

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Tuesday, January 14, 1964

WHD

Page 1

Today is another big day, it is the day President <sup>Segni</sup> ~~Segni~~ of Italy and Madam <sup>Segni</sup> ~~Segni~~ are going to come for their State meeting.

It began with very mundane business of getting my white chiffon dress shortened, and then spending an hour or so reading the background material on Italy, its state of politics and economics, on the life of the <sup>Segni</sup> ~~Segni~~, that Frank Malloy had brought me the evening before... Looking at the pictures of members of the party so I would recognize them.

Then, at noon, I drove down with Lyndon to the Union Station for the official greeting.

President <sup>Segni</sup> ~~Segni~~ is rather like an elderly gnome, with spidery white hair and a gentle smile, which belies the long years he's spent in the government, with all the top posts there are - Prime Minister, Minister, Minister of Agriculture, Minister of Foreign Affairs. Madam <sup>Segni</sup> ~~Segni~~ is plump and gentle, and easy to be with.

We met them in 18 degree weather, with every breath that we blew, just going out in front of us with a great white cloud of steam.. We walked through the lined up flags of all the 50 states of the Union, and onto a little platform where there are the usual greeting ceremonies, except they were slightly snarled up by the cold, because a good many musical instruments won't play outdoors in 18 degree weather. And we had to rely too much on drums.

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Tuesday, January 14, 1964

Page 2

Then we got in the cars, for a parade down Pennsylvania Avenue. It was a crystal bright day, gorgeous sunshine, and snow everywhere, and the capitol never looked whiter. And the brilliant green, red and white flags of Italy and our own flags gave the day a festive air. There were a good many people out, considering the weather.

When we reached Blair House, we said goodbye, and I went back for lunch on a tray, a good deal more reading from my whole brochure about Italy, going over the guest list, looking in to see what the State Dining Room looked like, and being very pleased with it.

Going in to listen -- I must admit with something of a tremor -- to the practice of the Christy Minstrels, and with no tremor at all for Robert Merrill, but finding that I was late for it.

And then checking out the lovely Yellow Room, which I found that I am glad I did check out, because even in this house, things need dusting every now and then.

After my good friend, Mr. Per had come and fixed my hair, I went into the Yellow Room and had lots, and lots, and lots of pictures made, some of which I hope to have one that will turn out good.

Then all dressed up in my pretty white, sort of Grecian flowing chiffon, and with Lyndon, we began to wait for the momentarily bulletin to go down to meet them. Pretty soon it came and we walked out <sup>onto</sup> ~~under~~ the front steps of the White House, and the blaring lights of the photographers, and into

## THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Tuesday, January 14, 1964

Page 3

the icy weather, without a coat, to say hello to two very nice, <sup>elderly</sup> people, and the leaders of their government, <sup>who</sup> ~~we~~ were accompanying them.

Next <sup>and</sup> this is always a part of the evenings that I have liked best, <sup>when</sup> there have been evenings with the Kennedys. <sup>We</sup> went back up to the Yellow Room. The Chief Justice and Mrs. Warren were there; the Secretary of State and Mrs. Rusk; and, of course, besides President and Mrs. <sup>Segni</sup> ~~Segni~~, there were the Ambassador from Italy to us, Mr. Fenoaltea; our Ambassador to Italy, Mr. and Mrs. <sup>Reinhardt</sup> ~~Rhinchart~~. And of course, Angie and his lovely wife, Robin, without whom such things just couldn't go on. And the chief members of the Italian party. Chap.

We had a drink, we looked at the pictures of the arrival, and then we went into the gifts, and that was when I was really proud of the people who work for me because the gifts showed imagination and charm, or so I thought.

There was a silver box, and on the outside, a map of the United States and the map of Italy - and a sentence from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, which said, "Italy remains to all, the land of dreams and a vision of delight." I think up until about a week ago, we'd have called it a cigarette box. It is now called a desk box.

And there was, even more delightfully, a letter written in 1774 from one Philip Mazzei, a compatriot of our guest of honor, who was a friend of Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin, and who had been asked by them

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Tuesday, January 14, 1964

Page 4

to come to this country and look into the possibilities of improving our production of wheat and the introduction of vineyards in this country. It was old, authentic, and charming and it was translated into English and Italian in a little leather frame, a pamphlet attached.

