

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Monday, December 4, 1967

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The wedding week begins. And I, with that good feeling of being rested and wanting to get things done.

I worked at my desk in the morning.

The first big event was a Bill signing in the East Room -- the Mental Retardation Amendments.

I walked in with Lyndon at 11:30, and there was a whole front row of drama. The members of his Committee, behind each a story. Muriel Humphrey, Eunice Shriver, Bess Harris Jones, along with the doctors and the scientists.

This time we missed the boat. It did not go well. Lyndon began with some ill-chosen jokes. Something about the East Room being the poor man's wedding chapel, in a reference to having the wedding here because of a recent experience in church. It grated on me. There are days when he fights, literally runs, from one appointment to another. This time, I believe, he took a staff member's judgment and used jokes about a ceremony that is not a joking matter. Actually, it's a good step forward. And we are still making them, ~~Although~~ there is a general impression of gloom and stalemate.

When it was over, the Congressmen went up and stood behind him, led by Lister Hill, father of all good things in medicine. He passed out pens, and we filed into the East Room and shook hands and hugged as Mathilde Krim and Bess Jones came down the line.

And then I went to the swimming pool for 30 laps. It's odd how I could have swum here for four years without ever, until the other day, seeing the

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initials, "J.F.K." and then a date (March, I believe it was) '62 painted into the mural of the Virgin Isles on the door. This is the third such reminder in the House. There is that plaque above the fireplace in my bedroom. And then the inscription in the side of the marble mantel in the President's room.

I went up to the solarium for lunch -- the first day of our protracted house party. I had written out a long list of cold meats, salads, hot casseroles, and sent a copy to each of the numerous cooks asking them to put together menus for lunch, which would be served ~~buffet~~ buffet from 12:30 - 2:30 in the solarium. And dinner from 7:30 - 9:30, buffet also. I listed the approximate number of guests, and the nights when they would be eating out. And thanked the staff for what I knew was really a great drain on them and a challenge to their ingenuity. Also, I asked them to fill the icebox with milk and coke and Freskas and some beer, and to set up a box to keep cookies and fritos and a centerpiece of fruit so that all the house guests can have snacks whenever they want.

It's going to be one long house party, and I plan to enjoy it more than anybody.

A sizeable crisis is that Zephyr has had to leave to attend the funeral of her nephew in California. She will be gone three days. She's hard to get along without anytime, and especially this week.

In the afternoon, I went to Mr. Per's, and then on to Dr. Turchin's, feeling much relieved thereafter -- while the big job went on in my bedroom of putting up the new drapes and the canopy on the bed.

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And then back at the White House, I got ready for the Harriman's party to introduce Lyndon and Chuck to the Diplomatic Corps.

I wore my pink lace, sprinkled with silver, by Mollie Parnis -- far too short I thought. And the elegant white mink coat. And was, I thought, waiting for the President on the second floor. Then I got the frantic news to come quick. He was in the car waiting for me. I joined and I had run, but not fast enough -- this being a bad day for him -- and I could feel his tenseness. There is too much too fast. From this party on a dead run he would go to an important appointment with William Randolph Hurst, and then to a news conference at the State Department.

But he is attacking his battalion of troubles with vigor and determination.

This afternoon he was in the swimming pool with the Chief Justice and Abe. Every day, now, for more than a week he's taken exercise on that exercycle thing in his bedroom. He's done without deserts and bread and drinks -- all except Saturday night -- and he has lost 8 or 10 pounds. I am proud.

The doorman who let us out at the Harriman's was a ~~xxx~~genial colored man whom I have seen at every party I can remember, since our early days in the Senate when I began going to important parties.

Averell and Marie were at the front door waiting for us. We stopped for pictures. The Harrimans had had Lynda Bird and Robb in the receiving line in the back drawing room, surrounded by their fabulous art collection --

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SuZon, Van Gogh, Loc Luce Latrek.

Lynda was lovely with her hair piled high, wearing a pale ice-blue, heavy silk dress with dat bayable jewels and earrings out of the same jewels.

On the table was the lovely present from the Diplomatic Corps -- a five-piece silver tea service, including the tray, in Lynda's pattern, Chantilly.

The newspapers the next day said the price of it, according to a local store, is \$6,770.

Lyndon made a swift tour of the room with Jimmy Symington greeting as many as he could and leaving in about 20 minutes, while I stayed for about an hour making a leisurely circuit with Sylvia. The Dean, Sevilla-Sacasa, whispered conspiratorially to me that their personal gift would be over for Lynda and Chuck a little later.

Everyone was telling Mrs. Nehru goodbye. In fact the town is going to have ulcers if they don't leave soon -- there have been so many farewell parties.

I saw Dobrynin in a corner, but I did not speak to him.

The people I felt I really knew were all the Latin American Ambassadors who had come down for a weekend at the Ranch in April. And I had a moment to say to Margain that I was very concerned and hopeful about the Mexican exhibit at Hemis Fair. It could be the greatest they'd have there -- it ought to be.

There were screams and hugs when I saw Robin Duke, and we had a few minutes to talk, and I introduced her to Mrs. Robb, who by that time had sought a table

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out under the tent. There was a large tent that covered the top terrace of their garden, decorated with long red velvet streamers with big silk roses -- the same red as Lynda's bridesmaids will wear. And a small version of Peter Duchin's orchestra was making music. But principally it was a talking party.

Through the plastic walls, I could see the glistening green of their great magnolia trees in the descending levels of the garden where last summer, August '66, they had had the wonderful party for Luci.

I completed the circuit, saying "hello" to Sir Patrick and Lady Dean. And to an extraordinarily interesting man -- an Arab I suppose -- with a creamy white tunic, embroidered from head to toe. Almost entirely they wear dark western suits now. Only the African women wear bo-bo's and occasionally a garnian and a brilliantly striped blanket.

There were only a few non-diplomats. The Vice President and ^{Muziel} ~~Muziel~~, the Chief Justice and Mrs. Warren, Jack and Mary Margaret who have predictably become very much a part of the Georgetown set.

Luci was having the most fun of anybody -- candid, quotable, liked by the press. She was scotching rumors that she was expecting again, surveying the crowd saying this looks like old home week, greeting her Daddy "Hello, handsome", and then leaving quickly like Cinderella. "I have to be back at the White House by 7:00 because my baby sitter leaves then."

The wedding party and how generous it was of Marie and Averell to have them, because even their gracious home does not hold this size crowd easily.

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We were having a good time and staying a long time, watching the flow of celebrities -- older and more sophisticated than Luci's wedding party. The girls -- really quite stunning -- but clinging together a bit because they were different from the Diplomatic crowd.

I stayed a full hour and left about 6:30.

At home, I autographed and recorded. Lyndon came in at 9:30 with Marie from addressing the National Foreign Policy Conference - the Business Executives - at the State Department. He's in a fighting mood. I admire him fiercely. I want to see him spend himself almost whatever it takes against this miasma of despond, this ~~xx~~ virus, that is infecting our country. And yet it would be so easy, so happy to, as I have heard him say, "Let the bastards save the bastards," Announce he would not be a candidate. Draw a circle for our energies, our brains, our hours, around our family, our business, our very personal friends, and have fun for what is left to us of life.

I had dinner with Lyndon and Marie. Chief Mills came in and I had exercises and a rub and watched TV and to bed at 11:00.