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3 THE ECONOMIC CLUB OF DETROIT  
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8 THE HONORABLE JANET RENO  
9 Attorney General of the United States  
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13

14 Monday, May 2, 1994

15 Cobo Center  
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1           This is my fourth visit to Detroit in the past  
2 year. I came in June to speak at a Free Press  
3 conference on children. You have an exciting, a  
4 splendid city. It is beginning to cause waves around  
5 this nation of what a city can do when everybody comes  
6 together, when government and business and neighborhood  
7 leaders and citizens in the community start working  
8 together to rebuild a city, to rebuild a community, to  
9 be proud and to cherish your tradition. It's catching,  
10 ladies and gentlemen.

11           I have been through your suburbs. I have  
12 visited downtown. I rode along the river front this  
13 morning. I walked around Belle Isle. I went last night  
14 to an incredible dinner, bringing so many people  
15 together. I have been to a La Raza Conference here.  
16 This city is an exciting, building city, respecting the  
17 differences of all, while at the same time bringing all  
18 together to solve mutual problems.

19           I have heard now of Operation Friendship,  
20 where you bring young Japanese baseball players from  
21 high school here to play, play with the  
22 Canadian-American team, an incredible opportunity for  
23 young people, an incredible example of a city that has  
24 shown as a beacon of bringing people together.

25           I think I will, since I have been to Detroit

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1 so much now, cite you again and again as an example of  
2 communities that can begin to work. I think we have to  
3 look at it in perspective. I think with the depression,  
4 people started looking to Washington as a source or the  
5 cure for all the problems; with World War II, people  
6 looked more often to Washington as the place of  
7 authority, the place where things got done; with the  
8 Civil Rights efforts of the '50s and '60s, people began  
9 to look to Washington for justice. In the '70s, they  
10 looked to Washington for money. In the '80s, Washington  
11 started shipping programs to the states, but without the  
12 dollars, and the states started shipping the programs to  
13 the communities, but without the dollars, and American  
14 communities throughout this nation, with their back up  
15 against the wall, have now begun to do what Detroit is  
16 doing, and demonstrate to all concerned that we can make  
17 a difference if we come together. If we look at people  
18 as the most important part of the equation, and if we  
19 build on people and their differences by bringing them  
20 together.

21 You have shown it in the industry that has  
22 made this city's name in terms of coming together, of  
23 workers and management coming together to build better  
24 products that can make this nation proud. It is a great  
25 pleasure to be here, and I would like to talk to you

1 about the Administration's perspectives, but most  
2 importantly, from the eyes of the Department of Justice,  
3 in how we can form a true partnership with communities  
4 throughout America.

5 A community such as Detroit, far better than  
6 public officials from Washington, can look to your  
7 neighborhoods and understand that people come first,  
8 that people must be part of the equation; that people,  
9 not programs, are the best servers; that people, not  
10 programs, make things happen; that people, not  
11 bureaucracy from Washington, is what's ultimately going  
12 to get the job done.

13 You understand your needs and resources far  
14 better than an Attorney General from Washington. You  
15 understand how the eastern districts of Michigan may  
16 differ from other federal districts in terms of the  
17 burdens placed on United States attorneys, and you,  
18 understanding those needs and resources, can develop far  
19 better plans for how money should be utilized in a  
20 community like Detroit, than an Attorney General or  
21 bureaucrats from the Department of Justice.

22 I am trying my best to make sure that  
23 everybody in the Department of Justice understands that,  
24 and that we reach out as a team player with Detroit to  
25 other communities in the nation to build a partnership,

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1 but I think there are certain ingredients of that  
2 partnership. I don't think the mayor would like to deal  
3 with a whole bunch of federal agencies. I think he  
4 would much prefer to deal with the comprehensive,  
5 coordinated effort with the different federal agencies  
6 that impact on Detroit, with our Office of Juvenile  
7 Justice and Delinquency Prevention, working with  
8 education and HHS, to form a comprehensive unit that he  
9 can deal with as one, and we're trying to do that in  
10 Washington.

11 I think the common denominator of any  
12 partnership has to be a recognition on both the part of  
13 the federal government, and the community, that we have  
14 got to concentrate on prevention programs rather than  
15 waiting until the crisis occurs. For too long we have  
16 developed programs in Washington that have waited for  
17 the crime to occur and the jails to be filled, rather  
18 than focusing on prevention up front; that have waited  
19 to expend vast sums for tertiary medical care rather  
20 than providing preventative medical care up front; that  
21 have spent vast sums and a lot of words on homelessness,  
22 rather than providing family preservation programs up  
23 front; that has preferred to spend a lot of money on  
24 remedial programs as late as the community colleges,  
25 rather than providing sound child development programs

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1 that form a solid basis for education up front.

