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# Mock trial acquits Lizzie Borden

## Former Simpson lawyer defends alleged ax-murderer

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Lizzie Borden was back on the witness stand, still wearing her Victorian outfit and still claiming she did not hack her father and stepmother to death with an ax.

More than 100 years after her acquittal, Borden was found innocent again, this time at the mock Court of Historical Review and with help from one of O.J. Simpson's lawyers.

The court, which uses volunteer lawyers and judges and hears about 10 cases a year, has decided such weighty issues as the birthplace of the martini (Martinez, Calif.) and the existence of Santa Claus (yes).

At Wednesday's nonjury trial, defense lawyer Peter Keane reminded the court that it also had a serious calling.

"It would be wrong for us to change history," said Keane, an assistant public defender.

Borden herself was the star witness, played by Municipal Court Judge Diane Wick, who looked as if she had just stepped out of the 1890s.

Borden, 32 at the time of the killings, said she worshipped her father and loved her stepmother "just like a real mother."

"I certainly did not," she said when asked if she killed them.

In a courtroom filled with dozens of spectators, Keane urged Municipal Court Judge George Choppelas not to

"It would be wrong for us to change history."

**PETER KEANE**  
 "Lizzie Borden's" defense lawyer

add to the unkindness Borden suffered after she was acquitted of the killings that took place in her home in Fall River, Mass., on Aug. 4, 1892.

Borden died in the same town in 1927, an ostracized spinster whom children taunted by chanting, "Lizzie Borden took an ax and gave her mother 40 whacks. When she saw what she had done, she gave her father 41."

Borden was a victim of media hype and was "condemned by rhyme," said Gerald Uelmen, who helped persuade a jury to acquit Simpson in the 1994 slayings of his ex-wife and her friend.

No murder weapon was discovered and although there was "a shower of blood, not one drop was found on Lizzie," Uelmen said. Her father, Andrew Borden, a banker and the wealthiest landlord in town, had many enemies, he said.

As in the Simpson case, there was no second suspect. But the defense told

the judge that Andrew Borden was heard arguing with a man in the house a few days before he was slain.

Prosecutors Frank Russoniello, a former U.S. attorney, and Frank Winston insisted that only Lizzie Borden had the opportunity and motive to carry out the slayings.

She was jealous of her stepmother and wanted her father's \$500,000 estate, an enormous sum at a time when a loaf of bread sold for 5 cents, they said.

Despite the recounting of details about the blood and blows, both sides provided the levity that has made the mock court famous.

At one point, the defense asked if Borden had been read her Miranda rights.

"Carmen Miranda wasn't even born," answered Russoniello, drawing laughter with the reference to the Latin American movie star with the outlandish headdress.

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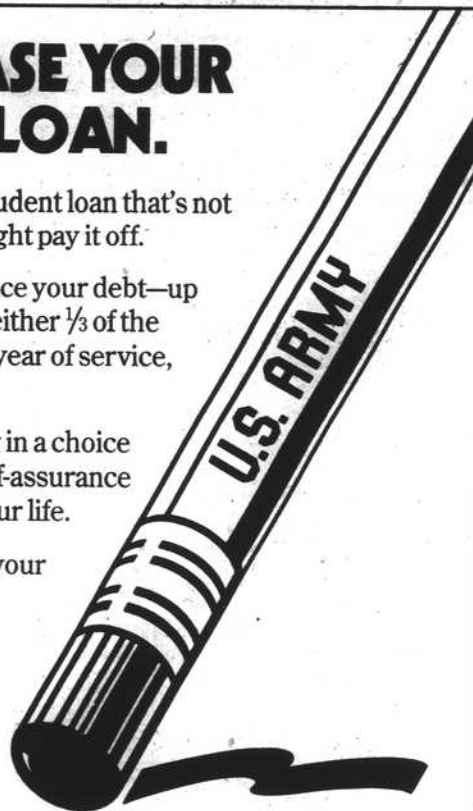
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## Winning stamp contest brotherly tradition

WASHINGTON (AP)—Bob Hautman continued a family tradition Thursday by capturing the annual federal duck stamp contest with an acrylic painting of a Canada goose nestled in a wetland.

Hautman, an artist from Plymouth, Minn., became the third of three brothers to win the prestigious competition that attracted 477 entries from artists across the country. His painting will be used on the official 1997-98 federal duck stamp.

Bob Hautman, a finalist five previous times, and his two brothers have been prominent fixtures in the competition since 1989. His brother Jim won in 1989 and 1994, while his brother Joe won in 1991.

The sibling rivalry has been good-natured.

"Now people will stop saying,

"Next year it's your turn to win," the new winner said.

Duck stamps, which must be purchased by hunters as part of their license, have become increasingly popular among stamp collectors, wildlife artists and conservationists. Sportsmen who hunt ducks and geese must buy a stamp each year, but people who do not hunt make up 10 percent of sales.

The stamps cost \$15 apiece, with 98 cents of every dollar going for the purchase and protection of wetlands habitat.

Each year, the winning design becomes a collector's item. The winning artist receives no contest award but stands to profit from sales of limited edition prints of the artwork, along with T-shirts, mugs and caps with the design.

Hautman's painting of a single

Canada goose was similar to a winning entry by his younger brother, Jim, two years ago, except this painting added a wetlands scene as a backdrop.

"The Canada goose is such a majestic bird," said Hautman in explaining his selection.

Second place in the contest went to Hank Buffington of Stockton, N.J., for an acrylic painting of a single pintail on water. Third place was awarded to Bruce Miller of Mound, Minn., for an acrylic painting of two pintails in a wetland habitat.

Federal duck stamps have been issued annually since 1934 and more than \$500 million has been raised over the years from stamp sales. The latest stamp will go on sale July 1, 1997.



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