

JANET RENO, ATTORNEY GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES

BEFORE THE

ASSOCIATION OF TRIAL LAWYERS OF AMERICA

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1993 ATLA ANNUAL CONVENTION

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

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**GARY & ROOMIAN**  
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1 MS. CONLIN: Good morning. Please find  
2 your seats and then please stand for the Presentation  
3 of the Colors.

4 (Presentation of the Colors. )

5 MS. CONLIN: You may be seated. Good  
6 morning. Welcome to San Francisco and welcome to the  
7 Association of Trial Lawyers of America's 47th annual  
8 convention, the largest convention by far that ATLA  
9 has ever had. I think it's worth a hand.

10 We are in ATLA completing a remarkable  
11 year. Every committee, every staff person, has worked  
12 long and worked hard to make us a more effective  
13 organization. We won important legislative victories.  
14 The Product Liability on Fairness Bill is not a part  
15 of the law of the land.

16 We are constantly monitoring the Health  
17 Care Reform effort. We care about Health Care Reform,  
18 but we also care that those who are injured by the  
19 wrongful acts of medical professionals are fully and  
20 fairly compensated, and we remain ready to do battle  
21 any time, anywhere, to protect the unfettered right to  
22 jury trial.

23 We have expressed our views before the  
24 United States Supreme Court. Most recently our views  
25 prevailed in the Daubert case, thanks largely to the

1 spectacular advocacy efforts of our own President-  
2 Elect, Barry Nace.

3           Also, the Supreme Court upheld the right  
4 of juries to make punitive damage awards when  
5 egregious conduct occurs in amounts which will  
6 actually punish the wrongdoer. At the same time, we  
7 began a major public education campaign to help  
8 citizens understand the role of civil trial lawyers  
9 and the role of the civil and criminal justice system  
10 in our democratic society.

11           We improved and expanded services to  
12 members. We made ATLA more diverse and inclusive at  
13 every level of our organization. We warned the public  
14 through ATLA Alert of the dangers of Group B Strep to  
15 just-born babies. And we held a standing-room-only  
16 conference on domestic violence, bringing together for  
17 the first time the medical community, the shelter  
18 community, and the legal community, to reason together  
19 about this most important public health concern for  
20 women.

21           Out of that effort, many good things have  
22 come, including a domestic violence litigation group  
23 which will meet here for the first time at 10:30 on  
24 Wednesday. And all of you who care about these issues  
25 should feel free to attend. There are 30 new

1 litigation groups and one new section, the section on  
2 small office practices, which will also meet here for  
3 the first time.

4 I am proud of all that we have  
5 accomplished, and you should be too.

6 Thank you for joining us at this, the  
7 capstone and highlight of this remarkable year. And  
8 it is a delight to be in this beautiful city.

9 And here to welcome us this morning is  
10 Angela Alioto, President of this city's Board of  
11 Supervisors.

12 Welcome, Angela.

13 MS. ALIOTO: Thank you very, very much.  
14 It looks like the trial court lawyers have warmed up a  
15 city that is generally foggy at this time, so I hope  
16 you enjoy this wonderful weather.

17 This is no ordinary welcome to our  
18 gorgeous city. This welcome is to the nation's most  
19 truly independent lawyers, to the distinguished  
20 Attorney General of the United States of America, to  
21 the distinguished Governor of the State of Texas, and  
22 of course to Anita Hill who has stood up for all of  
23 us. This is truly a special welcome for me to give.

24 I have to take a deep breath, standing  
25 next to Janet Reno.

1           We like your brand of trial lawyers around  
2 here. The independent lawyer lives in your  
3 organization. The tendency to homogenize the legal  
4 personality is deplorable to me, because if the  
5 lawyers with star quality and rugged independence  
6 desert the scene, jurisprudence will truly lose its  
7 soul.

