

**The original documents are located in Box 30, “5/1/76 - Remarks at 62nd Annual White House Correspondents Dinner, Washington (Includes talking points)” of the President’s Speeches and Statements: Reading Copies at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.**

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**THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN**

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

**62ND ANNUAL WHITE HOUSE CORRESPONDENTS**

**DINNER**

**THANK YOU, LARRY.** (Larry O'Rourke will introduce you)

**MR. VICE PRESIDENT / MRS. ROCKEFELLER**

**MEMBERS OF THE CABINET** (7 at the Head Table)

**HELEN THOMAS**

**MEMBERS AND GUESTS OF THE WHITE HOUSE CORRESPONDENTS  
ASSOCIATION**

TALKING POINTS FOR FIRST PORTION OF WHITE HOUSE CORRESPONDENTS' DINNER

1. Thank Helen Thomas for the gift she presents you on behalf of the WHCA. It is a desk set specially made at Colonial Williamsburg by their master silversmith, William D'Matteo, featuring a ballot box in the center. It is conceived as "A symbol of the basic meaning of our government."

You may want to say you will treasure it along with the silver Liberty Bell which the WHCA gave you in 1974 when you spoke as Vice President. It was supposed to symbolize "Freedom of the Press." Both freedom of the press and free ballot box are basic to our way of life.

2. Commend Helen for her service as President of the WHCA over the past year -- you also spoke at the dinner last year when she was inaugurated. The talk of that evening was that Danny Thomas (no relation) made some jokes that were interpreted as anti women's rights and was rebuked by his own daughter, Marlo.
3. You probably should briefly congratulate the evening's three award winners:

ALDO BECKMAN - Chicago Tribune

(for Sara Jane Moore shooting attempt in San Francisco)

JAMES V. RISSER - Des Moines Register and Tribune

(Two awards -- both for stories exposing grain scandals.)

ALBERT R. HUNT - Wall Street Journal

(for exposing alleged conflicts of interest on tax loopholes)

IT'S GOOD TO BE BACK AMONG ALL MY OLD FRIENDS

I KNOW I HAVE A LOT OF GOOD FRIENDS IN TEXAS,

BUT WE WON'T KNOW EXACTLY HOW MANY FOR A FEW HOURS.

BUT WIN, LOSE OR DRAW, THERE ARE TWO THINGS

I REALLY LEARNED DOWN IN TEXAS --

NEVER UNDERESTIMATE YOUR OPPONENT, AND

ALWAYS SHUCK THE TAMALE.

AS YOU KNOW, I JUST SPENT FOUR DAYS CAMPAIGNING  
DOWN IN TEXAS -- AND THIS MAY COME AS A SURPRISE TO YOU,

BUT I TOTALLY AGREE WITH GOVERNOR REAGON ABOUT THE PANAMA.

(PUT ON PANAMA HAT)      I BOUGHT IT; \ I PAID FOR IT; \

I OWN IT; \ IT'S MINE AND I'M GOING TO KEEP IT! (TAKE OFF HAT)

I GUESS EVERY CANDIDATE FALLS IN LOVE

WITH CERTAIN LINES AND CERTAIN PHRASES•

I UNDERSTAND THAT MY OPPONENT IN THE PRIMARIES HAS EVEN BEEN

KNOWN, ON OCCASION, TO REPEAT AN ENTIRE SPEECH.

I DON'T KNOW IF THIS IS TRUE, BUT I UNDERSTAND MY OPPONENT

HAS GIVEN THAT SAME SPEECH FOR SO MANY YEARS,

THE VERY FIRST TIME HE GAVE IT, THE LITTLE SEVEN YEAR OLD GIRL

HE MENTIONS AT THE END WAS SARAH McCLENDON.



GOVERNOR REAGAN AND I DO HAVE ONE THING IN COMMON•

WE BOTH PLAYED FOOTBALL, I PLAYED FOR MICHIGAN,

HE PLAYED FOR WARNER BROTHERS•

BUT, YOU KNOW, AFTER THE HEAT OF THE CAMPAIGN  
DIES DOWN, I'M SURE THERE WILL BE A PLACE FOR THE GOVERNOR  
IN THE ADMINISTRATION. PERHAPS AS A GOOD-WILL  
AMBASSADOR TO PANAMA.

WE GOT BACK FROM TEXAS LAST NIGHT AND IT WAS

THE USUAL ARRIVAL CEREMONY.

WHEN AIR FORCE ONE LANDED THE BAND STRUCK UP

HAIL TO THE CHIEF. WHEN THE PRESS PLANE LANDED,

THEY PLAYED HOW DRY I AM.

