

White House Correspondents

Mr. President and former Vice President Johnson ... Mr. President and former Vice President Kirkpatrick ... Mr. Vice President and President-in-1969-from-Minnesota Bailey ... ladies ... and members of the unfair sex.

Thank you, President Kirkpatrick, for this bowl for my undelivered speeches -- or Humphrey's Rain-Check Remarks.

There is nothing ... nothing! ... so painful as carrying around ... undelivered ... something whose time has come -- as every expectant mother and President knows.

Thank you, too, Mr. President (to LBJ), for so often taking the words right out of my mouth. My new bowl already runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life --- But I guess I better leave out that part about dwelling in the House of my Lord.

I express my appreciation and gratitude, too, for this evening's entertainment -- all except that fellow who kept dropping his H-H-H's. (Reference is to "Sir Gilbert Peake".)

I'm not sure, Chuck (referring to Chuck Bailey), what kind of home talent show we can put together next year. It's going to be a big come down from a television disc jockey to a drug-store soda jerk.

✓ x x

My remarks this evening will be brief.

I am aware of the current definition of an optomist: A woman in the audience who starts putting on her shoes when Humphrey says "And now in conclusion..."

I have never quite gotten over the notion that a period is a punctuation mark starting another sentence.

When I get started, I'm just too lazy to stop.

XXX
You have asked for my reports on the campaign.

I'll have no comment on the Indiana primary until the urinalysis reports (or saliva tests) are in.

XXX
The reports of an "adequately-financed" Humphrey campaign this time are a baseless charge of guilt by association -- although I admit ~~I am~~^{being} tired of trying to make my living in this business like a free lance astronaut.

XXX
Gene McCarthy says there are more important jobs to fill than the Vice-Presidency. I agree with Gene.

XXX
The press report of our having to buzz the landing strip in Rawlins, Wyoming, yesterday to get some antelope out of the way was wrong. They were delegates who ^{just} couldn't wait.

XXX
I find the American people ready to agree now that every issue is not black and blue. They believe in this country ... where

every boy can go into politics and grow up to be Vice President. It's just one of those chances he has to take.

But seriously ... (a phrase I got from Everett Dirksen) ...
and "in conclusion, .."

You will find, Mr. President (to LBJ), even in all this banter, evidence of ^{the} a deep affection for you which few people in this country can have as intimate reason for as do all of us here tonight.

I salute you gentlemen and ladies ... White House Correspondents ... in Ambrose Bierce's way -- as "enlightened souls who prefer dry wine to sweet, sense to sentiment, wit to humor and clean English to slang."

The months ahead have a special relevance to ^{our} the democracy's future.

Some of us -- many of us here tonight -- will be joined ... by choice or by assignment ... in the common responsibility during these months to inform a people.

There could be no superior function.

Yet if this responsibility is common ... its proper discharge demands an uncommonly high order of independence -- especially between those who seek roles in the nation's stewardship ... and those who report on their efforts.

Freedom ... no less than science .. has its Truths; and they are as hard to get at ... as uncompromising ... only possibly less absolute.

There is that haunting epigram by the Man of La Mancha: "Facts," he puts it, "are the enemy of Truth." And ^{his} ~~the~~ dictum itself seems not fact ... yet still true.

And then his refrain ... about the "duty -- nay the privilege!" "To dream the impossible dream/ To reach the unreachable star!"

No Don Quixotes ... we who politic and you who report. Seasoned, weathered veterans more ... of the view that "politics is the art of the possible."

Yet ... just conceivably ... the art of the possible dream -- and of the reachable star.

Thank you.

Vice President's Remarks
White House Correspondents Dinner
Washington, D. C. -- May 11, 1968

I know you fellows think that Guess
who's coming to dinner " " is a movie
for me it's been a full time job! for me.

(The gift to you may
turn out to be a
+ instead of
a bowl.)

④ Carroll K. Patrick - Invention -
" wherever you are, wherever you are
invited to next year's dinner
(Guess who's coming to dinner is a
current ^{and} popular movie. I think the
unexpected guest is a Negro.)

NOTES

MR. PRESIDENT AND FORMER VICE PRESIDENT
JOHNSON . . . MR. PRESIDENT AND FORMER VICE PRESIDENT
KILPATRICK . . . MR. VICE PRESIDENT AND PRESIDENT IN
1969 FROM MINNESOTA BAILEY . . . LADIES . . . AND FELLOW
MEMBERS OF THE ESTABLISHMENT:

⑤ I like your election procedures - less costly than
a primary, more secret than a convention, and not
subject to press criticism.

THANK YOU, PRESIDENT KILKPATRICK, FOR THE ^{Case} ~~SHOW~~
FOR MY UNDELIVERED SPEECHES . . . HUMPHREY'S RAINCHECK
REMARKS.

AND THANK YOU, MR. PRESIDENT (LBJ), FOR SO OFTEN
TAKING THE WORDS RIGHT OUT OF MY MOUTH. ~~MY OWN SON~~
~~ALREADY RUMNETH OVER. SURELY GOODNESS AND MERCY SHALL~~
FOLLOW ME ALL THE DAYS OF MY LIFE . . .

