

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

WHD
Tuesday, October 8, 1968

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Another early morning. Breakfast at 7:30, and then reading over several times my few remarks to welcome the Board of "Reading is Fundamental". Margy McNamara is the Chairman and sparkplug and the reason for me participating. And this morning at 9:00 there would be a kick-off session at the Smithsonian.

Lynda Bird and I left together a little before 9:00. Dillon Ripley was at the door to meet us, and Margy looking very bright eyed but very, very thin. We went into one of the attractive rooms of the Smithsonian, and there were about 20 people, several publishers -- a Mr. Vaughn from "Doubleday" who said to me, "We hope we are going to have the pleasure of publishing your diary." Several educators, representatives of minority groups -- Mr. ^{XENIUS?} Homenis from his, Whitney Young from the Urban Coalition. And Lynda Bird, a member of the Board representing youth. Someone from the Ford Foundation -- they are sponsoring the program. Doug Cater who had worked for it in the White House.

There was a gracious welcoming speech by Dillon. And then a brief movie showing what "Reading is Fundamental" had done here in Washington -- extremely well done -- featuring throughout a little colored boy named Gregory who was right there with us this morning. And then Margy took over, made a hopeful, earnest, presentation of what they were trying to do. And it was time for me to speak.

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I mixed about half and half my real feelings and the prepared words, and it turned out rather well. I thought I caught a flicker of interest from Mr. Vaughn.

Then there was the coffee break, and I said goodbye all around and wished them luck and left. I noticed that several members of the Board, among them Bill Moyers, had not come.

I was back at the White House a little past 10:00 and went straight up to the Treaty Room where Dr. Grover and Gary Yarrington and Dr. Newland and Ralph Becker were already assembled. And a sizeable contingent of press -- cameras, writing press. And there spread out on the table of the Treaty Room and displayed on easels around the wall were a fabulous collection of political memorabilia going all the way back to a George Washington medallion. There were clay pipes from ol Hickory's time and watchfobs from several campaigns, women's suffrage banners -- I can almost see Daisy Harriman carrying one -- a torchlight from a torchlight parade, a ^umorning badge someone had won after Lincoln's assassination. And some original cartoons about Lincoln that made Herb Lock look like a kindly illustrator of a children's book. There were gadgets galore, and it surprised me how far back many of our modern-day campaign ideas go.

They took a host of pictures before they left, and then we settled down with coffee and sweet rolls. And Ralph Becker talked to us about

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collections around the country, ways to interest those that had them, the value of making known to the public that the Library was in existence, and this gift had been made. It would he said intrigue other collectors and be followed by interest and quite possibly gifts. And so that afternoon and the next day I was chagrined to see how little interest there was on it. Not so the next event of my day when I had thanked him, and it is indeed the first big step in exhibit material along the way that has been given to the Library and I was excited and grateful to Mr. Becker.

I picked up my bowling bag, joined Muriel and Jane Muskie down on the ground floor and we walked over to the bowling alleys, preceded by enough press and photographers to record a Summit Meeting. They swarmed all up and down the lanes clicking and ~~and~~ flashing and behind us leaving just barely enough room to roll. I got a spare the first time, and then something I've hardly ever done -- rolled two balls that went in the gutter for my second frame, thereby causing me to come up number three -- Muriel, the easy winner and Jane Muskie next. Me, obligingly but unintentionally, in a poor third. But then the funny thing was the way it was reported the next day -- in columns and pictures and news stories. And obviously I had done myself and the Library a disservice by letting these two events happen the same day.

Back upstairs I had a hot dog and Waldorf salad in my room.

And then at 2:00 I went down to the Library for my last annual meeting

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with the National leaders of the Future Homemakers of America -- 16 fine looking young girls in their middle teens I think from all over the country. I asked them about their projects, did my not too successful best to draw them out in conversation. And then delivered my little spiel about the Library and asked the guide to give them a very special tour of the White House.

Back upstairs I had a long afternoon to work at my desk with Marilyn and Ashton and on Beautification albums with Cynthia, to get a brief rub, a comb-out. And then after conferring with Lyndon's office -- it looked like he was going to be very late, uncertain when -- I left with Luci for our dinner engagement with General and Mrs. Westmoreland.

