

Frank Gannon

## THE GOOD DOG RICHARD AFFAIR

Shocking insights into Richard Nixon from the late Fawn Brodie.

What wouldn't you give to have been on Air Force One on that runway in Cairo when they closed the door, revved up the engines, and people suddenly noticed that Richard Nixon wasn't on board? Can't you just see it, as the seat belts were fastened and the tray tables locked securely in their upright positions and it sunk in that *he* was somewhere out there on his own doing God knows what.

Few people in our history have excited quite the same range of emotions as Richard Nixon. Nearing his seventieth birthday, and after six years of relative seclusion since he resigned the presidency, Nixon is still totem for some and taboo for others—still the man some love, the man some hate, and the man some love to hate. Why is this? Why should Nixon excite such extreme emotions? It would take many books—and Fawn Brodie's posthumously published *Richard Nixon: The Shaping of His Character*\* isn't one of them—to begin to answer that question.

One might begin by saying that Nixon has combined success with survivability while exhibiting apparent disregard for the approval—and even for the opinion—of the political and media establishment. From Jerry Voorhis to Archibald Cox, the list of those against whom Nixon has been pitted reads like the liberal pantheon of the last four decades. There is something almost superhuman about an individual who for thirty years could seek and survive such encounters. Indeed, at one point in Mrs. Brodie's book she questions whether his career wasn't assisted by "demonic forces."

As a Book of the Month Club selection, Mrs. Brodie's work deserves serious attention more for what it will become than for what it is. What it is is a very bad book,

\*Norton, \$18.95.

Frank Gannon is Vice President for Publishing and Communications for the Richard A. Viguerie Company. He is former special assistant to President Nixon and was chief editorial assistant on the Nixon memoirs.

and had it been written by anyone else it would have sunk quietly into the fever swamps of the by now extensive eccentric Nixonphobic literature. But because of Mrs. Brodie's reputation as a best-selling biographer, and because her book purports to be so thoroughly researched and so full of undeniably memorable stories and details, it is bound to become a source for subsequent studies of Nixon.

Unfortunately, this is deadly serious stuff. This is Richard Nixon squirming spread-eagled on the merciless couch of psychobiography, written in a breathless, gossipy Hollywood style. You may laugh, you may cry, but you'll never forget the story they said couldn't be told: Nixon's mother, the castrating saint; Nixon's father, the randy satyr who makes W.O. Gant look like Captain Kangaroo; Nixon's hatred of his dead brothers and guilt over profiting from their deaths; Nixon discovering that the reward for lying to everyone about everything is constantly higher political office; Nixon's bloodless, loveless marriage; Nixon's furtive attempts to cure his emotional wretchedness through psychotherapy; Nixon's increasing physical attraction to the swarthy Cuban,



Bebe Rebozo; and finally Nixon triumphant: President of the United States, cut off by Pat, sustained by Bebe, overcoming all restraints of fratricidal guilt and glorying in the death he can rain on North Vietnam without anyone holding him personally responsible.

To advance her theories, Mrs. Brodie relies on the accumulative impact of scores of stories, anecdotes, and quoted sources. She skillfully paces her material and seeds her ground to condition the reader to accept her psychobiographical points. Her whole portrait of Nixon depends on being the sum of its parts, which is why the accuracy of each part is so important.

Richard Nixon is no stranger to psychobiography. He has been clinically diagnosed by scores of writers who have never met him. Bruce Mazlish (*In Search of Nixon*) wrote about what he saw as Nixon's self-absorption, capacity for denial, and excessive fear of being unloved. James David Barber (*The Presidential Character*) slotted Nixon as an "active-negative" type with the accompanying character traits of deviousness, secretiveness, and the tendency to fly off the handle in the face of overwhelming odds. Dr. Eli Chesen (*President Nixon's Psychiatric Profile: A Psychodynamic-Genetic Interpretation*) concluded that Nixon was a compulsive obsessive. Lloyd Etheredge ("Hard-ball Politics: A Model") described Nixon as suffering from a narcissistic personality disorder. And Dr. David Abrahamsen, in *Nixon vs. Nixon: An Emotional Tragedy*, found that the former president was a psychopathic personality, orally and anally fixated, and suffering from a severe character disorder.

There is no question that the circumstances of an individual's childhood, family, and upbringing, can and do play vital parts in adult outlook and behavior. One purpose of biography is to show how men and women develop personality and character from the raw materials of their early lives. But psychobiography takes this simple tool and beats its subjects to death

with it. It is ludicrous to contend that something you did at age 5 will inexorably surface again at age 45. In the case of Mrs. Brodie's Nixon, she uses her research to build a straw man and then sets her Freudian dogs on him. Take, for example, her treatment of one of the staple biographical elements of Nixon's early life: the story of the prominent townswoman caught shoplifting in the Nixon market.

When the woman's crime was discovered, a family conference was held to decide what to do. Young Richard argued against subjecting her to the public humiliation of arrest. When Hannah Nixon confronted her indirectly, the mortified klepto offered to pay back everything she owed month by month so that the secret could be kept from her husband. Most biographers are content to accept this story as indicating Nixon's early maturity and compassion.

