

Albert's Mother

by Jesse Minkert

The lies that Albert told his mother were irrelevant now, hidden under the clutter of decades, innocent compared to his more recent lies. The Senate Subcommittee probed him for the facts he had worked so hard for so many years to obscure. They were widely accepted practices. Many of his associates practiced them, less ineptly than he, apparently.

His mother always caught him, too. The telltale smudges at the corners of his mouth, the knuckles scraped on the skin of another boy's face, the mud from the sinkhole on his shoes, the extra mileage on her car, the magazines in the garage, the lingering scent of smoke on his jacket. She would probably have caught him with condoms in his wallet if he had ever used them. But Mom was a relentless investigator and a tireless interrogator. These Senators did not compare. Deceiving them was mere sport.

The stern tone of the chairwoman made him miss his mother, the snap of her accusations, the sting of her belt on the backs of his legs. He doubted that the chairwoman had the kind of character she needed to take off her belt and command him to drop his pants. And until she did, thought Albert, she was just a joke.

