

*Parade
7.14.74*

*Beautiful
women
who received
beautiful gifts
and turned
them in*



MRS. RICHARD NIXON



MRS. EDWARD COX

The Quiet Sale

by Charles Peterson

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF.

On Oct. 15, 1966, Congress passed the Foreign Gifts and Decorations Act, a piece of legislation which, along with the U.S. Constitution (Article I, Section IX), prevents an official of the U.S. government or member of his family and household from keeping a gift worth more than \$50, given by a prince, king or foreign state.

If the Queen of Great Britain gave Lady Bird Johnson in 1968 a tiara of pearls and emeralds, Mrs. Johnson would have had to turn it over to the State Department. If the Peruvian gov-

ernment gifted President Nixon with a valuable piece of pre-Columbian art, he could not display it in his San Clemente office indefinitely. He would have to register and then turn it over to the State Department. If the Royal Family of Saudi Arabia bestowed upon Mrs. Nixon and her daughters three gifts of jewelry worth more than \$100,000, which it did, then Mrs. Nixon would

have to gift-register the jewelry, which she has, and subsequently move it along to the assistant chief of protocol for special protocol services at the State Department.

The old way

Prior to 1966, Presidents Eisenhower, Kennedy and Johnson, their wives, and their children could retain whatever gifts foreign governments gave them. And in some cases they did. But since 1966 the practice has become illegal.

Now the State Department takes possession of such gifts and in consultation with the General Services Administration determines whether they go to the recipient's government office, some other government agency, the Smithsonian Institution or are placed on sale as government surplus property.

Early this year, for example, the State Department sent jewelry to the General Services Administration which

that agency had appraised at \$15,650. The GSA decided to sell it at a sealed-bid auction in San Francisco on April 2, 1974.

No public announcement was made of the sale. Instead GSA mailed notices to 250 West Coast jewelers and 3424 individuals who had previously asked for notification of such sales.

The jewelry was deposited in a safe-deposit box in the Wells Fargo Bank on Market Street in San Francisco, where potential purchasers were allowed to inspect it and then send in a sealed bid for the various items they wanted.

To the highest bidders

Of the 250 jewelers and 3424 other persons made aware of the auction 56 inspected or had inspected for them the jewelry in safe-keeping at the bank. Three bidders got the lot. An R.O. Murphy Jr. of Grove City, Pa., paid \$6612 for a diamond-and-ruby necklace and ring. Edward M. Wavers of Yuma, Ariz., paid out \$6033 for five gold-diamond watches. And George Crane of Michigan Systems Research of Dearborn, Mich., paid \$150 for an amber pendant set of chain, earrings and ring. Thus, of the appraised value of \$15,650, GSA received from the auction an 81 percent return of \$12,795. Not bad.

The assistant chief of protocol for special protocol services, Hampton Davis, declines to make public the names of the countries which made the gifts to U.S. officials in the first place.

"It would be slightly embarrassing," he says, "for them to know that their gifts have been sold, and it would be