But Mrs. Brodie writes that "Pre-occupation with shoplifting stayed with Nixon, and it infected an astonishing number of his jokes as President." As evidence she quotes speeches where Nixon told one group at a White House reception that they could have a cup of coffee but couldn't take anything else as a memento of their visit, and another group that they could take anything that wasn't nailed down as a souvenir. Just a few paragraphs later, these lame pleasantries have become "Nixon's preoccupation with thievery," and Mrs. Brodie suggests that

all through these adolescent years he never resolved the problem of what was really his in the store. . . . In any case, when Nixon finally became president, he found it impossible to distinguish between what was "mine and thine" in the presidential store. His problem with entitlement—"My father owns it, therefore I am entitled to it," translated into "I have been elected president, therefore I am entitled to it"—had never properly been resolved when he was very young.

For me, the paradigm of psychobiography's validity is the treatment of the famous "Good Dog Richard" letter which Nixon wrote on November 23, 1923, when he was almost eleven years old. It is worth reprinting in full:

My Dear Master:

The two boys that you left with me are very bad to me. Their dog, Jim, is very old and he will never talk or play with me.

One Saturday the boys went hunting. Jim and myself went with him. While going through the woods one of the boys tripped and fell on me. I lost my temper and bit him. He kicked me in the side and we started on. While we were walking I saw a black round thing in a tree. I hit it

with my paw. A swarm of black thing came out of it. I felt pain all over. I started to run and as both my eyes were swelled shut I fell into a pond. When I got home I was very sore. I wish you would come home right now.

Your good dog  
RICHARD

Professor Barber suggests this letter was written "at a time when his mother was away with Harold"—al-

though a simple command of the chronology indicates that his brother Harold's illness did not appear until years later. He continues:

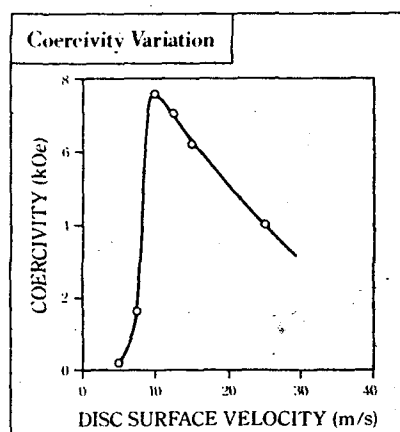
The fantasy is full of symbols. Are the boys his brothers, kicking and hurting him? Is the old and neglectful dog Jim his father, who fails to protect him? . . . And what should be made of the "black round thing" which, when touched, releases dreadful stingers?

Dr. Abrahamsen exhibits no such hesitancy about interpreting these symbols. He states that the letter is highly revealing from a psychoanalytic point of view, because biting

is one of the most primitive responses we have. It is an animal reaction and belongs to the earliest stages of human development. . . . That Richard wrote that he bit one of the boys at an age when a child would normally have passed through this

## The Critical Interval

*There has long been a need in the industrial world for low-cost, high-performance permanent magnets. Recent discoveries at the General Motors Research Laboratories show promise of meeting this challenge by the application of new preparation techniques to new materials.*



Coercivity of  $\text{Pr}_{0.4}\text{Fe}_{0.6}$  plotted as a function of disc surface velocity.  
Color-enhanced transmission electron micrograph of melt-spun  $\text{Nd}_{0.4}\text{Fe}_{0.6}$  having 7.5 kOe coercivity.

TWO properties characterize desirable permanent magnets: large coercivity (magnetic hardness or resistance to demagnetization) and high remanence (magnetic strength). Higher-performance magnets are required to reduce further the size and weight of a wide variety of electrical devices, including d.c. motors. Such magnets are available, but the cost of the materials necessary to produce them severely limits their use. The research challenge is to select, synthesize, and magnetically harden economically attractive materials of comparable quality.

Prominent among alterna-

tive materials candidates are alloys composed of iron and the abundant light rare earths (lanthanum, cerium, praseodymium, neodymium). Investigations conducted by Drs. John Croat and Jan Herbst at the General Motors Research Laboratories have led to the discovery of a method for magnetically hardening these alloys. By means of a rapid-quench technique, the researchers have achieved coercivities in Pr-Fe and Nd-Fe that are the largest ever reported for any rare earth-iron material.

Drs. Croat and Herbst selected praseodymium-iron and neodymium-iron based upon fundamental considerations which indicate that these alloys would exhibit properties conducive to permanent magnet development. These properties include ferromagnetic alignment of the rare earth and iron magnetic moments, which would foster high remanence, and significant magnetic anisotropy, a crucial prerequisite for large coercivity.

That these materials do not form suitable crystalline compounds, an essential requirement for magnetic hardening by traditional methods, presents a major obstacle. Drs. Croat and Herbst hypothesized that a metastable phase having the necessary properties could be formed by cooling a molten alloy at a sufficiently



stage long before, reinforces our impression that the oral hostile aggression Richard harbored as an infant had been prolonged beyond the norm and had become fixated. The degree to which he regressed into a fantasy is abnormal. We can surmise therefore that the details were not incidental: they reflect an instinctive response which stayed with him long after he had learned that biting was not socially acceptable. Expressions of this kind of response appear in his adult behavior. In his political life, Nixon

was often vindictive and revengeful. He was sarcastic, cutting, and caustic.

