



**WEEKLY MEDIA AVAILABILITY WITH
ATTORNEY GENERAL JANET RENO
THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, WASHINGTON, D.C.
JANUARY 18, 2001
9:29 A.M. EST THURSDAY,**

ATTY GEN. RENO: Good morning.

Q Well, good morning.

Q (Off mike.)

Q Hello again.

ATTY GEN. RENO: Hey.

Well, let's see if I can get through this one. (Laughter.) Myron tells me it's my 293rd press availability. It has been an extraordinary opportunity for me, and I thank all of you who have made it possible. It seems like just yesterday that I put my head in the Press Office and said, "What do you all think about this?" And you looked at me like I was crazy. (Soft laughter.)

But I want to thank everybody in the Public Affairs Office who has made it possible, who's helped me prepare and done so much hard work to make sure that we got as accurate information as possible.

Q Has there been further contact since we saw you last with the attorney general nominee?

ATTY GEN. RENO: No.

Q Can you tell us anything about the upcoming transition, who the acting attorney general will be, what you know

about the transition --

ATTY GEN. RENO: I --

Q -- who will be in charge from your end?

ATTY GEN. RENO: I can't comment, but I think we'll be very happy, and I think there will be a comment shortly.

Q Ms. Reno, can you just -- I'm sure it's something you've never been involved in. Some of us have never seen it happen. How does it -- what is the outgoing administration's role in this process? Do you make recommendations? How does that work?

ATTY GEN. RENO: It is a process that involves the chief of staff and the incoming chief of staff, my chief of staff, and the transition person. And we've tried to do everything we could to make sure it went smoothly.

Q Specifically, on the question of acting, does the outgoing administration make a recommendation?

ATTY GEN. RENO: I think we try to reach a consensus.

Q And you expect an announcement shortly from the transition office on that or from here?

ATTY GEN. RENO: We'll see how it's made. (Soft laughter.)

Q Do you expect that today?

ATTY. GEN. RENO: I don't know.

Q The president-elect, assuming he keeps that -- they've been getting regular national security briefings -- has your department provided any briefings on major cases that will be upcoming, that need to be dealt with?

ATTY. GEN. RENO: We would be prepared to, if there was anything that needed an immediate issue addressed, and we

have, in some respects, done so.

Q Can I follow up on that? An immediate issue is the arrest of the high-ranking Russian official in New York yesterday. He holds the rank of a Russian government minister, and he has been arrested. So have you consulted the new team on this?

ATTY. GEN. RENO: We have made appropriate advices with respect to it.

Q How did the operation work? Because obviously, it involved getting a visa for the official to begin with. Can you tell us anything about that?

ATTY. GEN. RENO: No, I can't.

Q What is the situation now? How will it -- how is it supposed to proceed?

ATTY. GEN. RENO: I think it would be more appropriate for it to take its course and not comment on it.

Q Do you read that this is an issue for the Justice Department or more for the State Department?

ATTY. GEN. RENO: I think that perhaps all of us are involved.

Q Ms. Reno, could I ask you to outline your plans over the next few months; what you plan to do and what kind of climate you expect to find back in your home town?

ATTY. GEN. RENO: I'm looking at my scheduler and thinking how nice it will be not to have any schedule and not to have any plans. (Laughter.) But I hope to wind my way home this weekend, pick up my truck on the way, sit on my front porch and do nothing for a week except what I want to do when I want to do it. Then I'd like to kayak from Everglades City to Flamingo through the Wilderness Waterway, which ought to be a good initiative to slow one down.

Q How far is that?

ATTY GEN. RENO: It's about 120 miles. And then I'd like to figure out what I'm going to do next in terms of my professional life. And then I'd like to take off in the red truck.

Q How did you ever do with your plan to walk the C&O Canal? Did you finish it?

ATTY GEN. RENO: No. That's one of the things I want to do. I reached the point where there was a dead spot with the radio, and I didn't want to be that much out of circulation. So I've --

Q Is that about Mile 72 or Mile --

ATTY GEN. RENO: I got to about 104 miles. I've got about 80 miles to go.

