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5 TRANSCRIPT OF SPEECH

6 GIVEN BY

7 JANET RENO, U.S. ATTORNEY GENERAL

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18 Keynote address of Janet Reno, U.S.

19 Attorney General, at the Adams Mark Hotel, Tulsa

20 Ballroom, 100 East Second Street, Tulsa, Oklahoma,
21 74103, at 8:40 p.m., on Thursday, August 15, 1996,
22 and the proceedings being taken down by Stenotype by
23 JANET L. NIEMANN, a Certified Shorthand Reporter in
24 and for the State of Oklahoma, and transcribed by
25 her.

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1 Thank you, Marlene, and thank you all for
2 this wonderful welcome. But it is I that should be
3 applauding you, for you are my heroes and my
4 heroines. You're the ones that taught me, you and
5 your colleagues and my friends from Miami. Marlene
6 is the one that greeted me as I came to Washington.
7 And I thought, I'm not going to lose my sense of
8 community; I'm not going to lose my touch with
9 victims. She has proven me right again and
10 again.
11 President Clinton has asked that I send you
12 all of his warm regards. And he's asked that I give you
13 a letter, Marlene, which I will before I leave,

14 expressing his appreciation for NOVA's work. When we
15 announced the support for the victims' rights
16 amendment, he commented again what extraordinary
17 efforts this group has undertaken on behalf of the
18 victims of America.

19 I appreciate the opportunity to speak with
20 you tonight as this important conference draws to a
21 close. Marlene has shared with me the program for
22 the conference, and it is an example of what a
23 conference should be. You've learned. You've
24 earned. You've had fun.

25 For the past two decades the visionary work

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1 of Marlene Young and John Stein and this wonderful,
2 wonderful staff have helped to secure many important
3 reforms for crime victims everywhere. The Department
4 of Justice and I prize our partnership with NOVA, our
5 partnership which aims to secure greater rights for
6 victims and to improve services for crime victims in
7 every way that we can. NOVA working with the Justice
8 Department has helped lead the way. You have, by

9 providing crisis response teams after major crimes
10 that impact entire communities, shown so many people
11 how it can be done.
12 Indeed, I was intrigued to learn that
13 NOVA's Crisis Response Team Program was first
14 developed ten years ago in the aftermath of the
15 brutal killing of 14 people in Edmond, Oklahoma. Few
16 people in that community did not know the victims or
17 were not impacted by that terrible crime. Mike
18 Turpen, then the Attorney General of Oklahoma, called
19 NOVA and said, "I know your organization helps
20 individual victims of crime. But what do you do when
21 an entire community has been victimized?" NOVA
22 responded. Building on its understanding of
23 individual crisis intervention, NOVA gathered experts
24 from around the country and organized its first
25 community response team which assisted not only the
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1 immediate victims of the crime, but also emergency
2 workers who were on the scene and the community as a

3 whole.

4 On April the 19th, 1995, at about 9:02

5 a.m., every American became an Oklahoman, and the

6 people of Oklahoma showed this nation how to be

7 Americans. The people of Oklahoma City and of all

8 Oklahoma came together with people from literally

9 around the world to speak out against the violence

10 and the hatred that had spawned that blast from hell,

11 to reach out to victims and to survivors and help

12 them begin to heal, to assist law enforcement in

13 bringing people to justice and in defending this

14 nation.

15 Three NOVA crisis response teams funded by

16 the Justice Department provided crisis debriefing to

17 hundreds of school children and emergency workers.

18 Individual school children donated their allowances.

19 Entire states provided coordinated efforts, and

20 contributions came from foreign governments. The

21 state of Iowa gave a donation of \$100,000 out of its

22 own compensation money to provide assistance. Turkey

23 and Japan each donated \$10,000. Oklahoma City school

24 children received over 400,000 letters from around

25 the world. When the case proceedings were moved to

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1 Colorado, hundreds of citizens there offered their

2 homes, food and transportation to victims who wanted

3 to attend the trial.

