

Tuesday, January 17, ¹⁹⁶⁷~~1968~~

Tuesday, January 17th, was one of those ~~xxxx~~ roaring, busy White House days. Lyndon awoke early and I stumbled into my room, back to the soft bliss of sleep, woke up about 9:30 and rejoined him for coffee and juice, and the newspaper, and then up the big day. the morning on necessary household tasks, talking with Bess about our house guests, assigning rooms, working with Ashton and Zephyr on menus.

Lyndon feels I am neglecting my housework. these days.

I talked to dear Marnie Clifford who is scheduled for an operation, made a date with Lera Thomas to come to see me this afternoon, and talked to Lynda in California. She reports there has been no publicity. They have been strictly left alone and out of the papers. She feels there is a wide gap between herself and the girls she ~~se~~ has ~~interview~~ interviewed on the California campuses. The net of it is that s he feels older, more mature, more conservative than she ^k things they feel. Someone had ~~raise~~ raised the question, wasn't she concerned about there being some picketing when she came out to California. And one of the girls she was interviewing had answered "If there is going to be any picketing,

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I would ~~like to~~ be in it. More than half of them had protested, picketing, carrying placards, and feeling in some way that it was a mark of accomplishment.

I went to the dentist and fitted dresses with Lucinda, talked to Doris Powell in Karnack about the Post Office which I very much hope will be a somewhat distinguished and worthy building in my little hometown, and then a bit of rest, and at four o'clock Lera Thomas came back from a month in Vietnam where she had gone to hospitals and schools and ate with the soldiers in their messes, talked with them by the dozens, traveled the length of the land. She brought me a letter from Mrs. Caulfield - medal of freedom winner -- a blind woman who worked with the blind in Vietnam, a thrilling letter. She told stories of the work with of individual American doctors giving two months from their lives to work with the Vietnamese as well as our soldiers, and of an American woman doctor not more than 40 who had simply immersed her life in working for them. Had a small hospital

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with more patients sleeping in the halls than in beds,
and our people are training midwives, medical assistants,
It has been a singular opportunity and a ~~hazardous~~
hazardous one for a woman and all the time I watched Lera
I thought of her having been for all these years the wife of
one of the most powerful men on the Hill, and now here she
is a widow and what will she do next?

Then I heard the tolling of a distant bell. Lyndon
had discussed the possibility that she might be seeking a job.
Bless him, he said, "You have to think of something she could
do. What could you do if you were a widow?" There are so
many reasons why I like him! But for now Lera is not seeking
a job. She is returning to Houston to help Ann have her 3rd
baby, and probably to marry off Lera in March, and then what
comes next she doesn't know. She is uncertain but she is an
indomitable woman. A funny gift she brought me, for Lyndon
it was, It was a shirt made out of a sack that had held bulgar
a sort of a rough wheat product, apparently, that we send to the
Vietnamese for distribution to refugees. I laughed and thought
this is the second time around. In my childhood the sons and
daughters of tenant farmers wore shirts and dresses made out
of ~~flower~~ four sacks. Somebody in that AID program must have
a past that goes back to that.

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// And then after an hour Lera left and my next appointment came - Joan Crawford, that glamorous ^{woman} I have watched on the screen for so many years, now a Vice President of Pepsi-Cola, with Liz and Sharon and Rosemary Stroer (?) She wanted to tell me about Pepsi's cooperation on the beautification front. Streamers on their delivery trucks, ~~little~~ litter bags and ~~little~~ ^{litter} barrels to be distributed by their dealers, ^{line} a ~~line~~ on all their TV commercials, address to the young people "It's your country. Put that empty bottle in the trash container. "

It is an endless fascination to me to meet people from the stage and talk theatre. They are glamorous forever in capital letters. It is surprising to me to find that some of them, and lots of people everywhere, think about us in politics with the same wide eyes.