2 We in America, if we are going to make a  
3 difference and do what you're doing in Detroit, are  
4 going to have to put prevention first and start focusing  
5 on preventative mechanisms that make a difference. But  
6 as we do so, we have got to understand that there is a  
7 tendency on the part of those who focus on different  
8 areas to say well, look, I have this great program for  
9 juvenile delinquents, ignoring the fact that we will  
10 never have enough money to change juvenile delinquents  
11 unless we invest up front in children earlier on. Or  
12 they'll say look at the wonderful thing I've done with  
13 Head Start, without recognizing that unless we do  
14 something for elementary school students, afternoons and  
15 evenings, all the good work of Head Start can go for  
16 naught.

17 We have got to develop a continuum that  
18 recognizes that people are going to be moving from job  
19 to job in the future in this world, that the person who  
20 holds one job for all his life may not be a part of the  
21 business world to come, but that we should provide  
22 retraining at 40, at 45; as a person's particular  
23 position becomes obsolete, let them understand there  
24 will be retraining mechanisms; that we look at a whole  
25 continuum of development and understand where we can

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1 intervene at critical points to prevent the problem,  
2 rather than waiting for the crisis to occur.

3 And the most important, or one of the most  
4 important parts of this equation of partnership, is to  
5 recognize that we're all in this together. When I  
6 started as a prosecutor long ago, business people would  
7 say: Janet, you're a nice girl, but that's not my  
8 problem. And doctors who were treating the middle class  
9 would say: Janet, I understand your concern about  
10 children at risk, but it's not my problem. And I had  
11 prosecutors tell me the same thing. But what I have  
12 learned, and what so many people are learning, unless we  
13 invest in children and in prevention, we will never have  
14 enough dollars to build prisons 18 and 20 years from  
15 now.

16 The Council for Economic Development has made  
17 clear to this nation, that unless we invest in children  
18 zero to five, we will not have a work force in 15 and 20  
19 years that will fill the jobs to maintain America as a  
20 first-rate nation.

21 Doctors understand that health care  
22 institutions are being brought to their knees by lack of  
23 preventative medical care. Ladies and gentlemen, I  
24 think America has come to realize that we're all in this  
25 together. And as we work through solutions, we must

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1 work together. We must cross disciplines; the police  
2 officer must work with the social worker and with the  
3 pediatrician and the public health nurse. Prosecutors  
4 must work with business people. We can do so much if we  
5 come together and bring the power and the energy in all  
6 these disciplines to focus on a problem in a meaningful  
7 way.

8 But saying all that, there are two basic  
9 maxims that I think are important for us to remember as  
10 we develop this partnership. The family, a good, strong  
11 family is the best caregiver of all. There is no  
12 substitute for that family. And as we look at  
13 investment, we have got to figure investment and how we  
14 build stronger families, how we preserve families, how  
15 we keep families from falling apart, and it's possible  
16 to do it through family preservation programs and  
17 through policies and procedures that put family first in  
18 the workplace, first in what we're trying to focus on.

19 Secondly, a job that can earn a living wage is  
20 the best social service that I know, and we have got to  
21 prepare our children with skills that can enable them to  
22 earn that living wage; and for the businessman, people  
23 with the skills to fill jobs that take advantage of  
24 modern technology are going to be the great engine that  
25 fuel Detroit, that fuel this nation in terms of building

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1 an economy that can match anyplace in the world.

2 But what this partnership has got to be about  
3 is, let's forget the big picture, and focus on people,  
4 individual people, and if we don't let the size of the  
5 problem overwhelm us, then let us join together and,  
6 child by child, family by family, block by block,  
7 neighborhood by neighborhood, city by city, take back  
8 what we have cherished for so long in this nation,  
9 giving children a chance to grow in a strong,  
10 constructive way, giving us safety in our communities,  
11 giving us opportunities.

12 Ladies and gentlemen, Detroit is an example  
13 that we can do this, and the spirit that has been  
14 evidenced in this city in the year that I have been  
15 coming here, a spirit that is increasing every time I  
16 come, a spirit that is being heard around this nation is  
17 an example to all this nation that we can do it.

18 But where and how do we proceed from here?  
19 First of all, to rebuild community, to bring people in  
20 to a community so that they are willing to come out and  
21 to work together, requires that they feel safe.  
22 Violence has always been primarily the responsibility of  
23 state and local government. Too often the federal  
24 government has looked remotely away or focused just on  
25 bank robberies. I have said to the Department of

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1 Justice that violence has to be the first priority of  
2 anyone concerned about the criminal justice system at  
3 the federal or state level.

