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ATTY GEN FENO Good morning.

Q Ms. Feno, I see you have the FBI UNAROM number. Would you like to bring us up to date on the investigation?

ATTY GEN FENO Obviously, a great deal of effort has gone into this. Much forensic work is being done and we want to do everything that we can to respond. Anybody having information should call the FBI and the task force. The number is 1-800-701-BOMB.

Q Is the FBI any closer to having any idea who this person is?

ATTY GEN FENO: Obviously, we can't discuss the details of the investigation, but we are doing everything possible to identify the perpetrator.

Q Ms. Feno, on December 8th, Congressmen Clinger and Roberts wrote you about the Smaltz (sp) inquiry into Secretary Espy and the idea that there was a need to broaden it in their view. And I think they're asking you to go to the court to broaden it. Have you taken any action?

ATTY GEN FENO: I just received the letter yesterday and I asked for a report from the Criminal Division as to exactly what the status was and the situation was, and I'm looking forward to receiving that report as soon as possible.

Q Technically is that necessary for you to go to the court, or isn't that -- I was a little puzzled. Isn't that the role of the independent counsel himself now that he's appointed, to go directly to the court?

ATTY GEN FENO: That's the reason I asked the Criminal Division for their assessment, and obviously I will await that. I don't want to do anything that would interfere with the independent counsel's work, and so I have to understand exactly what the procedure is.

Q Ms. Penco, Congressman Meehan sent you a 107-page pros memo, I believe on Tuesday. Have you had a chance to review that yet?

ATTY GEN. RENO: No, I haven't. As I understand it, he met with the associate attorney general, left some materials, those materials are being reviewed.

Q UNABOM again. I think there was a wire service story yesterday suggesting that the FBI was perhaps being a little stingy in disclosing some of the details, some of the evidence that has been accumulated and I think the observation was made that if some of these details were out, the person living next door to the UNABOMber might realize that this person is in fact very close to -- the identity of the person is close to that described in whatever media reports might ensue from your releasing these details. Do you have any concern about that?

ATTY GEN. PENO: In my conversations with Director Freeh he is doing everything he can consistent with the conduct of the investigation to identify the perpetrator, and that would include releasing details that might help to lead to the identification of that person. But at the same time, it's important that details that could in any way -- the release of details that could interfere with the investigation not occur, and obviously he continues to reevaluate just where we're at in terms of what can be released and what can't be released.

Q Given the technology that law enforcement has, there has to be a lot of public confusion as to why this guy has gone on so long without being caught. How would you sort of explain that to the average person on the street?

ATTY GEN. PENO: Obviously this is a situation -- and one of the most frustrating things for me as a prosecutor was to see cases go unsolved. There are cases that involve complex issues. Obviously the technology of these devices is complex and sophisticated. And again, I think the important thing is for us to pursue every possible lead, and I'm satisfied that the FBI is doing that.

Q Ms. Penco, I gather that the various components have received copies of the DPP test for a report on the Weaver case. Do they have any timetable for reporting back to you? It's been, what, eight months since they've completed it?

ATTY GEN. PENO: Well, as I think you're aware, they have reported. What we're trying to do is to make sure that the local prosecutor in the jurisdiction where the situation arose has now had an opportunity to review the results of our investigation. State law and federal law are different. We have done -- we have tried to pursue this to leave no stone unturned, and I think it is important that the local prosecutor be given an opportunity to review our investigation to determine what decisions should be made with respect to state law, and that's where we're at at this point.

Q So just to follow up, you don't anticipate that any of the components will do anything in terms of deciding on whether or not there should be any administrative action here before this local prosecutor sees the report?

ATTY GEN. RENO: I can't comment on the timing of it. I don't know how that timing would evolve with respect to administrative action, but I want to make sure that the local prosecutor has unfettered opportunity to consider it and give us his recommendations as to how we should proceed that would not be inconsistent with what

Q Ms. Peno, could I ask you about a provision again in the Republican Contract with America in the House regarding policing? As you know, they would propose to remove the emphasis that this administration in the recent crime bill put on community policing and allow localities to spend money on other areas such as overtime, straight hiring, equipment, that kind of thing. Now, the Republicans say, we want to give the -- they say, we're not against community policing, we just want to give the localities more flexibility. They can spend this federal money as they wish. Well, is there anything -- what's wrong with that argument?

ATTY GEN. PENO: I think what everybody is talking about that is on -- the people who are on the front line of policing in this country, community leaders who are working with the police officers, neighborhood activists who are involved with police officers understand that the real issue is that we need police officers on the streets who understand their neighborhood, who understand the citizens in the neighborhood, who know who's who, who can reach out and help a young man stay out of trouble, who can reach out and solve a crime because they know the people in the community and they trust that police officer. It's nothing new. It's called old-fashioned policing.

The bill also -- the act, the Violent Crime Act -- provides monies for overtime. It provides monies for automation that releases police officers' time so that they can come back to the streets.

