

'Closer to the truth than ever before'

Frost penetrates Nixon's stonewall

by Greg Porter

More than one-fifth of the entire nation is watching as Richard Nixon restates his contention that he knew nothing of the Watergate cover-up until March 21. David Frost waits just long enough for Nixon to finish this expected response. Then he plays his high card.

Looking down at his clipboard, Frost asks the question he has been waiting to ask: *If you didn't know until March 21, he says, then why did you tell Charles Colson on Jan. 20, "We're just going to have to leave this where it is, with the Cubans"? And why did you tell him, "At times I just stone wall it" on Watergate?*

Nixon replies a bit slowly, defending himself on the basis of motive and not action. Seconds later, Frost pounces again.

He quotes from another Colson tape, dated Feb. 13 and 14. *"The cover-up is the main ingredient," Nixon says on the tape. "... That's where we gotta cut our losses. My losses are to be cut. The president's losses got to be cut on the cover-up deal."*

Frost delves further into the tape. The forlorn Nixon interrupts, *"It hasn't been published yet, you say?"*

"No."
"Oh, I just wondered if we'd seen it."

Richard Nixon did not watch the telecast of the Nixon-Frost Watergate interview, but 50 million other Americans did. In Chapel Hill, one of those fifty million, James Reston, Jr., watched with a unique interest. The University of North Carolina creative-writing instructor, who had witnessed the original taping, watched again as Frost delivered in his own style the questions Reston had researched and prepared.

It was Reston who found the Colson tapes and provided Frost with the trump card he played so deftly, just as it was Reston who provided a lot of "slogging, yeoman work with the trial transcripts," 47 volumes of them, from June through December of last year. And it was Reston who was there in Monarch Bay, Calif. to brief Frost on Watergate up until the last moment when he walked on the set for the taping.

James Reston, Jr., a UNC graduate and a New York native, has written several books, including *Perfectly Clear: From Whittier to Watergate*, which he co-authored with Frank Mankiewicz. When David Frost went looking for a researcher, he settled upon James Reston because of that collaboration. Reston had the time and the ready knowledge



DADDY BROKE MR. NIXON!

to prepare Frost for the Watergate showdown. So Frost set Reston up in a Washington apartment which served as a headquarters for Frost's staff as well as a summer home for Reston and paid him a "handsome sum" to begin a methodical search for information to refute Richard Nixon's public denials of participation in the Watergate cover-up.

Although Frost went "absolutely first class," the job was painstaking, and if not for a couple of good breaks, it might have been fruitless. Reston said that a simple clerical error along with Charles Colson's inadvertent aid enabled him to dig up the Nixon tapes that finally "broke" Nixon and drove him "closer to the truth than ever before."

According to Reston, the Colson tapes which Frost

unveiled for the first time were accidentally included with evidence Special Prosecutor Leon Jaworski introduced against several Nixon aides in 1974. Because the tapes were not introduced officially, there was no public record of their existence and they lay unnoticed until Reston, who was systematically pulling all Colson tapes, came upon them.

"I had always thought Colson was important," Reston said. "He was the hatchet man, Nixon talked to him with his hair down. They talked dirty politics together."

Colson unknowingly aided Reston in his search for evidence when he gave the journalist "sanitized" transcripts of all Nixon-Colson conversations. "I about fell out of my chair," when Colson first agreed to give me the transcripts, Reston said. But then he found the transcripts were doctored to exclude any incriminating information. "What they did have were the dates of the conversations, so I knew what I was looking for at that point."

The Colson tapes "completely undermined the point that Nixon had only heard about the cover-up March 21," Reston said. "The new material undermined his public position and the whole structure started to crumble." It was Frost's quotes from the Colson tapes that first shook Nixon, Reston said, and made it possible for Frost to "extract an apology" from the former president.

"When that card was played, he was very visibly surprised. In the dynamics of the interview, that was extremely important because from there on he didn't know what we had and what we didn't. The strategy was to break him out of his patterned answers with new material."

After the trump card was played, Reston said, Frost could bluff Nixon "closer to the truth than ever before."

While Reston termed Nixon a "superb, very, very formidable" adversary "who knows how to use the medium well," he said Frost's performance was "epic-like in the Watergate interrogation." Despite detractors who say Frost is more showman than interviewer, Reston said Frost was a more guileful interviewer than any journalist he knew.