(over)

BUT I GUESS I BETTER LEAVE OUT THAT PART ABOUT DWELLING
IN THE HOUSE OF THE LORD.

* * *

Cactus Pryor is hard to Top -
Wait till you see

I AM NOT SURE, CHUCK (BAILEY), WHAT KIND OF
HOME TALENT SHOW WE CAN PUT TOGETHER NEXT YEAR.

But when it comes to a [#] Credibility
gap, just remember we come from
the land of Paul Bunyan

By the way - 1

↳ I HARDLY RECOGNIZED ANY OF YOU WITHOUT YOUR
WHITE HOUSE PASSES HANGING AROUND YOUR NECKS OR ~~OR~~
TO YOUR POCKETS. - ~~all you have to do~~

~~DICK DALEY TOLD ME WHEN YOU COME TO CHICAGO, YOU
CAN TELL WHEN YOU'RE FUNNY OR HAPPY, BUT DON'T TELL
THEM YOU'RE A RIOT.~~

Remember you have nothing to lose but
your chains!

Jew words about U.P.

↳ IT IS TRUE ~~IN THIS COUNTRY~~ THAT EVERY BOY
CAN GO INTO POLITICS AND GROW UP TO BE VICE PRESIDENT.

↳ IT IS JUST ONE OF THOSE CHANCES HE HAS TO
TAKE. !

~~to~~ Jew words about the U.P.

↳ ABOUT THE VICE PRESIDENCY: GENE MCCARTHY
SAYS THERE ARE MORE IMPORTANT JOBS TO FILL THAN THE
VICE PRESIDENCY. I AGREE WITH GENE.

MY REMARKS THIS EVENING WILL BE BRIEF.

I AM AWARE OF THE CORRECT DEFINITION OF AN OPTIMIST; A WOMAN IN THE AUDIENCE WHO STARTS PUTTING ON HER SHOES WHEN HUMPHREY SAYS, "AND NOW IN CONCLUSION."

THERE ARE SO MANY DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATES THIS YEAR I THOUGHT I OUGHT TO IDENTIFY MYSELF -- I'M THE RUTHLESS ONE.

Hunter the Heartless!

I NEVER KNEW WHAT GOOD TYDINGS WAS UNTIL JOE CAME OUT FOR BOBBY -- HE ANNOUNCED FOUR TIMES ONE WEEK FOR BOBBY -- I GOT ALL 49 VOTES IN MARYLAND. JOE FLEW OUT TO WYOMING YESTERDAY AND I GOT 18 OF 22 DELEGATES. I HAVE JUST ASKED JOE TO VISIT DICK DALEY, WALTER REUTHER, --- NEBRASKA, OREGON AND CALIFORNIA.
← JOE ALSO BET ON DANCER'S IMAGE.

TONIGHT, I WOULD LIKE TO RISE ABOVE POLITICS
AND SPEAK ONLY OF MY OWN PLANS . . . PLANS TO IMPROVE
THE LOT OF THE WHITE HOUSE CORRESPONDENT.
HERE IS MY PLATFORM: -- EQUAL TREATMENT FOR ALL
REPORTERS -- EXCEPT FOR THE HAPPINESS CLIQUE -- AL CAPP,
WALT KELLY, CHARLES SCHULTZ, AND WALTER LIPPMANN.
THEY'RE SPECIAL.

↳ I'LL BE FRANK WITH YOU ABOUT MY INTEREST IN
THE WHITE HOUSE. IT'S THE ONLY WAY I EVER EXPECT
TO GET AN OFFICIAL RESIDENCE. -- ~~Frank~~

* * *

BUT I MEAN TO TAKE CARE OF YOU, TOO. THE WHITE
HOUSE PRESS CORPS DESERVES BETTER TREATMENT. YOU
FELLOWS HAVE BEEN OVERCROWDED AND UNCOMFORTABLE LONG
ENOUGH.

↳ SO, IF I'M ELECTED PRESIDENT WE WILL OPEN NEW
OFFICES FOR THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS IN A BEAUTIFUL,
LUXUTY BUILDING ON 16TH AND H. STREETS . . . SOUTHEAST.

* * *

But what worries me - Is that difficult
choices you will have to make as you
objectively report - Hymies Post or Waverly!

THE MONTHS AHEAD HAVE A SPECIAL RELEVANCE TO THE DEMOCRACY'S FUTURE.

↳ SOME OF US . . . MANY OF US HERE TONIGHT -- WILL BE JOINED BY CHOICE OR ASSIGNMENT -- IN THE COMMON RESPONSIBILITY DURING THESE MONTHS TO INFORM A PEOPLE.

↳ THERE COULD BE NO ~~SUPERIOR~~ superior function

YET IF THIS RESPONSIBILITY IS COMMON . . . ITS PROPER DISCHARGE DEMANDS A HIGH ORDER OF INDEPENDENCE -- ESPECIALLY BETWEEN THOSE WHO SEEK ROLES IN THE NATIONS STEWARDSHIP . . . AND THOSE WHO REPORT ON THEIR EFFORTS.