8           And a special welcome to the Attorney  
9 General. It's about time that a great woman has been  
10 appointed on the competitive merits to the country's  
11 lead lawyer.

12           What an honor it is to have Governor Ann  
13 Richards in our city. Out here we have a love for  
14 that combination of practical intelligence and a  
15 satirical tongue that will match any man when it comes  
16 to satire.

17           And how nice it is to welcome Anita Hill.  
18 She was in the pit of the coliseum fighting off the  
19 lions for all of us. Her battle, fought with  
20 extraordinary courage, will open doors for women  
21 throughout the country, if not throughout the world,  
22 and I personally want to thank Anita Hill.

23           In a word, my welcome is tinged with real  
24 pride that women are so dramatically and prominently  
25 represented here.

1           Do enjoy our city. It has attractions  
2 galore. This spectacular geography of mountains,  
3 hills, bay and ocean, and this healthy climate that we  
4 have for you, are here for you to find, to like, to  
5 love. Our opera, our symphony, our ballet,  
6 world-famous restaurants, and a thousand and one  
7 places of genuine Bohemian life, are yours for the  
8 taking. Enjoy it all.

9           Thanks for bringing this colorful group of  
10 great trial lawyers to San Francisco. And do me a  
11 favor, spend some money here. Thank you very, very  
12 much.

13           MS. CONLIN: Thank you. Thank you,  
14 Angela. Perhaps this need not be mentioned, but, you  
15 might guess, Angela Alioto is a trial lawyer and a  
16 member of the Association of Trial Lawyers of America.

17           I also want to welcome Willie Kennedy on  
18 the Board of Supervisors. Stand up, wave.

19           Also with us this morning is Michael  
20 Yamiguchi, United States Attorney for the Northern  
21 District of California. Michael, welcome.

22           Congressman Tom Lantos and his wife are  
23 also with us, and we welcome them. I'm told they're  
24 with us. Well, let's clap anyway. They meant to be  
25 with us.

1           And I know that in an audience like this  
2 there are probably a whole bunch of people that I  
3 should say hello to and acknowledge and introduce, and  
4 in fact, that applies to each and every one of you.  
5 But in order for us to get to our main event, I have  
6 only one additional introduction to make of a very  
7 special friend of the Trial Lawyers, a supporter of  
8 consumer rights, and a very, very distinguished  
9 Federal Judge, Jim Carrigan of the District of  
10 Colorado. Jim?

11           For the last 12 years we have had  
12 administrations whose Attorney General probably would  
13 not have come to join us. Of course, we probably  
14 would not have invited them.

15           It is a very great pleasure to introduce  
16 our featured speaker, the Attorney General of the  
17 United States of America, Janet Reno. We are  
18 extremely proud to have you with us this morning.

19           In just a few hectic months, she has set  
20 an admirable standard by addressing each issue with a  
21 straightforward question: What is the right thing to  
22 do?

23           A direct descendant of Florida pioneers,  
24 Miss Reno grew up in Miami. She has a chemistry  
25 degree from Cornell and an L.L.B. from Harvard Law

1 School.

2           From 1978 until her recent appointment by  
3 President Clinton, she served as the state's attorney  
4 in Miami, first appointed to that position by  
5 Florida's governor and subsequently elected to that  
6 office five times. She began her legal career in  
7 private practice.

8           The citizens of the United States have an  
9 Attorney General with a steadfast focus on prevention  
10 and a tremendous concern for children. She values  
11 results over labels, logic over rhetoric, and  
12 substance over slogan. I'm delighted to introduce  
13 Janet Reno, Attorney General of the United States of  
14 America.

15           MS. RENO: Thank you so very much.

16           I love the law. I love lawyers. From the  
17 time I was a little girl, I wanted to be a lawyer.  
18 The courtrooms of the Dade County Courthouse, of that  
19 beautiful old Federal Building, were like magical  
20 places to me when I went with my father, a reporter  
21 for the Miami Herald, as he covered trials, both  
22 criminal and civil. And I thought that that was one  
23 of the most wonderful things that anybody could do,  
24 was to be a lawyer.

