

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 6, 1966 -- page 1

Thursday~~s~~ October 6th was a busy White House Day. In the morning I put on my persimmon wool suit, Jean Louis combed my hair, and I went to the Fish Room with Lyndon to have our picture made for Look Magazine. We are lucky^{12th} on pictures made together except those casual ones at the ranch, and then back to the West Hall to have a meeting on, of all things, Christmas, with Bess before she headed vanishes ~~and heads~~ for the Pacific, and Sandy Fox and Betty Hogue. We talked about the ~~crash~~. Alas, Mrs. Howard will not do it again. We had loved it so these three Christmases. We are trying to get one from the Smithsonian.

^{And about}
~~We made out~~ the Christmas parties and settled on tentative dates for the ones for the staff and their children and the under-privileged children -- that is always one of my favorites -- and later for the Diplomatic children; and then one for the Press Women; and Sandy, that resourceful, artistic man, and Bess spread out all of our proposed Christmas gifts. We discussed them pro and con, including peach preserves and honey from the LBJ Ranch, and deer meat sausage and home-baked bread and got out all the lists.

Somewhere, sometime I try to plan ahead as much as possible, I want to fill each of the Christmases here full to the brim, but organize as well ahead of time as I can so that Christmas itself can be for joy and not for confusion.

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At twelve-thirty I had a luncheon guest, Jane Engelhard and three of her friends, Mrs. Bragga⁷ (she is Marconi's daughter), Mrs. Houghton whom I think I met ~~for~~ first with the Douglas Dillons, Mrs. Warburg, four elegant, polished, beautiful women who live in the world of the very rich that I have looked into these last few years but always as a visitor, never quite at home. I feel, though, that I have some friends in it. Jane, I think, is one. And MANY really exciting interesting people who know so much about many things that I don't and that I would like to learn.

We sat in the West Hall and had sherry. They had come to talk to me about being the honor guest at their annual banquet to raise funds for international education. They really work at it. They know a lot about it. The bulk of the funds of the organization are provided by foundations, such as Ford and Rockefeller, and by the federal government, to provide interviews and guidance ~~abroad~~ abroad for prospective students and to make scholarships available. The Directors are trustees among ^{whom} which I gather these women are really very active members. They raise about 50 thousand annually with this ball and do a sizeable measure of the guidance and the work of the organization.

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The ball itself sounds such fun, I found myself wanting to go!
It is limited to 400 and many of the names of the regular comers were people I knew --- Brocke Astor, the Rockefellers, Mary. They never ~~try~~ try to expand. In fact, they hold it down to "we favorite few," so husbands would want to attend, Jane said. My difficulty is the ever-recurring one that there are at least 2 dozen such events a year that I have some real personal call to go to, two or three sponsored by our own Cabinet wives whom I think of almost as family. If you start, where do you stop?

Feeling awkward and ungracious, I tried to explain this. And then there is always the fact that I can never predict Lyndon's activities, and I told them I would let them know sometime in November.

Then we went downstairs to the first floor dining room. Lyndon was having newspapermen in the family dining room, and besides I wanted lunch in "Jane's room." I drew her in the conversation about what state she had found the room in, what she had done to it. There had been a large eagle emblazoned on all four walls. Now only one eagle remained. There had been a great expanse of moulding where the wall joined the ceiling - much of it has been stripped away --
a new and stronger, very handsome mantle^{el} was found. Mr. Dupont worked with her every step of the way. She speaks very affectionately of him. Once at her mother-in-law's she noticed some of the ~~Harrison~~ ~~Harrison~~ Harrison china. She asked about it. Yes, it had been in the

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the White House, and Jane said "Well, you just said goodbye to it. I am going to give it back to the White House." It is some of my favorite with the graceful corn and wheat pattern around the edge. It speaks of plenty.

Somewhere along the way I noticed a sparkle in the eye ~~fix~~ -- the extra lift of interest of the other three ladies at being on the second floor, and I asked if after our coffee they would like to go see the Lincoln Room and the Queen's Room. They would indeed. One of them had never seen it, another not in years. Mrs Bragga (?) said she had stood in line one hot summer day for about 2 hours to go through the White House, although she knew she could have called Jane and gotten some sort of special treatment but she didn't want to. And so we had a thorough tour. And I was touched and delighted when people, especially people as sophisticated and traveled as these, are really thrilled [^] perhaps just a trifle awed [^] at seeing the White House. And I also feel [^] distinctly annoyed at myself for not having prepared myself, briefed myself, better. I could have made more of these two hours! For one thing I knew that the Warburgs had given a painting to the White House, and suddenly [^] aghast [^] I couldn't remember which one it was. I could have made it a more sparkling 2 hours for them with some bright little vignettes of history, and a thorough knowledge of their own relationship to the progress of this ¹house.

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I was touched when Jane said -- I was being ecstatic about the flowermen and what lovely bouquets they made -- and Jane said "Oh, Lady Bird you must give credit to Bunny Mellon. I have seen her working on them for hours with her own hands." And then Mrs. Warburg looked at the Cezannes and said "Do you know, I have visited in the home of Mr. LURZUR in the South of France (she mentioned how many years ago) and those pictures were hanging on the wall. I saw them there and I knew that he was going to will them to the White House."

It was a thoroughly interesting two hours before Jane left for her plane and Canada, and the other three ladies with Mr. West for completing the tour of the downstairs floors.

