

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Wednesday, September 13, 1967

Page 1

I was up early, talking with Mr. Wierick on the phone about when we can lay the rugs -- it will be two weeks from today. And then working in the West Hall with Liz and Sharon and Larry Halprin -- the indoctrination, the learning process for my trip to the Midwest. Mr. Halprin has done Nicollet Mall in Minneapolis. And it's his fountain I am going to dedicate. I always wish I could advance my own trips. That is, go to the places and learn about them -- get in the mood. The next best thing is to talk, listen, question, absorb by osmosis everything I can from our staff people who have advanced the trip and read the reams of material they bring to me.

Close to midday I met with Mrs. Archibald Brown and Mrs. Smith about the decorating in my bedroom. Sometimes things go well. Today Mrs. Brown had brought a lovely fabric -- a pale yellow background with pink and rose and blue and green flowers that drift across it rather like an impressionist <sup>painting</sup>. It is really dreamy, delicate and elegant, and just heavenly with the Mary Cassatt painting above the fireplace which I hope stays until the very day I go out -- "Caress Infantine". This would be for the big 4-poster bed and for the curtains, in combination with the lovely, clear, yellow brocade -- soft and cheerful. It was love at first sight. I didn't need to look at the other samples. And best of all, it is relatively inexpensive -- about a third as much as the first fabric I looked at. We decided to pick up the soft green from the

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Wednesday, September 13, 1967

Page 2

Mary Cassatt painting in cotton velvet quilted for the short sofa and one chair. And perhaps a yellow piped in green for the bench at the foot of the bed.

Mr. West came in. The big 4-poster bed and the Eisenhower chest out in the storehouse are already in the process of being cleaned and repaired. And also my chest that has followed me from 30th Place to the Elms and now will be coming to the White House. What a saga my furniture has lived through!

We had a souffle on trays, and we talked about a fabric to cover the back of the shelves in the West Hall to show off our lovely things -- the marble head of Tiberius, the ancient Tang horses from China, my steuben glass bowl engraved with the buffalo hunt.

By 2:30 we had wrapped it all up and I said goodbye to Mrs. Brown and Mrs. Smith and Mr. West with that satisfied feeling that we had accomplished something and not left a lot of decisions dangling.

Then a quick comb-out and downstairs to the Red Room for a photo with Melinda Ferrebee -- the Cystic Fibrosis Poster Child. She was from West Virginia, and she was accompanied by Jennings Randolph who had most particularly asked for this meeting.

She was an adorable little girl with golden curls and a big smile. And it was at once ~~in Congress~~ <sup>in Congress</sup> and all the more pathetic to associate her with tragedy with early death.

## THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Wednesday, September 13, 1967

Page 3

Back upstairs I worked with Liz on speech drafts. Marsha joined us. It was another hour and a half of ~~amercing~~ <sup>amercing</sup> myself in learning about the trip, trying to capsule for Liz my philosophy, my reaction, what I wanted to say, how I would feel about seeing Columbus, Indiana or Mark Twain's home in Hannibal, Missouri.

I always get frantic about a week before these trips take place and think I can't possibly learn enough and get ready. A few minutes before 5:00 I went down to the Green Room for Bob Knudsen to do a picture. Alas for me I take the worst ones in the world! And we keep on sending out old ones because they happen to be good. I must get a choice of two or three new ones, White House oriented -- evening dress and elegant or casual and cheerful. And so we tried out on the balcony off the Blue Room, leaning against the columns and on the railing by Andrew Jackson's magnolias from the Hermitage.

And then inside to meet the wives of the Japanese Cabinet Ministers. They arrived -- many of them in ~~Kamones~~ <sup>Kimonos</sup>, although oddly enough they said at home they'd probably be wearing western clothes -- bowing an odd little curtsy as they extended their hands -- all smiling and chirping like a covey of birds. Several of them strove nobly to speak English. They were accompanied by their opposite members which made it much easier going, especially with Trudye Fowler and Jane Freeman and Jane Wirtz keeping the conversation going nimbly.

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Wednesday, September 13, 1967

Page 4

I was delighted when two or three of the Japanese ladies remembered that I had entertained them at the Elms. And we commented simultaneously on the fact that the cherry tree in the front yard had burst forth with a few vagrant blossoms although it was early December. (I have a horrible memory that it was probably December 7th.) It made it even more dramatic in retrospect because it was exactly one year later to the day that we moved into the White House.

Suddenly the bird-like chirping rose in <sup>decibels</sup> ~~desipoles~~ and I looked across the room and there was Lyndon striding through while the ladies executed their strange little bows as they extended their hands. He went quickly and smilingly from one to another with our Cabinet wives introducing their opposite members. And he was in and out in 5 minutes; a ripple of pleasant excitement in his wake.

I do not find this easy going -- trying to establish real contact with people whose language and whose civilization I do not share at all. And oddly with some countries it is much easier than with others. Pleasant as they all were, I do not feel that we have come to know each other at all in our brief encounter.

