

FACE THE NATION (CBS)

Guests: Labor Secretary Robert Reich, Sen. Phil Gramm (R-Texas), Bill Kristol, former chief of staff for former vice president Dan Quayle, and Chris Matthews, bureau chief for the San Francisco Examiner

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MR. SCHIEFFER: Today on "Face the Nation," a split decision in the Rodney King civil rights trial--two officers guilty, two acquitted. And the city remains calm. Is it finally over? We'll talk about the outcome of the trial and its implications with the attorney general, Janet Reno, and the new head of the NAACP, Reverend Benjamin Chavis. Then we'll look at the rest of the week's news with conservative strategist Bill Kristol, and Chris Mathews, Washington bureau chief of the San Francisco Examiner.

ANNOUNCER: "Face the Nation" with Chief Washington Correspondent Bob Schieffer. And now from CBS News in Washington, Bob Schieffer.

MR. SCHIEFFER: And welcome again to the broadcast, and welcome as well to the new attorney general, Janet Reno. You have said that you do not see a place for generals in the law, so you prefer to be called Ms. Reno rather than General Reno.

Let me start with this question, Ms. Reno. You said yesterday that you believe that justice prevailed in Los Angeles, and the president echoed that statement. He also said it is time to renew efforts to fight crime. He repeated a campaign call for putting 100,000 police, new police, on the streets.

Yet when his budget went to the Congress last week, I think, if I understood it correctly, it budgeted only \$50 million for community projects, for police grants. That would amount to only 3,000 police. Even with future funding increases and the \$25 million in police scholarships that's being talked about, that didn't come anywhere close to 100,000 new police on the streets. Isn't that raising false hopes?

ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO: I want to do everything I can to make sure that false hopes aren't raised, that we get police officers to the streets of America where the problems are. In every neighborhood of America, that's where the problem is. As I came in here today, someone was just telling me that police had finally identified the person who'd broken into her house. Each one of us is touched one way or another in our communities, and that's where police need to be.

I think it's a matter of allocation, I think it's a matter of dollars, it's a complicated problem. But I'm going to do my best to see that the limited resources of this nation in federal, state, and local governments are focused at least as much on that problem as any other, because I think that's where Americans are most concerned.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Well, can you clear up for us--because, frankly, I'm confused. When the president talks about 100,000 police, if I understand it it costs about \$50,000 a year to put a policeman on the street, salary plus training and so forth. That's a five-billion-dollar commitment. Is he talking about asking for five billion dollars more than is already in the budget to put 100,000 police on the street?

ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO: I don't think he's ever indicated that he would put 100,000 police offices on the streets immediately. But what we've got to do is--

MR. SCHIEFFER: If I may just interrupt, he said just yesterday it's time to put 100,000 police on the streets. That's the first time he's said that since the campaign.

ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO: You are not going to put 100,000 police officers on the streets overnight and do the right job. To put them on the streets, to see that they're properly trained, you have to do it in an orderly way over a period of time. I think that's one of the things that the federal government has done in the past is, say, here's a bundle of money, go do something with it. That's not the way to do it. The way to do it is to work with state and local governments in a real partnership to see that we work together to use our limited resources, to get police officers on the streets.

Now, a question you might also validly ask is, okay, you get them on the streets and they arrest people, what in the world are you going to do with them? I use as an example of what police officers on the streets can do to prevent crime an officer in Miami, Officer Ron Took, who's part of a team. He helped reduce crime in the neighborhood, reduce arrests, by working with juvenile court judges and other authorities in the system to see which youngsters, which young criminals, could be brought back into the community, put into programs, worked with on a day-to-day

basis with a community team composed of a social worker, public health nurse, community organizer. And much can be done to prevent crime.

We're going to have to look at the problem of crime with good hard commonsense. We've got to understand who should be put away and put away because they're so dangerous or because they're major traffickers in the human misery of drugs. And then we've got to provide alternative sanctions that bring people back into the community as constructive people who have a chance to get back into the community without committing further crime.

MR. SCHIEFFER: I don't want to press this, but I take it from what you are saying that when the president is talking about putting 100,000 new police on the streets, you're not talking or you have no knowledge of any extra appropriations or any more money that the president is intending to ask for beyond what he's already asked for.

ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO: The president, as part of his stimulus package, has asked for significant new monies, again for police officers on the streets, but we will work through all these funding issues; we will work at how we're using resources now, where the resources are being used, and try to effect a balance that focuses on the neighborhoods of America.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Let me shift to something else. The president has said he'd sign the Brady bill, which is the waiting period for purchasing hand guns. You've said that you favor that. Are you in favor of stronger gun laws than that, Ms. Reno? Do you think the time has come to go beyond what the Brady bill does?

ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO: Well, the president has also advocated a ban on assault weapons that have no use as sporting weapons, and we certainly support that.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Would you propose anything stronger, perhaps something like Virginia has just passed, which would limit people from buying one gun a month, or something like that?

ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO: Right now we're focusing on the Brady bill, on the assault weapons, but we will always continue to explore an appropriate balance between a person's right to bear arms and the limitation on weapons that have--and the use of weapons and the purchase of weapons that have no relationship to that right in a realistic sense.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Let me ask you. Do you believe that there may be a

downside to the verdict in Los Angeles yesterday? The former police chief, Darryl Gates, says that he now fears that police will hesitate to use force even when it is justifiable. Do you agree with that?

ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO: Chief Gates underestimates the great law enforcement officers that I have come in contact with in the 15 years that I've been a prosecutor. I think the King verdict vindicates so many police officers who day in and day out are sensitive to the use of force, know when to use it, when not to use it, under the most difficult circumstances. Most of the police officers in America are sensitive, thoughtful people who care deeply about their communities and the people in their communities, and I think they're going to continue to do a great job for their people.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Some civil rights leaders believe there is a pattern in this country of racial abuse in police departments and in prisons. Do you think that's correct?

ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO: I would never judge that a pattern exists until we carefully investigate each instance, look at the evidence, look at the law, and make an informed decision based on an thorough investigation.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Let me ask you, now that Los Angeles is over, do you have full confidence in the director of the FBI, William Sessions?

ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO: Right now we are reviewing those reports that relate to Director Sessions. I have made no judgment because I want to make an informed, fair, and objective judgment, and I am trying to do, that consistent with my other duties, as soon as possible.

MR. SCHIEFFER: I believe he told one of the newspapers down in Texas that he was confident that he would be able to stay on the job after he talked to you. Have you talked to him?

ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO: I have not talked to him about that, and I have not made any judgment with respect to that.

MR. SCHIEFFER: In closing, some police are saying just putting a cop on every corner is not the solution. Do you believe it's a solution, and do you think that the heavy security precautions that were taken in Los Angeles were justified now that there has

been no violence after this trial? Do you think that's why Los Angeles remained calm?

ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO: A cop by themselves on every corner is not going to make that much difference. A cop who's trained, who understands his community, who works with his community, who reaches out and forms networks with the people delivering help and social services, who reaches out to teachers, who forms a real network and a partnership that focuses on family and children, who understands that a police officer is often on the cutting edge of reaching out and restoring people's faith in their government, faith in local government, that police officer can make all the difference in the world.

With respect to Los Angeles, again, I defer to Chief Williams. I talked with him prior to the verdict coming back. I have great confidence in him, and I want to continue to work with him in the future in terms of forming a partnership--not my telling Chief Williams how to do something or him telling me how to do something, but good discussions as to what we can do address the long-range issues of Los Angeles.

And I'd like to do the same with police around the country, and with others in the community to see how we can really form a true partnership that makes police central to it, the sensitive caring police officers who have done so much for this nation.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Ms. Reno, I know you have a busy morning. We have to leave it there. I want to thank you very much for joining us this morning. We'll be back in a minute with the new head of the NAACP--in a minute.

ANNOUNCER: This portion of "Face The Nation" is sponsored by the Archer Daniels Midland Company--ADM, supermarket to the world.

MR. SCHIEFFER: To accommodate Attorney General Reno's schedule, we taped the first part of our broadcast about a half hour ago. We're back live now, and joining us, Dr. Benjamin Chavis, the new head of the NAACP. You've been on the job a week, you spent the first five days of that week, I guess, out in Los Angeles, just back from there.

Dr. Chavis, what do you think the significance of this verdict was? What does it mean to Los Angeles? What does it mean to the nation?

DR. CHAVIS: Well, I think these verdicts are very significant. First of all, it sends a signal and a message to all law enforcement officers in the United States that racially motivated beatings of citizens will not be tolerated, is totally unacceptable. And if an officer does that, they face the possibility now of being convicted, they face the possibility

of large fines, and they face the possibility of being sent to prison themselves.

