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Strange Gift

Editor — Reflecting the influence of Richard Nixon and John Mitchell, the Supreme Court has handed this nation a strange and sour 200th birthday gift: the handful of decisions tossed in with the July fireworks, which strike down several key portions of the Bill of Rights.

These include: the First Amendment right of freedom of speech, lost in the ruling against the right of the press to protect its sources of information; the Fourth Amendment right of the citizen to be secure in his person against unlawful search and seizure (and the Fifth Amendment right against self-incrimination), lost in rulings that evidence seized without warrant may be used to convict an accused, and in the ruling that violations of the Fourth Amendment may not be appealed to the Supreme Court but only to state courts; the Sixth Amendment right to trial by jury and Fourteenth Amendment right to equal protection by ruling that persons may be denied jury trials until they appeal from non-jury guilty verdicts. Along with these decisions, the court affirmed the death penalty, thus consigning us to further violations of our protection against cruel and unusual punishment.

Coming atop the scandals of misuse of power in the legislative and administrative branches of government (Congress, the White House, the FBI, CIA, Pentagon, etc.), these rulings have joined the judiciary in marking our bicentennial with a final stamp of hypocrisy.

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