

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

Washington's Birthday
Tuesday, February 22, 1966

WASHINGTON

W+D

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It was a short night for those around the White House. I awoke about seven, and finding Lyndon was awake, crawled in bed with him for coffee. Picked up the paper and saw a headline - "General Maxwell Taylor Agrees With Bobby Kennedy." I passed it to him "Can this be true?" Wearily, "Yes, we've been trying to bail him out." Apparently it had been a series of misunderstandings, misconceptions, misquotings. So this explains last night's late hours and strain, and tension. How disappointing! It had all been played against just a backdrop, or so it seemed to me, of relief, and relaxation on the weekend.

Two full days of testimony - there were Maxwell Taylor, and Dean Rusk - when it seemed that everything about Viet-Nam had been aired to all the world, and that the Administration had won the round, topped off by the marvelous, succinct appearance of McGeorge Bundy on TV on Sunday.

And then suddenly, this deflation, this uncertainty, apparently to ward off the mounting dangers of ~~schism~~ ^{disunion} and ~~desertion~~ in the country.

Lyndon - and I don't know how much staff - had spent practically all night on the problem. As a part of it, Bill Moyers had dinner with Senator Fulbright - that was the report he was writing up. I remember one sentence that Lyndon repeated several times, "They can talk and have opinions - but what do they do, when they see that letter on the desk from Westmoreland, asking for 20,000 more Marines? You have to answer it Yes or No - right now. Which answer?" No doubt about him - he has answered Yes - up to

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now - and will.

Lyndon spoke of the role of the press - "They just want to throw the cats ^{by} and the tail ^{into} by the ring and say 'Sick 'em'." "At least a situation like this is good for them - controversy makes lively writing."

Unable to control the great events of the day, I applied myself to the quite small. Spent an hour working on the samples that Jesse Kellam had sent me - the ceramic tile and floor tile, and formica - for Mrs. Bailey's house. Made selections, phoned him and returned them.

Succumbed to a shot of B12, long recommended by Liz, from Dr. Berkeley. Tried on my clothes from Mollie Parnes, several of them quite charming, and heard Luci, as mad as a hornet, discuss an article in a magazine or something called Women's Wear, which had given the three Johnsons pretty poor marks as dressers.

Luci was inclined to blame it on Lynda Bird's bobby socks and loafers, and was really quite heatedly annoyed about it.

I talked to Mary ^{Allen} ~~Allen~~ about repairs we're having made at the Haywood. Papering of two bathrooms and a bedroom, and slip covering of furniture. It's all coming along fine; it's finished, she likes it.

To Lawrence Klein, about work at the ranch, doing over the bedroom, the Victorian one, at the guest house. And some antique brass beds I've gotten, which he said are charming.

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And to A. W. about the park, the pocket size one in Johnson City, upon which Mr. ^{Wright}~~Wright~~ is busily at work, so that in May, ^{it} it will be ready for ^{Life} Life, and the public.

And then, because I am no marathon runner like Lyndon, and there are times when I can only feel love and compassion, and not really help, I lay down for a nap I simply had to have. A milk punch always gets me off to one, and I slept, wonderfully relaxed, until about four.

And then up to see Mrs. Provenson, eating my first real meal of the day, scrambled eggs and toast and bacon, always my favorite, in the Queen's Room, while we went over the Alabama speech, now finished and sounding better.

I really spent two long, good, hard hours with her, to much benefit.

And then I called Dr. Hurst, by now it was seven. Would he go bowling with me. ^{he} He would and ~~it~~ turned out to be good, though he insisted he hadn't done it in 10 years. He beat me a couple of games, but I beat him one with 143 score.

We stopped by to see if we could get Lyndon to come home for dinner. It should be an early one. But he's in the mess, which means that he has a crowd with him. I knew I must not interrupt. I left word in his office to ask him to join us. He had two appointments after the meeting, with the crowd, and when he had not come by 10 o'clock, we sat down to dinner, just the two of us.

It's always happy and easy to talk to Dr. Hurst, who had brought to us the product of seven years labor, on his part, ^{the} the first book off the

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press, on the heart. ~~The~~ The first comprehensive one to come out, he told us, in about a decade. I cannot even lift it, much less understand it, but I value his giving it to us.

We discussed the need for more nurses. There's a need for more of everything trained, in this world, it seems. And there's a sort of internicene ~~lasting~~ war between Nurses schools that give diplomas, and who actually supply some 90% of the nurses, and those that give degrees, such as Luci is going through, that supply a much smaller number, I think he said about 10%.

Willis
~~Phyllis~~ looked at the portrait that Mrs. Barry had done of me, and he is the first person who gave it, complete and enthusiastic endorsement. I was happy. If Lyndon needs dozens of friends, much love - I too need some.

At eleven o'clock I went to bed, but I asked him to stay up and talk to Lyndon. And Lyndon did come home a little past 11:30, and had dinner.

It is an endurance contest, this job. I count the months and the weeks until the time I have set, but I have not the force of character, and not really even the desire, to try to make Lyndon work less hard. It is worth every last atom of whatever he has to give it.

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