25           As I grew up and worked in the courthouse,

1 I would sneak down at lunchtime, or just before  
2 lunchtime, to watch the great lawyers in action, both  
3 civil and criminal. And again, what I wanted to do  
4 was to be a lawyer.

5 My mother, the lady who rassled  
6 alligators, didn't think her daughter should be a  
7 lawyer at one point, and so I got defiant; I digressed  
8 to chemistry. But it didn't take much to come back.

9 In the summer clerkship opportunities I  
10 had, again, I saw lawyers in action. I saw cussed,  
11 independent lawyers who would beat up on us in the  
12 courtroom in the most ethical way possible, and then  
13 be -- and unfortunately, in those days, they were all  
14 gentlemen, not ladies as well, but they were gentlemen  
15 as we left the courtroom in collegial discussion.

16 I am here because of one of the best trial  
17 lawyers in your midst. There is one reason I got  
18 appointed as State Attorney of Dade County, which is  
19 the reason I'm here. And the person who is  
20 responsible for my appointment as State Attorney of  
21 Dade County was Bill Colson, and I hope I do him  
22 proud.

23 As I look at history, as I look at my time  
24 in public service, lawyers at every step of the way  
25 have contributed so much in terms of improving

1 people's lives, in making things better and ensuring  
2 justice. But our system is not perfect and no  
3 profession is perfect, and there is no question but  
4 that we have got to work together, each in our own  
5 way, to restore some competence in the system, to let  
6 people think when they're graduating from college,  
7 What I'd like to do is to be a lawyer so I can protect  
8 people, so I can secure justice, so that I can make a  
9 difference in the lives of the people of America.

10 I want to build a Department of Justice  
11 that attracts the young people right out of law school  
12 so that they think that the best thing in the world  
13 that a young lawyer could do would be to engage in  
14 public service, not as a stepping stone, including  
15 trial experience, but to serve the public, to seek  
16 justice, to do right.

17 To do that, we've got to emphasize the  
18 honor and the ethical standards that I see reflected  
19 in so many people in this room that I know. We've got  
20 to make the law real to people, not just in dollars  
21 and cents terms, but in the language we use. We've  
22 got to use small, old words that give people an  
23 understanding of the legal system so that they can  
24 appreciate it and understand what it's about and not  
25 think of it as the mysterious mixture of legalese.

1 The law should be a lamp for all Americans.

2           We have got to restore civility. There is  
3 no doubt that in the 15 years that I served as State  
4 Attorney I became concerned at the progressive lack of  
5 civility that was too often exhibited in the courts of  
6 our county and in our state. And I am told as I have  
7 traveled around America that that, unfortunately, has  
8 developed in other jurisdictions. Let us ban together  
9 to make people understand that you can be the  
10 fiercest, most wonderful, vigorous advocate in the  
11 world and still do it in a civil, courteous context  
12 that appreciates the adversary.

13           Roxanne said I want to address every issue  
14 in the Department of Justice by one overriding  
15 question: What is the right thing to do? Not what is  
16 the political thing to do, what the expedient thing to  
17 do is, but what is the right thing to do. Harry  
18 Truman said that doing the right thing is real easy,  
19 but knowing what the right thing to do is far more  
20 difficult.

21           In this day and time it's far more  
22 difficult than Harry Truman ever dreamed of, with  
23 shrinking borders that cause one world's legal system  
24 to be enmeshed in another, legal systems working  
25 together side by side with technology that not even

1 Harry Truman dreamed of, adding new dimensions to our  
2 already complex problems.

3 Harry Truman would be proud of this  
4 nation, a nation that is so diverse, so magnificent,  
5 so protective of its differences, so appreciative of  
6 its differences, that Harry Truman would know that the  
7 time has come to make sure that people can be  
8 different, that we can be diverse, and yet that we  
9 work together respecting our differences for the  
10 common whole.

