

American history alongside the quill pen and recorded tapes. As Russo said on the stand, "It's an honor to have Xeroxed the Pentagon Papers."

These papers brought dramatically to our attention how central photocopying has become in the conduct of

public affairs. "Damn near everything I handled was Xeroxed or duplicated," recalls former presidential press secretary Gerald Warren. "When you're working in the White House, it's evident that if you write something there's a good chance of its being circulated.

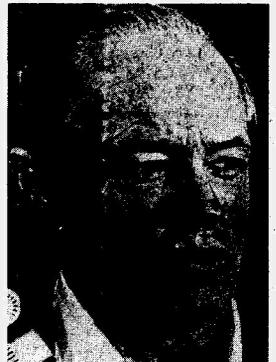
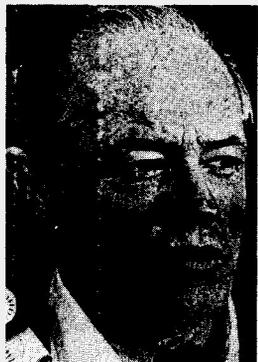
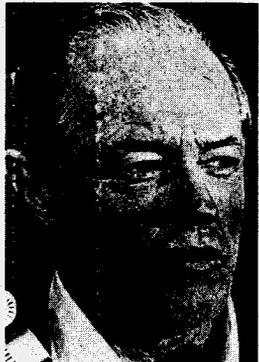
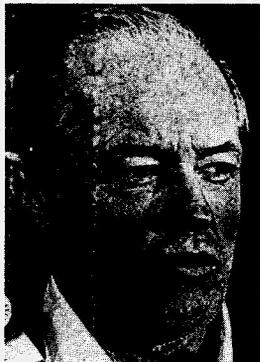
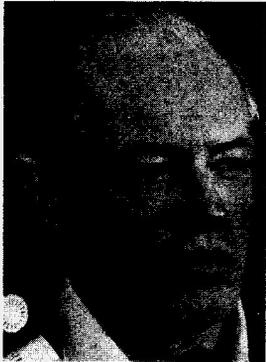
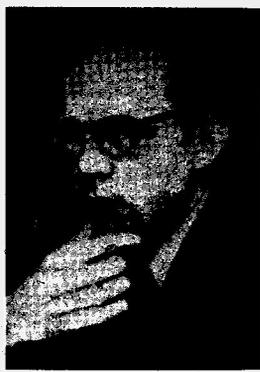
I became cognizant of not putting my name on anything without expecting it to be circulated. *Anything.*"

Over a glass ashtray etched with Richard Nixon's name in his *San Diego Union* editor's office, Warren brought up William Safire's *Before the Fall* to illustrate his point. "Where would that book be without the Xerox?"

he asks. "With all its memos and so forth." Warren doesn't recall feeling surrounded by humming Xerox machines at the White House, but once the trickle of leaks became a flood, he was forced to conclude that "they were certainly humming someplace."

Gerald Warren doubts that the absence of Xerox machines would have stanchd White House leaks. Those who wanted to share White House documents would have found other means. But





The White House Xerox machine helped Jack Anderson (center) get scoops and John Dean and Howard Hunt get jail terms.

would carbon copies have had the same clout? Or hand-written notes? Or excerpts from documents whispered over the phone?

Would the Pentagon Papers have swung as much weight retyped by a pool of stenographers?

Xerox copies speak with authority. They're like instant replay compared with a referee's memory. "You just have a little more secure feeling about them," says Les Whitten, Jack Anderson's associate, of the photocopies flowing through their office. "If you just have something typed out, you have no idea if it's authentic or not. But if you get a Xerox, at least it's on letterhead and you can check the typing against the typing that comes from that particular office."

Whitten recalls one case in which they hired an expert to match the type-

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face of a Xeroxed document that incriminated a banker with a typewriter in his office. They then took this document and waved it in the banker's face. He wept.