But the truth is, Bob, that we have partial justice in Los Angeles. That's how the NAACP reads this verdict. Two officers were found guilty, two were found not guilty. Keep in mind thought that 10 to 15 officers were really involved in the whole incident. The videotape shows a number of officers at one time or another. We are glad that two officers were found guilty; we are concerned that two were found not guilty. But keep in mind this is in federal court, and the issue was a violation of Rodney King's civil rights. In the state courts last year they all were acquitted.

So there's a problem, and I listened very carefully to Attorney General Reno. I agree with her in the sense that the system of justice is operating, but it's operating sort of slow. The fact of the matter is one of the reasons why we have to have civil rights statutes is because sometimes in state courts we cannot get justice, but now even in the federal courts we only got partial justice in our view. And so the NAACP, we intend to pursue a course that ensures full justice--and full justice for us is not just a verdict, it's just not locking up police officers who racially beat somebody--

MR. SCHIEFFER: If I may interrupt you, Doctor. You're not saying that the people that go to trial on civil rights have to found guilty for there to be justice.

DR. CHAVIS: Well, what I'm saying is that in a case like this, were there is a lot of evidence that shows that more than two officers were involved in a racially motivated attack, racial motivated beating on a citizen, then we are saying that full justice would have brought guilty verdicts to all four. We are saying that, yes, based on our view of the evidence, based on our being in Los Angeles, having a sense of what really was at stake there.

But also full justice for us is jobs, is employment, health care, early childhood uplift, empowerment, economic development. When we stayed in Watts, in Jordan Downs and Nicholson Gardens and Imperial Courts housing projects, we heard from the people. People, yes, were concerned about the trial but they were more concerned about getting jobs, about getting health care, about having their children not being caught up in the drug epidemic that's rampant there, and gang violence, and the truce movement is very important there.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Things are calm, things seem to be going very well there so far. The police chief said last night out there, Chief Williams, he thinks Los Angeles has turned a corner. Do you think it's over?

DR. CHAVIS: Well, I think Los Angeles turned a corner last year. I did not believe that Los Angeles was going to go up in flames

this time, and if you listen to people at the community level, the grassroots level, everyone was saying it was not going to be riots. And our concern, quite frankly, was we thought that some of the law enforcement personnel were over-preparing.

I remember this past Monday when I saw all the preparations: the National Guards preparing, SWAT teams preparing. It looked like to me they were preparing for Desert Storm. It did not happen, thank God it did not happen, and thank God--I agree with the chief that Los Angeles turned a corner, but it hasn't gone around the full block yet.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Could it still happen? I mean, what has to happen now to keep things calm?

DR. CHAVIS: Well, let me say, in Los Angeles as well as every urban center in America today in order to keep things calm, we've got to have employment, we've got to have jobs. I think what is being debated right now in Congress in terms of the Clinton economic stimulus package, which provides, in short, for jobs--particularly summer youth jobs and expansion of the urban youth corps, also jobs in the employment and expansion programs, building highways--jobs, jobs, jobs. That's what we constantly hear from Watts, that's what we constantly hear from Chicago, Miami, New York, Philadelphia, Detroit, the major cities--we need employment. And I think it's a travesty for the Republicans right now to be filibustering and trying to block something that could keep the cities cool this summer.

L.A., yes, we've gone past this trial; there's another trial coming. But if you really want to put a litmus test on whether or not L.A. will be calm this summer or whether or not the other major cities in this nation will be calm, it's whether or not we can have a delivering of some employment packages and jobs where people can go back to work and be productive.

High unemployment--sometimes in the African-American community, African-American youth unemployment is 75 percent and higher--high unemployment leads to social disintegration.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Are you suggesting that unless a stimulus package is passed that Los Angeles will not stay cool this summer?

DR. CHAVIS: I'm suggesting that unless the job package of the stimulus plan is passed quickly by the Congress, the whole urban center in America--not only Los Angeles but every major urban area--is going to face a hard time being stable this summer. We're facing major social unrest in our nation, in our opinion, if we don't get immediate relief in terms of jobs, in terms of employment, and this needs to come quickly particularly for young people in the country.

MR. SCHIEFFER: I want to ask you quickly about the trial of Reginald Denny, the white truck driver who was beaten during the riots. That trial is also coming up this summer. Those people are going on trial.

