

1965

Monday, August 23rd

Began with a blowup. I was in Lyndon's bedroom with Marvin and Jake and Jack coming and going, discussing with Lyndon Liz's memo to Marvin about approval of travel for the girls who work in the East Wing, who advance trips like mine to the Grand Teton and Lynda's to the Erie Fair, and Bess's to preview the ballet in Connecticut that would be brought down for White House entertainment.

Hopkins had pointed out to Marvin that previous First Ladies had not had their travel expenses paid for out of the \$25,000 travel allotment for the White House. Did this include the staff for First Ladies? Their position seems oddly in limbo. They work for the White House, the whole overall operation. Should their travel be paid for, just as the male members' would?

Lyndon, ever fearful of raising expenses and arousing any just criticism, was looking at it with a hard eye. I took the position that my few speeches, my few trips for HEADSTART, beautification and so forth, had to be advanced and ought to be paid for and my own personal ticket I would buy. And then I walked out, angry and hurt, and after what must have been a very flabby presentation of my case.

And then down to the theater to see a movie of our Virginia highway trip, which Rex Whitten had prepared and was very anxious

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to have me see, and like. And I can't tell anybody I have ^{seen it} unless I have.

When I returned from the beauty parlor, I had a message that the President would like to see me in his office. I went, with a certain amount of trepidation, because the last thing I need to bring to him, along with Vietnam and the steel strike, is personal problems.

He was so sweet. He knew I had been worrying about money to run the White House with ^{when} ~~with~~ my separation pay from KTBC comes to an end this month, and for Luci's foolishly expensive car and clothes to live up to the life we lead. He put his arms around me and said, "You don't have to worry about anything. You ought not to worry about money. I'll get you whatever you need." He'll always be safe there, because economy rides a fairly tight rein on me. And then he said, "One of the Jetstars has to go to Ft. Worth to be worked on, anyway, and it could just be set up to go today and take you and drop you off. It will be ready whenever you are ready." I was speechless and closer to tears than I had been in four or five years. I hugged him and walked out, not trusting myself to talk. Poor man, trying to walk the tightrope between loving and wanting to please his family and make them comfortable, and wanting to live up to the ethics, a sort of thrift, for the private actions that could face public scrutiny.

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Toughness must be one of the qualifications for this job, both private and public.

It was a busy day, getting ready to get off. Talked with Bess about the tea for the Johnson City hostesses, about going with me. The ever-serene Bess -- it hit her hard when I suggested that she go. She has two sick children, with both sets of parents out of town. She said she'd try to make it, she'd be ready by five if she could.

Talked with Jim Ketchum about the Noah Webster picture. It seems that Bill Benton, supposed donor, in no wise wishes to part with his picture. About the Rutherford Hayes desk, which has been on tour with the Kennedy memorabilia, and which now the Kennedy Library expects to have.

And then an hour and a half session with Rex Whitten of the Bureau of Public Roads and Jim Lacey in the Queen's bedroom, a thorough, intricate, tiring briefing on the freeway that Nancy Negley and Mrs. Tobin wrote me about that will go through a part of Brekinridge Park and the Incarnate Word property. Nancy had stated their case well -- with pictures of the Sunken Gardens, hike and bike trails, Girl Scouts camping area. And ever-patient, very articulate, Rex Whitten explored probably for the 117th time with me

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the problems and the alternate solutions -- the ever-growing traffic problems, which conflicted with retaining areas for recreation and beauty. In the end, I see no way out of this fight, now six years old, with the Texas Highway Department, the Governor, and the Bureau of Public Roads, and, so Rex Whitten says, about 70% of the population of San Antonio of the opinion that this solution is the most functional and least damaging.

I asked him please, at least, to make it with planting as pretty as that roaring monster of a freeway can be.

Then a few moments with Sandy Fox about Lyndon's birthday present, and with Liz about her memo. Take it easy. Maybe we can work it out. At any rate, I will fill my engagements and pay out of my own money for her or anyone else who advances me, and have less trips in the future.

And then, at 3:45, a bite of lunch. No wonder I was so hungry. And lots of mail to sign and autographing pictures, and, at long last, all too brief a session on the first draft of the speech to the Garden Club ladies in the Grand Tetons on September 7th.

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We left the White House at 5:15 -- Helen and Gene and Bess and I -- and we got on the Jetstar and flew to the ranch. And a very special feeling it was. This is the first time that I have been on a Jetstar on a trip of my own.

It had been a tense and trying day. Emotions, angry, sad or happy, are exhausting to me. And I was glad to just sit and read, or just to sit, and finally have a couple of drinks and sandwiches aboard.

We arrived at the ranch before dark, and Bess and I drove in to Johnson City and sat down with Jessie Hunter to plan the tea for the hostesses at the boyhood home, one of my main reasons for spending these three or four days here before Lyndon's arrival. It was set for Thursday, 4 to 6. She and Bess would divide the calls. We decided to limit the citations of appreciation to 5 who had given the top number of hours. We chose those to pour tea, talked about tours of the house, and music, the things they would like best.

And then we returned to the ranch at 9:30, in time for an early bed.