

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Wednesday, October 20, 1965

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It was a complete break from hospital routine. I spent the day with Max Brooks, Roy White, ^{and Bill} George Heath on a tour of the outstanding architecture on the campus of Yale and elsewhere in New Haven, Connecticut and in New York. It was also oddly a day of leaving the comfort and plushness of White House life and getting around over the country like any John Citizen.

I was called about 5:20 when the world was dark, dressed, had a cup of coffee, asked the nurse if Lyndon had opened his eyes. He was sound asleep. I tip-toed past his door and out of the hospital at 6:15.

The sky was just beginning to be pink with that wonderfully expectant feeling of dawn. And as we drove along the George Washington Memorial Parkway, mist was rising from the Potomac in great billows making it look like one of the early engravings. And in the distance the dim phantom of the Cathedral and the Capitol and the Washington Monument. I will indeed be old when day break is no longer exciting.

But I was hungry and we got on Alleghany Airlines -- Max and Roy and Bill Heath and I -- to find that they didn't serve breakfast -- a donut and coffee and nearly three hours of flight to New Haven with four stops -- far cry from Air Force I service! But it was interesting to see what I was going to return to in a short span of years.

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Thanks to my call to McGeorge Bundy the President of Yale himself, Dr. Kingman Brewster -- young, to me, handsome and very charming -- met me at the airport, and we drove to his home -- one of the old Edwardian residences or maybe it's Elizabethan -- on the Yale campus.

We had coffee with his wife and his architectural advisor, Mr. Ed Barnes. And then we set out on a walking tour of the Yale campus going by the IBM Building, designed by Bundschaff of Skidmore, Owings and Merrill -- a small jewel of glass and steel.

And then on up to a half completed building designed by Philip Johnson -- an enormous highrise structure at the end of a mall -- a series of great, round pillars reaching to the sky, holding together I believe it's the Science Building. And next to the Bienecke Rare Book Library by Bundschaff.

This was part of a courtyard of buildings on the Yale campus, and a renowned piece of architecture. I thought it looked cold, austere, severe on the outside. From the inside there was a magnificent way to display ⁸⁸ a million⁸⁸ dollars worth of rare books behind glass -- a great, brilliant showcase from floor to ceiling in the center of the building of rare and expensive and wonderful books. These were the stacks. And then there were display cases around in the walking area ranging from a Gutenberg Bible -- one of the six in the United States valued at \$1-1/2 million according to the curator of the building who took us around.

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Bill Heath asked him because the University of Texas is hoping to buy one of the six Gutenberg Bibles. Then to another display case holding early Texana, including one of the first printed versions of the Declaration of Independence of Texas from Mexico.

The outside shell of the building itself is composed of translucent marble some six or eight inches thick which permits the light to filter through with great magnificence. No tomb of a pharaoh was ever designed with a less thought of expense. And there we drove on around a sort of a hockey rink I think it was in the shape of a whale designed by Saarinen -- one of the first things that called him to the attention of the world of architecture.

And then the thing that I liked best of all in the whole day I believe -- the dormitory designed by Saarinen across a green swath from some old ivy covered buildings of stone ^{built} ~~that~~ generations before -- and somehow there is a delightful blending -- the completely modern with the old. But that does us no good because Saarinen is dead and what we are in search of is a living, ^{makeable} ~~valuable~~ architect who will be excited by the challenge of a Lyndon Baines Johnson Library on the University of Texas campus and who will work well with the University's own firm of Brooks and Barr.

As we emerged from the Biencke Rare Books Building, I had realized that there were photographers. And so I walked close to

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Dr. Kingman Brewster realizing that the jig was up as far as us having a day without being recognized, and just hoping that I looked intelligent, interested and reasonably well groomed.

And then we went on to another Philip Johnson Building of Epidemiology and Public Health which won no plaudits from our two architects -- a box, they called it. I thought it looked rather good. It was a very exciting moment when up in the library stack of the building with ^halls of glass looking down on New Haven and seeing the urban renewal development that Mayor Richard Lee has produced in this New England town when suddenly I turned back ^{of} the stacks and the first thing my eyes lit on was a book by Jane Jacobs about the life and death of cities. Someone came up to me and said, "Mayor Lee is outside. He would like to say hello to you." And there in a moment out on the sidewalk waiting for us was one of the most exciting Mayors in the whole United States, for what he had done for his town -- less than 200,000 -- to bringing it in his span of office of 12 years from decay in the doldrums into a vivid renewal. It is also a wonderful public relations story. It is as though they had tried to find the biggest names in architecture and hired them all to do a job in New Haven and then had told the world about it in letters six feet high. Paul Rudolph, Adolph ^{ahn}Koenig, Saarinen, Philip Johnson, Bundschaff. I doubt if any town of 200,000 in the United States has as many

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examples of big name architectures of this generation.

I spent a wonderful half hour riding around looking at public housing units. ^aEveryone of which he knew the amount of rent they paid for an apartment. He talked about them with the enthusiasm and the warm knowledge that one would talk about one's children. Being Mayor is certainly his love and his life -- one of the rare cases of "man meets job". And now he faces a race with an opponent whom ^{he} describes as to the right of Goldwater.