Next, downstairs, down that rather terrifying staircase, to the tune of Hail to the Chief, and to stand in line and meet all the guests who were assembled in the East Room.

Naturally, beside the Leadership in the government, there were all of the members of Congress of Italian descent, and believe me there's plenty! Pete Rodino, Dante Fascell, Silvio Conte, and so on and so on.

It was particularly nice to see our old friend, Victor Anfuso, formerly a Congressman, now a judge, who was with us in Los Angeles before July.

The labor leaders were there in good supply also, David Dubinsky, George Meany and Walter Reuther. I was a little sad to see that Walter Lippmann, the years at long last telling on that very splendid face. It gave me a lot of pleasure to see Mrs. Mesta there, looking just simply stunning. And Scooter and Dale are, of course, two that I like so much to have with us.

And then there was Mrs. Charles Marsh, and she said something very nice. "Charles is here in spirit, you know", she said.

After doing all the reading about Sardinia being a cross roads of the world, with the Phoenicians, the Carthaginians, the Spaniards, not to mention the Romans and the Greeks, and Lord knows who-all having traveled there, and left the relics of their lives and civilizations; and after having

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Tuesday, January 14, 1964

Page 5

read about President <sup>Segni</sup> ~~Segni~~ being a farmer, and of the many careers in government that he'd had over the last - oh, vigorously for the last 20 years, and before that, also, <sup>that is,</sup> before the entering of Mussolini, I found that I didn't need to have worried quite so much about what to talk to him about, because it was pleasant and easy.

Mr. Saragat, on my other side, the Foreign Minister, I had to try a bit on that.

The room was lovely.

After coffee and drinks, we went in to the entertainment. Richard Adler, composer and producer, and our old friend from the days of Lynda Bird's party, did the introducing. And first, there was Robert Merrill, of the Metropolitan Opera, who sang some Verdi, from Il Trovatore, I think it was, and then something from Rossini - Barber of Seville. I wish I had had time to tell him I had been raised on Scotti and <sup>Saverini</sup> ~~Scarpini~~ and Tetrizzini and Galli-Curci, and all of the Verdi things.

And the next thing that happened, was the Chris<sup>ty</sup> Minstrels, and everybody under 25, I'm sure, knows them. I must say that I didn't before but I just fell in love with them. They're seven young people whom Richard Adler described as <sup>//</sup> the face of young America, <sup>//</sup> doing folk music which they holler out with a considerable beat and rhythm and vigor, but <sup>it's</sup> ~~is~~ -- well, it's a new play on folk music. I actually saw President <sup>Segni</sup> ~~Segni~~, patting his foot and I believe it pleased everybody, except perhaps the critic, Mr. <sup>Paul</sup> ~~Hugh~~ Hume in the Washington Post this morning.

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Tuesday, January 14, 1964

Page 6

I believe most of the 140 guests had a good time and I know I did.

When the entertainment was over, we rushed up, told them how much we liked it, and had some pictures made which <sup>—</sup> more than any of the pictures <sup>—</sup> I am hoping will turn out well.

And then, very shortly, we went out into the frosty night to say <sup>bye</sup> goody on the front porch to the <sup>Segno</sup> ~~Segno~~, and Lyndon said, "I must get back to work."

Mr. George McBundy said, "The President just hates to be unemployed!"

And so I mixed around, and <sup>//</sup> passed the time of day with some 20 or 30 of the people.

And one little thing that I'm going to have to do for me, is to get somebody to stand by me, <sup>9</sup> at these state dinners, because the name, by the time it is filtered past, I'm the third individual in line <sup>—</sup> has become indistinguishable, and either I knew them all the time <sup>and</sup> ~~or~~ didn't need it, or else I do not get the name, the person goes by, and there is not that moment of contact that you really want.

So at the end of the day, my main feeling is one of great gratitude to Bess and Liz, who are the ones who made it happen, and this really very splendid White House staff. And I'm happy that I got to live it because I enjoyed it.