

Remarks at a Private Party in Chicago January 9, 2001

We had a rally upstairs. You heard them, didn't you? In the ballroom. A little loud. And I hope we didn't interrupt you. So there's an overflow crowd in the lobby, and they said, "They have to go through the edge of another ballroom." [Laughter] So here I am. [Laughter] So I've invaded your dinner. [Laughter] Well, thank you for the wonderful, warm welcome. I'm in Chicago today to basically say goodbye to the people of Chicago and Illinois, as President.

It's a very happy day for me in many ways. This hotel—since you're here for that, I should tell you, this hotel plays a huge role in my life. And I have two pictures of this hotel. That's what I told them upstairs, I have two pictures of this hotel which I look at every day of my life. One is of the lobby on Saint Patrick's Day of 1992. Hillary and I are standing there with green graffiti—not graffiti, what do you call it?—confetti, not graffiti, confetti—[laughter]—it's been a long day and a long 8 years—[laughter]—confetti coming down, because that's the night that we won the Democratic primary in Illinois, which basically sealed my nomination.

The second picture was my mother and my father dining here in 1946. And that's in my

private office in the Residence of the White House. I look at it every night—every single night. So I've seen those two pictures of this place every day for 8 years. This is also where I basically kicked off my campaign in Illinois in December of 1991, and so I'm very happy to be here.

And I wanted to come here for my last appearance in Chicago as President. And I want to tell all of you that it's been an honor to serve. I'm glad my country is in better shape than it was 8 years ago. I thank all of you for the role that you've played in revitalizing our country. And I wish only the best for the future.

I've said many times, and I'll say again, America may find people who do this job better than I have, but you will never find anybody who loved doing it any more.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:30 p.m. in the Empire Room at the Palmer House Hilton Hotel. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks to an Overflow Crowd in Chicago January 9, 2001

Let me ask you a question. Did you hear what went on upstairs? This is troubling. Half are saying yes; half are saying no. Let me say to all of you, I'll give you a brief version of what I said there.

First, I want to thank Chicago and the State of Illinois for being so good to me. I thank Mayor Daley for his leadership and partnership and for making it possible to prove that our crime policies and our welfare policies and our economic policies would all work, because they worked here in Chicago.

I thank Bobby Rush for helping me in '92. I thank Bobby and Dick Durbin and the entire crowd in your congressional delegation who have

been so good to me. But Senator Durbin, I especially thank you for all the things you've done. Thank you.

I thank Bill Daley for being a superb Secretary of Commerce and a brilliant campaign manager. What I told them upstairs was, Bill Daley ran the first Presidential campaign in history that was so clearly winning, a court had to stop the vote in order to change the outcome. It was brilliant.

Now, I want to say two other things. Upstairs, I said that this hotel was very important in my life. I spoke to the Democratic chairs here in December of '91. I had my party here on Saint Patrick's Day in 1992 when we won the primary.