During 25 years as a reporter, Whitten says, he's seen a direct correlation between the increase in document-leaking and the spread of Xerography. He's sure this is no coincidence. Before Xerox, Whitten points out, someone with a document to leak had limited options: photostating, photography, copying by hand, taking carbons or taking the original. "All of these things are difficult to do," says Whitten. "Now, if somebody has a document that should be exposed in the public interest, all he has to do is flip it through a Xerox machine and send us a copy."

Like the guy at the State Department who once Xeroxed 99 classified documents for Whitten in a lunch hour. Or all the people at Nixon's White House who sent Jack Anderson gift packets of Xeroxed memos and things. "I think it

became almost a national sport," Whitten says of these gifts, "for people over there to reach into files—particularly files they couldn't get caught reaching into; it might belong to the fellow next-door—and burn off a copy to send us."

Nixon was compelled to stop this Xerographic insurrection. Guards were posted at the White House copying machines. And John Dean had his Xerox privileges taken away. (They were later restored by a judge.)

The dirty tricksters would have been helpless without Xerox. Howard Hunt forged cables on a White House machine, and Gordon Liddy copied McGovern stationery on a machine rented by the Committee to Reelect the President.

But he who lives by the Xerox can also die by the Xerox. When Nixon finally was pulled down, it was in part by the weight of photocopied evidence against him. Efficient managers that they were, Nixon's men made and distributed multiple copies of their memos. So when the

special prosecutor's staff couldn't find a memo they were looking for in A's file, all they had to do was look for a "Xerox in B's file, or C's. In the process, they would sometimes find copies of memos they didn't even know existed. A former member of the special prosecutor's office calls such Xeroxed evidence "indispensable" to his case. He points out that the first piece of equipment his office acquired was a Xerox machine. They made constant use of it.

(In *How the Good Guys Finally Won*, Jimmy Breslin says the notebooks alone of Rodino committee members consisted of 1.5 million Xeroxed pages. Such bulk forced the committee to use expensive bond paper that collated more easily. At one point, Peter Rodino himself was pressed into Xeroxing late in the night.)

The press covering Watergate was also dependent on the power of photocopies. Carl Bernstein entered the case with Xeroxed notes that had originally been taken by a reporter at the break-in scene. He and Woodward then developed their story with the help of such photocopied evidence as canceled checks and telephone records. When the two were told of Haldeman and Ehrlichman's resignation, they didn't believe their ears. They believed it only after seeing

One does not say, "Let's Pitney Bowes that"

Xeroxed resignation letters, they wrote in *All the President's Men*, because "that made it real."

During the Ervin committee hearings, even television newsmen on the scene were often at the mercy of Xerox. Trying desperately to fill air time one afternoon while reporter Carl Stern waited for the White House enemies list to be copied so he could read it on the air, NBC's John Chancellor was reduced to muttering that "the world seems to hinge on Xerox machines these days."

It's hard to keep in mind how recent this truth is. Just 15 years ago the Xerox Corporation introduced the first copier that could reproduce originals clearly, with a dry process and on ordinary paper. By now the term *Xerox* has grown synonymous not just with photocopying but with copying of any kind. "His second novel was just a Xerox of the first," we'll say, or, "The twins were Xerox copies of each other."

Long before Xerox, there was

photostatting, a direct camera-copying process in use since the turn of the century. When it was reported recently that Jack Kennedy contributed to Richard Nixon's 1950 Senate campaign, a former Nixon campaign aide moaned, "We sure could have used a photostat of that check."

After a variety of chemical processes were found wanting in the early Fifties, 3M introduced its Thermofax machine in 1955. This produced legible copies quickly on crackly, brown-orange paper. Jack Anderson's source would say in 1972 that the copies of Thomas Eagleton's alleged drunk-driving record he claimed to have seen were Thermofaxed. Les Whitten recalls the rising tide of press leaks in general beginning a couple of decades ago on "these strangely colored orange pieces of paper." Thermofax copies have a branded look and "I'll burn you a copy" is a common idiom left over from this process' brief reign.

