

How the Seventies Changed America

By NICHOLAS LEMANN

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THE “LOSER DECADE” that at first seemed nothing more than a breathing space between the high drama of the 1960s and whatever was coming next is beginning to reveal itself as a bigger time than we thought.

That’s it,” Daniel Patrick Moynihan, then U.S. ambassador to India, wrote to a colleague on the White House staff in 1973 on the subject of some issue of the moment. “Nothing will happen. But then nothing much is going to happen in the 1970s anyway.”

Moynihan is a politician famous for his predictions, and this one seemed for a long time to be dead-on. The seventies, even while they were in progress, looked like an unimportant decade, a period of cooling down from the white-hot sixties. You had to go back to the teens to find another decade so lacking in crisp, epigrammatic definition. It only made matters worse for the seventies that the succeeding decade started with a bang. In 1980 the country elected the most conservative President in its history, and it was immediately clear that a new era had dawned. (In general the eighties, unlike the seventies, had a perfect dramatic arc. They peaked in the summer of 1984, with the Los Angeles Olympics and the Republican National Convention in Dallas, and began to peter out with the Iran-contra scandal in 1986 and the stock market crash in 1987.) It is nearly impossible to engage in magazine-writerly games like discovering “the day the seventies died” or “the spirit of the seventies”; and the style of the seventies—wide ties, sideburns, synthetic fabrics, white shoes, disco—is so far interesting largely as something to make fun of.

But somehow the seventies seem to be creeping out of the loser-decade category. Their claim to importance is in the realm of sweeping historical trends, rather than memorable events, though there were some of those too. In the United States today a few basic propositions shape everything: The presidential electorate is conservative and Republican. Geopolitics revolves around a commodity (oil) and a religion (Islam) more than around an ideology (Marxism-Leninism). The national economy is no longer one in which practically every class, region, and industry is upwardly mobile. American culture is essentially individualistic, rather than communitarian, which means that notions like deferred gratification, sacrifice, and sustained national effort are a very tough sell. Anyone seeking to understand the roots of this situation has to go back to the seventies.

The underestimation of the seventies’ importance, especially during the early years of the decade, is easy to forgive because the character of the seventies was substantially shaped at first by spillover from the sixties. Such sixties events as the killings of student protesters at Kent State and Orangeburg, the original



Richard Nixon greeted by children during his 1972 campaign.



Earth Day, the invasion of Cambodia, and a large portion of the war in Vietnam took place in the seventies. Although sixties radicals (cultural and political) spent the early seventies loudly bemoaning the end of the revolution, what was in fact going on was the working of the phenomena of the sixties into the mainstream of American life. Thus the first Nixon administration, which was decried by liberals at the time for being nightmarishly right-wing, was actually more liberal than the Johnson administration in many ways—less hawkish in Vietnam, more free-spending on social programs. The reason wasn’t that Richard Nixon was a liberal but that the country as a whole had continued to move steadily to the left throughout the late sixties and early seventies; the political climate of institutions like the U.S. Congress and the boards of directors of big corporations was probably more liberal in 1972 than in any year before or since, and the Democratic party nominated its most liberal presidential candidate ever. Nixon had to go along with the tide.

In New Orleans, my hometown, the hippie movement peaked in 1972 or 1973. Long hair, crash pads, head shops, psychedelic posters, underground newspapers, and other Summer of Love-inspired institutions had been unknown there during the real Summer of Love, which was in 1967. It took even longer, until the middle or late seventies, for those aspects of hippie life that have endured to catch on with the general public. All over the country the likelihood that an average citizen would wear longish hair, smoke marijuana, and openly live with a lover before marriage was probably greater in 1980 than it was in 1970. The sixties’ preoccupation with self-discovery became a mass phenomenon only in the seventies, through home-brew

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psychological therapies like est. In politics the impact of the black enfranchisement that took place in the 1960s barely began to be felt until the mid- to late 1970s. The tremendously influential feminist and gay-liberation movements were, at the dawn of the 1970s, barely under way in Manhattan, their headquarters, and certainly hadn't begun their spread across the whole country. The sixties took a long time for America to digest; the process went on throughout the seventies and even into the eighties.

While it was going on, the oil embargo didn't fully register in the national consciousness.

The epochal event of the seventies as an era in its own right was the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries' oil embargo, which lasted for six months in the fall of 1973 and the spring of 1974. Everything that happened in the sixties was predicated on the assumption of economic prosperity and growth; concerns like personal fulfillment and social justice tend to emerge in the middle class only at times when people take it for granted that they'll be able to make a living. For thirty years—ever since the effects of World War II on the economy had begun to kick in—the average American's standard of living had been rising, to a remarkable extent. As the economy grew, indices like home ownership, automobile ownership, and access to higher education got up to levels unknown anywhere else in the world, and the United States could plausibly claim to have provided a better life materially for its working class than any society ever had. That ended with the OPEC embargo.

While it was going on, the embargo didn't fully register in the national consciousness. The country was absorbed by a different story, the Watergate scandal, which was really another sixties spillover, the final series of battles in the long war between the antiwar liberals and the rough-playing anti-Communists. Richard Nixon, having engaged in dirty tricks against leftist politicians for his whole career, didn't stop doing so as President; he only found new targets, like Daniel Ellsberg and Lawrence O'Brien. This time, however, he lost the Establishment, which was now far more kindly disposed to Nixon's enemies than it had been back in the 1950s. Therefore, the big-time press, the courts, and the Congress undertook the enthralling process of cranking up the deliberate, inexorable machinery of justice, and everybody was glued to the television for a year and a half. The embargo, on the other hand, was a non-video-friendly economic story and hence difficult to get hooked on. It pertained to two subcultures that were completely mysterious to most Americans—the oil industry and



Nixon's Resignation Speech, 1974

the Arab world—and it seemed at first to be merely an episode in the ongoing hostilities between Israel and its neighbors. But in retrospect it changed everything, much more than Watergate did.

By causing the price of oil to double, the embargo enriched—and therefore increased the wealth, power, and confidence of—oil-producing areas like Texas, while helping speed the decline of the automobile-producing upper

Midwest; the rise of OPEC and the rise of the Sunbelt as a center of population and political influence went together. The embargo ushered in a long period of inflation, the reaction to which dominated the economics and politics of the rest of the decade. It demonstrated that America could now be “pushed around” by countries most of us had always thought of as minor powers.

Most important of all, the embargo now appears to have been the pivotal moment at which the mass upward economic mobility of American society ended, perhaps forever. Average weekly earnings, adjusted for inflation, peaked in 1973. Productivity—that is, economic output per man-hour—abruptly stopped growing. The nearly universal assumption in the post-World War II United States was that children would do better than their parents. Upward mobility wasn't just a characteristic of the national culture; it was the defining characteristic. As it slowly began to sink in that everybody wasn't going to be moving forward together anymore, the country became more fragmented, more internally rivalrous, and less sure of its mythology.

Richard Nixon resigned as President in August 1974, and the country settled into what appeared to be a quiet, folksy drama of national recuperation. In the White House good old Gerald Ford was succeeded by rural, sincere Jimmy Carter, who was the only President elevated to the office by the voters during the 1970s and so was the decade's emblematic political figure. In hindsight, though, it's impossible to miss a gathering conservative stridency in the politics of the late seventies. In 1976 Ronald Reagan, the retired governor of California, challenged Ford for the Republican presidential nomination. Reagan lost the opening primaries and seemed to be about to drop out of the race when, apparently to the surprise even of his own staff, he won the North Carolina primary in late March.

