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convinced that maybe we can use this court decision as a spur to even do a better job, a more comprehensive job. We're going to do everything we possibly can.

Mr. Lane. God bless you.

The President. Thanks. It's nice to hear your voice.

Goodbye, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you.

NOTE: The telephone conversation began at 10:27 a.m. The President spoke from the Oval Office at the White House.

Remarks to Law Enforcement Officers
April 11, 1994

Thank you very much, Officer Williams, if you just keep doing your work, and I'll be glad to carry your notebook anytime. There are a lot of days when you do more than we do up here anyway. [*Laughter*] I want to thank you, and thank you, Earline Williams, for your commitment and your remarkable statement and the work you and your husband are doing. Thank you, Eddie, for reminding us that we have an obligation to fight for your future. Thanks for bringing your friends, and thank you, officers, for giving him something to look up to and believe in. I want to welcome the new officers from Albany, Georgia, and thank them for their commitment to law enforcement and thank all the other people in law enforcement who are here at the local and State and Federal level.

In the last congressional recess, like the Attorney General, I got out around the country and listened to people, talked to them about a lot of issues. And I found that all over the country in every region, among people from all walks of life, all races and income groups and political parties, there is a deep concern about the tide of crime and violence in this country and about the underlying strains on our fabric as a common people that these have imposed.

We have simply got to do everything we can to move forward in helping the American people to reduce crime, to say no to those things which they ought to say no to, and to give our young people some more things to say yes to.

I came here today to emphasize how terribly important it is that the House of Representatives consider the crime bill immediately on its return. The Speaker has agreed to do that. I then want the Senate and the House to get together and resolve their differences and send me the crime bill as soon as possible. The American people have waited long enough. We don't need to waste their time with frivolous or political amendments and delay. We don't need to take months on a task that can be done in a couple of weeks. If the bill is on my desk in weeks, I will only take a minute to sign it, and then the American people will begin to have the tools they need to solve so many of their problems.

This has been a good year for us in this country. Our deficit is going down, and our economy is going up. Twice as many private sector jobs have come into this economy in the last 14 months than in the previous 4 years. After 7 years of gridlock, the Brady bill became the Brady law and is already working to stop felons and fugitives from purchasing handguns. And I'm proud that it was passed with the help of America's law enforcement officers.

But everything that we are trying to do to move this country forward and to bring this country together will be undermined unless we can give the American people a greater sense that they are secure in their homes, on their streets, and in their schools. The number of murders has tripled since 1960; so has the number of crimes per uniformed police officer. Death by gunfire will soon surpass death by car accidents. Almost a third of all of our families have had someone victimized by crime. Today, one in 20 American children carry a weapon to school, and over 150,000 stay home every day because they're afraid of what might happen to them in school.

We know the crime bill cannot solve all these problems. We know many of them will have to be solved by those people who are here today in uniform and people like them and the friends and neighbors they have, like Mrs. Williams. We know that. We know that unless there are

young people like Eddie and his friends who are willing to work and be role models themselves and make something of their own lives, that everything we do here in Washington will be limited. But we know, too, that we have to take the lead, we have to take the initiative, and that we can give people like these people the tools they need to seize control of their lives and make their communities safer and better places to learn, to work, and to grow.

The crime bill provides funding for another 100,000 police officers over 5 years for community policing because it works. It will make a difference. You already heard what Officer Williams said about 12 officers in Albany, Georgia. The mayor of Houston put 655 more police officers on the beat. In 15 months, crime dropped 22 percent; murders went down 27 percent.

This can be done everywhere. This bill with community policing will help the police officers of our country not only to catch more criminals and put them behind bars but to reduce crime and to connect with more young people before it's too late. I was very moved by what Eddie said about his attitude about the police, because of the work of these two fine police officers. We know that crime can be reduced and that lives can be enhanced. So as the Attorney General said, policing is a big part of this crime bill.

If Congress passes the bill soon to give the American people more police officers, I'll make this commitment to you: I'll cut through the bureaucracy and the redtape in Washington so that within a year, 20,000 of these new officers will actually be hired and trained and working to make our streets safer. If they'll send me the bill, we'll cut the redtape. No more politics in Congress; no more redtape in the bureaucracy. Let's give the police to the American people, and let's do it this year.

