

**The original documents are located in Box 46, folder “Ulbricht Portraits” of the Betty Ford White House Papers, 1973-1977 at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.**

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## *Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library and Museum*

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*Library: 1000 Beal Ave., Ann Arbor, MI 48109*  
*Museum: 303 Pearl Street, NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49504*

*(734) 205-0555 fax (734) 205-0571*  
*(616) 254-0400 fax (616) 254-0386*

Date : March 16, 2018  
Reply to  
Attn of : Stacy Davis  
Subject : White House Social Files related to John Ulbricht  
To : The File

This document case contains materials that were originally filed in the White House Social Files (WHSF) Subject File under category PR 14-15. The documents were removed, or in some cases photocopied, from the WHSF by a White House staff member.

Researchers should consult WHSF Subject File category PR 14-15 for possible additional material related to John Ulbricht and his portrait of Mrs. Ford.

FIRST LADY

PR 14-15 (4)

PR 5-1

AR 5

June 24, 1975

Dear Rosemary Eng:

Thank you so much for your thoughtfulness in sending Mrs. Ford a copy of the School of the Art Institute's Quarterly Magazine featuring the article about John Ulbricht. You were very kind to give the First Lady the opportunity to see your publication and to know of the current activities of this center of learning and creativity.

Mrs. Ford has been a supporter of the arts since her dancing days and hopes to do as much as possible to stimulate interest in the field. She was delighted to attend the recent New York benefit for Martha Graham. The President, who views himself as "a converted individual", added parenthetically to this description the idea that, "and converts, as everyone knows, are the best advocates."

With gratitude and warm wishes,

Sincerely,

Marba S. Perrott  
Director of Correspondence  
For Mrs. Ford

Rosemary T. Eng  
The School of the Art Institute of Chicago  
Michigan Avenue at Adams Street  
Chicago, Illinois 60603

AH



RECEIVED

JUN 25 1975

SOCIAL FILES

Susan P.  
F.Y.I.

April 1, 1975

Dear Mrs. Ford,

I was most happy to receive your very kind letter -- thank you so much for writing.

I'm really glad that you and the President were fortunate enough to avoid the flu, which was a rather nasty affair. Mine, luckily, was not so bad as to prevent me from continuing to work on the President's portrait which I had begun immediately upon my return to Mallorca.

I plan to arrive in Washington on April 23 and remain there a few weeks. Needless to say I will be at your disposition and the President's at any time that is convenient to you to show you the portrait. I had written Nancy that I planned to arrive on April 20, but certain circumstances have forced me to delay my flight until the 23rd. Once I am in Washington I will, of course, contact Nancy immediately.

I'm most interested in the project you speak of concerning your friend and his wish that I paint his wife. I deeply appreciate your writing to me about it and, as I've told Nancy, I will certainly contact him in New York during my forthcoming trip.

I look forward eagerly to seeing you and the President again soon. Angela joins me in sending you and the President our warmest personal regards and best wishes.

Yours sincerely,

*John*

John Ulbricht

(97) 210070  
Sp

- BF + SF WILL  
SEE 4/30/75 AT 6:30 PM.

- GF WILL SEE AT 3:30 PM.

SP

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MAY 7 1975

SOCIAL FILES



file

JOHN ULBRICHT . ES CLAPES 85, GALILEA, MALLORCA. ESPAÑA

April 1, 1975

Dear Mrs. Ford,

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Yours sincerely,

*John*

John Ulbricht



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MAY 30 1975

SOCIAL FILES

FIRST LADY

February 5, 1975

PR14-15

Dear Leo,

Many thanks for your recent letter, and please let us know when you are going to be in town. Knowing how you love art, you would have enjoyed being here this past week as John Ulbricht was in from Spain sketching the President. He brought along a few of his still lifes, and he is really great. Tiersa Scott now has them at her house so maybe if you get in soon you can have the fun of seeing his fantastic works. Please just give us a call when you come in.

Always,

Nancy H. Howe

Mr. Leo S. Guthman  
Apartment 32D  
1040 North Lake Shore Drive  
Chicago, Illinois 60611

NHH/ep



*file*

December 15, 1974

John Ulbricht  
~~Es Clapes 85~~  
Galilea,  
Mallorca,  
Spain.

Mrs. Nancy M. Howe  
Special Assistant to Mrs. Ford  
The White House  
Washington, D.C.  
U.S.A.

Dear Nancy,

I was delighted to find your good letter of December 6 here in Galilea after returning from a brief trip to Madrid. The dates for seeing and sketching the President (January 11, 12 and possibly 13) are perfect as are the circumstances that will allow me to watch his natural and varied reactions.

Thanks to the information I received from you via your secretary by telephone in Madrid, Mr. Clinton Thaxton will send the First Lady's portrait by diplomatic pouch to Mr. Clem Conger at the White House. The painting will be in Madrid within a few days, and I have asked Mr. Thaxton to make sure that it reaches Washington as soon as possible and certainly no later than January 8. We will arrive in Washington on either the 8th or 9th.

