

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Saturday, September 29, 1968

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It is a sad season. Troubles are crowding in on all sides. And even that bright-spirited Luci is here for a very real cruel reason -- the funeral of LeRoy Bates who used to be her beau when he went to the Naval Academy and was one of the most wholesome, gay, approved-by-a-family young men that have filled this house in our time here. He was killed in a flight-training accident, piloting a new plane. And Luci, in a manner so truly Luci, has asked his young widow, Melinda, who has been here many times with LeRoy, and she is now three months pregnant, And Melinda's father and mother -- the Venables -- to stay here at the White House during the time they are here for the funeral.

Luci fills a friends place well. She gives in every way she can, and feels the better herself for it. And she has that sort of friends. She and Lyndon went to the Catholic church and I stayed at home and read the Sunday papers, made phone calls and got ready for the audiovisual meeting at 2:00.

At 1:00 we had lunch with Neva and Wesley and Arthur and Mathilde who have shared so many bleak days with us -- and Lynda.

It is a joy to have Neva and Wesley here. I had told them I wanted them to come to one more State Dinner, and Neva had said, "Wesley hopes you'll just ask us up sometime when there is not a State Dinner." So we had, planning it around one of our small dinners for just about 26 people on Friday night. They had come Thursday and will be leaving tonight. And we've had snatches of time for family talk and reminiscences about the Ranch and they had seen

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some of our movies.

At 2:30, I went to my audiovisual committee meeting for the Library in the Treaty Room with Dr. Grover and Arthur Drexler and Jack Valenti and Leonard Marks -- a very aggressive and useful member of the committee who keeps on trying to get things rolling -- Gary Yarrington, Dorothy Territo, and Juanita Roberts. And at the last minute I had asked Harry Middleton to join us. I think more and more I want to cue him in on everything relating to the Library. His knowledge of films is especially useful.

Just before the meeting I got word that Dr. Stanton would not be with us. He had been flying in from Arizona and the flight was cancelled for some reason. He has been a good friend and an able activist on this Committee. And yet conditioned as I am in these days you expect successive departures from our vicinity and an erosion of interest and commitments. I note his absence wondering if he will return.

We spent about an hour and half talking about the exhibit for life in the White House which Arthur Drexler is putting together. I regret to say he does not have a model for us yet. It is still some 6 weeks off he says. He did bring the colored slides of the East Room and the Yellow Room and Treaty Room and the President's office done by the great architectural photographer. And they were magnificent. They can be blown up to something like 12 feet by 7 feet. And we talked of the area to put them in -- the artifacts to put in front of them -- and possibly by the use of film recapturing the life in that room, such as a bill signing or the entertainment for a State Dinner or the

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wedding in the East Room.

The picture of the Yellow Room is by all odds the best. I am sick at heart to think that we will not have a replica of either the President's Office or some small portion of the White House -- maybe a corner of the Yellow Room or the focal center of the East Room -- anywhere in the Library. But I fought this battle for months and lost it.

Leonard Marks had brought a Fairchild viewer. We talked of the use of it with cartridges.

And then, after we had had sandwiches and tea, I took them downstairs to show them "home-place" which they all thought was a considerable success. And afterwards, Arthur Drexler, who is not given to enthusiasms, paid me a very real compliment. In the month of January '68 which shows at long last the improvement we have sought so earnestly to make in these films. Since April 1st, four or five of us have devoted many hours to working on these films, and this one shows it.

We adjourned the meeting about 5:30 and I went upstairs to be with the West's before they left.

We had had such a happy walk around earlier -- Neva and Wesley and the Krims and Lyndon and Patrick Lyndon and Yuki. And Yuki -- that ham -- had made a beeline for the fence to make friends with all the tourists who soon congregated there. Patrick Lyndon had waded right through the white petunias and pink geraniums trying to get into the fountain. The fountain has never

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been more beautiful than in this summer's pink and white -- a great season for geraniums. This is the sort of thing that the Wests have enjoyed about their visit here I think, and I too.

Down at the fence there was much clicking of cameras and we waved at the people. But actually they don't interfere any more with my feeling of being at home here.

When the Wests left I started to go bowling. But walked instead over to the West Ellipse and through it just about twilight. There is no sign of the new fountains that ^{Rose Zalles} ~~Rozales~~ contributed the money for. There are paths. I hope when I return some future Spring, there will be a fountain and flowers here. The dogwoods are touched with color. And there is the feel of Fall in the air.

Lyndon had asked Carol and Abe to come over. I had been hungry to see them for days and weeks. But I hadn't asked them for a strange reason. I wondered if they could stand to see us, the unwitting architect of all the agony they are going through. But our only thought -- Lyndon's only thought -- months ago when he had nominated him to be Chief Justice -- had been to find the best Chief Justice this country could have and to accord to Abe an honor he ~~is~~ so magnificently deserves. Well, it hasn't turned out that way. So often through the years I have seen this drama played out but with a different set of characters. Somebody was being molined, torn apart, character and life questioned by the Congress, the press. And finally you suppose by people in general. But there would be a wise and able and compassionate guide

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somewhere for them to turn to -- and that was Abe. And now when Abe is the man who is being pilloried, where is there an Abe Fortas for him to turn to. There really hasn't been. And so the sorry story is nearly played out -- the end will probably be sometime this next week.

And Abe and Carol were coming over for dinner about 7:30. There would be just the six of us. The Krims were staying.

Actually when they came Carol was bouncy and tough and expressing her observations in salty and I thought healthy language. And I was reassured by her. She is quite sure it is all over -- Abe has lost. Senator Dirksen's complete turnaround was the end. And she is philosophic about it. Abe was very quiet, contained and dignified. We talked and talked and talked. And it was so good to see them. Carol says of course he will stay on the Court as long as she can work and they can afford to keep the house.

We explored the future of the country, the temper of the time, the campaign of Nixon and of Humphrey -- the likelihood that there might be a swing to a strong conservatism-- even something of a ⁴facists time. And we talked of the heritage of McCarthy the first and McCarthy the second. What days we have lived through here. And with Abe and Carol from the very first.

The Krims left about 11:00 and the Fortas' stayed on for nearly an hour. Somewhere in the course of the evening, I went to see Melinda and hugged her. We talked of Butch. And I met Colonel Venable and Chip, his son.

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It was midnight when the Fortas' left.

And so this weary and painful month approaches its end, with Lyndon still fighting. He made a speech yesterday down in Kentucky when he called for an end to hate and fear as vote-gathering tactics, and a plea for unity in this season of bitter debate.