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## **Kay Summersby, Missing Person**

### **A Biographical Epilogue**

Omission is the most powerful form of lie.

George Orwell

The only thing new in the world is the history you do not know.

Harry S. Truman

I think one of the most interesting things about autobiography is what the autobiographer leaves out. . . We look at a chair and we see the solid: We see the chair's shape in the wood. In looking at an autobiography, it's as if you're looking at the voids in the chair in order to see the form. Look at what the author is not telling you.

David McCullough

If Eisenhower's family, friends, and followers had their way, Kay Summersby would have become a missing person.

We know all about Ike and Mamie. Their lives have been documented in literally hundreds of memoirs, biographies, histories, and films. But Kay's personal postwar history is much less well known and difficult to trace, perhaps because, as Ike's biographer Jean Edward Smith wryly remarks, "[T]he burnishers of Eisenhower's image have worked overtime to eradicate her from the record."<sup>1\*</sup>

She was airbrushed out of the official photograph taken in Eisenhower's office after the signing of Germany's surrender. Harry Butcher mentions her only five times in the 876 pages of the published version of his detailed war diary, *My Three Years With Eisenhower*. Mickey McKeogh, Ike's orderly, doesn't mention her once in his personal memoir, *Sgt. Mickey and General Ike*, even though McKeogh and Kay spent a part of almost every day together from July, 1942 to July, 1945. And in his military memoir, *Crusade in Europe*, Eisenhower mentions her just once (page 133), as a member of his personal staff: "Kay Summersby was corresponding secretary and doubled as a driver."

It is true that Kay is mentioned frequently in almost every book about Eisenhower in World War II. But while biographers turn to her memoir, *Eisenhower Was My Boss*, as a valuable source of detailed information about the General's wartime life, they generally reject her claim in *Past Forgetting* of an intimate relationship—denials that seem to be based on little else than the intuitive conviction that Dwight David Eisenhower could not have cheated on his wife and the belief that he could have had no intention of marrying Summersby. Carlos D'Este's dismissal is typical: "[I]t is extremely improbable that this affinity ever developed into something deeper."<sup>2</sup> Stephen Ambrose is willing to acknowledge a "close relationship" (whatever that means) but rejects the idea that Ike might have wanted to make it more permanent. While Kay was "the third most important woman in [Eisenhower's] life, behind only his mother and his wife," Ike "never thought of marrying [her]."<sup>3</sup>

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\* Because Kay's postwar life has not been systematically documented, I am referencing sources for those who would like to dig a little deeper. Casual readers can ignore the endnotes.

Some biographers venture further. In a lengthy, four-page discussion of the relationship, Geoffrey Perret explains obligingly that “Eisenhower needed [Kay] and he indirectly admitted as much and . . . she read into his admission a passion that was not there and never would be. . . . For all that Kay Summersby wrote about love, she knew little about it, for throughout her unhappy life it eluded her.”<sup>4</sup> Fine stuff if you’re writing a novel—much less helpful in what is supposed to be a biography.

It is certainly true that, after the war, Kay Summersby became persona non grata in Eisenhower circles. But while she may have been airbrushed out of the picture, she never quite disappeared. In fact, for the rest of her life and beyond, she lingered like a threatening ghost in the margins and footnotes of the Eisenhower epic, telling first one story and then another about her three years with the Supreme Commander. And while each of her memoirs—*Eisenhower Was My Boss* (1948) and the posthumous *Past Forgetting* (1976)—tells a different and overlapping part of her story, neither tells the whole truth. Nor is it clear what the truth is, for as David Eisenhower remarks in his biography of his grandfather, the truth is “known only by them, and both are gone.”

But it is possible to know some things. For example, it isn’t true (as some have said) that Ike and Kay never saw or heard from one another again. Quite the opposite, in fact. There was frequent contact between them until Kay’s marriage in 1952, just two weeks after Dwight David Eisenhower became the thirty-fourth president of the United States.

And it’s possible to know other things. What follows is an account of the arc of Kay’s postwar life that I have pieced together from official documents, letters, diaries, and contemporary newspaper stories, along with my own inferences and speculations.

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When Eisenhower’s staff was sent to Washington in November, 1945, Kay was ordered to Berlin. Taking Telek with her, she worked from January to September, 1946, under General Lucius Clay, the Deputy Governor of the U.S. Zone. (A close friend of Eisenhower, Clay would become an advisor in his 1952 presidential campaign, help assemble his first-term cabinet, and serve in his administration.)

Kay was promoted to the rank of WAC captain in early 1946. Around that time, Ike wrote to ask her to type the official diary she had kept for him during the European campaign, and they exchanged several letters about the project.<sup>5</sup> In one letter (January 15, 1946), he sympathizes with Kay's desire to leave her position on General Clay's Berlin staff and offers help in finding her a job at the United Nations. In a note on the typed letter, he wrote:

This scrawl is just to say that whatever I can do for you will be done—I don't know whether the citizenship thing [Kay was still a British citizen] will enter the picture, but all we can do is try to get you a job. I believe the organization will be stationed near N.Y. City. In any event, don't get downhearted.<sup>6</sup>

The letter continues the theme of “I want to help,” which continues throughout their correspondence. In another letter (March 11, 1946), he says, “Our pups are doing splendidly. The one that I call ‘Telek’ looks exactly like his dad.”<sup>7</sup> The puppy Telek must have been a constant reminder to him of the Scottie he and Kay had shared, and the reference to “our pups” may be a coded statement to Kay that she was remembered. In fact, the last sentence in the dictated and typed letter is even more explicit: “All of us miss you and send you our warm regard.”

Kay's Berlin job—she managed the visits of military and civilian VIPs—seemed routine and she must have missed the daily excitement and sense of urgencies of the war. She had already (in October, 1945) initiated citizenship proceedings; now, she left Telek temporarily in the care of General Clay and sailed to the States aboard the Army transport ship *General SD Sturgis*. She arrived in New York on October 10, 1946, and renewed her citizenship effort in the District Court of Washington D.C. on November 18.<sup>8</sup> Telek flew to California four months later, making the trip on an American Overseas Airlines plane in the personal custody of the pilot. At a layover in New York, newspaper photographers snapped his picture. There were more photographers waiting in California; wire-service photographs of Eisenhower's little dog and the attractive Kay, still in uniform, appeared in many newspapers around the country.

If Kay and Ike got together when she arrived in New York or when she went to Washington to pursue her citizenship, there is no record of the meeting. This isn't surprising, since by this time,

Eisenhower would have been made aware of the hazards of a continuing association with her and was being closely monitored. As biographer Michael Korda notes, from the time he returned to the States in late 1945, the General was completely “protected” and “insulated” by a staff “whose primary purpose was to make him look good.”<sup>9</sup>

However, this is *not* to say that Kay and Ike did not manage to meet privately. In fact, after Kay’s death, one of her friends told a magazine writer (*New York Magazine*, May 7, 1979, p. 69) that the pair privately “trysted for the final time” in her New York apartment after the war, perhaps when Kay arrived from Germany. Seeing her without the knowledge of his staff and/or his wife might have presented a certain challenge, but Eisenhower could no doubt have done it if he chose. It is also not a surprise that there are no meetings (other than a brief office encounter with Telek and another on the Columbia campus) described in *Past Forgetting*.

At the time of her return to the U.S. in 1946, Kay was still in the service. She was ordered to Hamilton Field, north of San Francisco, as inconveniently far from Washington (and the General) as possible. Her job as an assistant public relations officer was even less eventful than her assignment in Berlin—until, one night in February, 1947, when a man entered the women officers’ quarters, picked Kay’s room at random, and attempted to rape her. She screamed for help and he was apprehended almost immediately.<sup>10</sup> He confessed to other attempts and the matter dragged out until September, when he was found guilty and sentenced to fifteen years.