11 The time has come, and lawyers must join  
12 in in talking in gentle, thoughtful terms, with  
13 passion, with firmness, with conviction, but not with  
14 rhetoric and not with bashing and not with vicious  
15 criticism, but with thoughtful, caring ideas about how  
16 we deal with the complex problems of America.

17 Too often I see the public sector squared  
18 away against the private sector. I see the press  
19 versus the politicians, almost as if they are  
20 adversaries without a common goal. And yet I know in  
21 the hearts of both, they're both trying to do what is  
22 best for America.

23 I see the public defender and the  
24 prosecutor going at each other hammer and tong. And  
25 so for the last ten years I think we have developed a

1 wall between prosecutors and defense that doesn't need  
2 to be there. We're on the same side in terms of  
3 trying to secure justice for all America, and we can  
4 come together as collegial lawyers and discuss our  
5 differences without batting each other over the head  
6 with a two-by-four.

7           We have got to have lawyers talking with  
8 doctors. Somehow or another we can address our  
9 problems without the two camps being squared away  
10 against each other without dialogue, without  
11 discussion, without thoughtful purpose, to how we  
12 address the critical problems that beset America.

13           Republicans and Democrats have got to  
14 start talking together again about how we face this  
15 mutual crisis of finance, how we face this mutual  
16 crisis of providing a strong and healthy future for  
17 our children. But too often I find us squared away  
18 almost as armed camps.

19           And race must discuss with race, and  
20 ethnic group with ethnic group, how we address the  
21 critical problems of America. I want the Department  
22 of Justice to be involved as the nation's lawyers in a  
23 thoughtful, considered discussion that prizes  
24 difference, but respects each of us and respects the  
25 idea that each of us represents, so that we can work

1 throughout these ideas to come up with a common whole.

2           America must come around the table again  
3 and sit down and start to discuss. We must be willing  
4 to compromise. We must be willing to sacrifice.  
5 Sacrifice does not mean lack of independence.  
6 Compromise does not mean giving up your principles.  
7 It means talking until you come up with something that  
8 everybody can live with that's consistent with the  
9 ultimate goal of justice for all.

10           We're all in this together. The best way  
11 I can describe it is when I first took office  
12 prosecutors thought that their job was prosecuting  
13 people, getting them convicted and seeing them  
14 sentenced. But now more and more prosecutors  
15 throughout this nation understand that we will never  
16 be able to build our way out of the crime problem.

17           The prosecutors have a responsibility for  
18 looking at the back end of the line, of where people  
19 came from, of understanding that we can no longer be a  
20 nation that reacts just to crisis, we've got to  
21 prevent as well. That if I went to a public hospital  
22 and saw a crack-involved baby, I've got as much  
23 concern about that crack-involved baby, because unless  
24 I do something about that baby now, I will never have  
25 enough prisons 18 and 19 and 20 years from now to

1 house that baby and others similarly situated.

2           The trial lawyers are recognizing that.  
3 You have taken the lead in calling people's attention  
4 to the problem of domestic violence. Fifteen years  
5 ago, I talked about domestic violence, I developed a  
6 domestic intervention program in the State Attorney's  
7 office, but nothing began to get police attention so  
8 much as some trial lawyers suing some police  
9 departments on some domestic violence issues. Now  
10 everybody understands.

11           But we shouldn't wait till the domestic  
12 violence occurs. And what you have done in terms of  
13 developing through your seminar programs where  
14 doctors, educators and lawyers can come together to  
15 prevent the problem in the first place is critical.  
16 You have done so much in terms of prevention. But I  
17 think you can do more in terms of warning the public,  
18 warning industry, warning state and local government  
19 of problems that you see within your jurisdiction so  
20 that those who really want to do right can take steps  
21 to see that we can make a difference.

