

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:

Unanswered Questions

The managing editors at Mr. Nixon's Florida press conference and some United States congressmen, are judging Mr. Nixon's innocence or guilt on his ability to make a "comeback" and "image", based on popularity. However, answered questions at press conferences, performances before conservative audiences, and continuing contradictory statements by Mr. Nixon leave many questions unanswered about his role in the Watergate scandal. Only through impeachment hearings can these questions be properly dealt with; and the findings, whether they increase or decrease Mr. Nixon's popularity, will at least relieve the public of much anxiety and continuing loss of confidence in our government.

It is ludicrous to judge a leader on his popularity, for it would have made such men as Hitler and Mussolini innocent beyond a doubt! I hope that the readers of the managing editors' newspapers, and the constituents of these congressmen, will rally for impeachment proceedings immediately, rather than following the ridiculous and irresponsible guidelines for judging our President as the above sources openly advocate.

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Freudian Slips?

It has been almost 60 years since Freud published "The Psychopathology of Everyday Life," enriching our self-knowledge, as well as our language, with what has come to be known as the "Freudian slip." Even the most careful of us have, on occasion, inadvertently used the wrong word to betray thoughts we had intended to misrepresent or at least to conceal. And, on other occasions, we have detected our fellowmen doing the same. Freud found an analogous mechanism where the inner contradiction asserts itself "in the form of forgetting a word instead of a substitution through its opposite."

Former Treasury Secretary John B. Connally, I think, has recently provided us with a striking example of this analogous form. Connally is well-spoken, a fine orator, a seasoned negotiator, and one who gives every impression of having control of his senses, especially at public appearances. In a recent speech aired on television, however, after Connally vigorously affirmed his belief in the then Vice President Agnew's innocence of any wrongdoing, he stated that by all rights Agnew should be assumed guilty. Later, Connally apologized profusely to Agnew when he was informed of his omission of the word *not*. In light

of the subsequent revelations in the Agnew matter, it appears that Connally must have known at the time of his "slip" the extent of Agnew's guilt.

Freud said that in these cases "it is a self-criticism, an internal contradiction against one's own utterance, which causes the speech-blunder, and even forces a contrasting substitution for the one intended. We then observe with surprise how the wording of an assertion removes the purpose of the same, and how the error in speech lays bare the inner dishonesty. Here the *lapsus linguae* becomes a mimicking form of expression, often, indeed, for the expression of what one does not wish to say. It is thus a means of self-betrayal." Freud was particularly fond of this insight and expanded on it at great length: "The conception of speech-blunders here defended can be readily verified in the smallest details. I have been able to demonstrate repeatedly that the most insignificant and most natural cases of speech blunders have their good sense . . ."

By all accounts, the press conference is President Nixon's best forum, where he is able to consistently prevail over his tormentors. Therefore it was both surprising and familiar to hear Mr. Nixon, last Saturday, respond to a question, before the Associated Press Managing Editors at Disney World, with the statement that the good public servants Haldeman and Ehrlichman "should be assumed guilty until proven guilty." Nixon apologized profusely when he was informed that he had left out the word *not* . . .

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