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VIOLENCE IN AMERICA*

SENATOR BILL BRADLEY**

Let me begin with a poem I received from a 16-year-old in Camden, New Jersey. The title of the poem is, *RIOT at East Camden Middle*:

The riot start after the basketball game—hallway outside the East Camden Middle School gym. Unknowns fightin the Two-Eight Youngsters.

An Unknown get up in a Two-Eight face. And then it's knives. Razor blades. Black eyes. Busted noses. Blood all over the halls. Girls screamin, cryin. People steppin on each other to get outside.

Fifty to a hundred people fightin.

Crazy!

War inside the school.

An even fists an knives is not enough.

Guns. Someone duck out to get the guns. Bullets sprayin the crowd out on the parkin lot.

Three girls, two dudes get shot that night.

I carry my gun every day.

The young African-American male who wrote this poem is more likely to die in the violence he describes than in any other way.¹ Murder is still the number one cause of death for young African-

* This article has been adapted from a speech given by Senator Bill Bradley before the National Press Club in Washington, D.C., on May 11, 1994.

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¹ See Peter B. Edelman, *Toward a Comprehensive Antipoverty Strategy: Getting Beyond the Silver Bullet*, 81 GEO. L.J. 1697, 1699 n.8 (1993) (noting that in major cities, gunshot wounds are leading cause of death of teenage African-American males); Norman Redlich, *Politics and the Death Penalty: Can Rational Discourse and Due Process Survive the Perceived Political Pressure?*, 21 FORDHAM URB. L.J. 239, 268 (1994) (noting that young African-American males in New York City are more likely to die by gunshot than by any other way); Mel Reynolds, *Gun Makers Must Pay the Price*, CH. TRIB., Feb. 15, 1993, at 17 (indicating gunshot deaths of African-American boys outnumber all other natural causes of death combined).

American males.² Our goal, when thinking about violence in America, must be keeping these young people alive by reducing the level of gunfire and terror among the young, in schools and in cities.

But it would be a mistake to stop there, for violence is not confined to street crime nor to urban America. It burns in many places. It is a blaze fed by many fires. Ask any corporate executive who never drives home the same way two days in a row. Ask any head of security at a suburban mall or a college campus. Ask anyone who uses an ATM machine at night. Ask any Japanese tourist if he would, under any circumstances, knock on a stranger's door for help in Louisiana. Ask any German tourist about getting off the freeway in Miami. Ask Michael Jordan.

Violence, while present throughout our nation's history, has of late taken some inexplicable turns. Somehow our times seem different from the past. Nancy Kerrigan and the Bobbitts are not a singing group from the 1960's, and the Menendez family is a far cry from Ozzie and Harriet. Gone are the television days of Matt Dillon rounding up outlaws in the old West or Elliott Ness and the boys always prevailing against organized crime. A Charles Starkweather or a Charles Manson used to come along once in a decade. Now it seems a Jeffrey Dahmer pops up someplace every year. And the more bizarre the incident, the more widespread the news coverage.

People flock to television, competing to tell the most lurid story. There are days when through "the tube" it seems as if the country has taken form as one big dysfunctional family. More and more people seem to be living on the outer edges, unsure of how they will get back. We seem to be daring each other as if we were teenagers, taking risks that in another time and place would have been unthinkable, not realizing that unless we get things under control, the country will be the loser. The remarkable thing is that too many people do not really do anything about it. They just accept it. Rape, muggings, and murder pass us by in a blur of recognition. Street taunts raise awareness of danger that even triple door locks cannot prevent. Slowly, violence burns and eats away at our social fabric as if it were acid so that even when statistics show improvement, we do not feel more secure.

² See Edelman, *supra* note 1, at 1699 n.8.

I. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE—AMERICA'S DARK LITTLE SECRET

Violence in America goes deeper and comes closer to many families than we would like to admit. Domestic violence, for example, is America's dark little secret.

