

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Thursday, September 19, 1968

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It was my fourth early morning in a row.

Mr. Per came in about 8:15 to give me a shampoo and set, but conscience won over vanity and I said just make it a comb-out and I will spend this time talking to Lyndon.

The last two days I feel I have hardly seen him. My mind and my efforts have been on my own affairs.

We talked about how I would join him for the weekend, flying down to Texas late Friday afternoon. And with the Boyds and Mahons -- that delighted me.

I am so pleased. For some time now -- maybe two weeks -- he has been swimming every morning. Dear little Marie has been going with him faithfully, and I think she adopted that hair-do partly just so she could swim with him. I make it only once or twice a week.

I worked at the desk with Ashton, clearing up a good deal of the backlog that accumulates when I do not touch it for two days.

Then on my way to New York. I stopped in the Rose Garden for pictures with Nancy Gates Hayes and her husband Bill and Jeff and Chip and Cindy and X Cathy. It has been a real pleasure having them here. And there was that one nice night when very late about 10:00 or 10:30, Nancy and Bill had dinner with us and the four children came in after a movie and were introduced. And Lyndon heaped them with presents to take home. Nothing gives him more pleasure.

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The Garden is tired and bedraggled. There are still a few pink and red geraniums -- the nicotiana in full lavender bloom, but the fountain down in the South lawn is glorious. Better this summer than I have ever seen it with the pink geraniums and the white petunias.

I caught the 11:00 shuttle and was in at the Pierre at 12:30, lunched with Rita Wohlman and talked about a possible costume for the Inaugural of January '69. We thought of beige and brown with a rich brown fur.

Bess, that organized, forethoughted person, is planning for my future and says that Rita Wohlman is someone who might be helpful in organizing my shopping on future trips to New York. And indeed I will be coming back to New York. I am spoiled. I hope once or twice a year. I shall treat myself to some of the same, though it will indeed not be the same without Bess and a lovely apartment and all that goes with being First Lady. Not in five years have I become accustomed to that phrase.

After lunch I fitted the bright pink dress with Miss Treyz and Marquise. And then at 2:30 saw Mollie Parnis who invited me to be her house guest when I would come to New York after January.

A little past three we left the Pierre by car -- and to travel across the country in a car has come to be a very special treat for me. For a long, long way it was just the drab fringes of the city. And then quite suddenly we turned off onto a narrow, winding road that was preciously rural, where the branches of the trees almost met over the road. There were a few discrete, tastefully

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marked entrances to what I expect were elegant homes. But the intent of the people who lived here to get away from city living was very evident.

A little before 5:00 we drove up at "Cragwood" in Far Hills, and there was Jane standing at the front door to meet me. And from then on the day was sheer delight.

We went ^{out} on a terrace that opened on the garden. The grounds drifted down to a swimming pool and then a sheer cliff it appeared to be and a deep valley, and on the other side, misty hills rising. Everything was forest covered -- occasionally a roof rising among the trees.

There were Jane and Bess and I and her sister, Barry Brian, her secretary and the curator.

I have learned a few things about the very rich in my five years here. One is that on an estate of this kind there is very likely to be a security man. There was here. But this is a more unusual part of a household -- a curator. It fits with Jane's marvelously organized and very diversified life.

The family drifted in and out -- a couple of the children. Charles arrived -- so much thinner. That was one of the happy things about this trip -- to see how much he'd lost and to know it might add years to his life.

We had delicious paper-thin sandwiches and tea in egg-shell thin cups. And then we went on a tour of the house -- an exquisite, colorful medley of treasures from all periods, all cultures. But the room dominated for me by an enormous bouquet -- it must have been about 8 dozen -- carnations,

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pinks, reds, oranges, corals -- an explosion of color -- everything except white.

And one of the most fascinating things was a very small, delicate, intricately detailed portrait of Charles' 90-year old mother.

We walked through the living room and the dining room, through the library and all the exquisite bedrooms -- every one very different.

And there in Charles' room was an enchanting dreamy portrait -- also Aaron Chickler -- of Jane in bed in a filmy bed-jacket. But do not be deceived -- I am sure she was working like a beaver.

And then we descended the path that led to the swimming pool with its lovely back-drop of misty valleys and hills beyond. And there was a delightful, very informal sort of family living room -- open for summer, a huge fireplace for winter, stone, beams, dramatic contemporary paintings, a bar, an office and living quarters for the curator. I am sure it must be a haven for the children -- and this is a house full of children as is evident in every turn.

And down below a most surprising thing -- vaults for their paintings, with I am sure the humidity just right and the security also, and stacks that I would like to copy -- slots into which the paintings are pushed. And the curator pulled out great names, French impressionists, an early American western that was either a Remington or a Russel contemporary. And here I learned that when Jane closes the house for several months, many of the treasures are stored away -- the paintings, other valuable things. And that happens in her house in Florida and in this house. The organization,

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the burden, seems enormous to me. My admiration for her industry grows the more I know her.