Q To go back to the same case, do you feel the new team supports your action in this case?

ATTY GEN. RENO: I would not comment.

Q Have you heard from the Russians on this case?

ATTY GEN. RENO: I would not comment.

Q Russian colleagues.

ATTY GEN. RENO: I would not comment.

Q Ms. Reno, I understand the Colombians have been helpful lately with stopping the flow of heroin into this country. Can you comment at all about that and their level of cooperation lately?

ATTY GEN. RENO: I can't comment specifically with respect to heroin. I would ask Myron to review the matter and see

if there is anything that we can say publicly. But the level of cooperation with the Colombian government in terms of extradition and other efforts has just been excellent.

Q Ms. Reno, have you made a decision on whether to prosecute the former CIA director?

ATTY GEN. RENO: I would not have a comment at this time.

Q Would you have any comment at all about terrorist acts against U.S. assets in the Middle East, specifically Khobar Towers, specifically the Cole bombing? Can you update us in any way with regard to those investigations?

ATTY GEN. RENO: As you know, I really don't comment on investigations as they unfold, except I would say that in both instances we will not rest until the people responsible for it are brought to justice. And you may say, okay, you're out of here in two days. But I have a profound respect for the people in this department and their absolute commitment not to give up till they bring the people responsible to justice.

Q And there is progress? You cannot comment specifically on the progress, but would you say that there is progress?

ATTY GEN. RENO: I would not comment one way or the other.

Q On the same subject. A Russian official, the head of the Russian security service, recently came to this town to talk, among other things, on these matters. Later the Russians released a brief statement saying that an issue of the Russian cooperation with the Americans in investigating the Cole incident was discussed. Can you tell us what sort of cooperation was discussed, what sort of cooperation do you expect from the Russians on that?

ATTY GEN. RENO: I'm not familiar with the specific discussions, so I couldn't comment.

Q Ms. Reno, your management style -- or your style of dealing with things -- I think is to seek consensus

on occasion, to get all points of view, to be reasonable in your approach to the things that were brought to your table. But to quote somebody close to the process, you've been "cussed at, fussed at, and beaten about the ears." How did that happen over the last eight years?

ATTY GEN. RENO: You'd have to ask the people who did it. (Laughter.)

Q Well surely you have an opinion. You're not someone who -- in my opinion -- who is abrasive or would necessarily draw that type of fire. But you have certainly been at the center of a firestorm, on and off, for the last eight years. How did that happen? Was it just the course of events? Did the partisan atmosphere in Washington take over?

ATTY GEN. RENO: I'm serious; I don't know why people say mean things when they could say the same thing in a civil way.

Q Ms. Reno, according to the guides being sent out to 5,000 law enforcement agencies -- why the need, and is there a concern within the Department about the relationships that various police departments have with law enforcement?

ATTY GEN. RENO: I'm glad you've raised that because I've wanted to address this issue today. There are many things that the men and women in this department have accomplished that I am very proud of. I know that there is still much to do, however. And today I want to use this last opportunity to highlight just one more initiative, and it's our effort to promote professionalism, integrity, and best practices in police departments.

Police officers, I think, have one of the most difficult jobs of anybody I know. They have to make legal decisions. They have to protect lives. They have to do it under extraordinarily difficult circumstances. And they've done a wonderful job in this country. Many neighborhoods are safer and better places to live as a result of the community policing of police officers who are professional and who understand their community and who have worked to build

trust and confidence with the people they serve. I've worked to encourage a style of policing that gets officers into the community and engages the neighborhood, and that involves the people in the safety issues of their community.

One of the biggest challenges, however, is how you build trust between law enforcement and the communities they serve. When the community hears about the use of excessive force or racial profiling, that trust is sometimes broken. That is why President Clinton and I brought together a host of experts, including police executives, union representatives, academic experts, and civil rights advocates, two summers ago. We discussed ways to strengthen the relationship between police officers and the communities, and ever since we've been visiting police departments to find police practices that work.

