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PRESIDENTIAL CLASSROOM 1993
ATTORNEY GENERAL JANET RENO

Thursday, June 24, 1993
12:10 p.m.

Omni Shoreham Hotel
Palladium Room
2500 Calvert Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C.

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1 SEMINAR PROCEEDINGS

2 VOICE: Well, that was nice. Thanks. This
3 seminar is a real important one for all of you. It is
4 part of Presidential Classroom's curriculum. It is an
5 important seminar on an important part of this government.

6 Ms. Reno is going to be here momentarily, I
7 would say within the next 7 minutes.

8 One of the best parts of my job at Presidential
9 Classroom is working with just a terrific board of
10 directors. These are people who have spent 24 years, in
11 some cases, volunteering their time on behalf of the
12 students at Presidential Classroom.

13 The gentleman who will be introducing the
14 Attorney General is a member of that board of directors.
15 He is also one of the founders of Presidential Classroom.
16 His name is John Sims. He is here with us this afternoon.

17 And what we are going to do here until the
18 Attorney General arrives is have John come up here and
19 talk a little bit about his association with Presidential
20 Classroom, as well as the history of the organization.

21 He is an attorney. He is with the firm of Sims,
22 Walker and Steinfeld. Ladies and gentlemen, please join
23 me in welcoming John Sims, a member of the board of
24 directors of Presidential Classroom.

25 (Applause.)

1 MR. SIMS: Thank you, Nala. Let's see, the
2 instructions were to speak into the microphone, I believe.
3 Can everyone hear me? Good.

4 As Nala says, I am very fortunate in the fact
5 that I happen to be one of the co-founders of Presidential
6 Classroom and have served on its board since its inception
7 in 1968. And let me say we have a terrific board. They
8 are all volunteers, they are hard working, and of interest
9 to you is the fact that four of our board members are
10 graduates of the program. So, as I look out on this
11 group, hopefully one or more of you may join our board at
12 some future date.

13 You may wonder how a program like this got
14 started. And, quite honestly, I oftentimes wonder myself
15 because I was approached and asked if I would be one of
16 the founders. The history is that the idea for
17 Presidential Classroom started during the Kennedy
18 administration. It was kicked around among the White
19 House staff for quite some time. It was still being
20 kicked about at the time of the assassination of President
21 Kennedy.

22 Then, President Johnson talked about it with his
23 staff for quite a while. Finally, it was decided that it
24 would not be a program run by the White House, but that it
25 should be a program run by individuals as a not-for-profit

1 corporation. And that was the point at which I entered
2 the scene, along with some other people.

3 And since then, we have had many, many classes.
4 We have put many students through here, some 65,000 or
5 70,000 of you in those intervening years. We think it has
6 been a good experience for you. We hope it has. It has
7 certainly been a rewarding experience for me, and I am
8 certain for the other members on the board, otherwise,
9 they would not devote the amount of time that they do to
10 it.

11 Let me say that we have one board member from
12 Casper, Wyoming who is an orthopaedic surgeon, a graduate
13 of the program. Another board member who practices law in
14 New York City, is another graduate of the program.
15 Another who is a graduate of the program is director of
16 marketing for AT&T in the Washington area, and another who
17 is director of human relations for a large corporation in
18 Florida. Those are the four graduates of the program that
19 serve on the board, and then there are others. There are
20 a total of 13 and there are 9 other directors.

21 It has not been without a lot of work on the
22 part of the board members, and a lot of work on the part
23 of our staff. I know that you recognize that we have many
24 volunteers in the program, and without them the program
25 could not be the success that it is.

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1 I wish that you would join me, since we have
2 little bit of time, join me in showing your appreciation
3 for their efforts on your behalf this week.

4 (Applause.)

5 MR. SIMS: Now, in order to make the maximum
6 time available to our speaker, I am going to do something
7 that is unusual, and that is to go ahead and make
8 introductory remarks so when she gets here all I will say
9 is, please welcome our speaker. Well, I will say please
10 welcome the Attorney General of the United States, the
11 Honorable Janet Reno.

12 But it is your program, and I want to maximize
13 that amount of time so that you will have time to ask your
14 questions.

