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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

THANK YOU HELEN (or thank you madam
President)

MEMBERS AND GUESTS OF THE
WHITE HOUSE CORRESPONDENTS ASSOCIATION

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN *dg*

WHITE HOUSE CORRESPONDENTS DINNER

SATURDAY, MAY 3, 1975

(ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS)

I DO APPRECIATE THAT RATHER KIND AND GENTLE INTRODUCTION
BECAUSE HELEN THOMAS HAS A WELL-EARNED REPUTATION FOR SPEAKING
HER OWN MIND. I CAN REMEMBER SOME YEARS AGO, WHEN I WAS
STILL A CONGRESSMAN, HELEN AND I WERE WALKING DOWN PENNSYLVANIA
AVENUE WHEN WE PASSED ONE OF THOSE SCALES THAT GIVES YOU YOUR
WEIGHT AND YOUR FORTUNE. -- ALL FOR A PENNY.

HELEN SAID, "WHY DON'T YOU TRY IT? I MIGHT GET A SCOOP."

SO I GOT ON THE SCALE, PUT IN A PENNY, A CARD CAME OUT AND IT

SAID: "YOU ARE HANDSOME, DEBONAIR, SOPHISTICATED, A BORN

LEADER OF MEN, A SILVER-TONGUED ORATOR, AND SOME DAY YOU WILL

MAKE YOUR MARK IN HISTORY." HELEN LEANED OVER, LOOKED AT THE

CARD, AND SAID, "IT HAS YOUR WEIGHT WRONG TOO!"

IT IS A GREAT PLEASURE TO BE HERE TONIGHT AND
WITHOUT FURTHER DELAY, LET ME CONGRATULATE THE DISTINGUISHED
MEMBERS OF THE WHITE HOUSE CORRESPONDENTS' ASSOCIATION
ON YOUR VALIANT, COURAGEOUS, AND SUCCESSFUL STRUGGLE
TO ACHIEVE ONE OF THE GREATEST AND MOST CONSEQUENTIAL
JOURNALISTIC TRIUMPHS OF ALL TIME. I'M REFERRING,
OF COURSE, TO YOUR HEROIC EFFORTS TO KEEP THE PRESS PLANE
FROM CONVERTING TO NO-FRILLS.

I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU SPEND YOUR TIME ON THE
PRESS PLANE. ALL I KNOW IS, EVERY TIME I CALL IT,
I SAY, "THIS IS THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES."
AND A VOICE ANSWERS, "I'LL DRINK TO THAT!"

I KNEW SOMETHING WAS GOING ON WHEN I SAW

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DICK GROWALD WRITE TEN PAGES OF NOTES AT MY TULANE SPEECH ---

AND THAT ISN'T EASY WITH A SWIZZLE STICK.

THEN ALDO BECKMAN CAME OVER, SAID "HELLO,"

AND MELTED MY CUFFLINKS!

BETTY AND I HAVE LOOKED FORWARD TO THIS EVENING
BECAUSE A WHITE HOUSE CORRESPONDENTS' DINNER IS ALWAYS AN
ADVENTURE. FIRST THERE'S THE RECEPTION; FOLLOWED BY
THE DINNER; FOLLOWED BY THE PRIVATE PARTIES; FOLLOWED BY
THE PRIVATE PRIVATE PARTIES; FOLLOWED BY THE NIGHTCAP.
AFTER THE PRIVATE PARTIES. THROUGH THE YEARS, I'VE
FOUND THAT A WHITE HOUSE CORRESPONDENTS' DINNER IS A LITTLE
LIKE ONE OF SARAH McLENDON'S QUESTIONS + YOU NEVER REALLY
KNOW WHEN IT'S FINISHED.

I'VE BEEN COMING TO THESE DINNERS FOR QUITE A
FEW YEARS NOW AND I'M EMBARRASSED TO ADMIT, I DON'T
REALLY KNOW A GREAT DEAL ABOUT HOW THE WHITE HOUSE

CORRESPONDENTS' ASSOCIATION OPERATES.

BUT SINCE I'M ALWAYS INTERESTED IN THE ELECTORAL PROCESS,

I ASKED JIM DEAKIN, "JUST HOW DO YOU GO ABOUT CHOOSING

YOUR PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT?" JIM SAID, "IT'S

RATHER HARD TO EXPLAIN IN A FEW WORDS BUT THE PROCEDURE

DOES HAVE THE SEAL OF APPROVAL." I SAID, "OF WHAT?"

HE SAID, "COOK COUNTY!"

INCIDENTALLY, YOU MAY BE INTERESTED TO KNOW

THAT RON NESSEN'S FAME AS A PRESS SECRETARY AND HIS

UNPARALLELED SKILL AT CARRYING OUT THE DUTIES OF HIS OFFICE ---

HAS SPREAD FAR AND WIDE. LAST WEEK AT THE COLUMBIA

SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM IN NEW YORK CITY, FIFTY GRADUATE

STUDENTS WERE ASKED THIS QUESTION: "IF YOU HAD THE CHANCE

TO STUDY THE ART OF SIMPLE DIRECT COMMUNICATION WITH RON

NESSEN --- WHAT WOULD YOU ASK FOR FIRST?" NINETY-SIX

PERCENT ANSWERED: "ANOTHER CHANCE!"

AND ANOTHER MEMBER OF OUR STAFF HAS ALSO ACHIEVED
CONSIDERABLE RECOGNITION -- DAVID HUME KENNERLY. THE
VERY FIRST DAY DAVE KENNERLY CAME TO THE WHITE HOUSE TO BE MY
PERSONAL PHOTOGRAPHER, HE SHOOK MY HAND AND PROMISED TO DO
FOR ME EXACTLY WHAT HE HAD DONE FOR HIS LAST EMPLOYER.

