

What The President Never Said at Herndon Elementary

By William Nicoson

Somebody threw over my transom an excerpt from the President's Briefing Book preparing him to visit Herndon Elementary School. I can't verify its authenticity, but here it is:

Secretary Riley chose HES because it's handy, fitting neatly into Monday morning's ed-op slot before you skip to Moscow in the afternoon and because its diversity ratio is in heavy overdrive. Intelligence agencies confirm that in the last 3 years at HES minority student population has jumped from 14 to 50%, but caution that many of these students come from highly educated families steeped in strict moral codes of other cultures.

One of the School Board members has refused to meet you at HES, expressing disapproval of your "behavior", and intelligence agencies warn that a group of troublemakers in Herndon may picket HES during your visit. We will take the standard measures designed to silence critics, but this is small potatoes compared to the adverse reaction brewing for your Maryland appearances following the triumphal visit we're working on in Ireland.

Though the school will be in recess during your visit, it's been proposed that you meet for an hour or so to answer questions from a group of both elementary and high school students called in for that purpose. The usual prep Q&A is attached, but these highlights deserve special focus:

Q: Years ago when I stole my sister's book and denied it, my father said that lying dishonors our family. He said one day I'd have a family of my own and that lying by the head of the family is especially dishonorable. He said if I started to lie now, I'd have trouble being honest then. Does the same thing apply to the national family? Does lying by the head of a nation to the national family dishonor the nation? **A:** Your father is absolutely right about the family. Nations are a little more complicated. Sometimes statesmen are obliged to hedge public statements in the best interest of the nation.

Q: My mother's a lawyer and wants me to be one someday. She's been upset by cases where she's sure the other party lied under oath. Her client wanted to lie to even the score, but she wouldn't let him – said she'd leave the case. She says lying in a court proceeding dishonors our judicial system. Mr. President, as chief executive, are you our chief law enforcement officer?

A: I've always been strongly committed to law and order.

Q: Yeh, that's what confuses me. People say you've lied under oath in a court proceeding. Doesn't that dishonor the judicial system you're sworn to uphold? **A:** I've always been legally accurate when I testify in court proceedings. Your mother will understand legal accuracy, I'm sure, especially on private matters. But surely you've got other things to talk about than private matters. No one interested in Whitewater? [Chuckle]

Q: I am. I did a paper on Whitewater. There were things I couldn't understand. **A:** Sure. It was long ago and complicated.

Q: A Little Rock jury found your business partners stole \$300,000 of taxpayers' revenue, of which \$50,000 was used for the benefit of your joint Whitewater business. My Dad says that if he discovered his partners did that he'd be the first to condemn them. As President, you're in charge of protecting the taxpayers' revenue, right? You said you were sorry for your partners but said nothing about being sorry for the taxpayers they robbed. Didn't you benefit from what they did? **A:** Hillary and I lost money in Whitewater.

Q: But wouldn't you have lost more if your partners hadn't robbed the taxpayers? Did you ever offer to return to the Treasury your share of the Whitewater benefits from your partners' fraud?

Recommendation: Instruct Secretary Riley to advise HES officials that there will be too little time to meet with a select group of students.

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