**Burks Speech [No. 16017]**

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Remarks by Mr. Tracy Burks on the occasion of his best friend, Willie’s, wedding.

[**NOTE**: if you’re able to arrange it with the band’s drummer, have him stand by for a signal from you to drop a “rimshot” into your speech at a few designated places. AND IF YOU’RE LUCKY ENOUGH TO GET A LAUGH OR CHUCKLE AT THESE SPOTS, DON’T “STEP” ON IT.]

[after being introduced, or bringing the crowd to ‘order’ by tapping a beverage glass:] good evening, ladies and gentlemen . . .

for those who don’t know me, my name’s tracy burks, and willie’s asked me to be his best man here tonight. of course i said “yes” because he’s my very best friend, AND how DO YOU say “no” TO your VERY best FRIEND? but then i thought TO MYSELF: *what the hell am i getting myself* ***into*** *with this whole best man thing*?

so because the internet is *“the source of absolute-ly all knowledge in the known universe,”* — right? — i asked google, “Google, what the hell am I getting myself into here by agreeing to be willie’s best man?”

and google said, “you’ve gotta give a speech.”

“a speech?!?” I asked, hoping that i’d heard wrong.

“yes, a speech,” google said.

“what kind of speech?” i asked.

“the kind that’ll say nice things about your friend and will make those who know him glad they do, and those who don’t wish they did.”

so i asked google, “serious or funny?”

“whatever you want. tell jokes, don’t tell jokes . . . sing, don’t sing . . . it’s up to you. but above all,” google said sternly, in its computer-generated voice, “keep it *short*!”

so apparently i’m supposed to sing willie’s praises and talk about his finer qualities. unfortunately, i CANNOT sing and i WILL NOT lie. [rimshot]

now . . . at the moment,i know that many of you don’t know willie baldwin very well; but by the time i’ve finished this speech, most of you will wish you didn’t know him at ***all***! [rimshot]

now it’s my job to tell you the straightforward, unvarnished truth about willie. so LEMME SEE . . . [begin ‘countin’ on your fingers, one at a time]: Gen-tleman . . . hard worker . . . loyal friend . . . student of life . . . accomplished intellect . . . an inspiration to others . . . [pause]

willie is none of these, really [rim shot], . . . but he must have many other fine qualities, because without *some-thing* going for him, he never, *ever* would’ve been able to persuade a woman as lovely, as smart, as accomplished, and as discerning as [bride’s maiden name] to take him as her husband. [turning toward bride] [bride’s first name], my dear, you’re a might lucky woman. you couldn’t pos-sibly have found a more caring and considerate person to spend the rest of your life with than willie baldwin. as noran ephron said in *harry met sally*: ***“when you realize you want to spend the rest of your life with somebody, you want the rest of your life to start as soon as possible.”***

well, [bride’s first name] and willie, the rest of your lives are starting right now. and if i may, let me CONTRIBUTE TO THIS NEW BEGINNING with this toast [raising a glass and inviting the audience to do the same]:

*“MAY YOUR LOVE BE ADDED, AND MAY IT NEVER BE SUB-TRACTED. MAY YOUR HOUSEHOLD KNOW GREAT HAPPINESS AND LITTLE SORROW. MAY YOUR GRASS ALWAYS BE GREEN AND YOUR SKIES FOREVER BLUE. AND MAY YOU LIVE AS LONG AS YOU WANT AND NEVER WANT FOR AS LONG AS YOU LIVE.”*

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