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ADDRESS TO THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE INFORMATION  
SERVICES ADVISORY POLICY BOARD  
U.S. ATTORNEY GENERAL JANET RENO

Bayfront Hilton  
333 First Street  
St. Petersburg, Florida  
June 4, 1997  
9:10 a.m.

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MS. RENO: Thank you, Bill, and I want to thank all the members of the board for your service. Many of you are back for a second term, and I know from my own experience what a drain it is to have to go to meetings in some other city while you have so much happening in your own department.

Mr. Bonino, you deserve special praise for accepting a second term as chair, and we really look forward to

12 continuing to work with you.

13 This board and its working  
14 groups are able to do so much through  
15 the board, through the IACP, the major  
16 city chiefs, the National Sheriff's  
17 Association and state control terminal  
18 officers and the Royal Canadian Mounted  
19 Police. You are able to get the  
20 benefit of thinking of law enforcement  
21 across this country and this  
22 continent. I think it is so important,  
23 and your work is so important.

24 I'd like to recognize, if I  
25 may, an individual who will soon be

3

1 ending a distinguished 28-year career  
2 with the FBI, Dennis Kurre. He spent  
3 the last 12 years working on  
4 identification issues and was deeply  
5 involved in developing and implementing  
6 the CJIS move to West Virginia. He was  
7 also a wonderful force for support of  
8 his employees during an unstable  
9 transition period.

10 Dennis, we wish you luck and  
11 you will be very missed.

12 (Audience clapping.)

13 As Bill Esposito said, I came  
14 to Washington with a local  
15 perspective. I came to Washington  
16 having seen the feds come to town too  
17 often and tell us what to do and not  
18 consult with us, and I wanted to do  
19 everything I could to build a  
20 partnership between the federal, state  
21 and local law enforcement agencies  
22 across this land.

23 When turf jurisdiction and  
24 wanting to take credit get in the way,  
25 the public loses. We should be so

4

1 proud of our respective agencies and  
2 never forget the sense of camaraderie

3 that goes along with it, but we can  
4 have a sense of camaraderie across  
5 jurisdictional lines and amongst  
6 federal, state and local law  
7 enforcement, and when I see that  
8 develop, it is so exciting.

9 It is so wonderful to be able  
10 to go into a jurisdiction and see the  
11 federal agencies working together, see  
12 them sharing with state and local in a  
13 two-way street, see people making  
14 decisions based on what is in the right  
15 interest of the case and not who gets  
16 the credit.

17 And it's also very refreshing  
18 sometimes leaving Washington to find a  
19 republican sheriff and a democratic  
20 United States attorney working together  
21 without any consideration as to party  
22 lines, and I wish Washington would  
23 learn more about that.

24 But nowhere is this important  
25 partnership more important than in the

5

1 area of information sharing. This  
2 board perfectly illustrates how a  
3 collaborative local state and federal  
4 effort combine to make our streets  
5 safer.

6 Just a few days ago, the new  
7 Uniform Crime Reporting Statistics show  
8 yet another decrease in crime overall.  
9 The simple fact is that crime has  
10 dropped for 5 years in a row and that  
11 violent crime is down 7 percent, 11  
12 percent for murder.

13 Those are heartening numbers  
14 and they indicate that we're on the  
15 right track, but if you're a state  
16 attorney in Dade County for 15 years,  
17 you know that when they go down, they  
18 also go up, and we can never, ever  
19 relax our vigilance. That's why we've  
20 got to work again to secure passage of

21 the Interstate Compact. The Compact  
22 serves as the final step along the path  
23 towards complete decentralization of  
24 criminal history records.

25 We submitted the Compact to

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1 Congress for approval last year, and  
2 unfortunately, they failed to act. I  
3 can tell you, and as I told Mr. Bonino,  
4 it's good to have board meetings every  
5 now and then to force the issue, but  
6 O&D approved the Compact for submission  
7 yesterday, and we are in the process of  
8 submitting it and hope that it will be  
9 acted on this year.