22           Lawyers throughout American history have  
23 been the bold ones, the innovators, the creators, the  
24 people with vision. We have so many complex problems  
25 now. We need that vision. We need to look beyond our

1 narrow practice of law. We need to look beyond our  
2 profession. We need to look beyond our area in the  
3 community. We need to look at all of America.

4           There is a saying inscribed on the  
5 building of the Department of Justice in Washington  
6 that says, "The common law is derived from the people,  
7 founded on the will of humankind, framed in mutual  
8 competences, and sanctioned by the light of reason."

9           I think that is a beautiful statement.  
10 But, ladies and gentlemen, when 80 percent of the poor  
11 and the working poor in America do not have access to  
12 legal services, much less to our courts, that saying  
13 cannot be worth more than the building it's chiseled  
14 on. We have got to make it a reality for all  
15 Americans.

16           Trial lawyers through your fee  
17 arrangements have given access of some people to the  
18 courts, but there are far too many who do not have the  
19 access. There is that welfare mother who has  
20 struggled to get a minimum wage job, but loses other  
21 benefits and is worse off than if she hadn't gone to  
22 work in the first place, a welfare mother caught up in  
23 Roman numerals and ABCs and title thises and  
24 what's-its-names thats that they don't understand, and  
25 that unfortunately too often government itself doesn't

1 understand.

2           There is that middle class person whose  
3 parent has died who has a Social Security problem. To  
4 go to a lawyer would cost them a thousand dollars or  
5 fifteen hundred dollars to unravel something that  
6 might get them eight hundred dollars. We have got to  
7 press government to become more citizen friendly so  
8 that people don't have to go to lawyers to deal with  
9 their government on basic things such as Social  
10 Security and Welfare issues.

11           How many of you have watched a family  
12 member, a neighbor, a friend, try to unravel problems  
13 with an insurance company? Not something that  
14 involves vast dollars, but just trying to understand  
15 an insurance policy. Too many Americans, not just the  
16 poor and the working poor, but too many Americans,  
17 don't have access to legal services that give them an  
18 ability to deal with the day-to-day problems that they  
19 face, either with the landlord, with the insurance  
20 company, with the Federal Government and Social  
21 Security.

22           We have got to make the laws of this  
23 nation and the procedures and regulations which  
24 implement them understandable so that all can deal  
25 with it in a sensible way. But recognizing that there

1 will be issues that we still cannot deal with by  
2 ourselves, we must develop the concept of a community  
3 advocate that maybe specializes in insurance policies  
4 or a Social Security issue or a Welfare issue for the  
5 working poor, to help them unravel the regulations  
6 that too often make government remote and unattainable  
7 for its people.

8           We have got to address the issue beyond  
9 legal services of access to our courts. Attorney  
10 General Griffin Bell said it best, "The constitutional  
11 guarantees of human rights ring hollow if there is no  
12 forum available for their vindication." Statutory  
13 rights become empty promises if adjudication is too  
14 long delayed to make them meaningful or the value of a  
15 claim is consumed by the expenses of asserting it.  
16 Only if our courts are functioning smoothly can equal  
17 justice become a reality for all.

18           You have done as much as any group of  
19 lawyers to give people access to our courts. But  
20 we've got to do far more. And working together,  
21 recognizing the value of the jury trial system, doing  
22 everything possible to protect it, we still ought to  
23 be able to make our courts far more accessible to all  
24 Americans at a lot less cost and with a lot less  
25 delay.

1           Where do we begin? First, I think we've  
2 got to understand what has happened to our courts in  
3 these last 15 years. Overwhelmed by drugs,  
4 overwhelmed by other symptoms of deeper problems in  
5 our society, our courts are staggering with the case  
6 loads that they have.

