

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Thursday, August 8, 1968

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It began in the VIP suite of Brooke Hospital in San Antonio far too early after the preparation the night before for today's tests, and a restless, gruesome night.

Then at 7:00 the nurse waked me. We went downstairs for the X-rays -- they were awful. I was back in my room by 8:00, and in a little while Lyndon came in and sat down by my bed. He looked very sad, and his brown eyes were full of tears. I don't think he knew I knew it, but he didn't have much to say. But he made me think there might be something to the fears I have had about what cause these stomach pains. Incredibly they returned at 9:00 and said they wanted me to come back and have some more tests. They had told me I was all through. These were even worse. And in the course of them one of the doctors said portentously and cryptically, "I sure am glad we've repeated this." I did not know what he meant. It could be very good. They hadn't found what they thought they'd found. Or quite bad.

They took me back to my suite, limp and exhausted about 9:00 and I crept into bed, and hours passed. All this time Lyndon was having tests. I had thought we were leaving for the Ranch. His tests were only supposed to take a very short while.

Finally, Dr. Lukash came in -- a very kind and gentle man -- and told me that a maze -- an obstruction they thought they had seen in

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the first set of X-rays -- had been revealed as just a valve -- an oversized valve, and quite a normal thing -- in the second X-rays. So we could all breathe a sigh of relief about me. They hadn't found anything wrong. It was just probably a reaction to the sulphur drug or one of those mysterious, not-understood things that they always label a virus. But then, he went on, they had found in Lyndon along the diverticulum in his colon this small growth -- quite tiny really -- that they might have to remove. They would make more tests after a liquid diet early next week. And what of this growth? It might or might not be malignant. ~~The~~ chances in fact were very small that it would be. But they did not feel that they could securely advise him to ^{just let} ~~just let~~ it stay there. I homed in at once on the feeling that they would get it out and soon and it would not be malignant. And the most that it would take from his life was about six weeks of relatively reduced activity. It was a bad few days until they did find that it wasn't malignant. It would have been the same with me if I had had it I think -- my assurance would have.

The morning seemed to last forever. Finally about 12:00 Lyndon came in and we left together. The doctors issued a statement about him. There were cameramen at the front door, and a friendly crowd waving and screaming. We smiled and waved back.

And then we choppered to the Ranch. And there Lyndon's work waited for him. Arthur Okun had come down in the middle of the morning

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from Washington. They worked. We had lunch with Mr. Okun and Jesse Kellum and Don Thomas and A. W.

And after lunch I went to bed -- glad to be there and unmolested by any tests -- reading "Nicholas and Alexandra". And Lyndon and Jesse and Don and A. W. went driving.

The view out my window is a delight. Early this summer the corn was young and a very fresh green, and every day it seemed taller. Then on our last visit we had had fresh roasted ears coming into the table every day. And I could see James going out for them. Now it is the real hot middle of summer, and the corn is all in the freezer and the stalks are getting sere and dry at the edges. But even as I laid there and watched Dale come along in the shredder I think it was and mowed it down -- row after row. And before long it would be time to turn it under. But by then I will be watching the maximillion daisies -- an eight foot stock of gold at the left of the window and behind them a Spanish oak that will be red in November.

About 5:30 I felt lively enough to get up and go and join Lyndon and Don and Jesse and A. W. Marie Fehmer and Doris Kearns were along too. We rode until dinner time.

It is still the time of fire flies -- hundreds of them, twinkling along close to the ground, especially thick in the grove on the way down past Oriole's to the cemetery. That is always a place of mystery to me.

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It was a night of a full moon. The doves are still flying in pairs. And in all of our neighbors' fields, hay stands in bales, freshly cut on the ground waiting to be picked up. The country is still wonderfully green -- even in August. The wind is a caress. In fact just the weather is enough to make you glad to be alive. The only thing lacking is to feel really good. Lyndon does not. Nor do I. And all of the long talks I've had on the telephone this afternoon, I could not give any definite answers to Bess or Liz on any dates -- anything in the future. I told them that I would decide early next week. I could not tell them. We have to wait until Monday to see what these tests show. That is one of the wonderful things about being out of this job. We can both be sick on our own time. Nevertheless this is the best time in all the years here I suppose to take off -- with all attention on first one convention, and then soon the next. All eyes on politics. This is the best time for us to have a little time off. But what an unplanned ^{way} to spend it.

We had dinner at 9:30. Never can we bring ourselves into the table while there is still light in the sky. It is too beautiful a show to miss. The table is always full -- Don and Jesse and Marie and Doris -- whom I like better all the time -- and Tom. And how glad I am that he will be with Lyndon.

After dinner, Lyndon went swimming with as many of the folks as he could corral. And I went to bed, annoyed at myself for not being more adventurous. And yet quite ready to go to bed.