

NEWS BRIEFING BY ATTY GEN. JANET RENO; HUD SECY HENRY CISNEROS; DIR. OF  
DRUG CONTROL POLICY LEE BROWN; AND ASST SECY OF THE TREASURY RON NOBLE  
RE: ANTI-CRIME INITIATIVES TUESDAY, MARCH 29, 1994  
J-29-01 page# 1

dest=crime,sjd,doj,dtr,drugczar,dhud  
data

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ATTY GEN. RENO: Our National Violent Crime Initiative is  
underway with a federal prosecutor now designated to coordinate our  
efforts in every one of the 94 districts in the country with joint  
local/federal strategies for attacking violent crime already underway  
in many of the districts. I have had an opportunity to visit  
districts, to talk with state and local law enforcement, to talk with  
federal officials who are working with them, and I am advised that we  
have not seen such cooperation in many years. We have further to go,  
however.

Our Weed and Seed program is reaching more communities now -- up  
to 20 sites from 10 last year, apprehending more criminals and  
developing more prevention programs that have proven to be successful.  
Our (PAC ?) program is working with local officials to bring new  
direction and energy to community crime prevention efforts.

As I travel across the country, I hear real enthusiasm for these  
combined state and federal efforts that bring a focus on law  
enforcement, on the violent criminals, on what the federal government  
can do to assist local government in terms of law enforcement. I also  
see us coming together with cities and communities across this nation  
in crime prevention efforts, using the Office of Justice Programs, the  
Bureau of Justice Assistance, Weed and Seed, to work with them as true  
partners in providing monies that are truly needed.

But I'm not here to be a Pollyanna or to pretend that the crime  
problem is being solved. We've made some headway but we've got more  
to do. The crime bill is now pending in the House and it has many  
helpful provisions. One of the refrains I hear as I travel across

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this nation is the need for more support for state prison systems to  
make sure that they are able to house the violent criminals for the  
length of time the judges are sentencing them. The bill will provide  
\$3 billion in grant money to state and local governments to operate  
prisons and to make sure that we have truth in sentencing for violent  
offenders.

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Programs to deal with youthful and drug offenders are in the crime bill and they are critically important. Community after community had had the chance to visit our local drug court in Miami and want to replicate it, but don't have the resources. Those resources would be provided in the crime bill. And prevention programs that give kids something to say yes to, our youth employment skills program, keeping schools open later are all in the crime bill and I think are critical provisions.

We have announced a plan to restore funding for Byrne (sp) grant multi-jurisdictional task forces, which so many sheriffs have pointed out are so critical to their efforts. But the one aspect of our crime bill that I think is so critically important is the provision for the 100,000 police officers for community policing, and every community I have been to police departments either want to start it or have started it on a very small scale and want to expand it.

Right now at the Department of Justice we are halfway through our police hiring grants program, a program designed to make a downpayment on the 100,000 police officers. Four months ago we gave our first grant, to date we have passed out \$75 million for over 100 cities and towns to hire 1,000 new police officers. And those that got the first grants tell me they're making a difference.

By the end of April when the program is complete, we will have put 2,000 police officers on the streets in about 200 communities. But for each jurisdiction we will have been able to help under this program, 15 more have applied. Three thousand cities, towns, counties and states have applied for this program. Some came in late and are not eligible, which brings the total to more, and we will only be able to assist approximately 200.

Everywhere I travel, local officials say they need this help. The crime bill presents an unprecedented effort to tackle this problem. Its 100,000 new street-level police officers, a 40 percent increase in the current national force of 250,000 street level law enforcement officers is a vital effort.

We have much to do. I think the American people want us all to work together in a non-partisan, thoughtful way to get this crime bill passed. It focuses on punishment that's fair and that fits the crime and that provides preventional alternatives that can make a difference.

I'd now like to introduce Secretary Henry Cisneros of HUD to talk about the work -- the really excellent work that's being done in Safe

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Homes.

