

MEMORANDUM

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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Wednesday, October 2, 1968

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It was a tumultuously full day at the White House -- a mixture of pain and triumph. The pain was resoundingly told on the front page of the paper, "Senate Rejects Fortas Cloture by Wide Margin - Nomination Seen Dead for Session". The vote: 45 - 43 -- almost the last page in this long agony in the nomination of Abe to be Chief Justice.

The triumph was quietly told on the inside pages, but a source of warm satisfaction for me and a lot of conservationists. "Two new National Parks and a system of scenic rivers and trails were added to the Nation's outdoor public preserve today. President Johnson signed four bills." And one of them was the 58,000 acres Red Wood National Park.

But the first major event of the day was the arrival ceremony on the South Grounds to meet President Tombalbaye of Chad.

I wore my red wool with the white hat. And at 11:30 Lyndon ~~and~~ and I marched out of his office for this first of the State visits to be handled by Ambassador Abell -- our fourth Chief of Protocol.

President Tombalbaye was very black -- his face, a network of scars -- a part of the tribal initiation I suppose, and he spoke only French. So it was very difficult for me to have any real contact then or later.

Luci, in a very short skirt and white boots, and Patrick Lyndon, very independent and masculine with his new haircut, were every bit as interesting to the photographers as were the two Chiefs of State delivering their speeches from the platform.

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After shaking hands with the small party from Chad in the Diplomatic Reception Room, I ~~started~~^{started} upstairs and ran into Mary and Ruben Ruebsahm who were touring the White House with the George Stantons from Johnson City, and Dr. and Mrs. Perryman. I was delighted that I at least had the opportunity to shake hands with them and suggested they might want to linger and watch the bill signing.

And then upstairs I had nearly an hour to work with Bess and Ashton to get ready for my beautification meeting in the afternoon. I called Liz and invited her to bring Lawrence Rockefeller and Henry Diamond with me after the bill signing instead of going to the mess.

And then a little past 1:00 I went down to the Usher's office with Ashton in tow signing mail and making decisions until the last minute when Lyndon emerged from the elevator and we ~~went~~^{marched} together and with a sense of triumph into the East Room for the signing of four landmark bills in the ~~story~~ story of conservation in this country.

The room was crammed. In the front rows formed many familiar faces -- Scoop Jackson, venerable Senator Hayden, Wayne Morse, looking a little chastened, pleasant sight, Senator Church who's return is also quite uncertain, and Tom Kuchel who will not be back and whose good friendly face gave me a pang.

There was the Chief Justice, all benevolent smiles and brushing off the reporters questions. And of course Stu Udall. I expect he tallies up these

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successes with as much relish as I do.

Lyndon made an excellent speech in which he took occasion to speak of our beloved Chief Justice who stands for all that is good in this country. Besides the Redwoods Park, which has trees in it that are a thousand years old and range up to 367 feet in height, there also came into being today the North Cascades National Park in the State of Washington -- an area that's called the American Alps and is still very frontier. And then a system of urban and rural trails including the Pacific Crest Trail from Mexico to Canada. And then the establishment of a National Wild and Scenic River Systems reserving sections of eight rivers with 27 more under study.

It is all like a vast banquet of places to go and things to do for me.

And threaded through Lyndon's speech the warm sweet references to me. And afterwards when he signed the bill, the first pen he gave to Senator Hayden and then one he gave to me.

Somewhere in the back of the ~~room~~ crowd, Lawrence was waiting. He almost never appears on the front row. I went upstairs and greeted him and Henry and Liz, but then was interrupted to go back down and stand for a few minutes in line with Lyndon and shake hands with the rest of the guests. Mary Ruebsahm came through just in time for me to remind Lyndon that these were neighbors.

And then just a little before 2:00 I was back upstairs in the family dining room for one of the shortest but most fun luncheons I can remember

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in the White House. Laurence did most of the talking. He was as excited as a child about having enlisted some new recruits for conservation -- and what a list. One was Charles Lindbergh who has shut the door on the world for 35 years, but now is opening it himself -- so Laurence says -- to talk to people and groups in the interest of conservation. He, Laurence, is especially trying to save an area in the Hawaiian Islands which he tells me is beautiful beyond belief. He described the luncheon in which three of the other guests were Charles Lindbergh

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Doris Duke and Arthur Godfrey.

It seems that the project that Laurence is working on would cost about \$5 million. In his inimitable way he was telling the story -- he was quoting Doris Duke -- he said, "I can't contribute \$5 million. But I can put in \$3 million", at which point Liz said, "Isn't that too bad" in a voice that had us almost falling out of our chairs with laughter. And then Laurence went on talking about how Charles Lindbergh was anxious to enlist the aid of public press in Government, suggested that maybe they might get a joint meeting of the Hawaii Legislature which he would address.

Laurence's enthusiasm is earnest, contagious -- in a way charmingly boyish.

We all regretted Mary Lasker's absence. She was sick but hoped to make it to the meeting.

