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because of all the film that was being shot.

Q. Are you relieved, sir, that you have finally settled upon an Attorney General?

The President. I'll discuss that at 4:30 p.m.

Q. Are you asking for greater access for American goods in Japan?

The President. This is just the beginning of our relationship. We had a little talk about trade. And Minister Watanabe said that he thought that we shouldn't become protectionist in our relationship. And I agreed, but I said I thought we had to bring the trade deficit down and that I would be working with him on it very firmly.

Q. Did he agree to that?

The President. Yes, he agreed. As a matter of fact, he discussed some things that he thought would be done. So we had a good talk. But it was very preliminary. You shouldn't attach any burden on him because he came to see me today.

Q. So you're going to be friends?

The President. Well, I think we'll be friends and we'll have a few disagreements and a lot of agreements.

Q. So is this lawyer you mentioned a woman?

The President. At 4:30 p.m.

Q. At each photo op you go a little bit further.

Q. Will we see her on the way out?

The President. I hope not.

[*At this point, one group of reporters left the room, and another group entered.*]

Q. Mr. President, will you meet with the Japanese Prime Minister by the end of March? Have any plans?

The President. I don't think a specific date has been set yet, but I want very much to meet with him in the near future. The Japanese-American relationship is very important, not only to Japan and to America but to the rest of the world. And I think it's important that we meet pretty soon, and I'm trying to set it up now.

Q. Was there a big agenda for this meeting, today's meeting?

The President. Was there a big agenda? Well, we talked for a good while, as you probably know, about a wide range of things, everything from the AIDS crisis to the situation in Russia, to the GATT round, to the necessity of resolving the trade differences between our two countries. It was a good first meeting. I thought it was a good first meeting.

Q. [*Inaudible*]—diplomatic?

The President. It's my job.

NOTE: The exchange began at 2:35 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

The President's News Conference With Attorney-General-Designate Janet Reno

February 11, 1992

Nomination of Janet Reno To Be Attorney General

The President. Good afternoon. One of my central missions as President is to reconnect the Government of the American people with the people who sent us here. Government cannot be an abstract, distant entity. It must be directly linked to the real lives of real people. I pledged when I ran to reach beyond Washington to bring the best from America's statehouses and courthouses to our Government. And I believe that my Cabinet and other appointees have fulfilled that pledge so far.

No agency needs an injection of innovative spirit more than the Department of Justice. Americans demand and deserve freedom from crime in their homes, at their schools, and on the streets. Talking tough is easy. Actually getting results is much more difficult and much more rare. Thousands of prosecutors and police across America have been developing successful ways to fight crime and, just as important, to restore the sense of security that makes community possible in our Nation. I expect my Justice Department to take those lessons and apply them nationally, to be an innovator for law enforcement.

After years of political controversy and abuse, the Justice Department also needs an Attorney General who will bring a sense of pride, integ-

rity, and new energy to that agency. The Department's dedicated career staff need leadership to help the Department pull together to focus on the urgent interests and issues of justice and law that brought the employees of the Justice Department into public service in the first place. They need an administrator schooled in the management of tough and complex problems and difficult-to-call legal cases, things that affect matters in the office and on the streets of America.

I am proud to announce today that I intend to nominate Janet Reno, the State attorney from Miami and Dade County, Florida, to be our next Attorney General. She is a front-line crime fighter and a caring public servant. She has devoted her life to making her community safer, keeping children out of trouble, reducing domestic violence, and helping families. She has truly put people first.

She grew up as the daughter of two respected Florida journalists. She worked her way through Cornell University, graduating in 1960. Three years later, in 1963, she was one of a handful of women to graduate from the Harvard Law School, a year behind her distinguished Senator, Bob Graham. After a decade in the private practice of law, she was appointed the State attorney in 1978.

Janet Reno is ready to tackle the Justice Department's problems. Serving successfully as the chief prosecutor in a complex, diverse urban community is a really tough job. And she has done that job and done it well. She supervises an office of 900, including 230 attorneys. Her office handles over 120,000 cases per year, 40,000 of them felonies, and has won 80 capital punishment convictions for first degree murderers since she became prosecutor.

She has pioneered innovative programs to reduce crime, violence, and drug abuse. She launched a drug court program that has become nationally acclaimed that gets young first-time offenders back on track. She's piloted a community policing program, helping to reduce crime in blighted urban areas, something we want to do all across America. She began one of the first and best domestic violence programs combating spousal and child abuse. She runs a tough child support program that is at the leading edge of making deadbeat parents pay up.

