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THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN *dy*

## THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

January 24, 1975

## MEMORANDUM TO THE PRESIDENT

THROUGH: DONALD RUMSFELD

FROM: ROBERT A. GOLDWIN *RAJ* *RAJ*

Tom Brokaw's question about "the credibility of American justice" especially "as young Americans see it," gave an opportunity to talk morality in a straightforward, down-to-earth way. The question was: Agnew "is going to become a millionaire" and "Mr. Nixon is in California. How do you suppose that squares with the idea of justice as young people ought to see it in this country?"

Most of your answer was excellent, and the line--I wouldn't buy the books"--was brilliant. But the last part could have been strengthened by an argument something like the following:

I think it will bother a good many Americans, young and old, that some people seem to be rewarded for wrongdoing, but of course we are all familiar with the fact of life that money rewards don't always correspond with human goodness. If they always did correspond, then the measure of any person would invariably be the size of his pocketbook--and we know that isn't the case. Good people are poor as well as rich, and rich people are bad as well as good.

But I don't think most Americans think that the only rewards and punishments in life are money gains and losses. For people who choose public service as their way of life, for example, honesty and self-respect and good reputation are their own reward, and money does not replace them if they are lost.

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I think that most Americans who care about justice would agree that financial gain does not make up for the kind of disgrace suffered by the people we are talking about.

Justice works in funny ways and does not always follow a fixed path. Some really severe punishments have been handed out by the American people. I don't think young Americans who care about justice would trade places with people who have been removed from office, had their careers terminated, and suffered public disgrace--even for a lot of money.

I wouldn't buy the books, let me add.