

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

Thursday, July 22, 1965

I woke about 5:30 to hear Lyndon say - almost as though he were in the middle of a sentence, but he had been interrupted - "I don't want to get in a war and I don't see any way out of it. I've got to call up 6000 boys, make them leave their homes and their families." It was as though he were talking out loud, not especially to me. I hope the refrain hadn't been in his mind all night long. Feeling like the boy that leaves the burning deck, I went to my own room to try to get another hour or two of sleep. —  
Frustrated and unsatisfactory, and so I got up at 7 and started a busy day devoted entirely to beautification.

Lasker

First, a little bit of work with Patsy on the mail and then at 11 Mary and Nash Castro and Liz came. We set a date of the next meeting of the Beautification Committee, the 24th of September after Mary's back from Europe. We asked two more people to join us on the committee - Robert Weaver from National Housing, and Mr. <sup>Currier</sup> ~~Courier~~, a relative of the Paul Mellons's who has <sup>the</sup> knowledge and interest to be helpful, if he joins, according to Mary.

Then a big problem, our "sales package." Our booklet, which hopefully will show the before and afters of a small square, a triangle, in Washington, and how much it will cost; of an unplanted school, and with one with wisely chosen, hardy, flowering trees and shrubs. Of the great, splendid projects, of the Washington monument grounds, and Hains point - all sorts of packages

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ranging from a thousand dollars to a hundred thousand - and not to leave out the single trees, is my plea. Because one of the most delightful recognitions we have had, as gifts, are ~~some~~<sup>from</sup> school children in buses, come to Washington on their spring vacation, to see the Cherry trees, ~~and~~<sup>who</sup> then send us a check for about \$17 dollars to plant a cherry sometime, somewhere, in memory of their trip. And there were about four or five such trips. I surely want to see they make somebody's column, particularly along about next February and March, when other busloads of children will be planning their trips to Washington at Cherry blossom time.

And of course, the big discussion was fall planting, and how could we get interest stirred up in it -by writing a letter or telegram to the mayors all over the country - to governor's all over the country.<sup>?</sup> It will be a request for cooperation, perhaps by calling a conference in their own communities or states. Anyhow, some sort of a spirited action.

Then I read them a draft of a little story that Life may use along with its spread. From my informal talk with her, Liz has woven it together, picking up Nash's facts and figures, that I think might be useful. I

It was a full morning.

Diana

At 1 o'clock I came in for lunch. She had just called me the night before about something that might be a key to support of young people all over the country. She's going to a national conference and conclave of Girl Scouts, there'll be some 10,000 of them there, and she's going to meet with the leaders,

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the planners, and they have already offered to <sup>host</sup> ~~post~~ a seminar or gathering in Washington, of the leaders of youth groups. It sounds like ~~one~~ they would mean, besides themselves, (Girl Scouts), Boy Scouts, 4H, Campfire, Girl's Clubs, all the youth service organizations. These would not be the young people themselves; the program planners; the leaders, and I would hope, a sprinkling of the leadership among the young.

What an army this would make - if we could really build a fire under them, to start planting campaigns, and education campaigns, and clean up campaigns, cherish this country and think for the future - these are the folks we want to reach, if only we had the salesmen!

We made it clear that the White House couldn't run such a conference; it's too big a job for our little staff, but I'd surely lend my time and any possible speech, tea attendance, anything I could do, to enlist them to bring them into the fold. They are the key, the young folks.

Diana left, thrilled and elated, she's really going out there as a member of the board of the Girl Scouts and to tell them about the Peace Corp, of course. This is an addendum. She told me her daddy is going to get in the next day. She'll just miss him - she was leaving at 5 - and so, too, was Mary leaving shortly after 5.

So after lunch, I said, "Let's get Walter Washington, and drive around and look at some of the schools - the proposed ones for planting, because we've got this money, it's high time we set about choosing a school

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for fall planting and try to have a model school, a model play ground and a few model triangles or squares of parks, to show for our work. So we  
drove into the Cardoza district, second precinct, <sup>I believe it is</sup> passed Walter Jones School, Bernard School, John L. Young Playground, and then passed the Kennedy playground.

I had two sort of revelations along the way. These schools were, indeed, dreary and ugly, though adequate looking brick structures; a little woe-begone grass in front, no planting; within the playground, solid concrete, with very sparse play equipment. But the unusual thing was the number of broken window panes. Sometimes as many as 20 in the front of the building; broken, for what reason - bored young folks, angry young folks, frustrated - WHY? - An ugly symptom of some disease today.

I asked Walter, that hard-working apostle of <sup>"</sup>Let's do something on this committee - how the two schools had <sup>pared</sup> ~~failed~~, that the S. Kline department store and Hechinger's planted last spring. He beamed and said, that the number of broken window panes had gone down markedly, there had only been two since that had taken place in May.

And then the other revelation was to see the Kennedy Playground. A boisterous, carnival sort of place - simply boiling with children, playing on an old street car, an old fire engine, a salvaged ship, airplane, train, all of which had been painted bright red, green, blue, purple; striped, circled - a veritable carnival of color.

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The same sort of thing with some screening of planting, perhaps a fence, some vines around it, a mere sprinkling of flowering trees around the edges. No grass, no use for grass. Some benches under the trees for mamas to sit and watch - and this might be the very recipe for higher density of population spot in Washington. If there was the land, the equipment, and much of it would be readily available from the Defense Department - or from all sorts of wrecking places. The land, alas, would be prohibitively high, but it's worth investigating.

We drove back past Garfield Terrace, which stands on the grounds where once stood Garfield Hospital - Lynda was born there. Garfield Terrace is now a home for the indigent elderly - <sup>quite</sup> ~~quiet~~ charmingly planted, with one of the ~~most~~ handsomest fiew of Washington <sup>from</sup> ~~of~~ the roof top garden, Walter Washington tells me, and Kay Graham is going to do something about furnishing it and making it especially beautiful, he said.

We returned to the White House about 5:30, in time for Mary to catch her plane, and said goodbye. She's off to the south of France and a complete change from work.

I'm going to be the biggest vacation buff in the world, when this job is over - I just hope she won't forget me by then! She had showed me pictures of the fairy-tale villa she rents every August and has invited me several times.

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Then I talked to Lynda. I sounded short and unhappy and she said, "Here, I swam all the way from Canada to talk to you, with 65 degree water." Sure enough, she had, in the boundaries waters between the United States and Canada. She had swum a half a mile, across one of the Minnesota lakes and then back to the campsite on the American side. If she can just write like she can talk, she'll make that a good story for National Geographic.

Lyndon came home a little before nine, called the Ed Clark's and brought them down for dinner.

To think all day, and I had, is a hard job for me. It should give me more sympathy for Lyndon, and as soon as dinner was over - about 10:30 - I was ready for a massage. Thank goodness Ann is such home folks that I could ask her to curl up on the bed while I had one, and tell me the news of Austin - of Doug and Leila, and hear it was bad.

Doug is being hounded out of his law partnership because of his espousal of the Democratic Party in last fall's campaign.

One of the oldest families in the state; one of the most securely placed in wealth and position, but not immune to their neighbors, to their friends, anger when they break the <sup>more</sup> ~~mass~~ of their part of the world. Ann was divided between excitement of going to Australia and tears about Leila.

She has already sold her house in Austin; is moving her things to her little medallion house in Deep East Texas.

Tired as I was, it was hard to go to sleep, after Ann left and I wound up trying to read myself to sleep. Making a rather poor choice, in fact, because I had a sampling of the letters about beer and Catholicism

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brought to me, and they're better 7:00 am reading, than 12 midnite.