

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Tuesday, October 5, 1965 WND

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It was a day of tension and the end of tension.

In the morning I worked at my desk. And then I went to Georgetown to the studio to listen to the nearly finished product of my documentary for John Secondari. I had been prepared as gently ^{or} she could by Simone. But the recorded portions were not as good as the on-camera -- that it wasn't up to the quality they wanted. It was awful. I was reading a script written by someone else -- lifeless and school teacherish. It did not hold my interest -- how could it hold anyone else's?

How could we have been so pleased in June -- Abe and Mary and the Secondaris and I with the recorded portion? The whole thing looked awful and I felt sick. John Secondari suggested that I have some tutoring lessons and then come to New York -- the only studio where they could properly record while I looked at the film and got in the mood. I could not tell them why I could not come to New York. Lyndon's announcement would not be made until 6:00 this evening. So I said I would look at my schedule and try to work it out, that the next few weeks were uncertain and full.

Then heavy with failure I returned to the White House, stopping along the way at Jean Louis to get a hair-do for the afternoon's business. One, having my picture made in the Diplomatic Reception Room, giving my check to the United Giver's Fund. Two, having another

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picture made with John Sparkman -- hard pressed for the Senate next summer in Alabama ^{along with} ~~and~~ Dr. Von Braun -- one of his leading constituents, ^c And Mayor Glen Hearn of Huntsville. Mayor Hearn had in hand his kit from the "Keep American Beautiful" group. And their visit was for the purpose of telling me about a Park in Huntsville -- the Deep Spring International Park in memorial to the country sending students and military personnel to study at the Red Stone Arsenal.

Handsome Dr. Van Braun hoped I would give my attention to the power and telephone lines strung above our cities. He said in Europe in many towns it is required that they bury them.

Then Liz ^{sh} whizzed me out the door and we went to the Washington Board of Trade where Mark Evans and his microphone and Timmis ^{Timishenko (?)} ~~Shinkle~~, the landscape architect, Ralph Becker and a few other Board of Trade people along with assorted tourists were gathered for a 5-minute or so ceremony about the Board's own beautification of its headquarters -- holly trees in planters, chrysanthemums -- one, I planted. ck
Name!

All day long I went with the sense that I am moving automatically through the prolog ^{now} toward the real beginning.

Back at the White House I had a session with Jim Ketchum about where to hang the Mrs. Roosevelt portrait, where to put the Churchill bust, ^{no! ?} La Grues portrait of Benjamin Franklin, the desk that Queen ^{but what?}

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Victoria gave to the White House and it was used by President Kennedy and that the Kennedys now want to borrow for their Library. It has been decided that it will go to the Smithsonian, and then when the Kennedy Library is finished, with as little publicity as possible, to the Kennedy Library on loan.

There are many facets to this -- a giver of treasures to the White House wants very much for his portrait or a rare piece of furniture to remain forever within these walls. He feels an assurance when he gives it. What if he cannot feel this assurance? What will this do to the program of acquiring things of beauty ^{for} the White House? On the other hand, how can you say no to the appeal of Mrs. Kennedy -- of all her family -- for the desk her husband used -- the one under which Caroline and John John played and peered at the photographers. I think it is unwise ^{but} and I cannot say no.

We found the just-right home for the beautiful rug that Mrs. Hutton had given the White House in the Vermeil Room. We looked at the Mary Cassatt's to agree on which one I really wanted if it can be had -- the rather French impressionist looking one with the nurse maid on the park bench and the little girl in red on her lap.

And then it was nearly 5:30 -- time for me to meet Liz and Bess. They had no idea what I was going to tell them. I did ^{it} very simply -- that at 6:00 Bill Moyers would announce briefly that

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Lyndon had had an attack of gall bladder trouble the night of Labor Day. The repeated tests and X-rays had indicated the wisdom of taking it out, and he would go into Bethesda for surgery Thursday night to be operated Friday morning.

