

COPY

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

**THE CASEY JOURNALISM CENTER
FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**

**"The American Family:
A Tradition Under Siege"**

CONFERENCE

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

College Park, Maryland

Sunday, September 26, 1993

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THE CASEY JOURNALISM CENTER FOR

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES:

"THE AMERICAN FAMILY: A TRADITION UNDER SIEGE"

September 26, 1993

DEAN CLEGHORN: The Attorney General will be with us shortly, and we would like to finish most of the program before her talk in the way of introductions and so forth.

I am Reese Cleghorn, and I am Dean of the College of Journalism at the University of Maryland. I welcome you to the first conference of the Casey Journalism Center for Children and Families of the college. We will have just a few introductions tonight, though there are many in this room who might be recognized on such an occasion for the role that they have had in helping us to develop this center.

I first want to recognize three executives of the Casey Foundation, which was made, which has made possible this evening, this conference, and this center. I will ask them to stand briefly as they are introduced, and please continue eating as we do this.

Dr. Douglas Nelson, Executive Director of the Casey

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1 Foundation, who will be here at the table with the
2 Journalists tomorrow morning to launch the discussions
3 there. Mr. William Rust, Director of Communications,
4 who is working with us as Program Officer for the
5 Foundation. Mrs. Betty King, Director of Administration
6 and Operations of the Casey Foundation.

7 We are very pleased to be associated with the Casey
8 Foundation in our work. It is the largest foundation
9 dealing exclusively with issues affecting children, and in
10 particular with policy issues. It's good works may be
11 found in many of the communities from whom, or from
12 which the journalists here are drawn tonight. We are
13 pleased to note the Foundation will be moving about this
14 time next year from Greenwich, Connecticut to our great
15 city of Baltimore.

16 Next I want to recognize the Chancellor of the
17 University of Maryland system, Dr. Donald Langenberg,
18 if he would stand, and the Provost and Vice President of
19 the University of Maryland at College Park, Dr. Daniel
20 Fallon, and members of the new National Advisory Board
21 of the Casey Journalism Center, which has been
22 established to represent a broad range of specializations

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1 in journalism. To help us as we take the next steps in
2 this endeavor, Ms. Tonda Rush, Chief Executive Officer
3 of the National Newspaper Association, Ms. Laura
4 Staff Writer with The Washington Post,
5 and Dr. John Freeman, Lederer Professor of Pediatric
6 Epilepsy at Johns Hopkins University.

7 Now I would like to introduce for welcoming
8 remarks, the President of the University of Maryland at
9 College Park, Dr. William E.

10 DR. KIRWAN: Thank you
11 very much, Reese. It is my pleasure to be with you this
12 evening, and to have this opportunity to, to welcome you
13 to the University of Maryland at College Park, and to this
14 inaugural event of the Casey Center.

15 Certainly we are very honored tonight to have
16 Attorney General Janet Reno as our keynote speaker. I
17 know you share with me the feelings about the inspired
18 leadership that she has brought to our nation. We are
19 also very pleased to have Doug Nelson, Bill Rust, and
20 Betty King with us from the Casey Foundation.

21 The university is very proud to be able to serve as
22 the home to the Casey ^{Journalism} Center for Children and Families.
1

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1 As a first time grandfather for only one week, my interest
2 in young children has reached new heights. We are
3 delighted to have such a distinguished group of fellows
4 to serve as the first class in this Casey program.

5 We believe that the Casey Foundation has chosen
6 well in selecting the University of Maryland for the home
7 of this center, first because of the strength of our
8 College of Journalism which has been widely recognized
9 as one of the leading colleges of journalism in the nation,
10 but also because there is on this campus considerable
11 expertise on areas that relate to children and family. We
12 have with us this evening, and a person who will be on
13 the program tomorrow, Andrew Billingsley, who is one of
14 the nation's leading experts on the black family. We
15 have national experts on education of disadvantaged
16 youth, crime among youth, drug abuse, and
17 demographics. Faculty from the campus represented this
18 evening with working in this areas are Peter Leone, Ray
19 Lorian, Harriett Pressor, Charles Willford, and Denise
20 Godfridson. So we believe that we have the commitment
21 and interest on this campus, and the expertise to support
22 the activities of the Casey Center.

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1 As one other indication of this interest, this
2 institution's interest in the general area of, of young
3 people, families, dis, disadvantaged youth, the university
4 and Coca Cola will announce a major award this Friday
5 about a partnership between the College Park campus,
6 the District of Columbia Schools, and the Coca Cola
7 Foundation to identify at risk young people with the goal
8 of having them come to the university and complete a
9 college degree.

10 So we think there is a, a wonderful environment here
11 at College Park for carrying out the work of the Casey
12 Center. We look forward to great things from the center,
13 and under the able leadership of Cathy Trost, Dean
14 Cleghorn, and the wonderful faculty of the College of
15 Journalism. I am sure these great things will happen.
16 Thank you very much.

17 DEAN CLEGHORN: Thank
18 you, Bill. When the Casey Foundation approached us
19 some time ago to discuss it's first initiative in journalism
20 with journalists, we felt that we had been presented with
21 a wonderful opportunity, and one we simply must not fail
22 with. We immediately plunged into an assessment of the

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1 coverage of the issues involved across the country in a
2 rather a, a rather hasty but in some ways very revealing
3 study as we went into creation of the center.

4 We found a very mixed scene, one in which some
5 parts of print and broadcast were doing a really superb
6 job covering these issues, and some of that work was
7 done by people who are in this room tonight. But we
8 found also that it was a field that in many ways was very
9 inadequately reported overall. We are now in the midst
10 of a very extended research, piece of research work to
11 pin that down further. We are about to finish the first
12 part having to do with newspaper coverage, how papers
13 cover these issues, who the assignment editors are, what
14 space is allocated, who the specialists are. We will move
15 next to magazines and broadcast, and on the basis of this
16 work we will have real background with which to
17 proceed, to become the national center for assistance to
18 journalism in this area. From the first we asked
19 ourselves are we to be advocates? Are we to approach
20 this subject with passion, or do the norms of objective
21 journalism constrain us in our work? I will say that we
22 intend for the center to uphold the highest standards of

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1 journalism. It will be an advocate of no organization, no
2 foundation, no advocacy group, or for that matter no
3 university and no journalism school. But it will be an
4 ardent advocate and facilitator for better journalism in
5 the field. We will not shy away from saying an advocate
6 for children, and especially disadvantaged children,
7 children in trouble, who are so numerous in this country
8 and throughout the world today.

9 This country is paying more attention to these
10 issues today I believe than ever before, but the outcome
11 in terms of the nation's commitment I believe remains in
12 doubt. A few people and some institutions, a few had
13 the lonely work a few years ago of trying to bring some
14 of these problems to the attention of the public. We
15 must try to live up to the ground breaking effort that was
16 made, and some of those efforts were made by the Casey
17 Foundation. There were people in the '60s in particular
18 we remember who were passionate on this subject.

19 I want to quote one of those who worked
20 relentlessly for disadvantaged children in the south
21 where I was at the time, as he also worked against the
22 problems of race and poverty. A few of you know of Dr.

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1 Raymond M. Wheeler, a Charlotte physician who led a
2 physician's team into Mississippi in 1967 to examine the
3 consequences of hunger, and found children who then
4 were described in careful detail and in photographs for
5 the rest of the nation to see in a stark picture of horror.
6 Their report was published in a book called Hunger U.S.A.
7 Today, and as some of you recognize that book had very
8 powerful impact. It was followed by a CBS prime time
9 documentary called "Hunger in America." As a result of
10 this good journalism, the country's attention for a brief
11 time was riveted on hunger, malnutrition, and in
12 particular disadvantaged children who were subject to
13 that.