7           I think the first thing we do is to  
8 develop a real partnership between federal and state  
9 governments where the National Association of  
10 Attorneys General, the National District Attorneys  
11 Association, the National Association of Criminal  
12 Defense Lawyers, and the Department of Justice work  
13 together to develop principled policies for what  
14 should be handled in Federal Court and what should be  
15 handled in State Court.

16           No longer should somebody go to Federal  
17 Court just to get a headline. No longer should  
18 somebody go to Federal Court for a case that could be  
19 handled as appropriately, or more appropriately, in  
20 State Court only to secure needed prison cells to  
21 house that dangerous offender for the time the judges  
22 are sentencing them.

23           We have developed a parallel prison system  
24 since 1983 that has no basis in federalism. The  
25 Constitution recognizes the clear difference between

1 state and federal courts, but a prison cell is a  
2 prison cell is a prison cell, and it ought to be used  
3 in this nation to house dangerous offenders for the  
4 length of time the judges are sentencing them so that  
5 we can get these people put away and kept away. And  
6 we should develop other programs working with state  
7 and local governments to provide opportunities for  
8 people to return to the community with half a fighting  
9 chance not to become recidivist.

10           That's going to require state and federal  
11 governments to talk together. And as I've traveled  
12 around the nation, I have the great feeling that  
13 federal judges and state court judges want to talk.  
14 State and federal prison officials need to be involved  
15 in this effort. Prosecutors and public defenders and  
16 private criminal defense lawyers must be involved.  
17 We're all in this together. We all have got to  
18 address the ultimate issues of the administration of  
19 justice to make sure that our courts are wisely used  
20 based on thoughtful principles of federalism and what  
21 should be a crime and what shouldn't be a crime.

22           To do that is going to require a political  
23 will, and I need your help. We have got to get rid of  
24 the labels in America of "soft on crime," of "hanging  
25 judge," of "throw the key away," of "bleeding heart

1 liberal." Nobody in America likes crime. Nobody in  
2 America likes violent crime one bit, and we've got to  
3 get rid of the partisan rhetoric and get down to the  
4 issues of how we put the bad guys away and give the  
5 others a chance to succeed again. I look forward to  
6 working with you in that effort.

7           But crime and drugs, teen pregnancy, youth  
8 gangs that are sweeping through this country, making  
9 youth violence the single greatest crime problem we  
10 face in America today, all of these terrible phenomena  
11 are symptoms of a deeper problem in society, and that  
12 is that too often in these last years America would  
13 rather throw money away rather than deal with the hard  
14 issues. It would rather wait till the crisis occurred  
15 and throw limited dollars after the crisis rather than  
16 invest the one dollar up front to make a difference.

17           Lawyers have too often focused on their  
18 limited areas, the trial lawyer in winning that  
19 verdict and saying that that verdict protected  
20 children. Yes, you have. You've protected people.  
21 By your actions in domestic violence and other areas,  
22 you've done wonderful things.

23           Prosecutors have done wonderful things.  
24 They've put bad guys away. But they've too often been  
25 pleased when they got the conviction, saw the person

1 sent off to jail, and ignored the fact that he was  
2 only going to serve 20 to 30 percent of the sentence  
3 and be right back out doing it again.

4           Public defenders have thought that they  
5 won the battle when they've gotten their client off on  
6 a motion to dismiss or a motion to suppress, failing  
7 to recognize that the prison of drug addiction that  
8 that client was in was worse than any prison that that  
9 public defender helped that client to avoid. We have  
10 got to focus on that client up front before the  
11 prosecutor tries to send him to jail.

12           Lawyers throughout all America have got to  
13 start focusing on prevention and what we can do to  
14 build structures that can enable people to live  
15 together without hurting each other either  
16 intentionally or accidentally. We have got to develop  
17 programs that prevent the risk, diminish the risk and  
18 give people an opportunity to grow as strong,  
19 constructive human beings.

