



## “We’re Going to Carry the South”

**Date:** 1964-10-07

**Conversation:** WH6410-04-5842-5843

**Participant:** Lyndon B. Johnson

**Participant:** Lady Bird Johnson

**Participant:** Lynda Bird Johnson

**Start Time:** 21:40

**Duration:** 06:33

**Place:** Chicago, Illinois

SCENE SETTER: In this telephone call, Lady Bird and Lynda Bird Johnson reported to President Johnson on their experience in the Palmetto State aboard the Lady Bird Special campaign train. Meanwhile, President Johnson was in Chicago for the night after a day of campaigning in Iowa and Illinois.

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**Lynda Bird Johnson:** Hi, Daddy.

**President Johnson:** Hi. They tell me you were the star of the ball.

**Lynda Bird Johnson:** Well, I was.

**President Johnson:** You were? Just admit it, huh?

**Lynda Bird Johnson:** Well, I *was* pretty good.

**President Johnson:** You were?

**Lynda Bird Johnson:** Yes, sir!

**President Johnson:** Well, how do you think—are we going to carry the South?

**Lynda Bird Johnson:** I think we’re going to carry the South. I’m not too sure about South Carolina. I thought we did very well in North Carolina, and we did pretty good in Virginia, too, and I think we did well in South Carolina up to tonight. I agree with Mother [Lady Bird Johnson]. Tonight, Mother and Luci [Baines Johnson] and myself, we just all got up and smiled and said nice things. We didn’t attack.

**President Johnson:** Well, who cussed them out? [*Pause.*] Senator [Olin D. T.] Johnston [D–South Carolina]?

**Lynda Bird Johnson:** He did. His wife . . . made—said something. Several people. [*Pause.*] The congressman. Lots of people did.

**President Johnson:** What'd the congressman say?

**Lynda Bird Johnson:** Well, he just . . . he just gave hell.

**President Johnson:** He did?

**Lynda Bird Johnson:** Yeah. He did come around and tell them several times about being—about how this wasn't showing very good manners, and so forth, and that quieted them down pretty much. They tell me, though, Daddy, they had a lot of trouble here in Charleston [South Carolina]. That we did this very, very big shopping center. They took a vote of all the people who had stores there, and all but one voted against letting us do it. The man who owns it is a good Democrat, so he let us do it.

Also, they told me that they went to the—heard that they went to one of the schools, trying to have a Young Citizens thing there in the gym, and that the principal ordered them off the premises and suspended the Young Citizens. So it just shows you what we're up against. And I just—I'm—they're fighting as hard as they can. The people we saw here tonight were good people. I think that if they'll just all go out and register and vote, we'll do pretty well. The only problem is—I think in a way it was good, because a lot of these people in line, they're lackadaisical and not done any work, were excited by the fact these few people were there. We're going to get a lot of sympathy reports, because these people were bad. I think we'll just stay good and not say anything, we'll be doing real well.

**President Johnson:** [*Pause.*] OK. I love you, and be a good girl. Don't run out with the Marines too much.

**Lynda Bird Johnson:** Well, I love you, too, Daddy. You take care.

**President Johnson:** You tell them to get you in by 2:30 or 3:30 or 4:00 anyway. [*Slight chuckle.*]

**Lynda Bird Johnson:** Well, Daddy, this is my problem: there's no plane out of here.

**President Johnson:** There's not?

**Lynda Bird Johnson:** No plane until tomorrow afternoon, so I'm going to have to take a train, so I can get there—get by tomorrow.

