

# Beware The Tender Trap... Does A Leopard Change Spots?

## I Remember Richard

Peter B. Young

In 1946, when I was 14 and my brother was seven, we lived in a small bungalow in Pasadena, California. In between teaching my brother the rudiments of football, women and journalism I knew he would grow up to be editor of The Daily Tar Heel. I found time to read a little bit about the antics of one Richard Milhaus Nixon, a young Navy veteran who was running for Congress in neighboring Whittier.

These antics were lovingly reported in the Los Angeles Times, a sort of house organ for the California Republican Party. On second thought, the California Republican Party was a house organ for the Los Angeles Times. Anyway, the good ship Nixon was successfully launched in the very year in which I finally managed to teach my brother how to run a "stop and go" pass pattern. (Just who taught Mr. Nixon is not entirely clear to me—perhaps it was Norman Chandler, publisher of the aforementioned Los Angeles Times. Whatever the teacher was, Mr. Nixon learned his lessons at least as well as my brother.)

By 1948, for want of something better to do, I was sort of hanging around the fringes of the California Democratic Party. At that time, the Democratic Party in California consisted of nine sweet old ladies, three old men, six hots, two professors, and one semi-illuminated juvenile: me.

One of these professors was my dear friend and teacher, Franklin K. Patterson. In 1948 Pat was asked by a committee of Whittier Democrats (this committee consisted of one sweet old lady, one old man, one hot, and a Quaker professor) to run against Congressman Nixon. Patterson carefully considered this offer for all of five minutes and decided that he was really much happier teaching me how to run a stop and go pass pattern. Had I not been such a stimulating student, Patterson would have run against Nixon and doubtless put an end to his brief political career. (In reality, and unknown to the Whittier committee, Patterson was conferring daily with agents of the FBI about a serious episode several years previous when Communist representatives tried to recruit him for the infamous Sorge ring operating out of Tokyo. This would have been a fatal handicap to entry into a political race against anybody, let alone Mr. Nixon.)

Instead of Patterson, the role of sacrificial lamb was handed to Steve Zetterberg, a country lawyer from the outskirts of Whittier—that is, if Whittier has any outskirts. Zetterberg was, and probably still is, a gentle, innocent, decent guy. Nixon creamed him.

This brings us to 1950 and Nixon's spectacular promotion from the House of Representatives to the U. S. Senate. This particular campaign, a crucial one not only for Mr. Nixon but also for his Party, has been the subject of much analysis which is neither my purpose to repeat nor to summarize. Let me instead let down a few memories.

I remember Nixon's fat face staring at me obsequiously from every billboard in the state. The Nixon billboards even extended into Mexico for the benefit of those Californians who wanted a weekend of respite. The stench of The Big Money exuded from this son of an humble Whittier grocer.

I remember a piece of Nixon campaign literature that was mailed to every Democrat in the state. This trifled was headed, "As one Democrat to another," and was carefully contrived to give the impression that Nixon was a Democrat! And I remember Glen Wilson, Jimmy Roosevelt's campaign manager, holding this scurrilous leaflet in his hands and saying: "Jesus Christ, how could he dare? I mean how could he dare?"

And I remember Helen Gahagan Douglas, Nixon's opponent in this campaign, growing more and more hysterical in her frustration at the Nixon tactics until finally the Roosevelt Democrats took to calling her "Helen of Acre" (a cruel and cutting comment).

Finally, I remember Paul Ziffren, Mrs. Douglas's campaign manager, brooding and contemplating his revenge in the back of some dingy meeting hall. Ziffren may yet get his revenge in 1960, a good ten years after the provocation.

Most down-the-line Democrats share this highly emotional image of Richard Nixon. And yet I can not rid myself of the suspicion or hunch that this strange and slippery man just might turn out to be one of our great Presidents. This admission is dragged from me most grudgingly. And yet it is necessary to give The Devil his due. I neither forget nor forgive his past. But what if talk of "the new Nixon" is more than cheap Republican press agency?

