

*Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2025*

**Remarks Following a Public Safety Officer Medal of Valor Ceremony and an Exchange With Reporters**

*January 3, 2025*

*The President.* Folks, I wanted you to come in because these eight men have done things that are changing not only their lives, but the lives of families that were able to celebrate Christmas—I mean what they did. They saved children. They saved people in serious distress. They jumped into freezing water. They did it all.

And I think it's—I think it's very important that the public see them and know who they are. I know you have all their backgrounds, but what they did—they allowed people to continue their lives in ways that they never would have been able to. There's a lot fewer empty chairs around the kitchen table and dining room table because of what these guys did.

And what they did is amazing. They literally put their lives at risk, some of them at the point that you wonder how they could have had the nerve to do it.

In addition to that, I want to thank their families, because if you're the spouse of a firefighter or a police officer, you always worry about that phone call—that one phone call you're going to get when they know the alarm went off. And so I want to thank them, because I'm confident they wouldn't be able to do what they're doing without their—the support of their spouses and their families.

So thank you, guys. I really mean it. You're the best America has to offer. I'm so damn proud to stand with you.

And I know you have a lot of questions for me, and I'm not going to answer them unless they're related to this. I'm going to be talking later today.

So anybody have any questions about these guys? Holler—[*inaudible*].

*Terrorist Attack in New Orleans, Louisiana*

*Q.* Mr. President, have you spoken to any of the families of the victims in New Orleans?

*The President.* Yes, I have.

*Q.* What have they told you? What have their reflections been?

*The President.* How——

*Q.* Any thoughts, you know, on the suspects in those incidents?

[*At this point, several reporters spoke at once.*]

*The President.* I'll talk to that later.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:25 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Public Safety Officer Medal of Valor recipients Sgt. Jeffrey Mathes, Detectives Michael Collazo, Ryan Cagle, and Zachary Plese, and Chief John Drake accepting on behalf of Ofc. Rex Engelbert, of the Nashville, TN, Police Department; Sgt. Tu Tran and Lt. John Vanderstar of the Lincoln, NE, Police Department; and Firefighter Brendan Gaffney of the New York City Fire Department.

*Categories:* Addresses and Remarks : Public Safety Officer Medal of Valor, presentation ceremony; Interviews With the News Media : Exchanges with reporters, White House.

*Locations:* Washington, DC.

*Names:* Cagle, Ryan; Collazo, Michael; Engelbert, Rex; Gaffney, Brendan; Mathes, Jeffrey; Plese, Zachary; Tran, Tu; Vanderstar, John.

*Subjects:* First responders, service and dedication; Law enforcement officers, service and dedication; Louisiana, terrorist attack in New Orleans; Public Safety Officer Medal of Valor.

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