

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Monday, October 14, 1968

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I went in Lyndon's room early. He had come in from Texas very late last night. I was told it was about 2:00. But this time he did not look ~~rested~~ rested from his trip home. In fact I have never seen him look nearly the end of ~~his~~ his resources -- he looked worn and worried. He said something like this while he was getting dressed: "You know, when we got out of this in March I said it was because I didn't know whether I could make it for another four years or not. Now I don't know whether I can make it through another three months." And then he looked at me as though reaching for some comfort which I did not have and said, "I may have one of the hardest decisions of all to make today."

I went to the swimming pool and had thirty laps, and then to Jean Louis for a hair treatment. Zephyr sent me a hamburger which I had under the dryer along with signing letters, and was back at the White House by 2:00 to go to the Lincoln Sitting Room for tea with Jean Hughes who had been my daddy's nurse in his last long illness -- a sweet, cheerful brunette, warmhearted and feminine. She had eased his days considerably and I wanted to express my appreciation. She had three friends with her. We had tea and sweets and reminisced about Marshall and Karnack and daddy. And then she handed me some pictures -- the last that were ever ~~made~~ made of daddy on a trip where she accompanied him down into the valley, one of his rare relaxations, his own search for

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Shangri-la. I had arranged a tour for them of the rest of the house. And Marcia and Sharon came to see me, and we had a session on the preservation luncheon which I have set my heart on having shine as one of my best parties this year. I had a long talk with Dr. Lonergan about Lynda Bird. He's very agile about not being pinned down, but after some persistence he said he thought it probably would be between the 20th and the 26th. He would be very surprised if it went into November. And then I had for tea in the Yellow Oval Room the officers of the National Association of Food Chains -- some 16 or so couples representing the big food companies. One of the officers and host is my friend Joseph Danzanski who works very hard on beautification in Washington and has landscaped at least two of his own Giant Food stores quite handsomely. This was a way for me to say "thank you" to him, and also hopefully to call the attention, perhaps in press, his fellow presidents of big food chains with specific pride and the interest of environment of this man who ran businesses just like their's. I made it just as personal and warm as I could, and it really was a very pleasant 45 minutes before I started them off on the rest of the tour. And then went back myself to the West Hall a little late for a meeting with Dr. Grover and Sharon about the Library -- with Dr. Grover to talk about the oral history program and to que in with Sharon when and how the films are going to be finished, which is becoming one of our major problems in the Library.

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In the middle of our talk, the door opened from the dining room and Lyndon emerged bringing with him Senator Russell. Inside, I stiffened. Lyndon summoned me with a look and a hearty word. I came over and greeted the Senator, pleasantly, coolly. Oddly he took my hand and leaned over and kissed it with a rather selfconscious word, "This is something I picked up in Europe." It was strange behavior for both of us. For so long he has been the guiding star in the Senate for Lyndon -- perhaps he still is. But I do not any longer share that feeling. It has been a one-way street for too long. All the devotion and loyalty on Lyndon's side. Oddly I find it impossible to feel ~~love~~^{respect} or pain toward somebody unless I have ~~loved them first~~ loved them first. Lyndon said, "Thank you for spending so much time with me." Is that odd for a President to say to a Senator? It is the measure of the respect in which he still holds Senator Russell.

I had at least an hour and half session with Dr. Grover. The Library, the films, are consuming so much of my last months here, and well worth it I think. I only wish I had started harder on the Library two years ago. And then to the bowling lanes for two swift games. And then back upstairs for a couple of hours of desk work, phoning our house guests first -- Father Schneider and the Truedells. And in the meantime Jim Cain had arrived. I told them that we would love to have them join us for dinner if they could hold out until that uncertain hour when Lyndon arrived.

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I invited them down about 9:00, and we had a drink and talk. And it was 10:00 when Lyndon came in, bearing the strain of the day on his face. But he always manages somehow when he gets out of the elevator to assume a sort of a jaunty walk, as though he wants to reassure those of us who ^{are} looking to him.

He talks about the poverty program -- especially the HeadStart program -- that he hopes Mr. Truesdell will be able to set up for the community of Stonewall, extending possibly as far as Johnson City. And he keeps on trying to draw Father Schneider into it. It is really funny. He has little knowledge or interest in the divisions between different churches, and insists on putting them all together.

As soon as we had finished, and by now it was about a quarter of eleven, he said, "Well, I am going to bed early because I want to be awake at midnight." That is when the cables from Saigon come in. So whatever was afoot was still afoot and undecided and the tension strung out. And the miracle of the day was that it wasn't already in the headlines.

I thought of what Lyndon had said this morning about the story in the Sunday paper -- McGeorge Bundy, one of the original architects of U. S. policy in the Vietnamese war called yesterday for an unconditional bombing halt. In a puzzled way Lyndon had said, "I wonder what a man like Bundy thinks he gets out of it -- that it affects the course of events, or he get approbation at his club, or he gets a little of this stuff off of

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him." I suppose he means a little of McGeorge's former backing of the war. This statement had made me sad. And I wondered if it could actually affect the minds of negotiators for Hanoi, hold their hands, determine their decisions by just one jot or tiddle.

This week, tomorrow, leaves the half way mark in the time that our boys will be gone. Six months from tomorrow, God willing, Chuck will come home and Patrick will already be here. What a lot of counting I have done in this job.