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Air Transport Association



OF AMERICA

1709 New York Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20006

LEO SEYBOLD
Vice President
Federal Affairs

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN

November 4, 1976

Rh-
clip
Honorable Gerald R. Ford
The President
The White House
Washington, D. C. 20500

Dear Mr. *President*:

The attached two columns in the Chicago Sun-Times reflect more adequately than I could state the sentiments of my family and the millions of your admirers throughout the nation.

Whatever you may decide to do in the future Mildred and I wish for you, Betty, and your family health, peace and happiness.

Sincerely,

Leo

Air Transport Association of America

1976 NOV 4 PM 1 13

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Honorable Gerald R. Ford
The President
The White House
Washington, D. C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

The attached two columns in the Chicago Tribune
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the sentiments of my family and the millions of
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WHITE HOUSE
MAIL ROOM

1976 NOV 4 PM 1 13

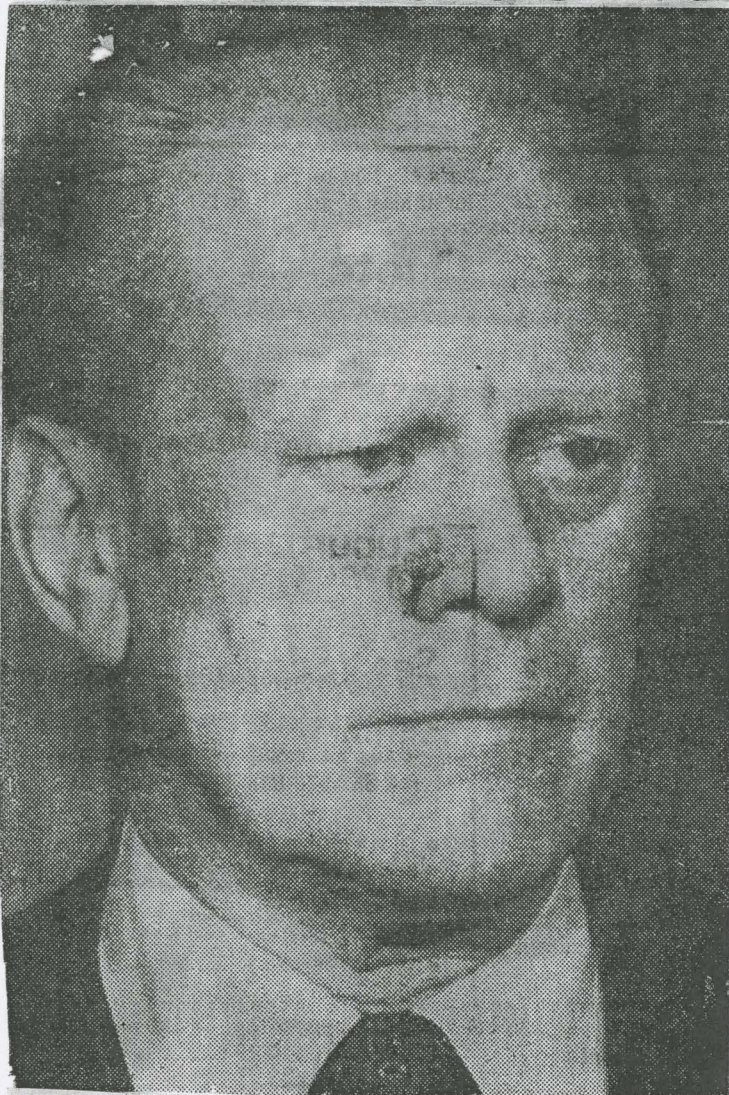
Whatever you may decide to do in the
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Sincerely,



AT

The Fords: Dignity and class in defeat



His voice a casualty of the campaign, President Ford listens as the First Lady reads congratulatory wire he sent to Jimmy Carter. The message: "It is apparent now that you have won our long and intense struggle. I congratulate you on your victory." (UPI)

By Morton Kondracke

Sun-Times Bureau

WASHINGTON — Jerry and Betty Ford acknowledged defeat Wednesday like the people they are. They accepted it decently, generously and bravely. They took it standing side by side, and people who watched them do it were left in tears.

Together with their children, President and Mrs. Ford came down to the White House press room. Despite treatments, Ford's voice was gone as a result of the campaign, so he introduced his wife, who delivered his statement of concession, thanks and hope for the country's welfare.

Then, the Fords stepped down from their podium and shook hands with staff members and the press, which dropped its objectivity and cheered. People said "good luck" to the President and he joshed about how his last-minute field goal had failed to clear the crossbar. A woman reporter who shouted "I love you" to Mrs. Ford spoke for millions of people who weren't in the room.

Even the President's White House and campaign staffs, which often squabbled, dropped recriminations. They said they had given the campaign their best shot and just missed victory. There were some "what ifs," but for the moment there were no "I told you sos."

"The President," Mrs. Ford said, "urges all Americans to join him in giving your united support to President-elect Carter as he prepares to assume his new responsibilities."

She read a telegram — "Dear Jimmy," it started — that Ford had sent to Carter, congratulating him on winning "our long and intense struggle for the Presidency."

He told Carter, "I believe that we must now put divisions of the campaign behind us and unite the country once again in the common pursuit of peace and prosperity."

Although there will continue to be disagreements over how to attain those goals, "I want to assure you that you have my complete and wholehearted support as you take the oath of office in January."

Ford had spoken to Carter earlier in the

Turn to Page 6

Thursday, November 4, 1976

CHICAGO
Sun-Times



The Ford family displays dignity and class in defeat

Continued from Page 1

day and had his chief of staff, Richard Cheney, read the telegram, which concluded: "May God bless you and your family as you undertake your new responsibilities."

