

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Thursday, February 17, 1966

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An early annual event, the Congressional Wives Prayer Breakfast. I was up before seven, dressed and ready to go with Lyndon by 7:30. This is one of the days in the year that Liz would like to strike from the calendar, but I, perhaps it is my Karnack raising, find comforting and substantial. And if the veneer of sophistication<sup>g</sup> may have acquired in the last 20 years, *e* makes me look at it with somewhat questioning eyes, it is the other side, the "old-time religion," that plainly wins out.

There were nearly a thousand women in the Blue Room, *or the Shoreham* spreading out into the lobby beyond. Natalie Grant (it's nearly always a Southerner) was the Chairman, and Mrs. Norman Vincent Peale was the main speaker. I hope I take a lesson from her book. A large part of her speech was three stories - vignettes - that told her message better than any series of nebulous words could have done.

It was here that I learned that Muriel had *quite* slipped off to join Hubert. She was supposed to do the Scripture reading, but someone substituted for her. I looked around the full room, wondering what was going on in the mind of Mrs. B. K. Nehru, a Hindu, I suppose; and numerous Catholic wives from the Diplomatic Corp, who were present, headed by Mrs. Sevilla-Sacasa; because this is a pretty protestant affair.

I was glad they were all there. Besides the Congress and official Washington, I heard that Presidents of the Jaycees all across the country *re* had been invited, their way paid by some Foundation. And also a sizeable contingent, more than a hundred, I believe, the Presidents of Student Bodies of Colleges, and any time I hear an anecdote "the long haired, muddle-

*Ch  
Jaycees*

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headed foolishness on campuses these days" I am glad they were here.

We finished before the men, so we filled in the time with songs, both old hymns, and my Methodist raising in Karneck came rolling back to me with the words, somewhere in the recesses of my mind, of "Onward, Christian Soldiers", and "What a Friend We Have in Jesus", and "Sweet Hour of Prayer" - 'til finally the men, Lyndon, Billy Graham, Senator Carlson (who heads the mens group) arrived in a flurry of excitement.

I liked the line from Lyndon's little talk where he recalled ~~the~~ the wisdom of Abraham Lincoln, when he said, "I have been driven to my knees many times by the overwhelming conviction that I have no where else to go. My own wisdom and that of all about me, seemed insufficient for the day."

Billy had said he had been resting, and reading, and studying all winter but was now ready to start on the road again.

Then I went on to my Spanish lesson. Mercedes <sup>Eicholz</sup> ~~Leites~~ started having them at her house once more, in January, and I have missed only one. Bethene Church, Grace Dodd, Abigail McCarthy, June White, Ann Celebrezze, and I meet at Mercedes' for two hours <sup>Le Profesora</sup> every Thursday. Drink good, strong, black coffee, talk what must be usually awful, but happy and excited Spanish, and learn a little bit, with ~~la profesora~~, Senora Lopez-Maguire. It's my own two hours - nothing else enters my mind - it's my special self-indulgence - I love it! It exercises a different set of muscles, in my brain, and sheds a sort of light on the rest of the day.

Back at the White House, I worked with Ashton. And then had another

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hour with Mrs. Provenson, in the Queen's Room, on the Denver speech.

Just a day or two earlier, I had gotten word that a portrait had been done of me, from photographs, by Mrs. Philip Barry, widow of the playwright who wrote The Philadelphia Story, done for the rooms at the Womens Democratic Club, and would I see <sup>her</sup> for a few minutes, and the portrait, to see if there were any suggestions, perhaps changes, that she might make? It came as a stunning, and not comfortable surprise. I knew nothing of it or of her, and a portrait is a terribly personal business, but of course, I would see her. And when she arrived, I was very pleasantly relieved. She was a charming woman, and there was much to like about the portrait; the impressionist approach, lights and shadows of yellows <sup>and</sup> all tones, and greens mingling in together. The White House and the Capitol like fairy structures in the background. My hair, I thought, looked very nice, and the eyes rather nice - and the nose, unhappily, just like my nose looks. From there on down, mouth and chin, were not good; or the blurred, indecisive, sort of apologetic looking, and the jaw too wide. I told Mrs. Barry I would be very happy to devote as much time to it, <sup>as</sup> as she herself would, in an effort to do the very best we could, to leave something hanging on the wall at the Womens Democratic Club, <sup>that</sup> that would be a credit to us both. She worked it out in 30 minutes and we planned to meet again.

She gave me copies of two of her husband's plays.

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It had been a constant rat-a-tat of people and need to measure up, so I went to lie down and rest awhile, and turn on the TV and watch General Taylor, and felt like cheering for him, as though I were at a football game. His manner so courteous, his replies so concise; he sounded so on top of the situation and like someone I could trust.

Conversely, Bill Fulbright sounded philosophical, meandering and muddled. And Senator Wayne Morse, nasty.

Liz and I had another go at the Alabama speech. I'm doing it with the end of my wits, at the end of the day, and it shows it. These periods of gestation on speeches, are so painful that I think even Liz is going to be cured of wanting to get me to say yes to speaking engagements.

Finally, feeling mentally exhausted, but physically hungry for exercise, I went over to the bowling alley by myself, not even trying to get someone on the spur of the moment, and made the highest score I've ever made in my life - 183! And then another game - 154; and then stopped mid-way of the third game because the League - made up of the janitors and the people who work in the EOB, had been waiting on me several minutes, for the alley. And also, because in the theatre, my next bit of work on my film was waiting for me.

Quiet, soft-spoken Simone met me there, and we had a drink while we checked out the dialogue on one more of the old movies, about 1954, I believe it was, before putting it in the can, for whatever use it may be in the future.

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But I was interrupted by a call from Lyndon. He was upstairs, would I come?<sup>?</sup> I dashed. We had dinner a little before nine, and were in bed in time for the eleven o'clock news.

*Ch*  
*Kope*  
The New York Times had a story about a vest pocket park, where, in a sylvan setting, the Franklin National Bank would have a small branch bank, both <sup>for</sup> its customers and the public, on a site that had been a solid concrete parking lot.

Either it's catching on or I'm just learning to read!

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