

Dear Jim,

Personal files

12/30/76

My attention was drawn to the story on Bardyl Tirana in this morning's Style section because I seemed to recall that for some reason Sammie Abbott was opposed to him in a District school-board election.

So I read the story. His father, apparently, was considered a security risk or a loyalty case. He says his father received "the McCarran treatment" but remained an employee and yet, inferentially, died of a broken heart.

There may be another meaning of which I am not aware but his father had a hearing. That was not the McCarran treatment. The McCarran (in the sense of McCoy) was no hearing.

From the story, however, he seems to feel this so deeply after all these years that tears come to his eyes.

He was in DJ, civil, and not happy there.

He is in private practise.

You will need help.

If you would consider trying to speak to him to see if he feels the same way about anyone other than his father, enough to work on it, you may want to speak to Sammie first.

Sammie may have been opposed to him because he was for someone else or because of some reasons of principle. The latter could have been as simple as race - Sammie believed that with a majority of the students black the board should be black.

There is, of course, another aspect of which, not knowing anything of his connections with the Kennedys, McGovern and Carter, I have written you earlier. If Carter wants to run the government, particularly the places where his policy can be nullified, he had best address some of the kind of thing I went through and without doubt still exists and bring that under control.

Best,



The Washington Post

# STYLE

People /

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 30, 1976



Barry Tuma by Linda Wheeler—The Washington Post



# Loyalty, the Inaugural And Bardyl Tirana

By Judy Bachrach

"You know," says Bardyl Rifat Tirana, swallowing hard, "You know yesterday when you asked me about my father, I think I skirted the question." It is 8:45 a.m., and Tirana is driving down to the Inaugural Committee, of which he is co-chairman. But he isn't thinking about the inauguration. Rifat Tirana, who was born in Albania and who died when his son, Bardyl, was 14, is still with him.

"He'd been an economic adviser for the Export-Import Bank. He wrote 'The Spoil of Europe,' which was a blueprint for what Hitler did. Well, we were supposed to go to Spain to administer a loan. My father loathed Franco..."

Bardyl Tirana's eyes blur with tears; the voice chokes off the sentences. "My father, you know, was very proud to be an American. Well there was someone who wanted his job, so he was given the McCarran treatment. I mean he was administered a hearing on the question of loyalty.

"Well he passed. We went to Spain by boat. And I had a—a tremendous sense of pride because I could sense his pride. He died the first week in Spain."

The tears are spilling freely down his cheeks; he shakes them off before continuing. "The three politicians I worked for: [Robert] Kennedy, McGovern, and now Carter—I have a sense of each one. I try to remember what it was that attracted me to each one. Each of the

three are . . . won't tolerate a wrong. I was trying to think—trying to think what happened to me when Carter said, 'Will you go to work for me?' It was, 'This is the kind of person I do want to work for. This is the kind of person I want to be part of' . . . I suppose there has to be some transference [from my father to] Kennedy, McGovern and Carter. You know what they all had? Intense loyalty."

The car stops before the inaugural headquarters (once temporary World War II military offices), and Tirana emerges, blowing his nose, wiping his eyes. Into the grim nest of offices known as Tempo B, he strolls purposefully, encased in three-piece pinstriped blue.

People call out to him, caution him to be prompt for a 10:30 a.m. press conference. Then he walks into his office. From a manila envelope he pulls out a 1964 New Yorker magazine which contains an interview with Robert Kennedy when he was running for the Senate.

"One young guy," said Kennedy, by which he meant Tirana, "gave up his job in the Justice Department in Washington and came to New York with his wife. They have no money and they're working as volunteers."

"See," says Tirana. "Loyalty."

Beside Tirana are the new signs of loyalty. A large caricature designed in honor of his 39th birthday, showing the co-chairman, with a multi-

See TIRANA, C3, Col. 1



# Loyalty, Inaugural And Bardyl Tirana

TIRANA, From CI

licity of hands grabbing such inaugural concerns as "finance committee," "press" and "license plates." The sketch contains a brief nod to the problems resolved by Vicki Rogers, the other co-chairperson ("Gripes, Complaints, Headaches"), symbolic reflections of the fact that many outsiders don't know what Rogers does for the Committee.

