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MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Thursday, March 14, 1968 **WHD**

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This was one of those terrific, pummelling White House days, that can stretch, and grind, and use you - even I who only live on the periphery. So what must it be like for Lyndon?

The headlines were - "Kennedy is Considering Race Against Johnson" -
"Johnson Urges Hill to Act on D. C. Problems" - "Fowler Urges Congress
to Act on Fiscal Problems, ~~Sights~~ ^{Stren} Gold Rush, War, Inflation, Pleads for
Tax ~~Rise~~ ^{Rise} - Mad Rush in Europe - Gold Buying Skyrockets."

Lyndon asked me to get Clark and Abe on the phone and ask them to come over at 8:30.

I had meant to get in my 30 laps in the pool, before the beauty parlor, but a meeting of this gravity and interest, was too compelling, and so I sat on the green sofa in the West Hall.

I listened to these three strong friends discuss our future, and our actions and plans. Lyndon is quite convinced Kennedy is running, but then he has been all along.

I went to Mr. Per's and had a rush hairdo, and was back at the White House, with just 10 minutes to change before the arrival ceremony. Into my green Marquise ensemble, and then to Lyndon's office, rattling off instructions to Ashton as she walked beside me.

We marched out onto the south grounds, Lyndon and I, to a sizeable crowd of people, a ripple of applause greeting us as we went, and I, at least, in what I have come to think of through the years, as "riding in the

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tumbrel attitude, needs shoulders just a bit squarer, and head just a lift higher. It was chilly, and bright, and beautiful, with the flags whipping in the wind, and the call of the trumpets making your blood leap.

Dean Rusk stepped forward and I said, "You are my hero." And then the big black car rolled up and out stepped the Prime Minister of Somalia, a youngish, round faced, pleasant and able-looking man wearing a white embroidered Muslim cap, and accompanied by a delicate, pretty wife, whose soft spoken English was excellent. And I was impressed too, with the simplicity and straightforwardness, and the ease of the Prime Minister's speech.

Then inside for the receiving line, which was quickly over and the Prime Minister and Lyndon left for their talks. And Sylvia took Mrs. Egal to Blair House.

I was back upstairs by 12 with a full hour to work with Liz while we had a sandwich, on our next big Women Do-er's Luncheon. This one on child health and the work of this administration in that field. We had a list of possible guests, from HEW, from Mathilde, from our own acquaintances; Katie Louchheim. I called Bess Jones.

They are composed of professionals, doctors, nurses, psychiatrists, people who work in the government, the governors wives, bureau heads in HEW, wives of Congressmen who carry the ball for Health measures, writers on health, and very much the volunteers. The sort of woman who dreams,

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fighters, builds a clinic in her own home town. Such as Bess Jones did.

And then, it was one and time to go into the Cabinet Room, for the awards that Lyndon was giving out to the Federal Career Women.

The seven of them lined up against the wall in the Cabinet Room, facing the battery of cameras. They were an interesting group ranging from a wildlife biologist, with Interior; and a statistician with the Economic Advisers; and an attractive young negro woman with the Office of Civil Rights; to an air traffic control specialist with the FAA.

Lyndon made a sweet speech, half humor and half earnestness, lauded them, shook hand, and ^{was} ~~were~~ gone within moments. I stayed a little longer to talk with them about their work.

And then very soon, was back upstairs, to complete hacking out with Liz, the list for our own Women Do-ers. To find the volunteers, and those the ones that I especially want to pin-point and honor, is the hard job and we particularly want to have leaders of organizations connected with the field of child health, such as PTA and Junior League and Jaycees. We got it in good shape, I think.

And then I made my third change of clothes for the day. Sometimes, living in the White House means a ridiculous number of changes per day, one for each occasion. And in my nearly favorite red suit with the navy trim, I left for the circus. This is an annual event with me and one that I have liked.

