

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Friday, August 9, 1968

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I was up early, had a swim with Lyndon -- about 20 laps. Tom Johnson and Jim Jones were in, and Marie Fehmer too. And Marie -- at last Lyndon is achieving one of his ambitions -- he's getting Marie taught to swim.

And then Bernice Burg came and gave me a new hair-do, and under the dryer I finished the envelope of mail to sign and pictures to autograph that Ashton had sent down. Today was going to be a busy day with almost as much air traffic as Dulles. The first plane would be the Vice President and Muriel. I did not emerge from under the dryer in time to meet them. Lyndon did and took them riding. And I joined them at the Cedar house a little before 12:00. We came back to the main house and sat in the yard. I passed bloody marys and draft beer. And then we went into lunch about 12:30. Hubert and Muriel and Bill Connell -- his AA, and Marsha Shepherd -- his pretty secretary, and Doris Kearns and Jim Jones and Tom Johnson and Marie and Mathilde Krim who had arrived last night and was our house guest.

Hubert was his ebullient, happy self. He looked fit and healthy once again after his ~~fire~~ ^{fire}. And so did Muriel. Her clothes are darling now. She told me about her plans. She will travel mostly with Hubert. Later when she goes off by herself she will try in each town to follow a pattern of either a lunch or a reception with Democratic women to talk on the subject that she knows best to some appropriate group -- child

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health, with a special emphasis on retarded children. And a press meeting with which she is loathe to call a press conference. We are somewhat alike -- she and I. Neither of us think we have anything big enough to call a press conference for. But a discussion -- now that's different. I made one forthright request of Hubert, laughingly saying that whoever was the next President of the United States I had one favor I wanted to ask and ~~now~~ now is my chance to ask him -- if he wound up in that big house, would he please keep Blanco. Blanco is a patrician. The White House lawn is the perfect setting for him. At the Ranch he is scared of the cattle. He used to be scared of the peacocks -- of everything that is strange. And he beats a retreat for the house, the President's room and finally under the President's bed.

We discussed with happy frankness our opinions of the McGoverns and Senator McCarthy. Hubert and Muriel and their party left about 3:00 in ~~and~~ a flurry of arrivals. Earlier at a quieter time I had phoned Roy White and asked if he could come out. He wanted to bring Max Brooks with him. And they arrived as a threesome actually with another member of the firm just as I was taking Muriel and Hubert to the airport. And then there was a flurry of arrivals. The Washington shuttle bringing Secretary Weaver and Joe Califano and Mrs. Middleton and their four children. And at the same time -- and I am not sure whether they came in a ~~separate~~ separate plane or not, though I think they did -- Edgar Kaiser

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and his son and an assistant. We got the message that Senator Eastland's plane was circling and about to land. Instinctively I thought that Senator Eastland and Secretary Weaver wouldn't be exactly cozy little company, so perhaps I could be useful by meeting Senator Eastland and entertaining them in driving them around the place while Lyndon conducted his business with the Secretary -- and the Kaiser group. But first I quickly drove Mrs. Middleton and the four children down to the aide's office, asked for a car to take them into town -- cokes or refreshments or anything? No. And then back just in time to be at the foot of the ramp as the Senator descended. He was accompanied by two friends -- D. A. Biglane and W. O. Schurden. And I relaxed happily into the accents of the deep South. I made apologies for Lyndon, asked them to get in with me and "let's see something of the place while he's attending to some business and then we would join him." So we drove down by the graveyard -- no unfamiliar sight for Mississippians, and the house where Lyndon was born and around looking at the cattle. How proudly displayed the "coastal Bermuda". Yes, they had "coastal Bermuda" in Mississippi -- plenty of it. This they thought was mighty fine. They were exceedingly complimentary of our registered cattle.

Senator Eastland was determined to talk politics. He said, "You know your husband is going to be nominated don't you?" I said, "No, Sir, not at all. There is not going to be any movement of that sort -- that is

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not with any force behind it. And if he were, he wouldn't accept."

He seemed somehow taken back -- a little disbelieving -- as though I had hoped it would happen that way. But relatively unshaken in his conviction. "You know Hubert can't make it. He's not catching on." As little as they see eye to eye, as much as lies between them, he would rather see Lyndon nominated than anybody now before the Democratic party. And he did not seem enthusiastic for George Wallace whom he considered quite strong.

