

JANUARY 31, 1969

Friday

This doesn't fit in the last book. I think Jan.

The last day of January was gray and misty—  
An invitation to some sunny shores, and alas we had decided  
not to go to California, where the Winthrop Rockefellers  
had so generously made their house in Palm Springs available  
for us. But maybe we'll still go to Florida for Acapulco.

I spent the morning on unpacking chores. I had told  
Lyndon that I wanted to be sure to get in touch with Liz  
when she arrived and invite them out to dinner and it was  
he who suggested that I go out to the airport to meet her.  
So I drove into Austin alone, running into stretches of fog,  
veils of mist that hung in the valleys or lingered over the  
hills and then clear stretches—a familiar sight on this road  
all the years since '51.

I stopped at KTBC, briefly greeted some of the personnel  
there were a group of them gathered in the coffee shop wishing  
'happy birthday' to one of our longtime employees. And then  
Jesse said he would go out to the airport with me.

I approach my return to private life eagerly, curiously  
looking for the differences, blandly (not sure of word on tape)  
that it will be easy and cosy. Today was an experience.

Friday January 31, 1969

page 2

We had a hamburger in the coffee shop and soon there was a small stream of waitresses and little boys coming up to me asking for autographs. I wrote my name between the bites and then went out to watch from the opposite end that so familiar phenom of the 1960's --an airport arrival. It is a word added to my vocabulary and evokes just as clear a picture as say the word 'picnic' or 'ball'. The occasion was the arrival of the VIP's for the Headliner's Club annual celebration. Liz was one of them and there was a movie star or two and an award winner from the world of journalism.

Plane time approached and all the characters and props took their places. The Mayor, Mr. Akin, and his pretty wife with an armfull of yellow roses, Mayor Pro tem Emma Long, City councilmen and businessmen, a band loudly playing "The Eyes of Texas" and "The Yellow Rose of Texas", a small cluster of photographers and a yellow carpet being unrolled. "This is different", one of the officers from Bergstrom leaned over to tell me. The red one, last used for us on our return home was being framed and hung in the officers' club.

Friday January 31, 1969

page 3

Lots of people spoke to me in a friendly natural manner like I had been there everyday, but nobody took my picture and there was certainly no excitement about my presence. I stood on the edge of the crowd under an umbrella--it had begun to rain--with Emma Long. The plane came to a halt, the lady with the yellow roses pressed forward and so did the photographers and out stepped a movie star and a few more VSP's and no Liz. Les, looking pale got off the plane last and said it had been dreadful weather for ~~flying~~ from Washington and when the plane put down in Dallas, Liz had vowed never to set foot on a plane again and had got off in search of an automobile. She would arrive in time for the evening party.

Jesse and I left and went to join Mr. Copus, a real estate developer in Austin and there followed two of the most education hours in the life of our town that I have had in five years. We drove and drove all around the periphery of my well loved Austin. There are springing up shopping centers on on ~~the~~ every hill and valley and pasture lands march rows of new houses. Some of those he took us by were quite good --streets laid out in a meandering fashion, American Elm trees planted at regular intervals on both sides

Friday January 31, 1969

page 4

Mr. Copus is building a house on Warren Woodward's old lot and I was going to choose the building materials. The lot, now cleared had great possibilities --a lovely view of the hills and river. I decided old brick, the cedar ( ? ) shingle roof would be my first choice and pink Mexican brick next and the white stone third.

I reached the F.O.B. in the late afternoon and tackled the desk with Helene for several quite productive hours. The mail is beautiful --<sup>it is a</sup> ~~the~~ pipeline to the heart of the people of this country which I have always valued and respected. It is also over-powering --I am staggered to think how we can get it all answered and filed and taken care of. Now the tone of most of it is 'welcome home, we love you, thank you for these long years of working for us'. A great many of them recall experiences through the years with us. Often I remember, sometimes sadly not at all.

About seven, Helene and I went over to the 5th floor and I changed into my black lace dress and together we drove to the Westgate, the handsome high rise apartment that overlooks the State Capitol, --we were going to Roy Butler's party for Liz and the other VSP's of the Headliner's celebration.

Friday January 31, 1969

page 5

Our first party back home in Austin and this too was an experience. We found a parking place right in front--I dare say a rare gift from the gods. Going up in the elevator I knew nearly every face and not a single name, so I just smiled brightly all around and said "I want you all to know Helene Lindow, my secretary."

Upstairs we were engulfed in the loud, gay confusing aura of a cocktail party--unfamiliar to me these five years past where nearly all the parties I attend are those I am giving. Someone asked me what I was going to do when I got out of the White House and I said "I am going to be a guest!"

Here it was different, I did know many of the guests; our hosts the Roy Butlers, <sup>dear</sup> Paul and Dolly Bolton, whom I greeted with a hug, the pale forlorn <sup>Gloria</sup> ~~Lloyd~~ Green, the widow of the founder of the Headliners, George and Joanne Christian, radiating pleasure in being home, and of course Liz who's already full of spicy stories about Washington in the last eleven days.

It was a sophisticated impressive room with floor to ceiling windows that framed the State Capitol below us in a stunning view. I moved around the room, introducing Helene and seeing old friends. And after about 30 minutes I took my departure

Friday January 31, 1969

page 6

accompanied to the elevator by Walter Cavin who kept on looking over his shoulder, I think, for my entourage.

There was none. He seemed a little baffled and said "are you alright, shall I go to your car with you?" I assured him that I was right down front--don't bother. And feeling quite independent and a bit adventurous I got in the car and headed out into the night to the Ranch about 65 miles away. No Jerry, no Woody--all on my own. I am determined quite ~~determined~~ desirous of being independent in the small business of day-to-day living.

I turned on the radio and went along at a brisk speed--quite cozy really, but I was aware it was night and I was alone. As I approached Johnson City, I called on business service and found that Lyndon was at the Moursunds--they asked me to come by. They had already had dinner so I jumped into the pool and had a vigorous swim of about 40 lengths and then joined them around the fireplace in their bedroom. Mariallen brought me a plate of fried chicken and the day ended on a pleasant low key, comfortable note.