

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Wednesday, August 16, 1967

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It was another one of those awake at 7:15 mornings. How weary and depleted it leaves me for the day. Lyndon and I watched Senator John Tower for the Republicans and Senator Joe Clark for the Democrats on TV -- the Today Show -- talking about Viet-Nam. And what a twist of fate it is to see this Administration -- indeed us -- being explained, backed -- yes, even defended -- by John Tower, while that red-hot Democrat Joe Clark slashes at the Administration's policy with rancor and emotion. The wheel does turn. We brought Lyn in. And it will be the last time for quite awhile. And he layed on the bed and kicked and gurgled. Lynda came down and sat beside us. She is so good with little Lyn, and she loves him dearly. But I had a 10:00 date with Mayor Akin. We drove around Washington -- our first little Park at 3rd and Independence and Syphax School where praise the Lord they have taken out the dead trees. And there were three or four teenagers weeding the plots. And down the double avenue of magnolia soulangeana on Pennsylvania, SE. And of course past Liz' strip -- masses of flowers where the masses pass-- Rawlins and Walt Whitman Parks -- while I gave Harry an explanation of what our little committee has tried to do in the 2 years and 8 months of its life. And what I hope for the city of Austin -- the most imaginative and lively use of the waterfront, the development of Waller Creek, a strip of cool green through the city for several miles, as lovely as it is in the few blocks where it passes the University. And shopping centers

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that have the relief of some trees, some greenery. I respect his earnestness about his job and his devotion to Austin. I have no idea whether I made any impression. I had left Nan Robertson's articles in his room and suggested he might want to read them, to see the sort of climate the country was coming into all over about the looks of cities.

When I got back I went into Luci's room and there was all the confusion of packing -- open suitcases, Luci rushing around madly asking the maids if they had seen this dress or those shoes. The staff here all love Luci. They call her "baby", and it has no relation to the way Rap Brown uses the word "baby".

I had my lunch brought in on a tray and spent the last several hours of Lyn's visit here just watching him and talking to Miss Gffeller. I had brought her in a framed picture and White House book together with some more effective evidence of my gratitude for her stay with us because I hope she will come back for things like Christmas or I hardly dare say it, another wedding in the family. It has been a joy to have her with us. The nicest time I think of all in Luci and Pat's and Lyn's visit was Sunday night when we all sat around the dinner table and Luci made some careless, very positive assertion about the passage of a sales tax in Austin which obviously she favored and thought anybody who didn't favor it was pretty dumb. And her daddy very calmly said, "Now honey, you must remember this. You and I and ^{Gene} ~~Jan~~ Williams and Helen

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can only just wear so much, and eat so much. And in a sales tax everything you wear or eat is taxed. Now which one of us do you think is more capable of paying taxes? You and I or ^{Gene}~~Jan~~ and Helen?" A sales tax really helps the rich people at the expense of the poor people. I wish I could remember it and explain it exactly, as cogently, as simply as he did. And then we simply sat and listened with the children interjecting every now and then, and Lyndon reminisced about his college years when there were three terms in each one the tuition would cost \$17 and everytime it approached he thought sure he would have to drop out that time because he just simply couldn't raise the \$17. Once Ben Crider had leant him \$80 -- all that he had in the bank -- and that had simply meant the difference between him staying another term. Another time the Masons -- he had heard about a scholarship they offered for \$200. He had written and applied for it although his father was not a Mason, and they had granted it to him. He never knew quite why. And he had left school before he graduated to teach a term to make the money to pay it back. And then there was one time when ^{he} didn't see possibly how he could pay it and Aunt Lucy had come to him with \$3.60 and said "I've been saving my egg money and I want you to have it." And Dr. Evins whose pay as President of the school was a mere pittance had told him he just had got to stay in and he would find the money somewhere. And then Lyndon went on to say how in the last two or

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three years of Dr. Evins life when he was very old and retired and no longer quite alert we had put him on the payroll of KTBC as a monitor and he had carefully evaluated programs that children listened enthralled. And every now and then they ask questions and Joe, who knew nothing at all I am sure of poverty, of need, was soaking it up. Luci said, "Daddy, we needed to hear something like this." And indeed she does because she lives in a soft cocoon there in Austin with children of rich people, a lovely street where ease and security prevailed. And of course as her mother I am glad. But I recognize that it is also dangerous in its own way.

The children were leaving at 2:30, and Lynda and Chuck went to the Queens' Room a little before to tell Luci and Pat their plans. And I was proud of the foursome as I stood looking at the door watching them. Warrie and Lynda and I went down to the South Grounds to see them off at 2:30 with much kissing and last farewells. And then back upstairs in the Queens' Sitting Room Lynda and Chuck and I discussed their plans. His present period of duty at the Marine Barracks here in Washington will end around the first of the year and he has asked to go to Viet-Nam. So perhaps that will be in February or March. There is usually a little lapse of time for a man to get his affairs in shape -- called "Procedural Leave" I believe. And so their big decisions are when should the wedding date be. And when should they announce it. They are thinking of December 9th -- that is a Saturday and nicely spaced between Thanksgiving

