

tree in memory of the children. So this morning before we got on the plane to come here, at the White House, we planted that tree in honor of the children of Oklahoma. It was a dogwood with its wonderful spring flower and its deep, enduring roots. It embodies the lesson of the Psalms that the life of a good person is like a tree whose leaf does not wither.

My fellow Americans, a tree takes a long time to grow, and wounds take a long time to heal.

But we must begin. Those who are lost now belong to God. Some day we will be with them. But until that happens, their legacy must be our lives.

Thank you all, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:32 p.m. at the Oklahoma State Fair Arena. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Frank Keating and his wife, Cathy, and evangelist Billy Graham.

## Interview on CBS' "60 Minutes" April 23, 1995

### *Oklahoma City Bombing*

*Steve Kroft.* Thank you, Mike. Mr. President, you said this afternoon that our one duty to the victims and to their families is "to purge ourselves of the dark forces which gave rise to this evil." Can you bring the country up to date on the status of the investigation?

*The President.* Well, as you know, another person was arrested today, and the investigation is proceeding aggressively. I have always tried to be very careful not to reveal any evidence and to let the Justice Department, the Attorney General, and the FBI Director decide what should be released when. But I can tell the American people we have hundreds of people working on this. They are working night and day. They are doing very well. We are making progress.

### *Response to Terrorism*

*Mr. Kroft.* You said immediately after the attack that we will find the people who did this, and justice will be swift, certain, and severe. If it had turned out that this had been an act of foreign-sponsored terrorism, you would have had some limited but very clear options. You could have ordered bombing attacks. You could have ordered trade embargoes. You could have done a lot of things. But it seems almost certain now that this is home-grown terrorism, that the enemy is in fact within. How do we respond to that?

*The President.* Well, we have to arrest the people who did it. We have to put them on trial. We have to convict them. Then we have to punish them. I certainly believe that they

should be executed. And in the crime bill, which the Congress passed last year, we had an expansion of capital punishment for purposes such as this. If this is not a crime for which capital punishment is called, I don't know what is.

### *Capital Punishment*

*Ed Bradley.* Mr. President, this is Ed Bradley in New York. There are many people who would question our system of criminal justice today in the United States—in fact, many people who have lost faith in our criminal justice system. With so many people languishing on death row today for so many years, how can you say with such assurance that justice will be certain, swift, and severe?

*The President.* Well let me say first of all, it's been a long time since there has been a capital case carried through at the national level. But our new crime bill permits that. Now, when I was Governor, I carried out our capital punishment laws at the State level. We just pursued the appeals vigorously. I do believe the habeas corpus provisions of the Federal law, which permit these appeals sometimes to be delayed 7, 8, 9 years, should be changed. I have advocated that. I tried to pass it last year. I hope the Congress will pass a review and a reform of the habeas corpus provisions, because it should not take 8 or 9 years and three trips to the Supreme Court to finalize whether a person, in fact, was properly convicted or not.

*Mr. Bradley.* But without a change in the law, you think that is what will happen?

*The President.* It may not happen. We can still have fairly rapid appeals processes. But the Congress has the opportunity this year to reform

the habeas corpus proceedings, and I hope that they will do so.

*Response to Terrorism*

*Mike Wallace.* Mr. President, Mike Wallace. Are we Americans going to have to give up some of our liberties in order better to combat terrorism, both from overseas and here?

*The President.* Mike, I don't think we have to give up our liberties, but I do think we have to have more discipline and we have to be willing to see serious threats to our liberties properly investigated. I have sent a counterterrorism—a piece of legislation to Capitol Hill which I hope Congress will pass. And after consultation with the Attorney General, the FBI Director, and others, I'm going to send some more legislation to Congress to ask them to give the FBI and others more power to crack these terrorist networks, both domestic and foreign.

We still will have freedom of speech. We'll have freedom of association. We'll have freedom of movement. But we may have to have some discipline in doing it so we can go after people who want to destroy our very way of life.

You know, we accepted a minor infringement on our freedom, I guess, when the airport metal detectors were put up, but they went a long way to stop airplane hijackings and the explosion of planes and the murdering of innocent people. We're going to have to be very, very tough and firm in dealing with this. We cannot allow our country to be subject to the kinds of things these poor people in Oklahoma City have been through in the last few days.

