

## Let the Accused Speak

To the Editor:

No matter what our political beliefs, whether we be conservative, liberal or radical, we have been indoctrinated with the principle that a man is innocent until he is proven guilty.

Despite the equally strong conviction that a free press is essential to our liberty, I feel most strongly that the cumulative effect of the newspaper headlines and the television news using hearsay evidence in many cases has resulted in the most unfair and biased assault on the character and integrity of many persons involved in greater or less degree in the so-called Watergate affair.

I strongly urge that your good paper make a determined effort to give those who have been charged with many mistakes of judgment and worse an opportunity to defend themselves without the background of the news media's accusations, whether intentional or not.

This is a difficult task for you and the others, but one which you must assume if you are to be a defender of the doctrines that have made this country great. GILBERT W. CHAPMAN  
New York, May 23, 1973

## Questions for Mr. Nixon

To the Editor:

If President Nixon does hold a press conference, I hope these two questions will be asked:

1. Why did Mr. Nixon—a lawyer—receive Judge Byrne at San Clemente during the Ellsberg trial?
2. What steps has Mr. Nixon taken (and, if any, when) to cut off payments to the Watergate defendants by C.R.P., Mr. Kalmbach or other participants in the cover-up effort?

CUTHBERT H. LATTA  
Philadelphia, May 27, 1973

## The Sullied Presidency

To the Editor:

I cannot let the Watergate scandal pass without making two comments:

(1) Those who clamored for peace in Vietnam over the past four years were constantly told that only the President had all the facts; that they should trust the President; that if they knew what the President knew they would keep quiet. Now President Nixon has assured the whole nation on television that he knew nothing about the Watergate scandal; that no one told him anything; that he was completely ignorant of it all. It would seem then that we have a President who knows everything, or knows nothing, according to how it suits his political interests.

(2) There is much talk about respecting and saving the office of the Presidency. I agree. However, it should be clear to all Americans that the person who should be most concerned to respect and save the office of the Presidency should be the human being who temporarily fills that office and is accountable for it to all Americans, past, present and future.

The fact is that President Nixon has himself done more than anyone in history to sully that office, if not by his own actions, then certainly by the type of men he employed and by the political atmosphere he fostered. I must admit that from my own observation of his political style I always thought he would bring no credit to the office; but I never thought so badly of him as to imagine the kind of sewer into which he has turned the White House.

ISAAC ASIMOV

New York, May 9, 1973

## Nixon Apologist

To the Editor:

In William Safire's column of May 21, he states:

"Surprised observers noted that as a lawyer, Mr. Nixon . . . in oral argument [in the Hill-Life Magazine right-to-privacy case in 1966] . . . more than held his own before the Court with former Judge Harold Medina, the opposing counsel."

This statement is in error; Mr. Nixon's opponent was the judge's son, Harold Medina Jr.

Mr. Safire quotes from a memorandum about the case from Mr. Nixon to Leonard Garment, then the President's law partner and now his counsel. Presumably, Mr. Garment furnished this to Mr. Safire. This raises two questions: Could Mr. Garment be the "surprised" observer who was so impressed by Mr. Nixon's argument? Was the concept of writing a column portraying the President as an advocate of privacy suggested to Mr. Safire by Mr. Garment?

Mr. Safire is a facile writer. In his columns so far, however, he has consistently played the role of a flack and apologist for the Nixon Administration. Presumably, The Times engaged Mr. Safire in order to present conservative opinions in its editorial pages. This is a commendable objective but it is not being well served so long as Mr. Safire writes as a Nixon sycophant. SEYMOUR SHERIFF  
Washington, May 23, 1973

## Blessings

To the Editor:

Bless dear, good Billy Graham for proving by the Bible on Op-Ed that his great and good friend is not to blame for the recent events. Bless wise Cyrus Sulzberger for showing how trivial are these domestic peccadillos when we had better get cracking on talks with the Russians, in which indeed American criminal experience is essential. And bless kind William Safire for reminding us of the folly of those so partisan as to deny credit to the President for the inspired Christmas bombing of Hanoi that brought us peace with honor.

W. A. SWANBERG

Newtown, Conn., May 5, 1973