

MEMORANDUM

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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Thursday, October 24, 1968

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I was up early -- about 7:30 -- and had breakfast with Lyndon, worked on my speech for today's luncheon, went to Mr. Per's shop with my constant companion, my straw bag, full of letters to sign and the luncheon program of the American Association of Nurserymen, especially the pictures of today's award winners. Banks and insurance companies -- that you would expect. But a truck drive-in cafe and two filling stations -- that's something of a triumph. An interest in better business surroundings is spreading.

I like to immerse myself in the subject matter of a meeting before I go to it -- the aims of the organization, the award winners if any, the guest list, the head table, the scenario as we call it.

And so close to 12:30 with Marcia (Liz is still sick) I drove to the Statler Hilton and was soon in the midst of a congenial group that I have worked with much of these last four years. Of course the host of the organization, Mr. Shadow and Mr. Letterer. And then City Councilman, John Hechinger and his wife, June. And Mary Lasker and Dr. Grovner, Councilwoman Polly Shackleton and Stew Udall. Walter Washington was going to join us later -- his third luncheon for the day.

And in the familiar line formation we walked into the Ball Room of the Statler Hilton, fixed more beautifully than I ever remember it -- banks of greenery, mounds of red roses, actual trees about 12 feet tall

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flanking the head table. It was really quite stunning.

They had asked Bill Baxter to give the invocation. I haven't seen him in ages, and he has grown a moustache. He is today's minister alright -- no longer at St. Mark's, not even at the Peace Corps. But somewhere in the Government in the poverty program.

I had the pleasure of being early on the program which always makes it possible for me to really enjoy the rest of it -- a brief speech congratulating all the award winners. And then a hope expressed that the most progressive businessmen and imaginative planners would turn their eyes toward two of the big blots on today's landscape -- shopping centers and the urban fringe.

And then came the big event -- the handing out of the awards -- some 16 -- each amply recorded by photographers and spread all across the United States from Massachusetts to Oklahoma City to California (no surprise that it's heavily loaded with Californians).

The best news of the day to me was from Mr. Letterer that they had three times as many entrants this year as they had had a few years ago.

And then, just as I thought it was over and was gathering up my gloves and purse to rise and depart, Mr. Leverett rose for what turned out to be a sort of major speech of the day -- a tribute to me -- glowing, sweet, dear. But it makes me feel rather like I'm present

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at my own funeral, and I am not a bit ready to cooperate. I like the sentiment but I don't want the show unless it fuels some further activity.

It was over by 2:30, and I returned to the White House. And at 3:00 began a meeting in the West Hall with Dorothy and Dr. Grover and Dr. ^{Rhodes} ~~Rhodes~~ on the Library. More and more these days the Library is devouring my hours. It has more strands than the hair on my head -- more things to pursue. I will be so glad when Dr. Newland is with us full time.

But the burden of today's meeting was to try to catch up on some knowledge of just who in the Administration -- from the Cabinet through the Congress, Ambassadors -- the whole range of people -- had accepted the invitation of the Archivist to leave their papers to the Johnson Library. We went over all the lists beginning with the Cabinet. I was gratified by many -- disappointed by some. Especially pleased by Clark Clifford's -- prompt and clear-cut decision to give his papers that related to the period of the Johnson Administration.

A half a dozen or so we marked for me to call. Former Secretary Luther Hodges of Commerce and HEW Secretary Anthony Celebrezze.

The meeting lasted nearly three hours and was not over until close to 6:00. I noticed Lynda wandering through the room as though she had something to say to me. And Warrie Lynn was with her. And

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as soon as my group left, I turned to Lynda and said, "Honey, what time is it?" She looked at something in her hand and gave me an answer oddly that was in seconds. And suddenly I realized that the thing that she had in her hand was a stopwatch and that she must be counting pains. I was flooded with guilt that I should have had my mind anywhere else. I said, "Honey, have you called the doctor?" Yes, he would be here pretty soon. I talked to Mike Howard. He would have the car standing by. We would probably go in two of them. Lynda has had her suitcase packed for days.

Luci was everywhere at once -- the most in charge of anybody, dissentilating with excitement. Dr. Lonergan came a little past 6:00 with a calming influence and a bit of humor. He's been just right for Lynda -- a competent profession^d detached physician. And yet to him Lynda has become an individual, not just a case. And they are good friends now. No trouble at all that she is the daughter of the President. I think humor has helped on both sides.

He examined her in my room on that beautiful canopy bed. He said he thought they had better wait a little while, but he felt sure it would be within the next few hours.

I took Lyn over to Lyndon's office, hoping to see him privately for just a moment to explain to him that we would be going to the hospital and for him to be very quiet about it until we got out there and told Liz.

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A quiet moment with him is hard to come by, and I gave him the message in sort of shorthand talk with his next appointment, Carl Hinney, coming in the door.

And then back over to the West Hall. Business had picked up. There was an air of departure pretty soon. Yes, the doctor said, he thought the time had come to go.

I called Lyndon and told him we were leaving right away. And he said, "Wait just a minute." And truly, in just a moment he was there. And Lynda, who was in considerable pain by this time, drew herself up proud and tall and very composed. He kissed her, and he told her how proud he was of her and spoke of the day when she was born.

And then we were off in a flurry of excitement in two small cars -- no limousine -- the doctor and Lynda in the first one -- Luci and I in the next one. And an odd thing was that at the last moment little Lyn seemed to know that something was happening. That affected him and he didn't like it very much. We left him in Helen's keeping. Warrie Lynn would come over later and spend the night with him. Oddly he sensed I think that we were not looking at him or thinking about him, but about Lynda and something else.