Mrs. Brodie, in turn, speculates that this plaintive letter was written to Hannah Nixon during one of the times when she supposedly returned to her family's home in order to escape the drudgery of life with her husband and sons. She states that "If nothing else, the letter demonstrates how early he had

begun to exaggerate the wrongs inflicted on him by others—a compulsion that affected his whole life."

The actual facts surrounding the "Good Dog Richard" letter, however, are amusingly straightforward. Hannah Nixon kept two early examples of her second son's precocious writing ability. One was a letter, dated January 24, 1924, requesting a job as a delivery boy with the *Los*

*Angeles Times*. The other was the "Good Dog" letter—a grade school composition exercise in which the students were told to pretend they were dogs whose masters were away from home, and to write him asking him to come back.

In putting her own particular spin on Nixon's psychobiography, Mrs. Brodie sees it as containing five elements: a history of lying from his earliest youth; the impact of death in advancing his career; a perverse delight in giving and taking physical and mental punishment; a failure to love; and the dark guilt of fratricide. Two examples will serve to illustrate her approach.

To begin with, Mrs. Brodie claims that Richard Nixon grew up in an atmosphere in which his father punished him physically and his mother punished him both mentally and emotionally. The resulting youngster adapted but was forever warped—cursed to a cold, secret, calculating adult life of taking punishment while awaiting the chance to give it back. "That Nixon was ambivalent about the punishment he received as a child is suggested by a comment he once made to Stewart Alsop. Discussing motivation in politics, he said, 'It's always good to have the whip on your back.'"

If this seems indirect, Mrs. Brodie has harder evidence. She points out that in the "Good Dog Richard" letter, Nixon complains about being kicked; in Peru in 1958 when Nixon was spat upon by a hostile demonstrator, he kicked him in the shin; after the 1962 gubernatorial defeat in California, he told reporters, "You won't have Nixon to kick around anymore"; in preparation for his 1969 inaugural address Nixon read TR's, Wilson's, FDR's, and JFK's inaugurals and told his speechwriter that the theme of each "was to kick hell out of someone else and tell the American people they're great"; Nixon asked John Dean, "Have you kicked a few butts around?"; and of his opponents in 1972 he said, "They got the hell kicked out of them in the election."

Bringing this significant litany together for the first time, Mrs. Brodie then raises the obvious question:

Did Frank Nixon kick his sons? The theme of kicking and of being kicked, appears early in Nixon's life, and surfaces repeatedly. . . . Whether Frank Nixon kicked his son or not is not as certain as that Nixon felt himself to be kicked around by his father. That the idea of kicking came easily to Frank Nixon his son made clear in *Six Crises*. After listening to his "Checkers" speech,

rapid rate. They tested this idea by means of the melt-spinning technique, in which a molten alloy is directed onto a cold, rotating disc. The cooling rate, which can be varied by changing the surface velocity of the disc, can easily approach 100,000°C per second. The alloy emerges in the form of a ribbon.

THE researchers found that variations of the cooling rate can dramatically affect the magnetic properties of the solidified alloys. In particular, appreciable coercivity is achieved within a narrow interval of quench rate.

Equally remarkable, synthesis and magnetic hardening, two steps in conventional processing, can be achieved simultaneously.

"X-ray analysis and electron microscopy of the high coercivity alloys reveal an unexpected mixed microstructure," states Dr. Croat. "We observe elongated amorphous regions interspersed with a crystalline rare earth-iron compound."

Understanding the relationship between the coercivity and the microstructure is essential. The two scientists are now studying the extent to which the coercivity is controlled by the shape and composition of the amorphous and crystalline structures.

"The development of significant coercivity is an important

and encouraging step," says Dr. Herbst, "but practical application of these materials requires improvement of the remanence. Greater knowledge of the physics governing both properties is the key to meeting the commercial need for permanent magnets."

## THE MEN BEHIND THE WORK

Drs. Croat and Herbst are Staff Research Scientists in the Physics Department at the General Motors Research Laboratories.

Dr. Croat (right) received his Ph.D. in metallurgy from Iowa State University. His research interests include the magnetic, magneto-elastic and catalytic properties of pure rare earth metals and their alloys and compounds.

Dr. Herbst (left) received his Ph.D. in physics from Cornell University. In addition to the magnetism of rare earth materials, his research interests include the theory of photo-emission and the physics of fluctuating valence compounds.

Dr. Croat joined General Motors in 1972; Dr. Herbst, in 1977.



# General Motors

The future of transportation is here



Nixon wrote that Frank Nixon had observed, "It looks to me as if the Democrats have given themselves a good kick in the seat of the pants . . ."