The publicity created by her attacker’s arrest and trial proved difficult for Kay. She applied in May for a compassionate discharge and was separated in July, 1947. In April, her mother came from England for a visit, apparently stopping off in Washington to see Eisenhower. Replying to a letter from Kay in May of that year, he wrote, “I know that your mother’s visit must be a real treat for you both.”<sup>11</sup>

Kay had kept in touch with Harry Butcher, Ike’s naval aide, after the war. Butch had divorced his wife Ruth (Mamie’s wartime roommate) and married Molly, the Red Cross worker whom he met in Algiers. In the spring of 1947, Kay visited Butch and Molly at their home in Santa Barbara, where Butch had just launched Radio KIST. During the visit, she likely told Butch that she was considering writing a

book about her wartime experiences. She still had in her possession the two wartime diaries that she and Eisenhower had maintained in 1944 and 1945, which Eisenhower had already suggested she might use for a book.<sup>12</sup> Butch, whose gossipy diary of the war was published by Simon and Schuster in 1946, may have referred her to his literary agent, George Bye. (Bye, a well-known New York agent, had a number of high-profile clients, including Eleanor Roosevelt, Charles Lindbergh, Rebecca West, and Rose Wilder Lane and Lane's then-unknown mother, Laura Ingalls Wilder). Butch also wrote to Ike to let him know that Kay was considering writing a memoir. It's fair to say that this news would not have been greeted with enthusiasm by Eisenhower staffers, whose experience of Butcher's book had not been positive.<sup>13</sup>

Back on the East Coast in the summer of 1947, Kay took Telek to visit Eisenhower in his office in the Pentagon, the first opportunity to reunite Ike with their dog since the Scottie had arrived from Germany in March. Eisenhower, Kay says, invited her to bring Telek back to see him and—once again—offered to help her find a job.

There's something of a mystery about what happened next in Kay's life. I haven't been able to find any direct documentation, but we can reconstruct the narrative from a letter Eisenhower wrote to her and an entry in his diary. She seems to have written to Eisenhower sometime in early November from the Commodore Hotel in New York, letting him know of a change in her "wedding plans."<sup>14</sup> Eisenhower replied on November 12 that he was grateful to her for informing him of the change and sent his regrets.<sup>15</sup> Three weeks later, he wrote in his diary (a diary he intended for later publication):

I heard today, through a mutual friend, that my wartime secretary (rather personal aide and receptionist) is in dire straits. A clear case of a fine person going to pieces over the death of a loved one, in this instance the man she was all set to marry. I'll do what I can to help. . . . Makes one wonder whether any human ever dares become so wrapped up in another that all happiness and desire to live is determined by the actions, desires—or life—of the second. I trust she pulls herself together, but she is Irish and tragic.<sup>16</sup>

This cannot be, as some have suggested, a reference to the 1943 death of Kay's fiancé, Colonel Richard Arnold, and it cannot be a reference to Kay's 1952 marriage to Reginald Morgan, who was at this time still married to his second wife. Taken with the letter of November 12, it seems to suggest that Kay planned to marry in late 1947, but that the "man she was all set to marry" unfortunately died. Whoever

the man was and whatever happened, the details have dropped out of the records, and all we have left are hints of this tragedy—and Ike’s unusual (for him) personal reflection on the high cost of emotional involvement.

In early December, living in a New York hotel and looking for options, Kay considered the possibility of reentering the service.<sup>17</sup> But by the end of 1947, she had taken a job with Tex McCrary, a well-known American journalist and public relations specialist.<sup>18</sup> McCrary, widely hailed as the creator of the talk-show format on radio and television, was organizing a world-wide news service for radio and television, with correspondents anchored at strategic spots around the globe. Kay may have met McCrary in Algiers, where he served during the war as a public relations officer for the Mediterranean Allied Air Forces. Or Eisenhower or one of his staffers (making good on the promise to help her find a job) may have recommended her.

In the early months of 1948, Kay was sharing an apartment on East 69th Street in New York with Anita Roberts, a former WAC who had occasionally been a fourth at Eisenhower’s bridge table. At work on the wartime memoir that would be published as *Eisenhower Was My Boss*, Kay had fired her first ghostwriter and replaced him with Frank Kearns.<sup>19</sup> Her work on the project was interrupted in May, 1948, when her sister Sheila died unexpectedly and she went to England to care for her mother, who had suffered a nervous breakdown. She wrote to Eisenhower to tell him of Sheila’s death and tell him about her book.<sup>20</sup> The next day, he wrote sympathetically to both Kay and her mother: “It is distressing to learn of the tragedies in your family.” He also expressed surprise to hear about the book (he believed that she had returned to military service), but complimented Kay on her choice of George Bye as an agent: “I feel you are possessed of a fine adviser in George Bye.”<sup>21</sup>

The publisher (Prentice-Hall) wanted to call the book *Eisenhower’s “Girl Friday,”* but Eisenhower objected. In a July, 1948, letter to George Bye (Kay’s agent), he said he didn’t see why the book had to have his name on it and proposed the title, *A WAC in SHAEF*. He also wrote to the editor at Prentice-Hall, Myron L. Boardman. To Kay, he summarized his concern and added: “You know, of course, I wish you the best of luck in this publishing venture.”<sup>22</sup>

Kay returned from England in time to receive the British Empire Medal, awarded by the British consulate in a ceremony on board the Cunard's *Brittanic*. And in time to hand over her notes, diaries, and manuscript drafts to her new ghostwriter, Frank Kearns, an American-intelligence-officer-turned-journalist who had been based in London during the war. A skilled writer and researcher with a comprehensive understanding of Eisenhower's campaigns, Kearns was recommended to Kay and to her editor at Prentice-Hall by Edward L. Saxe, who also served in London with Eisenhower.<sup>23</sup> It seems likely that Kay knew both Kearns and Saxe; she certainly knew Saxe's wife, Anthea Gordon Saxe, who had also been a civilian driver in the Motor Transport Corps.<sup>24</sup> Both of the Saxes later became her literary executors.

At the time, Kearns and his wife, a British fashion model and showgirl named Gwendoline Ethel Shoring (an ex-pat Brit whom Kay may also have known back in London) were living in an apartment on West 80th Street in New York and Kearns was working as a freelance writer for national magazines. He had only one month to produce the 110,000-word manuscript, because Prentice-Hall—eager to capitalize on the publication of Eisenhower's memoir—was rushing Kay's book into print. The October publication of *Eisenhower Was My Boss* would be just one month ahead of Doubleday's November publication of Eisenhower's memoir, *Crusade in Europe*.

Kay and Kearns were paid an advance of \$1,000.<sup>25</sup> They split the advance evenly and agreed that Kay would get 73 percent of the royalties and Kearns 27 percent. The book received strongly positive reviews from Charles Poore and David Dempsey in the *New York Times* and quickly shot up to the top of the charts. Within two months, some 25,000 hardcover copies were in print. The book was serialized in *Look* magazine in October and November and excerpts appeared in over fifty newspapers. It was widely—and positively—reviewed as “the inside story of a military command from a woman's point of view.” One advertisement promised, “You'll enjoy the personal, human things Captain Summersby says about her boss.” Another: “Her story is a report to women—the only one of its kind to come out of World War II.” The book, with side-by-side photos of Kay and Ike, was front-page news in newspapers all around the country.



Kay had sent Ike (who was just beginning to settle into his presidency at Columbia University) a pre-publication copy of her book, and on September 30, 1948, he replied with a dictated thank-you note. In New York, she was staying at the Hotel Winslow at Madison Avenue and 55th Street, but she spent the autumn and part of the spring of 1949 on the lecture circuit, speaking on college campuses and at women's clubs, libraries, and bookstores. She also appeared on radio and on the popular quiz show, "Twenty Questions." In July, 1948, she flew to England, where the UK edition of the book had been published by T. Werner Laurie Ltd. She visited her mother in London; they traveled through England and Scotland and visited relatives at Inish Beg.<sup>26</sup>

Returning to New York on the *SS America* at the end of October, 1949, Kay found an apartment at 155 East Forty-Ninth and her name began to appear in the New York gossip columns. She sent a Christmas note to Eisenhower, saying that she was working with a travel service and finding the work "very interesting."<sup>27</sup> Walter Winchell reported in the *New York Daily Mirror* (January 16, 1950) that she had "quietly" opened a "midtown travel agency." Dorothy Gilgallen reported in the *New York Journal American* (May 29, 1950) that her agency was located at East 42nd street. In the *Los Angeles Times*, Hedda Hopper (April 7, 1950) called the venture a "lecture bureau" and mentioned that Kay was visiting Hollywood.

