

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Thursday, May 18, 1967

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I drifted into consciousness about 7:30, Lyndon was awake reading the papers, and half asleep went into my room where I did not awaken again until 10:30.

This week I cannot get enough sleep, and it is marvelous to be so relaxed except that I begrudge missing Spanish. And by the time I had had coffee and dressed and <sup>been</sup> interrupted by a couple of calls and reached Spanish class it was about 11:30 and three-fourths over, and nobody there but Mercedes and Mrs. Maguire. But they gave me a chance to brush-up on phrases to use at the party. I stopped by Jean Louis on the way back for a quick comb-out and lunch on a tray and changing into my blue Ben Zuckerman with my lovely aquamarine pin from the President of Brazil. And then down to the Blue Room for the first big event of the day -- a tea for the "Friends of the Kennedy Center" -- some 300 of them from 38 States -- their first meeting. It seems that their job is to be the catalyst in their areas to create interest, potential audiences. Nobody had mentioned the word contributions. But as I looked at them I thought I had seldom seen as elegant and ~~be~~ jeweled group -- nearly all women.

The tea followed a very familiar pattern. First a picture in the Blue Room with the <sup>principals</sup> ~~principals~~ -- Ann Brinkley (Mrs. David) Chairman of this Washington meeting, and Mrs. Frank Wesner, National Chairman of the group, followed by the receiving line in the Blue Room with the

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red-coated Marines playing outside in the great Hall, and tea served in the State Dining Room.

There were old Washington society figures -- Mrs. Robert Lowe Bacon and Mrs. <sup>Ed. name</sup> O. Slider and the George Garretts. And familiar names in the art world -- Mrs. Dillon Ripley and Mrs. John Walker, the Leonard Carmichaels, and venerable David Finley tottering along. And the Roger Stevens who's absolutely <sup>ir</sup>replaceable in his field.

Every few moments a dress whipped by that just made me catch my breath -- so stunning it was. Jane Engelhard's, Mrs. Edward P. Morgan's, and Mrs. George Stevens, Jr.'s. The best looking of all perhaps -- Mrs. David Ginsburgh's -- a brilliant yellow dress and a brilliant red coat. One big surprise to me was Mrs. Earl K. Long, widow of the former Governor, an outspoken, active figure herself in Louisiana politics. Somehow this wasn't the milieu I had expected to meet her in. [And for a quite different reason, Mrs. Arthur Schlesinger, who is pleasant enough but whose husband has said such excoriating things about us that I hardly see how even his wife could set foot in the house.

[But then I hear their own relationship 'tenuous.][It was an act of great generosity and not entirely approved by me/ when Lyndon reappointed him as a member of the Kennedy Cultural Center.]

For all their great number, there were only two Kennedys among the "Friends of the Kennedy Center" -- Mrs. <sup>Auchincloss</sup> Okenclaus, very elegant

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and gentle and <sup>quiet</sup> quite. And beautiful Mrs. Teddy Kennedy. And the papers later reported that she and I had on the same dress. There was a smattering of Congress -- Betty Fulbright and Lucy Moorhead and Nuala Pell whose own looks I think have enormous class. And I believe I remember seeing both Senator and Mrs. Percy. I asked about ~~Jay~~ and Sharon -- they were home. It was fun to see my old friend Mathilda Maschally <sup>who</sup> who used to be in the Capital Public Speaking class with me and who was responsible for getting about \$1. million worth of marble from the Government of Italy for the ~~the~~ Kennedy Center.

As the receiving line went past about every fifth or sixth person I would murmur something like, "It's so good of you to give your time to work for the Center," or "I know it is going to be terribly interesting getting the Center started," or "Thank you for what you are doing for the Arts in our country." So many of them gave me an absolutely blank look but I began to wonder uneasily if I had made a mistake on the group and this was instead the International Bankers Wives or something, -- Vignettes of the day -- only one woman in the receiving line called me Mrs. Kennedy. That used to happen quite frequently, but not in the last year or two. And another lady ~~said~~ saying rather accusingly that Texas was the only State that hadn't sent in one of the painted panels for the fence, and what should she do about it? She said she had written the Governor's office and had no response. My only suggestion was to write again. Another

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lady coming up to me to tell me most earnestly that she approved of Lyndon's program -- both domestic and Viet-Nam -- followed right on the heels by another woman who said imploringly, appealingly, "Wasn't there something we could do about Viet-Nam?" I told her my husband is spending about 18 hours a day, and that was one of the most important components of it, with the best brains that he knew, striving and searching for ways to do something about it. And she assured me, oh yes, oh yes, she knew, but wasn't there something we could try?

