



Jocelyn Krieger

Overtaxed marriage heads for shelter

Some men think in shapely figures, like 34-24-34. My husband, Byron, thinks in timely figures like 4-15-80, changing the last two digits to match the appropriate year.

I know better than to ask him to name the most important calendar date because it most certainly won't be our wedding anniversary. He'll say April 15 — income tax filing deadline.

I'm married to a walking table of tax deductions. Maybe it's because even though I vowed to love him until death do us part, the IRS had seniority.

For 35 years he was devoted to the IRS. He has lived with me a mere 21 years. Even though I've really done more for him than the IRS could ever do, it hasn't helped.

When our first baby was due in the month of May, he was aghast. He was so ashamed that he wouldn't tell anyone. It seemed dumb since we'd already been married 12 months.

"That's after Jan. 1," the prospective father

gasped. "We can't deduct the baby for one whole year!"

THUS BEGAN my career of "federal offenses," and every argument was virtually a "federal case."

Whenever we went to a formal function and I wanted to wear one of the lovely gowns I'd purchased for my singing engagements, the tax-man-in-residence would veto my choice.

"You can't deduct that from your income tax if you wear it any other time but for singing," he'd warn.

I discovered it was absolutely inconsiderate to contract a lingering illness during the first week of December because the doctor might not bill you until he found a cure — which could be after the first of the year. Then you have to wait a year to deduct it.

I've never been able to have a garage sale without my books being audited.

NEVER HAVE I been able to get into my car and turn on the ignition and drive away. First — I have to write down the mileage.

Since I chauffeur kids to doctors' offices like any other mother, besides driving to take my music lessons and to writing assignments, I get more of a writer's cramp recording mileage than I do writing for profit.

There isn't a real reason for me to complain, though. My husband left the IRS but stayed with me. As a private tax consultant, he spends his days plotting ways for his clients to save taxes, defending them before the IRS and tracking down legal tax shelters for everyone.

Me? He hands me an empty book with instructions:

"Write everything down."

I just found out the other day he even made me build my own tax shelter. He pointed to our six kids and said, "Now there's the perfect tax shelter."

There's a dream I have and I can't wait to make it come true.

Some day, when we're sitting across a table in a hidden romantic rendezvous with the candlelight flickering, as my tax expert husband reaches to encircle my hand with his own, his head obviously dancing with fantasies of hours to come, just as his warm hand touches mine, I'll say:

"One minute please. Is this business or pleasure?"

Jocelyn Krieger of Southfield is a free lance writer and a former actress in off-Broadway productions. As a singer, she has appeared with the Detroit Concert Band and Detroit Symphony Orchestra.



Sheila Rosen Seitzman

A good woman who liked being needed

He was an imposing figure in his wheelchair. Even after the severe illness, lengthy hospitalization and months of inactivity, the bulk of his body was impressive.

He had bright red hair, sparkling blue eyes and a smile that could have extended from one end of a bar to the other.

And it had. His wife told me he had been "big" on drinking, big on swearing and big on boasting.

He'd had many jobs but his favorite was driving a truck out on the road. He liked being his own man. He wanted to have control of every situation.

But one day the embolism in his brain stopped his life and changed it forever. It didn't care who he was, about his size or what he liked and wanted. The blood that had flowed freely in his body for 40 years was carrying some undissolved material which blocked a blood vessel in the left hemisphere of his brain.

Because of an anatomical crossover of body cir-

cuitry, he lost the ability to use his right arm and his right leg. He was aphasic, unable to voluntarily speak, read or write.

I WAS HIRED as a speech pathologist to give language therapy.

When I walked into their apartment for the first time, my new patient greeted me with "Damn!" His spouse immediately apologized for this outburst and I assured her that the involuntary language of many aphasic individuals contains profanities.

She laughed and told me that that word was nothing compared to his voluntary vocabulary.

We had been working together for several months, and my patient was learning how to speak, read and write again when I found out that he was not married to the woman I had assumed was his wife.

They were divorced five years before his stroke after 15 years of marriage. She told me that she

could not live with his having his own way all the time, always being the boss and never having a kind word for her. She had felt unimportant and unnecessary.

But when he was so sick and his parents were too old and weak to take him home, she intervened. She liked being needed and she liked taking care of him.

NOW THAT HE was relearning how to speak, she was afraid of what he might say to her and of the person he could again become.

I didn't have any magic answers. I told her strokes can affect emotions as well as the ability to talk or walk and the type of personality which would evolve with recovery was not necessarily predictable.

I did get an important clue a few weeks later when I complimented my patient on an assignment he had successfully completed for me. "Damn," he

said.

I interrupted: "Damn isn't one of the words we've been working on. You don't impress me with that. You knew how to say it before I came into your life."

Then those blue eyes began to sparkle and he grinned with that enormous smile, and said, "Damn good woman. Damn good woman helped me with homework. My damn good woman."

And he threw a kiss to the lady in the next room.

The writer, a resident of Orchard Lake, was born and raised in New York City. She is a speech pathologist and has worked in public schools, hospitals and rehabilitation clinics and has had a private practice. She is the mother of three daughters and is married to a patent attorney.

1980 by Sheila Rosen Seitzman.

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