SEC. CISNEROS: Thank you very much, General. I was pleased to be here a month ago with the attorney general, with Secretary Bentsen and with Dr. Brown to discuss the initiation of an administration initiative announced by the vice president entitled Operation Safe Home. The thrust is to bring together the resources of multiple federal agencies and focus on those environments where people live with federal assistance; that is to say public housing environments, which unfortunately are seed beds for much crime in our central cities, and assisted housing.

There was some skepticism raised at that time as to whether this was just an announcement or whether we intended to really put muscle behind it. I'm pleased to be here today to give you a sense of what the first month's result are on Operation Safe Home. Our interagency approach to Operation Safe Home has led to 24 arrests and 14 indictments and the recovery of more than 25 weapons and 300,000 in drugs and cash.

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The white collar portion of Operation Safe Home, which deals with equity skimming and diversion of funds destined for housing repairs or other housing needs, has yielded six indictments and a guilty plea. The multifamily skimming effort has led to four civil settlements with \$9.9 million in repayments to multifamily projects and \$2.1 million to HUD, double damages judgment of \$1.6 million.

Let me give you an example of how Operation Safe Home works on the ground. On March 16, as part of a task force effort in the city of New Haven, Connecticut, a team of 60 federal agents and police officers -- DEA, FBI, HUD Office of Inspector General, and state and local law enforcement agencies -- arrested 12 individuals and seized drugs and firearms at and near public housing developments. The individuals were charged with selling and distributing drugs, firearms, and risking injury to children.

Today HUD is announcing the availability of \$232 million under a program known as drug elimination grants -- the public housing drug elimination program, which will be available to local housing authorities to control and prevent drug use, drug trafficking and drug-related crime in these communities. Since 1989 when this program began, over 1,700 grants totaling over \$500 million have been awarded to housing authorities, so you can see that if we awarded over \$500 million from 1989 to the present, and this year, today, we're making available \$232 million -- almost a half of the total, we have increased the amount of money available for this program. It is directly -- goes directly to housing authorities for their use in attempting to get a handle on these problems.

HUD has also made available \$75 million for what are called family assistance centers. These are family living environments in public housing where young people can have access to educational opportunities, recreational opportunities and employment opportunities, and we tie those carefully into our anti-crime strategies.

All of this will tie into the president's \$6 billion anti-crime initiative. One step in which HUD is involved is the encouragement of police residency in public housing and in central city settings, and I'm very pleased to say we're having tremendous success in persuading housing authorities to give up units so that police officers can come in at discounted or no rents and live in public housing developments. It does seem to make a substantial difference.

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So my message today is, in summary, three-fold first, when we work together this way, we can produce results, and the last month has proven results already in public housing and housing settings.

Secondly, a key is that the federal agencies work together in an unprecedented way. I want to thank the attorney general. Because of the Justice Department entities involved in this effort -- DEA and the FBI, the U.S. attorneys, and the Treasury because of the role of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, and the Secret Service which gets involved in money laundering investigations -- all of which have collaborated to produce these successes and many more that we believe will be coming. It is reinventing government at its best when agencies can cross territorial lines, jurisdictional lines and work together for results.

Finally, I pledge to join the attorney general in her efforts over the next month to -- over the next several weeks, I should say, to do everything we can to pass the crime bill. That means going around the country, talking to citizens who in turn can express their opinions to their legislators, and working as part of the White House team to pass this important measure which will build upon the successes as additional funds are available for both prevention and enforcement and punishment phases.

It's my pleasure now to introduce my esteemed colleague, Dr. Lee Brown, director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy.

MR. BROWN: Thank you, Mr. Secretary. I also appreciate the opportunity to be here this morning to participate in the update on the administration's efforts to combat crime and violence and drug abuse. The Office of National Drug Control Policy supports this nation's criminal justice efforts by coordinating and overseeing both the international and domestic anti-drug abuse programs for all executive branch agencies. Additionally, the office serves to ensure that federal anti-drug efforts support those of state and local governments through collaborative initiatives.

While the results of these initiatives may overlap with those of my colleagues here with me today, it is the coordination and the funding role played by ONDCP which is so very vital to success. The office has made some major inroads toward advancing President Clinton's goal to institute a sustained, organized, disciplined approach to combat crime, drugs and violence.

