

ATTORNEY GENERAL JANET RENO ADDRESS TO A CEREMONY RECOGNIZING
JUSTICE DEPARTMENT EMPLOYEE VOLUNTEERS

Time: 2 p.m.

Location: Justice Department, 10th Street and Pennsylvania
Avenue NW, Great Hall

April 23, 1993

The editor of the report is Steve Ginsburg. Tim Ahmann, Eric Beech, Melissa Bland, Peter Ramjug, Paul Schomer and Willie Dunham assisted in editing this report.

This transcript is provided by News Transcripts, Inc.

(The following Q&A exchanges with press after her remarks were recorded)...

Q: Ms. Reno, could we shift gears for just a second? Can we just ask you a question about Waco?

ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO: No, you can wait until after I'm (inaudible).

Q: (Inaudible)

ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO: We're finalizing that today.

Q: When do you think we might know?

ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO: I'm not sure whether we'll be able to announce it today or the first part of next week.

Q: How about any more announcements on, you know, criminal division chief, things like that?

ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO: Obviously, I'm trying to get to that as soon as possible, consistent with making sure that Waco is thoroughly reviewed.

Q: There was a Waco TV station report that you and Governor Ann Richards got into a little telephone squabble over jurisdiction. Is that correct?

ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO: No. I don't know anything about it.

Q: Ms. Reno, the FBI says there's no new evidence--there was no new evidence that children were abused. Were you misled by the FBI?

ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO: No.

Q: What was your basis for believing there was continuing abuse of children?

ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO: The information that was furnished by the FBI.

Q: Well, are you distressed that now they're sort of backing off from that?

ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO: I don't think they're backing off on it. Based on the information that the psychologists furnished, they felt that the abuse was ongoing.

Q: Okay, but I understood from Carl Stern that you were told that somebody who recently came out of the compound had indicated a belief that the children were still being beaten, and that's what you were told.

ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO: Our concern was that we didn't--without seeing the children, we could not know, and based on the information that the FBI had developed, considering the past history of abuse and the continuing concern by the behavioral experts, that it was continuing.

Q: Well, how about--most of the kids that came out early on, I don't know how many there were, a dozen, the reports we got were that they seemed to be very well cared for, no particular psychological or any other kinds of problems. Has that changed? I mean, have--

ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO: Not to my knowledge in terms of the kids that came out.

Q: Okay, well, then, given that, didn't that sort of take away from some of the psychological--

ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO: Those are the points that we considered very carefully in trying to make a judgment as to what would be best.

Q: The inconsistencies in the last day or so between Justice Department people saying there were bullets in the heads of bodies down there and--

ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO: I have not heard that from a Justice Department person so I can't comment. We're just trying to make sure that anything we say is as correct as possible.

Q: Since the Texas authorities were saying one thing, the state and local people, and Justice Department people, like Carl Stern, for example, were saying something entirely different.

ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO: You would have to check with Carl to see what his source of information was, but I would not comment until I was absolutely clear, because we're not at the scene and with all that has happened, it's very important that it be done very carefully to make sure that--

Q: Yeah. What's your current feeling about whether this was a mass suicide, whether people were kept in against their will? What's your feeling based on what you've--

ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO: Again, we're going to try to review it all to come up with the best possible information we can to present the clearest picture possible.

Q: Is there a chance that the survivors' allegations that the fire was started accidentally by the use of tanks knocking over lanterns. Could that possibly be correct?

ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO: No, I don't think so.

Q: Do you have any evidence to indicate that they did cause the fire, and if so, what is it?

ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO: Again, what we're trying to do is collect all the evidence so that it can be presented in the most accurate manner possible.

Q: Thank you.

ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO: Thank you all.

The Reuter Transcript Report
Attorney General Reno/Volunteers
April 23, 1993
REUTER