

1963

Monday, December 30th

WHD

It seems like one great crescendo of activity follows another so rapidly that I wonder how Lyndon manages to shift gears in his life from one to another.

No sooner had we said goodbye to Chancellor Erhard and all the Germans, when this morning there arrived the Joint Chiefs of Staff, led by that handsome General Maxwell Taylor and including monolithic General LeMay, General ^{Shoup}~~Shoup~~ of the Marines (whose birthday it was and, incidentally, his last day in the service, we understand) and all the others.

They spent the morning talking over the very weighty problems and I spent the morning staying out of their way.

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Dr. Walter Heller, the economist, and Kermit Gordon, the Director of the Bureau of the Budget, were in and out, putting in their bit during the morning.

It was a late lunch, and then the departure.

And then we went in to Austin, to the funeral of Mrs. Tom Miller, which marked something of an ending to certain days in Austin, because if there was ever anybody who loved the town, who claimed the town, and who MADE the town, it was Tom Miller, who died a couple of years ago, rather -- rather tragically.

And this was the passing of his widow, and the final goodbye -- goodbye to those days.

Then Lyndon rode down to the stag showing of the TV film about ... (illegible). I hear that it was good and I wish I could have been there, but I had to be some other places.

Ten minutes before seven, Jerry gathered me up, we rushed across plazas, we stood on the corner, we jumped into the car, just like clockwork, and drove to the dedication of the Congregation Agudas Achim Synagogue, which is Jim Novy's brainchild and dear love.

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This dedication that Lyndon was going to attend very shortly after, I think maybe the night after November 22nd, was naturally postponed after what happened.

So there we were. It was a night I'll always remember with great affection. The hall, it was filled with Jews that we have known all my life in Austin, our constituents for more than 25 years, a good many of them our good friends, and a representative speckling of the ~~respected~~ ^{folks} in Austin. *speckling*

Jim Novy made the introduction. It was -- well, the English language ain't seldom heard nothing like it, because ~~he did~~ ^{there wasn't an "H" in} the whole introduction.

He said, "I think it was back in 1938 that I first met this young Congressman." And he said, "We can't ever thank him enough for all those Jews he got out of Germany during the days of Hitler."

And then he said, "Lyndon, right down there in front of you," and I looked down there and there were six little boys ranging in age from about, oh, four years to twelve years, and he said, "There's the current generation, and they'll be watching for you and helping you."

Then he went on to describe how the simple man feels about someone who has given his life to government service. I couldn't help

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remembering that Jim himself came over here as a Jewish immigrant at the age of some eight or so years, and went into the junk business when he was about twelve or fourteen. And he's amassed quite a good deal of money, and he's putting a lot of it back into the community that helped him and back into the whole Jewish movement.

Lyndon himself was never better in his response. He began by saying, and I feel just that way too, "that he was glad that his first non-official speech since he had taken this office was in a place of worship in his hometown."

It was a beautiful speech, short, but he's made these years in politics good. And in spite of my love affair with TV and my recognition that we couldn't have had the livelihood we've had and remain in politics except for TV, it's this kind of politics that I really like. And life will be less rich in politics -- less rich when there are no more meetings like this and it all takes place before the camera.

After the meeting was over we left quickly, picked up the new Congressman Jake Pickle and his wife, flew out home to a reasonably early dinner, and a reasonably early bed.

Two of the most memorable things about the day were the way, as we started out of the Synagogue, person after person plucked

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at my sleeve and said, "I wouldn't be here today if it weren't for him. He helped me get out." And that both frightens you and makes you happy.

And then there was the nice way, around the fireplace after dinner, that Lynda Bird and Dr. Walter Heller got to talking, and Lynda Bird was holding up her end of the conversation, which was all about economics and how to improve the conditions at the University of Texas, and the economy of the whole State, and our stature in the Union. Oh, she upheld her end of the conversation real well, and I could see Dr. Walter Heller responding to her, not only with interest, but with respect -- and it was fun.