

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Thursday, July 25, 1968

Page 1

It was a full, good day at the White House. I was up early with Mr. Per for a shampoo and set, working under the dryer, signing letters and "idiot work" -- autographing pictures. It takes days to recover from an absence.

And then a funny three-way appointment, resulting from my inheritance from Lyndon of the problem of Mr. Wong. We had been overjoyed at the Ranch when we had thought we had found a Secret Service man who could speak Chinese. But alas he spoke mandarin and Mr. Wong spoke Cantonese. So back in Washington we had found a Secret Service man who did speak Cantonese and another who spoke excellent Spanish. So here we were, all of us languages gathered together -- Al Wong, the Cantonese-speaking Secret Service man; ^{the} Chinese houseboy Wong; and I -- in the West Hall at the White House in a three-way conversation. It was hilarious. All the time I felt sorry for "houseboy Chinaman Wong", so far from his home land and nobody to really communicate with. But I think we laid out a schedule of work for him. Jim Jones had told me how he had gone in the kitchen and asked him in English if he spoke Candonese or mandarin. And Wong had answered brightly, "Coffee with cream and sugar?"

A little past 11:00 I joined Lyndon and we went down to the Lincoln Sitting Room where Madam Shoumatoff was ensconced with a portrait of Lyndon. With considerable trepidation we looked at it. I liked it. And

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Thursday, July 25, 1968

Page 2

when Lyndon rendered his verdict, very favorable, all of us visibly relaxed. He said, "You should have used a little more fluff in the hair." He was right. It was too slicked back. But now approaching 60 and nearly white-haired, he has quit using any hair oil, and by the middle of the day it fluffs out nicely and the old waves return -- the waves that were so dark and handsome when we first met when he was 26. I told her I would send in her lunch on a tray and she was to stay and work and show us the final product in the middle of the afternoon.

I worked with Ashton on framing the travel certificates. Somewhere, at the Ranch or in an office, there will hang these mementos for those wonderful journeys across this land. Glorious exclamation points in the story of these five years.

And Arthur and Jake and Bess and I sat down in the West Hall and planned a dinner for Texas friends which we could have on the Monday after the house party weekend of August 2nd.

Then it was time to dress for the stag luncheon at which I ~~have~~ had very late in the day been asked to sit in. I went to the Yellow Room and greeted them all. It was a marvelously interesting group -- the kind of assemblage that I delight in. And I know a part of the White House years and all the more for that efuneral character and joy.

From the Cabinet there was C. R. Smith and Postmaster General Watson. And there were long-time acquaintances like John Harper of

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Thursday, July 25, 1968

Page 3

the Aluminum Company. And bluff, hearty, William Randolph Hearst, Jr., and young Houston Hart standing for his father. And Ralph McCullough. And C. T. McLaughlin of the Diamond M Ranch at Snyder. And Dean McGee whom I always remember with Senator Kerr. Two of the Rockefeller brothers were there. David -- we talked about his wife's Island. And Laurence who sat on Lyndon's right, and afterwards gave me a glowing report. Such a gentle, wonderful man he is. And slim, aristocratic Albert Nickerson's Secony Mobile.

And some Texans -- Carl Finney and David Searls.

And former staff members -- Horace Busby and Jake Jacobsen.

And of course Arthur Krim and Joe Califano.

Our drinks passed among the nearly 50 of us in the Yellow Room. I moved from group to group talking. And Lyndon came in and did the same -- far more swiftly. Then we went into lunch a little before 2:00. I had a wonderful table with Lou Wasserman on my right. Then Bob Dowling. Close by, B. K. Johnson. Charles Bluedorn of Paramount Pictures. And Mr. Fred Lazarus of Federated Stores on my left. It turned out that he had some ailment -- Parkinson's disease I suppose -- which made it very difficult for him to hold his fork or spoon and feed himself. But it was a great test of his poise and mine. And we both rated an "A" because neither one of us seemed to notice that he was clattering away like a drummer with his spoon on his plate as he tried to convey a morsel to his mouth. And I from the vantage point of mid-fifties, looked on agast

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Thursday, July 25, 1963

Page 4

at what happens when one grows old.

Mr. Bluedorn was very interesting and very fond of Lynda, which pleased me immediately. He had met her in Hollywood it seems, and they had an immediate and quite reciprocated admiration. B. K. Johnson, to no surprise, was talking about land and grasses and seed and underdeveloped countries. And he said, "What was needed was to reform land. That is to build it up with fertilizers and improved grasses with everything that technology has devised. And that land reform which was supposed to solve so many problems in the underdeveloped countries just wouldn't work. To break up a large plantation of several thousand acres into small economic plots of a few acres each for individual ownership would increase the country's woes -- not solve them."

