

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Thursday, February 9, 1967

Page 1

I breakfasted with Lyndon, and then left at 9:40 for my Spanish class. Since I'll only have half of it today, I want every minute possible. Only Grace and June were there. I stayed until a little past 11:00 and then returned to the White House for a 11:30 meeting on the North Portico with King Hassan.

The big black limousine with the flags flapping rolled up around the drive between the line of servicemen at attention, And the flags of all the States in bright array. There were ruffles and flourishes and out stepped the monarch -- a dapper, slight, youngish man with long sideburns and a very contained expression, wearing a short, checkered overcoat that looks like a sports coat and alligator shoes. His sister, the Princess Aicha followed him. We posed under the Portico for pictures which are different this time because he had brought his two children -- the Crown Prince, Sidi Mohamed, three years old, dressed in a white wool caftan and a white ~~fez~~. And his four year old sister, Princess Lalla, as normal and inattentive as any American three and four year olds.

We are trying out a new format for winter arrival ceremonies -- honor guard and National Anthems under the North Portico and in through the Great Hall, filled to bursting with people who have been invited to witness the arrival ceremony, into the East Room and onto the stage where ~~for~~ the welcoming speech and the answer take place.

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Thursday, February 9, 1967

Page 2

The East Room seemed very small with the stage up and the flanks of TV and cameramen and newsmen and the crowd of guests. I feel that it takes away from the sense of elegance. I do not believe this format will work indoors. Outside, fine -- the color, the pomp ceremony, the trumpets and flags, are thrilling for visitors to watch on the South Grounds.

After the speeches, we went to the Blue Room and met first the whole Moroccan delegation which included 5 Princes, 2 Princesses, and 6 Ministers of Cabinet rank. And then, all the African diplomats and a small group of Washingtonians, including of course Walter Tobriner and Edgar Morris.

Then I escorted the Princess out the front door and she was gone.

#  
I spent the afternoon working, having lunch on a tray in my room. Once I went down to see the dance rehearsal. The East Room was dark -- only the spotlight on the stage. And José Limon and three dancers were practicing. It would be the Moor's Pavane, an interpretation of *Othello* O'Fellow, from Shakespeare, with the four main characters.

José Limon was as bald as an egg, but <sup>an</sup> altogether ~~an~~ attractive looking man. I marvelled that he could be so graceful, so controlled. He is in his middle 50's.

I had house guests coming, and I had asked Marilyn to alert me when any of them arrived. And so I met Mr. and Mrs. Hackney from

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Thursday, February 9, 1967

Page 3

Marshall who runs the bank that my daddy did business with more than 50 years. And Mrs. Hudspeth who guided first Lynda and then Luci through the maze of the University, and Joe Batson while they were taking a tour. Later on Governor Sanders of Georgia and Betty were coming. And then Mayor and Mrs. Wagner, to be our house guests.

I went up and had a cup of tea and ~~had~~ a nice long visit with the Hackneys. We heard about the work of the Interracial Council in Marshall, the plans for a dam on Caddo Lake and barges that would come up the Mississippi and then through the Red River and then Caddo Lake and the Bayou ~~Bayou~~ to Daingerfield and Jefferson, about the museum and the rather hopeless possibility that the brick house would ever be any sort of a historic site open to the public.

Sometime in the afternoon, I stopped in to see Betty and Carl who looked very happy and carefree.

I was wearing my ivory chiffon by Stavropolous. Jean Louis came and gave me a very fancy up hair-do, and I was ready by 7:15 to have pictures made by Okamoto in the Green Room and the Yellow Oval Room. We are always using pictures that are two or three years old. This setting, these clothes, will in a flash of the eye -- like Cinderella -- be gone from me. So I should get some good ones while I am here to send out and to save.

There is always that last-minute tension when Lyndon is getting dressed about 10 minutes before the visiting Chief of State is supposed to

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Thursday, February 9, 1967

Page 4

arrive. But Lyndon can dress in a flash of an eye. And we were downstairs on the front Portico a moment or two past 8:00 to meet King Hassan and his party.

He wore a white "jaloba" it's called -- a rather sheer homespun robe that can go over a suit, and a red fez. I am told that he always does this on a State visit, although at home he would be wearing a beautifully tailored Western <sup>man</sup> suit and driving his own sports car.

And his sister, the Princess Aicha, had on a beautifully embroidered light blue caftan that simply drifted around her ankles in long folds and <sup>my</sup>numerable strands of pearls.

There was the general, I hope, business of turning and placing the guests for pictures, first to the right and then to the left, for the mass of photographers. And then inside and up to the Yellow Oval Room. It was a small group this time. The Vice President without Muriel, Dean and Virginia Rusk, our Ambassador and Mrs. Tasca, and the King's brother, Prince Moulay Abdallah, and his sister, the Princess Aicha, and their Ambassador and his very beautiful wife Mrs. Laraki, and Lynda Bird, who looked very Spanish in a deep rose silk with a beaded black velvet jacket and her hair up very high in loops.

