

**Merry-Go-Round****Behind the Story  
Of the Jackie Letter****Drew Pearson**

**T**HE REASON WHY the White House was so anxious to retrieve the Jackie Kennedy letter to Lady Bird Johnson from a New York auction was because Jackie has been rather aloof with the Johnsons, and the White House didn't want to increase the appearance of aloofness.

Some people got the impression that Mrs. Johnson failed to answer Jackie's letter and attached no importance to her invitation to view the Nixon-Kennedy debate in October, 1960.

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**W**HAT ACTUALLY HAPPENED was that Lucianne Cummings, one of the Democratic paid workers, brought Mrs. Johnson a sheaf of mail at the airport, including the invitation from Jackie. En route to the Capitol, Lady Bird instructed Miss Cummings to reply by telephone that she would have to be in Baltimore with Mr. Johnson that evening, and therefore could not attend.

The viewing of the Nixon-Kennedy debate was to be held at Democratic headquarters on Connecticut avenue that evening, not in the Kennedy home.

Miss Cummings made the phone call but kept the letter, and later sold it without permission to Charles Hamilton, the New York collector.

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**T**HE FACT IS that the Johnsons have gone out of their way to invite Jackie to the White House and do everything possible for her. She continues to be aloof. Her first cold shoulder came on Dec. 22, 1963, when she declined to attend the final memorial services for her husband at which President Johnson paid him tribute.

Latest and unkindest cut was when she declined to come to Washington for the dedication of the "Mrs. John F. Kennedy Rose Garden." Jackie was in New York, one hour's flight away, was accepting various social engagements, but would not come to Washington to participate in the dedication of the White House garden named in her honor.

Despite the snub, the President placed a special White House jet at her disposal when she flew to England this month.

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