**PARTICUASmith Speech [No. 16024]**

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Remarks by Mrs. Berlinda Smith on the occasion of a March, 2017 family reunion.

[WRITER’S NOTE: I THINK THIS SPEECH WOULD BE MOST EFFECTIVE IF IT WERE DELIVERED WITH NO INTRODUCTIONS OR PREFATORY REMARKS AT ALL. JUST WAIT FOR THE AUDIENCE TO SETTLE DOWN AS YOU TAKE THE PODIUM, AND THEN:]

THERE IS TODAY RUNNING ON TELEVISION A PROGRAM CALLED “*BLUE BLOODS*” — IT’S IN ITS SEVENTH SEASON NOW, I THINK — AND IT’S WHAT THEY CALL IN “TV SPEAK” A “POLICE PROCEDURAL.”

THIS PARTICULAR COP SHOW HAS AN UNUSUAL TWIST to it, however, BECAUSE IT’S REALLY AS MUCH or more ABOUT A FAMILY OF LAW ENFORCMENT officers — THE REAGANS —THAN IT IS ABOUT THE ROBBERS AND evil-doers THEY chase. THE CENTRAL CHAraCTERS range from A GREAT-GRAMPA to his two youngest great-grandsons, plus a great-grand-Daughter who, AS THIS YEAR’S SERIES BEGan, WAS JUST STARTING COLLEGE.

BUT PERHAPS THE MOST STARTLING FEATURE OF *BLUE BLOODS* IS THAT THE REAGANS ARE very EXPLICITLY AND UNSELFCON-SCIOUSLY CATHOLIC. AND WE KNOW THIS BECAUSE EVERY SING-LE EPISODE OF THIS SHOW CONTAINS A SCENE OF THE ENTIRE, FOUR-GENERATION REAGAN CLAN GATHERED AROUND A TABLE FOR SUNDAY-DINNER AND SOMEBODY SAYING a CATHOLIC GRACE. several of the show’s episodes have ALSO either centered on or involved the catholic church.

NOW, I DON’T WATCH A LOT OF TV; AND POLICE PROCEDURALS CERTAINLY WOULDN’T BE MY cuppa tea EVEN IF I DID. BUT HAVING WATCHED A FEW EPISODES OF THIS MOST UNUSUAL TELEVISION drama, i must tell you that IT’S THOSE SUNDAY-DINNER SCENES BRING HOME TO ME SO VIVIDLY WHY FAMILY AND FAITH ARE SO VERY IMPORTANT IN MY LIFE. FOR LIKE EACH OF THE REAGANS IN *BLUE BLOODS*, IT IS FROM MY FAITH AND MY FAMILY THAT I DRAW THE FORTITUTE TO BEAR THE SLINGS AND ARROWS OF EVERYDAY EXISTENCE IN A SOMETIMES WRETCHED WORLD; AND FORTITUDE, AS WELL, TO ACCEPT THE [FINITUDE/ FINITENESS] OF MY OWN EXISTENCE AS A CORPORAL HUMAN BEING HERE ON THIS EARTH.

NO PERSON’S LIFE IS LONG COMPARED TO FOREVER.

WHAT’S A SINGLE HUMAN LIFESPAN, after all? IT IS AMONG the smallest possible BLIPS ON HISTORY’S timeSCALE, AND NOT EVEN *THAT* BIG ON ETERNITY’S CLOCK. so I’VE OFTEN WONDER-ED: IS A HUMAN’S existence REALLY *THAT* much DIFFERENT FROM THE MAYFLY’S? THAT INSECT’S entire life cycle spans BUT 18 hours. eighteen hours for hatching; 18 hours for mating; 18 HOURS FOR READING THE SUNDAY *NEW YORK TIMES*. 18 hours for dying — an entire lifetime lived in three-quarters of a single human day.

so IF, like the AVERAGE mayfly, WE’VE BUILT NO SKYSCRAP-ERS OR CURED NO DISEASE OR WON NO PRIZES . . . if, IN SHORT, we’ve left no DISCERBABLE footprintS in the sands of time, then BY WHOM SHALL *WE* BE REMEMBERED . . . ?

