

May 25 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1993

Exchange With Reporters Prior to a Meeting With House Democratic Leaders

May 25, 1993

White House Travel Office

Q. Mr. President, we haven't actually been able to get your view on the dealings the White House had with the FBI on all this travel stuff. Could you tell us what your view of all that is? Was it appropriate? Did you know about it?

The President. The only thing I know is that we made a decision to save the taxpayers and the press money. That's all I know. We saved 25 percent on the first plane ride and saved the taxpayers a bunch of money. Any other questions, I'll just refer you to Mr. McLarty—

Q. Was it your decision to go around the Attorney General and have the FBI issue a very rare statement?

The President. I had nothing to do with any decision, except to try to save the taxpayers and the press money. The press has been complaining for years that they were overcharged by the way the thing was done before. The first trip out we saved 25 percent for the press, and the taxpayers saved a lot of money. That's all I know about it.

NOTE: The exchange began at 8:45 a.m. in the State Dining Room at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Remarks at the "Drive American Quality" Presentation

May 25, 1993

Thank you very much, Mr. Bieber, and to all of you who are here. I want to say a special word of thanks to Mr. Smith and Mr. Poling, Mr. Eaton and Secretary Brown and Secretary Reich. I see Mr. Bieber just gave Secretary Reich a nightshirt. I also want to thank all the Members of the Congress who are here and for their support of the auto industry in this country.

I grew up as a boy, starting from the time I was about 6 years old, in the back of a Buick dealership. I have been interested in the automobile business all my life. I watched with sadness when it was down, and I feel great elation now that I see it coming back. These cars are what is best about America: increasing productivity, increasing quality, and gaining market share back. The people who make them are the people who deserve our support, and this administration is determined to give it to them. Last year the auto industry production was 5.6 percent of our gross national product. In 1992, vehicle and parts manufacturing directly accounted for 4.6 percent of our manufacturing employment. During the first quarter of this year, the Big Three accounted for two out of

three auto sales in the United States, with the American cars gaining market share in 1993. This did not happen by accident. It required investment, it required reorganization, it required some reductions in spending. Over the last 3 years, \$73 billion have been invested by the Big Three. Since 1981, quality has dramatically improved. The number of customer-reported defects is down by 80 percent. And many of our American cars, by any quality measure, are better than their foreign competitors today. They are also more fuel-efficient and increasingly so.

Our great challenge now is to produce cars of high quality at affordable costs that are environmentally responsible and that preserve good jobs here in America for those who can compete and win. In order to do that, we have to begin by getting our house in order. In the next few days, the United States Congress will have a chance to adopt the biggest deficit-reduction package in the history of this country, one that asks wealthier Americans—who, I might add, have overwhelmingly been supportive of this—to pay most of the burden of the new taxes, which exempts lower middle income Americans