// Of course, I had left Miss Crawford's name at the gate. When she was stopped there, she had said she was asked "What do you have for identification?" She answered "Just my face." Ah, fame! I wonder how long that will suffice for any of us?

For me this was a good chance to thank, praise, applaud Pepsi Cola's efforts on keeping our country clean.

They left about 6 . During the afternoon there had

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been calls, dashes up to the third floor, to welcome our house guests, the Jack Joseys, the Harold Youngs, the McCrocklins, the Roy Whites, Mrs. Herbert Marcus, Stanley's mother wasn't coming until dinner time, ^{I had made} and arrangements for them to have tours or cars or tea in their room.

Then I had a rub and reviewed the guest list and went ^{over} ^{seating} ~~our~~ the ~~feeding~~ chart with Bess. Then Jean Louis came and with his deft touch made a transformation between me of the afternoon and me of the evening with my hair piled high, and I wore my very favorite dress -- the Molly Parness white with the beaded jacket. I was dressed by 7:30, and Okamoto did some pictures of me in the Yellow Room. Months and years pass and I send out the same pictures simply because I don't spend the time to get new good ones made.

Our honor guests came a little before 8 and I met them in the Yellow Room -- The Chief Justice and Mrs. Warren and their family, the John Daleys and Mrs. Carmen ^{Clemente} ~~Clemente~~ first to arrive, then the Speaker and Mrs. McCormack with his handsome nephew, Eddie McCormack and his pretty wife. Miss Harriet on a cane walking with great difficulty, with unfailing devoted assistance from her husband the Speaker who

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looked paler and more sepulchral than usual. It was only later that I found that today a campaign had been launched to unseat him from his position as Speaker, a challenge on the Hill, a column by Drew Pearson, and last to come were Hubert and Muriel, looking very sharp in a white dress. His sister, Mrs. Wm. Baines and her husband, his sister, Frances Howard, who lives here, and his brother Ralph Humphrey from back home -- it is his first time in the White House, Hubert explained.

Then Lyndon came in bringing Mike Mansfield and Senator Dirksen with whom he had been conferring. Their wives had joined us earlier. Among the wives at least a fresh spirit of union, of getting back together in January is still abroad, and there was talk of the first meeting with of the Senate ladies Red Cross, ~~and~~ about 60 in attendance, and for the first time a Senate wife introducing her daughter who had joined the group, Louella Dirksen's daughter, whose husband is Senator Baker from Tennessee. They had had about 60 in attendance. I missed them. Some Tuesday I will drop in.

// At 8:15 the color guard came in, and the delightful bit of pageantry started, the removal of the colors and then ~~all~~ the line forming to go downstairs - Lyndon and I together,

then Hubert and Muriel, and then the Speaker and Miss Harriett, and the Chief Justice and Mrs. Warren. We were already half way down the stairs, and I remembered aghast I should have made arrangements for Miss Harriet to come down in the elevator. I turned back to them and apologized, but it was just as easy to keep descending. The speaker said "She is a great soldier". So, slowly, ponderously, we made it. //

At the foot of the stairs Bess lined us up for pictures to and the brave call of Hail to the Chief and with head high we marched to the East Room for the receiving line, which this time stood all 8 of us beginning with Lyndon and the Humphreys and McCormacks and Warrens and ending with me at the foot of the stage. How crowded the East Room looked! The stage and 190 guests, and you sacrifice something of the elegance of the smaller dinner.

But this is always one of the happiest parties of the year. Everybody knows everybody. All the Cabinet, including the newly sworn in Allen Boyd and Flavel, and all the Supreme Court, and much of the top echelon of the House and Senate the McClellands and Russell Longs, and Everett and Louella Dirksen, and affable Tom Kuchel with pretty Betty, Mike and Maureen Mansfield, the young and attractive Walter Mondales

--- he is Hubert's former colleague -- and there were two Governors Nelson Rockefeller and Happy, very soon to have their second child it seems. However quickly the wheel of fortune turns! I am glad that ~~both~~^{up} both in its ~~downward~~^{up} ~~sweep~~ sweeps and down surges, and now is certainly one, we have liked him and he I believe has liked us. And young and attractive Gov. Guy and Mrs. Guy of North Dakota.

