



## William Jefferson Clinton

### *Remarks at the Memorial Service for Ed Bradley*



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**AUTHENTICITY CERTIFIED:** Text version below transcribed directly from audio

I am an unannounced participant in this program for two reasons. One is, it's the only way I could catch Bradley unprepared. And the second is Charlene thought it only fair that some representative of the class that he persecuted so relentlessly should speak.

I first met Ed Bradley the way most Americans did -- on television, more than 30 years ago, talking about Vietnam. Over the years I watched him migrate from *CBS News*, to the documentaries, to *60 Minutes*. I watched his hair migrate from gray to black, from long to short to shaved. I didn't know what I thought about the ear ring, but Hillary liked the hair changes.

Throughout this whole migration I was learning. I learned about the human consequences of war and politics in Asia. I learned an enormous amount about complex biomedical issues. I learned about the perils of power and greed; about America's constant struggle with bigotry and its consequences.

You already heard that one of his last stories was about the appearance of the Ivory-billed woodpecker in the Cyprus swamps of my native state of Arkansas. I loved that story because it was the first time in 30 years he talked about something I knew as much about as he did -- and the only time.

Ed Bradley was a brilliant, insatiably curious traveler on a relentless lifetime quest to get to the bottom of things. He was like the great jazz musicians he so admired: He always played in the key of reason; his songs were full of the notes of facts; but he knew that to make the most of the music you have to improvise.



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We'll never forget what his solos were: the disarming smile, the disconcerting stare, the highly uncomfortable stretches of silence, the deceptively dangerous questions, and the questions that would be revealing no matter what answer you gave.

Watching him was mesmerizing -- because you knew you were watching a master at work.

This, then, is my tribute. I knew I had arrived in national politics when Ed Bradley wanted to interview me. I always preferred watching him interview others. The best thing about my brief stint on *60 Minutes* -- with these little one minute commentaries with Bob Dole -- was that it was the only time in my entire public life I felt protected from Ed Bradley.

On the one occasion when I thought he got a story wrong, I never once believed he wasn't looking for the truth -- or that he believed bad facts or unwarranted inferences were justified because he was making some larger point.

He was, after all, a jazz master. He improvised, but he honored the music.

I liked him. I admired him. I miss him.

And will never forget the music he made in all our lives.