A few weeks ago a woman told me the following story. Her husband used to beat her regularly. She wanted to leave, but feared the consequences for herself and her children. One day, her 2-year-old witnessed her husband strangling her. Finally, that incident was the catalyst for the woman to seek refuge, with her 2-year-old and her 4-year-old, in a shelter for battered women. A few days later, the 2-year-old got mad at the 4-year-old. The mother turned to see what was the matter and witnessed the 2-year-old reaching for the throat of the 4-year-old. I have often thought about that image of violence being passed on from one generation to another.

"The most dangerous place to be," a policeman recently said, "is in one's home between Saturday night at 6 p.m. and Sunday at 6 p.m." He forgot to add, "especially if you are a woman." A ten-year study found that in cases where the identity of the killer is known, over one-half of all women murdered in America were killed by a current or former male partner or by a male family member.³ Several studies have also shown that women who have been victims of domestic physical assault may comprise anywhere from nineteen to thirty percent of the injured women admitted to

³ See *Testimony of Mark L. Rosenberg, M.D., M.P.P., Director of the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control at the Centers for Disease Control House Government Operations, Human Resources and Intergovernmental Relations Domestic Violence, Before the Subcomm. on Human Resources and the Intergovernmental Relations Comm. on Government Operations: Family and Intimate Violence Is a Public Health Problem*, Fed. Document Clearinghouse Cong. Testimony (FDC) (Oct. 5, 1994) [hereinafter *Rosenberg Testimony*]. In his testimony, Mr. Rosenberg states:

Family and intimate violence must be considered a priority public health problem because of the extraordinary toll it takes on our society. Women are frequent targets of both physical and sexual assault by partners and acquaintances. In 1991, 5,745 women died as a result of homicide. Six of every ten of these victims were murdered by someone they knew; about 3 out of these 6 are murdered by a spouse or intimate acquaintance. Although over 99% of assaults on women do not result in death, they still result in physical injury and severe emotional distress.

Id.; see also Jill Smolowe, *When Violence Hits Home*, TIME, July 4, 1994, at 18, 21 (noting that approximately one-half of women murdered in 1991 were killed by spouses or persons with whom they had been intimate). See generally Angela Browne, *Violence Against Women by Male Partners: Prevalence, Outcomes, and Policy Implications*, 48 AM. PSYCHOLOGIST 1087 *passim* (1993); Angela Browne & K.R. Williams, *Exploring the Effect of Resource Availability and the Likelihood of Female-Perpetrated Homicides*, 23 LAW & SOC'Y REV. 75 *passim* (1989).

hospital emergency rooms.⁴ Violence against women in the home causes more total injuries in America than rape, muggings, and car accidents combined.⁵ Sudden, stark, and incomprehensible family violence does not just happen. It builds in a cycle of aggression, forgiveness, and blame until it explodes. And let us not forget that the battered spouse is almost never a man.

When J. Robert Oppenheimer witnessed the first atomic explosion, he said that the atomic bomb was a "destroyer of worlds."⁶ In the homes of battered women and abused children, violence is the destroyer of the world of love.

Few have observed this better than one of our greatest writers, Russell Banks, in his novel entitled *Affliction*:⁷

Pop held Wade with one hand by the front of his shirt, like Matt Dillon drawing a puny terrified punk up to his broad chest, and he took his left fist, swung it out to the side, opened it and brought it swiftly back, slapping the boy's face hard, as if it were a board, then he brought it back the other way, slapping him again and again, harder each time, although each time the boy felt it less, felt only the lava-like flow of heat that each blow left behind, until he thought he would explode from the heat, would blow up like a bomb, from the face outward.

