



# Department of Justice

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ADDRESS

BY

THE HONORABLE GRIFFIN B. BELL  
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES

BEFORE

THE 108TH SESSION

OF

THE FBI NATIONAL ACADEMY GRADUATION EXERCISES

10:30 A.M.  
THURSDAY, MARCH 24, 1977  
FBI NATIONAL ACADEMY  
QUANTICO, VIRGINIA

This is the first graduation ceremony at the FBI Academy that I have attended since becoming Attorney General, and I am honored to be with you.

Each member of this graduating class had to have outstanding ability to be selected to take part in the Academy's training program. You will return to your departments with even greater skills.

Those abilities have never been more needed in every city, county, and state in the Nation.

There are many vital ingredients that hold our society together and make it function properly. None is more important than the law enforcement and justice system.

Without the law, there can be no domestic tranquility, no rights, no freedom.

That is why I have decided to assign a high priority to fashioning an effective program for the national delivery of justice.

The Federal government will not do this work by itself, nor will it dictate to anyone. It must be a cooperative effort among all levels of government.

There is much for the Federal government to do. But most of the responsibilities will stay where they always have been and must remain -- with cities, counties, and states.

Criminal justice observers often say that the police are the first line of defense against crime. That is not the whole truth. Indeed, for most crimes, state and local law enforcement officers are the only line of defense.

There are now about 8,383 special agents in the FBI. By comparison, there are 25,500 policemen in New York City alone.

Similar points can be made about other components of the Nation's criminal justice system. The Justice Department has some 1,700 lawyers in its 94 United States Attorneys offices. In California alone, there are nearly 1,800 county and city prosecutors.

The greatest burdens are on you and other policemen, prosecutors, judges, and corrections workers at the state and local levels. The nature of the challenges facing you is extraordinarily difficult.

Serious reported crime increased 232 per cent from 1960 to 1975. A wide range of white-collar and financial crimes not only increased in number but grew more complex.

Both the individual and cumulative effects of this intolerable increase must be considered. Earlier this week, The New York Times printed a touching article by a man whose family had suffered repeated thefts. He concluded by saying: "we are resigned . . . to being victimized."

I hope such an attitude is not growing because of a national failure to reduce crime. But if it is, it must be

reversed, and the only way to do so is by demonstrating to our citizens that we can make significant inroads against crime and by improving the entire justice system.

It will be costly and time-consuming, but it must be done. Otherwise, instead of individuals becoming resigned to being victimized, it someday could be the Nation.

I have already begun a reorganization of the Justice Department as part of my overall effort to develop a new program for the delivery of justice.

To improve coordination, the Deputy Attorney General will supervise all aspects of criminal law enforcement -- including the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Drug Enforcement Administration, and the Criminal Division.

We intend to see there is maximum cooperation among Federal agencies and proper coordination between investigators and prosecutors. In addition, we want to make LEAA more responsive to state and local needs and more attuned to achieving greater practical benefits to the public.

The entire criminal justice system -- local, state, and Federal -- will be viewed as an integrated whole. I will ask every part of the Justice Department to be aware of its impact upon local law enforcement. This is not an offhand comment. It is a firm pledge.

In the time remaining, I would like to discuss some of my plans for the part of the Justice Department with which you normally have the greatest contact -- the FBI.

The FBI is the world's greatest investigative agency. I am convinced that it will become even better.

It has been through difficult times. Many charges have been made about some past FBI operations. But we must look to the future. Safeguards have been erected against recurrence of any past misdeeds and I will be frequently reviewing the system of accountability and supervision.

I believe the FBI today is an excellent organization, filled with dedicated and skilled personnel.

When he is sworn in, Deputy Attorney General Peter Flaherty will give a great deal of attention to the FBI. He will work closely with Director Kelley, and I am sure that the Bureau will continue to make ever-increasing contributions to the Nation's well-being.

It would be appropriate here to point out that the Nation owes a debt of thanks to Clarence Kelley for his guidance of the FBI during a difficult period. He resolved many problems that developed before he became Director, and he began new programs to improve FBI effectiveness.

Clarence Kelley has accepted still another major assignment before his retirement. He is a member of a Committee with the task of selecting a group of five candidates from which the President will select the new FBI Director.

The President wants nothing less than the best qualified person in the Nation to head the FBI.

The Committee has great respect for Director Clarence Kelley's experience. Most of the Committee's first meeting was devoted to his explanation of the issues that face the FBI and his views of the qualities needed in the new Director. In addition, the Committee urged him to ask all FBI employees to submit their own suggestions for Director.

Last week, the Committee mailed 460 letters seeking names of potential candidates. They went to law enforcement groups, law school deans, judges, governors, prosecutors, civil rights groups, and others.

The diligence of the search is an indication of the importance we place on the FBI. We want someone who will develop the Bureau while building on its existing strengths.

Many changes have taken place at the FBI in recent years, and more improvements will be fashioned.

The FBI is a young organization. Of its 8,383 special agents, nearly 2,250 have been hired since July of 1971. Another statistic is also meaningful: There are 4,015 FBI agents under the age of 35 -- nearly half the force.

A law enforcement agency must remain young in many ways, including a willingness to look at new ideas.

Because such an enormous amount of crime is caused by narcotics and drugs, I am determined to devote more resources to this problem. My actions will be based on facts.

I have directed a study of the possibility of converting the Drug Enforcement Administration into a division of the Bureau.

I want to know what such a move would accomplish and how FBI resources could help further to impede narcotics traffic.

Whatever the outcome of the study, the Federal priority in narcotics control will be against large-scale dealers and conspiracies. We will not squander resources on minor offenders.

Better techniques have to be found to combat a variety of crime. As criminals become more sophisticated, law enforcement must become more sophisticated. It is not enough to merely keep pace with the criminals. We must get ahead of them.

More accountants and computer specialists will be added to the FBI. This will be done through both internal training and recruitment. These specialists will investigate white-collar crimes, intricate frauds, and tangled financial schemes.

Fraud against the government, including Medicare and Medicaid cases, will receive a high priority. In plain language, these white-collar crimes translate into "stealing from the government." The public should understand that this means that these crimes are really thefts of their money.

The best way to convince thieves and would-be thieves that we mean business is to obtain a long list of convictions. This message will spread rapidly.

Organized crime and antitrust violations also will be pursued with renewed vigor by the FBI. There will be tenacious pursuit of the price fixers, the investor-cheats, and those who fleece the consumers.

While assuming new responsibilities, the FBI will shed some old ones. Director Kelley has already begun to restructure priorities, stressing, as he describes it, quality over quantity. This means that many more minor cases the FBI used to handle will be left to the states.

The FBI has an essential role in my efforts to improve the delivery of justice nationally. I am confident the FBI will be equal to the new challenges. In meeting with FBI personnel in several field offices recently, I have been impressed with what I have seen and heard.

The FBI is a proud organization and one to be proud of, as you have certainly learned during your weeks at the Academy. Without the FBI, law enforcement training would probably be a decade behind where it is now.

Your presence here is a tangible sign that meaningful cooperation can exist in the fragmented justice field. And if we are to succeed, that cooperation must grow.

Beyond all other qualities, however, one must remain foremost for all law enforcement personnel. It is integrity.

This is something we should all keep in mind as we leave here today to take on greater responsibilities in the American system of justice. I look forward to working with you.