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MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Friday, March 22, 1968

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I was up early, did work at my desk, and got a hair comb., Had a series of pictures made by Fred Maroon who is doing an article for two magazines.

And then, a little past twelve, left for my old beat, the Capitol. I was going to lunch with the 75th Club! Senator Margaret Chase Smith was our hostess. I went in the familiar entrance on the Senate side, where for 12 years, I had so often taken constituents for lunch or ^{sight} ~~sight~~ seeing, feeling more conspicuous than I ever had.

Frances Poage, the President, and Mrs. Lyle Boren, the Secretary, were ~~there~~ to meet me, and we walked into the Senate Dining Room, not the old familiar one that I loved, ^{Brumidi} ~~but~~ with the ~~Brumidi~~ ceilings, and Paul or John bowing hospitably, knowing everyone of us by name. But a strange, white ^{clinical?} ~~cataclyst's~~ place that, in Mrs. Smith's words, look like a Child's Restaurant, ~~but~~ there at a long table was Senator Smith, so warm and hospitable, that I was even gladder that I had come. And Mrs. Murdock, who had been our first President, when I had entered the club in April of '37, ^{and} And we, in all, numbered about 125. And Mrs. Sheppard of California, her husband is now very old and ill; and Ivo Sparkman. She and Frances Poage are the only two wives of sitting members, Senator Smith having progressed ^{from} ~~the~~ status of a wife, to a member herself; and Mattie Lee Grant, her Alabama accent completely undaunted by 30 years of living in Washington; and May Simpson. There were nine all told, and we had a delightful time, reminiscing

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back over 30 years. Frances brought up the subject of Henrietta Hill and suggested that it would be a nice tribute, if we all went together and put her name on the bronze plaque in the Congressional Club.

Mrs. Murdock, after so many years of being a guide, ^{following} ~~after~~ her husband's defeat, is now sitting at the desk where the books on the history of the capitol are sold, and she reported some enormous sales, ^{about} two million, I believe.

We talked about the great old days, when Mrs. Roosevelt would be our guest of honor. I still have a movie reel of a bit of it, and we would invite our favorite constituents, and we'd raise a lot of money, to send a crippled boy through college, ^{or} to buy a wheel chair for another.

With them, I did not feel in the least self-conscious, but the Senate, alas, has changed. Best of all I enjoyed visiting with Senator Smith. She said, "You know, I have stood by the President." I gathered she meant in most of his military decisions. She express a wry distaste for the shocking dissenters on college campuses. She said, "I tell them they have the right to dissent, but after they have done that, the majority rules." And of the bill they have up today, regulating the ethics of Senators, she described it as an 'exercise in futility'.

The first Senator to come over and say hello, ^{It's interesting} was the Majority Leader, quiet, above it all, that the same institution should have had two leaders, so different as Lyndon Johnson, and Mike Mansfield! He never ^{ceases} ~~seems~~ to

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puzzle me. Of him, Senator Smith said, "You know, I think Mike's greatest trouble is that he tried to oblige everybody." That results, I gather, in having a pretty short work week, what with this one, and that one, wanting to make speeches over a protracted weekend, not to mention the long holidays.

Albert Gore came over, completely white haired now. He didn't reach over and shake hands, he just sort of stood on the other side of the table, and surveyed us all, and looked as though he couldn't believe his eyes, seeing me.

And Senator Javits came over, and was exceptionally cordial; and I was delighted to see Senator McGhee, and Senator Mondale. Senator quite McGovern came over, I don't know/why. And Senator Morse, and no matter how mad you get at him, he is funny—One of the last authentically, colorful figures about whom you can weave so many good stories, in the Senate that used to abound with characters.

When Senator Smith said something laughingly about, "I don't see you around much. You must be running." He said, "Running? I'm galloping!"

Senator Tower was in the room, with an extraordinarily beautiful Eurasian girl; and Senator John Sherman Cooper; and Harry Byrd, Jr.

