

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Friday, October 4, 1968

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It was a unique day for me because it's the first time I've ever done a live TV show before an audience. It was the Mike Douglas Show. I had been asked by Muriel in the middle of the summer to do it. And at the Ranch I had said "yes" whenever we could both find time. I looked forward to it about like having an operation without anesthetic. But this is the only specific thing Muriel had asked me to do, and I cannot say "no" to someone I like and believe in as much as Muriel and Hubert when they are going through a time like this. They must be met on all sides by people who are just melting away or finding excuses or saying they'll do what they can, meaning very little.

I was up early. It is a week of early rising. I told Lyndon goodbye and set out with Liz for the airport. And there was Hubert to wish us well. I know how much every bit of this takes out of the candidate, and he didn't need to do it. He looked very tired. He has every right to. But still full of bounce. And as for Muriel. She was as calm as could be -- smartly dressed. And I thought I could sense a real ~~gap~~ ^{rapport} between her and all the press women on the plane -- and there were plenty of them -- around 20 I would judge. This was a leased plane and charmingly decorated in the blue and green he is using for the campaign. They served breakfast including the alcoholic drinks that are always a part of every press plane no matter if it leaves before daylight.

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Elva O'Brien was along. I asked her if she made speeches. "No", she smiled -- she just handed out literature. She is completely unoffending, and nevertheless I feel a sense of withdrawal just because of her husband. That is unfair and unreasoning. In all this business of politics I reserve my dislikes, my anger, if ever it reaches that measure, for those to whom we have once felt close -- not for those who are always on the other side. And there had been a time when we had felt close to Larry. I remembered the cynical remark of one of my friends when asked about Larry's position in Hubert's campaign. This person said, "Well I hope he works hard for Hubert".

We arrived at Philadelphia a little before 11:00 on a chilly, windy day with a small scattering of people at the airport -- a few "Welcome Muriel" signs. Mrs. Tate, the wife of the Mayor, to meet us. We drove in to the ABC studio, exciting no interest along the way. Then we walked in a daze through cavernous halls and stairways to a small bright room where there was almost a meal spread out on a table. Mike Douglas and Trini Lopez, so very friendly and easy and did as much as possible to put us at ease -- Muriel already was. In fact her many good qualities, wholesome good looks, warmth, humor, devotion to her family, and a real pulse of accord with the people of this country for whom we both work -- all shown forth in an intensified degree. Muriel is a fighter. Her husband needs her, and she is coming on good.

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And then it was time to join them in the brightly lit little summer house sort of a stage in front of a live audience -- my first time, and the feeling of being partly anesthetized and partly revved up to intensified effort took over. And for the next period of time -- and how long I have no idea -- I answered Mike Douglas' questions and Trini Lopez, and talked back and forth with Muriel, trying to weave into it all a picture of the Humphreys as I had known them these last 20 years. And some of the changes that the Johnson-Humphrey Administration ^{has} wrought in the lives of the American people -- Medicare, HeadStart, all the education bills. I simply have no idea how it will turn out. And it will be a week or two before we'll see it. And then I said goodbye all around -- Muriel will be continuing on a two-day campaign trip through Pennsylvania, and I returned to Washington on their plane, doing an interview with Dorothy McCardle on the way and phoning Lynda from the car to ask if she would be ready to go out to Bethesda Naval hospital with me. There was Jessie Hunter just inside the door of the Diplomatic Reception Room saying goodbye, leaving for Texas. It has been a happy visit having her here.

I located Lynda and we drove out to Bethesda for the important business of deciding where she, Lynda~~x~~, would go to have the baby. The doctor -- Dr. Lonergan -- his assistant and the Commandant of the hospital met us at the door. We went up to the Presidential suite where Lyndon has been about three times I think. And both Dr. Lonergan and

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the Commandant told us that for her to use this would be the simplest thing for the hospital -- the least disruption and messing up of their personnel and routine. And of course the most privacy and comfort for us. I suggested that we go down and see the place that Muriel Humphrey had used for her operation. It was on the 10th floor I believe at the end of a hall, a big comfortable enough room with a small room across from it where the baby could be. The doctor insists that the baby be in a separate room also. And there must be a room for the Secret Service. So that's a minimum of three. And I would like to have one. We could combine mine for mail, visitors, flower center etc. To get the four we would have to use one down at the opposite end of the hall from the elevator, and though we could screen off both ends there would be the center strip open to the press, open to all the visitors, open to the 8 or so patients that would be in the other hall. Lynda quickly dubbed this -- the "gauza strip" -- in which Helen Thomas and troops would be in constant force.

