

Capitol Punishment

Vive la Nixon!

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Similarite!

By Art Buchwald

ably. "But what is wrong with doing something illegal to win an election?"

"Well, it wasn't just a question of the President's people doing something illegal. It turned out that when the people involved were arrested, an effort was made to cover up the crime so nobody would know anyone in the White House had anything to do with it."

"Je compris, any politician in France would do the same thing," Francois said.

"The coverup, as far as we know," I continued, "involved a former Attorney General, the head of the FBI and several people very high in the administration. All sorts of evidence was destroyed and some of the President's most trusted men perjured themselves before the Senate Watergate Committee and the grand jury."

"We read all this in the French newspapers. But you still haven't answered my question. What did they do wrong?"

"Francois, how can I make you understand? There was one political scandal after another. The Vice President of the United States was forced to resign for taking bribes. The White House kept an enemies list which they were going to use to get people who criticized the President. They also hired plumbers to break into people's homes and offices. One thing led to another and pretty

PARIS—The good news from France is that the French no longer hate Americans. If anything, they are very sympathetic with President Nixon's plight and cannot understand what all the fuss in Washington is about.

My good friend Francois said to me, "Alors, mon vieux, what are you doing to your poor President?"

"Nothing really, Francois. It's just that he's in a slight jam and they're trying to find out whether they should impeach him or not."

"But what did he do?" Francois asked.

"It's hard to explain. You see there were some people working for his re-election who decided to find out what the other political party was doing by bugging its headquarters."

"Mais oui," Francois said, "what is wrong with that?"

"It wasn't just a question of bugging the opposition's office. They also discovered that people working for the President had large amounts of cash which they were using to sabotage the President's opponents."

"Naturallement. What else would they do if they were trying to beat the other party?"

"You don't understand, Francois. What they were doing was illegal."

"I understand perfectly," Francois said rather irrit-

soon there was some question of whether the President of the United States himself was involved."

"In France we would have been very disappointed if our president wasn't involved."

"Then there were other scandals. Mr. Nixon forgot to pay \$465,000 in income taxes."

"Vive la Nixon," Francois said.

"Then it was discovered that the President had tape recorded everyone who came into his office. Some of the tapes could prove whether he was involved in the coverup of the other crimes. The House of Representatives and the special prosecutor asked to hear all the tapes, but Mr. Nixon gave them only a few which he claimed were sufficient to find out if he was guilty or not."

"Any Frenchman would do the same thing. You have told me nothing so far to explain why you keep picking on him."

"Francois, I didn't want to tell you this, but the tapes revealed that the President of the United States puts catsup on his cottage cheese."

Francois's eyes bugged out. "Alors, why didn't you say that before? Now I understand why you want to impeach him."