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THE MAN WHO HAS DESIGNS ON THE QUEEN

Secrets from the
Royal Wardrobe

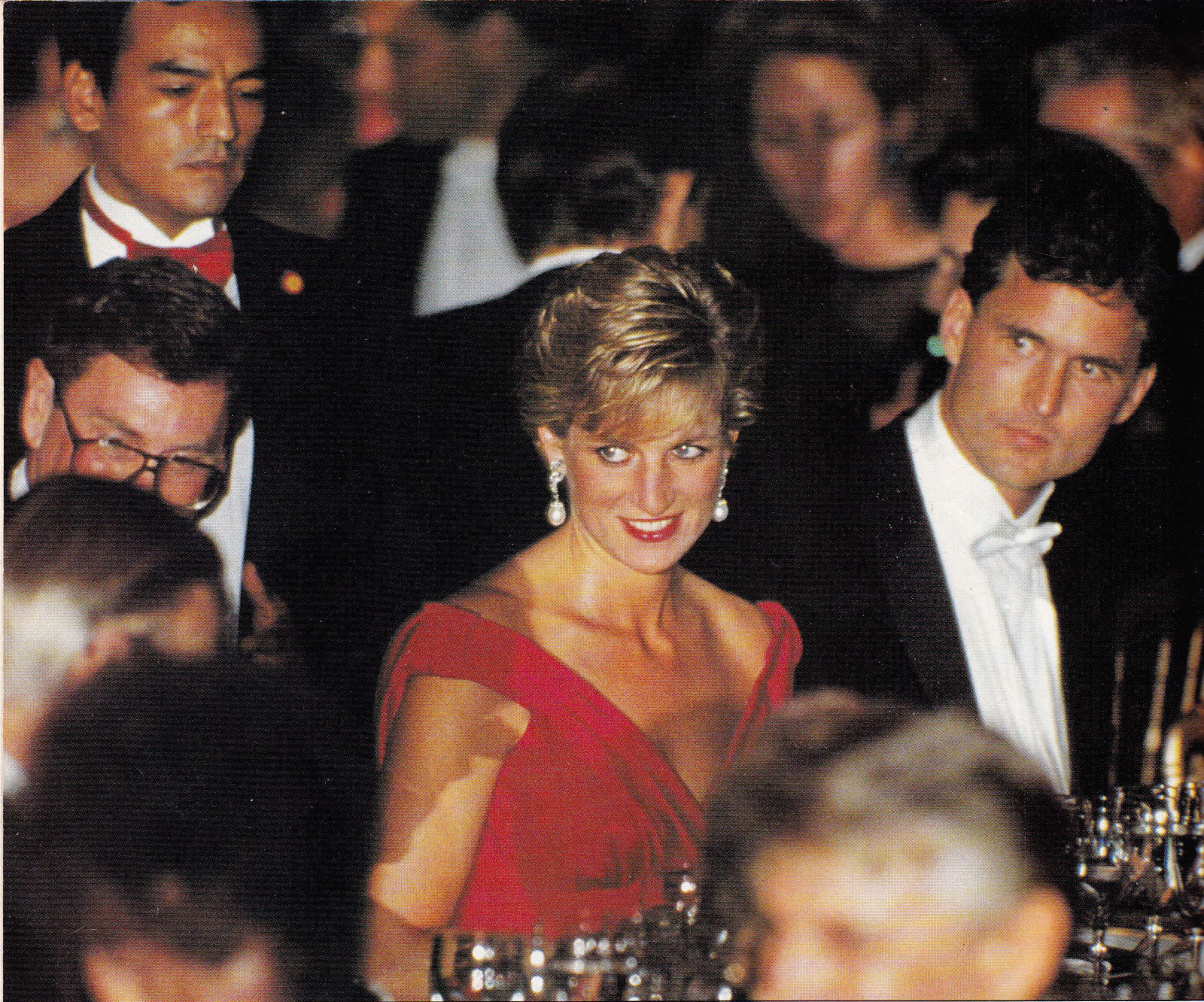
A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A PALACE FOOTMAN

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ABOVE: At the gala evening the Princess was seated next to the President's son. After dinner she danced until midnight and, in spite of a boycott by some of Washington's socialites, the gala raised £423,000 for the London City Ballet and Washington Ballet and a home for children with AIDS.

RIGHT: Looking stunning in an off-the-shoulder Victor Edelstein gown, the Princess charmed the guests at the gala evening.

