

# Tricia Kept Secret Well—Even THE NEW YORK TIMES, THURSDAY, Nixons Didn't

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Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, March 17 —So now it turns out that Patricia Nixon and Edward Cox have been secretly, but thoroughly, engaged for nearly two years, but they didn't get around to telling President and Mrs. Nixon until last Thanksgiving. And the wedding may not be on June 5 after all.

Or so Miss Nixon confided today at a rather singular White House gathering. The meeting was billed as Miss Nixon's first press conference since her father became President, but it was more like a schoolgirl's tell-all session that started with the history and specifics of her engagement ring.

"You know what?" she said, waving her right hand at a waiting press corps. "We just discovered the diamonds are round and sapphire is more oval."

The heirloom ring, which she's been wearing off and on since before Christmas, is a sapphire flanked by single diamonds set in gold. It first belonged to Mrs. Edward Ridley Finch, the former Mary Livingston Delafield, Edward's grandmother. Her initials and Judge Finch's are inscribed inside and so are Miss Nixon's and her fiancé's.

"I don't know how many carats," she said.

Nor was she exactly sure why the engagement was a secret for so long.

"We didn't do it on purpose," she said. "We just wanted to have it for ourselves and to share it with our families before sharing it with everybody. But you know how those things go. We told people and they told people . . ."

## 'White as a Sheet'

Like most prospective bridegrooms, Mr. Cox had to ask his future father-in-law for Miss Nixon's hand, and it wasn't easy. The meeting took place last Thanksgiving at Camp David.

"Bebe Robozo was there," Miss Nixon said. "He said Eddie was white as a sheet when he went in. We'd been watching a movie — The Greatest Show on Earth, I think. We got so nervous we had to go out and take a walk around the grounds. Then he talked to my father. I don't think he [the President] was really surprised."

Asked what the President said after this meeting, Miss Nixon looked a little nonplussed.



United Press International

## Patricia Nixon talking to reporters at the White House

"I think he was speechless for a moment," she said, "but you know how fathers are."

Plans for the June White House wedding are incomplete. Mr. Cox's Harvard

Law School exams don't end till June 2, and, as Miss Nixon put it, "That's pretty close. We may have to have it June 12."

But whatever the date, Miss Nixon said she hoped her sister Julie Nixon Eisenhower, would be matron of honor. Neither she nor Mr. Cox has named the other attendants.

"I think we'd like it to be on the small side," she said of the ceremony. "Just our family and close friends — sort of like last night."

The "last night" she was referring to was the combination Irish Night at the White House and her engagement party, a gathering involving 300 guests.

## Wears White Dress

The prospective bride, looking doll-like in a little white sleeveless wool dress, turquoise and gold earrings and a turquoise and gold bracelet, did most of her talking today from the depths of a large green chair. Her feet (she's only 5 feet 3 inches) barely touched the floor. She was quite frank about how she and Mr. Cox are different.

"I think Eddie's more intel-

ligent than I am," she said. "Eddie's very athletic. I'm very nonathletically inclined. He plays tennis. I cheer and get out there with pompoms."

She said Mr. Cox likes

poetry, including Browning and Keats, that sometimes they read to each other, and that he's not persnickety about food.

"We like puzzles," she explained. "Not crossword, but jigsaw puzzles, and any sort of games, including Ping-Pong."

Politically, the two seem to have their differences, but Miss Nixon said, "Our political beliefs are nowhere as divergent as reported. He's a Republican. We registered together in 1968 in New York. He might have been about to go toward the liberal column, but my elbow was there. He's more of an independent really."

"I'm a registered Republican," she added, "and there are more Republicans than Democrats I'd like to vote for but . . . I like to keep my options open as my father says."

## Practicing Cooking

After the wedding, the couple expect to live in New York, where Mr. Cox has a summer job with Whitney North Seymour Jr., the United States Attorney. In the fall, they will move to Cambridge so Mr. Cox can finish Harvard Law School.

Asked about her cooking talents, Miss Nixon said she's already started to practice, but that she wasn't any good.

Her specialty: chocolate chip cookies.

"I can do different kinds of eggs and pancakes," she said, "and bacon. It's really a hard thing to get bacon right."

She may also do her own housework, although she was uncertain about that, and she expects to live on a budget. Their funds, she said, would be from bonds and other investments they both have.

And her first impression of the young man she calls Edward, Ed, Eddie and Fast Eddie, depending on her mood?

"We've actually known each other since 1963 at the Chapin Christmas dance," she

said. "I'll never forget. We were dancing. He was so tall [he's 6 feet 1 inch] I was being smothered. I guess meeting Eddie was a smothering experience."

And her most important impression of him?

"Very intelligent," she said, adding that they played a word game and "he was so incredibly esoteric." His word was *infracaniophile*, she said. "I can spell that." She proceeded to spell it—with a "k."

"It means underdog lovers," she explained. "All Americans are basically underdog lovers."

Know