

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

September 8, 1974

Dear Mr. President:

Without doubt this is the most difficult decision I ever have had to make. I cannot find words to adequately express my respect and admiration for you over the many years of our friendship and my belief that you could heal the wounds and unite our country in this most critical time in our nation's history. Words also cannot convey my appreciation for the opportunity to serve on your staff during the transitional days of your Presidency and for the confidence and faith you placed in me in that regard. The Press Office has been restructured along professional lines. Its staff, from Deputy Press Secretary John W. Hushen down the line, is competent and dedicated and comprises loyal employees who have given unstintingly of their time and talents.

So it is with great regret, after long soul-searching, that I must inform you that I cannot in good conscience support your decision to pardon former President Nixon even before he has been charged with the commission of any crime. As your spokesman, I do not know how I could credibly defend that action in the absence of a like decision to grant absolute pardon to the young men who evaded Vietnam military service as a matter of conscience and the absence of pardons for former aides and associates of Mr. Nixon who have been charged with crimes--and imprisoned--stemming from the same Watergate situation. These are also men whose reputations and families have been grievously injured. Try as I can, it is impossible to conclude that the former President is more deserving of mercy than persons of lesser station in life whose offenses have had far less effect on our national wellbeing.

Thus it is with a heavy heart that I hereby tender my resignation as Press Secretary to the President, effective today. My prayers nonetheless remain with you, sir.

Sincerely,

*Jerald F. terHorst*

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