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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

#1551

For Immediate Release

November 18, 1981

DEDICATION
OF THE
THANKSGIVING TURKEY

The Rose Garden

12:43 P.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: This, of course, is a great tradition of Thanksgiving in our country, and so I'm very happy -- we used to do this all the time in California with the California Association, who came to the office, and I had a couple of adventures there too. Finally one day they turned to the custom of actually bringing it in cooked and we would have a lunch right there with the staff in the office. But I had to carve it for all of us, those gentlemen and ladies of the press with their cameras on me, and I remember one day I was carving and I thought they hadn't cooked it very well because there was a lot of blood appearing. It didn't look very appetizing. I found out I had cut my thumb. (Laughter.)

Q -- Merv.

THE PRESIDENT: I haven't seen Merv for a long time. What we are talking about here is a sort of in-house -- a gentleman named Merv Amerine from California in the '66 campaign when I was running for Governor. We chartered his plane, a DC-3, and we found out that when he wasn't chartering it to us, he was a turkey grower and was using it to haul turkeys, and now I don't want anyone to say the obvious thing that comes to mind -- it hasn't really changed. (Laughter.)

Thank you very much.

I am sorry to be so late for all of you, but on the other hand, I am just getting even because down in Texas there I sat for three hours before any of them showed up, and still didn't get one. (Laughter.)

Q What are you going to do with him?

THE PRESIDENT: Eat him.

Q Why don't you pet him first? (Laughter.)

THE PRESIDENT: Over the years you get used to turkeys. (Laughter.) But he is the real thing.

Q What are you going to do about your personnel problems, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't have any personnel problems.

Q What about Mr. Allen? Do you still have confidence in Mr. Allen?

THE PRESIDENT: I answered all those questions. That's all that needs to be said.

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THE PRESIDENT: But you know that it would be -- there is no way that you can comment now while this is still evidently under review. So I just feel that I'm not in a position to comment.

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