As you say, the date of the unveiling of the First Lady's portrait can be decided later. That I leave entirely in your hands, and in those of President and Mrs. Ford.

Thank you for the news of your friend's interest in a portrait of his wife. Yes, the price you quoted was entirely correct, and there would be no problem in my going to Philadelphia for a couple of days to do the necessary preliminary sketches. In any case, I plan to stay in Washington for a couple of weeks at least and then visit my family in the Middle West.

I look forward eagerly to the trip and am naturally very excited about it all. Hope you have a great Christmas and New Year, and will see you very shortly thereafter!

With thanks and all best regards,

Sincerely,

*John Ulbricht*  
John Ulbricht



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MAY 30 1975

SOCIAL FILES

XX

September 26, 1974

Mr. John Ulbricht  
Galilea, Mallorca  
Spain

PLEASE DO NOT RELEASE UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES ANY PHOTOGRAPHS  
OF THE FIRST LADY'S PORTRAIT. WE DO NOT WANT IT SEEN UNTIL  
IT IS UNVAILED -- PERHAPS IN JANUARY, 1975.

Nancy M. Howe  
Special Assistant  
to Mrs. Ford



NME/cp



Star 8/29/74

## Portrait Artist Finds Betty Ford A Relaxed Poser

By Ymelda Dixon  
Special to the Star-News

John Ulbricht, a young American artist, who lives in Majorca, came here last spring to do a portrait of Mrs. Gerald Ford at the request of her husband, who wanted a portrait of his wife for his vice presidential office.

Ulbricht sketched Betty Ford as she sat in the living room of the Fords' Alexandria home. As he worked, Mrs. Ford, wearing a pale green Chinese-styled gown, stroked the family's Siamese cat and conversed easily with the artist.

Ulbricht, who has painted the Duchess of Alba, poet Robert Graves, artist Joan Miro and Lord Mountbatten, came away from the sittings amazed by the Mrs. Ford's friendliness and democratic approach. For luncheon he marveled, they had sandwiches, coke and potato chips.

Photographs of the nearly completed portrait recently arrived from Majorca and, according to friends, the Fords are delighted. Mrs. Ford is so pleased she would like her husband to sit for Ulbricht.

David Scott of the National Gallery of Art, who is familiar with Ulbricht's work, said yesterday, "Ulbricht is that rare

portraitist who paints as an artist and not as a commercial agent. He paints from a standpoint of quality, not from an aspect of fulfilling a commission."

Meanwhile, another portrait, of the late Secretary of State Dean Acheson by artist Gardner Cox, will be unveiled on September 17 at the National Portrait Gallery. It is the gift of Acheson's law firm, Covington and Burling.

\* \* \* \*



RECEIVED

AUG 29 1974

SOCIAL FILES



**THIS FILE HAS BEEN CHARGED OUT OF THE WHITE HOUSE SOCIAL FILES. PLEASE RETURN PROMPTLY.**

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

October 20, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT AND MRS. FORD

FROM

CLEM CONGER *Clem*

As you can imagine, I was shocked by Maxine Cheshire's column in the Washington POST Sunday, October 19 regarding your official portraits. I was called a week ago by Mrs. Cheshire who knew that Mr. Ulbricht was coming to Washington with the two new standard size portraits, which I confirmed. She then inquired what would happen to the larger portrait of yourself now hanging on the Second Floor. At this point I explained that in my opinion every President and every First Lady needs at least three official portraits - one for the White House, one for the Presidential Library, and the third for an institution in their home state. Also, that many Presidents and First Ladies have had even more than three portraits so there would always be a place for a good portrait. I explained that the larger portrait had been ordered before you came to the White House, and that it was my understanding that it was to be used in the Executive Office Building in the Vice President's Office where the ceilings are even higher than in the White House. At no time did I criticize any portrait in any way. In my opinion, portraits are very personal things and must be approved by the subject and that no one else should comment on them until they are officially approved.

I always indicate on my tours of the White House with donors etc. as well as in my lectures that I hope that future First Ladies and Presidents will have standard size portraits because spaces for portraits in the White House will become more limited as the years go by.

Many of the very large portraits of the Presidents and First Ladies made in the 19th century are hanging in the White House but we have at least four in storage because there isn't space. We have lent two to the National Portrait Gallery where we had duplicates. The very large portraits now in the White House hang in the corridors and foyers, not in the important public rooms.



**I did not** discuss this matter any further with Mrs. Cheshire as I felt that I should not comment on them in any way until you and the President had made your own selections. Where Mrs. Cheshire got her opinions about "tensions" or my being "stubborn", I do not know. From my point of view this is not so. I feel that every President and every First Lady must be satisfied with their own portraits. I would recommend to them standard size portraits for historical longevity. After I leave the White House, I cannot assure that future curators would hang all the large portraits whereas I feel that a place could always be found for standard size portraits over the next hundred years.