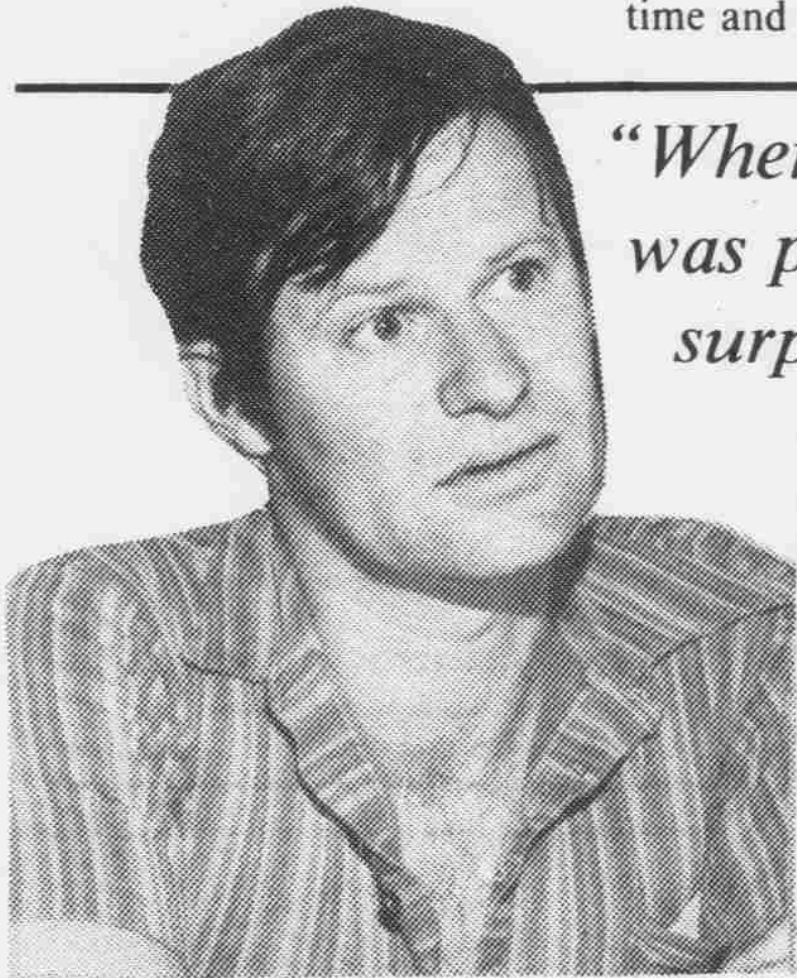
"I doubt seriously that any of his counterparts on the American scene from Cronkite to Mike Wallace would have approached it in nearly the same fashion. We talked as much about strategy as substance."

Reston said Frost's "absolutely devastating stance of interrogation, his hostile, adverse inferences" were necessary to break through the stone wall Nixon hid behind for so long. Frost's method, he said, was "really what happens in a courtroom. The prosecution assumes guilt and puts the assumption of guilt into the questions themselves."

Frost's knowledge of the

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No doldrums in the Southern Part of Heaven

By NANCY HARTIS
Staff Writer

There's more than one reason for UNC to be known as the Southern Part of Heaven, especially in the summer. It may come as a pleasant surprise to newly arrived students that Carolina offers a kaleidoscopic array of non-academic activity.

Simply put, there's just no excuse for anyone to be bored at Carolina, even in the doldrums of a hot summer afternoon.

Take sports, for instance. No matter what the game, whether it's golf, tennis, baseball or just throwing a frisbee, chances are there will be one or more Tar Heels sharing in the fun.

This love of athletics shows in the variety and quality of athletic facilities available here. For example, this summer Woollen Gymnasium will provide both outdoor and indoor swimming, handball, racquetball and squash courts, a fully equipped exercise room, volleyball, badminton and (naturally) basketball facilities to all students and faculty

members. For joggers, Fetzer Field, located behind the gym, contains a one-quarter-mile track. Intramural Sports Director Ben McGuire says Woollen Gym provides all equipment and uniforms and that "all a student needs is his tennis shoes and an I.D. card." Non-registered students can enjoy Woollen's facilities by purchasing a privilege card from the intramural office.

If organized team sports are desired, a student join any nine intramural teams by signing up at the gym.

For golfers, there's the University-owned Finley Golf Course, located on Finley Golf Course Road, just off Highway 54. For a \$2.50 fee on weekdays and \$3.50 on weekends, any student can play the 18-hole course. Golf carts and clubs can be rented there for a fee.

Of course, not all Tar Heels are jocks. There is a large faction of students who'd rather spend a sweltering afternoon lazing in the sun, with perhaps a can or two of suds. If that's more appealing to some, then there are a number of cool, shady parks just waiting for the sun-worshippers and picnickers. Among these there's Umstead Park (but beware

of being run down by the kiddies who love the swings and slides there), University Lake, the Arboretum and Little Forest Theatre, both of which are located on campus and are famously romantic.

For those who don't mind traveling a little, there's Duke Forest and Duke Gardens, both in Durham. Glen Lennox Pond, located off the Highway 54 Bypass, offers the added attraction of water and a duck population that craves breadcrumbs.

Alas, the most carefully laid plans for outdoor fun are foiled at times when those summer rains fall. But maybe rainy afternoons are a good time to check out the Carolina Union, with its music programs, bowling and billiards, or photo lab. Bridge and chess clubs operate here too, and any student is able to join. There's a color T.V. in the basement, along with vending machines. For detailed information and schedules, call the Information Desk.

Rainy days could also be a good time to visit the Ackland Art Museum, which is now featuring its 41st Annual Student Art Exhibit, or the Morehead Planetarium, where, it's been said, the astronauts go for space training.