The thread of fratricide, as unraveled by Mrs. Brodie, is an even more fascinating example of her method. And unlike some of Nixon's other hangups, this one is his very own:

But blame for the more sinister theme of fratricide, running like a lethal shadow through Nixon's life, should not rest with his parents. It was a development unique to him, which even now leaves me baffled and anguished. It surfaces too often to be accidental. Others have felt it. Theodore White, friendly to Nixon in 1972, castigated the liberal press for treating Nixon "as if the brand of Cain were on him."

Here, as Mrs. Brodie marches her evidence into serried ranks, the deadly pattern emerges. Nixon, she charges, profited from the deaths of his brothers Arthur and Harold both emotionally (advancing him in the affections of his parents) and financially (there would now be more money to spend on him and his education). Then, Nixon's maiden speech in Congress was "to encourage the destruction" of the Communist Eisler brothers. His "second act" in Congress (never mind Mrs. Brodie's chronology here, she's on a roll) was to attack Alger Hiss "and also Hiss's brother Donald, who bore the name of Nixon's own brother." Nixon, she says, started and encouraged the CIA movement to destroy Fidel Castro and his brother Raul as well. Then there were the assassinations of John and Robert Kennedy and Edward Kennedy's removal from the 1972 political scene by the events at Chappaquiddick. For good measure Mrs. Brodie throws in Martin Luther

King, Jr., George Wallace, the Diem brothers, and the suicides of two of Nixon's early biographers which, she says, "must be added to the list of untimely deaths that touched Nixon's life."

Having thus proved beyond any shadow of doubt that the deaths of brothers, including his own, had played a pivotal role in his life and in his career, Mrs. Brodie admits, "What one does not know is whether or not Nixon suffered from an anxiety that the fate helping him was demonic and not divine." Fortunately, within just a few pages, she is able to answer even this tough question. Writing about the Christmas bombing of North Vietnam in 1972, she states: "Again, death was his ally, this time still more massive killing and mutilation. That he had come to delight in the slaughter and had no quarrel with God concerning it was clear enough . . ."

As Mrs. Brodie describes her research for this book, it sounds impressive. She lists the 150 individuals she interviewed; her bibliography fills six pages of miniscule type; her footnotes require 35 pages of closely printed double columns. But closer examination reveals that she has merely taken a long walk on the wilder side of the anti-Nixon literature. Time and again, her most telling points turn out to come from the same few books that are either overtly unfriendly (e.g., William Costello's seminal *The Facts About Nixon*) or marginally eccentric (e.g., Traphes Bryant's *Dog Days at the White House*; Bryant was keeper of the Executive Mansion's kennels and Mrs. Brodie quotes his professional judgment that Mrs. Nixon hugged the Irish Setter King Timahoe because she was starved for affection from her husband).

As for her use of new and otherwise uncorroborated materials about so chronicled and controversial a figure, only a naive or disingenuous historian could accept them so uncritically. From considerable exposure to the extant Nixonalia, I can assert that any new Nixon story must be subjected to the most rigorous scrutiny, particularly anything post-Watergate. Having read extensively in both pre- and post-Watergate oral history materials, I have observed that those who before Watergate remembered personally seeing Nixon walking on water afterwards had vivid and total recall of the times they saw him pulling the wings off flies. (In fact, it was decided that oral history material was so unreliable

that, unless it could be independently corroborated, it would not be used in the Nixon memoirs.)

Mrs. Brodie seems not quite so discriminating, and some of the most important new stories in her book do not stand up to factual scrutiny. The story of Vita Remley, for example, is a dramatic addition to the Nixon canon, providing in microcosm the petty vindictiveness, pent-up rage, and violent emotional instability Mrs. Brodie sees in her subject.

The story is as follows: Vita Remley worked in the Los Angeles County Assessor's office. She was active in Democratic politics, and had been involved in the Nixon-Voorhis campaign in 1946. In 1952 she received a request for a veteran's property exemption from a Richard and Pat Nixon. At that time a married veteran owning less than \$10,000 worth of property could qualify for a \$50 reduction in his California taxes. Since Mrs. Remley knew from the papers that Nixon had just purchased a large new home in Washington, she knew he didn't qualify and therefore rejected his application. Drew Pearson somehow "indirectly" learned of this incident and ran it in his column.

Several weeks later, Nixon was giving a speech at the Long Beach Civic Auditorium and Mrs. Remley went to hear him. Mrs. Brodie dramatically relates what happened next:

Arriving late, she listened from near the open door. As he emerged he recognized her. In a sudden fit of rage he walked over and slapped her. His friends, horrified, hustled him away in the dark. There were no cameras or newsmen to catch the happening, and Mrs. Remley, fearful of losing her job, told only a few friends.

Mrs. Brodie hustles on to other matters, but the reader might want to linger over some of the more palpable improbabilities of this story. First, it depends on the coincidental geography that places Mrs. Remley and Nixon "near the open door" as he and his friends walk out. But the Long Beach Auditorium was a large public hall which held 2,000 people and had several entrances. Of course, it is possible that Nixon strode directly from the podium and through the crowd to where Mrs. Remley was standing. It's also possible that when he reached her he wasn't engulfed by the usual entourage of hosts, aides, supporters, and reporters which one would expect to surround the Vice President of the United States at a major appearance in his home state.