I want to briefly describe some of the initiatives that highlight the ONDCP's efforts toward achieving that goal. ONDCP fosters

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collaborative federal, state and local anti-drug efforts through its high-intensity drug trafficking area -- or a program we call the HIDTA program. During the past year, ONDCP provided funding to five HIDTA regions around the country. This funding supports over 150 federal, state and local initiatives which include multiagency task force operations, intelligence sharing networks and investigative support centers. These HIDTA programs target what we call gateway areas for drugs entering this country by working toward dismantling significant drug trafficking or money laundering organizations in Los Angeles, New York, Miami, Houston, and along the southwest border.

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Last year, these major task force operations seized more than 17 tons of cocaine and over \$241 million in drug-related assets. While these statistics may reflect the outstanding efforts of several law enforcement agencies, it's significant to stress that it was through the HIDTA program that federal, state and local agencies came together to conduct these joint operations. I have been involved in law enforcement over 30 years at the local level, and during that time I've seen the conflict and the lack of cooperation between state and local -- particularly state and local and the federal agencies. That is not the case today. Never in the history of my career have I seen a better working relationship between federal, state and local agencies than is the case now.

This year, this administration has taken another important step in combating drug abuse by integrating treatment services into the HIDTA program. Last month, I designated the Washington-Baltimore region a high intensity drug trafficking area. The primary focus of this HIDTA, which is expected to be a prototype for future initiatives, will be to reduce hard-core drug use through the region by coordinating treatment services with law enforcement programs.

I think we all know that jails around the country are filled with non-violent criminals who commit minor crimes so they can buy their daily doses of crack or heroin. This HIDTA will not only work to reduce the amount of drugs available to those chronic, hard-core drug users but it will also work to minimize the impact of the heroin addict who steals a carton of cigarettes from the 7-11 by treating the cause of the problem, his addiction. The logic is quite clear, we have to not only deal with the problem itself, that is the crime, but also try to stop the problem by dealing with the addiction. And that's consistent with the strategy the president released -- the National Drug Control Strategy the president released a few weeks ago. This will, in turn, free up jail space and other law enforcement resources which can be used to investigate and also incarcerate violent offenders.

To be successful, this program will require the coordination of not only federal, state and local law enforcement, but also the treatment community and the courts. I've allocated \$3 million in initial funding for this year toward the development and implementation of specific programs which will facilitate this coordination. Through its role as a policy development and coordination office, ONDCP serves to integrate the many functions of the more than 50 federal agencies involved in the nation's anti-drug efforts with those of state and local governments. We feel very strongly that this coordination, this working together will be the

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process by which we can take back the streets of our cities block by  
block.

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And that's the objective, to make sure that this country is a safer country.

I also join the attorney general and Secretary Cisneros in saying that the passage of the crime bill is extremely important. I'm particularly interested in seeing the 100,000 more police officers be made available to the police departments throughout this country, primarily to implement the concept of community policing. I know community policing works. It worked when I served as police chief in Houston, Texas. It worked when I was the police commissioner of New York City. In fact, in New York City, after only one year, we saw crime go down in every major index category, and that had not occurred in the 36-year history of this department -- that department.

So it's important that we get about the business of passing the crime bill, working together as partners with state and local and federal agencies and the American public in order to make a difference.

Now, I'm pleased to introduce the assistant secretary of treasury, Ron Noble.

MR. NOBLE: Good morning. This Thursday, March 31st, is the 13th anniversary of the attempted assassination of President Reagan and the wounding of former White press secretary James Brady, someone who many of you knew. And therefore, in our view, it is fitting to discuss the impact of the Brady law. We all recall the challenges and the complaints many people had about how ineffective Brady would be. If we look at this chart, we see the impact it's already had. In Houston, there were 2,183 forms processed, and 199 denials. In Dallas, we see 48 denials. In Ohio, we see eight -- 41 denials and eight were for fugitives.

So we see the impact Brady's having. We're making it more costly, more expensive, for people to purchase firearms. Convicted felons are trying to do it, fugitives are trying to do it. It's having a very real impact. And but for the work of the attorney general and my colleagues up here and the president, Brady would not have been passed.