14 We hope the work of the Casey Center will lead us
15 into a new era of journalist's committed involvement on
16 a great national problem. But there is more to this than
17 reporting the facts. As Dr. Wheeler told the Children's
18 Foundation more than two decades ago, "We have had
19 many studies, we know a great many facts about these
20 problems. We still need more but we know a lot." Then
21 he said, "Perhaps we ought to stop talking about all this
22 and turn the process around and study ourselves.

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1 Study," he said, "ourselves and try to find out why we
2 have priorities which are out of order, and why knowing
3 that as we do, we still allow horrible conditions to
4 persist." So I believe those in this room also should take
5 that as a mandate and as a challenge and call to action,
6 as well as the further definition of the facts and the
7 interpretation of those facts in the field.

8 We do have as our new director for this center a
9 person splendidly prepared to do this work here, and I
10 will bring her forward now, Cathy Trost, Director of the
11 Casey Journalism Center, who for seven years before she
12 joined us here was covering these issues awfully well for
13 The Wall Street Journal, and who does bring a passion to
14 this subject. Cathy.

15 MS. TROST: We had an
16 exceptionally strong field of candidates for the 30
17 fellowships that we awarded to the first Casey
18 Journalism Center conference. We had 164 applications
19 representing almost every state, and the 30 finalists here
20 with us tonight are a talented and committed group. I
21 would like them to stand in unison now so that we can
22 acknowledge them briefly. If they could all stand at their

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1 tables.

2 Media coverage of children's and family issues has
3 grown more sophisticated as news rooms across the
4 country begin to cover these issues as serious beats. A
5 survey of 61 newspapers and news services, which we
6 just completed at the Casey Center, show that more than
7 half have added children's and family beats in the last
8 three years. But barriers to good coverage still exist,
9 and reporters still struggle to make sense of the complex
10 web of programs and policies which affect children's well
11 being.

12 Over the next three days 27 experts will lead
13 intensive briefings and discussions about emerging
14 children's issues. We hope to all emerge with a better
15 understanding of the complicated forces that shape
16 children's lives today.

17 I am told that the Attorney General is going to be
18 here in about 10, 15 more minutes, so we are going to
19 resume eating, have dessert, and when she comes I will
20 come back up at that point.

21 *Restart* → The plague of violence against children and
22 teenagers in this country is escalating. As President

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1 Clinton pointed out this week, homicide is now the
2 second leading cause of death among Americans age 15
3 to 25, and more teenage boys die from gunshot wounds
4 than any other cause. As State Attorney in Dade County,
5 Florida, Janet Reno saw that there were links between
6 neglected children and the growing incidence of serious
7 crimes by juveniles. As Attorney General of the United
8 States she has become a powerful voice on behalf of
9 children, arguing that the cycle of violence will not be
10 slowed by punishment alone, but by a national
11 commitment to meeting the needs of vulnerable children
12 and their families, starting early before they are even
13 born with prevention strategies like prenatal care, quality
14 day care and early childhood education, preventing teen
15 pregnancies, and strengthening families.

16 After the Attorney General's remarks we will have a
17 period of question and answer with the journalists here
18 in the room, and they should identify themselves and
19 their affiliations when they ask the questions.

20 We are very honored to have Attorney General Janet
21 Reno as our speaker tonight.

22 **ATTY. GENERAL RENO:** It

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1 is a privilege to be here. As many of you know I have
2 some acquaintance with journalists. They raised me, and
3 I feel quite at home. I have also been extraordinarily
4 impressed as I have traveled around the nation at the
5 initiatives undertaken by various newspapers in various
6 places in the nation that I think really reflect leadership
7 that is needed and that is critical.

8 I came to the point I am at by taking office in 1978
9 as State Attorney in Dade County. I started to focus on
10 the juvenile division of our office thinking that that
11 would be the place really to prevent crime. But it did not
12 take me very long to realize that we would never have
13 enough dollars if we waited until someone was
14 adjudicated delinquent to correct all the children, and to
15 deal with all the problems that we faced.

16 I then started focusing on dropouts because we saw
17 a direct correlation between dropouts and delinquency.
18 It became clear to me that we would never be able to
19 correct all the children and provide an environment for all
20 our children sufficient to get them off on the right track
21 if we waited until the dropout programs then in effect
22 took place. Too often we had children 11, 12, and 13

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1 who had already fallen behind two grade levels, lost their
2 self-esteem, gotten into other conduct that was used I
3 think to attract attention.

4 So we started focusing on four and five year olds in
5 neighborhood intervention programs surrounding Head
6 Start. At that point the crack epidemic hit in Miami in
7 1985. The doctors took me to our large public hospital
8 as we struggled to figure out what to do about crack
9 babies and their crack involved mothers.

10 Doctors taught me so very much about the problems
11 of childhood, of how important the ages of zero to three
12 were. I looked at all the community initiatives underway.
13 So many people were trying to do good things for and
14 about, and with children. I tried to understand why the
15 various programs were failing. It seemed to me that one
16 of the reasons was that people focused on one narrow
17 point in time, or one narrow problem. Juvenile judges
18 would focus just on delinquency. Child welfare experts
19 would focus on abuse and neglect. The two of them
20 would never talk. Teachers would focus on a learning
21 disability without focusing on the home environment. It
22 was a fragmented focused initiative that did not look at

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1 the child's life as a whole, nor the child in the context of
2 the child's family.

3 Then it also became clear to me that as part of this
4 fragmentation too many people were focused on their
5 narrow discipline. The police officer tried to figure out
6 what to do about youth violence without talking to
7 teachers or social workers or doctors. Pediatricians tried
8 to figure out what they were going to do about children
9 to enable them to grow as strong constructive human
10 beings without looking to see what happened to the child
11 as the child went into the community. So many people
12 focused in their narrow little world without looking at the
13 whole.

14 The federal government tried to respond by doing a
15 lot of grant work and throwing money at it, throwing
16 money at it through grants that had a lot of strings
17 attached, through grants that went to communities
18 without any needs or resource assessment from the
19 communities. It simply did not look again at the whole
20 problem. There would be a grant for a particular
21 purpose, but if you could not comply with that particular
22 purpose you could not have the money. It was often

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1 times the federal government telling communities what to
2 do as if the federal government knew better.

3 The fourth reason I think so many of our efforts
4 have failed is that communities were fragmented. There
5 were so many diverse interests, and particularly as they
6 looked to Washington for money they would get
7 fragmented in their approach. They would start
8 competing for the dollars, and instead of taking the
9 limited resources they had and planning in an effective
10 way as to their needs and resources, they would focus on
11 federal dollars, get competitive, and stop working
12 together.

13 Finally, and I think most important of all, people
14 were not involved. Even in communities police, teachers,
15 social workers too often said we know how to do it better
16 than you, we are going to tell you what to do without
17 consulting with the community, finding out what people
18 thought, finding out what was best in terms of the
19 community. Those seemed to me to be the five reasons
20 that we have failed too often in thinking about children.

21 I have become convinced that unless we focus on
22 children we will never be able to build enough prisons 18

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1 years from now. We will not have a work force 15, 10
2 years from now with the skills necessary to fill the jobs
3 to maintain America as a first great nation. It becomes
4 absolutely imperative that we focus on children. But how
5 to correct these five deficiencies that I have talked
6 about?