20           We need to understand that there is a new  
21 problem in America that lawyers haven't begun to  
22 address. And that is that too often in these last 30  
23 years we have forgotten and neglected our children and  
24 our families. Too often in these last 30 years both  
25 parents have decided they were going to be great trial

1 lawyers or great prosecutors or great public  
2 defenders, and they haven't had time to spend quality  
3 time with their children. Too often in these last 30  
4 years we focused on winning the case and forgotten  
5 that the literal fabric of society and the law has  
6 fallen away from too many Americans.

7           It is a middle class woman whose husband  
8 has left her, wiped out her bank account, left her  
9 alone and desperate. It is a poor person growing up  
10 in an inner city, without any family around him or her  
11 whatsoever. It is that father who is struggling  
12 against all odds to try to be a good father and can't  
13 find a job because he has a prior record. He's licked  
14 his drug problem, he's trying to go straight, but the  
15 community doesn't give him an opportunity to get back  
16 into the mainstream of America.

17           As lawyers, we've got to work together to  
18 develop a nation that values every single individual,  
19 that values justice and not dollars, that values  
20 what's right and not what's expedient, that values  
21 people above everything. And to do that, we have got  
22 to create new systems that enable every child in  
23 America to grow in a strong, healthy and constructive  
24 way.

25           It's not going to be something that

1 lawyers can do by themselves, or educators by  
2 themselves, or doctors by themselves, or in too many  
3 instances the family by themself. But if lawyers can  
4 take the lead, knowing that we're not going to solve  
5 the problems of America in the courtroom, we can make  
6 a difference. I don't know any lawyer who would  
7 rather take his client's case to court than settle it  
8 beforehand or prevent it in the first place.

9           But we've waited too long for the crisis.  
10 We've got to get to prevention, to make sure that  
11 parents in America are old enough, wise enough and  
12 financially able enough to take care of their  
13 children. We've got to focus on teen pregnancy and do  
14 something about it. We've got to give our parents  
15 time to be with their children.

16           We have gotten so consumed in other parts  
17 of the practice of law, with billable hours, or too  
18 consumed sometimes in your own lives, because I've  
19 seen too many of you, or those of your colleagues, who  
20 have spent their nights until 12:00 o'clock at night  
21 preparing for trial the next day, gone by 6:00 o'clock  
22 in the morning, then exhausted and gone off to have a  
23 vacation while children have tried to grow. Somehow  
24 or another we can be great trial lawyers, we can be  
25 great prosecutors, and still spend quality time with

1 our children.

2           We've got to make sure that every child in  
3 America has proper preventative medical care. You're  
4 getting medical care and more for a very few. But  
5 working together, doctors and lawyers in America have  
6 got to make sure that the children of America get  
7 proper preventative medical care. Something is  
8 terribly wrong with a nation that says to a  
9 70-year-old person you can have an operation that  
10 extends your life expectancy by three years, whereas a  
11 child of a working poor person who has no insurance  
12 benefits, but makes too much money to be eligible for  
13 Medicaid, can't get proper preventative medical care.

14           We have got to understand that the ages of  
15 zero to three are the most formative time in a  
16 person's life. Nobody has disputed that over the last  
17 four months. I told the press, "You can talk about  
18 what I do, but you never dispute with me the  
19 substantive issues that I'm talking about." But there  
20 is no institution in America today advocating for that  
21 child zero to three who has no family structure around  
22 them.

23           You win the cases in the courtroom, but we  
24 have a critical issue for all America. What do we do?  
25 What new institutions do we develop through safe,

1 constructive edu-care/child care that give these  
2 children a chance to grow as strong and constructive  
3 human beings?

4           If 50 percent of all learned human  
5 response is learned in the first year of life, if the  
6 concept of reward and punishment is developed during  
7 the first three years of life, what good is it going  
8 to do to win cases in the courtroom 15 years from now  
9 either as prosecutor, public defender or trial lawyer  
10 if we as lawyers, we as Americans, don't ensure for  
11 our children in that age group institutions that can  
12 properly protect them?

