

Drawing the line

The Nixon Administration last week revealed its legislative proposals aimed at America's growing crime problems. President Nixon made it clear that he intends to continue the "hard line against street crime."

In his statement, Nixon emphasized some major revisions in the nation's criminal codes which he believes would help in fight against crime. The President is increasingly convinced that the lower courts are the source of many current crime problems because they allow liberal insanity defenses, lax sentencing procedures and poorly designed pre-trial release programs which permit drug offenders to commit more crimes while awaiting trial.

The President also wants to re-establish the death penalty for crimes such as hijacking and kidnapping. Nixon flatly states that the threat of execution is a major deterrent to crime. His argument is in direct opposition to the Supreme Court's 1972 majority opinion which pointed out that there was little or no difference in the crime rate between states which had the death penalty at that time and states which had outlawed execution.

The President said further that he will ask Congress to eliminate insanity as a defense against federal charges of murder and similar

crimes. According to the legislation proposed by Nixon, a suspect would no longer be able to avoid conviction by proving that he was insane at the time the crime was committed. Various definitions of insanity have been accepted as a legal defense in the U.S. for more than a century.

President Nixon's proposals also seek to de-emphasize poverty as a major factor contributing to crime. His criminal justice statements include only the slightest suggestion that housing and other social welfare programs can help reduce street crime.

In the statements noted here, Nixon has proposed some sweeping changes which have already provoked a few drastic reactions from both supporters and opponents of the President's crime plans. Perhaps this was the President's tactic. The media have overwhelmingly focused their attention on the popular issues of capital punishment and the insanity plea changes proposed by Nixon. Because of this the public has been diverted from a recognition of the real shortcomings of the President's crime message.

Most of the presidential proposals made since January have played down the federal government's role in solving social problems. Nixon's proposed criminal justice legislation is no exception. In his Inaugural Address,

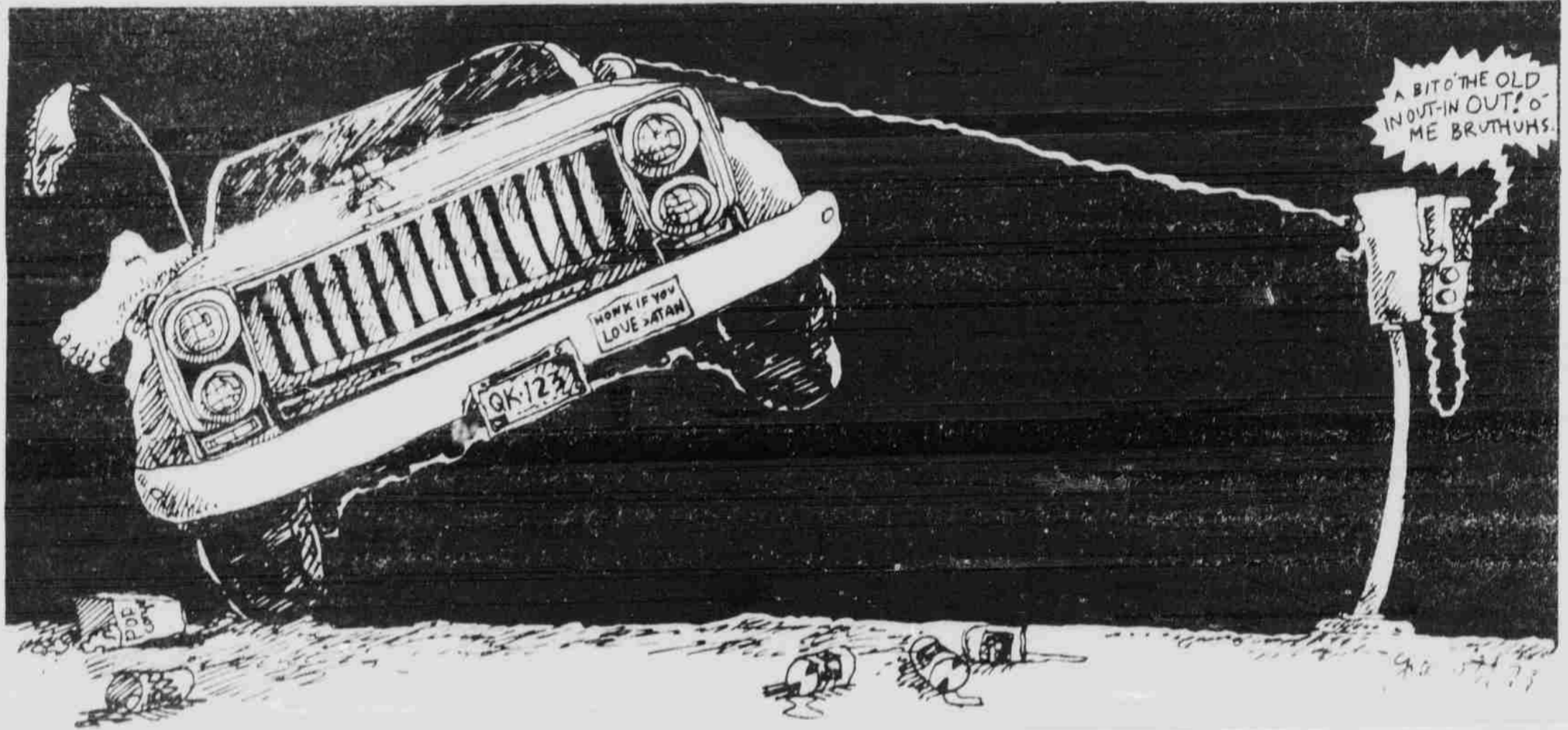
President Nixon said, "In the challenges we face together, let each of us ask—not just how can government help, but how can I help?" Apparently, the President now wants to apply this philosophy directly to the challenge of crime.