4 I came to Oklahoma City the Sunday after

5 the bombing, and I saw the spirit of the people. I

6 have returned since to be with victims and survivors,

7 and they have come to visit me in Washington. On my

8 table in my office is the picture of a little,

9 one-year-old child who was killed in the blast. She

10 is my symbol of victims everywhere and what we need

11 to do to make sure that they are protected.

12 So many people who felt the impact of that

13 blast have come to me to thank me for making a

14 difference, but it is you that they should be

15 thanking. Each of you who had a part in that effort

16 has set an example for all humanity of how we must

17 care. From so many who felt the impact of your love

18 and concern, but whom you have not had a chance to
19 meet, let me tell you how much they appreciated and
20 thank you. Thank you, from the bottom of my heart,
21 for caring so wonderfully well.

22 And in these last days, NOVA has responded.

23 When the bomb went off early in the morning in

24 Centennial Park in Atlanta, NOVA was ready. To

25 prepare for the Olympics, we supported NOVA's

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1 training of approximately 50 victim advocates in

2 Georgia on crisis response. Shortly after the

3 bombing, the NOVA-trained Olympic crisis response

4 team was on the scene helping out and making a

5 difference.

6 So, because of your efforts, because of the

7 efforts of colleagues of yours around this country,

8 victims of crime gain more and more crucial rights in

9 the justice system each year. Each year, because of

10 your efforts, they are gaining greater access to

11 needed services.

12 I discovered long ago that among the most
13 effective advocates I have seen are the survivors,
14 those who have channeled their pain and anger into
15 activism to achieve lasting reforms. They were in my
16 office, and they were great and marvelous strengths
17 for us all.

18 This year, during National Crime Victims'
19 Rights Week, at the end of April, I had the
20 extraordinary honor of meeting 13 people who are
21 truly making a difference for crime victims today.
22 They received the Crime Victim Service Award, the
23 highest federal honor for victims' advocacy.

24 I wish I had the time to describe all of
25 them to you tonight. I would urge you, because I

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1 think it may have been filmed, to put together a film
2 just describing each person's role in victim
3 advocacy, because it was one of the most moving
4 moments that I have spent in the last 3 1/2 years
5 that I have been in Washington.

6 Let me give you just a few examples of the
7 kind of work that they are doing. John and Pat
8 Byron's daughter Mary was murdered by somebody she
9 knew on her 21st birthday, just days after he posted
10 bail on charges of raping and stalking her. Fearing
11 for her life, Mary had asked authorities to notify
12 her of his impending release. But, tragically, that
13 notification never came.
14 Her parents, John and Pat, have worked to
15 establish a computerized notification system in
16 Louisville, Kentucky, which tries and keeps trying
17 until it is successful to contact victims and to
18 notify them of the offender's release. And
19 legislation was recently passed to expand this system
20 throughout the commonwealth.
21 We must work together to establish
22 effective notification systems for crime victims in
23 all states as we are striving to do at the federal
24 level. This is a victim's right that may
25 well mean the difference between life and death.

1 Marilyn Smith is another inspiring activist
2 who received the Crime Victim Service Award. More
3 than 25 years ago, Marilyn, hearing impaired since
4 she was six years of age, was brutally raped. At the
5 time of her rape, there were no victim services for
6 the deaf, which made her recovery needlessly long and
7 very lonely.

8 In 1986, Marilyn founded Washington State's
9 Abused Deaf Women's Advocacy Service, which now
10 offers a 24-hour crisis line, counseling and legal
11 advocacy for deaf and deaf-blind victims of sexual
12 assault and domestic violence. Just last month,
13 Marilyn carried the Olympic torch
14 for part of its journey across America.