At last the man stopped slapping him. He tossed the boy aside, onto the couch, like a bag of rags⁸

⁴ See *Rosenberg Testimony*, *supra* note 3. "Injuries suffered by victims of family and intimate violence represent tens of thousands of emergency department and physician visits." *Id.*; see also Ina Aronow, *For the Abused, A Sanctuary*, N.Y. TIMES, March 21, 1993, § 13WC, at 1 (stating that approximately one-third of all women seeking treatment in emergency rooms are victims of domestic violence); Susan Molinari, *New York Holds Domestic Violence Hearings*, N.Y. TIMES, June 29, 1994, at A22 (noting that Surgeon General estimates 30% of all emergency room visits by women are caused by family violence); see also U.S. DEP'T OF JUSTICE, BUREAU OF JUSTICE STATISTICS, SOURCEBOOK OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE STATISTICS, Table 3.25 (Timothy J. Flanagan & Kathleen Maguire, eds., 1993); Donna M. Welch, *Mandatory Arrest of Domestic Abusers: Panacea or Perpetuation of the Problem of Abuse?*, 43 DEPAUL L. REV. 1133, 1134 (1994) (suggesting that more than six million women are victims of domestic violence yearly). See generally Anne Flitcraft et al., *American Medical Association Diagnostic and Treatment Guidelines and Domestic Violence*, 1 ARCHIVES OF FAMILY MEDICINE 39, 39-47 (1992); Susan McLeer & Rebecca Anwar, *A Study of Battered Women Presenting in an Emergency Department*, 79 AM. J. PUB. HEALTH 65, 66 (1989).

⁵ See Welch, *supra* note 4, at 1134 (stating that in 1992, domestic violence injuries outnumbered combined injuries from car accidents, rapes, and muggings); see also Jan Hoffman, *When Men Hit Women*, N.Y. TIMES, Feb. 16, 1992, § 6 (Magazine), at 23, 25 (identifying domestic violence as leading health problem for American women).

⁶ MARTIN J. SHERWIN, *A WORLD DESTROYED: THE ATOMIC BOMB AND THE GRAND ALLIANCE* 9 (1975).

⁷ RUSSELL BANKS, *AFFLICTION* (1989).

⁸ *Id.* at 102.

This kind of violence turns boys like Wade into men such as Wade, who later in the novel becomes a cold, soulless killer. Violence not only destroys the world of love, it also destroys the world of trust that is essential to a humane public life. Ask urban dwellers who are afraid to go to the PTA or a church meeting at night, and they will tell you that the fear of violence strikes at the core of individual liberty.

II. THE BLAZE OF VIOLENCE IS FED BY MANY FIRES

Liberty is the right to choose. It is often expressed as freedom from coercion or control. But it is also freedom to make the best of our capacities and opportunities. One way you exercise liberty is through freedom of association. You must be able to associate in order to learn, invent, communicate, organize, pass on values, and practice democracy. Through association, we pursue our happiness. Security protects liberty and thus allows us to readily create associations through which we build community, which in turn will guarantee liberty. The genius of all of this is the interdependence of these ideals. They are meant to chase each other in a virtuous circle. None of these ideals is ever fully achieved—whether it is liberty, happiness, or security. Yet the vitality of America's dynamic democratic society is our incessant effort to achieve them.

In communities where violence prevails, ideals are lost. Violence clogs the arteries of a free society. It stops us from reaching our hand out to our neighbor. Violence robs us of liberty. It destroys the world of trust by turning citizens into either frightened, isolated victims or into predators living off of others' pain.

A. *Early Exposure to Violence in America*

Television, compact discs, and video games bring violence into the open windows of our homes. By the time kids reach the age of eighteen, they have witnessed as many as 26,000 murders on television.⁹ But not all those murders are the same. Some can make a

⁹ See *20/20: Death in the Classroom* (ABC television broadcast, Aug. 30, 1991) (reporting that by time children reach age eighteen, they will have witnessed approximately 32,000 murders on television); see also Terry L. Butler, *School Peace is Community Issue: The Schools Mirror Their Society*, PLAIN DEALER (Cleveland), Dec. 2, 1993, at 7B. The author notes that the National Association of Secondary School Principals ("NASSP") reports that "the average American child views 8,000 murders and 10,000 acts of violence on TV before

child pause at the consequences of violence, while others pile up in an empty litany of bashing, stabbing, and shooting that creates a numbness which in turn requires even crueler or gorier violence to induce just a flutter of shock. Murder pays—for the sponsors. For example, consider the remarkable popularity of rap anthems that glorify gang violence and the brutal abuse of women.