YOU CAN ALWAYS TELL THE PRESS PLANE,

IT'S THE ONE LEANING AGAINST THE LAMP-POST.

THIS HAS REALLY BEEN A GREAT EVENING.

I WANT TO CONGRATULATE YOU, LARRY O'ROURKE, FOR GETTING  
YOURSELF ELECTED PRESIDENT THE SENSIBLE WAY - WITHOUT  
A SINGLE PRIMARY.

I'M NOT SURE I KNOW THE EXACT DETAILS OF HOW  
YOUR ELECTIONS ARE CARRIED OUT -- BUT I UNDERSTAND THIS ONE  
WAS DECIDED BY HAND-WRESTLING HELEN THOMAS IN THE BACK  
OF THE PRESS BUS•

IT'S ALSO GOOD TO SEE SO MANY OF MY FRIENDS

FROM THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPERS -- LIKE

EDDIE FOLLIARD AND ED POE, PETE LISAGOR AND PAUL HEALY,

ROBERT REDFORD AND DUSTIN HOFFMAN.

THEN THERE'S THE FOLKS FROM THE NEWS-MAGAZINES,

THE NETWORKS, AND OF COURSE, I CAN'T OVERLOOK OUR GREAT

WORLDWIDE NEWS SERVICES -- A.P., U.P.I., AND C.I.A.

OH, AND I ALMOST FORGOT YOUR GUEST FROM THE

WONDERFUL WORLD OF ENTERTAINMENT -- RON NESSEN.

AND ALL MY GOOD FRIENDS ON MY CABINET,

IT'S GREAT TO SEE YOU - OH YES, I DO HAVE A CABLE TO READ *to*

THE GROUP FROM ONE WHO COULDN'T MAKE IT. THE SECRETARY

OF STATE IS SORRY HE COULDN'T BE HERE.

HE SAYS THERE'S GOOD NEWS AND BAD NEWS FROM

AFRICA.



"THE GOOD NEWS, EVERYONE HAS RECEIVED ME

WITH GREAT KINDNESS."

"THE BAD NEWS, I DRANK THE WATER."

BY THE WAY, DURING THE SECRETARY OF STATE'S  
ABSENCE, I ASKED ELLIOT RICHARDSON IF HE WOULD LIKE TO BE  
SECRETARY OF STATE. HE SAID HE THOUGHT HE ALREADY WAS  
SECRETARY OF STATE.

HOWEVER, DAVID KENNERLY VOLUNTEERED FOR THE JOB.

HE SAID THE SECRETARY TOLD HIM IT WAS A GREAT WAY TO MEET GIRLS.

MY GOOD FRIEND SENATOR HUBERT HUMPHREY,

ALSO SENDS HIS REGRETS THAT HE CAN'T BE WITH US THIS EVENING.

HE'S DOING A TALK SHOW TONIGHT (PAUSE) ALL BY HIMSELF (PAUSE)

ON ALL THREE NETWORKS (PAUSE) SIMULTANEOUSLY.

LET ME THANK THOSE IN CHARGE OF THE PROGRAM FOR

MAKING THIS SUCH AN ALL-FORD EVENING. A VERY APPRECIATIVE

MICHIGAN JERRY ~~WANTS~~ WANTS TO THANK A VERY TALENTED

TENNESSEE ERNIE ~~FOR~~ FOR A GREAT SHOW.

AND THAT GOES FOR THE OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE

OF THE OPRYLAND U.S.A., SINGERS AND DANCERS AS WELL.

ON BEHALF OF FIRST MAMA AND MYSELF, I ~~DO~~ WANT

TO THANK ALL OF YOU FOR THIS REALLY RELAXING INTERLUDE.

IT FELT SO GOOD, LET'S ~~DO~~ DO IT AGAIN NEXT YEAR \- SAME TIME,

SAME PLACE, AND SAME JOBS.

IT MUST BE OBVIOUS BY NOW THAT THIS ANNUAL DINNER  
OF THE WHITE HOUSE CORRESPONDENTS' ASSOCIATION IS ALWAYS  
A VERY SPECIAL OCCASION FOR ME. IT IS AN ORGANIZATION  
WHOSE MEMBERS AND OFFICIALS COMMAND MY VERY HIGHEST RESPECT  
AND CONTINUED ESTEEM.

I SAY THIS BECAUSE AFTER 27 YEARS IN WASHINGTON, I HAVE  
NEVER LOST SIGHT OF ONE BASIC TRUTH: THAT A PRESS CORPS  
BIG ENOUGH TO GIVE YOU EVERYTHING YOU WANT, IS A PRESS CORPS  
BIG ENOUGH TO TAKE FROM YOU EVERYTHING YOU HAVE.

END OF TEXT