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Also in the area of federal firearms licensing reform, prior to this year there were only 240 inspectors at ATF processing federal firearms license applications. And the process was so rubber-stampish, if you will, that even dogs were receiving federal firearms licenses. And early this last year, the New York City Police Department, in conjunction with ATF, embarked on a pilot project that, during last year, resulted in a 94-percent reduction of those people who received federal firearms licenses.

Now, why is that important? It's important because, with 284,000 federal firearms license holders which we currently have, it's impossible to regulate, it's impossible to do the sort of tracing that you need to do. Again, this will cost money, and the secretary and the president are supporting an increase in the licensing cost to cover the cost of doing the background inspections that you and I would want before giving someone the privilege of selling firearms.

Also in conjunction with the Department of Justice, we've continued to pursue what Treasury calls the Achilles Project, where we target armed career criminals, people who've had three serious violent felony convictions or drug-trafficking convictions. Or if they're convicted for being in possession of a firearm after having these three violent felony convictions on their record, or drug-trafficking convictions, they go away for a minimum of 15 years, in another important initiative that we're working in conjunction with the Department Justice, as well as the initiatives with HUD and with ONDCP.

So while I agree with the attorney general and everyone else who says it's difficult to highlight in a very brief period what differences we've made, we are making differences.

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The cooperation which has been referred to is more difficult to quantify but it's a spirit that makes all the difference in successful investigations versus unsuccessful turf battles.

One other area that I'd like to highlight is the Treasury Department has the ability to reclassify certain weapons as destructive devices if they don't satisfy any legitimate sporting purpose. The secretary did that on February 28th. He reclassified an item called the street-sweeper, which looks like the old Tommy gun but discharges shotgun shells instead of bullets and discharges 12 shotgun shells within three seconds. The same weapon was found fully loaded and operational at the residence of one of the people who was suspected to have been involved in the shooting of the Hasidic Jews on the Brooklyn Bridge this year. So in conjunction with the Department of Justice, HUD and with ONDCP, we at Treasury are committed to a coordinated effort to try to make a difference in the crime problem confronting this country.

Thank you.

Q: What do you think is the possibility? I mean is there any hang-up in passage of the crime bill do you think, running into a problem or --

ATTY GEN. RENO: I don't see any hang-up in the passage of it. I think it's just important that we focus on it as soon as Congress returns and that we all work together to fashion a balanced bill that punishes the dangerous and that does -- develops prevention programs with our communities that can keep kids from crime.

Q: General Reno, you might say that this briefing may have been called because the administration wants to present this united front. You may have seen this report, a report out of U.S. News and World Report, in particular, which says that the working group report on crime is not being released by the White House suggests that that report is, in a sense, too soft compared to what the public mood might be right now. Could you respond to that?

ATTY GEN. RENO: I don't know -- I didn't see the article so I can't respond to the article.

Q: It says that the --

ATTY GEN. RENO: One of the things I learned never to do is to respond to articles that I haven't read. But I'll be happy to read it and have Carl give you a response.

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Q: Well, have you seen the working group report?

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

Q: It's like an 89-page report.

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

Q: Are you advocating the truth in sentencing as part of the  
prison grants?

ATTY GEN. RENO: I think what we've got to do is to work with  
states to get dollars to them in ways that count so that they can  
begin to achieve truth in sentencing. I think it's important that we  
have -- work with them to set standards that they can meet and that  
end up ultimately making sure that these dangerous offenders get the  
sentence they deserve and then actually serve it.

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Nothing is so frustrating for the American people than to see somebody  
out in 20 to 30 percent of the sentence when they were dangerous  
offenders.

Q: (You ?) were using the figure 100,000 new cops. In New  
York, Mayor Guiliani says that doesn't meet the truth-in-packaging  
provisions, and that actually it's funding of 20,000 cops for five  
years, and only 75 percent funding, so it's really only 15,000 cops  
Is that accurate or is that --

ATTY GEN. RENO: I haven't heard his comment. What we have tried  
to do is to work with mayors throughout the country to make sure that  
what is provided for is something that is actually delivered. As a  
prosecutor on the streets of Miami, I used to get frustrated when I  
would hear federal promises that didn't materialize, and we want to  
make sure that there's funding in the crime bill to provide support  
for 100,000 police officers. We've always talked about developing a  
match. For those communities that can't provide the match, there  
would be waiver programs, but we're dead set and determined to make  
sure that when we promise something, we deliver it.

