

1964

Thursday, September 10th

I spent all morning making final decisions on clothes -- wrapped that little package up! Meanwhile, Lynda went off with Bess to do some shopping in less expensive places and we met at the airport just in the nick of time to make the 3:25 flight.

I had had an interesting trip to the airport. Traffic had stopped us on the usual route and we had detoured through Harlem, that much-talked-about district of New York. It looked like there had not been a trash collector in the vicinity for two months. It was the bleakest, greyest mass of concrete and bricks, refuse and crumpled papers. No sprig of grass or trees. I hate to think what I might grow to become if I lived there. The driver told us this was the Puerto Rican section, as also did all the signs we saw, which were in Spanish. He said the Negroes had moved out because they had a higher standard of living than the Puerto Ricans. I remembered the figure that this was the most concentrated area of population in the world. To look at it is to understand it better than you would from the newspapers.

We got to the White House a little after five, in time to sign some mail, change my clothes to something elegant to go with Lyndon to a fund-raising dinner in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Round trip was only three hours. It took place in an enormous sort of cattle-show barn. We passed through an area where there were bales of hay

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Thursday, September 10th (continued)

stacked up and cattle, and then on into a huge dining hall where thousands of Democrats were assembled -- they had already finished their dinner. Governor Lawrence, Joe Clark, Genevieve Blatt were among the main figures.

Lyndon's speech was rather patriarchal, very much on the theme of unity. — Even to dropping one bombshell, which rather included Governor Scranton and General Eisenhower, "under the spreading tent of all those who wanted to work for a unified America, progressive and forward-looking!" The reception -- the number of applauses -- were enough to kill the heart of any Republican. Larry O'Brien and Ken O'Donnell rode up with us in the helicopter and back. I've never seen Ken O'Donnell so relaxed, friendly, and almost enthusiastic. I expect it would be impossible for him to feel close to us, but in a purely professional way he was very much impressed by the night's activities.

Ch.  
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The temperature inside that Convention Hall was every bit of 90, and Lyndon was drenched with sweat when we emerged. He changed his shirt in a little trailer set up right outside the hall. Coming and going we shook hands with the crowd and were engulfed by the seas of humanity. — The signs nearly all friendly. He really has an electric, magnetic quality. And so does the Office!