

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

Thursday, March 19, 1964

WASHINGTON
WHD

Whatever has happened today, and it's been plenty, the most important thing about it - the 20th birthday of Lynda - and it reminds me of a line from Jane Adams. "One generation after another has depended upon its young to equip it with gayety and enthusiasm, to persuade it that living is a pleasure." And that's one thing that Lynda Bird constantly does for us.

One of the nicest things about the day, was a note from Lyndon, with some flowers. And it began, "Dear Fritz:" (reminding me of a time, very long ago), and ended with a signature, so personal, that I would hardly quote it anywhere.

As for that blessed child's birthday, really, I feel remiss in having given her only that most unimaginative of things - money - and sat down for a brief visit with her at lunch, where Zephyr did have an angel food cake with pink icing.

We moved some furniture from the family room at the Elms, to the solarium, in hopes of finally getting it fixed up so the girls would enjoy it. And I went out to buy a couple of lamps for Lynda's room.

Tonight is the night of the big Democratic dinner at the Armory, to which Luci Baines had most agreeably agreed to go, planning on wearing her pink crepe dress; and for which I am getting out my beautiful red ballgown.

But Lynda Bird, very sadly, for me, didn't want to go. She's just as strong and as individual as her daddy, and I hated to say "It's your duty, please go." Finally, and reluctantly, she is going, all of which has made

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the day something of a strain, but nothing compared to the bombshell that dropped into our lap late this afternoon.

Pierre Salinger, walked into Lyndon's office about three, told him that he was going to resign, and run for the Senate in California. Lyndon called George Reedy in the hospital, got him dressed, got him over there as soon as possible, they called a press conference and Salinger told the press conference of his resignation, leaving immediately thereafter for California.

There's such a vacuum, in my own thinking, of how to cope with this situation, that I can't quite describe it, because, of all the people from the Kennedy Administration, I had felt that he was one of the most clinical, professional, although very close and attached to the Kennedy's, we had established a certain sympatico relationship between that made me feel easy around him, at the same time that I trusted his confidence completely. So it's a big gap in my own thinking.

Ambassador Stevenson came over and changed clothes in the Lincoln Room to go to the dinner. We all got dressed up in our best and arrived at 8 o'clock in that vast barn, the Armory, where some 5300 people had paid a \$100 a head for the party dinner. And what a strange dinner it was. I must say that I never saw the Armory looking prettier but it being March the 19th, they had chosen a St. Patrick's Day theme, and the place was festive with green and white mammoth sparkling shamrocks, lyres, top

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hats, balloons, rising from every table, anchored by an Irish potato, and green and white cellophane fringe, and balloons hanging from the ceiling. But it all served to remind you of one person, President Kennedy - and made me feel an alien in the atmosphere.

Lyndon's speech, quite competent I thought, was not sparkling and there was intentionally, very little humor in it. Many, many people came up to the front table to shake hands with us and get autographs, and the nicest moment of the evening was when the waiters brought in a silver donkey with a green top hat and a green bow tie, on a float, and he was carrying a huge shamrock proclaiming, "Happy Birthday, Lynda." The donkey float also had on it, a three tiered birthday cake, with pink candles, 20 of them, and sugar roses, the whole thing weighing 55 pounds.

Poor lamb, Lynda, she had to blow out her candles with many puffs, and about the same moment, while they were introducing Mike Kerwin. I could ^{see} her looking pleadingly up at us, meaning I don't want to interrupt this introduction.

Added all together, the financial success of the dinner, the fact that it was for the Congressional class of 1936, of which we were a member, although somewhat belated, coming in in '37; The presence of so many paid-up ticket buyers from our own state of Texas (I think there were 35 from the old 10th Congressional District); the presence of that towering

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political figure, James Farley, as toastmaster; the fact that three good friends, Scooter Miller, Lindie Boggs and Mrs. Clayborne Pell, were co-chairmen of the dinner, And the charming courtesy to Lynda, all added to make it a big evening, a great evening, a success. But over-all there was that peculiar pall of -- "Are we intruders here?"

The departure of Salinger; the Irish decorations, the absence of any member of the Kennedy family - all helped to evoke that mood.