10 As you know, the Compact  
11 represents a sensible and an efficient  
12 approach to the interstate exchange of  
13 criminal history information for  
14 non-criminal justice purposes. The  
15 Compact will require the certainty  
16 which comes from fingerprint-based  
17 identification prior to the release of  
18 criminal history record information.

19 In recent months, some of you  
20 have raised concern over the justice  
21 department's agreement with the  
22 Department of Housing & Urban  
23 Development to process name-based  
24 rather than fingerprint-based  
25 background checks on prospective public

7

1 housing authority tenants.

2 Let me assure you that our  
3 agreement with HUD in no way signifies  
4 a departure from the belief reflected  
5 in the Compact that fingerprint-based  
6 names are better than name-based ones.

7 I have informed Chairman Bonino  
8 that the department will examine the  
9 HUD name-based check experiment after  
10 several months of operation to see how  
11 it's working, and we will work with the

12 board to try to develop a thoughtful,  
13 careful evaluation process that can  
14 give you confidence in this.  
15 Furthermore, I have received an  
16 assurance from Secretary Cuomo at HUD  
17 that once technology, like IAFIS,  
18 eliminates or substantially reduces the  
19 time and cost differential between the  
20 processing of name-based and  
21 fingerprint-based background checks,  
22 HUD will expect all background checks  
23 to be fingerprint-based.

24 Our experiment with HUD is an  
25 effort to find the appropriate balance

8

1 between the relatively limited time and  
2 cost associated with the processing of  
3 name-based background checks as opposed  
4 to the absolute accuracy and  
5 reliability associated with  
6 fingerprint-based background checks.  
7 We must study that experiment's result  
8 as we respond to ever increasing  
9 demands for rapidly available,  
10 inexpensive and completely reliable  
11 background check capabilities, but I've  
12 already made notes from my conversation  
13 with Chairman Bonino about how we  
14 follow up to make sure that the  
15 evaluation is thoughtful and  
16 scientific.

17 As we move to the 21st century,  
18 information sharing and technology are  
19 more than ever the bywords of law  
20 enforcement success.

21 At this time I'd like to take a  
22 few minutes to highlight several  
23 examples of areas where together we are  
24 making a difference in the fight  
25 against crime by you using information

9

1 the right way.

2 First, there is the

3 implementation of the National Instant  
4 Criminal Background Check System, the  
5 NICCS system, mandated by the Brady Act  
6 and designed by you. As you know, the  
7 Brady Act requires me to replace the  
8 current interim system where local  
9 police chiefs and sheriffs conduct the  
10 background checks.

11 With the NICCS system, by  
12 November the 30th, 1998, we will meet  
13 this statutory deadline; however, it is  
14 essential that the states, through this  
15 board, continue to actively participate  
16 in the implementation process. State  
17 participation is vital to the NICCS  
18 effectiveness, speed and accuracy.

19 Currently, it is estimated that  
20 the Brady Act's interim provisions, in  
21 conjunction with various state laws,  
22 prevent approximately 6,600 firearms  
23 per month from being sold to felons,  
24 fugitives and other persons prohibited  
25 from possessing firearms. That

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1 translates into lives saved and less  
2 crime. With your continued role in the  
3 implementation process, I am confident  
4 that NICCS will be even more effective  
5 and less burdensome than the current  
6 system.

7 As you know well, the backbone  
8 of our current criminal history system  
9 is the state's criminal history  
10 records. With that in mind, this  
11 board's Brady Act Task Group designed a  
12 NICCS system that allows for the states  
13 to serve as the points of contact that  
14 firearms dealers will call when  
15 contacting the system.

16 You, the members of the board,  
17 recognize that NICCS would operate more  
18 efficiently if state law enforcement  
19 representatives served as the point of  
20 contact for the NICCS.

21                   Furthermore, federal and state  
22                   law enforcement officials working  
23                   through the board recognize that state  
24                   law enforcement representatives should  
25                   be able to control background checks

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1                   for firearm sales taking place within  
2                   their jurisdictions.

