



**REMARKS OF PRESIDENT CLINTON AND ATTORNEY GENERAL JANET
RENO**

AT THE OKLAHOMA CITY BOMBING MEMORIAL DEDICATION

OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLAHOMA

7:01 P.M. EDT

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 19, 2000

ATTY GEN. RENO: To all the people of Oklahoma City, thank you for showing America how to stand up to evil, to the evil that spawned that blast from hell. You have helped us renew our spirit and our love of this country.

And we come to reaffirm our faith that the human spirit which binds us together is stronger than the evil that would tear us apart. You have proven that once again.
(Applause.)

We have come to rededicate ourselves to the belief that we can build a better, stronger society, where conflicts are resolved peacefully, where laws are enforced justly, and where every individual enjoys the freedom and the security to have a life of respect and constructive pursuit.

I am so very honored to be asked to speak here today on behalf of the wonderful people with whom I work at the Department of Justice, many of whom have traveled from all over the country to be here today. We are here to remember, to honor, to say thank you from the bottom of our hearts, and to pledge ourselves. We at the Department of Justice will remember and will hold in our hearts always those that were killed here. We honor the survivors, the families, the

rescuers. It has been so wonderful to come across this nation and to see the wonderful people -- fire personnel, rescue workers -- who still draw such strength from you and your examples in those first days.

We come to say thank you. Thank you for your warm and unfailing support, for the investigators and for the prosecution team who with your help showed that justice can and will prevail, and that our system does work.

(Applause.) And we pledge to you on this sacred site that the Department of Justice will never stop in its pursuit of peace, in its efforts to stop violence, and its determination to prevent terrorism wherever possible, and its absolute abiding dedication to bringing people to justice who hurt others in this land. (Applause.)

This memorial, like this community, will always stand for justice. Justice is that deep and abiding peace that comes when wrong is righted and when hurt begins to heal. Justice is found in that place in the human heart which sparks the desire on the part of all human beings to do good, to help others less fortunate, to stand against tyranny, to fight for freedom, to support those in need. In the face of an evil, an evil that staggers the soul, you demonstrated the triumph of the human spirit. And this memorial and the peace it will bring stands for your triumph.

Five years ago we became bound together by sheer tragedy. Now we are bound together not merely by the memory of what was lost, but also their spirit and by the knowledge that men and women of good will can come together in tragedy and in crisis to stand against evil and hate, to stand for justice and love, to stand for this nation and all that we hold dear. Thank you for leading the way. (Applause.)

GOV. KEATING: Mr. President, we are becoming whole, and you have been with us throughout. The first call that I received from out of state after this building was shattered was from you. You celebrated with us the passage and the signing of the memorial legislation. You celebrated with us when we completed the fund-raising to put every child through college who lost one or both parents or who was injured in the blast. You celebrated with us when we

completed the fund-raising to finish this memorial and to finish this museum and interactive museum. You have been with us throughout. On behalf of our entire Oklahoma family, I think I speak with no hesitation and no exaggeration when I say we are very grateful to you. Ladies and gentlemen, the president of the United States.
(Applause.)

PRESIDENT CLINTON: Thank you. Thank you very much, Governor Keating. I wanted to be here today, and I was grateful to be asked. I wanted to thank you and Kathy for all you have done. Thank you, Senator Nickles and members of the congressional delegation. Thank you, Mayor Humphreys, and I thank your predecessor Mayor Norick. Thank you, Chairman Johnson. Thank you, Karen Luke (ph). I thank all of the federal leaders who are here today who lost their employees and worked so hard -- Attorney General Reno and our secretaries of Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development and Transportation, the leaders of the Office of Personnel Management, the Customs, ATF and the Secret Service and many others. I thank Bob Stanton and the Park Service for making sure this place will be well cared for -- forever. I thank that unknown number of people who contributed to the building of this magnificent monument and to the scholarship fund. I thank General Farrell (ph) and all those who are working and will work here from now on to combat terrorism. I congratulate the young couple who designed this magnificent memorial, and I think we should give them a round of applause.

(Applause.)

I thank the Oklahoma City Philharmonic Brass and the Memorial Community Choir and Shantal Smith (ph) for their ringing and wonderful music today.

Most of all, I thank the families who lost your loved ones, the survivors and your families, the rescue workers and the family of Oklahoma, for setting an example for America. I can add little now to the words and music, even more to the silence and amazing grace of this memorial. It's empty chairs recall the mercy seat of Old Testament scripture, a place for the children of God to come for renewal and

dedication. So this is a day both for remembrance and for renewal.

Hillary and I will never forget being with you at that first memorial service while the rescue teams were still searching. I know the last five years have not been easy. I hope you can take some comfort in knowing that just as I said five years ago America is still with you, and that with this memorial you can know America will never forget.

As the governor said in alluding to Gettysburg, there are places in our national landscape so scarred by freedom's sacrifice that they shaped forever the soul of America -- Valley Forge, Gettysburg, Selma. This place is such sacred ground.

I think you should all know that it was on this exact day 225 years ago that the American Revolution began. What a 225 years it has been. The brave Americans we lost here 220 years later were not fighting a war but they were patriots in service to their fellow citizens, just as much as the police and fire and other public servants are here among us today. And there were children whose promise keeps our old democracy forever young.

Five years ago the cowards who killed them made a choice, a choice to attack this building and the people in it because they wanted to strike a blow at America's heartland, and the core of our nation's being. This was an attack on all America and every American.

Five years later, we are here because you made a choice, a choice to choose hope and love over despair and hatred. It is easy for us to say today, and even perhaps easy for you to clap today, but I know that this wise choice was also a very hard one, especially for the families of the victims. I know there are still days when the old anger wells up inside you, still days when tears fill your eyes when you think your heart will surely break. On those days in the future I hope you can come here and find solace in the memory of your loved ones and the honor of your fellow citizens.

I hope you can find the strength to live a full and loving life, free of hatred which only cripples. I believe your loved ones would want you to have that life. And though you have given too much, you still have so much to give.

The great writer, Ralph Ellison, who was a native of this city, once said "America is woven of many strands. Our fate is to become one and yet many." On April 19th, 1995, our many strands became one -- one in love and support for you, and in our determined opposition to terrorism. You taught us again how much stronger we are when we all stand together in our common humanity to protect life, liberty and the rule of law for all.

We may never have all the answers for what happened here, but as we continue our journey towards understanding, one truth is clear: what was meant to break has made you stronger.

As I left the White House today, I looked as I often do at your tree, the beautiful dogwood Hillary and I planted on the South Lawn five years ago for those who were lost here. Five years later that tree stands a little taller. Its spring flowers are a little fuller. Its roots have dug in a little deeper. But it is still a young tree. Five years isn't a very long time for trees to grow or for wounds to heal and hearts to mend. But today, like your beautiful dogwood tree on the White House lawn, Oklahoma City clearly is blooming again. For that, all your fellow Americans, and indeed decent good people all over the world, are grateful to you, and grateful to God for the grace that led you on.

In Romans it is said, "The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Let us cast off the works of darkness and let us put on the armor of light." May you keep on your armor of light. May you keep your light shining on this place of hope, where memories of the lost and the meaning of America will live forever. May God bless you, and God bless America. (Applause.)

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