*White House Security*

*Mr. Wallace.* People are wondering, Mr. President, if you're going to close down Pennsylvania Avenue in front of the White House to regular traffic. There are barriers there, of course, all the time. But there are those who suggest, particularly because of the man who tried to shoot up the White House, that maybe Pennsylvania Avenue itself should be shut down.

*The President.* Well, I hope that they won't have to do that. I hope that ways can be found to make the front of the White House secure without doing that, because millions of Americans go by Pennsylvania Avenue every year and see the White House and the overwhelming number of them are law-abiding, good American citizens, and I hope they won't have to do that.

*1993 Tragedy in Waco, Texas*

*Mr. Wallace.* Lesley Stahl has been out in Michigan with the Michigan militia for the past 24 hours. Lesley.

*Lesley Stahl.* Mike. Mr. President, what I kept hearing from the militia men there—and I gather this is true among all these so-called patriots—is the Waco incident. It seems to be their battle cry. It's their cause. They say that the Feds went into a religious compound to take people's guns away. They say no Federal official was ever punished, no one was ever brought to trial. I'm just wondering if you have any second thoughts about the way that raid was carried out?

*The President.* Let me remind you what happened at Waco and before that raid was carried out. Before that raid was carried out, those people murdered a bunch of innocent law enforcement officials who worked for the Federal Government. Before there was any raid, there were dead Federal law enforcement officials on the ground. And when that raid occurred, it was the people who ran their cult compound at Waco who murdered their own children, not the Federal officials. They made the decision to destroy all those children that were there.

And I think that to make those people heroes after what they did, killing our innocent Federal officials and then killing their own children, is evidence of what is wrong. People should not be able to violate the law and then say if Federal law enforcement officials come on my land to arrest me for violating the law or because I'm suspected of a crime, I have the right to kill them and then turn around and kill the people who live there. I cannot believe that any serious patriotic American believes that the conduct of those people at Waco justifies the kind of outrageous behavior we've seen here at Oklahoma City or the kind of inflammatory rhetoric that we're hearing all across this country today. It's wrong.

*Ms. Stahl.* But, Mr. President, there are tens, maybe more—tens of thousands of men and women dressing up on weekends in military garb going off for training because they're upset about Waco. Just what—despite what you say, we're talking about thousands and thousands of people in this country who are furious at the Federal Government for what you say is irrational, but they believe it.

*The President.* Well, they have a right to believe whatever they want. They have a right to say whatever they want. They have a right to keep and bear arms. They have a right to put on uniforms and go out on the weekends. They do not have the right to kill innocent Americans. They do not have the right to violate the law. And they do not have the right to take the position that if somebody comes to arrest them for violating the law, they're perfectly justified in killing them. They are wrong in that.

This is a freedom-loving democracy because the rule of law has reigned for over 200 years now, not because vigilantes took the law into their own hands. And they're just not right about that.

#### *Response to Terrorism*

*Mr. Kroft.* Mr. President, you have some personal history yourself—

*The President.* I do.

*Mr. Kroft.* —with right-wing paramilitary groups when you were Governor of Arkansas. You considered proposing a law that would have outlawed paramilitary operations. Do you still feel that way? And what's your—what, if anything should be done? Do we have the tools? What should be done to counteract this threat?

*The President.* Well, let me say, first of all, what I have done today. I've renewed my call in the Congress to pass the antiterrorism legislation that's up there, that I've sent. I have determined to send some more legislation to the Hill that will strengthen the hand of the FBI and other law enforcement officers in cracking terrorist networks, both domestic and foreign. I have instructed the Federal Government to do a preventive effort on all Federal buildings that we have today. And we're going to rebuild Oklahoma City.

Now, over and above that, I have asked the Attorney General, the FBI Director, and the National Security Adviser to give me a set of things, which would go into a directive, about what else we should do. I don't want to prejudge this issue.

