

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Wednesday, February 22, 1967

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George Washington's birthday was an off-beat day for me spent in New York. I caught the 9:00 shuttle and arrived at the Carlyle at 10:15. Jack Valenti had been aboard. We drove him in. He and Mary Margaret are leaving next Sunday for Spain. ~~But~~ I keep on finding such delicious examples of what other people do in their lines of work. First there was Miss Treyz and Adele Simpson, and then the Marquise clothes.

Lynda Bird was sleeping very late. Thank goodness I remembered that it was a holiday. She had been out with John Loeb, Jr., the night before, and when she finally woke up, was full of gay chatter.

Mollie Parnis came in time for lunch, and Sally Victor. We had fittings of her things, and I made a few more tentative choices. — I could tell being very parsimonious according to Bess' way of thinking. She and Helen both look at me with a mild reproof and assure me that I will indeed need everything that I am getting and several more in addition that I say I cannot afford.

Mollie sometimes tells interesting little anecdotes of her days with helping Mrs. Eisenhower. And I am always reassured and pleased that none of them would I mind being told if I were Mrs. Eisenhower. She does not however say anything about Mrs. Kennedy, although I think I have read that Mrs. Kennedy got some clothes from her, and I do not ask.

We lunched in front of the big picture window giving out onto the Park -- an unforgettably thrilling view. I have all these scenes locked

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in my heart to remember when life is quieter.

How funny that just trying on clothes should be so tiring!

By the time that Mr. Stavropolous came -- and he was loudly announced from the foot of the steps by one of the Secret Service men, much to Bess' chagrin and mine, because Mollie Parnis and Sally Victor were just leaving. ~~By~~ this time I found that I was really tired and quite sure I only wanted one dress from him -- the exquisite yellow chiffon that looks like a Botticelli girl dancing in the dell, scattered with little daisies down the front.

So it was a very pleasant self-indulgent feeling to lie down and have a facial and read. Lynda had left by this time, going out to lunch and a matinee, "Black Magic" with John Loeb, Jr. -- a very impressive young man. Actually he is 36, handsome, extremely New York. A totally different world from me, from Lynda.

When Lynda came in, we went over the guest list that Mary's secretary had thoughtfully provided for us. Lynda knows more of them and more about them than I do.

I had my hair combed, piled on top of my head, and wore my pale yellow Adele Simpson dress with the jacket. And a little before 8:00 we left for Mary's. From the moment we entered it was perfection, -- the flowers, the food, the setting, the guests. Everything in Mary's house is so exquisitely done. Living is an Art, and planning and imagination

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and great taste have gone into making it so.

There were about 30 guests for dinner. Memorable among them -- the Mark Chagalls. He looks rather like an aging fawn with his spritely, very mobile face, his bushy eyebrows, and a smile that lights up. He spoke only French with a few halting words of English. But he said rather charmingly, "The face talks, ^{//} ~~his~~ does". Everyone was talking about the sets he had done for "The Magic Flute". Chagall loomed rather larger in the production than Mozart. And the James Hesters were there. He is the handsome head of the New York University. He said "Yes, they were ~~ex~~ having their share of protesters and placard carriers. But nobody mentioned the 5-minute standing ovation that some Government official got after there had been a few dozen hecklers." He also said they were going to invite Lyndon to their June graduation ceremony.

The distinguished and interesting Raymond ^{Loewys} ~~Boies~~ were there, and I thanked him again for his help in giving design planning for items for the handicapped to make. He does it I decided for a very good reason. He is a naturalized citizen and still impressed with how wonderful it is to live in this country. He came from France and has been a citizen for 15 years.

Quite without any opening from me, he got launched ^{on} ~~under~~ the subject of anti-Americanism in France which he assured me does not exist among young Frenchmen. They like our clothes, our dances, our cars, our way of living he said.

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Mrs. Danny Kaye was there without her husband who is doing the almost monastically hard work of taping a show.)

Handsome Hugh O'Brian slipped in a bit late, and was sitting by Lynda at dinner. And on her other side, a very attractive young doctor, Henry Betts, who is head of the Rehabilitation Institute in Chicago and looks scarcely over 20.

