

# Economic woes blamed on average American



Dear President: I, Joe Sikspak, American, take pen in hand to poke a finger in your pie. It's about this New Directions program you got.

Like I was down at Paddy's Place last night. "Give me a Seven-high, Paddy," says I, "and tell me who got us into this mess we're in."

"Well, Joe," says Paddy, "the conservatives blame the liberals, the liberals blame every President back to L.B.J., Henry Kissinger blames the Arabs and Houlihan's wealthy maiden aunt blames 'that man in the White House,' by whom she means F.D.R."

"But, who was it, Paddy?" says I.

"It was you, Joe," says Paddy.

"Me, Paddy?" says I, kind of surprised. "What did I do?"

"Remember this time last year, Joe?" says Paddy. "You were living high on the hog—eating a steak once a week, taking the wife out to dinner and the movies on Saturday nights, buying a new color T.V. . . ."

"It seemed like a good idea at the time," says I.  
 "But on account of you spending money like it grew on trees, prices went sky high," says Paddy. "You got to face it, Joe. You caused inflation."

"I didn't know what I was doing, Paddy," says I. "But I seen the folly of my ways. Like I didn't buy no new car this year, there being talk of lay-offs down at the plant."

"Exactly, Joe," says Paddy, shaking his head. "And now you're causing a recession. By being a penny-pinching miser, you're throwing thousands of decent working men out of their jobs."

"I'm sure a knucklehead, Paddy," says I. "What do I do now?"

"You got to bite the bullet, Joe," says Paddy, "and accept the \$200 tax cut the President wants to give you."

"The President can count on me," says I. "I will sock it in my mattress for the rainy days ahead."

"No, no, Joe," says Paddy. "You got to stimulate the economy by buying that new car."

"For 200 bucks?" says I.

arthur hoppe  
**innocent bystander**

"Well, take the wife out to dinner and the movies instead," says Paddy. "The thing is, you got to start spending money like water, Joe, to get us out of this recession we're in."

"That's what I was doing last year, Paddy," says I. "And I caused that whole inflation thing."

"And you will again, Joe," says Paddy. "But weren't you happier then?"

"That I was," says I. "But tell me, Paddy, how do I know when to pinch pennies and when to heave my cash to the winds?"

"Don't worry, Joe," says Paddy. "The President will let you know under his New Directions program. It's working great. He's got a new one every couple of months."

So I just want you to know, President, how sorry I am I got us into this mess. And I'll follow you in whatever New Direction you say.

Truly Yours,  
 Joe Sikspak, American

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