Today, of course, and for more than a decade, to copy is to Xerox. Although this field has grown crowded with competitors, many of whose machines are comparable to those of Xerox, one simply does not say, "Let's Pitney Bowes that," or, "How about running off a few 3Ms?"

The precipitous genericizing of its name has turned the Xerox Corporation into a media nag. In recent years, Xerox has pleaded with people not to use its name as a common noun, let alone a verb. This might only be a cynical ploy to encourage the practice, but there is cause for the company's concern. "Photostat," after all, began as a trademark, as did mimeograph, mineral oil, milk of magnesia, thermos bottle, linoleum, fiberglass, cellophane, nylon, aerosol, escalator, shredded wheat, kerosine, windbreaker and tabasco sauce. In a celebrated court case more than half a century ago, Judge Learned Hand took away Bayer's exclusive right to their "aspirin" trademark because usage of this term had grown so common. And so Xerox keeps on nagging.

This company's larger concern is to protect its dominant position in a continually expanding field. In 1975, an estimated 75 billion photocopies (or 350 per person) were made in the U. S., and the industry grossed about \$3 billion. These figures are double those of five years ago, and they are expected to double again by 1980. Though its dominance has slipped somewhat in recent years, Xerox still collects over half of all revenues for photocopying and 82 percent of all revenues from plain-paper

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copiers.*

Historian Daniel Boorstin (recently appointed librarian of congress) calls Xerography an influential shaper of this era, but one in need of chronicling. In *The Americans: The Democratic Experience*, Boorstin groups Xerox machines with Polaroid cameras, tape recorders and videotape as a source of repeatable experience, "making daily life into a world of mass-produced moments. Now almost anything that was seen or heard by anyone could also be seen or heard by countless unidentifiable others."

How you feel about this depends on where you stand. For the makers of carbon paper, Xerography is a horror. For the file cabinet industry, it's a boon. Xerox machines have helped the CIA with their letter-copying and made file-rifling easier for the FBI. Researchers love photocopying and newsletter publishers despise it.

Without question, photocopying has made us a less edited culture. Yet it has democratized the flow of information. Les Whitten calls Xerox machines "the greatest thing for the press since the First Amendment." But after having some of his administration's files liberated in this way, the late French President Georges Pompidou lamented photocopying as "a disease of our times."

The Freedom of Information Act would be meaningless without Xerox machines. Before the development of Xerography, gaining access to your FBI file, for example, would have meant traveling to Washington, trusting an agent's report of its contents or paying a fortune for photostats. Though some agencies have tried to discourage people from taking advantage of the act's provisions by overcharging for reproduction, a recent amendment requires such fees to reflect true cost. (Even so, the sons of Ethel and Julius Rosenberg not long ago were offered 953 pages of CIA material relating to their parents at \$14.85 a page and 29,900 pages of FBI data at 78¢ per page. These figures included a "search" fee that was later rescinded.)

Politicians can't exist without copies. No campaign today would be considered healthy without a Xerox at its heart firing instant press releases and returning the fire from opponents. Long after the 1972 presidential primaries had ended, Ed Muskie's biggest single unpaid

* Industry-wide photocopying statistics are difficult to compile and interpret. Data reported on this topic, for example, often apply to plain-paper copiers alone. Competition in the copying industry is cutthroat (including allegations of equipment sabotage by competitive sales reps), and producers are not always forthcoming with dependable information. Statistics used in this article were supplied primarily by Dr. William Coggs of Dataquest, Inc., an independent investment analysis firm in Palo Alto that collects data from photocopy users and is considered authoritative.

creditor was the Xerox Corporation.

Once in office, today's politician becomes, if anything, more dependent on photocopying and its aura. A generous Xerox budget and preferably one's own machine have become contemporary signs of political prestige comparable to a chauffeured limousine. This is true of government members in general. Former Health, Education and Welfare employee Robert Ellis Smith recalls wistfully the Xerox perks of that status: the daily news summary awaiting him in the morning; the right to make unlimited copies on a whim and the exciting clash of Xerox on Xerox. "I've seen times in meetings when a bureaucrat would lose a point," the lawyer recalls, "simply because he couldn't produce a Xerox to confirm it."