So there they are: face to face. Nixon instantly recognizes Mrs. Remley from the newspaper photos several weeks back and pastes her in

the jaw. No one who saw it happen, and not one of the friends to whom the unaccountably frightened Mrs. Remley confided (after all, the damage had already been done by Pearson's column and the other publicity surrounding the exemption request), ever breaks his silence. Fortunately, Mrs. Remley felt safe enough 28 years later to give this episode to history by relating it to Mrs. Brodie. As the sole footnote for this remarkable story attests: "Vita Remley to FB, May 19, 1980."

It's a pity Mrs. Brodie didn't bother to complete the Vita Remley story. For one thing, the Remley refusal of Nixon's niggardly and patently unqualified request for a veteran's exemption was printed in Pearson's national column five days before the 1952 presidential election. Mrs. Brodie mentions neither this, nor the fact that three weeks after the election Pearson printed a retraction: The Richard and Pat Nixon who had filed the request just happened to have the same names as the vice president and his wife.

Apart from being uncritical of her sources, Mrs. Brodie is sometimes just wrong about them. She quotes "Kandy Stroud, on Pat Nixon's staff" as saying, "She gave so much and got so little of what was really meaningful to a woman. . . . Sometimes he was so brutally indifferent I wept for her." Coming from a member of Mrs. Nixon's staff this is powerful stuff. The problem here is that Kandy Stroud was the White House correspondent for *Women's Wear Daily*.

Trying to establish the point of Nixon's indifference to his wife, Mrs. Brodie cites the president's Daily Diary:

an astonishing record that chronicled what he did every moment of his life save for his trips to the bathroom. . . . At San Clemente, on July 6, 1972, for example, this president who had written with such emotion on the right to privacy seems not to have minded someone noting in a file that from 2:50 P.M. to 2:51 P.M. he spoke to his wife, that at 4:48 P.M. he met her at the pool area, that at 5:02 P.M. he returned to the compound residence. "Through the days and nights of his life," Jimmy Breslin noted, "his diaries showed he spent a half-hour, at the most up to an hour, a day with his wife."

If Mrs. Brodie had mastered her sources she would have known that the Daily Diary was a relatively selective document compiled by White House secretaries, telephone operators, and Secret Service agents. That it was called a "diary" undoubtedly leads to some confusion—not least because Nixon himself did keep

## NOVELS

by J. Inchardi

\$11 each

Lines On The Death  
Of A Fisherman

Three Jews In A Tub

Dreamship

Yurros

A Paper Toy

Intercourse

Jehovah Mafioso

Saturn Maru

Order by mail from

Sirius Books, P.O. Box 177  
Freeport, Maine 04032

a separate, tape-recorded personal diary (not to be confused with the White House tapes!) during the almost 19 months of his second term in office. The Daily Diary, however, was just a barebones outline of Nixon's schedule, phone calls, and whereabouts when he was anywhere outside the family quarters or residence area. Thus, the one minute conversation would have been a phone call logged by an operator. The fifteen minutes in the pool area would have been the daily afternoon swim the Nixons always took together in San Clemente. The pool was next to the residence, and the "return" there meant that the Nixons were now in their house for the evening and therefore off the logs.

In Mrs. Brodie's discussion of the 18½-minute gap, she states as absolute fact that

Eighteen and one half minutes of a crucial tape he destroyed totally. Prosecutor Leon Jaworski was certain of this, but Nixon, in his memoirs, continued to deny it, and said that the erasing might have been done accidentally by his lawyer. Fred Buzhardt by now was dead and unable to defend himself.

In fact, Fred Buzhardt died of a heart attack on December 16, 1978, eight months after the Nixon book was published. Besides, Mrs. Brodie makes it sound as if Nixon blamed Buzhardt for the erasure, but here is what Nixon actually wrote in his memoirs:

Haig told me that Garment and Buzhardt were completely panicked by the discovery of the 18½-minute gap. They suspected everyone, including Rose, Steve Bull, and me. Suspicion had now invaded the White House. I even wondered if Buzhardt himself could have accidentally erased the portion beyond the five-minute gap Rose thought she might have caused.

There is not time nor space enough to list all the errors and evasions in Mrs. Brodie's book. For each period of Nixon's life she dredges up every old canard and retells it in its most damning form as if it were gospel truth. Thus her version of the debate over the PAC endorsement in the 1946 campaign has Nixon snookering poor "nonpunishing and caring" Jerry Voorhis by entrapping him in a classic ploy of guilt by association. In fact, one of the revelations of the Nixon memoirs was the discovery of a newspaper report that Voorhis had actually been interviewed for that specific purpose by the organization whose endorsement he claimed was unsought and came as a complete surprise to him. Although Mrs. Brodie quotes from the Nixon memoirs regarding this campaign, she

neglects to mention this new and devastatingly inconvenient fact.

Again, in the case of the 1952 Fund crisis, Mrs. Brodie states that Nixon lied in the Checkers speech when he said the Fund was not kept secret. But she does not explain how you keep secret a fund raised entirely from several thousand letters sent through the mails to past contributors.

