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March 13/90

TO: KRISTEN GEAR

5 Pages

GRIDIRON DINNER (Mark Lange)

I HAVEN'T SEEN PEOPLE THIS WELL DRESSED SINCE I WAS IN CALIFORNIA A FEW WEEKS AGO, AND THE ANNENBERGS HELD A GARAGE SALE.

THIS LOOKS LIKE THE KIND OF AUDIENCE WHERE NO ONE WILL COME UP TO ME AND COMPLAIN ABOUT POSTAGE GOING UP TO 30 CENTS.

WHEN I TOLD BARBARA WE'D BE SPENDING TONIGHT AT THE HOTEL WHERE ALL THE ACTION IS, SHE THOUGHT I MEANT THE VISTA.

BARBARA WAS A SENSATION HERE LAST YEAR WHEN SHE SHOWED UP WEARING A RED WIG. I GAVE HER AN IDEA HOW SHE COULD TOP HERSELF THIS YEAR, BUT SHE REFUSED TO DRESS UP AS MARLA MAPLES.

I'VE BEEN HEARING THE CRITICISM OF SOME DEMOCRATS AND SOME IN THE MEDIA ABOUT SO-CALLED TIMIDITY, LACK OF VISION, A LOW PROFILE AND UNINSPIRING SPEECHES. WELL I'M NOT CONCERNED. I'M SURE MY FRIEND TOM FOLEY WILL IMPROVE.

(He's the Democratic speaker.)

MORE...

TO: KRISTEN GEAR - GRIDIRON (CONT'D)

DESPITE THE CHARGES THAT I HAVE A THIN SKIN, I ENJOY BEING LAMPOONED BY THE WASHINGTON PRESS CORPS. SOMETIMES KNOWN AS THE "DIGNITY BATALLION."

I'VE HEARD CRITICISM THAT I'M OBSESSED WITH PUBLIC OPINION POLLS. THE FACT IS, I DON'T THINK POLLS SERVE ANY USEFUL PURPOSE AT ALL -- AND 67% OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE AGREE WITH ME.

SURE, BARBARA AND I REGISTER HIGH IN THE POPULARITY POLLS, BUT I WON'T REST UNTIL 100% OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE ARE BEHIND THE BUSHES.

THERE ARE SOME WHO SAY I'M SECRETIVE. WELL I HAVE AN ANSWER FOR THAT, BUT I CAN'T TELL YOU BECAUSE IT MIGHT LEAK OUTSIDE THIS ROOM.

SOME IN THE MEDIA THINK I'M DEVIOUS. WELL I'LL FOOL THEM.

SOME ACCUSE ME OF BEING TOO CAUTIOUS. I'LL RESPOND TO THAT AFTER I'VE CONSIDERED ALL SIDES OF THE QUESTION.

SOME SAY I'M TOO TIMID. I'D LIKE TO END THAT PERCEPTION RIGHT HERE AND NOW, BUT I'M AFRAID OF THE REPERCUSSIONS.

I'D LIKE TO REPORT TO YOU ON THE VISION THING. FOR A FEW MINUTES LAST NIGHT I THOUGHT I HAD A VISION, BUT IT TURNED OUT TO BE INDIGESTION.

MORE...

TO: KRISTEN GEAR - GRIDIRON (CONT'D)

IT JUST SO HAPPENS THAT I DO HAVE A VISION. I SEE AN AMERICA WHERE REPORTERS WON'T CRITICIZE ME ONCE I'VE HAD THEM OVER FOR DINNER.

I WANT TO THANK AT&T FOR THEIR OFFER, BUT I'VE DECIDED NOT TO APPEAR WITH RAFSANJANI IN A "REACH OUT AND TOUCH SOMEONE" COMMERCIAL.

I'VE TAKEN A LOT OF KIDDING ABOUT THAT HOAX PHONE CALL, SO I JUST WANT TO MAKE IT CLEAR THAT THE GUY WHO CALLED WAS RAFSANJANI. UNFORTUNATELY -- IRVING RAFSANJANI, A TOLEDO PIPE-FITTER.

WE GOT BACK AT IRAN. RICH LITTLE PHONED RAFSANJANI PRETENDING TO BE ME.

I'LL TAKE A PHONE CALL FROM ANY ADVERSARY I'M HAVING PROBLEMS WITH, IF THERE'S A CHANCE TO IRON OUT OUR DIFFERENCES. BUT FOR FUTURE REFERENCE MY MESSAGE TO MY STAFF IS: DAMMIT, IF IT SOUNDS LIKE GREENSPAN, MAKE SURE IT IS GREENSPAN."

