

WHD
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I was up early, like when I was a child and it was a day to go to the County Fair and I didn't want to miss a thing. Coffee at seven, a small private smile to the big canopied bed that I would not sleep in again, and to the courteous deferential White House butler who brought the tray. I'm glad I had spent a lot of Saturday afternoon saying goodbye because I do not remember that I said many goodbyes to the staff on Monday. And Mr. Per in to comb my hair before eight o'clock and then in my robe with a cup of coffee in my hand, a last little pilgrimage of my own into all the rooms on the second floor, walking around quietly--partly to see if there was any personal object left anywhere--mostly just to stand still and absorb the feel of the Yellow Room and the Treaty Room--I shall never forget it. The Lincoln Room and the little Lincoln Sitting Room--and here I found a whole coffee table full of dirty dishes, which I quickly reported to John. Some of the guests from last night's party in search of chairs and a place to perch their plates had drifted in here. He sounded as though he was going to search even the most remote corners anyway. I asked him to please take down the portraits of Lyndon and me, still on the easels in the East Hall, and put them in the care of the Curator.

And into the Queen's Sitting Room and then into the lovely Queen's Room. Here and in the Red Room and in the Green Room I like the flower arrangements most of all, I believe.

About nine-thirty I went up to Ashton's office--one of the last in the whole White House to be dismantled or to stop functioning. It was pandemonium, knee-deep in boxes and pieces of paper! She said she would have it all clean by a little past eleven and make a final walk-through and be out by noon.

And then into Luci's room which looked hopeless--scattered bags, half-opened. [We would] dispatch Patrick and Olga and Miss Glasel and Lucinda out to the Cliffords at about the time we left--maybe five minutes before or five minutes after. Thank heaven with one hour left [to Luci] of the Secret Service, I don't have to handle that!

Luci, in her willful, highly feminine way, had decided to wear what she thought was her prettiest outfit--a very heavy black and yellow dress for which she had no "just right" coat and kept on assuring me no, she wouldn't be cold during the ceremony.

And then into the Pineapple Bedroom, where I found a guest book of the myriad guests who had stayed upstairs with us--put it back in Ashton's hands--and do the rest of the guest rooms.

Into the Solarium--its personality all stripped away and looking cold and clinical now and what a gay room it's been--with Luci's signature face on the window, Lynda's Winnie-the-Pooh pictures, trip pictures and stacks of records, and often a buffet table for the stream of houseguests!

I went back down to my room and put on the peach pink dress that I would wear and then down to the Red Room. The floor was alive with butlers and cleaning people and there was a smell of ammonia in the air--what a surprising household smell here! John assured me that it would be gone in thirty minutes and yes he would light the fires and we would have some sweet rolls with the coffee.

A couple of times I went into Lyndon's room. He had been on the phone constantly since seven o'clock or talking with aides, dictating, dispatching Jim or Larry for some last thing to be done. Once he showed me a couple of sheets of paper--the citations for Mary Lasker and Laurance Rockefeller--he was giving them the Medal of Freedom and these were the brief records of their accomplishments for their countrymen. There was a list about twenty long that we had discussed over a period of months. I was glad he was doing it, but wished he had done it a month ago with pomp and ceremony. It had been very hard for him to choose some and exclude others. I made a few changes to Mary's and Laurance's.

After a while it was time to put on my elegant mink hat--what an indulgence--how often will I wear it at Stonewall? Take up my muff, tell Lyndon I would be a few minutes early and to come as soon as he could and down I went to the Red Room.

For me, in any day of crisis all the real emotions--all the leave-takings or whatever-it-is have already been lived through at

a quieter time. From now on, one is sort of anesthetized--in armour--and still there's the feeling of "going to the Fair" and wanting to absorb, take in everything, but not to feel it.

The day blurs into a montage and I am not sure of sequence. I think Leonard Marks was there all the time and from our viewpoint the orchestra master, and I believe Hubert and Muriel were the first to come. And then, as it so often had happened, we got the message, "They're two minutes away," and Lyndon and I walked out on the North Portico lined heavily on both sides with cameramen. And there on the left was a hilarious sight! Mr. Traphes Bryant, at his feet a bouncing Yuki, freshly washed and wearing a bright coat that Mrs. Bryant had made, a darling grey poodle, clipped and brushed and proud, and tucked into Mr. Bryant's coat, a little miniature of a dog, breed unknown, surveying this scene with bright alert eyes. Until the human members of this drama arrived, these characters had been filling in for the cameramen!