It is quite clear what caused the Reagan campaign to catch on: He had begun to attack Ford from the right on foreign policy matters. The night before the primary he brought a half-hour of statewide television time to press his case. Reagan's main substantive criticism was of the policy of détente with the Soviet

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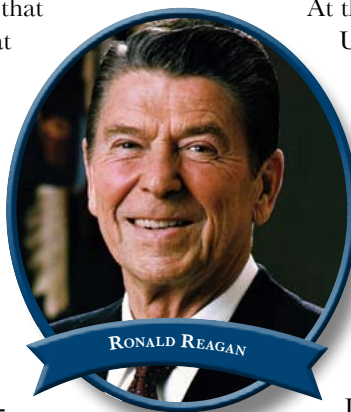
Union, but his two most crowd-pleasing points were his promise, if elected, to fire Henry Kissinger as Secretary of State and his lusty denunciation of the elaborately negotiated treaty to turn nominal control of the Panama Canal over to the Panamanians. Less than a year earlier Communist forces had finally captured the South Vietnamese capital city of Saigon, as the staff of the American Embassy escaped in a wild scramble into helicopters. The oil embargo had ended, but the price of gasoline had not retreated. The United States appeared to have descended from the pinnacle of power and respect it had occupied at the close of World War II to a small, hounded position, and Reagan had hit on a symbolic way of expressing rage over that change. Most journalistic and academic opinion at the time was fairly cheerful about the course of American foreign policy—we were finally out of Vietnam, and we were getting over our silly Cold War phobia about dealing with China and the Soviet Union—but in the general public obviously the rage Reagan expressed was widely shared.

A couple of years later a conservative political cause even more out of the blue than opposition to the Panama Canal Treaty appeared: the tax revolt. Howard Jarvis, a seventy-five-year-old retired businessman who had been attacking taxation in California pretty much continuously since 1962, got onto the state ballot in 1978 an initiative, Proposition 13, that would substantially cut property taxes. Despite bad press and the strong opposition of most politicians, it passed by a two to one margin.

Proposition 13 was to some extent another aftershock of the OPEC embargo. Inflation causes the value of hard assets to rise. The only substantial hard asset owned by most Americans is their home. As the prices of houses soared in the mid-seventies (causing people to dig deeper to buy housing, which sent the national savings rate plummeting and made real estate prices the great conversation starter in the social life of the middle class), so did property taxes, since they are based on the values of the houses. Hence, resentment over taxation became an issue in waiting.

Carter, the only President voted into office during the 1970s, is the decade's emblematic political figure. (pull-out)

The influence of Proposition 13 has been so great that it is now difficult to recall that taxes weren't a major concern in national politics before it. Conservative opposition to government focused on its activities, not on its revenue base, and this put conservatism at a disadvantage, because most government programs are popular. Even before Proposition 13, conservative economic writers like Jude Wanniski and Arthur Laffer were inventing supply-side economics, based on the idea that reducing taxes would bring prosperity. With



Proposition 13 it was proved—as it has been proved over and over since—that tax cutting was one of the rare voguish policy ideas that turn out to be huge political winners. In switching from arguing against programs to arguing against taxes, conservatism had found another key element of its ascension to power.

The tax revolt wouldn't have worked if the middle class hadn't been receptive to the notion that it was oppressed. This was remarkable in itself, since it had been assumed for decades that the American middle class was, in a world-historical sense, almost uniquely lucky. The emergence of a self-pitying strain in the middle class was in a sense yet another sixties spillover.

At the dawn of the sixties, the idea that anybody in the United States was oppressed might have seemed absurd. Then blacks, who really were oppressed, were able to make the country see the truth about their situation. But that opened Pandora's box. The eloquent language of group rights that the civil rights movement had invented proved to be quite adaptable, and eventually it was used by college students, feminists, Native Americans, Chicanos, urban blue-collar "white ethnics," and, finally, suburban homeowners.

Meanwhile, the social programs started by Lyndon Johnson gave rise to another new, or long-quiet, idea, which was that the government was wasting vast sums of money on harebrained schemes. In some ways the Great Society accomplished its goal of binding the country together, by making the federal government a nationwide provider of such favors as medical care and access to higher education; but in others it contributed to the seventies trend of each group's looking to government to provide it with benefits and being unconcerned with the general good. Especially after the economy turned sour, the middle class began to define its interests in terms of a rollback of government programs aimed at helping other groups.

As the country was becoming more fragmented, so was its essential social unit, the family. In 1965 only 14.9 percent of the population was single; by 1979 the figure had risen to 20 percent. The divorce rate went from 2.5 per thousand in 1965 to 5.3 per thousand in 1979. The percentage of births that were out of wedlock was 5.3 in 1960 and 16.3 in 1978. The likelihood that married women with young children would work doubled between the mid-sixties and the late seventies. These changes took place for a variety of reasons—feminism, improved birth control, the legalization of abortion, the spread across the country of the sixties youth culture's rejection of traditional mores—but what they added up to was that the nuclear family, consisting of a working husband and a nonworking wife, both in their first marriage, and their children, ceased to be so dominant a type of American household

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during the seventies. Also, people became more likely to organize themselves into communities based on their family status, so that the unmarried often lived in singles apartment complexes and retirees in senior citizens' developments. The overall effect was one of much greater personal freedom, which meant, as it always does, less social cohesion. Tom Wolfe's moniker for the seventies, the Me Decade, caught on because it was provably true that the country had placed relatively more emphasis on individual happiness and relatively less on loyalty to family and nation.

Like a symphony, the seventies finally built up in a crescendo that pulled together all its main themes. This occurred during the second half of 1979. First OPEC engineered the "second oil shock," in which, by holding down production, it got the price for its crude oil (and the price of gasoline at American service stations) to rise by more than 50 percent during the first six months of that year. With the onset of the summer vacation season, the automotive equivalent of the Depression's bank runs began. Everybody considered the possibility of not being able to get gas, panicked, and went off to fill the tank; the result was hours-long lines at gas stations all over the country.

It was a small inconvenience compared with what people in the Communist world and Latin America live through all the time, but the psychological effect was enormous. The summer of 1979 was the only time I can remember when, at the level of ordinary life as opposed to public affairs, things seemed to be out of control. Inflation was well above 10 percent and rising, and suddenly what seemed like a quarter of every day was spent on getting gasoline or thinking about getting gasoline—a task that previously had been completely routine, as it is again now. Black markets sprang up; rumors flew about well-connected people who had secret sources. One day that summer, after an hour's desperate and fruitless search, I ran out of gas on the Central Expressway in Dallas. I left my car sitting primly in the right lane and walked away in the hundred-degree heat; the people driving by looked at me without surprise, no doubt thinking, "Poor bastard, it could have happened to me just as easily."

In July President Carter scheduled a speech on the gas lines, then abruptly canceled it and repaired to Camp David to think deeply for ten days, which seemed like a pale substitute for somehow setting things aright. Aides, cabinet secretaries, intellectuals, religious leaders, tycoons, and other leading citizens were summoned to Carter's aerie to discuss with him what was wrong with the country's soul. On July 15 he made a television address to



the nation, which has been enshrined in memory as the "malaise speech," although it didn't use that word. (Carter did, however, talk about "a crisis of confidence ... that strikes at the very heart and soul and spirit of our national will.")


To reread the speech today is to be struck by its spectacular political ineptitude. Didn't Carter realize that Presidents are not supposed to express doubts publicly or to lecture the American people about their shortcomings? Why couldn't he have just temporarily imposed gas rationing, which would have ended the lines overnight, instead of outlining a vague and immediately forgotten six-point program to promote energy conservation?

His describing the country's loss of confidence did not cause the country to gain confidence, needless to say. And it didn't

help matters that upon his return to Washington he demanded letters of resignation from all members of his cabinet and accepted five of them. Carter seemed to be anything but an FDR-like reassuring, ebullient presence; he communicated a sense of wild flailing about as he tried (unsuccessfully) to get the situation under control.

I remember being enormously impressed by Carter's speech at the time because it was a painfully honest and much thought-over attempt

to grapple with the main problem of the decade. The American economy had **co-incidence**  been **co-incidence**  been assumed being an expanding pie, and by unfortunate had happened just when an ethic of individual freedom as the highest good was spreading throughout the society, which meant people would respond to the changing economic conditions by looking out to themselves. Like most other members of the word-manipulating class whose leading figures had advised Carter at Camp David, I thought there was a malaise. What I didn't realize, and Carter obviously didn't either, was that there was a smarter way to play the situation politically. A president could maintain there was nothing wrong with America at all—that it hadn't become less powerful in the world, hadn't reached some kind of hard economic limit, and wasn't in crisis—and, instead of trying to reverse the powerful tide of individualism, ride along with it. At the same time, he could act more forcefully than Carter, especially against inflation, so that he didn't seem weak and ineffectual. All this is exactly what Carter's successor, Ronald Reagan, did.

