

Will Mr. Nixon Surprise Us All?



Arthur Hoppe

YOU MAY HAVE read where Mr. Nixon got up before dawn last Saturday, drove down to the Lincoln Memorial and woke up eight protesting students to find out what was on their minds.

"Hi, there, you in the sleeping bag, this is your President speaking . . ."

The students said they asked him a lot of questions about war and peace, but they couldn't make much out of his answers.

"When we told him where we were from," one girl said, "he talked about the football team. And when someone said he was from California, he talked about surfing."

"I was trying to relate to them in a way they could feel I understood their problem," said Mr. Nixon afterward, obviously pleased he had spoken to them in their own language.

"I hope it was because he was tired," said another girl politely, obviously concerned that her President had gone crackers.

But you can't blame Mr. Nixon. It's most difficult to communicate with the young these days. And at least he's developed a new policy for dealing with the growing number of dissidents in our society — The Surprise Presidential Visit.

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"HI, THERE, Mr. and Mrs. Joad. I hope you won't mind your President dropping in on your little shanty here near Appalachia Corners, but I wanted to see how you poverty-stricken Americans were making out these days."

"Well, sir, to tell the truth, we ain't making ends meet. And my wife, Maude, here's got sciatica real bad and the cost of medicine . . ."

"But, take it from me, Mr. Joad,

you've got a lot to be proud of. Why, the Arkansas Razorbacks were one of the three number one teams in the country last year. And those West Virginia Mountaineers should do much better next season. They're real hungry. Excuse me, I think Mrs. Joad just fainted."

Of course, The Surprise Presidential Visit should be employed with care:

"Hi, there, you Americans of Negro descent. I hope you'll forgive your President from waking you up at 4 a.m. But I was intrigued by that picture of a black panther over your door. And I'm here to offer you encouragement and hope for the . . ."

"Blank, you blank. Go Blankety, blank, blank, blank."

"Yes, but as one fan of the Pittsburgh Panthers to another, I feel that with some help in their interior line next season . . ."

"Listen, you motherblank, we're goma blankety, blank, blank your blankety-blank."

"Well, frankly, I never thought much of the Pittsburgh Panthers either. Tell me, whom do you like in the America Cup yacht races this summer? Oh, I see you're all hunters. I hope those aren't loaded. But in trying to relate to you, let me say I heard that the grouse shooting in Scotland this year . . ."

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BUT, AS I say, you can't blame Mr. Nixon. It's tough enough being President without having to relate to the people — particularly all these new dissident groups who are speaking new and different languages.

Anyway, a President spends 98 per cent of his time talking to politicians, bureaucrats, fat cats and generals. And Mr. Nixon, you have to admit, really speaks their language.