It was a slow line what with 8 of us in it and half the people pausing to hug and kiss each other. It is the reunion time of year.

And then there were lots of special friends of the Humphreys and the McCormacks and the Chief Justice invited for the occasion because it was their party. And Minnesota and California and Massachusetts were represented well. I delighted particularly for them to share it with those they love.

From the government there were the Ramsey^a Clarks and the Thurgood Marshalls, and Sol Linowitz, full of enthusiasm for his job^{and} optimism, and Farris Bryant the shepherd of the Governors with his lovely wife. From our staff the ^Ccalifanos, the Watsons, and George Christian who must be indoctrinated by knowing everybody, and Mike Manatos whose daily job it is to deal with the Congress, and Liz Carpenter and a sizeable number of other House members -- Manny Cellar and Republican

stalwart Leslie Arends and Charles Halleck, and two Texans who have survived the years with important committee assignments, the George Mahons and the Bob Poag~~ues~~. Other Southern^{ers} who wald a heavy power in the House, Wilbur Mills and Mendel^f Rivers, Hale Boggs was there from the leadership, but not Carl Albert, from the Republican side, ~~G~~erry Ford and his pretty wife Betty. And our old friends, the Douglas Arants from Alabama who used to handle some legal work for me in a time of the settlement of the estate, and the Miguel Guajardos from Acapulca, associated with some of the happiest times of our life, and of course our house guests.

The entertainment world was especially well represented. Tonight was the most star-studded entertainment the White House has seen in a long time - Carol Channing doing 30 minutes from Hello Dolly and with her was the composer Jerry Herman and Producer David Merrick who she calls the money man of the show.

And from my earliest memories of the great of the stage, Alfred Lunt and Lynne Fontaine, aging but elegant, and Joan Crawford -- there was a marvelous transformation from this afternoon. Her simple basic black dress could have been anybody's. Tonight her shocking pink dress and coat announced her presence from one end of the East Room to the other, and the

that ^{legendary} ~~legendary~~ Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., a pretty young Negro singer, Nancy Wilson, a big Falstaffian character with a beard whom lots of guests recognized as the great jazz man from New Orleans; from the education world Dr. Butterfield of ^{Wesleyan} ~~Weslyn~~ University in Middletown, Conn., and our own Dr James McCrocklin from Southwest Texas State College, George Meany of Labor advanced ponderously on his ~~cane~~ cane, and C. R. Smith, ^{from} business, leaned over a minute to let me tell him how much we thanked him for his generosity to the White House. He gave the Thomas Moran painting and may give the Tate. The Press was there in full force -- the Dan Rathers and nearly blind Victor Reisel, Ray Shearer because he covers us so constantly in Texas I feel especially easy around him, and the same for the Jack Horners, and the Bob Youngs and the Kirkpatricks.

When the lengthy line was at last over, Lyndon took Muriel and and Mrs. Warren to the State Dining Room. I went into the Blue Room with Hubert on my right and the Speaker on my left. Next to him sat Mrs. McCormack. They are never separated at dinner parties. In fact, in all the long decades of their marriage, he has had dinner with her every night. And then Russell Long alone. Katherine will come up when his daughter is queen of the Mardi Gras, And Betty Kuschel

