

AUTHOR'S NOTE

This book is a portrait—not a black-and-white photograph—of five years of my life. It represents my best effort to paint what I saw and reproduce what I heard. I have included detail, texture, tone, to make this history more vivid—though, I trust, no prettier. I prepared for the writing of *Blind Ambition* the same way I prepared to testify before the Ervin Committee, before the special prosecutors, and in the cover-up trial. But in the book I have included dialogue and enclosed it in quotation marks, whereas in my testimony I deliberately refrained from dramatizing the events I was relating.

While many White House conversations were taped, many were not. To reconstruct what occurred, I reviewed an enormous number of documents as well as my own testimony. Wherever possible, I spoke to others who were present with me during discussions, or I talked to people to whom I'd related conversations shortly after they took place, and I referred to notes I had kept. I have also, of course, relied on my memory in this account of my experiences in the White House, and while I do not claim to report the dialogues verbatim, I vouch for their essential accuracy. To borrow my lawyer's phrase: "I'm ready to get on the box"—take a lie-detector test.

A final matter of importance. I have often read authors' acknowledgments, but I never before quite realized what they were saying. Now

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I do, and it is not merely a gesture when I offer thanks to all those who helped with this book. I sincerely thank Marcia Nassiter and David Obst for their early encouragement; Estelle Oppenheim and Marie Ralphs for typing and retyping many drafts; Patty Firestone and Hays Gorey for critical readings and helpful suggestions; Richard Snyder, Sophie Sorkin, Vera Schneider, Harriet Ripinsky, David Nettles, Frank Metz, Joanna Ekman and the staff of Simon and Schuster for their enthusiastic and professional support; Taylor Branch for his talented assistance and patient tutoring; and Alice Mayhew, my editor, for guiding—more truly, forcefully but thoughtfully driving—the book to completion.

JOHN DEAN

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