

The Streakers, The Coverup

By Art Buchwald

"Mr. President, you know those seven people who were arrested for streaking through the Watergate fountain last week?"

"I read about it in the newspaper John."

"It turns out several of them worked for the White House."

"Why didn't I know about this sooner?"

"Well, Mr. President, we thought we could keep it from you. It is our belief that it would be unwise to have the President of the United States involved with streaking and all its implications."

"I am very disturbed that anyone on my staff would run nude through the Watergate fountain. Why did they do it, John?"

"They thought it would help you in the polls. The problem now, Mr. President, is that the people arrested say if we don't help them, they're going to reveal that we've been streaking in the White House for the last six months. If that gets out we're going to be in a lot of trouble."

"That's blackmail, John. What are our options?"

"We could pay the money to them to hush them up."

"How much would it cost, John?"

"Taking into consideration their lawyers' fees and what it would cost to care for their families, I would say \$1 million."

"We could raise that easily, John. What are our other options?"

"We could say we streaked in the White House for national security reasons. We had to hire streakers because the FBI refused to streak for us, and the CIA under their mandate could streak only in a foreign country. Our streakers were hired to find out what other streakers were up to. As President, it was your constitutional duty to see that the people in this country did not discard all their clothes and run around in their birthday suits."

"I see. Do we have any other options?"

"We could refuse to pay the money to the defendants and let them reveal the streaking that went on here. We could say that a few members of your staff did run nude through the halls, but no one had ever streaked through the Oval Office. As soon as you heard about it you ordered an investigation of the streaking and insisted that those who did it had to resign."

"What if it turns out that my closest aides were involved in the streaking, John?"

"There's that possibility, Mr. President. I saw two of the men you hold in the highest esteem run naked through Rose Mary Woods' office the other night."

"Have you ever streaked, John?"

"Yes, sir, I have, Mr. President. One afternoon while I was working on some legislation for you, I suddenly took off all my clothes and went running on the White House lawn. The Secret Service caught me just as I was going over the fence."

"You had better to go to Camp David, John, and write a full report for me."

"I'll do that, Mr. President. Now to get back to the people who were caught streaking at the Watergate. We do have another option. We could offer them executive clemency."

"How could we justify that, John?"

"We could say they were nudists on their way to sun bathe on the Potomac, and they cut through the Watergate complex to save time."

"Sure we could, John. But if I start giving executive clemency for streaking I could lose my mandate."

"Then what should we do, Mr. President?"

"I could try to hush the whole thing up. Or I could tough it out. But I have a third option, John. Pat and I could streak down Pennsylvania Avenue tomorrow at high noon—BUT THAT, JOHN, WOULD BE WRONG."