

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Wednesday, October 12, 1965

Page 1

Dr. Hurst left at 7:00 in the morning. Knowing he was gone was like having a warmth go out of the hospital.

I was up early, but not in time to say goodbye. I had breakfast with Lyndon about 8:00 -- tea and mellow balls for him. Just as ten years ago in this same place, he is dogged and determined to get his weight down.

And then a long session with the dentist. And then trips through the wards carrying Lyndon's flowers. The first ones went to the veterans from Viet-Nam -- about 13 or 14 in the hospital. And then the children's ward. And then I sent them to the Protestant Chapel and the Catholic Chapel. And then this morning to several surgical wards -- introducing myself and shaking hands and bringing the President's good wishes.

And then back for an hour of sitting by Lyndon's bed, writing a note on the back of the engraved cards to close friends. And lunch with Lyndon and Bill and Marvin and Jake and Vickie in the handsome conference room with President Eisenhower's flowers -- yellow mums -- still beautiful in the middle of the table.

It was a beautiful day -- gold and blue October. And a little after 2:00 I drove down the George Washington Memorial Parkway to the White House.

I had made an appointment to have tea with Adelyn Breeskin to talk about the Mary Cassatt painting. It was too beautiful to stay inside.

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Wednesday, October 12, 1965

Page 2

So we had our spiced tea in the Jacqueline Kennedy Garden. We went over the three transparencies of the Cassatt paintings and got her evaluation of all of them. She prefers the one that has the rather French impressionist look -- the nurse maid sitting on the park bench with the little girl in red on her lap. The little girl has the look of a primitive somewhat, almost stick like, with straight blond hair, but a sort of a pixie look like she might bounce down any moment and do the most outlandish thing. And in the background a red and pink and white flower. A rather off-beat, thoroughly charming Mary Cassatt. But it is privately owned and it may or may not be for sale. We shall pursue it. It is my favorite too. But I think I could settle for the mother and two children if we are not able to get it.

And then I had a session with Liz and Bess and Ashton signing mail in the dressing room. -- the only livable room left. And then down to bowl with Liz and Ashton -- two games of 118 -- and only time for half of a third game -- 5 frames with a promising 80.

~~Eyehilanted~~
~~Accelerated~~ with success I returned to the hospital just before dark through the magnificent parade of crimson and russet and gold.

[I walked into the room to find Abe sitting quietly by Lyndon's bedside in a somber atmosphere. I asked if they would like me to wait if they were discussing some business, and Lyndon said,

Class for
10 years
& Review
the
27

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Wednesday, October 12, 1965

Page 3

"No, you might as well come in and listen to this."

He was seeking Abe's advice on how he could escape from the burdens of the presidency for the next indefinite period. In explaining his feelings he said, "I have to decide yesterday whether Latin America -- all the countries -- get X million dollars" (I never can remember the amounts) "The dollar is falling into the communist line -- it is going to be a fait accompli in two or three weeks. Everybody in town wants to ^{give?} get everything to everybody" (He means the people in the State Department who work with the various countries) "and they may be right," he said. "The budget has got to be made. Two weeks from now the first requests come in. The whole State of the Union has got to be dealt with and the speech written. I've got 18 Task Forces working. And I don't want to see one more piece of paper."

That summed up the whole subject -- not one more piece of paper, not one more problem. He said he didn't feel like making a single decision right now and to be required to say what should be done would be to give a bad decision.

"I want to go to the Ranch. I don't want ^{ever} Hubert to be ~~even~~ able to call me. They may demand that I resign. They may even want to impeach me."

*Close
for 10
year and
review then
CJg*

*Ch
tape*

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Wednesday, October 12, 1965

Page 4

He was like a man on whom an avalanche had suddenly fallen. It was a trapped feeling. For Abe and ^{me} who watched him, an awesome feeling. Not entirely new for me. I had seen it in 1955. But not for an hour but for days, for weeks. But then he could escape from being Majority Leader, from the duties of the Senate. It was much more a personal decision and not a national one or even global. He wanted Abe to write out in the best planned manner a statement that according to his arrangements with the Vice President he was asking him to take over the duties of the presidency for an indefinite period of time so that he could recover from fatigue.

*Close
for 10
year and
remain
the
CJg*

Mostly we sat in an atmosphere of numbed silence with Abe offering quiet legal observations on the alternatives, the way of doing it. But then someone came in and said dinner was ready, and we went into the conference room -- the three of us -- and had dinner with Marie, and Luci and Pat came in, and we urged them to eat with us. And they lightened the mood. Lyndon was real sweet to them both in a sort of a far off distant fashion.

Then the three of us went back to his room, and Abe began to write out in long hand what Lyndon had asked him to -- Lyndon speaking at random gave us a glimpse of the most painful thing on his mind. He talked of the young Corpsman who took care of him at night. He said "He has the finest body you ever saw. He's just 20. He's had a

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Wednesday, October 12, 1965

Page 5

year of college. It is so sad. He may be going to Viet-Nam in a few weeks. And then, look at Pat -- isn't he the nicest boy. He's going into the Air Force Reserves. But you don't know where he will be in a few months.

Marie typed the paper for Abe. He, a little concerned that it should be seen by anybody's eyes. I told him never to worry about Marie. And after Lyndon read it, he said, "Here, you had better keep both of these copies. I don't want anybody to know about them."

So here is the black beast of depression back in our lives. Friday, Saturday, Sunday, Monday had gone so straight in an upward graph. Tuesday had been quiet, and perhaps I should have suspected but I did not. I think it quite essential that he have days, maybe weeks, of rest. But I also feel absolutely possitive that after a few weeks he will be needing activity to feed on. But how to buy a little time of quiet when you are President of the United States.?

Close
for 10
year
and review
then
CJG