Diana IN WASHINGTON

*With little fuss or publicity, the Princess of Wales slipped into America's capital city to lend support to causes close to her heart.
John-Manuel Andriote followed Diana during her visit.*

PHOTOGRAPHS GLENN HARVEY



The most surprising part of Princess Diana's visit to Washington occurred before she had even stepped off the plane. In the days leading up to her first solo visit to the capital there was absolutely no coverage of her impending arrival. Unless one knew in advance through publicity channels that Diana was coming to town, it would have seemed that Her Royal Highness had jetted in on a whim and caught the nation's capital off-guard.

This most unusual occurrence led to an absence of public awareness of the Princess and her schedule. There were crowds wherever she went, but they tended to be made up of small groups of onlookers who simply happened to be in the vicinity.

The Princess was in town to preside over a royal gala evening to raise money for both the London City and Washington Ballets as well as Grandma's House, a home for children infected with the AIDS virus. Her schedule allowed Diana to witness more of the stark contrasts of American life during her 24-hour visit than most Americans see in a lifetime. Her whirlwind tour — her second trip alone to the States — took the Princess from the glitzy dinner-dance, through a morning call at the White House, to a final visit to the rundown Washington neighbourhood where Grandma's House is located.

On the night of the gala, a crowd of spectators and photographers waited patiently while guests climbed out of their black limousines. At last, the police sirens and flashing lights heralded the arrival of Her Royal Highness. The door of the green Rolls-Royce swung open and out stepped Diana, looking elegant in a silk fuchsia-coloured Victor Edelstein gown and simple diamond ear-rings.

Inside the gilded, flower-bedecked auditorium, an orchestra was playing as the glorious soprano of Wilhelmina Fernandez filled the room. The Princess sat with officials of the three organizations that would benefit from the evening's proceedings. Noting that Diana was chatting with her tablemates, one of the pint-sized footmen who had greeted the Princess outside was heard to ask his mother why a Princess would want to speak with these commoners. To which the woman responded simply, 'Because she's a regular person, she speaks English, and she's very gracious.'

Apparently those qualities were not sufficiently laudable to bring out several of Washington's leading socialites, although they had been on the gala's original organizing committee.

Word had it that some of the city's social lionesses had roared about the \$2,500 to \$3,500 tickets. Georgette Mosbacher, the Secretary of Commerce's glamorous wife, went so far as to ask for a refund.

'I must say people here behave differently than they do in Britain,' said Joanna Seymour, media manager of the London City Ballet.

After coffee with the President and Mrs Bush the next morning, Diana's whirlwind itinerary took her to Grandma's House. The Princess has always made a point of visiting organizations she raises money for. The luxurious Rolls-Royce and its royal occupant, wearing her pink and purple Catherine Walker suit, contrasted greatly to the backdrop of derelict houses and dented cars.

Inside Grandma's House, the Princess was greeted by another 'First Lady,' the nickname given to the first child to come and live in the facility. The three-year-old, dressed in a jumpsuit, held Diana's hand as she was shown about, and was even picked up by the Princess and carried upstairs. Later the excited child was given a lift in the Rolls around the block to a companion facility, known as Grandpa's House, which the Princess was to declare officially open.

'Aren't you excited?' said a man to one of the home's young residents. 'We have a Princess with us today!' To which modest Diana remarked, 'Don't put it *that* way!'

Smiling broadly, she knelt on the floor where the children were playing. Joan McCarley, director of Grandma's House, brought in her mother to meet their royal visitor. Still kneeling, the woman who will be the next Queen of England extended her hand to the elderly woman.

Outside Grandpa's House, teenage volunteers gave Diana T-shirts and caps for her sons, Princes William and Harry. Before getting back into the car for her drive to the airport, the Princess thrilled onlookers when she walked over to shake hands and accept a bouquet of flowers.

Debbie Tate, president of the organization that runs Grandma's and Grandpa's Houses, said afterwards, 'A person of her stature coming here dissolves the myth of how the [AIDS] virus is contracted — it is not contracted by hugging.'

Although the Princess's visit to Washington might have been brief, Diana's influence as an international figure, combined with her genuine concern for the plight of the children she met, will go a long way to dispelling prejudice against people who have AIDS. ■





LEFT: Princess Diana and America's first lady, Barbara Bush, in the White House. Diana is looking at Barbara Bush's book, *Millie's Book*.

BELOW LEFT: Outside Grandpa's House, the second of two homes for children with AIDS, teenage volunteers give Diana T-shirts and caps for Princes William and Harry.

BELOW: Diana cuddles a three-year-old victim of AIDS before carrying her into the Rolls-Royce for a ride. The little girl is called the 'First Lady' as she was the first to come and live in Grandma's House.

