

Ronald Reagan Presidential Library
Digital Library Collections

This is a PDF of a folder from our textual collections.

Collection: Speechwriting, White House Office
of: Speech Drafts

Folder Title: Nancy Reagan: American
Sportscasters Dinner. Nov. 18, 1986

Box: 437

To see more digitized collections visit:

<https://reaganlibrary.gov/archives/digital-library>

To see all Ronald Reagan Presidential Library inventories visit:

<https://reaganlibrary.gov/document-collection>

Contact a reference archivist at: reagan.library@nara.gov

Citation Guidelines: <https://reaganlibrary.gov/citing>

National Archives Catalogue: <https://catalog.archives.gov/>

AMERICAN SPORTSCASTERS' DINNER
NOVEMBER 18, 1986

-- THANK YOU, PETER, AND THANKS TO ALL OF YOU FOR YOUR WARM WELCOME. I'M DELIGHTED TO BE HERE.

-- I HAVE TO TELL YOU THAT MY HUSBAND IS BESIDE HIMSELF WITH JEALOUSY AT ALL THE SPORTS STORIES HE'S MISSING THIS EVENING. HE'S SUCH A SPORTS FAN AND HAS BEEN KNOWN TO TELL A GOOD STORY OR TWO. I THINK THE REASON THE MEETING IN ICELAND WAS SCHEDULED FOR ONLY TWO DAYS WAS BECAUSE HE WAS AFRAID IT WOULD RUN INTO THE WORLD SERIES.

2

-- BUT HE SENDS HIS REGARDS TO EACH OF YOU.

-- I WANT TO TALK WITH YOU BRIEFLY TONIGHT ABOUT SOMETHING SPORTSCASTERS KNOW A GOOD DEAL ABOUT -- CHAMPIONS. JACK DEMPSEY SAID THAT A CHAMPION IS ONE WHO GETS UP WHEN HE CAN'T.

-- IF THAT'S THE DEFINITION, I'VE SEEN A LOT OF CHAMPIONS OVER THE PAST FIVE YEARS. AND I DON'T MEAN AT THE RACETRACK OR IN THE RING OR ON THE PLAYING FIELD. I MEAN IN THE REHABILITATION CENTERS -- WHERE OUR YOUNG PEOPLE, OUR CHILDREN,

ARE STRUGGLING DESPERATELY TO GET ON THEIR FEET AFTER BEING SLAMMED DOWN BY DRUGS.

-- THEY KNOW BETTER THAN ANYONE WHAT IT MEANS TO LOSE, BECAUSE THEY'VE BEEN SO LOW THEY'VE LOST IT ALL -- THEY'VE LOST THEMSELVES. THEY'VE LOST THEIR HOPES. THEY'VE LOST THEIR VALUES. THEY'VE LOST THE CAPACITY FOR LOVE.

-- THEY HAVE NOTHING. THEY FEEL THEY ARE NOTHING. THEY'RE SHELLS. I'VE SEEN THEM. I CAN SEE THEM TONIGHT AS I'M TALKING

TO YOU. IT'S NOT FAIR -- CHILDREN HAVING TO DEAL WITH A PROBLEM EVEN ADULTS CAN'T HANDLE.

-- SOME OF THESE CHILDREN ARE ABLE TO REGATHER SLOWLY, PAINFULLY, THE BASIC ELEMENTS OF LIFE THAT DRUGS TOOK AWAY. OTHERS NEVER DO, AND THEIR LIVES SIMPLY BECOME A CHEMICAL REACTION.

-- AND YOU CAN'T HELP ASKING YOURSELF, WHY? WHY DO OUR CHILDREN, WHO HAVE SO MUCH TO LIVE FOR, WHY DO THEY USE DRUGS?

WHY DO THEY RISK ALL THAT LIFE HAS TO OFFER FOR A MOMENTARY THRILL, A TEMPORARY ESCAPE?

-- WE KNOW SOME OF THE ANSWERS.

-- WE KNOW THAT DRUGS ARE READILY AVAILABLE IN THIS COUNTRY. WE KNOW THAT PEER PRESSURE IS A GREAT INFLUENCE. WE ALSO KNOW THAT FOR MANY YEARS DRUGS WERE GLAMORIZED. AND I COULD LIST A NUMBER OF OTHER FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO OUR YOUNG PEOPLE TAKING DRUGS -- ACADEMIC PRESSURES, BOREDOM, NORMAL

ADOLESCENT REBELLION AND SO ON, BUT LET ME RAISE SOMETHING THAT I THINK IS MUCH MORE BASIC -- THE LACK OF SELF-ESTEEM.

-- DRUGS RUSH IN TO FILL THE VOID WHERE A CHILD'S SUPPLY OF SELF-ESTEEM SHOULD BE. THE CONSEQUENCES OF THAT VOID ARE GREATER TODAY THAN EVER BEFORE IN HISTORY. OTHER ERAS HAVE HAD THEIR OWN MEANS OF ESCAPE, LIKE ALCOHOL, BUT WITH SOMETHING LIKE CRACK, ADDICTION CAN BE ALMOST INSTANTANEOUS. THE STAKES OF EXPERIMENTATION AND SEARCHING FOR ONESELF ARE GREATLY INCREASED.

-- SELF-ESTEEM GIVES CHILDREN THE STRENGTH TO COPE, NOT JUST WITH COCAINE OR ALCOHOL, BUT WITH LIFE ITSELF. THEY GET THIS ESSENTIAL QUALITY FROM US. IF WE READ TO THEM, TALK TO THEM, PLAY AND WORK WITH THEM, WE'LL BE AFFIRMING THEIR VALUE AS INDIVIDUALS. OUR PRESENCE WILL TELL THEM THEY HAVE WORTH.

-- YOU KNOW, WHEN HARMON KILLEBREW ENTERED BASEBALL'S HALL OF FAME, HE RECALLED, "MY FATHER USED TO PLAY WITH MY BROTHER AND ME IN THE YARD. MOTHER WOULD COME OUT AND SAY, 'YOU'RE TEARING

8

UP THE GRASS.' AND DAD WOULD SAY, 'WE'RE NOT RAISING GRASS. WE'RE RAISING BOYS.'"

-- WELL, THAT COMMITMENT IS WHAT KIDS NEED.

-- EACH OF US MUST MAKE A COMMITMENT TO AMERICA'S CHILDREN AND A COMMITMENT AGAINST DRUG ABUSE. EACH OF US MUST DO IT IN HIS OR HER OWN WAY. IN TEDDY ROOSEVELT'S WORDS, WE MUST DO WHAT WE CAN, WITH WHAT WE HAVE, WHERE WE ARE.

-- THIS NATION'S SPORTSCASTERS HAVE A GREAT DEAL OF
INFLUENCE, BECAUSE YOU'RE VISIBLE; YOU'RE RESPECTED. TONIGHT I
AM ASKING YOU, ON BEHALF OF OUR YOUNG PEOPLE, PLEASE, DO WHAT YOU
CAN, WITH WHAT YOU HAVE, WHERE YOU ARE.

-- THANK YOU FOR INVITING ME AND THANK YOU FOR YOUR
HOSPITALITY.

#
