

Von Hoffman

These Foolish Things

Washington

THE FEDERAL penitentiaries now are getting a higher class of criminal than those who have been causing the correctional authorities so much trouble in recent years. Instead of the black bank robber with bad teeth and a vicious attitude, or incorrigible, loud-mouthed, radical Catholic priests, the WASPS are going to the calaboose.



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The first was E. Howard Hunt, but his years with the CIA had twisted him into something the rest of us salmon faces can't easily identify with. Egil (Bud) Krogh, however, is perfect, so white and middle class he could make Dristan commercials.

Egil Bud, you may remember, was the boss of The Plumbers who was sentenced to six months in jail. The judge stayed execution to give him a little time to straighten up his

affairs and appear with his blonde wife and his two charming blond children on a television show where CBS's redoubtable Mike Wallace interviewed him. Even Wallace, though, wasn't able to get Egil Bud to explain what was going through his head when he ordered the famous burglary of the Los Angeles psychiatrist's office. Not that Egil Bud isn't profusely contrite. Judged by his words, he would seem a promising candidate for rehabilitation, doubly so since of all Richard Nixon's White House Horribles, Krogh enjoys the best reputation. People who daydream about pulling Nixon's fingernails out apply adjectives like decent, honorable, kind, honest and truthful to Egil Bud.

But if they're right, there is no point in sending the man to jail. He is not a fit candidate for punishment or rehabilitation. His problem and ours is that

he suffers from nopelessly bad judgment and you don't put people with bad judgment in jail; you just don't give them responsible positions.

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YET IT SEEMS our government is swarming with people with a fatally deficient grasp on reality. Take the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Thomas Moorer, the chap who had his yeoman spying on Henry Kissinger. Putting aside questions of decorum and orderly procedure, an American admiral who spies on the Secretary of State lacks the judgment to know who the enemy is.

Given the admiral's defective sagacity, imagine what dippy goings-on we can expect to find in the lower ranks. Not long ago a Federal court case gave us a chance to find out when the judge had issued an order telling the Army to stop bedeviling enlisted men suspected of smoking pot or being friends with soldiers who smoked pot.

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INTRODUCED INTO the record was a written order by a Marvin D. Llewellyn, light colonel of infantry, which said:

"Burning candles is not authorized. Psychedelic lights are prohibited . . . no anti-American, anti-Army, anti-religious, or politically oriented posters or pictures are authorized . . . Pornographic displays will not be allowed. Examples of such include the depicting of sexual intercourse and the lewd display of the genitals. Centerfold pictures of Playboy and other similar photographs are not considered in this category."

Never mind that they don't even have psychedelic lights in junior high anymore, never mind that the poster business died in 1969 or that the drug epidemic is over, an Army officer who spends his days drawing distinctions in sexy pictures is irremediably defective in judgment. Light Colonel Llewellyn will make a suitable successor to Light Admiral Moorer.

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OUR GOVERNMENT is loaded with men who can't understand that the odds are against everyone being a spy, a traitor, a security risk or an enemy of the state. Every organization must suffer a certain number of officials who live by delusion, but we have so many that to survive sensible men must play the fool.

The admiral and the colonel and 10,000 others remain at their posts while the luckless Egil Bud goes to jail, but neither jail nor school nor therapy can mend them. One by one, some day soon, they must be led to positions where their ardent stupidities and pure-hearted blunders injure none but themselves.

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