3                   This system will not only  
4                   maintain local control where it  
5                   belongs, but it will also insure that  
6                   state law enforcement, the agency  
7                   closest to the proposed transaction and  
8                   with the best access to criminal  
9                   history and other disqualifying  
10                  records, makes the final determination  
11                  of whether a person may purchase a  
12                  firearm.

13                  As you on the board recognized  
14                  early on, efficient operation of the  
15                  NICCS depends on the state's taking on  
16                  the task of serving as points of  
17                  contact. States that serve as points  
18                  of contact will get the benefit of a  
19                  useful new law enforcement tool, while  
20                  at the same time strengthening the  
21                  NICCS.

22                  I am hopeful that most states  
23                  will accept this task as it is clearly  
24                  in the best interest of state and  
25                  federal law enforcement, not to mention

12

1                  public safety.

2                  Recently, there have been some  
3                  indications that some state  
4                  legislatures are resisting the idea of  
5                  having their state serve as a point of  
6                  contact for the NICCS system. If you  
7                  are experiencing such resistance, let  
8                  us know. We are here to support you in  
9                  your efforts to become points of  
10                  contact for the NICCS system.

11                  If your governor or your

12 legislature is considering ceding this  
13 important area to the federal  
14 government, let us know so that we can  
15 work with them and inform them of the  
16 content and the policy behind it. I  
17 will do everything in my power to  
18 assist you in this effort.

19 I am also hopeful that we can  
20 continue to work hand-in-hand in two  
21 other areas that make the NICCS as  
22 effective as possible. First, every  
23 state needs to join the Interstate  
24 Identification Index, or triple I.

25 State participation in triple I

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1 will benefit the NICCS by improving the  
2 quality, the accuracy and the  
3 timeliness of the criminal history  
4 information. I know that 32 states  
5 currently participate in the triple I,  
6 and I look forward to complete state  
7 participation by the year 2000.

8 Second, every state must  
9 continue the process of updating its  
10 criminal history information. Since  
11 1994, the Department of Justice has  
12 distributed approximately \$250 million  
13 in grants for this very purpose.  
14 Up-to-date and readily accessible state  
15 data is an essential component of the  
16 NICCS system, and we are depending on  
17 you to continue your efforts to upgrade  
18 your state record systems. If there is  
19 anything that I can do to assist you in  
20 this area, please let me know.

21 And I know, not only in terms  
22 of the NICCS system, but in terms of  
23 our ability to detain the dangerous  
24 offenders or offenders that may be  
25 wanted in another state, that it is so

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1 important that we undertake this  
2 effort, and I'm willing to talk to



3           governors and to legislators to let  
4           them know how critically important this  
5           undertaking is.

6                     Let me now turn to NCIC-2,000  
7           and inform you that both Director Freeh  
8           and I are personally committed to  
9           making it happen. There have been  
10          delays and there have been problems.  
11          I'm not here to make excuses or to do  
12          anything but to tell you that this is  
13          an important area to me and to the  
14          director.

15                    But Mr. Esposito can tell you  
16          that the issue of IAFIS and the issue  
17          of NCIC-2,000 are two of the prominent  
18          issues on my get-back list, and I've  
19          learned an awful lot about technology  
20          that I never knew and I understand how  
21          vitally important this is to law  
22          enforcement across this land, and when  
23          it's important to us, I can tell you it  
24          will be important to the entire  
25          Department of Justice.

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1                    We can't cope with the demands  
2          of the 21st century unless we automate  
3          the core of the system, the prints  
4          themselves; therefore, IAFIS must also  
5          become a reality, and I am dedicated to  
6          working with Bill and with Director  
7          Freeh to make sure that happens.

8                    Two of six bills are now  
9          complete, and new compatible systems  
10         are being designed to make sure that  
11         everything we now buy is IAFIS  
12         compatible. IAFIS will bring us into  
13         the 21st century and will do more to  
14         protect officers on the streets. We  
15         are already hearing success stories.

