

## Capitol Punishment

### Zounds!

### What Evil

### CREEPS

### In My

### Domain?

By Art Buchwald

The setting is the palace at Key Biscayne where Richard III has retired to contemplate his next move.

(Enter the Duke of Ziegler.)

Ziegler: My lord. . . .

Richard: Good news or bad news that thou com'st in so bluntly?

Ziegler: Bad news, my lord. Dean has fled to Maryland. Magruder sings in Virginia and the palace guard are confessing in chorus.

Richard: Zounds! I cannot tell if to depart in silence, or bitterly to speak in gross reproof. Yet so much is my poverty of spirit, so mighty and so many my defects, that I would rather hide me from my greatness. What say the citizens, dear Ziegler?

Ziegler: The citizens are numb, my lord, except for those who would impeach thy motives at the Water-gate.

Richard: They do me wrong and I will not endure it! Who is it that complains unto the king that I forsooth am stern and love them not? By the holy Graham, they love his grace but lightly that fill his ears with such dissentious rumors. A plague upon them all!

Ziegler: What shall I tell the citizens, my lord?

Richard: Since you will buckle fortune on my back, to bear her burden, wh'er I will or no, I must have patience to endure the load; but if black scandal or foul-faced reproach attend the sequel of this sordid affair, your mere enforcement shall acquittance me from all the impure blot's and stains thereof.

Zeigler: I will say, my lord, you have no comment.

(He exits.)

(Enter Baron Ehrlichman and Baron Haldeman, guarded by a lieutenant from the tower.)

Ehrlichman: My lord, we must depart perforce. Farewell.

Haldeman: And to that end we wish your lordship here t' avoid the censures of the carping world.

Richard: Well, your imprisonment shall not be long.

I will deliver you or else lie for you. Meantime have patience. Now I'll strive with troubled thoughts to take a nap, lest leaden slumber peise me down tomorrow. Farewell, dear Haldeman and Ehrlichman, you served me well, though you cannot serve me last.

(Ehrlichman and Haldeman exit. Richard goes to sleep.)

(Enter the ghost of the Earl of Muskie.)

Ghost of Muskie: Let me sit heavy on thy soul. Think how thou stab'd'st me in the prime of my career, at Manchester and other places too long to mention. Be cheerful, Richard, I shall forget you not.

(Enter the ghost of McGovern of Dakota.)

Ghost of McGovern: When I was mortal, by thee my anointed campaign was punched full of deadly holes. Think of me, dear Richard, virtuous and holy, when justice wields its blade. Live and flourish!

(The Ghosts vanish. Richard starts out of his dream.)

Richard: Alas, I am a villain. Yet I lie I am not. My conscience hath a thousand several tongues and every tongue brings in a several tale. And every tale condemns me for a villain, perjury, perjury in the highest degree!

(Enter the Duke of Rebozo.)

Richard: A horse! A horse. My kingdom for a horse!  
Rebozo: Withdraw, my lord. I will help you to a horse.

Richard: Slave, I have set my life upon a cast, and I will stand the hazard of the die. I have slain six crises in the past. Today shall be my seventh. A horse! A horse! My kingdom for a horse!

(Enter a messenger.)

Messenger: My gracious sovereign. . . .

Richard: Out with it! What had news now?

Messenger: The Duchess of Mitchell has called for your head.

Richard: Zounds! By the holy mother of Our Lord, his plot has gone too far!