

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Thursday, June 10, 1965 WHD

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It was a day that varied between being hilarious and serious.

At 10:30 I was to leave with the ABC filming crew to do the Potomac River which meant Jean Louis at 9:30 and makeup with Lilian Brown and getting geared up with my little electrical device in pocket, and then to the River.

For the occasion, Mr. Secondari had engaged a boat -- a quite elderly boat -- that must have spent some part of its time hauling fish or we even joked, garbage; <sup>from</sup> on the first moment of the day we were snake bit.

Always I am accompanied <sup>by</sup> with my straw bag -- necessary, ubiquitous container that has sun oil or scarf, my own camera, maybe a big hat. Today we forgot it.

The top deck of the boat was broiling hot. It was hard to maneuver it to the locations where we had either the good view we wanted or the bad view we wanted of the banks. Everywhere we were directly under the air flight pattern from National Airport. And it is the busiest airport in the United States everyone of us is ready to swear.

Just as I got to the most earnest or poetic part of the script, "roar" would go a jet overhead.

They had brought along a delicious lunch, and we all sat below deck and ate while Mr. Secondari, one of the best raconteurs I've ever been around, told us tales about filming somewhere close to

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the Dead Sea in about 125 degrees day time temperature - a film he hopes to do of Cortez. I wished he would bring the whole company by the Ranch if he does it. I've grown very fond of them all. <sup>.... And I love</sup> Working in Moscow on a documentary.

It was a good lunch and I was their guest, and they had for me this delightful chair -- a director's chair -- with instead of my name on the back, "The First Lady". It will be one of my prize possessions in my own little archives.

After lunch, back to work, and pretty soon I began to have the feeling that something was going wrong and that nobody was anxious to tell me what it was. But finally it was inescapable. They had to tell me. We had been having engine trouble for some time. It had dead stopped now. We could not proceed. We could stay where we were and shoot the rest of the film with the boat drifting, in spite of the anchor, steadily toward the shore. We kept on doing takes -- Simone getting as nervous as a <sup>little</sup> ~~kettle~~ on a hot stove, the Secret Service talking on their little machines and conferring quietly with each other and Simone and shaking their heads as the boat drifted and drifted toward the shallow shorelines.

I noticed the police boat which had been accompanying us at a distance, drawing nearer and hovering quite close. Finally, my Secret Service said, "We are just going to have to take you off. This

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thing is going to be grounded any minute." No, no, it's not dangerous, but it appeared it would result in a call for help to some kind of patrol and a lot of notice from the shore, and certainly a ridiculous newspaper story if I were on board. But we didn't have much to do of the script. Mr. Secondari and Mr. Harasty and my friend "Indian Joe" -- all of them were so eager to do one more take -- one more take. Over and over we were doing small bits. Mr. Secondari was probably cursing under his breath, and I trying my best to keep a straight face while I said, "Who knows, some day John Smith, <sup>Sturgeons</sup> may return to their native home."

A good few minutes <sup>past</sup> ~~passed~~ the time that the Secret Service had wanted me to get on the other boat, <sup>stop</sup> The cameras did ~~start~~ grinding, and I bid farewell to my marooned friends, stepped into the police boat -- it would only hold my detail and Simone and me -- waved them farewell from our glorious day on the river. And we were back at the White House by 3:00 -- in time for a little desk work and a little rest before the next very sparkling event of the day. That was meeting Rebekah Harkness who is making a gift to the White House of a portable stage for the East Room.

She came for cocktails at 6:00, bringing with her a couple of officers of her Foundation -- Mr. Aaron Frosh from New York and Gerald Wagner of Washington. They both have been working with

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Bess on this stage. I am sure it all came about through Bess' ingenuity and of course Mrs. Harkness' generosity. And the idea was probably born when Mrs. Harkness came to a White House dinner and saw the entertainment that takes place afterward on the thoroughly makeshift, heavy, unprofessional stage that we put together for so many wonderful entertainments.

Mrs. Harkness was quite beautiful -- slim and sleek and elegant -- an inhabitant of that glittering world where one moves from a home in Antigua to an apartment in New York to a cool country home in Connecticut or a ranch in Wyoming and where one knows many people in the arts and literary circles along with financial ones.