Often, the corporate search for violent products gives us violence of such intensity that it has no context at all—neither moral nor autobiographical. There is a difference between, on the one hand, the fiction of Russell Banks¹⁰ or the news footage of the Bosnian war—both of which portray violence—and, on the other hand, a corporate product such as *Mortal Kombat II* that consists of nothing but violence—that in a sense *is* violence. George Gerbner, a communications professor at the University of Pennsylvania, who has been following violence in the media for quite a long time, draws a similar distinction between the symbolic, and often tragic violence of Shakespeare and fairy tales, and “happy violence,” which shows no pain or tragic consequences.¹¹

Every year, approximately 500 high schools participate in seminars that I conduct throughout New Jersey. This year, for the

finishing elementary school, and by the age of 18, that teenager will have witnessed 200,000 acts of violence on TV, including 40,000 murders.” *Id.*; COMM. DAILY, March 24, 1993, at 8 (discussing recent movements to force broadcasters and cable operators to reduce televised violence, especially during peak family hours, in effort to reduce violence in society); *NTIA Launches Inquiry: Foundation to Improve TV Launches Attack on Television Violence*, COMM. DAILY, March 26, 1993, at 2 (stating that Foundation to Improve Television petitioned for regulation of violence during hours when children are in television audience); *Not A Threat: Sen. Conrad Asks T.V. Industry for Voluntary ‘Safe Harbor’ on Violence*, COMM. DAILY, Dec. 16, 1993, at 2 (noting there are about 3,000 studies documenting harmful effects of violence).

¹⁰ See BANKS, *supra* note 7 and accompanying text (discussing domestic violence); see also *Nightline: Crime, Violence and TV News* (ABC television broadcast, Dec. 10, 1993). Secretary of Health and Human Services, Donna Shalala, expressed her concern over the failure of the media to take responsibility for the cumulative effect of such violence on public attitude and behavior. *Id.* Secretary Shalala further criticized the media for not distinguishing or explaining violence in news events from violence in the context of video games, movies, and television programs. *Id.*

¹¹ See GEORGE GERBNER & NANCY SIGNORIELLI, *VIOLENCE AND TERROR IN THE MASS MEDIA: AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY* (1988). The authors criticize television for presenting an unrealistic and inadequate picture of violence and crime. *Id.* at xx-xxi. In addition, they argue that “the everpresent images of media violence lead to an acceptance of violence as normal behavior.” *Id.* at xxi; see also George Gerbner, *Violence in Television Drama: Trends and Symbolic Functions*, in 1 *MEDIA CONTENT & CONTROL 28 passim* (George A. Comstock & Eli A. Rubenstein eds., 1972) (contrasting reality of violence with media’s failure to convey significance of violence by showing its consequences); George Gerbner, *Death in Prime Time: Notes on the Symbolic Function of Dying in the Mass Media*, in 447 *THE ANNALS OF THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF POLITICAL & SOCIAL SCIENCE* 64, 64-70 (1980) (analyzing media’s concealment of reality and inevitability of dying).

first time in fifteen years, one of the topics I discussed was violence. To facilitate the interaction with students, my staff and I broke up into small groups.

In one of the seminars, I spontaneously asked the following question, without any idea of what the response was going to be: "How many of you in this room have ever seen someone killed?" Two hands in one small group went up. I then asked: "Can you describe it?" Neither one of them could. They were still too traumatized. In another, one senior raised his hand. I said, "Can you describe it?" He then described what it was like to see a person standing on a street get shot in the head with an automatic rifle. He described in vivid detail what happened to the victim's head and how it looked as the person fell into a pool of blood. He said, "That's not how it looks on TV."

