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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

April 22, 1976

ADMINISTRATIVELY CONFIDENTIAL

MEMORANDUM FOR:

RON NESSEN

FROM:

JIM CONNOR *J.C.*

The President reviewed your memorandum of April 20 concerning Dick Schaap's article in SPORT magazine concerning the White House Athlete's prayer breakfast he attended and the column written for the INDIANAPOLIS STAR by Tom Keating. He made the following notation:

'Excellent'

cc: Dick Cheney

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN.....

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

April 20, 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: RON NESSEN

RHW

I ran into Dick Schaap, the sports writer, in New York, and he asked me to show you this recent article he wrote for "Sport" magazine concerning the White House Athlete's prayer breakfast he attended.

Also attached is the column written for the Indianapolis Star by Tom Keating after his recent visit with you in the Oval Office.

Attachments:

Sport Magazine
Article by Tom Keating

gmc 9
Excellent

THOMAS R. KEATING

A Visit With The President

WASHINGTON, D.C.—At precisely 4:30 p.m. yesterday, the door to the Oval Office of the White House opened and there was President Gerald R. Ford working behind a cluttered desk.

Just what I was doing in the White House for a chat with the President is a little hard to figure but thanks to Max Friedersdorf, a former Indianapolis newspaperman who now is a top presidential aide, the meeting was arranged.

Mr. Ford bounced up from behind his desk to shake hands warmly as a White House photographer snapped pictures from a dozen angles.

As he directed the group, which included press secretary Ron Nessen and Indianapolis Star Washington correspondent Ben Cole to easy chairs, Mr. Ford looked larger and stronger than expected. His wide face and thick hands are those of an ex-athlete.

OUTSIDE, the Rose Garden was at its peak and the sunshine brightened a room already painted and carpeted a dazzling white.

Mr. Ford quickly asked how Mayor Bill Hudnut was getting along and how the political scene looked in Indiana, and then talked of his admiration for Indiana Governor Otis R. Bowen.

That out of the way, Mr. Ford commented that although Indiana University had defeated the University of Michigan, his alma mater, three times this year in basketball, the Wolverines had given the Hoosiers their toughest games.

"I WATCHED the overtime game on television," Mr. Ford said. "Benson was just too much. He's a real man. But watch out next year. I think Michigan only loses one player."

Amazing! So far this week I've talked with Woody Hayes, a half dozen congressmen and the President of the United States and the first thing they want to talk about is I.U. basketball.



The President went on to say he would be in Indiana soon to campaign prior to the May 4 primary.

"That reminds me of something," Mr. Ford said suddenly. "You know, up to now this year's campaign has been on a high level and I thought Ron (Reagan) would see it stayed that way. But evidently I was wrong."

After directing an aide to get a newspaper from his desk, Mr. Ford frowned at an open page and handed it over for inspection.

The object of his displeasure was a four-page ad in last Sunday's Milwaukee Journal entitled "Should We Sell the White House?" It was paid for by an organization called "Florida Friends of Reagan," and was packed with some pretty rough statements about Mr. Ford.

"WHAT DO YOU do with something like that?" Mr. Ford asked. "It's terrible and, to be honest, I've called it a lot worse things the last few days."

As Mr. Ford puffed away on his pipe, he seemed to relax and the conversation turned to Indiana history and a visit he may make soon to Vincennes.

"Is unemployment a big concern in Indiana?" Mr. Ford inquired. "All our surveys show inflation is the No. 1 worry people have today."

Before he could elaborate, an aide appeared through a hardly visible door and hovered over the President's shoulder with a note.

MR. FORD examined the note carefully, cupping it sideways in his hand like a card player, and then nodded to the aide and placed the note face down on a table.

He talked on for a while but his attention obviously had been diverted and before long he stood up slowly to indicate he had to go.

We had been talking for 25 minutes and Mr. Ford had created such an easy, relaxed atmosphere you forgot you were in the Oval Office and that the man joking next to you was the President.

White House employes, who have gone through some rough years recently, says that feeling is the best thing about the Ford administration.

