

Administration of Barack Obama, 2014

Remarks on the Resignation of James F. "Jay" Carney as White House Press Secretary and the Appointment of Joshua R. Earnest as White House Press Secretary

May 30, 2014

[The President interrupted a press briefing by Press Secretary Carney.]

The President. Hello. You haven't seen me enough today. One of Jay's favorite lines is, "I have no personnel announcements at this time." But I do. And it's bittersweet. It involves one of my closest friends here in Washington.

In April, Jay came to me in the Oval Office and said he was thinking about moving on, and I was not thrilled, to say the least. But Jay has had to wrestle with this decision for quite some time. He has been on my team since day one: for 2 years with the Vice President, for the past 3½ years as my Press Secretary. And it has obviously placed a strain on Claire, his wife, and his two wonderful kids Hugo and Della. Della's Little League team, by the way, I had a chance to see the other day, and she's a fine pitcher. But he wasn't seeing enough of the games.

Jay was a reporter for 21 years before coming to the White House, including a stint as Moscow bureau chief for Time magazine during the collapse of the Soviet empire. So he comes to this place with a reporter's perspective. That's why, believe it or not, I actually think he will miss hanging out with all of you, including the guys in the front row. *[Laughter]*

Q. Come on!

Q. Third row. Third row. *[Laughter]*

Q. He's holding his breath. *[Laughter]*

The President. But Jay has become one of my closest friends and is a great Press Secretary and a great adviser. He's got good judgment. He has a good temperament. And he's got a good heart. And I'm going to miss him a lot. I will continue to rely on him as a friend and adviser after he leaves to spend as much of the summer as he can with his kids before he decides what's next for him. Whatever it is, I know he's going to be outstanding at it.

Of course, that meant I had to make a decision, which is who succeeds Jay. And we've got enormous talent around here, but I've decided that we're going to put in this slot somebody who is also a friend and adviser. So today the flak jacket is officially passed to a new generation: Mr. Josh Earnest.

Josh is a coach's son from Kansas City. He still roots for the Royals, I guess. *[Laughter]*

Q. Sure, he does.

The President. As you know, his name describes his demeanor: Josh is an earnest guy, and you can't find just a nicer individual even outside of Washington.

The country, of course, knows him for his golden voice and dulcet tones on West Wing Week, the biggest viral Internet hit since "Between Two Ferns." *[Laughter]*

But Josh and I have an incredible history going all the way back to the Iowa caucuses. Josh was my Iowa communications director. And even when he was in that role, you'd find him

spending an extra hour or two helping young staffers make phone calls or knock on doors. There was no task that was too small, no detail too unimportant for Josh to attend to.

At the White House, he's been a mentor to many of the young people here who I know are thrilled for him today. He is of sound judgment and great temperament. He is honest and full of integrity. And I'm sure you will at some point get frustrated with him as well—*[laughter]*—but it's going to be hard, because he's a straight shooter and a great guy.

So my request is that, be nice to Jay on his farewell tour, and be nice to Josh during his initiation, which I'm sure will last maybe 2 days or perhaps two questions. *[Laughter]*

Q. Is this effective immediately?

The President. So we're going to let him hang around a little bit to milk it for all it's worth. *[Laughter]*

All right? Thank you, guys.

Press Secretary Carney. Thank you, sir.

Press Secretary-designate Earnest. Thank you, sir.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 2 p.m. in the James S. Brady Press Briefing Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Claire Shipman, wife of Press Secretary Carney; and Don Earnest, father of Press Secretary-designate Earnest. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Press Secretary Carney and Press Secretary-designate Earnest.

Categories: Appointments and Nominations : White House Press Secretary, appointment, remarks; Resignations and Retirements : White House Press Secretary, resignation, remarks .

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