↳ FREEDOM . . . MORE NECESSARY THAN SCIENCE . . . HAS ITS TRUTHS; AND THEY ARE AS HARD TO GET AT they are AS UNCOMPROMISING . . . if POSSIBLY LESS ABSOLUTE!

AND IT IS THAT HAUNTING EPIGRAM BY THE "MAN OF LA MANCHA": FACTS -- THAT HE PUT IT "ARE THE ENEMY OF TRUTH" AND HIS DICTUM ITSELF SEEMS NOT FACT -- YET STILL TRUE.

↳ AND THEN HIS REFRAIN ABOUT THE DUTY -- ~~THE~~ indeed PRIVILEGE "TO DETERMINE THE IMPOSSIBLE DREAM, TO REACH THE UNREACHABLE STAR."

we are no

~~no~~ DON QUIXOTE . . . WE WHO ARE POLITICAL AND
YOU WHO REPORT -- SEASONED, WEATHERED VETERANS ^{*are*} MORE
OF THE VIEW THAT "POLITICS IS THE ART OF THE POSSIBLE."

YET . . . JUST CONCEIVABLY . . . THE ART OF THE
POSSIBLE DREAM -- AND OF THE REACHABLE STAR.

THANK YOU.

* * *

DRAFT

Moynihan/Bennett
May 9, 1968

WHITE HOUSE CORRESPONDENTS DINNER

When I saw you all here, I thought for a moment I was in the Federal City Club.

* * *

I take my invitation here as a good omen. After all, the big prize for all the hard months of campaigning for the Presidency is the honor of addressing this dinner. I may just quit while I'm ahead.

* * *

Yes, the winner takes all. And with it, the right to live in the White House, be Commander in Chief, and satisfy Sarah McClendon's curiosity.

* * *

As President, wherever I'd go, you'd go. (Lord, that's a sobering thought).

I mean, how would any of you like to have Max Frankel dogging your every step -- taking notes.

DRAFT - 2

Moynihan/Bennett
May 9, 1968

White House Correspondents
Dinner

(Of course, I'm betting on my ability to talk faster than Max can write).

* * *

On the other hand, it's a grand pleasure to meet the press on these terms.-- a press conference on the new, improved French model.

* * *

Some of you have been writing that I may not be comfortable in an adequately-financed and well-run campaign. Let me say that I like it. To start off with anything less today is a little like trying to make a living as a free lance astronaut.

* * *

Tonight, however, I would like to rise above politics and speak only of my own plans ... plans to improve the lot of the White House correspondent.

Here is my platform:

-- equal treatment for all reporters -- except for the Happiness Clique -- Al Copp, Walt Kelly, Charles Schultz and Walter Lippman. They're special.

DRAFT

Moynihan/Bennett
May 9, 1968
White House Correspondents

-- True press conferences -- in which the
Cabinet gets to question each of you -- and the
President gets to say "Thank you, Mr. Buchwald" --
we'll have the White House press badges designed by
Pierre Cardin.

* * *

I'll be frank with you about my interest in the
White House. It's the only way I ever expect to get an
official residence.

* * *

But I mean to take care of you, too. The White
House press corps deserves better treatment. You fellows
have been overcrowded and uncomfortable long enough.

So, if I'm elected President we will open new
offices for the White House press in a beautiful, luxury
building on 16th and H Streets ... Southeast.

* * *

DRAFT - 4

Moynihan/Bennett
May 9, 1968
White House Correspondents

This is a beginning for me ... and for many of you ... of a new chapter in a long and warm relationship.

I want this relationship to continue to be open and free.

I also want the relationship between government and those who report on government to be free of sharp practice by either side.

This relationship is too important to our free nation and to our free press to allow of anything but open and plain and consistent policies and habits. This means providing full and fair access to all the information available to the government whose release does no damage to national security.

I want every journalist to have equal opportunity to report this news. I do not want procedures that are unfair, that confuse the public, that invite opinion into news columns and bring worse practices in their wake.

DRAFT - 5

Moynihan/Bennett
May 9, 1968
White House Correspondents

Sometimes it is necessary for the government to offer information to the press without fully revealing the source. This is a strategem that has been used too often. I want it reserved only for those rare occasion when there are no acceptable alternatives. In short, I want fairer treatment for the public and for those journalists who cannot report stories on their own say-so or on the say-so of some anonymous source.

News without a source is bad enough. News without a source offered exclusively to one or to a few selected journalists is intolerable. The result of such "leaks" are "planted" stories that are demeaning to both journalism and government.

I could end with the familiar comment Thomas Jefferson made on preferring the absence of government to the absence of newspapers, but I would rather remind you that Jefferson also said newspapers could be divided into four chapters, Truth, Possibilities, Probabilities and Lies. "The first chapter," wrote Jefferson "would be very short."

It is as much my job as it is yours to make that chapter longer.

* * *



Minnesota Historical Society

Copyright in this digital version belongs to the Minnesota Historical Society and its content may not be copied without the copyright holder's express written permission. Users may print, download, link to, or email content, however, for individual use.

To request permission for commercial or educational use, please contact the Minnesota Historical Society.



www.mnhs.org