

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

WHD  
Saturday, October 5, 1968

Page 1

It was a completely different day from the one before, reminiscent of many, many campaign journeys in the past. The different<sup>e</sup> day, I think, in the practice of the art of advancing.

I was up early -- about 7:30 -- it's been a week of early mornings -- read my speech over several times, talked to Lyndon about the trip, left with Liz about 9:30 for Kentucky, wearing my new shocking pink and feeling ready for the occasion. And at the airport -- how different -- there was a sizeable crowd -- about 800 the paper said -- led by the Republican Mayor and Mrs. Schmied, a hospitable, totally correct greeting with an armful of flowers. And then Lt. Governor Wendell Ford, who is running for Governor, and Catherine Peden who is running for the Senate. And all along the airport fence, smiling faces and waving hands, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, Cubs, Brownies, friendly signs -- "Welcome Patrick Lyndon's Grandmother", a group of Job Corpsmen almost entirely Negroes. I made a particular point of seeking them out, shaking hands with everyone of them -- "What are you taking?" "Brick masonry." "And you?" "Carpentry!" "How about you?" "Education." This I heard over and over. I presume it just means the equivalent of a high school degree or some basic education. "Good luck. I'm glad you decided to do it." Groups of Union workers and postal workers with signs -- everybody with a big, friendly smile -- not a single unfriendly gesture. I felt like Mullen, that I had been taken backwards in time.

11

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Saturday, October 5, 1968

Page 2

And then into the car with Wendell Ford and Catherine Peden, and as we drove in I saw several billboards -- "Catherine Peden for the Senate". The word "Democratic" did not appear upon them. I heard this warning bell and asked about Hubert and his chances and got an unenthusiastic reply. And actually from my chief advisor on Kentucky -- Senator Earl Clements -- whom I had talked to before I ever decided to make this trip. The prospects in Kentucky were distinctly poor for a Democratic victory, though he did finally endorse completely my coming.

There was a sizeable crowd in front of the Sheraton Hotel, and these were nearly all adults. We mounted a small platform, and there was a little welcoming ceremony by Lt. Governor Wendell Ford acting in the absence of Governor Nunn who made me an Admiral of all the Kentucky waterways. I had been made a Kentucky Colonel once before. And then a lady representing the Kentucky Garden Clubs gave a silver mint julep cup -- what else? -- with a nice inscription about my work for conservation. And two cute little boys -- members of the Little League -- came forward with baseball bats. One for Patrick Lyndon and one for somebody else who hasn't made his appearance yet. Bats are a major industry in this town.

Standing beside me was a young Negro about 7 feet tall. It turned out he was a basketball star known by everybody in the crowd except me, a native of Louisville now playing in Baltimore. And obviously a big asset in drawing a crowd. There had been music and bands before my arrival.

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Saturday, October 5, 1968

Page 3

It is really very interesting to see the workings of an advance man. And the pretty young Queen of the Kentucky Derby gave me a ~~sh~~ horseshoe of red roses -- a small one. And then the funniest thing of all -- a couple who had a breeding farm presented me with a very small burro for the use of Lyn at the Ranch. I climbed down off the platform, had my picture made with him, laughed with the crowd, and then made a short speech -- and a rather good one I thought -- straight from the heart and no notes, and felt quite in tune with them all. There was a complete feeling of good will and happiness in the crowd. Only one sign that was hostile, and it only fairly amusingly so. A young man held it up. It said, "I am in favor of a slightly dishonorable peace".

We went into the Hotel ballroom and walked through a cheering crowd of 900, mostly ladies, a few men. It was the Kentucky Democratic Womens Club luncheon. They had had a two-day meeting of which this was one of the events. I watched with interest Catherine Peden who ate little and between courses covered every table in the room. You can't beat work. I think she has a real chance to carry it. Governor Breathitt was on one side of me and had strong, warm things to say about Lyndon. He spoke briefly as did Catherine Peden and Lt. Governor Ford. And then it was my time. I called on our Kentucky ancestors -- the Buntins and the Shays and a few more, and Kentucky great whom I had known, Albin Barkley and Earl Clements. And then launched into about a 12-minute

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Saturday, October 5, 1968

Page 4

talk that was I thought purely on the constructive work of the last 8 years, and why I thought it ought to continue under Hubert Humphrey who had been so much a part of it all. His name from the very first on some of the most progressive legislation -- Medicare, Peace Corps, Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, Civil Rights Acts. <sup>Because</sup> ~~Of course~~ I do not really believe it and because I don't think it's a woman's place, I did not have ugly things to say about the other candidates. Nevertheless my description of Hubert -- he is without vindictiveness and bitter hatred, and God knows our country needs that today. He is a builder, a unifier, who does not try to set American against American. He does not pander to the fears and the souls of our people -- he calls on the best that is in us -- the affirming spirit of hope. I suppose such lines in my description of Hubert's record, and indeed of the eight years of the Kennedy-Johnson Administrations, made all the stories refer to the speech as her "toughest political speech this year". I was interrupted frequently during it by applause. In fact during the whole day -- I felt that I had been carried back through time to another era -- so warm, receptive, friendly, and natural was everything that happened.