The second thing this bill is about is punishment. And I want to emphasize, if I might, three things. There's been a great deal of debate and much honest disagreement about whether we ought to have some sort of "three strikes and you're out" bill. I would like to make two points about that, as someone who started my public career as a State attorney general almost two decades ago now. First of all, an overwhelming percentage of the really serious violent crimes are committed by a relatively few people. Even a small percentage of the criminals in our country commit an overwhelming percentage of the really serious violent crimes. Secondly, this law is designed to be directed, if it's properly drawn, against a narrow class of people, those who do not commit crimes for which it's already "one strike and you're out." Keep in mind, many of our crimes today can get you a life sentence or a very long sentence just by doing it one time. But there are people that are clearly and demonstrably highly likely to take life or to commit serious, horrible crimes—we know them by their profiles—who do things which clearly indicate this, and still they can wind up being paroled after relatively modest sentences.

This bill is designed, if properly drawn—and the Attorney General has done a fine job of working on the bill that is coming through the House—to be directed against that narrow class of people. I do think those folks, you can say, "If you do this three times, we do not think you should be paroled." And I believe it will enable us, for those who think this is too harsh, to create more enlightened attitudes about other people who may be put in prison for too long a period of time or who may need alternative rehabilitation strategies. But these police officers are out there putting their lives on the line, oftentimes in the face of people who are back on the street that they know are highly likely to do something that is life-threatening.

So respectfully, I dispute those who believe that we can't have a "three strikes and you're out" law that is good, that is properly drawn, and that makes a difference. We shouldn't let a small percentage of even the criminal population terrorize the country if we can find a way to stop it. And this is our best effort.

The second point I want to make is that this bill does some other things about punishment, too. This bill encourages States and localities to find alternative punishments for first-time, nonviolent offenders, for young people, boot camps or other kinds of community-based programs which may reconnect people to their communities before it is too late and which will give them a chance not only to be punished but to learn something while they're doing their respective sentences. So this is a smart punishment bill.

The third thing this bill is about is prevention. We know these programs work, too, especially for young people. And I want to say a special word of thanks here to the Attorney General.

When I appointed her, I wanted someone who had actual experience on the front lines fighting crime and who understood that you have to be both tough and smart. And her relentless, constant, compassionate but tough-minded advocacy for a sensible prevention strategy is critical to the fact that we now have about a billion dollars in this plan for jobs for young people in high crime neighborhoods and recreation programs and summer programs and opportunities for young people to bond with caring, concerned adults who care about their future. I thank her for that. And that's a very important part of this bill. It will make a huge difference to the young people of America.

A big part of that is making the schools safe and drug-free and free of violence again. If our children can't be safe in school and going to and from school, they're going to have a very hard time. After all, a lot of the young people most at risk of being victims of crime, as well as at risk of becoming criminals at a young age, live in communities very different from those that most of us grew up in, communities where the family structure has been weakened, communities where other organizations are weaker than they once were, and communities in which there is almost no work for people to do. When you take work and community and family out of a neighborhood, you create an awful vacuum in which only bad things, only bad things, can occur unless someone moves in to fill the vacuum.

Our schools are trying. But we are asking them to do in many of our communities today, we are asking them to do things that no one ever thought the schools could do alone. And we have got to continue to support them through these safe school initiatives and the other prevention plans. So that's what we're trying to do in this crime bill: more police, more punishment, more prevention.

In this time of budgetary constraints, the very idea that we're about to pass a program that will involve over $20 billion in new money is an astonishing thing. It's a lot more money for State and local initiatives, but we have to do it. And I am proud of the fact that it is going to be paid for, not with a tax increase but with the phase-down of the Federal Government. We are reducing over a 5-year period the size of the Federal bureaucracy by about 250,000 people. And all the savings are going to go on into a trust fund to pay for this crime bill, so that at the end of 5 years we will have a Federal Government that is as small as it was when President Kennedy was in office. And the money saved from that downsizing will be giving our communities a chance to give our kids a future and our people a chance to be safe on the streets. I think that's a pretty good switch, and I appreciate the initiative in doing it.

