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REMARKS BY

THE HONORABLE 42nd PRESIDENT OF THE

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

WILLIAM JEFFERSON CLINTON

at

CULTUREHORDE'S NELSON MANDELA TRIBUTE CONCERT

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The Church of St. Paul the Apostle

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Reported by:

Sadie L. Herbert, RPR, CLR, RSA

ELLEN GRAUER COURT REPORTING CO. LLC

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## P R O C E E D I N G S

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SELLO HATANG: Without further ado, please allow me to call to the stage one of Madiba's great friends and someone who has supported and loved Madiba and made great contribution to the Nelson Mandela Foundation, President William Jefferson Clinton.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLINTON: Thank you very much.

Thank you Sello for the introduction, for the memories. Thank you Pamela for CoultureHorde's work tonight. Thank you Garth, you are doing a great job. Your invitation was even better, I was going to be --

(Laughing.)

PRESIDENT CLINTON: I want to thank our great friends, Graca, who was just a young girl, the presidency off -- Madiba was elected. It's her story to tell how they became close friends, but she was there with him every step of



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the way, as president and when he left, until his last day on earth. And here she is still with him tonight. I thank her for that.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLINTON: I thank my friend Morgan Freeman, who has been a real blessing in my life and has the most wonderful voice and narrated a film for me, worked with my foundation. And I was thinking to myself, it's true, I'm old and gray, now I have to fit myself somehow between the Soweto Choir and the voice of God over there.

(Laughing.)

PRESIDENT CLINTON: So cut me some slack, I'm doing the very best I can.

(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLINTON: Mayor Dinkins, who brought, physically brought Nelson Mandela into the life of my family; Hillary, Chelsea and me. He was our friend, collectively and individually, in ways that, at this late hour, I



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can't recount. But you never forget, ever when someone is good to your child. And when I was president and he was president and I had the honor of serving during his entire term, we often had a lot of business when it was late at night in America, and he had risen early in South Africa to go to work, and I was always trying to accommodate his schedule. But he never talked to me once that he didn't ask, even if we were having some heated disagreements, which, believe it or not, occasionally happened, he had a job to do and I did too, he always asked about Hillary, he always asked about Chelsea. He always asked if my daughter was up and he wanted me to go get her so he could make sure she was doing her homework.

(Laughing.)

PRESIDENT CLINTON: Chelsea is coming up to be smart. And it originally worked.





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When she went off to England after graduating, after we were both out of office, he was there often and he called her repeatedly. Something she did not tell me until he passed away.

I want to thank the Soweto Choir, who I last heard on American soil in my hometown, in Little Rock, Arkansas. You are getting better with age.

(Laughing.)

PRESIDENT CLINTON: I want to make a couple of points. The previous speakers have been kind enough to say that I have been obsessed with whether we can raise the funds necessary to keep Madiba's memory alive and keep this work going. And I thank you for that. I thank Sello for what he said, but when I gave a million dollars, I didn't have a million dollars. But I raised it, and we made it, but then with a lot of American friends of Nelson Mandela.

Last time, it was all --



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(Laughing.)

PRESIDENT CLINTON: But the biggest chunk we raised was one night in South Africa, and I did an event at a children's hospital, and then we did an AIDS event. He was tired. We'll go out at night, and I said, don't worry, we will do this. And Sello was there. We were going to have an auction. And Madiba was always riding me because it was my job to rag him about being friends with Gaddafi and Castro and, you know, always supported him, and it was his job to rag me about the Cuban Embargo. So we laughed about it. And then I was going to -- and Sello comes and said to me, I know you said the Americans should participate in the auction, but he said, Madiba said there's one item at this auction that you have to bid on, just you; don't let any other American have it. I said, what is it? He said, oh, you'll know quite well when it comes up.



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So through the auction, this beautifully packaged bottle of Cuban rum comes up.

(Laughing.)

PRESIDENT CLINTON: And under American law, I cannot legally return with it to the United States. And I did not have the capacity to consume it all before I got home.

(Laughing.)

PRESIDENT CLINTON: So I started bidding on it. And someone, who had, you know, a hundred times more money than I did started bidding against me. I said, you can't do this; what are you doing? And he said, oh, this is part of the deal. So I think I paid \$11,000 for that bottle of rum. One of the best buys I ever made.

Why am I telling you this?

There's something real. Mandela's life teaches us two things, not one. First, it teaches us that what we have in common is more important than our



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interesting differences. And therefore, that cooperation will always be better than conflict.