BY OUR FAMILIES.

by our sons and by ours daughters, and then by *their* sons and by *their* daughters, and by the mothers of their mothers of their mothers . . . AND SO ON.

And WHY SHOULD *THEY* REMEMBER . . . ?

BECAUSE IT’S WHAT FAMILIES DO, OR AT LEAST WHAT THEY’RE *SUPPOSED TO* DO. for who BUT OUR FAMILIES CAN we trust to maintain STURDY AND STEADFAST that GOLDEN THREAD OF REMEMBRANCE THAT KEEPS OUR LOVED ONES’ spiritS ALIVE, YEAR to YEAR, DECADE to DECADE, GENERATION to GENERATION, DOWN THROUGH THE INFINITE AGES OF TIME.

WHICH IS WHY I’M BOTH HONORED AND HUMBLED BY BEING ASKED TO MAKE THESE REMARKS HERE [TONIGHT/this evening], THOUGH I’M SURE A LOT OF YOU DON’T HAVE THE SLIGHTEST IDEA WHO I AM OR HOW — OR IF — WE’RE EVEN RELATED. WELL, VERY BRIEFLY, I’M THE OLDEST GRANDDAUGHTER OF [NAME OF GRANDPARENT(S), AND THEN THE REST OF YOUR LINEAGE, AS APPROPRIATE]. THESE WONDERFUL PEOPLE ARE PART OF *MY* GOLDEN THREAD OF REMEMBRANCE; AND one way or other, THEY’RE PART OF YOURS, AS WELL.

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[**optional**:]

i actually don’t know just how many generations of the smith[?] family are represented here [TONIGHT/this even-ing], but why don’t we try to get a rough idea with a lit-tle audience-participation exercise. on the count of three, would any of you WHO HAVE, OR WHO HAVE HAD GREAT-GRANDCHILDREN, PLEASE STAND UP. ONE . . . TWO . . . THREE!

[IF THERE ARE ANY STANDEES] WOW — LUCKY YOU!! [TO EACH ONE IN TURN] HOW MANY GREAT-GRANDKIDS?

NOW, HOW ‘BOUT GREAT-GRANDKIDS? ANY GREAT-GRAND-CHILDREN HERE WITH US TONIGHT? STAND UP ON THREE, WON’T YOU: THREE: ONE . . . TWO . . . THREE!

[IF THERE ARE NO STANDEES] OKAY, THEN: HOW ABOUT GRAM-MAS AND GRAMPAS? WOULD ALL YOU GRANDPARENTS STAND UP ON THE COUNT OF THREE. ONE . . . TWO . . . THREE!

THERE YOU GO! AND ARE ANY OF YOUR GRANDCHILDREN HERE WITH US TONIGHT? HAVE ‘EM STAND UP, WON’T YOU WHEN I COUNT THREE ONE . . . TWO . . . THREE!

SO OBVIOUSLY, THE REAGANS OF BLUE BLOODS HAVEN’T GOT [MUCH/A THING] ON US SMITHS[?].

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IN ANY EVENT, it’s in part to celbrate the life, and TO com-memorate the death of [names of grandparents and mother] that we’ve gathered here this [TONIGHT/this evening]. and i would be *terribly* remiss in that regard if i didn’t recall for you this one time that . . . [tell one or more humorous grampa/gramma/mother anecdote(s)].

it’s in this spirit of [gratitude/generosity/fun/love] that the smith[?] family’s gathered together here [TONIGHT/ this evening]. i understand that we’ve got VARIOUS kinds of family-reunion-type stuff in store for us, so let’s get started, shall we . . . [hand the microphone to, or motion to the podium, the event’s emcee] . . . and this is [name and relationship to family], who’ll take it from here.

[emcee’s first name.]

thank you.

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