

Capitol Punishment

No Pompi, I Said San Clemente, Not San Simeon

By Art Buchwald

"How can he keep up three houses on his salary?" Pompidou asked.

"Is simple," Brezhnev replied. "Security."

"Quelle security?" Pompidou asked.

"Every time something has to be done to San Clemente dacha, Secret Service says is for security. Nixon needs golf carts, is for security; new tiles for roof, is for security; heated swimming pool, is for security; beach cabana, is for security; electrical work on house, is for security. I tell you, gospodin, when I get back to Soviet Union I am going to have long talk with my security people and get my dacha by the Black Sea in shape."

"Bon idee!" Pompidou said. "I think I'll meet with my security people and have them fix up my home at St. Tropez. I could use a new guest house and a sauna."

"I am going to tell my security people to build me a movie theater and a golf course," Brezhnev said.

"Do you play golf?" Pompidou asked.

"No, but you never know when I'll be booted out by the party and a golf course should add to value of my property."

"What else did Nixon tell you?" Pompidou wanted to know.

Leonid Brezhnev stopped off to see French President Georges Pompidou on his way back to Moscow and of course they talked about their mutual friend, Richard Nixon.

"Mon cher ami," said President Pompidou, "How was your visit to the United States?"

"Is fantastic!" said Secretary Brezhnev. "I was at the White House, Camp David and San Clemente."

"Alors," said Pompidou, "when I met with Nixon all I got to see was Iceland."

"Gospodin Pompidou, you should see the dacha Nixon has in San Clemente. It must be worth two, \$3 million."

"I didn't know he was doing that well as President."

"He doesn't do that well but he has friends. He explained to me how he bought the place. It seems he has this friend Abplanalp who loaned him the money to buy San Clemente. Then Abplanalp bought back everything but five acres so Nixon didn't owe Abplanalp anything. Nixon got the house for nothing and Abplanalp got the land around San Clemente and everyone was happy."

"It's hard for me to follow that," Pompidou said.

"Frankly, I didn't understand it either. But Nixon was laughing the whole time he explained it to me so it must have been a good deal."

"He said the best investment he ever made was buying the dacha at Key Biscayne. He got the government to make \$579,907 worth of improvements on this dacha so if he ever wants to sell it, it will be worth three times what he paid for it."

Pompidou nodded. "I have always said about Nixon that he may not know how to protect the dollar abroad, but he really knows how to buy Florida real estate."

"You can say that again," said Brezhnev. "When I get back to Soviet Union I'm going to speak to my good friend Bebe Rebozovitch and see if he can find me another dacha in Vladivostock with lots of security."

"Now tell me, Comrade Brezhnev, what did you find out on your visit to the United States that would be interesting for me to know?"

"Gospodin Pompidou, I will tell you something, but you must swear that you will never reveal where you heard it."

"Sacre coeur," said Pompidou, "I swear it."

"Nixon has fantastic lawn sprinkler system at San Clemente."

"Alors!" said Pompidou. "For security?"

Brezhnev shrugged his shoulders. "What else?"