^{By} ~~For~~ the time we put the Mayor out we were attracting such crowds that I was feeling very conspicuous. So we went to only two more buildings -- one by Paul Rudolph, one by Adolph ^{Kahn} ~~Kahn~~. The Architecture Building and the Art Gallery. Neither appealed to me. I understood the phrase "brutalism" in architecture which I had heard -- the exposed concrete -- the raw structural frame -- the crude unfinished look -- the deliberate defiance of any need to be elegant or beautiful. And yet they are great names in their profession. Somehow it reminded me of the Hans Christian Anderson ^ason story about the emperor's new clothes. If you can get enough people -- enough reviews -- to sing, "this is great, this is wonderful, this is new," then maybe you've got it made. I wonder how they will look -- those buildings -- 50 years from now. [?]

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A little before 1:00 we said goodbye to Dr. and Mrs. Kingman Brewster -- such a smooth, attractive host he had been. And I must admit my eyes had been out on stems simply because I had been on the campus of the great Ivy League school -- Yale.

And then we drove on, headed for New York, and stopped at a Holiday Inn for lunch. The dining room was closed, there were no booths -- ^Wshould we sit at stools². Of course we would. So we sat down at the stools and ordered cheeseburgers -- all four of us. And grinned as we looked across to the Secret Service who had got fed first and a lady sat next to Roy White and leaned over to him and said, "That looks like Mrs. Lyndon Johnson." He said, "Yes, it is". And she said, "Now isn't that just like her to sit down here and have a hamburger with us!"

But now I was rueing the day I ever started on a diet, but determined to live with it a little longer.

So for the next hour and a half we drove into New York, arriving at Lincoln Center a little past 3:00. Frank Stanton was ^{there} to meet us.

There in the triumvirate around the fountain are three of the great buildings of modern architecture -- Philip Johnson's New York State Theatre, Harrison and Abramowitz Philharmonic Hall, and the still uncompleted building in the center which I did not look at too closely but believe is by another member of the firm of Harrison and Abramowitz.

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To my surprise the New York State Theatre turned out to be quite a recoco building -- guilt and plush and chandelier like lighting, somewhat contrived within a severe limitations of modern architecture. I was not drawn to it. On the other hand, also to my surprise, I liked the Harrison and Abramowitz Philharmonic Hall best of all of our day's sight-seeing except for ~~Sarinen's~~ dormitories at Yale.

Frank Stanton who was on the board of trustees of the Lincoln Center walked with us every step with his observations. And then we drove on to the museum of modern art~~s~~. We walked quickly through and looked at the charming garden at the exterior of the wing that Philip Johnson has built.

This was the building where I had made a little speech last spring when this wing was opened -- the garden with its beech trees and fountain and weeping beeches and a statuary -- Henry Moore -- Jacque Ameti -- its rows of tables full of diners at 4:00 in the afternoon. It's very lively and attractive. Bill Heath was intrigued by a bit of statuary of a coiled snake which a man had given in memory of his wife. It was a modern piece, but it was also exactly like a piece of pre-Columbian art that I had seen at Dumbart^{Notes.} *On the*

Here we said goodbye to Frank Stanton and drove by Asia House, the United Nations buildings, the World Fair grounds -- empty and

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deserted. And then to the plane at 5:45 where just as I was about to board I ran straight into Sissy Morrissey of "Time & Life" -- no hope to be anonymous unless I get a mole on my nose and a wig.

On the way home, we settled to a drink and a summary of our day's activities. On my part there is no clear cut choice -- no decision. We've seen a lot of illustrious examples, but none of which I would wish to follow. But then the architects have not seen the site of the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library or know what its function is or what our dream of it is. So we are looking for something that doesn't exist.

Bill Heath said the more he saw of other things the more he liked Brooks and Barr of Austin. And the more the tale of the emperor's new clothes kept recurring to my mind. But yet I want to attach some great and lustrous name to the Library so it will ^{//}sell for what it's worth ^{//}in the eyes of the world. And I want it to be someone who can work well with Max's firm on the spot, who will probably be responsible in great part for the final outcome of the whole building.

I said goodbye to my companions at the airport and hurried out to the hospital -- some 12 hours after I had left -- ~~in~~ back in time to find a great void -- Jim Cain had left feeling that all was well with Lyndon to get back to his job.

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Lyndon had had a full day, signing the Clean Air Bill early in the morning, sitting outside nearly four hours and walking nearly two miles, talking to lots of people along the way, toured the hospital ward and had given the newspaper people plenty of copy.

I had dinner with Lyndon and Dr. Hallenbeck and Vickie. And Luci and Pat came in on their way to a concert by Van Cliburn. Luci was adorable in black velvet and a white organdy bow and a very coquettish and feminine hair-do.

It was a full, exciting and useful day without arriving at any clear cut decision as to whom we wanted to design the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library.

What did I remember from the day? Not the different works of architecture, but the New England commons -- the expanses of green shaded by great American elms that divide the campus yet bind it together and give open space and dignity to the city. It's a good thing tradition is on its side or else it would have long ago given way to a highrise office building or a parking lot.