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Initials

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

Saturday, December 9, 1967

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Lynda's wedding day, Saturday, December 9th, began overcast and gray, though with the promise of the sun breaking through.

I went in Lyndon's room early, and there sat Jesse Kellum and Don Thomas, both in conversation with Lyndon.

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Marvin and Jan came and went.

Yes, it begins to sound more like its sure that Lyndon will be leaving for Texas.

One of them brought me a list of guests that might be invited to ride home on Air Force I. This is both a blessing and disappointment. Luci and Pat need to save those two tickets. At \$85 each, they will surely go. But it will be so hard to pack to get ready and to miss all the good, good times -- with only ^{supper} ~~super~~ upstairs after Lynda and Chuck have gone, Diana's party tomorrow afternoon.

Jean Louis had set up a shop in the East Hall and there were several dryers and a screen and dressing table. Jean Louis and two assistants, combing hair from 9:00 on.

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Somewhere during the bedlam I had some lunch in the solarium. The last lunch of our busy house party. And all during the day I was aware of seeing Warrie Lynn -- a dear, lovely, chirping Warrie Lynn -- looking forlorn and sad when it's she I always look to for cheer.

The Chief gave Lynda Bird a backrub.

I went downstairs to look at the final preparations of the wedding. The cake was gorgeous, and the flowers in the tent -- a bright profusion of pinks and reds and pale oranges -- they were paper flowers. And on the tables, the most beautiful bouquets -- an absolute triumph from the flower room, ranging from ^{tenderest} ~~tenderous~~ pink to deepest velvet red.

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Chuck came, and at once I loved what he said. "How is my little girl feeling?"

Lyndon and I and Chuck and Lynda went into the Queens' Room, passed the gauntlet of bridesmaids -- the last ones getting their hair combed -- and quietly shut the door.

And Lyndon's performance as a father was superb. He was so full of tenderness and understanding, wanting to help, discussing the whole situation very quietly. We gave them a  U.S. Savings Bond for our wedding present. 

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And then the great wheels of order and convention went to rolling. And I went to get dressed and Lyndon went to get dressed. And a few minutes before 4:00, ~~xxx~~ I took my place at the head of the stairs. Bess, still quiet in all the tumult, was the major domo, and at her signal I took Bryan Lamb's arm and walked down the stairs past the throngs of wedding guests in the entrance foyer and down the hall, the mast in the East Room. My eyes locking for a moment in a message of love to this good friend and that kin person and another childhood friend of Lynda's.

I took my place behind the rope close to Aunt Ellen who was seated, seeing Tony in the background behind me. And Rebecca -- tall and handsome, her hat a mass of ostrich plumes. And across the way on one of the benches, Chuck's

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83-year old grandmother, looking elegant and frail and quite sweet, seated on the bench that we had provided for the elderly or infirmed.

I was glad that somehow in the unbelievable time before the wedding I had gone up to the Robbs' room for ~~a~~ a quiet few minutes visit. Mrs. Sims, his grandmother, was surrounded by Aunts, children, and well taken care of. But I wanted her to feel that it was quite special to have her there -- four generations of Robbs sharing in the wedding. Chuck's two little nieces, after seeing the House, had been invited out by friends.

The ceremony began on time, they tell me, with Pat Nugent and Joe Batzen coming in first, and then the other groomsmen. And then all the velvet clad bridesmaids. And ~~Lynda~~ Lynda had been right all along. It was a stunning color. Each one looked perfectly beautiful. Luci, looking ^{ethereal?} inferial and very solemn, was the last to come in taking her place in a semicircle in front of the altar. And all the time, Chuck, facing forward toward the door, looking firm, strong and happy.

Then the Marine band struck up the march from Lowengrin, "Here Comes the Bride". Every heart in the place lifted, I am sure, and there was a hushed expectant moment. And there at the door was Lynda on her Daddy's arm. Beautiful as she was, it was he I watched all the way. Such a mixture of tenderness and quietness and farewell in his look. His hair looked whiter than I have ever seen it, and I was full of tenderness for him.

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How would one describe the bride? Queenly, radiant, stunningly beautiful, certainly. And the whole setting was in the grand manner. I have never seen a lovelier ceremony. My heart was a roaring tumult of pride, of desire to ^{wring} ~~ring~~ from this wonderful time every second of pleasure, of the feeling of farewell.

