angry and ready to talk. . . . I didn't look for soreheads at the White House because I assumed there weren't any. They were all on the team."

But there are always soreheads in the White House and the press should look for them. Doug Kiker recalls the Marvin Watson-Bill Moyers rivalry under Lyndon Johnson, which meant

that you could get almost anything out of one if you mentioned some threat from the other. Only in April, 1973, did Christopher Lydon of the *Times* begin uncovering the various cliques in the Nixon White House that had existed from the beginning and which could have been used to find out the truth about Watergate.

R. W. Apple says, "The press doesn't demand to see the White House staff members often enough. I think there's a certain accountability they should fulfill. We have to demand that they be open to questioning. After all, they work for the country."

This doesn't mean there has to be some legal requirement that government employees see the press. It does mean that civil servants should accept some reasonable availability to the press as part of their responsibility to the public they are supposed to be serving. Of course, Henry Kissinger shouldn't have to give every interview requested—if he did, he wouldn't have time for anything else. But there is no excuse for the H. R. Haldemans who refuse to be interviewed at all.

One small example from *The Washington Monthly's* experience illustrates this point. We have been trying to do a story on the enlisted men who are assigned as servants to military officers. The Army says that the officers have the right to refuse to talk to us—and that all of them have refused. So, we have no story. But the officers are public employees, and the public has a right to know what they are doing.

Look for the Shredder-Man

Another version of "looking for the sorehead" is "going down the line." Sy Hersh says, "The little guy who runs the Xerox machine may only be able to give you an extra copy, but that may be all you need." And the guy who runs the Xerox machine is not an intimate friend of the President, will not lose a \$42,000-a-year job if he talks to you,

and just might put the interests of the country above the interest of the current incumbent in the White House.

Hugh Sloan, while not a Xerox operator, was a guy down the line who was known to have resigned because of Watergate. We now know he was deeply disturbed, disturbed enough to take his concerns to Stans, Chapin, and Ehrlichman in July, 1972. Who was the reporter who called him up in July? Who found out that Magruder advised Sloan to commit perjury?

Bill Moyers says that when he was press secretary, the reporters he most feared were those who followed the agency head out the White House door and back to his office where he would immediately tell his assistant what had happened at the White House. As the assistant told *his* assistant and so on, the story would soon reach someone of sufficiently modest loyalty to the Administration that the reporter could get him to talk. Moyers also feared the correspondent who went down the line at the White House to talk to unknown middle- or lower-level assistants who were doing important work but who had every reason to believe that the public, not to mention their friends back home, didn't know it. The temptation to reveal the inside knowledge that proved their importance was often overwhelming.

One of the most important things the reporters could have done to prevent Watergate was to have alerted the public about their inability to report the presidency. Mel Elfin, Washington Bureau Chief of *Newsweek*, told us he had never been able to get an interview with H. R. Haldeman. But he never told *Newsweek* readers. James Reston has not been able to interview Nixon, Haldeman, or Ehrlichman since 1968, but he had never reported this fact in his column. R. W. Apple one day in March called 17 different White House officials without getting an answer. But he, too, has not reported these rebuffs.

Reston says, "Turner Catledge [former managing editor of the *Times*] had a strong feeling that we should not seem to be whining and complaining about lack of access. It was our job to get the news no matter what barriers they put in the way." Apple adds, "It seems awfully self-pitying and self-serving to write about how mean those fellows are because they won't return your phone calls."

In addition, one suspects that while it may not have been true of men so secure in their jobs as Elfin, Apple, and Reston, many reporters were afraid to admit their lack of access because it might reflect on their competence to do the job.

Another way newspapers could have made their readers aware of how the story was being hidden is suggested by James Deakin: "I'm convinced that if the press had regularly printed the transcripts of Ziegler's press briefings from last June on, the public would have become aware much earlier of the pattern of evasion and deception. But only one or two papers printed even one of these transcripts." This would also protect the public from those reporters who heard the contents of the transcript first-hand but failed to report the legitimate inferences.

Thou Shalt Not Lie

Congressman Paul N. McCloskey has proposed that it be made a crime for a government employee to willfully lie to a committee of Congress. Because of the failure of past attempts to legislate openness in government—witness the marvelous skill of the federal bureaucracy in evading requests for documents under the Freedom of Information Act—little attention has been paid to McCloskey's proposal. We think it should be revived and expanded to forbid officials to lie to reporters—or to any other citizens. It has become justifiable and the accepted thing for public officials to lie. This does not mean that they always have to be forthcoming. There

may be some things they can't or won't talk about. In such cases, as Clifton Daniel notes of his father-in-law, Harry Truman, they can say, "It's none of your damn business." But they don't have to lie. The government can fine or imprison the taxpayer who lies. It seems only fair that the taxpayer have some remedy against the government official who lies.

Finally, the press has to deny the President deniability. Its reports of what his subordinates are doing must be searching—not simply to inform the public as we have already argued, but to make sure the President cannot plead ignorance of their behavior and thereby escape responsibility for it.

General Abrams was praised by congressional committees and his promotion approved because he said he didn't know that General Lavelle was bombing the hell out of North Vietnam. It seems to be the view of everyone that President Nixon should escape liability if actual knowledge of Watergate can't be pinned on him.