Such talk is not the fashion of the day. And somewhere in the middle I suppose a solution will be found.

And after January 20th, Lyndon can regard such problems with more of an academic detachment.

I told Bob Dowling I hoped to come to New York on Monday. And we talked of plays. And fortunately both the plays I said I might see turned out to be ones he had an interest in. "The Prime of Miss Jean Brody", and "The Price".

When the coffee came in Lyndon rose and made an off-the-cuff speech, direct, warm, the sort that pulls everybody in the room into

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Thursday, July 25, 1968

Page 5

his orbit, and we could have listened for 30 minutes. The speech actually lasted six or seven I think. I was wonderfully proud of him. And there is all the difference in the world in a speech like this in which you see the mind and the heart of a man, and a speech that he reads through a teleprompter that has been prepared for him. It was a revelation to me as well as I know him because it has been a little while since I've heard a speech like this.

He talked about what he was going to do after he got out of the Presidency. Lectures -- at a few Universities -- association with young people -- giving them some insight into what it was like -- public service. He talked about the school in Austin, the Library. He addressed all of the men in the room as ones who had shared the great part of the load of these last five years. And it was true. Many have been on Task Forces, many have given advice -- singularly or in groups -- have helped in elections -- in varied ways even a part of the fabric of these five years.

And then, too soon it seemed, he quit and turned it over to Joe Galifano who showed charts -- a picture of the model of the Library in the School of Public Service, how they fit in the campus, the Universities' role, when the buildings would be finished, what it was hoped the school would teach, the number of professors and students. But most of all the reason and the need for it all.

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Thursday, July 25, 1968

Page 6

And then Arthur addressed himself to the fact that although the Library would be handled by the Federal Government such as all other presidential libraries are under the GSA -- the Archives -- that there would be extra needs of the Library such as the oral history that could not be met by a Government budget. And in the school itself which would be run by the University there would be an additional need for Fellowships and visiting Professors or figures from Government -- here or abroad. And ended by saying that now was not the time or the place to talk about a budget -- about money for any of this -- but this was just the story of the dream and what was hoped would come about in 1970. And that after January he and others would give themselves to trying to turn these dreams into a reality.

And so the Luncheon ended about 3:30 on a note it seemed to me of exciting conversation, good companionship, beautiful setting, and I hope some accomplishment for the future in ~~just~~ just the right tone.

And then we went down once more to the Lincoln Sitting Room and there was Madam Shoumatoff and the portrait. The hair had been adjusted. Lyndon looked at it. He liked it fine. We all practically hugged each other. There was a sense of accomplishment in the air. One more step taken. He left quickly. I called Jim Ketchum up. He apparently liked it very much and we committed it to his care, and I said goodbye to Madam Shoumatoff, planning to meet her about August 10th to work

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Thursday, July 25, 1968

Page 7

on the sketch that is to be Lyndon's birthday present -- a little pastel of one of the girls.

In the late afternoon I had a long meeting on the Library with Dr. Grover and Sam Houston. I had gotten Sam Houston to come down from New York to discuss with him, making a list of the Johnson relatives and ~~going~~ going to see everyone of them to ask if they have any old pictures or family albums or diaries and newspaper clippings or any of the morabilia that might be suitable. And maybe to get oral tapes. ~~Was~~ They could be very useful -- a stranger going in to see Aunt Jessie or Oriole might be disastrous. Whereas Sam Houston might ~~be~~ get them strung off on interesting old family reminiscences. We went over the whole list of Government and family who had ~~x~~ been invited by the Archivist to give their papers to the Library. And it is rather disappointing the few who accept, the few who have anything, the few who seem interested.

I spent an hour and a half and I think Sam Houston got enthusiastic about it, for which I was glad of. As for me it has been going on for a long time and it seems as slow as walking through molasses.

When it was over I yearned for exercise. So Dr. Hurst and I had three fast games. He beat me all of them. We returned to the second floor and ~~Wila~~ ^{Wila} and Weeze Deathe joined us and we sat on the Truman Balcony. Every now and then the ~~wind~~ breeze brought us the scent of magnolias and we looked at the monuments and talked of all the things

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Thursday, July 25, 1967

Page 8

they had done with their children. And we had a thoroughly good time.

Dr. Hurst said he hadn't had such a restful time in years.

Lyndon came and we ate by candle light. The boys came down and sat with us. They had just seen a movie. They had a dish of ice cream while we had dinner. And then I had a massage and went to bed before midnight. A thoroughly grade-A day, a sense of some accomplishment in my work and a pleasant balm of feeling that I have given a happy time to people who have given so much to us -- the Hursts and the Deathes.