15 As you have read in your daily, our speaker is a
16 native of Florida. She has spent most of her life and
17 professional career in Florida. She graduated from
18 Cornell University with a degree in chemistry, following
19 which she went to Harvard Law School and earned her LLB,
20 after which she returned to Florida and, for the most
21 part, has been engaged in public service; that is to say,
22 working for various and sundry government units in the
23 legal field.

24 She is the recipient of many awards and
25 recognitions -- and I am told we have 1 minute. It is

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1 terrible to have to get up here and back fill, you know,
2 unexpectedly, because all I was told was I was just going
3 to get up here and introduce the speaker.

4 But I think we are singularly fortunate in
5 having the Attorney General take time out of her busy
6 schedule to come and speak with you today. And I am sure
7 that she will have some very interesting remarks because
8 she has had a most interesting career, and she enters her
9 office at a very interesting time, as I am sure all of you
10 are aware.

11 I think our speaker is on the way, and that
12 being the case, would you join me in welcoming --

13 (Applause.)

14 MR. SIMS: As I have said, in order to save
15 time, I have already given the bio. I apologize for that,
16 but we want to save time.

17 And it is my honor and privilege to introduce
18 the Attorney General of the United States, the Honorable
19 Janet Reno.

20 (Applause.)

21 GENERAL RENO: I am delighted to be here, and I
22 hope that you will be prepared to ask me the tough
23 questions, because I have found students have asked me
24 better questions than anybody else in these last 3 months,
25 and the toughest ones, too.

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1 (Applause.)

2 GENERAL RENO: These last 3 months have been so
3 incredibly intense for me because they have brought back
4 to me so many of the feelings I had about 40 years ago, as
5 I sat where you are sitting, wondering what the future
6 would bring, how I would be involved in the future. And
7 it is so wonderful to see so many young people caring so
8 much about government, about public service, about what
9 should be done in America.

10 I would like to address the issues of criminal
11 justice and the justice system in America, of how we
12 achieve justice for all Americans, which I think has to be
13 our ultimate goal.

14 I look at the problem of crime, I look at drugs,
15 and I am convinced that if we work together, if we talk
16 together, if we make crime and the issues involved in
17 crime and drugs a nonpartisan issue that produces good
18 discussion where we evaluate what works and what does not
19 work, we can make a difference.

20 In that regard, I think that we should approach
21 sentencing at the end of the line from the point of view
22 of who should go to prison for long periods of time. The
23 career criminals, the dangerous offenders, the murderers,
24 the repeat offenders who prey on human life I think should
25 be put away and kept away. There is no excuse for that.

1 (Applause.)

2 GENERAL RENO: But then you have got to figure
3 out how you pay for it, because prisons cost money. I
4 think the American people are willing to pay for
5 sufficient prisons to house the career criminals and the
6 truly dangerous offenders.

7 But then you have to look at the fact that a lot
8 of other people are going to prison, and the question
9 becomes how are we going to afford it?

10 Many of you come from States like I do. I came
11 from Florida where we had developed sentencing guidelines,
12 we had minimum mandatory sentences, but we did not put the
13 dollars with those sentences. And so by the time we left,
14 I left, there were not enough prison cells to house people
15 for the length of time the judges were sentencing them.

16 People were being prematurely released from
17 prison at 20 to 30 percent of their sentence, making a
18 mockery of what law enforcement officers, judges, and
19 prosecutors were doing in trying to achieve justice.

20 How do you answer that? Where do we get the
21 money for the prisons?

22 I think we also have to recognize that many of
23 the people who go to prison are coming out sooner rather
24 than later. Let me give you a typical example of what
25 happens.

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1 Somebody will be sentenced to 3 years for a
2 burglary committed to get cash to sustain their drug
3 habit. They have got a terrible drug problem. They are
4 sentenced to 3 years in prison. They do not get drug
5 treatment. They are dumped right back out on the streets
6 without job training or placement.

7 They return to where they started in the first
8 place. And guess what they are going to be doing a day
9 after they get out of prison -- starting all over again.
10 That does not make sense. That is a waste of tax payers'
11 dollars, it is a waste of police effort and court effort.

