

Fixing the White House Fence

Three contractors are bidding to fix a broken fence at the White House in Washington, D.C. One contractor is from New Jersey, another from Tennessee and a third from Florida.

The three go with a White House official to examine the fence.

The Florida contractor takes out a tape measure and does some measuring, then works some figures with a pencil. "Well," he says, "I figure the job will run about \$900: \$400 for materials, \$400 for my crew and \$100 profit for me."

The Tennessee contractor also does some measuring and figuring, then says, "I can do this job for \$700: \$300 for materials, \$300 for my crew and \$100 profit for me."

The New Jersey contractor doesn't measure or figure, but leans over to the White House official and whispers, "\$2,700."

The official, incredulous, says, "You didn't even measure like the other guys! How did you come up with such a high figure?"

The New Jersey contractor whispers back, "\$1,000 for me, \$1,000 for you, and we hire the guy from Tennessee to fix the fence."

"Done!" replies the government official.