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Crime - Top Cops Event

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

October 8, 1998

CEREMONY HONORING NAPO TOP COPS

DATE: October 8, 1998
LOCATION: Room 450 OEOB
BRIEFING TIME: 10:00 am - 10:30 am
MEET/GREET: 10:30 am - 10:45 (Oval Office)
EVENT: 10:55 am - 11:30 am (Room 450)
FROM: Bruce Reed

I. PURPOSE

To honor the National Association of Police Organizations (NAPO) Annual Top Cops and demonstrate your ongoing support of law enforcement.

II. BACKGROUND

You have honored the NAPO Top Cops every year for their exceptional acts of heroism. This year, 34 police officers from ten jurisdictions from around the country will have received their Top Cops award the night before this event at the NAPO annual dinner.

In your remarks you will announce grants of approximately \$70 million for communities to hire more police and for states to improve their criminal history records. You also may be able to sign significant legislation providing for more school safety officers, improved law enforcement technology, and easier sharing of criminal history records.

- COPS grants. You will announce that the COPS Office will award \$27.4 million in grants for 151 policing agencies across the country to hire 428 officers. This announcement will bring the total number of officers funded under your COPS Program to over 88,500 -- keeping the initiative ahead of schedule and under budget.
- Improving System of Brady Background Checks. You will announce more than \$41 million in Justice Department grants for states to improve their criminal history records, which will enhance the effectiveness of the Brady Law's National Instant Criminal Background Check System. The grants, provided through the National Criminal History Improvement Program (NCHIP), are funded through the 1994 Crime Bill. Total grants under this program exceed \$200 million.

At this event, you also may be able to sign the following bills (which Congress is scheduled to vote on tonight):

- Law Enforcement for Our Schools. Legislation introduced by Rep. James Maloney and Senator Campbell ensures that school safety officers can be funded through the Justice Department COPS Program. You challenged Congress in June to pass this legislation and provide more safety officers for our nation's schools.
- Improving Criminal History Records and Access. Legislation introduced by Senators DeWine and Leahy provides \$1.25 billion in federal assistance to states over five years for upgrading communications technologies and criminal justice identification systems. The bill also includes an Administration-proposed national compact on the electronic exchange of criminal history records for non-criminal justice purposes, such as employment checks on day care and elder care workers.

III. PARTICIPANTS

- The President
- Attorney General Reno
- Tom Scotto, President of NAPO
- 34 TOP COPS to be standing on stage. (*Background material attached.)

IV. PRESS PLAN

Open Press.

V. SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

- **YOU** will be announced onto the stage accompanied by Attorney General Reno and Tom Scotto.
- Attorney General Reno will make welcoming remarks and introduce Tom Scotto.
- Tom Scotto will make remarks and introduce **YOU**.
- **YOU** will make remarks.
- **YOU** will work a ropeline and then depart.

VI. REMARKS

Provided by Speechwriting.

1998 NAPO Top Cops

Arkansas State Police - Trooper First Class Ted Grigson

His neighbor fell and broke his neck. Trooper Grigson found him and stabilized him when the accident occurred. He then helped the family for six months while he recuperated -- canceling his vacation and exhausting all his leave time so that he could still perform all of his usual duties as a trooper. He cared for his neighbor by leading a team of volunteers to care for his dairy farm and helping the family raise funds to renovate his home to accommodate his wheelchair.

Los Angeles Police Department - Officer Don Anderson, Detective Vincent Bancroft, Jr. Officer Edward Brentlinger, Officer John Caprarelli, Sergeant Steven Gomez, Detective Kevin A. Harley, Officer Richard Massa, Officer Dean Schram, Officer Conrado Torrez and Officer Richard Zielinski

In February 1997, a series of bank robberies culminated in a shoot-out during the robbing of the Bank of America in North Hollywood. Two heavily armed men wearing body armor were seen entering the bank by L.A. Police Officers and began firing shots inside the bank. As they left, the robbers became aware that police had surrounded them and they began shooting at random. As bullets bounced off the suspects it became evident to police that the two men were wearing body armor. The suspects fired more than 1,100 rounds from their semiautomatic assault rifles injuring a total of seven civilians and eleven LA Police Officers. Eventually, one suspect committed suicide and members of the LAPD SWAT team shot and killed the other.