But I think what we're all concerned about -- both Republicans and Democrats -- is to make sure that there are some objectives to be achieved. We have seen in the past when monies have been spent through grants with little or no objectives, little or no goals, and I think it is important that we work with the communities to get them what they need. And the refrain I hear -- and judging by the response to the COPS program -- I mean, the response has been overwhelming.

Commissioners from the department -- the state department of law enforcement mayors are writing to us telling us that they haven't seen a program so effectively implemented so quickly, that we're trying to be responsive, that we're trying to meet their needs. I don't see any reason to come in and change something that is so obviously working. I don't see any reason to come in and change something that so obviously has the support of police throughout this country. And I think it's important that, as we develop any kind of legislation, we have goals and objectives that can be measured so that we make sure the taxpayers' money's being spent the right way.

Q Ms. Peno, in that regard, I gather at this point you have received from OMB the pass back for the FY96 budget and that it may incorporate some cuts for U.S. attorneys, but other than that the spending is relatively consistent with what you're asking for. But there apparently is some effort underway to reduce funding for ATF, Secret Service in their law enforcement capacities.

Is there some overall law enforcement budget strategy that's underway, and is it your view that ATF and Secret Service can take a reduction and have some of the things they do folded into the Justice Department?

ATTY GEN. PENN. I -- you would have to check with OMB as to what overall strategy they may have in mind -- I focus just on the Department of Justice. But I will say that we have had an excellent working relationship with the Secret Service and with ATF. As many people know I had a good working relationship with ATF during the time I served as a local prosecutor and we have enjoyed the opportunity to work with them. I don't think -- I've got enough to say grace over in the Department of Justice. Don't ask me about other people's funding issues.

Q You don't know whether there is a proposal to fold in some of their operations into --

ATTY GEN. PENN. I've heard different proposals floated around, but we have not been involved with those proposals.

Q Ms. Penn, the zeitgeist on both the Hill and in the White House now is to reduce the size of government. Is there any suggestion that any Justice Department program may take a hit?

ATTY GEN. PENN. My whole approach to reducing the size of government is to make sure that we spend the American people's dollars as wisely as possible, and I'm constantly looking for ways to do more with less. You've heard, perhaps, my comments of what it's like when you're faced with a mandatory reduction because of a shortfall in state revenue, and you participate in a very difficult situation in which all state agencies budgets are cut by 10 percent with eight months left in the fiscal year. You realize how much more effective you can be if you continue to look at how to get the job done, and that's what we're trying to do in the department.

Q Can you tell me how this Boundary County, Idaho prosecutor will get a look at the Weaver report? Will he have to come into town for that process? What's the timetable --

ATTY GEN. PENN. We invited him here. He has not been able to come so we've sent it to him.

Q So it's in his hands now?

ATTY GEN. PENN. I can't tell you that it is in his hands. It has been sent to him and I would assume that it is in his hands now.

Q General, back on the prosecution proposal that was so helpfully sent to you on tobacco. With the changeover to a Republican majority on the Hill and the obvious distaste they now have for any kind of further inquiry in the tobacco companies, does that make it a little less helpful or is it irrelevant to anything the Justice Department would do?

ATTY GEN. RENO: In terms of what the Justice Department does in any investigation, it's not done based on who's in power. It's not done based on whether Republicans or Democrats have an interest or whether Republicans or Democrats are involved. It's based on the evidence and the law and what's the right thing to do, and I'm going to try to continue to do that.

Q I'd like to ask about one other aspect of the Contract with America, namely on civil justice reform. The Republicans, as you know, would propose to do various things about product liability, medical malpractice attorneys' fees. I recall that when you first came to office you said that this department under your reign was going to do something about civil justice reform, and I don't recall hearing what the result of that may have been, but is that on track? And does it have anything to do with the issues that the Republicans are bringing up?

ATTY GEN RENO: I have not seen what specifically the Republicans are proposing. We would obviously look at that, but what we have tried to address are the concerns that I think all Americans have in terms of the cost of litigation, access to litigation and delay. And I understand that I will shortly be receiving proposals from the group that has worked on what we can do in terms of alternative dispute resolution.

I have stressed and continue to stress the need for lawyers throughout America to learn how to negotiate as much as they learn how to try cases and to advocate. I saw as a prosecutor in Miami a substantial number of our cases were negotiated, yet our lawyers so often go to law school without having any course in negotiation. It is clear from the experiences in the last 10 or 15 years that there are some marvelous programs that teach people how to get things settled without having to go to the cost of filing lawsuits. And we're looking at what we can do throughout the department to enhance our negotiation skills so that we make the best judgment possible and just don't go to court for going to court's sake.

Thank you very much.

Q Christmas plans?

ATTY GEN RENO: Going home!

Q Olay Merry Christmas

ATTY GEN RENO: Thank you. Happy Holidays to you all

END