She, in fact, handles scheduling and tickets, among other things. He, in fact, takes care of finances the D.C. agencies and the press, among other things. He, therefore, is generally The Spokesman, and will become the target of public acclaim or censure depending on the fate of the "Y'All Come" inauguration. "We couldn't . . . open the doors of the White House—too many people," he explains. "All we could do is extend an invitation to everybody to come to Washington . . ."

And so the question is: What kind of administration post does Bardyl Tirana want after accomplishing this thankless task?

"If Gov. Carter asked me to take a position in his administration, I would take it—whatever it was," Tirana replies. And then, because he knows the press—"Have I been asked? No. Have I thought about it? No." And then, because he knows the limits of human credulity and because he is quite candid: Well that is not entirely accurate. I have thought about it. But it's been no more than a thought or a fantasy."

He stretches out his hand to retrieve the old New Yorker, which smells of must and of damp.

Bardyl Tirana is part Albanian Moslem, part Russian Jewish, part Chicago upper-crust WASP. It is a mixture that has resulted in a darkly handsome man, but one in whom an incipient puffiness (around the stomach, about the eyes and cheekbones) has already made inroads. Bardyl Tirana looks like the picture of Dorian Gray after a month in the closet.

When Bardyl and Gail Tirana arrived in Washington to work, it was 1962, and Kennedy era. They had just been married (she having left pub-



Bardyl Tirana by Linda Wheeler—The Washington Post

lisher Clay Felker for Tirana because "I didn't want a big life, a life that was involved with power"). And so, when they came here they became one of the more popular couples of that time. Beautiful, both of them—Gail with her high cheekbones and tilted eyes; Bardyl, who had, after all, been raised here. Jackie Kennedy took a shine to Gail Tirana when she saw her dancing at a party, and invited the two to a White House party.

Tirana was at the Justice Department, the civil division, "looking for work to do;" his wife was an administrator at the Washington School of Ballet. When Robert Kennedy became a senator she worked in his press office. In 1965, Tirana went into private



law practice.

"We were never sort of The Couple or young and giddy," says Gail Tirana. But it does seem that they did bask in the non-negotiable charm of that period.

### *"They Had It All"*

"They had it all," says a friend from that era. "They were attractive, lived in Georgetown. They were the energy people. They had all the energy and enthusiasm people seemed to appreciate then . . ."

But when Robert Kennedy was killed, the couple gradually withdrew into their own private circle of friends and family (they have two daughters), into a more private life.

"Yes, we did withdraw," says Bardyl Tirana. "Who knows whether it was because of Robert Kennedy's death . . . It had been very interesting, very exciting as young people. After the assassinations it was all bulls . . . The world had changed and we had changed."

"Death," explains Gail Tirana, "is an intrusion on life . . . It's the realization of limitations on men with glorious dreams and ambitions . . . It occurs to me that each of us in our own way turned to finding some kind of order. Mine was a turning into what I thought of as the essentials: family and friends and the celebration of life."

And as for her husband—he worked on McGovern's brief 1968 campaign, organizing transportation.

"I can remember being in his Chicago hotel room when the police were splitting heads outside. McGovern flew into a rage."

"I came back and we had the first school board elections here. There was a meeting at a church on Connecticut Avenue. And what people were saying in effect was, 'Let's build a wall down Rock Creek Park.' Well, I came home and told Gail I was going to run for school board. She said, 'What do you know about education?'"

### *Explaining a Transition*

A number of people wondered precisely that, wondered if school board wasn't simply a convenient launching pad for Tirana's political aspirations. Rosamund Corbett, who is Tirana's mother, explains the transition this way: "Putting himself up for school board was something to offer. It was a way of doing something (in memory of Kennedy) other than sending flowers."

In 1968, he ran and lost—this despite the party Teddy Kennedy threw for him. In 1969, he ran again—as an at-large candidate this time—and won. Then, as now, he betrayed no reluctance at getting his name mentioned in the press. He had, in fact, a reputation for calling reporters up at 7 a.m.