Similarly with the word "new" as applied to Mr. Nixon, it hums with implications. Less flattering than "mature," it concedes tacitly that the Vice President was absent from Sunday School the day they were teaching the Golden Rule and other restraining amenities. But the word "new" also suggests that the subject has

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Margaret Halsey  
(First appeared in THE NEW REPUBLIC, January 17, 1958 and is still applicable today. Margaret Halsey is the author of many books and articles including WITH MALICE TOWARD SOME, COLOR BLIND AND THE FOLKS AT HOME.)

People who have been in concentration camps say that there is almost nothing human beings cannot get used to, after a while. Hence it is quite in the cards that individuals who began in 1932 by admiring Adolf Severson may end up in 1960 as, if not admirers, at least resigned to Richard Nixon.

It has been a commonplace for a long time to say that Americans are apathetic about their government. However, a recent interview with the playwright George Axelrod, printed in the NEW YORK POST, seems to indicate that the electorate is more responsive to what goes on in Washington than might be supposed.

Mr. Axelrod was asked by Mike Wallace why authentic American humor is dying and why the writer of comedy is a disappearing breed.

"Life itself is so satirical," the playwright replied, it's hard to satirize it. It's all so preposterous and musical comedy, with buffoons running the country and the Russians making us look idiotic. In a grotesque, horrible way, life itself has become pretty much of a joke. And you can't make a joke on a joke.

Some of Mr. Axelrod's words strike a painfully responsive chord in hearts other than those of professional humorists. As the improbable events accumulate—Little Rock yields pride of headline to Russian moons and American rocket failure—the feeling deepens in many people of being caught up in a sort of gangrenous sunset, brilliant with the streaky pyrotechnics of decay.

In such an atmosphere, it is not too hard to resign one's self to Richard Nixon. We have books like THE ORGANIZATION MAN to testify that the complexities and contradictions of a business society are markedly erosive in their over-all effect; and so liberal a publication as THE REPORTER has already become sufficiently "adjusted" to the "new" and "mature" Nixon to affirm that, "We don't see any reason why... he should be the object of permanent distrust."

This seems reasonable enough at first, but it has a more dubious significance than meets the eye. A light from moral standards is almost always rationalized as tolerance, flexibility and a sensible, reassuring broadness of viewpoint. Where THE REPORTER leads, perhaps others will follow—and they will not by any means be uniformly disreputable or a more lunatic fringe.

As the President's energies decline, the press—with only a few honorable exceptions—will tend increasingly to thrust Excelsior into Mr. Nixon's Arthurian digits, it is going to be more and more difficult to see what a tricky and artful ellipsis the word "mature" in this instance, actually is. Yet only in dealing with a Mongoloid idiot could Mr. Nixon's past history be completely ignored. The money he accepted from California businessmen, the Checkers speech, his campaign tactics against Congressman Voorhis and Helen Gahagan Douglas and his imputations of treason against the Democrats in 1954 are too well known to be dissolved away by the silent treatment. But the word "mature" makes the necessary and unavoidable reference to this passionate pilgrimage without specifically recalling any of its details.

To describe the Vice President as "mature," now that he has arrived, is to convey—by an expert use of suggestion, that he was immature when he was on the way up. Thus his earlier behavior is transmuted. It becomes—not unscrupulous, treacherous and evil—but merely boyish, inexperienced and ill-judged. By a tromp foel of vocabulary, what was actually spiritual gangsterism is scaled down to appear as an innocuous over-enthusiasm.

"Mirror, Mirror, On The Wall,  
Who's The Fairest One Of All?"



reformed, and that where he was formerly bad, he is now good. The reasoning behind this of firmation is the kind we grew familiar with during Hitler's rise to power. What this reasoning postulates is virtue-through-satiation - being good because there is not longer any need to be bad - because, that is, one has gotten what he wants. Even without the memory of the Rhineland and the Sudetenland, this picture of virtue as arising from ingestion rather than from inner conviction is too absurd to require comment. Mr. Nixon has no more altered in character or personality structure because he is close to the Presidency than Harry Truman has altered in character or personality structure by reason of having left it.

