

# Mobil Oil Corporation

150 EAST 42ND STREET  
NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10017

HERBERT SCHMERTZ  
VICE PRESIDENT

May 13, 1974

We don't believe a corporation can take on a cartoonist without coming out second best. Nevertheless, Mobil feels obliged to register dismay and puzzlement over the Don Wright cartoon (copy attached) which the Washington Star Syndicate is currently distributing on a nationwide basis.

We are well aware that cartoons are visual editorials which lend themselves so admirably to satire that the cartoonist is without peer in his ability to amuse, inspire, ridicule, deflate, or even outrage the reader. We expect the cartoonist to employ exaggeration, distortion, and caricature to make his point; everyone and everything is fair game -- and that is as it should be in a free society.

But satire is at its best when it gives us a glimpse of the truth that might otherwise have eluded us. The Wright cartoon, as we interpret it, affords no such glimpse. Instead, it represents satire totally unrelated to fact or truth, and therefore strikes us as a rather shabby example of intellectual dishonesty.

The cartoon puzzles us because it seems to make these assertions, none of which is true:

- that Mobil has uttered, or somehow endorses, associates itself with, or sponsors the statements attributed to the President.
- that if we did sponsor what is presumably a news program featuring the President, which we have not done, our sponsorship could affect the program's content -- or that, conversely, the program's content could rub off on Mobil.
- that the President is an albatross around Mobil's neck, and Mobil around Mr. Nixon's neck -- insinuating a sort of two-way guilt by association.

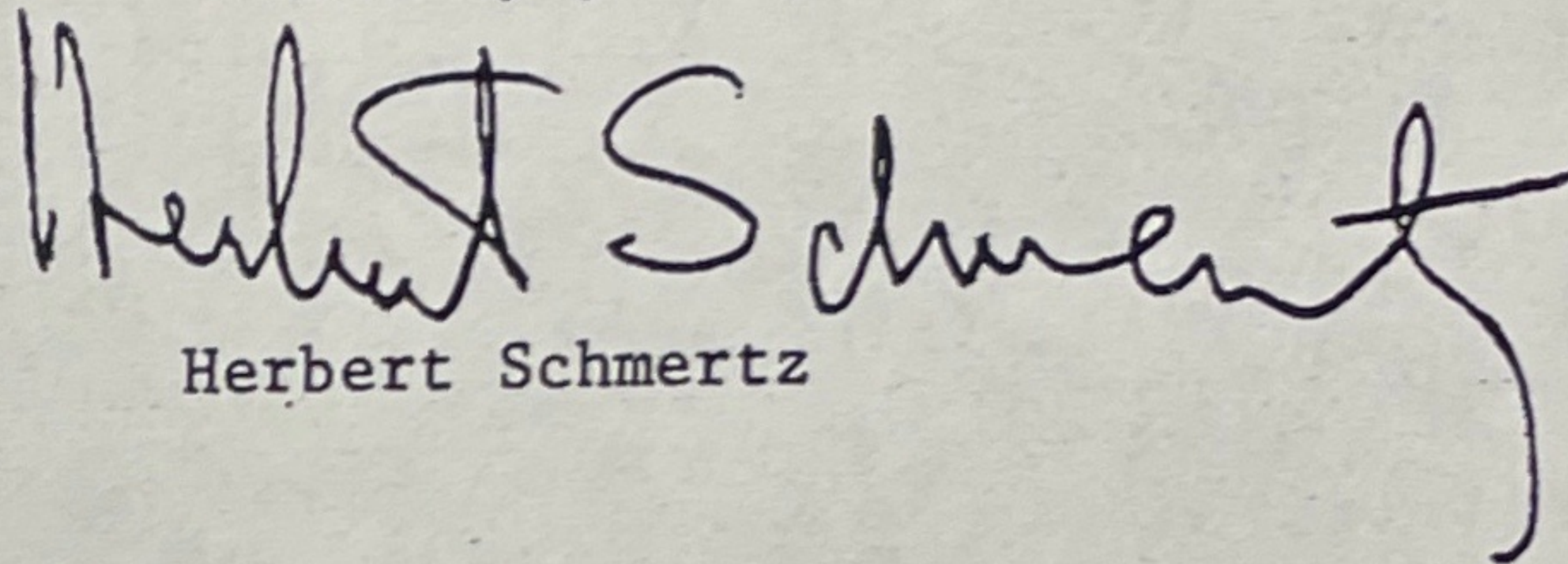
What Mr. Wright has done is to link Mr. Nixon, whose popularity is at an all-time low, with Mobil, which shares the opprobrium felt by all oil companies, thus fallaciously causing each to tar the other.



As we said, the cartoon puzzles us. Perhaps it was intended to goad us into objecting to it at a time when we are vigorously demanding the freedom to present our views over the broadcast media. We choose not to fall into that trap. Freedom of the press is the law of the land, regardless of what Mobil or any other institution or individual says about it. The freedom is there, hanging out for all to see, enjoy and, occasionally, to abuse.

The quality of that freedom can be measured by the number of abuses it can withstand without serious damage. We don't believe the Wright cartoon represents a major abuse of freedom of expression, but we think it would be a disservice to that freedom if we did not, here and now, blow the whistle on Mr. Wright's intellectual dishonesty.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Herbert Schmertz". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Herbert Schmertz



---AMERICA'S GREATEST  
DAYS LIE AHEAD. THE  
ECONOMY IS UPSWINGING  
AND INFLATION IS  
DOWNTURNING---



OH, WHAT OPPORTUNITY!  
WHAT PROSPERITY!  
WHAT FREEDOM!  
WE'VE NEVER HAD  
IT SO GOOD!



SPONSORED BY  
**Mobil**  
OIL COMPANY