

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Friday, July 23, 1965

This day began as a fabulous visit into a page of past history, that is fast disappearing from the scene.

Mrs. Marjorie Post is a member of our Beautification Committee and she has made a gift of \$5,000. , plus an offer of plants from her lovely home, Hill wood. Because she's asked me in the past to come out and walk around the grounds, if I would like to, even if she were not there, I decided to go so that I could write a more understanding thank you, and learn something of the plants that she might contribute to the squares, and triangles, and parks in Washington - something hopefully, that can be kept together and carry her identity, along with her money contribution.

Tony arrived, fresh from about five or six weeks in four South American countries for AID. He met me at the White House about 10 o'clock, and we set out for a two hour excursion into fairyland, Hillwood, the mistress absent, at her home in the Adirondacks, where apparently, there is a sort of a constant turnover of the house party. There's another home in Palm Beach and there used to be a 300 or so foot yacht, the Sea Cloud.

But this lovely Hillwood, is home from about April through June, or and then once again in the fall to Thanksgiving ~~to~~ Christmas.

It's a surprisingly large wooded area, some 27 or so acres, I believe, <sup>Linnear</sup> on ~~Lillian~~ <sup>Lillian</sup> avenue, close to where we used to live. Remote, <sup>Sylvan</sup> ~~Sylvan~~, secluded and right in the middle of residential Washington! Commander Ault, who

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apparently manages Mrs. Post's properties, met us, together with the gardener, Mr. Earl Loy. The House, <sup>itself</sup>, was closed, most formidably, with great steel, <sup>or</sup> aluminum slabs, bolted all over the outside doors and windows. And then at the <sup>entrance</sup> men in uniforms that said Hillwood Police that set a certain air as we entered.

Commander Ault never had two more appreciative visitors! I'd been at Tregaron, I'd loved it and the sudden vistas of the cathedral thru the trees, and <sup>here</sup> ~~here~~ I found another vista! On the front porch of the house, on <sup>an</sup> absolutely direct line, <sup>door</sup> as if drawn by an engineer, the front looks at the Washington monument, while the wonderful, selective cutting of the towering trees, made just the right vista, like a stage setting. I commented on this to Commander Ault - it was perfection! He smiled and said, "When Mrs. Post bought the house, we moved the <sup>front door</sup> ~~house~~ 32 inches, to get that effect!"

The great sweep of that <sup>front</sup> lawn was dominated by a flag pole, with a ship's yardarm across it, to remind them, I suppose, of the Sea Cloud, and at the base, a plaque with the names of the ~~many of the~~ 200 employees, who work on Mrs. Post's house and grounds - it was a gift from them.

And all around, a border, that is changed three times a year - tulips in the spring, in mid-summer, begonia, white and flame and pink, and periwinkle, ~~verbena~~ and marigolds and azurium; and in the fall, chrysanthemums. And then there is the Japanese garden, arched stone bridges, and a waterfall which finally ends in a pool, around which, almost hidden, you come upon small stone figures, a turtle, a heron, a grasshopper, and a frog. And the

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pool is crossed by stepping stones, made of gristwheels, Japanese lanterns hang in the trees, a very ancient one of stone from a temple - the whole thing is truly a fairyland. There was even, in a secluded spot, a little dog graveyard, for her favorite dogs, <sup>wife</sup> for the last many, many years, were buried. Some had been brought from other homes.

There was a "friendship walk", small statues, glistening in the shrubs, the four seasons around a flagstone terrace, the names of donors at the bases, this nation's great for the past several decades - Justices, Cabinet Members, societies names - I noticed the Tom Clark's among them, and a little plaque "A Garden is ~~an~~ Enchantment", naming Mamie and Ike Eisenhower as the donor. And then vast greenhouses. There's so much behind this facade of beauty! For instance, when she is in residence, it takes about 200 pots of azaleas for use in the house itself. There is greenhouse after greenhouse with orchids alone. I remember the lovely one she'd sent to the White House. I've accepted them all too casually - there should have been a glowing note about each one. Of course, the nicest thing to remember is that she opened this up for benefits, for a series of Symphonies, for a series of concerts for the young, all sorts of cultural and civic things.

And now - from me - there must be the sweetest expression I can make of my gratitude for her handsome gift - an exploration of what we can do with the plants she has to offer.

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They turn out to be a <sup>acuba</sup>~~Suba~~, a small variegated box, and Ilex, no great number, but if they can be combined into a well-tended, beautiful, small park, a square or triangle, together with her gift, how much her interest might be stirred. And she could, if she wanted to, be such a figure in this.

Commander Ault, it turns out, has been with her for more than thirty years - back through at least three husbands. He was hired by when Mr. Hutton, ~~who~~ was doing the engineer <sup>my</sup> work for the Navy, on building the Sea Cloud, and he knows how to find an Italian sculptor, to reproduce a particular beautiful garden piece, that turned out to be just plaster of paris; or a machine that will sterilize all the topsoil to be used in the hot houses, so there won't be any weeds; or how to move a doorway 32 inches. I couldn't help but think of Ed Clark's story, "Rich Folks have such pretty ways." She has certainly shared hers, with the people of Washington, and I've heard that she is going to leave the house, and everything in it, as a Museum, to the Smithsonian - or some such organization.

We came for an hour, and spent nearly three and returned to the White House in time for a sandwich and some soup in my room, and then upstairs for a nap for Tony.