I shook hands with everybody I could on the way out, ran into Marie Turner whom I had met at Lick Branch, the one-room schoolhouse where you got to it by crossing the creek on a log. She had come up with a bus load of people. Later upstairs I ran into a former Governor of Kentucky,

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Saturday, October 5, 1968

Page 5

now a Judge, Judge Combs. And I was out of the hotel by 2:30, where to my amazement I found a large crowd still congregated -- larger in fact if anything -- although I think the music had ceased. And once more I waved to everybody and shook hands and responded and climbed upon the edge of the car to look into the eyes of the people on the other side of the street. I like to try to look directly into the eyes of some little girl or a man or an old woman -- almost a personal hand clasp. And one's own evidence of excitement and pleasure and response to them solicits the same sort of response from them sort of like a shot of adrenaline. It's an interesting experience.

We were back at the airport well before 3:00. And on the ride home began one of the most interesting parts of the day. A girl whom I have known for years -- Esther Coopersmith -- as just one of those good friends who is always on hand to help in campaigns with enthusiasm and industry and never failing loyalty. I have never had a really personal conversation with her before. Liz said, "Esther, tell Mrs. Johnson about your trip to Russia." And so she did. It seems that one of her parents had come from Russia -- the other from Romania. She had been born in America, but her ties really were very recent. Somehow or other her husband was asked to go to Russia. She described him as a small builder, and this was an Exchange Program -- certain business men in different fields were asked to go over there to meet I suppose their counterparts.

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Saturday, October 5, 1968

Page 6

At any rate they got a bit more than they bargained for perhaps when this couple went. She asked if she could go to see some of her Aunts and Uncles and Cousins. At first the answer was no, no, no. And then some official said to her, "Didn't you go with President Johnson on . . . ." and he mentioned some trip. She said, "Yes." And then a short while later arrangements began to be made for them to see certain kinfolks. Her description of them was pathetic -- cousins who were about 30 and looked as though they were in their 60's -- so hard had been their life. Some who lived in a ~~xxxx~~ town 30 miles away had never travelled that far from their homes before. They were brought in especially to see her. They have to have a permit everytime they go anywhere. All had very little to say while they were in their rooms with them. But then when they went out walking in the park they began to be much more expansive and told them about their lives and works and troubles. They were afraid the rooms were bugged. All of this because they are Jews. One couple they took for a meal into a cafe. They ordered from the menu, and then it became apparent that this couple had never been in a cafe before. They reached into the recesses of their dark and drab clothes, and brought out -- one of them -- a loaf of black bread -- the other, a piece of what appeared to be dried meat, and they began to hack hunks off of it, expecting to make their meal therefrom.

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Saturday, October 5, 1968

Page 7

There wasn't a one of them she said -- not a one of these people -- who wouldn't give their life -- anything, to come to America. And then slowly it began to unfold to me, the reason why she and her brother and a lot more people like her had poured so many hours and devotion and money into Lyndon's campaigns all through the years. And our personal relations barely touch. They believe in him quite simply as a leader, an exponent, of what is possible in America, a country about which they can still grow excited and tearful and urgent in their determination to work for. We have indeed, so many of us, grown fat and complacent and overly assured.

We were back at the White House by 4:00. And I heard that Lyndon hoped to go to Camp David. I packed a suitcase, talked with Lynda, the Krims came in, and we left in the chopper about 6:00 -- only the 5 of us -- the smallest group we've ever taken to Camp David. We sat around very cozily in that lovely room looking down into the valley with its lights where the great battles of the Civil War were fought, had a drink and talked long of all the things that face us now. I began to realize how tired I was. And the other side of that coin is how glad that it is not we who are in this campaign.

We had an early dinner, and I did that incredible thing once more of going to bed about 8:30 and reading myself to sleep on Allen Drury's

"Preserve and Protect."

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Saturday, October 5, 1968

Page 8

As I was about to go to sleep, I thought of a funny thing that a lady had said to me as I shook hands through the crowds today in Kentucky. With a conspiratorial look of someone imparting exciting news, she said, "We had two chickens and I named one Lady Bird and one Lyndon!" "I hope you didn't eat them," I said over my shoulder as I went on shaking ~~my~~ hands with the next group.

And then at another party this week, one lady in a long line when finally she reached me and we shook hands said, "At last I am at the heart of the artichoke."

Some day I am going to write a small article on my life and times in the receiving line.