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Week Ending Friday, July 31, 1998

Statement on the Shootings at the Capitol

July 24, 1998

Hillary and I were deeply disturbed to hear of the shootings this afternoon at the United States Capitol. Like all Americans, we extend our thoughts and prayers to the families of the slain officers, Jacob Chestnut and John Gibson, as well as to the injured victim and her family. The Capitol is the people's house, a place where visitors and workers should not have to fear violence. Every American appreciates the bravery of the Capitol Police who prevented further injury through their courageous actions.

NOTE: This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Remarks on Departure for Norfolk, Virginia, at Andrews Air Force Base, Maryland

July 25, 1998

Shootings at the Capitol

Good morning. The shooting at the United States Capitol yesterday was a moment of savagery at the front door of American civilization. Federal law enforcement agencies and the United States Attorney's Office are working closely with the DC police and the Capitol Police to ensure that justice is pursued.

Meanwhile, I would ask all Americans to reflect for a moment on the human elements of yesterday's tragedy. The scripture says, "Greater love hath no man than this: that he lay down his life for his friends." Officer Jacob "J.J." Chestnut and Detective John Gibson laid down their lives for their friends, their co-workers, and their fellow citizens, those whom they were sworn to protect. In so doing, they saved many others from exposure to lethal violence.

Every day, a special breed of men and women pin on their badges, put on their uniforms, kiss their families goodbye, knowing full well they may be called on to lay down their lives. This year alone, 79 other law enforcement officers have made the ultimate sacrifice. Every American should be grateful to them for the freedom and the security they guard with their lives, and every American should stand up for them and stand against violence.

Officer Chestnut was a Vietnam veteran, a member of the Capitol Police for 18 years, just months away from retirement. Detective Gibson was a deeply religious man, beloved by his co-workers and, being from Massachusetts, devoted to the Red Sox and the Bruins. Both leave behind loving wives and children, the affection of neighbors, friends, and co-workers, and the deep gratitude of those who are alive today because of their bravery.

In this one heartless act, there were many acts of heroism, by strangers who shielded children with their bodies, by officers who fanned across the Capitol, by Dr. Bill Frist, a renowned heart surgeon before his election to the Senate from Tennessee, who had just put down his gavel when he rushed to tend the injured. To all these and others who stood for our common humanity, we extend the thanks of our Nation.

To the families of Officer Chestnut and Detective Gibson, nothing we say can bring them back. But all Americans pray that the power of a loving God and the comfort of family and friends will, with time, ease your sorrow and swell your pride for loved ones and the sacrifice they made for their fellow citizens.

To Angela Dickerson, the young woman who was injured in the shooting, we extend our prayers and hope for your speedy recovery.

To every American who has been shaken by this violent act, to the millions of parents who have taken your children through those