16                    Moreover, IAFIS will greatly  
17         enhance the FBI's ability to respond  
18         quickly to the increasing demand for  
19         fingerprint checks. The current volume  
20         of requests is incredible, and it is

21 increasing, primarily because of recent  
22 state and federal legislative  
23 initiatives that have increased the  
24 demand for FBI fingerprint services.  
25 Handling this volume is particularly

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1 challenging in light of the CJIS  
2 division's recent move to West  
3 Virginia.

4 If the FBI experience continues  
5 at current levels during the remainder  
6 of this fiscal year, the receipt of  
7 fingerprint cards is projected to reach  
8 as high as 14.4 million in this fiscal  
9 year alone. This is a 76 percent  
10 increase over fiscal year '93 receipts  
11 and a 28 percent increase since last  
12 year.

13 I am keenly aware, only too  
14 keenly aware, of the current backlog  
15 and understand that these waits are a  
16 problem for you and for all of law  
17 enforcement. Let me assure you that we  
18 are doing our very best to address this  
19 problem.

20 With your recommendations and  
21 support, over 800 new employees have  
22 been hired in West Virginia this year.  
23 Indications from March and April of  
24 this year reveal a dramatic increase in  
25 the number of fingerprint cards

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1 processed monthly, and, Chuck, I want  
2 to thank you and everybody involved for  
3 this extraordinary effort. But the  
4 receipts continue to climb and we're  
5 going to have to work harder to address  
6 this significant issue for law  
7 enforcement.

8 This fall, the FBI will also  
9 implement a stand-alone image, storage  
10 and retrieval capability, which will  
11 completely eliminate the need for

12 manual fingerprint file searches. This  
13 means no more time-consuming pulling,  
14 identifying, verifying and refiling  
15 functions. We're confident these  
16 improvements, coupled with the IAFIS  
17 project, will make a real difference in  
18 the amount of time it takes us to  
19 prosecute -- or process a fingerprint  
20 card.

21 The first summer job I ever had  
22 was with the Dade County Sheriff's  
23 Office in the summer of 1956 after I  
24 graduated from high school. My job was  
25 checking fingerprints and sometimes

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1 taking fingerprints. When I look at  
2 what has happened in these ensuing 40  
3 years, it staggers the imagination and  
4 converts vanity to prayer.

5 I would now like to turn to the  
6 NCIC's newest file. On May 4th,  
7 through all of our joint efforts, the  
8 NCIC protection order file is up and  
9 running supporting the Violence Against  
10 Women provisions of the 1994 Crime  
11 Act.

12 Every one of us understands the  
13 scourge of domestic violence, and two  
14 states at least, Kentucky and Maine,  
15 declare it to be their number one crime  
16 problem. We also all understand the  
17 importance of protection orders, but  
18 those protection orders aren't worth  
19 the paper on which they are printed if  
20 local law enforcement officers don't  
21 know they exist.

22 Time was when lists could be  
23 typed up and kept over the visor and  
24 cruisers in each city or town; time was  
25 when we didn't think domestic violence

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1 was very important. But in our more  
2 mobile society and in so many

3 professional police departments and  
4 sheriff's offices across the country,  
5 we now understand how important it is,  
6 and all of us in law enforcement  
7 understand the mobility of America,  
8 both abusers and victims. The only  
9 effective way to attract -- to track  
10 these orders is on computer, and you've  
11 made that a reality.

12 There is an added benefit,  
13 because federal law enforcement  
14 prohibits those subject to certain  
15 domestic violence protection orders  
16 from possessing firearms. The new file  
17 allows law enforcement to identify  
18 those who shouldn't have a gun. Since  
19 so many domestic violence homicides are  
20 committed with firearms, we now have a  
21 real chance to prevent these terrible  
22 crimes from occurring, not just  
23 counting them after they occur.

24 I used to look at cases that  
25 could have been prevented and cases

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1 that we simply couldn't have done  
2 anything about, and clearly, we can do  
3 so much in terms of prevention and  
4 domestic violence. All the data is  
5 there; the arena is there, and this  
6 information can be incredibly helpful.

