

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

[WE OPEN WITH THE PRESIDENT PULLING THE TABLECLOTH AS HE GOES
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 ^{program} ~~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.

I DO APPRECIATE THE SATURDAY NIGHT SHOW SENDING
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.

Slow
IT IS A GREAT EXPERIENCE TO BE HERE TONIGHT.

AS I LOOK OUT OVER THIS VERY DISTINGUISHED AUDIENCE,

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~~ 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

TONIGHT, FREEDOM IS NO LAUGHING MATTER.

THANK YOU AGAIN FOR LETTING ME SHARE

THIS EVENING WITH YOU.

END OF TEXT