Today I'm pleased to release a report that identifies effective ways to promote police integrity and professionalism in policing. These are principles for promoting police integrity. These principles have worked in police departments across the country to build trust, to enhance police accountability, and to reduce police misconduct. They're a product of conferences, meetings, and discussions. It is a product we will be distributing, in answer to your question, to police departments across the country.

And it's built on some simple ideas:

Have officers fill out a report any time they use force in an encounter, so people can have an immediate record of just what happened. Make it easy for citizens to file complaints alleging misconduct, and allow for anonymous complaints. Develop early warning systems, so departments can identify potential problems, so there is time to intervene with counseling or training before a serious incident occurs. Emphasize training not just for the new recruits but for all members of the force.

These are just some of the many ideas contained in this document. Each department can adopt these practices and

policies as their own, and then there will be room for local innovation to build upon these principles, recognizing that no one size fits all. It is a guide to some of the best police thinking, the best police practices available.

As I have said before, policing is the human face of government that most citizens see, more so than any other face of government, and how a police officer does his duty in protecting the citizens, while building trust and giving them confidence in government, is one of the most difficult and yet most rewarding tasks there is.

And I hope that this set of principles will be useful to police departments to let them know what's working, what's not working, what is useful in this country today in building police professionalism.

Q How are you coming in your discussions with both the New York City police department and the Washington, D.C. police department? Are you close to agreement with either one?

ATTY. GEN. RENO: The discussions continue with New York City and with Washington, and I would not comment on how close we are.

Q Ms. Reno, it seems clear how these practices will help reduce complaints about police misconduct. How will following these practices make police organizations better at reducing crime?

ATTY. GEN. RENO: If you have confidence in your police department, if you trust your police department and trust that police officer, you're going to be far more willing to tell that officer information he needs to solve crimes in that community. You're going to be able to work together far more effectively to prevent crimes in the first place.

I think that the trust between officer and community is absolutely essential to effective crime-fighting. But I go further: The police officer who gets to know the young men in the neighborhood and who builds trust with them

so that they can come to him and talk to him, not be afraid that he is going to immediately assume that they're responsible for a crime just because they've been in trouble before, but instead look at them and give them positive opportunities, that's going to reduce crime, because it's going to let that kid know that there's an ally there, a mentor, somebody he can look up to, he can trust, and he doesn't have the same slippery slope, if you will, that get him back into trouble.

Q Ms. Reno, how would you describe your legacy in office after eight years?

ATTY. GEN. RENO: I've stayed away from the legacy thing because I think that you need to look at it somewhat objectively. I like to go Mount Vernon, and somebody pointed out a marvelous thought from George Washington that he had penned to a friend who had asked him to write out what he thought he had contributed to the nation. He said, "If I were to write a history of what I've done, I might be reduced to tears. I prefer to drift on down the stream of life and let posterity judge my record," and I think that's what I'll do, too.

Q Ms. Reno, one of the things that's been talked about a lot this week is that the attorney general is bound by the law, regardless of his or her personal beliefs. How often did you encounter that during your tenure, and can you give any examples of when what you had to do might have conflicted with what you personally believed to be right or wrong?

ATTY. GEN. RENO: Approve the death penalty.

Q Does that mean -- I mean, that was talked about at the congressional hearings this week. How much of a problem was that for you?

ATTY GEN. RENO: That is something that I grapple with regularly. If I were in the legislature, I would vote

against the death penalty. But I have asked for it probably

more than any other person in America.

Q Can you think of any other examples of cases where your own personal feelings may have been, if not directly, at least indirectly at odds with the enforcement of various federal laws?

ATTY GEN. RENO: No, because most of the other issues were such that they were more case construction issues, where you could go either way, where people -- some of the best lawyers in the department sat at this table, and five were for one position and five were for another position, and I had to make a judgment between them, but it wasn't that the law required something.

Q Ms. Reno, have you had an opportunity to view the film "Traffic" as of yet? And are you disappointed that the Arellano Felix gang portrayed in this movie is still operating, and doing so successfully? Does that bother you?

ATTY GEN. RENO: The most precious possession I've had in the last two weeks has been time, and I haven't had time to go to the movies. (Laughter.) I want to make sure that I continue to be supportive of any effort that can properly be effected to bring those associated with the Arellano Felix organization to justice.