7 Finally, we need to continue to  
8 work together to make the National Sex  
9 Offender Registry a reality. In June  
10 of 1996, President Clinton directed me  
11 to develop a national sexual predator  
12 and child molester registration system,  
13 a system that would, for the first  
14 time, link together the sex offender  
15 registration and notification systems  
16 being developed in all 50 states.

17 On February 23rd of this year,  
18 we took an important first step toward  
19 making that national registration  
20 system a reality when the FBI's interim

21 National Sex Offender Registry became  
22 operational; but, of course, this new  
23 registry will only be as good as the  
24 quality of data on sex offenders that  
25 it contains.

21

1 The watchword here, as  
2 everywhere else, is collaboration. But  
3 we are already working closely with  
4 officials in your states to insure that  
5 accurate and up-to-date information on  
6 the whereabouts of sex offenders is  
7 timely loaded into the system and we  
8 need to intensify these efforts.  
9 Working together, I know that we can  
10 make a difference in preventing sex  
11 crimes.

12 There are so many other issues  
13 that we will all face together in these  
14 next ten years in law enforcement in  
15 America. With the development of  
16 technology, we see new tools for law  
17 enforcement that we never dreamed of.  
18 We also see new technology in the hands  
19 of the bad guys that really present  
20 incredible new challenges for all of  
21 us.

22 We will not succeed unless we  
23 work together in addressing how we  
24 insure for law enforcement at every  
25 level of government, the expertise

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1 necessary to match wits with the bad  
2 guys and the equipment and the  
3 information infrastructure necessary to  
4 give law enforcement the tools to do  
5 the job. These pieces of equipment,  
6 this expertise in some instance, will  
7 be very expensive and there may be only  
8 one or two of its kind.

9 We need to figure out how to  
10 share it at the federal, state and  
11 local level in a comprehensive way that

12 can make us prepared for this next  
13 century to match wits with criminals  
14 around the world, for we will also face  
15 another dimension; and that is, that  
16 crime and its impact and its  
17 consequences will be international in  
18 nature.

19 When a man can sit in his  
20 kitchen in St. Petersburg, Russia and  
21 with his computer steal from a bank in  
22 New York City, we know the time has  
23 come to really develop a comprehensive  
24 partnership based on principles of  
25 federalism recognizing the

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1 globalization of so many issues and  
2 remembering that state and local law  
3 enforcement are at the heart of all  
4 that we do.

5 I thank you all and  
6 individually for all that you do every  
7 day. I admire you for your work and  
8 your willingness to be at the cutting  
9 edge of law enforcement.

10 I've come here to demonstrate  
11 that we are colleagues, that we are  
12 partners, and I look forward to working  
13 with you to insure full state  
14 participation and NICCS and triple I,  
15 and to insure an ongoing partnership  
16 that will serve law enforcement and our  
17 citizens across this land and this  
18 continent.

19 If there is anything that I can  
20 do, please let me know, and don't wait  
21 for meeting-to-meeting. It is very  
22 important that I continue to hear from  
23 law enforcement across America as to  
24 what the Department of Justice can do  
25 to more effectively serve as a partner

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1 in this effort.

2 Thank you very much for

3           inviting me today.  
4                   (Audience clapping.)  
5                   (Speech concluded.)  
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1                                   CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER  
2           STATE OF FLORIDA  
3           COUNTY OF SARASOTA  
4

5                   I, ELSA ROHOW, Registered Professional  
6           Reporter for the State of Florida, do hereby  
7           certify that I reported in stenotype the  
8           proceedings had of this matter previously  
9           captioned herein; that I thereafter reduced my  
10          said stenotype notes to typewriting; and that the  
11          foregoing transcript, pages 1 to 24, both  
12          inclusive, constitutes a full, true and accurate  
13          record of all proceedings had upon the said  
14          matter, and of the whole thereof.

15                   Witness my hand as Registered  
16          Professional Reporter this 7th day of June, 1997.  
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20                                   \_\_\_\_\_  
                                  Elsa Rohow

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Registered Professional Reporter  
My commission expires: 10-22-98