

## The President's Radio Address *December 11, 1993*

Good morning. This morning I want to talk to you about crime and violence and what we can all do about it.

On Tuesday evening in Garden City, New York, a gunman shot and killed 5 rush-hour commuters on the Long Island Rail Road and wounded 20 others. On Thursday night in California, there was a memorial service for 12-year-old Polly Klaas. She'd been kidnaped from her bedroom 2 months ago. Her little body was found last Saturday.

These tragedies are part of the epidemic of violence that has left Americans insecure on our streets, in our schools, even in our homes. The crime rate has hit every American community from our oldest cities to our smallest towns to our newest suburbs. As a suburban California woman, the mother of a 10-year-old girl, said a few days ago, "There's no safe place to go. There's no place that's safe."

If our Nation is to find any meaning in these tragedies, we must join together to end this epidemic of violent crime and restore the fabric of civilized life in every community. There is now some hope amidst the horror because decent people are fighting back against crime.

Just before Thanksgiving I signed the Brady bill into law. It requires a 5-day waiting period before anyone can purchase a handgun so there can be a check of someone's age, mental health, and criminal record. The Brady bill became law because you, the American people, were stronger than the gun lobby.

On Thursday, together with Attorney General Janet Reno, FBI Director Louis Freeh, and Drug Policy Coordinator Lee Brown, I met with mayors and police chiefs from 35 cities. They told me they need more police on the streets, a ban on assault weapons, and action to keep drugs and guns away from vulnerable young people. And I intend to give the folks on the front lines the resources and the support they need to win the fight against crime.

I call upon Congress when they return in January to pass promptly a strong crime bill that will put 100,000 more police officers on the street, prohibit assault weapons, and provide fundings for more boot camps for first-time offenders.

I want to put 100,000 new police officers on the streets of our communities so they can walk their beats and work with neighborhood people. Putting more police on the streets will do more to reduce crime than anything else we can do.

The ban on assault weapons and the restrictions on semiautomatics are important because they'll stop criminal gangs from being better armed than the police. And these restrictions would have prevented the gunman on the Long Island Rail Road from having two 15-round clips of ammunition that enabled him to maim and kill so many people with such deadly speed. Assault weapons and 15-round clips have nothing to do with hunting or sports. They just let criminals shoot people more quickly. A recent study in one of our major cities showed that the increasing death rate among young people hit with gunshots was due almost entirely to the fact that the weapons themselves were more likely to be semiautomatic and therefore more deadly.

Boot camps have been endorsed by every major law enforcement organization in America. They give first offenders a second chance to learn some discipline. And they open more space in the prisons for hardened, violent criminals.

Now that Congress is home for the holidays, tell your Senators and Representatives to pass a strong crime bill so your family can be safer. You know, the new year begins just 3 weeks from today. I'd like to suggest a New Year's resolution for every Senator and every Representative: Let's pass the crime bill as soon as you return.

There's so much more we're doing and more we need to do. Under the leadership of Dr. Lee Brown, our Drug Policy Director and the father of community policing, we're strengthening enforcement and prevention. We're increasing the focus on hardcore users who fuel the crime and violence and the tragic waste of human lives.

Next summer in our national service program, AmeriCorps, thousands of young people will help with community policing, escort older people, and board up abandoned buildings so they

can't be turned into crack houses. The young people in the Summer of Safety will be an inspiring example for Americans of all ages to work together to make our streets safer by acting on our finest values.

Let's face it, drugs and guns and violence fill a vacuum where the values of civilized life used to be. Work and family and community are the principles, the institutions, upon which the great majority of Americans are building their lives. We need to restore them and the sense of hope and discipline that will give every man and woman, every boy and girl the opportunity to become the people God intended them to be.

In recent weeks, I've spoken to leaders from the religious community and the entertainment community about the obligation we all share to fight violence with values. Last week I was proud to hear that the Inner City Broadcasting Corporation of New York, which owns five radio stations throughout the country, will no longer play songs that advocate violence or show contempt for women. And I understand that two stations in Los Angeles, KACE, owned by former Green Bay Packer Willie Davis, and KJLH, owned by Stevie Wonder, have also

adopted this policy. Whether we're ministers or moviemakers, business people or broadcasters, teachers or parents, we can all set our sons and daughters on a better path in life so they can learn and love and lead decent and productive lives.

In this holiday season, as we rejoice in the love of our families and hold our children a little closer, we should also strengthen the bonds of community. We can make our neighborhoods and our nations places of shared responsibility, not random violence. The tragedies of this week remind us that there is no place to hide. The lessons of our history remind us that Americans can accomplish anything when we work together for a common purpose.

As we begin this season of celebration and rededication, let's remember the words of Theodore Roosevelt, a great President who was once a police commissioner too: "This country will not be a good place for any of us to live in, unless we make it a good place for all of us to live in."

Thanks for listening, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:06 a.m. from the Oval Office at the White House.

## Statement on Organized Crime in the United States and Italy *December 12, 1993*

In the ongoing struggle against the Mafia and other international crime syndicates, the United States renews its pledge of solidarity with and support for the Government and people of Italy. Organized crime is a scourge that has exacted a terrible toll in both our nations, a toll in lives ravaged by narcotics, brutalized by violence, destroyed by murder.

The Government of the United States, like the Government of Italy, is committed to fighting back, to reclaiming our streets, and to punishing those whose criminal conduct tears at the fabric of our societies and threatens the lives of our citizens. Accordingly, I am directing the Department of Justice and the Department of the Treasury to do all they can to strengthen the cooperation between American and Italian law enforcement.

As evidence of our resolve, Louis Freeh, Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation,

and Ronald K. Noble, Assistant Secretary for Enforcement in the Department of the Treasury, are in Italy this weekend for high-level meetings with Italian authorities to discuss new steps we can take to combat organized crime. Director Freeh and Assistant Secretary Noble are speaking today in Palermo on these joint law enforcement efforts. They will underscore the debt that we and all nations owe to Judge Giovanni Falcone, the courageous jurist murdered while leading the fight against the Italian Mafia, and to the scores of other brave Italians who put their lives on the line every day in the battle against organized crime.

The United States Government was pleased that we were able to assist Italy in the search for Judge Falcone's murderers. FBI laboratory experts facilitated the processing of DNA evi-