12 And I propose that we look at these people that
13 we know have a problem and that we know are coming back to
14 the community and approach it from a carrot and stick
15 approach that says, look, you have got your choice. You
16 can spend 3 years in prison or you can face a certain,
17 short, specific punishment and then you can work your way
18 out of prison by agreeing to drug treatment, by moving
19 into nonsecure facilities, moving into day treatment,
20 working with us in job training and placement, moving back
21 to the community as a law-abiding citizen, and permitting
22 us to check your activities by random drug testing as you
23 go.

24 Now, if you mess up on the way, we will put you
25 back in prison until you understand that we mean what we

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1 say. But as you gradually come back into the community we
2 will support you each step of the way if you abide by the
3 rules of the game. It makes far better sense than putting
4 people into prison and having them come out, only to
5 participate in a revolving door.

6 But we have got to talk sense in terms of the
7 dollars involved, what is necessary. It costs a lot less
8 to do that than it does to send people to prison for long
9 periods of time.

10 We have got to focus on family violence. When I
11 first took office as a prosecutor in Dade County, I did a
12 study of who had been killed in our county in the previous
13 25 years. Family violence was one of the great causes of
14 homicide -- husband and wife, ex-spouse, boyfriend,
15 girlfriend. And I found that people did not take domestic
16 violence too seriously.

17 We formed a program to focus on it, because I
18 have the theory that if a child sees his father beat his
19 mother he comes to accept violence as a way of life. And
20 one of the first places that we can start to focus on
21 violence is in the home, saying that violence against the
22 people we love is unacceptable and intolerable, and we can
23 do something about it in terms of intervening.

24 Some people say, but I do not want to see a
25 family member go to jail. Oftentimes, jail may not be the

1 appropriate answer. There may be an alcohol problem.
2 There may be a problem that can be solved by counseling.
3 But working together, we can solve the problem.

4 I think it is imperative that we put far more
5 resources into our juvenile justice system. It makes no
6 sense to see a child, having committed a serious crime
7 with serious family difficulties at home, sent off to a
8 training school for 6 months and reintegrated into the
9 community without more, without job training and
10 placement, without followup in the community. That is a
11 waste of dollars. It is a waste of young human life.

12 But I suggest to you that drugs, the spiraling
13 youth crime, youth violence that we are seeing, teen
14 pregnancy, youth gangs, the great number of children and
15 youth that we see coming into the ranks of the homeless,
16 the dropouts, are all symptoms of a deeper problem in
17 society that we have got to address. And that is that for
18 too long, too often in the last 30 years America has
19 forgotten and neglected its children.

20 21 percent of the children in America live in
21 poverty, a far greater percentage than any other age
22 group. That is our future, and yet that is most
23 disadvantaged age group in America. We look at the
24 figures in our rape treatment center in Miami. Over 50
25 percent of the people seen at the rape treatment center

1 are youth or children. Something is terribly wrong.

2 We look at the number of families that have just
3 disintegrated around children, and we look at children
4 struggling to grow as strong and healthy human beings
5 against the most adverse circumstances.

6 I reached a conclusion as a prosecutor, and I
7 have the feeling 10 times over now that I am Attorney
8 General and have watched the problems throughout this
9 Nation, that unless we make an investment in children we
10 will not have enough prison cells 18 years from now to
11 house children born today to crack involved mothers, or
12 born today to mothers who neglect their children.

13 Unless we invest in children today, we will not
14 have a work force within 10 or 15 years that can fill the
15 jobs to maintain America as a first rate nation. We have
16 not only to punish people at the end of the line, not only
17 to punish people when they commit serious crime, we have
18 got to make an investment in our future up front.

19 I think we need to develop a national agenda for
20 children that begins with the first point, that you do not
21 have children until you are old enough, wise enough, and
22 financially able enough to take care of them.

23 (Applause.)

24 GENERAL RENO: I did child support enforcement
25 in Dade County and I got so good at it that they wrote a

1 rap song about it, and it became the top on the charts of
2 the rap songs about 4 years ago. And kids got to
3 understand it, and they share your feeling about that. We
4 have got to focus on teen pregnancy.

5 We can reduce it by giving people an opportunity
6 to go forward, to have afternoon and evening recreational
7 programs, to have alternative programs that can provide
8 supervision, structure, and opportunity to advance in the
9 particular interest that a young person has. We can do so
10 much.

