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PRESENTATION OF ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO
BEFORE THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY DINNER OF
VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

Saturday, July 12, 1997

Radisson Hotel
Adirondack Ballroom
Burlington, Vermont

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(8:20 p.m.)

ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO: Thank you,
Senator Leahy and thank you for your friendship
and your wise counsel over these four years.
Governor Dean, it's been wonderful to watch you in
action and I have appreciated the opportunity to
work with you. Commissioner Walton and
Commissioner McMahan, Colonel Sinclair, Colonel
Marshall, thank you. Thank you one and all for
making me feel so welcome this evening. It's been
like coming home to Miami but going the other way.

12 And I appreciate it so much. I
13 appreciate the invitation to come back to this
14 perfectly beautiful state and have the chance, if
15 just for a few hours, to look out across that
16 lake, to fly in and see the mountains coming up
17 ahead, to see the spirit of community that is so
18 evident, not just in Burlington but throughout the
19 state. To hear people talk about how they would
20 wake the Senator up at 3:00 in the morning, or how
21 they were started together and how they worked
22 together or when they grew up together. You have
23 an extraordinary opportunity here for community
24 that few other places have, and you have used it
25 to the fullest and it is a pleasure to be here.

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1 It's also a great honor for me to be
2 here to help you celebrate and to congratulate you
3 on 50 years of distinguished and dedicated service
4 to the people of Vermont and to the millions of
5 people who come here year round to enjoy this
6 beautiful state.

7 I think good policing is probably one of
8 the most challenging undertakings that any person
9 can pursue. I think policing is one of the most
10 challenging and complex professions that I know.
11 At 10:00 at night on an icy, snowy night when you
12 give an 18 year old his first ticket, the way you
13 give it to him is going to form his opinion of law
14 enforcement for the rest of his life. And based
15 on the people that I've met this evening, I bet
16 most 18 year olds have a very, very good opinion
17 of law enforcement.

18 I think that day in and day out people
19 don't realize that you're putting your life on the
20 line. It may seem like safe duty, but that's
21 oftentimes the most treacherous. And day in and
22 day out you go out and you put your life on the
23 line for the people of Vermont, and you do it with
24 such grace and courage.

25 There are other things to being a police

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1 officer, and you know it. Having to go into court
2 to remember something that may have happened a

3 year ago because witnesses were missing; to be
4 cross examined by a lawyer who's gone to law
5 school, who can sit in his law office and prepare,
6 who can prop his feet up and pull his books off
7 the library shelf, but you've got to make the same
8 decisions with respect to search and seizure, with
9 respect to the constitutional rights afforded a
10 defendant. You've got to make the same decisions
11 the lawyer makes, and you've got to make them
12 stick by quiet, firm, honest testimony in court.
13 And the way people have spoken of your work, you
14 do that day in and day out.

15 And families, as the Governor said, can
16 never, ever be forgotten for you wait, and then
17 after you've waited, they come home after they've
18 had a terrible night with four calls, one -- all
19 back to back, and they're tired and they've had to
20 work a little bit extra and it's been an awful,
21 freezing, sleety night and you've got to make them
22 feel warm and welcome and you've got to do it with
23 a sense of humor. And judging by the way some of
24 the couples that I've met tonight who have been
25 together for a very long time and who have been

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1 with the Vermont State Police for a very long
2 time, the families do such a wonderful job of
3 that. So I salute you all, families and troopers,
4 50 years of extraordinary service.

5 For these last four, as Senator Leahy
6 has said, we have tried to be a good partner. As
7 a state prosecutor, I never liked the feds coming
8 to town to tell me what to do. I never liked them
9 coming to town to say, give me all the
10 intelligence you have, but not giving it back.
11 And I came to Washington resolved to do everything
12 I could to form a good, strong partnership with
13 state and local law enforcement across this
14 country both in the urban areas and in more rural
15 areas like Vermont. You are on the front line.
16 You understand your needs and resources in Vermont
17 better than I do sitting in Washington. I need
18 your input, your ideas. I need to know what your
19 problem is and how the federal government,
20 consistent with principles of federalism, can best

21 work with you to solve that problem in a real
22 tangible way that can make a difference.

23 The Senator described some of the things
24 that we have done, and we've got to work harder on
25 the partnership with respect to development of a

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1 complete, accurate, full criminal history record
2 system. Nothing is more frustrating, I suspect,
3 to a trooper because it was frustrating to me as a
4 prosecutor to see somebody arrested, get them
5 booked into the jail, have them released because
6 there was no prior criminal history that we could
7 find and find they were a two time armed robber
8 from halfway across the country and we didn't have
9 the record. Let us continue to work together in
10 every way we possibly can to develop a criminal
11 history record system in this country that can
12 protect and benefit all of law enforcement and the
13 community that they serve.

14 But as we have looked back at 50 years
15 of distinguished service, let's look forward now
16 for just a moment to the next 50. What's it going
17 to be like? Ladies and gentlemen, policing won't
18 seem the same 50 years from now. We have
19 technology already in existence that staggers the
20 imagination and converts vanity to prayer. We
21 have a man who can sit in a kitchen in St.
22 Petersburg, Russia, at his computer, and steal
23 from a bank in Burlington. We have men who can
24 obtain access to credit card information for
25 35,000 people in south Florida and take that

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1 information and extort money in exchange for the
2 return of the information. We have people who can
3 hack into computer systems and bring down power
4 grids, bring down emergency systems, bring down
5 financial systems. This applies to a person
6 whether they are a common thief who wants to steal
7 from the bank or the terrorist that wants to
8 terrorize this nation.

