Two and one to Lockhart. Where are you headed now? You’ve got—

_The President._ I’ve got to go back to—the President of Italy is here today. And we’re having the Italian state dinner tonight.

_Q._ Now, in fact, I understand that my buddy Keith Berman from ESPN is supposed to be a guest at that state dinner.

_The President._ I think that’s right. I think he’s going to be there.

_Q._ Well, keep him away from the President of Italy. That’s all I can say. [Laughter]

_The President._ And we’re going to have a lot of distinguished Italian-Americans.

_Q._ Two-two pitch now to Lockhart. That’s a base hit down the left field line. Hammonds hustles over to cut it off. Rounding first and holding is Lockhart with his second straight hit. Three to two, Kansas City trailing the Orioles here in the fourth inning.

Well, that sounds like a great night. And again, we really appreciate your stopping by.

_The President._ Thanks. Glad to do it.

Q. Any time you feel like a ball game, well, stop by and visit us.

_The President._ You’ve got a deal.

Q. All right.

_The President._ Thank you.

Q. That’s the President, Bill Clinton, threw out the first ball—threw a strike, I might add, and he actually warmed up, he said, with Orioles chairman of the board Peter Angelos ahead of time.

_The President._ I did, and I was on the pitcher’s mound because Ripken taunted me up there. [Laughter]

Thank you.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

_The President._ That’s a popup.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:21 p.m. in the WBAL broadcast booth at Oriole Park at Camden Yards. In his remarks, he referred to ESPN commentator Chris Berman. A portion of this interview could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

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**Interview With Mel Proctor, Jim Palmer, and Mike Flanagan of Home Team Sports in Baltimore**

**April 2, 1996**

Q. Welcome back to Camden Yards. The Orioles lead the Kansas City Royals 3–2. It is opening day, and President Bill Clinton was here today to throw out the first ball, and he’ll be joining us momentarily, as soon as we get him miked up.

Well, we’ve got two right-handers, myself and Jim Palmer, and two left-handers in the booth now, Flanagan and the President.

Q. We finally have some balance up here.

_Q._ Can we get a Presidential chair in here?

Thank you very much.

How are you, sir?

_The President._ Great. It’s been a good game, don’t you think?

_Q._ I agree.

_The President._ And a beautiful day.

_Q._ What was that first pitch you threw? Fastball, slider, curve?

_The President._ It wasn’t fast. It wasn’t fast, but I had a good time.

Q. This is a good time of the year for you. I know you’re a big college basketball fan, having gone to Arkansas. Unfortunately, the Razorbacks were eliminated, didn’t make it to the finals.

_The President._ But I’m very proud of them. They started 4 freshmen and made it to the Sweet 16, so I think they did well. It was a great tournament this year, I think. Everybody who watched the games must have felt it was a great tournament.

_Q._ I know you love being here on opening day.

_The President._ I do. And this has been exciting, you know? It’s great to see this new Baltimore team. You know, they’ve got a chance to go all the way. And yet, if my count’s right, all their RBI’s go to Mr. Ripken today.

_Q._ That’s right. [Laughter]

_Q._ Yes, he got 30 percent of what he had in all spring training. And of course, they all
want to get to the White House, because I know you had the Atlanta Braves there in early March.

The President. I did.

Q. I know you get out to a game or two during the season. Do you watch at the White House when you’re home?

The President. I do quite often, I do. I watch the games when they’re on, especially at night. When I come home late at night and I’m kind of keyed up and I don’t want to go to sleep, I often watch the games that are on.

Q. A drive to right center field. Johnny Damon makes the catch on the warning track.

The President. Great play. That’s a great play.

Q. Johnny Damon taking an extra base hit away from Chris Holies.

So you were saying you watch our games late at night. I guess in essence what you’re saying is that we put you to sleep.

The President. Or keep me awake. [Laughter]

Q. This is the youngster that last year, at Double A, got about 188 at bats, but the reason Bob Boone left him in center field, even though they have a very good center fielder in Tom Goodwin, is because of his ability to make plays like that.

Q. Here’s Tony Tarasco, who struck out his first time up.

Q. Did you play baseball yourself in high school?

The President. My school didn’t have a team, but we had church league and Boys Club. We had all those. I played in some of those teams when I was a kid. I loved it.

Q. I know you love to golf; did you play any other sports growing up?

The President. Yes, but only—not in school; I played church league basketball, softball, baseball, but you know, everybody that grew up where I did wound up loving sports.

Q. Now, are you allowed to have a favorite team?

The President. I think so. In the basketball years—in the basketball season, excuse me, people understand it when I cheer for my home State team or for my alma mater, Georgetown. And when I was a kid, interestingly enough, in Arkansas, the St. Louis Cardinals were the closest baseball team to us; there were no Texas teams then. And so we used to listen to Cardinals baseball. That’s what I studied to when I was a boy.

Q. Is that right?

The President. Yeah.

Q. I know you were out here last year when Cal Ripken broke Lou Gehrig’s consecutive game streak.

The President. I was.

Q. What did that mean to you?

The President. I think it meant a lot to me not only as a baseball fan but as a citizen and as the President now, as someone who really wants his country to work well. The idea that a man could show that kind of discipline and devotion to his work and stay with one team for a career in a time and age when a lot of people don’t last very long because they don’t have the discipline to do it and just go for the big-time bucks in the short run and float around from team to team, or in the case of non-athletes from company to company, I think it really sort of was reassuring, not only to me but to the American people, to see that kind of record set and to see that kind of discipline and loyalty. I liked it a lot.

Q. Are you aware that Ken Griffey, Jr., is a Presidential candidate and has promised, if elected, to let people not pay taxes for 2 months?