After leaving government, Smith worked in the American Civil Liberties Union's Washington office. When visiting government officials on ACLU business, he found "I'll make you a Xerox of that" to be a reflexive, almost ceremonial re-

One has become hooked on Xeroxing when reading the material no longer seems necessary before copying it

mark. "It's a form of payola," Smith explains. "A little token of esteem, a gift—the only kind a bureaucrat can give you. There's a whole ritual involved. Meetings open with the offering of coffee and close with the handing over of Xeroxes. In between, the bureaucrat is stacking things up on his desk. Just before you leave, he buzzes his secretary and hands her the pile, saying, 'Go Xerox this.' Then he gives them to you both as a present and as a signal that the meeting's ended."

A bureaucrat's nightmare is that some incriminating document will get caught in the machine's middle; just waiting to be flushed out by an enemy. Or that he will leave something important beneath the flap of a Xerox machine. When John Bartels was forced to resign as head of the Drug Enforcement Administration, one charge against him was that he had blocked an investigation of associates—an investigation he learned about only after a secretary found evidence of it left on a Xerox copier.

The main lesson bureaucrats have learned from Xerox machines is to stay

on the good side of their secretaries. Bear in mind that while the rest of us were interested in the Pentagon Papers primarily for *what* they revealed, bosses' stomachs everywhere turned at the thought of *how* they were revealed. "My God," was the instant reaction, "could such a thing happen to me?" "Who's the Ellsberg in my office?" "What about my secretary?"

Over the past several months, the American Medical Association has been suffering the consequences of Xeroxed leaks. Since June, the AMA has been severely embarrassed by a flow of internal documents to the outside world showing their collusion with drug companies and political activities inconsistent with nonprofit status. These photocopied documents were presumably being shared with the press by a doctor nicknamed "Sore Throat," who called to talk hoarsely with reporters. In fact, as the AMA announced after hiring a detective agency to help the search, the real leakers seem to have been three disgruntled secretaries with a grudge and a photocopy machine.

By now, a generation has grown up in the company of Xerox. The machine's use to us is second nature. "We call it Parkinson's law of copiers," explains Bill Coggs, of Dataquest, Inc., an independent investment analysis firm that collects data from photocopy users. "If a photocopier is there, people will find a way to use it."

Now that copies can be made for a dime at the laundromat, they've become a ubiquitous part of everyday life. It's hard to recall how we made copies of resumes, bills in dispute and party invitations complete with map before Xerox came along. (One prospective bride planned to Xerox thank-you notes in advance and distribute them to gift-givers at her wedding, rolled and tied with a yellow ribbon.)

As photocopying has become routine, headaches once limited to the executive suite have crept into our living rooms. The left-under-the-flap problem, for instance: At my local library they remember finding (and returning) an endorsed \$10,000 check left on their SCM machine. By the *Rolling Stone* account, one of Bill and Emily Harris' more panicky moments on the lam came when she left the original of a letter to his mom on a public photocopier. After hurrying back to find the letter gone, the SLA pair was sure their goose was cooked. But nothing ever came of it.

Less dramatic but more pervasive is the explosion of Xerox promiscuity: By one estimate, 25 percent of all copies

made are unnecessary, and some consider this figure conservative. Inside the office, tomorrow's efficiency experts will be attacking Xerox promiscuity with both slower copiers and fewer of them to cause longer lines and discourage profligate Xerography.

Office managers are Xerox politicking already. Who gets to use which machine how often has become a morale issue rivaling the length of coffee breaks. The awarding of Xerox keys and charge accounts are basic status delineators within any office, as is a secretary with enough clout to move to the head of photocopy lines.