13           Let us understand what it's like to have  
14 developed a world where both parents are working or  
15 where that single parent is struggling. And what do  
16 we do for our children after school and in the  
17 evenings to give them safe, constructive alternatives  
18 to the street, to the malls, to the graffiti writing?  
19 We can do so much if we step beyond our narrow worlds  
20 of the courtroom, step beyond the narrow worlds of the  
21 justice system, and look out to what justice is about.  
22 It's about people.

23           For too long now we have developed program  
24 after program that tries to serve the people. But we  
25 spend more money in determining whether somebody is

1 eligible for a service because we don't trust them  
2 rather than serving them. The one thing I have found  
3 after 15 years as State Attorney for Dade County, and  
4 after four months being in this job, is that the  
5 American people are stronger, greater, tougher than  
6 we've ever given them credit for. They want to do  
7 right, and we have got to give them the opportunity to  
8 do right, to truly show this nation and this world  
9 that we are a government of the people, by the people  
10 and for the people.

11 MS. CONLIN: You have issued to us a call  
12 to arms and we accept it. We pledge to work with you.  
13 You can count on us to do whatever and to go wherever  
14 we can to assist in this noble effort. Our theme for  
15 this convention is "Building a Just America," and by  
16 God, we mean it. We do care. We will help to build a  
17 just America.

18 And it is such a thrill, it is so  
19 wonderful, to have to lead us in that effort a  
20 competent, caring, committed person in Janet Reno,  
21 Attorney General of the United States of America. She  
22 is a gift to us, she is a gift to our client, and  
23 she's, most of all, a gift to the United States of  
24 America.

25 I wish that you all could see what I see,

1 a sea of faces of people who do care. We have really  
2 arrived in this organization.

3 I want to take just a moment to introduce  
4 to you the incoming president of the Association of  
5 Trial Lawyers of America, Barry Nace, as I mentioned,  
6 a wonderful advocate and who will be a wonderful  
7 president. Barry?

8 And as you all know, our Executive  
9 Director of the Association of Trial Lawyers of  
10 America, also a gift, Tom ~~Anderson~~<sup>Henderson</sup>. We were led in  
11 the Pledge of Allegiance by two very special people,  
12 Matthew and Jonathan Nace. And they knew all of the  
13 words.

14 While I have you all in this room and  
15 after listening to what Janet Reno had to say, I want  
16 to remind you of a task that we have undertaken. In  
17 January, Justice Kennedy, our own board member ~~Andy~~  
18 Hollis, and good friend Lanny Vines, came to our  
19 association and asked us to help with the National  
20 Coalition to Prevent Child Abuse. Your Board of  
21 Governors voted unanimously to accept that challenge.

22 In order to do what we need to do to  
23 prevent child abuse, to coalesce with this important  
24 organization, we need your help. If you can help  
25 us -- By "need your help," of course you know I'm

1 talking about not only your help as attorneys, but  
2 also your monetary assistance.

3           What we're going to try to do is assist in  
4 the development of public service announcements of the  
5 sort you have all seen, but that will go a bit further  
6 in helping people to identify the resources that they  
7 can use if they need help in preventing the abuse of  
8 their own children.

9           If you can write a check this morning for  
10 a hundred dollars or a thousand dollars or a hundred  
11 thousand dollars -- we'll take anything -- please do  
12 so. We need to be a part of this effort as we need to  
13 be a part of every effort everywhere that helps us to  
14 build a just America. Welcome to ATLA.

15           Your biggest problem this week is going to  
16 be choosing from among the wonderful things that are  
17 offered to you, so use your resources. The very  
18 greatest frustration of course is trying to get to  
19 everybody you want to get to, trying to choose which  
20 educational program you can go to. Know that you can  
21 get tapes of those you can't get to, and do have a  
22 lovely time in this lovely city. Thank you.

23                           ---oOo---

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