always a good guest, she keeps her side of the table lively,
and then David Merrick (?) and Lynne Fontaine who spent
most of the evening talking to each other. I caught one
phrase "When have you seen Noel?" I was fascinated by
Lynne Fontaine who wore a regal, flowing cream or gray
chiffon as queenly as her own manner, ^ahandsome & jeweled
pin -- it looked like the Czar of the all the Russians might
have given it to her, her hair piled on top of her head, in
her late 70s creating the illusion of beauty. She drew me like
a magnate. I had looked up some of the things she had played
in ahead and found that they took me all the way back to my old
favorites, "Design for Living" and "Idiot's Delight", - Noel Coward
I think, "There Shall be No Night", the most stirring war play
I remember. I spoke about them briefly. She told me she was
doing Anastasia for TV in March. The conversation naturally
gravitated to the theatre, and Hubert - no surprise - came up
with the liveliest ~~story~~ stories of all, stories of a traveling
company coming to the opera house in South Dakota. It would
be named the Opera House. What dream of glory caused them
all to be named that in Marshall or Johnson City or that little
town in South Dakota. They borrowed his Mother's davenport
and rug every year, and the family got free tickets to the play
in return. Hubert was in great form and carried the table with
him. I was grateful because on my left the Speaker was silent

and sad, serving Miss Harriet's plate, speaking gently to her, and I puzzling in my mind her conversation with him as far removed as possible from the days events in the House.

We had "Sole Nina", delicious, and "Pheasant Muriel."

Hubert said the wild rice should be after him. And then a chocolate "Souffle Harriet". My heart always lifts with the singing strings. I feel like ^{to} a special gift to the guests!

But next comes a problem we haven't solved when we have a dinner in two rooms. Those of us in the Blue Room cannot see the President when he rises for his toast. The murmur ^{his first} of voices continues. We always lose a ~~few~~ phrase or two or a sentence, but it was splendid, his toast. I liked especially the line "It was the richness of this American earth that made us powerful and affluent. It was the fidelity of men like these that made us free." These were the three honorees, the Vice President, the Speaker and the Chief Justice.

In his reply Hubert left off being funny for once and was serious in recalling FDR's last written but unspoken words, the gist of which I recall "There is no limit to our accomplishments of tomorrow except our ~~our~~ failing today."

The Speaker when his ^{time} ~~term~~ came changed from his subdued and sad manner of the evening to a tall and commanding figure. He called the White House ["] This Mansion of destiny to

which few are called, "our leader to day is a man ~~bibb~~
bigger than life, a man ~~close~~ close to the soil and to the
Bible, a man who is on the largest scales of human progress."

And Chief Justice Warren's reply ~~was~~ I can
characterize mainly, just as I can him, of good will, sweet,

Then we rose up and went into the Red Room and
the Green Room and the Hall to speak to those people we had
missed and have some brandy and spend 10 minutes ~~with~~
before the marvelous entertainment.

In introducing one guest to another I called her by
the wrong name, even going on to add the wrong home town,
and from then on the rest of the evening felt about 14 years
old and all thumbs and knees — ~~at~~ the very other end of the
scale of poise and command, Miss Fontaine had something
very nice to say to Lyndon. She liked his toast, the words
brought tears to her eyes. I felt as good as ~~I~~ had had the
moment before. She also told me her dress was copied
exactly after one she had had made 25 years before for a
great occasion. I had heard Moreau (?) had made her clothes
and she said the same dressmaker had made this one. I felt
greatly flattered. She had had this one made for her visit to the
White House. (end of tape)

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Then Lyndon and I and the six honor guests took our seats in the front row in the East Room and in every chair there was a program with a green-gold seal on it, with a delightful picture of Dolly and the synopsis of what we would see--thirty minutes from Act II. "Elegance--the waiters galloped and Hello Dolly was enchantment. The waiters did gallop, the costumes were hilarious. The audience kept time with their feet or leaned forward and then the awaited moment when Dolly came in, in pink and crimson and cherry red satin and beads and a bushel of feathers for a hat. It was one of the gayest times I remember in the White House and over all too soon. When the curtain came to for the last time after storms of applause, Gower Champion brought Carol down the steps and David Merrick came up to join us and all the cast stood behind us and the Humphreys, McCormacks and Warrens called in a group, "This old house is bursting at the seams tonight," and there were pictures, pictures, pictures. Then the band struck up Happy Birthday to You and a huge cake was wheeled in as pink and cherry and crimson as Dolly's own dress. This was the fourth anniversary of the opening of the show. Carol herself has performed it over a thousand times and here began the second and impromptu show--a lively exchange of two or three minutes. Carol said, "Dear Mr. President, we are all so touched. You knew we were coming. Lady Bird, I understand you have the finest recipes for cakes--all of them from Dolly Madison."

