

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Monday, May 25, 1964

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The day began with a lot of work, first with Liz, and then Bess, and then Ashton. Lunch in my room.

Then I called Mary Lasker and ran my little speech past her, which I was to make in the Museum of Modern Art, <sup>9</sup>this very night, on the occasion of the opening of the new wing. She made a couple of suggestions, and very good ones they were - and Mary has that rare quality of suggesting them, <sup>9</sup>in a way that somehow or other winds up by getting them done.

In the middle of the afternoon, about 4:30, I went to New York, arriving at the small, exquisite Carlyle Hotel, and walking into the Presidential suite, had once more the feeling that I had strayed into the apartment of the fairy princess. It's yellow and white, all glass and magnificent views -- one side Central Park, the other side the tall buildings -- an absolutely fantastic place. And the bedroom I inhabit there, pink and white and blue, exquisitely feminine.

Tonight is another one of my adventures<sup>5</sup> into the art world, this time occasioned (because I had regretted it in the first place), by a very urgent call from a dear friend, Frank Stanton, and it would be hard for me to say No to anything that Frank asked me to do.

Oddly enough, I got a note from Frank, saying that because of his close association with the broadcasting business, he would not be out at the airport to meet me. He thought the press might make something of it. And lo and behold, in the course of the whole evening, never once did I encounter Frank and Ruth Stanton. I must remember to tell him Lyndon's famous story

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about the time he went to make a speech<sup>for</sup> Congressman Cannon in Missouri, and everybody from Cannon himself, right on<sup>up</sup> to the President<sup>had</sup> called, beat the table, and implored him to - and then Cannon didn't even show up.

Adlai picked me up about 7:20<sup>to</sup> to take me to the Museum of Modern Art, where I was met by the David Rockefellers, the John Rockefellers, and Rene d'Harnoncourt, the director of the Gallery; and William Burden, the President of the Museum - and we had a tour of the Galleries. . . .

Passing first through the galleries that housed great of the last years of the 19th Century: Renoir, whom I liked; Toulouse-Lautrec, who amuses me tremendously; and Degas that weren't dancing. We paused in front of a large mural by Matisse, called La Dance, they all seemed to be dancing in mid-air, and all nude. I saw one of my old friends' Van Gogh, of a storm brewing, that must have been during a period when he was entering a phase of deep depression.

It was really fun, but<sup>on</sup> such tours as that, <sup>one</sup> never gets to see as much of the pictures, the objects, because you always have to be conscious of the photographers, the newspaper people, and the friends who are showing you through.

One thing I particularly liked, is the Museum's accent on giving notice and prizes to those who produce ordinary functional<sup>day-to-day</sup> things, <sup>such</sup> as a lavatory, ~~it was~~ very gracefully built; and a pitcher, just a water pitcher, that had good design.

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The new project is a six story wing, which cost some six million or so dollars, and houses, among other things, prints and drawings, a gallery of architecture and design; and one of photography, specializing in Steichen. And I did hope I would see my old friend in there tonight.

There were about 400 guests for dinner, seated at round tables, in the most interesting room. It had red felt carpet and the walls done in yellow felt, with facsimile autographs of the artists - enormous Picassos, rather small Lipshitz, and a Toulouse-Lautrec signature that looks like a Japanese symbol; ~~Duffy~~ <sup>Duffy</sup>, Chagall - all sorts of signatures, and very effective and fascinating it was, that is, if you could take your eyes off the 47 tables around us.

At mine, I was between Rene d'Harnoncourt, about six feet eight, and the most interesting conversationalist, and Mr. Burton. And Mary Lasker was there, and also Jacques Lipshitz, one of the most controversial sculptors, whose work is in the garden, and who had just finished designing the medallion which Lyndon will give to Presidential scholars. I wish I had been more knowledgeable about the medallion itself. All I could do was give him a big smile and sort of blow him a kiss of appreciation.

