

Spoofing Spiro

Television newsmen last week were still viewing Vice President Agnew's attacks on the press with alarm, but one unelected elite—the humor columnists—was beginning to relax and enjoy it. "Boy, you guys have put me back in business," Art Buchwald told Administration Communications Director Herb Klein shortly after Agnew's Des Moines speech. "Where do I send the wine?"

In one column, Buchwald squelched rumors that Vice President Agnew was planning to dump Richard Nixon in 1972. "A spokesman for the Vice President," he wrote, "told me that Mr. Agnew was very satisfied with the job his President was doing and that he even intended to give him more responsibilities." In another, Buchwald declaimed against the "small elite group of men, no more than a dozen," who chose "to show the violence of the Purdue-Ohio State football game rather than the peaceful scenes on the sidelines. Why were their cameras constantly aimed at the confrontation between the two teams instead of showing us what was going on outside the stadium in the parking lot, where all was calm?"

Mean Northeasterners. Recalling stereotypical apologies for the Ole South, Russell Baker admitted that it is "true, as the Nixon Republicans assert, that the Northeast is not representative of the U.S." But "even the meanest Northeasterner has nothing against the conservative who knows his place. Many Northeasterners, in fact, grew up in the care of conservative mammies. Many also had conservative daddies." What's more, he added, we "eat at the same table with them."

In another column, Baker reported that "we are at NBC News headquarters in Provo, Utah. Chet Huntley's face is in the hands of the cosmeticians. They have massaged its familiar wrinkles and laugh lines into an expression of utter objectivity." Meanwhile in Biloxi, Miss., David Brinkley is having his eyebrows shaved so he can't raise them.

Art Hoppe of the *San Francisco Chronicle* went to the future tense. It is January 1971, and President Nixon has just assessed the state of the Union. "Well, Chet, do you have an instant analysis?" "Yes, I do, David. I'd say it was the most magnificent, glorious, stirring speech since the Gettysburg Address. I think my biggest thrill came when he said, 'I want to make one thing perfectly clear.' I always get a thrill when I realize the President's going to make one thing perfectly clear."