

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Friday, January 24, 1964

WHD

Today was a day of really leveling on the Art project. Clark, Abe, Bill Walton, Pierre Salinger, Liz and I met in the Queens' Room, that is the Queen's Sitting Room, to discuss our project.

I had decided that is the room where we will be least interrupted, and sort of my own little private retreat.

The agenda already prepared by Clark, gone over by Abe, considered by Walton, and now to be presented to Salinger and Liz, was:

- 1/ How to best continue and preserve and give a formal, legal pattern to the wonderful things that have happened to the White House. Clark had prepared an Executive Order to be issued by the President, which Abe had changed only slightly, which involve the establishment of a curator, as a permanent position, rather than just the sort of a whim of the First Lady. And the establishment of a Society for the Preservation of the White House, which would consist of the top members of all of the Agencies most connected with it, that is, the Fine Arts Commission, Walton; the Parks Commission, Wadsworth (but now it would soon be somebody else); the National Gallery of Art, John Walker; the Smithsonian Institute, Mr. Carmichael; the White House Historical Association; I believe about six or eight basic organizations like that, and then four public members.

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Clark had said that Mrs. Kennedy had suggested that two of those members, <sup>be</sup> Mr. duPont, the Chairman of the Fine Arts Commission; and Mr. Foss<sup>burgh</sup>~~berg~~, the Chairman of the Painting Commission. There couldn't be two with more sterling credentials, and there couldn't be anybody to whose wishes I'd want more to accede, but that left only two members, so I thought perhaps we'd want to enlarge the number of members of the public group, in order to put more of my own stamp on it.

And then Clark brought us the news that Mrs. Kennedy had agreed to serve on it herself, which is something that I had asked her the very first day when I came to see her. I think it was the day after the funeral, Tuesday, the 27th of November, or thereabouts.

And she will probably furnish the flame, the fuel, for the forward moving of such an organization, so that will be wonderful.

But now my job is to look around and find some people from the southwest or the south, with equally sterling credentials and of the Johnsonian tinge.

And some of them, several of them, must be women, so it gets down to a job of research.

The second part of the agenda, is how to make the other members of the Fine Arts Committee, and the Painting Committee, feel that they are appreciated; how to retain their talents, their friendship, their future help

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— in short, how to keep the Johnson Administration from bearing the brunt of being the one that put an end to the magnificent <sup>a</sup> Art adventure of the Kennedy Administration.

All of that must be wrapped up in a letter, and it will have to be a very good letter, for there are some wonderful people on that Fine Arts Committee and Painting Committee.

Liz, of course, had her own ideas, and got them in very forcefully, about me making the announcement and that was decided on and approved by Salinger and everybody, when the action took place. And it will take place as soon as we can select our members.

After about three hours of hard work, we said goodby, and I jumped in the pool, which is as hot as a Turkish bath, to drain out some of the uncertainties of all that I've been doing.

And then I drove out to Mr. Per's, with Lynda Bird. My moments with her are stolen moments, but they're always good ones.

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Late that afternoon, the Jim Nash's, <sup>e, e</sup> from Austin, <sup>e</sup> came in to have a drink with me. They're here for Barbara Boggs wedding, because the young man she's marrying, Dr. Sigman <sup>and</sup>, is one of those innumerable young men who spent the summer with them. Besides raising their own children, and a couple of their relatives children, <sup>e</sup> who became orphans, they just had something as our own household has had, innumerable young folks, passing through in the summer time for a month, <sup>e</sup> or two months, <sup>e</sup> or a week.

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And then something that I'd been looking forward to all the week long, blew up in my face like a pricked balloon.

Abe Fortas had invited us to come out to dinner at his house, along with the Paul Porters, and Justice and Mrs. Douglas, and Justice and Mrs. Black (only the Blacks couldn't get back from Florida), and I, who had been getting rather stir-crazy during the whole week, was really looking forward to getting out of the house. But it was decided that we had better not leave.

And so, everybody came over here to dinner instead, which was the next best thing. Lynda was with us, and she's practically the age of the new Mrs. Douglas, the third Mrs. Douglas. And what an irony it was, that I had run into at the beauty parlor, just a few hours before, Mercedes Douglas, who's off on a trip to the Virgin Islands, I think, and we'd made plans to get together as soon as she got back.

The new Mrs. Douglas is very <sup>thin</sup> - there's only 86 pounds of her - and she's very young, and sweet, and trusting and nice. I guess sometime, I'll give up trying to understand people - but I'll always love Bill and hope for the best for him.

I had a moment of reminiscing with him, about his days with Roosevelt.

**P** Paul Porter is the most unchanged of all of us. Has a good joke every five minutes, and told me that he and <sup>B.</sup>~~P.~~G. were seeing a lot of each other, and that all was well with him and <sup>B.</sup>~~P.~~G.'s family. And he did mention that Bess was remarried, and I said "Yes", that Lynda Bird has spent a couple of

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weekends in her home in Florida."

Bill and Mrs. Douglas were going to leave tomorrow, to go down the Rio Grande <sup>of</sup> all rivers <sup>on</sup> a raft, on a several day trip. I wouldn't be surprised if they land up on a sandbar about every 100 yards, and they are going into the Big Bend country. They'll be gone several weeks. She's as enthusiastic about it as he is.

Carol, with her cigar, was just as sentimental, and pragmatic, and tough, and soft-hearted. She's such a queer combination of a person, and she and Abe are two that are my always-favorites. And what a lot they've had to suffer with, with all their friends who get divorces, and come and <sup>their troubles</sup> lay at their door.