

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Sunday, December 3, 1967

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It was 10:00 when I awoke. I went into Lyndon's room, and there was Jack for a cup of coffee and deep conversation. Lyn had made his morning visit and left.

I climbed in bed and had my coffee, and listened to Jack describe his visits to college campuses. He is an endearing person -- so much devotion and enthusiasm and fire -- and an actor. We read and talked the long McNamara story, Senator McCarthy and the primary -- the whole spectrum -- and watched TV.

I was feeling much better, though still a little squeezy.

I put on a hostess gown and went upstairs to the solarium.

It would be a juggling act to take care of our household this week -- a time full of warmth and joy and confusion, and a certain amount of strain calling for long hours and understanding from our staff.

A seated lunch had been arranged in the solarium. About 1:30 we began. Mr. and Mrs. Robb and ^{Trenny}~~Tenny~~, who is adorable -- fresh, bubbly, brunet, wide-eyed and a little impish. And Lynda and Chuck.

Just as we had finished the main course, Luci came rushing in and says, "Daddy says won't you come down and join him". So all of us traipse^d downstairs, our deserts and coffee following us. And there was Jack and Mary Margaret and both the children. But the children were sleepy, and they left as soon as lunch was over. And the Robbs excused themselves to go to the City Tavern to get ready for the party. And we found ourselves still sitting at the table --

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Lyndon, Luci, Chuck, Lynda and I. There followed a family conference, unplanned, drifted into, deeply enjoyed, settling nothing.

Lyndon quoted me -- and it's true -- that I had said that "we were drifting into the posture of running again, that we were being forced into it in a way by all the attacks by McCarthy and Kennedy and the columns and the polls and the whole hostile array." He himself didn't see that as the necessary outcome at all. He felt that we were heading toward announcing that we would not run. This, I think, the wish was farther to the thought. Luci said quite simply that she was selfish -- she ~~x~~ liked her father -- she wanted him with us and alive and having fun and helping raise Lyn and any other children she might have.

In summary, what she said was that he would not have time for us, nor probably would he survive if he ran and was elected for another four-year term.

Chuck was the quietest of the lot. And ^{Lynda}~~Lyndon~~ next. She said simply that she was of two lines. For the country, she wanted him to. She could not see anyone else right now that she would feel good about taking over. For herself, she'd love for him not to.

I think I can describe her feeling by saying it's sort of a fatalistic belief that however much we talk about it, he will end by running.

As for me, knowing it was no help, no comfort, no guidance to Lyndon, I could only repeat that I wish we could get out and I don't know how to get out, nor when, nor in what words to frame the decision.

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When we left to dress for the party, I told Lyndon I was going early and stay a long time because I wanted to meet all of the Robbs' friends. He and Luci could come later.

In my black velvet dress, in a borrowed Ivory mink coat, feeling like the lady who wore her necklace in the Guy de Maupassant story.

I arrived at the City Tavern a little before 4:30 for one of the most memorable and unique parties I have ever attended in Washington.

There were about 200 guests and everybody seemed to know everybody. Betty Beale described it well. "Lady Washingtonians came out of hiding yesterday to meet Lynda Bird Johnson and Chuck Robb. Except for the Johnsons, there were no officials present. No diplomats, no VIP's and no politicians."

Mr. and Mrs. Robb were in line with Chuck and Lynda, their son ^{Wyckiff}~~Wickoff~~, his wife and their two small daughters in matching pink and blue dresses aged 2 and 3, and ^{Trenny}~~Trini~~, a white bow in her long black hair, a white dress.

The talk was of old times. I knew Jim Robb in kindergarten. Frances and I used to double date, or we went to Gunston Hall together. Several I met were in their wedding. And Zennie Etz of old Washington.

One couple related how they had eloped to Rockville, riding in a trolley car. And everybody remembered when the trolley used to go the wrong way around DuPont Circle.

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There were old Washington names. A Miss August LaConrad whose father had been Solicitor General under Grover Cleveland. And Thomas Woodward who had been Maritime Commissioner in Franklin Roosevelt's Administration. And an elderly and delightful Mrs. Shepley, widow of a Congressman, who had more than 60 years ago accompanied Alice Roosevelt to the Philippines and later when a guest at the wedding.

To top it all, there was a Mrs. Augustine Todd, whose great-great-great-grandmother had been the first White House bride, Lucy Payne Washington, sister of Dolly Madison. In fact, genealogy was much the order of the day.

One lady asked me if Lyndon wereht related to the Deshayes of Kentucky. And yes, she was too, from the Breckenridge line. How Mrs. Johnson would have loved it.

They were all Washington names. The Ed Burlings, the Mark Sullivans, the son of the columnist I remember, and Neta Rowe -- I latched onto her and we stood together while I made it a point to meet everyone who came in though carefully staying away from the receiving line.

And there was a Mrs. Donald Johnson who was one of the 12 children in The Gilbreath book about "Cheaper by the Dozen".

Still feeling a little squeamish I was only having a coke although there was a lovely buffet table.

One sweet touch was an elderly ~~conv~~ colored woman who had taken care of Chuck for the first 8 years of his life. The Robbs had bought her a ticket from Phoenix, and she had come on for all of the festivities.

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Luci came in with her Daddy, wearing a white brocade with a white ribbon in her hair too, very much like Trini. And she was telling everybody, "I'm going to enjoy myself this time. I'll have all of the fun and none of the trauma."

I enjoyed it wholly and left with Lyndon close to 6:00. But we were not ready to go home. Vignettes of the rest of the day. Lyndon and I going into the apartment house where Wright Patman lives and walking into a small, lonesome apartment (we had announced ourselves only 5 minutes before) and sitting down for a 30-minute Sunday afternoon chat just like we were the neighbors next door. And Lyndon and I walking into St. Dominick's Catholic Church for a quiet private service, and Luci meeting us there with Lyn asleep in her arms, and one of the Fathers held Lyn while the three of us knelt for our small private service.

It's an easy, comfortable atmosphere. They seem to want to help. They all talked of Cardinal Spellman, and how much we would miss him.

But the funniest thing yet of the day was about noon. It was Patrick Lyndon in his walker going around and around the dining room table, and Lyndon in his walker -- that is his executive chair -- pushing himself backward and holding out his hands to Lyn who persevered for the complete circumference of the table while the rest of us howled with laughter.

Back from St. Dominick's, Lyndon went to the office to look at the ticker while Luci and I settled in the West Hall with Lyn. There lay Luci on the floor

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with her next-to-best blue print cocktail dress flat on her stomach making faces and singing rhymes with Lyn who looked solemn and gurgled with delight by turns and drooled on her and patted on her.

And what was I thinking about? That she had only two cocktail dresses and would have to wear this one some other day this week. It would have to be cleaned. It wouldn't look well. There is no Martha in this child.

The most important thing that a mother can do is to enjoy her child. And maybe teach him and certainly take care of him. I told her she should have changed her dress first. She looks at me with a mixture of amused tolerance and reproach.

Time passed and it was nearly 10:00 when Lyndon came, and the three of us sat down to dinner.

Lyndon enjoys Luci more at this age than he did in all her babyhood or childhood, I believe. In fact, it's since she's been about 17 that they have become friends.

After dinner I had the complete luxury -- a fire, a massage, and Gun Smoke.

I announced my recovery from this cold and stomach ^{bug} ~~cold~~, or whatever, by beginning the new week with exercises.