

W H D
1965

Friday, September 3rd

Was for me a day of waiting and uncertainty. This will be the last long weekend of the summer. I would have bet anything Lyndon would come to the ranch to spend it. But could he, with the steel strike still hanging like a sword over the head of the Nation?

Unable to rule the day, I wasted it, rather. I had spent most of the last two weeks in the necessary business that comes to every housewife of getting the closets cleaned, the storage areas cleaned, and the thorough, once-a-year cleaning of the main house, guest house, little house where Lyndon was born, and, hopefully, next week it will be the Lewis and maybe the Scharnhorst. It was for this I had brought Helen down, and with great efficiency she had proceeded from room to room, so that when I walked in behind her and the team she had had, I smiled a housewifely smile that comes with knowing everything is in order.

But now all of that was underway. I talked to Weldon Sheffield about when we might get together on further interior decorating and to Richard Myrick about his plans for the ranch. But mostly I wasted time. Went to the beauty shop, returned home about four, got a call from Lyndon to turn on my TV,

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switched it on with mounting excitement from 4 o'clock, and then at 4:32 (and with him it was 6:32) there he was -- jubilant, calm, never looking stronger, he announced the settlement of the steel strike. He introduced Mr. Abel and Mr. Cooper, almost, you could think, weighing the cost to the Nation in the weeks to come if the strike had gone on, that this was the high point in the craft of his Presidency, beginning that November day. Certainly it will remain one of the high points.

I put in a call to him, loved the racing excitement in his voice when I got him. He said he would leave by 7 o'clock for Texas. And then he put Mr. Cooper on and Mr. Abel, ^{representing} the steel companies and the steel workers, and I had a chance to say thank you for their long hours and hard work and patriotism.

And then, too excited to really get down to work, I told Mary to get a fish dinner ready and that we would have it at the Haywood, late as it would be, called A. W. to ask him to join us there. And then Weezie Death and I drove in the sunset over to the Lewis Ranch on a few housekeeping details. I wandered into the back yard, and the enormous fig tree has practically enveloped it. The figs are getting ripe, sweet and delicious.

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Friday, September 3rd (continued)

Later I drove past the boyhood home and picked up Jessie Hunter, and we went on to Haywood. How I have relished the hours of being alone here! Quite still, no calls to respond to anybody's needs or moods. A little aloneness is necessary in my life, an ingredient that's been very much missing for nearly two years. Aloneness and housekeeping have marked the middle of the weeks these last two weeks. Strange ingredients for happiness! But necessary sometimes for my own personal self.

A. W. and Mariallen were already at the Haywood. Mariallen told me in one brief sentence that she was going to the hospital on Monday. I had called Jesse. And at 9:10 the helicopter sat down with Lyndon riding a high wave of success, and Jake and Vicky and Marie.

For him it was after 11, so we had dinner, fried fish, right away. Sort of a victory offering to the Conquering Chief. It was only later that I heard he had worked until after 2 o'clock last night, and then read until nearly 3.

This week has been such a week that it almost frightens me to think of the time when there are no more rabbits coming out of the hat, no more victories wrought by any magician out of a set of facts that seem to promise only grim failures.

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Friday, September 3rd (continued)

This week has seen not only the victory in the steel strike, but also a near victory for Home Rule in the District of Columbia. A vote in the House is assured. What's held it up all these years has been inability to get the Home Rule Bill out of the House District Committee. Now there will be a vote on September 27th.

But failure is for the future, and tonight is for success.

We ate quantities of fried fish, watched the news on TV, everybody's version of the steel strike settlement, and then returned to the ranch for bed, taking Jesse Kellam with us and arriving about 11 o'clock.

The rich wine of success is not a bit soporific for me. Happily, Lyndon went to sleep, soon and easily, while I tossed most of the night.