All the other candidates were selling national healing; Reagan, and only Reagan, was selling pure strength. 

Actually, Carter himself set in motion the process by which inflation was conquered a few months later, when he gave the chairmanship of the Federal Reserve Board to Paul Volcker, a

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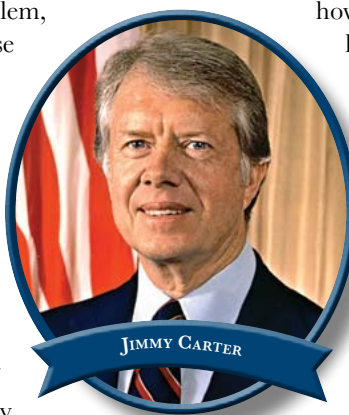
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man willing to put the economy into a severe recession to bring back price stability. But in November fate delivered the coup de grâce to Carter in the form of the taking hostage of the staff of the American Embassy in Teheran, as a protest against the United States' harboring of Iran's former shah.

As with the malaise speech, what is most difficult to convey today about the hostage crisis is why Carter made what now looks like a huge, obvious error: playing up the crisis so much that it became a national obsession for more than a year. The fundamental problem with hostage taking is that the one sure remedy—refusing to negotiate and thus allowing the hostages to be killed—is politically unacceptable in the democratic media society we live in, at least when the hostages are middle-class sympathetic figures, as they were in Iran.

There isn't any good solution to this problem, but Carter's two successors in the White House demonstrated that it is possible at least to negotiate for the release of hostages in a low-profile way that will cause the press to lose interest and prevent the course of the hostage negotiations from completely defining the Presidency. During the last year of the Carter administration, by contrast, the hostage story absolutely dominated the television news (recall that the ABC show *Nightline* began as a half-hour five-times-a-week update on the hostage situation), and several of the hostages and their families became temporary celebrities. In Carter's defense, even among the many voices criticizing him for appearing weak and vacillating, there was none that I remember willing to say, "Just cut off negotiations and walk away." It was a situation that everyone regarded as terrible but in which there was a strong national consensus supporting the course Carter had chosen.

So ended the seventies. There was still enough of the sixties spillover phenomenon going on so that Carter, who is now regarded (with some affection) as having been too much the good-hearted liberal to maintain a hold on the presidential electorate, could be challenged for renomination by Ted Kennedy on the grounds that he was too conservative. Inflation was raging on; the consumer price index rose by 14.4 percent between May 1979 and May 1980. We were being humiliated by fanatically bitter, premodern Muslims whom we had helped ease out their dictator even though he was reliably pro-United States. The Soviet empire appeared (probably for the last time ever) to be on the march, having invaded Afghanistan to Carter's evident surprise and disillusionment. We had lost our most recent war. We couldn't pull together as a people. The puissant, unified, prospering America of the late 1940s seemed to be just a fading memory.



I was a reporter for the *Washington Post* during the 1980 presidential campaign, and even on the *Post's* national desk, that legendary nerve center of politics, the idea that the campaign might end with Reagan's being elected President seemed fantastic, right up to the weekend before the election. At first Kennedy looked like a real threat to Carter; remember that up to that point no Kennedy had ever lost a campaign. While the Carter people were disposing of Kennedy, they were rooting for Reagan to win the Republican nomination because he would be such an easy mark.

He was too old, too unserious, and, most of all, too conservative. Look what had happened to Barry Goldwater (a sitting officeholder, at least) only sixteen years earlier, and Reagan was so divisive that a moderate from his own party, John Anderson, was running for

President as a third-party candidate. It was not at all clear how much the related issues of inflation and national helplessness were dominating the public's mind. Kennedy, Carter, and Anderson were all, in their own way, selling national healing, that great post-sixties obsession; Reagan, and only Reagan, was selling pure strength.

In a sense Reagan's election represents the country's rejection of the idea of a sixties-style solution to the great problems of the seventies—economic stagnation, social fragmentation, and the need for a new world order revolving around relations between the oil-producing Arab world and the West. The idea of a scaled-back America—husbanding its resources, living more modestly, renouncing its restless mobility, withdrawing from full engagement with the politics of every spot on the globe, focusing on issues of internal comity—evidently didn't appeal. Reagan, and the country, had in effect found a satisfying pose to strike in response to the problems of the seventies, but that's different from finding a solution.

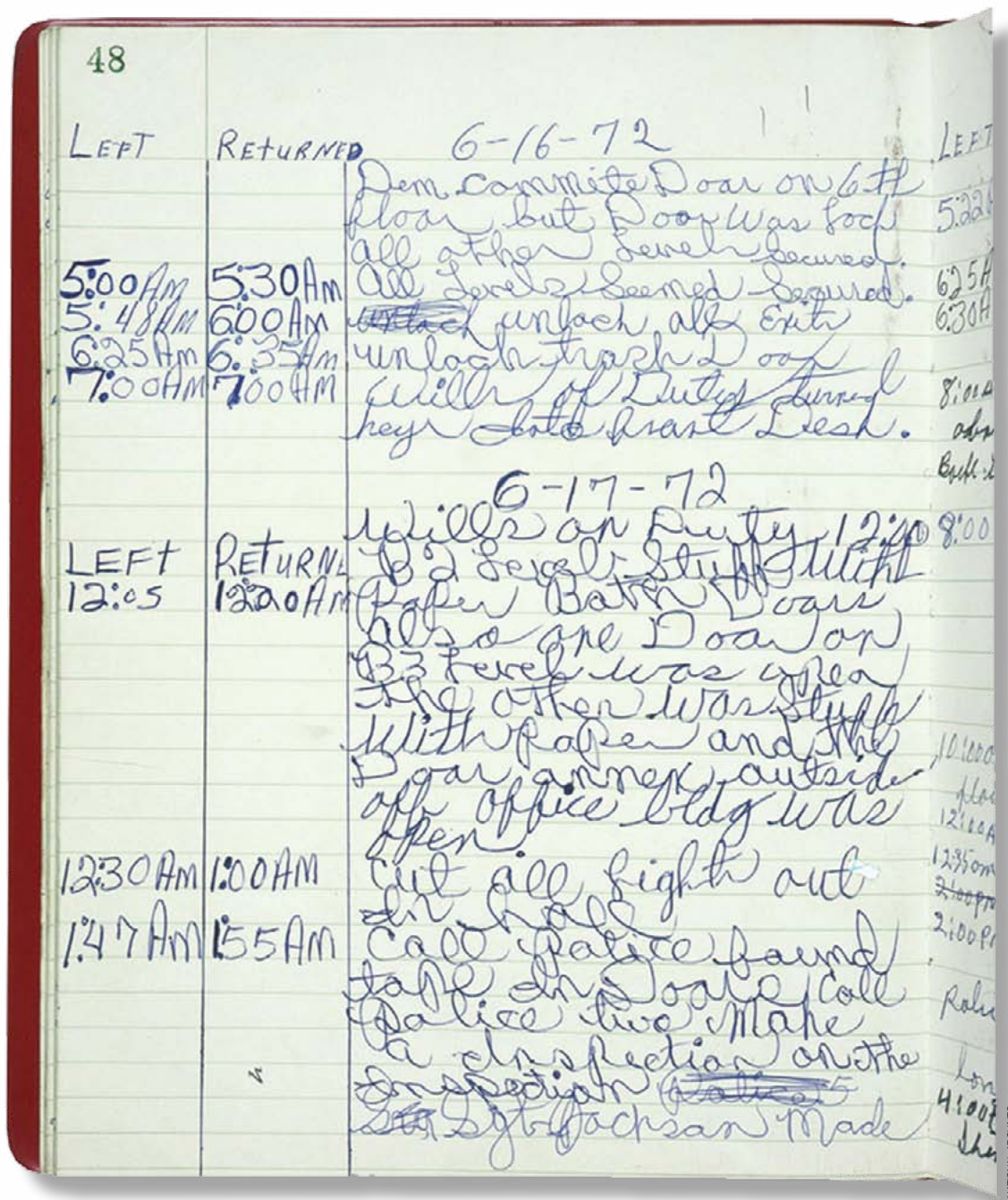
Today some of the issues that dominated the seventies have faded away. Reagan and Volcker did beat inflation. The "crisis of confidence" now seems a long-ago memory. But it is striking how early we still seem to be in the process of working out the implications of the oil embargo. We have just fought and won a war against the twin evils of Middle East despotism and interruptions in the oil supply, which began to trouble us in the seventies. We still have not really even begun to figure out how to deal with the cessation of across-the-board income gains, and as a result our domestic politics are still dominated by squabbling over the proper distribution of government's benefits and burdens. During the seventies themselves the new issues that were arising seemed nowhere near as important as those sixties legacies, minority rights and Vietnam and Watergate. But the runt of decades has wound up casting a much longer shadow than anyone imagined. ❧

