

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

Monday, September 9, 1968

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I slept until 9:30. I woke to find Lyndon having coffee in the West Hall with Larry Temple and Jim Jones. On those fortunate mornings when I sleep late he slips out to keep from waking me and has breakfast and conducts business in our family sitting room -- the West Hall.

It was a day just tailored to my liking. Much work, some exercise, and a gay convivial ending to look forward to.

First in the morning ~~we~~ I went with Lyndon to the dedication of the HUD building. I wanted to particularly because Andre Meyer has been interested in it as a part of the whole L'Enfant Plaza complex.

Marsel Broyers handiwork is indeed impressive. It houses 4300 under one roof -- and wonder of wonder in this day. It cost \$3 million less than Congress appropriated.

We went to the platform. There were the familiar figures -- Secretary Weaver, Bob Wood, Dr. Haar. And to my surprise, ~~LEAH~~ Thomas. And Archbishop O'Boyle, that embattled man for whom I feel an extra kinship these days.

Lyndon made the principal address. Good enough, but I wish it could have been off-the-cuff, popped and piffy.

And to me some of the most memorable words of the day were the Reverend Leon Sullivan's -- Negro poverty worker from Philadelphia whose project we saw with such enthusiasm a year ago or so.

Back at the White House I had thirty laps in the pool and then went to Jean Louis. And then began the long afternoon of work. First, an interview

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partly by tape with James Egan for Good Housekeeping on my future plans.

We sat in the Lincoln Sitting Room, had spiced tea, and spent an hour trying to keep a course between being guarded and candid. There are so many things I want to do. Follow autumn from the tip of Vermont -- or would it be Maine -- down through gold and crimson New England and past familiar Washington and Maryland and Virginia and on down to the South to home. And in reverse follow Spring beginning maybe with the old historic homes and garden of Mississippi and on up through South Carolina and once again to New England. And I love to walk the Appalachian Trail and I want to go down ever so many rivers. The Snake and the Rio Grande have just been a taste. And one thing I shall do is go to the homes of all the presidents. By now I have been to at least 12, and often you find that there are two or three to commemorate each president.

With us it will all be a package, from birth to death, right there in that little river valley.

I would even like to go back to the University and get a Masters, probably on the wild flowers of the Edwards plateau. Very likely I shall never have the discipline, the determination, the tenacity to stick to it. And so I had better not talk about it. And that applies to so many things. And I want to pay for living here in this wonderful country. I want to know and work at what's going on in my community, in my area, in my State -- for good things -- maybe a little volunteer work in HeadStart or getting art mobiles into the small towns of Texas. And always, always I will be working on Parks and conservation. And I shall get more luxuriously into the pleasures of the

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theatre. It has just been a little taste getting to know the Paloneur Canyon Pageant and the Albany fandango. Now I would like to explore the Trinity theatre in San Antonio. And I have never even been to the Jefferson Museum.

And then, compellingly, there is the call of all the far away places that I want to go to see. The snorkels in the clear waters off Mexico, the Cacahuamilpa, and the good live archaeological digs in Yucatan Peninsula, and the Tikus Uphates in Greece. It's almost a family joke -- me going away to the Isles of Greece on a boat to get away from everything. But when I go, I shall try to take some of my family along -- there's nobody that I find more fun.

But this would sound so naked in print and before any of it was done. And so I talked a good deal about the prosaic and necessary things. The first months that must be spent unpacking possessions of thirty years accumulation, and helping get a daughter whose husband is overseas settled in with her baby temporarily in my home until he returns.

So with a considerable trepidation, I spent an hour and heaven knows what will come of it.

And then after a good long session with Liz and Sharon going over an excellent memo that Sharon had prepared -- a sort of synthesis of our achievements in my committee and of the projection of the things to come.

I spent another hour with Merle Secrest of the Washington Post. Once again in the Lincoln Sitting Room and over a cup of spiced tea, talking about

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beautification -- past, present, and future. The best of all things was that I found her a devotee. She, too, is hooked and enthusiastic. And ~~the~~ if there is one triumph I can think of is that there are more articulate writers and thinkers -- more projectors to the public -- about conservation and beautification than there were four years ago. And for that I can take some little credit.

I described our wind-up achievements -- the hocked fountains on the Ellipse and the Haines Point jet, the three schools -- Bowen under construction, and Brown and Kingsman going out for bids. And in the low-income areas, the two vest-pocket parks, a gift of the Kreegers, and the planting of street trees in Shaw. And we examined our failures. Somehow we hadn't enlisted the full support of the business community of Washington. Most of the big gifts had come from outside, although there had been some. Mrs. Merriweather Post, the Kreegers, the Lockheims, the Myer Foundation. Sometimes there had been a failure to have the full support of a neighborhood on a project that you put there -- such as a school improvement. And that was always absolutely necessary. I did not mention it, but one of my conspicuous failures along that line is a little Park in Johnson City that sits there unused and unappreciated really. But I hope a lesson to me.

After Merle left, I worked a while at my desk. And then at 7:00 I went down for the happy, gay ending of the day -- the County Fair on the South Grounds.

Only in our Administration have these South Grounds seen such a sight. A ferris wheel, a merry-go-round, peanuts and popcorn and cotton candy,

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sack races, and fortune tellers. We ran into Scooter Miller and Mary ~~K~~altman decked out in loud ~~sh~~ colors and dozens of strings of beads and brown paint, dispensing the fortunes to all comers. Ernie Goldstein and Tyler Abell wearing red-striped vests and straw hats were barkers for the sack races and the "crack the whip". Everybody had been called in to help. I asked where Lynda Bird was. First she was on the merry-go-round, then up in the ferris wheel. Somebody expressed concern and she'd said, "Well my doctor told me I must not go skiing, but he never did say anything about ferris wheels." She had been so live and gay, so strong and sensible. I am very proud of her. She is funny about her baby -- calls him "thumper", describes his gymnastics rather ruefully and goes right on to the Iranian Embassy or the Moroccan for dinner or bridge, for long walks around the monuments, for weekends in New York and Newport, inviting friends down to see the house. It is very satisfying.

Always before the staff party had been at Christmas, and because there had been at least a thousand, it was not possible to invite them to bring their spouses. Outdoors we can. That's the great ~~ring~~ virtue of this evening. At least the first ten people I stopped to talk to were from the photographic section and we laughed at how busy we kept them. And there were telephone operators everywhere. I will always think of them as my special friends. And I saw the Philipinos with their wives, and even Wong accompanying Mary and James Davis, munching on a hot dog and apparently communicating with them somehow. He is in language school now. And all of Lyndon's top Assistants were there. I hear Walt Rostow even made it. And I ran into

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George Christian, Larry Temple, Tom Johnson, Joe Califano. It was a great evening with everybody especially proud to be able to bring their husband or their wife to the place where they work -- the White House.

Bess had a photographic business going at a choice spot on the front lawn. There was a little platform and a long line of the staff lined up to mount the platform, have a picture made by polaroid with the back-drop of the great house, and afterwards I signed ever so many of them.

About 9:00, Lyndon came out, made a circle of the lawn, joking with everybody he knew, gathered up the Rufus Youngbloods and Marie and John Criswell, Jim Jones and Olive Olivia and we wound up on the second floor a little past 9:00 amply fed by the delicious barbequed ribs. But we all had a drink and talked with Rufus about security at the Ranch in the months to come, with Tom and Jim about the office staff, and Lynda and Warrie Lynn.

And a little past 11:00 to bed.