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Laura Bush

*White House Correspondents Dinner Address*

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Ladies and gentlemen, I've been attending these dinners for years, and just quietly sitting there. Well I've got a few things I want to say for a change. This is going to be fun because he [the President] really doesn't have a clue about what I'm going to say next.

George always says he's "delighted" to come to these press dinners. Baloney. He's usually in bed by now. I'm not kidding. I said to -- to him the other day, "George, if you really want to end tyranny in the world, you're going to have to stay up later."

I am married to the President of the United States, and here's our typical evening: nine o'clock, Mr. Excitement here is sound asleep, and I'm watching *Desperate Housewives* -- with Lynne Cheney. Ladies and gentlemen, I am a desperate housewife. I mean if those women on that show think they're desperate, they ought to be with George.



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One night -- One night, after George went to bed, Lynne Cheney, Condi Rice, Karen Hughes and I went to Chippendale's. I wouldn't even mention it except Ruth Ginsberg and Sandra Day O'Connor saw us there. I won't tell you what happened, but Lynne's Secret Service codename is now "Dollar Bill."

But George and I are complete opposites: I'm quiet; he's talkative. I'm introverted; he's extroverted.

I can pronounce "nuclear."

The amazing thing, however, is that George and I were just meant to be. I was the librarian who spent 12 hours a day in the library; yet, somehow, I met George.

We met and married and I became one of the regulars up at Kennebunkport. All the Bushes love Kennebunkport, which is like Crawford, but without the nightlife. People ask me what it's like to be up there with the whole Bush clan. Let me put it this way: first prize -- three-day vacation with the Bush family; second prize -- 10 days.

Speaking of prizes brings me to my mother-in-law. So many mothers today are just not involved in their children's lives. Not a problem with Barbara Bush. People often wonder what my mother-in-law's really like. People think she's a sweet, grandmotherly, Aunt Bea type. She's actually more like, Don Corleone.

Cedric, am I doing all right?

I saw -- I saw my in-laws down at the ranch over Easter. We like it down there. George didn't know much about ranches when we bought the place. Andover and Yale don't have a real strong ranching program. But I'm proud of George. He's learned a lot about ranching since that first year when he tried to milk the horse. What's worse, it was a male horse.



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Now, of course, he spends his days clearing brush, cutting trails, taking down trees, or, as the girls call it, The Texas Chainsaw Massacre. George's answer to any problem at the ranch is to cut it down with a chainsaw -- which I think is why he and Cheney and Rumsfeld get along so well.

It's always very interesting to see how the ranch air invigorates people when they come down from Washington. Recently, when Vice President Cheney was down, he got up early one morning; he put on his hiking boots; and he went on a brisk, 20-to-30-foot walk.

But actually, in all seriousness, I do love the ranch; and I love the whole Bush family. I was an only child, and when I married into the extended Bush clan, I got brothers and sisters and wonderful in-laws, all of whom opened their arms to me. And included in the package, I got this guy here [gesturing to the President].

I think when you marry someone, you unconsciously are looking for something in your spouse to help fulfill something in you, and George did that for me. He brought fun and energy into my life -- and so many other things. George is a very good listener; he's easy to be around; and on top of it all, he's a loving father whose daughters absolutely adore him.

So in the future, when you see me just quietly sitting up here, I want you to know I'm happy to be here for a reason: I love and enjoy being with the man who usually speaks to you on these occasions.

So George and I thank you for inviting us, thank you for all of the good work that you and the press do, and thank you for your very kind hospitality this evening.