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SECURITY OFFICER'S LOG OF THE WATERGATE OFFICE BUILDING

SHOWING ENTRY FOR JUNE 17, 1972

<http://www.archives.gov/historical-docs/todays-doc/index.html?dod-date=617>



During the early hours of June 17, 1972, Frank Wills was the security guard on duty at the Watergate office complex in Washington, DC.. This log shows that at 1:47 a.m. he called the police, who arrested five burglars inside the Democratic National Committee Headquarters. Investigation into the break-in exposed a trail of abuses that led to the highest levels of the Nixon administration and ultimately to the President himself. President Nixon resigned from office under threat of impeachment on August 9, 1974.

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"SMOKING GUN" CONVERSATION

<http://nixon.archives.gov/forresearchers/find/tapes/excerpts/watergate.php#smoking>

Audio: http://nixon.archives.gov/forresearchers/find/tapes/watergate/trial/exhibit_01.mp3

HALDEMAN AND NIXON DISCUSS THE PROGRESS OF THE FBI'S INVESTIGATION, ESPECIALLY THE TRACING OF THE SOURCE OF MONEY FOUND ON THE BURGLARS. THEY PROPOSE HAVING THE CIA ASK THE FBI TO HALT THEIR INVESTIGATION OF THE WATERGATE BREAK-IN BY CLAIMING THAT THE BREAK-IN WAS A NATIONAL SECURITY OPERATION.

Haldeman: Okay -that's fine. Now, on the investigation, you know, the Democratic break-in thing, we're back to the-in the, the problem area because the FBI is not under control, because Gray doesn't exactly know how to control them, and they have, their investigation is now leading into some productive areas, because they've been able to trace the money, not through the money itself, but through the bank, you know, sources - the banker himself. And, and it goes in some directions we don't want it to go. Ah, also there have been some things, like an informant came in off the street to the FBI in Miami, who was a photographer or has a friend who is a photographer who developed some films through this guy, Barker, and the films had pictures of Democratic National Committee letter head documents and things. So I guess, so it's things like that that are gonna, that are filtering in. Mitchell came up with yesterday, and John Dean analyzed very carefully last night and concludes, concurs now with Mitchell's recommendation that the only way to solve this, and we're set up beautifully to do it, ah, in that and that...the only network that paid any attention to it last night was NBC...they did a massive story on the Cuban...

Nixon: That's right.

Haldeman: thing.

Nixon: Right.

Haldeman: That the way to handle this now is for us to have Walters call Pat Gray and just say, "Stay the hell out of this...this is ah, business here we don't want you to go any further on it." That's not an unusual development,...

Nixon: Um huh.

Haldeman: ...and, uh, that would take care of it.

Nixon: What about Pat Gray, ah, you mean he doesn't want to?

Haldeman: Pat does want to. He doesn't know how to, and he doesn't have, he doesn't have any basis for doing it. Given this, he will then have the basis. He'll call Mark Felt in, and the two of them ...and Mark Felt wants to cooperate because...

Nixon: Yeah.



Haldeman with Nixon at the Western White House - La Casa Pacifica, November 21, 1972.

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"SMOKING GUN" CONVERSATION

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Haldeman: he's ambitious..

Nixon: Yeah.

Haldeman: Ah, he'll call him in and say, "We've got the signal from across the river to, to put the hold on this." And that will fit rather well because the FBI agents who are working the case, at this point, feel that's what it is. This is CIA.

Nixon: But they've traced the money to 'em.

Haldeman: Well they have, they've traced to a name, but they haven't gotten to the guy yet.

Nixon: Would it be somebody here?

Haldeman: Ken Dahlberg.

Nixon: Who the hell is Ken Dahlberg?

Haldeman: He's ah, he gave \$25,000 in Minnesota and ah, the check went directly in to this, to this guy Barker.

Nixon: Maybe he's a ..bum.

Nixon: He didn't get this from the committee though, from Stans.

Haldeman: Yeah. It is. It is. It's directly traceable and there's some more through some Texas people in—that went to the Mexican bank which they can also trace to the Mexican bank...they'll get their names today. And (pause)

Nixon: Well, I mean, ah, there's no way... I'm just thinking if they don't cooperate, what do they say? They they, they were approached by the Cubans. That's what Dahlberg has to say, the Texans too. Is that the idea?

Haldeman: Well, if they will. But then we're relying on more and more people all the time. That's the problem. And ah, they'll stop if we could, if we take this other step.

Nixon: All right. Fine.

Haldeman: And, and they seem to feel the thing to do is get them to stop?

Nixon: Right, fine.

Haldeman: They say the only way to do that is from White House instructions. And it's got to be to Helms and, ah, what's his name...? Walters.

Nixon: Walters.

Haldeman: And the proposal would be that Ehrlichman (coughs) and I call them in

Nixon: All right, fine.

Haldeman: and say, ah..

Nixon: How do you call him in, I mean you just, well, we protected Helms from one hell of a lot of things.

Haldeman: That's what Ehrlichman says.

Nixon: Of course, this is a, this is a Hunt, you will—that will uncover a lot of things. You open that scab there's a hell of a lot of things and that we just feel that it would be very detrimental to have this thing go

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"SMOKING GUN" CONVERSATION

— CONTINUED —

any further. This involves these Cubans, Hunt, and a lot of hanky-panky that we have nothing to do with ourselves. Well what the hell, did Mitchell know about this thing to any much of a degree.

Haldeman: I think so. I don't think he knew the details, but I think he knew.

Nixon: He didn't know how it was going to be handled though, with Dahlberg and the Texans and so forth? Well who was the asshole that did? (Unintelligible) Is it Liddy? Is that the fellow? He must be a little nuts.

Haldeman: He is.

Nixon: I mean he just isn't well screwed on is he? Isn't that the problem?

Haldeman: No, but he was under pressure, apparently, to get more information, and as he got more pressure, he pushed the people harder to move harder on...

Nixon: Pressure from Mitchell?

Haldeman: Apparently.

Nixon: Oh, Mitchell, Mitchell was at the point that you made on this, that exactly what I need from you is on the—

Haldeman: Gemstone, yeah.

Nixon: All right, fine, I understand it all. We won't second-guess Mitchell and the rest. Thank God it wasn't Colson.

Haldeman: The FBI interviewed Colson yesterday. They determined that would be a good thing to do.

Nixon: Um hum.

Haldeman: Ah, to have him take a...

Nixon: Um hum.

Haldeman: An interrogation, which he did, and that, the FBI guys working the case had concluded that there were one or two possibilities, one, that this was a White House, they don't think that there is anything at the Election Committee, they think it was either a White House operation and they had some obscure reasons for it, non political,...

Nixon: Uh huh.

Haldeman: or it was a...

Nixon: Cuban thing-

Haldeman: Cubans and the CIA. And after their interrogation of, of...

Nixon: Colson.

Haldeman: Colson, yesterday, they concluded it was not the White House, but are now convinced it is a CIA thing, so the CIA turn off would...

