

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Tuesday, September 24, 1968

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Tuesday, September 24th, was one of those full, back-to-back Washington days. Actually I enjoy them. Though I find after nearly 5 years that I am much more physically and mentally wearied -- and what of Lyndon. That is the relief, the joy, the insurance, that in a little less than 4 months we will not have to have this endurance.

I went to Mr. Per's in the morning for a shampoo and set, worked a little with Ashton, and at 1:00, left the White House in the big black car with Ashton and Liz and Jane Freeman and Lynda bound for the Capitol/what has <sup>for</sup> actually become an almost annual occurrence -- the "Louisiana gumbo" luncheon, cooked by Senator Ellender himself and served to a bunch of ladies only in his little hideaway in the Capitol.

On the way, Jane talked about my participation in the Humphrey campaign. It would be a good idea if I went to their campaign headquarters hopefully well covered by the press, picked up some literature, thanked the volunteers, had plenty of pictures. I would. We set the next morning as the time. And we talked of possibly having a style show in Texas and of me making a speech.

And then we pulled up to that all familiar beat of mine -- the ~~Capitol Capitol~~ Capitol of the United States.

We entered through the hall that has the Thomas Jefferson columns with the ears of corn as decorative motif, and it still bears the scars of British bullets when the British partly burned the Capitol in the War of 1812.

A host of memories walked with me. Among them, this was the entrance where as presiding officer of the Senate wives I had gone to meet Mrs. Kennedy

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the first year she was our guest of honor at our Annual Senate Ladies Luncheon. I remember pointing<sup>out</sup> these things to her.

Upstairs there was a quite congenial bunch of ladies mostly -- only about 17 of us. Besides our car full, Luella Dirksen and Lindy Boggs, Perle Mesta and Betty Beale and Dorothy McCardle, Lady Waller of Australia and Mrs. Allott and Mrs. Bill Driver and Maureen Mansfield. And the lone man, the Senator. A few times he has been joined by one other -- the President. This time he would not be. The radio said that the President was on his way back to Washington but probably would not arrive until 1:30 or 2:00.

The "Louisiana gumbo" was as good as ever. The ritual of its cooking eagerly listened to.

It was the Senator's birthday, and I presented him with a cake made by the White House chef, ~~XXXXXX~~ inscribed, "Happy Birthday to a Great Chef" and centered with a tall, fluted chef's cap made of icing.

The Senator wears his years philosophically, even gayly. He talked of his 13 grandchildren, his trips to Africa -- where slavery incidentally still exists at least in the case of women -- and on the Fortas nomination foreboding, painful estimate that he did not think a cloture vote could be obtained to stop a filibuster. And that would mean dooming the appointment of Abe.

The star of the occasion to my noways impartial eyes was Lynda Bird. I am in all of her these days. She is full of common sense, a quite undramatic courage. She's humorous, calls herself "Miss Scootch", gives imitations of

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her own gawdaddling ungameliness, and is unremittingly disciplined about her diet and exercise -- swims, walks all over this town, and until just a week or so ago, bicycles long and hard.

Today, she was very funny telling her end of the table about our family. She's that most private of people. Actually they were innocuous statements that Luci should have been on the stage, that there would be no middle ground for her. She would always be playing either "little Mary Sunshine" or "Ofelia". That I, mother, was like a character in Voltaire's "Kind Deed", whatever is going on it's the best possible world. And her Daddy, so true, he doesn't hear you at all unless you are saying something you don't want him to hear. Then he somehow hears the whole thing.

With many thank-yous and an awareness that this was the last one, we said goodbye about 2:20.

We returned to the White House. I collected my thoughts briefly to go into the minor trial of meeting a Mr. David Jones who is writing a lengthy piece on the Johnson Library for the New York Times.

I met with him in the Lincoln Sitting Room and spent about 45 minutes during which he took notes going over the genesis, the beginnings, of the Library -- my philosophy of it, what I hoped it would do.

He seemed especially interested in the audiovisual aspects. Wary and unsure about his intentions -- in fact with a certain synacism barred by about 5 years contact through the New York Times -- I answered his questions.

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And then I had a few minutes to work with Ashton.

At 4:00 I went down to meet representatives of the American Association of Nurserymen on the front lawn. There were just a handful of them. Mr. and Mrs. Shado -- he's the President. Their executive Vice President Robert Letterer whom I know much better. The irreplaceable Nash Castro and of course Sharon. And the President of the International Harvester Company, Mr. McAllister, who is actually financing the little booklet which they wish to present to me. It is called, "Landscape Beauty Depends on People", and showed in pictures charmingly how to present a pretty face to the world with the landscaping at your front door. Or to have a gayer place for recreation in your backyard. Or beauty as a community effort.

It was really quite well done, and I was delighted to salute them and hoped it gets in the hands of thousands of people across this land which of course is the purpose of pictures in front of the White House with the First Lady.

This is one of the small stones in the whole structure of my work with conservation.

