

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Friday, March 11, 1966 ~~WHO~~

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It was a good day of work and pleasure, which began early. All the nights are too short, these last months. It seems that Lyndon never gets more than five or six hours of sleep. I do not know how he arises to work so hard. After laying down his night reading at two, finished or unfinished, and awakening about 7:30.

I had breakfast with him about 8:30, in his room, which is rather like a convention hall.

And then decided to treat myself to a visit to the National Art Gallery with Ida May. She had plans to go - could I be ready in a few minutes? I ignored duty and feeling delightfully truant, drove to the National, where John Walker and Carter Brown were waiting for us at the entrance.

The great collection that Paul Mellon and Mrs. Mellon Bruce, have lent for the 25th anniversary of the official dedication of the National Gallery, are more than 200 French impressionists. Probably there's more of them under this roof today, than any place in the world, even Paris. One Cezanne sold for \$800,000 last October. They range from Corot to Picasso, Monets, Manet, Cézannes, Degas, Boudin, I never saw so many charming ones. They're not open to the public yet. We went straight to the Gallery. They weren't labeled so I had a delightful time, seeing if I could identify them. So I walked up close and looked at the signatures - and very often I could. Secretly I hoped that Johnny Walker and Carter Brown were as impressed as I was!

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But they do begin to speak to you after a good many years of exposure. I could tell when Van Gogh was getting into his last period, he went mad. I found many Monets that weren't misty at all, in fact one of my favorites, was a very clear, bright garden, huge golden sunflowers, and two little children going down a path - a Monet. And another girl on a hilltop and you can almost feel the wind in her hair.

I discovered some Renoirs that were most unlike anything else he's done that I have seen. Paintings of his children, quite photographic; and one of the dearest ones of all, a little Mary Cassatt girl, plumped on a couch, looking at her little dog, both of them planning some devilment.

We spent a pleasant hour and as I walked out, saw groups of school children, people smiling and waving at me. I smiled and waved back, but mostly I was right inconspicuous.

Back at the White House, I had a meeting set up with Mr. West and Jim Ketchum, to put together the agenda of the meeting we must have soon, for the Committee for the Preservation of the White House. To tell them about all the things we've done for the tourists - show cases, the tape, the room signs, stories of the President's trees on the south grounds. To tell them our achievements of the last year and in acquiring paintings and our hopes for the future. The new drapes for the main entrance, that we need and also very much, new drapes and chair covers - or should it be new chairs, for the State Dining Room?

Two full pages of things we must talk about, plus a report on White

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House publications. How all the books are coming along, the amount of sales, the amount of money we can expect from the White House Historical Association, to help with acquiring permanent art objects.

We had innumerable cups of coffee, and <sup>they</sup> must have thought they were never going to get any lunch, because I let them go at 2:30.

And then Lyndon came for lunch. It's the first time I've had lunch with him in ages. Mostly I'm too famished to wait - a cup of coffee doesn't hold me. I must start eating a real breakfast so that I can wait until he comes because he eats alone on the days when he doesn't bring business guests, and he does not like to be alone at all. If he can't find me, he calls Ashton, or gets Vickie or Marie.

Yesterday, he said he had called everywhere for me, so today, he came prepared with Vickie, and the three of us sat down for lunch.

And afterwards, I had a long session of fittings with Lucinda. How boring it is. And then a little nap, and more work with Ashton and Bess.

A little before six, Jane Freeman, whom I had called to invite to ride with me, out to the Woman's National Democratic Club Benefit Show. And off we went for about 30 minutes of that familiar signature to this job, walking through crowds, shaking hands and smiling, looking at booths filled with items but with a silent auction. A painting by Alice <sup>Atcheson</sup> Atchinson; needle work by Jane Wirtz; well known products of States, Bourbon from Kentucky, and a smoked ham; and I'll bet some chili from Texas.

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We're going to have an extravaganza a little later, put together by Scotty Lanahan, and the Clark Clifford's talented daughter, and ~~to~~ which Ann Hand was one of the stars, but I didn't stay. I thanked everybody, there were lots of pictures and then with release, I hurried back to the White House.

To work some more. What a week of work this has been! But there has to be a week like this now and then, or else there couldn't be trips and speeches, and days when I don't see my desk.

I asked the house guests to meet me about nine, for a drink. How late our hours must seem to other people!

And then delightfully enough, Lyndon came at 9:15, but not in a hurry to go ~~into~~ dinner. He enjoys Oveta Hobby, <sup>very much</sup> and also Ida May and Jim. They are leaving tomorrow morning for Viet-Nam; they've been briefed all day, they were full of interesting stories themselves, and enthusiastic, each of them, hopeful.

I was glad that Lyndon quit the dietetic Dr. Pepper and had a couple of what scotches while we talked. He told them ~~that~~ he hoped they'd do in Viet-Nam; what he hoped this government could do, the imprint we could leave on the country.

"One, I would see that everyone there got a bath. It is simple to wash. I am sure Proctor and Gamble can get us the soap."

"Two, I would have a fast inoculation." He keeps on talking about how they die at 35, and how sores caused by lack of cleanliness, skin diseases,

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are a major scourge of the country.

"Three, I would see what the simple three R's are out there, and I would get them started into school. Just like you would buy a Liberty Bond. This country is the goldfish bowl. Our only purpose out there is to keep these people from being eaten up. I want to get out of there more than anybody, including the Marines."

And then he spoke of President Eisenhower. "Since I have been President, the man who has helped me most, and asked the least, is Eisenhower."

of Dien? And then he talked ~~xx Jim~~. It always makes me uncomfortable when he does. His death, he regards as a hideous turning point in the war and a black spot in our national life.

And then he talked of his own philosophy. "I'm not a liberal, I'm a progressive. The liberal believes in controlling your mind, like a Communist does. I do not believe in that."

And, once more, about Viet-Nam, "I want to do something about the condition that causes this war."

And he spoke of what our agricultural ~~and no~~<sup>know</sup>-how, our technology could do for them, and of Freeman's mission over there. "We are going to give them 200 pound hogs for their 100 pound hogs. Our sweet potato vines produce twice as ~~much~~ many pounds of sweet potatoes, as their vines do."

Westmoreland is not just a killer, he has a social consci<sup>business</sup>~~enciousness~~.

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Oveta, in talking about the liberals attitude about the Viet-Nam situation, said, "There is something sick in the liberal viewpoint in all this."

At one time Lyndon described himself, "I'm like a prize fighter in the ring, the right fist is the military, the left fist is aid, washing, agricultural, education.

Poor beleagured man. He's put in a week of work on it. Tomorrow will be more, with about 46 or 47 of the Governors coming, all day briefings.

After Lyndon's blessing, Oveta made a sweet, grave little addition of asking help for him. We had a merry dinner, and then by midnight, we were in bed.

My day had been interspersed with many personal things too. The call that Uncle John Patillo had died - one of my last links with my childhood. I had a long talk with Nettie Mason, his daughter, in which we could even laugh over some of the happy times we'd spent when we were children.

And I called Jim Fosburgh about paintings, our plans for acquisitions. I want to keep everybody's enthusiasm up. And Mary Lasker about the art tea at the White House next week, who, among our beautification friends, might enjoy coming?

It's been a week of infinite and necessary work and no great glittering events.

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