Then, discussing the 1960 election, Mrs. Brodie asserts without proof that Nixon purposely arranged to go to Moscow in 1959 in order to bait Khrushchev and so demonstrate his ability to stand up to Communist leaders. And in a ridiculous version of the power relationships in the Eisenhower White House, she has Nixon virtually initiating and masterminding the plot to overthrow Castro

as a means to assure his own election as president, all this despite contemporary documentary evidence that Nixon was undecided about Castro's intentions.

Because Mrs. Brodie makes so much of the friendship between Nixon and Bebe Rebozo, her errors in

## In earlier epochs, a critic tormented only the writers...



*Of all the cants which are canted in this canting world—though the cant of hypocrites may be the worst—the cant of criticism is the most tormenting.*

Laurence Sterne

## In ours, he torments everybody.

Recently a middle-aged father published a book about his sordid adventures in massage parlors, wife-swapping communes and the worlds of easy sex and prostitution. The critics were grateful to Gay Talese. *Newsweek* said that "Talese's research has an awesome solidity about it." *Vogue* was proud of "... Gay's triumph over the puritanical strictures of Ocean City, strictures that so inhibited him that he didn't even masturbate until his second year in college." And the *Chicago Tribune*—a newspaper respectable primarily in its own eyes—turned its enthusiasm into promotion by running excerpts of *Thy Neighbor's Wife* for Chicagoland families to read.

The state of literary criticism today strongly confirms Laurence Sterne's warning: the cant of criticism is the most tormenting. To make things worse, the modern media have transformed the critic into a midwife of mass consciousness. Regardless of what we wish to know or ignore, we live with cultural events and their consequences—as interpreted by the modern critic. Sadly, what passes for "cultural criticism" in *Time*, *Esquire*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Ladies Home Journal*, et al., amounts to an elitist, moral shoddiness.

### The Critical Difference

In *Chronicles of Culture*, we feel there is a need for a counterpoise to those

who judge cultural offerings without giving any thought to the impact of messages which are liberated from all codes of moral and intellectual responsibility. We firmly believe that culture, books, movies, behavioral trends—their meaning and success—deeply affect man's preferences and, consequently, his sense of moral and social order. We are not timid when we confront the liberal cultural cant. *The National Review* remarked that we, "Go for the jugular. ... *Chronicles* reports on the reporters, and reviews the reviewers. Its verdicts have not been kind."

### The Critical Response

In every issue, we challenge the dominant cultural establishment on what it preaches about culture, politics and social matters. Malcolm Muggeridge observed that "... in *Chronicles of Culture* the Consensus assumptions—that the *New York Times* is a great newspaper, that the South Africans are uniquely the villains of our time, that President Reagan is an idiot, that all good men and true build their hopes on disarmament talks with Mr. Brezhnev, etc. etc. etc.—are blissfully absent." Tom Wolfe said about our work, "It has been a pleasure to watch Leopold Tyrmand and the *Chronicles of Culture* confront—à la Orwell—the smelly little orthodoxies of our time." And from

the *London Times*, "... it is a relief to receive an American publication which puts forward another view. ... [*Chronicles*] displays a pleasantly open and ironic position. ... Who, among the liberal monopoly of power in this sphere, will reply to Tyrmand?"

If you care about *la différence*, send for your subscription today.



MAIL TO:  
**Chronicles  
Culture**

934 N. Main St.  
Rockford, IL 61103

- ☐ Check for \$6.00 enclosed (six bimonthly issues).  
☐ Bill me.

NAME (Please print)

ADDRESS

CITY

STATE

ZIP

AS1



this regard are particularly noteworthy. For example, she writes that "Rebozo accompanied Nixon to the hospital when he had viral pneumonia in July 1973; a press photograph shows him saying to White House physician Dr. Tkach, 'Take good care of him.'" Given the relationship Mrs. Brodie implies existed between the two men, the tenderness conveyed here would

seem to support her intimation. The footnote cites a page in *The Breaking of a President*, a rather bizarre compilation of Watergate material by Marvin Miller, a California Nixonphobe, published in 1975. The page does indeed show a photograph of Rebozo and Dr. Tkach, but the quotation "Take good care of him" is the caption Mr. Miller wrote for the photo in his book.

Mrs. Brodie introduces Rebozo as "a handsome, unmarried Florida native of Cuban descent who had a reputation for discretion," and notes that "Rebozo had been a beautiful youth, called 'the best looking boy' in his high school yearbook." She writes, without citation, that "one woman in the White House said he had 'the most beautiful eyes in Washington.'" And she cites no less

an authority than Dan Rather as saying that Rebozo was "one of the most sensual men he had ever seen."

In order to explain away the fact that Rebozo was widely known as a man-about-town and was frequently seen in the company of attractive women, she turns to "the sensitive Jules Witcover," who saw this socializing "as a facade, and thought of Rebozo as being 'like Nixon, a loner and introvert.'" Finally, Mrs. Brodie produces Bob Greene of *Newsday* who said, "My own particular thought was that he was one of those guys who has an extremely low sex drive. He had a tendency to keep the company of whisky-drinking, fishing, rather masculine-type men, with the exception of Nixon."