She has been a fair-minded and effective prosecutor. Her balanced approach has won wide praise from across the community, from law enforcement, the bar, community leaders, civil rights leaders. People from all walks of life have hailed her achievements and her remarkable dedication to public service. She has won election five times and is the single biggest votegetter in Dade County. The overwhelming support of the people who know her best is the most telling testament to her skills that I know of.

As an experienced law enforcement leader, she will be an effective voice in our fight against violent crime, spearheading our efforts to put 100,000 new police officers on the street, to keep dangerous weapons out of the hands of criminals, to make greater use of boot camps and other alternative means of service for young offenders, to increase aid to local law enforcement, to expand the use of community policing and to tackle the problems of violence against women and the need for tougher child support enforcement.

She will join with local leaders and environmental advocates to make sure that those who pollute our air and our water pay for their actions and take responsibility for the needed clean-up. She will work to invigorate our civil rights laws and to ensure that every person has an equal chance to contribute to and to participate in all our country has to offer. And she'll lead the fight against crime in the suites, as well as crime in the streets, ensuring that every possible penny is recovered from people who have bilked the S&L's and other white-collar criminals.

Finally, I want to say to you that every one I know who knows and has worked with Janet Reno agrees that she possesses one quality most essential to being Attorney General: unquestioned integrity. She's demonstrated throughout her career a commitment to principles that I want to see enshrined at the Justice Department. No one is above the law. Our legal system must protect the innocent and punish the wrongdoers. That the promise of equal justice under law must be a reality for every American.

This remarkable public servant still lives in a house in Florida that her mother built with her own hands. She has a listed phone number, and she's told me many times that people who find that their ex-spouses are delinquent in their child support call her at home because they believe that she can go collect their child support. She has lived the kind of life, in real contact with the toughest problems of this country,

that I think will serve her very well as the Nation's chief law enforcement officer.

Janet Reno.

I want her to give a statement first.

[*At this point, Attorney-General-designate Reno made a statement.*]

FBI Director William Sessions

Q. Does this mean you're going to have a house-cleaning of the Justice Department, and that Sessions is on his way out as FBI Director?

The President. Well, first of all, I think it's important that we put the new Attorney General in and get our leadership team in at Justice. And I don't want to speak for her, but I think the appropriate thing is to wait until the final report is in on the FBI Director and give the Attorney-General-designate a chance to review that before we say anything else about that.

Q. Do you have any ideas on that subject?

Selection Process

Q. Mr. President, how much was your selection guided by a determination to have a woman as the first Attorney General?

The President. Somewhat, but not entirely. I also reviewed a large number of men for this position. And in the last several weeks, actually, I decided that I would just do it as if I were doing it all over again. I would go back to ground one. I reviewed a large number of potential candidates, both men and women.

I have to tell you, if I might be permitted a little personal moment, I've had a high regard for Janet Reno for some time because my brother-in-law is the defense attorney in the drug court about which I spoke so I've known about her exploits for some time. And I considered her even in the beginning, even though she and I never had a conversation. So I think it's fair to say that in my mind at least she prevailed in a fleet of very fine candidates, both men and women.

Q. Mr. President, can you tell us what role Mrs. Clinton had in this selection because we know that Janet Reno has a great deal of experience in child issues and that she's come to Mrs. Clinton's attention last year at least?

The President. None except to say that she liked her a lot. I mean, that she knew her and liked her a lot. And of course, Hillary's brother had been in the drug court. So I knew that from my own direct knowledge, though she didn't even talk to me about that.

Q. Did she participate in the interviewing?

The President. No, not at all.

Inslaw Case

Q. Mr. President, will she clean up the Inslaw case, that case where Meese and others stole a great system for using computers and didn't pay for it, and the House Judiciary Committee has recommended that there be an independent counsel to clean this up? It's a scandal on the face of the United States Government.

Attorney-General-Designate Reno. What I will do is what I do in each of these instances. I'll make sure that we review it carefully, look at the evidence, look at what should be done based on the evidence and the law, and take appropriate action.

Death Penalty

Q. Ms. Reno, could we get your views on the death penalty, and is there a difference between your view and the President's view? And if there is, is that significant, and how will that affect your policy at the Justice Department?

Attorney-General-Designate Reno. I'm personally opposed to the death penalty, as I've told the President, but I've probably asked for it as much as many prosecutors in the country and have secured it. And when the evidence and the law justify the death penalty, I will ask for it as I have consistently. I will advocate for it as the law of the land in particular situations if we can secure such penalties.

Q. Will you move to reverse the death penalty?

Nominee's Qualifications

Q. Mr. President, can you assure us today, sir, that of all the candidates you either reviewed or could have reviewed for this job, that the one you have chosen is the absolute best qualified person possible?

