

# The Question: What Do You Think of Ford's Pardon of Nixon?

By JOHN STAPLETON and WILLIAM HEFFERNAN

## The Inquiring Fotographer

**Malcolm R. Rudolph, Washington, D. C., investment banker:** "I feel relieved that President Ford has taken this action. His unconditional pardon of Richard Nixon will benefit the U. S. greatly and history will show that it was the right thing to do."

**Edward Bauml, 47th St., Brooklyn, college student-part-time taxi-driver:** "It completely disproves the concept of equal justice before the law. If Nixon's subordinates continue to be convicted and sentenced to jail, Nixon should not have been pardoned. But Nixon selected Ford as his vice-president and Ford is indebted to him."

**Martha Velez, executive secretary:** "Initially, I felt that Nixon should get what was coming to him, but by giving him a pardon, President Ford is getting Watergate out of the way. If amnesty is given to Nixon's aides, Watergate can be left behind. Nixon won't be unpunished. He must answer to his conscience and to God."

**Roy Wilkins, executive director NAACP:** "I condemn President Ford's full and complete pardon of former President Nixon because the law has not taken its full and complete course. I now urge that there be an immediate review of all less than honorable discharges given those who served in Vietnam and full, unconditional amnesty for those who failed to serve in that war, due to the special treatment given to the former President."

**Cohen Aharon, Astoria, Queens, salesman:** "Ford acted properly. Richard Nixon had many accomplishments in office and he did much for the U.S. in foreign relations. The good he did outweighs the wrong. I'm from Israel and I know what Nixon did for Israel. He is entitled to leniency now that he is a private citizen again."

**Louis J. Clark, Pawling, N. Y., computer operations:** "It was wrong for President Ford to treat Nixon differently from anyone else. If I did what he did, I'd get about 20 years. Ford also said Nixon couldn't get a fair trial. I disagree. A lot of people feel sorry for him and I think any American jury would judge him fairly and impartially."

**Mrs. Christina Galt, book-binder:** "What he has done by pardoning Richard Nixon is to harm our system of equal justice. When a man like Nixon commits crimes and gets away with it, why should his subordinates go to jail? Ford seems like a nice man, but after this, he is about as believable as Nixon. Ford said he'd let justice take its course with Nixon and he went back on his word."

**Telford Taylor, Columbia law professor and former chief prosecutor at the Nuremberg war crime trials:** "I'm afraid this decision will have a very adverse effect on the Watergate jurors, now that that head man has been pardoned. It will work, I'm afraid, much in the same way as with the My Lai jurors, who, realizing that the officers involved would not be convicted, refused to convict the enlisted men."

**Rina Marie Carbone, college student:** "It was a slap in the face to the American people. It seems to me President Ford is making fools out of us by saying he knows Nixon did wrong but he wants to pardon him anyway. This seems like a deal that's been made under the table."

**Irving Anker, Chancellor New York City School System:** "As an educator I consider it, in addition to the whole Watergate matter, a situation that our students must study as a preparation for citizenship and I will ask that it be included in all social study classes. To do otherwise could end support to the all too common belief that everyone in our government is on the take."

**Arthur J. Jackson, Springfield Gardens, Queens, supervisor:** "President Ford has acted from the courage of his convictions, but I disagree with his judgement. I feel like Mr. TerHorst who resigned as presidential press secretary after Nixon's pardon. I think this pardon should spur Congress to carry through the impeachment process so the American people will have all the facts about Watergate."

**Marc Spiro, Fifth Ave., retired:** "President Ford's action is a little premature. Since Richard Nixon has not been convicted of any crime and since he has confessed no criminal act, I can't understand why he needs a pardon. A pardon would be okay if he were convicted or had confessed to a crime."

**George S. Freeth, Seaford, L.I., engineering supervisor:** "It stinks. If a man did wrong, he should be punished like anyone else. There was no over-riding reason why Nixon should go scot free, and I voted for him and backed him until it became apparent that he was involved in the coverup. Nixon should be punished for deceiving us about Watergate for years."

