

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Monday, April 27, 1964 **WHO**

The day began with breakfast with Lyndon, with Jack, <sup>as</sup> usual, bustling in and out, <sup>with</sup> papers, briefing him on the days activities. Growing a little wan and drawn, himself, I think, He certainly is pouring a lot of devotion and good humor, <sup>and</sup> hard work into this, and my respect and liking for him is rising all the time.

At 11 o'clock, I had an appointment with Madam Indira Gandhi, with the number two lady from the Embassy, Mrs. Dhar, who happens to be a cousin of Mrs. Gandhi's; and Mrs. Rusk.

We had coffee in the Yellow Room, talked about the health of Jawaharlal Nehru. He is steadily improving, Mrs. Gandhi assures me... About our trip to India a year or two ago. I find it rather difficult to communicate with these highly intellectual superior Indian women and their exquisite English. It is possible, that with the departure of Nehru, she may be the number one influence in that sub-continent.

Mrs. Rusk, bless her, is never at a loss for conversation to bridge a gap.

Presently, we went out on the north portico and had our picture made together, as I told them goodbye.

And then, I went in, in time to get ready for lunch with Jane Engelhard (Mrs. Charles Engelhard, whom we've known for years, who's been a real friend of ours and who, on the Fine Arts Committee, had contributed so much to the White House... All the furniture, practically, that is ~~the furniture~~ in the downstairs dining room.) This is another one of my lessons in getting

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ready for the May the 7th meeting... <sup>i</sup>In learning about art with a capital A in the White House, what has been done by whom, the intertwining of personalities.

Jane assured me that she would come down for the May 7th meeting, <sup>g</sup> in her plane, bring with her Mr. John Loeb, who had contributed the Yellow Room, Mary Lasker, Ann <sup>o</sup>Ford, a whole plane load of the main doers on the Fine Arts and Painting Committees. She told me how she and Mr. Harry duPont, <sup>g</sup> had worked in the Queen's Room, pulling furniture around themselves, and she told me the astronomical prices of some of the portraits. The more I hear, the more I marvel at how Mrs. Kennedy put it all together.

Jane is beautiful, rich beyond belief, highly competent, and I think, <sup>g</sup> is a friend of ours, really. However, she is a world apart from me, and I'm not exactly at ease with any of the <sup>^</sup> what you might call, art set <sup>^</sup> Palm Beach set, Jet Set, whatever they are. <sup>g</sup> They certainly aren't just plain folks!

We toured the whole first floor, she chose some vermeil ornaments to go on the mantle <sup>el</sup> in the Red Room, where Mrs. Kennedy's own personal obelisk had been. And when she left at three o'clock, Lyndon had not yet emerged from behind closed doors in the dining room, where he and Mr. Rusk, <sup>g</sup> and several others <sup>g</sup> were working.

Moments later he came out, was really annoyed that I had not alerted him to her presence, and sent out a net <sup>of</sup> requests that she be stopped at whichever gate it was, and, <sup>g</sup> did what I was unable to do, <sup>^</sup> retrieved her, brought her back for a moment of conversation and a picture with him. He

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certainly is a quick guy to act.

The next thing on the agenda <sup>[was]</sup> were the reception<sup>s</sup> for the wives of the members of the National Academy of Sciences, which was holding its annual meeting in Washington. These ladies' husbands are the most distinguished scientists in the United States - Mrs. Frederick Seitz, <sup>who</sup> is the wife of the President. Other members connected with the Administration were Mrs. <sup>Detlev</sup> <sup>ca</sup> Detlif Bronk, whose husband was formerly on the Space Council; and Mrs. Hugh Dryden, whose husband is Deputy Administrator of NASA; Mrs. Donald Hornig, whose husband is Lyndon's Science Advisor; and Mrs. Leonard Carmichael, whose husband was at the Smithsonian and who has newly been appointed to our old, <sup>dear</sup>, the National Geographic; and Mrs. Glenn Seaborg, whose husband is Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission; and Mrs. James Shannon, whose husband is head of the National Institute of Health, <sup>which</sup> I admire so much.

As they went down the line, <sup>I</sup> I was impressed over and over, at how many of the names were very, very foreign sounding names. Certainly, we are no Anglo-Saxon country, <sup>But</sup> it seemed as though there <sup>were</sup> were a preponderance among these scientists, <sup>of</sup> of Bjerkneses, Bloomenbergens, Dienhartog, Drogstadt, Goodschmidt, Herschstelters, Hotstadtners, Disstakowskis. It seems not many plain Smith, Jones, and Johnsons turn out to be scientists!

There was one rather lovely moment, <sup>when</sup> when a lady with a particularly thick foreign accent, <sup>[and]</sup> a very foreign name, to whom I had spoken as she came

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down the line, after awhile returned, and said to me, "Now I feel like a citizen." I said, "Oh, you just got your citizenship papers, a little while ago?" And she said, "No, I got those three years ago, but being here, seeing so much of your history, in front of me, makes me feel really like a citizen!"

Having greeted the 200 or so, I went on in to the State Dining Room to join them for refreshments and to move from group to group, to pass the time of day. [~~What, when~~] suddenly, to my amazement, Lyndon appeared at the south entrance of the room. He clapped his hands for silence, and made a little impromptu speech to the ladies, in the course of which he told them how many women ~~he~~ <sup>had</sup> brought into the government, some 741, in jobs that were in excess of \$10,000 a year, <sup>a</sup> Asked them to look around for "can-do women" to put their hands to the wheel in other government jobs, and then shaking hands with the first two dozen or so, that he could reach, disappeared quickly to a pleasant little murmur of applause.

