

NYTimes OCT 22 1973
Announcing a Nominee

To the Editor:

The White House ceremony on Oct. 12 at which Representative Ford was announced as the nominee for Vice President was paradigmatic of the deep moral defect within the current Administration and helps explain, in part, the moral anguish from which our country is now suffering. Historically, the occasion hinged upon the fact that the recent Vice President had resigned under pressure and is labelled a felon, which, along with the Watergate scandals establishes this Administration as one of the most morally bankrupt in our history.

In a manner that must, on reflection, be viewed only as bizarre in its tastelessness and blindness to the moral implications of the occasion, the President chose to treat that lugubrious event as (a) an opportunity for a set speech on his political successes (including the thought that Watergate is best forgotten) and (b) as a kind of jolly party convention where, with the gayest of spirits and the brightest of smiles, the secret of the identity of the nominee for high office was announced. One might have thought that one was witnessing the victorious tail-end of a successful political convention—compliments, applause, good humor and a gracious invitation to the guests to partake of refreshments.

Totally independent of the merits of Representative Ford (and of Nixon's political sagacity in choosing him), what is terrifying is the President's characteristic lack of any sense of understanding the moral character of that occasion. His behavior displayed again that grievous defect in his perceptions and, willy nilly, in his entire Administration — a defect of moral judgment, which (apparently beyond his capacity to comprehend), continues to benight the conscience of the nation.

(Prof.) EDWIN S. SHNEIDMAN
University of California
at Los Angeles School of Medicine
Los Angeles, Oct. 13, 1973