

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Thursday, October 14, 1965

Page 1

It was a relatively quiet day. And because of last night, I felt like walking on egg shells. Lyndon had slept only intermittently. We had breakfast a little after 9:00 in his room. And then about 11:00 he dropped off to sleep while I sat and wrote endless notes.

Bill's briefing said very forthrightly that "President Johnson is gaining his strength more slowly than anyone thought and is weaker than anyone thought he would be at this point."

I think the pace of the last 20 months have accumulated weariness that was not evident until the operation -- all completely true and very wise to say. He went on to reiterate that the doctors "continue to be pleased with his recovery and satisfied with the progress." They find nothing out of the ordinary.

It was President Eisenhower's birthday, and I remembered that Lyndon had said, "I must be sure to send a telegram." So I wrote one out and was delighted when Lyndon said, "Fine, send it -- adding one sentence -- "you were expressing sentiments I greatly admired on television last night".

I feel so good when I can do something to help him. He is surrounded by people who do.

We lunched a little after 2:00 -- Jim and Jake and Lynda and Marie. And then the day was so beautiful I said, "Let's go for a ride." I got no response. And then we began to ask if there weren't a solarium --

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Thursday, October 14, 1965

Page 2

a roof -- a place where we could go. There was. So off we put. Lyndon was walking with a wheelchair following down a couple of long hospital corridors with Rufus and Marie to a small quiet, sunny room looking out over the forest and countryside into about 78 degree bright sunshine. And there we stayed for 2 hours -- I with my lap full of notes, Lyndon in the yellow pajamas Muriel had given him, and the gray robe the press had sent him.

Mary Margaret came with Courtney Lynda who played delightedly with Lyndon. Bill Moyers said, "Do you think it would be all right if we let the press come up and just take a picture and no questions? Maybe they might let you alone for the weekend."

I was pleased when Lyndon said yes.

Courtney, black curls, bright eyes, pixie smile, was full of talk about "I love you, Prez", and "Where's Him", and lifted Lyndon's spirits by her sheer joy in life.

Suddenly there burst upon us about 100 members of the press all getting in front of each other vying for positions. I was relieved to see there were about three women with them. They snapped picture after picture while Courtney obligingly kissed Lyndon on the cheek and hugged him and went through a series of antics and delighted everybody.

Sun is his natural benefactor, and Lyndon looked reassuringly brown and healthy.

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Thursday, October 14, 1965

Page 3

I left about 5:30 to join Ashton to drive out to Great Falls before dark fell. I have a ravenous desire to get out of the hospital even for an hour.

We walked out to a lookout point and below us was the wildness of rushing water, great boulders, whirl pools, and all around the scarlet and gold and crimson of October in the late twilight.

Back at the hospital I signed mail and dispatched Ashton, and then returned to Lyndon's room and presently to dinner with Vickie and Bill Moyers who is getting off for a couple of days vacation. He has a cold and is exhausted. And Jack and Marvin. And Luci and Pat sat in with us though they didn't eat.

We began to reminisce on the Senate great -- Walter George and Clyde Hooey of North Carolina and Tom Connally of Texas. To me, Senator Kerr was one of the last of the great individualists. It is a grayer Senate now -- no colorful characters have come along to take their place.

Lyndon told anecdotes of how Clyde Hooey always used to wear a rose in his lapel and a claw hammer coat. And another time how he -- Lyndon -- had tried to get him to change his vote on an important matter. And when it was well explained to him, Senator Hooey said, "All right beloved, but first I'll have to go back and wipe out some tracks I've made." And about Walter George and his great

(Sen. Hooey always called a good friend "beloved")

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Thursday, October 14, 1965

Page 4

Oregon
rolling ~~Oregon~~ voice and the silence that fell on the Senate when he rose to speak.

It was a good day. The shadows seemed to have lifted.

One of the interesting events to me was to hear from Nat Owings. *He said* But he had talked to the Speaker and the Speaker had agreed, after conferring with George Stewart the architect for the Capitol, that the plan to run a freeway below ground between the Capitol and the end of the Mall underneath the statue was agreeable to him, so that around the statue there can be the reflecting pool that is planned as a part of the whole Mall complex. The freeway, Nat Owings says, is already funded and the reflecting pool can be paid for by the money saved by rerouting the freeway straight instead of in a curve. And straight takes *it* right underneath the statue. I wonder if I should live to see the completion of any part of Pennsylvania Avenue or the Mall. But I saw the beginning of the Jefferson Memorial, and now it seems that it has been here forever.

We will speak no more of yesterday and *pray* that the mood remains quiescent.