7 I think we have got to tell communities, look, you
8 understand your needs and resources better. Throughout
9 the nation, from the National Association of County
10 Commissioners, League of Cities, Mayors conferences,
11 everywhere I have gone people in the community seemed
12 to know better, seemed to understand the need for early
13 intervention and prevention far better than, frankly I
14 think Congress and many people in Washington do.

15 Thus we need to challenge communities, you tell us
16 what you need, you tell us what resources you have, you
17 tell us what we can do. I think we then have got to make
18 sure that the federal government comes together in a
19 more comprehensive approach.

20 I used to sit around a table at home and have five
21 federal agencies in town. They had not talked to each
22 other, they did not know what each other did, they had

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1 not designed their programs to get the best return on the
2 dollar by combining their efforts in a comprehensive
3 fashion. We have started, in terms of the various cabinet
4 level agencies, to start talking together, to start planning
5 our programs around how can a Department of Justice
6 delinquency prevention program best compliment the
7 Department of Education's grant to a particular
8 community. But we have a long way to go because there
9 are still so many strings attached that not even waivers
10 can help correct.

11 I then think we have got to say to communities,
12 look, how you do it is up to you, but we have got to
13 establish a national agenda for children. Each community
14 may do it differently, but you have got to involve people
15 in terms of addressing this national agenda.

16 The first thing we have got to do is do something
17 significant about reducing teen pregnancy in America.
18 You can come back to every problem and trace it back to
19 an early pregnancy, a child who got pregnant at 14, and
20 by the time she was 20 she had four children and her
21 hopes and dreams were dashed, and she was getting into
22 crack. You could just see the cycle repeat itself.

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1 I think we can make a difference, again, if we
2 involve the community. If we go to the community and
3 understand from the community how best to do this, how
4 best to establish parenting skills courses in our high
5 schools. Something is wrong with a nation that says to
6 a person who has no knowledge of raising children
7 because of the breakdown of family to date, look, we
8 say, you have got to have certain graduate requirements
9 to graduate from high school. What about courses in
10 parenting skills?

11 We have got to free our parents time to be with their
12 children. I think this is the greatest challenge to any
13 work force in America, how we put children and family
14 first in our work forces, in our various businesses, how
15 we give parents quality time to be with their children,
16 particularly in this terribly complex and often times
17 discouraging world that children face.

18 Then, as was pointed out, we have got to provide
19 prenatal care. This is where you all have been so
20 effective, or at least the journalists who have taken the
21 lead in this area in terms of trying to convey to the
22 average person why prenatal care is so important.

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1 Doctor after doctor will tell me that this is the most
2 formative time in a person's life in terms of what medical
3 care can do to produce a strong and healthy life. We
4 have got to articulate it so everybody will understand.
5 If they do not understand from the need to invest in
6 children, let us put it to them in terms of their tax paying
7 dollars. For every dollar invested in prenatal care we will
8 save three dollars for health care costs associated with
9 low birth weights caused by lack of prenatal care.

10 Let us start, and I think the whole health care reform
11 effort is going, one of the most critical pieces of it is the
12 need to provide preventative medical care for children
13 and families. It breaks my heart in the 15 years I was
14 State Attorney, people knew me, they knew how to get in
15 touch with me, they knew that I would help them with
16 their problems, and again and again there would be the
17 desperate call from someone who had no health
18 insurance, who made too much money to be eligible for
19 Medicaid, who could not get simple preventative medical
20 care or simple needed care for their child because they
21 did not have the money.

22 For each dollar invested in immunizations, for each

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1 dollar invested in well baby check-ups, for each dollar
2 invested in preventative medical care we are going to
3 save dollars down the road, and we have got to figure out
4 how we can convey that to your readers and to the
5 citizens of this country so that they are willing to make
6 that investment.

7 We have got to understand in words, and the doctors
8 can be so eloquent when those doctors really care about
9 the situation, how important that age of zero to three is.
10 All the preventative medical care in the world will not
11 make any difference unless we provide a nurturing
12 environment.

(JACKSON?)

13 As I went to the neonatal unit at Jack's Memorial
14 Hospital in Miami, I would see babies, this the beginning
15 of the crack epidemic before we had figured out what to
16 do with them, who had not been held or talked to except
17 when changed or fed for about six weeks. They were just
18 lying in their bassinets almost beginning to respond not
19 as humans but as little animals. Whereas a child severely
20 deformed through birth defects, with tubes coming out of
21 everywhere, was across the nursery. Both parents tried
22 to be with that child as much as they possibly could

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1 around the clock. That child through the pain and the
2 torture that she was involved in was beginning to
3 respond with smiles and with human affirmation.

4 I think I began to understand better than ever before
5 why we have got to focus on that zero to three. All the
6 delinquency programs, all the special education programs
7 will not make any difference unless we can focus on that
8 first three years. 50 percent of all learned human
9 response is learned during the first year of life. The
10 concept of reward and punishment, and the concept of a
11 conscience is developed in those first three years. What
12 good is a prison 18 years from now if the child has
13 absolutely no concept of a conscience? We see these
14 terrible examples of youth violence, and then we turn
15 around to see who committed it and find a child who is,
16 has no remorse whatsoever because their world was not
17 shaped in those formative years.

18 We have got to make sure that the educare of zero
19 to three, as I call it, good safe constructive child care,
20 recognizing that that time is such a formative time, is
21 blended into Head Start, and that Head Start is improved
22 and enhanced and provided everywhere for children who

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1 do not have the opportunity to have supervision and
2 structure at home.

3 We have got to free teachers times to teach. I look
4 at the paperwork that teacher after teacher complains of
5 and shows me. I look at all the problems that teachers
6 have to deal with, the child coming to school racked by
7 domestic dissention at home, the child coming to school
8 without any structure at home, the child coming to
9 school without having been readied for school in the first
10 five years. The teacher spends more time making up for
11 lost time than teaching.

12 Yet think of what we have asked our teachers to do
13 in these last 30 years. We face the most unprecedented
14 educational challenge probably in all of human history.
15 In the last 100 years think of what we have learned,
16 flight, man to the moon, atomic energy, sulfag, penicillin,
17 television, telephones, the automobile, probably the most
18 incredible burst of knowledge in all of human history, and
19 the schools have not begun to be able to keep up with it.
20 We have got to free their time to teach. We have got to
21 make teaching the wonderful, wonderful profession it is.

22 I remember my school years. I hear from my

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1 teachers in these last seven months as they write to tell
2 me that they remember me, and they did not know, some
3 of them are less favorable than others, did not think you
4 would get there, Janet. But it is so wonderful to hear
5 from them, and I remember how magical they were in my
6 life. Yet I see teachers so beat down by the burdens that
7 we have placed on them, placed so many difficult
8 challenges, and somehow or another we have got to let
9 people know that teachers, the great teacher, the
10 wonderful teacher is little lower than the angels.

11 But then we have got to look at what we are doing
12 with our schools. The afternoon and evening hours are
13 so critical. Has it ever bothered you to drive past a
14 school after 4:00 o'clock in the afternoon and see it
15 locked and unused, as you have just covered a city
16 commission meeting where somebody is crying out for a
17 new recreational facility for our children? It has never
18 made any sense at all to me. Yet as I have traveled
19 around the country talking to delinquents, talking to
20 former gang members, talking to kids in trouble, and I
21 asked them the question, "What would you do to prevent
22 yourself from getting in trouble?" "If you had something

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1 afternoons and in the evenings for me, and not just
2 sports," say they. "If we just could get to the computer
3 banks at school. If we could do something in theater. If
4 I had somebody to talk to, somebody who did not put me
5 down, somebody who did not hassle me, somebody who
6 treated me with respect." If we took all that we spend
7 for delinquency programs and put them up front in after
8 school and evening programs that really challenged our
9 youngsters we could make such an incredible difference.
10 But their comment about people talking to them is also
11 important. I think this may be one of the great
12 challenges of journalism today, how we get to children,
13 how we talk to them.