**Leon J. Berry, Riverside Drive, retired:** "What Ford has done is not in line of our concept of justice. It is premature to give Nixon an absolute pardon before any specific charges have been made and a trial held. Richard Nixon has never admitted making anything but mistakes concerning Watergate. You don't pardon someone for mistakes."

**John Lindsay:** "It is very depressing that Washington is behaving as though Watergate never happened. We've always known that there was a double or triple standard of justice in our country, but to have the top governmental official place his imprimatur on it is very sad-denning. The President must uphold the concept of equal justice for all. He failed in this instance, I'm afraid."

**Cyrus Vance, president New York City Bar Association:** "Our government is founded on the principle of equal justice for all. Historically, the power to pardon has been exercised only if there has been a finding of guilt and after a full, fair and open trial. The power to pardon is a sacred trust to be used only in the rare circumstance that full justice requires that it be tempered with mercy. I feel President Ford acted prematurely and unwisely."

**Mrs. Hattie Squire, service specialist:** "It didn't make President Ford look too good in my eyes. I don't think as highly of him as I did when he first took office. Now that he has let Nixon go, he will have to let the others go if he means what he says when he talks about equal justice before the law."

**James Leff, Supreme Court Justice, City of New York:** "I don't feel it is possible to pardon an innocent man. If President Ford offered me a pardon before I was accused of anything, I'd be insulted. Since he was never charged with anything, former President Nixon, by accepting a pardon, acknowledges guilt."

**Nancy Bischoff, market data technician:** "I don't think the pardon was a good idea. What really annoys me is that many of Nixon's subordinates have served time in jail or are under indictment for engaging in the Watergate coverup. This pardon is no way to teach the youth of the country not to break the law."

**Theodore Kheel, mediator and lawyer:** "I take a dim view of it. There is a confusion in thinking. I don't think any sensible person would want to see Richard Nixon in jail. But President Ford issued the proper statement last August, when he said he reserved the right to issue a pardon, but could not do so because no action had been taken. He then urged the special prosecutor to move ahead. Now he has reserved himself and created a cloud of confusion."

**Michele Ratliff, administrative assistant:** "I'll be happy with President Ford's 'full, free and absolute' pardon of Richard Nixon if he also grants unconditional amnesty to those who fled the country to avoid the draft."

**Stephen P. Lawrik, Staten Island, engineering associate:** "President Ford did right. Richard Nixon has been punished enough simply by having to step down from the White House. He has been a politician most of his life and he is now out of politics forever. However, since Nixon has been pardoned, his subordinates deserve the same consideration."

**Robert Moses:** "I believe President Ford's pardon of President Nixon was constitutional, courageous, timely and charitable; that it was in the American tradition and that it will appeal to the majority of our people."

**Sonny Mathis, Philadelphia, Pa., executive chauffeur:** "It was wrong. I want to know what was on those tapes. If Nixon isn't tried in court, the contents of the tapes will never be disclosed. Nixon got off pretty easily. He resigned before being impeached and was pardoned before he was tried. If I drove somebody's car one block, I'd get 10 years."

**Rabbi Alexander Schindler, president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations:** "The pardon would have been fully acceptable if it had come after legal processes had reached their conclusions. But under the circumstances the act will deepen the cynicism of our citizenry and their conviction that there are, indeed, two laws in the land, one for the lowly and one for those who rule on high."

**Mrs. Kay Mulstay, office worker:** "I agree with President Ford's action 100%. To my way of thinking, it would be a terrible thing to imprison an ex-President. Think of the effect on children of future generations. Nixon did wrong, but he has been punished enough. President Ford found it within himself to be charitable and it is to his credit."

**Ewald Nyquist, New York State Education Commissioner:** "I would hope every secondary school will include, in its social studies curriculum, all aspects of Watergate and its aftermath, including the pardon granted Nixon and the continuing trials of all his subordinates."

**Mrs. DeLois Bordon, account specialist:** "Outrageous. President Ford is saying that a former President is beyond punishment and the law. What about people who have been sentenced to die because of crimes? What about those in Washington who operated under Nixon's orders?"

The "Crime in Suburbia" series will resume tomorrow.