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MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Thursday, April 4, 1968 WND

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These were two days I would have loved to sleep, to a luxurious nine or ten o'clock. Instead, I woke again, early, along about seven, and pondered the joys of going to the beach for a swim, but actually too tired to do it, and so drifted back to sleep.

It was nearly nine when I woke up, for good, and had breakfast in bed. And then dressed, with Liz coming in every moment or two for another two or three, for four pictures of me to sign for the staff, which I was very glad to do. I hope I never forget, that after all these years Lyndon knew and worked with FDR, we only have about two or three autographed pictures of him, and how much we treasure them.

I wanted to be ready to leave on time for my own sake, and because, I think it's the manner of this efficiently run household, to do things on time.

So just a few minutes before eleven, I went out on the terrace, and all the staff were assembled over by the fountain. She took me over and introduced me to them, many of them had been with her for years, and there are extensive houses on the grounds. There were cameramen and pictures were made of me and the staff, and me and Mrs. Post, by the fountain, feeding the goldfish, out on the lawn with that great pleasure-dome of a house, as a background. Just at the last, as I was about to go, she introduced another employee, the security man, a big, burly, commanding looking fellow.

Later, Liz said something like, "They <sup>They</sup> have as much security as you have at the White House, and, of course, it shouldn't have come as a

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surprise to me.

We said goodbye to Mrs. Post on the steps, and Angie, and Robin, and the Harzogs, Mr. Dudley and Mr. McManus, and I returned to Washington on the Merriweather, having lunch on the way, elegantly served as always.

One of the pleasures of this trip has been the chance of a long conversation with Robin, one of my always favorite people. I asked her if she had seen Mrs. Kennedy, and how was she, because many of their circles touch. In that inimitable manner of hers, she said, "I don't know. You know, she doesn't talk to women much." And there was nothing censuring in her manner, or snide. I shouldn't mind being in Robin's hands for discussion, and yet it was an expressive statement.

I was back at the White House at 3, and the headlines of the Washington papers were so hopeful - Hanoi offers Talks on Bombing Halt - U. S. Accepts, Will Establish Contact - Johnson Off Today for Hawaii Parley On Viet-Nam Policy. It would be good really, from my standpoint, <sup>that</sup> ~~when~~ he would be gone on this trip, while I would be gone to Texas. I wouldn't feel so remiss leaving him in Washington.

And another headline - RFK-HHH see LBJ. But the Amazing news was that Lyndon had flown up, just a few hours ago, to New York for the installation of Archbishop Terence Cook, taking with him, not only Luci, which is natural, for her strong Catholicism and the comfort she brings him, but also Lyn. This was the end! There was even talk around the house

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that Luci was going with him to Honolulu, and Lyn. I immediately began to plant seeds around, that I thought it would be fine for Luci and Pat to go if he wanted them to, not Lyn, and began arrangements for little Patrick to be taken care of here in the White House.

~~And~~ then I worked at my desk, and with Ashton<sup>with</sup>; Bess on the Austrian dinner list, marking the house guests that I would like to have; putting a memo in Ashton's hands to get approved by Lyndon, and then called the prospective guests, because, of course, we'll return Tuesday night and then the dinner will be Wednesday night.

~~And~~ then<sup>g</sup> worked with Liz on the Texas trip. Seldom has there been a trip I looked forward more to. Spring is beautiful. I have a passion for showing foreigners our country, not its major metropolitan areas like New York and Washington, which is mostly what they see, but its country side and little towns, and out of the way gems, and this was just what I was going to do. And showing them our home.

The speeches were in good order, I went over them, I was even satisfied with my clothes.

One of the few flaws in the day, was that it seemed Lyndon was going at even a faster pace, than before he made his decision<sup>speech</sup>, Sunday night. Marie said he had gotten hardly any rest, and was very tired, and here he was leaving for Hawaii tonight.

~~And~~ there was a Democratic Fund Raising dinner this evening, and I got the word that we were going to it, not for the dinner, but just for a

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nine o'clock appearance, and he would make a speech. N

Nevertheless, it meant evening dress and up hairdo and I called Mr. Per.