The altar was a raised platform in which Canon McAllister stood, and behind him, the window blanked out, were the great mass of greens on which tiny lights sparkled. A tall white cross gave the final stamp of a religious ceremony.

Chuck's responses were firm and clearly said. Lynda's much quieter. And Lyndon's only words, when Canon McAllister asked "Who gives this woman in marriage?", he answered, "Her mother and I." And a ripple of emotion, I thought, went through the crowd. And then he stepped back -- I grateful that he was careful of her train -- and joined me behind the velvet rope.

I had nearly been startled when I saw some tiny slits in the white fabric behind the altar. Two sets of eyes looking out on the room, and then what was obviously the business end of a camera. Actually, it was a great job of camouflage.

And I remember how solicitous Luci was in arranging Lynda Bird's train, taking her flowers at the proper moment, offering the ring to Lynda for her to put on Chuck's finger.

In just 20 minutes, Reverend McAllister said, "You may kiss the bride now", and Chuck leaned over with a big smile and kissed Lynda on the cheek, and the Marine orchestra broke into Mendleson's wedding march, and she was on his arm headed across the East Room and out under the arch of swords.

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But I never saw it. So I'm glad I did yesterday at the ~~xxxxxx~~ rehearsal.

Each red velvet clad bridesmaid on the arm of a groomsman went out. And finally, I, escorted by Bryan Lamb again. And then taking Lyndon's arm, we went through the halls smiling right and left, this time more relaxed and ready to be joyous. And up the stairs. It had all been glorious -- perfect.

Lyndon's wedding dress, of course, was the something new, and it fulfilled every expectation. Long sleeved, high collared, white silk satin, its front panel outlined in embroidered silk flowers with seed pearls. It was indeed quite regal. There was a renaissance feel about it, and I hope I live to see a granddaughter wear it. And I am sure it will be just as good then.

As we mounted the stairs, I gave a fleeting thought to what must be the controlled pandemonium below because as soon as they could deferentially urge the wedding guests out of the East Room toward the State Dining Room and the pink tent, ^{where} ~~the~~ champagne and the big buffet tables awaited them, I would lock the doors, open the window onto the terrace, remove the altar, the Marine band would melt away and Peter Duchin's would replace it, the screen would come down from in front of the cake and tables for champagne and refreshments would blossom in the corners. What a job. The master of logistics is ~~best~~ Bess, abetted by Mary Kaltman and Mr. West and all this valiant crew.

Upstairs, all the wedding party assembled in the Yellow Room from which all the furniture had been taken. There was a press pool and a vast array of cameras. Then they took pictures in every conceivable grouping. Four of us, then the six of us, and then all the party -- 21 in all, counting The Reverend

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McAllister. And here we stretched entirely across the Oval Room -- Lynda and Chuck right underneath George Washington. And next to him, his mother and his father, Lyndon standing beside Lynda, then I and then Luci.

Then the parents were released and we went out to get a drink and a moment's rest while they took pictures of just the young folks. And then of just the bride and groom.

Bess, for the first time I noticed, was looking a little nervous. "No, we couldn't go down yet," she said. And I remembered what a jungle the Blue Room had been --- with mast equipment for TV and furniture waiting to be conveyed into the East Room. Now it was being readied for the receiving line.

NBC began a "Special" of the wedding, and for a few minutes we watched it. ~~Lyndon~~ Lynda perched on the arm of a chair and Chuck beside her.

Then Bess came and said, "they're ready". And down the six of us went to the Blue Room, Lyndon first in line, with Lynda beside him and then Chuck and then his mother and then his father, and I bringing up the end of the line -- very much to that polite gentleman's discomfort^{er}, but entirely right in our house, I thought. And the ~~445~~ 640-odd guests began filing by. It was slow because for every one, I had to have a special introduction, and for so many a kiss and an embrace.

TV covered the first 15 minutes. A sizeable number of VIP's showed up here, led off by the Vice President and Muriel, and the Chief Justice and Mrs. Warren. Then the Secretary of State and Virginia Rusk. Alice Roosevelt Longworth was among the first, and Lyndon gave her a big hug. She said to

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my relief very fulsome, warm things about how beautiful the wedding was. General Walt and General Wallace Greene and General Leonard Chapman were all there. Every member of the Cabinet. Only 14 Senators and their wives had been invited, and everyone had accepted, though I never did actually see Dick Russell at the wedding. And only 8 members of the House.