The President. Yes, I’m worried about that. I’m worried about him. I figure that—at the very least he’s going to take more votes away from me than Senator Dole. [Laughter] I’m really worried about it. I think—you know, I’ve always been a big fan of his. I feel sort of stabbed by it. It’s breaking my heart.

Q. You wouldn’t consider that, would you?

The President. What?

Q. Not having taxes for 2 months?

The President. What I want to know is how he’s going to pay the bills. I’ll consider it. I want to hear the rest of the deal. How is he going to not pay the bills?

Q. Base hit for Jeffrey Hammonds, who is two for two—a double his first time up and now a single. So that’s a good sign. Hammond’s back healthy and swinging the bat well.

The President. Looking good.

Q. Getting back to Cal Ripken and all of the pressure that he must have been under last year during that streak—and you can certainly identify with pressure in your office—what do you see about the way he handled the pressure?

The President. I think he did what I try to do; he didn’t vary his routine. He just focused on the day that was before him. And I think that he must have had the record in mind, but it didn’t paralyze his play. Even the night he
was here, the night he broke the record, he hit a home run on a 0–3 pitch. So he still had enough presence of mind not to even just take the walk, you know? He was there, ready. He was playing. He was alive to every moment, and I think that’s what you have to do. When you’re under a lot of pressure, you have to just take a deep breath and do what you know to do.

Q. Pitch is low to Brady Anderson, who has struck out and grounded out. We’re visiting with President Clinton.

The President. I think you’ve got to give a lot of credit to conditioning, too. And the way he keeps himself in shape in the off-season and during the season must have an incredible amount to do with the fact that he was able to play relatively injury-free all these years. And that requires a lot of discipline.

Q. And you know, a lot of discipline—Mike and I played for the Orioles for a number of years, and a lot of people wonder what it’s like to play in the big league. Are you enjoying being President? Is it what you thought it was going to be?

The President. Yes. Oh, yes, I enjoy it very much. I’m honored every day when I go to work. There are some parts of it that are a little rougher than I thought it would be, but I have no complaints. I signed on for the whole show, and I’m just honored to have a chance to do it, to make a difference, to stand up for what I believe in, and to serve. It’s an incredible opportunity, and if I had it to do over again, I’d do it in a heartbeat.

Q. There are no off days as President?

The President. No. But I always tell everybody—

Q. Even Cal gets one off in the spring.

The President. ——even the bad days are good, you know? Even the bad days are good. You know, the only frustrating thing is when you come up against a problem that you know cries out for some sort of resolution, and you’re not sure you have the power to do anything about it; or when you get a problem where it seems 50–50 on both sides, you just have to kind of feel your way through to the answer, but you’re not—neither you nor anyone else can be sure about whether it will come out all right. Those things are frustrating, but in terms of the pressure and the tension of the job, I don’t mind that at all. I like it. It’s part of the challenge.
tain, because things are changing so fast. And now the biggest challenge is figuring out how to keep the job machine going and still give the baseball fans in America, the working people, the security that they deserve while they are on the job, some certainty that if they work harder they can get a raise, they can have a retirement, they can provide health care for their kids, that kind of thing.

And no one knows how to do this. It’s a new challenge. We have never had a time before when we generated so many new jobs, and the economy was performing well, but we still have people uncertain out there. So that’s our biggest challenge today.

Q. One out, Mike MacFarlane up for the Royals. He doubled and scored his first time up.

We were talking about somewhat of a background in sports as a youngster. Did you take any lessons away from competition that you use now in your life and on the job?

The President. Absolutely. Two, particularly. No matter how good you are at what you’re doing, most things work out better when teams do it together. People work better together than they do on their own most of the time. And the second lesson is the obvious one: Never give up. It’s not over till it’s over.

Q. Were you very frustrated as a sports fan during the baseball strike?

The President. Yes, very. Especially that year. It’s something that you can identify with as a pitcher. It was the greatest hitting year in 50 years. I mean, for people like me that grew up memorizing the baseball statistics, not just of all of my heroes in the fifties when I was a boy but going back to the twenties and thirties, I knew the hitting records of all the old players. The idea that we were going to have a—literally a 50-year record in hitting. And I know there are all kind of reasons for it, the expansion teams. I know all that. But to see that just thrown away, it just broke my heart. For all of us nuts, it was a bad deal.

Q. Thanks for being with us, sir. It’s been a pleasure.

The President. Thanks.

Q. Come back anytime.

The President. Thank you. This, however, is going to be a good year.

Q. Yeah, I imagine, and a busy year.

The President. A good year for baseball.

Q. And also a busy year for you.

The President. But I’ll still keep up.


Q. A real pleasure.

The President. Thank you.

Q. We’ll be back with more from Camden Yards in a moment. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Give me a golf game some day.

Q. Okay. You got a deal.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 4:30 p.m. in the HTS broadcast booth at Oriole Park at Camden Yards.

Remarks at a Dinner Honoring President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro of Italy

April 2, 1996

Ladies and gentlemen, good evening. President Scalfaro, Mariana Scalfaro, members of the Italian delegation, distinguished guests: Hillary and I are delighted to welcome President Scalfaro to the White House. We were so warmly received by him in both Rome and Naples in 1994.

President Scalfaro’s long public career and his lifelong devotion to the people of Italy mark him as one of the great democrats of our era. He has always been a great friend of the United States. And during the tremendous changes that have affected Italy and all Western democracies since the end of the cold war, he has been a clear voice for civility and decency in public life.

Today we had a serious talk about the issues we are working on together, but tonight it is fitting that we celebrate the extraordinary friendship between Italy and the United States and between the people of Italy and the people of the United States. And tonight, Mr. President, on behalf of all the American people, we thank Italy for the greatest of all its gifts to