Q Did you watch any of the Ashcroft hearing?

ATTY GEN. RENO: I saw some glimpses of it on the news.

Q Ms. Reno, can you give us an update on where you stand -- or the department stands in terms of funding for the tobacco litigation?

ATTY GEN. RENO: I think we've worked out that issue. Let me give you the -- funding is being provided by the same sources that provided it -- as provided it last year. It will come from within the department and from the other agencies affected.

Q Can you say how that breaks down?

ATTY GEN. RENO: Last year, funding for the lawsuit came from the Justice Department's Civil Division and the Health Care Fraud and Abuse Control Program, as well as from the Departments of Defense, Veterans Affairs, and Health and Human Services.

Q Ms. Reno, back to some of the comments you made earlier. Does that mean -- or I guess how does that -- how does your position, your personal position, stand against your feeling or consideration of a possible moratorium? Do you feel like now there should be a moratorium or not?

ATTY GEN. RENO: What I think is important is that we look at each case, look at it in the context of the information that we now have available, work with the National Institute of Justice to see what other studies can be developed to ensure that in the particular case there is not an unwarranted disparity in terms of the application of factors that would cause unwarranted disparity.

Q I was just going to follow up on the death penalty. Why weren't you able to finish the racial disparity question? I mean it seems like you've really left that hanging, and with a new administration coming in, that just may -- that whole issue may die in terms of addressing the subject head-on, especially in terms of your opposition to the death penalty.

ATTY GEN. RENO: What I did early on was start keeping records so that we could make sure that we had done everything we could to see if there was any pattern and any inappropriate disparity. Early on, the people who were experts said we didn't have enough data to make any statistically sound determinations, and so we waited some time, having begun to collect this information after the passage of the Anti-terrorism and Death Penalty Act.

When we collected the information, it was voluminous information, and we tried to put it in the best, most useful form we could. As we did so, it became clear that there was additional information that was needed from the U.S. attorneys, and so time was given to them to collect that

information.

We now have that information, and we're trying to work with researchers and other individuals who might be interested in doing something like this, to review it and to determine what could be done to analyze the various pieces of information, see what additional information is necessary, and make some informed judgments.

Q And it's NIJ that is now thinking of that, rather than the deputy's job?

ATTY GEN. RENO: All of us have been looking at it. The National Institute of Justice is one of the research arms of the Department of Justice that is more skilled in terms of identifying those who are capable of responding to a request for proposals and who can give us advice on what they would need to properly effect a good analysis of the data.

Q (Off mike) -- more than anybody in the department. Is it your gut feeling that there is a real problem? I mean, you've said in the past that you were -- I think your words were "sorely troubled" by the numbers. But do you really feel there is a racial disparity problem and that it's much more than just something that happens?

ATTY GEN. RENO: What -- my concern -- and I've voiced it on so many occasions -- is that there is a disparity that starts early on. The child who is born in a situation where he never knows his father, and his mother is never there, doesn't have the same level playing field as a kid born with a loving family, in circumstances that give him equal opportunity. That's affected when two kids, 12 years old, each commit somewhat the same crime, and the police stop them. There's nobody to take the one child home to. There's a loving family who immediately responds to the scene and tells the officer they will make sure that he is properly supervised. And the second child goes home while this first one goes down to central intake.

The next level that you often see the problem develop is when they decide whether there will -- the child will

bedetained. We have in many states what's called home detention, which permits the child to be at the home, leavingonly to go to school, and under strict supervision. If there's no one at home, you can't send the child to homedetention, and so, again, the playing field is not level.

I think it is vitally important that we level that playing field in every way that we can, and that's the reason I havefocused on early intervention, on early support for children and families at risk, to try to give the child the firmfoundation with which to grow.

I think, as a result of some of these disparities, you see a disproportionate number of black victims and blackdefendants. And I would like to do everything I can, and that's one of the things I'm going to continue to try to do, isto focus on children and family through community initiatives, through teaching, through any work that I can pursuethat will give us some insight into how we can level the playing field, provide equal opportunity, and rebuildcommunities.