Q: But is it 20,000 times five years, or is it 100,000 for a  
period?

ATTY GEN. RENO: It's 100,000 cops developed within the next five  
years.

Q: So it is 20,000 -- funding for 20,000 each year.

ATTY GEN. RENO: We would hire 100,000 over the next five years.  
Whether it was 20,000 for five years, I'm not sure where he's coming  
from, but I'll be happy to contact his office and --

Q: What I'm trying to understand is whether -- it's 100,000  
different people, or 20,000 people paid --

ATTY GEN. RENO: It would be 100,000 different people is the aim.

Q: General, I understand you said that you put the money out  
for the first thousand --

ATTY GEN. RENO: Yes.

Q: -- and you had good results? What were the good results?

ATTY GEN. RENO: I am told -- I visited in Orlando, for example,

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and I am told in their community policing initiative, that they are having an impact. I have not gotten the statistics from them, but in all those that have received the grants and then have had time to see them begin to be implemented or enhanced, I'm told that they're making a difference.

Q: Ms. Reno, at one point months ago, you said that just having more police officers may not be the answer for all police departments, that some police chiefs felt that they really couldn't absorb more police officers. Are you certain that these 100,000 new officers will be utilized properly?

ATTY GEN. RENO: I have been so certain of it after talking with police chiefs around the country, visiting community policing initiatives, talking to citizens in the community. The desperate need that police departments have around the country to have police officers and this additional support that will permit them to transition to community policing is echoed everywhere I go. It's gotten so if I go to a community that's applied for a grant, I can barely get out of the community without everybody saying, "Where's my money? Why haven't you given me a grant?" I am absolutely convinced that the monies will be used wisely. I'm absolutely convinced that just money for policing won't work, but money for sound community policing that focuses on targets in the community where priorities are developed with citizens in the community, where citizens are involved and prevention efforts are implemented again with citizens can make a difference.

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Q: If I might follow, you paid some attention to the crime problem here in Washington, and the District has about 50 percent more police officers per capita than the next largest city. Yet clearly it's got a big crime problem nonetheless. But what is the problem here, do you suppose, if it's not -- obviously it's not just more police officers. I mean, more police officers certainly isn't just the sole answer.

ATTY GEN. REND: Well, as I have suggested, I don't think just more police officers. I think they have to be used the right way. I've obviously not made a close analysis of the district's issues, but I have asked Eric Holder (sp), the United States attorney, to work with the chief of police and work with public officials to do what is -- anything that the federal government can appropriately do to address the problem of focusing on the bad guys, the career criminals, taking steps to identify them and proactively go after them and make the arrest, apprehend the fugitives, get them sentenced to appropriate sentences while at the same time developing appropriate prevention programs.

SEC. CISNEROS: General, if I may say a quick word on the District, because I think that sometimes that's trotted out as -- and it's not exactly a good comparison. And Lee Brown, as a police chief, may want to add a word. The District of Columbia bears a different burden than any other city of 650,000 people or so as a result of the fact that it's the nation's capital. So it must allocate police officers to everything from traffic control to coordination with executive protective services in the mansion -- rather, in the embassy areas and so forth, unusual number of parades and other civic gatherings and so forth. My guess is that, while that number stands out of 50 percent more per capita, it really is because it's the District, because it's the nation's capital. And those police officers are not assigned to police -- the presumption in the question is not as accurate as one might think.

Q: Secretary Cisneros, how many -- do you have any idea of how many police officers have taken up this offer to move into the public housing?

