

# WASHINGTON REPORT

## The Sun Was Terribly Hot That Day...

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Penn State passed us in Maryland, and the kids all waved the "peace" sign and clenched fists as they sailed by us. As we approached Washington, more students were hitch-hiking on entrance ramps. The day before, the *Detroit Free Press* told us 30,000 were expected in Washington. Now the radio said 100,000, but looked like more yet!

Before we reached the District of Columbia, we missed the two other cars we were traveling with. That meant that we would have no place to stay once we got there. Not knowing what we would find, we decided to go to George Washington University.

Washington was beautiful, as it always is this time of year. The trees had broad green leaves, and flowers were everywhere. It was like mid-summer, and hot. All of the houses on Embassy Row looked as though they cost a million. But there were other houses, not so far away, which were in the worst slum you can imagine.

At George Washington we were directed to the Harlan Brewer Building, the students' "White House" as someone called it. There we were given the phone number of someone who had opened up their home for the students.

Our destination was the home of a geologist who works with the Smithsonian, Dr. Newman. His family had donated their recreation room for people to stay in, and we rolled out our sleeping bags.

President Nixon was holding a televised news conference a few minutes after we arrived. Everyone watched intently, and although Nixon said that he wanted everything the students wanted, other things he told the press made him a liar. He told us that expanding the war would help end the war, and that more deaths could bring an end to the killing. He said that the rhetoric should be kept "cool," but defended his use of the word "bums." He held a moment of silence for a dead newsman, but no silence for dead blacks or dead students.

The next morning we slept late. When we got up, we learned that Dr. Newman and his wife would also attend the rally on the Elipse. Their daughter, Marty, would also be there. Mrs. Newman thought that it would be a good idea if we all carried a wet handkerchief in a plastic bag in case we were tear-gassed.

We parked our car in a faculty lot at George Washington, and walked the few blocks toward the White House. Along the way, student "Marshals" from the New Mobilization Committee were posted to keep us on the sidewalk, direct us to areas for medical aid, and give us phone numbers for legal aid. The crowd was so vast that you could see neither the beginning or the end of it.

The D.C. Police had brought in busses to block off Pennsylvania Avenue so that there was no possible way to get to the front of the White House. When we got to the Elipse behind the White House there were busses there, too, so that there was no way to see the White House short of standing on the speaker's stand, the Washington Monument (which was closed), or flying in an airplane. Those were also the only ways of seeing the whole crowd.

The list of speakers was impressive, although they stood so far away that none of them were visible. Mrs. Coretta Scott King spoke briefly. Dr. Benjamin Spock, Dave Dellinger, Phil Ochs, Judy Collins, Jane Fonda, someone from Women's Lib and a Panther also spoke. They were hard to hear, and the heat, in the 90's, was just too much. The sun was terribly hot, and water fountains were mobbed.

"That was not Mr. Nixon you



Some of those attending the Washington rally sought relief from the hot sun by taking a dip in the Reflecting Pool at the foot of the Lincoln Memorial, shown in the background.

Photo by Ed Kozlowski

saw on TV last night," said one of the speakers, "that was his Advertising Agency!"

The rally lasted about three hours. As it broke up we were told by the speakers that there would be a march some workshops. None of us were able to hear where they would be, however.

At the end of the rally, three army trucks and a jeep pulled up a short distance from us. They were stopped for quite a while, and the soldiers were talking to the people in the crowds. The soldiers, too, were sick of Vietnam. The next thing we knew, all of the students were climbing into the trucks—some of them waving Viet Cong flags. My wife and I jumped on the first truck.

We were all packed in like sardines, and had no idea of where the soldiers might take us. "Maybe we're all going to the gas chambers," joked one of the students.

We weren't going to be gassed, we found out. We were only going a few blocks, waving and shouting for the end of the war, before being stopped by other soldiers. The troops ordered us out, and we all climbed off the "liberated" Army trucks.

As we left, many of us shook hands with the friendly soldiers in the trucks. "Those guys will probably end up in the stockade," someone said.

The trucks had left us only a short distance from a fountain and the reflection pool in front of the Lincoln Memorial. A great crowd had gathered around the fountain,

where many students were wading and splashing the water to avoid the heat. Many of the students of both sexes were completely or partly naked, and everyone accepted it as the normal thing. I stripped down to my shorts and joined the fully dressed and fully nude in the refreshing pool.

We all met back at the car at about 5:00 p.m., and exchanged experiences. Jody and Ed, the two other guys with our group, had followed the march from the Elipse. The New Mobe Marshals had lost a battle with some "crazies" who wanted a little violence, and smashed some bus windows. The police reacted by throwing a few tear-gas canisters, one of which went off a few feet from Jody.

"The (New Mobe) medics grabbed me right away, and hauled me about a block to their medical center," Jody told me. "They hosed me down right away to get the stuff off of me. They were really great." The medics were medical students from George Washington and other area colleges.

We had run into some of the other Northern students earlier in the day, and had agreed to meet them at the MacDonald's in Arlington. Nobody had said which MacDonald's to go to though, and so we never found them. Instead, we found several girls from the University of Bridgeport in Connecticut. The girls told us that Bridgeport had become a "Free University" open to the community as a result of the Kent State incident and aftermath. Students there have four alternatives: 1) take your grade as it stands now, 2) take it on "pass-fail," 3) take an incomplete and make it up next year, 4) or take individual instruction arranged by the faculty. This, they hoped, would leave Bridgeport for the people who wanted to learn. The students are also taking the issues they are concerned with to the people of the city of Bridgeport.

We decided to take our "Bridgeport Plan" and another plan for a national congress of colleges to the leaders of the New Mobilization Committee, as we had felt that the day had lacked some direction. When we got back to George Washington University, however, getting in touch with the New Mobe proved difficult.

New Mobe Headquarters were in

the Student Union at George Washington. Once in the Student Union, we all looked for the rest room. Someone pointed me in a door, and I went in. The first room was filled with sinks and mirrors, with guys at them. A girl came out of the area where the toilets were.

"Oh, this must be the girls' john."

"It was," she said, "but it's been liberated. Come on in."

Guys and girls found nothing unusual about a "liberated" rest room. "After all, everyone excretes!" said someone in our group. "We used to segregate the races in our johns. Now the only people we segregate are the sexes."

We all regrouped in the lobby, and some of us went up to the New Mobe offices. The halls were a mess, and confusion seemed to be the rule of the day. People in the New Mobe room were having an emergency meeting, and we were asked to come back the next day. "There's been a Federal Injunction, and a demonstration at Dupont Circle is being thrown back here by the cops," they told us.

We went back to the Newmans', watched the news, and went to bed.

The next morning, Sunday, three of us went to the Unitarian Church with the Newmans. The speaker had been a friend of Ghandi, and spoke on "Ways to meet oppression." After the service we had coffee and anti-war literature. The church had been open to student demonstrators for the weekend.

Dr. Newman, who is president of the Washington P.T.A., talked us into staying for Monday and job interviewing for schools in the area. So on Monday we interviewed and saw our Congressmen before leaving.

Philip Ruppe, the Representative from this district, told us that he supports Nixon's policies and will back George Romney's wife in the Senate race. He also told us that he disagreed with us.

The trip home was a long one, but on the way Paul Harvey told us the news over the radio: "The Nixon Administration has announced that the first men have already come out of Cambodia. They also said that Saturday's student demonstration at the Elipse had nothing to do with their decision. But it did!"



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