Tying things together, Mrs. Brodie writes that after the resignation, "Rebozo's role in the complexities of the Nixon marriage for the first time became a matter of public comment." She observes that "Much about this friendship remains obscure but in one respect it was like a good marriage . . ." And she adds that "Nixon seems to have been willing to risk the kind of gossip that frequently accompanies close friendship with a perennial bachelor, this despite his known public aversion to homosexuals . . ." (Mrs. Brodie has already discussed Rebozo's marriage and remarriage, but that apparently doesn't affect perennial bachelorhood in her reckoning.) Lest any stone of innuendo be left unturned, Mrs. Brodie informs us that Rebozo stayed aloof from the so-called Palace Guard "led by Haldeman and Ehrlichman, who cracked the whip for the clean-cut handsome young staffers . . ."

It sure seems as if Mrs. Brodie is trying to tell us something here. Fortunately, her innate delicacy prevents her from coming right out with it, so it is up to the reader to fill in the blanks.

Mrs. Brodie is equally insinuating and misleading in her treatment of the relationship between Nixon and Dr. Arnold Hutschnecker. Dr. Hutschnecker was a Park Avenue internist who wrote a book called *The Will to Live*, which enjoyed considerable success in the early 1950s. It was of the self-help genre: Work-related stress was the cause of many psychosomatic ailments, and if people would tap into the vital life forces within them they would be happier and healthier.

Nixon was given a copy of the book by California Senator Sheridan Downey, the Democratic incumbent who endorsed Republican Nixon over

## The Best Social Program

**V**erily, America faces a daunting range of social woes. They demand solutions. Many of our citizens are cut off from opportunity. They need help.

How best can the problems be met, the people helped? For too long, we as a nation have sought answers through an elephantine, hyperactive government bent on redistributing resources by taking from the haves in taxes and giving to the have-nots through a welter of social programs.

But that hasn't worked. The problems have festered and spread even as taxes and spending and governmental involvement have ballooned, oppressing all with crunching taxation and inflation.

It hasn't worked, for one thing, because we've become so preoccupied with slicing up the economic pie that we've neglected the essential task of making the pie bigger. We've become split up into a nation of factions, with each segment and interest group—business included—scratching and scrambling for its share. When the pie shrinks or stagnates, each group fights all the more desperately for a share of what's left. Consensus gives way to confrontation in our political life.

We've become more engrossed in carving out a larger slice of someone else's wealth than in producing more wealth ourselves. In the process we've lost sight

of what forged the American economic marvel in the first place: an expanding private enterprise economy functioning in a free society to increase the wealth and living standards of those who are willing to get out and work for what they want.

"A rising tide lifts all boats"—that's how President Kennedy put it a couple of decades ago. His message long went unheeded by our national leaders. Now it's getting through. Emphasis anew is centered on the need to create, compete, produce, earn—and grow. Once again priority is being given to fostering the initiative and enterprise that power sound economic growth of the kind that will bring opportunity and advancement to all . . . lifting all boats.

What is overlooked too often is that those in greatest need stand to gain the most from national economic progress. For they are the farthest behind, and they have the farthest to rise.

There'll always be a need, of course, for publicly funded social programs and for government to step in and help those trapped on the bottom rungs. The where-withal for the public sector to do all we expect of it must come from the private sector. The best social program of all is a strong, growing, productive economy.



fellow Democrat Helen Gahagan Douglas in 1950. Nixon liked the book, and when he was in New York he went to Dr. Hutschnecker for a checkup.

It is difficult for Mrs. Brodie to accept the fact that Dr. Hutschnecker was not a psychiatrist. When first we meet him, he is introduced correctly as "an internist with a special interest in psychosomatic illness, who treated Nixon for 'stress' when he was vice president . . ." Later, however, we are told that Dr. Hutschnecker was "called—not altogether incorrectly—the President's shrink." Then, on page 333, Mrs. Brodie herself supplies the psychoanalytical diagnosis that Dr. Hutschnecker so unobliquely failed to provide: "We may assume that the doctor noted Nixon's 'neurotic hangups,' but these he cannot discuss." And in words that seem remarkably unenlightened coming from a psychobiographer, Mrs. Brodie declares that "No one goes to a doctor who specializes in emotional problems unless he is driven by a special wretchedness."

Finally, on page 503, we hit paydirt: Mrs. Brodie at last wrestles Nixon to the couch. She recounts a dream that Nixon mentioned in his personal tape-recorded diary and adds, "Sharing a dream is dangerous, as Nixon must certainly have recognized in therapy." *Therapy?*

Lest I leave the wrong impression, I want to assure potential readers that this is not a book without heroes and heroines. Fortunately the world compensates for people like the Nixons with people like the Kennedys. Mrs. Brodie is positively rhapsodic when she describes JFK as

a man of formidable natural gifts, who brought intellectuals swarming into his camp as had Franklin Roosevelt, and who charmed even the most cynical of reporters. Lean, athletic, handsome, a shock of boyish hair falling over his forehead, his cool gray eyes crinkling at the corners when he grinned, he caused palpable excitement among the women in every gathering, and his appearance on motorcades sent girls into

paroxysms of shrieking and jumping.

