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AN ADDRESS
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10:15 P.M., E.S.T.

Good evening, my friends --

A few weeks ago I visited Alcatraz Island--"The Rock", as it is familiarly called by its inmates, is a maximum security prison for dangerous criminals.

I went there to present to the families of the guards slain in the unsuccessful outbreak last May, engraved scrolls emblematic of their heroism.

Warden Johnson told me that there were several prisoners who wished to see me.

He explained to me that many of them spend their spare time looking up the fine points of the law in the hope of reopening their cases.

One convict, with a long record of crime, he said, was simply "looking for justice".

I agreed to see as many of the men as time would allow.

We began with the man who was "looking for justice".

He had very little to say.

In an attempt to make him feel at ease, I finally asked if he was the one who was "looking for justice".

He replied, "Yes, sir. I am looking for all of the justice you have got".

In my travels over the country I have found quite a few folks who want all justice for themselves.

Tonight we speak here of "Justice For All".

It is easier to state ideals than it is to translate those ideals into realities.

Yet, ideals are of little worth unless they become living facts.

The ideals of democracy and the actual living of them must be brought into harmony.

Although the march toward full democracy has been long and difficult,

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it is not yet completed.

It will be completed only when a living and growing America, full of promise, becomes an America in which the promise is fulfilled -- a land of justice and opportunity for all.

As I stand here tonight I see a large number of women showing keen interest.

In the not too distant past, even in good America, they were little more than the property of men.

They obeyed the laws but had no part in their working.

When an act to provide for woman suffrage was introduced in the Senate of one of the 48 states, it was referred to the Committee on Insane Asylums, where the Senators evidently thought it belonged.

Today, women are not permitted to sit on juries in many of the states, though the scales of justice feel the weight of their influence more than any group in the world.

We are now attempting to correct this evil by federal legislation.

Women have finally been permitted to practice medicine and law, and to work in the market place but, if married, in many states they cannot control their earnings.

They are good enough to bear our children but the law - in many states - gives them little share in the responsibilities of rearing them.

Justice for women will be complete only when they have been given an equal share with men, in the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

Likewise, it was only two years ago that the Supreme Court held that all qualified citizens of the United States, regardless of race or color, had a federal right to vote in a primary election where the primary election process was an integral part of the state's machinery of choice for the selection of the successful candidate.

The Court said they had such right to vote and to have their vote counted as cast.

Negroes have been voting in primaries in certain sections of the South, and other sections were added this year.

The ideal of justice for all will not be a living reality so long as the spirit of hate, hypocrisy, intolerance and fear -- abiding in the hearts of some Americans -- remains.

Breeders, spreaders and carriers of hate, whether racial or religious, are un-American and strike at the very heart of the American way of life.

Organizations and groups, such as the Ku Klux Klan, deliver a grievous blow to democracy.

Their program resembles that of totalitarianism for they build their platform on the exploitation of ignorance.

In the South, they fan the flames of white supremacy, -- in the North, they broadcast the seeds of intolerance and bigotry -- while in the West, they talk of America for the native born.

The enemies of freedom all use the same techniques in their program of destruction.

They pit group against group - race against race - faith against faith -- and set up a credo of brutality.

We must not use their methods in our fight for Justice For All.

We must use the American techniques of due process of law.

All races and all colors make up America.

All races, all colors, all faiths have helped to make the name of this Nation a synonym for liberty to all peoples in the world.

We are concerned today with Justice for all from the standpoint of minorities.

(OVER)

We Americans have an abhorrence at a lynching, at racial violence at the misuse or abuse of authority.

Puddin McFadden was a 60-year old colored farmer down in Florida.

One night the Town Marshal, a man named Crews, and some of his friends went out for an automobile ride.

Said Crews, "I think I'll get Puddin tonight if he is on the streets".

He was on the streets and some two hours later was forced by Crews into the car and driven to the Swanee River made famous by Stephen Foster.

After beating him with a whip, Puddin was forced over the bridge into the swirling water below.

Some days later, Puddin's body was found.

Today, Crews stands convicted by a federal court.

He received the maximum sentence.

A victory for Justice For All.

Isaac Woodard, Jr., a colored soldier, was discharged from the United States Army at Batesburg, South Carolina, after forty months' service.

He had served over a year in the South Pacific.

Isaac started to home here in New York.

He was on a bus.