Tyler joined us here. I am so glad that he and Bess are sharing this trip with me. Bess shares so much that is just work. And we turned to the terrace and had a cocktail. Ambassador Byrode, who had brought the Ne Wins of Burma to see us -- and his wife came in. And Jane and Charles' daughter, Annette and Sam Reed, her husband, and another daughter Susan, and Charles Baskerville, the portrait painter.

And then I went upstairs to my elegant yellow bedroom that looks out on the heavenly view and found all my cloths unpacked. I put on my white Mollie Parnis with the long sleeves. Jane's hairdresser gave me an exquisite up-do, and I went downstairs for a dinner party. It was a jewel among evenings.

The things that I shall remember most besides Charles' wonderful loss of weight is the air of family that prevaded the evening. There was Charles' 90-year old mother in a wheelchair, exquisitely dressed, wearing a necklace of real diamonds almost to her waist and having as much fun as any guest present. Two daughters -- Susan and Annette with her husband and a table full of their younger friends. Jane's sister, Mrs. Rupert Girrard and her husband. And of course her sister Barry.

And another thing, the unbelievably beautiful flowers.

There were four tables, and guests received cards directing them to the geranium table, the violet table, the anemone table whose center-piece

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was a great splash of pinks and reds that looked like all the crown jewels of all the Rogers. And the Rose table -- exquisite and delicate pinks. And this was where Charles and I sat. On the other side was Mr. Forbes of the Business magazine. And there were some old friends: the Doug Dillons, who miraculously never look a day older; and Governor Richard Hughes and Betty who is a transformed woman having lost her 80 or 90 pounds. But I felt sad about the Governor who simply did not look well -- quiet, less full of the juices of life that I have known him. And Mrs. Bob Minor who was indeed very full of the juices of life. And there was a name out of the past, Mrs. Sumner Wells who has paralleled so many of my years in Washington, but whom I could not somehow engage in any conversation and remained handsome and remote.

It was an absolutely delicious dinner -- exquisitely served -- and I relished every moment of it like a visitor to another planet. But the sweetest event of all was at the end of the dinner when Jane read a telegram from my husband -- a sort of love letter -- which of course thanked the host for being so nice to me.

And then there were toasts. Charles with strong, good words for Lyndon. How I thank him. And I returned one, unsure but determined. And then we went into the beautiful living room for coffee and liqueurs, and I found myself sitting first with one group and then with another.

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I like so much better being a guest than a hostess.

There was one outstanding lady, Mrs. Hammond Finwick, who would make a good subject for our book -- a gentile steam-roller who is engaged in every good activity in the community and extending indeed to Washington. One didn't need to be told that she had been for Adlai Stevenson.

We found many things in common -- conservation, her interest in Lyndon's education bills. But most of all I liked to see her operate, for some of the gentlemen who were very much opposed to everything she was saying. It was a most skillful duel. She was one of the eternally hopeful about the nature of man -- liberals -- and I would like to know her better. Her other guests were neighbors. Several of them had particular interests in conservation I found. There were about 34 of us in all. And after awhile a small group of musicians in the corner began to lure us into one end of the room for dancing. There were some excellent dancers and I soon began to imagine that I was too.

It was a carefree, thoroughly delightful time. And it was not until I had seen several of the guests take their departure that I made a movement to go upstairs. Then others left. But Jane gathered us up -- the Tyler Abells, Charles, one or two more, and we sat down in the library and had a night-cap and the quiet, end-of-evening talk that is often the best of a party. This one spiced with some quite unusual things for me to hear. And that is about their security people and the problems they deal with and several attempts to enter --

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for robbery or for worse -- this house. And one of them, Jane had been present. I thought of the brick house and all of the years of my childhood and there never was a key to any door. And if someone entered in the middle of the night I could usually tell after awhile who it was. If about 10 minutes later there was a loud snoring, I knew it was Uncle Walter. And if there immediately began the plaintive wail of the Victrola I knew it was my brother Tom my coming home from ~~the~~ a date. And if figure entered reciting all the names of the Confederate Generals and the battles they engaged in as he mounted the stairs and plunked to a room I knew it was 'ol good Coleman, whose mind had been deranged by a childhood illness but who was still a gentleman and welcome in our home.

And I thought of all the years at 30th Place when we had never locked a door either, but ran helter-skelter looking for the key when Congress ended and it was time to rent the house. And the renter naturally wanted the key turned over to him.

The whole day has been a page out of another book -- enormously enjoyed by me and I am grateful.