And if she leaves you depressed reading about how banal poor Pat Nixon is and how badly she is ignored by her husband, Mrs. Brodie compensates with this portrait of Jackie Kennedy:

Her youth, offbeat piquancy, immense haunting eyes, and atypical beauty made her overnight an international sensation. Thanks to her maiden name, Bouvier, the French counted her peculiarly their own.

*Richard Nixon: The Shaping of His Character* is a sadly unbalanced book. Mrs. Brodie so actively despises her subject that she has none of the perspective good biography requires. She does not credit Richard Nixon, child, youth, or man, with one worthy achievement, one decent intention, one unselfish action, one normal motivation, one human instinct. It is a very bad book: the bitter legacy of a determined and passionate woman.

And what good has it done? Even as Mrs. Brodie's book begins inching

toward the remainder stores, Richard Nixon seems once again on the verge of a fiery re-entry into the political atmosphere. His inclusion in the official delegation to President Sadat's funeral led the *Washington Post* to run a front-page story headlined "Nixon's Redemption—Mission in Middle East Could Be His Way Back From Elba." Mary McGrory, her worst fears confirmed, wrote that Nixon used the funeral as his "round-trip ticket to respectability" and the way to end "the hated obscurity of his exile in New Jersey." Joseph Kraft wrote that "the pariah smirked his way back into the circle of grace."

Until Nixon's more passionate critics exorcise their own ghosts from the 35 years of bitter controversy that have surrounded him and meet him on the solid ground of historical fact, they will continue to flail at a bogey at least partly of their own imaginations, convinced that he is about to stage another successful comeback and at last achieve his goal of suppressing the Constitution. □



## BEDPAN HOSPITALITY

by Ernest van den Haag

Apart from Samuel Butler, long dead, nobody believes that hospitals ought to punish the sick—yet punish them they do. Comfort in a hospital, it seems, is frivolous. The patient who wants comfort is suspected of not taking his illness seriously enough. He should be dedicated to being sick and getting better, not thinking about trivial luxuries incompatible with the dignity of illness, let alone the sacred mission of medicine and the ministrations of its angels of mercy. "This is a hospital," the saying goes, "not a luxury hotel."

But why shouldn't a patient in a hospital enjoy the comforts and conveniences of a good hotel (to the extent his condition permits), so long as he is willing to pay for them? The truth is, they are incompatible not with medicine but with hospital traditions for which there is no longer any justification, if ever there was one. Somehow, there remains the idea that comfort is inappropriate in

Ernest van den Haag is author of *Punishing Criminals*.

principle, like champagne at a funeral. Even where nurses are cheerful and medical services superb, the hospital's punitive tradition survives—and demands discomfort, humiliation, and absurdity.

I just spent a few days in a hospital. I paid the extra charge and reserved a private room, except that it wasn't really private. For one thing, I couldn't close the door. (They're deliberately made that way.) And even when I managed to stick some newspapers under it, nobody bothered to knock before barging in or close the door when leaving. At night a nurse with a flashlight came by, not quite noiselessly, every half hour—I suppose to make sure that I was still alive. Thinking that sleep was probably good for me, I protested, meekly, but to no avail. "It's the law," she explained.

Money didn't buy me privacy (even in a "private room") and it didn't buy me comfort, either. My bed was too narrow (a double bed was, for

some reason, out of the question), and when I confessed to being over 65 the nurses insisted upon raising the bars along its sides, as if I belonged in a crib ("regulations, you know"). The mattress and pillow were sheathed in plastic, which was hot, uncomfortable, and slippery: Shall I go on?

Hotels, by the way, with sanitary problems of their own from their frequently changing guests, manage to do without the plastic sheathing. (But then they can't afford to make customers uncomfortable, can they?) And that's not the only difference. Hospitals offer room and board markedly inferior to what any hotel knows it must offer on pain of losing guests. My room was smaller than any hotel room I've ever stayed in. I couldn't control the air conditioning. My bathroom had no bathtub. And, of course, in the hospital there was nothing resembling room service: Meals had to be ordered a day in advance, and food was brought only at meal times. No snacks, no cup of coffee when you want it. Magazines

are unavailable. There is plenty of television, yes, but no radio (am I the only patient who likes to listen to music?). And there's a phone at every bed, each implacably set to jangle at top volume.

Indeed, noise—unnecessary noise—seems to be part of hospital regimen, at all hours, as if it were somehow snobbish or elitist to have quiet, to speak in low voices. Nurses' aides, for instance, seem to enjoy shouting at one another across miles of corridor. And when they have nothing to shout about, they whistle or sing. Carts pass through the corridors all the time. Nobody seems to oil the wheels. They squeak and have no rubber tires.

Besides all varieties of discomfort and inconvenience, there are still other hospital traditions, at least one of which is scrupulously honored: The patient is not to be trusted. You can walk up to the X-ray room yourself? Never mind. You go on a stretcher, like it or not. So: phone