I sat ~~at~~ between Richard Rogers, the composer, and Lynda's boss, Bob Stein of McCalls, whom I found very easy to talk to, and who seemed to take Lynda pleasantly as a matter of course, and assured me that everybody at McCalls did too, though it certainly had posed problems at first. But he had taken her around to meet every individual so he said they wouldn't gawk at her in the halls. And aside from a few of the difficulties in traveling, the suite in San Francisco particularly, all had gone well. Most of the time he said, she stayed in motels. She was quite content too and was unbothered.

Here was I, great lover of the theatre, sitting next to one of the biggest figures in it -- over how many decades? Three? Four? Richard Rogers. And I couldn't think of anything terribly bright to say to him. So I asked him which of his musicals had he really loved the most himself. He thought a minute and said "Carousel". Fortunately I did remember that that came from "~~Lilium~~" and was one of the very first things I ever

"Lilium"

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saw when I was 15 -- the part of a seed that planted my long harvest of joy in the theatre.

I envied course after course -- so delicious, so beautifully presented.

There were two outstanding toasts -- one rather off-beat by John Gunther, a toast to this room and all the interesting company it has housed over the many years he has known it, for the good talk here, for the beautiful paintings that lined the wall, to the whole exquisite setting -- very apt and bright. And then there was a toast by Lynda that caught us all unaware. "Because this is such an official occasion," she said, "I want to propose a toast to the President -- George, that is." It took several seconds before somebody began to laugh, and then everybody around the table followed suit as they realized it was George Washington. After all, it was his birthday.

Then we dispersed into the other rooms, and gradually the after-dinner guests began to drift in. Leonard ~~Lyons~~ Lyons, whom I have been seeing for much more than 30 years and who doesn't seem a bit older than the first time I saw him. And Mollie Parnis with her beautiful house guest, -- the Stanley Donnans, he is a movie producer. And the John D. Rockefellers. I managed to have a few minutes with him to talk about the wedding. It will be April 1st. They are very happy.

Mary had told me about the new method of smoke control that Major Alexander D'Seversky had invented, and when she brought him over to introduce him I told him that I remember his name well from the early

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1950's when Lyndon and Stu Symington were so interested in increased air power. He is the very apostle of it -- ~~Victory Through Air Power~~. And he said, "Yes, I spent more than 50 years of my life working on airplanes and now I am a 'chimney sweep'".

Someone remarked with amusement that two of George Backer's wives were present, and friends were trying to keep them in different rooms. ^{Larry} Loren Bacall was one of the most charming women there. I looked at her and ^{tried} ~~was~~ to analyze it. It's not looks. I think it's a full, lusty interest in life.

There were lots of the beautiful ~~young~~ people -- Kitty Carlisle and Marietta Tree and Susan Stein. And the most attractive man to me was John Loeb.

I found it hard to talk to any individual. ~~The~~ room was so full. I danced a little. I was really more pleased when John Loeb said, "Come on", and took me to a quiet end of the room where we could look out on the river and the lights. And then we sat down for a few minutes with only four people. This was the happiest time of the evening for me. It was a star-studded group. Richard Kiley of "The Man of LaMancha", the best show of the season was there -- David Merrick, ~~dress~~ designers, museum directors, investment bankers. A marvelous cross-section of a marvelous city gathered together for me by the dearest friend -- a sort of a feast. And so it was.

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The only person I was really disappointed in was me. And one I was particularly proud of was Lynda who was taking it all in like a sponge -- bright, beautiful. Person after person came up to me to say "I didn't know how pretty she was", or how she has grown into a new young woman this last year."

A little before 1:00 I said goodnight to a few around the room, and dearest thanks to Mary and goodbye to Lynda.

A few vagrant flakes of snow were sifting down. When I was back in the Carlyle in bed I could hear the wind roaring around that tower. I read until nearly 2:00.

A happy little postscript to the day had been in the "New York Times" about San Antonio winning the award as the cleanest town in the Nation -- a Nan Robertson story. It wasn't that so much as the fact that 50-percent more towns had entered the competition this year than last. And that after the decision had been reached and the award announced on the basis of a great big scrapbook full of pictures they had sent in that the Mayors and civic leaders from losing towns poured over the winning scrapbook like football coaches studying the films of the previous Saturday's disastrous game. Well, this making that sort of an impact, ^{not} we are here to stay!