

OUCH! I'll Just Have Tap Water, Please



by Reg Green

In the 1970s when inflation forced up the price of coffee from 10 cents, with unlimited fill-ups, to 25 cents – and a blank stare if you asked if the second cup was free – I was in a group making a documentary to bring home to people that the retirement life they had planned would inevitably become out of reach unless they saved far more than they had ever expected.

One of the team thought up a line that we hoped would jolt audiences into this realization. It did. Every time it was shown, the audience's response was a laugh of nervous disbelief, followed by a silence heavy with soul-searching.

The line? A panhandler, coming toward the camera, asked, "Can

you spare a dollar for a cup of coffee?"

Looking ahead today, shouldn't you be considering what a tall cinnamon dolce latte will cost when you retire?