



**WEEKLY MEDIA AVAILABILITY WITH ATTORNEY GENERAL JANET RENO  
JUSTICE DEPARTMENT WASHINGTON, D.C.  
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ATTY. GEN. RENO: Good morning. Since last weekend I have  
been working to identify a qualified and respected  
individual outside the Department of Justice to head a  
review into the events at Waco to ensure that the American  
public has confidence and faith in whatever that  
investigation reveals.

I have been eager to identify the appropriate outside  
investigator and I hope to name that person shortly. It has  
taken some time because I want to do it the right way. I  
want to ensure that any individual has no conflicts, would  
be well-received and has the time to handle the task in an  
appropriate manner. That is a lot to ask of any individual  
and it is appropriate to let any individual have the time

to think it over.

On Wednesday I learned that additional materials had turned up in the FBI facilities in Quantico. These materials included tapes that the Justice Department and the FBI have released, or will release, to the public. Upon learning of the existence of the materials, senior officials here at Justice, with the concurrence of the FBI, directed the marshals to pick up the materials from the FBI where they had been transferred earlier this week.

I agreed with the decision because I understand that it is consistent with the order of the district court in Texas indicating that the Marshal is responsible for securing and transferring evidence to the clerk of the court in the Western District of Texas.

Over the past two weeks, I, along with many Americans, have been troubled, very troubled over what has transpired. But Director Freeh and I are dedicated to finding the truth in this matter. We have been in almost daily telephone contact as we seek to establish a process that will get to the truth, and that is what we're going to do.

Q Ms. Reno, the decision to send the marshals to get this material across the street from the Justice Department has been perceived and even described by some Justice Department officials as a calculated public slap at the FBI. What do you think of that? And were you concerned at the time that it might be perceived that way?

ATTY GEN. RENO: That's just plain wrong. It was a matter that we tried to work out in a way that would be consistent with the court's order, consistent with the best interests of the investigation, and it was done with the concurrence of the FBI. And I might say that as we seek the truth, it's very important that people don't play one off against another. We're dedicated in this instance to finding the truth, and we're not going stop until we do. Q Ms. Reno, describe your relationship with the FBI, though. Would you say it's tenuous, tense?

ATTY GEN. RENO: No, I'd let you say tenuous and tense. To engage in --

Q Well then how would you describe it? What would you say is your current relationship both with Louis Freeh and with the FBI generally?

ATTY GEN. RENO: Louis Freeh and I have what I think is one of the best relationships that people can have in law enforcement. If you have the prosecutor and the chief investigator, if you will, in constant agreement, it's not right. It's not realistic. Somebody's foolin' somebody.

When you have an FBI director and an attorney general who can discuss matters, disagree on some things, as we have, agree on most everything in a principled way, I think that's what we should be about, and that's what I think I have with Louis Freeh.

Q When you aides think though, that they have politically undercut you, sometimes intentionally, do you not agree with that?

ATTY GEN. RENO: I think some people perceive that. And I think one of the issues that you have to face in Washington is perceptions. I try to deal with realities. And the one thing I know is that, when I call Louis Freeh and say, "I need to talk to you," I am getting a straight answer.

Q Ms. Reno, what about the delay at the FBI between the discovery of this tape and the time that the Justice Department was notified of it? Does that indicate that maybe some people across the street haven't got the message about how serious this is?

ATTY GEN. RENO: I questioned that. I think that this is a matter that the outside investigator should look at just because people ask questions about it. But I think it was -- they had five boxes of material, and they were going through it and trying to identify what was what.

Q Could you explain, Ms. Reno, about sending the marshals

to get the tape and how that had to do with a court order in Texas and how that was done with the concurrence of the FBI? Did you state that? And finally, is there increasing enmity between Justice and FBI over this whole issue?

ATTY GEN. RENO: I have just tried to answer that question. And you all are going to try your level best to make us enemies, but you're not going to succeed!

Again, in any situation where you have got to conduct criminal justice investigations and handle matters in the fish-bowl that we exist in here in Washington, it is oftentimes difficult. But I have a relationship with Louis Freeh, and with the people around him, that I think is excellent.

Yeah, I sometimes call him up and say, "Why did you do this?" And he'll call me and say, "If I were you, I'd do that." But that's the type of discussion I think is beneficial and it's one that I feel very comfortable with -- (Audio break.)