We gulped our lunch. We went downstairs to meet the other members of the Committee and board the bus about a quarter to three to the dedication of the Hobart Community Parks. As I had checked the list of acceptances for the Committee meeting, I saw that our ranks were diminishing -- which is indeed the story of this Fall. There was a good nucleus -- Laurence and Mary and Walter Washington and Polly Shackleton and Katie Louchheim and Libby Rowe. And the irreplaceable^e Nash Castro. But absent were Victor Gruen and Nat Owings, Bill Walton and Kay Graham.

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Every time I see a bus, I shall think of our beautification committee -- the places we've been to in them. It is a long and rather happy roster. This one was a quite modest one -- two small parklets on short Hobart Street in a low-income area of old houses, chiefly as we saw the crowd gather a community of Negroes but some whites. On one side there was a tiny playground with some very sturdy and imaginative equipment to slide and climb and do gymnastics on, and on the other side, trees, benches, raised flower beds -- a rather attractive little area for sitting and sunning for community old folks.

I had been out to preview it a few days ago and it had looked ~~s~~pretty forlorned. Today it was much gayer -- bright chrysanthemums and flags, a band and a little platform in the street where it was roped off. We went through the oft-repeated program -- an invocation and "America the Beautiful". Nash Castro welcomed us, and Walter Washington made his rich folksy remarks. And then David Lloyd Kreeger. He and Mrs. Kreeger were sitting on the platform with us, and it was because of their generosity that the little Parks had been transformed from two vacant lots that were used mostly as a sort of dumping ground into a real community asset for recreation. Then David Lloyd Kreeger presented the Parks to the community, and they were accepted by a dignified, elderly Negro, Mr. Arthur Brooks. And if community planning and improvement make a go of it in this town or anywhere it is because ~~of~~^{of} citizens who work at it like him.

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And then I made my little talk, feeling nostalgic and happy at another little stepping stone on our way.

The Kreegers and I unveiled the plaque. And then we mixed in the crowd, shaking hands, giving autographs, making my way toward a table where some of the ladies had baked cookies and made some punch. I always feel you should sample it once they have gone to the trouble. It seems so cold not to. So I helped myself and then with many cameras clicking we made our way back to the bus -- Walter guiding me every foot, introducing me here and there, at home with his flock. Everybody knows him. And then we came back to the White House and had a committee meeting in the Library. I spoke of some good steps -- the Reader's Digest article for September on "America Can Be More Beautiful With Your Help", the signing of the big Conservation Bills at noon today, a story in the paper that Montgomery County was going to outlaw moving, flashing, garish signs.

Stewart Udall had joined us for the meeting. He took over and then we had a wonderful description -- first from Nash Castro on "Summer in the Parks", and then from Walter Washington. And his description of the things they had done -- community concerts and plays and bus trips and cookouts. It was hilariously humorous. He is a remarkable bridge between the black community and the white community.

By 5:00 the meeting was over and I went upstairs to find that Lyndon

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had just come in for lunch. I had a short meeting with George Hartzog on the Park across from our Ranch. And then spent an hour with Liz and Erv going over a draft of the speech I will make for Hubert in Kentucky on Saturday. It was good. There was very little I needed to change -- inject a little more of myself into it. Actually, it pretty well flowed from ^{my} heart and head.

And then exhausted, I had a brief massage, worked a little with Ashton and Marilyn. Mr. Per came and gave me a comb-out. I called various ones of the house guests -- the Louis Shanks and Roy Butlers and Cactus Pryor to welcome them and to say we'd have a night cap when dinner was over.

Then I went over the guest list for the last time and checked out my table seating and Lyndon's.

In the last couple of dinners we are running up against a shocking number of regrets. It would be interesting sometime to see just how the percentage has risen since the prime days of '64 and '65. Of course there are major reasons. This is campaign season, and many of the Senators and Congressmen and Governors are doing what comes first -- working at getting re-elected back in their Districts. And then ~~we~~ quite certainly the President of Chad is not the most prestigious visiting Chief of State that one might rush to meet. But there is the factor, and I am aware of it -- of the growing erosion of the popularity of the Johnsons

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themselves. But I was determined to turn a minus into a plus, and several days before when I had checked the list I had called the Louis Shanks and the Roy Butlers in Austin to come up and be our house guests. And also the Cactus Pryors whom I very much wanted to have at least once in this house, though invited before, they've never come. And I was happy to have the opportunity to invite a very fine member of Lyndon's staff who had never been to a State Dinner -- DeVier Pierson and his wife. And Joe and Trudy Califano, for whom in my opinion we could never do enough. And the Nash Castros, to whom I feel close enough to invite at the last minute. And Roy White was in town working on the Park. So this is a wonderful chance to have him for a last visit. And then Florence Mahoney, because her son and daughter-in-law are coming it was a very reasonable thing to say someone's dropped out and we would adore to have you too. And the young Ed Weisls, Jr. I always keep in the back of my mind that if I have anything gay to share, I want to share it with Ed Weisls' children.