*The Vice President recently announced that the Administration proposed new legislation to increase penalties for federal crimes committed while wearing body armor.

Kissimmee Police Department, Florida - K-9 Officer Malcom Thompson

In June 1997, Officer Thompson responded to a suspicious person call. He recognized the man getting into a cab at a 7-Eleven parking lot and asked him to get out. He did not know that the suspect had several warrants out for his arrest including armed robberies from that same night and car-jacking. The suspect shot the officer four times in his head, neck, and chest and then put a gun to the cab drivers head to force him to drive him away. Officer Thompson managed to follow the cab and shoot and kill the suspect through the back window of the cab.

Indianapolis Police Department, Indiana - Sergeant Dawn Higgins

Sergeant Higgins and her partner, Patrolwoman Karen Dague, were on a routine patrol when they saw a suspicious vehicle in an alley. As the officers approached the car, the three occupants attempted to flee and Sgt. Higgins began to chase them. She heard a gun shot and returned to her patrol car to find her partner shot and lying in a pool of blood. Sgt. Higgins gave her first aid efforts until emergency personnel arrived while giving descriptions of the suspects, which lead to their capture.

New Hampshire State Police - Trooper First Class Charles M. West

In February 1997, Trooper Phillips was on his way to get a haircut when he spotted Carl Drega, a man known to police for his angry ways, and stopped to speak with him about his vehicle. Drega opened fire, killing Trooper Phillips and his partner who had come to assist him. Drega went on to

kill a judge and the editor of the local newspaper before fleeing the scene in Trooper Phillip's car. Hours later, Drega wounded two more officers, and Trooper West ran into the line of fire to rescue them. Trooper West, without regard for his own safety, put himself at great risk in order to save the lives of the officers. Trooper West exchanged gunfire with Drega and killed him.

*Vermont State Police Captain Mark Metayer, who was the commander for the Vermont State Police during the Drega incident, spoke at the President's Bullet Proof Vest Bill Signing on June 16, 1998 about how he and his colleagues are not provided bullet proof vests. The bill gives localities that do not provide for vests additional funds to do so.

New York City Police Department - Officer Joseph Dolan, Sergeant John A. English, Jr., Officer Michael F. Keenan, Officer David Martinez, Lieutenant Owen C. McCaffrey, Deputy Inspector Raymond McDermott, Captain Ralph Pascullo, Officer Mario Zorovic
In July 1997, an informant told officers that tow men had built four bombs and planned to blow up a subway later that morning. Lt. McCaffrey, Sgt. English, and Cpt. Pascullo formulated a tactical plan and decided on an entry team for the apartment where the bombs had been built by alleged foreign terrorists. The team entered the apartment and advanced to the room where the two suspects and explosives were located. One suspect grabbed an officer's gun, while the second threw himself on the switcher which partially activated the bomb. Both suspects were disabled and a later search of the apartment led to the discovery of four pipe bombs.

Salt Lake County Sheriff's Office, Utah - Sergeant Jim Potter

On Sept 22, 1997, Sgt. Potter was leaving the gym and heard a radio transmission that Johnny Lavato had barricaded himself in his home and was firing on officers. Three officers had been pinned down behind a patrol car by a barrage of shots coming from the house, and one had been injured. Sgt. Potter arrived at the scene and crawled toward the wounded officer. An outdoor light activated by a motion detector exposed all of the officers in the immediate area. Putting himself at great risk, Sgt. Potter ran to the light and broke it with a lawn chair, drawing rifle fire from Lavato. Sgt. Potter rescued the officers and carried the wounded officer on his back to safety. Lavot was found dead of a self-inflicted gunshot wound.

