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Monday, July 27th

Was a clear signal that the lush days of relaxation of early July were over. I spent the morning studying about the Malagasy Republic, an island off the coast of Africa, the fourth largest island in the world, almost as big as Texas, nearly 6 million population, its people a mixture of Asian and African.

And then at eleven o'clock President Tsiranana and Madame Tsiranana arrived for the welcoming ceremonies on the South Lawn. He was short, voluble, stout, gesturing and talking nearly all the time, very much at home, apparently. Madame Tsiranana at 46 was the mother of eight children and had four grandchildren. She told me she had married at 15 and that most girls in Malagasy -- or Madagascar, as I've known it all my life -- marry early.

Besides the standard military, diplomatic corps, and Administration people, there is an increasing number of special visitors to the White House whom we invite to stand out on the South Lawn and watch greeting ceremonies. So picturesque it is, it must be one of the most interesting memories they take back with them to Iowa and Alabama and Washington State, or wherever.

From noon on I studied the list of guests tonight, particularly those young folks who were asked at ten to watch Oklahoma and for dancing later, and added to them, mostly internes up here studying for the summer --

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young folks. We have quite a group of Governors coming to the dinner tonight and we have asked them to be our house guests, so I tried to be on hand to greet each one of them as they arrived and conduct them to their rooms. Huge Governor Carvel of Delaware, the biggest Governor of the littlest State -- he must be all of 6 feet 8 and several times Governor, for I remember him for the past two decades, it seems. He and his wife were in the Queen's Room, and upstairs youngest, handsome brunet Governor Hughes of Iowa and his wife and cute little daughter. They were enroute to the World's Fair. And -- also young and handsome -- Governor Breathitt of Kentucky and his pretty little wife, whom I visited recently. And big Governor Morrison of Nebraska, himself something of an old pro. I had met him at a backyard barbecue in Nebraska back in 1960 that had been given for us by, I believe, a friend of Senator Kerr's. And Mrs. Morrison and I had a nice talk about Nellie, whom she's very fond of.

Later I gathered up all the house guests and took them on a quiet tour of the first floor, because tonight the dinner will be out on the lawn and with the exception of the East Room there will be little chance to see the lovely house.

After a week of cloudy, grey, unpredictable weather it turned out to be "oh, what a beautiful evening -- star-spangled. Lyndon and I were

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ready on time, even a moment too soon on the Front Portico. I wore my white chiffon. There was even hopefully a pause in the heaviest national problem of the day -- the street fighting in New York and Rochester -- with headlines saying "The Mayor-King Draft Peace." *ch. tape*

The stage was set for a gay evening. We took them upstairs to the East Room rather late -- about 25 minutes, for the few minutes of get-acquainted and the exchange of gifts. Our most interesting one to them, I thought, the aerial photograph of the Republic of Malagasy, taken from the U. S. satellite TIROS, at an altitude of 434 miles. And their most interesting gift to me, an unset aquamarine, the first jewel I can remember getting. When I looked around and saw that the Mennen Williams were not upstairs with us, I sent down quickly to get them. Africa is their bailiwick, and I had liked and enjoyed Nancy so much on our trip to Mackinack^W Island and I felt I wanted to know her better.

Then downstairs for pictures, to the tune of Hail to the Chief. Lyndon and President Tsiranana and I and Madame Tsiranana walked into the East Room. Adlai Stevenson was there. How genuinely delightful he is! And Stewart Udall, of whom I am becoming fonder all the time. Marvella and Birch Bayh -- their first night out -- her first night -- since the plane accident, and she did look quite thin and fragile.

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Tom and Betty Kuchel, recently back from the Republican Convention.

Lyndon leaned across the table later and said, "Betty, I want you to handle my campaign." She laughed and said, "You know I like you, but I can't do that."

[Among the guests were]

Our quartet of Governors, the young, attractive William Henrys, head of the FCC, my longtime Alabama friend Dorothy Vredenburg Bush and her husband, and my even older friends, Jim and Elizabeth Rowe.

Later on their daughter was to join us for Oklahoma and the dancing.