Each year, the Fell Brothers, give a free performance of the circus, for

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about 6,000 children - Junior Village and the United Givers Fund Agencies, all the neighborhood homes. Does it matter that I go? I don't know, but at any rate, the Felds seem to appreciate it.

And as I walked through the lower level, next to the ring, looking to the right and to the left and smiling and waving, there was a little ripple of excitement and giggles, and pointing, and clapping, that followed me on my way.

Mr. and Mrs. Israel Feld, and Irving Feld, and a clown, and John Ringling North had met me at the door, and together we all marched down to my seat, which was right between a little boy named Bryan, who was very talkative; and a little girl who silently sucked her thumb, and I couldn't get her to say a word as hard as I tried.

The circus never palls on me - my favorites were the dog and pony show, and then Thomas leaned over and asked me, "Does it remind you of Yuki?" Yes, it did. And the most adorable poodles; and then a beautiful spectacle on the trapeze. Costumes of red and white, like peppermint stripes, the lovely stars, entering wrapped in white fur and snow falling. The Felds and I snapped bits of conversation about the Roy ^{Hoskins} ~~Hothines~~, who has bought a large piece of the circus, and they told me how many of the performers were families, that go on for three generations or more, particularly the stars on the trapeze.

Cotton candy came by, and popcorn, and I tried to get a bite between

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flashes of the camera. It was easy to oblige them with vivid interest - I'll be hopelessly old when I don't like the circus!

There was an intermission a little past four, and I said goodbye to Bryan and the Felds, and made my way out among the crowded rows, shaking hands to the right and left, and being pursued by giggles, ^{and} straight out questions, "You Mrs. Johnson?".

And then back in the White House limousine, and home before five to work in bed, because it's surprising how tiring it is to try to ^{give out,} to make all those children feel that it was a little something extra to see the First Lady there, the President's wife.

I cleared the desk with Ashton, and called our house guests and welcomed them - the Perry Basses from Fort Worth; and George Nokes from Waco; and Tex and Wickie Goldschmidt; and then Mr. Per came in for a comb-out.

I put on my pink Mollie Parness with beaded jacket, one of those wonderful dresses that I always wear, ^{when} and I don't know quite what's right ~~and neither~~ ~~left~~.

Okie came and we made pictures. I'm trying very hard to get some good ones of me in evening clothes, because I'm still sending out ones made in '64! Whenever in my life will I wear more evening clothes, or have a better photographer than Okie?

Every day here, I have tried to live it to the utmost, for this job, for this house, and for me. There was a beautiful bouquet of pink and white roses. I leaned over it and I think we will get some good ones from it, a medley with

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my pink and white dress.

At 20 minutes of eight, I heard that Lyndon had gone over to the State Department for a reception for Trowbridge, a goodbye. My heart sank, how could he possibly get back and not be late[?] He could, he did, he stayed seven minutes, kissed Nancy, thanked Sandy, made an amusing speech. He said Trowbridge had promised him one thing - he wasn't going to run for President, and then he paused and said - "I ought to point out that that was a week ago."

He was back at the White House and in a black tie and we were actually down stairs at the north portico a few minutes past eight.

For a great deal of his day, time is Lyndon's servant, not his master. He wrings from it, every action, every achievement, every human contact that he can.

Simone had reminded me that we were on TV tonight, so we tried to take an extra moment, in the greetings on the north portico, with the Prime Minister once more, [?] ~~and his little muslim, but a black tie~~ ^{unclear} And Mrs. Egal, quite elegant.

We took them upstairs to the Yellow Room, where Hubert and his trip to Africa, was much the center of discussion. And when Mrs. Warren reached over and kissed me on the cheek, the first time I ever remember, I felt that it was the same sort of salute, and I was grateful, ^{just} that I wanted to give to Dean Rusk, for his magnificent performance before the inquisition on

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Monday and Tuesday.

Among our gifts to the Prime Minister and Mrs. Egal, was a bamboo bowl, in vermeil, which is used on all the White House tables, when we have a State Dinner - and 30 boxes of toys for her to distribute among her favorite orphanages, which is a slightly uncertain situation because he has two wives, and I didn't know what to do about the one ~~he~~ left at home. But anyway, the bowl will do for the house.