There is some question as to who started an altercation in the bus but there is no question that today Isaac is blind.

It is alleged he was beaten with a blackjack in the hands of a local officer.

Today, that officer stands charged, on my direction with a violation of federal law.

A federal judge and jury will hear the facts and determine his guilt or innocence.

We shall prosecute vigorously.

John Jones and Albert Harris, Jr., young colored boys, were placed in jail a few weeks ago down in Louisiana.

Several days later the Sheriff told the youths they could go home.

Those were happy tidings -- until Jones and Harris walked out into the jail yard.

There waiting for them was an armed mob.

Whisked to a secluded spot, the mob used whip and club unmercifully.

Jones' lifeless body was found the next day but Harris, left for dead, escaped.

He is safe today - far away from Louisiana.

I ordered an immediate investigation.

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People assisted us magnificently.

Twelve days ago a federal grand jury in Louisiana indicted two deputy sheriffs, a police officer and others for this heinous crime.

A federal judge and jury will pass on these facts and determine guilt or innocence. We shall prosecute vigorously.

Several months ago there was a most serious racial disturbance at Columbia, Tennessee.

I immediately directed an investigation and later a grand jury presentation.

In a personal appeal, I publicly invited all persons having information to forward it to me or to the grand jury.

Every phase of the matter was heard.

390 witnesses were sworn and examined over a period of several weeks.

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The grand jury found no evidence on which to base an indictment.

Tonight I again say if any person has evidence identifying anyone engaged in this vicious vandalism, I welcome it and will personally see that it is presented to a grand jury.

Last July a frightful murder of four colored citizens of Georgia shocked the nation.

President Truman personally directed the Federal Bureau of Investigation to enter the case.

Over 2500 witnesses have been interrogated.

The President often inquires of our progress.

Today --- and I reveal it for the first time tonight - I have directed that the entire matter be presented to a federal grand jury.

I am hopeful it will be able to put the finger on those dastardly conspirators who committed this brutal crime.

It is true the jurisdiction of the federal government depends upon a thin thread of law.

I am sorry to say there is no field of law in which the federal government is expected to do so much with so little.

The federal statutes give me the power to prosecute only when a person has been deprived of a federally secured right.

The right of life, liberty and property, the Supreme Court of the United States has repeatedly held, is not a federally secured right.

Despite these legal handicaps, there have been 309 separate investigations involving civil liberties since I became your Attorney General 16 months ago.

Twenty-three cases have been prosecuted -- an average of one each three weeks.

Six cases, involving ten defendants, have resulted in convictions -- 8 in acquittals and 9 stand ready for trial.

I have burdened you with these details in a few cases because I cannot help bringing home the horror that results when mob violence takes over, when lynch law replaces due process and when irresponsible persons set themselves up as the judge, the jury, the prosecutor, and the executioner.

This wanton disregard of orderly procedure militates against the priceless heritage bequeathed us by the men who founded this nation.

The way of justice is that of equality for all.

We must not base our thinking upon the writing or statements of agitators.

Under the cloak of an attempt to secure civil liberties, they would take true civil liberty from us.

There are those who say I should devote more time to acting and less to "legalities" -- unless there is an unwillingness to act.

Those that say that, know there is a genuine desire to act, but I shall not be bull-dozed into acting extra-legal.

That is the fascist way - the communistic way.

It is, indeed, a pathetic thing for Americans to have their Americanism unrecognized.

In a great many instances this is so.

We condemn those who bring it about.

The average colored citizen of America is a good citizen and deserves better treatment in the hands of a democracy, but communism is not the answer and communistic leadership will not cure it.

The average colored citizen is too intelligent and too good an American to follow the leadership of those who pay lip service to democracy but would bring the slavery, the purges, the atheisms of communism upon our people.

The average colored citizen is proud of his Americanism and I say to you,

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that there are no better Americans and few who have contributed as much to the up-building of this country of ours.

I believe that the real soul of justice for all in America is the exercise of local responsibility by each community in every state.

The intent of the Bill of Rights was to protect life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness through local self government and the administration of justice.

In the event of a breakdown of such community responsibility, then, the federal government should exercise such rights as the Congress sees fit to bestow upon it to protect the life and liberty of its citizens.

Your President, Harry S. Truman, is giving his special attention to the problem.

In his usual forthright way, he hopes to translate our ideals into living realities.

In this he has our prayers.