The big black car rolled up and out stepped the President-Elect, growing momentarily more impressive somehow, and then Pat in a smashing rosy red outfit, belted, with lapels and a fur hat. Pretty little Tricia stepped from somewhere, in a powder blue coat with little touches of fur. She's tiny and very feminine. And Julie, taller, darker, and more vivacious, and lanky smiling young David. We stopped on the Portico for pictures. Right and then left and then the funny little business that so often happens about who goes

in the door first until I took Pat's arm firmly and said, "Shall we go in?" Then we were all in the Red Room, the crowd enlarging to include Senator Dirksen, Speaker McCormack, the Vice President-Elect and Mrs. Agnew and their son who had been in Vietnam, with his wife, and their two daughters, Senator Mansfield, Gerald Ford, Senator Jordan and Carl Albert, and Lynda and Luci who gravitated at once to the young Nixons. I noticed Luci and Tricia in animated conversation in a corner, apparently getting on very well. And Lynda asking David if he really did leave all those notes behind the pictures, and I asking Mr. Marriott how he was managing with his thousands of friends who must suddenly have come from the far reaches of the United States demanding a suite with a large living room. Over in the corner, I saw Liz and Bess standing together surveying the scene. How wonderful it has been to work with them all these years!

There was Leonard Marks saying, "It's time to get into the cars." And Pat and I and Speaker McCormack went out together and took our places in a car. Lyndon and Mr. Nixon were in the lead car and in between some Secret Service and somewhere behind Lynda and Luci and Leonard Marks. We all laughed that they were going to have the merriest time of anybody.

It took a while before everyone got in and I looked up at the facade of the White House and there, glued to one of the windows were the faces of John Fickland and Jermain, and another butler, was it Johnny? That was my last view as I drove away from the White House.

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We started the parade down Pennsylvania Avenue. It was strange--there were very few people--a little knot here, a group there. I waved busily and tried to lock eyes whenever I saw an animated face, but mostly they just stood and I did not see a familiar face the whole length of Pennsylvania Avenue. But there was a good deal of banners and bunting. Our conversation was desultory and trivial--we were glad it wasn't sleeting, we might even avoid rain although it was a gray brooding day. I said I felt sure that the stands were going to be full by the time they rode back. Somehow I felt vaguely sorry that they weren't. And every now and then a booming remark of substance from the Speaker, all the more surprising coming from that frail desiccated man. We saw a few children with flags and he said from deep within the well of his thoughts, "I like to see them with flags," and we both looked at the Capitol, he and I. I talked about how driving in from Virginia on summer afternoons, with the other Speaker, Mr. Sam Rayburn, who used to say, "How do you like my Capitol?" And we said together something like, "We all feel that it's ours."

Then as we drove up under the Portico at that great old building we were met and escorted, with minimum confusion, to the office of Senator Margaret Chase Smith. There was Mrs. Eisenhower in a dark dress with an off-the-face hat, as poised and friendly and lively as in all the more vigorous years I had known her. I was glad to see her and I had one brief minute with her to tell her how much I

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had always appreciated her coming to the Senate Ladies Luncheons in my time in the White House. And she in turn recalled how nice it had been that Mrs. Woodrow Wilson had come to earlier functions in her day.

Lyndon and Mr. Nixon went to some adjoining office. Presently some orchestrator of all this drama gave us a signal, and together Muriel and I walked out the door and down the great steps of the Capitol under the commanding handsome newly built portico--face to face with the great sea of faces that stretched off to the right to the House Office Buildings and to the left to the Senate Office Building and in front of us over toward the Supreme Court. Side by side, and it gave me a warm pleasure that we walked together. Later Muriel said the same. We took our seats on the front row and then turned our heads to watch the next entrance onto the stage of this great quadrennial American pageant. Try as I did to soak everything up, I cannot remember for sure--I think that when Lyndon walked in, they played "Hail to the Chief" and this time, truly the last time. He looked very tall and handsome and impressive, and very relaxed too, I thought. Then I think Mrs. Nixon came in alone--the bright rose red a smashing success. And finally, the country's new President.