15 All of us must work together
16 to ensure that accessible services are available to
17 victims with disabilities throughout this country,
18 the 48,000,000 Americans who are wonderful and
19 constructive citizens who need the access and need
20 the protection to develop to their fullest potential.

21 Other major reforms have been achieved by
22 grassroots organizations like Mothers Against Drunk
23 Driving. MADD has fought for and secured stronger
24 penalties for drunk drivers and participated in
25 prevention programs, including victim impact panels

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1 in schools and in programs for offenders.

2 When I became state attorney in Dade
3 County, there was no MADD chapter in South Florida.

4 I was visiting in Daytona Beach, and there was a MADD
5 chapter there. They were wonderful advocates. And I
6 thought, hmm, why can't we have one in South Florida?

7 Then came a very fierce lady to my office, a lady by
8 the name of Diane Holmes, who said, "I'm forming a
9 MADD chapter." And I said, "Great." Then when she
10 came to me and said, "I want to quit my job and come

11 to work for you." I said, "Hooray." Because of the
12 efforts of people like Diane Holmes and her

13 colleagues across this nation, their efforts have
14 literally resulted in saving thousands of lives, a 21

15 percent decline in the number of alcohol-related

16 deaths between 1990 and 1993.

17 With the strong support of the Clinton

18 Administration, crime victims and advocates, such as

19 Jim and Sarah Brady, spearheaded efforts to ensure

20 Congress pass legislation, The Brady Act, to require

21 a waiting period before the purchase of handguns. To

22 date, The Brady Act has helped to defer

23 more than 60,000 convicted felons

24 from having a handgun, keeping kids and others

25 from purchasing handguns. And countless survivors of

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1 domestic violence created coalitions across the

2 nation to advocate for the landmark Violence Against

3 Women Act, which is part of the 1994 Clinton Crime

4 Act, authorized 1.6 billion dollars to support a

5 national domestic violence hot line, police,

6 prosecution and victim service initiatives and

7 important research in this area. It is making a

8 difference.

9 The 1994 Crime Act also expands the rights

10 of, and protections for, victims in the federal
11 criminal justice system by providing sexual assault
12 victims with counseling and payment for testing for
13 sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV; by
14 requiring interstate enforcement of protection orders
15 and by encouraging state establishment of sex
16 offender registries.

17 The President and the Justice Department
18 have fought successfully for the victims' provision of
19 the 1996 Anti-Terrorism Act, which provides
20 \$1,000,000 in funding to strengthen anti-terrorism
21 efforts, made restitution mandatory in violent crime
22 cases and expanded the compensation and assistant
23 service for victims of terrorism both at home and
24 abroad.

25 The recently enacted Federal Megan's Law

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1 requires states to tell a community when a dangerous
2 sexual predator enters its midst. Named after a
3 seven-year-old New Jersey girl who was sexually

4 assaulted and murdered in 1994 by a twice-convicted

5 sex offender, this law can make a difference. It

6 bears the name of one child, but it was passed to

7 protect every child.

8 Just last month, the

9 President called for the establishment of a national

10 sex offender registry system, and I look forward to

11 working with NOVA to make sure that it is

12 implemented in the most efficient, thorough manner

13 possible. The Administration's Anti-Youth Violence

14 Bill, the Anti-Gang and Youth Violence Control Act of

15 1996 also will expand victims' access to juvenile

16 delinquency proceedings and records.

17 In addition to fighting for these

18 legislative initiatives, the Administration has

19 provided substantial financial support for victims'

20 initiatives. For example, the Crime Victims funded

21 the Department of Justice this year with providing

22 more than \$230,000,000, a record amount, to nearly

23 3,000 victim assistance programs. By the end of this

24 year, this Administration will have collected more
25 than \$1,000,000 in criminal fines, all of which will
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1 be used to serve crime victims.

2 The President has been consistent and

3 unwavering in his efforts to fight violent crime.