Their gifts to us were an ivory desk set, quite complete and very attractive, including an ivory pencil holder, which we can put to use right away.

The Prime Minister, laughingly remarked, "Mrs. President, I can assure your Congress, that this didn't cost more than \$50," which shows he'd done some research.

Behind the flags, we marched down the steps, to the tune of Hail to The Chief, and there's not a day here, no matter how battered with problems that my heart won't rise when I hear that.

~~And~~ We stood in line in the East Room, to meet our 140 odd guests. From the Cabinet, there were the Clark Cliffords; Mr. Justice Thurgood Marshall, represented the Court; there was only one member of the Senate, the Clayborn Pells, and he came apologetically, quite late, that he had stayed on the floor to make the one extra vote that was needed to pass the Gold Cover Bill. What a cliff hanger!

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The Gardner Ackleys were there, leaving next week for Italy; and the John Dalys from the Democratic Committee. From the entertainment world there was Sammy Kahn; and pretty Kitty Carlisle, whom I had met at Mary Lasker's; and Barbara Rush, the movie star. When a young man on Lyndon's staff, saw her name on the list, he tried to wangle a seat next to her.

From Education, there was Professor Kastanio, an outstanding authority on the Somal~~a~~ Republic, quite a limited breed I should think.

The Chairman of the Board of Sinclair Oil, Mr. Frederik Bush, with whom I had a very pleasant moment's conversation, congratulating him on the very handsomely designed filling station in Georgetown. He said, "There are going to be more of them all over the country." In fact, he was so interested in conservation, in what our environment looks like, that he said when he retired (it is going to be soon) that was going to be his major concern!

There were a sizeable number of Congressmen present - six I think - including our old friends the Harley Staggers, and the Clement Zablockis.

And from the government, Dick Helms of the CIA; Leonard Marks of the USIA.

Besides our house guests, no other Texans, except the Charlie Blakes. He used to be one of Lyndon's District men, but now lives in Washington.

And a great pleasure it was to have him here.

From the press, the familiar face of Bill ^{the's} Lee, who has covered us since the early, roaring Senate days. I'll always look back on them with affection!

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Frank Reynolds of ABC; and a new-found friend of the press, Joe Garagiola, — and that too must be a rare breed these days, [^]who is on, I think, the Today Show.

Bess and I had spent time on the seating, especially Lyndon's table and mine. Next to the Prime Minister, there was Mrs. Rusk; and then George Wood, with that relaxed feeling of a man who has just laid down a big burden. He and I talked about MaryEllen Monroney. He's a very attractive man.

Then friendly little Mrs. Sam Gibbons, the wife of a Congressman from Florida; seated next to a tall, dark Californian, Eugene Kline, a business man and Johnson supporter.

On the left I had the Minister of Foreign Affairs, whose English was scant and difficult; and then a very good guest, Mrs. Straub, whose husband is Assistant Administrator for AID, pretty, an asset to the table, and as much in love with Washington as I am.

Robert Mass~~ey~~^{ey}, who wrote Nicholas and Alexandra, was between her and Elspeth Rostow, certainly one of the nicest seats in the room.

It was a pleasant, light dinner, for conversation. The Prime Minister and I talked about the search for oil in his country, which has been going on for about 15 years, unsuccessfully so far.

My knowledge of Somalia is limited to frank-incense, and myrrh, and leopard skins, which didn't ~~leave~~ lead to any extensive conversational gambits, but he was a pleasant, easy companion, and I was very intrigued by Mr. Mass~~ey~~^{ey}.

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who himself has a son with hemophilia. That's how he began to write the *Nicholas and Alexandra* book. It is the most monumental job of research that I can remember.

We talked about how amazing it is that all the great bulk of letters, the diaries, and the eye-witness accounts, survived, when they themselves were killed in such a holocaust!