For all the preparation that went into it, it was a brief ceremony--only about forty-five minutes, I believe. And how to describe it?--low key, restrained it was to me. None of the

youthful ebullience, the poetic brilliance of the Kennedy Inauguration, or the warm roaring Jacksonian quality of ours.

I remember only bits-and-pieces stand out--a special smile between me and Mrs. Warren (she was right behind us). Among the five prayers, one was by the head of the Greek Orthodox Church who had been my companion on our trip to the funeral of the King of Greece, along with President Truman. Looking out onto the sea of faces and finding so few familiar ones--Allen Drury, I believe--and very personal warm smiles from some of the newspaper women down front--Wauhilla La Hay, Betty Beale. A murmured remark now and then to Mrs. Agnew who was on my left--something like, "There's going to be so much that you'll enjoy," or "We wish you good luck in all the years ahead." And there, towering in front of us, was the camera stand--it seems to get bigger every four years. The great eye of television trained down on us.

And I remember with corresponding appreciation and dismay that when there was a prayer, or the orchestra broke forth in "The Star Spangled Banner," in one of the booths one of the commentators rose to his feet, unselfconscious, natural, and in the other booths the other commentators sat sprawled around their tables--perhaps handling their instruments required this.

And then an odd optical illusion during the swearing in of Vice President Agnew. Hubert was standing directly behind him and as Agnew raised his hand and I looked at the tableau, it looked as though it was Hubert's hand that was up!

And finally, the Inaugural speech itself. The paper said it was seventeen minutes long and President Nixon delivered it rather quickly in an even voice. It was, I thought, low-key with much accent on peace. There were no high trumpet calls to action and probably that is just as well. God knows there's been plenty of striving in the last five, yes, eight years and probably the country is tired of striving--maybe they just want to hold still--absorb the deluges of change for a while. It was interrupted by applause from time to time, but there was no great surge of emotion that swept the sea of people in front of us.

Well before one o'clock, he finished and we all rose to take our departure. I said goodbye to pretty little Tricia on my right next to Muriel--in case I did not really get to make a formal goodbye to Pat or the new President and as it happened I didn't really.

Then I was swallowed up in the great departing throng going up the stairs, trying to take in every face that I saw--so many of them unfamiliar. The Cabinet was right behind President Nixon and over beyond, off the stand, a group of Senators, and then up the stairs themselves on one side the Diplomatic Corps--a last big smile to Sevilla Sacasa. At the top of the stairs was Hugh O'Brian, who was I think, in charge of their gala. And then we were in the big black car down below--Lyndon and I, and Lynda and Luci, driving with a motorcycle escort away from the Capitol grounds and down the streets, now more filled with people, and out onto the George Washington Parkway, on towards the Cliffords.

I was propped for some newspaper coverage outside their house, but not for what we found. It looked as if we had moved backwards in time to some particularly homey campaign rally! Their quiet front lawn, secluded from the highway by a hedge, was jam-packed with people--little boys up the apple tree, babies in arm, high school and college youngsters carrying signs--"We'll Never Forget You, LBJ," "You Did A Good Job," "We Still Love You, Lyndon." Somebody had a Texas flag and there was a great big U.S. flag waving precariously in front of us across the sidewalk. Marny, without a coat, and Clark were standing at the end of the sidewalk to greet us. We hugged them and made our way up the sidewalk shaking hands to right and left, trying to think of a courteous brief phrase for the microphones that were stuck in front of us, and finally pausing on the front stoop for a picture with the Cliffords. We quite lost Luci in the crowd, because of course her Secret Service departed at the stroke of twelve, but I really think she was revelling in it, as much as having difficulty.

Inside that warm and welcoming house, there awaited us one of the most significant and dear parties I shall ever attend. A good part of the Cabinet, but not all. I hope we are finished, done with the need for categories. There were the Rusks and Fowlers and the Freemans and the Alan Boyds and C. R. Smith, and the Marvin Watsons and from Lyndon's staff, Walt Rostow and the George Christians, and from mine, Liz and Bess and their husbands. Hubert and Muriel

of course, and from the House, the Hale Boggs, and Jake and Beryl Pickle. In all the sixty-odd people, there was only one regret--the George Mahons--and that late in the day because they had been asked to represent the state of Texas in some of the Inaugural festivities. There were four Senators there--the Mike Monroney, and the Birch Bayh, and the Scoop Jacksons and the Gale McGees, Out of towners Arthur Krim, and Jane and Charles Engelhard, who were asking about our plans to come to Florida. Just one press person--the Bill Whites, and one from the Court, Abe and Carol Fortas. And from elsewhere in the Government, the Leonard Marks, the Bill Deason, and Averell Harriman.