14 I was in a delinquency program in Omaha and these
15 ten kids came in. They were all in serious trouble. Here
16 were all the politicians. They looked at us like we were
17 all a bunch of politicians, and that we were coming to,
18 and I started probing and talking to them, and it took me
19 about five minutes to get them to start talking. One of
20 the first things they said was how people put them down.
21 How people, teachers, police officers and others hassle
22 them. But then I listened to them and they are so

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1 incredibly sharp, and they started naming the people in
2 their community who could make a difference to them.
3 A man without a high school education who had started
4 a program for boys was obviously one of their saints.
5 Every kid knew him, knew what he had tried to do in the
6 community, knew how he had respected them, what he
7 had done. Somehow or another both journalists and
8 attorneys general, and people who care about children
9 have got to figure out how we get into their world and
10 talk with them.

11 We have got to understand that we can do so much
12 in terms of teaching them once we get them into our
13 elementary schools, teaching them not to be violent. The
14 D.A.R.E. and other drug education programs have done so
15 much to prevent people from getting into drugs. We can
16 do the same thing with violence. Across the country
17 there are so many wonderful conflict resolution programs
18 that teach our children how to resolve conflict
19 peacefully. It can make that difference.

20 But that goes back to the whole concept of the
21 family. This country has for too long ignored domestic
22 violence. There are still communities in this nation that

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1 do not consider it to be very much of a problem at all. So
2 what is new, that has been happening for a long time.
3 But I still persist that the child who watches his father
4 beat his mother is going to come to accept violence as a
5 way of life. We have got to intervene in the domestic
6 violence that is racking this country. Doctors in
7 emergency rooms can no longer afford just to stitch up
8 the bruises and cuts. They should be referring this
9 person for counseling to try to interrupt the cycle of
10 violence. Prosecutors no longer should accede to
11 victim's desire to drop charges just because they are
12 afraid or do not want to be bothered. We have got to
13 persist in carrying through with the prosecution, and in
14 diverting people into programs that can interrupt the
15 cycle of violence so it is not handed down from one
16 generation to another.

17 We have got to focus on the family through using
18 our, our schools, freeing our teacher's time to teach, and
19 putting into our schools people who can provide the
20 counseling for the family as well as the child, and bring
21 that family into the school so that there is a place, a safe
22 place that a person can go for the help, the support, the

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1 encouragement through crisis.

2 We have got to see what can be done through
3 community policing. I have been so gratified to see other
4 communities throughout the country using community
5 policing as a problem solving technique that goes to not
6 just a police problem but a family problem which often
7 times brings down the family and causes the delinquency.
8 But again, it is people working together, schools, police,
9 social workers, everyone coming together to look at the
10 family as a whole.

11 Most of the people I see want to be good parents,
12 but the world is so overwhelming to them they do not
13 know what to do. Just at the point they think they are
14 getting ahead the plumbing starts to leak and everything
15 falls a part around them and they do not know who to go
16 to to get help. Or there is an illness and they do not
17 know where to go to get help. We can provide enough
18 support without telling them what to do, to help them
19 help themselves, but we wait until the crisis occurs. We
20 wait until the child has to be taken to the emergency
21 room having run a temperature of 103 for two nights
22 before we intervene with preventative medical care. We

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1 wait until the crisis occurs.

2 Then finally, we have got to look at how we are
3 educating our children for the future. So many children
4 are graduating from high school without a skill that can
5 enable them to earn a living wage. We have summer job
6 programs that are not tied to the child's aptitude and
7 interest, are not tied to the school's program for the fall.
8 It seems to me we should take our 7th graders, look at
9 their aptitude and interest, match summer job programs,
10 summer job experience with school experience, school
11 work experience, so that that child knows that if they
12 follow the prescribed route they can graduate with a skill
13 that can enable them, can enable them to earn a living
14 wage.

15 We have got to give our children an opportunity to
16 belong to something they care about. Every time I turn
17 around and talk to another gang member, or former gang
18 member, if you could give me something that I could
19 belong to, something I could identify with, something
20 where I could feel like I was somebody it would help.
21 Certainly we can take that desire that causes youngsters
22 to come into gangs and put them into organizations that

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1 can change our world. I look at the Civilian Conservation
2 Corps of the depression era and see the results through
3 my communities and through so many others. I look at
4 World War II and I remember my aunts as they went off to
5 war, one as an Army nurse behind Patton's Army in North
6 Africa, and one as woman's Army service pilot. They
7 were heroines to me, and they were going off to help
8 save a world. I look at young people who went halfway
9 around the world for John Kennedy's Peace Corps. The
10 challenge is on our streets, and clearly it seems to me in
11 communities throughout America we can challenge our
12 youngsters in a way that can make a difference for them.

13 We have so much to do. But if I, I wondered what
14 would happen when I came to Washington. I wondered
15 whether it would be overwhelming. I wondered whether
16 the rest of the nation would feel the same way. I have an
17 absolutely strong positive, I am absolutely convinced
18 that we can do it now because everywhere I have gone
19 people are talking the same language of investing in
20 children, invest in families, trust people, involve people,
21 provide comprehensive programs that give them the
22 chance to get off on the right foot. Again, I am very

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1 proud that in many instances journalists are leading the
2 way. I would welcome your questions.

3 MS. MARINUCCI: Ms. Reno,
4 my name is Carla Marinucci, I am with The San Francisco
5 Examiner. As you know, California immigration is an
6 issue of great importance to us, and immigrant families
7 are, produce our agriculture in many ways. But Governor
8 Pete Wilson has had a big rise in popularity in the state's
9 polls by suggesting that children of undocumented
10 laborers particularly should be banned from school in
11 California, and should suffer cutbacks in health care and
12 infant care, so forth. I am interested in your thoughts on
13 this issue and the whole dilemma of the immigrant
14 situation as it is right now, particularly as it relates to
15 children and families.

16 ATTY. GENERAL RENO: I
17 think you can do so much in terms of making sure people
18 know how much immigrants have contributed. There is,
19 I have seen one study that is now on my desk, I
20 understand that there may be another, that points out
21 that for the burdens that immigration places on a
22 community there are many benefits that arise as a result.

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1 Certainly I can speak of my community where I have
2 watched our schools, our jails, our public hospital
3 overwhelmed, but I have watched immigrants in the last
4 30 years in Dade County make invaluable contributions in
5 building a, a city that is, has grown in leaps and bounds.

6 I think it is important that we move, I think
7 immigration may be the single most difficult issue that I
8 face in the time that I am Attorney General. How we
9 balance this nation's tradition as a nation of immigrants,
10 while at the same time recognizing the burdens. I think
11 the best way to deal with suggestions like the Governor's
12 is to try to point out what contributions have been made
13 and how it is balanced.

14 One area where I do not think their contribution is
15 made, and I think it is a very difficult area, is, are those
16 undocumented aliens who are currently in our prisons.
17 The number, there are 26 percent of those in federal
18 prisons are undocumented aliens. That is a, a heavy
19 burden with little return. We are working trying to figure
20 out how we can absorb some of that burden from the
21 states.

