

## Getting

When Charles Colson got religion, the first person he wanted to break the news to was his grandmother—the very same grandmother he had vowed to run over in 1972 to get Richard Nixon reelected President. He knocked on the door and cried, “Granny, it’s me, Charles.”

## Right

“You go away, Charley,” his grandmother said, “and take your car with you.”

## With

“Granny, you don’t understand. I’m not here to run over you. I’ve got religion now. I’ve come to pray with you.”

Colson’s grandmother opened the door a couple inches. “You’re joshing me, Charley boy.”

“It’s true, Granny, I’m no longer the mean, dirty, rotten, unscrupulous trickster you used to bounce on your knee. I’ve been reborn, Granny.”

She hesitated. “How do I know this ain’t one of your tricks to get me out in the street so you can go vroom . . . vroommm with your motor again?”

“I have Sen. Harold Hughes with me. He’ll tell you I mean it.”

“That’s right, Granny,” Sen. Hughes said. “Charley has made his peace and he’s asking everyone to forgive him his sins.”

“I ain’t so sure I’m ready to forgive him. You know I was flat on my back for six months after the 1972 election.”

“Granny, please let me in. I want to show you I’m a new man.”

“All right,” Colson’s grandmother said, “but leave your car keys out on the stoop.”

Colson came into the house with Sen. Hughes. “Shall we kneel together?” Colson asked.

“Not me,” his grandmother replied. “I haven’t been able to kneel since you screamed at me, ‘Four more years!’ and then put your Oldsmobile into drive.”

“That’s all in the past, Granny. As a matter of fact I’ve pleaded guilty and I’m going to be a witness against Nixon.”

“Don’t blame you for that; I read the transcripts and it turns out the President didn’t think too much of you. He called you a namedropper and used to laugh at you with Dean, Ehrlichman and Haldeman. My, Charley, I never thought anyone would play you for a sucker the way Nixon did.”

“I have to forgive him too, Granny. Since my conversation I can feel no animosity toward anyone, not even the President of the United States.”

“By gum, Charley, you really may be a changed man. It’s hard for me to believe, of course, after what I’ve been through.”

“I want to make it up to you, Granny. I want to cleanse my soul. The devil was in me in 1972. You understand that, don’t you?”

“I understand it, because you’re my grandson. But what about all the other people you played dirty tricks on? What about the political ads, and the forged telegrams and the enemies list?”

“I’m going to become a government witness, Granny, and make amends. I’m going to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.”

“So help you God,” Sen. Hughes added.

“Anybody want any cider?” Colson’s grandmother asked.

“No, we’ve got to be going. We have miles to go before we sleep. All I want to know, Granny, is do you forgive?”

“All right, Charley, I forgive you. But no more getting involved in presidential campaigns, you hear?” Colson smiled for the first time. “Cross my heart and hope to die.”

## Granny:

## Step on

## Her Hand

## And Help

## Her Up

By Art Buchwald