4 That does not mean that the federal government  
5 should go in and take a street level crime that's more  
6 appropriately prosecuted in the state court and take it  
7 to federal court; that means that all the federal  
8 agencies within the Department of Justice, the FBI, the  
9 DEA, Marshal Service, the border patrol, must join  
10 together in a comprehensive partnership with state and  
11 local government, working through the United States  
12 Attorney's office, so that we focus on the problems of a  
13 community like Detroit, share information with local  
14 police agencies that can help solve murders, help solve  
15 problems in the community, take those cases that most  
16 appropriately belong in a federal court, but do it as a  
17 true partner, not interested in credit, not interested  
18 in headlines, but interested in doing it the right way  
19 and in making a difference.

20 But in that effort, it is imperative, I think,  
21 that we look to what we can do to support states in  
22 other areas. Nothing is more frustrating to a  
23 prosecutor than to see somebody prosecuted, convicted,  
24 and sentenced, and not have enough prison cells. The  
25 crime bill pending in Congress now will provide direct

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1 dollars to state and local communities to make sure that  
2 we have the dollars to house the truly dangerous  
3 offenders for the time the judges are sentencing them.

4 Those three-time offenders who commit serious  
5 crime will face three strikes, you're out. We have  
6 tried to focus this bill as much as possible on that  
7 three-time armed robber, a person who has had one  
8 chance, a second chance, and continues to put a gun up  
9 against somebody and threaten and hurt them. We can  
10 make a difference. But most offenders don't belong in  
11 that category, and we've got to make sense of it and  
12 talk sense.

13 Most offenders are in prison today because  
14 they have a substance abuse problem that's gotten them  
15 into trouble, and they've graduated to stealing to get  
16 cash to sustain their habit. Too often we have cycled  
17 them through a system, knowing they have a drug problem;  
18 we send them to prison, we send them back to the  
19 open-air drug market where they got into trouble in the  
20 first place, without the drug treatment, without the job  
21 training and placement, without the aftercare, without  
22 the support, and anybody in this room can guess what  
23 they're going to do when they get back; they're going to  
24 start all over again.

25 Far better that we get drug courts provided

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1 for in the crime bill that will give people an  
2 opportunity to break that cycle of drug abuse. Far  
3 better that we have boot camps and youthful offender  
4 programs that can concentrate on offenders when they  
5 first get into trouble, and not only provide a fair,  
6 certain, sanction to fit the crime to let young people  
7 know that there is no excuse for hurting anybody else,  
8 but at the same time brings them back to the community  
9 through aftercare programs that can give them a positive  
10 start.

11 Now, some people say to me, why should I hire  
12 somebody who's been in trouble when I can hire somebody  
13 who hasn't? There are aftercare programs working around  
14 this nation today that have so trained people in work  
15 ethic, work performance, job skills, that some employers  
16 are looking to these programs rather than to others as  
17 sources and places to employ people who make a  
18 difference.

19 Ladies and gentlemen, if we work together and  
20 understand that we have got to invest with these kids,  
21 we can make a difference. But as important, an FBI  
22 agent or U.S. Attorney coming to a community may not  
23 know that community nearly as well, may not know that  
24 neighborhood nearly as well as the community police  
25 officer.

1 I have been in Highland Park walking through  
2 Highland Park with a community police officer that knew  
3 the residents in the elderly facility, knew the  
4 residents along the street. He was not somebody that  
5 just went by in the patrol car who was not known. This  
6 was a person that knew the community, knew the  
7 priorities, knew the problems, and I have seen evidences  
8 of community policing working throughout this country.

9 It's policing which puts people first. It's  
10 policing that says a policemen can be a partner with  
11 citizens in that neighborhood, can be a partner and a  
12 mentor to young people. Nothing is more rewarding than  
13 to walk into a program for youngsters at risk and see  
14 the community police officer there as the mentor for the  
15 young people reaching out to them and giving them a  
16 chance to do something else other than become involved  
17 in gang activity.

18 Wherever I've gone in America where there's  
19 been a community policing program in place, and put --  
20 implemented appropriately, it is making a difference  
21 both in crime reduction and in something more touching.  
22 To walk through a South Central Los Angeles elementary  
23 school, 40 percent African American, 40 percent  
24 Hispanic, and 20 percent Cambodian, with community  
25 police officers, and to ask those youngsters what they

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1 want to be when they grow up, and have them turn shyly  
2 and point to the police officers and say: I want to be  
3 a policeman.

4 With a smile and a trust, you realize that we  
5 are developing a new attitude about police best  
6 expressed by the young woman I talked to in south  
7 Dallas. Policemen have been my enemy, but they're not  
8 anymore. I now am looking at them with trust and hope  
9 and understanding.