B. Gun Violence

There are more gun dealers in America today than there are gas stations or grocery stores.¹² In 1991, 14,373 Americans were murdered with a gun, over 12,000 with a handgun.¹³ In England, the number of handgun deaths was 486.¹⁴ Every fourteen minutes,

¹² See *Testimony of Marian Wright Edelman of the Children's Defense Fund, Before the Senate Subcomm. on the Constitution Comm. on the Judiciary: America's Epidemic of Gun Violence*, Fed. Document Clearinghouse Cong. Testimony (FDC) (Mar. 23, 1994) [hereinafter *America's Epidemic of Gun Violence*] (criticizing "mass market availability" of guns in American communities); *Kids and Guns: Hearings on the Problem of Kids & Gun Control Violence Before the Subcomm. on Juvenile Justice*, 103d Cong., 1st Sess. 137 (1993) (statement of Willie L. Jude, Jr., Principal, James Madison High School, Milwaukee, Wisconsin). Mr. Jude testified that during the 1992-93 academic school year, approximately half of the student expulsions from Milwaukee public schools were gun-related, and students between the ages of 13 and 16 accounted for more than 70% of the cases. *Id.*

¹³ See U.S. DEP'T OF JUSTICE, FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION, ANNUAL REPORT: CRIME IN THE UNITED STATES (1992) (reporting that in 1992, 12,489 murders resulted from handguns); see also *Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act: Hearings Before the Subcomm. on Crime and Criminal Justice of the Comm. on the Judiciary*, 103d Cong., 1st Sess. 69 (1993) (statement of Sarah Brady, Chair Handgun Control, Inc. testifying that 65 Americans die in handgun fire each day); *Opening Statement of Senator Howard M. Metzenbaum, Before the Senate Subcomm. on the Constitution Comm. on the Judiciary: America's Epidemic of Gun Violence*, Fed. Document Clearinghouse Cong. Testimony (FDC) (Mar. 23, 1994). Senator Metzenbaum noted that from 1987 to 1992, the rate of murders committed with handguns increased by 52%. *Id.* Additionally, Senator Metzenbaum stated that "when someone is killed by a gun every 14 minutes, we have a gun crisis in this country, and . . . [this crisis] is taking a terrible toll on our children, our families, and our communities. It is indeed changing the very fabric of our lives." *Id.*

¹⁴ See generally *America's Epidemic of Gun Violence*, *supra* note 12. "[T]he 360 American . . . [children] who died from guns in 1990 were twice the number of handgun deaths of citizens of all ages in all of Sweden, Switzerland, Japan, Canada, Great Britain, and Australia combined that year." *Id.*

someone dies of a gunshot wound.¹⁵ Every gun injury involving hospitalization costs over \$30,000—eighty percent of which is paid by the taxpayer.¹⁶ There are approximately 71 million handguns in America owned by private citizens.¹⁷ In 1992, 34,000 people applied for licenses to sell guns.¹⁸ Only thirty-seven were denied.¹⁹ With only 240 inspectors to police 245,000 gun dealers, this is not a surprise.²⁰ In a nationwide poll of teenagers, Louis Harris found that fifteen percent of suburban teenagers and seventeen percent of urban teenagers reported carrying a gun in the last thirty days.²¹ Furthermore, forty percent of all teenagers say that they could get a handgun within twenty-four hours if they wanted one,²² and the same percentage say that the threat of violence has made them change where they go, where they stop on the street, where they go out at night, what neighborhoods they walk in, and who they become friends with. Finally, police officers point out the change in violence over the last decade. They report that generally the murderers have been younger, the guns more high-powered, and the acts themselves more and more random.

¹⁵ See Karen Pallarito, *Gun Control: Hospitals Taking Aim to Curb Gun Violence*, MODERN HEALTHCARE, Feb. 21, 1994, at 26 (noting that in America there is one gun death every 14 minutes).