Washington, D.C./Maryland/Virginia - DEA Group Task Force - Assistant Special Agent in Charge Frank J. Chellino, Detective Sergeant Thomas P. Coppinger, Group Supervisor Timothy L. Estep, Detective Gary Gibson, Corporal Michael Grant, Detective Joseph Marchi, Corporal Jason Merson, Special Agent Timothy K. Scott and Detective Thomas J. Wise

Maryland State Trooper David Hughes arrested Gregory McCorkle on drug trafficking charges in December 1995. To prevent the trooper from testifying against him in court, McCorkle plotted to murder Trooper Hughes and recruited a hit man and several conspirators to ambush Trooper Hughes outside of his home. On August 20, 1996, the assailant missed his mark and instead shot Trooper Hughes brother, injuring his left arm. Because the two brothers had arrested many criminals in their career, the Maryland State Police launched a multi-jurisdictional task force, with the assistance of the DEA. In March 1997, Detective Marchi of the Arlington P.D. learned that a man name Greg had been buying guns and a bomb. The next month, Detective Gibson learned that a man named Greg had offered to pay for the murder of a police officer. The team assembled

by the DEA ultimately learned that Greg was, in fact, McKorkle and they arrested him and others on federal drug charges and learned that he was responsible for the drug-related conspiracy surrounding the attempted murder of Trooper Hughes.

West Virginia State Police - Sergeant Michael E. Spradlin

In 1995, Sgt. Spradlin heard of the accidents of two Davis siblings that had occurred in 1982 and began investigating. After 2 ½ years of reviewing medical records and interviewing more than 100 witnesses, Sgt. Spradlin came to the conclusion that the children's mother suffered from Munchausen syndrome, a condition in which parents harm their children to gain attention. Ten-month-old Seth had suffered permanent brain damage from insulin injections, and three-year-old Tegan died in May 1982 of a caffeine overdose. The mother was convicted after only three hours of jury deliberation because of the strength of Sgt. Spradlin's evidence.

Madison Police Department, Wisconsin - Officer Timothy G. Hahn

In an attempt to serve an arrest warrant for a nonviolent offense at the home of their suspect, Officer Hahn and Garcia found him resisting arrest and hiding in the bathroom. Suddenly he emerged from the bathroom with a gun and shot Officer Garcia in the thigh and the side. Hearing the shots, Officer Hahn came to Officer Garcia's aid. The suspect began approaching and Officer Hahn returned fire, hitting and stopping the suspect from killing him and his partner.

Honoring and Strengthening Our Nation's Law Enforcement **October 9, 1998**

Today, the President will honor this year's "Top Cops" -- an award given by the National Association of Police Organizations to pay tribute to law enforcement officers from across the country for service to their communities during the preceding year. This year, 34 exceptional law enforcement officers from ten jurisdictions will receive the distinguished award. At the event, President Clinton also will sign legislation and announce grants enabling communities to hire more police and states to improve their criminal history records and upgrade law enforcement technology.

New Tools to Support Law Enforcement and Safe Communities

- **Improving Criminal History Records and Access.** The President will sign bipartisan legislation, introduced by Senators DeWine (R-OH) and Leahy (D-VT), to provide \$1.25 billion in federal assistance to states over five years to upgrade communications technologies and criminal justice identification systems. The bill also includes an Administration-proposed national compact on the electronic exchange of criminal history records for non-criminal justice purposes, such as employment checks on day care and elder care workers.
- **Law Enforcement for Our Schools.** In June 1998, the President challenged Congress to pass legislation to provide more school safety officers for our nation's schools. Today, the President will sign legislation introduced by Rep. James Maloney (D-CT) and Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell (R-CO) to ensure that school safety officers can be funded through the Justice Department COPS Program.

Safer Streets: Adding Police and Halting Illegal Handgun Sales

- **Meeting the President's Pledge of 100,000 More Police.** The Justice Department's Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) will award \$27.4 million in grants for 151 policing agencies across the country to hire 428 officers. Today's announcement will bring the total number of officers funded under the President's COPS Initiative to over 88,500 -- keeping the COPS Initiative ahead of schedule and under budget.
- **Improving System of Brady Background Checks.** The President will announce more than \$41 million in Justice Department grants for states to improve their criminal history records, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of the Brady Law's National Instant Criminal Background Check System. The grants, provided through the National Criminal History Improvement Program (NCHIP), are funded through the President's 1994 Crime Bill. Total grants under this program now exceed \$200 million.