10 Ladies and gentlemen, that crime bill provides  
11 for 100,000 police officers on the streets of this  
12 nation in ways that can help. Congressman Levin has  
13 made clear that we make it flexible enough to meet the  
14 needs of different communities. He's taken me to  
15 communities around Detroit to say it may be different  
16 here, we've got to have it flexible enough so that all  
17 communities can use it. We can make a difference  
18 there.

19 But that crime bill won't make sense unless  
20 there is a significant provision for prevention there.  
21 It is an historic occasion to see what the House has  
22 passed in terms of prevention programs that provide for  
23 afternoon and evening programs that can make a  
24 significant difference in a child's life. They can  
25 provide an opportunity for recreation, for learning,

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1 instead of getting into gangs.

2           Wherever I go in this nation, I ask people,  
3 kids who had been in trouble, what would you do to  
4 prevent the trouble in the first place? And they tell  
5 me again and again: Programs afternoons and in the  
6 evenings, somebody to talk to. We can do all of that,  
7 particularly in communities like Detroit where people  
8 are coming together to reach out to all our children to  
9 make a difference.

10           And finally, there's pending in the House of  
11 Representatives this week the bill to ban the sale of  
12 assault weapons. It just makes common sense that all  
13 America has got to speak out and to say that guns used  
14 just to kill people and for no other purpose don't  
15 belong on our streets. Those who are hunters, who are  
16 concerned about losing their right to possess their  
17 hunting weapons, need only to look at this bill and see  
18 that the bill provides explicit protection for 670  
19 hunting weapons and other weapons used for sporting  
20 purposes. It is also one of the pieces that can make a  
21 difference.

22           One of the next responsibilities of the  
23 Department of Justice is to enforce our Civil Rights  
24 laws, and I am dedicated to doing that with all my heart  
25 and soul. I am dedicated to trying to do everything the

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1 Department of Justice can to appreciate the differences  
2 of all Americans, the differences that have created the  
3 great traditions of this nation, of bringing people  
4 together to work together to solve our problems, Detroit  
5 is again a shining example of what can be done.

6 But for those who would continue to  
7 discriminate, those who would continue to spread hate,  
8 those who would continue to be bigoted in ways against  
9 others that is unlawful, I want to do everything I can  
10 to enforce the laws. But I have a suggestion for us.  
11 If the federal government works with community, if all  
12 of us work together, we can do so much by talking and  
13 learning. Let me give you an example.

14 We have focused on lending discrimination as  
15 one of our priorities in trying to end discrimination in  
16 the lending industry. Now, it occurs to me that  
17 somebody who wants to lend money, if he knows he has a  
18 good underwriting risk isn't going to be worrying about  
19 any other factors. As I got into this, I discovered  
20 that members of the industry weren't aware that they  
21 were discriminating based on race or based on ethnic  
22 background. It was sometimes just a pattern in  
23 practice; it was lack of marketing, lack of underwriting  
24 knowledge on the part of some of the people doing the  
25 underwriting; it was an unintentional discrimination.

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1           When the president of Charlotte Bank would  
2 stand up with me to announce a voluntary compliance in  
3 an agreement that we had entered into, and urged other  
4 members of the lending industry to join with the  
5 Department of Justice in securing the ending of any  
6 discrimination in the lending industry, it became clear  
7 to me that we work with communities, if we work with the  
8 business leaders of communities, if the United States  
9 Attorney, the Attorney General, and the national  
10 associations representing the lending industry come  
11 together, we can do so much short of enforcement to end  
12 this type of discrimination, and that's what I'm  
13 dedicated to doing in the Department of Justice; whether  
14 it be in lending discrimination, whether it be in  
15 enforcement of the Americans with Disabilities Act, we  
16 can do so much, because I keep discovering again and  
17 again that some of these situations develop  
18 inadvertently, and what we need to do is sit down and  
19 talk it out and figure out how we do it right. But for  
20 those who want to continue to thumb their nose and  
21 continue to discriminate, I'm going to do the best I can  
22 to enforce those laws as vigorously as possible.

23           Another area that I hear concern about are  
24 environmental regulations, but I suspect that there is  
25 every one in this room has a favorite river site, a

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1 favorite place in northern Michigan someplace, a  
2 favorite place to go in the west, someplace where they  
3 care passionately about the air and the water and the  
4 land around them, where they don't want anybody messing  
5 up their precious heritage, and for people here who  
6 never leave Detroit, there's probably their favorite  
7 patch of sky.

8 Ladies and gentlemen, we can protect the  
9 environment of this nation if we will come together in  
10 community after community, if communities that are  
11 affected by environmental practices that are coming from  
12 other communities join together, and we are dedicated to  
13 working with you in every way we can to make sure that  
14 standards are understood, the implications and results  
15 are understood, and that we can make a difference.

