

1965

Thursday, May 20th

This is a week dominated by the Dominican Republic and its troubles. Some time in the middle of the night Lyndon came and crawled in bed with me. This morning, haggard and worn, he looked at me and said, "The most awful thing has happened." I know that efforts had been going on to form a coalition government agreeable to all sides. To Bosch, to the Junta, the rebels, whoever they all are. He said, "Bosch's friends, five of them, were returning to Santo Domingo. The one who is the key to the situation was shot in street fighting and killed." I wondered if that was the end to what Abe had meant Monday night, when he had said "We are this close to an agreement." Lyndon said he had only slept two hours Monday night and very little last night.

How I wish I could reach him, ease him! Actually, the only thing I can do is not impose upon him any questions, decisions, troubles. Fortunately my own life has been smooth and free of these these last few months.

This trivial thing which has bothered Liz greatly and me not so much, about the sale of a letter Mrs. Kennedy wrote me in the Fall of 1960, by some autograph house in New York. An ugly incident. It's a funny commentary on the press that it has taken up as many inches as it has, in view of the important things going on in the world. Of course I never gave the letter away, and it's frightening to think that a worker

1965

Thursday, May 20th (continued)

somewhere in one's office would take such a letter and put it up for sale. I flinch a bit to think what Mrs. Kennedy must feel about either my manners or my efficiency.

Another funny thing. Having put their heads together, Liz, several office standbys, Mary Rather, they finally decided who the person was who had kept the letter. Lucy Cummings was her name. I remember her slightly. At any rate, with many big stories, a great blast of information, the letter was withdrawn from sale by the company offering it and is to be returned to the White House.

*Check for
Cummings
1965*

The big event of the day was a luncheon given by the 81st Club for me. They had also invited the few forlorn remainders of the old 75th Club, the one I came here with in 1937. We went to the home of Mrs.

Ch. name Lovey, and it was two delightful hours with old friends, nearly every one of whom I knew by first name. Henrietta Hill, Mattie Lee Grant, Lera Thomas. Her looks and her words indicate that Albert is really a very sick man. She said that Anne, returning from South America, did not know how sick he was, and she hadn't told her because she is eight months pregnant. Jeanne Bates, May Simpson, Mrs. Andy Biemiller, 30 or so old friends. We had delicious covered dishes, buffet style, prepared by the ladies themselves, and sat around in the living room trading news about each other's children -- by now it's grandchildren --

1965

Thursday, May 20th (continued)

and as I looked around rather sadly I noticed how many were exes, not actually in the Congress any more. I sent back for my camera and got some movies. Everybody was taking pictures. There was a cute little cart with an umbrella gaily bedecked with flowers over it. The ladies had gotten up at dawn to work on it, and in it there ^{were} ~~was~~ loaded books that had been given by members of the Club and were sold while we were there. I bought two -- only a dollar each -- The Guns of August and Hawaii by Mit~~ch~~ener. And then I got everybody to sign Hawaii -- ^{the money} ~~it~~ is to go to our charity project, D. C. General Hospital. Since 1948 we have made a small donation each year to it to help out with recreational facilities for the people there -- radios, a TV. They shouldn't have given me anything, but they did -- a gold charm -- a Horn of Plenty spilling out rubies, and on it was engraved, "To Lady Bird from the 81st Club." It was a fun time.

And then I went on to the second big event of the day, the ABC filming on the South Portico of the Treasury Department, where there is a marvelous view of Pennsylvania Avenue. The hazards of such work are plenty -- a plane will roar over in the middle of a take and you have to try it again. Once a fly lit on my face. I remained immobile and went on with my script, with considerable effort. I thought I could tell on the faces of the cameraman that he knew the fly was there, could see the

1965

Thursday, May 20th (continued)

fly, and after a while he burst out laughing and said, "We'll have to do that one over again." John Secundari said, "The nicest people to work with are Popes and First Ladies. He'd done a documentary on Pope John and was full of great tales about him. One of the best, when the Pope was still on camera but didn't realize that he was, he looked up and said, "Finito?" John Secundari decided to use it because, as many knew at that time, it was nearly finito for the Pope. He had cancer and his days were limited. So John Secundari added on some marvellous lines about finito to this great and good life.

The South Portico of the Treasury Building is the best place in town to get a good view of Pennsylvania Avenue. Mr. Secundari told me that the model would be looked at and explained later, but my script, my part of it was done from that vantage point.

Surprising how tiring this is! Two and a half hours and I was quite weary and glad to be back at the White House for a few moments with Lyndon. He is to have a top level meeting tonight with McNamara and Abe and Ball and Vaughan and Raaborn. Eating and sleeping are sandwiched in between the things that must be done.

I talked with Bess and Lynda about her dance for Princess Christina. Lynda is not only agreeable, but eager to look up the sons and daughters of her Daddy's and Mother's friends. She seems to want

1965

Thursday, May 20th (continued)

to branch out, to meet more people. I am delighted.

I worked with Liz on my desk. Once I heard the sound of music in the hall, a piano. I looked out and there was Luci at the piano at the end of the hall, dressed in a long red velvet hostess gown, playing The Lord's Prayer and then later Old Man River, with an angelic, dramatic look. She seldom touches the piano any more, but when she does she handles it with love, and music comes forth, though not exactly as written on the page, I think, but Luci's own version. She was making a picture as she sat there, and she knew it. Red band on her jet black hair, downcast eyelashes on her ivory cheeks, an angelic expression while she softly played The Lord's Prayer. Dear little Luci, it's she that ought to be the actress.

Karen and Bill Hitchcock are in and out of the house at all hours. She leads her own life and is a peculiarly independent, capable, rare little girl, although at times deeply intuitive and appreciative of love.