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Initials

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Friday, July 2, 1965

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Luci's 18th birthday, and the 10th anniversary of the severest trial that we ever knew -- Lyndon and I.

I suddenly discovered I couldn't after all without girdle and well-combed hair go around slouchy and sloppy and happy in my self-appointed vacation. So harnessed and enslaved can one become trying to look one's best. And so I got a rush appointment with my old friend Mr. Per and went over for a permanent. This was a sort of psychological surrender.

I got home just in time to have lunch with Lynda in my bedroom -- a meal we gulped down off of trays while I handed papers back and forth to Liz saying "Tell them this, tell them that", and in between writing out my statement for the press -- the simplest and shortest possible -- to express what is happening today -- that [^]Luci Baines Johnson is being baptized into the Catholic church at 2:00 at St. Matthews' Cathedral. She has been taking instructions from Father James Montgomery since last September. The President and Mrs. Johnson and her sister Lynda were present at the service together with a few friends. "

Dear Lynda -- her mind was on many things. I was conscious I wasn't quite reaching her. It was a fragmented hour. She isn't getting the most out of life this summer. Young and beautiful to me and so very bright and alive and a delicious sense of humor.

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And she feels it

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I think more than either Lyndon or I about Luci becoming a Catholic.

Lyndon and I had tried to do this as simply and quietly, with dignity and in a very personal manner, discussing it only with Luci and Father Montgomery and Lynda Bird and the young folks that Luci had asked to be her sponsors. I never thought we would succeed. But as 2:00 approached, it looked as though we were the only ones who knew it.

Lyndon was standing by -- Lynda Bird and I were dressed. Only Luci we were waiting for. If only we could get through the next hour in a dignified, inconspicuous manner.

And then just as I was handing to Liz the envelope with a simple little statement in it about Luci's being baptized, in walked Luci, about as inconspicuous as Brigitte Bardot in a lovely white lace dress -- it would have made a fine wedding dress -- her black hair shining, her eyes full of stars, a rosary and a prayer book, I guess, clasped in her hand. Liz took one look at her and said, "My God, I've been with you through pierced ears, a Sting Ray car, that party where you had beer, and now what is this?" We all melted into laughter. She looked at the announcement. I said, "Tell all your press folks in another 15 minutes or so."

And then off we drove to St. Matthews -- the four of us. And I unable to forget the memory of another service there -- the funeral

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service for President Kennedy.

Father Montgomery was standing at the street door waiting for us. We walked in quietly -- quick, but not hurried -- and went to the front of the Church where with James Montelero and dear little Warrie Lynn in a beige dress and a beige mantilla standing by, and Father Montgomery officiating. ^WWe went through the very simple ceremony of Luci's first step into Roman Catholicism.

There were a few elderly ladies in black dresses, very much absorbed in their own prayers. There were a few Nuns here and there. A dozen or so odd worshippers who paid us little attention. And then we rose and went back to the baptismal ^{font}part. The Priest tipped Luci's head backward and baptized her -- only a few words, and then he smiled and said "Congratulations". We all kissed her. Lyndon shook hands with Father Montgomery. I noticed that Lynda Bird left swiftly with tears in her eyes and was down the steps and into the car before the others of us emerged.

All the Betts family were there -- even a relative who is a Nun. And of course Beth Jenkins. Besides Pat Nugent -- two or three more friends from Marquette.

I walked out the door deliberately, not swift and not slow, because I didn't want there to be anything furtive about this, and yet no showmanship. I did not see a camera in sight. The whole thing had taken probably less than 15 minutes.

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Luci remained for her confession. And Lyndon and I and Lynda Bird drove home. I could not help but think we went in four and came out three. [But it was done evaded to give a little chance for philosophizing.] All plans for Luci's birthday party had been made in the Solarium upstairs -- only about 30 or so of her best friends. Lots of them were house guests. Beth and her boyfriend, Lynda Bird had Dave down, Warrie Lynn, Pat Nugent, one or two others from Marquette.

