

Though campaign funds come from everywhere, Simmons Fentress is the central point of accounting—or non-accounting. There, the sensitive, secretive nature of political financing in this election year puts a strain on journalistic patience, stamina—and eyes. “You feel like a dentist touching a raw nerve,” says Correspondent Hays Gorey. “One Republican source and friend, hearing the proposed topic for an interview, said, ‘I’m going to hang up now.’ I promised not to mention the Watergate, and he gave me two minutes.” Gorey’s colleague, Simmons Fentress, found the McGovern people more willing to talk about the delicate matter of money. Still, he says, it “is not the kind of story where one person or three or even three dozen will tell you what you want to know. So you work up bits and pieces.”

STEVE NORTHUP



FENTRESS & GOREY

your eyeballs spin like a slot machine. Little men with sledgehammers pound away at your temples.”

Iker endured nonetheless, and his findings contributed to the story written by Associate Editor Ed Magnuson, the author of 33 previous TIME covers. “Perhaps the hardest part of writing this story was keeping my own indignation in check,” says Magnuson. “I’m outraged when someone jumps the line in front of a theater; the big campaign contributors are jumping the line on a national scale.”

Magnuson’s introduction to political financing came 23 years ago, during his undergraduate days at the University of Minnesota. As a special project for a course in political science, he spent an academic year closely following one candidate for the Minnesota legislature. “Over many months,” Magnuson recalls, “I watched the pressures on him mount from special-interest groups and potential contributors.” As a reporter and writer, Magnuson has been able to watch many other politicians since then. “Nothing seems to have changed,” he concludes, “except that the money and the potential reward for both donor and recipient have grown greater.”

Ralph P. Davidson

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