



H. R. Haldeman Diaries Collection, January 18, 1969 – April 30, 1973

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Wednesday, March 17.

Whitney Young's funeral. We left fairly early with a plane loaded with black leaders and a few top staff people.

The President did a superlative job in his ad-lib eulogy, which ran about seven minutes and was an outstanding example of the type of thing he can do in this area. That leads us back to the same old problem of follow-up. Thurgood Marshall, for example, on the plane coming home, had some very positive comments regarding the talk. The question now is what good did it do, is there any follow-up? The important thing, of course, is the little asides and the reaction, not the actual coverage which will be pretty good since it was carried live on all three networks.

Somehow we've got to make the point of no notes, and all of that. It's another prime example of the thing: if Kennedy had done this, the press would be ecstatic, especially since this whole area of civil rights, etcetera, is really the press' issue anyway. One rather remarkable point was the President's use of a quotation or comparison drawn from a lecture that Lon Fuller had given several years ago at Yale, which the President remembered from reading a book over the weekend, regarding "the morality of law versus the morality of aspiration"—I guess it was "the morality of order versus the morality of aspiration." And he used that as a thesis for one segment of his talk which was very impressive, and will be doubly so if we're able to get it out somehow in our follow-up.

He spent a good bit of time this afternoon on the phone talking to various people, since he had nothing scheduled after return from the funeral. In talking to Safire, he became very disturbed because Bill had been talking to Sidey and Osborne, etcetera, and was making the point that the President is seeing a lot more people and talking a lot more openly now as part of a PR plan to improve his image. He, of course, is very distressed that anybody would suggest this, and particularly distressed that Safire would think it was a good idea to push this kind of a line. For this reason he wanted me to talk to Safire, which I later did, and get him straightened out on the fact that all of what we've been doing has been planned in advance and is a part of the same



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pattern we've been following all along. He's terribly anxious that we not let out the idea that we're changing our PR approach, adding a lot of interviews and that sort of thing, to try and hustle things. He feels Safire needs the facts so that he isn't in the danger of building stories on a myth. And he also feels that we must not be defensive and must not concede the point to these people: we have to nail the lie. Actually, Bill agrees and was taking the same approach, but on a somewhat different basis in that he recognizes that we having stepped up our activity, the press knows we have, and they're going to write that we have. So we should try to turn that around to a plus rather than pretending that it doesn't exist.

The fascinating point that the President raised apparently had been brought up by Bob Abplanalp, which was the observation of the enormous uplifting effect of the Clay-Frazier fight. It had the chemistry and drama that really lifted public spirits. The President feels that this proves that we need an event something like the first moon landing, and so forth, that people need to be caught up in a great event and taken out of their humdrum existence, and that we need to find more of this, more possibilities in this regard.

Tricia's engagement announcement and the rest of the party last night apparently went very well. Got extremely good press today, and ought to carry us with the excitement of it, and so forth, through the summer period. In fact, this may be one of the event-type things that the President's talking about, if we can build it and take advantage of it properly.

End of March 17.