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Judy Agnew: Cheerful...

By Sally Quinn

The hostess was standing in the foyer with her dress undone down the front as a friend sewed a button on and the first guests arrived.

The host sat in the living room looking slightly uncomfortable as the only man at an all ladies tea.

Mrs. John Kopsidas was having a tea party for her old friend Mrs. Constantine Panayotacos, the wife of the new Greek Ambassador, and she had called weeks in advance to day that Judy Agew would be there too.

Mrs. Agnew didn't arrive exactly on time so Kopsidas, a retired Greek banana importer, shuffled from foot to foot waiting for her and talked about how he had come to know the Agnews.

"I knew Mr. Agnew's father, a fine man, charming man. Always he says, 'My son will be President of the United States someday.'"

Kopsidas pulled back his cuffs and flashed a pair of cufflinks with the vice presidential seal. "These, Agnew gave me for my name day two years ago," he said proudly. "He is a good American and he loves his country. He will come back as President when the real truth comes out. The Watergate Committee has no respect for the President or the Vice President."

But Kopsidas says that Agnew can't write the real truth because, as Agnew told him, "he had to make an agreement with them that he wouldn't write anything about it. But those people in the White House, they see him getting too close to it and they chop him off..." and he made a chopping sound and motion at his neck.

Mrs. Agnew arrived and Kopsidas extended a hurried greeting and was shipped off upstairs, looking relieved.

Mrs. Agnew talked excitedly about her new granddaughter, Melina Eleni, the daughter of her son Randy and his wife of Greek descent.

Judy Agnew looks slimmer and better than she ever has. Only her eyes and a few extra lines around her mouth belie the bright smile and a cheerful demeanor. "I exercise every day at home," she says. "It really makes me feel good."

She seems comfortable and at ease, but only when the talk is about children or the most superficial chatter.

She tenses a bit when the conversation turns to her new private life.

"I always was sort of private, you know, even before," she says. "But everywhere I go now people come

up to me or stop me. It happens constantly. They're always terribly friendly and say nice things. I like it when they do. I've been getting so many wonderful cards and letters from people saying I have their support."

When someone mentioned reading printed excerpts of Agnew's novel in progress, she brightens.

"Oh, well, what people don't seem to realize is that my husband is a very good writer."

"He wrote all his own speeches. And nobody knows that when he was much younger he used to be a ghost writer for other people's speeches... but he doesn't want me to talk about the book..."

It was time for the receiving line and, over her protests, Mrs. Agnew was put in line along with Mrs. Caspar Winberger, wife of the Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, and the jolly, robust wife of the new Greek Ambassador.

The room began to fill up, and the noise began to sound like the Bird Cage at Lord and Taylor's at lunch as the ladies piled into the dining room to munch on Greek delicacies.

"Mrs. Agnew looks wonderful, doesn't she," beamed the hostess. "And so does Mr. Agnew. I saw them two weeks ago at a dinner party. But you know what he told me," and her face clouded over, "he told me it was terribly, terribly hard on her and that he had to support her until the worst part was over."

For Judy Agnew, it looked like the worst part was over and when someone asked her if she believed Mr. Kopsidas, that her husband would someday be President of the United States, she put her fist up in gesture of victory and smiled a great big smile.

Then went into the dining room for a cup of tea.