To be sure, Mr. Truman was by his own admission unprepared, in terms of world state-manship, to enter upon the Presidency, whereas Mr. Nixon has been conscientiously reading himself for the office. But Mr. Truman was not morally unprepared for the White House, Mr. Nixon, on the other hand, suffers from a disability that all the briefing in the world will not mitigate. He cannot go back to Sunday School.

The point is a pivotal one. If the Vice President's energies are truly as monumental as the Luce publications and others in the swelling chorus say they are, the Presidency in its present form may prove too narrow for them. Mr. Nixon, as President, may wish to extend the powers of his office the way those other dark-jowled fellows - the ones in South America - so often do. The opposition—the people who think that such an Executive should not overbalance the Legislature and the Judiciary—must then expect to get the "old" Nixon treatment. Such people will have to get what comfort they can, as they watch the mad dripping slowly down their reputable names, from reflecting that it was their own too-trustful natures that permitted the Wander-kind to get out of control.

Until some absolutely unmistakable portent comes along—such as Mr. Nixon's resigning his office and going to Africa as a missionary—common sense requires the

working hypothesis that he has not changed and is not going to. It may seem easy enough, at this present writing, to make a moral judgment on him and stick to it. With the passage of time, however, sticking to such a judgment is going to grow increasingly difficult. To judge the Vice President leniently - to modulate as The Reporter has done into a lower set of standards - may be expected to become more and more of a temptation, both for professional observers of politics and for persons whose interest in the subject is peripheral.

The past five years have demonstrated that in a business administration, the press has a considerable operational resemblance to one of the priesthoods of antiquity. So far from encouraging controversy, discussion and the exploration of ideas, the priests of Ike, like the priests of Isis, concentrate on incantation. They may know—as hierarchs usually do—that there is nothing in the Holy of Holies but a rusty bobby pin and two chipped moth balls, but they do not divulge, or make it easy for anyone else to divulge, this liberating bit of information.

So far as the press and public relations are concerned, the head-dress of Tut-an-kh-Amen is already nestled on Mr. Nixon's putatively youthful brows, and as the President's arrieries close up like morning glories, it is going to take more and more courage to discuss the Vice President in terms of the known realities of his character.

People who live in our society often complain that it is too fluid. What they mean, however, is that automobile styles become obsolete too fast. Emotionally, our society—so far from being fluid—is in some ways extremely rigid. Once the characterization of a public figure is put on the market, so to speak, that characterization freezes into place and is no longer susceptible to modification.

The icon of the Great Leader, for instance, has now been extensively altered by the most crashing, smashing evidence of its sentimental inaccuracies. And as Mr. Nixon's stereotype gets the deep freeze treatment—the stereotype of efficiency combined with an

agreeably chastened boyishness—more and more respectable and intelligent people will gradually be drawn over to the side of condoning, forgiving, and forgetting. It will get lonelier and lonelier to criticize and speak the truth.

And indeed one can understand why. Should Mr. Nixon succeed to the Presidency, it will be a great temptation to make exonerating noises about him. To live with him as President, in full awareness of what his actions have shown him to be, will require considerable endurance. One's natural instinct will be to set up a sheltering illusion—to warm up the bleak and wintry truth by arguing that he cannot really be so bad. There will be a disposition to believe that merely sitting in an office with the American flag and the Great Seal of the United States has an ennobling effect. Or being the father of two. And so they do—but not on confirmed and habitual self-promoters.

Forced to adjust to Mr. Nixon as Chief Executive, many people will automatically develop a sort of selective morality. They will have one set of ethics—the one they were taught as children and have been used to all their lives—for judging themselves and their friends. They will have another, and a much lower one, for the President of the United States.