And Adlai Stevenson was there; and Nichole Alphanand was there, looking like a little girl just out of a convent, in a long sleeved, high neck, pale blue and white evening dress, with sedate bows, but infinitely coquettish, in the

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most understated sort of way.

Close at hand were the Doug Dillons; Paul Mellons; and of course, the four Rockefellers. I glimpsed the Bill Paleys, she looked so beautiful across the crowd; and Jean Kintner was sitting right next to us. She participates in so many things.

But never, never, never did I see the Frank Stantons.

There were about 400 guests at the dinner, and I think the thing that impressed me most, <sup>was</sup> David Rockefeller's speech, a very personable, handsome, youngish man, brother of Nelson, Winthrop, John D. He began to reminisce about how, <sup>in</sup> his high school days, <sup>his</sup> mother would have in to tea, <sup>friends</sup> interested in art and they planned this Museum of Modern Art, which now stands on the very spot of ground that his home stood in, in those days. The Museum was begun in 1929.

What an interesting picture that conjured up, and what an interesting family they've been - the Rockefellers - pouring back their vast fortune into art and education~~al~~, and civic life, not only in this country, <sup>but</sup> around the world. I've come <sup>upon</sup> ~~up in~~ their tracks everywhere I've been.

After dinner, we went up to the upper garden for the artist's reception. But, alas, it was black as pitch, on purpose, because the big moment of the evening was to be when I pressed the switch and turned on the light, <sup>that</sup> would reveal the new garden and the new wing. And the crowd was back to back, so it was impossible to wander gracefully around and greet various artists, although one of the lady chairmen of the event, <sup>took</sup> me in tow and

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attempted to do that.

Presently they said, <sup>by</sup> it's time for the ceremony. Then we had a tribute to the artist, <sup>der</sup> William Bur~~ton~~, the President of the Museum. <sup>then</sup> ~~in~~ the main address of the evening, written by <sup>Dr. Gillick</sup> Paul ~~Twitch~~ but delivered by someone else in his absence (he was ill). *Ch. name*

And then ----- came me, and it was a rather good two or three little minutes. The lines I like best were, "These rooms, this lovely garden, and the art which inhabits them, are larger than the square feet they measure. One must measure them in terms of creativity. They make it possible for every man, woman and child, who walks through them, <sup>to</sup> to participate in the process of creativity. They make it possible for you and me, for the learned connoisseur and the school child, to engage in a dialogue between doing and dreaming - fact and fancy - between the must of the average man and the thrust of the artist. This great and growing museum makes it possible to leave out dailyness and see what we never saw before in the daily round - for art is the window to man's soul."

And then, what was probably the most sense in it, was "This generation is engaged not only in a war against poverty of man's necessities, but a war against the poverty of man's spirit. This museum is an open door for all who seek enrichment of spirit."

Then came the moment <sup>when</sup> when I pressed the button - and I could practically hear a vast sigh of relief from those in charge, because not everything had

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gone according to plan - and the moment I pressed it, lights flooded the lovely garden, and lit up the shaft of the building.

I said thanks and goodbye to the people on the platform, and made a fairly leisurely way to the car, because Adlai Stevenson had invited me to a after-opening party at his house, which turned out to be the most fun of all. It's an apartment not a house, of course, in the Waldorf, most charmingly decorated. And the 100 or so guests who came in for drinks and sandwiches, were an interesting cross section of the theatre world. The Hammersteins, I believe - I never can get the Rodgers and the Hammersteins separated. Mark <sup>Connelly</sup> ~~Conley~~, of Green Pastures; several others; Ken Galbraith, whom I got off in a corner, and had an interesting talk about my trip to Kentucky, and a teachers training corp, which was one of his main ideas for the poverty program.

Also from the theatre world, the Josh Logans; and the Frederic Marches; and Roger Stevens, and I'm so glad he had the Ed Weisls; and Abe Fortas.

Adlai is certainly a man who wears well, but since he's some 10 or more years older than I am, I wonder how he can work and think all day, in the arena that he's in, and then go to parties at night. It was the most fun I've had in a long time.

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