On the other hand, no humiliation quite matches that of being the office Xerox schlemiel. This is the person for whom the machine just won't work. "It's awful," shudders one such unfortunate.

profiles the preoccupation with Xeroxing ("later on a stronger term will be needed") of an old clerk named Minkin. As public photocopy machines begin to make their appearance, Minkin begins slowly, copying an occasional letter for which he's neglected to make a carbon. Then the clerk decides more copies are necessary. "A voluminous letter writer Minkin was not," Liben writes, "but it became apparent to him that copies should be held of *all* letters written. Say the response to a letter is based on a misunderstanding of what was in that letter. You must quote your own letter to make clear the basis of the misunderstanding. If you don't have the letter, you must quote from memory. . . the kind of people who create misunderstandings would probably not accept your memoried version against what they had in writing. They

are many who are even addicted. Like my friend Bob Frankel. Bob calls Xerox "my favorite piece of machinery."

"I love Xerox machines," Bob admits, "and have for nine or ten years. Why, with a Xerox machine you can take any piece of paper in the world and make it your own." Frankel's Xerox fixation is exacerbated by living in Cambridge, a city so filled with junkies that every corner candy store seems to have a copying machine. Having dispensed with carbon paper entirely, Bob today copies any document of conceivable value. Sometimes he makes two copies, one to send home to Toledo. "You know," he explains, "just in case."

There are existential questions at issue here. In one sense, the need for copies is Cartesian logic amended. I Xerox, therefore I am.

But the essence of Xerox addiction is fear—fear for the loss of an original, especially to one's enemies. Copying can give marvelous expression to paranoia, justified and otherwise. While writing his book of CIA revelations, ex-agent Philip Agee stopped every 30 pages or so to Xerox these pages, which he then squirreled away in different parts of town. (Thomas Kiernan probably wishes he'd done the same with the only copy of his manuscript on Bebe Rebozo, which was recently stolen from the writer's apartment.)

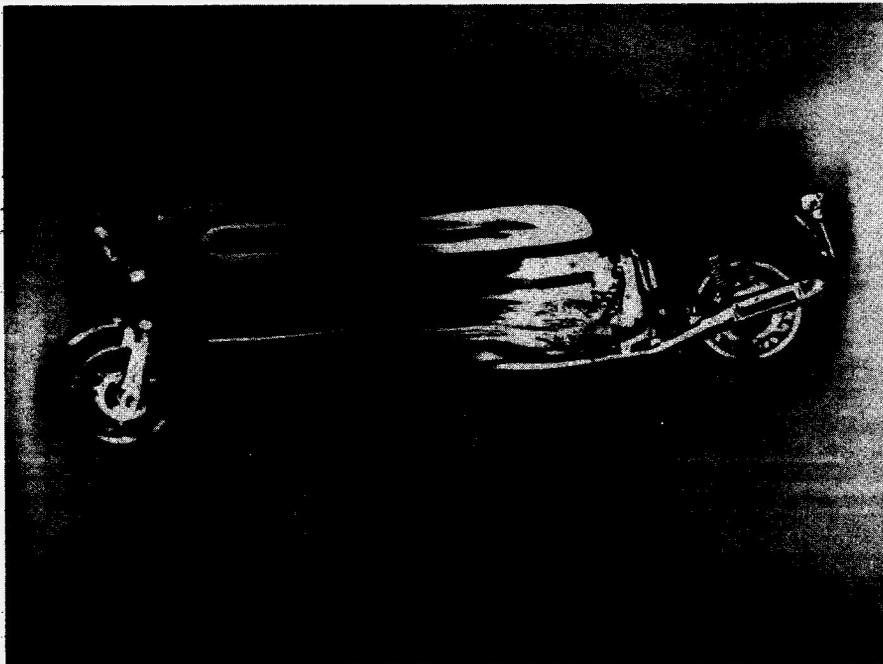
Fears don't have to be justified to warrant extra copies. For anyone manning a public station—desk sergeants, legal aid lawyers, receptionists—the wide-eyed unfortunates carrying smudged manila folders fat with photocopied evidence of the wrongs being done them have become a commonplace.