If you and your family wish the large portrait to be the official White House portrait of course it can be. All I have to know is your decision. We will then make the recommendation to the White House Historical Association as they also approve technically and pay for the portraits. Only for safety sake do I want you and the President to be absolutely sure which of several portraits you may wish to hang permanently in the White House. I will do my best to insure that it has a proper location as long as I am here.



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Many of the large portraits of the Presidents and First Ladies in the 19th century were painted in oil and have been lost or damaged. I have always felt that standard size portraits would be a better way to preserve the memory of our Presidents and First Ladies.



November 17, 1975

JOHN ULBRICHT  
SANTIAGO RUSSINOL, 26  
PALMA DE MALLORCA, SPAIN

MRS. BETTY FORD  
THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON, D.C.



Dear Mrs. Ford,

I was very sorry and surprised not to have been able to see or speak to you during my recent trip to the United States. Of course I understand how busy, both you and the President have been and realize there could have been little time left over for other matters.

Consequently I am writing to you about a few things that remain obscure to me and which I feel and hope that you can clarify - for which I would be deeply grateful.

The first matter concerns the large portrait of yourself which you so graciously unveiled in January. My only wish is for this painting to remain in your possession (and that of your family's), a donation with which you may do as you please. I'm altogether innocent about such affairs, but should such a donation be contrary to either tradition or law, perhaps you could suggest some other solution. I had thought that you might have wished this painting to represent you in the White House Collection, but Mr. Conger has made it clear from the beginning that its large size makes it unsuitable.

As you know, Mr. Conger wanted me to do two smaller paintings, that of the President and a second one of yourself. Both these paintings were left in his office - delivered and shown to him by myself - on October 19. By the way, I was shocked and upset to see an article in the Washington Post referring to all this only two days later, and can only say that I have no idea where or how that information was obtained. I certainly was not consulted and had nothing whatsoever to do with it.

I'm very anxious to know your feelings concerning these two latter paintings and merely ask you to tell me what you think of them. I realize that portraits are extremely delicate matters and that my image of a person may not always coincide with that of the individual concerned. I did my best to reveal the profoundly serious and purposeful attitude of the President - in fact (as in the cases of many other portraits I have done) I painted several studies and even another "finished" painting before achieving the image I was searching for. Whether that image pleases you and the President is for you to say. You can be sure that I will accept your decision with complete respect and understanding, of course.

Besieged as I am with requests for information, I'm completely at a loss as to what to say. You and the President alone can clarify this for me, and I know I can confide in your kindness and honesty in giving me your decision as promptly as possible.

Just before leaving New York, Art News Magazine called me to say that Mr. Conger had told them he had never even seen the paintings and had never asked me to paint smaller-sized canvases of the President and yourself. This left me utterly stunned and mystified, as you can imagine!

I would be so deeply grateful to you, Mrs. Ford, for your consideration in writing to me as soon as you have an opportunity. Meanwhile, please accept my best wishes and kindest regards for yourself and for the President.

Yours sincerely,

John Ullrich

P.S. The unveiling of Pearl Hoffman's portrait was an unforgettable experience. Milton Hoffman is a wonderful man.



POR AVION

**R** MALLORCA  
No 04161



MRS. BETTY FORD  
THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON, D.C.  
U.S.A.

WHITE HOUSE MAIL  
RECEPTION & SECURITY  
  
NOV 20 1975  
  
Processed by:

JOHN ULBRICHT  
SANTIAGO RUSSIÑOL, 26  
PALMA DE MALLORCA  
SPAIN



2/27/74  
between her meetings

Mrs. Ford received your letter today and felt badly about all the misunderstanding that has generated since she selected you to do both her portrait and the Presidents. She wanted you to know immediately how pleased she is at her portraits and ~~that we will~~ deeply regretful that you have been besieged with requests for information. Again, she apologizes that she was unable to see you during your visit and anxiously awaits your return to the States. Confidentially, I can

relay

~~realy~~ that the President at one point did mention he felt the eyes on his portrait were rather stark <sup>& ghostlike, staring</sup> and that

<sup>mouth too clenched</sup>  
looks almost as though he can't blink

However, I would prefer that you not indicate this to anyone since this is a private matter between you, the President and the First Lady until the ~~decision~~ final decision has been reached, unavailing. Please know that all requests for information can be referred to Mrs. Ford's press secretary, Sheila Weidenfeld. (Sheila will tell them that no decision has been reached)

Got more relief  
make a nice pair  
Kob's generates warmth

2/27/74 (heads of  
State of Dip Rom  
2nd R in done it)



THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

Mrs. Ford:

John Ulbricht understands completely and sends his very best to you and the President. The information you gave him is exactly what he needs to make the appropriate adjustments. He looks forward to spending a few minutes with you in making changes that will please the President upon his return to the states. He will set up an appointment through us to keep this confidential. He is looking forward to seeing both you and the President soon.

(6 hours ahead in Spain)

3:00 p.m. 11-26-75

