

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Monday, March 21, 1966

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I had breakfast with Lyndon about nine; his room is like a staff meeting for about two hours each morning. It's very hard to find time for a personal talk.

And then, because it's a day when the public is not here, and because the sun was shining bright, I went down to Mr. West and Mr. Ketchum, to the State Dining Room, to look at the lovely fabrics for the drapes, and the chairs and the two drawings ^{that} Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Brown of the MacMillan Company had left. I want to make up my own mind ^{on} which I really liked best, but what Mr. duPont says to me when I see him in April, ^I will have a lot of bearing.

Bess was on the first floor walking through the paces with Sylvia Symington. I think Jimmie and Sylvia will be wonderful in the protocol job, but I am sad at Lloyd and Ann leaving, and I feel that I did not do all that I could to incorporate them into our family.

Work at my desk, with the mail. Signing a picture for Zephyr's birthday, the 23rd or 24th one she's been with us. Meeting Liz Carpenter's brother, and then downstairs to have my picture, with Mrs. Alice Roosevelt Longworth and Russell Train, receiving an album of pictures of wild life in Africa. This is the publicity for the movie Born Free, the premier to benefit the Wild Life Organization.

I asked Mrs. Longworth and Judge Train ^I to come upstairs and have tea

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with me. It was an extraordinary hour. She's one of the most vivid people I've ever known, also rather frightening. She told a story about Bobby Kennedy, being like the macaw parrot, at least in her fast staccato voice, that was what I understood the bird to be. This bird, gentle natured for centuries, would land on the back of a sheep, pluck out a little tuft of wool, to help make its nest. And then one day, some macaw parrot, plucked too deep, and tasted blood, and developed an addiction to it and from then on, the macaw parrot would light on the back of sheep, disembowel them, so she expressed it, and leave them to die. It was a quite horrible story.

She said she had told it to Bobby himself. I had no comment whatsoever, and hope she does not supply me with one.

Then she was very interested about Lynda Bird. There are so many quoteable things to say about Lynda Bird, and so few that I feel I want to quote; to be properly discreet is to be very dull indeed.

Mrs. Longworth said she'd seen in the paper, that Lynda Bird had gone to church with George and his mother, at the Christian Scientist Church. I said yes.

We all laughed at the rather diverse religious interest in the lives of the Johnson family. Russell Train said presently ^{that} we were being quite ecumenical. Mrs. Longworth said, rather more picturesquely - "All the way from the Virgin Mary to Mary Baker Eddie."

We reminisced about the White House. Russell Train's father had been

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Naval Aide to President Hoover. There had been a time, when he was 10 years old, when he had spent a night ~~in~~ here. Once more, it was borne in on me, how much such a thing means to even the most sophisticated. That must have been nearly 40 years ago, and it still matters.

As always, I walked down the stairs with Mrs. Longworth, to say goodby. I want to give every measure of respect to her; in so many ways I admire her. The nicest thing is she seems to ~~truly~~ truly like Lyndon.

While we were having tea, he strolled in, quite amazingly, in a ^{shawl} ~~tie~~ silk dressing gown, in a plaid that outdid Joseph's cloak, for its wild colors, but barely covering his knees. He's one of those rare people, who meets her on her own terms. I think she recognizes in him, a fellow spirit, and he always talks with her, as though she were the only person in the room, or certainly the most important.

The next little segment of my day, was with Susan's beau, Gary Sodotty, a scotch in the Queen's Room, and half hour or so of talking of Susan. He kept on repeating the words "She's so kind, she's so honest". He seems genuinely devoted, he did not however, ever tell me that he'd asked her to marry him, nor did he specify any time at which he was going to try to see her. He graduates from Dental school in June, but there are ahead, the years at interning, He's specializing in Orthodontist work. He's a very nice, personable young man and I liked him. He had studied for the Priesthood a couple of year, and then decided it was not for him, and had gotten out. And

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I think, perhaps, it is his yearning to do something for somebody that draws him to Susan. It was his birthday, ^{and} he was delighted to be here, and I feel that at least I am doing a little something for Susan, investing ^{time} that with him, and I feel guilty ~~but~~ I am not doing more.

Then I dressed quickly and went over to the State Department, for a small dinner that was given by the busiest man in town, Secretary of State Rusk, ~~and Secretary~~ and Mrs. Rusk, for the 15 White House Fellows, and their wives. I stayed just for a drink with them, managed to meet all the Fellows, talked with as many as I could. They have quite a little enclave of their own, and I think if there's one thing they've learned up here, it's that public servants work hard and keep no regular hours, that is, those at the top.

Back at the White House, I found that Ida May Cain had arrived. Jim is returning from Viet Nam tonight and with him Earl Rudder. Ida May and I went downstairs to look, ^{once more,} at the drapery fabrics for the State Dining Room in the night lights, ^{and} those in the main entrance hall. I want to see them in all possible circumstances. I want this to be a good choice for the next

Ch tape!!
I hope that nobody in the future thinks of Mrs. Lyndon Johnson's taste as ^{identical w/ ?} a denial of President Chester Arthur's.

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Lyndon came home for dinner at 10:00 bringing Bill Moyers with him. And the four of us sat down -- grace by Ida May. And Jim and Earl Rudder arrived shortly afterwards. They had dined in the plane. So we sat and talked. Jim said they had never been outside of the noise of firing. His main interest was hospitals. It seems that AID has built quite a few there.. Staffing them is another problem and a serious lack. Instead of bringing Vietnamese here in the States ^{for} when teach ^{ing} of training, perhaps to Hawaii.

Earl Rudder is interested in agricultural ^{getting} ~~the~~ technical know-how to them, those fatter pigs and more productive sweet potato vines. The years have taken a great deal of the fire out of the young Lieutenant ^{who} ~~the~~ climb ^{up} on the chalk cliffs ⁱⁿ ~~and~~ the assault on Normandy. He is rather heavy set and quiet these days, very dependable looking.

Everybody else dispersed a little past 11:00, but Lyndon sat up until 2:00 doing his night reading.