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She introduced the heads of the cast, each one with a quip, and then turned to the audience. "I am deeply grateful for the Great Society because apparently you know how to spread it around." This was an obvious reference to the lines in the play "Money is like ~~unto~~ manure which doesn't do any good unless it is spread around." That brought down the house, but before they could recover, Lyndon said, "we've got to close down this show before Senator Dirksen takes it over," and then he reached out and took the Senator by the arm. Senator Dirksen ambled up to meet Miss Channing and she quickly said, "Many people say we sound alike," and the audience roared again. Lyndon looked over for Senator Mansfield, sent someone to find him. Apparently he was gone and in the manner of a certain Senatorial couple named Johnson, the other past Administrations before 1961, a good many of the guests, the busier or older ones go home before the entertainment.

Then the guests filtered out into the great hall and the Marine Band there struck up dance music and Lyndon led Carol out on to the floor. Her feathered hat covered his face as they danced. Rather than join in, nearly everybody joined a circle and watched. The night really has been a night of politicians rubbernecking at theater celebrities and show people rubbernecking at the politicians. Well, this was a combination not to be missed. Then Hubert took over with Carol. Doug Fairbanks asked me to dance and talks as charmingly as he

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looked. He spoke of his visits to the White House, beginning with the early days of FDR. He used to make a few trips for FDR--information gathering. He smiled implicatively and said, "I was no NO. 007, maybe an 003 1/2."

He then spoke of the Inauguration of 1941. There was a dance at the White House beforehand and suddenly someone came up to him with the message that he must leave at once--that Robert Sherwood was writing the Inaugural Speech and he had been taken ill and he had the task of completing it and an hour to do it in. Quaking, he left the floor and somehow got through the task!

A few other guests drifted in for the entertainment. Ambassador Edward Clark, who we just found out was in town and his daughter, Leila, most impressed, Nancy Dickerson looking very beautiful in green satin. Before 12:30 Lyndon left and I soon followed. He said, "if you would like to get the house guests up, I will slip on a robe and we will have a nightcap." So I got Bess to look for the Joseys and the Youngs and the Whites. I took the McCrocklins up. I had noticed that Mrs. Herbert Marcus, who apparently had a wonderful time, mostly taken under the wing of the Abe Fortases and the Marvin Watsons, had gone up a good deal earlier and ^{was} ~~were~~ apparently already asleep. So, ^{then} the ten of us who were spending the night under the roof met in the Yellow Room and Ed and Leila joined us and for an hour ^{and} we reviewed the party. No two couples enjoyed it more than the Roy

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Whites, to whom it is the greatest pleasure to offer some hospitality, and the Jack Joseys, a member of the Board of Regents of the University, an attractive couple, not too blasé to be really thrilled at being in the White House. Mary Louise and I talked about Longle^aigh--long ago a place of enchantment in my life. Alice does not live there now. It has been sold to one of the Paul Mellon interests, she thinks. This is the cozy intimate part of a White House visit so I tried to make it for each of the couples a personal moment of being talked to and listened to. Lyndon was in great form telling the Menzies' story for Ed's benefit, recounting our stay in Australia for them all and it was 1:30 before he went to bed--he to his night reading and I to sleep.

1967 had begun auspiciously on the social front, at least, ^{Albert}~~all be it~~ surrounded by a swarm of troubles on every other side.