

## Capitol Punishment

# Four Snore Years

By Art Buchwald

"APATHY WINS IN LAND-SLIDE!" was the headline in Wednesday morning's newspapers.

I went to Apathy's hotel headquarters in hopes of interviewing the winner, but his aides said he was resting.

"Did he have a tough night?" I asked.

"No, he's always resting. He sleeps a lot."

Refusing to be put off, I sneaked up to his room and without knocking walked in. Apathy was lying on his bed in his underwear.

"I'm sorry to break in on you," I said apologetically.

Apathy yawned, "I couldn't care less."

"You apparently are the big winner in this election. How do you feel about it?"

"All right, I guess. I really didn't care if I won or not. Frankly, I don't feel any different now than I did before the race."

"That's interesting," I said writing very fast. "What made you enter the campaign in the first place?"

"I was drafted," Apathy said. "Early in the year the pollsters and pundits indicated there was tremendous grassroots support for Apathy in this country. It started when people suddenly realized they might have four more years of Nixon. Then McGovern was nominated in Miami and that put the clincher on it. People came to me and said, 'Apathy, this is your year.' Well, I didn't have anything else to do so I agreed to run."

"And you did well," I said. "Can you tell me a little about the strategy you used?"

"My strategy was not to do anything. I let McGovern campaign on radio, and I let Agnew and Shriver go all over the country. The more exposure they had the more Apathetic the country became. By Election Day I was 75 points ahead in the polls."

"But surely you did something

to lull the country into a false sense of complacency."

"I'm not being modest when I say I didn't make a speech, issue a statement or spend one cent on my campaign. But I got all the press. The columnists and the commentators kept talking about Apathy in this campaign every day. Wherever people gathered to discuss the election, Apathy was the first thing mentioned. Both parties were knocking themselves out for their candidates, but I was the one who got all the exposure."

"I imagine," I said, "you became very nervous when the Watergate bugging scandal broke."

"My staff panicked; they wanted me to do something about it. They were afraid the American people would lose their Apathy after that. But I just told them to sit tight. I knew it was impossible to get the American people shook up about anything anymore. And I was right. No matter what came out on the Watergate, the electorate stayed Apathetic, and I didn't lose a vote."

"Was there any time during the campaign when you felt you were in trouble?"

"The only time I had a scare was when technicians striking against CBS cut the cables before the New York Jets—Washington Redskins game on Sunday."

"For the first time everyone in the country was aroused and lost their Apathy and I was afraid they would remain infuriated until election Day. But CBS gave them all another football game to watch and everybody went back to sleep."

"Apparently you've been given a mandate by the American people. What do you intend to do with it?"

"Nothing," Apathy said. "If I did anything I'd just shake people up."

Mrs. Apathy came into the bedroom in her slip, drinking a can of beer.

"How does it feel to be the First Lady of the land?" I asked her.

She shrugged and took a sip from the can, "Beats the hell out of me."