22 MS. MOHLER: I am Mary

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1 Mohler from The Ladies' Home Journal. I have noticed a
2 lot of people talking about the fact that our children are
3 bombarded with images of violence from the media, from
4 television, from television programs, from music videos
5 and rap music. Is there any way to protect children from
6 the images of violence they see around them without
7 evoking censorship?

8 **ATTY. GENERAL RENO:** I
9 think one of the ways, and I think America is prepared to
10 do it, and I think they are sending a message. I do not
11 watch television but I am kind of appalled every time I
12 walk into somebody's living room and they keep it on and
13 I see what is happening, though it seems to me it may be
14 improving slightly. But I think you can avoid the
15 censorship issues by America sending word to its
16 advertisers that we not only do not want violence
17 advertised, but we would like for you to take at least the
18 afternoon and evening hours and try to use television for
19 the constructive medium that it could be in terms of
20 educational opportunities and the like. I think, that is
21 the way I think best to proceed.

22 I think, again, journalism has done a lot towards

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1 publicizing some of the reports indicating the correlation
2 with violence. But there again, I think it is
3 extraordinarily important that we do not blame it all on
4 television. If it is not, it is again, violence is a learned
5 response, and yes, television can be a contributor. But
6 it is that domestic violence at home, it is the violence in
7 the world around, and I think there is going to be no one
8 simple answer to it, but certainly that could be a threat
9 of it.

10 MS. DAUGHERTY: I am
11 Jane Daugherty from The Detroit Free Press. I was
12 wondering if in your travels around the country, in
13 talking to some of the states where there are major
14 family preservation movements, if you have had time to
15 reflect on, I mean some of them seem mostly cost cutting
16 measures. In Michigan a very dysfunctional family gets
17 six weeks of intensive in home services, but then is
18 basically off the books in terms of the child abuse that
19 provoked the involvement with family preservation.
20 Particularly from your perspective as a former State
21 Attorney, do you think our criminal justice system, the
22 court system needs to move more quickly in establishing

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1 the status of children in the system, and either moving
2 them out of foster care more quickly and placing them for
3 adoption?

4 **ATTY. GENERAL RENO:**

5 That is one of the trickiest questions I know because we
6 addressed it again and again with respect to the issue of
7 crack babies. I have so many mixed emotions about it.
8 I do not think the child development experts have, have
9 really reached any consensus on that yet. What troubles
10 me is I would see a, the doctors would teach me how
11 important those first weeks were in terms of bonding in
12 a nurturing environment. I would see children's lives just
13 dashed during that first year or two years as we tried to
14 get the mother off crack and back into a strong family
15 relationship, often with failure, and then the child is
16 bounced from one foster parent to another. I used to
17 think to myself why do we not just terminate the parental
18 rights? Then I would get calls from people, "As State
19 Attorney, perhaps you could help me. I was born in
20 Miami. I am trying to find my mother. I was put up for
21 adoption when I was little. I desperately, desperately
22 want it." I never, apparently in, people knew that I was

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1 interested in children's issues, so they would call me. It
2 is so heart breaking. I do not know the answer and I do
3 not think the doctors know the answer.

4 It was so touching to me when I saw a child who
5 killed a fellow that he was with at 13, and I went back
6 through his whole life. He adored his crack involved
7 mother, just worshipped her. She cared deeply for him.
8 If we could ever get her off crack we could make such a
9 difference. But it is again, cost cutting is probably a
10 good description of a lot of the programs. We say, okay,
11 we will get that mother into treatment. We get her
12 detoxed, we get her stabilized. She does fine in
13 treatment. We get her reunited with her children and
14 then we send her back to the apartment over the open air
15 drug market where it started in the first place. We do
16 not provide after care. We do not provide follow-up. We
17 do not provide a drop-in service, and we just let her shift
18 for herself. This comes back to the lack of a continuum.

19 I think probably the best approach until we have
20 better information, if ever we will on that issue, is we
21 have got to start early. I think the states that are in, I
22 cannot quantify this yet, the states that are saying, look,

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1 we are not going to give up on any age group, but we are
2 at least going to start doing it right in zero to three, and
3 then as we get zero to three right we will start expanding
4 to zero to five. I think those states are probably the
5 states that are going to be most successful. Again, I do
6 not think we should dictate to states how it be done
7 because it is going to vary from one place to another.
8 But I just think that the beginning of a comprehensive
9 effort with zero to three in the families of zero to three
10 can make a difference.

11 **MS. LOFTUS:** I am Mary
12 Loftus from Winter Haven, Florida, down in your neck of
13 the woods. You mentioned teenage pregnancy as being
14 one of the precursors of many of these social issues. Yet
15 in central Florida we face a lot of resistance to programs
16 for family planning, sex education in the schools, face
17 resistance from large religious communities, especially
18 the fundamentalists, the right wing churches, the largest
19 and most well funded in town. How do you see them as
20 being enticed to partake in your overview of ...?

21 **ATTY. GENERAL RENO:** It
22 is going to require some courage and willingness to speak

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1 out on the issue, and I am reminded of a situation that I
2 saw in Miami, where the issue came as to whether a
3 school based clinic should be established. The school
4 board considered it. The school board's morning was just
5 faced with one speaker after another railing against doing
6 this, with the various groups that you mentioned there in
7 abundance. The noise was overwhelming. The board
8 voted, however, to place the clinic in the school, and it
9 was interesting in the poll that The Herald did in the
10 following weeks. Most, a majority of people supported
11 the board in that effort.

12 The time has come to cut through it, I mean, to start
13 talking about the hard issues. I think America, unless we
14 start talking about these hard issues, and unless we are
15 willing to stand up and, and discuss it we are going to
16 get into deeper and deeper trouble. I think the tendency
17 has been, and I, I do not know why this preoccupation
18 with single issues clouding discussion about so many
19 others, and preventing discussion whether it be
20 sentencing policies or family planning information, we
21 have just got to start talking about them and come up
22 with solutions.

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1 MS. RANDALL: I am Sharon
2 Randall from The Monterey County Herald. You aptly
3 targeted teen pregnancy. It is a tremendous issue in our
4 county. We have one of the highest teen pregnancy rates
5 in the state of California. What I am told listening to the
6 community, people who work with these young women,
7 is that the high rate of teenage pregnancy in our area has
8 less to do with birth control than with self-esteem. Most
9 of the young women who get pregnant choose to do so in
10 our area. They are having babies by choice at 14 and
11 even younger. How do we deal with that?

12 ATTY. GENERAL RENO: I do
13 not think, and that is the reason I come back to a
14 continuum of starting with prenatal care. Everything,
15 every step along the way to build a strong and healthy
16 person who has self-esteem, who has respect, who has
17 done well in school. You are not going to solve the
18 problem just by focusing on teen pregnancy prevention
19 programs. It is going to be how you raise that youngster
20 to think, look, I can be a lawyer, and yes I would rather
21 be a lawyer than, than get pregnant and have my hopes
22 and fears dashed. It really, you have hit it on the head,

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1 it really comes to self-esteem, and all those threads that
2 come through it involving somebody's afternoon. If she
3 does not sit and watch television all afternoon and look
4 at the soaps and feel like a slob as opposed to doing
5 something constructive, and getting a pat on the back
6 from a teacher, or excelling at basketball, or running
7 circles around the, the computer lab supervisor because
8 she is so bright and able. It is finding the difference. It
9 is finding what interests that child. It is, it is not an
10 easy answer. I think the tendency we have, and I think
11 you will be hearing from Lisbeth Schorr, and I think she
12 is one of those that has been very important to me in
13 pointing out you cannot just solve this piece, you have
14 got to look at the whole.

