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MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Tuesday, March 5, 1968 **W40**

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I had been happy last night, when I had seen Lyndon's light out at eleven, and had read myself to sleep on Nicholas and Alexandra.

But this morning when I went in, I found that he waked up about two o'clock, had worked steadily all through the night, until six, then he had turned out the light and slept fitfully until 7:30.

Nevertheless, he was in a good humor, with a sort of serenity that has settled on him these last few days. Things are just as bad as they could possibly be, it seems, and yet he is calm, cheerful, and inspires confidence in those who are around him.

This morning, big news - he stepped on the scales, and they teetered at 200, a little bit too heavy, took off his glasses, with a triumphant look in my direction, and handed them to me, and the scale settled at 199-1/2.

I went to the pool and had my 30 laps and then to Jean Louis.

And back in time to join Liz and Sharon, and Wolf Von Eckardt, in the Library, for lunch. Our mission was to begin exploring what I could talk about to the architects in the northwest in June.

Wolf is smart, loves his subject, urbanization, and is a good conduit to the Washington Post, to educate the people of Washington on many of the problems of the city. What I particularly wanted to talk to him about was, is there anybody doing really great shopping centers? I traveled so much by helicopters and it is very discouraging to look down to see acres and acres of cement, covered with a sea of automobiles, ~~surrounded with~~

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surrounding a cluster of bald, monotonous stores.

I liked the line from Gertrude Stein, in Mort's book, "There's no there, there." No personality, character, no sense of place.

And also I wanted to ask him, because he said there's an absolutely great filling station, a prototype of filling station, being done in Finland. If there was anywhere in this country, ^{where} that such an attempt was being made.

Yes, there was, by Mobil. He promised to find me, the man in the Company who was responsible for it.

We also discussed the awards this spring, the First Lady's awards for excellence in design or landscaping to a business establishment, a neighborhood, a public building. I think, I hope, he'll give them some encouragement, some pat on the head.

At any rate, I enjoyed him, and learned something. And leaving Liz and Sharon to work longer, I dressed in my ivory chiffon Stavropolous, and went down to the Lincoln Sitting Room to meet Madam Shoumatoff.

I approached the portrait with fear and trembling, but I must say I liked it, and my sittings are actually a pleasure. Madam Shoumatoff is a highly entertaining talker, although she keeps right on working. I cannot understand how she can apply her mind both to working and talking.

This time she told me about her life in Russia. She showed me a picture of her home in the Ukrain. It might have been my Uncle Harry's house in

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Selma, Alabama. The stately white columns, a Greek facade, stately beautiful trees and shrubbery. She said Russian country life was very like it is here, ^{as a} in Virginia. She said that she had left ~~at the~~ very young woman, with her husband, who was on a Diplomatic mission for the ^{Korinsky} ~~Korinsky~~ government to this country. When they arrived here, they found that there was no ^{Korinsky} ~~Korinsky~~ government, the real holocaust had begun. Then she said the most delightful thing. "Mrs. Johnson, it is a very great privilege, ^{to} ~~to~~ suddenly be deprived of all your wordly goods," - and then added in an aside, "that is, if you're 20 and in good health." They brought only the clothes for a short journey, and a little jewelry.

I asked her if she had any idea, when they left, ^{of} ~~of~~ what was impending in Russia. She said, "Not the slightest." and even when it happened, they thought everything would settle down again, and then in about two years, ^{they} ~~they~~ would ^{go} ~~go~~ blithely home.

The two hours passed swiftly. Tomorrow will be the last sitting. ~~and~~ ~~And then,~~ I went down to Jim Ketchum's office, looked at the Walt Kuhn, a large canvas of very bright pumpkins. I thought it might be good in the Library of a country home, but not on the second floor of the White House.

Then I looked at Mrs. Truman's portrait by Greta Kempton. It's really quite nice. We'd set a date for the hanging. I talked to Mrs. Truman. Alas, she will not be here, but Margaret will, and I asked her to bring all the boys.

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Then Ashton and I cleared my desk, a monumental job, and we both went downstairs, to join Lynda's party in the Blue Room. She had shown the movie of her wedding, to a small group of friends and staff people who had worked so hard on it. It was, in a way, sort of a goodbye party to Washington, though nobody mentioned it.

There were bridesmaids Phyllis Bonarbo, Marie Fehmer and Mrs. Jerry Giles, and Warrie Lynn; ushers Doug Davidson, and Fred Widecuss; and hosts at the wonderful parties, Tom and Mary Clark, and the Bill Deasons, and the John Flemings. They had come down to spend the night; and the Jack Hights; and the Averill Harrimans. I am always enormously flattered by their kindness to my children. And Marta and Stu Ross; and Warren Woodward, Woody, with a funny story, that when he got a call at 7 o'clock in the morning, to ask could he get three trucks and two buses, out to the airport, to accomodate the press and all of their equipment, by 10 o'clock, he knew that it was a campaign year.

And such hard working participants in the wedding as Bess, and Liz, and Tommy Atkins, and Sandy Fox, and Henry Haller, and Mary Kaltman, and Bob Knudsen.

It was a happy party. These two young people are very much loved, and nobody said a word about their leaving and everybody thought about it.

I stayed about an hour and then back upstairs. Lynda, and Chuck, and the Flemings joined us presently, and we had a quiet, companionable drink.

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Mathilde is here, attending a seminar at Johns Hopkins, some scientific thing, and she was with us.

And finally Lyndon came home at a fairly reasonable hour, and was courteous and kindly, although I could tell his mind was far away from the dinner table conversation.

He had had one small victory, the Senate had voted cloture on the Civil Rights debate, and it looks like now we might get a bill, including Open Housing. My heart goes out to him, he's working so hard, and it's a cruel prospect every way you turn.

Chief Mills came and I had a rub, and was in bed at a fairly early hour.

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