Interestingly enough, Madiba learned this as a young person being raised in a traditional way in South Africa and then through those long years in prison, that science has confirmed what we now know, genetically, now that we have seen the human genome, that we are all 99 and a half percent the same. Literally, every nonage-related difference you can see, every nonage-related difference you can see, including the difference in our skin color, our body shape, our height, whether we're basses or tenors or sopranos, it's all in just one half of one percent of our genome.

Now, we all spend 99 and a half percent of our time thinking about the half percent that's different and wishing it was different, like to be a little taller, a little thinner. He





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understood that.

And we also now know that cooperation works better than conflict in painful ways. The world is mean, bitter, violent failures. Why? Because people want to make it all their way or the highway.

What is the disappointment of the Arab Spring, Egypt, why are they fighting, why have we gotten rid of Saddam Hussein if Iraq is still in conflict? Because there aren't enough people who want to share the future with the people who are different from them, who want to be inclusive.

Which leads me to the second thing, more important. In all those long years in prison, he learned that you cannot be the person who you should be in the public sphere until you are inside. Every person, every person here in this sanctuary tonight had some legitimate cause to be enemies, had some legitimate cause to feel



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resentment, remorse, regret with anyone. But I seriously doubt if all of our causes combined would amount to the intensity of justified anger that Madiba could feel from having his whole -- taken away the best years of his life, seeing his children come up, watching a marriage crumble, having to reconstitute life, the loneliness.

How did he go through all this and come out a better man than he went in?

Once we were talking and I said to him, you know -- I got Chelsea up early in the morning, we watched him walk. And I know, watching your inauguration, and I know you put the people who put you in prison in your government, but tell me the truth, when you were walking to freedom for the last time, when you knew you were going to be free, didn't you hate them?

And what I love about him, because he was not a saint, he said, well, of course I did. He said, I felt hatred



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and I felt fear because I hadn't been free in so long. But he said, I got over it in about 40 seconds. And I said, why? He said, because I knew if I hated them, when I got in that car and drove out the gate, I would still be a prisoner. I wanted to be free, and so I let it go.

All over the world today, human affairs are being dictated by people who are not free, because they can't let anything go and because they are afraid to reach out to some people who are different from them. And a lot of times their fears are well founded, a lot of times their anger is completely justified, but it doesn't work.

One of the few great figures of our era who has outlived Madiba is the Nobel Prize winning scientist chemist named E.O. Wilson, who wrote a book called "The Social Conquest of Earth". He said, if you look at all the history of human life on our planet, there are



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four childhood species; ants, termites, bees and people. And the only thing they have in common is they are the great cooperators.

People are the most important because, unlike ants, termites and bees, we have consciousness and a conscience. But we also present the biggest danger to the ongoing success of life itself on our planet because we are prone to arrogance and forgetfulness and we give in to things we have to triumph over.

As a friend, Madiba was to people one-on-one the same way he was as a leader putting his adversaries in his government. He lived as he governed and it made him, for all the South Africans who are here will tell you, because I did the whole trip over there, a very good president. But that is what the world needs to do.

Pick up the paper tomorrow, read the news, look at where they're





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fighting, ask yourself what they're fighting about and ask yourself if Nelson Mandela were running the affairs of that country, would there be this level of violence and killing and the answer, invariably, will be no.

We cannot allow his legacy, his memory, his meaning to drift into the history books, to become a distant memory. He must be as real to the people who never knew him, as real to children who cannot remember him, as real to grandchildren who are not yet born as he is to those of us who loved him.

The work of this foundation is important. If you wake up tomorrow, look at the newspaper and ask yourself, when you read about a conflict in Africa, in Asia, in the Pacific, in Latin America, anyplace people are arguing and fighting, in the halls of the legislature in the United States, if just a few people thought, felt and



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acted the way Madiba did, would it be this way? The answer will always be no.

We are living in an interdependent world. All that remains is to find the terms of our interdependence. The only way they'll be defined in a positive way is if we can reach across, and the only way we can do that is if we're free. The greatest free man I ever knew should have his legacy continue as long as the rest of us can help to keep it alive.

Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

(Time noted: 9:57 p.m.)



C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Sadie L. Herbert, a shorthand reporter and Notary Public within and for the State of New York, do hereby certify:

That the within statement is a true and accurate record of the stenographic notes taken by me.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 14th day of February, 2014.

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SADIE L. HERBERT, RPR, CLR, RSA