

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

WHD
Wednesday, November 6, 1968

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The day after the election, when it was almost as it seemed to me a continuation of election night. I had gone to bed a little past midnight with Hubert running neck and neck with Nixon -- a surprising, pour-the-steam-on, magnificent race. But the outcome too close to know for hours and hours.

Occasionally during the night, I drifted to consciousness and could hear Lyndon's TV on.

The next morning, before 8:00, I went in. He had dozed, but had been awake off and on all night. And the results now were fairly firm, for Nixon. That is in the electoral college. But with the people of the country, it was still almost the same percentage -- 43 point something for one, 43 point something for the other. And Wallace making the difference, but though far below what had been predicted for him some two weeks ago.

Jim Cain called me and told me that Luci's father-in-law, Mr. Nugent, had been operated on for disc trouble in his back. It had been serious. It was a good thing they had gone on and operated. My reflex reaction barely restrained was to say, "Did he vote absentee", rather than "How is he?". Jim told me he would be all right.

Sometime in the mid-morning we called Muriel and Hubert. Lyndon talked to both of them, and I to both. And I wished I could

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have poured across the wire the pride and respect and admiration I felt for them in the race they had run. In a way, they are today's heroes for millions of Americans.

I do not remember exactly when they made their speeches, but Hubert's was gallant and warm and it looked to the future. It was a healing speech and a high moment in his career. And I thought Nixon's was a wise and hopeful speech -- a clear-headed one.

I believe it was sometime during that morning that I told Lyndon there were three people I would like to talk to -- the Monroneys, the Bayhs, and the Boggs. At some point we did. The Monroneys had lost. To my thinking the biggest loss in the Senate. But the Bayhs had won against heavy odds. And the Boggs had won in the hardest fought race they have ever had, I think on their pure personality and friendship. His daring esp^{al}sol of open housing has cost him heavily with his constituency.

Finally we drove around -- Arthur and Mathilda and Lyndon and I -- over the Martin and the Danz. I had called Frank Erwin earlier to ask if he could drive out and have lunch with us. Life must go on, and the Library is a big part of life for us. And Frank's hand in it is a strong one.

A. W. drove over and the six of us sat out on the little south front porch behind the columns in the brilliant warm sunshine and

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had our lunch on trays. It's a funny thing. We had been looking for a place protected from the wind. We talked for years about building some sort of a wind barrier out by the swimming pool. And here on our own front porch by chance we found it -- protected on three sides -- and it was nippy weather but bright, gold and warm by the sun.

We had a delicious lunch and talked and talked about the University, its difficulties, its future, the new Administration in Austin, the incoming Governor Smith, what John would do with his life. Frank feels that Houston and that law firm will not contain him always. There is too much of that rancher at heart in John Connally.

I think that Arthur is one of the hardest hit people I know by the outcome of the election. I know that each of us -- enormously proud of Hubert -- were thinking what else, where, how, could we have done something different or more. At any rate, Texas had gone for Hubert, and that was our primary concern.

Yesterday when we had called him and Muriel just as the first reports had begun to come in, we had told them laughingly but proudly nevertheless that they had carried Stonewall -- no main feat in this German Republican area.

I felt that the Texas vote was somehow a vindication of Lyndon.

To me, one of the good moments of the day was a TV program

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where Walter Cronkite and Teddy White were analyzing the vote -- two of the principal states -- decisive ones -- Illinois and Texas. And Teddy White, in a rather free-line malicious way, abetted by Cronkite, was painting a picture of bossism and chicanery and dishonest control that was especially the talent of these two States. And then John Connally was on the phone on the program. And in a courteous, masterful, tough way he called Mr. White's hand, answered his charges in a way that soon had them fluttering apology.