Whatever the project, it apparently didn't last very long, for in the fall of 1950, Kay took a job as a "vendeuse" in women's upscale retail at Bergdorf-Goodman, on Fifth Avenue in Manhattan, where she worked for the next two years. She mentioned the "very good job" in a Christmas, 1950, note to Ike; it, too, may have come through the Eisenhower connection, although if it did, she doesn't mention this.<sup>28</sup> Her letter was written just two days before Eisenhower was named Supreme Allied Commander of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and moved with Mamie to Paris.

Kay became an American citizen in February, 1951. Late in that year, she sent a holiday card to Eisenhower, with a typed note mentioning that she would be spending Christmas in Washington with Ellen Ruthman (the WAC officer who served as Ike's dietician and supervisor of his personal mess when he was at the Pentagon) and that she would be joining the WACs who had served on his staff during the

war for their fifth annual get-together. She was also looking forward to seeing Butch and Molly, who were visiting in New York. She added “Telek continues to be in wonderful shape. He looks younger than ever.”<sup>29</sup>

Eisenhower, meanwhile, had taken a two-year leave from the Columbia University presidency so that he could serve at NATO, and he and Mamie were living in a chateau outside Paris. In early 1952, he was persuaded to run for president as a Republican when he saw a remarkable promotional film created by Tex McCrary (for whom Kay worked in 1947-1948). McCrary arranged a “We Want Ike” rally in Madison Square Garden and recorded the rally on kinescope. It was designed to convince the General that there was a massive groundswell of enthusiasm for his candidacy. It did the trick. When Eisenhower (who was living at the time outside Paris) saw the kinescope, he was so moved by the demonstration that he agreed to become a candidate.<sup>30</sup>

Eisenhower’s path to the Republican nomination was contested by Senator Robert A. Taft. Taft’s campaign claimed to have a copy of the letter Ike had written to Marshall shortly after VE-Day, saying that he intended to divorce Mamie and marry Kay. There were even suspicions that Ike and Kay had not ended their relationship when he left Germany. Around this time, Harry Butcher wrote to warn Ike that a “group of businessmen” were attempting to raise \$15,000 to tap Kay’s telephone and catch calls from Eisenhower.<sup>31</sup> Apparently, Taft’s staffers also approached Kay, attempting to get information from her. In his *Mirror* column of January 30, 1952, Walter Winchell notes that Kay “jilted Taft forces attempting to ‘woo’ her.” Heading the column is a photograph of Kay in uniform, holding Telek, who was apparently a familiar sight in New York social circles. The caption reads, “No Soap for Taftites.” There is no mention of a letter, but the newspaper audience is presumed to be able to guess that Kay has some sort of secret knowledge about Ike that—if it were revealed—would derail his candidacy.

In the summer of 1952, Kay flew to London to visit her mother. As it happened, Eisenhower and Mamie were there at the same time. In *Past Forgetting*, Kay says that she sent a note to their suite in the Dorchester Hotel, inviting them to tea with her mother. Shortly, a young major appeared at her mother’s house, saying that General Eisenhower had asked him to take Kay out. Over drinks, the young man said,

“Kay, it’s impossible. The General is really on a tight leash. He is not his own master.” “It was [Ike’s] way of letting me know,” Kay writes, “that I still did mean something to him.”<sup>32</sup> On September 24, *New York Post* columnist Earl Wilson mentions that Kay has returned from England. A month later, Wilson writes that Kay Summersby’s Scottie “wears an Ike button.”

Whatever the behind-the-scene rumors and maneuvers, the issue of Eisenhower’s relationship to Kay was not publically aired in the 1952 presidential campaign. Eisenhower carried all but nine of the forty-eight states, and the Republicans, following the General’s flag, took both the House and the Senate. The GOP was back in power, and Eisenhower was in command of the Oval Office.

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Two weeks after the election, Kay married Reginald T. H. Morgan, a partner in the New York brokerage firm of Dominick and Dominick. Kay was Morgan’s third wife. His first wife had died and he was recently (June 12, 1952) divorced from his second wife. With the marriage, Kay gained four stepchildren. They said their vows in a quiet ceremony in a friend’s home on East 72nd Street. After a honeymoon at St. Croix in the Virgin Islands, they moved to New Canaan, CT. Kay wrote to Ike to let him know of the marriage. In response, he wrote: “It was good to hear from you, particularly such happy tidings! Congratulations to the lucky groom, and to both of you my very best wishes for your continuing happiness.”<sup>33</sup> So far as is known, it was his final letter to her.

The marriage didn’t last. “It was an unfortunate experience,” Kay said when the couple separated in 1957. She obtained an Alabama divorce on March 11, 1958.<sup>34</sup> (Morgan had other problems, as well. His second wife was suing him for failure to pay child support for their two children.)<sup>35</sup> At the time, Kay was living at 901 Lexington Avenue in New York, just three blocks from Central Park; she later moved to an apartment on Park Avenue. Through the mid-1960s, she worked as a fashion consultant for CBS-Television, costuming such stars as Tallulah Bankhead, Greer Garson, and Peggy Lee. As a freelance costume designer, she worked with such shows as “Kraft Music Hall” and assisted one of Hollywood’s top designers on films such as *The Group* and *The Night They Raided Minsky’s*. Her last job was as a fashion consultant for *The Stepford Wives*.<sup>36</sup>

But while Ike might be gone from Kay's life and her marriage had proved to be a bad idea, Telek was still her constant companion—until his death in 1959, at the age of seventeen. “Such a gallant little dog. Such a faithful, loving friend,” she writes in *Past Forgetting* (p. 281). “From now on, there would always be something missing in my life: the spirit, the gaiety, the devotion of a small dog named Telek.” The Scottie was her last link to Ike, who died ten years later, on March 28, 1969.

In 1973, Kay was diagnosed with liver cancer. The doctors gave her six months to live. At the same time, she learned that former President Harry Truman, in *Plain Speaking*, had confirmed the rumor that had been going the rounds for years. According to Truman, Ike had written “a letter to General Marshall saying that he wanted to come back to the United States and divorce Mrs. Eisenhower so that he could marry this Englishwoman.”<sup>37</sup> Truman's statement was confirmed by his aide, Major General Harry Vaughan.

Stunned by the former president's statement, Kay says that she decided to write a second memoir that would—now that the General was dead and she was dying—tell the “truth” about the affair. She began working with a ghostwriter named Segrid Hedin. The work was partially done when Hedin was paid and released and another ghostwriter, Barbara Wyden, took over the project. The publishing house Simon and Schuster reportedly paid Kay \$50,000—more than a quarter of a million dollars in today's money. From this amount Kay paid Hedin \$8,500 and Wyden \$25,000. Wyden worked from Kay's tapes and notes.<sup>38</sup> Kay is said to have seen about seventy-five percent of the manuscript before she died.<sup>39</sup>

Wyden came to the project with twelve years of editorial experience under her belt. She had held editorial positions at *Newsweek* magazine and worked as an editor at major newspapers in Chicago and San Francisco. She moved to *The New York Times Magazine* in 1963, then became a free-lance writer in 1975. In 1980, she was described as “one of the most talented, evocative, and dependable ghosts.” She went on to work with such celebrities as Dr. Joyce Brothers, Jane Fonda, and Julie Nixon Eisenhower. She may have become connected to the project through her agent, Claire Smith.

However, the posthumous book that Simon and Schuster published was not the book that the first ghostwriter, Sigrid Hedin, remembered. In a 1977 interview with investigative journalist Greg Walter, she said:

Kay's affair with Eisenhower lasted for several years, much longer than was stated in the book . . . Eisenhower was not impotent. They actually had an affair, but they didn't really have that much time to be alone. They were living in a goldfish bowl. I think Kay probably felt she was going to marry him, you know.<sup>40</sup>

Hedin also claimed, in the *New York Post*, that “there was a lot in the final version of *Past Forgetting* that is not quite correct” and that she had the “real manuscript.”<sup>41</sup>

Kay died on January 20, 1975. Her brother Seamus scattered her ashes on the family gravesite outside the parish church of Rath and the Islands, a mile and a half from her childhood home, where she rode bareback and sailed down the River Ilen to the Celtic Sea.