¹⁶ See Nancy Weaver, *Public Picks Up Tab for Most Shootings, UC Study Says*, SACRAMENTO BEE, Jan. 2, 1993, at B1. Approximately 80% of patients injured as a result of gun violence are uninsured or eligible for subsidized medical care. *Id.* But see Pallarito, *supra* note 15, at 26 (noting that National Rifle Association asserts that fewer than 0.15% of all U.S. handguns used each year result in need for hospital care).

¹⁷ See Betty Parham & Gerrie Ferris, *Q&A on the News*, ATLANTA J. AND CONST., Dec. 29, 1993, at A2. "The majority of the 71 million registered handguns in this country are U.S.-made." *Id.*; *Pulse: Guns*, N.Y. TIMES, Mar. 14, 1994, at B1. "Nationwide, private citizens own more than 211 million firearms, 71 million of which are handguns." *Id.*; Gene Warner, *10-year Ban on Handguns Proposed by Gaughan*, BUFF. NEWS, July 20, 1994, at B4.

¹⁸ See *Unless We Do Something, It Will Only Get Worse Ending the Violence*, THE RECORD (New Jersey), May 17, 1994, at D6.

¹⁹ *Id.*

²⁰ See *20/20: Guns for the Asking* (ABC television broadcast, Dec. 11, 1992) (noting that there are only 200 inspectors to check 35,000 applicants per year); see also Gregg Krupa, *Spotty Oversight, Potential for Abuse Mark Weapon Sales*, BOSTON GLOBE, Dec. 21, 1993, at 1. Given current resources, it would take ten years to inspect each licensed dealer to ensure that they are keeping proper records on each gun received and sold, and that they are only selling to eligible buyers. *Id.*

²¹ See Cynthia Tucker, *In Search of an Antidote to Violence Guns and Gangs*, ATLANTA J. & CONST., Aug. 18, 1993, at A15. In a recent Louis Harris poll, "15 percent of students in the sixth through 12th grades said they have carried a handgun in the past 30 days, 11 percent said they have been shot at, and 59 percent said they know where to get a gun." *Id.*; see also Terry L. Butler, *School Peace is Community Issue: The Schools Mirror Their Society*, PLAIN DEALER (Cleveland), Dec. 2, 1993, at 7B (noting that 31 deaths from handguns occurred in or near schools during 1992-93 school year).

²² See *Prime Time Live: Deadly Lessons* (ABC television broadcast, July 1, 1993) (student professed ability to "get a gun today").

C. *Loss of Hope*

Native American reservations in South Dakota have a murder rate more than twice that of Los Angeles.²³ In poor rural counties in Mississippi, the murder rate equals that of Newark.²⁴ The common denominator in all of these places is poverty and loss of hope. Vast segments of urban America are in an economic depression. Lives are being wasted, shortened, and demeaned, without a job that could give dignity to each of them. At a time when our common economic future needs every able-bodied person, we see poorer, sicker, less well educated, third world enclaves emerging in our midst.

I have spoken on Native American reservations and in urban school and recreation programs for over twenty-five years. A decade ago there was a distinct difference between the kids in these two places. On a Native American reservation the kids would sit quietly, almost impassively, hesitant to ask questions or offer opinions. The toll of 200 years of neglect had settled so deeply that it had squelched their hope. When I looked out into the audience, I stared into "dead eyes"—no response—no hope.

In contrast, in an urban community, the kids seemed wired with energy. They could not sit still, bobbing up and down, left and right. They asked questions, talked incessantly with each other. Often, they did not concentrate, but their eyes were alive with expectation. I go to speak in urban America today, and something has changed. Too often I see "dead eyes." Once the hope is gone, everything is gone.

D. *Single Parent Families*

In Detroit, nearly eighty percent of the kids are born to single parents.²⁵ In 1991, thirty percent of all children born in America

²³ See *Indians, a Pouch by the Highway*, THE ECONOMIST, Dec. 19, 1992, at 29. The Pine Ridge reservation of the Ogala Sioux in South Dakota has a murder rate three times the national average. *Id.*

²⁴ See U.S. DEP'T OF JUSTICE, BUREAU OF JUSTICE STATISTICS, SOURCEBOOK OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE STATISTICS, at Table 304 (1994) (noting that 1992 murder rate for Newark, New Jersey was 31.3/100,000); see also Shep Montgomery, *Safer Streets, Regional Growth Highlighted 1994 Agenda*, MISS. BUS. J., Jan. 10, 1994, at 1 (noting that Jackson, Mississippi recorded record-setting 87 murders in 1993).

