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Brian Williams

NBC News Final Signoff

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Well, look at the time. I'll try to keep this brief. After 28 years of peacock logos on much of what I own, it is my choice now to jump without a net into the great unknown.

As I do, for the first time in my 62 years, my biggest worry is for my country.

The truth is, I'm not a **Liberal** or a **Conservative**. I'm an **Institutionalist**: I believe in this place; and in my love of my country, I yield to no one.

But the darkness on the edge of town has spread to the main roads and highways and neighborhoods. It's now at the local bar and the bowling alley, at the school board and the grocery store. And it must be acknowledged and answered for.

Grown men and women who swore an oath to our Constitution -- elected by their constituents, possessing the kinds of college degrees I could only dream of -- have decided to join the mob and become something they are not while hoping we somehow forget who they were.



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They've decided to burn it all down -- with us inside.

That should scare you to no end as much as it scares an aging volunteer fireman.

To my coworkers, my love and thanks. And I say again, everyone I've worked with has made me better at what I do.

To my family, "love and thanks" doesn't begin to cover it. But now I have the time to better express it.

My friends know who they are -- no one's been blessed with better friends.

To the guests on this broadcast, as you heard the nice man say a few minutes ago, "it's always been about you"¹ -- otherwise I'd be staring into the camera for an hour, five nights a week, and nobody wants to see that. You are the 11th Hour² and will continue to be the 11th Hour. This is where I thank you, however, for being so great for explaining these last five years.

As a proud New Jersey native, this is where I get to say, "Regrets, I've had a few. But then again, too few to mention."³

What a ride it's been. Where else, how else was a kid like me going to meet presidents and kings and the occasional rock star? These lovely testimonials that I can never truly repay make me hyperaware that it has been and remains a wonderful life. It's as if I'm going to wake up tomorrow morning in Bedford Falls.⁴

The reality is, though, I will wake up tomorrow in the America of the year 2021, a nation unrecognizable to those who came before us and fought to protect it -- which is what you must do now.

My colleagues will take it from here. I will probably find it impossible to be silent and stay away from you and lights and cameras after I experiment with relaxation and find out what I've missed and what's out there.

Every weeknight for decades now, I've said some version of the same thing. Thank you for being here with us -- *us*, meaning the people who produce this broadcast for you. And you, well, without you, there's no us.



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I'll show myself out. Until we meet again, that is our broadcast for this Thursday night.

Thank you for being here with us.

And for all my colleagues at the networks of NBC News: Good night.

¹ Reference unclear

² American nightly TV program hosted by Brian Williams covering news and politics

³ Allusion to (and line from) fellow New Jersey native Frank Sinatra's popularized tune *My Way*

⁴ Allusion to the film *It's A Wonderful Life*, especially popular around the Christmas holidays.