15 *Congressional Quarterly.* MR. KATZ: I am Jeffrey
16 Katz, I know the welfare system from top to bottom.
17 What from your perspective and background needs to be
18 done to improve child support enforcement?

19 ATTY. GENERAL RENO: I
20 was one of the few prosecutors in Florida to do child
21 support enforcement, and became so famous at it that
22 they wrote a rap song about me that the kids enjoyed

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1 immensely. When I took office the child support
2 enforcement system in America was in shambles. It was
3 one of the most frustrating areas that I dealt with, and I
4 did it because I thought it was so important. But if I had
5 run our criminal justice system's functions in the office
6 the way we had run child support at the outset, and even
7 as I was leaving Dade County, the whole criminal justice
8 system would have crumbled. But we are engaged
9 throughout the country in building a much better system.
10 We have got to get it all linked by computers so that
11 every state talks back and forth to each other by
12 computer, that it is totally linked, that the court
13 calendars are linked to the central depository systems,
14 that we have every bit of locating information that we
15 can, and exchange information back and forth, that we
16 eliminate state lines as an arbitrary boundary to, to
17 collecting child support. But I think mostly it is getting
18 the system automated so that we run it like it should be
19 run.

20 MR. MADIGAN: Charles
21 Madigan for The Chicago Tribune. Recognizing the
22 complexity of the issues of violence I was wondering if

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1 the administration anticipates any further action on the
2 issue of gun control?

3 **ATTY. GENERAL RENO:** The
4 President has said very clearly that he wants to get the
5 Brady bill passed, and that he wants to get a ban on
6 assault weapons passed. I think that those will be the
7 two principal efforts in this initiative with the crime bill.

8 **MR. MADIGAN:** Beyond
9 that?

10 **ATTY. GENERAL RENO:** He
11 has not spoken beyond that. I personally have always
12 felt that each state should adopt a law that requires
13 anyone who possesses a weapon, any kind of a weapon,
14 no matter where it is possessed, to be licensed, and then
15 being licensed to demonstrate that they know how to
16 safely and lawfully use the weapon, and that they are
17 capable and willing to safely and lawfully use it, and then
18 require revocation and procedures for those who fail to
19 do so, and strict punishment.

20 **MS. ENGRAM:** I am Sara
21 Engram from The Baltimore Sun. You have mentioned
22 domestic violence. I would like to bring that to the

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1 forefront, but a lot of politicians do not want anything to
2 do with that issue. I wonder what you plan to do from,
3 with your position in Washington to bring more attention
4 to it?

5 **ATTY. GENERAL RENO:**

6 When I took office in 1978 our marvelous medical
7 examiner, Dr. Joe Davis, called me and said, "Janet, I
8 have got 30 years worth of information over here at the
9 morgue as to why people have been killed in Dade
10 County, and nobody has ever really analyzed it." We got
11 some interns and went over there and did a thorough
12 study, and found that 40 percent of the homicides in that
13 25 to 30 year period were husband - wife, boyfriend -
14 girlfriend, ex-spouse related. We developed an
15 application for an LEAA grant based on that, and developed
16 a domestic intervention program that is still in existence.
17 We have built on that trying to focus attention on it.
18 That was 14 years ago. It has been like pulling teeth to
19 get people interested. First to get the judiciary
20 interested. Interestingly enough what has focused
21 attention there were far more women being appointed to
22 the bench or being elected to the bench, and they have

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1 changed that significantly. The whole attitude of our
2 bench now is totally changed except for perhaps one or
3 two. It has been aided and abetted by good strong
4 editorial support for judges in reflecting on judges who,
5 who came up for editorial endorsement. I think that has
6 been invaluable.

7 The police, it was like I needed five bulldozers to
8 get the police interested which always puzzled me since
9 domestic violence calls are one of the most dangerous
10 calls that a police officer can respond to.

11 I do not like to threaten people with lawsuits, and I
12 think that is a, but there is something to be said for them
13 when I discovered that police were beginning to get
14 interested because the police foundations were
15 circulating information about police departments that had
16 been successfully sued for failing to properly respond to
17 domestic violence calls. So slowly the pieces are being
18 put together, but it is, it is extraordinarily frustrating as
19 to how long it takes to get everybody interested and on
20 the same page.

21 **MS. FRERKING:** Back to the
22 prevention program, my name is Beth Frerking, Newhouse

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1 News Service in Washington. One of the things that, that
2 we keep running into both in school bond issues, that
3 include the kinds of services sometimes that you are
4 talking about, is that in most communities today maybe
5 a quarter of the population, that is high in some places,
6 have children in schools. You probably saw this in
7 Florida with the older, elderly population. I wonder, it
8 seems to me that we are not making the case with the
9 people who are the property owners, and who vote on a
10 lot of the things, or tell their politicians that they think
11 those programs are important. Then particularly, if like
12 the first questioner said, it is immigrant, immigrant
13 communities where they do not feel any connection. How
14 do you see the Clinton administration making that case
15 of, you know, more adequately with everybody?

16 **ATTY. GENERAL RENO:** One
17 of the things that I have asked our office of policy
18 development to do in working with the other
19 departments, HHS and Education, and I have asked them
20 to work with a number of groups who are interested in
21 the same area. I would like for us to try to develop a
22 continuum that quantifies not just speculatively, but as

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1 clearly as we can what a dollar invested here will save
2 here.

3 There are a couple of clear examples. The prenatal
4 care it seems to me has been documented very, very well
5 throughout the country, immunizations. But try to
6 document what a dollar invested in this program can
7 mean in terms of dollars saved. I have had experience
8 because we had a school bond issue in the last five years
9 before I came to Washington, and we also had the
10 creation of the Children's Services Council.

11 The council was created, we had to do two
12 referendums on that council, one for the creation of the
13 council and that was approved. But secondly, we could
14 also give it the authority to assess and add valorem tax
15 of a small amount. Each county was permitted to do
16 that, and a number of counties had been successful not
17 only in getting the council passed but in getting the tax
18 authorized. We failed in Dade County but it was in a
19 curious election where it was made difficult, and where
20 we, because of a home rule charter, could not have the
21 council functioning to lay out what it would use the
22 money for. So I think it was extremely difficult, and I

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1 was not really surprised at the failure of the tax.

2 But it has succeeded, and it has succeeded by
3 chambers of commerce, newspaper editorial support,
4 newspaper follow-up, discussion, stories. One of the
5 things that I would urge you to do because I have always,
6 it has always intrigued me, you have got to make your
7 stories about children shorter because I think what
8 happens is that the reporter gets absolutely into their
9 cause, they feel passionately about it, they cannot stop
10 writing. The editor has said, okay, you can have all this
11 space, and they keep writing and writing and writing.
12 There is a tendency of America not to read beyond the
13 first page.

14 I went back, my mother was one of those reporters
15 who if not edited very carefully could write on and on
16 forever, but she had a pretty good editor. I looked at
17 some of her stories and the layout on the stories. There
18 was great visual layout that attracted attention. The
19 story was not too long, it was usually on, on one page,
20 pretty bold. She had some, some impact in those days,
21 or at least other people said that she did. So I think
22 editorial support can be invaluable. The chamber's effort

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1 can be invaluable. If you could build that coalition in the
2 community you can sell it.

3 MS. HAND: I am Gail
4 Stewart Hand from Grand Forks, North Dakota. I know
5 that in Florida there have been a lot of cases prosecuted
6 where pregnant women who drink or use drugs have been
7 prosecuted for child abuse which is capturing the ire of
8 the ACLU's reproductive freedom people. Where do you
9 stand on that in terms of being an effective tool against
10 putting children ...?