I worked with Liz and Bess, and then, the beautiful day grew black. I was supposed to do the inviting for people to go to Camp David with us for the weekend. I misunderstood. I invited some that Lyndon had been thinking about, but that, as it turned out, couldn't really discuss business

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with them, if he was trying to discuss it with others. So I was crushed; feeling that I had not only messed up not only his relaxation, but his attempt to work on the blessed weekend.

And then, there was the question of what I was to do with my four o'clock appointment to go to see the David Lloyd ~~K~~reager's, possible donors of the Beautification Program, and owners of the Art Collection that I really wanted to see.

Any minute we might get off to Camp David. Should I take the chance? I decided I would.

Tony and I drove out to the ~~K~~reager's, about 4 o'clock. It developed they live within a couple of blocks of where we lived happily for 18 years, and I expect Beagle was one of their constant, unwelcome visitors. I carefully avoided his name.

It was a quite simple house, really, with a most astonishingly wonderful collection. The apricot and gold, and blue and green scene above the fireplace, by Bonnard, that I fell in love with. A woman with long hair, by Renoir; a dreamy, floaty Manet, so like the one at the White House; Picassos that I think are right fresh out of a madhouse; Statues that I make no pretense to understand, Cezanne, van Gogh, Corot. A most marvelous collection, especially considering that they'd only been at it really, for about eight years.

They were charming people, and I enjoyed them just as much as I did their collection. Philip Johnson is building a house, just to suit the

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collection; all glass and arches, and gardens, on Foxhill Road, close to Mrs. Cafritz's. They were easy and pleasant and I would have adored to stay, but I was on pins and needles, knowing that there were people accumulated at the White House. So back we rushed at 6:00 o'clock to find the Goldberg's already in the Yellow Oval Room, with a cup of tea; Peter Hurd arriving - I'd phoned him to come up and we would take our chances on getting sittings. This further complicated my weekend because it's sort of like asking Lyndon to take castor oil. And Mary Margaret, nurse and baby, standing out front, waiting for the helicopter.

I told them to please go upstairs to the second floor, and get comfortable; got Peter Hurd established in the bedroom, and then took him with Tony, on a tour of the first floor, to look at all the Presidential portraits, to see what sort of backgrounds they used, to see what sizes they were. I want us to work towards a bust size, of about the same as the Thomas Jefferson portrait, and perhaps, in the background, a sort of symbolical capital, "because the hill was my home," Lyndon has often said. It played a more than a quarter of a century role in his life. I told Peter we would bring him out to Camp David in the morning at 9 o'clock for a sitting.

Time passed, and I'm glad to say, Justice Goldberg got a nap, so Dorothy told me, but at 7:50 we got the signal, to come quick, and we were on the helicopter; Tony and the Goldbergs, the Valentis and Buz, Vicki and

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her date, Dennis.

This time, when we reached Camp David, I wanted only to get into slacks, seek the solace of a drink, curl up on the sofa, and listen. It had been a day full of magic and excitement and learning, and I'd been glad to share it with Tony, to watch his delight, but I could only feel that I had made Lyndon's time more difficult, by not really understanding his plans for the weekend, <sup>so that</sup> ~~until~~ I was tense and on edge.

After dinner, I watched a movie, Mirage with Gregory Peck. Everybody else went to sleep except Buz and <sup>me</sup> I, and Vicki and her date. And then to bed, but it was hopeless.

After midnight when I couldn't go to sleep, I came out in search of a book, found Brownstone Front by Louis Auchincloss, and went back and read until about 2:30.

The light wakened Lyndon, he put his head in the door, said "Can't my darling sleep? - I'm so sorry." So I put a blanket across the crack between the doors, read a little more and then turned it out. It was a short night.

I waked at 5:30 with the birds chirping the dawn. For an extraordinary <sup>ill</sup> healthy, tough, reasonably happy person, sleeping is becoming the hardest thing for me to do, particularly when I feel that I have not played my role well, that I have been a hindrance and not a help.

For Lyndon, the day had been a constant diet, of Viet-Nam, with Secretary Rusk, McNamara, General Wheeler, McGeorge Bundy, and others

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and the fact the Poverty Bill had passed, that there had been many pluses in the legislative achievements of the week, <sup>had</sup> ~~at~~ not prevented Viet-Nam from dominating the news. All the lineage, all the stories, Bill Moyers <sup>said</sup> ~~had~~ been <sup>A</sup> sensationaly good, everybody agrees.

At dinner, <sup>I</sup> we discussed Stevenson; and one of the favorite subjects of conversation around Washington these days, Schlesinger's book, LBJ versus RFK, the story of who said what on the fateful day, <sup>the</sup> ~~and~~ decision was being made about who should be vice president. And the nasty little thing that Schoenbren claimed Stevenson had told him. Goldberg said, "We are all grippers to an extent. You come home and gripe to Lady Bird; I go home and gripe to Dorothy; we've got to blow off steam somewhere. Stevenson was tired, he was frustrated, but don't for one minute, <sup>I</sup> ever believe, <sup>I</sup> that he thought or said a moment's disloyalty to the Administration or the President."

Lyndon told the story of about how Stevenson had come to him and told him he was thinking of running for the Senate in New York State. That was in the spring of '64, and what did Lyndon think about it, he asked. Lyndon said, "I think it will be awful. You were made for this roll <sup>er</sup> you're in. I just don't want to think of anybody else in it."

Stevenson, somewhat taken aback, said, "Is that what you really want me to keep on doing?"

Pitilessly Lyndon said, "Yes, I do." And Stevenson never cast a backward glance to the Senate, he went right on in a job in which he was, in theatre terms, perfectly cast.