The President. I can assure you that based on my criteria I think she's the best. Somebody else might have other criteria. My criteria were the ones that I outlined. I wanted to bring someone to the Justice Department who had had both management experience and legal experience. I want to bring someone to the Justice Department who had dealt with a wide range of real-world problems and who had a keen eye for excellence and talent, to restore a sense of movement and energy and vitality. There are an awful lot of good people at the Justice De-

partment who want to be part of a Department on the move and feel good about it.

And the one thing I thought—I can tell you this—this is ironic since I'm now naming Janet Reno. I want to be forthright and answer the question fully.

In the beginning of my deliberations weeks ago, the one reason that I did not pursue this more was because Janet Reno had always been a State prosecutor and not a Federal U.S. attorney or not a higher Justice Department official. But the more I dug into it and the more I talked to people about it, the more I realized that you couldn't be the State's attorney in Dade County for 15 years without having enormous exposure to a wide range of issues that the Justice Department deals with and without working with the United States attorney. You might want to ask her for some specifics.

So finally, I said, well, why don't I just call and explore this. And I did, and I was fully satisfied that she had more than enough familiarity with the Federal system to do the job.

Q. Mr. President, can you outline for us, when you say "somewhat," that her gender was somewhat of a factor, can you explain to us how big a role that played, and why? And I'd like to ask Ms. Reno how she feels about taking a position that seems to have been set aside for a woman.

The President. It was not set aside. I'll tell you again, I considered a significant number of men for this position. And as I said before—someone asked me about this double standard issue—there were also a significant number of men who couldn't go forward in this process because of some of the same problems that you all have written about.

I thought it was important not to disqualify women just because of what happened before. And I really believe—I'm not sure you could find anybody around the country that would get any more favorable and broad-based support than I have been given in spontaneous comments. I just left a Member of the House of Representatives who doesn't live within 200 miles of Janet Reno, who heard that I was going to name her and just went out of his way to tell me that it was a great appointment, what a wonderful thing it was that I had done. I feel very comfortable with this appointment on the merits.

Law Enforcement

Q. Mr. President, given the tight budget constraints that you have been focusing on over the past weeks, how do you and this Attorney General plan to go about fulfilling your campaign promise to hire 100,000 police officers for this country?

The President. Well, I think there are three things that I would point you to, and keep in mind we don't have to do it in the first year. We have—when you all talk to me about my campaign commitments, remember I've got a 4-year term—[*laughter*]—at least that.

I want to do that from three sources. Number one, I hope we can bring that crime bill back up that almost passed but didn't last time and have some funds for local law enforcement to hire more police officers. Number two, I want to proceed at a pace with the national service program, which will give priority in every State to people who want to pay their college loans back by working as police officers. Number three, I want to pursue the idea that Senator Nunn first raised, at least he was the first one I ever heard raise it, of helping people who are going to be mustered out of the military service to qualify to move quickly into careers as police officers or teachers.

And so, we believe from those three sources, with the funding that I have set aside in the budget I will recommend, and the other things that we will do over the next 4 years, we will be able to meet that goal.

Susan [Susan Spencer, CBS News].

Selection Process

Q. Is it safe to assume that Ms. Reno has (a) never hired an illegal alien, legally or illegally; (b) paid all her Social Security taxes? And finally, as you look back on the soap opera that has led to this, how do you assess whatever political damage you may or may not have incurred?

The President. Oh, I don't think there is much. I think what happened—I just would remind you, though, I nominated one other person for this, Zoe Baird, and I took responsibility for that fact that our vetting procedure was inadequate. It was my personal responsibility. Since then, all the other things that you have written about are things that you found out about in ways that I don't know, but our procedure worked and worked quite well. And I didn't discuss anybody or anything until I got ready

to nominate somebody else. So I think they did a good job.

If there were any mistakes made in the interim, it was people who worked here, worked around here, or were talked to by us who said things to you they shouldn't have. But otherwise, the system worked pretty well as it was supposed to have worked.

Q. First question: we can assume that all of these other matters are not a problem?

The President. Well, why don't you ask her?

Attorney-General-Designate Reno. I've never hired any illegal aliens, and I think I've paid all my Social Security taxes. Certainly in the vetting process in the last week we've covered everything.

The Vice President. She made sure that a lot of others have, too.

Q. Mr. President, to the extent that you wanted to fulfill these commitments, did you feel hamstrung by the pledge or the perception of a pledge that you had set aside this job for a woman?

The President. No.