During the phone call, Ford and Carter made preliminary arrangements to set Carter's transition to the Presidency in motion.

Ford had gone to bed at 3:15 a.m. Wednesday when he and his staff still thought he might pull out a last-minute victory.

When he awoke at 8:30 a.m., he quickly was told by his staff that his fondest wish, to repeat the 1948 come-from-behind example of Harry S. Truman, was not to be.

The staff, including Cheney and campaign chiefs James A. Baker and Stuart Spencer, had worked out the numbers in states where

final returns still were out and decided there was no possibility Ford would win.

They considered whether a challenge to vote counts in New York would make a difference and decided it would not.

The senior staff also agreed that, in view of Carter's majority of 1,000,000 to 2,000,000 popular votes, a challenge in New York in search of an electoral majority would be fruitless.

Economic counselor William Seidman, one of those at the meeting, said the Ford staff discussed things that might have made a difference but did so without finger-pointing and came to no conclusion.

Maybe more time should have been spent on Wisconsin, whose loss was a crucial dis-appointment, one aide said. Another thought Ford's vetoes of the common-situs picketing

bill and job-creating public-works legislation had enraged labor unions into action against Ford.

"If only we could have gotten unemployment down below 7 per cent," one top assistant mused. The selection of Sen. Robert J. Dole (R-Kan.) as a running mate was mentioned to Seidman by a reporter. "No regrets," he replied. Maybe if sugar prices had been higher, an aide said, we might have pulled in Hawaii. If Eugene McCarthy had stayed on the ballot in New York, maybe...

"We really looked all this over," Seidman said. "This is usually a time when everybody is looking for scapegoats, but we couldn't think of what it was. We almost made it. It could have been anything."

The Fords plan to take a week off, starting Sunday, in Palm Springs, Calif. No decisions

have been made about what they will do after Jan. 20, when Carter is inaugurated into an office that Ford, the nation's only vice president to succeed a President who resigned, would like to have occupied for the next four years.

Before Jan. 20, Ford said, "We're going to keep working. It's the job. We've got a lot of things to do and we're going to keep doing it."



Loser quite a man

Thanks, Mr. Ford—we needed that

Dear Mr. Ford—

These must be among the most trying hours of your life, and I hope this letter is not an intrusion. Losing the Presidency is a hurt that only a handful of men will ever know, and no one besides yourself can understand the personal sorrow that you are feeling now.

But I wanted to write — as one of many Americans who are not very interested in politics and who are not registered members of either political party — to say thanks. Thanks for being there when we all needed you.

You did not seek the Presidency when it was handed to you. You were the middleman in a crisis the like of which we may never see again. The rest of us could feel relief when your predecessor left office; while we talked about how the bad times were over, you alone faced the burden of trying to put us all back together again.

Before you came to office, you said you never would run for the Presidency on your own. You changed your mind soon after entering the White House, but it would be hard to blame you for that. Only 36 other persons in the history of this nation shared with you the experience of being President; it is not hard to imagine that the lure of wanting it some more is an enticement hardly any man could resist.

IN THE FIRST MINUTES of your Presi-



Bob
Greene

dency, you said that you realized that you had not been elected by our votes. You asked that, in the absence of our ballots, you could have our prayers. You wished aloud that your predecessor and his family could find personal peace; you said that the long national nightmare was over.

We out here in the country were moved by your speech that day. But we all have short memories; within months we were treating you the same way we have treated all of our modern Presidents. It is probably good, this intense scrutiny and easy criticism, for it helps make a President realize that his constituency is, indeed, paying close attention. But in your case we went out of our way to let you know we did not regard you as an unflawed man.

So we made the jokes, and the nasty cracks, and the innuendos. It wasn't just the editorial cartoonists and the political columnists; so many of us joined in the glee at

laughing every time you displayed a physical clumsiness, making jokes about your uneasy way with words and snickering over what we were led to believe was your lack of intellect. That you were an athlete; that you were a discerning survivor of the political infighting of the Congress; that you were an attorney graduating near the top of your law school class at Yale University; those things did not impress us. Now you were the President, and Presidents are the biggest targets we have.

BY THE TIME this election season came around, it was fashionable to portray you as a bumbling clown. How this may have affected you as a human we didn't much care. You were the President, and that is how we have been conditioned to treat our Presidents in the second half of the 20th Century.

So you must be nursing hurts that you never expected. You will be leaving the White House soon, perhaps leaving Washington. And now perhaps it is the right time to say the words to you that we didn't ever say before.

You were a victim of circumstances. We all were victims of circumstances, of the national crushing of the spirit that was brought about by your predecessor. It was a little easier for us to be victims, though; we could merely complain and not be forced to do anything about it.

You, though—you had the job of beginning the healing. And you did it.

TWO YEARS AGO, it seemed at times impossible that we could ever be a nation that could smile again. That we could ever be a people who felt good about ourselves. But somehow it began to turn around. And you, more than anyone else, did it. In a quiet, low-key way, you made sure we knew that the White House was not a place of uncleanness any more. You made sure that we knew that a President could, indeed, still be a caring man worthy of our trust. You helped get us out.

I don't want to talk about the results of Tuesday night's balloting. As I said at the beginning of this letter, there are many of us who do not spend very much time thinking about political matters, and it is best to leave the political analysis to those who make a career of that.

This is just a note of gratitude for helping all of us find a peace that, for awhile, seemed destined never to be ours again. May you and your own family find peace, too. We can never repay you for the service you gave to your countrymen when we needed it most. It is difficult to put our feelings into words, but please know that the feelings are there, and that we will not forget.

Thank you, Mr. President.

