

United States v. Nixon / Cartoon Analysis—Answer Key



Source: Leonard Borozinski, *State Journal* (Reprinted with permission)

Background

“Executive privilege” is the concept that the president can withhold certain information from Congress or the courts. Throughout history, Presidents have claimed executive privilege if they see a need to protect military, diplomatic, or national security secrets. President may invoke executive privilege when the sharing of certain conversations or information may harm national interests.

Observe

1. What people and objects are shown? Make a list of what you see in the cartoon including captions.

Two men are shown: one is labeled “COMMITTEE TO RE-ELECT PRESIDENT” and one is a caricature of President Nixon. They are holding an umbrella labelled “EXECUTIVE PRIVILEGE.”

2. What is the setting?

The setting is a storm, and the men are standing ankle deep in water labelled “WATERGATE.”

Reflect

3. What is happening in this image?

The men representing the Committee to Re-Elect the President and President Nixon are trying to stay dry/shelter themselves under the umbrella of executive privilege. The umbrella is too small to keep them dry and they are both getting wet.

4. What significance do the labels and symbols have?

The water labeled WATERGATE symbolizes that they are being damaged by the Watergate crisis. The umbrella they are sharing labeled EXECUTIVE PRIVILEGE is too small to keep them dry symbolizing that executive privilege will not extend far enough to keep them out of trouble.

Evaluate the Message

5. In your opinion, what is the cartoonist’s message? What elements of the cartoon give you that impression?

The artist is trying to convey that executive privilege is providing limited protection from the Watergate Scandal. The artist is likely a critic of the Nixon administration.

6. Do you agree with the point of view and message of the cartoonist? Why or why not?

Student answers will vary.

Question

7. What do you still wonder about?

Student answers will vary.