

**Annual Press Gridiron Show: Governor Thornburgh
monologue, October 21, 1984 (16:06)**

>> Thornburgh: I'd like to say something that, given the level of this performance, I think needs to be said at this time.

[Laughter]

You know, it's very easy to stand up here and rattle off a bunch of cheap, tasteless jokes at...

[Laughter]

...the expense of decent people.

[Laughter]

So, if you don't mind, I'd like to get started.

[Laughter]

Thank you, Denny, for that eloquent introduction, and congratulations on your election to the presidency by a unanimous vote of 1-0. Just think, folks, it was just a year ago that Denny Barbagello was wasting his time with Mike Ross and Terry Punt on Third Street playing handball against the curb.

[Laughter]

And now... And now Denny's been elevated, so to speak, and I, for one, do not intend to give him short thrift.

[Laughter]

His task is awesome, as all of us just witnessed. This is the only production I know of where people actually come early in order to get seats in the back of the room. Frankly, the only reason I come is because I take great pleasure in sharing my hopes and dreams with thoughtful Pennsylvanians. And this event gives me a chance to reach the rest of you.

[Laughter]

This has got to be the biggest gathering of politicians and lobbyists under one Pennsylvania roof since the last session of the federal grand jury here in Harrisburg.

[Laughter]

And I want to... I want to take this opportunity to welcome our lawmakers, in particular, back to the capital to resume the world's longest ongoing game of Trivial Pursuit.

[Laughter and applause]

You know... Especially active in this game has been Chairman Bud George of the House Conservation Committee. Now, Bud couldn't be with us tonight because his brother -- or is it his sister? -- Boy George, is in concert on City Island.

[Light laughter]

Also active for many years has been our distinguished Senate president pro tem Henry Hager. Henry, as you know, is retiring from public service through no fault of his own.

[Laughter]

I am also pleased to welcome Jim Manderino back to town. You know, some of you have pointed out that Jim and I are engaged in a growing friendship these days. Jim does the growing, and I provide the friendship.

[Light laughter]

Of course, one should never refer to Jim without recognizing that eloquent Speaker of the House, the Honorable K. Leroy Irvis. It was Speaker Irvis who reminded us in print not long ago that, and I quote, "It's fun to be partisan. You don't have to think." Now... I think it's fair to assume that he wasn't referring to any members of the General Assembly when he said that. My best guess is that he was talking about Judge Crumlish.

[Audience groaning]

In opinion after opinion, Judge Crumlish has made it abundantly clear these days that he's developed delusions of grandeur. He thinks he's Jay Waldman.

[Laughter]

I'd like at this time to recognize another master of Harrisburg's version of Trivial Pursuit, Alan Kukovich. But Alan's been so quiet, I thought he might have passed through puberty this summer.

[Audience groaning]

We asked Bill DeWeese. "I doubt it, sir," Bill said. "Puberty's not in Alan's district."

[Laughter]

I...I'd also like to note the presence of several unindicted candidates for statewide office here this evening.

[Laughter]

Their...Their achievement is certainly worthy of recognition, although their P.R. people seem to be spending more time keeping their bosses out of the papers than the other way around. As you know, this has been a year of some changing faces in my administration, and we've been awfully busy recruiting new talent that will keep us on the path to immortality. The toughest of all to replace, however, was Paul Critchlow. It was virtually impossible to find someone who, like Paul, had mastered the art of being out when he's in and in when he's out. Someone whose American Express card is wanted in 14 states. Someone with the intellectual vision of a Tony May. Someone with the self-effacing modesty of a Mike McLaughlin. Somebody with the quiet charm of a Sandy Starobin.

[Laughter]

Appropriately enough, in our search for Paul's replacement, we began in the capital newsroom. Those candidates were disappointing, to say the least. One couldn't spell my last name.

[Light laughter]

One couldn't spell my first name.

[Laughter]

One couldn't spell his own name. It's B-O-B, Bob! J.R. Freeman couldn't come up with anything he'd written over the last 10 years. Brad Bumsted couldn't come up with anything he'd read over the last 10 years. Ben Livingood confessed that he hadn't paid any taxes over the last 10 years. After that, I kind of knew where Ben would end up.

[Audience groans]

52 reporters from U.P.I. showed up and offered to share Critchlow's salary.

