

8

Pulling Strings

WHEN Ambassador Kennedy and Rose returned from their West Coast trip, Whalen reports, they decided to sell the huge house in Bronxville and make their legal residence in Florida, which had no income or inheritance taxes. The house was sold in early 1941, and thereafter when the ambassador was in New York, which was often, he took a suite at the Waldorf-Astoria. The real estate broker who handled the deal, John J. Reynolds, subsequently interested the ambassador in real estate speculation in New York City. For the next half dozen years, the ambassador bought and sold, riding wartime inflation. Whalen says that these deals made Kennedy "enormously richer."

When Jack left the New England Baptist Hospital in February, 1941, he went to Palm Beach, where he found his father involved in a new project. He wanted to write his memoirs, and he enlisted Jack's help in locating a suitable ghostwriter and editor. Jack wrote Frances Ann Cannon's husband, John Hersey, at *Time* magazine. We found his letter, dated February 22, at the Kennedy Library. It indicated, among other things, that Jack had been in the Bahama Islands and in Frances Ann's hometown, Charlotte, North Carolina.

DEAR JOHNNY,

I was sorry to miss you when I was last in New York, but was only passing through after my weekend in Charlotte.

My father has decided to get his papers, for the last three years, in shape for eventual publication. He has been looking around for someone who could help with the job and it was in connection with this that I am writing. When I was down in Charlotte I met a friend of Frances Ann's, Connie Burwell, who impressed me very much, although I only talked with her for a

short while. It seemed to me that this job might be of interest to her. It would take a year at least, probably two, and it would consist of correlating newspaper articles, Dad's daily notes and diary and actual events into a form somewhat similar, I imagine to the three volumes of Walter Hines Page.

I wanted to write to you first to check the matter before getting in touch with her. I thought you might have some ideas as to whether this would be in her line or whether you might have someone in mind who would fit better. Of course I haven't any idea what her plans are and she may not wish to start in on a job like this, but I wanted to get your re-action [sic] before doing anything about it.

My father will be up in New York at the Waldorf-Towers Friday, February 28th, for a few days and he would appreciate it very much if you would get in touch with him there. I was over in Nassau last weekend and saw Mr. and Mrs. Cannon, who looked very well but who seemed very regretful that you both were not there. I imagine you will agree with them.

Thanks very much for your help and I hope to see you again sometime soon. Please remember me to Frances Ann.

Sincerely,

JACK KENNEDY

We were curious about Jack's trip to Charlotte. Was he dating a new girl there? Connie Burwell, maybe? Connie Burwell was later a *Time* magazine researcher and had married a *Time* correspondent, William White. We talked with Connie Burwell White by telephone in Denver, where the Whites now live.

Frances Ann Cannon was a very close friend of mine. I was a bridesmaid in her wedding—the prettiest wedding I've ever seen in my life. The dogwood were blooming . . . tons of champagne . . . everybody in pink tulle dresses floating down a long marble hall in that beautiful house. Anyway, I got to know Jack when he came down to Charlotte to see Frances Ann. He didn't come often. I think Mama Cannon was trying to bust up the romance. She took Frances Ann on a round-the-world cruise on the *Kungsholm*.

I graduated from Sweet Briar in 1934 and got a Ph.D. from the University of North Carolina in 1937. I taught political sci-

ence and history in a little college in Charlotte for several years. I spent a year in Germany and Europe before I started teaching. Jack was always interested in people who had done interesting things. So when Jack came to Charlotte he could relate to me. . . . I was of more interest to him than most people in Charlotte. We had a lot to talk about.

Q. Were you dating Jack in 1941?

A. Oh, no! I saw him entirely through Frances Ann. I don't know what he might have been doing in Charlotte for a weekend in February, 1941, but all of the Kennedys were always flying back and forth. I remember very well discussing the book with Jack. I expressed some reservations—his father had a reputation for being pro-German and I felt he ought to tell it like it was. After that I flew to Palm Beach and talked to his father. Jack wasn't there but I remember Mrs. Kennedy—very pretty—and Teddy and Bobby—little boys—playing under the piano. So I had an interview with Mr. Kennedy and decided to do the book. It was all set up and the papers were en route over from England when the ship they were on was sunk. I have a feeling the papers were later recovered but that ended that and the book was never done. And thanks to John Hersey I went to work for *Time-Life* the next year, 1942.

We are not certain what Jack was doing in March. Probably lying by the pool and on the beach, recovering his health and enjoying the social season in Palm Beach. Eunice was there, too. In our interview, she had said, "I had been a student at Sacred Heart College, Manhattanville, but in December, 1940, I had to drop out. I had stomach problems similar to Jack's. I went down to Palm Beach where I saw Jack."

Now that Jack himself had dropped out of school, he faced a certain draft call in the forthcoming month of July—not that there was any chance that he could pass the physical, which in this first draft of youngsters would be fairly tough. Perhaps to settle the matter in advance, Jack may have tried to enlist in the Army. Burns writes that this attempt was made "in the spring" but Jack was rejected "because of his old back condition." We asked the Kennedy Library archivists if there were any documents on file to verify this episode. They reported they could find none.

Jack now returned to the idea of going to Yale Law School. On

March 31, 1941, he wrote the authorities at Harvard requesting, for the second time, that his transcript be sent to Yale. But there was no correspondence on file—such as an application—from Jack to Yale. Then came a new adventure.

That spring Rose had decided to travel again. She and Eunice booked reservations on a cruise ship that would take them on a voyage through the Caribbean and down to Rio de Janeiro. Jack decided to fly down and join them in Rio and then go on to Buenos Aires, where the Kennedys had some good friends. On April 18 Jack was issued a new passport, with visas for Brazil, Argentina, and Chile.

In her book, Rose describes the voyage south. The ship stopped at Barbados May 14; Rio May 21. We think Jack left Miami by Pan Am Clipper and met them in Rio. Rose includes a photograph of Jack, herself, and Eunice, posed with Sugarloaf Mountain in the background. They are arm in arm, smiling the famous Kennedy smile, Jack in the middle. He is wearing white buckskin shoes, dark trousers, a plaid sports jacket, sweater, and bow tie. He looks healthy and happy, very collegiate, very young.

Rose had an entry in her diary which mentioned Jack in Rio:

Jack and Eunice and I invited by Ambassador Jefferson Caffery to dinner at the United States Embassy. The first dinner in an embassy I have attended since I left London. . . . I sat next to Señor Aranha, the Brazilian Foreign Minister, whose family has been in politics five generations. . . . It seems to me that the idea of a family serving in the government generation after generation, as is the case with so many English families as well, is one we might do well to think about and encourage in our own country. . . .

At Rio, Rose wrote, she and Eunice left the ship and continued the trip by air. They flew to Buenos Aires then across the Andes to Santiago, Chile. From there they turned north, stopping in Peru, Ecuador, Panama, and Cuba. They arrived back in the States, Rose says, about June 20.

According to Jack's passport, he followed the same route but from the date stamps—and since Rose does not mention Jack after Rio—it seems that they split up and that Jack continued the trip alone. We could find no entry stamp for Argentina, but Chuck Spalding had discussed this trip in our interview, and he told us that Jack had