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APRIL 16, 1975

OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT  
AT THE  
WHITE HOUSE NEWS PHOTOGRAPHERS  
ASSOCIATION ANNUAL DINNER

SHERATON PARK HOTEL

9:23 P.M. EDT

Mr. President, Chairman Johnson, Mr. Ambassador, members of the Cabinet, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen of the White House News Photographers Association, survivors of Vail, guardians of the front gate at Burning Tree, followers of Eric Rosenberger, and my very good friends (Laughter):

As I look at this wonderful audience tonight, all I can say is, if I have ever heard of stake-outs, this is ridiculous. (Laughter)

Obviously, I am delighted, along with Betty, to be here tonight on this 54th Anniversary of the White House News Photographers Association, and it is a pleasure to see all of you so relaxed and so unrushed.

In fact, I think one of your members was trying to tell me something about my schedule. He said it is easy to tell a White House photographer these days because you all carry a very little card in your wallet, easily accessible. It says, "I am a White House photographer. In case of an accident, don't do a thing. I need the rest." (Laughter)

Let me thank you, President Boston, for that very thoughtful gift, which Betty and I will cherish, and I thank you for the kind introduction.

You know, President Boston, that really has a ring to it. I think all of us understand that. President Boston and I didn't have much of an opportunity to get acquainted during our very short meeting before Betty and I came, but we did exchange a few words before the awards.

I asked President Boston, "Do you ski?" He said, "No." I said, "Do you play golf?" He said, "No." I said, "Have you ever played football?" He said, "No." I said, "Do you make your own breakfast?" He said, "No." (Laughter)

I don't want to cause trouble, but ladies and gentlemen, I ask you, this is a President? (Laughter)

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(OVER)

I think all of you appreciate that I am really only fooling. President Boston has done an outstanding job as the chief executive of the White House News Photographers Association.

In fact, he was telling me that he recently completed his first term as president and has just been re-elected unopposed to his second term as president. (Laughter) Bernie, all I can say is, you sure know how to hurt a fellow.

As you all know, photography is both an art and a science and its practitioners are always striving for the ultimate, or the perfect photograph.

In fact, my favorite photographic story was told to me by Frank Borman, one of our famous astronauts. Frank said when he was 50,000 miles high, he reached for his camera and took a picture of the entire earth and all of the people on it.

I asked Frank, "How did it come out?"

He said, "Not so good, somebody moved." (Laughter)

Well, at the White House, I feel we also have a richness of photographic talent. There is an old saying that one picture is worth a thousand words. With David Hume Kennerly, I get both. (Laughter)

I am sure all of the professional people here, and many others, are familiar with David Kennerly. Dave is known as the Ansel Adams of "M" Street.

David is one of the finest, most talented, most creative, most gifted photographers this Nation has ever known. That is not just my opinion, it is his, too. (Laughter)

But as I look about tonight, I see so many great photographic luminaries -- there is Cleve Ryan -- and I know Cleve will be interested to know that by Executive Order, I have just named him postmaster of Air Force One. (Laughter)

Frank "Baby" Johnston, who has never fallen down on any job until we got him on skis at Vail.

And George Tames, who is perhaps best known for the work done by his most famous and celebrated pupil, Matthew Brady. (Laughter)

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You know, personally I always enjoy being with all of you because exciting things always seem to be happening around news photographers.

Last year I was in San Francisco, and suddenly the floor started to tremble, the walls started to sway and the ceiling started to crack. I turned to Wally McNamee and I asked, "San Francisco, earthquake?" He shook his head. He said, "Roddey Mims, jogging."  
(Laughter)

Tonight, let me salute Roddey and all of you other heavyweights in the world of photography. You are the free spirits who capture the moment and liberate the imagination. Throughout my entire political life, and before, I have always placed my confidence in photography as a medium to get any message across, and now, as President, I know that the members of the White House News Photographers Association, along with members of our own White House Photographic Department, are creating a unique contribution to the Presidential record; a vital day-by-day, hour-by-hour and often minute-by-minute portrayal of the events on their way to becoming history.

Your efforts today will breathe new life into the textbooks of tomorrow. You leave not footprints, but color prints, in the sands of time.

On a more personal level, Betty and I thank all of you for the kindness, for the courtesy that you have shown both of us. In the past eight months, we have shared many happy moments, and a few sad ones as well.

I want you to know how much your good will and your good wishes have meant to both of us. My wish tonight is that it will always continue to be so, and that as photographers and as friends you will never have cause to take a dim view of the White House.

Thank you and good night.

END (AT 9:34 P.M. EDT)