Nixon: Well, not sure of their analysis, I'm not going to get that involved. I'm (unintelligible).

Haldeman: No, sir. We don't want you to.

Nixon: You call them in.

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"SMOKING GUN" CONVERSATION

– CONTINUED –

Nixon: Good. Good deal! Play it tough. That's the way they play it and that's the way we are going to play it.

Haldeman: O.K. We'll do it.

Nixon: Yeah, when I saw that news summary item, I of course knew it was a bunch of crap, but I thought ah, well it's good to have them off on this wild hair thing because when they start bugging us, which they have, we'll know our little boys will not know how to handle it. I hope they will though. You never know. Maybe, you think about it. Good!

Nixon: When you get in these people when you...get these people in, say: "Look, the problem is that this will open the whole, the whole Bay of Pigs thing, and the President just feels that" ah, without going into the details... don't, don't lie to them to the extent to say there is no involvement, but just say this is sort of a comedy of errors, bizarre, without getting into it, "the President believes that it is going to open the whole Bay of Pigs thing up again. And, ah because these people are plugging for, for keeps and that they should call the FBI in and say that we wish for the country, don't go any further into this case", period!

Haldeman: OK.

Nixon: That's the way to put it, do it straight (Unintelligible)

Haldeman: Get more done for our cause by the opposition than by us at this point.

Nixon: You think so?

Haldeman: I think so, yeah. ☒

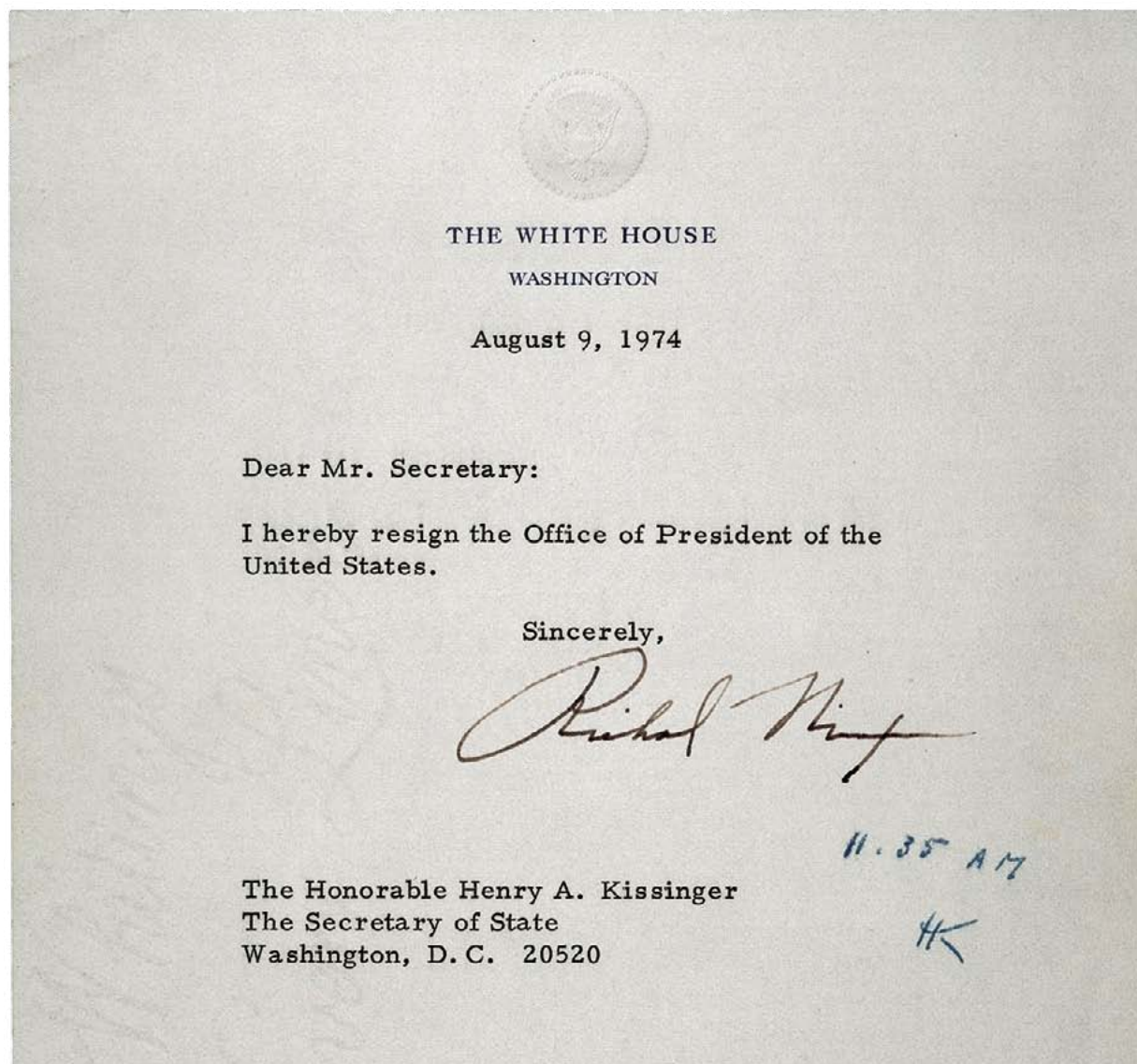
AUDIO

[http://nixon.archives.gov/forresearchers/
find/tapes/watergate/trial/exhibit_01.mp3](http://nixon.archives.gov/forresearchers/find/tapes/watergate/trial/exhibit_01.mp3)

How the Seventies Changed America

RESIGNATION OF PRESIDENT RICHARD NIXON

http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/american_originals/nixon2.html



The President's speechwriter, Ray Price, began drafting a resignation speech days before the resignation, as the President agonized over his decision to stay or to go. Speaking for some 16 minutes, Nixon recounted his successes as President, especially in the area of foreign affairs. He explained his departure as a matter of practical politics—he had lost his political base. He did not address the issue of abuse of Presidential power and did not mention the word "impeachment."

On the morning of August 9, 1974, the day following President Nixon's televised resignation speech, White House Chief of Staff Alexander Haig presented this letter to President Nixon to sign. The President's resignation letter is addressed to the Secretary of State, in keeping with a law passed by Congress in 1792. The letter became effective when Secretary of State Henry Kissinger initialed it at 11:35 a.m. (National Archives)

How the Seventies Changed America

ROE V. WADE

<http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/treasures/trr143.html>

In 1973 the United States Supreme Court ruled that a right of privacy under the Constitution guaranteed a woman's right to have an abortion under certain circumstances. Associate Justice Harry A. Blackmun, who wrote the opinion for the Court, circulated among his colleagues a draft announcement that he would later read from the bench as the opinion was released. Chief Justice Warren Burger, a boyhood friend, returned Blackmun's draft with his comments, written in red pencil.

No. 70-18 - Roe v. Wade

No. 70-40 - Doe v. Bolton

Harry
Here are my
thoughts
W.B.B.

These are the abortion cases that were argued first in December 1971 and again last October. They are appeals from three-judge federal courts in the Northern Districts of Texas and Georgia, respectively.

The law suits attack the constitutionality of the Texas and Georgia abortion statutes. The actions were instituted by pregnant women, both married and unmarried, by a married couple in the Texas case, and by physicians and others alleging an interest in the subject matter.

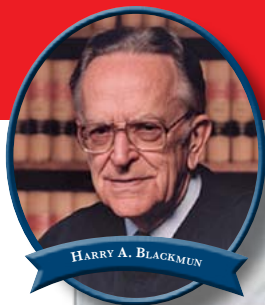
The Texas statute is representative of those that are presently in effect in a majority of our states and that, for the most part, were enacted during the last half of the nineteenth century. The Texas statute prohibits any abortion, or any attempt at an abortion, except where it is procured by medical advice for the purpose of saving the life of the woman. It makes no reference to health, as does the District of Columbia statute considered in *United States v. Vuitch* decided here in the 1970 Term.

