

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

Sunday, August 18, 1968

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I flew in a small plane with Helen and George Christian from the Ranch back to Washington. This is a unique month in our life, a time of slowing down, of quiet, a time of sadness. And I approached leaving Lyndon with a tentative uncertain feeling -- perhaps even my presence would be helpful. And yet there are other things that need to be done now. And one is a meeting of the audiovisual committee of the Library which if it doesn't take place on Sunday, the 18th, it will have to be postponed until the last of September because Dr. Grover is going to Europe. And there were other things I wanted to do -- a little party for Connie Freeman who is getting married, and Orville and Jane are my favorite people in the Cabinet next to Secretary Rusk. And I need to work on all the films -- the monthly diary type -- that are being ground out or slowed up, depending on whether I look at the scripts and the interlock when they are ready, having at the same time the advice from someone close in Lyndon's office like Harry Middleton and the technical movie judging eye of Jack Valenti. And as a sort of personal plum I wanted to have a little afternoon party for about 40 or 50 close friends, and give them one of the magnolias that had been propagated from the Elms or from the Andrew Jackson magnolia here at the White House.

So for all these reasons I flew back arriving a little after lunch which I ate in a hurry on a tray. And then at 2:30 for the business of the day what principally brought me back to Washington -- the meeting

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of the audiovisual committee of the Library in the Treaty Room, which I shall always think of as my own "board of directors" room.

Dr. Stanton was faithfully on hand, and Dr. Grover with Arthur Drexler and Gary Yarrington and Dorothy. Juanita was in Europe and Busby in Texas. And Leonard Marks taking his children to or from camp. And Jack Valenti arrived about 30 minutes late. All of which rather set the tone of the meeting -- of momentums slowing down, of enthusiasm dissipating. I am sure this only a scintilla of what I must expect in many things. Nevertheless it was a very useful meeting of about 3 hours in which two things at least became clear. One, for our exhibit "life in the White House" we must have some really superior, marvelous photographs of the interior. We decided on the Yellow Room, the East Room if possible, the West Hall. And very important, the President's office. Arthur Drexler mentioned Esra Stola as the great ~~architectural~~ architectural photographer, and Frank Stanton quickly agreed. We decided on getting him down here to take some pictures within the next few weeks if possible. I urged them to try to do it while we were out of town. And the second achievement was a direct answer from Dr. Stanton to Dr. Grover's question. "Yes, both the major networks -- CBS and NBC would give to the Johnson Library a copy of all the footage that they had of President ~~the~~ Johnson's own speeches and events and trips during his presidency and closely related shows." They would do it in

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the year 1969 for tax purposes. So we could expect it sometime after January 20th. Dr. Grover and I felt at least this was pinned down. The court reporter took everything down. We passed sandwiches and cookies and tea. We discussed the responses to Dr. Grover's questionnaire which had been mailed to White House visitors. And surprising it was not bearing out some of my preconceived answers about the interest in weddings for instance.

We set Sunday, September 29th, as our next meeting day. And we left feeling that we had accomplished a good deal simply by grinding away.

We walked through the Yellow Room and the East Room with an eye as to how we could use a great photograph of those rooms blown up as a backdrop for exhibits in front of them that would tell of life in the White House. Perhaps a few minutes of the film of Lynda's wedding or of a bill signing in the East Room.

About 5:30 I said goodbye to them and began my second meeting of the day. This time Liz and Simone and Tony Loeb and Don Peterson to work on the script for the West Hall ~~fixes~~ filming which will begin tomorrow -- the main reason for my returning. This lasted until 8:00, and both exhausted and accelerated by the sense of useful work for the last six hours or so I said goodnight to them all and settled down to a quiet bridge game with Lynda and Alan and sweet Mrs. Boyd, eating

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my supper off a tray whenever I was dummy. It was a comfortable, cozy evening in the West Hall to the extent that one could close out the world outside. The headlines had said that HHH was bending toward a peace plank in Viet-Nam. And that another President to whom we had come to feel close was practically at death's door -- Eisenhower's condition is extremely critical, the headlines read. And the feeling I could not quite talk away that I should be with Lyndon the days of this month, even though these projects here called out to be done.