Senator Dirksen embraced everyone of us and ~~x~~ planted a large kiss right on my mouth.

There were two members of the Court besides the Chief Justice. The Blacks and the Fortas^d and of course the Tom Clarks.

And the amazing thing was how many of the Ambassadors had come from so far. Dukes from ~~Spain~~ Spain, the Heaths from Sweden, and even the Eugene Lockes from Viet-Nam, and the George McGhees from Germany.

There was a great hugging and kissing when John and Nellie came down the line, with young Johnnie now 6 feet. And embraces for the Jim Cains and the Willis Hursts. In fact, it was a hugging and kissing party, so much so that the line went very slow.

And an harassed Bess came up to me and said, "If it keeps on moving at this rate, it will take three hours to do the line." So reluctantly, I tried to hurry up. We stopped mid-way, closed the doors and sat down for a drink, but went on after about 10 minutes.

I had a special squeeze of the hand from Mary Lasker when I found her in front of me,

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There was an amazing number of Robb relatives. I got a thumbnail sketch of each from Mr. Robb as they came down the line. And I in turn gave him a sketch of the Bobbitts and the Tony Taylors, Elaine Fischeser and Aunt Ellen. I could feel the press's blood pressure go up whenever any of Lynda's movie friends came along. The elegant Merle Oberon and her interesting husband Bruno Paulye. Carol Channing, wearing outrageous yellow mini bloomers that came to mid-thigh with her nice husband Charles Loeb. And the Henry Fords and Charlotte Ford Narkos, causing almost as much a flurry. But surprisingly the Earl and Countess of Bessboro not being noticed at all.

There were plenty of old beaus. Mike Fenner and Dave Lefevre and John Loeb and Paul Dresser. And there were other members of the four -- a crowd that had always gone together at O'Henry Jr. High. Rudy Valentine, now Calas Quintiss, and Christon Von Chrysler, finishing up her masters in California. And Pam Ward, now Mrs. Brian Midgan, a housewife and mother. And there were friends from ~~NCS~~ NCS, Jane Taylor and Jennifer Erkert and Jill McKelvey and Jan Nichols and a host of NCS teachers beginning with Miss Lee.

And the tallest man in the room, John D. Rockefeller IV with Sharon, demure and dainty at his side. And our old neighbors, Dr. and Mrs. Reid. And here Lyndon stopped the line a minute to explain to the press that he had raised them both -- our girls. It was wonderful, every moment of it. And it lasted all of two hours.

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About 7:15 the last guest went down the line. And then the six of us went into the East Room where Lyndon and I and Chuck and Lynda walked up on the platform where the cake sat. Someone brought Chuck's sword, and with their two hands on the handle, they cut the first piece. This, Lynda shared with Chuck. Lynda took the sword and cut another big slice, and I had a bite of it -- absolutely delicious pound cake with white raisins and a trace of rum or some liquor and luscious white icing.

Then in a swirl, so that I do not quite remember who danced with who first. There was Lynda and Chuck, then ~~Lyndon~~ Lynda and her Daddy, I with Mr. Robb. And then Lyndon cut in on me, and with a big smile he said, "You sure have been 'makeded' up for that purple dress" -- one of the light touches of the day. And how many of the dear touches he contributed was his referring to our wedding at least 3 times and always laughingly with some reference to my awful purple dress.

Everyone had rushed into the East Room for the cutting of the cake, so it was madly ~~over~~ crowded, and we were dancing in a small circle, and I was glad to escape.

The bridesmaids and groomsmen were dancing and then it was no time until I heard a flurry of excitement. And then people were saying, "~~She's~~ 'She's about to throw her bouquet." I was in the Green Room, and I couldn't possibly make my way to where I could really see her. So behind a sea of backs, I heard the rising ripple of excitement as Lynda threw her bouquet and Warrie Lynn caught it.

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And then, she was off upstairs, and that was the last that the wedding guests saw of her.

I found Mrs. Huxslo and sat with her on the sofa in the Green Room -- Daniel Webster's I believe it was -- and we had a loving talk about Lynda, who is as dear as a daughter to her.

