

1 CRIME STOPPERS INTERNATIONAL, INC.

2 SEPTEMBER 30, 1995

3 VIRGINIA BEACH, VIRGINIA

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6 GUEST SPEAKER: ATTORNEY GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES

7 JANET RENO

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22 Reported by:

23 Rachel E. Evans, Court Reporter

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1 MS. RENO: Congressman, thank you so very  
2 much. It has been my privilege to have the opportunity  
3 to work with you over these past two and-a-half years,  
4 and I thank you so much for all of your guidance and  
5 good counseling.

6 Mayor, it's very nice to be back in  
7 Virginia Beach. I am getting to know the geography a  
8 little bit better now and it's a wonderful opportunity.

9 This is such a special privilege for me  
10 because I remember not so many years ago being invited  
11 as the chief prosecution in Dade County to a meeting to  
12 discuss a new program that some caring individuals  
13 wanted to establish in our community in South Florida.  
14 They called it Crime Stoppers. I didn't know what to  
15 expect. I recall going to the meeting and being so  
16 impressed that the people who wanted to initiate Crime  
17 Stoppers in our community understood the burdens of the  
18 local prosecutor, understood what it took to get a  
19 conviction, understood how important it was to protect  
20 witnesses and victims who might be frightened,  
21 understood how important it was to work with all  
22 aspects of the system, but most of all understood that  
23 they could not sit by idle and continue to let crime  
24 terrorize our community; that it was necessary,  
25 important and vital that citizens who care stand up,

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1 come up with creative solutions and work with the  
2 public sector, involve the public sector and make a  
3 difference.

4 I went back to my office. I told my  
5 prosecutors about this group that I had met with and  
6 told them that we were going to cooperate with them in  
7 every way possible. They immediately had questions.  
8 What about discovery? What about this? What about  
9 that? It is just going to be a mess. I said, just  
10 believe me. Trust me. When you talk to these people  
11 you are going to see a difference.

12 So I sent them off to some meetings. They  
13 came back with one comment, you were right. That  
14 program as I left Dade County had been so successful.  
15 People believed in it. Prosecutors believed in it.  
16 Police, private sector and those active in Crime  
17 Stoppers had really bonded together to make a  
18 difference. Crime Stoppers to me is the symbol of what  
19 involvement is all about.

20 The only way we are going to fight crime  
21 and violence in this nation is that if we all come  
22 together. Police can't do it by themselves.  
23 Prosecutors can't do it by themselves. It's going to  
24 require citizens like you, people like you working  
25 with officers who are represented here that come

1 together to make a difference. So use the system as it  
2 should be used, to see that justice is done and the  
3 people are held accountable.

4 So for me remembering that day in Miami  
5 when Crime Stoppers was organized there to see what it  
6 has become in my community, and now to have the chance  
7 to travel around the country and watch your efforts at  
8 work throughout the country, and now to gather here  
9 with representatives from around the world is a very  
10 very special privilege for me. And from one who has  
11 been the beneficiary of Crime Stoppers, all I can say  
12 is thank you from the bottom of my heart for caring,  
13 for working so quietly, so effectively and so  
14 wonderfully for the betterment of our communities  
15 around this nation.

16 A thousand communities around the world  
17 you have touched. That's an incredible figure. Four  
18 hundred and seven thousand crimes you have helped  
19 solve. Over three million dollars in recovering  
20 property. A 97 percent conviction rate for ninety  
21 thousand defendants. That is an incredible record. We  
22 have got to keep at it, though. We cannot stand by and  
23 accept the fact, as some say, well, violence is going  
24 down in many of our cities. Yes, violence is going  
25 down because of people like you who care, because of

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1 officers who are willing to put their lives on the  
2 line, because of prosecutors who work round the clock  
3 to get a conviction.

4 Yes, we are seeing results, but now is not  
5 the time for us to stand by. We have got to continue in  
6 our communities to build our partnership between  
7 police and the private sector, between social workers  
8 and teachers and correctional officials. Between  
9 prosecutors and first-grade teachers in truancy  
10 prevention programs and conflict resolution programs.  
11 Working together we can make a difference in this  
12 nation. And I am here to tell you that I have never  
13 ever been so encouraged.

14 For a long time as a prosecutor I heard  
15 people talk a lot. I watched as prosecutor. I watched  
16 us get the convictions and I heard people talk. But  
17 then I am seeing action now in this country. I am  
18 seeing communities come together to reduce the crime  
19 rate to make a difference. But what I also see are  
20 communities that are oftentimes overwhelmed with  
21 totally inadequate resources to meet the burdening case  
22 load produced by Crime Stoppers, by police officers who  
23 care, and that's the reason the administration and I  
24 have fought so hard over these last two and-a-half years  
25 to get the Crime Act passed and to keep it enforced.

