

10/15/95 7:30 P.M.

PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON
REMARKS FOR THE LIZ CARPENTER LECTURE
COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS
UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
OCTOBER 16, 1995

LBT
Fraudster All Hang together All Hang Separately
ITailor → Fox
Churchill → Coulter

Acknowledgments: [The First Lady spoke in 1993];
President Robert Berdahl ["Bird-All"]; Bernard Rappaport
[chairman, Board of Regents]; Nicole Bell [student;
introduces you]; Chancellor Bill Cunningham; Barbara
Jordan; Lucy Johnson; Congressman Pickle; Sheldon
Eklund [Dean of Liberal Arts]; Jane Cummings
[Chairperson of Students Distinguished Lectures]; Gary
Mauro; and, most of all, Liz Carpenter.

Liz said she has a file longer than War and Peace of
letters inviting me to come here. [This plays off joke in
Liz Carpenter's intro.] Liz: We all know that you didn't
need anything that long. The minute she asked me to
come to Austin, I knew I was going.

After all, anyone whose life has been touched by this remarkable woman -- a woman who worked side-by-side with President and Mrs. Johnson, who mastered the White House press corps, who reared not only her own children, but, at the age of 70, her late brother's teenage children, too -- knows there is one word that is simply not in her vocabulary, and that word is "no."

~~Come to think of it, I don't know all that many Texans who take "no" for an answer.~~

My dear friends and fellow Americans, in recent weeks every one of us has been made aware of a simple truth.

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We have been made aware of it so clearly that there is no excuse to avert our eyes: white Americans and black Americans often see the same world in drastically different ways. The question today is equally clear: What do we do now? This is not about any one recent event or episode that has captured the national attention. It is about the rift that we see before us.

While many hearts are sore, let us take a moment to give thanks for the fact that we have made progress up that mountain Dr. King described so eloquently in 1968.

I have seen this in my own life.

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I remember a time not so long ago when our neighborhoods, businesses, schools, jobs, and voting booths were closed to many Americans simply because of the color of their skin. I remember a time when there were hardly any people of color serving in our state houses, our school boards, our city halls, and even our Congress. No one can deny that we have come a long way.

Almost 30 years ago, Dr. Martin Luther King marched with sanitation workers in Memphis. They marched for dignity, equality, and economic justice. The placards they carried read, simply: "I am a man."

The thought of
Most of the

almost all of them

men marching in Washington today are

doing so for the same reason. For them, it's about pride,

it's about respect, it's about taking responsibility for
and their countries. It's about wanting

themselves and their families. I honor their presence in
that stands to the town and trying to help them. It's about making

our nation's capital today. I urge all Americans to
the fault of the government, ~~that~~ unless black men ~~accept~~ should

embrace these principles.

that's bad, no one else can help them, their best interest children except the
have, black history too many of them still face. And it's about the minority
the rest of us that if they do not believe that word, we too have a responsibility
to join with them in being better tomorrow, a friend tomorrow.

good

It is my job to support efforts that lift us up. But it is

also my job to speak out against anyone who would

attempt to rally people around the flag of hate. One

million men are right to be standing up for personal

responsibility. But one million men do not make ~~one~~

man right if ~~that~~ ^{one} man's message is ~~one~~ of malice and

division.

No good house was ever built on a bad foundation.

Nothing good ever came of hate. ~~I challenge you today~~

~~to embrace your communities and repudiate the~~

~~hatemongers.~~ ^{So} Let us pray today ^{that} all who march, ^{and} all who speak with ^{us} for atonement, for reconciliation, for progress, let us pray that those who would ^{not} hear will give voice to ^{the} ~~the~~ ^{the} true message of nonviolence.

Today, we face a choice. One way leads to further

~~and more~~ ^{but} ~~isolation~~.

separation and bitterness. The other way, ~~the path we~~

~~must take,~~ ^{is} the path of courage that leads to unity, ^{reconciliation,} and a rich opportunity for all to ^{live} the most of the lives God has given them.

~~Now more than ever, we do not have a person to waste.~~

~~We must understand that our diversity is our greatest~~

~~strength. We will go up or down together.~~

I must tell you today that the racial debate need not be a setback for us, but a great opportunity -- one that we cannot let pass us by.

