



Department of Justice

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ADDRESS

BY

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ATTORNEY GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES

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at the

Graduation Ceremonies of the Sixty-first

Session of the FBI National Academy

Departmental Auditorium

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Thursday, June 5, 1958

Thank you for your kind invitation to attend the graduation ceremonies of the FBI National Academy. I consider it a special privilege to participate here today.

Over the years the FBI National Academy has become a leading institution in promoting the idea that law enforcement has but one purpose-- to serve the people of our country. The principles of integrity, justice and concern for the rights of individuals which are taught here in the Academy serve as important guidelines for all public officials. But in addition, equal attention is given to effective law enforcement. The "rule of law" as we know it is a hollow phrase unless the law is enforced effectively, not only with due regard for the rights of the individual, but also for the public's right to be protected from crime and lawlessness. The country owes a debt of gratitude to the FBI National Academy.

It is not realistic to talk about the FBI National Academy without giving credit where credit is due. The Academy is--like so many other advances in the field of law enforcement--in large measure the result of the imagination and planning of the Director of the FBI. The success of the FBI has not been based on empire building or on publicity gimmicks. It has travelled the path of performance to establish its reputation. Based on five years of close association with the men of the FBI let me say that I have never known a finer group, and I believe that there is no man in our country who is more dedicated to the public interest or who has served his country more unselfishly than J. Edgar Hoover.

We in America can be proud of our accomplishments in the field of law enforcement. Law enforcement officers, local, state, and national, are devoted to the protection of the lives and property and rights of the individual. We are taught and believe that proving the innocence of an accused is as important as getting evidence to convict the guilty. This policy is the hallmark of our free society.

We need only look to some other areas of the world to see the contrast. International Communism uses law enforcement as a weapon to demonstrate the ruthless power of the state. Secret arrests, third degree methods and concentration camps are the trade marks of dictatorship. The law enforcement officer is a mere tool to serve the selfish purposes of a ruling clique.

Although in the United States much has been achieved in the last generation in law enforcement, we must not be complacent. We still have many problems to solve. That is why you men have attended the FBI National Academy. The knowledge you have acquired here will make you more effective law enforcement officers, better able to protect the citizens of your community.

Law enforcement officials, by the very nature of their work, will meet with some criticism. That is the way it should be. A society where criticism is forbidden is alien to our way of life. We, as law enforcement officers, can learn much from constructive criticism.

Unfortunately, however, some criticism is not designed to improve law enforcement but to hamper it in carrying out its duties. Loose and unverified charges are made that civil liberties are being abused. Law enforcement officers are sometimes painted as a Gestapo peering over every citizen's shoulder. Such reckless criticism is an insult to the men and women who are devoting their lives to a career of service in the law enforcement profession. They suddenly see half-truths, insinuations and downright falsehoods conjured up to destroy public confidence in the validity of their work.

There is only one way to meet such destructive criticism. Keep your standards high. Law enforcement in the last analysis will be judged by the quality of its results in protecting the liberties of our citizens. If we do our job well, such criticisms will fall by the wayside, discredited.

Some critics have asserted the specter of a national police, and the charge has been made from time to time against the FBI. Nothing could be further from the truth. Instead of attempting to usurp the functions of other law enforcement agencies, the Department of Justice and the FBI have resisted grandiose expansion programs and instead are rendering services to strengthen local law enforcement.

I need but mention a few to you. The FBI Laboratory, for example, will examine evidence in criminal cases submitted by local law enforcement agencies. Later, if that case comes to trial, an FBI laboratory expert will testify as to the scientific examinations conducted--at no cost to the local

agency. During the fiscal year 1957, the FBI Laboratory conducted more than 160,000 examinations on evidence submitted by law enforcement agencies in every state of the union as well as in United States territories and possessions.

Then, there is the FBI Identification Division which contains over 148,000,000 sets of fingerprint cards. During the last fiscal year, almost 74 per cent of all arrest prints received were identified with prior police records on file, and over 15,000 criminal fugitives were identified. This fingerprint data, channeled to local law enforcement, is helping day after day in the solution of local cases--not by an FBI usurpation of local authority, but by a sincere FBI effort to improve the quality of local law enforcement.

You men are outstanding examples of the voluntary cooperation between the FBI and local law enforcement. Now, as you return to your home departments, you are better qualified to do your work. You have higher skills, new knowledge and greater visions of accomplishment. You realize more than ever the importance of cooperation, of working with your other law enforcement agencies in attacking the criminal. You can assist in the training of your fellow officers. You stand ready to give your full talents to your community.

This spirit of cooperation, it seems to me, forms the answer to many of our problems today. Crime is basically a local problem. Under our constitutional division of powers, about 90% of crimes are within the

investigative jurisdiction of local law enforcement. The FBI and other federal investigative agencies have specifically limited powers. They cannot--and do not--step outside that jurisdiction. The FBI is willing, through its various cooperative services, to assist local authorities in handling local crime problems but it has no authority to investigate outside its jurisdiction.

Often you hear demands, sometimes most vociferous, that the FBI should be ordered to investigate crimes over which it has no jurisdiction. The pressure becomes especially great when the crime is particularly shocking.

I can assure you that the Department of Justice is constantly alert to any possible violation of Federal law in such instances. We carefully consider the various statutes to see if any basis for Federal jurisdiction can be established. If such jurisdiction is found, we will institute an immediate investigation. If not, we assist the responsible authorities in every way possible. People are apt to forget how small the FBI is. The FBI has about 6000 special agents engaged in investigative work. New York City has more than 23,000 police officers and Chicago has about 9000.

To me, the greatest danger of a national police in the Nation today is the lackadaisical attitude which prevails in some quarters of "Let the Federal Government do it." This abdication of community responsibility can only lead to disrespect for law and order.

Law enforcement in any community is only as effective as the local citizens demand and are willing to support. There are some basic objectives towards which every community should strive:

Law enforcement must be handled by career law enforcement officers paid a sufficient amount to attract and keep good men. This means that the police force must be divorced from politics.

There must be a greater concentration of effort at all levels of government to smash organized crime rings. Nationwide syndicates of racketeers and hoodlums now exercise control over most profitable forms of illegality. From positions well removed from the products they dispense, they control the activities of bookies, dope peddlers, numbers runners, and vendors of obscene magazines. It is imperative that we bring the full force of all law enforcement agencies to bear against these overlords of crime.

There must be greater attention paid and more trained personnel employed to meet the growing problems of juvenile delinquency. Almost one-half of all the major crimes in the country are committed by persons under 18 years of age. Fully half of all the juveniles who come to the attention of the Federal Government are known to the juvenile authorities or police in their home communities. But for lack of properly trained personnel and adequate facilities the local authorities have been unable to cope with the problem before it becomes serious.

Finally, the community must be made aware that it, too, has a responsibility in seeing to it not only that individuals obey the law but that they must actively cooperate with the police if they want to live in a law abiding community. Under our system there can be no place for public apathy and even unconscious support of unlawful activities.

Our task--that of the Department of Justice and you as local officers--is to work together towards our common objective of securing for the Nation ordered liberty. Only as we enlarge our cooperative efforts can we deal with crime so that our people may fully enjoy our heritage of freedom.

In closing, let me again congratulate you upon your graduation from the FBI National Academy and say to each one of you that we have enjoyed having you with us.