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REMARKS FOR THE COUNTRY MUSIC ASSOCIATION SHOW
THURSDAY, JANUARY 7, 1988

-- THANK YOU, REBA AND LARRY. I'M TRULY HONORED TO RECEIVE THIS AWARD FROM TWO OF COUNTRY MUSIC'S TOP PERFORMERS. I WANT ALL THEIR FANS TO KNOW THAT THEY HAVE AS MUCH HEART AS THEY HAVE TALENT AND, I'M PROUD TO BE THEIR FRIEND.

-- IN COUNTRY MUSIC, SOMETIMES YOU SING OF LOVE AND ITS STRENGTH, AND SOMETIMES YOU SING OF BROKEN HEARTS AND BROKEN LIVES. I CAN'T TELL YOU OF ALL THE YOUNG HEARTS AND LIVES I'VE SEEN BROKEN BY DRUGS -- OR THE PAIN THAT MANY FAMILIES ACROSS THE

NATION ARE EXPERIENCING EVEN AS I SPEAK.

-- YOU SOMETIMES SING OF WHAT'S BEEN FOUND AND AT OTHER TIMES OF WHAT'S BEEN LOST. LET ME SAY THAT LOSING TAKES ON THE DEEPEST OF MEANINGS WHEN YOU'VE SEEN YOUNG PEOPLE LOST TO DRUGS. THEY LOSE THEIR PERSONALITIES, THEIR ENTHUSIASMS, THEIR HOPES. THEY LOSE THEMSELVES. AND IT IS A HUGE STRUGGLE TO PUT YOURSELF TOGETHER AGAIN, WHEN AT 12 OR 14 OR 16 YOU'VE LOST ALL MARKERS AS TO WHO YOU ARE AS A PERSON.

-- AND FINALLY, YOU SING NOT ONLY OF GOOD TIMES, BUT OF HARD TIMES, SO I WANT TO TELL YOU ABOUT A LETTER I RECEIVED FROM A YOUNG MAN IN JAIL. HE SAID HE DIDN'T BELONG THERE AND WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN THERE, BUT HE TRIED A DRUG CALLED COCAINE. AND HE'D LOST EVERYTHING IN LIFE THAT WAS IMPORTANT TO HIM. AND THEN HE WROTE: "MRS. REAGAN, WHY DID THIS HAPPEN TO ME? I HURT SO BAD AND AM SO SORRY FOR THE COURSE MY LIFE HAS TAKEN. SOME SAY I'M SICK. SOME SAY I'M BAD. I DON'T KNOW, ALL I KNOW IS THAT I HURT

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DEEP WITHIN ME, AND I PRAY IT GOES AWAY. PLEASE TAKE IT AWAY, MRS. REAGAN. IF NOT FOR ME FOR OTHERS. HELP US. WE MUST LET PEOPLE KNOW THE DANGER . . . ANYONE WHO TRIES A DRUG TAKES THE GREATEST RISK HE WILL EVER TAKE IN HIS LIFE. MRS. REAGAN, PLEASE, TELL THEM FOR ME . . . I KNOW NOT ONE PERSON WOULD TAKE A DRUG IF THEY HAD TO LOSE WHAT I'VE LOST."

-- NOW HOW CAN WE IGNORE SUCH A PLEA. I CAN'T AND I KNOW THE BIG HEART OF COUNTRY MUSIC CAN'T EITHER. THAT IS WHY I AM SO



VERY GRATEFUL FOR THE COUNTRY MUSIC ASSOCIATION'S OFFER TO JOIN ME IN THIS CRUCIAL FIGHT AGAINST DRUG AND ALCOHOL ABUSE. THE MESSAGES IN YOUR SONGS ARE HEARD BY MILLIONS, AND I KNOW THAT YOUR MESSAGE TO YOUNG PEOPLE ABOUT THE DANGERS OF DRUGS AND ALCOHOL WILL BE HEARD AND LIVES WILL BE SAVED.

-- THANK YOU FOR CARING AND FOR THIS VERY SPECIAL AWARD.

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