11 We can focus on the young men as well as the
12 young women. It is wonderful to see a young and caring
13 father, who cares about his child and wants to do what is
14 right by his child. But first things first. We have got
15 to make sure that our parents are capable of taking care
16 of their children, and that will be one of the first steps
17 forward towards getting our children off on the right
18 track.

19 Secondly, we have got to make sure that every
20 child in America's pregnant mother has prenatal care.
21 Now, you say what in the world is the Attorney General
22 talking to a young people about prenatal care for? I wish
23 I had known as much about it at your age. I have only
24 learned about it in the last 10 years as the doctors have
25 told me about child development and the impact we can have

1 on the future of one person's life by an appropriate
2 investment in a healthy mother.

3 We can say if you are not interested in children
4 for children's sake, if you are not interested in the
5 future of America but only interested in your dollars that
6 you are going to pay as tax payers, for every dollar spent
7 for prenatal care you can save \$3 within 3 years for
8 health care costs related to low birth weights caused by
9 lack of prenatal care. It is only making sense.

10 Let us look at the ages of 0 to 3. What the
11 child development experts have taught me in the last 10
12 years is that that is the most formative time in person's
13 life. Think about it for a moment. 50 percent of all
14 learned human response is learned in the first year of
15 life.

16 Traditionally, the family was the teacher in
17 that time. But in too many instances both parents are
18 working, a single parent is struggling to make ends meet,
19 or a child is neglected. And that supervision, and
20 structure, and nurturing, and bonding that surrounds the
21 child for so many does not exist for far too many.

22 The concept of reward and punishment is learned
23 during those first 3 years of life. If a child does not
24 learn what punishment means in those first 3 years, what
25 good is it going to do to threaten a 13-year-old with

1 punishment, or threaten a 20-year-old with punishment?

2 We have got to develop edu-care programs that
3 provide a Head Start type program for every child in
4 America whose parents cannot supervise them as they are
5 growing up. We have got to focus on making sure that our
6 schools have time to teach.

7 Think about it for a moment and look at the
8 burdens we have placed on our public schools. Up until
9 the Industrial Revolution, both the principal teachers of
10 the child were in the home, the mother and father. I
11 sometimes think of an English village, with the miller,
12 the wheelwright, the tailor, the tanner, and the children
13 in the house and around the shop where both parents worked
14 and where the home was.

15 With the Industrial Revolution one of the
16 principal parents began to go to work. And then after
17 World War II, we saw the second parent begin to go to work
18 ever more often, and we saw the schools begin to absorb so
19 many burdens. Children came to school racked by domestic
20 dissention at home, the schools became responsible for
21 ending 200 years of slavery through integrating our public
22 schools for this first time, and yet the schools had
23 incredible educational challenges.

24 Think of what we have learned in the last 100
25 years. Flight, man to the moon, atomic energy, sulfur,

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1 penicillin, modern operational techniques, lasers,
2 computers, probably the most incredible burst of human
3 knowledge in all of history. And the schools have not
4 begun to keep up with it because they have not only had
5 the educational challenge, they have had the social
6 burdens placed upon them as well.

7 Let us free our teacher's time to teach, and let
8 us develop the concept of full service schools so that
9 there are support services in our schools that can help
10 families, can support our children, and can address
11 problems up front before they get too critical to solve.

12 The classic example that I dealt with in Miami
13 -- I had to prosecute a lady once. I obviously did not
14 prosecute her vigorously, I got her into a diversion
15 program. She was a single parent with three children.
16 One child ran a continuous fever, upset, crying in the
17 night. The woman was at her wit's end. She lost her job
18 because she had taken too much time off to take care of
19 the child.

20 Finally one night, threatened with being evicted
21 because she could not pay her rent, the child crying
22 because of his fever, she gave the child the back of her
23 hand. He fell and was cut. The child protective service
24 people were called. The children were taken away, put in
25 a foster home, and she ended up in the back seat of a car,

1 homeless. The children bounced from foster home to foster
2 home. Now, that woman was a loving, caring mother who, if
3 she had been given half support up front, could have made
4 a difference, could have solved her own problems.