4 From the time I first met with him on February the

5 9th in the Oval Office 3 1/2 years ago -- it seems

6 like just yesterday, and it seems like a hundred

7 years ago -- he first spoke then of his commitment to

8 victims' rights, and he has been with us ever since.

9 From the Crime Bill to the Brady Bill to the

10 Anti-Terrorism Bill, this Administration is making a

11 difference, but we have much to do. Those laws

12 contain protections for victims. But, as important

13 as those protections are, they do not and cannot give

14 victims equal status with the accused. That's the

15 next step we need to take.

16 You, victims, survivors, advocates, have

17 built a powerful support for a victims' rights

18 amendment to the Constitution of the United States

19 with bipartisan congressional support and with the
20 strong support of the President. A victims' bill of
21 rights, once a novel idea, is now a reality in almost
22 every state. And, at least 20 states, my own
23 included, have amended their state constitutions to
24 ensure these crucial rights. But we need to work
25 closely together to meet the many challenges that
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1 remain. There is still no consistency in the
2 implementation of victims' rights nationwide and no
3 guarantee of crucial services for every crime victim.
4 When the President announced his support
5 for a victims' rights amendment, he also directed me
6 to hold the federal system to a higher standard than
7 ever before, to guarantee maximum participation by
8 victims under existing law and to review existing
9 legislation to see what further changes we ought to
10 make.

11 At the President's direction, we are doing
12 everything possible to ensure victims' rights are

13 respected and that the victims' participation in the
14 criminal justice process is encouraged and
15 facilitated. The Justice Department is conducting a
16 system-wide review of federal law enforcement
17 victims-related activities and will be taking all
18 necessary steps to provide for full victim
19 participation in federal criminal proceedings. In
20 this effort, we intend to establish a nationwide
21 automated federal victim information and notification
22 system, and we look forward to working with you and
23 getting the benefit of your good thoughts in this
24 effort.

25 As a society, we tend to focus on the

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1 high-profile cases. But, when the spotlight is off
2 and the media has gone home, we should be able to
3 provide the same level of services to every victim in
4 America, to a mother who has lost her
5 son in a drive-by shooting, to a woman fleeing
6 domestic violence or to a young child who witnesses

7 acts of violence at home, at school or on the
8 streets. Our goal must be to provide comprehensive
9 services for all victims, whether they live in an Indian
10 country, in a small rural community or in a large
11 urban housing project. A critical step towards
12 ensuring fundamental rights and services for crime
13 victims is a federal constitutional amendment
14 guaranteeing victims' rights.
15 In announcing his support for a
16 constitutional amendment for
17 victims of violent crime this past June, President
18 Clinton today said, "Today the system bends over
19 backwards to protect those who may be innocent, and
20 that is as it should be. But it too often ignores
21 the millions and millions of people who are
22 completely innocent because they're victims, and that
23 is wrong. When someone is a victim,
24 he or she should be at the center of the criminal
25 justice process, not on the outside looking in."

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1 Some have questioned the need for a

2 victims' rights constitutional amendment. And I,
3 like the President, certainly do not support amending
4 the constitution lightly, but I have long been an
5 advocate for treating victims with dignity and
6 respect. Now, after carefully reviewing the issue of
7 a federal constitutional amendment with all the
8 lawyers in the Department of Justice, it is clear to
9 me that the best way to secure consistent and
10 comprehensive rights for victims is by including
11 those fundamental rights within the U.S.
12 Constitution.

13 In the constitutional amendment, crime
14 victims should have the right to be informed of, and
15 to not be excluded from, public court proceedings;
16 the right to be notified of major case events and the
17 status of the offender; the right to be heard, if
18 present, by the Court about release from custody,
19 sentencing and pleas; the right to be heard by the
20 parole board when it considers an offender's release,
21 and the right to appropriate restitution. What

22 victims want is a voice, not a veto, in our criminal

23 justice system.

