

MEMORANDUM

WHD

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Thursday, October 31, 1968

Page 1

Halloween Day. It had been a sleepless night. Lyndon had a bad cold. He was awake at 4:00 and again at 5:00. We gave up and had breakfast about 7:30. His throat and voice were awful -- an ill beginning for a momentous day.

I spent the morning recording, working at my desk with Ashton, called Lynda at the hospital and dispatched Helen to help her pack. And Luci, who was never more in her element to help Lynda with makeup and getting dressed and taking care of the baby while they drove home.

And then at 11:00 to the Lincoln Sitting Room -- my very familiar ground -- for a meeting with Simone and Harry Middleton and Leonard Marks and John Secondari who may do one of the little 10-minute documentary on some facet of this Administration. Conservation is what I would like him to do.

Over us hangs the ever darkening clouds of not enough time. In 2-1/2 months some doors will be closed, the staff dispersed, records hard to come by. If we would make a start on this now, how much better it would be.

John surprised me by saying this must be a very personal approach -- "I, the President, worked on conservation because..." I flinch from it. I do not really agree. I think he's just big enough to see that it is one of the several most important things overtaking

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Thursday, October 31, 1968

Page 2

civilization today -- the need for conservation that is.

We met for an hour. Middleton will try to prepare a script, a general theme. John Secondari will see about how he could implement it in the 10 minutes or so. Nothing tied up firmly.

I went in Lynda's room which is waiting -- warm with books and pictures and her record player.

And next is Luci's for the baby. And there is the white wicker bassinet that Jimmy Alred gave us nearly 25 years ago for Lynda. And it has raised at least a dozen babies. Now it is all fresh and dainty with the ribbons and lace. And inside a little pillow that Lynda Bird had when she was a baby. And a white chest -- my gift -- that Warrie Lynn has painted with little figures from "Winnie the Pooh".

Luci is upstairs in the Blue Toile room which suits her exquisitely. And Patrick Lyn next door in the little Rose Sitting room, leaving our two main guest rooms still free.

I had lunch in my room, kept on getting messages from the Secret Service about Lynda's time of arrival. Lyndon had been alerted too. And a little before 3:00, I went down to the South Portico. There was Lyndon and enough press to welcome a visiting Chief of State -- especially the women members with that particular excitement that they reserve for the high moments of weddings and babies.

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Thursday, October 31, 1968

Page 3

We were a little early. Lyndon put his arm over my shoulder and we walked over to the Rose Garden where quietly away from the press he said, "It looks like Ellsworth Bunker has done the impossible. He's gotten Thieu aboard for the bombing halt."

It had been on again, off again in the most nerve-racking fashion for the last two days, at the very blade edge of happening and then not quite. In fact this whole month of October has been one of the most unremitting strain, the most protracted tension that I ever remember in our five years here.

George Christian and Tom Johnson came up, and they quietly talked about when to make the announcement. They decided between 7 and 8 tonight. I was grateful it had already been recorded -- Lyndon's voice was so bad.

And then the big black car came into the driveway, and out got Luci completely in her element carrying the baby until Lynda could get out.

Lynda was wearing her going away costume for her wedding -- the loveliest orange-red coat and dress with a bright scarf around her neck -- her makeup beautifully done, her hair simple but elegant with a fall, looking absolutely radiant. The baby had on a dress that Lynda had worn as a baby and little booties and a white blanket knitted by her grandmother Robb. And in her dark hair there was a little yellow

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Thursday, October 31, 1968

Page 4

ribbon -- another on her blanket.

All the news ladies clustered around, clucking happily, and asked of course about the yellow ribbon. Lynda said, "In her hair she wore a yellow ribbon, she wore it in the spring time and in the month of May." When they asked her why she wore it, "She wore it for her Daddy who is far, far away."

And then there were lots and lots of pictures which will no doubt soon find their way to Viet-Nam. All of us together and just Lynda and baby.

And then we went upstairs to Miss Glosel and peace and rest for Lynda.

In the mid-afternoon there was a party in the Solarium -- a surprise Halloween birthday party for Helene, planned by Luci, with that dear room decorated with paper cutouts and pumpkins and orange ice cream with chocolate sause, and staff and Helene's mother -- just about 25 of us. Luci is a good friend.

I stayed a little while and then went back to work -- the day a sort of suspended waiting for Lyndon's announcement. This has been a month of waiting. And then finally close to 7:00 first to the map room and then to Lyndon's office with Luci and Helene. And there a little past 7:00 we watched Lyndon on TV on all three faces of

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Thursday, October 31, 1968

Page 5

TV, making the announcement of the bombing halt.

The next hour was the most ludicrous mixture of grave and heavy and warm and funny. Lyndon and I sat side by side and watched the story of the bombing halt unfold. Staff came in and out -- Rostow, Christian, Jones, Larry Levinson, Tom Johnson. And in the midst of it all, there was Lyn dressed in his Halloween suit -- a red and white costume that said, "Super President". And in his fat little hand a pumpkin.

He kept on trying to get his grandfather's attention and Lyndon said, "Lyn, go kiss grandpa," and pointed to the screen. And Lyn went over and gave him a big kiss, first on one screen, then another and then another.

When it was over, we watched the commentators. Most of them were good. What a change.

And there on the floor was Luci, playing like she was about 2 years old with Lyn climbing all over her. What a scene it is going to be when his Daddy first sees that little boy. He's the little boy that daddy's dream about.

Mary and Juanita went back over to the second floor with us, and Tom Johnson and George Christian came for dinner. And Warrie Lynn and Helene. And there's a sigh in our voices when we look at Warrie Lynn. We will be saying goodbye to her tomorrow for two years.

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Thursday, October 31, 1968

Page 6

We listened to all the news. There were some pretty acid calls from the public, calling it a political move on one of the open telephone programs.

It had been a good speech, and I was proud. I especially liked the lines: "I do not know who will be inaugurated as the 37th President of the United States next January, but I do know that I shall do all that I can in the next few months to try to lighten his burdens."

What an extraordinary combination he is of a passionate advocate, a partisan, and yet cool, judicious and always with a long view.