When I was Governor of Arkansas, this is over 10 years ago now, we became sort of a campground for some people who had pretty extreme views. One of them was a tax resister who had killed people in another State, who subsequently killed a sheriff who was a friend of mine and was himself killed. One was the

man, Mr. Snell, who was just executed a couple of days ago, who killed a State trooper in cold blood who was a friend of mine and servant of our State and got the death penalty when I was Governor. One was a group of people who had among them women and children but also two men wanted on murder warrants. And thank God we were able to quarantine their compound. And that was all resolved peacefully.

But I have dealt with this extensively. And I know the potential problems that are there. I don't want to interfere with anybody's constitutional rights. But people do not have a right to violate the law and do not have a right to encourage people to kill law enforcement officials and do not have a right to take the position that if a law enforcement officer simply tries to see them about whether they've violated the law or not, they can blow him to kingdom come. That is wrong.

*Mr. Kroft.* One of the things, or one of the most frightening things about this whole business, has been the fact that most of the materials that this bomb was made from are readily available. Great Britain, for example, has placed some controls over the concentrations of certain chemicals and explosives in fertilizer, for example. Are there things that can be done to eliminate availability and the accessibility of ingredients that can turn deadly?

*The President.* There may be some things that we can do both to eliminate them or to make it more difficult to aggregate them or to make sure that the elements will be identified in some way if they're ever used in a bomb so people know they're far more likely to get caught. All these things are being discussed now, and that's what I've asked the Attorney General, the FBI Director, and the National Security Adviser to make recommendations to me on.

Members of Congress have various ideas and have made suggestions. Law enforcement people and other concerned folks around the country have. They're going to gather up the best ideas and make these recommendations to me in fairly short order.

#### *Oklahoma City Bombing*

*Mr. Bradley.* Mr. President, do you think that what happened in Oklahoma City is an isolated incident carried out by a handful of people or is part of a larger, more coordinated effort involving a larger network of these groups?

*The President.* I don't think the evidence that we have at the present time supports the latter conclusion. And I think we should stick to the evidence. Just as I cautioned the American people earlier not to stereotype any people from other countries or of different ethnic groups as being potentially responsible for this, I don't want to castigate or categorize any groups here in America and accuse them of doing something that we don't have any evidence that they have done.

I do want to say to the American people, though, we should all be careful about the kind of language we use and the kind of incendiary talk we have. We never know who's listening or what impact it might have. So we need to show some restraint and discipline here because of all the people in this country that might be on edge and might be capable of doing something like this horrible thing in Oklahoma City.

#### *Response to Terrorism*

*Mr. Wallace.* To follow on Steve's question, Mr. President, no longer does terrorism have to be state-supported. There's terror on the cheap now. It cost the World Trade Center bomber, we understand, conceivably \$3,000, \$4,000 for all of what was involved, including the rental of the van. And today, I learned, that it's about \$1,000 worth for the explosives and the van and so forth in the Oklahoma City bombing. What do you do about terror on the cheap?

*The President.* Well, you're right about that. And of course, the same thing could be true of the terrible things they've been going through in Japan. But the nations of this world are going to have to get together, bring our best minds together, and figure out what to do about this.

We have been working hard to try to get the legal support we need to move against terrorism, to try to make sure that we can find out who's doing these kind of things before they strike. But I do think there are some other things that we can do.

At one point people thought we couldn't do anything about airplanes, but we made some progress, significant progress, because of things like airport metal detectors and other sophisticated devices. And we'll tackle this. We'll make progress on this. We'll unravel it. But it is true that in a free society that is very open, where technological changes bring great opportunity,

they also make it possible to do destructive things on the cheap—to use your phrase.

So we're going to have to double up, redouble up our efforts and then figure out what to do about this. But we'll move on it, and I am confident that I'll have some further recommendations in the near future.

#### *Oklahoma City Bombing*

*Mr. Wallace.* CBS News has a report—or had a report, late this afternoon; I don't know whether you're familiar with it—about a man by the name of Mark Koernke, from the Michigan Militia, who apparently sent a fax, a memo, to Congressman Steve Stockman of Texas, who held onto it for awhile, and finally sent it to the NRA. And then the NRA held it—and it was important information, apparently—held it for 24 hours before they sent it on to the FBI. Can you shed any light on that?