"Seven a.m. is a good time to get

people at home," Tirana replies mildly. "Yes I was in the papers a lot. I was using the papers. I used the press to convey a problem . . ."

He hasn't changed.

But Gail Tirana—Gail Tirana who is going to Wesley Theological Seminary to get her masters—is of a decidedly different temperament. "I find I'm very interested in the Old Testament," she says. "I'm not sure why. I think there's a new sense of roots for some reason. I just want to go back to the beginning."

And yet, one senses that Bardyl Tirana feels he has found precisely that in Jimmy Carter: a new beginning.

In the beginning, or at least in Bardyl Tirana's beginning, his maternal grandparents were Anna Strunsky, a Russian-born socialist who was very close to author Jack London; and William English Walling, an uppercrust Chicagoan who helped found the Women's Trade Union League. Together, the couple helped found the NAACP. Anna Strunsky refused to take her husband's name, causing much consternation among the Chicago elite. They married in St. Petersburg, causing the Tsar much consternation.

### *'A Compulsive Worker'*

Bardyl Tirana, very conscious of his background, who still whips out all the old clips on his grandmother, went to all the good schools. To Andover and Princeton and Columbia Law. "I was not," he explains drily, "what you'd call a hard-working student . . . I played squash in Princeton . . . It was the era of Eisenhower and Doris Day. I mean nothing happened. In Columbia I played cards. Now I'm a compulsive worker."

There is in Washington nothing unusual about a compulsive worker. What is unusual is the way Bardyl Tirana goes about it. There's an extraordinary intensity to him, a passionate eagerness that demands you know everything about him. Right off. Before he speaks the lips tremble slightly and his hands never stop shaking.

"I never have been able to figure Bardyl out," says a woman who did not like him and stills feels ambivalent toward him. "I used to think he was very ambitious. Now I think he really believes (in public education). I think he wanted to change the world. But the world would not be changed."

When Bardyl Tirana having been introduced by Carter advisers Peter Bourne and Mary King first sat down to breakfast with Gov. Jimmy Carter in December, 1974, the only thing he knew about Carter was that the governor had put Martin Luther King's por-

trait in the Georgia statehouse. "I said, 'This is a brave man,' modest. I had no question as of that breakfast that he would win."

### *Briefing a Staff*

Carter asked him to brief his staff on transportation by which he meant figuring out how to move a campaign staff and reporters and Secret Service people from place to place. Tirana, having done this for both Robert Kennedy and McGovern, assented. From November 19, 1975 on, it was more than a half-time job, and Tirana was teaching them how to save money by beginning the campaign with DC-3's instead of jets and how to charge the press 150 per cent of first-class fare.

In September 1976 Mayor Walter Washington sent letters to both presidential aspirants, telling them to appoint someone to represent them on the inauguration. So when Carter won, Tirana won.

But even before the election he and J. Willard Marriott (Ford's representative) were meeting with District and federal people on inaugural problems. "We were reviewing plans for fancy grandstands for the area opposite the presidential reviewing stand," explains Tirana. "I said, 'Why can't we just rent bleachers?' They said, 'Well you can't have cabinet members sitting on bleachers.'

"I said, 'Why not?'"

"Marriott said, 'Why not?'"

Bardyl Tirana is saying this a lot

these days: that this will be a modest inaugural, a people's event, traditional when the traditions seem valid.

And so this time, as in other times, the inauguration of Jimmy Carter is more intimate than it might at first seem.

In one of many millions of personal senses—for Bardyl Tirana—it's a coming-out party.

But inaugurations are much more than the traditions that accompany the investiture of a president. In the intimacy of the television age, they are also more than historical episodes. Inaugurations—and in this sense they are much like assassinations—are highly personal experiences. Or at least in retrospect they seem so. The spectacle of JFK taking the oath without his top hat, the memory of LBJ taking the oath on Air Force One.

And so this time, as in other times, the inauguration of Jimmy Carter is more intimate than it might at first seem.

In one of many millions of personal senses—for Bardyl Tirana—it's a coming-out party.