

Well, There Goes The Neighborhood



Arthur Hoppe

MR. NIXON is "definitely considering" selling his home in San Clemente, which he once promised to give to the American people, and moving to suburban Bronxville, N.Y., according to U.S. News & World Report.

On learning of this bombshell, The Bronxville Neighborhood Improvement Association immediately called an emergency meeting.

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"WELL," said the noted liberal, Gaylord Galosh, with a shudder, "there goes the neighborhood."

That brought the distinguished conservative, Dr. Homer T. Pettibone, to his feet. "I see no reason why we should condemn a new neighbor sight unseen," he said. "Let us welcome him with the tolerance and brotherhood for which Bronxville is famous."

"I'm only thinking of our property values," said Galosh. "If we let him in, we'll have to let all his convict friends in. You want to turn Bronxville into a halfway house?"

"It's that kind of talk that incites panic selling," protested Pettibone. "If we all stick together and resist block-busting tactics by unscrupulous real estate salesmen, we'll enjoy the cultural enrichment of living in a truly integrated community."

"Don't get me wrong," said Galosh defensively. "Some of my best friends are disgraced former office holders. Of course they tend to be pushy and careless. So when it comes to keeping up their property..."

"That's not fair," said Pettibone. "It's a well-known fact that he devoted considerable time and expense to improving his property at San Clemente — up until a year ago anyway."

"That may be," said Galosh. "But have you noticed that he goes around barefoot lately, wearing the same old windbreaker all the time? That certainly doesn't fit into our image of a decent Bronxville citizen."

"He probably makes more money than we do," said Pettibone indignantly, "despite his appearance. Underneath, I'm sure he's just like us."

"What about his credit rating?" asked Galosh. "You know how hard it is for people like that to get loans. And if he gets behind in his payments and they foreclose."

"That's his business!" snapped Pettibone. "If he can afford this house, he has a perfect right to buy it."

"Maybe so, but we ought to think of him, living here, out of his element," said Galosh. "Why there isn't a single Mexican laundry in town. Why doesn't he move to Key Biscayne? He'd be happier living among his own kind."

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THAT STARTED a shouting match: "Credit to his race!" "Would you want your sister..." "It was interrupted by the arrival of a real estate broker who announced the deal was off as the house had been purchased by "a very nice Puerto Rican family."

Galosh and Pettibone looked at each other. "Thank God!" they said.