

1967

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 7

The city was wrapped in a ^{winter} ~~fall~~ cocoon of white. I slept late and had a mid-morning meeting with Liz and Doug Cater and Simone in the Queen's Sitting Room to discuss a possible education trip to Appalachia-- Pennsylvania and West Virginia and Kentucky, North Carolina and Tennessee, for the purpose ^{of giving} ~~to give~~ exposure to some of the wonderful things Lyndon has achieved in education, Teachers Corps in operation in some back hollow of West Virginia, an adult education project, new buildings at a new community college in Tennessee, winding up at a reception at the Hermitage given by Governor Buford Ellington for education-oriented people of all facets. Maybe John Gardner might accompany me. It sounded very interesting and I would like to go, but there are a lot of hazards.

I lunched on a hamburger in the room with Lynda. In the middle of the afternoon Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Irshin ^{Came} to tour and tea, a couple who had lost their only son in Vietnam and we had had several exchanges of letters with them--Lyndon had-- very simple and touching when they wrote they would be in town for a Convention and asked if they could come to see us. I said yes. I had been a little taken back when a wire had come from some Public Relations person connected with the Convention wanting to be on hand to take pictures. We had promptly answered that this was a quiet personal visit-- no pictures. When I met them I felt

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they were as simply, as earnest, as likeable as their letters had seemed and no part of this PR man's eagerness to make publicity out of their visit. Such a visit must necessarily be strained-- to begin, at least-- but soon I found myself feeling quite at home with them. She was the most talkative of the two, a plump comfortable woman, quick to tell me about her family. She had two daughters besides the son and she had been out to spend four days with him during his rest and recuperation time in Hawaii. ~~She~~ He said he was never bitter and he knew what he was there for. They all knew, the soldiers, he said, but they did feel a little concerned about the folks back home who were doing all of the complaining. He said I write to the Generals--Westmoreland and DePue, because I think they must be lonesome. I bet nobody writes to the Generals. ^{"I"} I would agree with her on the lonesome part. I felt they were still partially anesthetized. The blow had not completely come home yet. All at the same time it was painful and exhausting, with a thread of sweetness in it because of their pride in their son. They were two of the real innocents I think. You almost forget there are a lot of people in the world like them.

A little later Roxanne came and we had a cup of tea in the West Hall.

 She is getting a Masters in Journalism at Columbia. She seemed very excited about it, not in love with anyone. This is rather sad at twenty-three or

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twenty-four-- more anxious to go back to live in Europe than to do anything in the United States. How strange! She said she had been with her CBS people to cover the White House this morning, part of her assignment as a journalism student and that nobody that she worked with or around knew that she had any relation to the White House.

At six o'clock there was the main event of the day. I had invited the White House Fellows-- this year's eighteen and the five that had stayed on from last year-- to bring their wives and come for a drink. ^A It was a low-key, informal talking party with a few of our staff members, the Doug Caters, the Bob Kintners, and their young children who were just back from the Peace Corps, and Richard Graham, the Director of the National Teachers Corps, and Bill Baxter, my Episcopal Minister who had left to take the place Bill Moyers once had with the Peace Corps. They are some of the brightest young people in the whole country, in their late twenties or early thirties, already established and marked for success. ^{They} were spending a year of their lives working for the Government in the area of great exposure, the sharpest demands and challenges the Government has, because the Fellow works directly in the office of the Director of the Budget or with John Gardner in HEW or with Bill Wirtz in Labor. Now three or four of them are right here in the White House. One, assigned to Dr. Hornig, Sanford Greenberg, had been named by the Junior Chamber of Commerce as one of the ten most outstanding young

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men in the United States along, incidentally, with Joe Califano. One I have come to know well and be very fond of, a member of last year's crop, Tom Johnson, from Georgia. He is number two or three as White House Press Officer. There is only one woman in the crowd-- Jane Cahill, who is with HUD and only one Texan, Walter Humann, of Dallas, who is in Post Office. One Negro, Major Ronald Lee, one of the most attractive of all, a regular Army man, part of last year's crop, ^{is} with Larry O'Brien at the Post Office.

After the brief receiving line, I sat down in the Red Room and soon found myself in the midst of a very interesting group of about eight crowded around. Unfortunately, though, they wanted to hear about me and I wanted to hear about them, but there was a good exchange. I think the thing I heard repeated most was that they were impressed with the quality of the men at the top of the Government and how many hours they put in working at it. And among the women it was that they never saw their husbands for dinner. There seemed to be great camaraderie among them all. To my delight, suddenly someone was at my elbow saying that the President had come into the Blue Room and he would like to say a few words and my crowd immediately melted into the Blue Room. Lyndon stood rather in the middle of a large circle with his hands clasped loosely behind him, his head lowered slightly talking very quietly. It was one of those wonderful times I would have given anything to have it on tape! His language was so simple, fresh, terse. You could have heard a pin

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drop. The burden of it in general was it is not hard for a President to do what's right, it is hard for him to know what's right, and a brief resume ^{of} ~~for~~ their achievements in which they, this group, can take pride.

I had planned this meeting without him partly because I want to get to know these young people myself, partly because I want to do anything I can to increase the feeling of closeness among all the people who work around us, closeness, determination, high spirit. These are bad times, the Press buffeting us on every hand. I want to search for talent in any way I can and I want to fight back in any way that I can. To have Lyndon come in made the evening because it is him I want them to feel close to.

One of the fellows leaned over to me and said "If only everybody could hear him like we hear him. Can't we get him on TV like this?" I am afraid not. # It was a long party. I did not leave until eight thirty. Then I had three quick games of bowling, felt somewhat less caged for it and back on the second floor, ^uwaited until eleven o'clock when Lyndon came with Joe Califano and George Christian and we finally sat down to dinner and a rub and then to bed. The Manchester book has at last run its full course, but we are wading through a dank swamp of bad stories and bad feelings with nothing good on the horizon except Luci, who is thoroughly happy, got back home safely and Pat is registered in two courses.

Sometimes there is a little loneliness in her voice. #