11 ATTORNEY GENERAL RENO:
12 I spend a lot of time with the doctors on that issue. The
13 doctors again and again urged me not to prosecute
14 because they felt that it would detour people from
15 coming in for prenatal care. I spent a lot of time talking
16 to them, talking with experts who had been involved in
17 treating crack involved mothers, and they said that
18 interestingly enough if the woman felt that she could
19 come in, that she did not face prosecution, that she
20 would not be punished, that at least for that pregnancy
21 you could have some impact in terms of reducing or
22 eliminating the drug usage during the pregnancy, and as

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1 importantly, you got proper nutrition and the whole
2 series of prenatal treatments that they felt were more
3 important. So we made some conscious determinations
4 not to file charges.

5 They were concerned too because they had heard
6 about activities, and they found that based on recording
7 requirements some women were going to a hospital in
8 Monroe County so that they would not have to report
9 drug usage. In the year before I left I heard of a couple
10 of women who had had as many as five or six pregnancies
11 while using crack, and I became fed up with it and had
12 gone back to the doctors to talk to them again about
13 what we could do in circumstances like that, and really
14 had not resolved it with them before I left. But my
15 approach to it was based on the doctor's strong feeling
16 that the prenatal care would be discouraged and that it
17 was absolutely the most important part of the whole
18 undertaking.

19 MS. WILLIAMS: I am
20 Celeste Williams. I am a reporter for The Milwaukee
21 Journal in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. You addressed part of
22 my question earlier, but if we could revisit a little bit the

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1 question of exposure to violence that so many children
2 are experiencing these days, especially as it relates to
3 access to guns. We know, all know anyone who covers
4 children knows that kids are not getting guns from the
5 corner gun shop even though we know that many of these
6 guns originate there. That is not where they are getting
7 them. How are we going to address perhaps nationally
8 the problem of this access, very easy access of guns to
9 children?

10 **ATTY. GENERAL RENO:** You
11 can pass the laws saying that children cannot have guns.
12 You can pass laws such as we did in Florida which
13 penalized people for giving children access to guns in
14 certain situations. That does not get them out of their
15 hands. I mean we can limit guns, even if we pass laws
16 concerning the distribution of guns you still have vast
17 numbers out there and vast numbers that are going to be
18 stolen sooner rather than later. I think we can take steps
19 to limit guns but I do not think that that begins to be the
20 answer that we have got, we have got to raise our
21 children to disdain guns.

22 **MS. DREYFOUS:** Well, just

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1 following up a little bit on all of this, I am Leslie
2 Dreyfous with The Associated Press in New York. I am
3 curious, you have been talking a lot about sort of a
4 holistic approach in communication among various
5 agencies and grass roots groups and that sort of thing.
6 Whether it is issues of gun control or teen pregnancy, or
7 whatever issue you believe for families and children, I
8 wonder what you can do, what the Clinton administration
9 can do to help push all of this to the top of the agenda,
10 or get it on the front pages as all of us I think are
11 interested in doing?

12 **ATTY. GENERAL RENO:**

13 Well one of the things that I have tried to do is, is state
14 what I feel and what my agenda is, and I have already
15 attracted too much attention by being an Attorney
16 General who talked about children instead of just about
17 punishment and what we could do. I plan to continue to
18 do that. At the same time, I have been meeting with the
19 other cabinet agencies, with the other cabinet secretaries
20 to talk about how we can join together in a more
21 comprehensive package. That is a nightmare because
22 there are so many specifically earmarked pots of money.

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1 I mean just in the office of Juvenile Justice and
2 Delinquency Prevention in the Department of Justice, a
3 lot of those dollars are earmarked by Congressional
4 action for particular programs, and they have got all
5 sorts of strings attached to them. We are going through
6 this whole waiver process to see how we can use them
7 more effectively. I think that the whole thrust of the
8 enterprise and empowerment zone legislation is directed
9 at saying to the communities, look, you come up with the
10 plan, address a continuum not just of children but of job
11 retraining, commercial development and the like. Then
12 we will back you up. I think that is the way we have to
13 go. We have been working with the Department of
14 Education and HHS in our office in terms of the youth
15 violence initiatives, and trying to figure out how we get
16 monies to communities in a more comprehensive way. It
17 is extremely difficult because of all the strings attached
18 through the appropriations process, but I think we are
19 making headway, not as fast as I would like.

20 MS. de BOER: My name is
21 Roberta de Boer. I am with The Toledo Blade newspaper.
22 You mentioned tonight, as you have in the past, the

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1 importance of freeing up working parents to spend more
2 time with their children. I am curious what the
3 mechanics of that might be in your opinion, particularly
4 in a time when entrenchment means that fewer workers
5 are doing more work, more people are doing temp work.
6 How do you think this is best accomplished?

7 **ATTY. GENERAL RENO: I**
8 think you can do a lot in terms of telecommuting. I am
9 just amazed. I think in five, and clearly in ten years, we
10 are going to have a whole new concept of the work force.
11 A lot can be done at home through faxes, through
12 computers, through communication in that fashion. I
13 think we have got to look at work hours and flex time.
14 We can, I think, be truly creative in that regard.

15 What we tried to do in Miami just as examples, and
16 I have tried to stress it at the Department of Justice,
17 teachers told me that one of the most difficult problems
18 they had was in getting parents to school to become
19 involved in their children's school programs. I
20 remembered my mother, who would be a homeroom aide
21 and the like, and how involved she was. As they point
22 out, some parents do not care, but more often than not it

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1 is working parents who cannot get away to get to the
2 schools.

3 So we developed a concept of educational leave not
4 for the parent to get an education but for the parent to
5 go spend time at their children's school, in addition to
6 annual leave and sick leave. It was amazing the response
7 I would get from teachers when I would visit schools.
8 Oh, Ms. so and so was here. She is from your office, and
9 this educational leave idea is so great. We tried to
10 develop all sorts of flex time approaches, job sharing
11 programs. We have got a lot to learn, but I think more
12 and more employers are coming to understand that it is
13 important.

14 MS. PETRIE: I am Laurie
15 Petrie from The Cincinnati Post. I think that, I wonder
16 whether people, what you are saying I think makes a lot
17 of sense to the public intellectually, starting early, early
18 prevention, or prevention and early intervention. But I
19 also hear from people, that is fine but resources are
20 limited and we are dealing with crises all the time, and
21 we cannot do both.

22 Also, I feel a sense of hopelessness from a lot of

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1 people to the extent where they want draconian
2 measures. A lot of people feel so fed up and say, forget
3 the teenage pregnancy prevention, let us start mandating
4 Norplant. I wonder if the American public is really where
5 you are, where they would be ready to put the kind of
6 resources behind prevention when they are dealing with
7 so many crises and feeling fed up?

8 **ATTY. GENERAL RENO:** I
9 think, I think that is going to be the most difficult issue
10 that we face in terms of violence, in terms of the crisis,
11 or the crises in a wide variety of areas. Will they just get
12 so fed up that they react? My approach, it was my
13 approach in the 15 years I was State Attorney, is do not
14 offer them panaceas, do not offer them more than you
15 can deliver. Tell them what can be done and what cannot
16 be done. Give them your best estimate of what needs to
17 be done, and keep talking about it.

18 I have the sense that they are closer to, to what you
19 described as my way of thinking then you give them
20 credit for. There are a number of states, Florida is an
21 example with its healthy start, that is making an
22 investment up front, is willing to make that investment,

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1 willing to expand on that investment as it is able to
2 include more additional years. There is, and I must, if,
3 I do not remember his name but there is one group that is
4 now engaged in trying to figure out how you can convert
5 from the crisis orientation to the prevention orientation.
6 We have got to do it.