16 For those who continue to contemptuously --  
17 really to spoil our environment with contempt, then I  
18 say we must take enforcement action as vigorously as  
19 possible.

20 Finally, we have a responsibility in the  
21 Department of Justice to make the law real for people.  
22 So many people watched as the former vice president and  
23 the ABA got into a fussing match with each other about  
24 how to reform the legal system and how to provide access  
25 to justice and how to eliminate cost and delay. I don't

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1 think we need to get into a fussing match. I think  
2 lawyers want to end the cost and delay involved in the  
3 system. I think business people and others who are  
4 involved in the court system want a court system that's  
5 responsive and that can resolve disputes in a  
6 satisfactory and cost effective manner. I think working  
7 together we can make that difference.

8 But there is an even greater problem in  
9 America today. The ABA estimates that 80 percent of the  
10 poor and working poor in America are greater, an  
11 increasing number of people fall into that category,  
12 that 80 percent do not have access to the courts, much  
13 less to legal services. That means that for too many  
14 American people who are underprivileged and at risk now,  
15 the law means little more than the paper it's written  
16 on.

17 Lawyers around this nation with their pro bono  
18 activities can make such a significant difference, but  
19 the Department of Justice, the local Bar Association,  
20 and the American Bar Association, and most particularly  
21 with the business community, must join together as  
22 citizens who live in the streets of the nation, who work  
23 every day with common problems that most Americans have  
24 to grapple with, and we must work together to make the  
25 law real for all.

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1           No matter whether the Department of Justice  
2 did the best job it possibly could, formed the best  
3 partnerships, unless we make an investment in children,  
4 young children early on, we will never, ever begin to  
5 solve the problem; drugs, youth violence, team  
6 pregnancy, suicide, the ever increasing number of  
7 children in the ranks of the homeless are evidence in  
8 America that for the last 25 to 30 years we have  
9 forgotten and neglected our children.

10           If you don't care about it from common  
11 humanity sake, look at it from a businessman's sake.  
12 Unless we invest in children, we are not going to have  
13 the future. We can invest in technology, we can invest  
14 in capital structure, we can invest in our law firms,  
15 but unless we start investing in people at an early age,  
16 we're going to have a lot more problems down the line;  
17 and it comes back to making sure that parents are old  
18 enough, wise enough, and financially able enough to take  
19 care of their children, that children in America have  
20 proper preventative medical care.

21           Something is terribly wrong with a nation that  
22 says to a person 70 years of age: You can have an  
23 operation that extends your life expectancy by three  
24 years, and turns to the children of working poor people  
25 and says: Sorry, you can't get preventative medical

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1 care because your parents make too much money to be  
2 eligible for Medicaid, and they don't have insurance.

3 We've got to understand that zero to three is  
4 the most formative time in a person's life, and you can  
5 say "that's not my problem," but that's our work force  
6 15 years from now. Those are people that can be in jail  
7 15 years from now if we don't give them a future in  
8 those formative years.

9 50 percent of all learned human response is  
10 learned in the first year of life. The concept of  
11 reward and punishment and conscience is developed during  
12 these first three years. Too many children in America  
13 have been at risk in these three years for the last 10  
14 or 15, and as we form a partnership between the federal  
15 government and communities throughout America, including  
16 Detroit, we're going to have to make sure that the  
17 children of America have a strong and safe and positive  
18 future.

19 But most of all, it comes back to us. I  
20 remember that alligator wrestler. She didn't wrestle  
21 alligators that much, but she did build the house we  
22 lived in, and when she wasn't building the house, she  
23 was teaching us to appreciate Beethoven's symphonies, to  
24 bake a sponge cake, to play baseball, she spanked us.  
25 She loved us with all her heart and she taught us how to

1 play fair, and there is no child care in the world that  
2 will ever be a substitute for what that lady was in our  
3 life.

4 And yet I watch the young parents in America  
5 today, in your workplaces and in my workplaces,  
6 struggling to get breakfast on the table and the  
7 children off to school, come to work, try cases, talk to  
8 witnesses, get home at 7:00 or 7:30 at night, put dinner  
9 on the table, get the children bathed, get the homework  
10 done, and repeat it day after day; they run errands on  
11 Saturdays, sleep late on Sundays or go to church, start  
12 preparing for trial on Sunday night. They don't have  
13 quality life time with their children.

14 Ladies and gentlemen, if we can send a man to  
15 the moon, if we can do the things that we have done with  
16 technology in these last 30 years of America, surely we  
17 can put children and family first in the workplace and  
18 in America again.