5 We could do that with full service schools.
6 Full service schools that focused on truancy prevention
7 before the child became truly delinquent. Full service
8 schools that help plan a child's career in terms of
9 providing job opportunities for the summer that blended
10 with school opportunities, that gave children an
11 understanding that they could graduate from high school
12 with a skill that can enable them to earn a living wage.

13 And let us challenge our young people to public
14 service. I do not know how many of you live in
15 communities where parks and other public facilities were
16 built by young men in the Civilian Conservation Corps
17 during the Depression, but they are great monuments to
18 what the young people of America can do during the most
19 difficult times in our history.

20 And then I watched my aunts go off to war. One
21 was an Army nurse behind Patton's Army in North Africa in
22 World War II. Another aunt was a Women's Army Service
23 Pilot who towed targets and ferried bombers.

24 We recently celebrated the 50th anniversary of
25 what we call the WASP, the Women's Army Service Pilots.

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1 We went to Sweetwater, Texas, to Avenger Field where they
2 first started 50 years ago. Here were 200 old ladies,
3 ages 70 to 80, who had gone off to war. They could not
4 get commissions because ladies did not fly. They had to
5 pay their way to fly for their country during World War
6 II. And they still felt like heroines for what they had
7 done in terms of contributing to the war effort.

8 And I look at the young people of the world who
9 went off, half-way around the world to help in John
10 Kennedy's Peace Corps. We have an opportunity to serve
11 our Nation now on our streets and in our communities, and
12 we must challenge young people throughout the country to
13 participate because they have so much energy, so much
14 commitment to what is right if only given half a chance to
15 exercise it.

16 But most of all, I think one of the great
17 challenges that you and I face for the future is how do we
18 devise a work place? How do we run government? How do we
19 run this Nation so that we give all people more time to
20 spend with their families?

21 I think of my afternoons after school and during
22 the summertime. My mother worked in the home, my father
23 worked downtown. My mother taught us to play baseball, to
24 appreciate Beethoven symphonies, to bake cakes. She
25 taught us her favorite poets. She spanked the living

1 daylights out of us, and she loved us with all her heart.
2 And there is no child care in the world that will ever be
3 a substitute for what that lady was in our life.

4 And yet I watch young men and women now
5 struggling to get children off to school, to get to work,
6 get home through rush hour traffic, the dinner on the
7 table, the children bathed, the homework done. Saturday,
8 errands are run. Sundays, they sleep late or go to
9 church. Sunday nights they start preparing for trial
10 again, and they do not have quality time with their
11 children.

12 We have got to think of bold, new ways,
13 telecommuting, shortened work days that dovetail with
14 school days, so that we can truly make an investment in
15 our most important possession, in our most important
16 capital, which is our children of the future.

17 This is a time to be bold. It is a time to put
18 politics aside. It is a time to ask common sense
19 questions and reach for common sense solutions. And it
20 is, most of all, a time to commit ourselves to others in
21 public service.

22 I look forward to your questions.

23 (Applause.)

24 MR. SIMS: You have 2 minutes to caucus before
25 the questions.

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1 (Please.)

2 MR. SIMS: Please take your seats and get the
3 questions going, please. I know everyone would like to
4 shake the General's hand. I would too, if I were you, but
5 let's be generous.

6 Ready with the first question. Please take your
7 seats for the questions.

8 MS. MacINTYRE: Good afternoon, Attorney General
9 Reno. My name is Trisha MacIntyre and I am from Hammond,
10 Louisiana. It is an honor to meet you.

11 Do you feel that an increase in the number of
12 half-way houses are the answer to successfully integrating
13 repeat offenders back into society?

14 GENERAL RENO: I think half-way houses can be
15 tremendously successful if you provide other facilities
16 and resources to go along with it -- a good counselor,
17 sometimes a 24-hour hot line, where a person who feels
18 like they are just about to lose it can call somebody and
19 get counseling.

20 Job training and placement has to be a part of a
21 half-way house program because it does no good to return a
22 person to the community unless you return them capable of
23 becoming self-sufficient.

24 All of these pieces working together, including
25 half-way houses which can be very important and far less

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1 expensive than prison, can make a tremendous difference.

2 MS. MacINTYRE: Thank you very much.

3 GENERAL RENO: Thank you.

4 (Applause.)