I was once doing some copying on the library's SCM when the man in line behind me commented that I seemed to have a system. Before I could answer, a young guy in line rolled his eyes and said, "You need a system. Your enemies have one."

He then looked to see what I was copying. It was *New York Times* index references to the Indian state of Sikkim. Printed on the same page was the heading "Slander." Pointing to this, the young man said, "Slander. Is that like what people are doing to me?"

He decided this index might be a good source for him and had me steer him to where they were shelved. When I later returned to the photocopy machine, my new friend had a tall stack of *New York Times* indices beside him. "Boy," he said, pressing one down on the glass plate. "I sure am glad you put me onto this. It's really going to help my court

XEROX ART BY DENNIS WHEELER



Xerography, once strictly a help for business, has now become a tool for artists.

"It's begun to affect my image of myself." Says another: "You have the feeling it's laying there waiting for you. Here comes Rice. What should I hit him with today? Faulty feeder? Blotchy toner? Paper jammed in the rollers? I hate the damned thing, but we're absolutely dependent on it."

But what about those of us left to the mercy of our unchaperoned passions, those of us who don't hate it, but love it? Per-copy costs are going down, not up. In a competitive setting such as university towns, the 3¢ copy has arrived. How are we to resist such temptation?

Make no mistake: What begins as a simple pleasure, the occasional Xerox or two, can quickly become an obsession—a craving for copies. Meyer Liben's short story "Minkin Copying"

could even send you a copy of your own letter to prove that your memory was not absolutely accurate. It was on the basis of this kind of thinking that Minkin decided to xerox *all* the letters he mailed."

Minkin begins to see the need for copies where he'd seen none before: of checks, of bills, of instructions to the laundryman in case they're not properly carried out. So he buys his own machine. Finally, "surrounded by the copies of what goes out to the alien, even menacing world, he feels a kind of security, for all misunderstandings, all lies and slanders can be effectively rebutted."

Such Xerox addiction may seem exotic. It is not. The need to make copies is no more bizarre than a sweet tooth. I suffer from it myself. My copying habit today is up to a kilo or so a week. There

case. You know they are. Everything has to be documented."

I looked more closely at what the man was copying. It was front covers of the twice-monthly index from the Watergate period. These covers consisted largely of pictures—of Nixon, Ehrlichman, Haldeman, Mitchell. "We're gonna have to get these guys," the copier told me with a knowing look. "The Nixons, the Rockefellers. Stealing all our money and never putting a penny back."

I asked how long he'd been engaged in documentation. Two weeks, was the response. The guy was thinking of buying his own machine, he added, since it was becoming necessary to copy "everything"—sometimes in duplicate or triplicate. He was even thinking of renting a safe deposit box to hold all his copies.

You never can tell, I said.

"That's right," the guy nodded, raising his eyebrows. "You never can tell."

A good rule of thumb is that one has become hooked on Xeroxing when reading the material no longer seems necessary before copying it. Again, this may sound out of the ordinary, but it isn't. After all, Kenneth Parkinson won acquittal from a charge of complicity in the Watergate cover-up by persuading a jury that he hadn't read an incriminating document—only Xeroxed it.

The problem time for a Xerox junkie comes after being cut off from a source of supply. A discharged employee told me of sneaking back to his old office in the dead of night just to whip off a few copies. Finally he got hold of himself and opened a charge account at the local copy center. After several weeks of running up a tab, he grew disgusted with himself and quit. Cold turkey. Went back to reading information instead of copying it, and taking notes by hand. Today, this man takes perverse pride in rarely resorting to Xerox. And he's found unexpected side benefits. Human contact, for example. "People now have to come see me for the original of information they want," he explains. "Before I would have just said, 'I'll Xerox it and stick it in the mail.'"

As with any addiction, a gentler tapering off is advisable in most cases. Because curing a need for copies isn't just a matter of cutting off supply. This can touch off what one executive calls "Xerox anger." A craving for copies, he's found, quickly turns to rage if frustrated.

