

Capitol Punishment

Was Josephine The Plumber?

By Art Buchwald

It was May 1975 and the Watergate hearings were still being televised every day. It was the longest show in the history of television and, like "The Forsyte Saga," it was hard to keep all the characters straight.

The Bilkin family sat in front of their set, bleary-eyed, but determined to see it through.

On the stand was John Dean III who had been testifying every day for eight months.

Maude Bilkin said, "What a nice looking boy. Tricia made a smart choice marrying him."

"Tricia isn't married to John Dean," Alan Bilkin said. "She's married to Jeb Magruder."

The Bilkins' 16-year-old daughter, Ellie, spoke up, "I thought Julie was married to Jeb Magruder and Tricia was married to Sen. Sam Ervin."

"No," said Joel, the 18-year-old son. "Sam Ervin is married to Martha Mitchell. Their son is Henry Kissinger."

Maude replied, "I thought Henry Kissinger was the nephew of John Ehrlichman."

Alan Bilkin shook his head. "No. Don't you remember last year when it was revealed that Henry Kissinger was H. R. Haldeman's long lost son?"

"That's right," Joel said. "And Henry Kissinger and Martha Mitchell were in love but they broke up when G. Gordon Liddy tapped their telephone."

"Didn't Martha Mitchell marry Maurice Stans?" Ellie asked.

"No, she married Robert Vesco and moved to Costa Rica," Maude said.

"I don't remember that," Alan said.

"You were working that day," Maude explained.

"What happened to Dick Helms?" Alan asked.

"Dick Helms became the head of the Bureau of Indian Affairs and lost a finger at Wounded Knee," Joel said.

"I thought Bebe Rebozo was at Wounded Knee," Ellie said.

"No, Bebe Rebozo became the governor of Florida when Daniel Ellsberg was appointed the head of the CIA," Alan said.

"Wasn't Daniel Ellsberg Patrick Gray's lawyer?" Maude asked.

"No, Ron Ziegler was Patrick Gray's lawyer. But then he resigned to become the commandant of the U.S. Marine Corps," Joel said.

"I thought Richard Kleindienst was made the commandant," Ellie said.

"No, Kleindienst became the head of ITT after Dita Beard moved to Denver," Alan said.

"It does seem hard to follow," Maude said. "Let's listen."

Ellie said, "Dean seems to be talking about President Nixon."

"What happened to President Nixon?" Joel asked.

"He married Brezhnev's daughter," Alan said.

Maude replied, "It seems to me Spiro Agnew's son married Brezhnev's daughter. I think Nixon is still married to Pat."

"But if Nixon is still married to Pat, what happened to Donald Segretti?" Ellie asked.

"He was adopted by Sen. and Mrs. Muskie and now lives in Maine with Jane Fonda," Alan said.

"I thought Jane Fonda had fallen in love with Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist," Joel said.

"I don't remember that," Maude said.

"You were shopping that day," Joel replied.

"Do you think John Dean will go to jail?" Ellie asked.

"I hope not," said Maude. "It would be awfully tough on Tricia."