

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Friday, July 8, 1966

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With the decision definitely made to stay at the Ranch until Monday I sink happily into the lotus-eater stage. I do not work ^{per} - ~~ad~~versely I miss it.

I rode with Lyndon in the morning over the Reagan Ranch. He never tires at looking at the deer. And then back to the house for the important event of the day for me -- driving in with Luci and Pat, with Pat at the wheel, to see the dream house that Luci had described to me. They had found it the day before and they were so excited because I wanted to go with them to see it. I couldn't have given them a better present. Luci described it every/mile of the way with music in her voice. "Mother when I was a little girl 6 years old going around in your high heels and dreaming of the house that I would some day live in with my husband -- this is the house. I'll be so happy when I'm on my honeymoon to think that I've got it to come back to and start out in." The location sounded good -- right off Exposition, close to O'Henry. And when we arrived I found that it was on a little horseshoe, a little nest of 6 or 8 houses, rather delightfully composed on a hillside. Her dream house was a little duplex made of old brick -- a rather mellow pinkish beige with a little ^{through} ~~red~~ iron gate -- all of it Tom Thumb scale and an absolute miniature ^a few feet of grass and shrubs framing the house.

Inside, it was in delightful taste. I found myself taking off my hat to Luci, agreeing with her enthusiasm. I wished we had brought a tape measure so we could see the size of the rooms and the wall space. Luci ^{at} ~~once~~

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dispatched Pat to the closest drug store to buy one. He was back in 15 minutes -- so convenient ⁱⁿ Austin. And we got down on the floor, crawling around on our hands and knees -- Pat and I -- measuring the living room -- nice size -- 19 x 12 -- and the master bedroom was almost 12 x 14.8. But alas I fear that king-size bed of theirs would have to wait for the next house. And the other very tiny bedroom or den -- a bit bigger than 9 x 11. The kitchen was bright and shiny with copper and Luci kept on pulling out drawers and saying, "See mother, see mother," and opening closet doors and saying, "Look at this wonderful storage space". Only living in it will teach her how small it is compared to what she is living in now. And in Austin of the lovely views, I begrudge the lack of a view of any sort. But it is an absolutely charming little place otherwise. A good laboratory to learn to keep house in. And I at once began to think about the things that I could lend her -- we could have put in while she was on her honeymoon.

And then excited and tired, we drove over ^{to} the Youngbloods and I ordered a fried chicken dinner -- Luci's very favorite. But it was Friday and she remembered, so she had fried shrimp -- she and Pat -- while she glowed with the enthusiasm that I had shared with them on their first real examination of the place that they might live in. All in all, I applaud their discernment and envy their excitement. And as I sat at Youngbloods enjoying the fried chicken and hot rolls and honey, I thought what a far cry this is from the elegance of the White House. But how content, how delighted I am here! Will the final move be as easy? I want to enjoy, relish every day there to the

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fullest and begrudge not one thing when I depart. I believe I can. I left them to go their visiting ways with all of Luci's multitude of friends and returned to the main Ranch to find the Jack Horners, the Bob Youngs and the Gills visiting Lyndon, established in the Cedar house and Sarg Shriver, expected to fly in about 5:00 bringing with him Dr. Bill Crook and his assistants Bill Mullen and Paul Dunkin. They had been having a tour of all the poverty projects in Texas -- Dallas, Houston, Corpus Christi, Camp Geary, San Marcos.

When they arrived, Lyndon loaded in Sarg and some of the newspaper men and I followed in another car with Bill Mullen and Paul Dunkin and the ladies, and we drove through the Reagan Ranch and on to the Sharnhorst where a chopper picked us up and we flew to the West Ranch in time to arrive just before sundown and see Dale Meek's operation -- trapping the native deer. He had a huge net -- 30 or more feet across -- rigged on a high pole in the middle and stretching out to trees or retaining poles on the side. Around the base of the middle pole he put corn. And then one of the Smith boys who is in charge of the operation and absolutely delighted with the job climbs in a nearby tree with string that triggers the net. And when a suitable number of deer -- hopefully as many as five -- are eating the corn, he drops the net over them. We parked out of sight and waited. Then we got the signal. The net had been dropped and we drove quickly up over the hill and there lying on the ground under the net were five struggling deer. And tumbling out of the pickup were Dale Meeks and several Sultemeier boys and others -- five in all --

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one to catch each of the deer and carefully, tenderly disentangle him from the net and pick him up. Some of them were bleating just like sheep. The sound astonished me. A man can carry a moderate sized one -- sometimes ^{for} with a big buck with horns -- they are in velvet now -- it takes two ^{men}. They had rigged up a pickup that had the sides enclosed with just tiny holes for air so that it was quite, quite dark inside. Dale said that amazingly some of his catches of deer would be asleep by the time he drove them to the Reagan Ranch and he would have to go in and wake them up to get them out.

On the first catch they had made the mistake of leaving some open space so that light came in and the deer had been absolutely frantic -- had kicked, fought, struggled, injured themselves. It was an interesting operation and an absolutely new field with all the people participating in it. On the second catch they only caught one deer. But that was six for a night. We are hoping to populate the Reagan and the Danfz. And Wesley, with a heavy over-population on his Ranch, is willing to give us as many as we can catch.

As for the ranch hands, this is more fun than the Saturday night dance! They were revelling in it.

We went back by chopper to the main house when dark had fallen and had dinner and then ^{watched} ~~watch~~ the movie of the Big Bend country and the "Night of the Dragon" ^{and} ~~in~~ the President's Country which I feared was about 30 minutes too much for our ^{company} ~~country~~.

I had had Sarge on my right at dinner, listening eagerly to his very graphic stories of individual successes in the poverty program. He is a

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great salesman and apparently Camp Gerry is a showcase, with every graduate from the Job Corps going on to a good paying job in private enterprise.

Lyndon insisted that they spend the night. They worked out a plan for a plane to pick them up the next morning and I showed Sarge and Bill Crook and the other guests to their rooms.