Always when I ride the George Washington Memorial Parkway, it is with pleasure -- exulting in the heavily wooded hills and the river

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below, and the city that stretches along the Potomac with the Capitol like a great white pearl in the middle. Tonight I didn't give a darn about it all. It seemed to last forever, and the speedometer crept up above 50 to 60 and I think 70. And I could see Lynda in the next car running her hand through her hair it looked like and leaning over toward the doctor. And the moments stretched endlessly. Actually, it wasn't quite 8:15 I think when we went up in the elevator to the Presidential suite, and it looked so good.

A nurse came in and took Lynda and the doctor disappeared. And I tried to put in a call to Chuck -- received an answering one from Lyndon who said we could get him the message through General Walt who was going out tomorrow and was right then in the process of making arrangements for his trip and would add this message to Chuck on his telephone call. And I took out the added insurance of sending a cable to Chuck that she had gone to the hospital -- more later. And then I called Mr. or Mrs. Robb -- got Mr. Robb -- he was delighted and he said that Mrs. Robb had just called him that she was going to stay out at a campaign meeting with Mrs. Blu Solimason and he could get his supper out of the ice box. And then before I could call Liz, she called me. Yes, I confirmed at 8:33, indeed we were in the hospital, and we had just gotten word to Chuck, or tried to.

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Dr. Lonergan came back in, and here was another moment of humor. He was dressed in strawberry pink pants and jacket. And in came the anesthetist in a sort of a lime green pants and jacket. The nurses of course were in white.

The doctors saw my face and laughed and said, "We wear them this way so they won't get lost in the laundry -- a psychedelic note to this whole exciting evening.

Luci, jumping up and down with excitement, practically knocked my coffee cup out of my hand when she threw her arms around me. She engaged the doctors in conversation, using professional terms whenever they weren't busy. And she told Lynda about every two minutes how proud she was of her. And indeed so was I, because Lynda was cooperating with the doctors with strength and composure and will.

Later when I did a tape to Chuck, I told him that he would have been proud of her. She would make a pretty good officer herself.

Every now and then Dr. Lonergan assured me that everything was going fine.

Lyndon called a little past 11:00.

Actually, things moved much faster than any of us had expected.

It was close to a quarter of twelve when the doctors put Lynda on the cart and rolled her up to the delivery room. I called Lyndon immediately. He said he would come on out. Liz hoped very much

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that he would be the one to come down and see the press and make the announcement and hand out the cigars.

And our prearranged plan between Dr. Lonergan and me was that he would send his assistant, Dr. Nab, out of the delivery room as soon as the birth had taken place -- leaving everyone locked in there. And his assistant would tell me the facts of the birth.

Lynda had been fiercely anxious that I get word to Chuck before I did to the press -- at least make every effort to. And also of course to Chuck's parents and to Lyndon. She clutches her privacy proudly if not always effectively. And so I was startled just a few minutes past 12:00 in my room across the hall from Lynda's to hear the phone ring once, snatch it up, and there was Mike Howard's voice saying, "Mrs. Johnson, it's a little girl and Lynda's fine." That's all, and he hung up. Almost in a state of shock, I put in a call to General Walt -- apologized for calling him so late -- told him the news -- a little girl -- they are both well -- more details later -- please get it to Chuck as soon as he could. And then I asked Luci to call the Robbs. And then was uncertain whether to call Lyndon because I don't know how secure those car telephones are. And by this time he was enroute. And still the doctor himself hadn't come down. But it all came together at once.

The doctor came in and confirmed what Mike had told me --

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a little girl, born very quickly and uneventfully. Actually she had been in the delivery room only about 15 minutes. And then Lyndon himself walked in, having by mistake gone past the whole flanks of the press on the way up apparently. We told him the news, and together the three of us -- Lyndon and Luci and I -- went down to meet the assembled press, led by a beaming Marcia.. And there was Liz -- really her first appearance since the operation.

There seemed to be some 30 or so people -- Helen and Frances and Wauhillau and Dorothy McCardle and lots of cameras.

Lyndon started passing out cigars. I don't know whether absentmindedly or with a sense of humor to Helen and Frances. We were following along behind with a box of candy for the ladies.

We went to the microphone and announced in a few happy words that Lynda had had a little girl at 12:03 -- that she is apparently healthy, vociferous, and seems to know that she's here and has her work cut out for her. And she is already expressing herself.

It was the only totally pleasant press conference I ever remember, and everybody was content with the news. It seemed to me that Wauhillau La Haye beamed the most.

Somehow the whole night seems to melt into a montage for me. And the pictures I remember best are Lynda gathering herself together with pride and strength to say goodbye to her Daddy as she left for the

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hospital. And then once again as she was wheeled in from the delivery room on that hospital cot covered with a sheet. She managed a smile for him and said, "You and Mother wanted a girl didn't you?"

As for baby Robb, she was very pink with lots of black hair, very vocal and active. She flailed her little fists and turned her little head from side to side. Her fingers are extremely long and delicate. I see no likeness to anybody -- just a new little person in this world.

Lyndon and I went hand in hand down the hall back toward the Presidential suite and he stayed a few minutes longer saying goodnight to Lynda, looking through the glass at the baby. Bob Knudsen had already taken a picture of her. And then he left for home about 1:00.

Luci and I stayed in the room with Lynda a little while longer, and then I went to bed in the room across the hall. But Luci did not come to join me until nearly 2:00.

One of the dividends of these past few weeks is an increased closeness between those two girls -- Lynda and Luci. And scarcely even Lynda herself seemed to be more elated, more grateful, more in tune with tonight's happening.

And so baby Robb turns out after all to be Friday's child, who is loving and giving.