I DON'T MIND MY FOREIGN POLICY BEING CRITICIZED, AS LONG AS THE CRITICS ARE KNOWLEDGABLE ABOUT WORLD AFFAIRS. I ASKED (A DEMOCRAT) WHAT HE THOUGHT ABOUT REUNIFICATION, AND HE SAID "MAYBE THE TRUMPS WILL GET BACK TOGETHER."

EVENTS MOVE SO QUICKLY THESE DAYS, IT'S MIND-BOGGLING. IT'S SO WONDERFUL TO SEE FREE SPEECH RESTORED TO THE SOVIET UNION, TO EASTERN EUROPE, TO ANDY ROONEY.

MORE...

TO: KRISTEN GEAR - GRIDIRON (CONT'D)

ON THE WAY IN I PASSED BY A GUY WHO'S ON A HUNGER STRIKE UNTIL THE GOVERNMENT DOES MORE ABOUT AID TO THE IMPOVERISHED. I STOPPED AND SAID "LOOK, I HATE TO SEE YOU SUFFER LIKE THIS CONGRESSMAN GEPHARDT, BUT WE'RE NOT SENDING AID TO THE SOVIETS."

I TOLD JOHN SUNUNU I WAS NEVER SO INSPIRED AS I WAS A FEW WEEKS AGO WHEN A BRAVE, FORMERLY PERSECUTED LEADER VISITED CAPITOL HILL, MADE A SPEECH AND HAD CONGRESSMEN EATING OUT OF HIS HAND. JOHN SAID "YES, VACLAV HAVEL WAS REMARKABLE." I SAID "I KNOW, BUT I MEAN RICHARD NIXON."

I THOUGHT PRESIDENT CARTER DID A GREAT JOB OBSERVING THE ELECTION IN NICARAGUA. I UNDERSTAND HE ASKED FOR BODYGUARDS TO BE WITH HIM AT ALL TIMES, AND WAS TOLD HE HAD NOTHING TO FEAR FROM EITHER THE CONTRAS OR SANDINISTAS. HE SAID "I KNOW, BUT WHAT ABOUT KILLER RABBITS?"

I ASKED DICK CHENEY NOT TO BE TOO FUNNY TONIGHT SO I WOULDN'T HAVE A TOUGH ACT TO FOLLOW. DICK SAID "WHY ASK ME, TOM FOLEY WILL PROBABLY BE FUNNY TOO." I SAID "I KNOW, BUT I CAN'T FIRE TOM FOLEY."

IT'S ONLY DUE TO FLUKE CIRCUMSTANCES THAT DICK CHENEY IS WHERE HE IS TODAY. WHEN THE TOWER NOMINATION FELL THROUGH, I TOLD JOHN SUNUNU TO GET ME MY FAVORITE POLITICIAN FROM WYOMING, AND JOHN DIDN'T REALIZE I MEANT AL SIMPSON.

DICK LEARNED A LITTLE ABOUT DEFENSE IN THE FORD ADMINISTRATION. HE USED TO PUT ON COMBAT GEAR TO PLAY GOLF WITH JERRY.

MORE...

TO: KRISTEN GEAR - GRIDIRON (CONT'D)

DICK HAS TO WRESTLE WITH A VITAL ISSUE NEXT WEEK: WHETHER FEMALE CATERPILLARS SHOULD BE ALLOWED IN COMBAT.

DICK DARMIN POINTED OUT A POSSIBLE FLAW IN MY PLAN TO DROP A MILLION CATERPILLARS ON COLOMBIA. AFTER THEY'VE EATEN THE COCOA LEAVES, IS THE AMERICAN TAXPAYER WILLING TO SEND THEM ALL TO THE BETTY FORD CENTER?

IF ANYONE THINKS WOMAN AREN'T VERY GOOD AT COMBAT, JUST PUT BARBARA BUSH ALONE IN A ROOM WITH GEORGE WILL.

I THINK YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT REPORTS OF A FEUD BETWEEN JOHN SUNUNU AND BILL REILLY ARE OVERBLOWN. NOT ONLY DO THEY GET ALONG FINE NOW, BUT JUST TO SHOW THERE ARE NO HARD FEELINGS, JOHN GAVE BILL A GIFT OF A TICKET FOR A RIDE ON A GREYHOUND BUS.

**105TH GRIDIRON DINNER \ CAPITOL HILTON
SATURDAY, MARCH 31, 1990 \ 10:56 P.M.**

YOU KNOW, THAT CLOSER A FEW MOMENTS AGO WAS THE MOST MOVING THING I'VE SEEN IN OVER A DOZEN GRIDIRONS. BUT I DO REMEMBER AN INSPIRED MOMENT BARBARA AND I HAD, AFTER LAST YEAR'S DINNER. STANDING ON A WINDY STREET CORNER... SHE IN A TRENCHCOAT WITH THE COLLAR TURNED UP... HER LONG, FLOWING RED HAIR BLOWING IN THE WIND... AND BOTH OF US TOO PROUD TO RUN AFTER IT.

