

What's Funny?

by Charles McCabe

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Will Rogers ... defined, pithily and finally, the craft of the political satirist. "Give me the truth," Rogers said. "I'll exaggerate it and make it funny."

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Today we live in times that try men's wits, as well as their souls. The role of the political satirist is not easy at a time when almost every utterance on high seems like self-satire. Mr. Nixon talks about telling the truth as if it were some child's game that he is constantly and patiently explaining to us dunkopfs out here in the wasteland.

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When the heat is momentarily great on our Leader, he produces his hole cards, his daughters - to explain that he is really telling the truth. These apotheosized baton-twirlers make quite as much sense on the political scene as Cronkite, Chancellor or anybody else. How can you exaggerate Tricia and Julie to make them funny? The political satirist today is a sober map maker of a lunatic and still uncharted terrain.
