

CHICAGOLAND CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

+ + + + +

ADDRESS BY

THE HONORABLE JANET RENO

UNITED STATES ATTORNEY GENERAL

+ + + + +

WEDNESDAY, MAY 22, 1996

+ + + + +

P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

MS. RENO: Thank you very much, Mayor. When I left Miami, I worried that I would lose my sense of community, my sense of people, the groups that made my community strong, the citizens who cared, business leaders who made a difference, law enforcement officers who put their lives on the line. And I made a point to try to understand the cities that I visited, the sense of what they were doing, the innovation, the boldness. And Chicago is a major player.

This City has a fairness, a boldness, a fragrance that is just exciting to be around, even when the Bulls aren't playing! It's so exciting to feel the sense of the City as they talk about it's festivals, they talk about people or neighborhoods. There is a sense in this city that you can accomplish things, that you can solve problems, that you can have a city that is run like a city should be run, that knows how to be a city. A city that people want to live in. And you made it seem an example for the rest of the country as to what can be done when government leaders come together with the private sector, with business leaders, and the citizens that care. I just am delighted to be in Chicago with you today.

I'm delighted to be here today with the Chamber because again in Miami the Chamber of Commerce is so critical to so many initiatives. I thank you on behalf of federal law enforcement for what you do in terms of crime prevention, for those you've honored here today.

When business leaders join with law enforcement, you get so much more done. When you join together with State, Local and Federal enforcement, to solve problems, you can make the

difference. We're all in this together and your recognition today of those who make the difference, is so critically important. It is a special privilege for me to acknowledge and congratulate the award winners. I've had a chance to meet, I think, most of them.

To the Federal law enforcement agencies, agents, I'm so proud of you. It's been my honor to work with so many dedicated men and women in the Department of Justice and I'm proud to stand here with you today.

To the Local law enforcement and State law enforcement what you do in this big city in terms of law enforcement and also in terms of reaching out to young people to give them a strong positive future is an example for law enforcement around the nation. And Superintendent Rodriguez it has been my pleasure to work with you. You are and represent the best in law enforcement and I congratulate you on that recognition today.

(Applause.)

To the business leaders who have done so much in terms of crime prevention, I congratulate you. For a community doesn't work unless business joins with government to make it work.

To the citizens, the citizens who can put their lives on the line, for being so brave. To the young people especially, thank you. This is a nation of people, and people who become involved, who are willing to make a difference, who are willing to reach out and help others, is what made this nation great. And you are a source of strength for me that I will take back to Washington. I congratulate you and I think you should all join together in giving those citizens that made a difference a great round of applause.

(Applause.)

There is this strength in Chicago, in this nation. And as the attorney general I made it a point to say I don't want to come to a community and tell them what to do. I want to join forces with communities across the nation in a partnership. In a partnership that can give our young people a strong and positive future. In a partnership where we join together with law enforcement let us take the local level to support them and assist them and create a two way street in exchange. In terms of exchange of information. We have tried to do that over these last three years and I am so proud of the working relationship that's been developed here in this community with Jeff Barnes, the U.S. Attorney, Jack O'Malley the State Attorney, the federal agencies and Local law enforcement, Superintendent Rodriguez. And when people talk to me about can we make both sides work together, I say you don't have to make people work together, just look at Chicago and see what they're doing and how they stand together, it is an example for us all.

Because law enforcement and crime prevention basically is a local game. Much of it will cross

state lines, much of it will involve Federal interest. We need to work together. One positive example of how law enforcement is so local in effort, so local in impact is it's a whole initiative of community policing which is taking hold across this nation.

And it's taking hold because the police departments like Chicago which are proving if you come back to the people, if you involve the people and identify the problems in their neighborhood, if the people begin to know their police officers and cross their offices, and work together in establishing priorities it will make a difference and in Chicago it is making a difference.

Your alternative police strategy has provided a powerful example of what community policing can do to enhance public safety by bringing police officers and residents together to build partnerships to fight crime and to improve the life of Chicago's neighborhoods.

I'm so impressed with the effort by which Officers Pikoll and -- on the same watch for at least a year so community residents can get to know those officers. I found that this will work and now an evaluation of CATS tells us the community policing done the right way, done the way it's being handled in Chicago can make a real difference.

A study being conducted jointly by the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority and the National Institute of Justice, the Chicago City Foundation and the John D. Kaplan -- Foundation, indicates that CATS is working. The study is ongoing. Initially most is on the first phase which involved the five prototype districts. They found that foreseeing crime problems had decreased significantly in each of the districts. It also found that resident receptions of police had improved.

The study also documented that CATS is providing new framework for partnerships between police and residents, civic groups and even the district. I'm so pleased that you are in the process of expanding it city-wide and I'm pleased that we have been able to provide some help from the Department of Justice and the spirit of the partnership that I talked about.