The Georgia statute, on the other hand, was enacted only in 1968. It is a modern statute patterned after the American Law Institute's

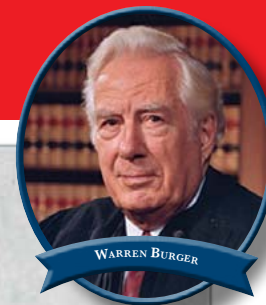
How the Seventies Changed America

ROE V. WADE

- CONTINUED -



HARRY A. BLACKMUN



WARREN BURGER

No. 70-18
No. 70-40

Page 4

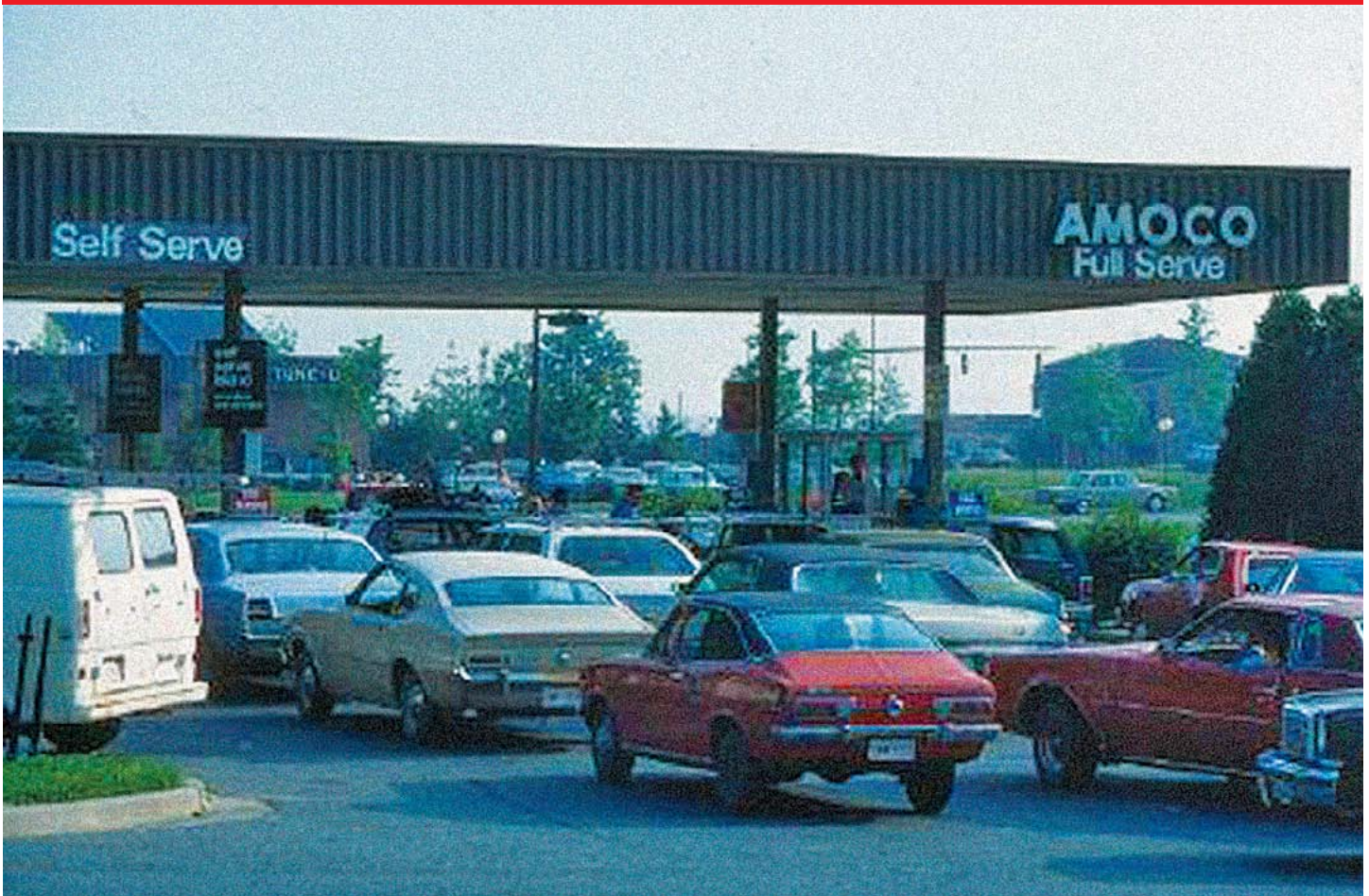
both federal and state. This examination revealed a number of interesting things. One is the fact that most of the strict abortion statutes were enacted by the States about a hundred years ago. Another is the conclusion that it is very doubtful that abortion was ever firmly established as a common law crime, even with respect to the destruction of a quick fetus. A third is that there is little consensus, even among religious or medical groups, as to when life begins. Some would fix it ^{arbitrarily} at the moment of conception. Others focus on quickening. Still others accept live birth as the significant point.

We have concluded again, as the Court has done before, that there is a right of personal privacy ^{or implicit in} under the Constitution. It is not spelled out in so many words, but the Court has recognized this right before in many cases and in varying contexts. We feel that it is founded in the Fourteenth Amendment's concept of personal liberty and restrictions upon state action. We further conclude that this right of personal privacy includes the abortion decision, ^{with no limits set down in the op} but we emphasize that the right is not unqualified and that it must be considered against important state interests in regulating abortion.

Good!

There are, we feel, two important interests that a state possesses and that if it so desires, it may seek to protect by legislation. The first is the state's interest in preserving and protecting the health

How the Seventies Changed America
OCTOBER, 1973: THE FIRST ENERGY CRISIS
<http://energy.gov/management/october-1973-first-energy-crisis>



DEPT. OF ENERGY

October 6, 1973

The Yom Kippur War breaks out in the Middle East. October 17, 1973, the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries declares an oil embargo, sparking the first "energy crisis."

How the Seventies Changed America

HOW TO TELL IF YOUR CHILD IS A POTENTIAL HIPPIE AND WHAT YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT

A 1970 P.T.A. PARENT EDUCATION PAMPHLET

BY JACQUELINE HIMELSTEIN

<http://www.superseventies.com/hippie.html>



Your son or daughter may be flashing warning signals that he or she will soon drop out of society and join the "hippie" movement. If you know what to look for, you may be able to prevent it.

Four leading psychiatrists, Dr. Jean Rosenbaum of Santa Fe, New Mexico; Dr. Jack Leedy of New York City; Dr. Robert Bussell of Chicago and Dr. Norman R. Schakne of Detroit, agree that a combination of the following signs spells possible trouble for the parent as well as the child...

1. A sudden interest in a cult, rather than an accepted religion.
2. The inability to sustain a personal love relationship – drawn more to "group" experiences.
3. A tendency to talk in vague philosophical terms, never to the point.
4. A demanding attitude about money but reluctance to work for it.
5. An intense, "far-out" interest in poetry and art.
6. Constant ridiculing of any form of organized government.
7. A righteous attitude, never admitting any personal faults.
8. An increasing absentee record at school.
9. The emergence of a devious nature, manipulating people for personal gain.
10. A tendency to date only members of different races and creeds.

"Naturally, some of these signs may be observed in perfectly normal adolescents, but it is when the majority of the traits are present that the child is on the way to becoming a 'hippie,'" Dr. Rosenbaum said.

"There are also the fairly obvious signs like shaggy hair and mod clothing. But those alone do not make a 'hippie.' Sometimes it's just a fad."

Each of the psychiatrists offered advice to parents who are worried about the possibility of their child's becoming a "hippie."

Dr. Rosenbaum: "There must be a reconstruction of the family unit, with much expression of love. Parents should work and play with these young people to show that all the family members care about one another."

"There must be a great deal of dialogue -- sometimes very painful dialogue -- to establish a new position of belief for the young people. They will deny they're hostile until their last breath."

How the Seventies Changed America

HOW TO TELL IF YOUR CHILD IS A POTENTIAL HIPPIE AND WHAT YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT

— CONTINUED —



"Until that underlying hostility is brought out, the children will be keyed to rebel."