24 Today, victims' rights vary significantly

25 from state to state. The federal government, adult

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1 and juvenile justice systems and the military all

2 provide different rights for victims. Victims'

3 rights should not depend upon the state in which they

4 live, whether the crime is federal or state or

5 whether it occurs on a military base or in Indian

6 country. Fundamental rights for victims should apply

7 in every form.

8 The President has directed

9 the Department of Justice to work with all involved

10 to craft suitable language for such an amendment. We

11 are working with all interested parties, law

12 enforcement and criminal justice interests, members

13 of congress and their staffs and victims' rights

14 advocates across this country on this important

15 effort. We want to develop the most effective

16 language possible, secure the rights of victims while
17 being careful, as the President cautioned, not to
18 hamper the ability of criminal investigators and
19 prosecutors to do their job or inadvertently to
20 provide defendants and convicted offenders ways to
21 cripple the criminal justice process.

22 Eileen Adams, who has been one of my
23 wonderful, wonderful colleagues, such a pleasure to
24 work with, this lady is the victims' advocate's
25 advocate, and she has been so effective. She wants

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1 to work with you. And as you see work on a
2 constitutional amendment developing, please continue
3 to let Eileen know your interests, your concerns and
4 your thoughts.

5 But, even if we succeed in securing a
6 constitutional amendment, we have to do more. I feel
7 very strongly about this because I participated in
8 the passage of a constitutional amendment in my
9 state. But then I saw, as I have seen on other
10 occasions, that we must make the words on that paper

11 real. We will have to continue our efforts in
12 congress and in our legislatures to ensure funding to
13 guarantee that those rights are enforced and that
14 services are provided.

15 Prosecutors with 200 cases and back-to-back
16 trials over a six-week period are hard put to check
17 on the status of restitution ordered two years ago in
18 a case they had. Let's make sure that prosecutors
19 have the resources to get the conviction and the
20 restitution. All the rights in the world won't mean
21 that much to the victim who cannot afford the
22 counseling to help him cope with the trauma of the
23 crime and sometimes the second trauma of the trial.

24 He cannot afford the counseling necessary to cope
25 with the fact that he cannot sleep at night, as he is

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1 faced with flashbacks of the gun in his face. He is
2 depressed, and he is consequently facing the loss of
3 his job. We must renew our efforts to make sure that
4 counseling and other services are available to all

5 victims in this country.

6 But our efforts cannot

7 stop with a constitutional amendment. We can't just

8 stand and wait and watch as another victim falls prey

9 to violence, as another senior citizen loses their

10 life savings in a telemarketing scam. Victims tell

11 us that if they could have one wish, it would be to

12 never have become a victim of crime in the first

13 place. That's why our efforts to combat crime and

14 violence are not complete unless they include

15 prevention programs that work.

16 We have made progress. Violence is down in

17 most major American cities. Community policing,

18 other initiatives are underway. Police are forming

19 networks and partnerships with the community in

20 designing prevention programs. It's exciting to see

21 what is underway. But we have to do more, because,

22 since 1985, youth violence has risen dramatically.

23 And it becomes an even more significant issue when we

24 face the fact that there will be a larger number of

25 young people in the age group of 12 to 17 in the next

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1 15 years.

2 We have just recently seen the '95 figures,

3 which offer us hope, but it does not mean that we can

4 become complacent. It means that we must renew our

5 efforts and realize that what we are doing can work,

6 but we must work harder. We must make sure that we

7 understand that we've got to focus on violence in the

8 home to protect our youth. The child who watches his

9 father beat his mother comes to accept violence as a

10 way of life. And studies have shown again and again

11 that the abused and neglected child becomes the

12 abuser. Let us focus on these efforts and make a

13 difference.

14 We must also support partnerships to curve

15 gang violence. A good example of such a program is

16 Teens on Target in Los Angeles and Oakland,

17 California. Public and private agencies are working

18 together to organize gunshot survivors, victims of

19 gang violence, to promote public awareness and

20 violence prevention. The teenage victims, many of
21 whom are in wheelchairs, speak to thousands of school
22 children each year encouraging them not to seek
23 revenge, but rather nonviolent solutions to conflict.