Q About six years ago, Ms. Reno, you stood up and said, "The buck stops here," with you, on Waco. Do you still have that feeling, or do you believe that so many people have misled you or lied to you that that is no longer your responsibility?

ATTY. GEN. RENO: Yes, I believe it. And when the buck stops with somebody, what you do is take appropriate action. You dig at it until you get it right and you get people telling you what actually happened. You don't run away from it. You don't say, "Oh, me. I can't handle this." You keep at it till you get to the truth.

Q But should you have dug a little deeper over the last six years?

ATTY. GEN. RENO: I've dug deep as I know how, and I'll continue to do so.

Q Will people lose their jobs over this?

ATTY. GEN. RENO: One of the things that you don't do until you get to the truth is make any judgment about what's going to happen. You look at it -- this is what we're trying to do with this process, is develop a structure with an outside investigator that can get to the truth. Right now, you have -- I mean, it was fascinating to look at the range of headlines and think, "Where'd they get that from?" (Laughter.) "How'd they get this?" I mean, there was some creative reporting.

Q But essentially, the outside investigator --

ATTY. GEN. RENO: But wait --

Q -- is fact-finding --

ATTY. GEN. RENO: Wait.

Q -- rather than a criminal investigation.

ATTY. GEN. RENO: Wait. Wait. Wait just a second. It is important that we realize that everybody has a different vantage point and that what is perceived by one person may not be perceived by another, and that's what we ultimately need to do, to get to the truth.

This person will have the responsibility for finding the truth and then making recommendations as to what needs to be done.

Q Ms. Reno?

Q Is there a second tape from the hours of 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 that the FBI has also turned over that they didn't have time to make copies of in advance?

ATTY GEN. RENO: I have not seen that tape yet. I understand it will be made public today.

Q Ms. Reno, there was a gap of several days between discovery by the FBI and disclosure to the Justice

Department. You said you've been in daily contact with Director Freeh. When did he tell you he found out about this, about these new tapes, and how does that affect the overall trust issue that you've been talking about?

ATTY GEN. RENO: What I understand from my conversation with Mr. Bryant is that it was called to their attention when they determined that -- what they had. We had a meeting earlier this week, and they learned about it after the meeting.

Q What will be the structure of the inquiry -- you've referred to it -- whether it be outside investigators working for this independent person or --

ATTY GEN. RENO: I want to let the independent person structure it the way she or he feels is appropriate so as to make sure that it meets their needs.

Q What about subpoena power?

ATTY GEN. RENO: Again, we will take each instance -- what I want to try to do in this instance, since I have indicated to the people that I want to make it public, is to try to pursue everything that we can by review, by interview, so that we can make whatever possible -- we possibly can available to the public, while at the same time pursuing any appropriate remedy.

Q So that means you do not anticipate -- do not currently anticipate that this investigator would use a grand jury or would use subpoenas?

ATTY GEN. RENO: It may be that -- we reach that point.

But I want to do everything I can to make sure that the information is available to the public, and with grand jury testimony, you can't do that.

Q So initially, at least, there will not be any use of a grand jury's --

ATTY GEN. RENO: That's correct.

Q Ms. Reno, what about the scope of the investigation itself? Is it going to concentrate on the use of theses military-style tear gas canisters, or are all the questions surrounding Waco being -- (off mike)?

ATTY GEN. RENO: I think we've got to let the independent investigator determine what he or she thinks would be appropriate to pursue. But what I hope will happen is that we will be able to agree on a mandate that gives them full authority to pursue any unanswered question.

Q But you haven't seen any evidence over the last week and a half or more, or even over the last six years, which would make you doubt the conclusion that that compound was set on fire by the cult leaders at the direction of David Koresh, and that the FBI had no hand in --

ATTY GEN. RENO: I think that's what every piece of information I have seen clearly shows. And it is important, again, to put it in perspective. But it is also important that we pursue any confusion, any question, in order to provide the American people with the truth.

Q Some reports indicate that former Senator Danforth has emerged as the leading possibility as an investigator. Is that true? And if so, why would he be the person?

ATTY GEN. RENO: I would not comment.

Q Ms. Reno, if this person initially will not be using a grand jury, will not using -- doing, in essence, a criminal investigation, what are your thoughts about the extent to which he or she will cooperate with these various congressional investigations? Is there any reason they can't work together?