**President Johnson:** Why you got to get back at all?

**Lynda Bird Johnson:** Well, because I have to go to school, Daddy.

**President Johnson:** You do? OK. I love you. Good night.

**Lynda Bird Johnson:** I love you, Daddy. You take care.

**President Johnson:** Let me talk to Luci.

**Lynda Bird Johnson:** She's not here, Daddy.

**President Johnson:** She don't mean she's out with a man.

**Lynda Bird Johnson:** Well, just one of her friends, Daddy.

**President Johnson:** My goodness alive, that girl. I don't know what she's—going to happen to her.

**Lynda Bird Johnson:** Nothing's going to happen to her except she's going to be happy.

**President Johnson:** OK. Good night. Let me talk to your mama.

**Lynda Bird Johnson:** OK. Here she is. You know you're loved, now. I'll see you tomorrow.

**President Johnson:** [*softly*] OK.

**Lynda Bird Johnson:** You sleep late and take care of yourself. Here's Mama.

**Lady Bird Johnson:** Darling?

**President Johnson:** This little Mary Pickenham [Pakenham] writing some mean stories from the [*Chicago*] *Tribune*. [*Pause. Lady Bird Johnson chuckles.*] Do you know her?

**Lady Bird Johnson:** Why, yes, I know her, and I imagine she wouldn't have her job with the *Chicago Tribune* if she didn't write mean stories, would she?

**President Johnson:** I don't know.

**Lady Bird Johnson:** [*speaking aside to Lynda Bird*] Why don't you say one word and then [*unclear*].

**Lynda Bird Johnson:** Daddy, I hate to bother you again. I just wanted to tell you Doris Fleson has high blood pressure.

**President Johnson:** Oh, she does?

**Lynda Bird Johnson:** She does. That's the only trouble. And she just—it wasn't real serious, but they just—we just sent her back home. And Dr. [Janet G.] Travell says she thinks she'll be all right, but she is—shouldn't be on the train.

**President Johnson:** Here's what this girl says about you, says: "The 19-car Lady Bird Special clicks down the tracks, campaign songs blast forth. There are 2 to 30 minutes of furious speech-making. Lynda Bird Johnson may sing 'Hello, Lyndon' in her off-key, girlish soprano."

**Lynda Bird Johnson:** [*Pause.*] Well, so what, Daddy? That'll just get me the sympathy vote of all those people who can't sing on key.

**President Johnson:** You mean you can get the sympathy vote of all the people who can't sing on key, huh?

**Lynda Bird Johnson:** I don't think there's anything wrong with that. I don't think I sing off key. But, after all, if you've been singing for as many hours as I have, I'm sure I've done it quite a few times off key, and I don't feel hurt by it a bit.

**President Johnson:** Why don't you learn how to sing on key? Take some lessons when you get up here?

**Lynda Bird Johnson:** Well, the first place, I haven't been singing very much. You see, they're just—she's just trying to find something wrong, Daddy. She didn't—it's better for her to say that than to say I—

**President Johnson:** She says, "Helicopters circling over the train, patrol cars following it, troopers armed with rifles at each stop are reminders that the candidate himself, the President, is not popular in the South. [Barry M.] Goldwater [Sr.] [R-Arizona] boosters are everywhere."

**Lynda Bird Johnson:** Oh, well, Daddy. She's just talking. If we didn't have anybody ever looking after us, she'd say that we were just begging to get hurt! [*Pause.*] After all, Daddy, she's going to have something [*unclear*]

**President Johnson:** How many people did you have in Charleston tonight?

**Lynda Bird Johnson:** [*speaking aside*] [*Unclear*] how many people in Charleston, Mother? [*to President Johnson*] Someone said about 20,000. [*Unclear*] crowd.

**President Johnson:** It was.

**Lynda Bird Johnson:** We've had good crowds all along.

**President Johnson:** How many hecklers did you have?

**Lynda Bird Johnson:** Oh, I don't know. Forty, 50, 60, I don't know. Twenty, 30, I don't know.

**President Johnson:** OK. Well, good night.

**Lynda Bird Johnson:** I love you. You take care, now.

**President Johnson:** OK.

**Lynda Bird Johnson:** You want to talk to Mommy?

**President Johnson:** Yeah.

**Lynda Bird Johnson:** Just a second.

*Pause.*

**Lady Bird Johnson:** [*Unclear.*]

**President Johnson:** Just wanted to tell you I love you, and I'll see you Friday.

**Lady Bird Johnson:** OK, darling. That's right. For the [*unclear*] everything [*unclear*], and I'll see you about eight o'clock Friday.

**President Johnson:** OK. Good night.

*End of excerpt.*

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