5 MS. LYNCH: Hello, my name is Maggie Lynch. I
6 am from Montgomery, New Jersey.

7 Attorney General Reno, do you propose limited
8 welfare after a certain amount of children are born into a
9 family on welfare?

10 GENERAL RENO: That is more in Donna Shalala's
11 area, and I have not explored all of the implications of
12 welfare.

13 Let me tell you something that I know something
14 about that I feel needs to be done. In Miami, I developed
15 a program with a community, a highly respected police
16 officer, a social worker, and a public health nurse. They
17 would work with one neighborhood looking at families as
18 whole, trying to enable people to become self-sufficient.
19 They would get people wanting to go to work.

20 Here would be a lady with three children. She
21 would be living in public housing. She would say, I have
22 got a minimum wage job. Then she would come back and say,
23 but Ms. Reno I am going to lose my benefits and will be
24 worse off than if I had not gone to work in the first
25 place.

1 What I would like to see us develop are tracks
2 whereby the person knows, okay, I may not become totally
3 self-sufficient, but if you will give me just a little bit
4 at this point, and a little bit less, and a little bit
5 less, I think I can work my way into some self-sufficiency
6 if I can get the job training and placement to go with it.
7 We can make far better sense of welfare.

8 MS. LYNCH: Thank you.

9 (Applause.)

10 MR. FRINE: Good afternoon, my name is Peter
11 Frine. I am from New York.

12 In the June 28th issue of Newsweek, you are
13 accused of, quote, slow going on the White House Anti-
14 Crime Bill, unquote. Administration and Hill sources say
15 that you oppose President Clinton's plan to fund 100,000
16 more police in the next 4 years. Could you explain your
17 position on that and why you disagree with President
18 Clinton?

19 GENERAL RENO: I do not disagree with President
20 Clinton. Newsweek did not even discuss the article with
21 me. What I have advocated is putting 100,000 or as many
22 police officers as we need on the streets to support local
23 police in what they need to do the job.

24 Some police officers say that they need
25 correctional officials, some say they need police, others

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1 say they need early intervention efforts. And what I want
2 to do is do everything I can to support the President's
3 position and to work with local law enforcement, mayors,
4 local communities around the Nation to provide them what
5 they need to do the job, and that will be in different
6 forms. Some will want a policeman, another will want a
7 correctional officer, another will want a juvenile school
8 officer. They will want it in different forms.

9 What I most want to do is make sure that we
10 provide them support in a real sense, and not with smoke
11 and mirrors.

12 MR. FRINE: Thank you.

13 (Applause.)

14 MR. ALLEN: Hello, my name is Lyndon Allen from
15 Washington, D.C.

16 Attorney General Reno, certainly everyone here
17 supports investment in the future, that being in our
18 children. But in this time of economic difficulty where
19 do you propose to get the money for such investment?

20 GENERAL RENO: I think one of the things that
21 America does is that it is too often penny wise and pound
22 foolish. Rather than spend a dollar on prenatal care, it
23 will wait and spend \$3 at the public hospital in 3 years
24 for the problems associated with low birth weight.

25 (Applause.)

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1 GENERAL RENO: Rather than immunize a child
2 against measles, it will wait until a measles epidemic
3 takes place and not only costs a lot more money to treat
4 the measles epidemic but results in children's deaths and
5 in health problems that will plague them for the rest of
6 their lives.

7 What I propose is that we develop an agenda that
8 shows the American people how much can be saved by an
9 initial investment up front. And somehow or other, as
10 anybody does, as a family does as they are beginning to
11 grow, they think, well, I have got to save. I cannot have
12 that new car. I may not be able to buy this new piece of
13 furniture. I may not have this. But I will invest in my
14 future and make sure that I have got something to look
15 forward to. And I think that is what America has to do
16 with its children today.

17 MR. ALLEN: Thank you very much.

18 (Applause.)

19 MS. RICE: Hello, my name is Delores Rice and I
20 am from Dallas, Texas.

21 Do you believe that drugs should be legalized,
22 if not for complete use, for medical use?

23 GENERAL RENO: The question is, do I believe
24 drugs should be legalized, and I do not because I think
25 that -- I have been to too many programs where there are

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1 recovering addicts who say, I got into the program because
2 of the leverage of fear of arrest or the fact that I got
3 arrested.