ATTY GEN. RENO: Well, we don't want to do anything -- if the outside investigator came upon information that would indicate that it should be pursued in another fashion, we want to make sure that we have that opportunity. At the

same time, one of the issues that we will address with the outside investigator is our responsibility to cooperate with Congress in the oversight function.

Any time you have a review function in the oversight function, you, as we have seen before, always have tensions. But we are dedicated to trying to do everything we can to honor Congress' oversight function, while at the same time getting to the truth and then taking whatever action the truth requires.

Q May I come back to the question about the marshals?

The decision to ask them to go over and get this material from the Bureau, rather than have the Bureau deliver it to the marshals, or something like that, has been seen by many senior people in this building as an attention-getting device at the very least, with the FBI. Wasn't there some inherent drama in the decision to do it that way?

ATTY GEN. RENO: No. Again, I think it was everyone trying to figure out what the best way to do it was and some people making some assumptions that weren't correct.

What we were trying to do -- and the FBI wanted to try to get everything ordered and numbered. And it was important that they continue that effort, as I understand it. And so, while they were numbering it, the Marshals Service was there working with them to try to do it in an orderly way.

Q Ma'am, were you angry --

Q But just to -- I am sorry -- but just to follow up. So some people in this building may have misunderstood the intention of using the marshals?

ATTY GEN. RENO: That's the best I can figure out.

Q Were you --

ATTY GEN. RENO: I guess it's --



Q Oh, go ahead.

ATTY GEN. RENO: -- it is so important, as we seek the truth in this instance, to do so in a calm thoughtful way, not judging the motives of other people, letting the outside investigator judge those motives.

But what we are trying to do here is to make sure that we have got the evidence, that we follow the court order, that we do everything by the book so that we can turn it over to the outside investigator in the most appropriate manner possible.

Q Ma'am --

Q Are you angry at the FBI for holding that tape for four days? And was it true that they withheld the knowledge of the existence of that tape from you? (Inaudible.)

ATTY. GEN. RENO: Everybody has commented on whether I'm angry or not. (Mild laughter.) I don't think this is a matter of anger. This is a matter of getting to the truth. And whatever I am, I am as dedicated as I possibly can be to getting to the truth. Sometimes anger obscures the truth and so I try to do so as calmly and as clearly as I can.

Q Some of your --

Q (Off mike.)

Q Just -- just a follow-up.

ATTY. GEN. RENO: Wait, wait, wait. Stephanie hasn't had a chance.

Q All right.

Q Beyond what happens over the next few weeks or the next few months, how worried are you that this whole episode will further fuel the anti-government sentiments, the militias, the people out there who will now wave the videotape and say, "See, it's true. The government has been

hiding the truth about Waco for six years," and that there could be incidents of terrorism in the country?

ATTY. GEN. RENO: I think that it is important for everyone to look at the truth as it is obtained, to not stop until we get to the bottom of it, and then it is important for all Americans, no matter what their attitude about government, to try to adhere to the law. There are people that disagree violently with me, but they are not violent people. And I think it is important for law enforcement to try to be as open and as forthcoming as it can be.

The challenges facing law enforcement today, as Adlai Stevenson said, "stagger the imagination and convert vanity to prayer" -- terrorism from forces around the world, violence on our streets, sophisticated economic crime, cybercrime, crime that can bring our information infrastructure to its knees.

It is going to be very important that we do everything we can to pursue these issues, to protect the American people, and do to so consistent with the principles of the Constitution and due process and fair play.

Q We now hear the head of the hostage rescue team, Dick Rogers, on the tape giving the approval to use those military canisters. I mean, he never told you, he never told anyone, and it's there now. It's going to be in everyone's memory for a long time. Don't you think that has the potential to stir up a lot of trouble?

ATTY GEN. RENO: What I think we should do is make sure that he has the opportunity to be heard and understand his perspective in order to get to the truth and find out exactly what it is.

Q How do you respond to those members of Congress who are suggesting you resign?

ATTY GEN. RENO: I think I should be accountable for what I do, and when I am accountable, I should make sure that I follow through. If I've done something wrong, then I should

take the consequences. If I've not done anything wrong, but something went awry, I should figure out what it was and try to take steps to see that it doesn't happen again.

The larger issue here is the facts that we know now indicate that the FBI did not set that fire; that fire was set by David Koresh and the people in that building. It was a terrible tragedy that came on the heels of federal agents being killed, just murdered. We've got to put it in perspective, realizing that as we do, it is still vitally and critically important that we pursue every aspect of the investigation to ensure that the truth will out.