Q Ms. Reno, about eight years ago when you came into this office you talked about children out there -- outthere, I mean, not in the courtyard. (Scattered laughter.) And at the time when you said those words, policymakersin Washington were not exactly focused on children.

Do you think, as a result of your eight years of talking about this, that there's been a gradual coming around toyour view? Do you see it in congressional legislation? Do you see it in the other agencies in terms of earlyintervention as a crime prevention tool?

ATTY GEN. RENO: I don't give myself the credit. I think an awful lot of people have been talking before I gothere, after I got here, about the issue. One of your -- one of the people sitting around this table said, "Maybe can letJanet Reno scout it and see if it's the way to go and maybe others will follow."

Well, I think we all scouted it and we all clearly determined that it was the way to go, and that the most important thing we can do in terms of fighting crime is to prevent it. And the most important way to prevent it is to make sure we have children who are strong and healthy, who have equal opportunity at education and equal opportunity for decent housing; for proper medical care. And we've come a long way.

This president has been a president whose first legislation signed was the Family and Medical Leave Act, which has been instrumental in this effort. What he and Secretary Shalala have done in terms of children's health care, in terms of expanding Head Start and improving Head Start, has been magnificent. I think we are light years ahead of where we were. And I've just been one of the many voices.

Q Do you have some things that you wanted to ask us about? (Scattered laughter.)

ATTY GEN. RENO: Well, I wasn't going to do that until you all finished asking me questions because I never like to take advantage of your time. (Laughter.)

Q Thank you.

Q Another question about your tenure here. You've always been very diplomatic in talking about your friends on Capitol Hill as oversight. But I can stand over your shoulder so close that my head is between you and the paper you're trying to read.

Were there times, do you think, that congressional oversight is a little over-muscular? Hearings are called before the smoke is cleared, often. Were there ever times when you felt that the hot breath of congressional oversight was getting to the point of interference?

ATTY. GEN. RENO: First, let me again reiterate, because I think it's so important, Chairman Hatch was never-- he was fiercely partisan at times, and he would show what polls said and things like that, but he was always such a

gentleman and so very gracious about it. And he would look at me at the end of these hearings after I told him that I thought the oversight hearing had been a good and thoughtful process -- and in those early days, they all were -- and he said, "I just don't understand." I said, "It's like these press availabilities. We have a responsibility to respond, to try to answer your questions, to answer Congress's questions. We have got to be independent. We can't let Congress be telling us how, or highlighting what it wants done with a specific prosecution. I think that's an interference between the branches of government."

But people of good will can work out so many issues, and I was so touched last Thursday that Attorneys General Thornburgh and Barr, my two immediate predecessors, were here in the building, and we were able to remind this institution that it's an institution that transcends parties; that the Weed and Seed Program is a Republican initiative started under President Bush's administration; that Mr. Thornburgh did so much in building international networks; that Mr. Barr kicked off Weed and Seed.

It's an institution that has much -- I think could do a better job of being a little bit more open, but at the same time, we shouldn't have interference with prosecutions that can be accused of being political.

Q You mentioned in your speech to employees that you urged them to be more open. Doesn't the direction for that come from the top? How can they be more open if you don't tell them precisely and specifically where and how and why?

ATTY. GEN. RENO: One comes to respect the traditions of the department, but, as I have explained to them and to you, I come from a different tradition -- one in a state that had a sunshine law that made most public hearings open and subject to transcripts; which made most public records immediately available to people without long backlogs so that it took some time to get them.

I think when the American people have the information, they can use it to judge their government.

Now, one of the issues that arises is the privacy issue, but too often there's a headline that says, "So and So Being Investigated By the Feds; Subpoenas Issued," and nobody ever hears about what happens to the case and the fact that the man was cleared. And I think we've got to continue to try to effect a balance between privacy and openness that permits the American people to be informed while at the same time protecting basic privacy rights.

It's one of the balancing lines of the Constitution and one of our challenges.