4 I had a man recently who stopped me and said, I
5 want to thank you, and I said, what for? And he said, you
6 arrested me and you prosecuted me, I mean your prosecutor
7 did. And I said, you are the first person that has ever
8 thanked me for prosecuting them.

9 And he said, I had a terrible drug problem. My
10 family had left me, I had lost my job, I did not have
11 health care benefits so I could not get treatment. I hit
12 rock bottom. I stole to get some cash for my habit, I got
13 caught, and your prosecutor got me into a treatment
14 program, and I cannot thank you enough. I have been drug-
15 free for 2 years, I have got my family back, I have got a
16 job, and I will never do it again. So, I think it can be
17 a leverage.

18 (Applause.)

19 GENERAL RENO: I have not answered the second
20 part. The second part is I am told by some that there are
21 medical uses. I still do not know enough about that to
22 make an informed judgment on it, but interestingly enough
23 I have some material on my desk that I am asking people to
24 explore.

25 MS. RICE: Thank you.

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1 (Applause.)

2 MS. PAGET: My name is Bernie Paget, from St.
3 Louis, Missouri.

4 Ms. Reno, do you feel that we have a substantial
5 battered women problem in America, and how do you propose
6 that we can solve it?

7 GENERAL RENO: As I indicated, I think that
8 domestic violence and family violence is one of the
9 critical problems we face. When I pointed out that 40
10 percent of the homicides in Dade County in that 25-year
11 period related to husband and wife, boyfriend, girlfriend,
12 ex-spouse disputes, most of the victims were women. And
13 if you translate that from homicides into people who were
14 battered without being killed, the problem is tremendous.

15 But it is problem that cuts across generations
16 and involves everybody concerned. Often you see the cycle
17 of violence handed down from one generation to the next,
18 and I think we have to look at the problem as a whole.

19 I think we have got to prosecute these cases and
20 leverage the offender into an appropriate disposition. If
21 he is just a mean, malicious, no good bully then he should
22 go to jail. If he is a husband who is basically loved by
23 his family and has an alcohol problem, we need to get him
24 into alcohol treatment. We need to be creative in our
25 dispositions.

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1 And we need for emergency room physicians and
2 for family doctors to come to understand that family
3 violence, domestic violence, is epidemic in this Nation,
4 and we need to approach it as a public health problem as
5 well as a criminal justice problem.

6 MS. PAGET: Thank you.

7 (Applause.)

8 MS. BALUKA: Hello, my name is Asha Baluka. I'm
9 from Ukraine.

10 And my question is how do you feel about
11 teaching morals in schools when the proper education of
12 morals has not been implemented in homes?

13 GENERAL RENO: The question is, what do you mean
14 by morals, and morals, morality, and ethics always blend
15 in. And some of the best examples I ever saw were in the
16 public schools where teachers by their examples were
17 marvelous role models for me in terms of the morality and
18 ethics that should be demonstrated by the adult world.

19 But where I think the answer lies is in the
20 first point that I made to you in terms of developing a
21 children's agenda. We have got to make sure, not only in
22 the United States but around the world, that parents are
23 old enough, wise enough, and financially able enough in
24 the context of their society to raise children.

25 I think raising children is the most difficult

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1 thing I know to do. It takes hard work, love,
2 intelligence, and lot of luck. And you may say, well, Ms.
3 Reno, what do you know about raising children? You have
4 never been married. 8 years ago, a friend died, leaving
5 me as legal guardian over 15-year-old twins, a boy and a
6 girl, and the girl was in love. And I have learned awful
7 lot about raising children.

8 (Applause.)

9 GENERAL RENO: I will also tell you that it is
10 one of the most rewarding, because when I put the young
11 lady on the plane to go to college, and then 3 years later
12 when she graduated cum laude in 3 years and she threw her
13 arms around my neck on both occasions and said, thank you,
14 I could not have done it without you, that is as rewarding
15 as any professional fulfillment.

16 (Applause.)