Dr. Leedy: "Family therapy is one ideal approach. Develop similar interests and hobbies. It's usually too late for the usual disciplinary measures when the child begins showing the 'hippie' signs. Discipline at that point might make him more hostile."

Dr. Bussell: "Have a good understanding and be more tolerant. Adolescence is at best and extremely disturbing time."

Dr. Schakne: "Learn to say 'no' when you have to. But explain your reasoning so that you maintain a communication link."

"The time to shape your child is in the pre-teen years. When your child reaches the teen-age level, the die has already been cast." ❌

How the Seventies Changed America

'CRISIS OF CONFIDENCE' SPEECH

BY JIMMY CARTER

<http://millercenter.org/president/speeches/detail/3402>

I KNOW, OF COURSE, BEING PRESIDENT, THAT GOVERNMENT ACTIONS AND LEGISLATION CAN BE VERY IMPORTANT.

That's why I've worked hard to put my campaign promises into law—and I have to admit, with just mixed success. But after listening to the American people I have been reminded again that all the legislation in the world can't fix what's wrong with America. So, I want to speak to you first tonight about a subject even more serious than energy or inflation. I want to talk to you right now about a fundamental threat to American democracy.

I do not mean our political and civil liberties. They will endure. And I do not refer to the outward strength of America, a nation that is at peace tonight everywhere in the world, with unmatched economic power and military might.

The threat is nearly invisible in ordinary ways. It is a crisis of confidence. It is a crisis that strikes at the very heart and soul and spirit of our national will. We can see this crisis in the growing doubt about the meaning of our own lives and in the loss of a unity of purpose for our Nation.

The erosion of our confidence in the future is threatening to destroy the social and the political fabric of America.

The confidence that we have always had as a people is not simply some romantic dream or a proverb in a dusty book that we read just on the Fourth of July. It is the idea which founded our Nation and has guided our development as a people. Confidence in the future has supported everything else—public institutions and private enterprise, our own families, and the very Constitution of the United States. Confidence has defined our course and has served as a link between generations. We've always believed in something called progress. We've always had a faith that the days of our children would be better than our own.



Jimmy Carter in the Oval Office

Our people are losing that faith, not only in government itself but in the ability as citizens to serve as the ultimate rulers and shapers of our democracy. As a people we know our past and we are proud of it. Our progress has been part of the living history of America, even the world. We always believed that we were part of a great movement of humanity itself called democracy, involved in the search for freedom, and that belief has always strengthened us in our purpose. But just as we are losing our confidence in the future, we are also beginning to close the door on our past.

In a nation that was proud of hard work, strong families, close-knit communities, and our faith in God, too many of us now tend to worship self-indulgence and consumption. Human identity is no longer defined by what one does, but by what one owns. But we've discovered that owning things and consuming things does not satisfy our longing for meaning. We've learned that piling up material goods cannot fill the emptiness of lives which have no confidence or purpose.

The symptoms of this crisis of the American spirit are all around us. For the first time in the history of our country a majority of our people believe that the next 5 years will be worse than the past 5 years. Two-thirds of our people do not even vote. The productivity of American workers is actually dropping, and the willingness of Americans to save for the

future has fallen below that of all other people in the Western world.

As you know, there is a growing disrespect for government and for churches and for schools, the news media, and other institutions. This is not a message of happiness or reassurance, but it is the truth and it is a warning.

These changes did not happen overnight. They've come upon us gradually over the last generation, years that were filled with shocks and tragedy.

We were sure that ours was a nation of the ballot, not the bullet, until the murders of John Kennedy and Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Jr. We were taught that our armies were always invincible and our causes were always just, only to suffer the agony of Vietnam. We respected the Presidency as a place of honor until the shock of Watergate.

We remember when the phrase "sound as a dollar" was an expression of absolute dependability, until 10 years of inflation began to shrink our dollar and our savings. We believed that our Nation's resources were limitless until 1973, when we had to face a growing dependence on foreign oil.

These wounds are still very deep. They have never been healed.

Looking for a way out of this crisis, our people have turned to the Federal Government and found it isolated from the mainstream of our Nation's life. Washington, D.C., has become an island. The gap between our citizens and our Government has never been so wide. The people are looking for honest answers, not easy answers; clear leadership, not false claims and evasiveness and politics as usual. ❖

VIDEO

<http://millercenter.org/president/speeches/detail/3402>

How the Seventies Changed America

LETTER TO AYATOLLAH RUHOLLAH KHOMEINI

BY JIMMY CARTER

<http://www.archives.gov/historical-docs/todays-doc/index.html?dod-date=1106>

On November 4, 1979, Iranian militants took over 60 Americans hostage in the U.S. Embassy in Tehran. Dated November 6, 1979, this letter was written by President Jimmy Carter in the early days of the hostage crisis. President Carter's efforts, which included a failed military rescue mission, were ultimately fruitless, and the hostages were not released until January 20, 1981—moments after Carter officially turned the Presidency over to Ronald Reagan.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

November 6, 1979

Dear Ayatollah Khomeini:

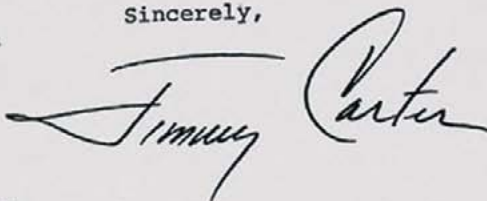
Based on the willingness of the Revolutionary Council to receive them, I am asking two distinguished Americans, Mr. Ramsey Clark and Mr. William G. Miller, to carry this letter to you and to discuss with you and your designees the situation in Tehran and the full range of current issues between the U.S. and Iran.

In the name of the American people, I ask that you release unharmed all Americans presently detained in Iran and those held with them and allow them to leave your country safely and without delay. I ask you to recognize the compelling humanitarian reasons, firmly based in international law, for doing so.

I have asked both men to meet with you and to hear from you your perspective on events in Iran and the problems which have arisen between our two countries. The people of the United States desire to have relations with Iran based upon equality, mutual respect, and friendship.

They will report to me immediately upon their return.

Sincerely,



His Excellency
Ayatollah Khomeini
Qom, Iran

DECLASSIFIED
NSC 1/22/85 re MC-84-10
BY ATE NARS. DATE 4/29/85

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

How the Seventies Changed America

RONALD REAGAN'S ANNOUNCEMENT FOR PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDACY

<http://millercenter.org/president/speeches/detail/5852>



Ronald Reagan accepting the Republican Nomination

That is why I am seeking the presidency. I cannot and will not stand by and see this great country destroy itself. Our leaders attempt to blame their failures on circumstances beyond their control, on false estimates by unknown, unidentifiable experts who rewrite modern history in an attempt to convince us our high standard of living, the result of thrift and hard work, is somehow selfish extravagance which we must renounce as we join in sharing scarcity. I don't agree that our nation must resign itself to inevitable decline, yielding its proud position to other hands. I am totally unwilling to see this country fail in its obligation to itself and to the other free peoples of the world.

The crisis we face is not the result of any failure of the American spirit; it is a failure of our leaders to establish rational goals and give our people something to order their lives by. If I am elected, I shall regard my election as proof that the people of the United States have decided to set a new agenda and have recognized that the human spirit thrives best when goals are set and progress can be measured in their achievement.

During the next year I shall discuss in detail a wide variety of problems which a new administration must address. Tonight I shall mention only a few.

No problem that we face today can compare with the need to restore the health of the American economy and the strength of the American dollar. Double-digit inflation has robbed you and your family of the ability to plan. It has destroyed the confidence to buy and it threatens the very structure of family life itself as more and more wives are forced to work in order to help meet the ever-increasing cost of living. At the same time, the lack of year growth in the economy has introduced the justifiable fear in the minds of working men and women who are already over extended that soon there will be fewer jobs and no money to pay for even the necessities of life. And tragically as the cost of living keeps going up, the standard of living which has been our great pride keeps going down.