And then, two crises followed, in rapid succession. One of the ladies looked at me and said, "I just don't see how you're going to be in New York at 7 o'clock tonight." I gulped, knowing that I had no intention of being, and said, "Well, er, ah, now, just what is this?" And she said, "Oh, I read in the paper this morning <sup>you're</sup> ~~you're~~ going to cut the ribbon at the Museum of Modern Art when the new wing opens tonight. I guess you're going to get into your evening dress on the plane, aren't you?" And her friend, who was with her, didn't help out a bit, when she affirmed the story, when she said, "Oh, yes,

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I read it in the New York Times this morning, that you would be in New York tonight." My mind raced back to the fact that I had told Dr. Stanton that I would come and cut the ribbon for the Museum of Modern Art, but I had it in the book for sometime in May!

I said goodbye as gracefully as I could, rushed upstairs, telephoned Ashton, looked in my date book, and personally called Dr. Stanton himself. And only then, <sup>9</sup> did I sigh with relief, when I found that it was stoutly reaffirmed to be late in May and not tonight, not tonight!

But then I got a quick call from Luci, "I must, absolutely must come up to see her in the sewing room, at once." With minutes to spare, because I was going to Mrs. Kennedy's house, leaving at 5:20, and that was a date I wouldn't want to be late for. I went up to the sewing room and there was Luci, adorable in a white dress, <sup>9</sup> that she had wanted so much, <sup>9</sup> for the Winchester Apple Blossom Festival, which I had told her she simply couldn't have because we had already bought another white dress, "...and when would you ever need two <sup>white</sup> bouffant <sup>?</sup> dresses?" Especially to the tune of \$115, each. She was so appealing in it, and wanted it so much, I couldn't say anything but yes. I hugged her, gathered the long panel of cream and gold fabric, <sup>9</sup> that will be the drapery in the East Room, <sup>9</sup> the drawing for it, and quickly went down stairs and into the car for Mrs. Kennedy's.

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I approached this stately Georgian house, almost with an apology, hesitant to trespass into sadness, I suppose, feeling an intruder.

Jackie met me at the door, in a black skirt, a white top, and a big lovely smile. We went into the living room, much prettier now, that it had the touch of a hand the past several months, much more complete - drapes, a rug, a grecian head here, lovely paintings there.

What I had come to discuss, is what I had already told her briefly over the phone. . . That I would like so much, if she would be present, it would mean so much to every one, at the meeting of the Committee of the Preservation of the White House on May 7th, and again at the tea that afternoon.

She said, "Lady Bird, but I cannot return to the White House." I told her then, that I hoped that she could write us a little note to guide us and get us started and to contribute to whatever was done by the Committee. She said, "Can't you just tell them for me, that I said my best wishes." So rather hesitantly, and wishing that I had not the necessity of trying to quote her, I readily agreed.

Then I took from the box, the long panel of cream and gold fabric, which had come from Boudain, a week or so ago, and I had never unfolded it myself until this moment. It had been chosen by Mrs. Kennedy sometime last summer, ordered last fall, the looms in Lyon, France, had started the weaving of it, and so, by November 22nd, it was very much a thing on the way. There is no pattern or repetition; it's a long panel of birds, perhaps

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one is a swan, flowers, medallions, motifs that were used in grand houses of the early 18th century—<sup>t</sup> The sort of thing, I suppose, that Thomas Jefferson or Monroe, <sup>i</sup> would have chosen themselves for the East Room. The design is exquisite, with a heavy fringe of beads at the top. The price is not as staggering as I had expected, some \$26,000 or so, including the making and hanging. We both really gasped in pleasure as we examined it.

I had a cup of tea. Jackie used the expression of having gotten "tea poisoning" in referring to the number of times one was called on to meet with a group and have some tea. I told her how lovely the garden was, I had brought a picture of it at the height of its perfection, and told her how wonderful Mrs. Mellon was being about continuing to keep it up.

And then, with that empty feeling that there was nothing that I could really say or do, I said goodbye.

In the course of talking about coming to the White House, she said "You know really every place I go, <sup>s</sup>reminds me of all the places we lived. We lived all over Georgetown." I wonder perhaps, if she will go away this summer for a long vacation. That might make it better. I understand they have routed a tourist bus by her house now, and I noticed policemen out in front of it, as well as the Secret Service inside.

I returned to the White House just in time for one of Lyndon's suddenly called receptions, this one being for the labor newspaper editors and being supposedly stag except that some of the editors are themselves women, and so he had asked for my presence, if possible.

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How delighted I was to find among them, <sup>g</sup>a young man who said he was married to the daughter of Victor McCree<sup>a</sup>, the one who had planned to be a doctor. It turned out that she wasn't a doctor, but instead she had gotten married and was actually here in Washington, teaching. One of the troubles about the swiftness of receiving lines, <sup>g</sup>is that you can't get the names and pinpoint the people because, presently, he disappeared into the vast <sup>man</sup>~~hall~~ of the State Dining Room, for refreshments, and I have no idea what his name is.

There was a lovely, <sup>g</sup>but painful picture of Lynda and Bern<sup>ad</sup>~~ard~~ in the paper today, with a title under it "The Last Dance". And the headline this Sunday was different. It spoke of Bern<sup>ad</sup>~~ard~~ being reached by telephone confirming the fact that the engagement was broken. What he said was dignified and correct. It couldn't have been better. I feel sad to look at their young faces. They're dancing together and Lynda is smiling her big, perhaps it's just-for-the-public, smile.