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Richard M. Nixon bought me a couch, so to speak.

And through me, he also, you might say, contributed money to the American Civil Liberties Union and to other organizations that are staunch supporters of the First Amendment.

Mr. Nixon didn't really send me his personal check drawn on his New Jersey bank. Nor did he designate a former member of the Oval Office palace guard or some other messenger to deliver the funds. The \$1,100 check actually came from the government of the District of Columbia.

But I know it was from the former President. It was my part of the settlement from lawsuits filed against the Government following the sweep of arrests on May 3, 1971, during the May week protests against the Vietnam War. Other lawsuits filed in connection with events that week also were recently settled. However, court rulings prevented the more than 8,000 people arrested from being included in a class action.

The actual names of the lawsuits involving me were McCarthy et al v. Kleindienst, and Adelman et al v. Kleindienst. And even though Mr. Nixon's name was not on the release form I signed, I don't think the others whom I am now pledged not to sue, including the former Attorneys General John Mitchell and Richard Kleindienst, and Jerry Wilson of the District of Columbia police, were acting other than under orders from the commander in chief.

Like the many tens of thousands who traveled to Washington during the first week in May 1971, I shared with my friends and colleagues from Philadelphia the same goal — to end the Vietnam War. Demonstrations in Washington and in other cities had done little to change policy, and plans

## Thanks, Mr. Nixon

By Andrew D. Gilman

now turned toward civil disobedience.

It was conceived that if protesters blocked roads leading into Washington on May 3, Government employees would not be able to get to their jobs and the war machine would stop for a day. We had nothing against the workers — it was the Government that was the target. So several of us wanted to bridge the gap between protesters and the citizenry, and decided to pass out doughnuts and leaflets to motorists stalled in traffic.

We never got to participate in the protest. The D.C. and other capital police forces rounded up people before they could act — not just demonstrators, mind you, but college professors, secretaries on their way to work, tourists.

My group was dispersed by motor-scooter policemen, and about an hour later I was arrested with several other persons as we walked on the sidewalk behind the White House. We were not jaywalking, disturbing the peace, or shouting toward the Oval Office. We were merely walking along the street when we were herded into a police van and taken to the D.C. jail.

I can still recall the scene at a local precinct late that night as we were processed for release. We had been transported in a converted moving van to the station house, and walked across the street, under an archway formed

by the rifles and unsheathed bayonets of two rows of National Guardsmen. I also remember the police guard in the station house who smiled so sweetly, the gold inlaid star in his front tooth flashing in the night light.

I was released that evening. Others taken to Robert F. Kennedy Stadium spent up to three days in jail. Then over the next several years, the arrests were thrown out by the courts, and records were expunged. Unfortunately, only a few hundred of the thousands who were swept off the streets filed claims for false arrest.

By now, the cases have demonstrated that the arrest of citizens on the mere suspicion that they are up to no good is a violation of the Bill of Rights. And I applaud the A.C.L.U. and other organizations that have established the principle that the Government can be held accountable — for dollar damages, not just with injunctions and legal opinions — for illegal actions that deny the guaranteed right of freedom of speech.

But at this point, I'd rather thank Richard M. Nixon for the foolishness of his own Government. Fortunately, I was not physically harmed by anybody, but I did see men and women run over by police scooters and others beaten for no apparent reason.

I guess if I were fully adapted to the realities of the 1980's, I would follow the advice of our current President and save this money. But I'd rather contribute to groups that are fighting many of this President's policies. And I'd prefer to spend, to consume, so when my old protester friends come to visit, they can have a place to sleep — on the Richard M. Nixon memorial sofa-bed.

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