President Clinton: A Record of Support for Law Enforcement

- Protecting law enforcement from deadly assault weapons. Because criminals should never outgun law enforcement officers, the President's 1994 anti-crime bill banned 19 of the deadliest cop-killing assault weapons. In addition, this spring, the Treasury Department generally banned the importation of more than 50 models of modified assault weapons.
- Preventing criminals from buying handguns. In 1993, the President signed the Brady Bill. Since its passage, over 250,000 stalkers, fugitives, and felons have been prevented from buying guns. That means fewer guns on our streets and safer streets for our officers.
- Giving the police the protection they deserve. In June 1998, the President signed the Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Act to provide \$75 million in grants to help state and local governments defray the costs of purchasing bulletproof vests.

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**PRESIDENT CLINTON:
PROTECTING OUR COMMUNITIES,
HONORING TOP COPS**

October 9, 1998

"Six years ago, some said crime was a problem we just could not fix. Today, because of our efforts, crime has dropped across the board to its lowest level in a generation, and respect for the law is on the rise. Our nation's law enforcement officers are at the center of that extraordinary success. They are cracking down on gun traffickers and working to keep guns out of the hands of criminals. They are working with local school authorities to promote school safety, and they are walking the beat and working with residents to prevent crime from happening in the first place."

President Bill Clinton
October 9, 1998

Today at the White House, President Clinton will honor this year's "Top Cops" -- an award given by the National Association of Police Organizations (NAPO) to pay tribute to law enforcement officers from across the country for service to the community during the preceding year. This year, 34 exceptional law enforcement officers from ten jurisdictions will receive this distinguished award. At the event, the President will announce the release of grants that will help communities hire more police officers and states improve their criminal history records.

WORKING TO KEEP STREETS SAFE AND STOP ILLEGAL HANDGUN SALES. The President will announce that the Justice Department's COPS Program will award grant money for 151 policing agencies across the country to hire 428 law enforcement officers. Today's announcement will bring the total number of officers funded under the President's COPS Initiative to over 88,500 -- keeping the COPS Initiative of 100,000 new officers ahead of schedule and under budget. The President will also announce the release of grant money through the Justice Department for states to improve their criminal history records, which will enhance the effectiveness of the Brady Law's National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS). The President remains opposed to efforts in Congress to undermine the effective and timely implementation of NICS, which is scheduled to come on-line next month.

NEW TOOLS TO SUPPORT LAW ENFORCEMENT AND SAFE COMMUNITIES. At today's event, the President will announce his intention to sign bipartisan legislation introduced by Senators DeWine (R-OH) and Leahy (D-VT) to provide \$1.25 billion in funding to states over the next five years to upgrade communications technologies and criminal justice identification systems. In addition, this bill includes a proposal called for by the President to create a national compact on the electronic exchange of criminal history records for non-criminal justice purposes, such as employment checks on day care and elder care workers.

PRESIDENT CLINTON: A STRONG AND CONSISTENT RECORD OF SUPPORT FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT. Since 1993, President Clinton has made law enforcement and crime fighting a top priority:

- Protecting law enforcement from deadly assault weapons. The President's 1994 anti-crime bill banned 19 of the deadliest cop-killing assault weapons. This spring, the Department of Treasury generally banned the importation of more than 50 models of modified assault weapons;
- Preventing criminals from buying handguns. In 1993, the President signed the Brady Bill. Since its passage, over 250,000 stalkers, fugitives, and felons have been prevented from buying guns. Fewer guns on our streets mean safer streets for our officers and families;
- Giving the police the protection they deserve. In June 1998, the President signed the Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Act to provide grants to help states and local governments defray the costs of purchasing bulletproof vests.