We had a cup of coffee in the Commandant's office and talked over the relative merits of the two places. The Commandant reminded me that if we did choose the 10th floor we would necessarily be taking rooms away from either 6 or 8 patients who might ^{need} them. And also he said the other 8 or so patients who would be on the floor would have more guests than they would under any other circumstances. All of this I knew

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and I readily agreed that for Lynda to use the Presidential suite would mean the least disruption for the hospital and its personnel. I felt impelled to go on and paint the picture from the side of the President and his press secretary and I suppose mine. The burden of the questions of their day would be, "How many rooms are there in the suite?" and "How much does it cost?". It costs the same thing for Lynda Bird as a Captain's wife if she has it in a ward or in the suite. And no doubt Senator Williams and Representative H. R. Gross would have their say about it in the Congressional Record, unless the Congress has adjourned. If they will only put up with that -- was it worth it? Sure it's phony to try to use something small and inconspicuous. And at this point the Commandant said, "Oh, the worst thing you could do to us would ^{be} to have Lynda Bird go down into the wards with that baby." I readily assured him that I had no intention of recommending that. But I thought we probably should recommend using the 10th floor -- to buy the silence, simply to do without the ^{criticism} ~~criticism~~ incurred by using the Presidential suite. So I must say it's an act of hypocrisy.

At this point the Commandant himself suggested that if we did use the 10th floor, he would recommend that we use not the room that Mrs. Humphrey had, but the opposite wing where there were four small rooms. And once ^{you} ~~she~~ had emerged from the elevator and gotten to the screens then you would have relative privacy in those four small rooms,

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less of a "gauza strip" in other words.

Lynda meanwhile was maintaining a manner somewhat divided between being humorous and detached. I liked her expression, "gauza strip". And on the other hand just barely concealed a little girl who was approaching having her first baby with her husband thousands of miles away in an ugly ~~was~~ from which he might not return, and wanting her parents to reach out and say, "Darling, we are going to take care of you. We are going to get you all the comfort and privacy." This she sorely wants -- that we can. And this one thing within our power to do, I found myself arguing against doing. I felt awful. We left on a note that we would talk it over. We would use the 10th floor in the manner the Commandant suggested, or the Presidential suite, and let them know.

And so we rode home, trying to talk about other things. And back at the house I found myself exhausted and simply went to bed and made enumerable telephone calls that had stacked up. Liz and Doug Cater, who had just announced that he was leaving to take a job with the Humphrey campaign, going I was pleased to note with one of the best interviews of any of the Assistants who have been with us. And Dr. Grover, and Marilyn and George Christian and Arthur Krim. I had a rub, and finally with Lyndon not home yet, had dinner alone in my room close to 10:00 and went to sleep. The house is quiet tonight. There are only

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Lynda and Lynn here. Luci is still in New York with her wonderful capacity for survival after she had gotten through the funeral of LeRoy Bates on Monday -- extending all that warmth and sympathy and hospitality that she could to Melinda and the Venables and the Boutwells and all the family. She had gone to New York in the middle of the week to be with the Scott Manns -- to turn from sharing death and bereavement with her friends to other friends who are in the midst of excitement and success and very vividly alive. It pleases me to see her becoming so close to the daughter of our old friends, the Roy Hoffhines. They are much alike, those two.

Besides being my daughter, Luci is a quite separate person, and I find her more and more exciting and interesting.

I felt a pang at deserting Lyndon at a time when he sorely needs companionship and laughter and family. But the two efforts of the day -- one for Muriel, one for Lynda, had simply exhausted me. And so I went to sleep by 10:30.

Looking back on the day: one thing that I had particularly missed with regret and that was the swearing-in of Russ Wiggins to take Ball's place at the U. N. I had loved his one-sentence answer to Senator Fulbright who asked him, "Why are you taking this job?" He had said "Because I am in love ~~with~~ with the United States." And that seems to me the best and only reason for working at most of these jobs in this town.