1           The Crime Act was passed last year about  
2 this time with the promise that it would put one  
3 hundred thousand community police officers on the  
4 streets of America in these next six years. There were  
5 skeptics. There were people that said you'll never  
6 even get twenty thousand offices on the streets in the  
7 next six years. But now, a little over a year after  
8 the passage of the Act, we have authorized for police,  
9 for sheriffs, for highway patrols across this nation.  
10 Over twenty-five thousand officers, and by the end of  
11 the next year we expect fifty-five thousand officers to  
12 be authorized and ready to go to the streets or on the  
13 streets of this nation.

14           This is so important because yesterday in  
15 the senate the senate voted to maintain or took steps  
16 to maintain the COPS program, so that we hopefully when  
17 congress reaches final action on this effort can move  
18 forward with the effort of putting community police  
19 officers on the streets where they count, where they  
20 can make a difference, where they reach out to  
21 neighbors and involve the citizens of the neighborhood  
22 in identifying the problem, establishing priorities  
23 where they build a trust in the community, a trust that  
24 enables people to solve problems together.

25           Now, some people say, well, you know those

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1 federal grants. I used to be the beneficiary of  
2 federal grants and I used to have to write the grant  
3 applications. And I used to get real tired of all of  
4 the bureaucratic red tape that was involved in doing  
5 it. So we set about working with police agencies  
6 across this country to develop effective simple grant  
7 applications that can get the money to the communities  
8 where the money can count, but do it in a way that  
9 holds everyone accountable.

10 It is now a wonderful experience to go  
11 into a community and have neighbors come up to me with  
12 their police officers and say we're working together.  
13 This is community policing. Crime is down 8 percent in  
14 our community or 15 percent in our community. We have  
15 come to the point in America where we can say this is  
16 working. Crime Stoppers is working. Community  
17 policing is working. Neighborhood efforts are working.

18 Let us not turn back. Let us go forward. For that  
19 Crime Act also recognized something else, that one of  
20 the most frustrating things that can happen to a police  
21 officer or to a prosecutor or to, I suspect, you when  
22 you have been involved in making sure that information  
23 is furnished that can solve the crime and produce the  
24 conviction, is to see somebody sentenced to ten years  
25 for an armed robbery and find them back out on the

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1 streets in two or three years because we don't have  
2 adequate prison cells in the state and local level to  
3 house the truly dangerous offender for the length of  
4 time that the judges are sentencing them.

5           The lack of truth in sentencing has done  
6 as much to undermine the public confidence in the  
7 criminal justice system as anything I know. We have  
8 got to make sure that dangerous offenders, the people I  
9 call the mean bads, are put away and kept away and that  
10 we have enough prison cells to do that. The major  
11 responsibility for that effort is on the state and  
12 local government, but they have been overwhelmed again  
13 and again.

14           This Crime Act will provide money to  
15 almost eight billion dollars for state and local prison  
16 capacity, for boot camps, hopefully so that we can  
17 insure that the dangerous offenders are incarcerated  
18 for the length of their sentence and that we can stop  
19 this merry-go-round of in and out that has too often  
20 occurred over the past ten to fifteen years. It is  
21 important that we focus on what other aspects of the  
22 Crime Act that already have enacted.

23           What many police officers will tell you as  
24 we try to figure out what to do about the violence is  
25 that so much of it is related to domestic violence.

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1 Now, that may surprise some of you, but when I took  
2 office in 1978 I sent people to the medical examiner's  
3 office to review case files for the previous 20 years.  
4 They came back with what was a startling report to me.  
5 That 40 percent of all of homicides in Dade County over  
6 that 20-year period were related to domestic violence.  
7 Husband and wife, boyfriend-girlfriend, ex-spouse. We  
8 developed a domestic intervention program, and slowly  
9 over the years police and courts and others have come  
10 to recognize that unless we stop violence in the home  
11 we are never going to stop it on the streets or in the  
12 schools or America. That the child who watches his  
13 father beat his mother is going to come to accept  
14 violence as a way of life, and that we have got to  
15 interrupt the cycle of violence in the home if we are  
16 ever going to stop it in the communities of this  
17 nation.

18 That is why a major commitment to violence  
19 against women was made in the Crime Act that has  
20 produced grants to every state in the nation as a  
21 downpayment on this effort of four hundred and  
22 twenty-six thousand dollars per state to be used for  
23 innovative programs, for more shelters, for police  
24 units, for initiatives that can join in community  
25 efforts to stop this type of violence.

1           Yesterday the senate restored full funding  
2 to that effort, so it looks like again we are going to  
3 be moving forward instead of backwards.

4           Now, those of you who have cared, who have  
5 been to the community leaders, who have worked in the  
6 Crime Stoppers' efforts will understand that one of our  
7 frustrations in law enforcement is that the drugs are  
8 fueling it. But it is really frustrating when you  
9 charge somebody with possession of a small amount of  
10 cocaine. They are first offenders. They are an  
11 obvious abuser and there are no treatment programs and  
12 no leverage to get that person into treatment. Drug  
13 courts are spreading across this nation. Drugs courts  
14 that operate from a good old fashioned carrot and stick  
15 approach that says, look. You're a first offender.  
16 You are non violent. You have a drug problem. You had  
17 a small amount on you. You can go into this program.  
18 You can work with us. The court will continue  
19 supervision over you in the next year. We will work  
20 with you in job placement, and if you stay clean we  
21 will help you off to a fresh start. But if you mess  
22 up, you're going to face punishment.

