

Capitol Punishment

Granny Colson To the Rescue

By Art Buchwald

Before the presidential election in 1972 Charles Colson, who had the reputation as the most ruthless man in the White House, said he would run over his grandmother, if necessary, to get Richard Nixon reelected President of the United States.

Not much has been heard of Colson's grandmother since November, 1972, and I've been wondering about her.

This scene keeps going around in my mind.

Colson drives up to his grandmother's house in his 1973 Buick, parks in the driveway and goes to the door.

His grandmother, still on crutches from the '72 election, answers the knock.

"How are you, Granny?" Colson asks, kissing her on the cheek.

"I'm coming along fine. The ribs are mending and the doctor says my hip should be healed in a matter of months. I must say, Charles, when you ran over me with your car, you really ran over me."

"Now don't start complaining again, Granny. You know as well as I do that the President's reelection depended on my running over you."

"Charles, I never asked you this before, but did President Nixon know you ran over me to get him reelected?"

"No, he didn't, Granny. I never told him and he never asked me."

"Why not?"

"I thought it best that he not know. Running over a person, even if it's your own grandmother, is considered a crime, and had the President known, he would have had to lower the boom on *somebody*."

"Did John Dean know you ran over me?"

"It was *his* idea. Any crime committed in the White House in the last five years originated with John Dean."

"When did the President first find out I had been run over?"

"As far as I can recollect at this point in time, it was either on Dec. 21 or March 22 of 1972 or 1973. He was very upset about it and made a statement that running over people's grandmothers had no place in the American political system."

"Did he ask you at any time if you had run me over?"

"Not exactly. He just said, 'Bob tells me you're doing a good job, Charles.'"

"And from that you deduced he was upset?"

"It was a feeling I had. Haldeman just winked at me so I figured the President knew about it."

"Granny, I don't have much time. I have to go before another grand jury. But what I came to see you about is this. President Nixon is in a lot of trouble. As you know, although I am no longer in the White House, my loyalty toward him has never wavered. I am determined that he survive Watergate no matter *what* it costs."

"You're a fine boy, Charles. Loyalty has always been a Colson trait. What do you plan to do to save the President?"

"Granny, would you step out in the driveway for just a moment?"

"Oh, no, you don't, Charles. I'm not going to fall for that one again."

"I promise to be careful this time, Granny. I'll make sure you only wind up with a couple of bruises."

"Charles, no one loves the office of the Presidency more than I do, and no one prays more ardently that the President can get out of Watergate intact. But I did my share when I got Mr. Nixon reelected. I see no reason why I have to be run over again, just to keep him from being impeached."

"For God's sake, Granny, what are grandmothers for?"