And then there was an interesting little bit with Rose Zalles who had just returned from a boat trip down the Nile and who described most enchantingly the different ~~scenery~~<sup>scenery</sup> -- clear blue water and steep cliffs and one long stretch where there are hippos back to back all along the bank. And another where there are big fat crocodiles in great plenty. I was both entrigued and surprised.

I made my way slowly through the State Dining room and encouraging everyone to find a friend and a plate of refreshments and seek a quiet spot in the Blue Room or the Red Room. I had more than usual the feeling that I was looking at a particular stratum of American society in which one common denominator was wealth although Merrill Seacrest described the organization this way: "A friend is someone who likes Alby<sup>e</sup> and Avant<sup>c</sup>  
~~Card art.~~" It certainly wasn't for those reasons or for any feeling of personal closeness that I was having them to tea. Why then? I guess mostly because I want Washington to have more and better Art. And

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second, because I thank Roger Stevens so much for all he's doing in this Administration, and this I can do for him.

I had a little breather and time to change from my Mollie Parnis print with the matching coat before I left with Sylvia to go to the Nicaraguan Embassy. Mrs. Sevilla-Sacasa had called me months ago to set a date in the Spring for a tea honoring me to which she would invite all the wives of the Diplomatic Corps. I arrived on the dot, a minute before four, and there was almost the whole Sevilla-Sacasa family -- and an impressive group it is, on the stoop to meet me -- the Dean himself with outstretched arms -- Lillian very pretty in black lace -- and 6-year old Bernardo offering me white orchids. Close by <sup>Guillermo</sup> ~~Guillermo~~ and his bride -- <sup>and Julia</sup> ~~Amalia~~, who looks much better, though frail -- and three other of the daughters. Eight of the nine children were there I think.

Lillian took me to the main salon and there introduced me to the ladies. But alas neither she nor the announcer called the names clearly enough so that I always understood them. I handed <sup>an</sup> extra laurel to Jimmy Symington -- he says it loud and clear. Before coming I had read the names of the Diplomatic Corps through several times and tried to pinpoint a line ~~with a finger~~ of conversation with several of them. But there were a lot of familiar faces missing. Lady Dean and lovely Mrs. Paris, Mrs. Dobrynin of course, Mrs. da Cunha, Mrs. Celso Pastor. I know

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that many of them were out of the country or ill. But it did point up to me that one's presence is important. And quite likely the hostess and the guests of honor are pleased by your presence or note your absence when it's the very official sort of thing at which invitations have gone out a long time ago -- a reminder to me I hope to try to be there with ~~a~~ a smile.

The Corps, a few ladies from the State Department and the press that always covers society events -- that was the guest list. And at the last minute I had asked if she would please include Mrs. Elsa Lopez Maguire -- my Spanish teacher. There were big embrazos when she came down the line. She had known the family all her life.

I had practiced Spanish phrases for an hour the day before and also some this morning hoping that I would be bold and glib. But they are so quick to use their English and I so unsure about my Spanish that I made little use of it. But it was fun to see the women who had been to the Ranch with us, and most of us had a laughing word or two to say about some of our experiences. They had gotten the pictures, they loved them. I told Mrs. Echevarria of Colombia how dear it was of her to write the note after Lynda's trip. She had said that the trouble there was caused by one journalist well known for being aggressive and bad-mannered.

Mrs. Waller and I talked about her visit to Mississippi. And Anne's



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coming. I told Mrs. Takiouchi how sorry we were to say goodbye -- they'll be leaving in a few days, and felt I had blundered when I said practically the same thing to Mrs. Nehru. It's not official she said.

As usual the wife of the Indian Ambassador and the Pakistan Ambassador -- <sup>Ch. name</sup> Mrs. Hilaly -- are two of the most attractive women in the room. Both of those countries must make a studied effort to seek out a top couple for this post.

Sylvia told me an interesting bit. She told me that at nearly any party the wives from countries that are bitter enemies such as India or Pakistan or Greece -- <sup>Ch. name</sup> Mrs. Matsis -- and Turkey -- Mrs. Esembel -- usually head straight for each other and engage in conversation.

I am sorry not to see Mrs. <sup>Finer-Tare</sup> ~~Finer-Tare~~ there -- they will be missed.

After the line we went <sup>out</sup> onto the garden where tables had been set around so that after you had helped your plate to refreshments on the table or in the dining room, you could come out and bask in the sun -- one of the first bright days of this Spring, and everybody kept on saying how influential the Dean was with the weather.