23           Those programs have been evaluated. They  
24 are working. It's not talk. It's something that is  
25 actually working. And yesterday the senate restored

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11.

1 monies to the drug court programs that will permit  
2 these programs to spread across this nation. In short,  
3 I think we are moving forward but, ladies and  
4 gentlemen, you understand when I see something like  
5 this, you understand, and the fact that you are putting  
6 this issue first.

7           The greatest single crime problem in  
8 America today is youth violence. Children unfortunately  
9 killing children in too many instances. It started in  
10 1985 many think as a result of the crack epidemic and  
11 it rose dramatically. Youth homicides committed  
12 between those ages 14 to 17 rose dramatically since  
13 1985. At the same time, for most of that period of time  
14 the number of young people in the age category of 14 to  
15 17 was going down. But in the last two years that age  
16 group is starting to swell in number. The demographics  
17 based on the population of zero to ten right now  
18 indicates there will be a significant increase in young  
19 people ages 14 to 17 in the next twenty years in this  
20 country.

21           The message is very very clear. Unless we  
22 start doing something about youth violence now the  
23 problem is only to get worse. For too long now we have  
24 neglected the juvenile justice system. We have waited  
25 to put our dollars into prisons rather than putting our

1 dollars into detention facilities or programs for  
2 serious youthful offenders or sound probation programs  
3 or juvenile justice programs that can make a  
4 difference.

5 I think this Crime Act will enable us to  
6 let kids know that they're going to be accountable for  
7 their actions, that there is no excuse whatsoever for  
8 putting a gun up beside somebody's head and hurting  
9 them, that you are going to face a punishment. A fair  
10 firm punishment that fits the crime. But that there is  
11 going to be a recognition that for most of these young  
12 people they are coming out of the detention facility or  
13 the serious youthful offender facility or even the jail  
14 sooner rather than later, and it makes no sense to put  
15 a youthful offender age 15 in a detention facility for  
16 two years, no matter how good it is, and then at 17  
17 turn that youngster back to the apartment over the  
18 open-air drug market where they got in trouble in the  
19 first place. Nobody can look at that and think that it  
20 makes any sense.

21 We have to focus on after-care programs  
22 that can make a difference for our youngsters after  
23 they have received the punishment. But as importantly,  
24 all of us, prosecutors, attorney general, those who  
25 have worked so long and so valiantly in the Crime

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1 Stoppers effort, all of us around this nation are going  
2 to have to figure out what we can do to give our  
3 children a chance to grow in a strong constructive way.

4 Through truancy prevention programs, through conflict  
5 resolution programs, through afternoon and evening  
6 programs that occupy our children's time in appropriate  
7 and constructive ways.

8 But, again, this nation is galvanizing  
9 into action. People are coming together to develop  
10 just such programs in our communities. We have got to  
11 continue that effort. It is so rewarding to me to see  
12 what happens when we reach out to children and show  
13 them that we care. To stand in a place that has a high  
14 crime problem in Dorchester, Massachusetts, and have  
15 young men who have almost been into trouble and  
16 probably some into trouble come up to me and tell me  
17 that for the first time they have a mentor. First time  
18 they have somebody to look up to. They are getting  
19 into job training. They're making a difference in  
20 their lives, and the men that made the difference in  
21 their lives were two community police officers.

22 When I go to South Dallas and a young  
23 woman stands up and says I was taught not to trust  
24 police officers but this community police officer on  
25 this beat is my friend and I trust him, and he is

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1 making a difference for all of us. When the  
2 businessman joins in and she says he is helping me by  
3 giving me experience in terms of how to get jobs and  
4 what to do and how to work. All of us can make a  
5 difference.

6 I refuse to suggest or even let anybody  
7 suggest that we have to sacrifice the generation. I  
8 refuse to say we cannot make a difference. I go back  
9 to that morning I met in the hotel in Miami with the  
10 Crime Stoppers representatives who had a new program, a  
11 new idea that they thought, they knew, they believed  
12 could make a difference. They were willing to come to  
13 new communities to recruit people in communities to  
14 make that difference. They made a difference. They  
15 are making a difference, and together all of us in this  
16 country working together can make sure that child by  
17 child, family by family, school by school, neighborhood  
18 by neighborhood, city by city, we can take this nation  
19 back for our children again. We can stop the violence  
20 because of people like you who care, who refuse to  
21 remain on the side lines, who are willing to commit  
22 time and effort to make a difference.

23 Good bless you all.  
24

25 (Whereupon, the speech was concluded at 12:10 p.m)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

STATE OF VIRGINIA

CITY OF VIRGINIA BEACH, to-wit:

I, Rachel E. Evans, A Notary Public for the State of Virginia at Large, certify that the foregoing speech of Janet Reno was duly taken by me at the time and place and for the purpose in the caption mentioned, and that the transcript is a true record.

Given under my hand this 2nd day of October, 1995.

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 Notary Public

My commission expires: November 30, 1995