

Free the San Jose Three



Arthur Hoppe

En Route to Washington

I AM FLYING back to Washington to offer my President my full support in his hour of trial.

As you may know, a grand jury in San Jose, Calif., has been investigating the riot that broke out at a Republican rally there shortly before the recent, unlamented election.

The riot started when Mr. Nixon, accompanied by Governor Ronald Reagan and Senator George Murphy, left the auditorium. According to press reports, Mr. Nixon climbed atop his car and made the peace sign to the demonstrators, remarking to an aide that this would really infuriate them.

It worked like a charm. Mr. Nixon, Mr. Reagan and Mr. Murphy got thoroughly stoned and the Republicans, in the closing days of the election, made as much political hay out of the incident as they could — which, as it turned out, wasn't much.

So the grand jury has been considering indictments. Obviously, there is only one they can logically return. But it isn't fair, the President can count on me when he's indicted for crossing state lines to incite a riot.

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PRESUMABLY, Mr. Reagan and Mr. Murphy will be charged as accomplices under our loose and vaguely worded conspiracy laws. Thus, I have joined with a dedicated group of justice-minded citizens to form "The Fair Play for Dick, Ron & George Committee." Looking forward to the long ordeal ahead, we are already making placards bearing our stirring slogan:

"FREE THE SAN JOSE THREE"

We hope to hire the best legal talent

available to defend the San Jose Three. If we can't get William Kunstler, we'll get Charles Garry. Money's no object.

We plan to stage marches, rallies and benefit rock concerts from coast-to-coast. A huge be-in in Central Park should raise thousands from button sales alone. Our buttons read: "Justice for the San Jose Brothers."

We're grimly predicting a long and costly trial. Our defense, of course, will be lack of intent. It's the only one we've got.

Clearly, Mr. Nixon did willfully cross state lines. Clearly, Mr. Nixon did, intentionally or unintentionally, incite a riot. We can't argue with the facts.

But can the prosecution prove Mr. Nixon crossed state lines with the intent to incite a riot? We think not. Is there one shred of evidence that Mr. Nixon told an aide in Washington that fateful day, "I think I'll go out to San Jose and start a riot"? We doubt it.

Just because Mr. Nixon thought he would profit politically from the riot doesn't prove long-range intent. Starting the riot could have been a spur-of-the-moment decision, unplanned, unpremeditated. The law is on our side.

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NOW SOME will say we are trying to extricate Mr. Nixon through a legal loophole. But that's the American way. Remember, it is our cherished American heritage that our President is innocent until proven guilty.

So send in your pennies and dimes to the San Jose Three Defense Fund. Support is pouring in from all walks of life. As my radical friend, Abbie (Che) Hayden said on contributing his two cents worth:

"May he get the justice he deserves."