

Amnesty for One and All



Arthur Hoppe

AMNESTY! Call me a bleeding heart if you will, but I feel the only way this bitterly divided and confused country can become united once again is by granting total, unquestioned amnesty.

As former Attorney General John Mitchell told reporters the other day, the only reason he did what he did, if he did anything at all, was "for the good of the country."

Even if he was misguided, this is certainly enough reason to grant him amnesty — along with Daniel Ellsberg whom he first prosecuted.

Then there are those who made the tough decision to pack up and leave home and jobs rather than serve a government many felt was unfair and immoral. I say let us practice forgiveness and bring Dwight Chapin back from Chicago.

An even stronger case can be made for those who stood on the highest moral principles and chose jail terms rather than cooperate with the government. Let us, then, raise the battle cry: "Free Gordon Liddy and The Watergate Six!"

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AMNESTY, too, I say, for all those noisy demonstrators whose screams of outrage have so annoyed the White House over the years. Let's start with Martha Mitchell.

And what of those who simply felt they were following orders? Amnesty for Lieutenant William Calley, James McCord and Donald Segretti.

It may be more difficult for us to forgive those higher-ups whose responsibility it was to see that this nation didn't get involved in a seemingly-endless, unproductive conflict that has so divided American from American. But charity demands

amnesty for Bob Haldeman and John Ehrlichman.

And who in his heart cannot find forgiveness for those young men who faced the enemy day after day with incredible courage, deceiving them whenever possible and refusing to reveal the truth even under the most intense questioning imaginable? Ron Ziegler deserves not only amnesty, but a medal for bravery under fire.

What of those young activists who have, admittedly, done irreparable harm to the reputation of the FBI by making off with their files and using them for their own purposes? Let us, I say, forgive and forget and grant amnesty to John Dean III.

There can be no question of granting amnesty to those resisters who saw the light and are now cooperating with the government, talking all they know about the plans and plots of the saboteurs in their little groups. Amnesty, then, for Jeb Stuart Magruder.

It can be charged that those older men who raised the money to finance these plots designed to disrupt our orderly democratic process should have known better. But if amnesty's good enough for the others, it's good enough for Maurice Stans.

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LET US even grant amnesty to those who withdrew in the face of enemy fire, such as Attorney General Richard Kleindienst. Let us go even further and grant amnesty to those accused of trying to buy their way out of the debt they owed their country — like Robert L. Vesco.

Let us start afresh with a clean slate, united and generous. We can count on our President to sign a proclamation granting amnesty to one and all.