*The President.* No. I can't shed any light on that. I don't want to do or say anything that would impair our investigation in this case. And I have urged other Americans to show that kind of restraint, and I must do so as well.

#### *Violence in American Culture*

*Mr. Kroft.* Mr. President, do you think that we are a violent nation, that violence is part of the American way of life?

*The President.* Well, we've always had a fair amount of violence. But organized, systematic, political violence that leads to large numbers of deaths has not been very much in evidence in American history except from time to time. That is, we're a nation—we're still a kind of a frontier nation. We're a nation that believes, indeed, enshrines in our Constitution the right to keep and bear arms. A lot of us, including the President, like to hunt and fish and do things like that. And then, of course, the number of guns in our country is far greater than any other, and a lot of them are misused in crimes and a lot of them lead to deaths. And there are a lot of knives and other weapons that don't have anything to do with guns that lead to death.

So we've had a lot of crime and violence in our country, but not this sort of organized, political mass killing. And we have got to take steps aggressively to shut it down. And I'm going to do everything in my power to do just that.

*Mr. Wallace.* You asked—I'm sure you asked yourself—we ask, why did—why did these peo-

ple do it? The director of the Terrorism Studies Center over at the University of St. Andrew in Scotland says that these attacks, he expects, are going to be increasingly brutal, more ruthless, less idealistic. For some, he says, violence becomes an end in itself, a cathartic release, a self-satisfying blow against the hated system. Little that can be done about that, if indeed the man's right.

*The President.* Well, I think two things that could be done—these are things that you could help on. For all those people who think that they are going to have a self-satisfying blow against the system, I wish they could have seen that young woman that I stood by today who showed me the picture of her two young boys that are dead now, or those three children that I saw today whose mother died last year of an illness who lost their father—he still has not been found. I wish they could see the faces of these people. There is no such thing as a self-satisfying blow against the system. These are human beings, and there are consequences to this kind of behavior.

The other thing I think we could do, in addition to showing those people, is to ask the American people who are out there just trying to keep everybody torn up and upset all the time, purveying hate and implying at least with words that violence is all right, to consider the implications of their words and to call them on it.

We do have free speech in this country, and we have very broad free speech, and I support that. But I think that free speech runs two ways. And when people are irresponsible with their liberties, they ought to be called up short, and they ought to be talked down by other Americans. And we need to expose these people for what they're doing. This is wrong. This is wrong. You never know whether there's some fragile person who's out there about to tip over the edge thinking they can make some statement

against the system and all of a sudden there's a bunch of innocent babies in a day care center dead.

And so I say to you, in America, we can be better than that. The predictions of the expert in Scotland don't have to be right for America. But we're going to have to examine ourselves, our souls, and our conduct if we want it to be different.

*Mr. Wallace.* Final question: Do we see too much violence in movies and television in the United States?

*The President.* Well, I have said before, I said in my State of the Union Address, that I think we see it sometimes when it's disembodied and romanticized, when you don't deal with the consequences of it. I think—when a movie shows violence, if it's honest and it's horrible and it's ugly and there are human consequences, then maybe that's a realistic and a decent thing to do. That movie "Boyz n the Hood," I thought, did a good job of that.

But when a movie—when movie after movie after movie after movie sort of romanticizes violence and killing and you don't see the human consequences, you don't see the faces of the mothers and the children that I saw today, the husbands and the wives, then I think too much of it can deaden the senses of a lot of Americans. And we need to be aware of that.

But it's not just the movies showing violence. It's the words spouting violence, giving sanction to violence, telling people how to practice violence that are sweeping all across the country. People should examine the consequences of what they say and the kind of emotions they are trying to inflame.

NOTE: The interview began at 6:03 p.m. The President spoke from the Oklahoma State Fair Arena in Oklahoma City. The interviewers were CBS correspondents Steve Kroft, Ed Bradley, Mike Wallace, and Lesley Stahl.

## Statement on the 80th Anniversary of the Armenian Massacres April 23, 1995

On this solemn day, I join with Armenians throughout the United States, in Armenia, and around the world in remembering the 80th anni-

versary of the Armenians who perished, victims of massacres in the last years of the Ottoman