Only one thing marred my sheer delight in the day and that is we must leave not later than three in order to get to Austin before the Inaugural proceedings there got under way. We did not want to conflict or upstage our own state of Texas Inaugural and a lot of the good Democrats and officials wanted to come out to the airport to meet us and so time was our tyrant. One of the blessings of the future might be that this tyrant will fade into the wings!

I remember vignettes--I sat in one of Marny's small delightful groupings with Marvella Bayh and Lindy and Mary Ellen, and we talked of our trip down the Mississippi. There, right outside the open window, not eight feet away was the whole yard full of people, the little boys up the apple tree, and a young man with a sign that said, "LBJ in '72." I smiled and waved and then he turned it round and

it said, "Lyn in 2004." And then once when I went upstairs, there was Lynda standing in a window holding Lucinda in her arms and waving down at the crowd below and pointing out the signs to Lucinda, and all the crowd waving back.

There was a moment when I got a rather imperious request to come upstairs at once--I think it was from Jim Jones. Lyndon wanted me up there and I saw him gathering up others. We converged in Clark and Marny's bedroom, along with Averell Harriman and Bill White and Lyndon. And Lyndon told us what it was about. Early this morning he had conferred the Medal of Freedom on Clark and Harriman and Bill White and seventeen others. He read Clark's citation and Harriman's and gave them to them. Bill's would be sent to him later. And then he talked of the others--much of Rusk who had already been awarded the Medal of Freedom, with distinction, and of Walt Rostow and his selfless service to his country and his President in an incredibly tough spot. I think I saw tears in Marny's eyes. What Lyndon said was a personal intimate talk in a low voice, very earnest, no speech at all. I was enormously gratified--I had wanted him to do this earlier with pomp and fanfare, but I was glad that at last it was done! Bill White answered and this tough but seasoned man seemed close to tears. He described his feeling for Lyndon briefly, just about four words--one of them was "gallant." He has a very felicitous way with words and this unplanned little talk was good enough to be graven in stone.

The hands of the clock prodded us on. I went down and led off the group in loading our plates at a sumptuous beautiful luncheon table. Emotion and times of great significance do not spoil my appetite--rather they seem to fuel it. I divided my precious moments between the delicious food and enjoying the guests, every one of whom meant so much to me, and remembering to smile and wave from time to time at our audience in the yard who were still watching through the windows. Lucinda made an appearance now and then in her little yellow infant seat regarding us all with solemn big eyes and occasionally a toothless granny grin. And Patrick Lyndon was weaving his way through legs while Luci, Olga, or I retrieved Marny's little treasures from the low tables at his approach.

And then, too quickly, I got the signal "time to go, let's go to the car." I hugged Marny and Clark, not expecting to see them again although they insisted they were going to race us to Andrews Air Force Base. We stopped on the front porch briefly again and Lyndon said a few words into Ray Scherer's microphone--how he had been a part of Washington for more than thirty years and loved it and he would come back to visit. And with waves and handshakes and calls of "God bless you, Mr. President," "We'll miss you Lyndon," we made our way to the car--the four of us together and headed for the helicopter on the grounds of the Bethesda Naval Center. Only en route did I remember that I had left my elegant fur muff and

my brand new gloves. Efficient most of those years and here at the last moment I fall apart! When I reached the helicopter my farewell to one of my Secret Service agents whom I would see no more--I think it was Woody Taylor--was to round up these two possessions as a parting kind gesture to me and send them along.

There was a small crowd even at the helicopter. We flew in silence over Washington and landed at Andrews. And there was a big crowd, lining the fence and drawn up around Air Force One. Lyndon strode past the lined up military and began to shake hands at the fence. The band played "Ruffles and Flourishes," but not "Hail to the Chief," and "Auld Lang Syne," and "Yellow Rose of Texas." And there was a salute of guns, I think 21, and it was a total confusion, and dear, and wonderful. Luci was crying--more a total living of the day than sadness, I think, and saying of Lyn, "He's just lost twenty-one of his best friends," meaning the Secret Service.