Senator Smith had ordered a really delicious lunch for us, a crab casserole for which the Senate is famous, and it was an hour lifted out of my life, of 12 years, and every moment enjoyed.

I left a little before two, and went back to the White House, just in time to meet Walter Washington, and go for one of our rides around this

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town, followed by Fred Maroon, for his series of pictures. We drove around Hains Point, and went past Buchanan School, where we got out. Here, I think Fred should have gotten some excellent ones.

Walter, ^{at once,} met an old friend, ^{Ans} shook hands with him. He was apparently the boss on the job, and showed us around the construction. The sunken basketball court is finished, and the igloo for climbing - the trees will go in soon. It's really taking shape and I am so proud of it. This is going to be the best thing that our Committee has accomplished, in the area of community life.

We went by Capper Housing Project, and here, once more, we got out and while Walter was explaining the possibilities for me, a small crowd had gathered, everyone of whom seemed to know Walter. And one of them said, "You all talking about our community project. Mrs. Johnson don't you want to come see the plans we've got?" His intimate relation with this town, is really a vital factor in his usefulness to us.

Then we drove by Syphax School, to which Kay had made a handsome donation for landscaping and playground equipment, and found it in fair, not fine condition, a little disappointing really.

My hair began to blow wildly, especially when we got out at another of Walter's projects. Everywhere Fred was snapping pictures, and I was trying to listen and learn, keep my hair smoothed down, and project an animated, interested appearance all at the same time.

It's always refreshing to take such a trip, and I returned, feeling the

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better for it. All the way, we had talked about the luncheon on the 17th. Walter will ride on the buses with us. We tried pretty much to cover our route and to decide what we wanted most to see that wouldn't take more than an hour. We pretty well have gotten it hewed down, the Buchanan *School* was a stop, with a brief run by Capper; around Hains Point, if the Cherry trees are in bloom. It looks so much better today, now that the stakes are gone, *on* the Potomac side; and Columbia Island for sure, leisurely, maybe with pictures, and hopefully the peak display of Mary's glorious daffodils.

I was back at the White House by four, feeling the better for it, and spent the afternoon, *working* at the desk, *until* our dinner guests arrived.

It was one of those quiet, *easy* evenings that are balm to Lyndon's spirit. No need to "sell" anybody, no need to put on a front, or to be guarded, lest someone is trying to use you, or to figure out your motives, *or* next actions.

There were the George Christians; Arthur Krim, down for the weekend with Mathilde coming in later tonight; the Larry Temples and Simon McHughs; Marie and Marvin, *Marion* is in Texas, *And* Jim Jones, *And* Luci and Pat.

Even with the imminence of Pat's departure, Luci gives so much of herself, her attention, her laughter, her companionship, understanding, to her daddy. My admiration, my gratitude for her grows with the years.

Of course, *one* of the main subjects of conversation, *was* the big event of yesterday. Governor Rockefeller's decision - he'd gone on TV about

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five o'clock in the afternoon, with the statement that he was not running for President. A very terse, forthright, manly, dramatic statement - he simply examined it carefully, and it was evident that he did not have the support of the Republican machinery. He left open the slim possibility of a last minute draft, but made it clear he did not expect it.

I was sorry; somehow I felt a little lonlier. It had only been a little earlier that afternoon, that I had been talking to Laurence, to thank him for the wonderfully generous thing he is doing, making it possible for an over-all plan for the State Park across from the ranch. He ⁱⁿ and his ^{were offering} marvelous under-played way, made it seem as though he ~~would offer~~ you no more than a cigarette, and that it was the greatest pleasure.

Getting to know the Rockefellers has been one of the nicest things about this job.

Later that night, after dinner, Lyndon said, "I believe I'll call Nelson, what do you think?" I said, "I wish you would." And so, while he was getting a rub, he did. He said, "I'm sorry, I sort of hoped the Republicans would field their best man."

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