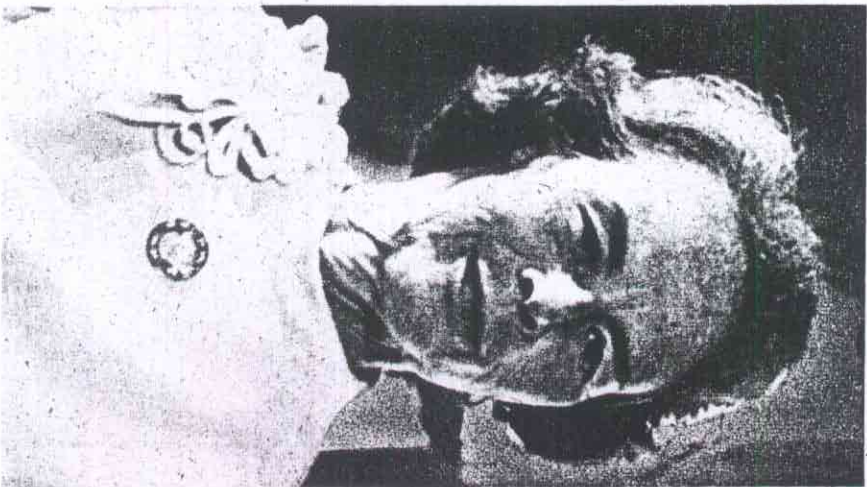
MRS. DAVID EISENHOWER



MRS. HUBERT HUMPHREY



MRS. WILLIAM FULBRIGHT



MRS. WILLIAM P. ROGERS

embarrassing for them to be told that such expensive gifts were not legally acceptable by U.S. government officials, although frankly, our Foreign Service men should have gotten that word out by now."

Section IV of the Foreign Gifts and Decorations Act declares: "Congress hereby gives its consent to a person to accept and retain a gift of minimal value [up to \$50 is what the State Department considers a minimal-value gift] tendered or received as a souvenir or mark of courtesy. A gift of more than minimal value may also be accepted by a person when it appears that to refuse the gift would be likely to cause offense or embarrassment or otherwise adversely affect the foreign relations of the U.S. However, gifts of more than minimal value shall be deemed to have been accepted on behalf of the United States and shall be deposited by the donee for use and disposal of the U.S. in accordance with rules and regulations issued pursuant to this act."

Avoiding embarrassment

Many of the gifts which U.S. officials have accepted and then turned over to the State Department come from Morocco, Qatar, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Ethiopia, and other undeveloped nations. They are accepted to avoid embarrassment.

Morocco, for example, gave one of our diplomats an expensive rug which he turned in. Brazil gave aquamarine stones. Iran came up with an expensive piece of turquoise. Japan, which should know better, gave a valuable

pearl necklace. Pearls also came from Qatar and Bahrain. Kuwait gave a silver tea set, while Chad and Zaire came up with ivory heads, ivory tusks and mounted cheetah skins.

Sen. Hubert Humphrey (D., Minn.) has now returned to the State Department a 7.9 carat diamond worth more than \$100,000. It was given to his wife, Muriel, in 1968 by Joseph Mobutu, President of the Congo. What Mrs. Humphrey could not return was a cache of 10

leopard skins also given to her because they were sold in 1970 for \$7500; the Humphreys donated the money to a school for the mentally retarded in Minneapolis, Minn.

Senator Humphrey says, "I did not realize at the time that the Foreign Gifts and Decorations Act covered members of my family. In the case of both the leopard skins and the diamond, they

were gifts made to Mrs. Humphrey. It was assumed that the gifts belonged to her."

Humphrey said, too, that on all his foreign trips he was accompanied by a protocol officer of the State Department and never did any of these officers tell him that the gifts should be turned over to the State Department. He said the gifts had been registered at the State Department but that they had been returned to his wife when he returned to private life in 1969.

Expensive jewelry

In addition, as *The Washington Post* revealed last month, the Crown Prince of Kuwait gave Mrs. Judy Agnew in July, 1971, a set of diamonds and pearls. The Emir of Kuwait a year later gifted Mrs. Adele Rogers, wife of the former Secretary of State, a set of rubies and diamonds. And the oil minister of Abu Dhabi presented Mrs. Elizabeth Fulbright, wife of the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, a set of emeralds and diamonds.

Whether such gifts, including the \$100,000 in jewelry given to the three Nixon women by King Faisal and his two half-brothers of Saudi Arabia, will eventually turn up at another GSA auction, no one seems to know.

In case you are interested, however, in bidding on the emerald and diamond necklace, the bracelet and earrings, ring, and pins the Nixons have gifted, registered or jewelry registered by others, write to the General Services Administration in Washington, D.C. 20405, and ask them to notify you in advance of any such sale or auction.



This amber jewelry, once given to a U.S. official by a foreign government, is now worn by Detroit area secretary Madeline Sellars. Her boss, George Crane, bought them at a government auction in San Francisco and gave them to her.