In the crowd I glimpsed Sharon with her little son and Cynthia, and the Wilbur Cohens, and above the heads, Ramsey Clark, and do I ascribe to his face a touch of sadness or is it there? And there was Diana and I was still clutching in my hand the darling little nosegay she had sent to the Cliffords for me. And the Speaker--at this I was very deeply touched--and of course our Congressman Jake Pickle, and a strong Republican Congressman, George Bush, and this touched me also. And the attractive young Cattos who are up for the Inaugural festivities of course, and Ashton in tears.

And to my amazement standing at the foot of the steps were none other than Clark and Marny and Dean and Virginia! They had indeed raced us and had gotten there, and quite a group of people who had been at lunch. We mounted the steps of Air Force One, Lyndon carrying his faithful companion, Lyn. We stopped at the top, the family, and turned and waved in a conscious goodbye tableau. I, searching for the eyes of the most dear and most familiar--and there close to the foot of the steps stood Liz with a sign that was an invitation to laughter, "Culpeper thanks you." Shades of 1960!

It was a quiet flight down. One of the first things I saw was a big bunch of yellow roses with a card on it from the Nixons. What a thoughtful thing to do! And I felt a salute too to their efficiency, knowing something of how great the demands on them and all their staff were today. I tried to sleep, couldn't, read the accounts of the things I had lived through, and about five-thirty we arrived at Bergstrom.

Here indeed was a crowd--perhaps five thousand packed along the fence--and a receiving party at the foot of the steps of the plane. Tall Ben Barnes in his tux only moments away from one of his own Inaugural parties--what a nice thing for him to do. And Eloise and Homer, and Chancellor Ransom and Hazel, and Mayor Akin and his wife who presented me with a beautiful bouquet of the first flowers of spring--Iris, tulips, narcissus, violets--especially prepared by Marietta Brooks, she said; and Bob Strauss, and Carolyn Kellam with

both her little children and the Deaths of course. The Longhorn band was there in bright orange and they played "Ruffles and Flourishes," and then "The Eyes of Texas." There was a big sign above the Base Operations that said, "Welcome Home, Mr. President and Family." Lyndon made a brief speech ending with he hoped that the country would be as understanding with Nixon as it had been with him--and knowing him and his deep respect for the office of the Presidency I didn't think he meant it as irony. He ended up saying, "Whether we are Democrats or Republicans, Texans or New Yorkers, we love our country, or we ought to love it."

And then once more, he took to the fence, with the wind blowing him in the face, grabbing for hands with both of his, and finally picking up Lyn and taking him along the fence while Lynda with Lucinda in her arms and I followed, smiling and waving.

With a last goodbye to an airport fence and also goodbye to Luci and Lyn who were going to their own house, Lyndon and Lynda and Lucinda and I got on the jetstar and headed for the Ranch. I looked over my shoulder and there was a silver crescent of a new moon, bright and clear and full of promise--it reminded me of the astronauts and it reminded me, rather preciously, of a line in one of Lyndon's recent speeches quoting one of the astronauts who said that he would look at the moon in years to come and remember with wonder that he was there. And both Lyndon and I will look back at the Presidency with wonder that we were there.

But there was still one more reception committee and it turned out to be quite a lively one! We got to the Ranch just as dark was falling. There around the hangar were about five hundred local folks--not A. W. and Melvin and the big "Jefes" of the area, but the Malecheks and innumerable Weinheimers, Father Schneider and the Truesdells. Lyndon invited everyone into the hangar and then he made them a rather long and rather fulsome talk about how glad he was to be home. He called Paul to get him some little gold pens and then stood at the door as he shook hands with everybody and said goodnight and handed them one of the souvenir pens.

Lynda and Lucinda and I went on into the living room and there were Arthur and Mathilde. Dale joined us and Mrs. Truesdell and we relaxed with a drink and then we had dinner with Mary Rather, Juanita, and Yolanda. A little past nine I went to bed, with a line of poetry reeling in my mind, I think it's from "India's Love Lyrics," "I celebrate my glad release, the tents of silence and the camp of peace." And yet for me it's not quite the exit line because I have loved almost every day of these five years. A better go-to-sleep line was one of the signs I had seen today, my favorite, "LBJ, You Were Good For The U.S.A."