Let me say again in closing, there is not a moment to lose. People are trying everywhere to do something about this, and everywhere they are being frustrated. The case of the Chicago Housing Authority has been in the news because just a few days ago, a Federal district court declared that the housing authority's own policy of sweeping their units for guns, for ineligible people living there, and for drugs was unconstitutional. As soon as I heard about that, I asked the Attorney General and the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, Henry Cisneros, to develop another policy that is constitutional and effective, because I have been to the Chicago housing projects. And I have been in the places where the sweeps occurred and where the housing units were cleaned up and where the people who were living in the housing units were hired to work with the police to ride up in the elevator and walk down the stairs and keep the places clean. And I saw children pouring out of housing units, pouring out, to run up to the head of the Chicago Housing Authority, Vince Lane, as if he were their savior because he simply gave them a safe place to live.

So does this administration want to follow the Constitution of the United States? You bet we do. But I can't believe that we can't find a way to have a constitutional search of places that we know are full of victims of crime because they harbor criminals. We are going to find a way to solve this problem.

Thirteen people died in Chicago violently last weekend, three of them in the Robert Taylor Homes project. Last night Secretary Cisneros spent the night in that project, and he called me today from there, and we had a conversation about this. He and the Attorney General are working on it. But I say this just to make this point: Those folks living out there in that housing project, most of them are not criminals; most of them are good people. They obey the law. They're doing the best they can to raise their children. They deserve our best and our quickest efforts.

So I say to you again in closing, I thank you for coming here, but we know we're all preaching to the saved today. Tomorrow when the Congress comes back, there are many other things that will claim their attention. I will ask them to think about many other things. You must say, "Pass the crime bill now."

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:36 p.m. at the Department of Justice. In his remarks, he referred to Ernest Williams, veteran police lieutenant, Albany, GA; Earline Williams, longtime volunteer for the Trenton, NJ, police department; and Eddie Cutanda, 15-year-old beneficiary of Boston, MA, community policing programs.

Remarks at the Thomas Jefferson Dinner
April 11, 1994

Ladies and gentlemen, may I have your attention, please? We thought of how we might best honor Mr. Jefferson on this evening. And I did a little research and discovered that in addition to this being the end of our observation of the 250th anniversary of Thomas Jefferson's birth, it is also the 200th anniversary of the birth of Edward Everett, who, like Thomas Jefferson and Warren Christopher, served as Secretary of State and whom you will all remember was supposed to be the person who delivered the real Gettysburg Address, at least according to Garry Wills. [*Laughter*] And so I thought I could follow Edward Everett's lead and speak for 2 hours tonight. [*Laughter*] And then I decided I wouldn't do that, that tonight should belong to Thomas Jefferson.

Let me say that any person who is fortunate enough to be Secretary of State or Ambassador to France or Vice President or President feels immediately, in many ways, a great debt to Thomas Jefferson. But in a larger sense, every citizen who ever benefited from the powerful ideas of the Declaration of Independence, the devotion to education embodied in the founding of the University of Virginia, the belief in the first amendment enshrined in the statutes of religious liberty, all of us are in his debt.

Tonight, I ask you to think of only one or two things as we begin this fine evening. Jefferson had the right tensions and balances in his life, and that is why he seems so new to us today. He believed that life had to be driven by fixed principles—life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness—but that we all had to be willing to be constantly changing. Life belongs to the living.

He believed that we all had a right to a radical amount of freedom, in return for which we had to assume a dramatic amount of responsibility. He always was trying to accomplish very big things, but the richness and texture of his life, and the reason it seems so relevant to us today, is that he took such great joy in all the little things of daily life. And it was those things that enabled him to be not just a philosopher and a politician and a lawyer but also an architect and a scientist, a person who enjoyed the large and the small, who believed that life should be driven by eternal principles in constant change, who would gladly have given his life for freedom and who exercised that freedom so responsibly. Oh, if only we could do as well.

On this 200th anniversary of his beginning, at the end of a wonderful year which included, for me and Hillary and our administration, the fact that we got to start our Inaugural at Monticello, let us raise our glasses in a toast not to the memory of Thomas Jefferson but to the vitality of his spirit and his ideas in our own lives and those of our country men and women for all time to come.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:20 p.m. in the Benjamin Franklin Room at the Department of State. In his remarks, he referred to Garry Wills, author and adjunct professor, Northwestern University.