At first glance, this might seem like a workable compromise; but it is not. Breshma's Law operates just as immutably in ethics as it does in economics, and cheap morals tend to drive good morals out of circulation. To charitable souls, it may seem vindictive to dwell on Mr. Nixon's past, but the issue transcends considerations of charity. To remember the Vice President's record is to keep alive—if only by inversion—that standard of morality which makes life worth living.

Morality is not just a picnic ground for pigs. On the contrary, it provides the hard substratum of seriousness without which, as Mr. Axelrod points out, comedy and authentic humor wither away. "You can't make a joke on a joke"—and what could be more indecently comic than pundits and newsmen, themselves unharmed, generously forgiving Mr. Nixon

for injuries done to Mrs. Douglas? Morality provides the fabric of truth which—to put it on the simplest level—enables the host to go into the kitchen and fix drinks in the certain knowledge that his visitors will not read the letters on his desk. Sentences as it sounds, morality provides a sense of identification with the past. Thou shalt not bear false witness is an indispensable part of the cultural heritage. To write it off, merely for the sake of accommodating a brash arriviste, is to show the idiot good nature of one who commits suicide because a taxi driver says, "Drop dead."

For those who like to talk in what they describe as "practical" terms, morality provides a sort of space platform for judging people and estimating the probabilities of their behavior. Perhaps if we had all been more ethically alert when Mr. Eisenhower obeyed Senator McCarthy's directive vis-a-vis General Marshall, we would have been in time to forestall some parts, at least, of the recent infelicities. Basically, America's present unhappy situation with both friend and foe stems from a circumstance that even the best minds did not observe until it was just a little too late - namely, that while Roosevelt made Mr. Eisenhower a general, Nature made him a second lieutenant.

Morality, for the eggheads and liberals, is the clue to conduct. The present situation is outwardly so extravagant as to justify many times over Mr. Axelrod's reference to musical comedy. The highest office in the land wobbles like a spent ping pong ball between a Kansas Hindenburg and a character assassin. The inner situation is more tragic and austere. What is actually involved, in the tender trap about a "new" Nixon, is an attempt to debase the moral currency. This attempt is unconscionable, but that does not make it less important to fight off.

Despite their stylistic differences, Mr. Eisenhower and Mr. Nixon—as holders of public office—have one thing in common. Their authenticity is derivative. It comes at second hand from their roles as ball-carriers for business, and not at first hand from deep inner feelings about representative government. To neither of them is the Presidency an awesome responsibility, held in trust for others. To both it is a mere adjunct—a showy adjunct, but an adjunct nevertheless—to personal life.

In a recent interview, Mr. Richard Maney, dean of theatrical press agents, said that humor today is considered subversive and that no American newspaper would now print Will Rogers. A check on the newspapers of the 1920's bears out the resounding accuracy of Mr. Maney's statement. Will Rogers was acerb and percipient—and popular—to a degree that we have forgotten. He would certainly have noticed that Mr. Nixon, in his "mature" incarnation cares more for rectitude and good government than anybody since Juan Peron.

Similarly, a writer like Mark Twain would have had a puncturing thing or two to say about the statement—now on everybody's lips—that Mr. Nixon has done a great deal for race relations. Actually it is the other way around. Race relations has done a great deal for Mr. Nixon. Race relations, which struggled along without Mr. Nixon in its pioneering days, has ended up in a blaze of glory. It has made even the Vice President unequal.

The mention of the great American humorists suggests that against the ready-mix virtue of the "new" Nixon, we do have weapons. Confronted with a potential President of such a stripe, we can lock up the spoons and the Constitution and treat morality with enough high seriousness to get the humorists out of hock and fetch the writers of comedy back from exile.

## Candidate 60'—Richard Nixon

Davis B. Young



Richard M. Nixon

Richard M. Nixon will be the nominee of the Republican Party for President in 1960. Of this we can be sure. We may also be certain Richard M. Nixon is definitely the front runner to win, that any Democratic opponent, even Senator Personality from Massachusetts, will face big odds when he tangles with the Vice President for the nation's top post.