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But that's not the end of the story.

*Past Forgetting* was published in November, 1976, nearly two years after Kay's death. *New York Daily News* columnist Liz Smith, writing a few months before the publication, called it “a story that people thought would never be told about one of America's most sacred idols,” and reported that the Literary Guild had already bought it. Excerpts were to appear in *Ladies Home Journal* and Bantam had paid \$800,000 for the paperback rights—and the book wasn't even out yet. Smith quipped, “How's that for according respectability to a kiss and tell about a married war hero with feet of clay?”<sup>42</sup> The Bantam paperback edition, which came out in 1977, cranked up reader expectations with a hyperbolic back-cover blurb:

Here, at long last, is the true story of the passionate, moving secret love affair between General Dwight D. Eisenhower, Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces in Europe, and Kay Summersby, the beautiful English fashion model who became his driver in wartime London, his staff aide, by his side through every crisis and high-level meeting of the war—and the woman he loved. Written by Kay Summersby Morgan herself, *Past Forgetting* is the intimate account of a relationship that began, haltingly, in 1942, when Kay was assigned to drive the then unknown two-star general, and ended in heartbreak when Ike, victor and war hero, returned home to face a disapproving General Marshall, the adoring American public, Mrs. Eisenhower—and the possibility of becoming President of the United States.

When word got out about the book, the Eisenhowers went into action. John Eisenhower speedily arranged to have a volume of his father's wartime letters to his mother published (by Doubleday), just three months after *Past Forgetting* appeared. (His mother's letters to Ike, which may have charged the General with flirtation or even infidelity, were not available for publication.)

*Letters To Mamie* probably didn't have the effect John Eisenhower intended. Reviewers commented that Ike's letters were "defensive" and clearly written in response to rebuking letters from his wife. *The New York Times* review—which ran with photographs of Kay, Ike, and Mamie—was titled "John Eisenhower Fighting Reports His Father Had Affair During War."<sup>43</sup> As well, every review of the Eisenhower's letters included a fairly detailed reference to *Past Forgetting*, which John Eisenhower must have wished would be ignored, or at least quickly forgotten.

It wasn't. The book did not garner strong reviews, and the question of Eisenhower's impotence seemed to dominate the conversation. In *The New York Times*, Tom Buckley was not enthusiastic, wondering why Ike, still in "the prime of his life," was so anxious to marry a woman with whom he was "sexually incompatible" and deploring Barbara Wyden's feminine "rosemary and rue" style.<sup>44</sup> Others found the book sensational; still others didn't find it sensational enough.

But the project had legs. In March, 1978, it was reported that ABC Television had paid \$100,000 for the movie rights to the book. Veteran Hollywood screenwriter Melville Shavelson reported the price as \$250,000, "nearly a record price in television for an unpublished manuscript." Shavelson should know, since he was the man who wrote, produced, and co-directed (until he was fired) the movie based on the book: *Ike: The War Years*, a six-hour made-for-television mini-series.

Shavelson, who devotes a full chapter to the project in his 2013 memoir, *How to Succeed in Hollywood Without Really Trying. P.S. You Can't!*, made several attempts to consult with John and David Eisenhower on the project and was (no surprise here) firmly rebuffed.<sup>45</sup> Failing to gain the Eisenhowers' cooperation, Shavelson pursued his own investigation of the validity of Kay's claims. One of his informants was General Omar Bradley, a close friend of Eisenhower's during the war years. When

Shavelson asked him about “Topic A,” Bradley merely said, “I once used Ike’s bathroom at his headquarters above Algiers. When I opened the medicine cabinet, I was face to face with Kay’s Kotex.”<sup>46</sup> That was enough for Shavelson.

Through 1977 and into early 1978, Shavelson and ABC proceeded with the script production, casting, and locations. The team had started filming when the project was abruptly halted. The Eisenhower family had sued the network to prevent the film from being made, and ABC was forced to put it on hold while the lawsuit was pending. The Eisenhowers were especially upset about the scene in which Ike (Robert Duvall) and his commanding officer General George Marshall (Dana Andrews) discuss Ike’s divorce letter. Here is how Shavelson imagined that confrontation:

INTERIOR MARSHALL’S OFFICE — MED. CLOSE — DAY  
Gen. Marshall is on his feet confronting Ike, who is also standing.

MARSHALL: That was the goddamnest letter I ever read in my life, Ike! You must be out of your mind!

IKE: (quietly) I meant every word.

MARSHALL: Idiotic! Foolish! You, of all people! The Supreme Commander acting like a schoolboy who’s been in the bushes with his teacher! Have you told Mamie?

IKE: Not yet.

MARSHALL: Eisenhower, mention one word of what you said to me in that letter to that wonderful woman, so help me God, I’ll hound you out of the United States Army if it’s the last act of my military career!

IKE: Well, goddamn it, you go ahead and try! I’m no schoolboy; I know exactly what I’m doing. I’ve given Kay my word, goddamnit, and my heart, not that I expect you to understand.

MARSHALL: I don’t understand one damn thing you’re saying. Except that you’re throwing away the most promising career in American military history.

IKE: It’s my life, I can throw it away if I want to.

MARSHALL: The hell you can. The hell it’s your life. How many thousands of men did you order to give up theirs for their country? How many boys in the 101st Airborne came back after you shook their hands?

He takes Ike by the arm, hauls him toward the window, where the Washington Monument is visible in the distance.

MARSHALL: I want you to be the next Chief of Staff. You divorce Mamie and marry that English girl, I won't have a prayer of getting that appointment past Congress. Look out of that window. If you look real hard, that's the White House. It may look far away now, but it's getting closer all the time.

IKE: To hell with the White House. I'm no politician and I never want to be one.

MARSHALL: What are you, Eisenhower? Don't you understand your country may need you? It needs you right now. Because you stand for something. You stand for 116,000 American dead; you're the only one who has come out of this war with the respect of the mothers and fathers who gave you their sons to kill. Respect. Remember that word. It isn't yours. It was given to you by your country. By the soldiers and sailors and airmen who died for it.

He is pacing now.

MARSHALL: (cont'd) And if you want to throw it away so you can climb in the sack with some girl half your age, you go and do it, because you're going to live in history, right next to Benedict Arnold.

IKE: That's hitting below the belt.

MARSHALL: Where do you want me to hit you? How do I make you come to your senses? Your life is not your own any more. It belongs to the United States. Now, I order you to go back to Mamie and forget everything that's happened in this office and so will I.<sup>47</sup>

The theme of Ike's life "belonging to the United States" is threaded throughout the film, as is the theme of Kay's willing (if reluctant) renunciation of the hero. Before Ike returns to the States for his victory lap, Kay tells him, "You are free of me. I went into this with my eyes wide open, knowing I was to be swept under the rug when this moment came. I shall mind, of course, but it's been—oh, such a lovely rug."<sup>48</sup> Good Hollywood stuff, but in reality, of course, Kay never got a chance to surrender. When she was swept under the rug, she was given no memorable lines.

After the lawsuit was filed, Shavelson continued to work behind the scenes, revising parts of the screenplay he felt might offend John and Mamie Eisenhower, selecting shooting locations, and obtaining war footage from the Army, which cooperated readily. It took a year of negotiations before the family and the network arrived at a compromise. The family dropped the suit and the network agreed to represent Mamie favorably and (most importantly) play down the Ike-Kay romance. Shortly afterward, Shavelson, who had been involved with the project from the beginning, was replaced as director by Boris Sagal.



Shavelson doesn't say whether his removal was one of the requirements the family imposed for dropping the suit. The network insisted that the Eisenhowers—and their corporate friends who threatened to pull their advertising from the network—had nothing to do with the script and personnel changes.<sup>49</sup> But when filming began again, the network's announcement of the project avoided any mention of romantic elements: "The story follows Eisenhower's role in the war as he rose to supreme Allied commander and five-star general," and the "romance" was reduced to a "relationship."<sup>50</sup> It is tempting to see the resulting diminishment of the film character of Kay as another instance of the airbrushing that began with the VE-Day photograph in 1945.

