

Betty Beale: Washington



Robert Strauss



Sen. and Mrs. Gale McGee



John Connally

Love at Watergate

WASHINGTON — Since becoming a TV star Sen. Howard Baker has been getting more advice and affection than he can use.

"He gets all these kooky letters," says his wife Joy. "They write. 'You are darling. You are adorable. I love you. I found out you were married when I read you were the son-in-law of Sen. Dirksen. If anything happens to your marriage, will you please let me know.'"

Joy doesn't see anything kooky about calling her husband adorable but thinks it's a little too much when women write such things from a TV acquaintance only.

"He also gets telephone calls," said Joy, who was getting bored "just spending idle days at home" and took the job of answering the phone in her husband's office.

"Will you tell him to stop chewing on his glasses," a woman in Oregon said. "It's very expensive to have new ear pieces put on your glasses."

Joy added "She called all the way from Portland to tell him that!"

The Senator has a habit of sticking one end of his glasses in his mouth and chewing on it pensively while listening to the Watergate testimony. "He chewed all the way through his glasses last week," said Mrs. Baker, so the warning came a little late.

Having given up cigarette smoking four years ago, Baker said he had to have something in his mouth and he couldn't chew gum with the television cameras on him. So about three weeks ago he took up pipe smoking. Almost instantly Joy got a call from a woman who said, "Will you please tell Sen. Baker not to smoke a pipe. He will get lip cancer."

While most Americans are wondering who writes "Uncle" Sam Ervin's and Howard Baker's stuff because their wit couldn't be more apropos, more homespun or better timed, some people are devoid of humor.

Several letters to Baker have pointed out that the hearings are serious business and the writers do not appreciate his levity. But generally the country is grateful for what is probably the only uncanned drolery on the tube.

It's a wonder Sen. Baker doesn't get glare blindness from the televised hearings because he no sooner arrives home than he closets himself in a darkroom. "He has two darkrooms, one here and one in Tennessee," said his wife who called him not just a photography nut but a "super nut."

He's been developing 19 pictures he took of people to hang on the walls of his own Senate office. One is of his son, Darek, 20, spitting in three directions at once. "Darek has beautiful white teeth," his mother said, "but because of the way they are spaced, he can spit in three directions simultaneously and Howard has a picture of him doing it." "Are you sure he isn't Mark Spitz?" friends have asked.

The Bakers' only other child is their daughter, Cissy, 18. "She is my extrovert," said Joy. "Sometimes it scares me. I think she might run against her father for the Senate."

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Wondering if new Republican John Connally and Democratic Chairman Bob Strauss were just as close



AUTOGRAPH hunters close in on Sen. Howard Baker of the Watergate hearings

as ever, a visitor to Texas recently asked how they were getting along now.

"Well, I'll tell yew," came the answer in a Texas drawl. "When John takes himself a buy-it of watermelon, it's Bob what spits the seeds."

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Just before the Watergate TV spotlight shifted this week to John Ehrlichman, I telephoned his wife Jeanne to see how this very religious, very circumspect and very proper family was holding up in the face of such an embarrassing and trying ordeal.

The answer came in the lilt in Jeanne Ehrlichman's voice and in every thought she uttered. She's about as close to a saint as you'll ever run into.

"I have been cleaning out—which is a joy. With five children of all ages there are lots of things. We don't have any plans, but we don't plan to come back to Washington."

What effect has this had on all their children? "The children are so great. They are untouched. We are leading a very normal life. It (the Watergate) is like a dream going on. We know the truth will be out eventually. If someone says you are purple and you know you are not, you just don't worry. The family is closer than ever. We re all pulling together."

How were the children treated at school?

"The kids at school were so supportive — they didn't try to hurt them. People sense when you need support. We have had that kind of reaction from people all over the country. In one way it's been a wonderful

experience because it's taught us a lot about people. Probably if anything there is a message here because we have felt that the ideal of America is being lived up to — that people are innocent until proven guilty.

"But that isn't true of the press. When they base something on hearsay, they say it's fact. They assume a person is guilty until proven innocent."

Wouldn't it be better if the President came out and cleared the whole thing up because only he can do it?

"I know the President will come out when all the testimony is out," replied this trusting woman. "We want the truth to be told and I am sure people will recognize it when it comes out. We have been asked how the truth will be known when it is heard. I have great faith people will know the truth when it's told." The lilt was still in her voice.

In the meantime, the Ehrlichmans are getting ready to leave their woodland privacy in Great Falls, Va.—30 minutes from Washington. There was some criticism in the paper, Jeanne observed, because they had bought their house four - and - a half years ago for \$76,000 and it's on the market for \$139,000.

But, said Jeanne, "fifty real estate people went through the house without knowing whose it was and they came up with that figure. The value of the property has gone up so tremendously they figured what it would cost now to build the same house on the same property."

Bob Haldeman's Georgetown house which he purchased last December for \$140,000 was sold this month for a reported \$170,000.