

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Monday, May 18, 1964

Page 1

This was a fairly routine day, with some nagging trouble and an evening, <sup>[it]</sup> the sort that I will miss most when I leave Washington.

In the morning, I had my picture taken, presenting a magnolia tree from the Elms to Liz, and one to Marie Sauer, in the little hallway right off of the flower room.

And then there was another picture, in the Green Room, seated on the sofa, <sup>in</sup> in front of a beautiful arrangement of flowers.

And then I went upstairs for the nagging troubles of the day, that is, to listen to a tape of a news conference which two Republican Congressmen had had, after they had made a visit to my tenants in <sup>Cutler</sup> ~~Attala~~ County, carrying with them in their briefcases, <sup>I</sup> concealed tape recorders. Incidentally, they didn't play those tape recorders, they just answered questions.

Abe, Walter, Liz, Simone and I listened to the tapes. Naturally the efforts of the Congressmen were to discredit my sincerity and Lyndon's sincerity in putting forward the poverty bill.

They talked about the squalid, run down condition of the tenant houses, true, certainly, and since they get a house and some 7, 8 or 10 acres of land for \$5 <sup>[it]</sup> a month, <sup>1</sup> certainly wouldn't be a business proposition for me to spend three or four year's rent to make repairs on the houses. On the other hand, how can I ask them to move off. <sup>?</sup> Charlie Cutler, for instance, who's been there since before 1912, my grandfather's life time. How would Charlie fit into the life <sup>of the</sup> ~~and~~ city, anywhere. <sup>?</sup> And what could he rent for \$5 <sup>?</sup> a month.

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Monday, May 18, 1964

Page 2

As for the two tenants who still do share cropping - they and their one mule - me and my hilly land, can't compete with the broad black acres of Lubbock - and tractors, and cotton picking machines. And I sure would be glad if they would move off, and I could plant the whole thing in pine trees. They're the tail-end, the very last residue of a dying economy, and their only hope lies in whether their children will learn some vocational skill at the <sup>Antonyville</sup> ~~Attalla~~ville High School, which they can trade for a good job somewhere in town, and get back into the main stream of life.

Meanwhile, I guess there's nothing I can do but, like Lyndon's joke about a jackass in a hailstorm - "hunker up and take it", because the publicity is ugly and it will be used abundantly by the Republican party for the next five months, I expect.

At any rate, it was Abe's opinion to do nothing, at least for the time being. I asked Elaine to go down and tell Charlie Cutler I thought he was wonderful on television, from all the reports everybody had given me about him. <sup>g</sup> <sup>x</sup> Told her, I would be sending her some boxes of clothes, and for her to distribute them according to the age and size of the different children. Since Uncle John has gotten so poorly in his legs, I don't want, <sup>g</sup> any longer, <sup>g</sup> to send him the boxes to take around to them.

In the afternoon, I worked on the mail. . . Went up to see Luci in the family room, realized that our problems were not yet solved, but that they were arrested <sup>✓</sup> on a plateau, so to speak.

And then, feeling relatively content, <sup>✓</sup> and ready to be gay, I left for one

## THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Monday, May 18, 1964

Page 3

of the evenings I like most in Washington, a small dinner with articulate and charming people.

Maryellen and Mike Monroney had asked us to come to a little dinner for the Walter Lippmanns, welcoming them back from a European trip. The Fulbrights were there, we sat in the charming patio by the swimming pool. There was a little crescent moon overhead. Delightful conversation. My only objection was that I wanted to hold up my hand and say, "Now everybody else hush and let's let Walter Lippmann talk for awhile, uninterrupted."

His confidante in Lyndon is both gratifying and frightening.

Dinner was delicious and there was a special Washington grace about the whole evening.

Lyndon's day had been more full than mine. He had had a stag luncheon for Willie Brandt, and I was glad to see there such old friends as Bill Douglas, Dean Acheson, Lucius Clay, and Tom Corcoran~~[there]~~. Glad also that Drew Pearson and Joe Alsop were included. And Dr. Milton Eisenhower, who's working on Lyndon's Presidential Scholarship Seletction Board, and very good it is, I think, to recognize and keep up with Republicans like him.

Dr. Eric Goldman was there; he's getting more and more useful to me all the time, so I am pleased that we can expose him to some of the glamour as well as so much of the work.

Seeing the columnists reminded me of something Lyndon had said the

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Monday, May 18, 1964

Page 4

other day. He said, "There's nothing I'd like better than to spend about one afternoon a week with Walter Lippmann or Scotty Reston. I like to expose myself to bright, sharp minds, pick up something, <sup>whet</sup> ~~whip~~ my own mind ~~together~~ against it, but I can't afford to, because it would cost me at least two columns of criticizing me, so that they could prove they hadn't been influenced by me." I believe I'd just take that risk.