*Ike: The War Years* was aired in May, 1979, and earned five Emmy nominations and an Eddy (for editing). No longer the story of the Eisenhower-Summersby romance, the muscular war saga was widely praised, even in the *New York Times*, which had initially opposed the project. Some reviewers, however, were disappointed that Kay's story had been abridged and the long-whispered love affair reduced to a few meaningful glances, a kiss on the cheek, and a surreptitious cuddle. Susan Anthony, an internationally syndicated New York reviewer, observes:

Although the question of whether Ike and Summersby actually had an affair is raised constantly in the show, no definitive answer is given. Instead, the conclusion is a resounding "maybe." While this may be comforting for Ike's family, it is irritating for viewers . . .<sup>51</sup>

Shavelson, an admirer of Kay Summersby and a believer in the truth of her memoir, was intent on having the last word. He novelized his screenplay under the title *Ike*; the book was published in a mass market paperback edition in America and England in 1979. In his author's "Afterword," he considers the question of just where, in this complex, multi-layered story, the truth lies (surely one of the most interesting juxtaposition of words in the English language):

What is truth? I do not know. . . . [But I] honestly believe that Dwight Eisenhower was human being enough to have felt what any of us might have felt, given that war and that time and that woman. By those who were there, I have been told that he did feel, deeply and honestly' and so did Kay Summersby.

Both Ike and Kay have now gone on. The truth, the absolute truth, if such a thing ever can exist, died with them.

And that, I think, is the last true thing that anyone can say about this story.

## Author's Note

In wartime, truth is so precious that she should always be attended by a bodyguard of lies.

Winston Churchill

The historian will tell you what happened. The novelist will tell you what it felt like.

E.L. Doctorow

I first met Kate Summersby in her 1976 memoir, *Past Forgetting*, which I read in the 1980s. The book challenged my view of Eisenhower, the president of my growing-up years. The bald, bland, inarticulate, golf-playing president actually had a *lover*? At the time, the fact that the powerful Supreme Commander turned out to be impotent (not just once but twice in the book) seemed to me to a marvelously fitting example of dramatic irony. I even wondered whether Kay was at last getting even with him, snarkily, for dumping her at the end of the war. After all, Ike couldn't very well rise up out of his grave and say, "It is not true! I *did* have sex with that woman!"

Then, just a few years ago, I encountered Kay again. This time, she was played by Lee Remick in the DVD edition of the TV miniseries, *Ike: The War Years*, which was widely advertised as "based on" *Past Forgetting*. The film bothered me. It wasn't just that the highly-charged sexual scenes in the book had been deleted from the script, although they were: the film's star-crossed lovers acted like two well-mannered adolescents conscious that Mom was looking on, saying "Now, kids, behave."

The lack of sexual tension was bad enough, but for me, the real problem was the portrayal of Kay. Lee Remick was directed to play Summersby as if she were the charmingly kittenish Mary Tyler Moore, and her lines could have come straight from the comic-relief heroine of sixteen years of American sitcoms. (This idea may have been come from John Eisenhower himself, who is quoted years later as saying that Kay had been "the Mary Tyler Moore of headquarters, perky and cute.") But a sassy, comic-

relief Kay doesn't carry enough emotional weight to make us believe that General Ike could seriously have fallen for her. Even more disturbingly, the Kay of the film doesn't give Eisenhower the chance to be the bad guy and break it off. She takes care of that herself. "You are free of me," she declares, playing the brave tragic heroine to the hilt. "I went into this with my eyes wide open, knowing I was to be swept under the rug when this moment came. I shall mind, of course, but it's been—oh, such a lovely rug." Tossing this glib quip over her shoulder, out the door she goes, chin high, not to be heard from again.

But wait! This isn't the Kay of *Past Forgetting*, who was inexplicably and humiliatingly dumped by the man she had loved, who went back to his wife and the Pentagon with only a brutal letter to axe their affair. Of course, an adaptation is an adaptation and Hollywood is Hollywood. (Lee Remick herself once said she wouldn't make another Hollywood movie until Hollywood started making movies for grownups.) Still, it seemed to me that something had happened during the production of this film that made it necessary to massively rewrite the love affair and completely recast the main character—to create a story that revised and trivialized and sanitized the love affair. I began to read, to ask questions, to dig into the history of the Summersby story—and the story itself, which is also the story of the war. The more I learned, the more I wanted to know, not just about Kay Summersby but about the man she had fallen in love with—Dwight Eisenhower—and the General's wife, Mamie. Who were Ike and Mamie before they became President and Mrs. Middle America? I began to sense that the golf-playing President and the Mamie-pink First Lady I knew from the magazines and newspapers of my girlhood were two very real people who had had a very hard time of it during a very hard war, their marriage seriously jeopardized by Ike's falling deeply in love with another woman.

This book represent my effort to learn about these real people and their real wartime love affair. Writing historical fiction, I am always mindful that I am working along a continuum that has documented fact on one end and pure invention on the other, with many points between. As I wrote this novel, I was dealing with things that really happened and things that might *also* have happened—and occasionally with what happened instead.

For example, Ike and all of the characters in his wartime command are historical people. Their characters and interactions and the settings in which they worked and fought are described as they appear in Kay's two memoirs, in Harry Butcher's minutely detailed war diary, *My Three Years With Eisenhower*, and in the references listed in the bibliography. I have fictionalized Ike's role in the Darlan affair (what part he played is not known) and throughout have created an Eisenhower consistent with the picture developed in Fred I. Greenstein's masterful study of Ike's duplicities and behind-the-scenes maneuvers in *The Hidden-Hand Presidency*, a book that gives us a very clear look at a man who played his cards close to the chest. In that regard, I have viewed his dalliance with Marian Huff (his golf and bridge partner in Manila, of whom Mamie was very jealous) as a precursor to his affair with Kay. The key events of the developing romance—Ike's gift of Telek, Ike's gift of a uniform, Ike's taking her with him to North Africa, to Egypt, and to Europe after the Normandy invasion—are documented in one or both of Kay's memoirs. Also true: King George's chilly snub, Churchill's interest, and the desert picnic with Roosevelt.

For Mamie's characterization, I have stayed close to the picture of her grandmother that Susan Eisenhower gave us in her sympathetic biography, *Mrs. Ike: Memories and Reflections on the Life of Mamie Eisenhower* and in several other First Lady biographies. I have fictionalized Ike's determinedly reassuring letters to her, but they are based on the real letters published in *Letters To Mamie*, which are indeed stilted, defensive, and unconvincing. Where Kay Summersby was concerned, her husband's protestations must have caused Mamie a great many more doubts than they resolved—especially after Mamie realized that he had brought her with him to North Africa.

Also real: Mamie's 1979 interview with Barbara Walters; a review copy is available at the Eisenhower Library. Mamie's comment about Ike's "old bald head" is reported by J.B. West, Chief Usher at the White House during the Eisenhowers' tenure.<sup>52</sup> Her reaction to *Ike: The War Years* ("Oh, how ugly they've made me look!") was reported after her death in the *Indiana Gazette*.<sup>53</sup> And her well-known jealousy of Ann Whitman, Eisenhower's secretary during the White House years, is documented in *Confidential Secretary*, Robert Donovan's biography of Whitman. "I tried to keep out of Mrs.

Eisenhower's way," Whitman said after she was forced to leave Ike. "It was clear that she did not want me around."<sup>54</sup>

To serve the fiction, I have invented a number of Greek-chorus friends for Mamie. They give voice to Washington and Stateside opinion and fact, and serve to get some of the goings-on in the Pentagon on the record. Cookie, Diane, and Pamela, are fictional creations, and their discussion in Chapter Twenty of the arrival of Ike's divorce letter at the Pentagon is fictional. However, Doris Fleeson is real, and her *Evening Star* column about Kay's Washington visit—which I have quoted accurately—was published at the time Kay was there. Fleeson was a highly-regarded journalist and her column could very easily have produced the fictional result I have described in that chapter: Mamie's call to General Marshall, asking him to keep Kay in Germany and Marshall's order to Eisenhower, directing him to return immediately to the States.