SPORT TALK 55



TRAINING TABLE

Andy Messersmith, the emancipated pitcher, was sharing a meal with Bill Madlock, the Chicago Cubs' batting champion who devours pitchers. Kyle Rote Jr., the high-scoring Dallas soccer star, was breaking bread with Bob Rigby, the New York Cosmos' goalie who loves to leave high scorers hungry. Elvin Hayes of the Washington Bullets was eating with Philadelphia's Billy Cunningham, instead of trying to belt him with an elbow, and, strangest mealfellows of all, George Allen of the Washington Redskins was dining in the same room with Tom Landry of the Dallas Cowboys, and neither was gagging.

What extraordinary power had

Usually, when Dallas coach Tom Landry comes to Washington, people want to wring his neck, not shake his hand.

brought all these natural enemies together in outward peace and harmony? Presidential power. They had all accepted handsomely engraved invitations to brunch in the home of a former University of Michigan center named Gerald R. Ford.

The invitations to a Presidential Prayer Brunch for Professional Athletes had prompted more than 100 sportsmen and sportswomen, most of them accompanied by wife or husband, to abandon their homes the day after Valentine's Day, 1976, and travel, at their own expense, to Washington, D.C. There, in the East Room of the White House, where kings and

prime ministers have feasted, the pro jocks dined upon fruit cup, baked ham, asparagus tips, grilled tomato stuffed with capon and mushrooms, and coconut cream pie—all served up by a battalion of tuxedoed waiters. Training table was never like this. The total crowd swelled to close to 300, including friends of the President, friends of the athletes and even a few token sportswriters.

President Ford welcomed the group and said that, for one of the few times in his brief White House existence, he was thoroughly pleased by the guest list. He was surrounded by the sort of people he preferred, not by people selected by his wife and/or the State Department. The President confessed that, despite the demands of his job, he still read the sports pages of the daily newspapers first each morning, on the theory that he was less likely to encounter personal criticism in that corner of the press.

After the President's remarks, eight of the athletes in attendance spoke—with varying degrees of nervousness, wit and charm—on behalf of all the athletes. The eight were Norm Evans of the Miami Dolphins, runner Madeline Manning Jackson, Calvin Jones of the Denver Broncos, pro golfer Rik Massengale, pro tennis player Dennis Ralston, figure skater Janet Lynn Salomon, Kyle Rote Jr. and Philadelphia pitcher Jim Kaat. Each of the eight talked about how he, or she, had accepted Christ into his, or her, life and had, because of it, become a better person.

Most of the athletes mixed a little humor into their religious statements. Norm Evans said that he came from an area in Texas so remote "we had to go toward town to do some hunting." Jim Kaat defined a religious fanatic as "someone who knows Jesus better than you do." And Calvin Jones told of W. C. Fields reading the Bible on his deathbed and, upon being asked why he of all people was reading that of all books, saying, "Looking for loopholes, looking for loopholes."

Rik Massengale mixed a little statistical evidence into his religious statement. Since accepting Christ, said Massengale, he had gone from 127th to 25th on golf's money-winning list.

The spirit of love was so great at the Presidential Brunch that no one bothered to ask Massengale why the Lord hadn't carried him right up to the top ten.

—Dick Schaap

MEEK JOE GREENE

When SPORT decided to put Pittsburgh's Joe Greene on the cover of the December issue, staring up at a fugitive from "Jaws," under a cover line saying, "Who's Afraid of Mean Joe Greene? EVERYBODY," we wondered what the All-Pro tackle's reaction would be.

A few days before Super Bowl X, Greene seemed to be in a good mood, so we asked him. "I thought it was funny," he said, "and you want to know the funniest part? I saw that movie—and I'll tell you the truth: That shark scared the hell out of me."

—D.S.

CHANGING TRAINS

The National Football League Players Association tossed a party the night before the Super Bowl, and among the ex-players on hand was Jerry Kramer, the former All-Pro guard for the Green Bay Packers. When Kramer walked into the party, the first man he spotted was an old foe, Dick "Night Train" Lane, once the sleekest and slickest of defensive backs.

At least Kramer thought it was Lane. The face looked familiar enough, but the body was new. Lane played for the Detroit Lions at 195 pounds, but he could now pass for a defensive tackle.

Kramer made certain it was Lane, then couldn't resist a needle: "Hey, Night Train," he yelled, "you've turned into a freight train."

Lane wasn't offended. He came over and patted Kramer on his own expanding waistline.

—D.S.

