P.S. to the NEWS
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GROUP GUILT

The other day, I received a letter from John Gardner of Common Cause. There wasn't anything confidential about the letter. Probably several million other persons received the identical form letter as part of a mass mailing. Mr. Gardner started off his letter by saying:

"The identity of one person responsible for Watergate has never been disclosed. That person is you. Yes, you and every other American citizen are to blame. Whether Republican, Democrat, or independent. ... Watergate ... reflects an undercurrent of political treachery that has become part of our very system itself. And ... we are all to blame for the consequences."

Now, Mr. Gardner may feel personally guilty about Watergate, but I don't feel guilty at all. I didn't commit any perjury, or burglary, or obstruction of justice; and I resent any self-appointed sociologist trying to pin the blame on the general public.

It is a peculiarity of liberals to subscribe to the theory of group guilt. There may be isolated instances, such as a lynch mob, where group guilt truly exists. But, as a general rule, sin is individual, and so is guilt.

When President John F. Kennedy was assassinated, the liberals tried hard to pin that murder on the conservatives as a group. After it was discovered that the assassin was in fact a Marxist and a member of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee, Lee Harvey Oswald, the liberals switched from charges of ideological group guilt to

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charges of geographic group guilt. They heaped the blame on Dallas, Texas, even though Oswald had lived in the Soviet Union longer than he had lived in Dallas.

The syndrome of group guilt is particularly destructive of law and order when liberals attempt to explain the rising rate of violent crime. We are told that society is to blame, and that we should be tolerant and permissive toward the vicious, depraved criminals who murder, maim, rape and rob.

The American people intuitively reject the group guilt syndrome. This is why American citizens are properly demanding the reinstatement of capital punishment as a deterrent to kidnappings, hijackings and other heinous crimes. Most Americans care more about protecting the pathetic innocent victims of crime than protecting the criminals.

One of the lessons of Watergate is that many crimes are not caused by poverty or lack of education. None of the Watergate defendants can excuse his misdeeds because he came from a disadvantaged neighborhood or a broken home, or was the victim of racial or economic discrimination, or was deprived of a college education.

Watergate is a good reminder that crime is an offense by individuals who should be individually punished.

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