

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Tuesday, December 17, 1968

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It was one of the longest days of my stay in the White House. Lyndon was awake very early. His cold was awful, and we had breakfast a little past 7:00.

I left with Simone and Harry Middleton about 9:30 to go to the Naval Photo Lab to look at the September InterLock. It was very good. They are definitely getting better. We suggested very minor changes, thanked the staff, and I was back at the White House in good time for my 12:00 appointment with Clark Clifford.

We met in the Lincoln Sitting Room by a fire. Often I go to him on questions of judgement -- they are interwoven strands of ethics and legality and good taste and just plain common sense, all interwoven. Then you state the problem and try to come to the best conclusion. I value his advice always and follow it usually. This time I wanted to talk about what I should do with the income derived from the sale of this diary. Clark considered it quietly for a moment and then said that he saw no reason why I shouldn't keep part of it or all of it if I wanted to. I told him my plans were to give half of an undivided interest to the Foundation and retain the other half for myself.

I was a little surprised to hear him say that he thought we need not make any announcement -- public that is -- as to the figure for which it sold. Announcement or no, I think the figure will out and if

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we don't state it briefly and at once whenever it is done, I think it will be speculated about and printed about until it has grown three times as big.

So, my present plan is that we will do nothing at all until we are out of the White House and then very soon -- shortly after January 21st -- we will proceed to sell it.

And the second thing I had to ask Clark was about the Latrobe mantel. I brought in the glossy prints of them and told him the story. I am very proud that the house has them. It is a major acquisition during my time. And I told him that we planned to put the larger one in my bedroom and the smaller one in Luci's bedroom.

And then we got to the delicate matter of what should we do with the plaque that is on the present mantel in my bedroom. Architecturally that will take some figuring out. The present plaque is I think just put on with a ~~poxy~~^{epoxy}. And if it is removed, it is doubtful that it would fit on the new mantel. Should the same inscription then be perhaps engraved on the marble? We decided that that decision should be left up to my successor, and I would neither remove nor reinstall.

We finished a little before 1:00, and since ^{it} was time for the Tuesday lunch Clark was just a little early for the Secretary of State and Lyndon and Dick Helms and the rest of the Tuesday group. So I left him to

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study some papers, and I went up to the Solarium to have lunch with Belle and Phil. Tony and Marfiana were out. I think he feels the need of the solace of his grandchildren. And Eloise was with her committee meetings.

Marilyn is keeping Belle and Philip busy going from the Capitol to the art galleries to the monuments. And then in a little chink of time like this we talk about Flora and Elaine and Burniece and Aunt Belle and Billingsly and Uncle Claude and playing in the Branch when we were 7 and 8. And I do not have the sense of a full visit that I would like. But something beats nothing. And that has had to be my total philosophy here in the White House.

There was time for just about a 30-minute review of the material and the agenda for our Beautification meeting and going over the guest list and changing into my Alaska underclothes and my pretty peach wool dress. And then down into the Blue Room where the fire was crackling and there was sherry and coffee. And assembled was a pretty good quota of the Beautification Committee -- for this our finally last meeting. Brooke Astor and Fred Farr and Kaye Graham, looking really drawn and weary -- just recovering from the flu. And John Hechinger whom I thanked for his dear letter. And Rudy Kaufman and Mary Lasker with her Secretary, Jane ^{Donough}McDonna. Katie Louchheim and Mrs. Cary Parker and ^{3.5.68}Admiral Philips. And of course Laurance ^{Admiral}

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Rockefeller. And Libby Rowe. And our garden club lady, Mrs. Rolmeig. And Adam Rumashovsky and Bill Schmidt and Polling Shackleton. And Bill Walton and Stew Udall and Walter Washington. And Tom Fletcher as well. And of course Nash Castro. And John Walker and Diana, who is distraught about her daddy, but determined to seek out the best medical solution to his problem.

I think everybody had made a great effort to get here for the last meeting. And there were in addition the donors of the fountain in the Ellipse -- Mrs. Rose ^{Zaller} ~~Collins~~ and the Francis Sauls and the Ralph Beckers. And the top executives of PEPCO, who themselves had made a sizeable contribution to the fountain at the end of Haines Point by donating the power lines. And the designer of the water jet itself -- the Hammels who had come all the way from California. And Connie Wirth and Carol Fortas, the Treasurer of the Society for a More Beautiful Capital. And the President of the Minnesota Granite Company who had donated in part at least the enormous slabs of granite in the ~~Inyathawked~~ (?) fountains.