Our guest, President Tombalbaye, arrived under the North Portico a little past 8:00. And we took him with his small party of Ministers up to the Yellow Room. He was wearing a beautiful blue flowing robe, handsomely embroidered and a matching blue cap and using a walking stick. Blue I was told later was a color limited to those of very highest rank. His ministers wore a similar robe in other

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colors. And a very good idea it is for representatives of foreign countries to wear their own native dress. It imparts ^{glamor} ~~glam~~ for us and naturalness for them.

The evening was not without its crises, though small. First we got the message that Madame Massibe the wife of the Ambassador would not be coming. And I said to Bess, "Fine, ask Jessie Hunter to be seated for the dinner." And then lo and behold into the Yellow Room a bit late, true, came Mrs. Massibe I think as much to the surprise of her husband as to anyone. Bess, the undefeatable, handed that situation by simply not sitting down herself. She was at Tyler's elbow every minute, smoothing the unpronounceable names. And then another small crisis, poor President Tombalbaye had lost his gifts for us. We understand the airlines had quite understandably not known what to do with two large boxes they had found in the ^{London} ~~London~~ airport marked simply "President Tombalbaye". So there somewhere he had put together some very lovely gold objects -- bracelets and necklaces for me and the girls composed partly of the fangs of some wild animal. I could never find out what.

A little past 8:30 we went down to the East Room and lined up for the dinner guests.

With the Rusks out of the city, there were the Katzenbachs, Orville and Jane Freeman and Mr. Justice Stewart and Mrs. Stewart.

From the Senate, the Hruskas and Danny Inouye whom I told in the

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line that he was one of my heroes. A small contingent from the House. Among them the Earle Cabells of Dallas. Mayor Washington and Benneta.

From the entertainment world, Mary Fickett, who had played so wonderfully the part of Mrs. Roosevelt in "Sunrise at Campobello" here for us. And Anita Bryant and her husband Robert Green. And the Efrem Zimbalists -- a very attractive actor.

And there were Texans, Dr. and Mrs. Cooper of the Department of Political Science at Rice. And the John Lotts. They will be hosts to the President of Chad when he visits their Ranch out at Lubbock for a barbeque. And Alfred Shepperd -- ^{John} Ben's brother. And the William Sinkins who reported on HemisFair to me. And of course my house guests. And a sizeable contingent from the Press -- the Frank Cormiers and the Bill Gills and Norma Milligan and the Ray Scherers and Helen Thomas.

I had worked at seating my table to put some French-speaking guests -- Dorothy Marks by President Tombalbaye. And then Senator Hruska who had some very kind things to say about Lyndon. I appreciated them more vocally than I would if I had known ^{his} actions today in the Senate. And Florence Mahoney next to Mayor Gonzales of Santa Fe with whom I talked about the opera and the Golden Aspin and Tony. He said that Tony was one of the most respected citizens of Santa Fe. And then Mrs. Brooks Hays and Governor Meyner. I told him what a good party he had missed

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at Jane Engelhards. And Elspeth was next to the Foreign Minister, and her French was excellent as is everything about her.

The President told me that there were parts of his country in which rain had never fallen. We discussed his coming trip to Lubbock -- especially to the School of Technology there where the problems of arid countries has been explored. And my trip to his neighboring Senegal. He inscribed my menu in French, and seemed very touched that we had named the desert "pears glossae sara". At least one foreign language would be such a tool for a First Lady.

After dinner we went into the East Room to hear Robert Goulet singing a medley of songs ending inevitably with "If Ever I Would Leave You" from Camelot, and interspersed with night-club chatter with enough political references to make me uncomfortable. This is one place I'll leave them out. There was one part of the medley that was unlike anything I've seen in the White House and really quite amusing. He would sink to his knee in front of a guest in the front row and in a very husky, sexy voice, address the song to her. To Mrs. Louis Shanks, to Jessie Hunter, and then to me -- "You Are the Promised Kiss of Springtime". To Mrs. Massibe who looked on in puzzlement. To Anita Bryant who responded in true showman fashion. And so did Lynda. But the hilarious one was Luci. In front of her he knelt and with an impassioned glance sang, "This is My First Affair". Luci looked at him and giggled, "you better be careful", she said. "My husband's been gone for 6 months."

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I hope not many of the guests heard her.

The President left immediately after the entertainment -- actually a little before 11:30. And Lyndon went right upstairs, taking Walt Rostow with him.

The house is full tonight -- the Butlers and Shanks and Greens and Cactus Pryor -- whom I all asked to join me in the West Hall. And Jessie Hunter too. And Bobbitt spent the night, though I never saw him. The phone did not answer when I called him about midnight to join us in the West Hall. And the Cy Vances who have spent more nights in the Lincoln Room than anyone during our time came and went without being seen by me at all.

Anita Bryant told us that she was going to have a baby. It is always the most fascinating subject for Luci.

We spent a pleasant hour or so -- one of the nicest parts for me -- as I could see it was being exciting for Jessie Hunter.

And so this very full and varied day came to an end a little past midnight. And a measure of its toll on Lyndon was his going straight to bed to work on night reading without pausing for even 5 minutes at the room full of people that meant a lot to him.