I was just about to exhaust the interest of the place and concerned about when I could take my guests home. Finally I drove back to the main house and with considerable relief saw Lyndon's convertible just going around the barn conveying Secretary Weaver and Joe Califano and the Kaisers to the plane. It was only later that I learned the tremendously exciting nature of their visit. The seeds go back to our visit to Karachi in Pakistan in '62 -- or was it 61? -- and a housing development that we saw there -- the whole little city -- in the process of being built actually. It was planned and designed by Doxie Otist -- the Greek architect. And Lyndon had been ecstatic with it then and had never forgotten it since and had talked to dozens of housing people, architects -- everybody through the framework of Government. Finally he was determined in his last few months to get something like this produced in our country -- that is small housing units not more than say 500 square feet with minimum plumbing facilities that

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could be sold for \$5,000 per house. And now at last he has just challenged Kaiser to produce a prototype, and they are going to do it in Austin, Texas and before Lyndon is out of office. About 10 different contractors are going to produce one each and see what's the lowest they can come out on it, that is in what sort of material -- hollow tile or brick or wood. It is an exciting prospect, and who knows maybe a step up in putting home ownership within the reach of very poor people. So in a moment Lyndon was back greeting the Senator and his friends warmly. There was also a Mr. Darneille in the group with his two sons, and I wasn't sure whether they had come in a separate plane. So confusing is this day.

So leaving Senator Eastland and party with Lyndon I went back in to join Max and Roy, only an hour late. We worked in the sitting room -- my very favorite room in the whole house on the big problem of the Park across the river. It seems their firm has been asked by Will Edward Odom to make proposals for the extended budget. My only insistence was that they work with the national Park Service which was already working on an overall plan for the Park. And then we went on to the small problems of my dressing room and Helen and Gertrude's rooms and bath. This complex is anything but static. There is always something new going on.

Close to 6:00 I said goodbye to Max and party and went to join Lyndon and the Senator at the Reagan Ranch. They were riding around in the convertible with the top down very skillfully interweaving farming and politics in the conversation. I think Lyndon was trying to blunt Eastland's

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hostility to Fortas -- if not to win him over -- and that may not be possible -- he is a very determined man, a positive man. At least to draw off any venom he may have, to explain Fortas as we know him. It was an interesting hour. The raillery, reminiscences, play of their two personalities -- rather like two boxers dancing around in the ring exchanging blows, but good natured. Meanwhile we were all having a little refreshment, although I because of this ailment which is beginning to be terribly boring -- a very unexciting refreshment. Mr. Biglane and Mr. Schurden were characters. I felt the understanding of them. It is produced by having been born and ~~xxx~~ raised in very much the same region. But I shiver to think what an eastern writer would have done with them with their words, their political and social views, their wonderful accent. Somewhat to my surprise they were ardent LBJ supporters, and for all the right reasons I thought. They saw in him just the same sort of champion of the poor folks that I do -- a practical, earthy, determined, sometimes skeptical, always hopeful, believe that you can do something about man and his troubles. And to a man, all three of them were insisting that Lyndon was the only man for the Democratic party in the coming election. How surprising this is, coming from three staunch Mississippians.

Finally after we had seen every cow and bull on the place and almost every blade of grass -- and that goes for both sides of the Sharnhorst and the Dantz and the Martin as well -- and even the auction barn to which

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Lyndon had taken them as a last show of what was happening in this country.

We finally returned from the auction barn by helicopter just at sunset promising Senator Eastland that he would be back with his granddaughter -- his 6-year old granddaughter had laced all of his conversation all afternoon. And at long last we had him back at the plane with goodbyes just before dark came.

The Krims were there at the house, and Tom Johnson and Doris Kearns and Jim Jones and Marie. And we all sat down for dinner. Meals unhappily mean very little to me these days because there is nothing fit to eat that I am eating. And as for poor dear Lyndon -- he had put himself at once upon returning from the hospital on Thursday on the liquid diet in preparation for the Monday tests. Although he didn't have to begin it until Saturday morning. All in all for two people that are supposed to be half way sick it had been a very full, very busy, exciting day.