Q. And part two, if we can ask Ms. Reno, we never got an answer to Ruth's question about how she feels about being appointed to a job in which there is that perception of a pledge.

The President. No. As I said, I interviewed—I even talked to—I don't know how it didn't get into the paper, but it didn't—both men as well as women about this job. And I seriously considered, seriously considered, at least four men for this job. I really concluded in the end that Janet Reno would be best. I never felt hamstrung by any commitment, even though I did want to name a woman Attorney General. I thought it would be a good thing. There are a lot of women lawyers in the country, a lot of women judges in the country, a lot of women prosecutors in the country. And I thought it would be a good and interesting thing to do. But I never felt hamstrung by the commitment.

Attorney-General-Designate Reno. I think this is one of the greatest challenges that any lawyer could have in America. And I want to try my level-best. I have been so impressed with members of the administration and with the vetting team and with the approach to Government, the approach that Government can work to put people first. And I'm just delighted to be here, and I'm going to try my level-best.

Nominee's Qualifications

Q. Are you a feminist?

The President. You want to answer that?

Q. Are you a feminist?

Attorney-General-Designate Reno. The question is whether I'm a feminist. My mother always told me to do my best, to think my best, and to do right and consider myself a person.

The President. I do think I need to make one factual disclosure and then I promise to call on Mr. Lauter [David Lauter, Los Angeles Times]. There was one factor which affected me about Janet Reno, which is that Senator Gore and I, when he was Senator and I was Governor, we carried Dade County in the Presidential election by 4 percentage points. The last time Janet Reno had an opponent, she carried it by 40 percentage points. [*Laughter*] That had a lot more to do than gender with convincing me that she could handle things at the Justice Department. If you know anything about Dade County, you know that is a truly astonishing achievement.

Q. If I could ask Ms. Reno, the President mentioned that he was attracted to your experience as a State prosecutor which gave you a lot of experience on the criminal law side. But you obviously haven't had direct experience with a number of Federal issues that will come up, constitutional issues that will come up. Do you feel that you'll have a substantial learning curve that you'll have to get over in order to be able to deal with those Federal law issues that you haven't been dealing with in your career, certainly for the last 15 years?

Attorney-General-Designate Reno. I think one of the splendors of the law is that it covers so many areas and that if you're going to be Attorney General, it's going to be very difficult for any one person to be skilled and to be experienced in every area that the Attorney General must cover. I think I can do the job, and I think I can do it by building a team dedicated to excellence, to professionalism, a team where the hallmark is integrity. And using the base of the tremendous career lawyers that exist in the Department of Justice, I think we're going to have a great team.

Q. Mr. President, this has been a frustrating process for you in some ways. If you had it to do all over again, what would you do differently?

The President. Oh, I would have called Janet

Reno on November 5th. [*Laughter*]

Immigration Law

Q. Ms. Reno lives in an area which is full of immigrants, legal and illegal, and a lot of things about the confusing laws of immigration came out in the past few weeks, as we all know. What will she do to clear up all these problems?

Attorney-General-Designate Reno. Again, what I would like to do is work with members of the administration, members of the Department of Justice, to look at the problem, to consult with the President, and to make recommendations based on a thorough study of the matter.

Abortion

Q. Can you tell us your views on freedom of choice?

Attorney-General-Designate Reno. I am pro-choice.

Florida Corruption Investigation

Q. Ms. Reno, could I ask a question? The county—Dade County—some of the critics have said that you have passed along questions of local corruption, government corruption, to the Federal courts and the Federal system. The question is why did you choose to do that?

Attorney-General-Designate Reno. Let me give you a classic example. My office was responsible for investigating and putting together a case against a significant number of corrupt officials. Florida has very liberal discovery rules that give defense attorneys the right to question all the witnesses, somewhat far more liberal than Federal court. The Federal authorities also have the Internal Revenue Service. It seemed to us as the case progressed that it would be best handled in Federal court. I didn't ship the case over there. I shipped the case with my prosecutors, who were cross-designated to the Federal court.

One of the things that interested me when I asked the U.S. Attorney to work with us in this effort is that he said, "Janet, that's political suicide. People will think you're ducking." And I said, "Mr. Kellner, I want to do what's right for the case and right to see that justice is secured." Our prosecutors participated in that prosecution. I think it gave me an understanding of Federal process, Federal procedure, Federal law. And I think it's an example of what State and Federal officials can do working together, without everybody being concerned about turf and taking credit for something.