DR. CHAVIS: Yes, and we're concerned about that trial. Certainly, there's going to be new tension around that trial as people wait throughout the trial and also wait for a verdict.

But let me say no matter which way those verdicts go, I don't think those verdicts are going to trigger a riot. What is going to trigger instability in Los Angeles and other cities is whether or not people get relief.

Keep in mind, Bob, going back to 1965 when we had the Watts rebellion, that's a long time ago. There was a Macomb Commission Report, and then later there was a Kerner Commission-- --you're familiar with the Kerner Commission Report--then there was the Christopher Commission Report. All these studies have shown that L.A. needs long-term substantive relief in employment, education, health care, child development.

The Clinton economic stimulus plan does not solve all the problems, but in two key areas--summer youth jobs and childhood immunization and other things that would affect children-- those things are in place. And I, for the life of me, cannot understand why we're making this a political issue on Capitol Hill right now.

So our forces are turning from Los Angeles and turning to Capitol Hill to get this package through.

MR. SCHIEFFER: All right, thank you very much, Doctor. We hope to have you again as a guest. We'll leave it there. In a moment, our roundtable.

(Announcements)

MR. SCHIEFFER: And with us now, a familiar face during the Bush administration, Bill Kristol, a conservative strategist, former chief of staff for Vice President Quayle, and Chris Matthews, the bureau chief of the San Francisco Examiner, to kind of kick around some of the news of the week. Let's start off with L.A. What's the lesson of L.A. here? What does it all mean, Chris?

MR. MATTHEWS: Well, I think it was very interesting when we had the riot last year that the reactions from the whole country wasn't just more cops, it was--well, of course, more cops, but it was also there must be something wrong economically out there, people do need jobs--I mean, the white community in the United States said there's a lot of poor black people out there that

need jobs. And I think the statistics still hold up. You've got a 10-percent unemployment rate in California. When you say jobs bill back East here, I think it means something out West, in California, because people are out of work. And I think that's a big part of it.

MR. SCHIEFFER: What about President Clinton saying yesterday it's time to put 100,000 police on the street? I'm not sure I quite understand this, because he said that during the campaign. Is that a bit hollow when he sends up to the Hill a bill that would pay for about 3,000 police? I don't understand, Bill, do you?

MR. KRISTOL: Well, Bob, it's easy to understand--President Clinton has pulled a Clinton, as Dan Quayle predicted he would many times during the campaign: he promises one thing and does another. When Janet Reno says she doesn't think putting a cop on every corner would make a real dent in the crime problem, I'm kind of amazed to hear that; I think most Americans think a lot more cops and a lot more prison capacity, so repeat criminals don't get out of jail so fast and really spend a good, long, deserved chunk of time there would make a heck of a difference to the crime problem. It's too bad that Bill Clinton has gone back on that campaign promise. That was a key to his campaign, to be a different kind of Democrat, a Democrat who was tough on crime. But he hasn't done a thing for law enforcement in the first hundred days in office.

MR. SCHIEFFER: But that's not realistic, is it Chris? I mean, he's having trouble getting a \$16-billion stimulus package through the Senate up here. He's talking about 100,000 new police. If I understand it, at \$50,000 a cop, which is what they tell me it costs to put a cop on the street, when you add up the training and so forth plus salary, that's five billion dollars.

MR. MATTHEWS: That's the math--it's certainly true. I think the country is not crying for a jobs bill, but they're certainly not crying to bring back Dan Quayle either, to be honest about it.

MR. KRISTOL: But they are crying to put a lot of cops on the streets.

MR. MATTHEWS: The problem is that conservatives and liberals always argue about these things. The fact is that you need both, obviously. Common sense says that if people don't have an opportunity to make an honest buck, they're going to make a dishonest buck. The second thing, though, is you have to outlaw murder in this town. If you get your car outside here illegally

tomorrow morning, you're going to have a hundred-percent chance of getting a ticket out here--we're a few blocks from the White House. You're going to get a ticket, you're going to pay a \$20 fine. If your body is found out there tomorrow morning, you've had about a 50-50 chance of them not even catching a suspect. Last year we had 400 murders in this town, 200 arrests.

The bottom line is you have a pretty good chance of beating the rap on murder.

So what we had to do is we have to make murder illegal, and we're not doing it any more in these big cities. We're not putting people in jail.