Lillian took me from table to table, and I chatted with groups of five or six until nearly two hours had passed with Sylvia coming up every now and then reminding me in her sweet little shy way of the time. But I like Lillian very much and I wanted her to know that I appreciated her hospitality.

One woman there I am sure must be busier than me this summer,

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and that's Mrs. Ritchie of Canada for all the world is going to Expo. She said she had just taken her International group by chartered plane on a one-day trip to see it -- leaving at dawn and returning by midnight the next day.

The iron curtain countries were well represented, but it seemed to me the Arabs were not. I guess for one reason Mr. ~~Kamel~~<sup>Kamel</sup> of Egypt is a bachelor and seldom sends a wife ~~from~~<sup>of</sup> any Embassy official to represent his country.

A little before 6:00 I made my goodbyes and drove home with Sylvia by our old house on 30th Place. It looked freshly painted and well kept. I no longer have any pangs when I pass, and I wondered if we could crowd ourselves back into it again. So quickly does one become accustomed to more luxurious living!

Back at the White House I went into the Library to have tea with Secretary Udall and Lee and our friends from Santa Fe -- Mari<sup>a</sup> Martinez, her son ~~Papui~~<sup>Papane</sup> Da and her grandson Tony Da. This was one of those days when I ate my way through the day. Mari<sup>a</sup> was complete in blanket moccasins and squash blossom necklace and scarcely a word of English. And ~~Papui~~<sup>Papane</sup> Da in western clothes, smooth, urban, very much the salesman type. You wonder how it can happen in one generation. Lee is knowledgeable and enthusiastic and devoted to the Indian arts and crafts. This is a working bunch of Cabinet wives. I am so proud of them.



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And then back upstairs with just a few minutes to rest before time to dress for the dinner -- one of the rare occasions when we have just eight people to dinner. Senator Mansfield and Maureen, and Jane and Charles Englehard. And we had invited the Valentis with them because they mix with any group and brighten it up.

I met the guests in the Yellow Room. Lyndon was late, and I took that opportunity to talk with Jane about "Operation Crêche". She is going to buy for the White House a beautiful crêche now that we've lost "ours" from Mrs. Howard. Antique, Italian figures! She had set out to learn all about them, and I asked her how she went about it. She said first she got three books about crêches and read them. And then she discovered there was a society of Christmas cribs in America. She found out who was the head of it, had had long talks with several of them, and tried to evaluate what were the loveliest, dearest, Christmas creches in the traditional field. And then she made a trip to Europe and walked through endless museums -- in Germany and France and Italy. And the trail had led to antique Neapolitan figures. I looked at the pictures. They have infinite detail, and each face is a portrait. It would be wonderful for the White House to have it. The figures are larger than Mrs. Howard's -- probably 18 or 21 inches high. And so there would be less of them. The Holy family, the shepherds, the kings, a few angels, a few animals. But now there remains one more trip to Europe to pick out the very precise

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figures. It's been quite a saga. She could write a thesis on Christmas crêches -- besides spending a most generous amount.

I always try to get my talking in before Lyndon comes because everyone crowds around him when he does. He was about 30 minutes late. We went into dinner complete with wine -- most unusual for the Johnsons when I have a small dinner. I had Charles on my left, and he told me something about his young days. He did not want to be simply a rich man's son. So his father who was in the mining business started him off with \$10,000 and he went to Africa to see what he could do. He said he became very much interested in the intricate problems of the continent, the effect of tribal <sup>customs</sup> costumes on their lives, the boundless riches of their resources and the small percentage of them that were used. It was fascinating. And Senator Mansfield in discussing the request by Senator Long and Senator Dodd himself to put off the vote on Senator Dodd until next Monday, I think it is until the 13th of June or thereabouts used an interesting expression. He said he was afraid it would give an ~~a~~ interval of time during which there would be whipped up a sort of McCarthy sentiment -- Communist hunt.

After dinner the ladies had coffee and liqueurs alone. And I heard all about the five Engelhard daughters. ~~What~~ What a remarkable woman ~~she~~ Jane is. She goes to Africa on safaris taking numberless guests, to the wilds of Canada where she catches a prize-winning salmon. Meanwhile

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handling a family of five daughters, and giving a birthday ball for a 90-year old mother-in-law while participating in all sorts of cultural and charitable events. And yet she makes time to hunt for a Christmas Creche all across Europe for the White House.

We ended up the evening watching the news in Lyndon's bedroom where there are not enough chairs and some of us sat on the floor.

The guests left at 11:30, and I went to bed feeling satisfied with the full measure of the day, for giving and receiving, for the sheer involvement with life.