Confirmation

Q. Mr. President, how long do you think it's going to take to get this nominee confirmed?

The President. Well, I talked to Senator Biden today, and he said that he would proceed in an expeditious way. So I think that you should ask Senator Biden about that. I think that the committee will take it up in an appropriate fashion. I don't expect them to race it through or anything, but I think they will do it in a prompt way when they come back.

Q. Can you think of any issues at all that might complicate the confirmation process? Anything that will have to be explained?

The President. I don't. I think that she may have to—she just explained one issue here. I can tell you this: If you've been a prosecutor for 15 years, it's like if you've been a Governor for 12 years. Not every call you make is right; not every case you pursue is won. But I can just tell you, I have been literally amazed at the quality of the recommendations that I received for Janet Reno.

Justice Department Staff

Q. Mr. President, have you make any decisions yet on any other top positions at Justice, and what is Webb Hubbell's role going to be at Justice?

The President. Well, we'll have to discuss that with the Attorney General now. But I will say this for the hometown press: He has done a magnificent job for the last 3 weeks under rather adverse circumstances, just trying to keep things together there and to keep the morale up and help at least to do the things that had to be done. I hope he will be staying there. And the answer to your other question is, as you might imagine, we have done an enormous amount of work on top-flight candidates for other positions, and I would expect that if this nomination goes as I expect it to, we will be able to fill out the Justice Department with first-class lawyers very, very quickly. Thank you.

Q. Are you sure you're not troubled by the fact that her parents were both journalists? [*Laughter*]

The President. No, actually, I thought the fact that her parents were both journalists and she still was a surviving elected politician made her doubly qualified to be Attorney General. [*Laughter*]

NOTE: The President's third news conference began at 4:40 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In the news conference, he referred to Webster Hubbell, Acting Assistant to the Attorney General.

Remarks and an Exchange With Reporters on Child Immunization at the Fenwick Center in Arlington, Virginia

February 12, 1993

The President. Thank you. We are delighted to be here today. I want to thank all of you for hosting us and coming out in such wonderful numbers, and I want to especially thank the young people who are here.

I want to begin my introducing the First Lady, my wife, Hillary. As many of you know, she is the chair of the President's Task Force on Health Care and came today to review the work of this wonderful clinic in anticipation of our presenting to the Congress a program to provide affordable health care for all Americans in the next several weeks.

We've had a wonderful time here today. And I want to introduce the person to my left who will speak in a moment, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, Donna Shalala. I also want to introduce two United States Senators who came with us today: first, the chair of the Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources, Senator Edward Kennedy of Massachusetts; and Senator Don Riegle of Michigan.

I'd like to thank Jim Hunter, the Arlington County Board chair, for meeting us here. I know we have members of the Virginia Senate and House here, and the school board chair, Frank Wilson. I thank all of them for being here. But the two people I'd like to thank most today are the two fine public servants who showed us around. I'd like to ask them to stand and be recognized: Dr. Susan Allan, the Arlington County health director—where is Susan?—and Sue Adams, the Family Health Bureau chief. Thank you, Sue.

We've had a wonderful time today. We got to walk through the process of what it was like for a parent to have a child immunized here. We saw the good news, which is that this place is doing a wonderful job of reaching people. We also saw some of the bad news, which is it's still pretty cumbersome to have a child immunized. And we did get to see a young woman of 20 months, get her a polio vaccine, which is an oral vaccine. So it was nice to see someone be vaccinated without pain. [*Laughter*]

We came here today to make this day a landmark and to fight to protect the health of millions of our children. I can think of no better place to announce a new immunization policy than right here on the front lines of the fight to provide accessible, affordable health care to every family in this area.

I'm pleased to be joined here by the children's advocates whom I have introduced. And I do want to say again our thanks to Sue Adams, the director of this clinic, and all the wonderful staff that came out and said hello to us and encouraged us along the way.

This week I was startled to read of the case of a young boy named Rodney Miller, a 20-month-old child who lives in Miami, currently being treated for meningitis in the Jackson Memorial Hospital. He's there because he did not receive a meningitis vaccine that cost $21.48. The bill for his stay in the hospital has already topped $46,500.

In the health care policy that our national task force is developing, nothing will be more important than preventive care. Today, American taxpayers are being hit with $10 in avoidable health care costs, avoidable health care costs, for every $1 we could be spending on immunizing our young people. The recent resurgence of measles in our country afflicted over 55,000 people, most of whom were children. The epidemic cost this country $20 million in avoidable hospital costs alone. Prevention would have cost $1 million. And those figures don't begin to take into account the terrible human cost, the agony of a young man like Rodney Miller with his joints swollen, with his ankles so swollen they have to be relieved with needling to get the pus out, that the pain and problems that he and many others will take