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SPEECH

BY

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DELIVERED TO: NATIONAL ASSOCIATION  
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I am pleased to have the opportunity to participate in this Sixth Annual Convention of the National Association of Media Women. Particularly to be a part of this "HOW TO DO IT" workshop. I noted when I received the invitation that the workshops would include input on the printed media---the spoken media---the visual media and advertising. And while I observed that Andrew Hatcher, an old friend and a former White House Press Secretary was listed in the advertising category, and properly so, because of his position with Hill & Knowlton, I questioned momentarily---why I was listed in the advertising area. But, after quick thought, I realized that the category is probably correct. Because in a very real sense, my responsibilities as Assistant Director of Communications at the White House run the gambit from the printed to the electronic media, and many things in between...and while much of this involves communicating--some people insist that its still advertising.

Let me say at the outset that I consider myself fortunate to have had the opportunity to have worked for the black press, a press too often maligned by some who ignore or



refuse to accept the value and function of the minority media. I must also say that I enjoyed my role as a newsman here in New York City with United Press International and Westinghouse Broadcasting--WINS Radio, as well as my post with the NAACP.

And what of my present job at the White House? I can only say to you that the challenge...which is ever present, the excitement and the experience--I don't think I would exchange for any other job in the world at the present time.

Well, what do you do? That's a question that's frequently asked by many of those who have never had the opportunity--some of us who have had the opportunity and refused to accept it--to work at the center of Government..if you please.

My work hours are certainly much longer than when I worked under union contract for Westinghouse Broadcasting. The pay is no better.

My day starts at the White House...usually at 7:45 or 8 A.M. and usually ends at 7-8 or 9:00 P.M. During that span of time the assignments could involve a Cabinet

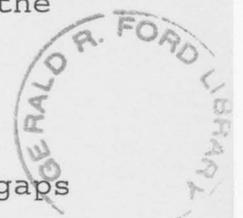


level briefing, a background briefing involving editors and publishers, White House correspondents or the electronic media on some topic announced by the President. My assignments also involve communicating with correspondents, editors and publishers throughout the country on items disseminated from the White House.

The work could involve a 45-minute notice that I am to take off with the President and his staff on a cross-country trip. Set up a schedule of news conferences...say in Philadelphia---for a Presidential Economic Advisor on Phase II, as was the case a couple of days ago. Incidentally, after arranging the news conferences on this particular trip I was told by Herb Klein that I would be accompanying this particular economic advisor on the 6 A.M. flight to Philadelphia, despite the fact that I had been at the White House until 11:00 P.M. the previous night.

Much of my work also involves attempts to bridge gaps which might exist...some which continue to exist...between the White House and the minority media.

I guess a vivid example of the pace we maintain would be a trip out to Detroit a couple of months ago...on this trip we had scheduled a news conference involving top

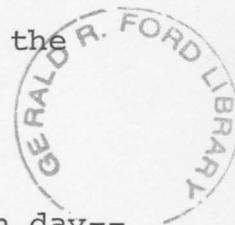


Government officials. A follow-up briefing ended this conference at about 9:00 P.M. Dashing back to Washington on the 7:00 A.M. flight the following <sup>morning</sup>...I had just enough time to drive from National Airport to the White House-- bags and all---and as I walked down the corridor I was met by Herb Klein, who matter-of-fact-like, informed me that he had forgotten to tell me during our conversation the night before that I was scheduled to make the 6:00 P.M. flight to Monrovia, Liberia. So we rush to get passport, shots and a briefing...with about an hour to get home, pack some clothing and head out on a three-and-one-half day round-trip ---10 thousand mile journey to Africa.

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Another area I consider to be vital which I am involved in is my communications with the 30 departments and agencies in the Federal Government...dealing directly with the heads of public information in these various departments, ~~during~~ <sup>determining</sup> ways to communicate programs to the American people.

Other specifics would include---during any given day-- 25 to 50 telephone calls from people--primarily blacks from around the country-- seeking information on how to go



about applying for an SBA loan, a grant from the Commerce Department's Office of Minority Business Enterprise, applications for a job in government, and many, many other areas of importance to minorities. I even had one gentleman call me from Baltimore, Maryland, requesting that I inform the President that his garbage had not been removed in more than a week.

I would also like to address myself briefly to another question that is raised by some minority group members. And that is this--Why would a black give up a secure job and go work for an Administration considered by many minorities to be less than sympathetic to the aspirations and needs of minorities? To me this is the easiest one of all. My basic philosophy on that score is simply this: People Make The Difference. To me it's not enough to simply sit by and criticize...to give with the rhetoric and often scream and complain---sometimes justifiably so--- about what is wrong, what is not being done and what should be done. I think that---given the opportunity-- as minorities we must accept responsibility--often on the firing line---and give what input we can into this Government. This is our Government, too. And, unless we are willing to step in and play our part when given the opportunity,



we shall continue to be left out of the decision-making apparatus of this---our society.

I might close by saying that under our system of Government, the President is elected every four years. We cannot --in my opinion--afford the luxury as minorities--- to sit back and wait four or eight years for a President who comes along and---all too often might---say the things we want to hear while failing---all too often---to deliver.

Believe me, the five months in which I have spent in Washington---have been a real eye opener to the fact that the big decisions governing our lives are generated and most often made in the Nation's capitol. It's incumbent that we are all represented in that decision-making. To me this philosophy is not representative of what some might call Potomac fever, but reality.