Lyndon's toast praised the Prime Minister, for doing so much to lessen the tensions which threatened East Africa, with the waste of war. The horn of Africa had long been a tinder keg, in between Somalia, Kenya and Ethiopia. Somehow this man, or fate, has brought about a period of cessation and peace.

Then, when the Prime Minister rose and made his toast to Lyndon, a very nice one, I almost thought he was quoting from Jack Valenti. "He wrested well, the great power of this country, was in the hand of the man now at the helm."

I took the Prime Minister into the Red Room for coffee afterward, and Perry Bass, who has traveled much in his country, and met many of the officials, but not the Prime Minister, came in, and I introduced him to the Prime Minister's wife, and then he joined the group, where Lyndon and the Prime Minister were talking.

He's been searching for oil for some five or more years there now, and his manager in charge, plays golf with the Prime Minister.

Others came in and I particularly tried to introduce the news ladies to the guests of honor.

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And then, at a word from Bess, we went into the East Room, which was for tonight, arranged in a different pattern. The Marine Band against the window where Lynda's altar had been, and the chairs in a wide semicircle in front of it.

As soon as the room seemed full and the guests of honor were in their seats, I went to the microphone and introduced Anita Bryant as the star of stage, and television, and now as our friend, who we were thrilled to have back on the White House stage. Anita looked absolutely lovely, with a sheer, floating, pale pink Indian costume trimmed in gold, and sang the Man of LaMancha, which always makes my heart take wings, and she closed with the Battle Hymn of the Republic, with Lyndon leading the standing ovation for her.

We've met many performers in the White House, and I think I have become friends with quite a few. Bess must be friends with dozens. Anita is one of the warmest, most natural, most likeable, and, I think, sure-fire hit with the average American audience.

During dinner, I had asked the Prime Minister what time it was, according to his home country, and he had said, I think, 2:30 A.M. That was about 9:30 when I asked him.

So I was relieved for my husband and him, both, shortly after the entertainment was over and the champagne was passed, and a little lingering

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and talking in the hall, he and Mrs. Egal, made their departure.

Lyndon followed soon. I lingered a moment to talk to the Gardner Ackleys, to strike a blow for conservation with Mr. Frederick Bush of Sinclair, and to have a moment's most interesting conversation with the young actress, who at the National, is doing ^{"The Home Coming"} ~~the~~ Harlow Pinter's horrible play, that I loathe. And for the first time I got a simple explanation of it, from the man accompanying her, who is in some theatre capacity. He said, "She, the woman in the ^{play} plane, was just daring, demanding, that her husband come out of his icy shell, grab her up by the scuff of her neck, and take her back home where she belonged." But no such healthy reaction from Pinter.

I had sent word to the Besses and the Nokes, and the Goldschmidts, our house guests, to join me on the second floor for a drink. And before dinner, I had asked Bess to see if she could get word to Anita Bryant and Bob Green, her husband, to come on over from the hotel and spend the night in the Queen's Room. So the nine of us converged on the second floor. Anita took her shoes off, and we all settled down to a happy hour.

The Besses talking about meeting their four children and friends, on a Caribbean Island for a real family vacation. George Nokes to talk Waco and politics. He's a former State Senator, lawyer, business man, and long time friend of ours.

Tex to talk about the uranium exploration in Somalia; and Bob and Anita to tell us all about their lovely house in Florida, and to laugh about the evening we had spent in Luci's kitchen on the day she had been expecting

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Lynn, but she turned out instead, ^{to} be dancing until about 2 o'clock in the morning and then brought them all home for scrambled eggs!

Lyndon came in in his robe about 12:30, through with two envelopes of night reading, but with more still waiting, ^{looking} very weary, but adding to the evening by being a warm and friendly, ^{and} relaxed host, for just about 15 minutes before I said, "Now I know what's waiting for you, so you have to go back."

And so to bed about one o'clock, on what had really been quite a good State dinner, under clouds as heavy as I can remember.

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