Q Ms. Reno, as a foreign reporter, I'm a rare guest here. I did want to congratulate you on this openness, on holding these meetings, and maybe ask you to urge your successor to do the same. (Laughter.) And --

ATTY GEN. RENO: Well, as you see, some of the frustration, though, in these open meetings is my "No comments."

Q It is all right. I understand that. (Laughter.) And I'm sorry to return all the time to the same thing, which is the biggest story of the day in my country. Have you been aware that this was about to happen, the arrest of this official, or were you made aware of this after the fact?

ATTY GEN. RENO: I was made aware after the fact.

Q And is there a possibility of bail? Does the law provide the possibility of bail with this situation?

ATTY GEN. RENO: I will not comment.

Q I don't have any questions on Russia, but I would like to ask you another question on the death penalty, if I may, please. Your thoughts on Timothy McVeigh. Now that it becomes fairly likely that he may be the first person executed in the federal system in a long time, and

since you prosecuted the case and approved the death penalty and so forth, can you say anything at all about what your thoughts are? Obviously, this case has nothing -- would have nothing to do with racial disparity and the other things that we were talking about, but just in terms of your thoughts or feelings about the Timothy McVeigh pending execution and the tragedy of Oklahoma City.

ATTY GEN. RENO: I will not comment on Timothy McVeigh because that is a matter that is still pending. I will comment on the tragedy of Oklahoma City. The people of that city are heroes and heroines to me.

The people who assisted them, the rescue workers and others who came from around the country are heroes and heroines.

Q Miss Reno?

ATTY GEN. RENO: I'm --

Q I thought you were finished. I'm sorry.

ATTY GEN. RENO: No. You looked at that horrible scene -- we came to that city the Sunday after for a memorial service -- and you saw people that were hurt both physically and emotionally. But you saw a courage and a strength that I have continued to see every time I go to that city, either for the dedication or for the ground-breaking of the memorial; when I go to the office, the U.S. Attorney's Office, when I see people who are survivors, when I hear from them by letter, when I meet the little sister of a child who was killed. And it's that bravery, that spirit, that strength that I think has influenced all who've come in contact with the survivors and those that coped with that tragedy. And I think we owe them so much.

Q Ms. Reno, looking back on your tenure, would you have done anything differently?

ATTY GEN. RENO: Yes. (Laughter.)

Q What comes to mind?

ATTY GEN. RENO: I would have not done what I did at Waco and tried to figure out some other way to do it. And one of the tragedies of Waco is we will never know what the right answer was because he could have done the same thing in two weeks after with no provocation and we would have been blamed for not doing something.

Q As you look back over your tenure, could you take us maybe to the moment that was most difficult for you and what went through your mind, and then perhaps to the moment where you felt best about the job.

ATTY GEN. RENO: The most difficult moment was Waco, and I've expressed just now what I was thinking.

The best moments -- there's not one best moment. There have just been so many great moments with people in the Department of Justice, with citizens that I've met across this country, with brave people I've met around the world who are fighting so hard for democracy.

I'd just like to speak to young people for a minute and say consider public service. I know that sometimes you think, why should I get involved in public service when you only get criticized for it? But to defend democracy is sometimes not an easy task. Our ancestors went to war on at least two occasions to defend democracy around the world and to defend civilization as we know it. And they gave their lives.

To stand up for the rule of law, to stand up for a government of the people, to defend it, to take criticism for it is an opportunity that you shouldn't pass up. To help people, to make a difference, to make this a better country is the most rewarding calling that you can pursue. And I encourage all young people to pursue it at some point in their life, for I think they will find it very, very rewarding.

Q Ms. Reno, can I ask, do you feel a need to repair relations back home because of some hard feelings over the Elian Gonzalez case?

ATTY GEN. RENO: I think one of the things that has frustrated me is that I haven't been home to talk to people and to let them know why I did things. Somebody asked a friend of mine, "Did she give this any thought?" And I said -- (laughter) -- "Give it any thought? That's all I thought about!" And so I think, no matter how much the media covered it, there are still things that cannot come out unless you sit down and talk with people whom you have known and let them know just what was involved in the process.