Eric Sevareid's book—Candidates 1960—and Jonathan Yardley's recent series shed some light on what type of man Nixon will be should he succeed to the White House. Nixon is now 46, married, and the father of two daughters. He is young, but not too young for the presidency. He is a graduate of Whittier College and the Duke University Law School. Nixon had an "exceptional" record in World War II, and went on to serve in the U. S. Congress from 1946-1950. In 1950, he was elected to the U. S. Senate in a memorable California battle against a female opponent—Helen Gahagan Douglas. His most notable Congressional achievement was his prosecution of Alger Hiss.

In 1952, the professional right wing guerrillas of the Grand Old Party tapped him as a running mate for Dwight D. Eisenhower, our contemporary father image. They were greatly impressed with his clean slate in Washington and consistent pursuit of Red activities in the government. Nixon's most noteworthy activities as Vice President have included his South American tour, his trip to the Soviet Union and the part he played in settling the recent Steel Strike. He has worked hard and exerted an influence never before shown by a Vice President. He has been a much stronger Vice President than Eisenhower has been President.

Yardley had this to say about the Vice President: "Nixon is described most accurately as a dogged, persistent politician who has a knack for being in the right place at the right time." This determination is going to be tough for the Democrats to overcome in the 1960 elections.

I would like to make clear the position of The Daily Tar Heel concerning the candidacy of Richard Nixon. We are opposed to his election as President. This paper will endorse any possible Democratic candidate from among the current five front runners in that party before it will support Nixon.

There are those of us who have seen enough of Nixon's campaign tactics and middle of the road policies so that we are unsure of where he stands. His smear campaigns when he ran for Congress and the Senate are not soon blotted from memory. It is true that Nixon has matured and grown in the Vice Presidency, but I refuse to believe he is ready to lead this nation.

## The Only Evil Not Discerned

Frank Crowther

Politicians, political observers, soothsayers, philosophers, tub-thumpers and what-have-you throughout history have been prone to consider their time "one of the most crucial in history, the veritable cross-roads of man's time on earth." Whether it be true or not, a question future historians will decide (if any are around), the modern world seems to be at yet another cross-road.

One single issue does not exemplify our situation. There are many: surging nationalism in the Middle East and Africa, European unity which now hinges on Charles de Gaulle, the total defense of the Western world, over-population, the threat of atomic destruction, and so forth. We Americans, however, are rounding the corner to a very particular, and peculiar, issue—the election of a new president nine months hence. This election, in and of itself, may decide the course of the 1960's, and the course of these ten years, no matter how sliced or who slices them, will portend, possibly, one of three things: a recapitulation and, hopefully, a modern Reformation; a dolefully disguised continuation of the status quo, the essence of which will exude "peace and prosperity" or some other palaver; or a strangely subverting strain of "conservative conservatism" which will decompose and disintegrate of its own putrefaction. If you disagree, I say, "Fine. At least you stirred yourself out of your vegetation to sound a note of dissonance." Many of us don't, won't and, as the current saying goes, couldn't care less. Thus modern America: fat and sassy.

But there are many of us, as well, who hope that we see underneath that negligent, unconcerned attitude a vibrating leitmotif, a theme associated with those people who have not completely resigned from the human race.

Very simply, it has what should be obvious implication. This man covets the White House and, many believe, would and will do anything to achieve the goal. And I am among those who do not trust this man, for reasons evident on this page and a definitive list of others. I stand only don't trust him. I fear him and what he stands for—the most devious form of opportunism. And I shudder when I read, as I did last week in a front page story, of a man who plans to support Nixon because he is an opportunist.

Sit in darkness if you will. Let this man and his machine swallow you up, and perish under his slothful, hypnotic pharisaism. Before you cast the die, however, listen for a moment to Milton's solemn words:

"For neither man nor angel can discern Hypocrisy, the only evil that walks Invisible, except to God alone."



POGO

BY KELLY