I asked that Diana take charge of getting the kinfolks up on the second floor anytime after the crowd began to thin~~ne~~ out. And I circled through the Red Room, the State Dining Room, the Blue Room, the main Hall, visiting with everybody and trying to absorb every minute of it to remember. Some how I never got to the tent.

There were two guests that I had studiously tried to prevent from coming to the wedding. Yuki, I didn't want him to come at all. He had made his appearance when we had all gathered in the Yellow Room upstairs to have our pictures done, wearing a bright red blanket on which a congratulations was spelled out in sequence. Liz has often said that Mr. Tra^{IN}pez Bryant ought to be an assistant press man. He gets Yuki ready and in on every occasion.

The other guest was an unwitting one. Little Patrick Lyn. And we had conspired -- Luci and Pat and I -- to see that he did not make his appearance until Lynda had tossed her bouquet and gone. Both of them came to me frantically and separately right after the cake cutting to say that the President was asking for him. I advised them to go in another direction and make no answer. But, alas, Lyndon won, and Patrick Lyndon came down for a brief visit during which, I am told, he stood on the piano and walked with help.

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However, he was promptly whisked away by Luci, but returned again, brought by his Grandfather after the bride had thrown her bouquet. And this time he visited around with everyone, looking very proper in his black suit with the little white stripe in the pants. He went to sleep with his head on his Grandfather's shoulder.

And at a quarter of nine, Lyndon left from the South Grounds, taking Luci and Pat and Lyn and a helicopter full of guests. Others had gone on ahead to Air Force I at Andrews.

Kinfolks had assembled on the second floor -- Patsy and Buzz Chaney and Aunt Ellen and Elaine and Roxanne, who had flown over from Europe just for the wedding. And Jack and Geri Hopkins. It was a particular joy for me to have them here. Diana in charge. Donald had gone home early. He must still be careful. Tony and Martiana, having the most fun of anybody except me. And my attractive young cousins, the Griffin Tatums.

I was so sorry to lose Ava Cox, and particularly Becky Alexander, whose coming to the wedding at all was a happy surprise. She looks very thin. I had noticed that she had on an elegant white dress. Luci told me that when she asked about her daddy and mother, she was just noncommittal. She and Luci tried to speak to all the kinfolks before her hasty departure.

I saw that everybody had a drink and then went downstairs to survey the scene for the last time.

The young folks were taking over. It was 9:00 and everybody was dancing.

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I asked Mrs. Robb to stop by and visit with us all before they went on to a late supper party of their Arizona friends. But I think she had her hands full with kinfolks.

Back upstairs, I saw Lynda coming down the hall quite calm and contained in a beautiful geranium red coat dress with a striped scarf. Patsy slipped some rice in my hand. I gave them both one loving farewell kiss. She spoke a word or two to the relatives. We all flung rice, and then the elevator swallowed them up and they were gone.

She had looked pensive, like she was already far away from us.

So then it was really over and I took the kinfolks around the dining room table where we loaded our plates copiously. I discovered that I was famished. And then we walked all the way in the Treaty Room. ~~Sam~~ ^{Sam} Houston came in, helped by one of the Chiefs, and Becky and ~~Barbara~~ ^{Bob} and Phillip. We had a big TV set in the room. The Communications had taped the "Specials" all day for us -- NBC's at 5:00 -- ABC's at 7:00 -- and one last night from CBS. We played all of these while we ate -- ABC's by all odds the best. And I saw more of the wedding than I had seen while living through it.

Lynda's wedding dress of course had been something new, and the little bow-knot pin that had been worn to a party where General Lafayette was the guest of honor. The pin had been given to Lynda by Mrs. Hudspeth was "the something old." It had been sewn carefully inside. Great grandmother Ruth Annette Huffman's handmade handkerchief was the something borrowed.

And inside the hem of the dress, "Lynda Bird Johnson, December 9, 1967,

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The White House", was embroidered in blue.

It was 11:30 when I said goodbye to the kinfolks. Chief Dawson had been waiting for me. I settled into the complete luxury of a massage while I watched TV and went to bed, almost alone in the House, about 12:30.

Of our house party, there only remains Sam Houston and the three Robbs upstairs and Phyllis Bonano.

And so this great day in my life slipped into history.