We went riding in the sunshine -- Arthur and Mathilde and Lyndon and I and A. W. We put Frank on the plane to go back into Austin. And then a little later we took the Krims to the plane. They must be back in New York tonight. And still later we drove around with Lyndon and Marie and Yolanda -- to look at houses where Yolanda might possibly live close to the Ranch and be on Lyndon's secretarial staff -- and Mr. Wyrick whom Lyndon is trying to get to go to work for us. We looked at his grandfather's old house. I think she liked that. And also the Sharnhorst Cowboy house -- too isolated and far away she thought. Off and on during the day I went out to the hangar which Bess and Mary Saltman and our great source of comfort and help, Weeze Deathe, were transforming into a gay place for the military party tonight with bright table cloths and crepe paper cutouts in shocking pink and bright blues and greens

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and Mexican ^{pirates} benyatas hanging from the ceiling. Bess is an absolute genius. I told Weeze she had better learn all she could. She and I would soon be on our own.

We had invited all the military staff that served the Ranch stationed in Texas. They have never attended in all these five years one of our happy staff parties at the White House. They were the Signal Corps who handled the microphones and p. a. systems and everything for the press conferences and run the projector, all of the helicopter crew, the boys who operate the telephones from midnight to 8 a.m. or man the tower or the firefighter crew who thank heavens have never been busy so far as I know. The stewards who take care of the staff guest house -- the whole network of support for the President. There must have been some 150, because with their wives we had a guest list of about 300.

I had added only Ken Gettis and Paul Glenn and Tom Mills -- they are really attached to the White House but down here now. And Clarence Knetsch.

A little past 6:00 we went out to the hangar -- Lyndon and I -- dressed to return to Washington, and spent a busy hour and a half with them. I moved from group to group and introduced myself and met their wives. And it soon turned into a autographing marathon. I had always rather talk, look at them, ask them about what they do. But once started, it is hard to turn off.

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We had beer and margueritas south of the hangar where the farm pickups usually stay. And this too was decorated. And there was cabita -- the first for some of the easterners. And the best noches specials I've ever tasted.

And then we filed inside and everybody went down the line and heaped our plates full with Mexican food and found seats at one of the long narrow tables. The room was bulging. I nutily blew a kiss to Sandy Fox who had added to the occasion by making the most artistic and attractive little invitation -- I think I must have autographed at least 100 of them -- that will make a nice keepsake for all these guests.

I kept on running into people who were friends of friends or who had worked in Lyndon's campaign of '37 or '41. More likely, it was their mothers or father or even grandparents who had.

It was a happy evening. And it was at dinner I heard one of the best stories in my years here. He was a military man that was going to retire soon. And he said he sure did like this country, and he was going to retire down here. And then he went on to say, "Mr. President, my Daddy's been visiting me" (he came from Indiana I believe it was). And he said his Daddy was about 75 and he never had been anywhere at all -- just worked in the coal mines all his life.

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And at this point his wife interrupted and said, "He went into the mines when he was 13." So his Daddy came down to Texas and they took him to Galveston and he had a nice visit. And then one night, just as luck would have it, out at Bergstrom, Air Force I came in and there was this man and his Daddy leaning over the fence watching as Lyndon got off the plane and started -- as he so often does -- over to the fence to shake hands. The man went on, "Dear Lord, make him come this way. Send him over here. Hadn't nothing ever happened to my Daddy." And Lyndon did go over and shook hands with his Daddy. The man said he didn't even remember what he said. But it didn't make any difference. And later on that evening his father said, "Well, son, this has been the greatest time of my life. I rode on an airplane, I saw the ocean, and I shook hands with the President of the United States."

We had a long way to go that night, so as soon as we had finished dinner, Lyndon went to the little platform in the hangar and with Haywood Smith's help, he handed out some citations for service to various members of the military. And then he made a speech. It is one of those that I hope is recorded -- informal, warm, earthy loving. And I think everybody there must have gone home feeling that these five years of hard work were a little more worth while.

We left the Ranch a little past 8:00. And at Bergstrom, we said goodbye to Luci and Lyn who we will not see for quite some time.

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She will be leaving for Hawaii on Saturday. And before 9:00 we were on Air Force I. I tried to take a nap -- couldn't. We helicoptered from Andrews into the White House, walking in past that clock by the elevator that I've passed so many late night hours. This time it wasn't even quite 12:30.

And so ended the day in which our future -- the country's future -- had taken a turn and spread ahead of us different from what we had hoped, but still a thrill, a salute to the great race and the gallantry of Hubert and Muriel.