MR. SCHIEFFER: So liberal Chris Matthews agrees with conservative Bill Kristol.

MR. MATTHEWS: Right, right.

MR. SCHIEFFER: The answer is more cops.

MR. MATTHEWS: The answer is more cops--stick. But also carrot. You've got to give people an opportunity. You can't just say put everybody in jail that's bad; you've got to say if you kids want summer jobs, we're going to give them to you. Now, I think in the end Bob Dole is going to buckle on this summer jobs piece of this stimulus package because how can you, going into a long, hot summer, say to kids who are out of school and out of work: no jobs this summer, kids. You've got to have summer jobs, and I think that's the weak point in the Republican position.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Well, that certainly is what Dr. Chavis is saying. How do Republicans answer that?

MR. KRISTOL: We want to create jobs; that's why we want to save the economy from Clinton's \$300-billion of job-destroying tax hikes. This stimulus package is mostly pork, it's not going to create many jobs. I agree with Chris that some part of it will get through, including the unemployment insurance extension and the summer jobs provisions. But the way jobs are ultimately created is not through government pork; it's through the private sector. And Bill Clinton is heaping greater burdens on the private sector. And I think it's not going to work.

MR. SCHIEFFER: That brings up the question of the value-added tax which was floated out this week to pay for health care. Is that viable? Is that going anywhere?

MR. KRISTOL: No, I think we're beginning to see the disintegration really of the Clinton economic plan and maybe even of his presidency here. The interesting story about the stimulus package is not the Republican--

MR. SCHIEFFER: You're writing the obit already?

MR. KRISTOL: I'm trying to, I've given him a hundred days.

MR. MATTHEWS: You guys had 12 years, and this guy's had three months.

MR. KRISTOL: I've given him a hundred days; it seems more than enough to me. The interesting story about the stimulus package is not that the Republicans are opposing it, it's that he's losing Democratic senators. He's already lost four or five; he's in serious danger of not getting--the whole package could not get through the Democrats let alone the Republicans, the Democratic support.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Can he save it, Chris?

MR. MATTHEWS: Oh, I think so. I think what he's done is he's done a very bad job of politics, which is an odd thing to say about a great politician. The people want the deficit reduced, they want lower government, less government--but they also want action. I mean, I thought Bill Clinton when he came into office, he got all those tremendous popularity numbers--it was because they saw him as the helicopter pilot coming to rescue them off the mountain. They didn't care whether he was a Republican or a Democrat, whether his wife was the co-pilot or not. They just wanted salvation, they wanted the guy to save them.

Clinton lost that edge the last couple of weeks. I think he stopped talking about growth and jobs and started talking about stuff like stimulus package, and it became pork. He should nail down the number of jobs in each one of the components of this package and say how many jobs are at stake and who's going to get them, and what parts of the country are going to get them and start fighting for those jobs, instead of making this ambiguous case for stimulus. I don't know what "stimulus" means. What it sounds like to me is more spending.

MR. SCHIEFFER: All right, here's something I bet both of you understand, and a lot of people are talking about. He had gay leaders from around the country, leaders of various gay organizations, into the White House this week. Good idea, Chris? In about 20 seconds.

MR. MATTHEWS: Great idea. I think that they're citizens, they should be treated as citizens with the rights of citizens--no special rights. I think they should be treated with the dignity of American citizens and I think it was very important to have them in as a community.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Good politics, Bill?

MR. KRISTOL: Who knows if it's good politics or not?

MR. SCHIEFFER: A good idea?

MR. MATTHEWS: It's the right thing to do.

MR. KRISTOL: No--no, it's not the right thing to do.

MR. MATTHEWS: Of course it is.

MR. KRISTOL: Special rights for homosexuals, treating homosexuals as a group the way we treat blacks as a group is ridiculous, is not supported by the American people; it would really be bad for the country, and I think he's going to buckle on it, he'll waffle. He'll end up antagonizing the homosexual rights advocates and antagonizing a lot of the American people.

MR. SCHIEFFER: I have to give you the last word because our time is up. We are out of time. Thanks to both of you. That's it for this week. Look for the latest on the Los Angeles situation tonight on the CBS Sunday evening news. Deborah Norville will be sitting in for Connie Chung.

Thanks for joining us, see you next week on "Face the Nation."

(Announcements)

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