Q So you have no intention of resigning, then?

ATTY GEN. RENO: I don't make any judgments; I let the facts speak for themselves, and I going to continue to pursue the truth. If the truth shows that I've done something wrong, then I will accept the consequences. If the truth shows what I believe to be the case, that we tried to set up something that would bring the people out, give them a chance to come out in a safe and orderly way, and that it was their determination and their judgment and their action that brought that fire upon them, then I must use the experiences that we have here and figure out what we can do for the future.

Q Ms. Reno, on another topic, have you and your staff made a formal determination whether the independent counsel law allows the Special Division to appoint a successor to Mr. Starr or any other independent counsels in the wake of --

ATTY GEN. RENO: Yes, we believe it does.

Q Ms. Reno, do you have any personal recollection of the events in question here that are related in that case -- do you have any personal recollection of that period early that morning, when the FBI sought to put tear gas on that underground shelter?

ATTY GEN. RENO: I don't have a specific recollection of anything to do with the tape. But that morning was a series

of different television cameras and different information coming in and different conversations going on, so I can't tell you specifically what was taped then and what wasn't.

Q Can you clarify one thing about that morning? Were your orders and the plan that was outlined for April 19th not to use incendiary devices, period, or not to use incendiary devices in the direction of the wooden bunker -- wooden compound?

ATTY GEN. RENO: Mine -- what I asked for were assurances -- and I received assurances -- that we would not use incendiary devices or pyrotechnic means of delivering incendiary devices. And I made no distinction between any part of the compound.

Q But is the -- is -- in your understanding, is the kind of tear gas round that was discussed on the tape yesterday -- in your understanding, is that an incendiary device?

ATTY GEN. RENO: I want to again let the outside investigator get to the truth of the issue, to make sure that we don't do anything that would prejudge the situation.

What we're being told is that there wasn't -- it was an incendiary device, but we need to get to the truth of it.

Q Well, this may be beyond anyone's understanding at this point, but isn't an "incendiary device" one that produces a fire, that -- because many of the experts who have looked at these rounds say they do get a little bit hot, but they don't typically burst into flames or cause fires.

ATTY GEN. RENO: Well again, what I want to do is not make a judgment. I want to use the process to get to the truth. And we may find that this was not considered incendiary. Other people indicate it may have been. Let us judge it with an outside investigator so that we can see the truth.

Q Ms. Reno, what is left to be done before you name the person to head this investigation? I mean, are you having

trouble convincing anybody to take on this task?

ATTY GEN. RENO: I would not comment on the process by which we are doing it, except to say, as I have, that we are trying to do it the right way.

Q Ms. Reno, the last week, as these revelations have come out, have you conferred with the president? Have you sought his advice? Has he advised you on any of these matters?

ATTY GEN. RENO: No, I haven't.

Q Have you had any contact with the White House in the past week?

ATTY GEN. RENO: Yes, I have discussed it with his chief of staff.

Q And what was the result of that conversation?

ATTY GEN. RENO: I kept him advised what I was doing.

Q Ms. Reno, when this person eventually agrees to accept this appointment, are you going to appoint the outside investigator under the special-counsel regulations that mirror the Independent Counsel law?

ATTY GEN. RENO: We will see as we design the process and design the mandate.

Q What are the qualities that you are looking for? If you are not prepared to talk about who it is, what are the qualities that you are looking for in this outside investigator?

ATTY GEN. RENO: The perfect person. (Laughter.)

Q And what might that include?

ATTY GEN. RENO: Let's see.

Q Why does it have to be a Republican?

ATTY GEN. RENO: It may not have to be a Republican.

Q Ms. Reno?

Q Does this mean you're looking at Democratic candidates?

ATTY GEN. RENO: Mm?

Q Does that mean you are looking at some Democratic candidates, as well?

ATTY GEN. RENO: I am not commenting.

Q On another subject -- about the Olympics investigation, two persons have now been indicted. It seems probable there will be more indictments. Can you give us any kind of time line and about where we are in this investigation; when the sponsors and the organizers could expect that the investigative part of this might wrap up?

ATTY GEN. RENO: No, I can't; I can't comment.

Q Can I come back to the question -- oh, I'm sorry.

Q I'm sorry. Ms. Reno, I was just wondering, to change the subject again, if there's any further negotiations with the Visa- MasterCard --

ATTY. GEN. RENO: With the what?