Some of our best moments as Americans have come when we have had the courage to face the truth about those times when we have failed to live up to our own best ideals. That act is not one of weakness, but of proud American optimism.

These confrontations with the truth bring about what ^{our} historians ^{have} call "open moments."

At such turning points, Americans moved against slavery, struggling away from the horror that one American could hold another captive; they moved to embrace women's suffrage; ^{They moved to guarantee} ~~recognizing at last that we~~ ^{basic ~~right~~ ^{legal} rights to Americans who refused to see, under the} ~~don't have an American to waste.~~ ^{leadership of the great President in whose shadow we} ~~gather today.~~

These moments left us with a legacy of greatness because we looked in the national mirror and were brave enough to say: "This is not who we are. We are better than that."

~~There is no such thing as a free lunch~~

As Abraham Lincoln, the Great Emancipator, reminded us, "A house divided against itself cannot stand."

At every moment when our divisions have threatened to bring the house down, we have moved together to show it up. My fellow Americans, our house is the great democracy in all history, and it is our great failure, our sin, it has been the chief of history against it. But ~~the~~ ~~division~~ ~~is~~ remaining, and we have work to do.

The two worlds we see now each contain both truth and distortion. ~~And what I am going to do today is tell some truths about racism to~~ Both black and white Americans. ^{Must face this.}
~~Only~~ ^{for} this honesty is the ^{only} gateway to the many acts of reconciliation that will unite both these worlds at last into one America.

White people must understand and acknowledge the roots of black pain. African Americans have indeed lived long with a justice system that in too many cases has been less than just. The record of abuses extends from lynchings and trumped-up charges to false arrests and police brutality. The tragedies of Emmett Till and Rodney King are bloody markers on that road.

Still today, too many of our police officers play by the rules of the bad old days. It is beyond wrong when law-abiding black parents have to tell their law-abiding children to fear the police whose salaries are paid by their taxes.

Blacks are right to think something is terribly wrong when African American men are many times more likely to be the victims of homicide than any other group in this country...when there are more African American men in our prisons than in our colleges.

When one in three African American men in their twenties were either in jail, on parole, or otherwise under the supervision of the criminal justice system.

Nearly one in three. I would like every white person in America to take a moment to think how he or she would feel if one in three white men were in a similar position.

Second, and even more fundamental: there is an unacceptable economic disparity between blacks and whites. It is fashionable to talk about African Americans as if they were part of a protected class. Many whites think blacks are getting more than their fair share in terms of jobs and promotions. The truth is African Americans still make an average of 60 percent less than white people. More than half of African American children live in poverty.

On the other hand,

Blacks must understand and acknowledge the roots of white fear. There is a legitimate fear of the violence that is too prevalent in urban areas.

The present North → suburban US → believe: "So a white couple in inner city can be done → don't understand why people put up w/ gangs or crime in Mexico, drug war in Mexico, and things like that. It is not racist for any parent to pull his or her child ^{back to a more secure area - by walking around regular security} close when walking through a high-crime neighborhood.

It is not racist to reject the few black leaders who -- in contrast to the vast majority of African Americans -- want to play on hatred and venom to do the work of inspiration.

Finally, there is the fear that both sides will not be able to see each other as more than enemy faces, all of whom carry a sliver of bigotry in their hearts.

System works - Official
code enforcement

13
Whites forget about beliefs
whites think beliefs monolithic
Whites to put more away + support pol work
or not

This gap between the two realities is inconsistent with
Diff of opinion not in diff opinion healthy for Dem - but diff
democracy. It impedes our growth and prosperity.

*no gap, no need in race. Threaten the work of MLK
the life to avoid*

~~And it dims the bright example we have always set for
the rest of the world.~~ As Dr. King said, "We must learn
to live together as brothers, or [we will] perish as
fools."

But recognizing one another's real grievances is not
enough. We must also take responsibility for ourselves.
No one is entitled to complain about grievances without
first cleaning out their own house. America: we must
clean our house of racism.

To our white citizens I say: clean your house of racism. Too many destructive ideas are gaining currency in our midst. The taped voice of one policeman should fill you with outrage. Stand up and be heard denouncing this sort of rhetoric...so loudly and clearly that your black fellow citizens can hear you. White racism may be black people's burden, but it is white people's problem.

Again, I say: clean your house.