9 We must form partnerships to deal with
10 this. At the Department of Justice, and the FBI
11 and in other agencies of government we're working

12 hard to develop the expertise and to develop the
13 equipment necessary to match wits with the
14 sophisticated terrorist, with the common thief who
15 happens to be computer literate. We are trying to
16 do that consistent with the Constitution and with
17 people's right to privacy. We need to work with
18 the private sector to do this, and we're in the
19 process of building those partnerships. But as we
20 see this technology develop, we are also staggered
21 by the cost of it, and we're all so frustrated by
22 the fact that something that is state of the art
23 today may be obsolete in two years.

24 The simple fact is that very
25 sophisticated equipment is going to replace the

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1 gun as a common weapon, and we have got to develop
2 the equipment and the expertise throughout law
3 enforcement in this country that can match wits
4 with the criminals that we will face. I would
5 like to work with you and with law enforcement
6 across this country to form partnerships to ensure
7 that we share with you the sophisticated equipment
8 that you might need once in a blue moon but that
9 it will be available to state and local law
10 enforcement; that we share the expertise, that we
11 share it on a national basis and on a regional
12 basis, but that we make sure that state boundaries
13 and local jurisdictions are not arbitrary borders
14 that prevent the exchange of the expertise that is
15 so important.

16 Just as technology presents
17 extraordinary challenges, so does it present some
18 extraordinary opportunities. We are seeing cases
19 solved now through the FBI systems using DNA that
20 we simply didn't believe possible, we couldn't
21 really comprehend when I had my first summer job
22 at the sheriff's department in Dade County in 1956
23 and fiddled around in the crime lab because they
24 heard I was a chemistry major and they thought I
25 might know a little bit.

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1 We are watching DNA in 16 cases that we
2 have identified in the Justice Department alone,

3 16 cases from law enforcement across this land
4 where DNA has absolved people who have been
5 convicted of a crime, have absolved them and
6 enabled them to go free. It is a remarkable tool.
7 And within five years if we work together, if we
8 pursue smart solutions, a crime scene tech will be
9 able to go to the scene of a crime, do DNA tests,
10 immediately match them on the computer and
11 immediately eliminate three potential targets that
12 would cost the Vermont State Police thousands of
13 dollars to pursue but immediately will be able to
14 eliminate them as suspects through DNA. And
15 hopefully we will be able to identify true
16 defendants faster, quicker before they continue to
17 hurt and harm others.

18 We have such extraordinary opportunities
19 in the terms of what we can do in the development
20 of information systems. Can't you imagine what it
21 will be like when we have an information system
22 that can immediately provide you with information
23 that the green Oldsmobile that you've just
24 identified as having participated in the
25 convenient store robbery here in Burlington was

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1 the same green Oldsmobile with the battered right
2 fender that might have been involved in a similar
3 offense in Augusta, in Manchester before they got
4 here, and that with the collection of information
5 that will be immediately brought to bear for you
6 and for law enforcement around this country. We
7 should be much more capable of solving crimes much
8 faster and much more effectively. But we have got
9 to work together to make sure that our information
10 systems are interoperable so that they can talk to
11 each other. We've got to work together to make
12 sure that you are not making expenditures in
13 Vermont in the next five years that will only lead
14 you down a dead end because you can't talk to
15 other agencies around the country. We've got to
16 work together as partners to develop an
17 information system in this country that is
18 accurate, that protects privacy interests, that
19 does everything it can to put in the hands of law
20 enforcement the information that is going to help

21 you solve the crime.

22 Yes, we have extraordinary challenges,
23 but we have magnificent opportunities in the
24 technology that is before us, but we must never,
25 ever let technology rule. We must always remember

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1 that people come first, and we must develop the
2 expertise so that we control the technology and
3 the technology does not control us. We must never
4 forget that the most important part of policing is
5 serving the people of our jurisdiction, serving
6 them with compassion, with firmness, with
7 understanding.

8 In my travels around this country and in
9 my 15 years as the prosecutor in Miami I became
10 convinced that good police are the glue that bring
11 communities together, that cause communities to
12 flourish, that give young people a chance to grow
13 in strong, constructive ways. It is the whole
14 function of policing to build community. You have
15 done so much to build that sense of community here
16 in Vermont. You have done so much to represent
17 what's best in policing in terms of bravery, in
18 terms of dedication, in terms of professionalism.
19 Thank you for 50 years of magnificent service to
20 the people you serve, and I expect that in 25 if
21 I'm an old lady and you invite me back here we may
22 be congratulating each other on what we've done
23 with the technology, but I suspect that I will
24 feel the same sense of camaraderie, the same sense
25 of community, the same sense of reverence for the

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1 Vermont state troopers that I do tonight. Thank
2 you.

3 (Applause)

4 (Whereupon, at 8:35 p.m., the speech
5 concluded)

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CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

1 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA) SS.:
2 STATE OF VERMONT)

3 I, Lisa M. Hallstrom, the officer before
4 whom the foregoing presentation was taken, do
5 hereby certify that the foregoing presentation was
6 taken by me to the best of my ability and
7 thereafter reduced to typewriting under my
8 direction.
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Notary Public in and for
the State of Vermont

My commission expires 2-10-99.