

MY LIFE WITH JACQUELINE KENNEDY

Request for Raise Sends Jackie Into Temper Tantrum

When Mary Barelli Gallagher, requested a raise from her former employer, Jacqueline Kennedy, the latter tried to persuade her to accept less than what was asked for. Jackie's former personal secretary reports in this eighth article of a series that the former first lady even had a temper tantrum over what the compensation should be.

By Mary Barelli Gallagher

Almost from the beginning, it was evident that my salary at the White House was ridiculous — \$4830. My weekly net income was averaging less than \$75.

By August, 1961, I started checking into the possibility of a salary adjustment — to between \$8000 and \$9000. I sent a memo to Kenny O'Donnell, who I understood was "proper channels."

Nothing happened. Jackie returned from the Cape on September 18, and the weeks ahead passed, busier and busier. So did the months, with no word at all — September, October, November, December.

At the end of January, I briefly mentioned the situation to Jackie, hoping she might take positive action.

"Speak to Mrs. Lincoln about it," she said, implying that this would get the matter squared away. I did. Still, the month of February passed, and the month of March. Evelyn assured me that the matter was "in the works."

Eventually, she reported that to "get things started" for my reclassification I should prepare a complete list of all the duties I performed each day for Mrs. Kennedy. "Everything," she



KENNY O'DONNELL
Got a "final" memo

emphasized.

Next came word that Mrs. Kennedy "will have to submit something in writing." By now, Jackie was vacationing in Florida for the Easter holiday. This had all gone too far already. It was almost a year since I had first spoken to Jackie about it.

April, May, and part of June, 1962, passed the same way. Preparations were under way for Jackie's trip to Mexico with the President and after that, her summer vacation at Cape Cod. This

would be followed by another trip abroad.

On June 28, I reminded Jackie again that no action had been taken. This time, she said she would look into the matter personally.

In mid-afternoon, I received a visit by Mr. West, the Chief Usher. As Mrs. Kennedy's emissary, apparently, he politely informed me that Mrs. Kennedy was arranging for me to get a raise in salary — to GS-8 (about \$6000)!

"Mr. West," I said, "I'm sorry — but tell Mrs. Kennedy for me that I'm not settling for any Grade 8. I feel I'm entitled to a Grade 12, and that's what I'll accept — nothing less."

No more than a minute passed before my phone rang. It was Jackie, wanting to see me right away. She was alone in the Sitting Room, smoking a cigarette as her desk.

She immediately began discussing my salary, trying to convince me that it wouldn't be possible for the thing higher than a GS-8 salary.

During the next 20 minutes or so, I was to see Jackie as I'd never seen her before. She worked herself into a frenzy over what my compensation should be.

Temper Flares

Her temper gradually flared, and she spoke in loud, angry words while newly lit cigarettes were being

stubby out in the ashtray on her desk, one after the other.

She actually stamped the floor with her foot, trying to persuade me to accept the GS-8 offer. I could see her not as a First Lady of the United States, but rather as a child raising a fuss when she was deprived of having her own way.

I finally said, "I could go out anywhere right now and easily get a job that paid me three times as much."

Jackie's quick retort to this was, "Well, Mary, if it's the money you want!"

"No, Jackie," I replied, "right now, it isn't the money alone that bothers me anymore — it's the principle of this whole thing." I wasn't about to relent in my position.

With a completely new twist, Jackie leaped to her feet, announcing that, inasmuch as I handled her strictly personal affairs, the government couldn't be expected to pay me for that.

I simply said, "Well, Jackie, if that's the case, and if it'll make things any simpler, I'll agree to staying on the government payroll now at GS-6, if you'll agree to pay me the difference between that and GS-12 by putting me on your New York office payroll."

'Our Pockets'

I had hardly had these words out when she retorted rather petulantly, "But then the money will be coming out of OUR pockets."

I agreed with her.

"Yes, Jackie," I said, "that's right — it would — but it would still be the same as when you were personally paying me before. You could afford to pay me then."

This apparently was about all that Jackie herself could take now. It was time for her to leave for her tennis game. She put her arm around me and said, just as softly and sweetly as she could, "Oh, Mary, I know how hard you work for me. But please, just go to Mr. West and tell him you'll settle for a Grade 8."

I was completely disheartened. After much pondering, I finally decided to place my case before JFK himself. By appointment, I saw him on July 3 at 3:45 p.m. The Presi-

dent asked me several direct questions about my duties and hours, was very friendly and understanding, and assured me he would "definitely look into" my salary needs.

Nevertheless, when three months passed without word, I could only assume what might have happened — that during his stay at the Cape

over the Fourth, JFK must have mentioned our discussion to Jackie and Jackie, in turn, must have assured him as she apparently believed herself) that the crisis was passed.

By October it seemed high time to make a last attempt with Kenny O'Donnell. I had to find out what the score was, and I sent him a "final"

memo. After two weeks, he suggested I discuss it with Evelyn Lincoln!

I was at the end of my rope. I told Evelyn I would quit in January unless I got a raise by the end of the year. Two days later, I got my raise, to \$8045 a year. A GS-11 rating.

Next: Jackie's Jewels.



AUTHOR HAD A CONFRONTATION WITH PRESIDENT ABOUT PAY RAISE

Evelyn Lincoln and John F. Kennedy finally got matter settled