Q With the Visa-MasterCard case, or the Microsoft -- case, if there's any further negotiations there?

ATTY. GEN. RENO: I won't comment on that one, for sure.  
(Laughter.)

Q Can we come back to the question Michelle asked about the ability of the three-judge panel to appoint a successor to Ken Starr? What is the view of your folks on why that's

doable now that there's no independent counsel law?

ATTY. GEN. RENO: I will ask Myron to give you whatever would be appropriate in terms of our findings on it.

Q Can you give us any idea when you will appoint this independent investigator? Will it be today? Tomorrow?

ATTY. GEN. RENO: We're going to do it as soon as possible.

Q You're basically waiting for the people you've talked to to get back to you? Just sort of -- you're waiting to hear back?

ATTY. GEN. RENO: If I start down the slippery slope of answering those questions, I'll be telling you who I have under consideration -- (Laughter.)

Q That's not really on the slope, though. That's more at the top. (Laughter.)

Q Has anyone turned you down?

ATTY. GEN. RENO: No comment.

Q No comment.

Q Do you think it's time for Louis Freeh to stand up and, one, talk to the American people through the media or some other way?

Or do you think it's time for him to stand up and say that the buck stops with FBI someplace on this issue?

ATTY. GEN. RENO: I think Director Freeh is taking all possible steps to make sure that the FBI is responsive, and I think it's incumbent upon us all. It's -- the buck ultimately stops with me because it's not just the FBI that was involved, it was others as well.

Q Are you confident that the FBI can be trusted? Do you

trust them yourselves? I mean, from the top down?

ATTY. GEN. RENO: I think it is important to realize that when you have an operation of this magnitude and an agency with so many different issues -- Remember what I've said. Law enforcement is probably one of the most difficult, difficult jobs there is in this country today. We're asking agents to exercise authority to protect the American people, to put their life on the line, to put their reputation on the line, to put their whole career on the line. And they react based on the best information they know in certain circumstances and it may prove to be wrong, or they may make a mistake.

It is so important to judge each matter on its own; to understand how it came to happen, and then to take steps to make sure it doesn't happen again and that people are held appropriately accountable.

Q Have you been misled or possibly lied to by the FBI, as was stated by the White House spokesperson recently?

ATTY GEN. RENO: I think it is important that before we reach any conclusion, we see what the truth is.

Q Ms. Reno, will this investigation also go into the possibility that Delta Force may have been on the ground in Waco in an operational capacity?

ATTY GEN. RENO: If that is still an issue, I will try to make sure that that is addressed as well.

Q Ms. Reno, given the department's history, and your history, with Chairman Burton and the House -- you're looking really hard right now to find an independent investigator to conduct this side of the inquiry -- is Chairman Burton the proper person to conduct the House inquiry into this matter?

ATTY GEN. RENO: I think that's for the House to decide. And we will be happy to cooperate with Chairman Burton in every way possible. Chairman Burton was on a plane with me from



Indianapolis, and he said, "I'm not sure you want me sitting behind you." I said, "I'll be happy to have you sitting behind me, in front of me or at my side." (Laughter.)

Q When was this?

ATTY GEN. RENO: About six months ago.

Q Did you have any further conversation?

Q It would seem the department has a really major job on its hands to try to sort out all of the information and the documents, because you've got -- on the one hand, you've got this investigation; you've also got litigation going on in Waco; you've got the congressional demands, subpoenas for information. Who is handling all of this, and how are you going to manage this?

ATTY GEN. RENO: It is a difficult task, but we are working through it.

Q Ms. Reno, some people on the House -- well, a couple on the House Government Reform Committee say that the tapes that they received for the 1995 hearings have been striped of sound. Is this a concern?

ATTY GEN. RENO: Again, we are going to ask that if there are any concerns, that the outside investigator look at them and pursue them.

Q Are you concerned about the impact of all this new information on your ability to get a fair jury down at the civil trial in Waco?

ATTY GEN. RENO: I think that as we pursue these issues, the American people will see that we're dedicated to the truth and that this -- what we're trying to do in the civil litigation is get to the truth. And I think we'll let the truth speak.

Q Back on the Olympics: Do you expect kind of a string of indictments to come as things are found, or do you expect kind of a group of indictments at the end of the investigation?

ATTY GEN. RENO: Now would I tell you whether I expected an indictment or not? (Soft laughter.)

Thank you all.

Q Thank you.

Q Thank you. Good day.

END.