Through his criminal justice proposals, Nixon seems to be saying that if the American people want their crime rate to decrease, they just damn well better stop committing crimes. In his proposed legislation, the President includes only a couple of phrases about the relationship between social problems and crime. A good deal of social research and practical experience have shown that this relationship is a very important and direct one, especially in the poorer sections of large U.S. cities.

Yet Nixon has essentially ignored the link between poverty and crime. And the White House has proposed cutbacks in various social programs. Since these cutbacks will eliminate jobs in poverty areas, many sources agree that they will hamper the fight against crime.

If America is to meet the challenge of its social ills, including crime, there must be a working partnership between the government and the people. As of now, President Nixon seems determined to sell out the federal government's share of the bargain.

Tom Lansworth



Drive-ins— bastion of beer, backseat boogie

It is a shame to be a member of the last repressed generation in America. Today's youth have a constant in their lives. They make disco parties and love-in parties and happenings. Many before us, the previous generation, had to make do with the space in

The drive-in was also the place where a young man would test himself by sitting on the back of the station wagon. He would sit there for hours, completely and hopelessly drunk for the first time.

I was a member of the last repressed generation. I would get into the back of the station wagon with my friends, ex-girlfriends, and girlfriends. They would sit there for hours, completely and hopelessly drunk for the first time.

For example, I was once in a drive-in where I was reported to be "the only one who didn't get drunk." I was the only one who didn't get drunk.

my tail between my legs, I finally decided we should leave. As we were pulling out (I had the lights dimmed so I wouldn't make a spectacle of myself while leaving), I heard that tell-tale flop-flop of a flat tire. I had never changed a tire on my parent's car and I couldn't figure out how to work the jack. Finally, a guy from a nearby car rescued me, although his assistance added another blow to my nearly non-existent masculinity.

I usually would entertain myself at the drive-in by watching the surrounding activities. Once I was parked next to an old station wagon, complete with fins and a crinkly roof. The man was about forty, had a beer gut and wore an undershirt. The woman was in her late twenties and looked a bit sleazy. They were "making-out" on the roof of the station wagon. Meanwhile, their two kids, who had on Superman T-shirts with spaghetti stains, ran around yelling and throwing rocks. Their chorus added to the growing crescendo of the rumbling and crinkling on the car roof.

bob russell
horse sense

As you can tell, I was a frustrated male. I was long past the Brigitte Bardot pictures in my brother's *Playboy* magazines. Frustrated males tend to load into the car with a six pack of beer and venture to the drive-in.

A frustrated friend of mine went to Terry's Garma Theatre (yes, Terry Carpenter) one July 4 with some other horny males. They spent most of the movie getting drunk and hooking the horn during love scenes. Their grand finale came during the fireworks display when they stood on top of the car and relieved themselves of the beer.

Other less bashful friends of mine tell me of going to the drive-in during the winter, when the windows could be easily steamed to opaqueness which prevented the man with the flashlight from discovering anything. They also tell me about feet sticking out of the window and nothing but clothes in the front seat, but all that is beyond my drive-in experience.

Today I am no longer so frustrated, which is to say that I no longer try to live up to the high school version of Hugh Hefner. Although it took me years, I finally tried the drive-in food, which caused my bladder to fill inordinately fast.

Understanding doesn't come easy. I have often wondered what defenseless females think of nervous, timid and oppressive American males. I hope someone tells me some day.