Now to the complicated matter of Eisenhower's "divorce" letter and Marshall's reply. In the fictional conversation in Chapter 20, I have invented "Marv's" reported glimpse of Marshall's scolding cable to Ike. But the incident is based on a real event related by Eisenhower biographer Jean Edward Smith. Garrett Mattingly, a Pulitzer-prize-winning Columbia University history professor, served as a junior naval officer in the Washington censor's office during the war and was assigned to read outgoing cables. In the early 1950s, well before Truman placed the letters into the public record, Mattingly told Columbia colleagues that he had seen Marshall's cable to Eisenhower in Germany.<sup>55</sup>

In addition to Mattingly's corroboration of Truman's claim, there are other confirmations. Dr. David R. Steelman, another Truman aide, said in a 1996 interview that he actually *accompanied* Marshall to the Oval Office to discuss Eisenhower's divorce letter with the president. Truman instructed Marshall to burn the correspondence. Marshall, however, told Steelman that "he was going to put it in the files, because he [Marshall] didn't trust Eisenhower as much as Truman did."<sup>56</sup> In 1973, after Miller's biography was published, General Harry Vaughan, Truman's military aide, told an AP reporter that at Truman's order, he had retrieved the documents from the file "to keep them out of the hands of Eisenhower's political opponents" (in the 1952 runup to the GOP nomination) and given them to the

president.<sup>57</sup> Jean Edward Smith surmises that Truman destroyed them, and finds evidence that Eisenhower knew what he had done and was grateful.<sup>58</sup> Stanley Weintraub sums it up wryly: “Documents, if any, have disappeared. That itself was not unique in the self-protective bureaucracy.”<sup>59</sup>

In any event, copies may have been made, for both the Taft primary campaign staff and the Democratic campaign staff threatened to use them in the 1952 election.<sup>60</sup> I haven’t been able to find any evidence that the Taft campaign actually had the letters. But years later, syndicated columnist Jack Anderson wrote that the late Senator Olin Johnston (D-S.C.) told him that the Democrats had compiled a dossier on the Eisenhower-Summersby affair. Johnston had access to the file and had personally seen Marshall’s correspondence “admonishing Ike to forget Miss Summersby.”<sup>61</sup> Columnist Drew Pearson also refers to Eisenhower’s divorce plans in his published diary (December 4, 1952), when he notes a conversation with John Bennett, a Pearson staffer, who reported that he had talked with Eisenhower in Paris in late 1951; Ike “wanted to know what the effect on the public would be” if word got out about his affair with Kay. Eisenhower “seemed chiefly worried because apparently Mamie didn’t know he contemplated a divorce,” according to Bennett.<sup>62</sup>

Some biographers have attempted to explain Truman’s startling announcement in *Plain Speaking* by saying that the former president confused the divorce correspondence with another exchange of letters between Eisenhower and Marshall regarding Mamie. On June 4, 1945, nearly a month after V-E Day, Eisenhower wrote Marshall asking permission to bring Mamie to Europe. The wartime separation, he said, was causing serious personal problems for him and his wife. Four days later, after having consulted with Truman, Marshall sent a sympathetic refusal, saying that the request couldn’t be approved when other similar requests were denied. Jean Edward Smith remarks that, in fact, this incident actually offers “tangential corroboration” of the divorce correspondence. He concludes that Eisenhower was using this letter to signal to both Marshall and Truman that he had given up his plan to divorce his wife.<sup>63</sup> Stanley Weintraub, too, finds the letter “suspicious on its surface,” especially since Mamie would have to travel by sea (she refused to fly), as well as give up her apartment and store her belongings, only a few months before Ike was due to return to the U.S.<sup>64</sup>

My conclusion: By VE-Day, Ike did intend to divorce Mamie and marry Kay. Marshall—a strong father figure, as well as Ike’s boss—persuaded him otherwise. Ike signaled his altered intention with his June 4 request to bring his wife to Germany. President Truman was involved in both the first and second exchange, and later destroyed the evidence. Ike hadn’t told Kay of his intention to marry her, so he didn’t have to retract an offer or a promise. But he hadn’t necessarily agreed to give her up, either—he had only agreed not to marry her. I believe that, as late as November, 1945, he intended to bring Kay to the States with the rest of his staff. In fact, it may have been his decision to send her to Washington in October, 1945, to pursue her citizenship that set the subsequent events in motion.

With regard to Ike’s impotence, as it is portrayed in the two “failure” scenes in *Past Forgetting*: as a writer of fiction, I have a wider latitude than a historian or a biographer. I feel that both Ike and Kay deserve to wrestle at least a little passionate pleasure out of those dark times, so I have given them that, at times and places where I think it might have been possible. In offering this fictional satisfaction to my fictional lovers, I have trusted to my own romantic imagination and to the testimony of Sigrid Hedin, the first ghostwriter on *Past Forgetting*, who told a reporter that Kay told her the affair was consummated and that she had the manuscript to prove it. (I can’t help but wonder who might have bought Hedin’s manuscript, how much was paid for it, and what happened to it. That’s a story in itself.) I’m guessing that Hedin was removed from the book for the same reason Shavelson was removed as director of the film. Each of them had a different story to tell, and they were paid not to tell it.

To go a little further: I believe the impotence was a fabrication, either by Barbara Wyden (the second ghostwriter) or the Simon and Schuster editor. It seems likely to me that the publisher was caught in a bind. On the one hand, given the whispers and insinuations that had grown up around Ike and Kay over the years, readers were expecting a story with at least a modest dose of steamy sex. An entirely chaste memoir would have felt both disappointing and evasive—and would have settled nothing of the did-they-or-didn’t-they question. Further, it might have been a little difficult to explain to an editorial board why an editor paid the equivalent of a quarter of a million dollars for such an unsatisfactory book. On the other hand, there was the pressure from the Eisenhowers and their friends—the same kind of



pressure that John Eisenhower brought to bear on ABC-Television that resulted in the removal of all but a whiff of romance from *Ike: The War Years*.

Faced with this dilemma, Simon and Schuster might have considered canceling the project: the author was, after all, out of the picture. But there was a substantial sunk cost. What's more, the subsidiary magazine, paperback, film, and foreign rights had already been sold, and at very nice prices indeed. *Past Forgetting* was too ripe a plum not to pick. So somebody came up with a solution that even Bill Clinton might have envied: Ike did *not* have sex with that woman because he couldn't.

In my novel, the lawyer Kay consulted is a fiction, but both the ghostwriter and the editor are real people. Barbara Wyden continued to work as a ghostwriter into the 1990s. The editor's visit to the dying Kay Summersby actually happened; Michael Korda, who was an editor at Simon and Schuster at the time, lays claim to that event in his 2007 biography of Eisenhower. In it, he remarks that he "had the pleasure of talking briefly to Kay Summersby Morgan shortly before her death, and published her posthumous memoir."<sup>65</sup> In the same chapter, he relates the anecdote about his stepmother knocking down his father with Lady Mountbatten's car, which I'm sure he shared with Kay, perhaps in that final conversation. I have, however, fictionalized that conversation and fictionalized the editor/publisher's role in the production of Summersby's memoir. I have no idea who is responsible for any deviations from the "truth" of the affair, or what those might be.

Regarding my depiction of the circumstances around the writing of Kay's first memoir, *Eisenhower Was My Boss*: Colonel McAndrews is fictional, and I have invented the signing of the non-disclosure document. But Kay's mother would later claim to a reporter that her daughter had "General Eisenhower's approval before agreeing to write the book."<sup>66</sup> And after Kay's death a friend hinted that Kay had signed "some papers" that kept her from telling the whole truth about the affair.<sup>67</sup> It is logical to assume that she signed such an agreement, especially since some of Eisenhower's staffers were disturbed by the publication of Harry Butcher's gossipy memoir, which mixed military report and personal commentary in a way that opened Ike to serious criticism and required him to write a couple of apologetic letters. The question of the affair aside, there would have been other very real concerns about what she

might reveal. Kay, a British citizen, had been privy to some of Eisenhower's most sensitive discussions and correspondence. Her book was potentially a bombshell, and Ike's staff at the Pentagon would have wanted to get out in front of the situation.

