

MEMORANDUM

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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Sunday, February 20, 1966

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Weekends are a sort of safety valve in our lives, used to rest and recoup and have fun.

The week had been a terrific strain, trying to assess the effect across the nation of Viet-Nam debate. There had been increasing hostility in the columns, for days and weeks, it seemed, and then, on Thursday and Friday, I had the feeling that it was our inning - that we won with General Maxwell Taylor and Secretary Rusk.

Nevertheless, I did not go to sleep Saturday night until 2:30; and finally went to my room and read, and read, and read; and turned out the light at 2:30.

The next morning, Lyndon asked me where I wanted to go to church. He makes quite a ritual of having me choose, and I always choose his or mine in rotation, giving the edge to the Christian church, if there is any uncertainty.

But today, we went to St. Marks. It is still a church in the round, but there were no surprises as there are so often are at St. Marks, until perhaps, one might say, we started out and little Coco McPherson came up and took Lyndon's hand, bringing along her friend, Janice, a 10 year old negro member of the choir.

We emerged from the church, four of us, hand in hand - Lyndon, Coco, Janice and I. And as we went down the sidewalk, we saw Helen Thomas. Lyndon said, "Helen, you know Coco McPherson. Coco, if you don't watch she'll out, ~~you'll~~ be announcing your wedding." And at the car, he said, "How

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would you all like to ride over to the White House with us and see the dogs?"

They would and the four of us piled in. We had just asked Bill Baxter and his wife, and Harry and Clayton if they would like to come for lunch, and they were going to follow us.

But the four of us rode off with all the cameras clicking. At the White House, we took the two little girls over to Lyndon's office, and he gave them pencils, and keepsakes. And then we found the dogs and went upstairs, and the dogs tumbled all over them.

Lyndon is very easy in conversation, with anyone from Janice to a Chief of State, when he wants to be. He found in a brief span of two or three questions, ^{that} there were eleven in Janice's family, seven boys and four girls, two of the oldest boys were in the military, she did not have a father. He asked no further questions. And she started going to St. Mark's because she was a friend of Coco's.

The eight of us sat down to lunch, and if anybody besides me thought that it was an interesting facet of Lyndon Johnson, 'Janice Diggs came to a small private party, before Cabinet member Robert Weaver did', it didn't show.

The children had an hilariously good time. Courtney said, 'this is the best time I've ever had in my life.' It was all Lyndon's doing, though I felt the glow.

And then we watched McGeorge Bundy on television. It was precise, razor sharp, in the light of Senator Kennedy's espousal of the Viet Cong

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being included in a sort of coalition government, before and not as the result of an election. McGeorge Bundy's quotes from President Kennedy about similar situations in Communist infiltrated countries, was particularly acute and ⁱⁿdecisive.

Lyndon said, "I'd give him A double plus." We'd called up on the way to church to ask if he and Mary and Clark and Marny, and Mary Margaret would have dinner with us. And so with that pleasant prospect to look forward to, I lay down for a luxurious nap.

Purposely, I refrained from calling Lynda. She'd arrived in New Orleans Friday night, to meet George, being chaperoned by Lindy Boggs, who is playing the part of a very giving family friend, to my children. Lynda has outlined to me, the parades, and balls, dinner in the old French Quarter; the plantation of friends in Slidell; so many fascinating things that in a way, I don't want to interrupt Lynda's independence or her time, or seem like a hovering and concerned mother. I balance between trying to remember that next month she will be 22, with the right to independence, and that her father is President of the United States, and that anything she does may reflect on him.

We'd asked everybody early, deliberately aiming at an early bedtime. McGeorge and Mary came at six, and the Clark Cliffords soon; and Mary Margaret was already there with her adorable child, who affords Lyndon more pleasure now, by being totally unrelated to any of the troubles of his life, totally happy, and totally concentrated on him.

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She and the puppies are two pleasant safety valves.

We called Trudy and Joe Fowler. Joe had been to the Carol Channing party and there was an hilarious picture of him doing a dance called 'The Monkey', I believe. Carol, who wore white ski pants - he had cast a look at the people at his table as he arose to dance and said, "Do you think this will shake the dollar?" Perhaps being off at that night of gaiety, Joe was deep at work in a pile of papers, but he agreed to quit and come over and have dinner with us.

So it was a pleasant party of nine. I moved from Clark, talking about the Library - to Mac, talking about how sad I was that he was leaving, and how grateful I am for what he's done. And I told him that I hoped he would ask add any names he could to the list of possible Directors for the Lyndon Baines Johnson School of Public Service, and that some day, he himself, would come to lecture there - for a summer - for a night - anything. I also said, "I hope that you're going to leave the papers that relate to the part of your time here with us, for the Library." I was quite prepared to hear that he was not. To my great delight, he laughed and said, "Everything that I've got is going to stay right here, except my bills."

Lyndon talked about Viet-Nam - in fact, that is about two thirds of what we talk about these days. He talked about the individual feelings of every mother who had a son in Viet-Nam, and in comparison, ^{about} his feelings.

He said, "There's not a mother in the world, who cares as much about it as I do, because I have 200,000 of them over there - and they think I am

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in charge, and if I am not, God help them - Who the Hell is²?"

In discussing General Westmoreland, whom he admires enormously, and his opinion on the pause, the General's feelings sounded about like this. "I do not expect anything to come of it. I am not for it. I do not want to be recorded as a boob, but we can afford it, the weather is going to be so bad for the next few weeks, that we could not do much bombing anyway. If we are ever going to have a pause, now is the time to do it, for our own Christmas season and the similar holiday of the Vietnamese people - and the planes can be well used along some wants in Laos. So, if you must, have a pause, do it - but we would not give you this advice unless we thought you had guts enough to resume the bombing."

Ch. Taper

McGeorge, who has a light word for the heaviest matters, ⁱⁿ his few hours off time, said "The President is not a lover of pauses this week. We buy and sell pauses on the curb. He bought this one because a lot of people were standing in front of him holding the pen." And people of such strength and repute they were.

It was a delightful evening. ^{She} ~~Philip~~ ^{Willis} Hurst arrived as we were finishing dinner. I'd asked them to be our house guests. And then I took Mary Bundy and Trudy Fowler down the stairs to show them where we had hung the Eleanor Roosevelt portrait. Trudy has already been to make a speech, a beautification, to Syracuse, New York. She was a great hit, she loved it and I think that she will do lots more.

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We went to the theatre and saw a few of my home movies. There's a streak of egotism ineradicable in all of us. I hoped they would cheer when I thought the scenes were beautiful - they didn't.

And then we saw The Land We Love, a very exquisite, professionally movie done/ about See America First, put out by the Treasury Department, I believe, in the interest of tourism. And I can't wait to get in my car and head for New England or Wyoming, so alluring it was!

And then, the President's Country, by USIA. I'm afraid the NBC one, my real preference, will never see the light of day.

We all went over to the President's office, to view Jimilu's bust of Lyndon, that so recently we had all applauded to the skies, and it got very mixed reviews - "not the strength, not the vitality," said McGeorge. I still like it, and seven years is all we'll have to give to it.

I had showed them the slide of the portrait that Helen Barry had done of me, and as always, opinions were mixed - but nearly everybody liked the impressionistic approach, the colors, the background - and nobody likes the mouth or the chin.

Our guests left early, about 11, and I had that happy feeling that these are all people that I want to continue to be a part of my life. Mark said there was a room in his apartment labeled for Lynda Bird.

I hope that each of them someday, will come to Austin to lecture on what they have seen through the window, on which they looked at government, Washington, Presidents, in the years of their time here.

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It was a good day.