SLIDE, T.J., SLIDE!

Baseball managers are regularly pestered each spring by individuals seeking tryouts. In Frank, Frank Robinson's book on his rookie season as a major-league manager, he recounts the rare talent one would-be big leaguer demonstrated for him:

During the winter of 1974-75, while I was managing in Puerto Rico for the sixth year, I got a long-distance call from a guy who identified himself as T.J. O'Hays.

"I got a slide I want to show you," he said.

"Is that all you can do is slide?" I asked him.

"That's all I have to do," he said. "I'm only twenty-nine. I can be your pinch-runner. I want to show you a slide that even if the fielder has the ball waiting on the runner, there's no way he can make the tag."

"What does the runner do—disappear?"

"Let me show you at spring training?"

"But the ballclub has to invite you."

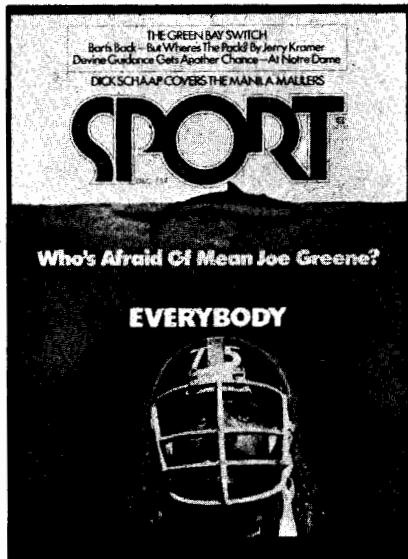
"I'll pay all my own expenses," he said.

"All right, if you pay your expenses."

I forgot about that conversation until my phone rang one night in Arizona. It was T.J. O'Hays.

"I'll see you in Mesa tomorrow," he announced.

"See me about what?" I said. "Who is this?"



"About the slide," he said. "I called you in Puerto Rico." Then I remembered. "I showed the slide to the A's today," he said. "I showed it to Finley, he's some kind of kook. But that Reggie Jackson is a class guy. You ask Reggie about me, he'll tell you I'm all right. I'll see you at the A's game in Mesa tomorrow."

Soon after we got to the visiting clubhouse in Mesa, where the A's train, a stranger walked in and put a little bag on a bench. He had longish, straggly blond hair but if he's 29, then I'm 29, too. All the coaches and the ballplayers were wondering who he was when he walked over to me.

"T.J. O'Hays," he said. "I called you about the slide."

"Well, yeah," I said. "But we don't have a uniform." I was hoping he wouldn't say that he had his own in his little bag.

"I'll get one from the A's," T.J. said. "From Reggie."

I was on the field when he strolled out wearing a pair of A's pants, a windbreaker over his shirt and carrying his little bag. He had on a pair of spikes with protective metal plates on each side. He pulled out of his bag two large sponges which he taped over his pants on each hip.

"I'm ready," T.J. said.

We walked down toward the right-field corner beyond our dugout. I threw a loose base on the grass in front of me.

"Stay right there by the bag," T.J. said.

He trotted some 30 feet away, then he turned and ran at me as if I were covering the bag. Suddenly he did a flip in the air with a Kung Fu kick and he landed on the base with one foot, *whomp*.

"See that?" T.J. said. "No way a fielder is going to stay at the base. He's going to see that foot coming down and he's going to flinch and I'm safe."

"Well, it's different."

"I could teach your players that slide in fifteen minutes."

"But they might get hurt."

"Not when they learn how to do it," T.J. said.

"What about until they learn to do it?" I said.

KING KUSH

Not long ago, when one of the Phoenix television stations was replaying the 1975 Fiesta Bowl game between Arizona State and Nebraska, the coach of Arizona State, Frank Kush, did not bother to watch his team's greatest victory. He had to watch something else. He had to watch the local educational station, because it was showing the film, "Son of King Kong."

"Well, you could say I am a King Kong freak," Kush admits. "I've seen the original movie oh, maybe, twenty or twenty-five times."

"I see Kong up there on the Empire State Building, and I wonder how some of our guys would stack up against him. He'd make a tremendous middle guard. He could close down both sides of the line at once. He's what I call a do-everything guy. He's got all the moves. He could be one of the all-time greats."

King Kush, coach of the country's second-ranked team last season, shakes his