Telek and Telegraph Cottage are real, of course, and there's no reason to doubt Kay's explanation of Telek's odd name. Kay's connection with it is real, as is the code name—Da-de-da, Morse for the letter K—that Butcher reports in his diary.<sup>68</sup>

I decided to include Kay's postwar biography as a nonfiction "afterword" to the novel because her life after her three years with Eisenhower is virtually unknown, and because it may help to answer some of the questions that the novel inevitably raises. Perhaps it can help us understand something more about why and how Kay told one kind of truth, then another—and what happened to the "truth" after she was no longer around to defend it. The effort to erase her from the General's life and cleanse the General of any hint of an illicit relationship with her is a part of the postwar creation of Ike the heroic figure, crafted by those who wanted to assist and ensure his ascension to the presidency.

The mature Dwight Eisenhower was his own man. But he was also a commodity that many people wanted to exploit and a symbol that some needed to protect. Kay Summersby herself was never a threat to the General; she cared too much for him to want to do him harm. But her intentions aside, she remained both a real and an imagined threat to him, and to them—even after both of them were gone.

#

Geraldine Brooks wrote, "The thing that most attracts me to historical fiction is taking the factual record as far as it is known, using that as scaffolding, and then letting imagination build the structure that fills in those things we can never find out for sure." There is a great deal we'll never know for sure about Kay, Ike, Mamie, and the triangular relationship that they began and carried on during the darkest days of the worst war the world has ever seen. But fiction is that path that brings us to the inner life, into the heart that is hidden and ultimately unknowable behind the closed curtain of actions and events. If this fictional work leads you to want to explore the real lives of these real people further—at least as far, that is, as the histories and biographies will allow—that is my reward.

As always, I owe a great deal to the scholars whose work has helped me in the research for this book—a very great many, when it comes to Eisenhower and World War II. For my understanding of Eisenhower’s personality and style, I am especially indebted to Fred I. Greenstein and his seminal work, *The Hidden-Hand Presidency: Eisenhower As Leader*, and to Jean Edward Smith, the only biographer who pays careful attention to the events surrounding Eisenhower’s intention to divorce his wife and marry Kay Summersby. I was glad to find a recent biography of Kay Summersby by Kieron Wood, *Ike’s Irish Lover: The Echo of a Sigh*. Wood filled in many of the details of Kay’s Irish heritage and prewar life. For Mamie Eisenhower, Susan Eisenhower’s *Mrs. Ike* has been most helpful. While I have tried to make You will find a list of the other important reference works at the end of this book. I hope you will make use of it as a springboard for your own further reading and study.

I am grateful to Ben Ohmart at BearManor Media for permission to quote the lengthy scene from Melville Shavelson’s memoir, *How to Succeed in Hollywood Without Really Trying. P.S. You Can’t!* Especially helpful: Valoise Armstrong, archivist at the Eisenhower Presidential Library, who provided research assistance and copies of important documents; and Paula and Richard Woodman, who generously shared notes and papers from Barbara Wyden’s estate. For their careful reading of the manuscript, I owe a big debt of thanks to John G. Albert, William J. Albert, John E. Webber, Judy Alter, Susan Davenport, and Cindy for their careful reading of the manuscript.

Thanks are also due to my writing sisters in the WorkInProgress group of the Story Circle Network for the nurturing friendship that does so much to brighten the writing week; to my agent Kerry Sparks for her unflagging enthusiasm and belief in my work; and to my husband William J. Albert, for his steadfast love and constant support, always.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Jean Edward Smith, *Eisenhower In War and Peace*, p. 522.

<sup>2</sup> Carlos D'Este, *Eisenhower*, p. 420.

<sup>3</sup> Stephen Ambrose, *Eisenhower: Soldier and President*, p. 212.

<sup>4</sup> Geoffrey Perret, *Eisenhower*, pp. 214-217.

<sup>5</sup> These and other letters and notes are held in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library. Others appear among the fifty-three Eisenhower-Summersby items offered for auction by Sotheby's in 1991 and 2008, by unnamed people who had come into possession of the material. The first set of auction items may have been offered by Edward and Anthea Saxe, Kay's literary executors; the second may have come from the estate of Barbara Wyden, the ghostwriter who worked on *Past Forgetting* and ended up with Kay's official diary (now in the Eisenhower library).

<sup>6</sup> Items xvi and xvii in the lot of 33 letters sold for \$43,750 by Sotheby's in 2008. <http://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2008/fine-books-and-manuscripts-including-american-a08501/lot.52.html> (Retrieved 6.29.2016).

<sup>7</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower to Captain Kay Summersby, March 11, 1946, Pre-Presidential Papers, Box 112, Summersby, Kay, Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library.

<sup>8</sup> For this and several other pieces of factual information about Kay's life, pre- and postwar, I am indebted to Kieron Wood, author of the Summersby biography, *Ike's Irish Lover: The Echo of a Sigh* (2016), available as an ebook from Amazon Digital Services LLC.

<sup>9</sup> Michael Korda, *Ike: An American Hero*, p. 609.

<sup>10</sup> The Associated Press story appeared on the front pages of dozens of newspapers around the country. One example: *The Daily Mail*, Hagerstown MD, February 14, 1947, p. 1.

<sup>11</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower to Captain Kay Summersby, May 14, 1947, Pre-Presidential Papers, Box 112, Summersby, Kay, Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library.

<sup>12</sup> On January 15, 1946, Eisenhower wrote to Kay on his Chief of Staff letterhead: "I've asked Gen. Clay to allow you time to type your diary so that I might have a copy. I do hope you can do it so that I may have the paper in my records. [The diary she kept from June 1944 through April 1945 is now in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Library in Abilene, Kansas.] I promise I'll never publish it, if there is ever anything to make out of it, that is certainly yours. (Possibly a poor joke, but I mean to say I recognize that you have a better claim to that diary than anyone else ever had for another.\*)" It is likely that he is referring to Harry C. Butcher's diary, which became *My Three Years With Eisenhower*. Eisenhower's January 15, 1946 letter is listed as Item xiv in Sotheby's 2008 sale (see note 6 above).

<sup>13</sup> Korda, pp.608-609.

<sup>14</sup> This could not be a reference to her November 20, 1952 marriage to Reginald Morgan; Morgan did not obtain a divorce from his second wife until June, 1952.

<sup>15</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower to Kay Summersby, November 12, 1947, Pre-Presidential Papers, Box 112, Summersby, Kay, Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library.

<sup>16</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, *The Eisenhower Diaries*, December 2, 1947.

<sup>17</sup> W. Stuart Symington to D.D. Eisenhower, December 26, 1947, Pre-Presidential Papers, Box 112, Summersby, Kay, Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library.

<sup>18</sup> “It is our understanding that . . . you have accepted a position with Tex McCreary [sic].” Lt. Col. J.H. Michaelis to Kay Summersby, December 31, 1947. Pre-Presidential Papers, Box 112, Summersby, Kay, Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library. The letter was sent c/o Major Ethel Westerman, General Dispensary, The Pentagon.

<sup>19</sup> Kay Summersby to D.D. Eisenhower, May 31, 1948. Pre-Presidential Papers, Box 112, Summersby, Kay, Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library. Summersby doesn’t mention the fired ghostwriter by name, but he may have been Mel Heimer, mentioned later by Robert Considine, “Kay Summersby: Recollections” in “On the Line” [Syndicated column], found in *Naples Daily News*, Naples FL, Feb. 3, 1975, p. 7. Heimer had just authored a book, *The Big Drag*, about New York. Considine, known for his celebrity ghostwriting, claims that Summersby asked him to ghost *Eisenhower Was My Boss*, but he had to decline.

<sup>20</sup> Kay Summersby to D.D. Eisenhower, May 31, 1948. Pre-Presidential Papers, Box 112, Summersby, Kay, Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library.