SEC. CISNEROS: It's -- I don't have an exact number for you, but it's happening in more communities and faster than I might have imagined. And if you are interested, I could actually take you to people who are doing that right here in the District of Columbia. We have several police officers who have now moved into housing developments. But I would say in many communities across the country it is happening. We're also now taking the next logical step, which

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is to find ways to provide discounted housing for officers who want to  
live in central city neighborhoods -- not public housing, but in  
neighborhoods -- by making HUD-owned homes, the so-called HUD homes  
that we take by foreclosure, available on some discounted basis to  
police departments for officers who want to live in the city.

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data

Q: Are they told if they go in there with these discounts that if trouble breaks out it's assumed that they'll try to do something about it?

SEC. CISNEROS: A police officer, of course, is never truly off duty; carry weapons even when they're off duty in most jurisdictions. And so the assumption is, first of all, that their very presence, the fact that they drive a cruiser home, the fact that they -- in many communities that they arrive in a uniform, that people know that they're there makes a difference.

Now, will they come out in the middle of disturbance? Many will do that because it's their perception of their role as a police officer.

Lee, you might want to say a word on this concept in his role as a former police chief.

MR. BROWN: It's very consistent with the concept of community policing. It gives the police officer an ownership of a geographical area. I've visited those locations myself, particularly one in Elgin, Illinois and talked to the residents of the public housing community there. And they told the story of a dramatic, drastic and significantly important change for the better in the living conditions there as a result of having the police officers there.

And that is one of the reasons that the administration is so high -- the president is so high on the concept of community policing, because it represents, if you would, a new way of thinking about police work, a new way of delivering police services. It involves a partnership between the police and the people to identify problems that are of concern to the residents, not so much how the police see the problems but how the people see the problems, and then jointly coming together to determine what are the best solutions to address the problem, and then using the resources of the police, other governmental agencies, the private sector and individuals to solve the problem.

And that's what's exciting about seeing this really quiet revolution take place in law enforcement today, supported by -- will be supported by the resources provided by the crime bill when passed by the Congress. The additional police officers are important for community policing. An example being when I went to New York as the police commissioner the police officers spend 95, 96, 97 percent of their time just answering 911 calls. You can imagine that you can't really take the time to know the problems, know the people to solve

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the problems if you're spending your eight-hour tour of duty just  
running 911 calls. You can also imagine there's not much job  
satisfaction in doing that.

On the community policing, officers will have the time to work on  
solving problems, thus having a better utilization of the resource of  
the police department. So it's important to have the police officers,  
the bodies, to do community policing and, as I said you can't solve  
problems if you have no time to do so and you end up going back to the  
same locations over and over again. And so that's the reason you find  
that there's such great support throughout the policing field as well  
as the administration for the concept of community policing.

MORE

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Q: Could I -- I'm sorry, I have a question about the Treasury chart. These numbers, are they handguns? In other words, in Houston do we read that 199 people were told they could not buy a handgun?

MR. NOBLE: Yes.

Q: So that means that 2,183 people were told that yes, they could buy a handgun. Does that mean the sale went ahead, necessarily, probably?

MR. NOBLE: Yeah, the forms are processed. Assuming they had the money, the sale went ahead.

Q: Is that -- I mean if you look at that, since February 28th, which is what, three or four weeks ago, 2,183 handguns were bought in Houston. I mean, looking at these numbers another way, do you feel like, you know, maybe -- I mean, to me, that's kind of stunning.

MR. NOBLE: To me it's stunning that there are over 200 million handguns in the U.S. That's stunning. But what's more stunning is that there are people with records trying to buy these handguns and that we're able to catch them and stop them.

Q: Clearly, that's a good thing. But I just wondered if it makes you think about taking this a step farther to, you know, banning handguns or --

MR. NOBLE: No. No.

Q: Why not?

MR. NOBLE: Because the problem that we're trying to address with Brady and that we have addressed with Brady is we're trying to address the problem of the wrong people having handguns. Now, a law-abiding American citizen who wishes to own a firearm should not be prevented from owning a firearm. That's --

Q: Why should they have one?

MR. NOBLE: Pardon me?

Q: Why should they have one?

MR. NOBLE: First of all, there's a constitutional right to bear arms. We hear about it time and time again. I think there's a constitutional right to bear arms. And I also think there's a right,

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an individual right to protect himself or herself or one's family. So from my perspective, I don't do anything and wouldn't suggest anything that would impinge upon a U.S. citizen's right to purchase firearms.

