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# The Marcos Verdict; Marcos Is Cleared of All Charges In Racketeering and Fraud Case

By CRAIG WOLFF  
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Imelda Marcos, the widow of the former Philippine President, was acquitted yesterday of charges that she raided the country's treasury and invested the money in the United States.

Mrs. Marcos, her lips trembling, looked to the ceiling as the jury forewoman announced, "Not guilty," four times. With that, Mrs. Marcos wept and a gallery filled with supporters from her homeland cried out and cheered in triumph.

The jurors said they were not convinced that Mrs. Marcos knew about any wrongdoing, and questioned why the case was tried in the United States. On their very first ballot, in the first moments of deliberations, they voted 10 to 2 to acquit her.

## End of a Four-Year Case

The verdict ended a case that began more than four years ago, almost immediately after Mrs. Marcos's husband, Ferdinand, fled the Philippines and after the new Philippine Government tried to seize the Marcoses' vast worldwide wealth. The case endured even after Mr. Marcos died last September. It culminated in a three-month trial that tested a novel concept in American jurisprudence: whether the wife of a foreign head of state should face a criminal trial in a United States court.

The case also engulfed Adnan M. Khashoggi, the wealthy Saudi businessman, a co-defendant who was acquitted on charges that he helped Mrs. Marcos conceal her involvement in the investments.

The Marcoses were charged with racketeering and fraud in stealing more than \$200 million from the Philippine treasury and investing most of it in jewels, art and four pieces of prime Manhattan real estate.

Mrs. Marcos, who had described the trial as a personal ordeal and a political persecution, was found not guilty of racketeering, conspiracy, obstruction of justice and mail fraud.

The verdict, read just minutes before 1 o'clock yesterday afternoon, unleashed an exultant demonstration and even a spontaneous birthday celebration for Mrs. Marcos on the steps of the United States Court House on Foley Square. The former First Lady turned 61 yesterday and as she emerged from the courthouse, scores of her supporters sang "Happy Birthday" and "God Bless America."

"I thank the almighty God for the vindication," said Mrs. Marcos, "and I am in great awe for the jury system that symbolizes the soul of the American people."

Then Mrs. Marcos, accompanied by friends, lawyers, her son, Ferdinand Jr., and a daughter, Irene, went to St. Patrick's Cathedral, where she walked on her knees down the center aisle in thankfulness and prayer.

Mr. Khashoggi, who was cleared on charges that he helped the Marcoses conceal their ownership of four skyscrapers in Manhattan by backdating bank documents, said he felt "more than vindicated."

"I have more faith in America and the jury system," he said. "I'm going to go to my country, to visit my God and Mecca."

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Late last night, Mr. Khashoggi and Mrs. Marcos celebrated at a party he had arranged at the Nile restaurant on West 44th Street. More than 100 guests dined on lamb and watched a belly dancer perform.

For Mrs. Marcos, who has been parodied and reviled for her ostentatious life style, the trial confirmed her reputation as a "world-class shopper," in the words of her own defense team. But clearly the jurors never grasped why the case had been brought to an American courtroom and certainly they did not see her as a thief. The crimes may have been committed by Mr. Marcos, many of them said, but through five days of deliberation, they did not believe that any of the evidence struck at Mrs. Marcos.

"Just because she was married to him doesn't make her guilty," said the jury forewoman, Catherine Balton. "There was no evidence. There was nothing to convince any of us that there was a case."

Another juror, Thomas O'Rourke, said: "It was on the wrong side of the ocean. It was a totally silly case. We are not big brothers to the people overseas."

While Mrs. Marcos vowed after the verdict to bring the body of her husband from Honolulu for burial in the Philippines, Carmen N. Pedrosa, a spokeswoman for the administration of President Corazon Aquino, said Mrs. Aquino would seek a criminal trial there "in the future."

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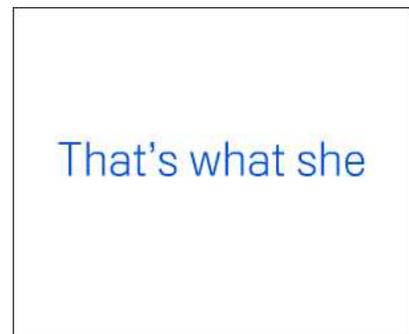


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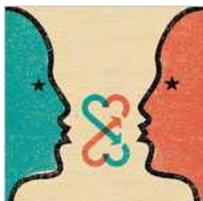
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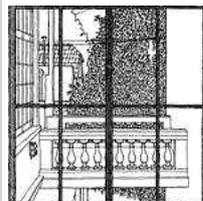


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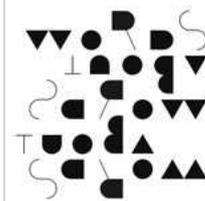
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