<sup>21</sup> D.D. Eisenhower to Kay Summersby, June 1, 1948. Pre-Presidential Papers, Box 112, Summersby, Kay, Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library.

<sup>22</sup> D.D. Eisenhower to Kay Summersby, July 28, 1948. Pre-Presidential Papers, Box 112, Summersby, Kay, Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library.

<sup>23</sup> *Algerian Diary: Frank Kearns and the “Impossible Assignment” for CBS News*, Gerald Davis and Tom Fenton, loc. 642. The introduction to this book contains eight informative paragraphs about Kearns and his work on *Eisenhower Was My Boss*.

<sup>24</sup> Kay continued her postwar association with the Saxes. Edward, who was an executive at CBS, may have helped her find a position as a fashion consultant for the network in the 1960s. Upon her death, both became co-executors of her literary estate.

<sup>25</sup> Eisenhower earned a \$635,000 lump-sum payment for his book from Doubleday, the equivalent of about \$6 million today. He notes in his diary (January 4, 1948) his intention to give Kay and four others \$1,000 each (roughly \$10,000 in today’s money), in recognition of their “faithful and unselfish” service to him.

<sup>26</sup> Wood, loc. 1024.

<sup>27</sup> Kay Summersby to D.D. Eisenhower, undated, Pre-Presidential Papers, Box 112, Summersby, Kay, Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library.

<sup>28</sup> Kay Summersby to D. D. Eisenhower, December 17, 1950, Pre-Presidential Papers, Box 112, Summersby, Kay, Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library. In his memoir, *A Pleasant Institution*, p.

361), John S. Monagan quotes William L. Laurence (Pulitzer Prize-winning official journalist of the Manhattan Project): “Kay Summersby was Ike’s girl . . . Bedell Smith called [me] and said ‘we’ have to get her a job. Bernard Gimbel got her a job, but it was not with Gimbel’s but with Bergdorf Goodman . . .” No date is given for the telephone conversation.

<sup>29</sup> Kay Summersby to D.D. Eisenhower, December 8, 1951. Pre-Presidential Papers, Box 112, Summersby, Kay, Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library.

<sup>30</sup> For background on Tex McCrary: <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/07/30/arts/tex-mccrary-dies-at-92-public-relations-man-who-helped-create-talk-show-format.html> (Retrieved 6.29.2016).

<sup>31</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, Pre-Presidential Papers, Butcher, Harry C. Box 16, Summersby, Kay, Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library.

<sup>32</sup> Summersby, *Past Forgetting*, p. 279

<sup>33</sup> Item xxiii in Sotheby’s 2008 sale (see note 6 above).

<sup>34</sup> *The Bridgeport Post*, Bridgeport CT, March 23, p. 2.

<sup>35</sup> *The Bridgeport Telegram*, Bridgeport CT, Jan. 25, 1958.

<sup>36</sup> Publisher’s foreword, *Past Forgetting*, p. 7.

<sup>37</sup> Merle Miller, *Plain Speaking: An Oral Biography of Harry S. Truman*, p. 339.

<sup>38</sup> I am grateful to Paula and Richard Woodman, Barbara Wyden’s brother and sister-in-law, for sharing copies of some 35 pages of typed notes, a few of Kay’s wartime diary entries, and what appears to be a preliminary draft outline of *Past Forgetting*.

<sup>39</sup> Lloyd Shearer, “Kay Summersby and Dwight Eisenhower: The True Story of Their Friendship.” *Parade* magazine, January 2, 1977.

<sup>40</sup> Greg Walter, “Stung by Tales of His Father's Infidelity, John Eisenhower Fights Back with Ike's Letters Home,” *People*, July 11, 1977, Vol. 8, No. 2. Archived: <http://www.people.com/people/archive/article/0,,20068273,00.html> (Retrieved 6/29/2016).

<sup>41</sup> Wesley O. Hagood, *Presidential Sex: From the Founding Fathers to Bill Clinton*, p. 134.

<sup>42</sup> Liz Smith, “Ike’s Love Writes About It” [Syndicated column], *New York Daily News*, June 5, 1976

<sup>43</sup> *The New York Times*, February 12, 1978.

<sup>44</sup> Tom Buckley, “Past Forgetting; Kiss and Tell,” *The New York Times*, February 13, 1977, p. 80

<sup>45</sup> Melville Shavelson, *How to Succeed in Hollywood Without Really Trying P.S. You Can't!*, Chapter 13, “Ike: The War Years.”

<sup>46</sup> Shavelson, *How to Succeed in Hollywood*, loc. 2908.

<sup>47</sup> Shavelson, *How to Succeed in Hollywood*, loc. 3187-3223.

- <sup>48</sup> Shavelson, *How to Succeed in Hollywood*, loc. 3164.
- <sup>49</sup> “New TV Twists,” Richard F. Shepherd, *New York Times News Service*, April 10, 1978.
- <sup>50</sup> “Ike’s Bio Is Filmed For TV,” Associated Press, March 23, 1978.
- <sup>51</sup> “Ike’s ‘love affair’ now a 3-part TV topic,” Susan Anthony, retrieved from *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Sidney, NSW, May 6, 1979, p. 37.
- <sup>52</sup> J. B. West, *Upstairs at the White House: My Life with the First Ladies*, p. 130. Among first ladies, Mamie was uniquely known for managing the White House from her bed.
- <sup>53</sup> “Mamie Had Been Identified by Sleek Black Limousine,” July 20, 1988, p. 23.
- <sup>54</sup> Robert J. Donovan, *Confidential Secretary: Ann Whitman’s 20 Years with Eisenhower and Rockefeller*, p. 14, 162.
- <sup>55</sup> Jean Edward Smith, *Eisenhower in War and Peace*, p. 441.
- <sup>56</sup> Oral history interview, Dr. John R. Steelman, with Niel M. Johnson., February 29, 1996. <http://www.trumanlibrary.org/oralhist/steelm2b.htm> [pp. 122-123, 202-205, original hardcopy version of this interview], Truman Library.
- <sup>57</sup> The Associated Press article appeared on the front pages of many newspapers. One example: “Ike’s Divorce Letter Still Exists, Says Former HST Aide,” *High Point Enterprise*, High Point, NC, November 27, 1973, p. 1.
- <sup>58</sup> Smith, *Eisenhower in War and Peace*, pp. 364-365. Copies may have been made from the Pentagon file, since the Taft and Democratic campaigns claimed to have them.
- <sup>59</sup> Stanley Weintraub, *15 Stars: Eisenhower, MacArthur Marshall: Three Generals Who Saved the American Century*, p. 519.
- <sup>60</sup> Smith, *Eisenhower in War and Peace*, p. 502, 546.
- <sup>61</sup> Jack Anderson, “Rumors Spread in Case Involving Sen. Kennedy,” Washington Merry-Go-Round [Syndicated column], August 22, 1960.
- <sup>62</sup> Drew Pearson, *Drew Pearson Diaries: 1949-1959*, p. 238.
- <sup>63</sup> Smith, *Eisenhower In War and Peace*, p. 442.
- <sup>64</sup> Weintraub, *15 Stars*, p. 519
- <sup>65</sup> Korda, p. 270. The anecdote about his stepmother is on page 269.
- <sup>66</sup> Wood, *Ike’s Irish Lover*, loc. 5012. *Chicago Tribune*, Dec. 20, 1948, p. 25.

<sup>67</sup> “Network Shy on Girl Who Liked Ike,” *New York Magazine*, May 7, 1979, p. 69. The friend claims that “*Past Forgetting* is not true”—that is, that the claim of impotence is false—and goes on to say that Ike and Kay “trysted” in the friend’s New York apartment after the war.

<sup>68</sup> Harry Butcher, *My Three Years With Eisenhower*, entry for October 14, 1942. “Clark, Beetle, T.J., Major Lee, Mickey, and I had a so-called ‘surprise’ birthday party at Da-de-da.” A footnote explains that Da-de-da is the “current code name for Telegraph Cottage” and a quick online check of the Morse code gives it as the letter K. Butcher deleted most of his references to Kay Summersby but allowed this coded hint to stand.

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