

# MI CASA, SUE CASA

BY THOMAS W. HAZLETT

**J**uly 1992: "The old adage '*mi casa, su casa*' will be true when my house is the White House." —Candidate Bill Clinton

April 1993: "Several conservative Democrats in Congress complain that they and their constituents are being denied access to visit the White House in an ongoing war of nerves with President Clinton. House members who last month voted against the administration's economic policies say presidential aides are warning them they're on the White House's 'don't help' list. About 36 Democratic senators and representatives are on the list....Mr. [Pete] Geren, a conservative Democrat from Fort Worth, Texas, had worked for months to get approval for a [White House] tour for 80 senior citizens from his district. But approval for the full tour was denied suddenly after Mr. Geren voted against Mr. Clinton's \$16 billion economic stimulus package, and only 40 were allowed into the White House." —*Birmingham Post-Herald*

April 1993: "Parents of 46 Brea Junior High honor students are upset because the White House has refused to let them get a special guided tour of the president's house when the students come to Washington in two weeks. They think they might be victims of politics and President Clinton's efforts to put the squeeze on Congress members....'Clinton's talking about how [meeting President Kennedy at the White House when he was a student] made such an impression on him, and he's not offering the same opportunity to my kids?' said John Zucman, whose 14-year-old daughter, Natalie, is disappointed she'll be going all the way to Washington without touring the White House." —*The Orange County Register*

Mr. Clinton came to Washington riding the ghost of Jefferson; he claimed to be a noble statesman who would take America up and beyond the meanness of the 1980s. His would be a government that would unite, not divide; it

would bring the best in us together, rather than put the worst of us to preying upon our fellow man. It would bring peace and harmony out of strife, chaos, and gridlock.

Now his operatives target senior tourists and junior high school honor students for political retribution. And, naturally, lie to the press about it. The Clinton administration blithely dismisses "enemies list" accusations with a "tsk, tsk." But the public threats issued by representatives of the White House tend to undermine this claim of innocence: Howard Paster, Clinton's congressional liaison, says he will, "without apology," dutifully keep track of those representatives of the people who vote against the 43-percent president and consider the full panoply of reprisals—including cutting off tours for constituents—at his disposal.

Or, as President Clinton might put it today: *mi casa, sue me in court casa if you want to see my casa.*

**I**n any language, Clinton's Conquistadores have focused like a laser not on the economy but on two key tactical angles: 1) talk sweetness (peace, brotherhood, bring America together, put people first, hugs, kisses, you're beautiful, babe) and 2) rip the internal organs out of your opposition.

Unemployment isn't merely bad; it's the "worst economy in 50 years." Leadership hasn't just failed to inspire; Republicans *hate* poor people. Now that Mr. Clinton is in power, the defamatory extremism of the campaign has been replaced by a viciousness unbecoming for a victor. As the Clinton administration continues its GOP rebuilding program with failure after failure, vindictiveness will become something of a civil-service obligation for federal employees.

This ugliness oozes not from one of the many gaps in Mr. Clinton's Swiss cheese-like soul but from the ideology

that he has brought to D.C. Contrary to popular belief, he does indeed believe in something. He is a fanatical devotee of Government. Of Programs. Of Commissions. Of Emergency Security Councils. Of Summits. Of Beltway Experts. Of Washington Trickle Down. If Bill Clinton could paraphrase Robert Duvall's character in *Apocalypse Now*, he would bellow: *I love the smell of red tape in the morning!*

Ever since that sultry evening he wildly proposed marriage to Hillary after learning of her body heat for full funding of Head Start, he has lusted after the top-down approach to public policy. Bill aches with missionary zeal to be seen as the Caring Solution to America's Problems. And if that means shafting a few junior high school kids...*sue my casa.*

Inducing the common folk to pay for ambitious government programs that reek of sizzling bacon is a sales task that would daunt even a Mary Kay pink-Cadillac owner. In this light, the divide-and-conquer reflexes of the Clinton *apparatchiks* are a symptom, not a cause. The only way you can get the masses to cough up the multi-billions is by bait-and-switch: Look at those Rich People! (Got you to look; I stole your wallet!) Only by diversionary tactics can one gather the resources to pay for fabulous new deals—the sort any healthy young presidential he-man like Billy Clinton truly craves.

It was this hormonal combustion that Jack Kennedy famously ignited in the pubescent Billy Clinton. Isn't it hypocritical to—Wait just a minute: I hereby endorse the administration's policies and go one step further, recommending that the White House deny *any* junior high school tour requests from Arkansas. The social savings could be enormous.

*Contributing Editor Thomas W. Hazlett teaches economics and public policy at the University of California, Davis.*

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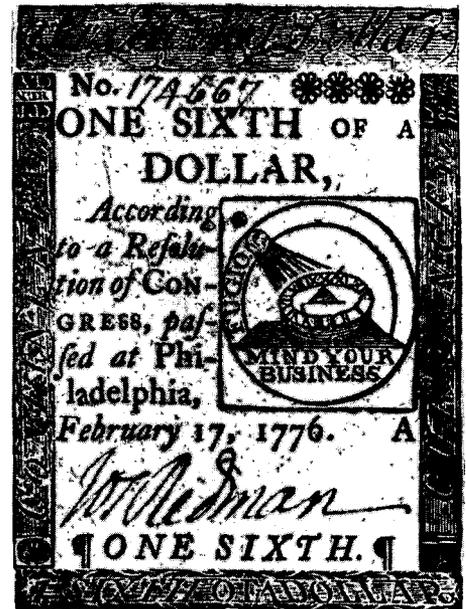
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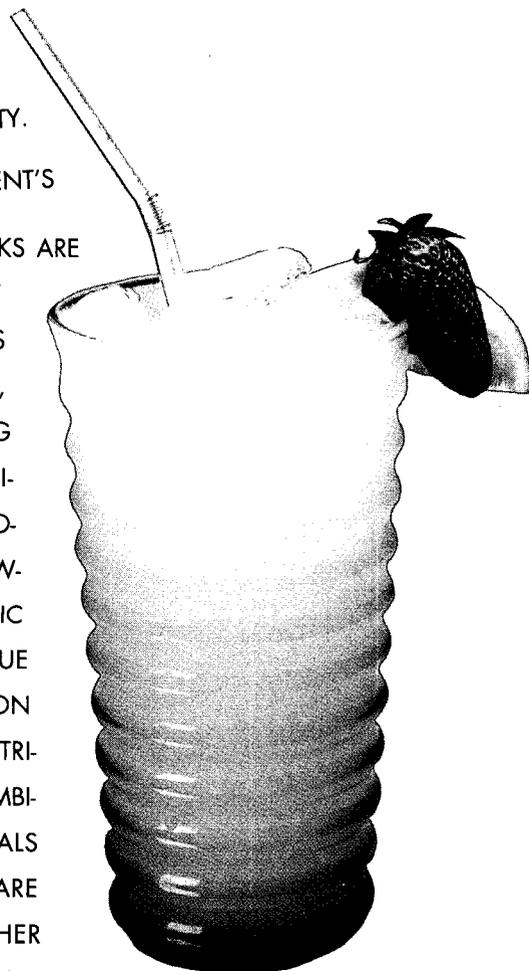
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