24 They also intervene with hospitalized gang members,
25 urging them not to retaliate. Teens counsel and

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1 support each other and support the young crime
2 victims who are so often afraid -- so afraid of gang
3 retaliation that they don't exercise even their most
4 basic rights as victims.

5 This is an exciting time. Technology gives
6 us great promise, but it also confronts us with grave
7 challenges. We must work together to ensure that
8 technology is used to benefit victims rather than to
9 exploit them. We live in a global society, and I
10 just want to commend you for the international
11 representation that you have here today. Crime is
12 becoming more and more international in its
13 consequence and its impact, and the initiative of

14 NOVA to reach around the world is an example, again,

15 of your forward-looking thinking which leads in the

16 right direction.

17 We live in a global society where

18 technology is being developed to help police identify

19 whether or not a suspect is armed. Computerized

20 anklets can monitor sex offenders and notify local

21 authorities if someone goes outside their

22 prescribed boundaries.

23 For rural areas, a global positioning

24 system is being developed which can help identify

25 someone's location by satellite. And already in some

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1 rural communities, the use of advanced, high-quality

2 video technology called "telemedicine" is allowing

3 doctors in large urban hospitals to assist in the

4 medical exams of people in remote locations.

5 With a couple of clicks of the Internet, we

6 can have a conversation with a person we've never met

7 in our lives who lives halfway around the world, but

8 this technology can also lead to new forms of
9 victimization. With another couple of clicks, one
10 can view child pornography on a computer screen. We
11 must renew and enhance our efforts to address this
12 issue, for it is not just our children, but the
13 world's children who are at risk. The Justice
14 Department is working with the National Victims'
15 Center to develop recommendations for how technology
16 can best be used to benefit and to protect victims.
17 We have got to renew our efforts to speak
18 out against hate which is spawning crimes that are
19 mean and vile. Haters most often are cowards, and,
20 when confronted, they back down. All of us must join
21 together in our communities across America to speak
22 out against hate when it occurs, to establish
23 standards of tolerance and understanding. It is
24 important for us to reach out and end the rhetoric of
25 bitterness and talk about how we bring people
22
1 together, understanding this great and marvelously
2 diverse nation and the strength that diversity brings

3 to us all.

4 It is time that we speak out and support

5 law enforcement in making sure it has the tools, not

6 just to hold people accountable for terrorism, but to

7 do everything humanly possible to prevent acts of

8 terrorism consistent with our constitution.

9 These times, as Adlai Stevenson said,

10 stagger the imagination and convert vanity to prayer.

11 But never, in all my lifetime, have I ever believed

12 so strongly and so devoutly in the American people.

13 I have now had the chance to travel across this

14 country, meet so many different people, young and

15 old, victims, people who care and who are concerned.

16 I draw the most strength from the victims, for they

17 represent America to me, people who will not be put

18 down, people who will not be defeated, people who

19 will rise again and stand again for what is right.

20 To you all, you are my heroes and heroines. You are

21 but little lower than the angels.

22 (Whereupon, at 9:15 p.m., the taking of the

23 instant proceedings ceased.)

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23

1 C E R T I F I C A T E

2 STATE OF OKLAHOMA)

3) SS:

4 COUNTY OF OKLAHOMA)

5

6 I, Janet L. Niemann, Certified Shorthand

7 Reporter within and for the State of Oklahoma, do

8 hereby certify that the above and foregoing

9 proceedings were taken by me in shorthand and

10 thereafter transcribed, and that the same was taken

11 on the 15th day of August, 1996, in the City of

12 Tulsa, County of Tulsa and State of Oklahoma,

13 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my

14 hand and official seal, this 19th day of August,

15 1996.

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