

Our Man Hoppe

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Joe Sikspak and
General Lavelle

Arthur Hoppe

DEAR PRESIDENT: I, Joe Sikspak, American, take pen in hand to hammer home a cry for justice.

Now there's a lot of Americans who can't figure out this whole deal with this General Lavelle guy. My friend, McSweeney's one of them. I should know. I just come from his trial.

There's poor McSweeney in the dock and the Judge looking down on him. "How do you plead," says the Judge, "you dirty rat?"

"Innocent as the driven snow, your honor," says McSweeney.

"Did you or did you not," says the Judge, "with felonious intent, clobber one Mrs. Gillicuddy on the noggin with a two-by-four?"

"I done what I done," says McSweeney, "for the good of the neighborhood."

"And were you or were you not at that time," says the Judge, "under orders of this court to keep the peace, following the 18 brawls you got into last month?"

"That's why I done it," says McSweeney eagerly. "I figured you'd okay it because it was part of your neighborhood pacification program."

"My what?" says the Judge. Then he kind of sighs. "Okay, McSweeney," he says. "Let's hear it."

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"WELL, your honor," says McSweeney, "there I am, trying to get a little shut-eye along about midnight and the Gillicuddys start a fight next door. They been fighting about as long as I can remember."

"But this time," says the Judge, "you decided to take the law into your own hands?"

"Not the law," says McSweeney, "a two-by-four. I got it by my bed strictly for self defense. But remembering your or-

ders to keep the peace, I pick it up and head for the Gillicuddys."

"Did you or did you not," says the Judge, "bust down their door?"

"It was nothing but a reconnaissance mission," says McSweeney. "You can't have a pacification program without reconnaissance missions. I had to see what they were up to. And — wow! — what they were up to! It was like this:

"There's little Mrs. Gillicuddy banging on Gillicuddy with a flat iron. And though he outweighs her two-to-one, he's getting the worst of it. 'Glad to see you, McSweeney,' says Gillicuddy politely. 'Get the hell out and mind your own business,' says his Mrs. So that's when I bopped her."

"Wait a minute, McSweeney," says the Judge. "Mrs. Gillicuddy says at no time did she threaten you with the flat iron."

"That's right," says McSweeney. "But she could've. And remembering your orders . . ."

"Dang it, McSweeney," says the Judge, "you don't call bopping her on the head an unprovoked assault?"

"No, sir," says McSweeney. "I call it a protective retaliation strike."

"I find you guilty of contempt of court, unprovoked assault and felonious moper," says the Judge. "Now what am I going to do with the likes of you?"

"Well, from reading the papers," says McSweeney, "I figure you ought to retire me on \$25,000 a year."

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SO THE JUDGE blows up and gives him one to ten in the pokey. It's a grave injustice. How was McSweeney to know?

What I mean is, President, I think it's a fine thing the way you go around telling everybody what a great country we got. But you ought to warn them that if they behave like it, they'll get arrested.

Truly Yours,
Joe Sikspak, American