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NOTE: These remarks follow the text as released by the Office of the Press Secretary. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks on the Death of Deputy White House Counsel Vincent Foster, Jr.

July 21, 1993

The President. Good afternoon. I have just met with the White House staff to basically talk with them a little bit about the death of my friend of 42 years, Vince Foster. It is an immense personal loss to me and to Hillary and to many of his close friends here and a great loss to the White House and to the country.

As I tried to explain, especially to the young people on the staff, there is really no way to know why these things happen, and it is very important that his life not be judged simply by how it ended, because Vince Foster was a wonderful man in every way and because no one can know why things like this happen.

I also encouraged the staff to remember that we're all people and that we have to pay maybe a little more attention to our friends and our families and our coworkers and try to remember that work can never be the only thing in life and a little humility in the face of this is very, very important.

I also pointed out that we have to go on. We have the country's business to do. I am keeping my schedule today except for the public events. I'm keeping all my appointments, and I expect to resume my normal schedule tomorrow. And then, of course, when the funeral is held, Hillary and I will go home and be a part of that. But otherwise, we will go on with our schedule and keep doing our work.

Q. Mr. President, do you have any idea why he might have taken his life. There's no indication——

The President. No. I really don't. And frankly, none of us do. His closest friends sat around discussing it last night at some length. None of us do. For more years than most of us would like to admit, in times of difficulty he was normally the Rock of Gibraltar while other people were having trouble. No one could ever remember the reverse being the case. So I don't know that we'll ever know. But for me, it's just important that that not be the only measure of his life. He did too much good as a father, as a husband, as a friend, as a lawyer, as a citizen. And we'll just have to live with something else we can't understand, I think.

Q. There's some feeling that he might have felt the guilt or blame for things that went wrong in the White House during the first 6 months.

The President. I don't think so. I certainly don't think that can explain it, and I certainly don't think it's accurate.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:50 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House.

Remarks in an Interview With the Alabama Press

July 21, 1993

The President. First of all, let me thank you for coming, and thank you for understanding why we didn't do the entire hour today. I'll be happy to answer any questions you have. And I have reviewed your schedule. I hope you found it helpful coming here, and I'm very glad to see you. I saw some of you walking across the street today.

Go ahead, sir.

Economic Program

Q. The Vice President was just talking about Senator Dole's alternative plan, and your administration's spokesman has been very critical and much more so of Republicans in recent days, what they've put forward. He used the phrase that the Republicans didn't have the guts to make the tough choices. I was just curious whether you would extend that characterization to Senator Shelby, the cosponsor of that Republican plan.

The President. Well, let me characterize the plan. I mean, what bothered me about the plan was that it seemed to me to run