19 (Whereupon Ms. Reno took  
20 questions sent in from  
21 the audience.)

22 MR. SHINE: If you had Waco to do over again,  
23 how would you proceed?

24 MS. RENO: What we did after Waco, as I said,  
25 was to take everything that we could learn from

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1 independent experts, to prepare different reports on  
2 different aspects of it. Other people volunteered  
3 information. We sought out anybody that could  
4 contribute any information, to try to understand how we  
5 might deal with that tragedy, or others similarly  
6 situated.

7 I directed the FBI to engage in a thorough  
8 review of the report and to implement a crisis response  
9 team concept that would be prepared, as much as one  
10 could be prepared, to deal with such a crisis in the  
11 future. I think it's clear that all the agencies of  
12 government, ATF and FBI, has come together, must train  
13 together in these aspects, so that from the beginning  
14 going in we understand all the implications, and that we  
15 consult with as many people as possible to make sure  
16 that we're on the right track.

17 The FBI has developed a crisis response team  
18 that will provide that balance. One of the tragedies of  
19 this openly horrible tragedy is that we will never know  
20 what the right thing to do was in the long-run, but what  
21 we will do is try to learn from our mistakes and be as  
22 prepared as we can with balanced efforts to try to learn  
23 for the future. I will never know whether it was a  
24 mistake or not, but I will try to learn from the past  
25 for the future.

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1 MR. SHINE: As a Washington outsider, and a  
2 woman, do you find it hard to break into that "men's  
3 club" mentality so prevalent in Washington, D.C.?

4 MS. RENO: No, it's the press corps. I think  
5 the press corps has given Washington a bad name. There  
6 is some unnamed Washington hostess that says I'm  
7 blustery, so I now go to a Washington dinner party, on  
8 the rare occasion that I do, and sit and put my hands in  
9 my lap and try to look very careful, but pretty soon I  
10 start waving my hands again and talking.

11 I have found Washington to be a much more  
12 friendly city than anybody has given it credit for, and  
13 it has been an exciting city. But it is really, again,  
14 good to get out from behind the beltway and see places  
15 like Detroit with such a spirit and such a tradition.

16 MR. SHINE: The U.S. Department of Justice has  
17 recently visited the Wayne County Youth Home. What is  
18 your intention regarding these at-risk youths who would  
19 be considered out before they're even up to bat, if  
20 appropriate mental health and education services are not  
21 provided?

22 MS. RENO: One of the things that we've tried  
23 to do is -- I used to be frustrated. I would sometimes  
24 call the Department of Justice and expect that they  
25 would have current information about programs that were

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1 working and not working. They didn't. We're trying to  
2 develop that in community policing and programs for  
3 youthful offenders and programs for serious youthful  
4 offenders, and domestic violence programs, and then  
5 other initiatives, so we can serve as a clearinghouse  
6 for the bold initiatives that are underway throughout  
7 communities in America that work.

8 I think, again, it's imperative that you  
9 provide a balance, that for young offenders who have  
10 committed violent crime, they've got to know there is a  
11 certain sanction, that there is no excuse for putting a  
12 gun up beside somebody's head and hurting them, but that  
13 the sanction should be fair, thoughtful, and fit the  
14 crime, and everyone should understand that that  
15 youngster is coming out of jail, or a youthful offender  
16 facility, and they're coming back to the community. If  
17 you put them in jail with more hardened offenders,  
18 they're going to learn how to be a better armed robber.  
19 If you put them in a program with others and have  
20 comprehensive, strict, proper supervision, along with  
21 educational opportunity, we may have a chance of getting  
22 them out with a chance of success.

23 We've got to follow that up with aftercare.  
24 We can have the best youthful offender programs in the  
25 world, but if you come back into the community with no

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1 follow-up support and aftercare and no parents that  
2 care, you're going to have the same problem again. It's  
3 common sense that we need, and we need follow through.

4 MR. SHINE: Do you have any thoughts about the  
5 recent controversy of caning in Singapore?

6 MS. RENO: People have been surprised that I  
7 don't have an opinion on this, but one of the things  
8 that I've learned long ago is, unless you're on the  
9 scene and have talked to people there, it's very  
10 difficult to understand. I'm opposed to torture, and  
11 each nation should have punishment that fits its  
12 tradition and crime without really giving in to  
13 torture. I don't know, not being there firsthand in  
14 Singapore, and understanding just what happens, what's  
15 right in that situation.

16 MR. SHINE: Do you think the U.S. should or  
17 will re-examine its policy toward Haitian immigrants as  
18 urged by Randall Robinson and others?

