

Mr. Pres.  
on a June  
Friday  
GRIDIRON SPEECH  
MARCH 19, 1977

Wilson  
Electric

I'm delighted to be here at the Gridiron Dinner and to share the platform with my friend Howard Baker.

Howard and I got to this dinner in different ways...I made it because I ran on my party's Presidential ticket. Howard made it because he didn't.

Do you know.

Howard also tried for the Vice Presidency ~~and I~~  
~~tell him's dying to know how I handled the nomination~~ The key  
to it all is timing.

But his timing was bad  
He was too anxious

I worked this way:

This is how I handled it. Howard  
I let the archers go to Plains first  
Ed Muskie went down to Plains and told Jimmy, " I'm  
dying to see the peanut trees. "

whispered to

John Glenn ~~told~~ Rosalyn , " My favorite food is blue eyed  
peas ".

Then Frank Church told Governor Carter that while he'd never been to Georgia himself, one of his relatives was stationed there in the army...General Sherman.

By the time

~~When~~ I arrived in Plains, Jimmy said, "Keep your mouth shut Fritz, and the job is yours."

*I know you have*

Now Howard ~~has~~ ambitions to be President someday...and there's nothing in the Constitution that excludes a Southerner.

But ~~Howard~~, you're a young man and you'll still be young enough <sup>to run</sup> after my second term in the White House...in 1992.

Of course you'll have to run for the Presidency against Teddy Kennedy...if you can win the nomination from Ronald Reagan.

*X X Y*  
*Tonight I'd like to*  
~~But let me~~ clear up one misunderstanding. People think this administration doesn't like Republicans. The truth is we really miss them. We don't have anybody to fight with now... except Bob Byrd and Tip O'Neill...and Scoop Jackson...and maybe Jack Brooks...and, of course, Mo Udall...and then there's Ed Muskie... well, also Russell Long. *& the Dem Mayors & Governors of this Country*

But politics aside, the President and I are busy trying to stay close to the American people. The President talks to [average] ~~distinguished~~ citizens at town meetings...and I attend simple white tie dinners and meet plain folks like you.

*We are very proud of the fact that*  
~~that we've~~ done away with the Imperial Presidency once and for all. In fact, the only time you hear "Hail to the Chief" in this town anymore is when Ben Bradlee walks into the newsroom at the Washington Post.

Naturally as Vice President I've had to disclose my financial holdings like everybody else.

I saw where Joe Califano gave up \$500,000 a year to become Secretary of HEW. Mike Blumenthal gave up \$400,000 a year to become Secretary of the Treasury. And Cy Vance gave up \$250,000 a year to become Secretary of State.

~~And I have a confession to make.~~ As far as I can tell, I'm the only one who took the job because I needed the money.

*Relations couldn't be better with the Pres.*  
But so far my new job seems to be working out just fine. *Turn to the Pres*  
I have a hotline to the President. It goes from the White House *even* to the treehouse to me.

And every morning the President and I both get exactly the same briefing from the CIA. The President gets his from Admiral Turner...and I get mine from Ted Sorensen.

*also*  
~~But we~~ have changed some of the procedures at the White House. For example, the last administration had a daily foreign policy briefing. *We have changed that and now* We just have a daily foreign policy.

So far the President and I are getting along perfectly.

*We've* ~~we~~ only had one disagreement. I asked him to appoint my son a Federal Judge. He said, "But *Fritz* your son's only 19 years old." I said, "Don't worry, Mr. President, by the time Hamilton Jordan gets him cleared he'll be plenty old enough."

Naturally, as Vice President I also preside over the Senate and <sup>I'm pleased to report that</sup> I've already mastered that job by seeking advice from former Vice Presidents. For instance, I learned from Nelson Rockefeller that they won't let you talk...but you can always use gestures.

*I'll admit*

But there are some things <sup>^</sup>about being Vice President I still don't understand. For instance, every week a contractor from Maryland comes in and leaves a plain brown envelope on my desk...or sometimes he leaves groceries.

X X X

I've noticed that there have been some criticisms of the administration's position on cuts in the defense budget and we've been accused of a lack of clarity on this issue. I've done a lot of work in this area, <sup>I understand it completely.</sup> and I'd like to explain it to you.

*You own newspapers -*

It's really very simple to understand once you grasp the principle of zero-based budgeting. The President <sup>Promised</sup> ~~said~~ he'd cut the defense budget by five to seven billion. Of course, he was referring to the authorized fiscal year 1977 budget...Well, actually, the appropriation for fiscal year 1977...or 1978. <sup>Now</sup> That figure, taking into account ~~the future zero base exercise and~~ a constant level of inflation and depreciation, was somewhere between 80 and 105 billion. <sup>I mean</sup> ~~Well, actually~~ 102 billion. Now the final appropriation for fiscal year 1977 will not be the same. The authorization for 1978...that is the continuing holdover authorization figure ~~for the hiatus period...when added to the authorization...or actually the appropriation...for that year, once the zero-base calculation~~

is made will exceed...or be less than...the comparable figure in 1977...or 1978. Well, not 78 unless the actual spending figure comes in at a level which can mesh with the economic indicators and the new appropriation...well actually...the new authorization.

*Now That's all there is to it.*

And I don't know why you people can't understand this.

*X X X*

There's one other thing I'd like to clear up tonight as well. The truth is that in this administration the Vice Presidency is the most powerful office in the land. And frankly, I don't see how the press has missed this...because the signs are everywhere.

*Look at the President*

*For e.g.* On inauguration day, I rode from the Capitol to the White House in a chauffeur-driven limousine. ...The President had to walk. Whenever I take a trip, an aide carries my luggage... the President carries his own.

Or compare our travel. I went to Paris...and London... and Rome. The President went to Pittsburgh...Springfield...and Charleston, West Virginia.

I stayed with the Queen at Buckingham Palace...the President stayed with a beer distributor in Clinton, Massachusetts.

Even my kids are better off than his. The President's children have to pay for their own meals. My kids haven't paid for a meal in 19 years.

But the clearest example of who's really in charge in this administration is this event tonight. You'll notice I was invited to dinner...the President only got to come for coffee.

I could go on a lot longer about the power of my office, but I've just been handed a note that my limousine has to be back by eleven...and Mr. President, does that include my suit too?

*Seriously*

X Y Y Y

I am proud tonight to stand here with you...not only because this is a distinguished audience...~~not only~~ <sup>or</sup> because

I have been asked to represent my party...but also because I <sup>& exciting</sup> serve in a new Administration. <sup>under a gifted President & Congress</sup> We may have...we do have...we will <sup>with the Press</sup> have our political disagreements. <sup>^</sup> But I hope we can all work together ~~to put forward not only the hopes and promises of this Administration, but, more important,~~ <sup>to advance</sup> the hopes and dreams of the ~~American~~ people. <sup>of our blessed Country</sup>

*Thank you*



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