The original documents are located in Box 26, "3/25/76 - Remarks at a Dinner for Members and Guests of the Radio and Television Correspondents Association" of the President's Speeches and Statements: Reading Copies at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN

RADIO-TELEVISION CORRESPONDENTS DINNER

THURSDAY, MARCH 25, 1976

TO THE LECTERN ... APPROACHING WITH A SHEAF OF PAPERS IN

ONE HAND AND THE SPEECH BOOK IN THE OTHER. PUTTING THE

SHEAF OF PAPERS ON THE LECTERN, HE LETS THEM CASCADE TO

THE FLOOR AND BEGINS WITH APLOMB:

NOTE: THIS DEPENDS ON AVAILABILITY OF REHEARSAL TIME.

BILL GREENWOOD, BOB FOSTER, DISTINGUISHED MEMBERS

AND GUESTS OF THE RADIO AND TELEVISION CORRESPONDENTS

ASSOCIATION -- AND IN PARTICULAR, MR. CHEVY CHASE.

GOOD EVENING.

I'M GERALD FORD

(POINTING AT CHASE) AND YOU'RE NOT!

FIRST, I WANT TO CONGRATULATE "UP WITH PEOPLE"

FOR THEIR MAGNIFICENT PERFORMANCE AND I ALSO WANT TO THANK

THEM FOR ELIMINATING FROM THEIR REPERTOIRE TONIGHT ONE

RATHER SENSITIVE SONG: NOTHING COULD BE FINER THAN TO BE

IN CAROLINA IN THE MORNING."

I ALSO WANT TO COMMEND THE RADIO AND T.V.

CORRESPONDENTS' ASSOCIATION ON THEIR VERY INTERESTING CHOICE

OF MASTER OF CEREMONIES. THAT'S ALL I NEED

NORTH CAROLINA AND CHEVY CHASE IN THE SAME WEEK.

NO, I REALLY ENJOYED HIS FINE PERFORMANCE.

MR. CHEVY CHASE, YOU'RE A VERY, VERY, FUNNY SUBURB.

CHEVY CHASE TO WASHINGTON - AND IN RETURN, ON APRIL 17th,

WASHINGTON IS SENDING THE SATURDAY NIGHT SHOW OUR VERY OWN

RON NESSEN TO BE THEIR GUEST HOST.

AND BACK AT THE WHITE HOUSE, WE'RE REALLY LOOKING FORWARD

TO THAT EVENING. WE HAVE EVERY REASON TO EXPECT THAT RON

WILL DO FOR THE SATURDAY NIGHT SHOW WHAT JIMMY CARTER

HAS DONE FOR GEORGE WALLACE.

NOW, DON'T MISUNDERSTAND, I HAVE NOTHING

AGAINST RON NESSEN BECOMING A PERFORMER. I LIKE

SHOW BUSINESS. I LIKE THE PEOPLE IN SHOW BUSINESS.

IN FACT, ALL MY LIFE I HAVE HAD NOTHING BUT RESPECT AND

ADMIRATION FOR SHOW BUSINESS PERSONALITIES. IT'S JUST

THAT I WOULDN'T WANT MY DAUGHTER VOTING FOR ONE.



IT IS A GREAT EXPERIENCE TO BE HERE TONIGHT.

I SEE THE WINE AND THE EXQUISITELY PREPARED FOOD -- THE MEN
IN THEIR TUXEDOS AND THE WOMEN IN THEIR BEAUTIFUL, SHIMMERING
EVENING GOWNS, AND I CAN'T HELP BUT THINK IT'S ALMOST
LIKE NEW YEAR'S EVE IN FRED HARRIS'S CAMPER.

INCIDENTALLY, I COULDN'T HELP BUT NOTICE THAT THIS

ENTIRE SHOW WITH CHEVY CHASE HAS BEEN PUT ON AFTER THE

"FAMILY HOUR." FRANKLY, I REALLY DON'T KNOW THAT MUCH ABOUT

THE FAMILY HOUR. IN FACT, I ALWAYS THOUGHT THE "FAMILY HOUR"

HAD SOMETHING TO DO WITH SARGENT SHRIVER'S CAMPAIGN.

IT WAS INSPIRED BY THE FAMILY AND IT LASTED

AN HOUR.

BEFORE I CLOSE, I WANT YOU TO KNOW HOW MUCH

I HAVE ENJOYED THIS EVENING. AND THROUGHOUT THE PAST YEAR

SINCE WE LAST GOT TOGETHER, I'VE ALSO ENJOYED THE GIVE AND

TAKE, THE FRIENDSHIPS, THE SOFTBALL QUESTIONS AND THE

HARDBALL QUESTIONS, I CAN ALWAYS COUNT ON FROM THE MEMBERS

OF THIS ASSOCIATION

ON THE BOTTOM LINE WE BOTH PLAY AN ONGOING PART

IN ONE OF THE GREATEST FREEDOMS AMERICA HAS TO OFFER.

AS JEFFERSON PUT IT: "THE LIBERTY OF SPEAKING AND WRITING GUARDS
OUR OTHER LIBERTIES."

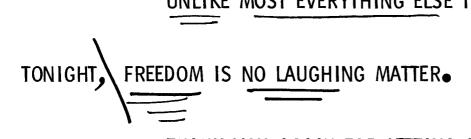
THAT'S AN ENORMOUS RESPONSIBILITY.

THE REMARKABLE THING IS THAT IT WORKS AND

HAS WORKED FOR 200 YEARS.

IN A WORLD THAT HAS SEEN THE GRADUAL SHRINKAGE
IN MEDIA FREEDOMS, AMERICANS CAN TAKE HEART AND TAKE PRIDE
IN THE FACT THAT OUR FREEDOMS HAVE ENDURED AND ARE STRONGER
TODAY THAN EVER.

UNLIKE MOST EVERYTHING ELSE THAT HAS BEEN SAID



THANK YOU AGAIN FOR LETTING ME SHARE

THIS EVENING WITH YOU.

END OF TEXT