In an important new book with an unfortunate title, *Administrative Feedback*, Herbert Kaufman points out that leaders "may resort to a strategy discouraging feedback about administrative behavior because they privately approve of the behavior they know they should, according to law and morality, prevent."

Remember Colson to Hunt, "Don't tell me," and Ehrlichman to Sloan, "I don't want to know."

Kaufman continues, "The temptations to establish claims of ignorance are as great when one is truly an accomplice as when one is truly a victim." He goes on to suggest that "one approach would be to abandon the fiction that leaders are by virtue of ignorance untouched" by responsibility for the actions of their subordinates.

But to pin the leader to the wall, the press must zero in on the subordinate. Too often they do not. Instead, in Kaufman's words, "The journalists focus on programs, the high politics of forming policies, or the sparring foot-

work of political maneuvering. There is hardly ever an examination of subordinate behavior that would instruct leaders."

Facing the Realities

One thing is clear, the "periphery" of sources must be expanded beyond the senators and ambassadors that gave Reston his scoops. Sy Hersh got the My Lai story from a bunch of guys you never heard of, which is, of course, the way the *Post's* Watergate story began. *The Washington Monthly's* greatest scoop, how the Army was spying on civilian politics, came not from the Secretary of Defense but from a captain in the Army Reserve named Christopher Pyle.

Reston looked for his scoops in the gap between the formulation of a policy and its announcement. Another place to look is the place where the policy is being executed. I used to work for the Peace Corps. My job was to evaluate Peace Corps programs overseas. I felt my main mission was to rub Washington's nose in the realities of the field. My best sources were not the top bureaucrats but the volunteers out there doing the job. Increasingly, I think the reporters will find their best sources closer to the cutting edge of policy. The Air Force press office can tell you what the policy is, but you have to go to Indochina to find out what General Lavelle's bombers are doing. There is one story in the political intrigue between the White House and the Congress and the lobbies in, say, the formulation of educational policy. A more important story may be out in the schools where that policy is being carried out.

On January 9, 1972, *The New York Times* published a story saying that some months earlier the White House had decided to do something about all those leaks and that a group devoted to plugging them had been formed under the leadership of Egil Krogh and David Young. The press might well have looked into how that policy was executed. ■

Tidbits and Outrages

No Time for Petty Scandals

Readers of our stories on banking in this issue will be interested in the extra evidence we have collected from around the country to show that your banker is always working for you. West Virginia's *Charleston Gazette* reported last month that "a legislator who has been deeply involved in trying sincerely to bring about effective legislation for consumer protection has come to the conclusion that the bankers rank at the very top in influencing legislators."

The main concern of the bankers in the recent session of the West Virginia legislature was defending the "holder-in-due -course" doctrine, which the *Gazette's* fine political writer, Harry Hoffman, explained, "permits a fly-by-night operator to make home improvements, then sell the contract to a bank. . . leaving the consumer to pay through the nose to the holder of the paper, even though the improvements were not made or were faulty."

Douglas Watson of *The Washington Post* reported that the seven Maryland officials who play key roles in administering the state banking laws supporting or legislation affecting the banking industry received free vacations to Bermuda to attend the May convention of the Maryland Bankers Association.

From Virginia comes another reassuring story about the intellectual and moral quality of your bankers:

Hot Springs, Va., June 8. Rep. Joel T. Broyhill received sustained applause from about 200 Washington bankers, wives, and business associates today after a speech in which he bitterly condemned news media for too extensive coverage of the largely "petty Watergate scandals."

Maybe It's Worth It to Get Rid of Them?

John Saar of *The Washington Post* recently pointed to new evidence of the democratic thrust of our armed forces. An officer retiring after 5 years' service is eligible for \$15,000 severance pay. An enlisted man can serve for 15 years and get nothing.

Exotic Dancer

For those who think government contracting is dull business, the *Commerce Business Daily* offers evidence to the contrary:

* A—ESTABLISH ENGINEERING SERVICES IN SUPPORT OF THE HAVE HAIR PROGRAM DURING THE EXOTIC DANCER EXERCISE. Negotiations will be conducted with Raytheon Company, Norwood, MA 02062. . . . For information only RFQ F33615-71-Q-1784, S/A(P106)

Watching Out for the Little Guy

The National Observer recently revealed how it defines the word "small" in a story entitled "How Small Investors Cash In On Those Soaring Interest Rates":

U. S. Government securities are paying unusually high returns. Short-term Treasury bills, for instance, currently yield about 7.1 per cent. . . . You need at least \$10,000 to buy. . . .

The Pain of Separation

One reason the press didn't complain more about its freeze-out from the White House may have been that reporters felt they weren't missing much by not getting to see the Nixon men. Only now, as more and more of the old White House insiders are speaking in public, are we getting an idea of what quotable material we've been denied all along. At a recent press conference in Los Angeles, John Ehrlichman told reporters that "it was not until February of this year that we were given any reason for even the beginning fibrillation of doubt" about John Dean's assurances that there had been no Watergate cover-up.

And in the grand tradition of Jack Valenti, former White House Special Counsel Charles Colson gave *The New York Times* a special glimpse of what it meant to leave the inner circle: "What I miss most is the opportunity to be with the President, and talk with him every day."