This executive was part of a human relations seminar at the Menninger Foundation in Topeka, Kansas. Menninger psychologist Layne Longfellow says the whole problem of Xerox

addiction can be a lively topic for discussion among corporate and government officials he leads in such seminars. One participant described the conflict resulting when two colleagues clashed over "restrictive" and "permissive" approaches to Xeroxing. Another told in awe of the time some employees broke into the Xerox room on a weekend and made 10,000 copies.

Longfellow suspects that needs may be at work here other than the need for copies. Xeroxing, he points out, is a reproductive process. It has analogies to human reproduction. Like children, the products of this process carry the hope of immortality. With enough copies of your memos on file, surely *some* record will live on of your existence.

"This gets into the whole area of self-affirmation," adds Longfellow. "Because if you can make 14 copies of something, you're more certain about it. By God, it's documented! Before your very eyes. In multiple. And this way of affirming yourself can lead to addiction. Since

"It became like a lover. I put my body on the plate and did all these erotic things"

questions about the self-image are diminished, it becomes a need, a reliance on the machine to do it for you."

Dr. Longfellow also cites the opinion of a colleague, a psychiatrist, that overuse of the Xerox can be a sign of anal compulsion. "The whole issue of controlling one's bowels is the same as saving Xerox copies," he explains. "It puts out stacks of paper like the organism puts out feces. By collecting such paper—copies of everything—you can exert more control over yourself and people around you. It's like the old cartoon of the guy on the toilet saying, 'The job is never done till the paper work's done.'"

But Longfellow's favorite explanation of Xerox addiction is as an unconscious association with human reproduction—"especially when you need to stick something into the machine to make it work, a key, or a counter. Then think about how you start it up (especially one of those nice big ones). All you have to do is push the machine's button and it warms up, it hums, soft lights come on (nothing harsh). It literally glows, gets warm and will go as long as you want it to, then shut

itself off and wait for your touch to start up again." Longfellow chuckles at his unexpected power of metaphor.

"A Xerox," he concludes, "can be titillating."

Consider, in this light, the case of Barbara Smith. Smith, 43, is a Los Angeles artist who pioneered the use of Xerography as an art form. Today, there are many like her—particularly since color has been added to the process. But ten years ago, when Mrs. Smith rented a Xerox 914 to create pictures in black and white, she was virtually alone.

The artist installed this machine in her dining room. She and her husband (now ex-husband) ate elsewhere. Daily, for months, Mrs. Smith worked at her Xerox. She loved the quality of line it produced—like modern etching, but never predictable—always a little different from what you expected.

After 50,000 copies, her machine needed an overhaul. But this took three days, and the artist couldn't bear the thought of separation. "It became like a lover," she says today. "I put my body on the plate and did all these erotic things. I thought of interacting on it with my husband, but he wouldn't. So I did anyway. I did it without him. My lover was the machine."

After a year and a half, Mrs. Smith began to feel her relationship with the Xerox had grown peculiar. "It was controlling me," she explains. "It was insatiable. I was just a tool of it. It was making me do all these things."

So she quit. Just like that. Returned the machine to the Xerox Corporation. And though the artist still exhibits products of her Xerox period ("The harsh, grainy details of arms, flattened nose, breasts and folds of skin cast the individual one knew into a creature of almost monstrous intimacy," artist Allan Kaprow writes of her efforts), Smith has since moved on to other media.

But she remembers her 914 fondly, especially its bar of light moving beneath the glass like a green sun—casting a morning shadow on top, then none in the middle, like noon, and finally a shadow of twilight at the bottom. (She had no worry of harm because the light, despite contrary speculation, cannot affect your eyes or cause sterilization.)

Though now separated from it for several years, Mrs. Smith says she misses her machine. Perhaps, it was suggested, the machine might some day turn up on a junk heap for her to reclaim. Would that be something she'd like?

"I sure would," Mrs. Smith replies instantly. Then she paused. "I wonder what they do with their old machines?" ●