We went up the stairs once more to the Lincoln Sitting Room and I served tea and congratulations and also received them in turn. Then said goodbye shortly, and went downstairs to my next meeting. This one to greet 300 members of JANGO -- the daughters of Armed Service personnel from 14 to 23 who volunteer their time at hospitals, in soldiers' and sailors' homes and service clubs. And this too was another sort of salute. What a country of effort we

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are. We try innocently, hopefully, industriously, in every field -- God bless us.

And they were a fine looking bunch of young women. I am so glad I did it.

First, there was a picture -- there always is. This time with the President, the senior board, Mrs. Jamie Adair, and Mrs. Lewis Walt, wife of the General. And little Susan Voss who is the daughter of the White House doctor and who has herself given 2,000 hours of volunteer work at Bethesda Naval Hospital and the Home for Uncureables in the past two summers.

I stood by the fireplace and they filed past with the beautiful <sup>and</sup> plain, the smartly dressed and simple -- all bright, eager, a little excited. And I tried to rise to it and be just as warm as they deserved. Every now and then I would pause to thank one of them for what they all did or to ask another where she worked.

Mrs. Robert Patterson, the wife of the Secretary of Defense of many years ago and the former head of this organization, came through and we reminisced briefly. And then I went into the State Dining Room and moved from group to group and urged them all to make themselves at home and look to whatever they liked the most -- the portraits, the flowers, our antique furniture. And once more to express my admiration and my gratitude for what they were doing.

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Then about 5:30 I went upstairs with the feeling that this small good work of the world goes on in spite of all the dire headlines in the paper -- "Mexico City Battles Kill 15 as Army Takes Over School". And the continuing pillory of Abe Fortas, the agony in Biafra.

Next I met with Liz and Simone and we spent a couple of hours going over the TV script -- the one I had done with Howard K. Smith in the family quarters -- and having a welcomed drink. It reads fairly well. I cringe sometimes, <sup>all the many</sup> ~~all the many~~ things I didn't say, and there's not the time or the strength to do it over.

Lyndon had called to say he was asking the Clark Cliffords to dinner.

About 8:00 I went down to the pool to find him and Clark swimming. I always welcome that. He has been marvelous about getting exercise lately.

Mathilde Krim came in briefly bringing her friend, Dr. Mitchell, a very intelligent and interesting Negro woman who works with her I believe. She had asked to show her the White House and I called the Usher to have the lights turned on in the State floor and in the Lincoln Room and the ~~the~~ Queens' Room. Mathilde herself would be guide.

I could tell that the conversation was purposeful, probing and tense. And so I deliberately did not try to listen. Marny came in about 8:30, and we chatted about our day at "Winterthur" while the men swam and talked.

And then we all went upstairs.

Mathilde and Dr. Mitchell came in and I asked them to eat with us.

And then called Jessie Hunter to come down and join us -- thinking it would

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be a treat for her. And I want her to have every treat at my disposition to offer.

We had dinner about 9:30, and I had a sense that the conversation was being temporarily halted. Lyndon relieved me of my decisions by suggesting that we have our coffee in the Yellow Room. So Marny, Mathilde, Dr. Mitchell, Jessie and I did, with an interesting conversation with Dr. Mitchell about the disturbances at Columbia. She is a teacher -- a very keen observer. And an added element of drama these days -- a Negro. The more you hear about it the uglier it sounds -- the more foreboding for these next years -- the more fuel for Wallace and those who think like him -- and the more likely that there will be a wave of <sup>anti</sup>authoritarianism, of a sort of depressive, <sup>fa</sup>scist, anti-liberal reaction in our country. And what will they do to the gains we have sweated to achieve in these last five years. Just as I feel the beast in me coming unchained, I realize I can't afford the luxury of emotionalism. The virtues of patience and the long view are crucially important these days.

About 11:00 Mathilde took Dr. Mitchell to the plane and Jessie Hunter said goodnight. And Marny and I began to wait out Clark and Lyndon who were talking earnestly on the green sofa in the West Hall. Their looks and their gestures did not invite us to join them. I thought of Clark's weariness and knowing that he likes to get to bed early and he has an important speech tomorrow. Have I all that much confidence in Lyndon's indestructability?

I knew that they had been talking earlier in the swimming pool -- snatches that I had overheard -- of the situation in western Germany, of Russia's

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intentions, of possible moves into Yugoslavia or Rumania, or even western Germany -- of all the fore-tense of the Czechoslovak thing.

Marny kept on urging me to go to bed. By this time we were seated in the hall -- having progressed that far and then realizing simultaneously that we should not enter their conversation.

At last they rose and standing kept on talking, sounding grim and troubled, but coming our way.

And it was 12:30 by the time they left -- Lyndon looking very weary. Clark apparently is shaken in his feeling about the bombing. In the years past, as have so many, he has been staunch in a tough stance. Now he will at least consider stopping it. They are desolving all around. Sometimes Lyndon uses the expression, "There is no one left but me and Rusk and Walt Rostow."

He went to bed after 1:00, with still the night reading to do, exhausted and very burdened.