

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Saturday, May 13, 1967

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If life can be said to have a pattern, as we go into Spring and summer, the crescendo of work mounts. [¶] We pack as many engagements as we can into Tuesday and Wednesday and Thursday, and often Monday and Friday are full. And then on the weekends we go to Camp David or to Texas. Or if we are here ~~Friday~~ ^{Saturday} morning is a time to think, to plan, to walk from one end of the Mall to the other with Libby Rowe or to talk with Polly Shackleton about "Project Pride" and its sequel for this summer, or with Abe Fortas or Roger Stevens about some of the Art programs, or dropping by the National to see an exhibit or go to the Arena. It's my day -- a blank day on the calendar -- a sort of creative day -- to think, to plan. There must be some like this to feed the rest of the week, to build upon. [¶] And then Saturday night and Sunday we often spend with the people that are most relaxing for Lyndon, that he can enjoy without thinking of being careful, or matching wits, or being influenced. Weekends are our great rejuvenators. This one was such. I spent the morning with book work. Then a little past 3:00 Abe Fortas came over, and in the Queens' Sitting Room which is my own special little fortress -- it has only one door and I can be private there -- we talked for an hour and half on the subject that has engaged ~~some~~ much of my thinking ever since Lyndon got into this job -- how to get out and when.

Many, many months ago I set March of '68 in my own mind as the time when Lyndon can make a statement that he would not be a candidate

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for reelection. I was following the pattern of President Truman, and I have counted first the years and then the months until that time. Now it is ten months away. For the first time in my life I have felt that Lyndon would be a happy man retired. I feel that there is enough at the Ranch to hold him, keep him busy, and then he can pour himself into some sort of teaching work at the University -- in the Johnson School of Public Service perhaps. And maybe an occasional lecture at San Marcos.

I find myself enjoying more and more every return to the Ranch. And I do not know whether we can endure another four term in the presidency. And I use that word in Webster's own meaning -- "to last, remain, continue in the same state without perishing." ^{And} the prospect of another campaign I face like an open-end stay in a concentration camp. I had thought that Lyndon was of the same mind as me -- that he would at some time announce that he would not be a candidate for reelection. I do not know. All these months I have felt that things ~~that~~ might keep him from it, that might trigger him into running. Or one, if the polls were so bad [or if Bobby Kennedy's lead was so strong] that it looked like he, Lyndon, could not be elected, that might force him to try. Or that two, if the Viet-Nam war were over, there would be the wonderful beckoning hope that the enormous economic muscle of this country which in the past 6 or 7 years has grown so vastly could be harnessed to achieving

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the goals of the Great Society, rebuilding the cities, and work on health and education and conservation. That could really be a siren song.

So over a cup of coffee, Abe and I talked about it. There is almost nobody in the world that I can talk to. Abe I feel I can. He seems very quiet and ^{at times} unpleased and a little sad, but very understanding. The gist of it at the end was that he thought Lyndon had done enough -- had worked enough with his life -- so that he could about next March make that announcement if things in the war were going good. If they were not -- if it were as bad as now or worse -- he thought he simply could not. That he must try for the nomination which he ~~may~~ might or might not win. Abe thought he would. And then for the election which he might or might not.

It was a solemn, rather sad, talk. One part I liked very much. Abe was quite sure that Lyndon had done enough so that his place in history was assured, whether he served out this term or was elected again or died ~~tonight~~ tonight. He was very insistent that Lyndon must not make a decision and certainly not an announcement before next March. He thought that any such decision or announcement would hamstring -- almost immobilize -- the war effort and Lyndon's domestic leadership of the country.

So it looks like after all I have left out the major alternative in my thinking all these months. That is if the war is not over, if it is still just as bad or worse -- and it looks like it will be a long endurance contest. I

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wonder too if I have assessed my own self correctly. I think I have. I admit quite cheerfully that I shall miss very much fresh flowers in the room every day, a heated swimming pool, a massage at night, and bright, sharp conversation with highly-placed people -- all this on the level of enjoyment. And on another level the feeling that I have done something. Back when the Director of the school down in Asheville, North Carolina wrote me after I had been there that the adult education class had closed the week before my arrival. But that after I was there and there were pieces in the paper about ~~me~~, the next day ten people called up and said that they wanted to get into the class. He squeezed them in. It may mean a difference in the lives, the jobs, of ten people. At any rate it is never far from my thoughts. I cannot control the outcome, though I will have some effect on it. And it will not, I hope, be decided until next March.

Lyndon had called guests to go with us to Camp David. And at 5:00 on a helicopter we left with Margy and Bob McNamara and Jake and Beryl Pickle and Jack and Mary Margaret and Courtney, with that delicious sense of relief, escape, of holiday that always goes with us to Camp David. Though it was a rainy, foggy weekend as it has been all Spring here.

We got into country clothes and took a walk, joined by Commander John Paul Jones' two little girls -- adorable Karen and Judy. And it was a sight to see those three little girls close together -- all of them vying

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for Lyndon's attention -- Courtney sure that she was his favorite and
a little surprised that he was even paying mind to those others.

Karen, a dark haired pixie with shining eyes whom you just
want to pick up and cuddle -- enormously feminine -- a real flirt. It
was a real feminine ^{set to} ~~at~~ at the sandbox level. #

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We went to Commander Jones' house to see the baby owl that had fallen out of a tree and was picked up by one of the service men and carried to the little girls for a pet. It was a solemn, furry little creature that flopped about on uncertain wings. And Karen was as much at home with it as she would be with a kitty cat.

Then we walked on over to the bowling alley and all of us played a game. And Jake and I -- he's gotten very fond of it and plays well -- lingered to play another two games after the others walked back with Lyndon to Aspen.

We had an early dinner -- about 8:00 -- outside the big picture window looking down into the valley. The world was wrapped in gray fog, and it was easy to believe that we were high on a mountaintop quite cut off and therefore free of worry and responsibility. Somehow I rejoiced just as much for Bob ^{as} and for Lyndon. I read off the names of the movies with little heart because actually listening to them was more fun than seeing nearly any movie. And we simply sat around the table for 2 hours. I remember at one point the talk got around to Dean Acheson and some recent confrontation he had had with Lyndon where Bob said he had been actually quite uncomfortable, apparently because Acheson's words had been so cutting. Lyndon was quite undisturbed and recalled a story the Speaker used to say about Acheson in describing his great brain and

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his great arrogance. And the Speaker had said, "He just ought to have had to run for public office some time. If he had only just run for sheriff once, he would be one of the greatest public servants we've ever had." The Speaker -- his wisdom and his pithy sayings have a way of creeping into our conversation. We share him with everybody. He's a legend in our lives.

At 10:00 I left to go see my show which was disappointingly a rerun. But I watched it almost as happily as the first time, and I was delighted to find that both Lyndon and Bob went to bed early. Tonight for Lyndon, with no night reading.

Two of the nicest things that have happened to me this week are the generous donations from Phyllis Dillon -- an incredible check for \$20,000 for some school in the District of Columbia -- a gift to our society. And my Mother's Day present from Lynda and Luci. Lynda's has still not arrived but she's told me about it -- the book (one of my own childhood books) "^{Lucilla} Lucilla Doll" rebound in leather. What an imaginative girl.

Ch. m.