I could tell from Lyndon's tone of voice over the phone that he was harassed and weary. And I was more than ever sorry because I had looked forward to this particular evening.

We drove up to Quarters One, and there was Kitsy on the steps to meet us. And we looked down below framed through the trees in the valley were the lights of Washington -- an absolutely glorious view with the Washington Monument its chief jewel. At first there were only the four of us, and then General and Mrs. Wheeler joined us. Both the Generals were in civilian clothes looking curiously undressed and defenseless without those uniforms, which do have a charisma for me.

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Do I belong to a different age?

It was exactly the sort of evening that I had been hoping for -- personal, warm, intimate talk. I've come to have a lot more understanding of what the military puts up with and the wives of the military -- moves, separations, dysentery. And now the mood that the country is in. I do not really want Chuck to stay in and make the military his life's career. But I will respect it if he does. I remember Kitsy's words, "It's a very special fraternity."

Lyndon was extremely late. He came in at 9:00 looking as tired as I have ever seen him, as worn -- the fight temporarily gone out of him. He was warm to the company he was in, even sentimental. He likes Kitsy tremendously. And he put his arms around ~~her~~ and recited for not the first time the story of how what she had said to him upstairs when she was a guest in the White House -- had been the final straw in his decision to bring the General back home.

We went into dinner in a dining room that looked out over the lovely view. We had dove and quail and a delicious rum pie. I eat with abandon these days. Glued of intimacy prevailed. We ranged all over the world and up and down several decades from General Mac Arthur to today. One of the things that Lyndon said in describing the mood of the country in these past few years was that McNamara, who without doubt, had done many wonderful things in the Pentagon, had nevertheless done the country

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a disservice when he took the glitter off the stars. The influence, prestige, place in society, of the military has curiously changed. Luci kept us laughing by entering into the conversation. She is ~~h~~ at home with everybody, no matter how exalted a title.

Earlier before Lyndon came ~~xxx~~ she was telling how she had about made up her mind about not to go on R & R at all if they didn't get it in October because she would want to be here for Lynda Bird's baby. And she would want to be here for Christmas. And then there was no/ point in going in January since he would be home in April. Patrick had written her back a firm no -- we are going when we can get it. And the General fixed her with a stern eye, and I think if I were a member of his family I would heed his words. He said, "Luci, he's right. You go whenever you get it."

The three of them discussed the Paris peace talks and the possible next meeting in Honolulu of some of the top men among the allies. It was close to 12:00 when we left, and Lyndon slept all the way home. And as we approached the White House I noticed that we were not going in the Southwest Gate as we always did. Instead we went through past the EOB and around onto Pennsylvania Avenue and came in the front entrance. I asked Clint Hill why, and he said, "There has been a penetration." What does that mean? The alarm went off and someone has gone over the fence they think. They are searching the grounds now -- the South Grounds that is.

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I thought of a newspaper story just a few days ago. There had been 6,000 threats against President Johnson and his family -- more than against any other President. I never think of it with any personal reference at all, no fear of personal harm for Lyndon or for me. But I do look with concern, even fear, for the time between January 20th and whenever in April Patrick returns, when Luci and little Lyn are ~~along~~ alone in that house together. I shall insist that she have at least a maid or a mentor living with her. Will that be enough? That little child's picture has been in the papers so many times with his grandfather. How easy it would be for some deranged mind to know that the cruelest ~~via~~ thing they could do to any of us would be to harm that little boy.

We went upstairs and heard no more of the intruder if such there were. But we had another worry. Lyndon was quite ill -- sick to his stomach. As bad as that night when the doctors decided that he had to have a gall bladder operation.

Finally we went to bed and it was not until the next morning that I heard that Liz too had been desperately ill with a stomach ache -- that she had been taken to the hospital and operated on about 1:00. Someone had called Lynda and Luci. They had debated with it to let me know, had decided that since daddy's light had just gone out that they wouldn't tell us until in the morning.