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and Christmas and will give them hopefully something more than 2 months for a honeymoon and some life together in a little rented apartment here in Washington. And the big problem, the list. And who should be the Minister. We talked to Reverend Sumners who had christened Lynda and Luci as well and confirmed them. We talked to Bill Baxter. This much Lynda Bird knows. She wants to be married in the White House in a military wedding with all the beauty and grace that a wedding can have. We got as far on bridesmaids as Luci and Warrie and Carolyn. One of the big problems will be to announce it before it gets announced in somebody's column -- hopefully not Maxine ~~Cheshire~~. Two thoughts threaded through my mind -- one amusing, one sweetly sad. At the elevator when I had run into George Christian and Tom Johnson, Tom had said, "Oh, we sure are going to miss that boy -- that little Lyn." He was a good story every day with all the riots and the war -- he was a big help. "About the only thing we can do now is to get Lynda Bird married off." And I had smiled innocently. And the sweetly sad one was when I went into Lynda's room, I noticed something different and for several moments I couldn't decide what it was. And then gone, gone were all the pictures of George -- the romantic-devilish one on the chest of drawers, the patrician handsome one and lots of other little mementos -- a faded telegram pasted on the mirror. She had said no word of it. They had simply been removed. Her Daddy had promised

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to talk to her. He was having a business lunch and finished it about 3:30. He came in the Queens' Sitting Room looking for once ghost-tired and sat down heavily. And Chuck told him in a very quick, straightforward fashion what their aims and hopes were -- ill-fashioned were his intentions I believe and not a bad word. And when Chuck ~~the~~ used the phrase "your permission", Lyndon quickly said, "You have it and my love". But it wasn't the long, getting-to-know-you talk that I hope he and Chuck can have sometime soon.

Early in the day I had been to a ceremony in the East Room -- A Viet-Nam Civilian Service Awards -- that was moving and sweet. Former Ambassador Lodge was with us on the stage, and a small group of civilians, workers in AID, members I believe of a church group, received citations for their bravery and their dedication and their long hours in constructive work in Saigon hospitals, schools -- a gigantic effort quite apart from the war. Were there ever such people as Americans?

Late in the afternoon my weariness caught up with me. I went to bed at 5:00, and it was 6:30 when Ashton woke me. I made some decisions on the Ivory Coast luncheon, some late staff invitations for the next day, and then called up my house guests and to welcome them and say, "Let's go bowling -- anybody that's interested." Brownie McNeil and his wife and Emma Long and Herman and Bess and their son Mark

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walked with me through the Rose Garden and over to the bowling alley, and we had about three good games. No telling when Lyndon will come for dinner tonight. He is in a regular maelstrom of work -- Senators and Congressmen -- a group at 6:00. And at 7:00 some columnists. And at 8:00 some Bureau chiefs. They were to be upstairs in the Yellow Room. And so I had chosen the Balcony off the Blue Room to sit with our house guests. Jerry and Crockett English arrived with their cute son Wilkie, and Stuart Long came moseying in. And we spent a warmly, pleasant two hours with the Jefferson Memorial glowing like a great pearl in front of us. And the tall, strong shaft of the Washington Monument. And a full moon.

Three of these couples I have known for 20, 30 years. And the Brownie McNeils had been a part of that most wonderful trip down the Rio Grande and singing around the campfire. So there was much to talk about. Bess' appointment by Lyndon to the Committee for Retarded Children. And with Emma Long, the makeup of the city Government of Austin, the plans, the personalities. I had put copies of Nan Robertson's articles in her room and asked her to accompany us the next morning when we went out to see Project Trailblazers. I hope very much that Austin and those that run it will grow in interest, in knowledge and in enthusiasm, for this whole wide spectrum of beautification for everything that it can mean for a city. And so I am using this time up here to expose Emma to some of it.

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One of the most delightful things about it was the simple, unabashed delight of my guests in being in the White House. And they couldn't have been more delighted than I was to have them. Jerry said, "I've been hoping you would ask me for years. But I meant the Ranch. I never thought you would ask me to the big house. I am going to have it tattooed on my chest. She's just as pixie and gay and funny as she was in the campaign of '41. That has been 26 years ago. And she doesn't actually look much older. And we reminisced about that real time of crisis in our personal lives -- Lyndon's and mine -- when Jerry returned from overseas with the Red Cross and spent the night with us at 30th Place. And during the night I became very ill, but didn't tell anybody. And the next morning went to the hospital with a ruptured tube -- it had been tubular pregnancy -- undiagnosed. And Jerry found herself staying on taking care of Lynda Bird.

And then Brownie McNeil brought out his guitar and played for us some of the songs I have loved so much, "^{Slender}Shundor" and "Roncho Grande" and "^{Grande la Harle}Wadala Harlee". What a different setting the balcony off the Blue Room and sitting around the campfire on the Navajo blankets under the great escarpment along the Rio Grande. And both nights had a full moon.

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At the appropriate moment in one of the Mexican songs, Jerry came forth with this wild ~~shriek~~ rather like a rebel yell -- a real "gretzo" Brownie said. And she said that's the way you feel when you are born and raised in El Paso.

It was 10:30 when Lyndon came out after his meeting with the Bureau Chiefs and joined us, and we went straight up to dinner where in spite of his weariness he was warm and interesting and giving out and I was so proud of him.

It was past 12:00 when we said goodnight to our house guests. And he to his night reading, and I to sleep.

There were two gifts from the day besides the pleasant memory. One was a little envelope full of square-headed nails handmade that Emma gave me. They had been used in the Capitol of the State of Texas in 1882 and removed in some recent reconstruction. And the other was a tape of Brownie's songs.