

SEChronicle

# ART HOPPE



## Keep the Faith, Cynics

‘OH, DICK, that’s a lovely interview you gave the Ladies Home Journal. And you’re absolutely right about this country becoming so cynical. What do you think caused it?’

“Well, as I noted in that interview, Pat, ‘We have very little leadership in our country today.’”

“Was that an attack on Gerry Ford, dear?”

“As a statesman-philosopher, I am above petty politics, Pat. I simply meant that when people lose faith in their leaders, they become cynical.”

“But what makes people lose faith in their leaders, dear?”

“Congress. Congress and the media. As I pointed out in that interview, ‘A congress or a parliament can paralyze leadership.’ I know that for a fact. As for the media, it has abdicated its fact-gathering to nonbelieving young people. Look at Woodward and Bernstein. They never believed a thing I said.”

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‘OH, IT’S SO SAD that Congress and the media have made people cynical about their leaders. But what can we do about it, dear?’

“Well, as I told that interviewer, ‘It may take the shock of an invasion — in Korea or in Thailand. If American lives are threatened, we may regain our sense of belief in our country and our need for strength.’”

“That’s a wonderful idea, dear. Will the Communists do it?”

“No, they’re too clever. They don’t want us to regain our sense of belief in our country and our need for strength. They want to keep us cynical.”

“But if they won’t help us . . .”

“We’ll have to do it ourselves. As I said about the CIA, ‘Extreme measures can be necessary if one is to put down evil consequences.’ Posing as Communists, the CIA will invade Korea and Thailand. We will rush to defend our allies. At a cost of only 50,000 American lives and \$100 billion, we will reunite the country, which will rally behind me . . .”

“Excuse me, dear. But I think people are bored with wars in Asia.”

“That’s a point. All right, the CIA, posing as Arabs, will invade New York City and in a bloody battle . . .”

“Do you think Gerry Ford would defend New York, dear?”

“You’re right. Wait, I’ve got the game plan. The CIA, posing as Vietnamese guerrillas in sampans, invades San Clemente. I and John Wayne mow them down. I am restored to the White House by acclamation. This time, I will quickly handcuff Congress and muzzle the press in order to destroy cynicism forever. After all, Pat, I am *not* a cynic!”

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‘Oh, that’s a marvelous game plan, dear. But aren’t you afraid people will suspect your motives?’

“Darn it, you’re right. It just shows you how cynical this country’s become. I sure wish I knew why.”