Sometime in the hour or two before, I had seen Luci and had told her how I felt about little Patrick's making the trip to Hawaii. That child will give and give for her father's comfort. "Naturally I think too, a little bit." She wanted the excitement of a trip like that for herself and Patrick. She has really not been on the trips, any of them, except the one or two day trip to Mexico City. And Lynda has been around the world, to Europe two or three times. But no, it would be all three of them, Luci, Patrick and baby or none.

Then, just about that time, Lyndon sent us word that he'd been thinking it over, and he thought it would be too hard on the baby. So that one was settled, and I told Luci that if we lived and had any means left, I was going to see that she and Patrick had some wonderful trips in a quieter time.

It was sometime while Mr. Per was fixing my hair, and Lynda Bird had been listening to the TV, that she came flying into my room, "Mama, Mama, Dr. King's been shot!"

~~And then,~~ Quieting down a little, she told us that Dr. King, about to lead a march in Memphis tomorrow, had been shot on a balcony, and was on his way to the hospital.

~~And~~ from that moment on, the evening assumed a nightmare quality.

It was only a few moments later that she came in and said, "Mama, he's

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dead." Everybody's mind began racing off in its own direction, as to what this would mean, to racial violence in our country, to the work of so many to try to bring us together - how far would it throw us back?

There I was with an elaborate hairdo, in Mr. Stavropolous' elegant, festive, flame-colored chiffon, ready for the Democratic dinner, which was already in progress. But the hands of the clock had stopped and we were in a strange sort of suspended state, for the next hour or two. Lynda and Luci and I.

Lyndon was in his office - I knew a statement was being prepared. He gave it on TV from the White House - "America is shocked and saddened by the brutal slaying tonight of Dr. Martin Luther King. I ask every citizen to reject the blind violence that has struck Dr. King, who lived by non-violence. I pray that his family can find comfort in the memory of all he tried to do for the land he loved so well. I just conveyed the sympathy of Mrs. Johnson and myself, to his widow, Mrs. King."

The line I particularly liked, "I hope all Americans tonight, will search their hearts, as they ponder this most tragic incident." And then the line that settled our personal, immediate questions - "I have cancelled my plans for the evening. I am postponing my trip to Hawaii until tomorrow."

So, I took off my flame colored chiffon dress, and put on a comfortable hostess gown, and sometime after 10 Lyndon came in, with Clark and Marnie Clifford, and Marie; Arthur and Mathilde Krim; and John Criswell. The last three had just come from the Democratic Dinner, I believe; and Mary

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Rather, how fitting that she should be with us, <sup>and now</sup> ~~On so much~~ of the ending, she was with us close to the beginning, and so many of the moments of high crisis; and Luci and Pat.

It was a strange, mostly quiet meal. I thought, <sup>and</sup> maybe they did too, <sup>that</sup> we had been pummeled by such an avalanche of emotions the last four days, that we couldn't feel anymore, and here we were, suddenly poised on the edge of another abyss, the bottom of which we could in no way see.

If we were silent, the TV was not, it blared constantly - statements from everybody, speculations on what would happen in various cities. ~~fearful~~, ~~heating up~~, and tensions. I do not remember when the first word came, <sup>of</sup> crowds gathering here in Washington, <sup>on</sup> certain streets. I do remember I talked to Clark Clifford on whether I should continue my own trip tomorrow morning. Clark, the always cautious, said "Let's wait until the morning, and see what the situation is, <sup>and</sup> decide then."

Liz was calling to ask me, she was being queried.

The guests left about 11:30; sometime, I do not quite remember when I asked Lyndon about his meeting with Kennedy this morning. He said, <sup>that</sup> Sorenson had accompanied him, <sup>and</sup> that they wanted Lyndon to support them. <sup>He</sup> said <sup>...</sup> that he felt very fond of the Vice President, he wanted to maintain his position of unifying the country, but he felt perfectly free to express his feelings in any way he saw fit. <sup>Lyndon said he had never</sup>

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~~seen such arrogance, but he must say that Sorenson was decent.~~ They wanted him to get busy with a Committee for liberals and start drafting people.

I talked to Lyndon about what I should do myself tomorrow. He said he thought I ought to go on, by all means.

And so, almost sure that I would, I went to bed.

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