

Jackie Raged Occasionally

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Eighth in a series

As the autumn chill nipped the air that second year in the White House, Jackie was talking about "fur" just as enthusiastically as she had talked about "jewels" in the spring. She was, as a matter of fact, inquiring whether a batch of skins—I can't recall the kind—could be made into two jackets or a coat by Madame Potok of Maximilian.

As I recall, from the sketches sent down, Jackie decided to have a full-length coat made. And the President made a big fuss over it, saying that it was beautiful, in fact, "terrific."

Jackie's exuberance over this particular fur piece did not dim her enthusiasm for yet another fur creation—a little black vest—a Christmas present from furrier Ted Kahn of New York. She was so delighted with it that she decided it could be used for more than just lounging—she would wear it over evening dresses and under suits.

She said that she had always considered little fur evening wraps as dull, but that Ted had broken her phobia against them.

Among the things that drew Jackie's attention was the service at one of her dinner parties. On Jan. 22 she was issuing a blast to the housekeeping department. She pointed out that the wine was not passed until everyone had finished his fish. Next time, she said, there should be a battery of waiters to pass the wine before the fish, even if they did nothing else.

She also complained about the Brie cheese, saying it was hard as rubber, even though it was a very good cheese. In the future, she wanted the chef to leave the cheese out of the refrigerator all day.

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JACKIE, From G1

She ended her blast by pointing out that a word used to describe the dessert had been misspelled—"Surprise

... not Surprise." She said perhaps not all cards were misspelled, but the ones at her table certainly were.

Even the new city plans for handling increased Washington traffic concerned Jackie, and she got in touch with a high official of the General Service Administration asking if there was any way to stop the Three Sisters Bridge. She suggested that Key Bridge be widened, instead, to handle the traffic, leaving the park near fashionable Foxhall Road alone. The fact that it was one of the few places left where children could take nature walks with rangers was the basis of her stand.

On March 25 I met JFK in the elevator. He again inquired about the status of Jackie's bills, and as we parted, I heard the familiar request. "Tomorrow, please send me figures for the first two months of this year as compared with the first two months of last year."

It was another evening of frantic homework! The totals for January and February, 1963, indicated some improvement over the first two months of 1962. For example, in January 1962, Jackie's clothing purchases had added up to around \$5,000, whereas in January, 1963, they only approached \$2,000. (But, of course, Jackie was pregnant in early '63 and not buying many clothes.)

As for the food and liquor expenses, January 1962, showed purchases of \$7,000, which had been reduced to a little more than \$5,000 in January 1963. Beauty salon, however, had remained about the same—January 1962: \$340; January 1963: \$300. Art in January 1962, totaled \$1,600, but in January 1963, there were no art costs at all because, even though Jackie had received two new paintings, the President had paid for them—they were his Christmas gift to her.

Jackie's personal expenses for the first two months of 1963 had come down by more than \$12,000—to a total of about \$16,000.

Jackie was busy collecting paintings. She wanted Bier, of London, to find her some 18th century paintings of the Spanish Riding School of Vienna. Lippizaner stallions fascinated her.

Jackie also was ordering a "War of 1812" print for the President's birthday, May 29. She told the dealer to watch for more naval engravings the President might like, as well as paintings of ships. She told him her budget was small, and she couldn't ever go over a couple thousand dollars, so it would be best if he didn't even let her know about superb pictures. At least, I thought, she wasn't getting him more scrimshaw! It became a standing joke around the White House that whenever Jackie didn't know what to get the President, she got him another piece of scrimshaw. The President liked the large whales' teeth, and he would keep them on his desk. Jackie had some of them embellished with the Presidential seal.

That same month, Jackie had discovered that the President's custom-made shirts were being mistreated by the laundry to which they were being sent. She ordered that an Oriental who knew something about laundry be hired to come to the White House to do them, or perhaps the wife of one of the Filipinos who worked in the kitchen.

Then it was clothes again—Jackie's clothes. In a letter to her clothes scout in Paris, Jackie wrote that she was really going to economize, even though a new designer the scout had found sounded fabulous. Jackie added that she was sick of going to all the old ones. She suggested that if the designer was that divine, the scout could let Lee buy a suit so Jackie could borrow it anytime.