

Charlie Rose Chats with Mark Twain

by Jack Swenson

Mr. Twain, you make no secret of your contempt for the U.S. Congress. Am I correct in making that allegation?

Indeed you are. In my opinion, no man's life, liberty, or property is safe while Congress is in session.

Aren't you being a little harsh?

Not at all. It could probably be shown by facts and figures that there is no distinctly native American criminal class except Congress.

But these are for the most part intelligent and well-educated men and women, are they not?

Fleas can be taught nearly anything that a Congressman can.

You question their intelligence?

Let me put it this way. Suppose you were an idiot. And suppose you were a member of Congress. But I repeat myself.

Idiot. Isn't that rather a strong term?

Perhaps. However, I believe that it is fair to say that all Congresses have a kindly feeling for idiots, and a compassion for them, on account of personal experience and heredity.

Harsh words, Mr. Twain, but I thank you on behalf of my viewers for giving us something to think about.

(Fade to a promo for "All Things Considered.")