To our black citizens: I honor the presence of hundreds of thousands of men in Washington today committed to atonement and personal responsibility. I call on you to build on this effort to share equally in the promise of America.

But to do that you must also clean your own house of racism. Again, I say: clean your house.

There are too many today -- white and black, on the left and the right, on street corners and on the radio waves - - who for their own purposes sow division. To them I say: No more. We are one family. One family. Not just neighbors, not fellow citizens; not separate camps; but family: white, black, Latino, men, women, able-bodied, disabled. When a child is gunned down on a street in the Bronx, no matter what our race, he is our child.

When a woman dies from a beating, no matter what our race, she is our sister. *Every time they come thru the veins of a woman died, it clouds the future for all our children*

We are one nation. One family -- indivisible. Divorce or separation are simply not an option.

Here, in 1995, we dare not tolerate the existence of two Americas. Under my watch, I will do everything in my power to see that soon there is only one. One America under the rule of law; one justice system; one social contract; equal opportunity; one America.

How do we get there?

First, by defending real opportunity. I'm not talking about opportunity for black Americans or white Americans.

I'm talking about opportunity for all Americans. I will fight to increase the minimum wage that holds families together.

I will fight to defend tax relief that helps lift 14 million low-income, working Americans out of poverty. ^{and their children} ~~And enjoy~~
to see how it's gain - But most of them are kids.

Second, by insisting on real responsibility. Nowhere is that responsibility more important than in our efforts to promote public safety and preserve the rule of law.

Citizens must respect the law and those who enforce it.

Police have a life and death responsibility never to abuse the power granted them by the people.

We know what works in fighting crime: community policing. We've seen it working all across this country where the violent crime rate is going down.

But for it to work, police departments must be scrupulously fair and engaged with -- not estranged from -- the communities they serve. I am committed to making community policing a reality across this nation.

We must crush the remnants of racism in our police departments and throughout our criminal justice system.

The police have the sacred duty to protect the community fairly -- but the citizens of our communities have the sacred responsibility to respect the police.

and more to support them & work w/ them.

Finally, I want to speak for a moment about a crucial area of responsibility: the responsibility of fatherhood. I want to speak to all Americans about this issue.

The single biggest social problem our society faces is the growing absence of fathers in our nation's homes.

One child in four grows up in a fatherless home -- without a father to help guide the child, without a father to care for the child, without a father to teach boys to be men and to teach girls to expect respect from men.

This is not a black problem or a Latino problem or a white problem, it is an American problem.

I know this from my own life.

My father died before I was born. My stepfather's battle with alcohol kept him from being the father ~~I needed~~. *he could have been.*

But as an adult, a father in turn, I committed myself to doing what countless men do every day.

Parenting is never easy. I know what it's like to stay up until dawn rocking a sick child. I know what it's like to watch my child go out to play -- a child whom I would defend with my life -- and know that there may be danger down the street. Every parent makes mistakes.

But the point is to stay there for your child day after day. Building ^{always job} a family is the hardest job a man can do.

But it is also the most important.

And let me say that we can only build strong families when men and women respect each other in partnership. That means men must move as much into the homeplace as women have moved into the workplace. And it also means that we must end domestic violence against women and children. Men must pledge never, never to raise their hand against a woman.

So today, I honor ~~the motives of the~~ hundreds of ~~thousands~~ of black men marching in Washington ^{to} ~~as a~~ demonstration ~~of~~ their commitment to themselves, their families, and their communities.

They understand that, while we all have responsibilities to each other, it is they who hold the key to their progress in this country. They understand that the march is not about the few at the podium. It is about the many who have come from all across the country to take a step in the name of what they know is right.

That is why I honor the millions throughout America -- men of every color who without fanfare or recognition do what it takes to be good fathers to their kids.

I say to all men, wherever you are: step up and be the kind of father ~~(you needed and, if you were lucky, actually had.)~~

an apology

I say to those men who have ~~never~~ met their children:
reach out to them. Be there for them. Your child, your
flesh and blood, needs you. *It's not too late*

I say to those men who only send money to support
their kids: Keep sending those checks.

Your children count on them. We'll enforce the law and
catch you if you stop. But your money is no
replacement for your guiding, your caring, and for your
loving your child.

And I say to those men who go home every night and
love and care for their children.

I say to them as a former fatherless child, as a father
myself, and as the President of a country that needs
you: Thank you and God bless you.