*obviously
garbled*

I had called Willie Day to come over and be "momma". And so there was just time back at the White House to do some last signing of letters and checking with Ashton and Liz and Helen before we boarded the helicopter at 3:20 for New York where Lyndon was going to address the National Education Association -- thousands of teachers gathered from all over the land.

On board the plane who should there be but Senator Morse. Lyndon spoke easily, jocularly. I spoke. And Carl Albert -- dear smiling Carl -- the "little giant" they call him -- always plenty of "shop talk" when he and Lyndon are together. And handsome, urbane, Ambassador Lodge.

We motorcaded in to Madison Garden -- the streets lined with cheering people, the bridges overhead as we passed the World's Fair crowded with masses.

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It was quickly done. Lyndon proposed a Teachers Corps for areas in the United States that were economically and culturally deprived. It was a clock-worked timed in-and-out trip. And then we were back on the plane headed for Texas. I was so ready to relax -- emotionally, mentally and physically.

Senator Morse had gone his own way, and Ambassador Lodge to Boston I believe. But Carl Albert and the Homer Thornberrys were in the main cabin with us. And over drinks and dinner there was plenty of "shop talk", -- feeling disappointed, a little hurt, all of us, about the number of times Jake Pickle had voted against the Administration. The Democratic National Committee sent Lyndon a letter -- a sort of a summary of the records of the new members of Congress. Pickle's was anti-Administration enough so that they cited him -- the President's own Congressman -- as one reason why it was hard to persuade the Congressmen to vote for Administration measures.

Speaking of his ambitions to help Negroes in his tenure as President -- whatever it was -- Lyndon said, "My God, if Martin Luther King catches up with me, he has got to get up early and march fast".

He admired Judge Thurgood Marshall and spoke of the possibility of asking him to be Solicitor General, and then if he proved himself as an outstanding man that all the Nation could be proud of, perhaps when

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a vacancy on the Supreme Court opened up, he might make him a Justice of the Supreme Court -- the first of his race. In talking about the Congress of course it got around to Judge Smith of Virginia and the difficulties he was placing in the path of passing the ARA bill. He said, "I want to wait a few more Thursdays!" (I don't know what Thursdays mean -- I guess it's just when the Committee reports). Lyndon said, "We can't beat the Russians with Judge Smith in charge." He went on to say "We have got to get our program between now and October 3rd. And then next year we'll tackle transportation and a few more things and wrap them up and get out of here before Easter."

I looked out the window and there was a new moon. -- ~~The~~ The last one I had spent partly in the Virgin Islands, -- complete surcease and delight in the easy company of Carl Albert and Homer Thornberry -- politics, the legislative procedure, the grist of our mill filled those three hours.

Lyndon said, "I have been in public life 34 years. But of all the things I am glad to be the architect of, it is putting the Catholics and the Protestants and the Jews together in the Educational Bill." His accent over and over in the 18 or so months he's been in this office has been on education, education, education.

When we landed at Bergstrom we were met by Colonel and Mrs. Bender. She's so pretty with her deep South voice and a big kiss and a smile.

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The moon was out and the last rays of sunset were in the sky. But Lyndon was yearning for the lake -- for the boat. And so he said, "Lets go to Haywood." It aroused no enthusiasm from me. The nights have been sleepless lately. The Benders joined us. We went in the helicopter to Haywood -- Lyndon and the Thornberrys and the Benders and the Moursunds -- went for a boat ride. And I went happily, exhausted and relieved, home to the Ranch.

I wanted to talk to Lynda,

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To Warrie -- and tell her how much we loved her. And if there was any little coming storm about Luci and her step today, she, Warrie, must not feel the least bit blamed or responsible.

And then to sleep gloriously a little past 10:00 -- earliest ever. But I awoke a little past 12:00 when I heard Lyndon, and went in and crawled in with him. It is a never-ceasing amazement to me how he can go to bed so late and get up so early.