

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Sunday, March 10, 1968 WND

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It was a day of deep gloom, lightened by the presence of the Krims. That is to say, it was purveyed in the newspapers, and the TV - it weighted the air around me, and I felt it in my very bones, but it was not apparent in Lyndon.

His voice was hardy; he had funny stories, when he stopped to talk with us, and his work on the phone, and in reading reports, ground on and on. I never took off my hat to him more, or felt more tender.

We were awake that early, and ^{waded} ~~waited~~ through pounds of newsprint; and Arthur came down and talked with us.

~~And then,~~ I said "Let's go to Dr. Davis' to church. And when I returned to the room, dressed, about a quarter of eleven, there was Lyndon, still on the phone. But he can break an olympic record for getting dressed, so he did and we were out the door in about eight minutes, and walked into church, just in front of the choir.

Dr. Davis was preaching on, what I thought was comfortably safe, the old time religion. Even so, he had to take a slight blast at some current event, and I braced myself.

Secretary Rusk came by right after church. Tomorrow, he goes up on the Hill to testify before TV. I admire him with all my heart. He is a great bulwark of strength, but even he looked weary.

~~And~~ afterward, Lyndon told me something very touching that he had said. "Your courage keeps me going. These days are an exercise of

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sheer spirit."

I went up to the solarium and Liz came by, straight from one of the gridiron functions. How I look forward to the time I return to this town, and if I get invited, return to all those gridiron functions! Then she and I, and Mathilde worked on a possible list for the Women Do-ers Luncheon on Child Health. What this administration has aimed at, in part achieved, in better health for children, through Head Start, and its work on mentally retarded. Our guests will be divided between professionals, doctors and administrators, volunteers, wives from the Hill or Cabinet, Governors wives, who have worked actively on child health. Muriel will be one of the speakers.

It was well after two when Lyndon phoned up to say he was hungry. We made some good progress on the list, so Mathilde and I joined him and Arthur, and we had a delicious lunch of crabmeat crepes, and salad, hardly calculated to be reducing, but he's been so good, so long, and I really wish he'd break over.

Afterward, Lyndon said, "Let's walk around the South grounds." He took a golf club and hit some balls over toward Eisenhower's green, and we walked around in the beautiful sunshine. There are a few crocus and the buds are beginning to swell, and in the West Garden, one of the magnolia Soulangeanas, the one that leans against the house, in the corner, close to the swimming pool, has a single pink bud opening.

Then we went over to the bowling lanes, and Lyndon left after the first game, to try to get a nap.

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The Krims said goodbye, but not until we had planned to meet again on Friday, ~~to~~ go to Texas for Lynda's birthday, and a goodbye to Chuck before he leaves for Camp Pendleton.

They are often balm and solace to Lyndon, and I am grateful to them, for being understanding, and warm, and gay; for fitting into his life so well.

I stayed and played another game, and overwhelmed myself by making 188 score, the best I've ever made.

~~And~~ then, about five o'clock, I went back upstairs, and did enough work at my desk, and recording, to satisfy my Calvinist conscience, and leave me free for the rest of the day.

~~And~~ Lyndon sent word for me to come in. No, he hadn't really slept - he'd read and talked on the phone.

Earlier, I had asked him at lunch, suppose someone else were elected President, what could Mr. X do that you could not do? He said, he could unite the country, and start getting some things done, that would last about a year, maybe two years. I think that is what is heaviest on his mind. Can he unite the country, or is there simply too much built up - antagonism, division, a general ^{malaise} ~~malice~~, which may have him, irrevocably, as its focal point?

The headlines had said, that McCarthy was showing a surge - at least the Washington Post had - in fact, they had practically two full pages devoted to him. And the Star - "Romney urges Rockefeller to enter race in Oregon." I think it might well be that we will just go along, and not announce until time

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for the convention, in the manner of Roosevelt in 40 and again in 44. And then the convention, and later the people, can just make up their minds.

Lyndon called Hubert - he was at the gridiron affair, he came over afterwards. We had a drink, and then dinner, Sam Houston joined us, and it was an easy, comfortable evening. There's still laughter in Hubert, but Muriel said that even this most sturdy and philosophical man, has been weary and shaken the last few days. And I thought there was hurt in his voice, when he described some of the actions, of certain Senators on the Hill. He said, "It's bad, and it's going to keep on being bad, through the Primaries. I think we might as well brace ourselves for more of the same until the middle of June."

Those styes are coming back on Lyndon's eyes. First one and then the other, red and swollen and painful - finally, sometimes a sty and maybe it just goes down. I thought, wryly, that it sounded more and more like Job, nevertheless, he is remaining calm, even-tempered, rather serenely philosophic about it - that is politics. But the war itself, he is deeply worried.

So ended this melancholy day, about eleven, with a rub, and a complete perusal of Time magazine - no balm, under the circumstances.

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