

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Wednesday, January 15, 1964

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This morning began with a session with Mr. J. B. West, who runs the house. Agenda, how to handle 2 a.m. dinners, because that is the ridiculous hour when my husband came home to eat his supper on Monday night - two nights ago. That cannot be continued - first, because I want him to live; second, because I want him to work well while he's living; and third, and way down the line, that's no way to run a house. Which is the end of it that I wanted to discuss with Mr. West.

We decided the one way to tackle it, was to have on hand a cooked turkey, and ham, and roast, and the things to make sandwiches, and whenever we got the word from the office, that there were some 10 or 12 people in the Cabinet Room and that serious talks were going on, and the hour reached about 9 or 9:30, we would make up a big platter of sandwiches and simply send them over at 10:00, with a big thermos of coffee, and some milk, and some candy, because by that time, anybody needs their energy.

The worst that could happen to me would be to -- for them to break up the meeting just as I walked in the door with the sandwiches and they would be wasted -- or else I could eat them for the next ten days for my own lunch.

No, that wouldn't be the worst. The worst could be that I'd make them angry, but something has got to be done about it, because, first of all, I'm thinking of Lyndon. And second, there are some other women's husbands that might be hungry there too.

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The second part of this agenda with Mr. West, was that when the evening waxed along to about 8 or 8:30, and we observed that there was nobody left in the office, but Lyndon and one, two, or three staff members, and it was obvious that we would not be having real company for dinner, that we simply send home most of the staff, leaving just the cook, and one person to serve, which is the way I've run my house all of my life, and then I can gently prod and urge to get home, as best I can, win or lose, and continue their talks over dinner.

Then we talked about how to clean those beautiful yellow sofas in the yellow room, that were really so perishable when there are a lot of people in.

Next I tried to call René, the principal chef, and Ferdinand, who did the desserts, because the dinner last night was so beautiful, I really wanted to tell them what a triumph it was. But, alas, both of them were out of the building. I guess they're artists, and artists go about things in their own way, so I simply left word that I had called, and I shall reach them another time.

After an hour or two of business, discussing bills with Marjorie and the cost of maintenance of the Elms, getting a little chart written up on that by Ashton, and signing some mail, I then got ready for the high point of the day, which was lunch at the Italian Embassy, by President and Mrs. <sup>So. mi</sup> ~~Sangi~~ in honor of us.

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We arrived at the Embassy about 1:30 and the first thing that happened was the presentation of gifts. Oh, how I just love <sup>one!</sup> It is the bust of the Emperor Tiberius, that dates from -- well, when was he a living man, <sup>?</sup> a hundred years B.C. or a hundred years A.D., something like that. Anyway, a very, very long time ago, and this will be the most valuable thing in my very own small, personal collection of artifacts. A charming link with history, and who would ever imagine that I would have it. <sup>?</sup>

The guest list was pretty much as it usually is - foreign relations people, Cabinet people, the entire Italian party.

That Embassy carries a great deal of the imprint of its own country, which is what I think an Embassy should do, and in the dining room when we went in, dominating the room are these two enormous chandeliers of venetian glass - they have a special name, moro I think it is - they are pink and blue, beige, and every pale color in the world, very delicate and terrifically fancy.

I was on the right - no, I was on the left of President <sup>Sagui</sup> ~~Sagui~~ and then on my other side was the head of their Foreign Affairs, Mr. Rusk's opposite number, Saragat.

The conversation really got quite amusing at times. The dinner was so beautiful that I couldn't keep from remarking on it to the Ambassador, who was within ear-and-eye reach down the table. Each dish that came out, was an architectural dream, what a chef they must have! And this brought the

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following comment from the Ambassador, whom, some years back, I would have described as a man with bedroom eyes. He said, "The most important man in the Embassy is the cook. You can get by with a mediocre Ambassador and a wonderful chef, but you cannot run an Embassy with a poor chef."

And then that elicited a story from Mr. Saragut<sup>a</sup>, about the chef of Louis XIV, who was such an artist and such an expert in the field, that when a certain magnificent dish that he was intending to prepare for a special banquet, that was spoiled by the fact that the seafood had not arrived in time -- he committed suicide, because his life had been ruined.

Thank God it got back a little balance when somebody else added "Yes, but things changed a little bit under Napoleon because he didn't care what he ate. He just ate whatever was put before him."

The Foreign Minister also made the interesting comment in answer to what I said about what seemed to me, as a pure outsider, that that great monolithic structure, the Roman Catholic hierarchy was finally beginning to change under the last two Popes. And he said yes, that when he went to see the Pope he wore his business suit now, and he did not kneel (his daughter knelt perhaps) but he did not kneel. It was like going to see anybody else.

I wonder what Lyndon and Mr. Segni<sup>Segni</sup> talked about in their substantive talks. I asked him a little bit about it. I don't really know but my idea is it's just a sort of reassurance to us, to the Italians, and to the world, that the flurry some months ago, about the election and about Italy swerving toward

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Communism, isn't so. That they really aren't swerving toward Communism.

At any rate, the toast couldn't have been more beautiful, or sounded more pro-western.

After we made our goodbys to the <sup>Seguis</sup> ~~Senators~~ and left, and I didn't get to take my head of Tiberias with me but I'm sure going to watch to see it gets here, we returned to the White House.

There was an hour or so of work and a little rest, and then I went downstairs to the Blue Room to greet the Senate and the House members of the Inter-Parliamentary Committee; some 40 members combined of our own Parliament and the Parliament of Canada, those Congressmen and Senators. This was at Senator Aiken's request, and anything that he asks, Lyndon and I would be mighty anxious to do; and, Congressman Cornelius Gallagher on the House side, who is the sort of head man in it, from our aspect.

I stood in line and met all the members, who had had a very special tour of the White House previously -- they all seemed so nice and so pleased to be there, and it made me feel good that I could do something like that.

And then, while we were having our sherry in the State Dining Room, and I was talking with first one group and then another, Lyndon came in, and within about 10 minutes of greetings and nice words, I think he got the maximum results, which is what I want him to do. Small time, real warmth, touch as many bases as he can, and not outdo himself.

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Next followed a little time to curl up in front of the fire, in my bedroom, sign my mail, and talk to Luci. I'm so glad that she's going to that Buckhills meeting, because she said, "It's something I've always wanted to do, mother." And she'll be exposed to a lot of young people, both boys and girls, in the best schools. They will listen to theosophical discourses on religion from - well, some of the instructors from Yale, I know, will be there. There will be good minds and sharpening of the wits - and there'll be some skiing and some dancing, and I think Luci will come back - well, some more doors of the world will open to her.

Then of course, Lynda Bird - I had a good talk with her, and innumerable others about everything ranging from clothes and art, to Wendy Marcus -- up and down the line.

I finally got a chance to read the wonderful article in Time, about John Connally - on the cover he looks like everything he is - and what they had about Texas, is about as close to the truth as one can hope for. It was about an A plus, and if John can take and handle Time, he can do anything.

Then I began to think about how to pry loose my friend from his office and get him home. With the help of Congressman Jack Brooks, whom I've come to be very fond of, who was in his office, it worked out that we -- I called Charlotte Brooks to come over and join us for dinner.

Jack Brooks, Jack Valenti and Lyndon went for a little swim, and got home about 20 minutes to 9, we had dinner and then, a rub, and then one of the earliest bedtimes, and one of the things that makes me think, the Lord

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has his hand on Lyndon's shoulder, is that about one minute after Lyndon's head hits the pillow, I hear this announcement that he is now asleep, with his regular breathing and that happens only with the Lord's blessed lucky ones.