

The original documents are located in Box 42, “12/15/76 - Christmas Party for Members of the Press Corps” of the President’s Speeches and Statements: Reading Copies at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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~~THE PRESIDENT WAS SEEN~~

CHRISTMAS PARTY FOR MEMBERS OF THE PRESS CORPS,

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 15, 1976

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IT'S ALWAYS A PLEASURE TO WELCOME MY FRIENDS FROM
THE FOURTH ESTATE TO A CELEBRATION AT THE WHITE HOUSE.

WITH A LONG AND HECTIC CAMPAIGN, AND WITH A GREAT
MANY HISTORIC EVENTS TO COVER, THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS CORPS HAS
CERTAINLY DISTINGUISHED ITSELF THIS YEAR.

AS WE ENTER THE CHRISTMAS SEASON, WHO COULD EVER FORGET
TOM DEFRANK'S GRAPHIC PORTRAYAL IN PEORIA, ILLINOIS,
OF A SHEPHERD KEEPING WATCH OVER HIS FLOCK BY NIGHT?

AS WE APPROACH THE END OF 1976, I KNOW THAT MANY
OF YOU STILL HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT MY FUTURE. IF YOU DO,
I UNDERSTAND THAT JOHN CONNALLY OR RONALD REAGAN WOULD BE HAPPY
TO ANSWER THEM FOR YOU.

I DO WANT TO CLEAR UP TWO RUMORS, HOWEVER . . .

FIRST -- IT IS TRUE THAT I HAVE BEEN OFFERED A VISITING

PROFESSORSHIP AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN . . . AND SECOND --

NO, IT IS NOT IN THE AREA OF EASTERN EUROPEAN HISTORY.

BUT THIS IS A PARTY AND I HAVE NO INTENTION OF MAKING

ANOTHER SPEECH -- ALTHOUGH I DO WANT TO REMIND YOU THAT AN

ELECTORAL COLLEGE BIG ENOUGH TO GIVE YOU EVERYTHING YOU WANT IS AN

ELECTORAL COLLEGE BIG ENOUGH TO TAKE FROM YOU EVERYTHING YOU HAVE.

LET ME SAY IN CLOSING THAT IT HAS BEEN A GREAT
EXPERIENCE TO WORK WITH ALL OF YOU, TO GET TO KNOW MANY OF YOU
PERSONALLY, AND TO NUMBER SO MANY OF YOU AMONG MY FRIENDS.

I HAVE A GENUINE AFFECTION FOR YOU AND GREAT RESPECT
FOR THE WORK YOU DO SO WELL. IT IS IMPORTANT WORK.
THOMAS JEFFERSON SAID IF HE HAD A CHOICE BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND
A FREE PRESS AS THE PROTECTOR OF A FREE SOCIETY, HE WOULD CHOOSE
THE PRESS. TOM HAD A POINT, BUT I WOULDN'T WANT TO PUT HIS
THEORY TO THE TEST.

IT WAS MY DEAR FRIEND PETE LISAGOR WHO SAID HIS JOB
WAS TO "WALK DOWN THE MIDDLE OF THE STREET AND BREAK WINDOWS
ON BOTH SIDES," BREAKING THROUGH THE POMPOSITITY AND THE
RHETORIC, GETTING TO THE REAL STORY, TELLING IT LIKE IT IS.

THAT'S WHAT YOUR PROFESSION IS ALL ABOUT,
WHAT ALL OF YOU ARE DEDICATED TO, WHAT THE AMERICAN PEOPLE
DEPEND ON YOU FOR.

IF YOU DO IT HALF AS WELL AS PETE LISAGOR DID, I HAVE NO FEAR
FOR THE FUTURE OF THIS COUNTRY.

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR TO YOU ALL.

END OF TEXT

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REMARKS AT THE CHRISTMAS PARTY FOR MEMBERS

OF THE PRESS CORPS, DECEMBER 15, 1976

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