Texas was well represented. ~~The~~ Billy Baileys, Judge Sarah Hughes who had sworn Lyndon in as President, Ed Looney of the Valley and Mrs. Looney, a longtime District leader in Senatorial days, and their daughter joined us later for Oklahoma. And the Jerry Manns. I still have some wonderful movies of him when he was our opponent in the Senate campaign of '41. And the Chancellor of the University, Harry Ransom, and his sweet gentle wife, is very much in the midst of Lyndon's new Task Force of heads of the larger universities. And the Byron Skeltons, two who have been doing vigorous battle lately and it would be interesting to see in their minds how much they walk a tight rope between the progress of their constituents and the good of their country. The Roy Wilkins and the Whitney Youngs. And from the world of entertainment, the Vic Damones and our two stars of the evening in Oklahoma, Shirley Jones (she's Mrs.

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Jack Cassidy) and big, handsome Peter Palmer. From the arts, my friends John Steinbeck and Elaine, the Jim Fosburgs. There'd been two seats open at the last minute and so very happily I had invited Philip because I thought this would be his only chance to come, and Luci, who looked beautiful in my Filipino dress. And there was a cross section of the world of business, of labor, of publishing and communications, including Ralph McGill and Drew Pearson, the Simeon Bookers of Jet, Ebony, Hue and Tan. And the Cass Canfields of Harper's. It was an interesting assemblage of about 170 that walked down the stairs from the Blue Room, those stately, circular stairs that actually see so little use, and emerged into the starlit night of the Rose Garden, where the Marine Band played at the end under the magnolia trees. The flowers were never lovelier -- yellow and white zinnias, carnations, marguerites, yellow^N marigolds, orchids (these, I think, the gifts of the Malaysians), delphinium in two shades, all arranged in the bamboo Vermeil containers, and the food never better, beginning with cold lobster -- tiny lobsters -- and then filet mignon, salad with Brie cheese, and a glacé dessert named after the visiting President, accompanied by Air Force strolling strings which the guests always tell me later was the high moment of the evening.

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The President proved a rather easy man to talk to -- just simply get him started about his country, and away he went. And then he and Lyndon were both schoolteachers and that was a gambit. And probably one of the most interesting ^{gambits} ~~ones~~ to me was the fact that we have a Space Tracking Station there in his country.

Afterwards, the four of us took front seats and watched the gay and typically American Oklahoma, about 35 minutes of it, beginning with Oh, What A Beautiful Morning, The Surrey with the Fringe on Top -- and it was hilarious later to hear Adlai tell about how he translates into French for Tsiranana exactly what a surrey with a fringe on top was. Everything's Up to Date in Kansas City, which is just about my favorite. Six of the best, ending with the whole company doing Oklahoma, with the line, "We belong to the land and the land we belong to is grand" striking straight to my heart. I don't believe there has been an entertainment all year that I have felt more in tune with and more proud of. I saw it when it first opened on Broadway, then I saw it in a barn theater in Texas driving home from Camp Mystic one night, near Kerrville.

But everything about the evening had gone late, so it was about twenty minutes of twelve when the entertainment was over. When our guests were ready to depart, the cars drove up, we bid them goodbye, and soon Lyndon departed, aides told me, but I deliberately stayed on down because I wanted to say goodbye to everyone who was leaving, to

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have a few minutes talk with anyone who lingered, and then to take a glass of champagne and drift on across the lawn with General Clifton to the little dance floor close to the beautiful blue pine. We had small tables placed around it, caberet fashion, centered with a candle. We had some forty or so guests, hastily asked when we finally found that the weather was going to be beautiful and we could have it outdoors. We were dancing to a combo. I found my Alabama cousins, the Sam Taylors from Birmingham. There were three young girls from East Texas whom Wright Patman had told me about. The Bill Whites' daughter, Jake Pickle's ^{daughter} ~~son~~, and the teenage children of the Oklahoma delegation.

I went to bed a little after one, concluding it was one of the nicest State dinners we had had, suggesting to Bess that they strike up Goodnight Ladies in about fifteen more minutes.