Princess Aicha was very difficult to engage in conversation. She is their Ambassador to London. But I could only get monosyllable answers to questions, though I searched eagerly and I hope brightly for some mutual topic.

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Thursday, February 9, 1967

Page 5

Jimmy gave me a look and I said, "May I ask you to join me on this side of the room?", and gathered up the Princess and the King and Lyndon around the desk for the exchange of our gifts -- a vermeil humidor with a Seal and a great big western style saddle for the King who is an enthusiastic horseman, and a replica of a silver-mounted hunting sword worn by George Washington throughout much of the American revolution. The original is in the Smithsonian. And there was a vermeil bowl just like those we use here in the White House -- the bamboo style -- for flowers for the Princess. And a whole group of books.

And then we were over at the other side of the room for their gifts. I am often reminded that we are <sup>very</sup> simple democratic Nation in our dealings with long-established monarchies. For Lyndon there was an enormous sword in gold with an elaborate carving that glittered with jewels. George Washington's <sup>for</sup> was a simple soldier. For me, a very elaborate gold box. And for the family, a set of gold dishes with our initials.

And then the honor guard came in to take the colors. Lyndon escorted the King, and the rest of us fell in behind -- Prince Moulay Abdallah, the Princess and I, the Vice President and the Rusks.

As we lined up at the foot of the stairs, I was aware of a commotion on my right. Somebody seemed to have tripped. I thought it was the Princess. It would only have increased the attention to it if I looked or helped. So I smiled straight ahead. The next day I noticed with some

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Thursday, February 9, 1967.

Page 6

annoyance that the brief second when the Princess Aicha tangled in her long caftan and sunk to the floor was the picture they used in both papers. At any rate, it was a very graceful fall -- a ballet itself. I've always regarded those stairs as a hazard in high-heels and a long dress. But at least my evening dresses are not as long as the caftans.

I can't imagine anyone running after the children or driving the car to the grocery store wearing one.

It was a smaller dinner tonight with only 135 since the King had brought no wife. Actually, his Queen is never spoken of.

There were two Cabinet members besides the Rusks -- the McNamaras and the Freemans.

The Senate was represented by the Clifford Cases of New Jersey and the Gene McCarthys -- he looking very tan and handsome. And Abigail, relaxed and well. But not ready to go back to taking Spanish. She is writing one book and editing another before she joins us in April.

And there were four from the House.

And among the former Ambassadors to Morocco, there were the Julius Holmes who had taken such good care of us when he had been Ambassador to Iran on our visit there.

I had asked the Bill Crooks, just up from San Marcos as Director of VISTA, and Jack Vaughn of the Peace Corps was there.



MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Thursday, February 9, 1967

Page 7

From the world of entertainment there were the David Brubecks, the pianist. And Ray Harm, the Artist, and Herman Wouk, the novelist.

And besides our house guests, another Texan -- Bob Kleberg of the King Ranch. And Lynda's host in New Orleans -- the Herman Kohlmeyers, when she had spent New Year's Eve there with George to usher in '66.

And my host from San Francisco for the opera, the Robert Watt Millers, very aristocratic and fine looking. I was glad to see them.

Our house guests, the Bob Wagners, arrived at 8:00 after a very bad flight, and were downstairs in ~~even~~ evening clothes only 20 minutes later.

From the press, there was lovely Shana Alexander of LIFE, and Betty Beale who has been to Morocco and knows the King. And the Kenneth Crawfords of NEWSWEEK. And Josephine Ripley of the "Christian Science Monitor". And Howard K. Smith of ABC, one of the few interviews I remember fairly well enjoying.

Business was represented by the Carter Burgesses from American Machine & Foundry. And William Dunn of Associated General Contractors. And after he had gone down the line, I could have kicked myself for not thanking him for what they are doing with Walt Whitman Park.

And Tom Gates who used to be in Eisenhower's Cabinet. And my old friend, Armand Hammer who before the evening was over said to me, "When you are working on a project, something that you are interested in, let me know, I would ~~like~~ like to help you."

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Thursday, February 9, 1967

Page 8

And the Albert Nickersons. And an attractive, youthful Bill Youngman, one of Tom Corcoran's associates.

Scooter and Dale had returned from Morocco only the week before, glowing with the wonderful time they had had. It was a cross-section of our country. —

The President of the University of Connecticut, Dr. Babbidge, from the world of education. —

The Mat Guinans from labor,  
And a fair quota of staff.

I was seated between the King and Prince Moulay Abdallah. I did not find it an easy evening. The King is intelligent, attractive, but perhaps it was my fault I did not find him easy to talk to. Once when I spoke with admiration of him having appointed a woman as an ~~Amb~~ Ambassador to England, his sister, he replied in rather solemn fashion as though admonishing me. In the Moslem religion, there is a quality between men and women despite what many people think.

I asked the Prince on my left to tell me about the official residence of the King in Morocco. And I really got a capsule of the royal life where there is not one official residence, but ten! And the King is expected to spend some time in each of them. Each has been used by a different monarch as the centuries have rolled along.



MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

Thursday, February 9, 1967

Page 9

I was especially grateful to Margy McNamara, who on the Prince's other side was being so lively that he couldn't help but be entertained. And across the table Jane Freeman's bright eyes and flashing smile were keeping her partners lively.

One of them was a Moroccan -- also dressed in a "jalaba". But he had the hood which is attached to it, snugly fitted around his face. It reminded me of an old-fashioned nightgown with a cap. And the lines went through my head from "The Night Before Christmas" -- "While mom in her kerchief and I in my cap, had just settled ourselves for a long winter's nap". And all during dinner everytime I looked at him I had to smother a ridiculous impulse to laugh.

The King tasted hardly a thing. No main course and of course no wine. Although he says that wine is one of the principal products of his country.

The hardest job I know is that of a translator. And it amazes me when they perform it often apparently without notes beforehand with such glib skill. Very few could challenge him there at any rate!

Lynda's table was having a good time -- Betty Sanders, Joe Batson, Mr. Brubeck.

The singing violins are always for me the romance of the evening -- the high point. They left even the most silent and diffident guests in a

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Thursday, February 9, 1967

Page 10

circle of enchantment, I think. We had coffee and liqueurs in the Blue and Red Rooms. And then we went in and took our seats in the front row -- Jimmy searching for the various Princes and Princesses to line them up with the King and Lyndon and <sup>me</sup> and Princess Aicha.

And then Jose Limon gave one of the best performances I have ever seen in the White House. Ballet is not my first love. Drama is. But this was sheer drama, and to me at least the dancing secondary. <sup>ch sp</sup> Deogo was the very spirit of evil, and you could feel his nasty cobweb of doubt closing you in as he leaned over <sup>Othello's</sup> ~~O-Fellows~~' shoulder.

Bess had said that Jose Limon had gone to see the President's barber this afternoon because he had a 5:00 shadow. To me he seemed as bald as an egg.

The gentle, innocent, Desdemona <sup>a</sup> gave a beautiful performance, sinking to death like a fragile flower on the stage <sup>while</sup> her tormented <sup>Othello</sup> ~~O-Fellow~~ laid <sup>bare</sup> ~~down~~ the agony of his soul in every gesture.

When they had finished, Lyndon and I rose and escorted the King up on the stage to meet them and to thank them. There were pictures.

And then as we made our way out into the Hall where trays of champagne were already being passed, The King, with a minimum of talk, said goodnight and we accompanied him to the front door -- the Princess right behind. I think the Larakis were disappointed to go so early -- it was scarcely 11:30. Mrs. Laraki is one of the most beautiful Ambassadors

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Thursday, February 9, 1967

Page 11

wives in Washington. The Moslems are very "in" these days. Some of the loveliest women and gayest parties.

Lyndon too left early -- a little past 11:30. I stayed almost half an hour longer to tour the floor, speak to as many guests as I could. But suddenly it seemed full of press and aides and most of the guests had gone. Snow was falling heavily, and many of them had laughingly said, "If we don't go soon, we'll be snowed in with you for the night."

Close to 12:00 I asked Mayor and Mrs. Wagner to join me on the second floor for a night-cap. Lynda and Joe came with us. The Hackneys and the Sanders had gone up some 10 or 15 minutes earlier. Reluctantly I decided not to call them down. But that was the best part of the evening, and we simply put up our feet and talked.

Mayor Wagner is a very happy, relaxed man. His wife is younger, gay, and good for him. If he misses his hard job it is only ~~not~~ <sup>Not Talqially</sup> ~~possibly~~, would be my guess.

We talked of his sons -- one has a Marshall Fellowship to Oxford -- of New York politics.

It was a pleasant 30 minutes and then to bed. Lyndon had simply been too tired to join us. Strain and sleeplessness sometimes take their toll -- on even the toughest. And the dark cloud of blame and criticism is pervasive these days.

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Thursday, February 9, 1967

Page 12

My most pleasant memory of the evening were the actors themselves -- Jose Limon whom I had talked to quite a little downstairs and the three with him.

I had been a little startled when Rostow came up to me and said, "I think Bess can relax. I don't think anybody was worried about the entertainment except the State Department." I questioned him and he said there had been a flap about presenting ~~Othello~~ <sup>Othello</sup>, lest it be considered a slur to the Moroccans. To me it was a very foolish walking-on-eggs business -- ~~Othello~~ <sup>Othello</sup> about whom Shakespeare wrote some 300 years ago was certainly not the first jealous older man married to a beautiful young wife.

Nevertheless I felt -- and why I can't quite say -- that it hadn't been a really great party. So it was balm and solace later on to hear my house guests exclaiming with delight about what a good time they had had at their tables, about the food, the violins, the entertainment -- everything.

House guests for a State Dinner -- old friends from Texas, Governors, long-time political friends -- are one of the extra touches that I have enjoyed and that I think mean something to the people who share them.