

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Saturday, November 16, 1968

Page 1

It had a feel of an important day in the White House to me because it really marked the launching of anything I would do about this diary.

But first, Lyndon and I had breakfast about 8:30, and then I met with Dr. ~~Malva Bell~~ Grovner and his wife and Liz in the West Hall over a cup of coffee. And we talked about the Red-Woods. Dr. Grovner has just returned from a trip out there. And we of course will be leaving on one next Friday, the 22nd. And I like to get indoctrinated. He loves his subject and I loved listening and not the least of what I wanted to know as a female participant in a picture story was what to wear. I decided on my heavy walking shoes from the Grand Tetons and possibly some heavy underwear. And my beige pants suit.

He spread out maps of the whole region and explained the history -- the difference between the coastal Red Woods -- the tall ones that grow to 365 feet in height -- and the more inland ones which are really bigger and an automobile can drive through, the gigantes. And they are older -- perhaps 3500 years old. And he left me a vast sheaf of articles from the National Geographic for my bedtime reading between now and then.

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Saturday, November 16, 1968

Page 2

And then about 11:00 he said goodbye and I went down to the second and very exciting meeting of the day in the Lincoln Sitting Room -- the publishers from Double Day were coming to look at my diary. Mr. Ken McCormack, Mr. Sam Vaughn, Mrs. Evelyn Metzger and Miss Maggie Cousins.

The fire was warming that very familiar room, and Arthur Krim was with them. And they were dividing up the black notebooks that Charlie Maguire had prepared, laboring far into the night. I think there were three of the notebooks with a couple or so days each from each of the six years of the span of time we have lived here.

They talked and Arthur Krim, and mostly I listened with the expansive feeling that they really were impressed and beginning to be excited.

After saying hello to everyone and having a cup of coffee, I was in and out of the room feeling that they would be more free to express themselves and to read quietly. They seemed quite concerned about the time they were taking up. I wasn't at all.

As it got past 12:00 I suggested that they stay for lunch with me. I called Lyndon. Yes, he would be glad to join us.

I brought in sherry, and each of them talked about the excerpts

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Saturday, November 16, 1968

Page 3

they had read. And I felt that they were quite genuinely interested.

A little past 1:00 we went into the family dining room, and Lyndon came with us. And we had a long, leisurely lunch during which Lyndon did most of the talking, reminiscing about his years in Washington, in public office, his decisions here -- quite openly I thought.

When we finished lunch, and by that time it was 3:00, I said goodbye. It had all been so much. I was so excited it was like a circuit of candy and cake and pie. And so I wanted a simple draft of fresh air and sunshine. I got the car and went riding around to a lot of the places we had worked on. To Watts Branch Park where I was shocked to see what either was an enormous amount of erosion on the creek bank or simply slipping in of the bank, or maybe it was flood damage or maybe it was some sort of construction. So disappointing for something we had worked on. And then past Sifax² School where some of our trees were dead and all of our plants were full of weeds. I felt further disappointment. And then I drove by Bowens School. The planting was just in and looked fresh and great. And the playground equipment looked so sturdy and functional and just ready for hundreds of children. And just as I came to a halt, there was a big black limousine in front of me. Who should it be? Who naturally but the

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Saturday, November 16, 1968

Page 4

people who were as interested in this, or more, than I was -- the ones who had given it. Kaye Graham and her mother, Mrs. Agnes Meyer.

I got out of the car and started over and Kaye Graham got out at the same time, and we met in the middle of the sidewalk all smiles, and so surprised to run on each other there. She said she was taking her mother out for a drive. She hardly got out any more because of her arthritis. And I went over and leaned in the car and talked to Mrs. Meyer who is mentally salty and vigorous although almost chairbound physically. It had the pleasant, exciting quality of complete spontaneity. And their gift to the city is a great plus for that area. In our half day of happenings on Monday, it will be one of the places we visit and hail as an addition to the cities' playgrounds.

Then I drove on by ^{213 mg car} La Fente Plaza -- a handsome spacious place, the Plaza framed by two long buildings by I. M. Pei. And at the foot of the horse shoe the great curving bulk of HUD which I think is by Marcel Breuer -- all of it on a vast scale, well planted though the trees will have to grow to it -- enormously contemporary but quite at home in this Federal city and worthy of it.

I walked all around over it -- after a while being recognized and smiling and speaking as I walked on. There were lots of photographers --

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Saturday, November 16, 1968

Page 5

amateur and professional. And frequently I walked in front of their lenses, and I wonder if they will be surprised when they get their pictures developed, or will they recognize me.

It was a beautiful Fall day and a good anecdote to my hours in the house -- the day of mixture of high elation, almost not to be touched or believed success within the offing and then to come down of the lack of maintenance in the work we had done around the city.

I was back in the White House by 4:30 to find to my amazement that the people from Double Day had just left -- a very lengthy luncheon visit. So I went to the bowling lanes and had three good fast games.

I had asked Lyndon earlier who he would like to have for dinner. And he said, "Why don't you just invite anybody you want. And so I did. Bess and Tyler and Liz and Les and the Charlie Maguires and Joe and Trudye Califano and Harry McPherson and Clay. I grow more and more aware as the time grows shorter of what an extraordinary and wonderful staff has accompanied us through these years. And Barefoot and Jan Sanders and Ramsey and Georgia Clark.

They began to assemble about 6:30. We had drinks and a fire in the Yellow Room. Lyndon was quite late coming over.

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Saturday, November 16, 1968

Page 6

Ramsey and I sat down on the yellow Louis ^{Quinze} ~~Cane~~ sofa and talked about this city, its future, Walter Washington (he's very high on him). He thinks it would be very wise if Nixon would reappoint him Mayor. The schools. He used a startling figure -- the percentage of Negroes in the schools of Washington has now risen to such an incredibly high number I am afraid to quote it but I think it is in the upper 80 percent. And he thinks the quality of the education is deteriorating.

We talked of the riots of April -- of whether they had in a way lanced the boil and enabled us to get through a relatively easy and peaceful summer.

Ramsey is an extraordinarily articulate, gentle, tough and likeable person. At times I am dismayed by him. A marticum of partisanship of working for your side is necessary in politics I think. And sometimes he seems to have an ivory tower unawareness. But I always find myself respecting him, and after I have heard his side I understand it much better.

Finally we gathered around the long table with Lyndon and had a pleasant, good dinner with people who are all familiar with each other.

And then close to 10:00 most of us went down the stairs to see a movie which turned out to be awful. And after about an hour of it

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Saturday, November 16, 1968

Page 7

I threw everybody a goodnight kiss and went upstairs and to bed by 11:30.

It had been a sort of a watershed day, though heading in what direction I don't really know. And there were some straws in the wind of better things happening -- a feeling that the talks in Paris might soon be joined by the Saigon regime. Maybe we would get somewhere. And then Nixon's appointment of Murphy whom we respect and remember. He is an excellent professional. He holds well for this interim period.