

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Monday, June 19, 1967

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I had set the clock for 7:30. But alas for my failing eyesight, it must have been 6:30 because that was when it went off. So I got a rather unwanted early start on the day. [#]It came in handy. A few minutes later Simone called me and told me that Lyndon would be speaking on TV at 8:30. We kept to the legal speed limit. And so it was in his little boyhood home in Johnson City that I listened to his speech on the Middle East. At first I thought it was too measured, slow, deliberate. It needed more drama and fire. And then close to the end when he pounded home the fact that the parties to the war must be the parties to the peace, that the future of the Middle East must be made in the Middle East and not planned and imposed by some outside power. And that came through loud and clear, and I decided that it was really an artistically done speech. I thought he looked strong and reliable -- like a leader. You couldn't have asked more ^{...}~~(of the lighting.)~~

Then I drove on to Johnson City where Neva met me a little past 9:00, and we spent a day of decorating -- making much progress on the rooms. We moved our bridge table and two folding chairs from my room to Lyndon's room to the sitting room, giving her my ideas on rugs and drapes and wall treatments, and clarifying my own as I went along, learning from hers, changing some, getting sure about others. And finally deciding that it would be a good thing if Neva could spend a couple of hours with Herbert Wells in his shop selecting fabrics that interpreted

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my heart's desire. A decorator is a relation not unlike a maid or a doctor. You have to know a person well and rely upon them and be in tune with them. And that doesn't happen over night. You have to know how they live. Neva knows us well. She was a great help.

We barely stopped for lunch. And then we disposed of a few pictures. And about 3:00 she left to drive to Houston. And then I set off for the old Bailey house which now sits in a grove of trees in the Reagan, sparsely and coldly furnished and inhabited by some of the military.

My team of Mr. Klein and James and a pickup truck full of paintings went along. And we hung and looked, and with their advice disposed of about seven, thereby brightening up the old place, along with a few colorful bedspreads and plans for some pinup lamps above the beds and floor lamps by the chairs.

I was back at the main house a little before 6:00, got in touch with Dale and rode with him in his pickup truck to Johnson City on one of our flower missions. I had seen a good stand of ~~galardias~~ ^{gailardias} in a field that belonged to Mrs. Lee Green just on the outskirts of Johnson City. I had called her and asked her if she minded if we harvested some of them, telling her the process by which we had done it before on our place. She said she would be glad to share. So Dale and I were going to make arrangements for him or Melvin Sultemeier to harvest them in a day or two.

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There were several carloads of tourists stopped at the old graveyard and in front of the house where Lyndon was born as we passed in the pickup truck. They pay~~ed~~^{ed} us no mind of course. I wonder if they would have been amazed if they had seen the First Lady riding along in a pickup with a foreman? I think not.

Dale gave me the news -- not surprisingly -- that blue bonnets were \$7.50 a pound. Usually they are between \$2 and \$3.50. This is the mark of both the increased demand and of the short crop. I told him to order 50 pounds nevertheless. They'll probably give him a slightly better price since we are such old customers.

And then I rode on into Luci's arriving a little before 8:00. We had a dinner date with Jesse -- Luci and Pat and Joe Batson and I. We were to meet him at Steak Island which turned out to be a charming place right on the banks of Town Lake with a table by the window where there was a good view of the blue hills and of the capitol and unhappily over my shoulder a very bad view of automobile tires and tin cans washed up along the shore. Our job is cut out for us here at home.

Earl and Weeze Deathe were with us, and it was a happy evening with a delicious steak and gay, easy company. This is my eighth night of my stay here in Austin, and what a really pleasant time it has been, doing necessary work that I like during the day and not hurrying about it and feeling that my forever home will be the better for it. And then

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at night sitting around Luci's kitchen table for a good dinner that she has prepared or going out to some of Austin's delightful places like this one -- Steak Island -- or ^{on} Sunday ^{Lake Way} ~~like way~~ or just Youngbloods for fried chicken. There has been more real visiting with Luci than I have had in years. How easily I could slip into living here! It's like the Lotus Island. I would miss the sharp stimulus of Washington conversation. And I might become ~~be~~ slothful, but I think I would enjoy it. It's like swimming in warm water.

Joe has been here since Thursday night. Such a comfortable person to have around. Everybody relies on him.

I talked to Simone and she sounded ~~like~~ beat. // The press had been following Luci all day taking pictures of her wherever ~~she~~ she went -- to the grocery store, the veterinarian, the drug store -- even into KTBC where Pat had glowered at them and asked them if they had business there.

As for Luci, she was the least worried of the lot. Her description of what happened was really hilarious. Finally she turned to one of her followers and said something like this: "Look. I know you've got your job to do and I know you've got your orders and I would be the last one to tell you that you can't do them or to try to stop you because that's not my place. But I think we could get the sort of picture you want and I could go about my business in peace if you would just tell me when you're ready and get a couple of pictures, and we would both come out better."

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She said the young man's jaw dropped ~~open~~ and he looked at her in paralyzed amazement and stammered and said, "I've got my job to do. I've got orders." And she realized he hadn't heard a word she had said. So she went over it again. And then incredulous he said, "You mean you would let me take a picture of you picking out some of those cans of food or something?" "Yes", she said. So they did and he went away happy. Unfortunately he was succeeded by two others and she had to go through the same process all over again -- wearier this time and they were a little more cynical about the whole thing.

She lives with it with grace and good humor. The same cannot be said of all the Johnson family all the time. //

They are early evenings here, and I like that.

We were back at Macken Street a little before 11:00 and to bed where I am reading myself to sleep with Tom Wolff's "Of Time and the River". I have been strangely cut off from the swift rushing stream of life in Washington. It's been a time and pleasant lake of ~~Back~~ ^{Back} Eddie -- insulated, calm, aware of the crisis in the Middle East but not caught up in it.