A little past 6:00 I was back upstairs getting ready for the big event of the day -- a small dinner for the Governors.

As the tides of frustration and mutterings and anger swirl around us, Lyndon is responding with increased activity on all fronts. And here at home in the evenings there are more and more meetings. Some of

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Wednesday, September 13, 1967

Page 5

them stag and largely business -- labor leaders, business men, educators, a group of 20 editors. And some of them are social. Tonight it was Governors with their wives. Terry of Delaware, the Hughes of New Jersey, Dempsey of Connecticut, McNair of South Carolina. Two friends from my New England trip -- the Kings of New Hampshire and the Hoffs of Vermont. And the young, attractive Breathitts from Kentucky. Otto Kerner of Illinois alone. And the Hulett Smiths with whom I began in West Virginia my trip through the Appalachians.

Because I think it makes <sup>it</sup> more special for the ladies, <sup>had</sup> I suggested black tie. And I wore my gold brocade that Mollie Parnis had made up for me from a State gift.

Jean Louis piled my hair high on my head while my misgivings grew because in general and I knew it well the Governors and their wives are likely to be low-key dressers.

I went into the Yellow Room when the first guest arrived a little before 8:00. It turned out to be a very good party I thought -- lively and friendly and interesting, with Ferris Bryant, the "shepherd" of the Governors and his beautiful and charming, very southern wife, helping greatly as hosts. And the young, <sup>Endicott</sup> Peabodys -- he's just come in as Assistant Director of the Office of Emergency Planning -- helping too. She is a sophisticated, lively woman, and he is an attractive man, though not as at ease in politics as his wife I think..

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Wednesday, September 13, 1967

Page 6

Lyndon joined us a little late, and we went ~~into~~ dinner. I had Dick Hughes on my right and Otto Kerner on my left. And Lyndon with Mrs. Robert McNair on his right, and intelligent, sweet Mary Alice Smith on his left.

There is never a lack of conversation with people who have as much in common as a President and a bunch of Governors! And of course I was most interested in hearing Dick Hughes talk about both the Viet-Nam elections and the riots in New Jersey. He gave the best explanation of the Gun Sale Bill that I have heard. And the most imperative reasons of why it should be passed after being hung up for several years in the House. In New Jersey by ~~a~~ <sup>dent</sup> ~~don~~ of great effort he had gotten it through by the skin of its teeth -- a State bill that requires every person buying a firearm to fill out an application setting forth 1) has he ever had a criminal record; 2) has he ever been a narcotics addict; 3) has he ever been an inmate of a mental institution. It takes only a few days to process these. The bill has been in effect two years, and during that <sup>time</sup> 7 percent of the applications have been turned down because the would-be purchaser could not pass these three simple requirements. Just think of the number of potential "Oswalds" that would have been turned loose on society without this bill. He's a most persuasive man, and most likeable. And Mrs. Hughes -- Betty -- is absolutely fantastic. I had talked to her earlier about her article in "McCalls" -- It was great -- describing Mrs. Gvishiana's visit.

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Wednesday, September 13, 1967

Page 7

Among all the guests I think perhaps it was Governor Dempsey who was the most full of warm and articulate praise of Lyndon and most outspoken against his critics.

When we finished our ~~desert~~<sup>s</sup>, Lyndon rose and made a long toast to the Governors. I don't think it had been planned -- it was entirely off the cuff and heart to heart and full of pungent, terse and fresh phrases about the problems they faced in their States and he faced in his job. There was one line that established a rapport I think. It went something like this: "There is nobody that has quite the sympathy for a Chief Executive <sup>as</sup> ~~than~~ another Chief Executive has." It was exactly the sort of talk that I want him to make on TV.

And when we walked out of the dining room I think the spirit -- the fight and will of all those Governors was up, and their hope too. Here was a group that would understand him better. <sup>But</sup> In a country of 200 million you can't do that with 30 people at a time.

As we walked out for coffee, one after another said to me, "Wouldn't it be wonderful if the President could go on TV with that talk<sup>2</sup>." Alas, everyone of us that comes to him with a remedy or a suggestion it is something for him to do. And yet I lead the pack in wanting him to do that.

Dick Hughes had convinced me that a strong, tough appeal to pass the gun law would be one of the best things Lyndon could do. And very soon -- maybe it is tomorrow -- he is going to talk to police chiefs.

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Wednesday, September 13, 1967

Page 8

So he's got a forum.

We left the men in the West Hall for coffee and conversation and we went into the Yellow Room. The Governors were just back from a Governors' Conference, and it had been 2:00 nights for them for several days in a row. So when the first guest started leaving close to 11:00 I was glad because an early end to a party of very busy people is wise. And I went to bed feeling that this has been a day with some accomplishment. We had worked hard, and we had made some progress.