

Capitol Punishment

Mr. President,

Quit Bugging Me

By Art Buchwald

The White House would have us believe that John Dean III, by himself and without aid, comfort or advice from anyone, conspired to activate the Watergate break-in and then cover it up so no one would ever know that people in President Nixon's Administration were involved. The way they make it sound Dean answered to nobody.

All right, let's raise that one up, the flagpole. President: John, Bob Haldeman just told me what a wonderful job you're doing.

Dean: Thank you, Mr. President. But frankly I don't think it was Bob's job to tell you anything.

President: I'm sorry about that, John. Tell me, just out of curiosity what have you been doing that Bob considers such a wonderful thing?

Dean: I'm not at liberty to tell you, Mr. President. It's very confidential.

President: But I'm the President of the United States. Shouldn't I know?

Dean: Mr. President, when it's time for you to know, I'll inform you. In the meantime, get off my back.

President: I didn't mean to offend you, John. I was just trying to get some information on a matter that will probably affect me sooner or later.

Dean: This is a security problem and, as your counsel, I cannot discuss it with you, Bob Haldeman, John Ehrlichman or anybody else. Now I'm very busy and if you have nothing more to say I'm going back to my office.

President: I didn't mean to take up your time, John. Could you give me a teensy weensy hint as to what you're working on?

Dean: Mr. President, you know very well I can't do that. If you don't feel I'm doing a good job, get yourself another lawyer.

President: I don't want another lawyer. I want you, John.

But you can't blame me for wanting to know what's going on around here.

Dean: Why don't you ask Haldeman if he's so smart.

Haldeman: Mr. President, all I know is John is doing a good job. I never asked him what he was doing.

President: Well, how do you know he's doing a good job then?

Haldeman: Just by the way he keeps his desk. He's probably one of the neatest men in the White House. I always know a man's doing a good job when he doesn't have any papers on his desk.

Dean: Oh yeah? Well keep your nose out of my office, Haldeman. I might have something in there I don't want you to see.

President: Please, men, no fighting. We're one happy family in the White House. Right?

Dean: I suppose so.

President: Let me ask you one more question. Are you absolutely sure, John, that there is nothing I should know concerning the people who work for me?

Dean: Boy, you never give up do you, Mr. President? Haldeman: If we thought you were going to get so upset, John, we never would have called you into the Oval Office.

Dean: I'm sorry. I guess I've been working too hard, what with covering up and . . .

President: Covering up?

Dean: You know what I mean. It gets cold at night in Alexandria and my wife always keeps telling me to cover up. Well, I'll see you later. (He exits).

Haldeman: He's the salt of the earth, Mr. President. I wish we had a hundred like him.

President: Send him an electric blanket as a gift from me. I don't want him to catch cold.