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# under analysis

BY THE LEVISON GROUP

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## Once the Dust Has Settled Charles S. Kramer

**The last campaign is the campaign for history. It is a march upon which we -- every woman, man and child -- embark both consciously and unconsciously, from early in life through our waning hours. It is the campaign comprised of the steps taken to shape how we will be remembered. They are steps which cannot, and should not, be left to others. They are steps which we must select with care. A person's reputation, after all, is a fragile thing and, once we are gone, we are unable to argue about it with much success.**

**--Sarah C. Remark--**

Sergeant Pepper filled the smokey tavern as I entered. JoJo stood quietly behind the decaying, dented, wooden bar, surveying the crowd. I approached, ordered a drink, then joined in her surreptitious glances as she dutifully poured the elixir. It had been some time since I'd joined the midnight revelry. I wondered whether the passage of time had altered the way I viewed my friends.

The Tavern's bar, contrasted by the modern, compact disc-playing, juke box in the corner, provided a context lost on most of the patrons. In one corner, Giradelle Robineau, a Parisienne contemplating a move to our country, quietly sipped a gin and tonic. Across the way, softballers, uniforms stained by the dirt of their games, replayed the events which had led to their losing record. Each was resigned to their place, though in their hearts

they "knew" their respective games should have ended differently. They rehashed, embellished and edited. Finally they decided, with the clarity of partial facts and hindsight, who was, in fact, to blame.

Outside, the full moon rose, its face simultaneously unyielding, unsympathetic and disturbingly romantic.

That morning, NBC's Today show had talked with a now unemployed security guard from our nation's capital. That noon, cable's CNN had interviewed a couple of plumbers. By midafternoon, the so-called "news" shows had slipped into discussions of events of years before.

In the Tavern, the talk was of politics; people spoke of the positions for which Perot may or may not stand.

Robineau approached the bar.

"It is quite a melee".

JoJo smiled her sardonic smile. "It's Wednesday," she noted. "Could be any Wednesday."

JoJo was right. She should not have been.

Man's first steps on the Moon. Kennedy's assassination. Nixon's resignation. Three events which remain imprinted in the collective mind of today's adults. We know where we were, what we were doing, and who we were with, when each transpired.

This past Wednesday was the twentieth anniversary of the Watergate break-in. Yet, it could have been any Wednesday. History has begun to filter the events of that troubled time and it is becoming clear that, as the years progress and the dust settles,

Richard Nixon's "difficulties" will soon be only a footnote in time. That may be a problem. The bigger problem, however, may be that few people will care.

Some believe that our elected officials' abuse of their positions stems from the traditional American abhorrence of governmental intrusion into private affairs. We don't pry into our leaders' daily activities to ensure they will continue to afford us the same courtesy.

Others believe we turn a blind eye to governmental conduct not out of fear of governmental intrusion, but out of misplaced trust. We don't press our leaders for the simple reason that we believe or hope that oversight is unnecessary.

Yet whether it is fear, trust, or some other unidentified factor, the result is the same. Power corrupts and abuses occur. Then, when that happens, we do not hold our elected officials accountable. The abuses continue. Ultimately, we all suffer.

It is time to clean up America's government and it is time to care. We don't need to overhaul the system. We don't need to search for an "unpolitician" and we don't need to comb the backwoods for a true outsider. We just need to read our history books and speak up. It's not too late to bring accountability back into style. All we need to do is take the time to be informed and to act. An eighty percent voter turnout on election days would change the face of America forever. It would also assure past and future Nixons their rightful place in history.

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