7 MS. MATCHAN: I am Linda
8 Matchan from The Boston Globe newspaper. I have been
9 impressed by the way in which the Clinton administration
10 has defined health care as a target of prevention, have
11 really zoomed in on this extremely significant problem,
12 names it, gone coast to coast, spoken to Americans about
13 the issue and, and are focusing on it and clearly are
14 going to come out with something.

15 Now at the same time children's needs are arguably
16 of equal or greater significance, not just because of the
17 inherent misery of the children's lives, but because these
18 are the building blocks of the next generation. You have
19 described six or seven fronts that we have to be moving
20 on right now, and I am wondering if it is too optimistic to
21 think that this is going to be defined as a problem of the
22 same scope, of the same importance, with the same

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1 attention on the part of the Clinton administration?

2 **ATTY. GENERAL RENO:** I

3 think the greatest single problem that we face in terms of
4 children is the health care issue. I think if you look at
5 the approach the Clinton administration is taking, or take
6 health care, do it. Take the National Service Corps and
7 do it. Riley is getting frustrated because some of his
8 educational initiatives are taking back seat the health
9 care reform. Too many of you, too many of the
10 newspapers that you represent have suggested that
11 perhaps the administration is biting off more than it can
12 chew, and there are some that believe that.

13 I think their approach is the soundest possible. I
14 think health care cuts across everything that we do. I
15 think the, the money being spent for health care crisis
16 that could have been prevented, if we can get a grip on
17 health care, and this is what I spoke about Thursday at a
18 Neonatal unit in Buffalo. If we can get a grip on health
19 care I think that will be one of the most significant steps
20 towards addressing the whole problem of how we invest
21 in children up front. It goes to a wide range of issues.
22 If we can get health care worked out so that we provide

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1 mental health therapy, so that we can take that child who
2 is sexually abused when they are four and five years old,
3 and instead of just returning them home without much
4 therapy we can address the problems and get them off on
5 the right foot. If we can address through, through
6 counseling domestic violence related trauma we can, if
7 we can address through the health care reform initiative
8 drug treatment, if we can get drug treatment provided to
9 the people who are now standing in waiting lines across
10 this nation, I think it will be the greatest step forward,
11 for it is exactly what you all have been talking about,
12 how you shift from crisis to up front.

13 MS. CLABBY: I think you
14 mentioned earlier specific phone calls where people are
15 looking for their adoptive, their biological parents?

16 ATTY. GENERAL RENO: Um-
17 hmm (indicating an affirmative response).

18 MS. CLABBY: Cathy Clabby
19 from The Times Union in Albany. The people are breaking
20 the law trying to get adoption records, trying to find out
21 who their biological parents were, where their biological
22 children are. I am wondering what you think about

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1 efforts to retroactively open files and let people find out
2 who their parents are?

3 **ATTY. GENERAL RENO:** I do
4 not know the answer to that. As I said, I have not
5 resolved in my mind because no doctor could ever, or the
6 doctors, some doctors felt very strongly one way or the
7 other. But doctors that I respected were so split on the
8 issue of termination of parental rights. It goes to the
9 same thing, I just do not know the answer. It is one of
10 the most troublesome issues that I have dealt with, and
11 heartbreaking in some of it's dimensions. I hope we get
12 a better handle on it. I am not sure that we will
13 listening, at least in the next ten years, listening to some
14 of the doctors because it is an area that they simply, I do
15 not think, have reached any agreement on.

16 **MS. ADAMS:** Yes, I am Pam
17 Adams. I am from Peoria, Illinois, The Journal Star. You
18 mentioned that one of the things we have got to do is
19 teach children to disdain guns. How do we do that when
20 you consider all the ways that guns are glorified from
21 police officers and the wild west, and all those things
22 that children love?

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1 **ATTY. GENERAL RENO:** One
2 of the things that I think has been clear, that of all the
3 initiatives in these last ten years aimed at drug abuse in
4 America, probably the most important have been
5 education and prevention. Education programs in the
6 public schools of this nation have worked so that most
7 people are reporting that fewer youngsters have used
8 drugs, although you have a greater number in this hard
9 core cluster of abusers.

10 I think we can do the same thing with respect to
11 violence. If we again provide the continuum, I mean the
12 child that, it does not do that much good to take a child
13 who at zero to three had no nurturing environment around
14 them, had no structure and no order, get them through
15 Head Start and then get them into a program where they
16 have no structure or order afternoons and in the
17 evenings, and then in school say, develop good programs
18 that teach peaceful conflict resolution, and teach them
19 what guns can do. That will not help. It has to go back
20 to the whole continuum. But I think it can be done.

21 **MS. ADAMS:** But we do not
22 give children play drugs for Christmas, you know. It

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1 seems like it is just a ...

2 **ATTY. GENERAL RENO:**

3 Well I have more and more friends who are not giving
4 their sons and daughters play guns for Christmas.

5 **MS. TROST:** We have time
6 for one more question.

7 **MS. LIPKIN:** I am Rebecca
8 Lipkin from ABC News. I wonder what you would do right
9 now with those teenagers particularly in Dade County
10 who may well have gone through conflict resolution but
11 seem to show no remorse in shooting at tourists in the
12 state of Florida and elsewhere? What would you do about
13 those kids right now to try to mend their lives?

14 **ATTY. GENERAL RENO:**
15 What we had proposed in, because we had been grappling
16 with this issue and we had police officers telling us that
17 children just laughed at them saying, "Hey may, you are
18 taking me to juvenile court and nothing is going to
19 happen to me." We had had a running battle with our
20 juvenile court judges on the need for more certain
21 sanctions that were fair and met the crime.

22 What I had proposed was a combination where we

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1 had identified judges who were firm but respected by
2 both prosecution and defense as very fair, who were
3 interested in the whole area, that when a child 13 or 14
4 committed a serious crime such as a robbery they would
5 be indicted as an adult, but then there would be one
6 charge pending as a delinquency charge as well. The
7 case would be transferred to the juvenile division which
8 we could do under the structure of our juvenile court
9 which was a division of our circuit court, so it was an
10 administrative transfer. That the judge would then say,
11 "Now look, you do not think anything is going to happen
12 to you. You have been indicted as an adult." The child
13 pleads guilty and the court says, "Okay, I am going to
14 sentence you to a year in the jail," and just let that sink
15 in. Then about a minute later, "but I am going to
16 suspend entry of that sentence and you are going to have
17 to report to me regularly, we are going to have one
18 counselor working with you as the case manager, you are
19 going to have to enter into a performance agreement,
20 bring up your reading level, bring up your grade level."
21 If say it is a 15 or 16 year old, "We are going to work
22 with you in terms of summer job programs and the like."

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1 We had started on that. Some of the judges were
2 more reluctant than others to, to really pursue that. I
3 was leaving about the time we were getting them into it.
4 The simple truth, there were totally inadequate resources
5 to begin to address the multiplicity of needs of these
6 children.

7 **MS. TROST:** Thank you very
8 much.

9 **ATTY. GENERAL:** Thank
10 you.

11 **ATTY. GENERAL:** I just want to
12 thank you all. It really is people who do a lot of
13 newspaper bashing, but so many of you have done so
14 many wonderful things on this issue and just keep at it.
15 Thank you.

16 **(WHEREUPON, the Conference was recessed at 8:25**
17 **p.m.)**

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