At last it was out. Somehow I felt years younger and pounds lighter. Poor Bess had been distraught with all the changes and upsets about the salute to Congress -- whether to add a movie, the possibility of cancelling the whole things, the logistics of moving a thousand people from the White House to the State Department and back, to getting all the prima donnas to work together. She -- the calmest of people had been at her ropes end for the last two days -- actually in tears yesterday. And I completely unable to explain my own difficulties to her or to promise the President's unflinching affable presence for as long as needed at a certain time for pictures with the actors or his own speech. When I finished I felt like I had just coughed up a time bomb that I had been carrying. So we quite simply began to plan how to handle the barrage of mail and the flowers -- cards to be printed or engraved with the Seal, the fact that I intended to go to the hospital and stay there the whole possible two weeks of Lyndon's stay, cancelling my few engagements after Thursday night and letting them know why I was not going to accept any more engagements for an indefinite number of weeks. The mounting stacks of invitations have been getting

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unexplained "no's" from me for days and days or the word that we will decide later, with Bess and Liz increasingly restive and puzzled. Poor Bess, with two sick children and 900 guests coming and a stage full of highly individual actors. I had felt ^{for days} like I wanted to give her a hug and a tranquilizer, ~~for days~~. And at last she can understand my side of it.

I left them to figure out the next day's business in the light of this all important commitment and went hurriedly with Marvin and Jack and Dr. Burkley out to Bethesda to look at the suite. The first time I had seen it, on the third floor, new, beautiful, practically raced through with Dr. Davis, making suggestions about the carpet for the bathroom floor and a reclining chair to be brought up from Camp David, plenty of hard pillows, the three-screen TV set to be installed, family pictures and some Salinas and other favorite pictures from Lyndon's office to make it more warm.

And then hurriedly back to the White House so that Marvin and Jack could attend the stag dinner -- another of the series involving Cabinet members, businessmen, leaders in the fields of education, the ministry and the arts -- all gathered for briefings, dinner and then ^{-and write} the talk-~~right~~ routine at the tables. I wonder if in any other Administration there has been such a constant mixing of the brains of the country at these stag dinners with more explanation of why we

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are doing what we are doing and what it will mean to you, John Citizen -- to you in labor and business, and lately, new facets have been added as diverse as David Suskind and the President of the Southern Baptist Convention, Dr. Wayne Dahoney, and Dr. Barnaby Keeney, the President of Brown University.

I think it is one of the most exciting things that Lyndon has done and it ^{has} ~~have~~ served as sort of circulatory system throughout this land in all its strata for what this Administration thinks and believes and aims toward.

With the stag dinner going downstairs, I settled down comfortably on the sofa with my own two guests -- Jim Cain and Willis Hurst -- for a quiet talk of evaluating the operation.

And then a good dinner.

But just as we reached the dessert I lost them to a higher priority -- Lyndon sent upstairs and asked them to join him and all the guests. I had had word that Sew Udall and Bill Mauldin, attending the dinner, would like to come upstairs to present a cartoon to me; my chance to share the bit of this extraordinary evening downstairs.

Bill had tucked under his arm the original of the cartoon of a highway winding its way through a thicket of billboards, one of which said, "Impeach Lady Bird" -- imagine me keeping company with the Chief Justice.

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Bill, who looks like a pixie, is a very engaging man. I think he will seem young when he is 60.

It was a lively 5 minutes. Stew Udall is always bright company. They both autographed the cartoon and then rejoined a much more compelling company downstairs.

I left a note for Jim and Willis to join me in the swimming pool.

We went down and had 40 laps -- enough to wear off some of the emotional fatigue. And then back for a rub, to telephone Tony, and then because it was about 1:00 -- feeling sure that Lyndon must come upstairs -- I opened the door and started into his room. Agast, I found it full of men -- Gregory Peck, Hugh O'Brian -- 10 or 12 men with Lyndon on the table getting a rub and holding them all in conversation at the same time. I shrieked and backed out. What a household! And what a moral to always have your hair and your grooming in perfect order.