17 MS. CORDUA: Hello, my name is Julie Cordua and
18 I am from Lindsay, California.

19 Attorney General Reno, in your opinion what
20 steps should be taken to help prevent such uprisings as
21 the 1992 Los Angeles riots in which the slogan, no
22 justice, no peace was frequently used?

23 GENERAL RENO: I was on the receiving end of a
24 similar situation back in 1980. My office in Dade County
25 prosecuted six police officers for the beating death of a

1 black motorcyclist who ran a red light and was then
2 apprehended by the officers, and some of them -- it was a
3 dark alley and there were no independent witnesses --
4 literally beat him to death.

5 The case was transferred by the judge, over our
6 objection, to another area of Florida and the jury
7 acquitted the officers, and the same thing happened in
8 Miami. And people were terribly critical of me. They
9 called for my resignation. They said that it was
10 necessary that I do so to quell further rioting and
11 further deaths.

12 And as I explained at the time, I said you
13 should not resign from office or let yourself be run out
14 of office by an angry crowd and besides, you have a great
15 opportunity to get me out of office because I have got to
16 run again in 2 months. Nobody ran against me, and my
17 mother said it was because nobody wanted the job.

18 But what I did was to continue to go to the
19 community to explain to them that I was not the jury and I
20 was not a dictator that could control the verdict, and
21 that we had put so much time and effort into the
22 prosecution. Over the next 13 years I went throughout the
23 community answering questions before that and after that.

24 I continued to try to talk about an investment
25 in children, an investment in futures, an investment in

1 housing, an investment in schools and programs for our
2 children, and all that was needed to build a fabric of
3 society where people can function together and address
4 their disagreements peacefully and without conflict and
5 without civil disturbance.

6 By the time I left Miami, I walked the length of
7 the Martin Luther King parade, which is about 30 city
8 blocks, each year since 1988. And as the black leaders in
9 Miami said my mother and I were the people that they liked
10 to see most because we walked all the time.

11 I think it is terribly important that America
12 talk together, that we learn to resolve conflicts
13 peacefully, that we understand that there will be
14 disagreement. But that most of all, for Los Angeles and
15 all the other urban centers, for some of the problems we
16 see on Indian reservations, for so much of what we need to
17 do in America we have got to give people a sense of hope,
18 a sense of fairness, a sense that there is a light at the
19 end of the tunnel, and working together we can do it.

20 MS. CORDUA: Thank you.

21 (Applause.)

22 GENERAL RENO: I will take one more question.

23 Then I apologize because this was not on my schedule, but
24 I have to go to the White House.

25 (Multiple simultaneous voices.)

1 GENERAL RENO: Now, here is what I would ask of
2 you. For those that did not get to ask me a question, if
3 you would write it out and leave me a phone number where I
4 can call you, I will try to do it. We need to coordinate
5 it. It will take a week or so. I will try to call you at
6 home. But I always try to get the young people's
7 questions answered. Now where you could --

8 (Applause.)

9 GENERAL RENO: What would be ideal is if you
10 could kind of make sure that they are not duplications, if
11 you could put them all together, and if you get them to
12 Donna Templeton in my office. I am going to alert her as
13 soon as I get back that I may have a series of questions,
14 and I will need to call you in the evenings at your home.
15 And I will continue to try until I get everybody, if you
16 will be patient with me, okay?

17 (Applause.)

18 MS. FRY: My name is Melissa Fry, and I am from
19 Dallas, Texas.

20 My question is that when child abuse cases go
21 before the court, more often than not the children are
22 seen as the criminal instead of being the victim. How do
23 you propose that we change this mind set?

24 GENERAL RENO: In 1984, we were advised that
25 there was a case that was burgeoning that was a horrible

1 situation. Allegations were made that a child care
2 operator of a facility had sexually abused some 20
3 children, ages 3 to 7. The children were very young. The
4 allegations seemed absolutely implausible and
5 unbelievable.

6 We probed and probed, went into it, and finally
7 became convinced that the children were telling the truth.
8 We got child development experts, we developed a
9 children's center, and we created an environment where the
10 children felt at home in the center.

11 We prosecuted that guy, convicted him. He got
12 six consecutive life sentences, and he is never going to
13 see the light of day.

14 (Applause.)

15 (Whereupon, the recording ended.)
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