So there was a little time in the Blue Room for me to go from one to another and thank them for their part in making these fountains possible.

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And then rather quickly into a bus -- what else? -- for our last tour -- the "fountain tour", stopping first in the West Ellipse and posing with Rose Zall^{is} in the most magnificent fur coat (it looked like Fox and would have protected her at the North Pole). We posed on the site of the new fountain along with a drawing of it. Work will begin this spring.

And then down to the completed [?]Hawked fountains that from Constitution Avenue framed the White House that you view across the President's Park. And from the Truman Balcony it frames the approach to the Jefferson Memorial. They are enormous saucers of granite. And the story of how they got here is a saga itself. They were too wide to come through tunnels and too heavy to go on certain stretches of road. And so they traveled thousands of miles from the Minnesota quarry where they were dug to reach this spot on Constitution Avenue and to be chiseled out in place here into the shallow bowl from which the fountain rises 16 feet high.

There was a brisk wind. Everybody huddled close by. I pressed the button, and up rose the jet. And here I think we perhaps made a mistake. I think they should have been higher in scale to match the majesty of Constitution Avenue and the White House in the distance.

Emmet Hawk was absent and very much missed. And most of all, Liz, who would have loved today, because it was a day of reaping,

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a day of finally turning over to the city what we had been working on for months or years.

And then we were back into the bus and out to Haines Point with Nash on the P.A. system explaining to us about the 1846 cherry trees and a description of the fountain that we were approaching. It was to be a 255-foot high spray of water that flashed upward from a floating structure just off the tip of Haines Point -- the most dramatic of the three fountains we were seeing today and one of the most dramatic sights in Washington. And it would be framed by a planting of evergreens and flowering trees that would direct your eyes to the end of the point. It cost \$180,000 and it was the gift of the Society for a More Beautiful Capital. And I knew, and I expect most of us knew, that it was in very great part of the gift of Mary Lasker.

Then he described some of the cliff-hanger details of its installation of the last few days -- how it had become stuck on a mud bank, how one of the motors had been frozen in our terrific cold spell and they had to send all the way to California for a new one and it couldn't be flown to Washington. There was no direct flight. But it could to Pittsburgh. And so they had dispatched a truck to Pittsburgh to pick it up. And just last night they had a successful try-out and it had worked.

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By this time our bus had reached the tip of Haines Point and everybody got out and went to the small platform with the icy winds off the Potomac hurrying us along. The U.S. Marine band -- the ever faithful -- were not here yet. We were 15 minutes early. But no matter. Quickly we went forward with the dedication program with Stew Udall introducing the platform guests. And Mary Lasker described the jet, and presented it to the city of Washington.

And then my hair whipping in the wind and I not minding and grateful for my warm fur coat I said my last few public words to my Beautification Committee -- getting a laugh when I began, "Can you believe it! It's not either raining or snowing!"

First a salute to the three fountains that will give their sparkle, their sounds, their grace to the city -- a brief summary of our Committees work -- sponsored a great variety of improvements for the city in lovelier parks, more challenging playgrounds, neighborhood cleanup and rat control. And today we celebrate fountains. And then I expressed my thanks to the donors of these fountains -- Mrs. Rose ^{Allen} Zelle and Mrs. Emmet Hawk. And the donors of the Haines Point jet, and the many people who have given of their time and skills. And I know lots of them must have had frozen fingers these last two days. And then ended with a special

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salute to Mary -- "Our guiding star who has lured, pushed, led us toward a more beautiful Washington."

It was the most hurried and easiest speech I can remember. And in moments we were back on our bus only to find that it was stuck, hopelessly, irretrievably stuck in the mud. But not even that mattered because there was another bus near by.

So Mary and I and Jane McDonough got into my White House car and sped on to the White House while everybody else with laughter and good humor got in the bus that was stuck and then into the other one and we all met a little before 5:00 in the Yellow Oval Room to warm up by the fire and with drinks that were being swiftly passed and to look out at the view over the Emmet Hawk fountains to the Jefferson Memorial. And to reminisce with each other about our trips and our successes and our failures and our four years.