This administration is committed to community policing, to putting 100,000 police officers on the streets of this nation where they can serve the people, prevent crime and affect enforcement. And we want to provide the kind of assistance that helps efforts like CATS have real success.

Under the 1994 Police Hiring Supplement Program, the Department of Justice provided funding to hire 50 new community police officers. Through the crime bill's Cops program we've been able to do even more.

Chicago has been able to hire 321 new police officers. In addition we have made funding available for automation that permitted Superintendent Rodriguez to redeploy 350 officers to

community policing.

In addition, the Department in a program with Chicago Alliance for Neighborhood Safety has developed a city-wide joint community police problem solving effort. We pledge to continue to work with you and make this effort a success.

The CATS effort has also focused on one of the most serious public safety issues we face; youth gangs. I understand the area was one of the prime gang and drug activity centers in the country and produced major problems. CATS at least worked for the bank in the area and an area foundation set up training classes about the banking system for community residents as it affected an ATM.

I know that there has been outstanding cooperation of this type throughout the City of Chicago. And some outstanding co-workers cooperation at every level.

We have so much to do to build on the extraordinary work that you've done, and that's why I'm pleased that Chicago was chosen to participate in an anti-gang initiative that the Department of Justice recently announced. With the funding provided for this initiative Chicago will have resources to sharpen what its community policing effort is doing to address the youth gang problem in this area. I'm also pleased the Chicago Crime Commission has designated youth gang issues as its top priority this year.

In this past year, through the anti-violence initiative spear-headed through the Department of Justice and Local law enforcement we have been able to do so much in terms of gang activity in terms of arrest, prosecutions, convictions and it is due to State and Local officers who are on the front line working with agents, developing these cases and prosecutors working together, not caring about credit, not caring about turf, but caring about the City of Chicago and the surrounding area and working together to make a difference.

As I talk about the Cops program I want to pay special attention to one particular person who has made that program so successful. A little over two years ago I had the opportunity to choose an associate attorney general to recommend to the President. I interviewed a number of people, but I interviewed one person that struck me immediately. His name was John Schmidt, one of your most distinguished lawyers. And what struck me about John Schmidt is he talked about local government and how local government had to be a partner with the Federal government in order to get things done. And that was the key to my suggesting to the President that he nominate John Schmidt. He has more than exceeded my expectation because he has been able to implement the Cops program in a way that serves local law enforcement. It is efficient, effective and does not involve a lot of red tape.

Mr. Mayor and people of Chicago thank you for caring the way you do. You've done a wonderful job.

(Applause.)

But community policing is only one part of it. The other part are business leaders who care, strong schools, citizens like those recognized today, children who want to make a difference, who want to be involved. It is so many different people coming together. It's a sign of reweaving the founders of the community around children and families who are at risk or who are in peril. Of reweaving the community around children to give them a strong and positive future.

Chicago again sets the example for this nation. For your reaching out to make sure our schools function as a part of the community, giving our children the skills necessary to fill the jobs, to maintain this nation as a first rate nation.

There are so many cooperative projects under way in this community that are so innovative and provide an example for the rest of the nation. The Department of Justice looks forward to working with you. Not just in continuing vigorous enforcement that will put the major gang leaders away and keep them away, not just in terms of cooperative efforts such as some of our drug investigations that will put traffickers away and keep them away, but in efforts that can serve our communities in building organizations that can strengthen communities, that can give our citizens a sense of --, but a capacity to adapt and deal with the problems in their community with support from us behind them.

I've been in office a little over three and a half years. I hear some people wring their hands about what's happening. But more often than not I hear people willing to accept the challenge. Never have I ever had such a sense that this nation is on the right track. That its citizens are responding. People are making a difference and that we can address the problems of crime. The problems of children who do not have skills that can enable them to compete in the workplace. Address the problems of neighborhoods that have fallen in disrepair because there is a sense of purpose and a bigger out about this land. But of all the cities, I can tell you I haven't found one better in accepting the challenge.

You haven't been standing here wringing your hands, you've been recognizing those who deserve credit as you do today, you've been involved in your community. You've been seeking all that you see and I will go back to Washington today after having talked with some of the award recipients this morning, talking to so many community and business leaders these last two hours with a firm commitment that we can in this nation focus on communities, take back this nation for our children, child by child, family by family, block by block, school by school, city by city. And I think Chicago will lead the way.

(Applause.)

(End of speech.)

MR. GIDWITZ: -- as well as its crime prevention committee, I'd like to present you with this small token of our appreciation for you coming here today and for sharing with us your thoughts. And Attorney General Reno, when I say small token, I mean small token. This is a small token, ladies and gentlemen

(Laughter.)

MS. ROSATI: She has to leave us now. She has many places to go and things to do, but let's give her a bon voyage that she won't forget -- (Applause.) She's much taller in person, did you notice that?

(End of tape.)