[Laughter]

We didn't have the office space. It'd all been taken by the legislature. Hal Ellis, a likely prospect. But he admitted to me that he had organized a mansion fund-raiser for Denny Barbagello. Fred Cusick said he wouldn't mind answering the phone, but would he have to say, "Hello"?

[Light laughter]

Three newsroom applicants had wives on the state payroll. Four had girlfriends. Two had both.

[Light laughter]

Film at 11:00. Finally it all came down to the dean of this organization, John Scotzin, the only man in the room tonight who still remembers when air was clean and sex was dirty.

[Laughter]

But John, John declined our offer. "You guys will be leaving office someday," he said. "How am I gonna support my family 20 years from now?"

[Laughter]

Having failed to come up with a candidate that could measure down to Critchlow, we settled for Dave Runkel, Harrisburg's answer to Buffalo Bob Smith, the man with a smile for every disaster. He clinched the job by composing this marvelous answer to every question we threw at him.

[Clears throat]

"I am carefully monitoring this situation and will take whatever action is appropriate." Also helping Dave to monitor the situation these days is Barry Stern. You know, Barry would have joined our administration sooner, but he wanted to finish his senior year at the John McEnroe School of Charm.

[Laughter]

Now...before the night is out, I'd like to clear the air about some matters of no consequence whatsoever. Despite opinions to the contrary, I am not a cold, conservative, adamant Republican. As some of my closest associates will tell you, in fact, I have the heart of a Democrat. I keep in a jar on my desk at home.

[Laughter and applause]

Despite rumors to the contrary, let me assure you that I did attend the Republican Convention in Dallas. I was the guy without the plastic armadillo on my head. And despite rumors to the contrary, I did not send Ginny to that other gathering in San Francisco. San Francisco, the only city in American where they think "Tootsie" was a documentary.

[Laughter]

I did watch the Democrats on T.V., however. I came away convinced that no matter who wins in November, things probably won't change all that much. Under Reagan, we get headlines reading, "President Falls Asleep During Cabinet Meeting." Under Mondale they'd read, "Cabinet Falls Asleep During Cabinet Meeting."

[Laughter]

And in both cases, the cabinet probably wouldn't miss a thing. Before I close, let me say one more thing on a very personal note. As you all know, I recently had the wonderful experience of becoming a grandfather for the first time. Already, however, my baby granddaughter, Kendall Leigh Thornburgh, has learned what it's like to be born in a land where the worst fear of modern man has come to pass -- the press. Poor Kendall Leigh. The Post-Gazette reported that she is a he. Their correction said that he is really a she, but misspelled her middle name "Lee." The Inquirer knew from the start that she was a she, but said Susan, not Sharon, was the mother-to-be. And finally, Wally Roche reported that whatever her name might be or whether a he or a she, she'll probably be driving to college for free.

[Laughter and applause]

Now...to all of you who have been injured like she, and all who are likely to be, I offer a way to brighten your day and set the whole bunch of us free.

[Ray Parker Jr.'s "Ghostbusters" plays; laughter and clapping]

When you got the blues 'cause you're in the news, who you gonna choose?

>> Thornburgh persons: Pressbusters!

>> Thornburgh: Who?

["Ghostbusters" resumes]

When they know it all, and you're about to fall, who you gonna call?

>> Thornburgh persons: Pressbusters!

>> Thornburgh: Who?

["Ghostbusters" resumes]

When you're feeling weak 'cause you sprung a leak, who you gonna seek?

>> Thornburgh persons: Pressbusters!

>> Thornburgh: I ain't 'fraid of no press.

[Laughs]

["Ghostbusters resumes]

When the poison pen is poised again, who you gonna want then?

>> Thornburgh persons: Pressbusters!

>> Thornburgh: Ahh!

["Ghostbusters" resumes]

When you think you spy that blinking eye, who you gonna try?

>> Thornburgh persons: Pressbusters!

>> Thornburgh: Who?

>> Thornburgh persons: Pressbusters!

>> Thornburgh: I can't hear you.

>> Thornburgh persons: Pressbusters!

>> Thornburgh: Yeah!

["Ghostbusters" resumes]

I ain't 'fraid of no press. When the open mike is about to strike,
who you gonna like?

>> Thornburgh persons: Pressbusters!

>> Thornburgh: Yeah!

["Ghostbusters" resumes]

I ain't 'fraid of no press.

[Laughter]

Bustin' makes me feel real good. Good night!

[Cheers and applause]

["Ghostbusters" resumes]