I had taken a moment to go into Lyndon's room. He was in bed. He looked sick. I had hoped that he could come in and see everybody for just a minute. But when I saw him, I told he should not try.

So I went back into the Yellow Room just saying that I was going to accept the report to the President for him and pass it along later, and he sent in his congratulations and best wishes.

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And about that time, in he walks, looking pale and like he was propelled on sheer determination. He made an amusing, touching little speech, thanking the Committee for all they had done, and finally thanking them for giving me back to him. And I know many a true word is spoken in gest. He does think I have taken time away from companionship with him doing the things that he wants me to do and investing it in all of these Beautification activities. He is both very proud and a little bit hurt and puzzled I think. But mostly proud. And as for me, it has been the major personal theme of these four years and richly broadening.

Laurence Rockefeller -- who else -- had had printed a summary of activities of the Committee -- a very handsome little booklet done by Sharon I am sure -- bright blue with the red and white flower on it. Nash made a little talk, passed one around to each of the members. There was an hour of warm good fellowship and a communion of people who have worked together. And then by 6:00 they were gone.

But the day was far from ended. I had called Charles Maguire earlier and asked him if he could come over for a few minutes. And so on short notice he did -- about 6:30. And we sat by the fire for about an hour and talked about how it might be possible for him to work on editing my diary. He told me about his other offers -- his indecision -- about really wanting to proceed to get his doctorate. He will write his thesis on the Cabinet. We talked about the academic attitudes of

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today, their general hostility to the Johnson Administration. He had been seeking a grant from a foundation so that he could live a year or two and write this thesis on the Cabinet. And as he pursued this purpose with the universities and foundations he became increasingly aware of this active hostility, this complete lack of understanding, of the man and of the Administration. He was quite interested in my proposal about the diary, but he did not say yes.

I said goodbye about 7:30 to him and called the Tippetts and they came down for their hour by the fire and we had a picture made and I told them how I very much hoped that Lyndon would at least get to see them tomorrow morning. They will be leaving tomorrow afternoon. We talked of Philip's home which he described as a once beautiful old house on the Alabama River. Now ill kept up. In which his family had lived for 7 generations -- a dying facet of American life for sure in this mobile society.

And then they went up to have their dinner on a tray while I waited for Lyndon.

He came in about 9:00, borne along on a wave of elation that was at complete variance to his physical looks. He looked pale and tired and his voice croaked like a frog. But he was elated. "Oh, you ought have been with me", he said. "It was the finest thing you ever saw."

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He had just been to a Reception which was given in his honor by the highest ranking Negro appointees of his Administration -- Supreme Court Justice, Thurgood Marshall, was the main spokesman. And he made a wonderful speech he said. And there had been about 350 guests at the Sheraton-Carlton. Bob Weaver of the Cabinet and Clifford Alexander of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. And Andy Bremer of the Federal Reserve Board. And Whitney Young and Roy Wilkins.

They had given him a desk set with the inscription, "To President Johnson - In deep appreciation from the Negro officials you've appointed". And Thurgood Marshall had said, "The people in this room have come for just one purpose -- to say 'thank you Mr. President'. You didn't wait. You took the bull by the horns. You didn't wait for the times. You made it." And Lyndon was all aglow. At least his spirits were.

We had dinner and we went to bed. But that was not the end of the day. Sometime in the middle of the night he called me. He was shaking with a chill. "I am freezing" he said. I piled on cover and rubbed his back real fast and tried to warm him up. I called one of the Chiefs. They came up and took his temperature. And I read alarm in the voice and in the face of the Chief. He wanted to call the doctor. No, said Lyndon, I will be all right.

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But the night was just a series of up and down trips for the Chief. And a little later he did call the doctor -- I think maybe it was about 4:00. And finally when the doctor came he was quite insistent that Lyndon should go to the hospital -- he proposed that they go very early in the morning.

Lyndon thinks of all sorts of things -- the stock market, the next day or two's appointments and decisions, the rumor machines whenever it is necessary for him to decide whether or not to go to the hospital. He said, "No, we will go about 8:00 or 9:00 if we have to."

And finally, somewhere in the early morning we drifted off to sleep and slept until 8:00. And then the doctors came in mass and he was sick enough and willing enough to go to the hospital. And that is when I felt that the day finally came to an end, because I went to my room and tumbled into the bed for a brief hour of oblivion before I began Wednesday.