If in talking to myself I sound like a child with my nose pressed against the glass of the candy counter, I am rather. I think it's a fascinating world! And the beautiful <sup>looked</sup> pen which Mrs. Harkness wore which <sup>Dali!</sup> like a sort of a pixie angel had been designed by Salvador ~~Dali~~ <sup>Dali</sup>. Crude of me to have admired it -- quite probably -- but I was interested to know that Salvador <sup>Dali</sup> ~~Dali~~ designed jewelry.

While we had drinks in the Yellow Room, they admired the <sup>Cezannes.</sup> ~~Susans.~~

<sup>Ch. sp. name</sup> Mr. Joe Milesner came. He had designed the stage himself. And a model was brought in by Bess and set up for us to look at. Absolutely beautiful. It will blend so well with the beauty of the East Room. And though it is all aluminum, the off-white color, the fluted

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Corinthian column affects and the curtain that's to be just the color of the new East Room draperies. It will be heavenly for the White House settings. And delightfully enough, it weighs just one-third of what the present stage does! So when we are shifting from having a 3:00<sup>8'clock</sup> tea for about 600 4-H children or a State Dinner with the stage all up for just a few hours later, I am sure the folks in the White House who do that moving will rise up and call Rebekah Harkness blessed.

She has turned her summer home into a sort of haven for students of the ballet, which is her particular love. It sounds like an art colony -- all intent on ballet and all its phases. And she the most interested one of them all -- a delightful person.

It was a pleasant hour and then the next hour was a great change of pace. Father Montgomery came to talk to me about Luci. And Luci herself joined us. I asked him the steps -- the one, two, three -- of how one entered the Catholic Church. <sup>had</sup> I already told him before, and I made it very quietly plain once more, that this was not my wish but that I had waited nine months -- almost a year -- and that is all that I had asked Luci for is time to consider to make sure it was what she wanted. He told me that the steps were first a baptism and Luci wanted it on her birthday -- July 2nd. And then after that her first communion which could be the next day and quite private indeed. And then sometime later whenever they decided

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she was ready -- her confirmation -- possibly a month or so later. And there would be two sponsors. Luci wants Warrie Lynn for sure. She hasn't made up her mind about a man sponsor. Later on when she is actually confirmed, there is another one who stands up <sup>and</sup> sort of speak with her. And for this she wants Beth.

We agreed that because we didn't want it to turn into a side show with the press that it ought to be as quiet, as simple, as dignified, as possible. Normally it would be in St. Matthews. I preferred and suggested any other church, because I cannot escape the memory of President Kennedy's funeral there. But it seems that is the parish to which Luci will belong. We decided that we would not tell anybody else except Lyndon and the sponsors actually concerned, and the three or four friends that Luci wants to invite. And of course Lynda Bird. None of my staff, but I would simply hand out a two-sentence factual statement about it a few minutes before two as Luci and her Daddy and I got in the car to go to the Cathedral. I cannot be happy about it, but it is quite true that Luci herself has been happier this last year, <sup>a</sup> more cooperative, understanding, and working daughter, a student and citizen, than she has been in her whole dear little life. And maybe her earnest search is at an end because it always has been a search from the time she used to walk across the street at Dillman on a Sunday morning as a little, little girl, dress not quite buttoned up in

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the back and hair ribbon in her hand, going to ask Mrs. Coleman if she could go to Sunday school with Evelyn at the Good Shepherd. Always she wanted to go to Sunday school and there was a time then when I wasn't feeling very well. But Luci managed by herself.

There has been a thread of that through the years, being the Chaplain at Camp Mystic for two or was it three years? And so utterly ecstatic about it and so serious. And joining the club on religious study when the time came at NCS to join a club. (Lynda Bird had joined a bridge club and a public speaking club I believe.) And getting chosen to go to Buck Hills Falls to a sort of religious seminar -- one of the few juniors at NCS who had showed the sort of interest that caused them to get chosen.

It was a late night for Lyndon. It was 11:00 when he came home to dinner. Such a capacity for concentration and for continuing work. Sometimes it makes me almost angry because he's spending himself so. But I don't know a better thing in the world to spend himself for. Today had been one of those made up of a long session with Maxwell Taylor and Rusk and McNamara and Rayburn and Ball and McGeorge Bundy and General Wheeler. It's really odd the idea that the press has of his lack of interest or lack of grasp in foreign affairs. He spends so many more hours of his day working on that than on any thing else, actually I believe if you picked them off hour by hour.

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From my small viewpoint, it just looks like the problems internationally -- the problems of the world -- are so much more insoluble than those of these United States. We can work on these here and make a dent -- a rather wonderful dent.