The people have not created this disaster in our economy; the federal government has. It has overspent, overestimated, and over regulated. It has failed to deliver services within the revenues it should be allowed to raise from taxes. In the thirty-four years since the end of World War II, it has spent 448 billion dollars more than it has collection in taxes—448 billion dollars of printing press money, which has made every dollar you earn worth less and less. At the same time, the

How the Seventies Changed America

RONALD REAGAN'S ANNOUNCEMENT FOR PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDACY

— CONTINUED —

federal government has cynically told us that high taxes on business will in some way “solve” the problem and allow the average taxpayer to pay less. Well, business is not a taxpayer, it is a tax collector. Business has to pass its tax burden on to the customer as part of the cost of doing business. You and I pay the taxes imposed on business every time we go to the store. Only people pay taxes and it is political demagoguery or economic illiteracy to try and tell us otherwise.

The key to restoring the health of the economy lies in cutting taxes. At the same time, we need to get the waste out of federal spending. This does not mean sacrificing essential services, nor do we need to destroy the system of benefits which flow to the poor, the elderly, the sick and the handicapped. We have long since committed ourselves, as a people, to help those among us who cannot take care of themselves. But the federal government has proven to be the costliest and most inefficient provider of such help we could possibly have.

We must put an end to the arrogance of a federal establishment which accepts no blame for our condition, cannot be relied upon to give us a fair estimate of our situation and utterly refuses to live within its means. I will not accept the supposed “wisdom” which has it that the federal bureaucracy has become so powerful that it can no longer be changed or controlled by any administration. As President I would use every power at my command to make

the federal establishment respond to the will and the collective wishes of the people.

We must force the entire federal bureaucracy to live in the real world of reduced spending, streamlined functions and accountability to the people it serves. We must review the functions of the federal government to determine which of those are the proper province of levels of government closer to the people.

The 10th article of the Bill of Rights is explicit in pointing out

that the federal government should do only those things specifically called for in the Constitution. All others shall remain with the states or the people. We haven't been observing that 10th article of late. The federal government has taken on functions it was never intended to perform and which it does not perform well. There should be a planned, orderly transfer of such functions to states and communities and a

transfer with them of the sources of taxation to pay for them.

The savings in administrative would be considerable and certainly there would be increased efficiency and less bureaucracy.

By reducing federal tax rates where they discourage individual initiative—especially personal income tax rates—we can restore incentives, invite greater economic growth and at the same time help give us better government instead of bigger government. ❖

Ronald Reagan campaigning with Nancy Reagan in Columbia, South Carolina, November 1980, center.



How the Seventies Changed America

TOP 10 HISTORICAL EVENTS OF THE 1970's

<http://www.examiner.com/article/top-10-historical-events-of-the-1970s>

Top 10 Historical Events of the 1970s

The seventies remains the worst decade since World War II. Many of its events still reverberate to this day. The American culture war hit a fever pitch with Vietnam and Watergate. The seeds of Soviet defeat were laid during the seventies at Helsinki and in Afghanistan. Arab terrorism emerged to plague Israel and the west. Here are the top 10 historical events of the 1970s in chronological order:

1 Nixon's Foreign Policy (1972): Richard Nixon became the first American president to visit China. Nixon opened the communist nation to American trade and reopened diplomatic relations. This isolated the Soviet Union. As a result, the Soviets began to bargain with the United States. Both sides entered into a new era of agreement and peaceful coexistence known as Détente.

2 The Munich Massacre (1972): Arab terrorists with ties to Yasser Arafat murdered the 1972 Israeli Olympic team. Although terrorists had struck before, they had never committed mass murder. This signaled the birth of the scourge of terrorism.

3 Paris Peace Accords (1973): While

negotiating with China and the Soviet Union, Nixon brought an end to the Vietnam War. The North Vietnamese refused to negotiate until they realized Nixon was going to be around another four years. After Nixon's re-election, North Vietnam negotiated for real for the first time and U.S. involvement came to an end in 1973. For his efforts, Dr. Henry Kissinger won the Nobel Peace Prize. The war killed 58,000 Americans and tore the country apart.

4 The Yom Kippur War (1973): Egypt and Syria launched a surprise attack on Israel. This was the fourth major war between the Arabs and Israelis. The Arabs hoped to end Israel's existence. At first, the Arab armies made dramatic progress. However, Israel rallied to defeat them once again. Meanwhile, the US



Nixon Resigns, 1974

and USSR almost came to blows over the conflict. Both moved quickly to resupply the combatants. The Soviets threatened intervention on the Arab side. Henry Kissinger made it known, on no uncertain terms, that Soviet intervention meant World War III.

5 Nixon Resigns (1974): In 1972, White House operatives bugged Democratic Headquarters. A White House bugging political opponents was nothing new. Nixon's 1968

campaign was bugged. However, the public did not know this. When the story broke, Nixon moved to cover it up. The cover-up made matters worse. Eventually, the president resigned rather than face impeachment.

6 Helsinki Accords (1975): Thirty-five nations including the United States and Soviet Union signed an agreement guaranteeing human rights and fundamental freedoms. Soviet Premier Leonid

How the Seventies Changed America

TOP 10 HISTORICAL EVENTS OF THE 1970's

— CONTINUED —



Iranian Revolution, 1979

Brezhnev signed the accord without a second thought. However, the agreement inspired Eastern Europeans. They began to agitate for freedom and independence. Solidarity in Poland is the best example.

7 Camp David Accords (1978): American President Jimmy Carter hosted Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin for peace talks at Camp David. After much haggling and a near total breakdown of talks, Begin and Sadat came to an agreement. Egypt agreed to recognize Israel and its right to exist. Israel agreed in principle to surrender land for peace. Begin and Sadat won the Nobel Peace Prize. Sadat would be assassinated for his efforts. However, it set a precedent. Peace is possible. However, the Arabs need to be willing partners in peace.

8 Iranian Revolution (1979): The Shah ruled Iran with an iron fist. His secret police terrorized the populace. In 1978, Iranians began to demonstrate against his regime. By December, the Shah lost control. He left the country in January, 1979. The government fell in February as Islamic militants defeated the Shah's forces. On April 1, 1979, the Iranian Revolution's spiritual leader, the Ayatollah Khomeini, became the supreme leader. The rebels created a theocracy. In November, 1979, the Iranians kidnapped American embassy workers and held them for 444 days. It was America's first look at Islamic extremism. In the wake of the revolution, Iran has become a state sponsor of terrorism and has waged a proxy war on Israel and the United States. In 1980, Saddam Hussein tried to do the world a favor and remove the regime. However, his

incompetence led to an eight year conflict which left Iraq in massive debt. Hussein invaded Kuwait to pay off his debt. That triggered a chain of events leading to two wars with America and Saddam Hussein's execution.

9 USSR invades Afghanistan (1979):

The Afghan government faced an insurrection. They signed a treaty in late 1978 allowing the USSR to intervene if necessary. In April 1979, the Afghan government requested Soviet aid. The Soviets sent some aid, but resisted full scale military assistance until December. On December 27, 1979, the Soviets invaded. They stayed for nearly ten years. The war drained the Soviet Union economically and militarily. The United States provided the rebels with weapons and supplies. Afghanistan became a killing ground. The Soviets pulled out in 1989 having lost the war. However, the Afghan Civil War continued until the Taliban took over in 1996. The Soviets suffered 50,000 casualties including over 14,000 killed.

10 Energy Crisis and Economic Collapse (1979):

In 1973, OPEC launched an oil embargo which severely damaged western economies. People began talking about energy conservation. In 1979,

an energy crisis struck. President Carter initiated price controls and a "windfall profit tax." Gas prices shot up. Later, Carter gave his malaise speech. Most Americans felt the president was scolding them and the speech fell flat.

As a result of the energy crisis, government economic policy, worldwide economic conditions, and the cost of the welfare state, the American economy collapsed. The country faced double-digit inflation and unemployment. Interest rates soared over 20%. European nations faced similar problems. Government spending and economic policy caused this downturn. Meanwhile, the Soviets continued to expand leading people to question whether or not capitalism and democracy could survive in the modern world. The economic downturn led to the rise of Margaret Thatcher in Britain and Ronald Reagan in America. ❌



Soviet infantry members at the time of deployment, 1979