I SAID, "GREAT!" THEN I REMEMBERED WHO HE HAD WORKED FOR ---
LIFE!"

AS MOST OF YOU KNOW FROM THE SCHEDULE, THIS HAS
BEEN A VERY LONG, BUSY AND EXHAUSTING DAY AT THE WHITE HOUSE.

I SPENT THE MORNING WORKING ON MY NEW BOOK: A WEEK IN THE

LIFE OF JOHN HERSEY AND IN THE AFTERNOON, I TALKED TO

SONNY JURGENSON. NOW THAT HE'S NO LONGER WITH THE

WASHINGTON REDSKINS, I SUGGESTED TO SONNY THAT HE RUN FOR

CONGRESS. I FIGURE IF THERE'S ONE THING THE CONGRESS CAN USE,

IT'S A LITTLE HELP ON PASSING.

WE'RE ALSO REDECORATING.

I'M SURE YOU'VE ALL

NOTICED THAT THE WHITE HOUSE IS GETTING A NEW COAT OF PAINT.

THE PAINTER SAYS IT'S LEAK-PROOF...~~///~~...I SURE HOPE SO.

BUT I DO HAVE ONE FAVOR TO ASK OF ALL THE
WHITE HOUSE CORRESPONDENTS SITTING HERE TONIGHT. EVERY
FEW YEARS WE HAVE TO PAINT THE WHITE HOUSE. IT'S DONE
FOR REASONS OF MAINTENANCE, ESTHETICS AND APPEARANCE.
SO PLEASE - WOULD YOU JUST REFER TO THIS AS A PAINT JOB -
NOT A COVER-UP?

AND NOW, BEFORE I CLOSE, I HAVE SOME ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
TO MAKE. I WANT TO THANK MARTIN AGRONSKY FOR GIVING PETE
LISAGOR THE NIGHT OFF PETER, AS YOU KNOW, IS ONE OF
WASHINGTON'S FOREMOST TELEVISION PERSONALITIES. IT'S NOT
UNUSUAL FOR HIM TO BE ON FIVE OR SIX SHOWS A WEEK, IN ADDITION
TO LECTURES, TALKS AND PERSONAL APPEARANCES. AND EVERY TIME
HE APPEARS, HE GETS AN ENORMOUS AMOUNT OF FAN MAIL. PETE WAS
TELLING ME THAT JUST THIS MORNING HE GOT A POSTCARD SAYING:
HAVING A WONDERFUL TIME. WISH YOU WERE HERE. IT WAS FROM
THE CHICAGO DAILY NEWS.

THIS HAS BEEN A WONDERFUL EVENING FOR BETTY AND ME,
AND WE THANK YOU ALL FOR IT. YOU KNOW, THERE IS A GREAT
DEAL WRITTEN AND SAID ABOUT THE FIRST FAMILY. THIS
DESIGNATION USUALLY REFERS TO BETTY, ME, ONE DAUGHTER AND
THREE SONS. BUT TO ME, IT DOESN'T HAVE THIS LIMITED
CONNOTATION.

I SEE THE FIRST FAMILY AS BEING AN EXTENDED FAMILY -- ONE

THAT DRAWS IN AND INCLUDES ALL OF THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO MAKE

THE WHITE HOUSE A LIVING, BREATHING AND FUNCTIONING BODY.

IT ENCOMPASSES A HANDFUL OF FORDS, COMPLETELY AND COMFORTABLY

SURROUNDED BY STAFF AND PRESS ALIKE. WE ARE NOT JUST JERRY,

BETTY, SUSAN, JACK, STEVE AND MIKE --- BUT BOB, HELEN, RON,

FRAN, FRANK AND A FEW HUNDRED OTHERS AS WELL.

WE WORK TOGETHER. WE LAUGH TOGETHER. WE

EXCHANGE IDEAS, FACTS AND SPECULATIONS. WE INTERACT.

WE CANNOT FUNCTION WELL WITHOUT EACH OTHER. THIS IS THE

STUFF THAT FAMILIES ARE MADE OF.

AND LIKE ALL FAMILIES, WE HAVE OUR DISAGREEMENTS.

WE TAKE IN AND ASSIMILATE INDIVIDUAL ATTITUDES, CONCERNS,

INTERESTS AND INFORMATION.

THEN WE SHINE THE SPOTLIGHT

OF OUR UNIQUE PERCEPTIONS ON EACH PROBLEM, EACH NEW CHALLENGE.

YOUR SPOTLIGHT IS NOT MINE -- MINE IS NOT YOURS.

SOMETIMES WE DIFFER.

BUT THE ESSENCE AND THE GLORY OF THE TRUE FAMILY

IS THIS: DECISIONS AND CONCLUSIONS MAY BE QUESTIONED --

BUT MOTIVATION AND COMMITMENT ARE NOT. WE SPEAK OUR

DIFFERENCES IN TRUST. WE ACCEPT THAT WE ARE TRAVELERS

HEADING TOWARDS THE SAME DESTINATION. IT IS ONLY THE ROAD

THAT HAS TO BE DETERMINED.

THIS IS THE FIRST FAMILY I KNOW WE ALL WANT TO BE A PART
OF. WE HAVE SHARED SOME OF THESE FEELINGS HERE TONIGHT.

WE SHOULD NEVER ASPIRE TO LESS. THANK YOU AND GOOD NIGHT.

END OF TEXT