At three o'clock I went down with Lyndon to the East Room for his Press Conference. I had only to sit in the front row and look pleasant, and yet they always affect me as though I was going into battle. Lyndon on the other hand looked calm, assured, if anything almost too measured in his answers, as he told them about the appointment of Lin^oowitz, Llewellyn Thompson, and Elsworth Bunker, and outlined our coming trip to six countries. It will take 17 days and cover 25,000 miles. New Zealand and Australia and Manila and Thailand and Malaysia and South Korea, and back for the refueling stop by Alaska. Plain business of course - the Manila Conference - with all the nations involved militarily in Vietnam. The agenda will be

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military and non-military aspects of the war in ^{the} search for peace. It will be the longest trip of any President since Eisenhower's trip to India and Pakistan and Afghanistan in 1959. He announced that I would go along, mostly to be with him, and in spare time to look at historic spots and conservation and beautification projects.

Surprisingly, the questions when they came, were not principally on the trip. They were on the extremely conservative candidates in the South, particularly gubernatorial candidates, on the stock market, and the cities bill, rioting in the streets, and I was glad to hear the one about the Great Society from Ray Shearer because it gave Lyndon the opportunity to say "We have recommended a pproximately 90 bills this session of Congress, after having the most productive session the last session in our history. We have passed about 75 of those 90 bills through both houses. We expect to get probably 10 more in the next 10 days. ^{Eighty-five} 85 out of 90 would be a pretty good box score."

His command of facts, his ordierliness, the strength of what he said, made me very proud. I wish there could have been a little more change of pace or humor. There was a moment in answering Sara^p, whose question was more a diatribe than a question,. As I left one of the newsmen said to me, "Mrs. Johnson, because you were sitting in the front row in that chair, we thought maybe he was going to nominate

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~~to nominate~~ you to be Attorney General!" And then I was out with time to work with Ashton and have a sitting with Mrs. Phillip Barry in the Queen's Room, and have a look at the painting.

[Unhappily I do not think it has profited by the changes she made. If anything, it has suffered.] She is such a detached pleasant casual person. I don't mind these sittings at all and emphatically want to combine my time with her talent to get the best product we can. Hm

It turned out to be an hour, and then I had time for a little rest before a really important event. ~~The~~ The goodbye party for the George Balls. The Balls arrived first with their son Douglas and a son and daughter-in-law, the John Balls, and his brother the Stewart Balls, and I asked the kinfolks to pause with me and look out the window at the enchanted ^{my} view of the Washington Monument in the changing lights of sunset. Soft pink on the western side, falling into shadow on the side facing us. It is the great ^{show} in town -- sunset from the Truman Balcony, or from this window.

It was a happy-sad time. I hate to say goodbye to people we have worked hard with. There have been a series of them - Martha and Luther Hodges, the Cellebreezes, the Bk Gronouskis. One of the things I like best is sharing it with the families of the people we are honoring. Trudy and Joe Fowler were there, and Margie McNamara looking brisk once more, and Bob, and Lydia and Nick Katzenbach, and the Postmaster General. We talked about the Post Office at Karnack.

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Stu and Lee Udall. And Jane Freeman without the Secretary who is off campaigning. And John and Mary Conner. And the Wirtzes.

Jane delighted me by saying once more that she had never had a happier time in the White House than at the party for their children.

The Rusks couldn't come, and Hubert was out of town also. Two

bld State Department hands were there -- the Averell Harrimans

and the ^{3, 4}Llewellyn Thompsons -- and from the staff the Bob Kintners and the Walt Rostows. ¹²The Thompsons were such interesting guests,

Lyndon in his extremely direct way went right up to Mrs. Thompson

and put his arm around her, and spoke glowingly about the sacrifice she is making, and how true it is, ^{two}to leave ~~two~~ girls, they are, I believe, 12

and 15, in boarding school is a rugged test of ~~the~~ patriotism, and few

are the people who can pass it. She is also, I understand, giving up a very lucrative job. For whatever it is worth, ^{she}~~she~~ knows there is a man

that sure appreciates it. ^{who}That is, Lyndon, and ~~he~~ believes the country in turn appreciates it.

Lyndon told me we must try to do some w sweet things for the girls to make up to them at least a bit, and I think I can.

It was an interesting time with a highly congenial company for me. Lyndon was very late, but nobody could have been more understanding than this group. It gave me a chance for the best talk I have ever had with Mr. Ball. He told me about ~~the~~ his three terms of service with the government. He got here one month after FDR, stayed

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a couple of years that time; returned in the 40s in a different department for a several years ~~pick~~ ^{pitch}; and then came back for five and a half years with Kennedy-Johnson.

Lyndon's speech was from a prepared text. It could have been better without. But the words and delivery were really great. He described George Ball, as he often has been, as the devil's advocate taking the other side, but doing it because he had been asked to do it to ~~exp~~ ^{explore} every angle, to lay on the table every path that might be followed.

And then we gave them a silver silver cigarette box with the signatures of all the Cabinet, and books to George Ball's two sons, and then the high point of the evening to me was George Ball's response, completely without notes, extremely erudite and I believe sincere; disagree he may often [^]with respect, and even like [^]I think he does. I was touched and pleased. We talked about what he was going to do next. They are off for Italy tomorrow for a long and leisurely ^{3 months -} journey wherever their fancy takes them, and a ~~French~~ ^{French} villa they call headquarters. I was immensely envious. He said sometime he was going to start writing a book. I wonder if involuntarily I ^cflinched[?]. He said, "Don't worry; it's not going to be memoirs." I got the

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impression he meant the gossip, instant history sort of thing that has been such a spate^{of} these days.

And then he said "I would like to , if the President agrees, dedicate it to him. It would be my feeling on the foreign polkcy."

When they left both he and Mrs. Ball kissed me, and I felt like they had pinned a medal on me.

Lyndon was off among the earliest guests with a brisk step back to his office, and after the last guest had departed, I did a little work, had supper on a tray in bed at nine o'clock^{feeling} like a deserter^{and} then had a massage, and was ready for sleep by ten.

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