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Office of the White House Press Secretary

THE WHITE HOUSE

TEXT OF REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
TO BE DELIVERED
AT THE DEDICATION OF THE ANDERSON INDEPENDENT
AND THE DAILY MAIL BUILDING
ANDERSON, SOUTH CAROLINA

I have been warned that it is sometimes risky to expose myself to the press. Although I held a press conference in the Rose Garden of the White House, not everything turned up roses. But that is as it should be in keeping my philosophy of an accessible and open Presidency and a free press. It is part of the great American process.

So I am delighted to be here today at the dedication of the new Anderson Independent and Anderson Daily Mail building. I congratulate these newspapers on the celebration of the 75th anniversary of the Mail and the 50th anniversary of the Independent. And I will take my chances on what they will report on my visit and on what I say.

As President, I am trying to continue the same free and pleasant relationship with the press that I enjoyed as Vice President and throughout 25 years in the Congress. I do not believe that I am doing things differently than before, except that the press seems a lot more interested these days in what I have to say.

There have been a lot of changes in America in our own lifetime. But there is one thing which must be preserved above all others. I refer to the First Amendment and all the rest of the United States Constitution which I am sworn to uphold. A climate of trust and understanding between the government and the people is essential if our system is to go on working. The Anderson newspapers and all the rest of America's press have much to do with that climate. And, of course, so do those of us who hold high offices.

I do not put as much emphasis on public relations as I do on fundamental human relations. We can all disagree without being disagreeable.

It is not the function of the press to propagandize for any party, any President, or any section of the public. You call things as you see them. I say to every journalist on the occasion of this dedication that I am particularly pleased to see a new building housing two fine newspapers at a time in our history when too many newspapers have been folding. Every reporter is now under an even greater responsibility to report without fear or favor and every newspaper to keep alive the tradition of a free press.

I differ with those who categorize the journalist as a different kind of American. I prefer to consider every one on his or her merits and to treat each as I would hope to be treated if our jobs were reversed. Although I have had a lot of adversaries in my political life, I have no list of enemies. Nor will I ever have.

I naturally do not enjoy being criticized in the press. But I would be even more concerned if the press were not free to criticize. That is why I am so pleased to participate in this ceremony today which perpetuates the great role of the free press in the United States.

It is a very happy occasion for me today to see that the printed word is still alive and well in South Carolina and throughout America.

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