

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Monday, February 10, 1964

Monday, February 10th, found me still sick. Obviously, I couldn't get up and do the three big things that were on the docket for the afternoon - and still be sure of being well Tuesday afternoon - and Tuesday is a must because nothing short of a dead body would suffice to get me out of the Diplomatic reception without hurting feelings. So I battened down the hatches by asking Lynda, Luci and Warrie Lynn to fill in on the really delightful afternoon schedule which I hated so much to miss.

First, at three thirty, Peter Benchley, the author of "Jonathan Visits the White House", was supposed to present to me ^a copy of his book. And he was going to be accompanied by a real live little Jonathan, who was the son of the Assistant to the President of the publishing company, McGraw-Hill. And there were going to be thirty children along, ranging from about five to nine year olds. One of Bessie's children was coming, two of Diana's, Angie little Duke had supplied us with a nice list of children from the Diplomatic Corps of suitable ages. My favorite, ^{Suppalla} Raphaella ~~Sevilla~~, one little Sevilla-Sacasa, that ought not to be hard to come by, the proper age, when there are nine in the family ^{! —} at least two from the African nations.

Later on, when Lynda and Warrie Lynn told me about the occasion, it just sounded delightful and I almost rolled on the floor, laughing about it, especially when I saw the darling pictures of the children. In standing in line to receive them, one little boy tugged at Lynda's skirt and says, "I'm your cousin." Recognizing Diana's son, she said, "Hello, Sasha." He said, "I'm not Sasha now, I'm Alexander." All the little children were dressed up so delightfully

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Monday, February 10, 1964

Page 2

and several of them had on their native costumes. Raphaela ^{Seppalla's} ~~Seppilla~~ was adorable. [#] They filed into the East Room after they had finished their special childrens' tour of the White House and after the presentation of the book had taken place to Lynda Bird and Luci Baines. And, when they got into the East Room, there were already congregated there, the youngsters for the second event of the afternoon. That was an audience of about 200 local high school students who had been invited to come and see the National Ballet Company put on Swan Lake and something from Capillia. The stage was set, the ballet was about to begin, all chairs nearly were full - and in streamed the thirty little children from five to nine. As many as could found chairs, and then Lynda Bird sat on the floor and plopped Sasha, or Alexander, down in her lap and Luci, who somehow or another had a chair, took a little girl onto her lap and the performance got under way. Lynda Bird must have had a delightful time with Sasha. Among the incidents were: She said, "Alexander, I'm so glad to see you". And he said, "Is that all you have to tell me, after I haven't seen you in three years?"

?
What?
Ch. to go

One of the cutest pictures was Lynda Bird and little Jonathan, who had brought his first pair of long pants for the occasion, and - I think, actually, still they were/about four inches too long and he didn't look the least bit used to them, which didn't keep the two of them from looking utterly at home with each other - and really just delightful, standing at the foot of the stairs, where there had been so many of the pictures taken of visiting chiefs of state.

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Monday, February 10, 1964

Page 3

The National Ballet did a very creditable job, although Lynda Bird said it seemed to be ^{what she said} was a creaky, make-shift sort of a stage - but Swan Lake is bound to be beautiful. Lynda Bird, being near-sighted, just had a hard time, really, telling what was going on that far away - and she was laughing when it was time to be crying, when the swan was dying. At least, according to Warrie Lynn, who kept on giving a delightful running account of the afternoon's activities.

The members of the Ballet Company, ^{range} all the way from Bulgaria and Yugoslavia, from California to New York, and four of them were from Texas. Who says we don't have culture in Texas - especially when this entire troupe only numbered about 28. [?]!

There was a very attractive program of ^{the} National Ballet, and I hope all the little children went home feeling good about it.

After they'd had their cookies and punch, Lynda, Luci and Warrie Lynn then came upstairs, leaving their guests down in the dining room, for the third event of the day. This took place in the Yellow Room and it was what I would most especially have liked to be present at - the presentation of the Margo Jones awards. It will go to three individuals that carry on the tradition and spirit of the late Texas producer, Margo Jones, in encouraging new plays and new play ^{wrights} ~~writers~~. The people who got them were Mrs. Judith Marshall, who has given many fresh chances to young dramatists in off-broadway plays in New York, and a Canadian, who had been born in Texas, ^{an} old lady Mrs Roy McGregor Watts, known as a patron saint for play ^{wrights} ~~writers~~ in Canada.

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Monday, February 10, 1964

Page 4

And then, the last award went to Professor George Savage of the University of California, in Los Angeles. On the judging committee were such playwrights as Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee, who wrote Inherit the Wind about the Scopes trial with William Jennings Bryan, on one side and Clarence Darrow on the other. I had seen Inherit the Wind with Melvyn Douglas playing it years ago - one of the most thrilling things I ever saw. They had also done Auntie Mame, which is what Lynda Bird cut her teeth on in the theatre, the very first thing she saw, I believe. And then there was Henry ^{Humes} ~~Hughes~~, a critic of the Saturday Review and editor of the annual volume of Best Plays. Liz had made sure that some of the theatre critics, like Mr. Cole, were on hand. Angie Duke actually presented the awards, adding luster to the occasion, I know. And the Canadian Ambassador, Mr. Richie, was there for the occasion, and also the Secretary of State for Cultural Affairs, Lucius Battle. It was just exactly the sort of a theatre group gathering, that I would have loved to be present at - and the way Lynda glowed when she described it to me later, made me realize that she had a taste for that sort of thing too. It also made me wonder if batting around the world as a Navy wife, on a very small salary, might sometimes seem a little short of some of the interesting things that she will know here.

^{Humes} I think Henry ~~Hughes~~, she must have found particularly attractive, and I noticed that in his book of best plays which he had inscribed to the President and Mrs. Johnson, he had taken it back and added, "With special thanks to Miss Lynda Bird Johnson, who's a charmer."

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Monday, February 10, 1964

Page 5

Deciding that the germs couldn't possibly go through the telephone wires,
to
I picked up the phone and called in there, /the Yellow Room, and congratulated
the three winners, and found that Professor Savage works for Sam Seld^{on}, so
we talked about Emil^ye and about her playwrighting ambitions. I also talked
to Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee about Melvyn Douglas and what a great
performance we all thought he gave. Before the playwright activities were
over, Luci Baines came in and plopped down in the chair, and I said "How
did everything go, honey?" And she said, rather wistfully, "Lynda Bird just
did fine." But that's not the way it looked to me the next day when I saw the
picture of Luci on tiptoe, making a little speech on the stage, asking everybody
to come in and ^[have] some punch and cookies. Nor does it sound like the little girl
that I read about in the paper the next day, who had stayed on and talked with
the high school students and to the National Ballet performers, after the per-
formance was over, and had been giving autographs and comparing notes on the
life of a teenager, and telling them that she liked the White House, but it was
mighty
~~kinda~~ big and it was kinda dark here now. All that she needs is a large dose
of self-confidence, which I think for anybody as pretty and bright as she is,
must be just around the corner.

Lynda Bird and Warrie Lynn came in bubbling with an arm-full of autographed
books, and I thought to myself, What a nice day this has been - and what a cross-
section of exposure to young people, and to - I hate to use the word - to "culture".
But it must not have been a good day for all the Johnson family, for Lyndon came
in, and although he had what seemed to me, a marvelous victory to ^{rock} wrap up,

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Monday, February 10, 1964

Page 6

by reporting that the House had passed the Civil Rights Bill by a big majority,
quite
nevertheless, he was very much upset and very disturbed - I do not know/what
things had produced it.