Q: Are you a member of the NRA?

MR. NOBLE: One might think so in light of my answer, right?

Q: Are you?

MR. NOBLE: I am not.

Q: Under Brady, the local law enforcement --

MR. NOBLE: But I just want to respond. I'm a college professor -- a law professor on leave. I may be returning more quickly than I'd like. But please -- (laughter) -- but that's my individual position. That's my individual position, for the record.

Q: The Supreme Court has not ruled on that question of the militia, and so forth, has it? You're a professor.

MR. NOBLE: Okay, it's my individual position, please.

Q: Brady requires the local law enforcement establishment to make a reasonable effort. There are more and more reports that many of these law enforcement agencies don't have the resources to make that reasonable effort and that some even disagree of having to do it under Brady. My question is, has Treasury tried to enforce and follow-up, and do you have the authority?

MR. NOBLE: We've tried to work cooperatively with state and local law enforcement officers. The starting point -- we work very closely with the Justice Department -- was deciding who ought to be the chief law enforcement officer for each state; ought it to be one central locale, like a state police department where they might have the resources to do the kind of comprehensive check, or ought it to be a local police chief who would know when an application came through with a false address that it was a false address. We try to work cooperatively with state and local law enforcement officers.

We believe one of the biggest controls or checks to make sure that Brady is followed is if that chief of police in some town in the U.S. doesn't do a Brady check and that convicted felon purchases a firearm and hurts someone you know or someone in a town or someone in a community, that's a tremendous chilling effect, a tremendous check, a tremendous encouragement to make sure people follow Brady. But beyond that, the law, as I understand it -- and I've just been reading memos recently -- there's a question as to what action, if any, can be

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taken if a law enforcement officer in a particular state says I just don't want to do a check, I don't want to take reasonable steps or reasonable efforts.

Q: That means you don't have the authority?

MR. NOBLE: Authority in terms of -- we have authority at Treasury over the federal firearms licensed dealer. That's who we have control over. So at Treasury we don't have the authority over the particular chief of police requiring him or requiring her to do it. But you can see that a lot of people are doing it. So if there's a possibility that one police officer in one county isn't doing it, I guess that's theoretically possible.

Q: Does Justice have any authority over that?

Q: General Feno, is the death penalty posing an obstacle to passage of the crime bill? That has been true traditionally. I guess the death penalty is in the Senate bill but there's opposition to it in the House.

ATTY GEN. REND: No, I don't think so. I think everybody understands that there are provisions that they may oppose but we are trying to work together to fashion a balanced bill that meets both the desires and appropriate aims for punishment and prevention.

In answer to your question, we are work -- want to work with state and local law enforcement to make sure that the Brady Bill is enforced as appropriate, and I think working together, explaining what can be done when you identify the number of people who are denied weapons, we can have an impact.

Q: Will expansion of the death penalty, though, wind up being part of this compromise, what will happen to it?

ATTY GEN. REND: Yes, I believe it will.

STAFF: One more question.

Q: Mr. Noble, can you just explain, there were 50 denied in Dallas for reasons other than criminal history. What are the reasons there? Are these all drug addicts? What --

MR. NOBLE: No. There are a number of reasons. You can be mentally unstable, you could have been --

Q: I know. But -- (inaudible) -- you don't know what they are?

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MR. NOBLE: I don't have it for you, but I can provide it to you  
later, okay? Thank you.

Q: General Reno, in view of yesterday's action by the Supreme  
Court on the insanity defense, what's your position on it?

ATTY GEN. RENO: One thing I learned long ago is to never comment  
on a Supreme Court opinion till I've read it, and I haven't had a  
chance to read it.

Q It wasn't even a statement, it was just they wouldn't take  
the case. They let the Montana court ruling stand.

ATTY GEN. RENO: Again, the dumbest thing anybody can do is  
comment on the case when they haven't read it.

STAFF: Thank you.

Q: Is the Justice Department involved in the Colosio  
investigation at all? Can you address that?

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

END

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