19 MS. RENO: I think this is one of the most  
20 difficult issues that I have faced, because I think, and  
21 I think the whole issue of immigration is one of the  
22 most complex issues that I will face. My father was  
23 born in Denmark. He came to this country when he was 12  
24 years old. As I told the students just before lunch, he  
25 spoke not one word of English. People in Racine,

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1 Wisconsin teased him about his funny clothes and funny  
2 accent. Within four years he was the editor of the high  
3 school newspaper and within -- he spent 43 years as a  
4 reporter for the Herald.

5 I turned around and watched the young Haitian  
6 students graduating from Miami's high schools, winning  
7 Silver Knight awards, graduating as valedictorian and  
8 salutatorian, and somehow or another we have got to  
9 maintain this nation's tradition as a nation of  
10 immigrants, properly supporting legal immigration.  
11 We've got to make sure that our asylum laws are real for  
12 people throughout the world. We have got to make sure  
13 that illegal immigration is dealt with in the best  
14 possible way. And in this context, I think it is  
15 important that we continue to review all immigration  
16 policies to make sure that they are properly balanced  
17 with regards to both supporting legal immigration,  
18 protecting and asylum, and combatting illegal  
19 immigration, but doing it in a way consistent with due  
20 process.

21 MR. SHINE: Does the special counsel on  
22 Whitewater make periodic reports on its progress and  
23 when will we hear the results of the investigation?

24 MS. RENO: As you will recall, one of the  
25 reasons I was reluctant to appoint a special counsel,

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1 because if I appointed somebody, he could never be  
2 totally, absolutely independent of me. Having appointed  
3 that person, I tried to do everything I could to make  
4 sure that he was independent, which meant: You don't  
5 report to me, we'll work out your budget so you don't  
6 have to come to me, I won't control the purse strings.  
7 I chose you because I thought you were the best person  
8 to do the job, that you were experienced, that you had  
9 served as a Republican appointee, as U.S. Attorney for  
10 the southern district of New York, and then in a  
11 Democratic administration, and that I was going to leave  
12 it to you to do the job, Mr. Fiske, and that's what I  
13 have done. You will have to ask Mr. Fiske that  
14 question.

15 MR. SHINE: When will judges be able to again  
16 do their own sentencing, rather than the imposition of  
17 the mandatory sentences? Judges of the court room  
18 surely are intelligent enough to do their own  
19 sentencing, I believe.

20 MS. RENO: One of the issues that has  
21 frustrated me most is, if asked me what I have done  
22 worst in the first year of office, I say the thing I am  
23 least proud of is the delay in getting the justice  
24 positions filled and making recommendations to the  
25 president.

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1           One of the recommendations that must be made  
2 as soon as possible is to the Sentencing Commission. I  
3 think we have a wonderful opportunity through the  
4 Sentencing Commission, fully staffed, balanced between  
5 Democrats and Republicans, to see effective sentencing  
6 policies recommended, and I look forward to working with  
7 the Sentencing Commission and with Congress to make sure  
8 that our sentencing policies make sense.

9           MR. SHINE: You are a popular and respected  
10 Attorney General; however, the New York Times and other  
11 media continually state that your department is in  
12 turmoil and needs organization. Please tell us your  
13 house is being put in order and how that is being  
14 accomplished.

15           MS. RENO: Well, first thing I will tell you  
16 is that the man who worked for the Miami Herald for 43  
17 years taught me many lessons, one of those important,  
18 particularly in this last year, was: Don't believe  
19 everything you read in the newspaper. If you were an  
20 avid reader of the New York Times, I probably would say  
21 especially the New York Times.

22           One of the things that my brother-in-law did  
23 last summer in the height of all the press gushiness  
24 about me was to call me and say: Janet, I want you to  
25 take a banana peel, go out in the middle of Pennsylvania

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1 Avenue and carefully orchestrate your own graceful  
2 decent from all this gushy fame. Shortly thereafter,  
3 the New York Times ran its first piece, quoting nobody  
4 in particular talking about disorder, and we all agreed  
5 that that was my banana peel, for which I thank the New  
6 York Times.

7 I'm very proud of the department, rather than,  
8 I obviously think my house is in order. I've expressed  
9 my frustration over the slowness in filling positions,  
10 but we're making real progress. I think the department  
11 has done some exciting things. I think we have been  
12 historic in some measures already.

13 To give you an example, when I came to  
14 Washington, you will recall that the DEA, the FBI, are  
15 both Justice Department agencies, along with Marshal  
16 Service and the border patrol. I found everybody going  
17 in different directions. I had already seen people  
18 going in different directions in Miami where they had  
19 turf battles with each other, and I swore that I would  
20 try to end the turf battles.

