

American people, real victims in Watergate



"You oughta see the one that got away."

When John Mitchell left the U.S. Courthouse in Washington, D.C., last week after being sentenced to from 30 months to eight years in prison for his role in the Watergate cover-up, he was asked what he thought of the sentence.

"It could have been a hell of a lot worse," Mitchell said. "They could have sentenced me to spend the rest of my life with Martha Mitchell."

While such punishment probably was not given because it would qualify as "cruel and unusual," there is truth to at least part of what Mitchell said. The four sentences handed down last week

could have been worse (or better, depending on how you look at it).

Along with Mitchell, H.R. Haldeman and John Ehrlichman were sentenced to at least two and one-half years in prison for obstruction of justice, conspiracy and perjury. Robert Mardian, convicted of conspiracy, was given a ten-month to three-year sentence.

The sentence given means they must serve the minimum time imposed without opportunity for probation. All four men announced their intentions to appeal, a process that could take up to two years.

While these four sentences are stiffer than those received by any other Watergate defendants since the original burglars, they seem out of proportion to the crime. These men tried to cover up what, in spite of their efforts, was revealed to be America's worst political scandal. These men lied to either Watergate investigators or grand juries. And these men could be back on the streets holding down good jobs in a profitable law practice within two and one-half years.

"Whatever Bob Haldeman did, he did not for himself but for the President of the United States," Haldeman's lawyer told U.S. District Judge John J. Sirica before sentencing. One of the defense attorneys told reporters that the four defendants would suffer "far more than Richard Nixon will ever suffer."

Attempts to portray these men as public servants just doing their jobs or as victims of injustice because they got light sentences while Nixon got none at all overlook one thing—the real victims of injustice are the American people who put their faith in leaders who were hardly deserving of it.

That the four defendants will suffer far more than Nixon may be true. That they will suffer far less than anyone else would suffer for committing a similar crime is hardly debatable.

Wes Albers

Our 'enlightened' world just a mirror image

It's been a long time since Sinclair Lewis first unmasked America. Through his novels *Babbalanza*, *Main Street*, and *Elmer Gantry*, to name a few, he plucked the scales from our eyes, revealing to us the dark, seamy underside of this society.

A quick review of certain events from the past year is enough to raise Lewis' ghost from the grave.

For one, it seems book-burning is still in vogue. The Christian fundamentalists across the country have been up in arms. God, democracy and morality are giving way to "vile and corruptible literature."

The fundamentalists, however, aren't going to let Adam and Eve die without a fight. Witness the recent trouble in West Virginia and the book-banning in Drake, N.D., two years ago.

"Witch hunts" haven't diminished in popularity either. Recently in Boston, Dr. Kenneth Edelin was found guilty of manslaughter in the death of a fetus he had aborted.

The circumstances surrounding the case were murky indeed. For one, it was rumored that the D.A.'s office was pressured into forming a case

against Edelin by certain anti-abortion groups in the Boston area.

Secondly, conspicuously enough, a majority of the jurors for the case were Roman Catholics and all the jurors were white. Dr. Edelin is a black man.

Speaking of Boston, one might as well speak of racism as well. Sadly enough, it's still around also.

joe dreesen smiling grimly

The busing issue has created a storm of controversy in Boston. Irate white parents refuse to send their children to school with blacks and vice versa.

Evangelism is almost as popular today as it was in Lewis' time. Billy Graham, Oral Roberts and countless others pick up where *Elmer Gantry* left off.

Send \$4.95 to the Wappitome Bible Institute in Pea Ridge, Ark., and get your own personal pre-fabricated god. He comes complete with a cure for every ailment known to man, except ignorance. However, read your guarantee carefully. Many of these gods have built-in-obsolence.

Closer to home, one finds no lack of ignorance. The religious preference card issue is a good example.

The campus religious leaders tell us 60 per cent of Nebraskans are church-goers. Religion is a very important part of most student's lives. For that reason, the churches should be allowed the use of the registration packets to discover the "religious needs of the student."

Well, by the same reasoning, sex is a very important part of most student's lives—probably more so than religion. Maybe massage parlors should be allowed the use of the registration packets to discover the sexual "needs of the student."

As a friend of mine said the other day, "If Sinclair Lewis were to come back now, he'd look around and shake his head—nothing's changed."

Recession forcing college students to adjust

Among those suffering most from the recession are college students who have been living joyfully in communes.

Take the sad case of Irwin Phlute. For the past five years, young Irwin has been attending Siwash University, where he majored in seven different fields of study at one time or another.

He lived in the Higher Organic Consciousness Family, which was housed in two rooms (plus a laundry tub and broken toilet) in a highly-desirable tenement area 27 blocks from campus. He shared these facilities, as well as numerous rats, with friends of various sexes also seeking higher organic consciousness.

In five years, he had acquired junior standing at the university, the knowledge of how to cook alfalfa sprouts and macaroni six different ways, and a loathing for material possessions—all thanks to his intelligence, application and a \$200-a-month allowance from his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Phleger Phlute.

Imagine his concern, then, when his father reluctantly informed him that, due to the recession, he would have to cut off his allowance.

"But how can I go on living with my family?" asked Irwin.

"You can live with us, dear," said his mother. "Please think of us as your family, too."

"It isn't the same," said Irwin despondently.

"I'm sorry, son," said his father firmly, "but we simply can no longer afford to support you in the poverty to which you've become accustomed."

Irwin made a frantic effort to get a job so he could remain with his family, but there were no jobs to be had. Having no choice, he bid an emotional farewell to his family and moved back in with his family.

Fortunately, his family lived only 14 blocks from the campus, for Irwin was now determined

to finish his education, not having anything else to do.

So Irwin unpacked his hi-fi in his old room with its twin beds, clean sheets and private bath. He breakfasted on bacon and eggs, lunched on baloney-and-cheese sandwiches, dined on meat, vegetables and potatoes and neglected his bike for the family car. Naturally, he was unhappy.

"I wish you wouldn't mope so, dear," said his mother. "With this recession, we all have to make sacrifices."

It is doubtful that Irwin could have borne up under the strain much longer. But then a glorious event occurred: Mr. Phleger was laid off.

arthur hoppe

innocent bystander

"At my age," said Mr. Phleger, rubbing his temples, "I don't know where I'll ever find another job."

"Oh, what will we do?" cried Mrs. Phleger, wringing her hands. "How will we live?"

"Don't worry," said Irwin confidently. "I'll show you how to apply for food stamps. I'll take you around to the supermarket alleys with the best thrown-out vegetables. And I'll teach you how to cook Alfalfa Sprouts and Macaroni Krishna. Happy times are here again!"

His father clapped him on the shoulder proudly. "And here I thought you were just wasting your time in college, son," he said in a choked voice. "And all these years you've really been preparing yourself for life."

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"Wanna cooperate?"