Q Ms. Reno, some of the conservatives who are coming in -- who have voted for President Bush and who support John Ashcroft are very concerned about the power of the government, particularly the FBI; worried about removing wire taps, worried about encryption, worried about snooping on people on the Internet.

There are measures that you and the FBI have supported to, what is called, maintain the status quo as far as surveillance. Do you have any thoughts on how you might reassure those citizens who believe that the investigative agencies have too much power to intrude in citizens' lives?

ATTY GEN. RENO: Well, to put it bluntly, I think those people would rather be reassured by Louis Freeh than by Janet Reno, and have more confidence in what Louis Freeh tells them. So I understand he's going to be staying on for a little bit and I hope that he might be able to reassure them.

Q How little bit?

ATTY GEN. RENO: You'd have to ask him.

Q (Laughs.)

Q We've seen you be cussed at and fussed at, but we've also seen you be cheered. When you were giving your farewell address a week ago, it was really quite an extraordinary outpouring of support for you. You may not even know how

many hundreds of people couldn't get into the Great Hall and that they set up monitors in the hallways, and there was too many people to do that, so they set up overflow rooms, and there were too many people to get into those rooms. And it was really -- it seemed to be an incredible statement by the rank and file, the secretaries and so forth, throughout this building, of great appreciation for you. And at the risk of flattering you, what were your thoughts about this, or do you even -- did you even know how many people tried to turn out for your farewell?

ATTY GEN. RENO: Yes, I was told, and -- (pauses) -- there are moments that you never forget, and that will be one. The hugs, the smiles, the tears, the letters, the whimsical cards indicates something to me: that people want to do their best. They want to contribute. They want to make a difference.

I haven't made the difference in this department; it's the people who know the law in their area of speciality. It's the support staff, who goes that extra mile to find something that's just so important and piece of litigation. It's somebody that goes that extra step to resolve a case through an effective settlement.

Anything that I've done in this department has been because of the people in the department. And when you trust people, when you believe in them, when you support them, they do wonderful things. And I have just been around some really great and magnificent people in these eight years. It has been one of the great privileges that any lawyer could have, any person could have.

I'm really looking forward to going home, and I've told them, "Come on down and sit on the front porch."

People ask me if I'm going to miss this job. Most of all I'm going to miss the people. The American people are so extraordinarily fortunate to have so many absolutely wonderfully dedicated people. And they're not yes people. They argue with me, and they fuss at me -- secretaries and lawyers. (Soft laughter.) But they argue and fuss in

such a nice way. (Soft laughter.)

Q Thank you.

Q Thank you very much --

ATTY. GEN. RENO: Can I ask you a question now?

(Laughter.)

Q Not on the record. (Laughter.)

Q And no whining! (Laughter.)

ATTY. GEN. RENO: And nothing pending. (Laughter.)

Q Your turn.

ATTY. GEN. RENO: No, I think you all probably have another place to go, so -- time marches on. Let me just tell you, I mentioned it the last time, but as you know, I come from a family of journalists, and I have never seen the media so -- set such an example as I have, for the people who are regularly around this table and in this room, for good, hard questioning, for giving me no quarter, for not forgetting a thing I ever said, ever -- (laughter) -- and for really making sure that the First Amendment was an instrument of truth and that America had a better opportunity to decide the truth in the marketplace of good ideas. Thank you all so very much. I'm going to miss you.

Q Me, too. (Cross talk.)

Q Ms. Reno, can we --

Q We'll find you next Thursday. (Laughter.)

Q We'll be on your porch.

Q Can we communicate with you? By the Internet or by what way?

ATTY. GEN. RENO: I'm going to get set up on the Internet so you can do that, and I'll let you know.

Q Okay.

ATTY. GEN. RENO: Thank you.

Q God bless.

STAFF (?): (Off mike.)

ATTY. GEN. RENO: Oh -- I can announce it.

Q The acting AG?

ATTY. GEN. RENO: The acting attorney general, as of noon Saturday, will be Eric Holder, my deputy attorneygeneral, and I am delighted.

Q Oh! Okay.

END.