21 We now have the Office of Investigative Agency  
22 Policy and Review, headed by Louie Free. Career people  
23 in the Department of Justice tell me they have never  
24 seen the federal agencies working together so closely,  
25 the federal law enforcement agencies; for the first

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1 time, the DEA and FBI have developed not only the  
2 sharing of information, but the systems for sharing  
3 information. They're starting to talk about common  
4 radios, automation, budgeting procedures, training. It  
5 is an exciting undertaking, reforming teams with the  
6 U.S. attorneys throughout the nation, improving training  
7 programs and disciplinary review programs.

8 I'm really excited about the direction the  
9 department is taking, but one of the things that I  
10 learned after 15 years in Miami, one day you can be real  
11 popular and the next day it can be the pits, the next  
12 day you're up, the next day you're down. I was lucky.  
13 The next time your Attorney General -- tomorrow I could  
14 take the brunt of it all, and so I would prefer for  
15 history to judge whether I ultimately had my house in  
16 order.

17 MR. SHINE: There are -- there were several  
18 questions sent up to the table about legalization of  
19 drugs in the United States.

20 MS. RENO: I'm opposed to the legalization of  
21 drugs. At home I prosecuted too many people. One of  
22 the stories that best evidences it, I was walking  
23 through a downtown office building one day, and a man in  
24 a worker's uniform came up to me and said: I want to  
25 thank you. I said oh, what for, sir? He said for

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1 arresting me. He said, actually for prosecuting me, one  
2 of your prosecutors prosecuted me. I lost my family  
3 because I had a drug problem. I lost my job. I had hit  
4 rock bottom. I had been stealing to get cash, and I got  
5 prosecuted. Your prosecutor gave me a chance to get  
6 into a treatment program, and I want you to know I've  
7 been drug free for two years. I've got my family back,  
8 I've got a job, and all I can say is thank you.

9 For that success story, there are some  
10 failures, but I also used to be, interestingly enough,  
11 asked to visit addiction treatment units of the various  
12 hospitals, or drug programs, to give their graduation  
13 address, because again, my office had been responsible  
14 for getting them in there in the first place by  
15 prosecuting them, and I was told, both by the people  
16 there, and by the treatment professionals, that the  
17 leverage of the criminal justice system had often times  
18 been the key, the trigger that had gotten people into  
19 treatment and had made them stay and ultimately made it  
20 successful.

21 The one thing I do strongly, strongly believe  
22 in though, is that drug treatment should be available  
23 for all Americans. Something is wrong with a nation  
24 which says to a person who might have five stiff drinks  
25 and drive up I-75 and plow into three cars and kill two

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1 people, look, if you break your two arms in that  
2 accident, you can have your arm set at the public  
3 hospital in Detroit tonight at the taxpayers' expense,  
4 if you don't have dollars, or if you don't have  
5 insurance; but I bet every single person in this room  
6 has known somebody who has benefitted from drug  
7 treatment, and I bet a lot of people in this room know  
8 somebody who has been on a waiting list for drug  
9 treatment.

10 As a prosecutor in Miami, that used to break  
11 my heart, that people would call pleading for  
12 treatment. I would have to beg and borrow a bed, and I  
13 would get them a bed, but usually what I found was I was  
14 displacing somebody else. We should have sensible,  
15 cost-effective drug treatment available.

16 I think some people have gotten a dim view of  
17 drug treatment because it became very popular when there  
18 was a glut in hospital beds around America and insurance  
19 companies were paying for drug treatment, and the  
20 insurance companies would pay for five weeks, and five  
21 weeks in a fancy hospital became what was thought to be  
22 the best deal.

23 Well, I don't think you need to sit in a fancy  
24 hospital after you've gotten detoxed, and I think with  
25 the appropriate case management, respite care, and

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1 nonresidential drop-in support, and other aftercare and  
2 support mechanisms, we can do so much. Again,  
3 communities know better than Washington how best to get  
4 it done within the context of their community, and we  
5 need to share it with you. But I am opposed to the  
6 legalization of it for that reason.

7 MR. SHINE: We are unfortunately running out  
8 of time, so this will be the last question, and it's an  
9 easy one. How does it feel to meet at Cobo Hall two  
10 days running? And the second part of that, now that  
11 you've made the New York Times crossword puzzle, what's  
12 next on your horizon?

13 MS. RENO: This has been an incredible  
14 adventure in this last year, Cobo Hall included,  
15 Detroit. I didn't see the reindeer this morning, so  
16 I've got to come back to see the reindeer. I don't know  
17 what comes next. One of the things that I learned is  
18 that you can never forecast the future. But I will tell  
19 you this, that after a year in office of visiting  
20 communities around the nation, of talking to people,  
21 businessmen, and just a youngster in the community, I  
22 have never felt so sure of this nation's future as I do  
23 now.

24  
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