- 2 -

LET ME CONGRATULATE THE NEW GRIDIRON PRESIDENT. IT'S GOOD TO HAVE AN INTELLECTUAL IN CHARGE. IT TOOK VISION TO PREDICT MY RACE WOULD BE OVER AFTER IOWA... TO SAY DUKAKIS WOULD GET THE SOUTHERN VOTE... TO WORK FOR A PAPER THAT PREDICTS DANIEL ORTEGA BY 30 POINTS... SPEECH IN THE DARK? HELL, BRODER WRITES WHOLE COLUMNS IN THE DARK.

THAT TUNE ABOUT THE "BAD, BAD, G.O.P." WAS A REAL TOE-TAPPER. WE REPUBLICANS ARE TOUGH -- ESPECIALLY MY CHIEF OF STAFF. DOWN IN CARTAGENA DURING A LUNCHTIME PHOTO OP, WE HAD TO KEEP SAYING, "REMEMBER JOHN -- BITE THE TACO, SHAKE THE HAND..."

OUR PRESS SECRETARY, HE USED TO BE PRETTY SOFT. BUT HE'S COME A LONG WAY FROM LAST YEAR, WHEN WE WENT INTO A CLOTHING STORE. MARLIN SAID, "I'D LIKE TO SEE A BATHING SUIT IN MY SIZE." AND THE CLERK SAID, "SO WOULD I."

BUT I THINK WE'VE GOT A GOOD TEAM IN PLACE. WHEN THE PHONE RANG THE OTHER DAY, SCOWCROFT RAN IT THROUGH INTELLIGENCE. BAKER CHECKED EVERYTHING OUT. SUNUNU SAID, "TAKE THE CALL." CERTAINLY WORTH IT. NEVER THOUGHT I'D HEAR FROM ELVIS AGAIN.

WHAT WE'RE STILL HEARING FROM THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS CORPS IS, "WHERE'S BRENT?" AND I'M SENSITIVE TO TONIGHT'S JOKES ABOUT THOSE TRIPS OF HIS. A FEW WEEKS AGO BRENT TOOK A VACATION IN SALT LAKE CITY. WE TOLD THE PRESS ABOUT IT. BUT I'LL BE DAMNED IF I'M GONNA PUT SANCTIONS ON UTAH.

[LAST ONE:]

LOOK. LOT OF COMEDIANS OUT THERE. DOING
IMPERSONATIONS. OKAY WITH ME. AT THIS JUNCTURE. \\
NEED FOR BALANCE: SOMEWHERE BETWEEN CAUTION, \\
AND PRUDENCE. \\ BUT NATURAL DISASTERS?
OUT OF BOUNDS. CALIFORNIA EARTHQUAKE? NOT MY FAULT.
SAN ANDREAS [AN-DRAY-US] FAULT.

YOU KNOW, A FEW YEARS AGO DAVID BRODER WROTE,
"GRIDIRONERS BELIEVE THAT FOOLISHNESS IS ITS OWN
REWARD." IT'S TRUE. BECAUSE THE BASIS OF ALL GOOD
HUMOR IS A MEASURE OF REBELLION. AND IF WE'VE LEARNED
ANYTHING FROM THE MOMENTOUS WORLD EVENTS OF THE PAST
YEAR, IT IS THE UNDENIABLE VALUE OF THOUGHTFUL DISSENT.
AS THE ESTEEMED DAVID -- DAVID BRINKLEY -- RECENTLY
SAID, "THIS CITY IS NOWHERE NEAR AS IMPORTANT AS IT
THINKS IT IS."

ALSO TRUE -- BUT THE LESSON HERE SHOULDN'T BE ABOUT DECLINING INFLUENCE, AS MUCH AS DEFLATING SELF-IMPORTANCE. EVENTS IN EASTERN EUROPE AND AROUND THE WORLD HAVE A POWER OF THEIR OWN -- BECAUSE OF THE PEOPLE AND PERSONALITIES THAT DRIVE THEM -- BUT ABOVE ALL, BECAUSE OF THE POWER OF IDEAS THAT COMPEL THEM.

WE MAY WITNESS THE WORLD'S UPHEAVALS THROUGH EYES BLURRED WITH TEARS, OR EYES BRIGHT WITH WONDER. BUT WE CAN KNOW THAT BECAUSE OF THIS IDEA CALLED AMERICA, THE WORLD WILL NEVER BE THE SAME AGAIN. AND THANKS TO MY BEST EFFORTS, THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE MAY NEVER BE THE SAME AGAIN EITHER.

GOOD NIGHT -- AND GOD BLESS YOU ALL.

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