

If You Ask the Question, You Can't

By Art Buchwald Oct 6/1973

Capitol Punishment

One of the proposals G. Gordon Liddy is supposed to have made to the Committee for the Re-Election of the President was to hire call girls during the Democratic National Convention and moor them on a yacht off Miami Beach. Liddy's plan, according to Jeb Magruder, was to lure Democratic politicians on board and photograph them in compromising positions.

The plan was vetoed by John Mitchell as being too expensive, but it probably wouldn't have worked anyway.

I talked to several Democratic politicians who attended the convention in Miami Beach and they were appalled to think that anyone would believe that they would fall for such an obvious ploy.

One senator told me, "If we saw a yacht with a bevy of girl volunteers on board, we would have known right away it was one of theirs. Hell, we didn't even have enough money for bumper stickers."

An aide to one of the presidential candidates said, "We heard the Republicans were planning something like that so we gave instructions to our staff to stick only to each other."

"I've heard of some dirty political tricks in my time," a Southern politician told me, "but putting beautiful,

young, fresh, enticing, irresistible women at the disposal of the opposition party beats all. It is frightening to think that anyone in this country would use sex to pervert the great American political system. I hope we have learned a lesson from all of this, and that is when you try to buy an election with the bodies of voluptuous, breathtaking, willing women, you are making a mockery of the Constitution of the United States."

"Then," I said, "even if they had done it you would not have gotten involved?"

"I'm not saying that. If I saw a nice looking yacht with some attractive ladies on board and they waved to me, I might have stopped by for a drink just to be sociable. After all, it was a damn hot convention. But if one of those lovely things asked me to go below deck to see the cabins, I would have replied, 'I would love to, young lady, but unfortunately I have to go and vote for Scoop Jackson.'"

A White House correspondent said he didn't think the Liddy Plan would have succeeded without being exposed.

"Two hours after the yacht was moored, the word would have gone out that there was a hospitality suite

Afford the Answer

...serving more than drinks on the beach, and you would have had people standing in line all the way up to Fort Lauderdale. Somebody would have gotten suspicious and broken the story."

Another reason why he thought the plan would have failed is that the Liddy forces were so bad at electronics that they probably would have never been able to compromise the Democratic politicians on the first go-round. This meant the politicians would have to come back a second time, which for many of them would have been very inconvenient.

One young McGovern supporter told me that he had heard that the Committee for the Re-Election of the President was planning to provide girls free to Democratic officials, and he sought out Lawrence O'Brien, the Democratic National Committee chairman, for guidance.

All O'Brien told him was, "When the going gets tough, the tough get going."

Although the Liddy Plan was vetoed, I was curious as to what such an operation would have cost the Committee. So I sought out a madam who deals in luxury yachts. "How much would it cost to charter a yacht with, say, 10 girls on it?"

"If you have to ask," she said, "you can't afford it."

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