

1965

Saturday, January 2nd

Up early, a little past seven. Still black coffee and juice -- not that it holds all through the day -- the last instructions to James, Gertrude, Mary -- and what a wonderful job they've done, and the best thing they've served us has been smiles. Word to Mr. Klein about repairs, a phone call to my neighbor, Mrs. Hodges, to see if she'd like the azaleas we are leaving behind, and then to Bergstrom and Air Force One, taking Him, quivering all over when he gets on a plane, and Sam Houston, who can scarcely walk, who Lyndon hopes to have helped by massage and medical treatment and such companionship as we have time for between now and the Inaugural. He will stay through that time.

And then, one of the quickest trips I can remember. ~~There~~ There must have been a heavy tail wind -- to Washington, leaving the blue and gold of Texas behind and arriving on a grey day at a little past one. The person whose ministrations I needed most was Jean Louis, and I spent the afternoon getting repaired. That too is one of my New Year's Resolutions -- to look better at all public appearances, to remember what is due the job. I still find it very difficult -- very distasteful, in fact -- to say "First Lady."

Lyndon has been immersed for the last two days in drafts of his State of the Union Message, the first one being almost an hour long. We must cut it to thirty minutes -- nobody listens past thirty minutes, almost not to Churchill himself. But it is very difficult, because during the years

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it has come to be a sort of a Mother Hubbard of all the things the Chief Executive hopes to do with his legislative year. And every Department feels that it must be mentioned or it is slighted. So cutting it is a meat-axe job. Lyndon talks, explains, gives forth, and then the speech comes by a sort of process of osmosis, through Dick Goodwin, with help from Bill Moyers and Jack Valenti.

During the last few months I have become somewhat Library-minded -- that is, I have read speeches and letters dating back to Lyndon's earliest days in Congress. You see how delighted you are when they are good, and some of them are glowingly good from those days, and how disappointed you are when they are trite or pedestrian. Some of the shortest and best lines Lyndon inserted himself, and I am sure what will be the lead, "I hope in the next few years, the leaders of the Soviet Republic will come to our land," and the line about "I am sure the American people would like to hear leaders of the Soviet Republic on our TV and leaders of this country would be glad to speak to leaders of the Soviet Nation on their TV."

So the afternoon for Lyndon was State of the Nation, night reading, and then telephone calls, and a bit of a nap. And then we asked the Bill Whites, only recently back from Rome, the Valentis, Marianne Means and her young fiance, Emmet ^{Rickman} ~~Deeman~~, and of course our house guests, the Watsons, to have dinner with us. Sam Houston is having his on a tray

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in his room, and probably will most of the time, though I must make a point to go up and visit him so he won't feel deserted.

Lyndon read the speech to us. Bill and I especially applauded the accent on education and the line about "We must learn how to use our leisure time," and I especially the line about beautify the countryside. How funny that I should receive today my first newspaper clipping -- I daresay there will be more -- about my urging Lyndon to do something about the automobile junkyards that desecrate the countryside. Some owner of a junkyard in Texas, in Harris County, very angrily saying that enough people wanted to mind a fellow's business these days and the Government just better stay out of his junkyard -- and as for planting trees to hide them, that was just a lot of foolishness.

We sat in the Oval Room, where the beautiful symmetrical Christmas tree with the millions of red balls is a jewel of a view, and right behind it, to the right, the Thomas Jefferson Memorial, and over to the left, the solemn shaft of the Washington Memorial. I am delighted we got to see ^{the tree} ~~it~~ once again, because Twelfth Night will soon be here -- or is it already -- and it will be gone.

Then we went downstairs to see a movie, Fail-Safe, a thriller which I expected to be rather like Seven Days in May, about thermonuclear

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warfare, but which turned out to be a blockbuster, an incredibly awful series of mistakes and decisions at the top level, right up to the President, so frightening that I would never have offered it to Lyndon as an evening's entertainment if I had really known what it was like. We were all speechless afterwards.

Dr. and Mrs. Gould arrived about eleven o'clock. Lyndon's throat had been bothering him, and as he usually does, he went arrow-straight to the best authority he knew, and Dr. Gould will work on him between now and time for the State of the Union on Monday. He saved us several times during the campaign.

Luci bounced in during the evening, glowing, happy. She had already told me that she had been to four parties on New Year's Eve and Jean Louis had told me what a perfectly beautiful hairdo he prepared for her. And Lynda, when I talked to her in New York -- she was staying with Charlotte Ford -- said that when she came in at two A. M. she was the first of the four ladies to get in!