²⁵ See Mitchell Landsberg, *Town May Be Single Parent Capital of U.S.*, L.A. TIMES, Sept. 18, 1994, at A2 (noting that in Detroit, majority of families are headed by single parents); see also Amy Harmon, *300 Rally in Support of All-Male Schools*, L.A. TIMES, Aug. 22, 1991, at A4 (noting that 70% of Detroit schoolchildren are raised by single mothers).

were born to a single parent.²⁶ Among black children, it was two-thirds.²⁷ Many single mothers do heroic jobs in transmitting values and raising their children well, against great odds. Many others are too young, too poor, and too unloved, and their children at birth become fifteen-year time bombs waiting to explode in adolescence. If you think violence among the young is bad now, wait until this army of neglected, often abused, sometimes abandoned, street-trained, gang-tested, friendless young people reach the age of fifteen. Their capacity to have any kind of meaningful attachment will be gone. One recent study indicated that a surprising number of urban teenage boys voluntarily admitted that they had no best friend and no one person they trusted. When only "the gang" gives life meaning, death cannot be far behind.

In America, the blaze of violence is fed by many fires.

III. THE NEED FOR A NATIONAL REBELLION AGAINST VIOLENCE

The recently enacted federal crime bill²⁸ is an attempt to counter rising violence. Its architects have worked hard and it does many good things, but its effects are uncertain. It is a huge compilation of ideas and proposals cobbled together by representatives of a nation which is increasingly desperate to do something about violence. In a way, it reminds me of what a group of anxious citizens would do as they threw furniture and household goods onto a barricade to stop the invading hoards. Many of the provisions appear to have the following rationale: "Well, maybe that would work; maybe it would help. So let's add it to the barricade." My fear is that the remedies come from so many different places and expand over such a wide area, that they will have limited impact—notwithstanding our good intentions.

²⁶ See U.S. DEP'T OF JUSTICE, BUREAU OF JUSTICE STATISTICS, SOURCEBOOK OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE STATISTICS, Table 100 (1994). 1991 births to unmarried women (percent of total):

- (1) United States 30%
- (2) White 22%
- (3) Black 68%

Id.; see also Joyce Price, *Families "Not Being Families": As "Mom-and-Dad" Households Decline, So Does Society, More Research Shows*, WASH. TIMES, Mar. 3, 1994, at A9 (noting that non-marital fertility increased in 1991, while marital fertility declined).

²⁷ See Price, *supra* note 26, at A9.

²⁸ Violent Crime Control & Law Enforcement Act of 1994, Pub. L. No. 103-322, 108 Stat. 1796.

Missing from this formulation is an overall national goal, and an admission that much of what must be done is beyond the reach of the federal government.

We need a national rebellion against violence that sets a specific target for reducing violence over ten years. For example, I suggest a seventy-five percent reduction in our homicide rate, which if achieved, would place us at about England's homicide rate of today.²⁹ A national rebellion against violence would be rooted in the knowledge that violence strikes at the core of our democratic freedoms. It would also give us some way to measure progress. So often, Americans, on the one hand, seem catatonic in the face of violence and, on the other hand, ready to entertain the most radical solutions to stop it. Unless we have a way to determine whether what we are doing is working, people will assume the worst and we will be caught in a spiral of extreme measures, perhaps endangering our rights permanently. We cannot simply replace a violent society with a repressive one. That would be a Pyrrhic victory. The rebellion against violence must enhance our national example, not diminish it. We must always remember that the world is watching us—now more than ever before.

Like so many other issues in public life, in the debate about violence, people do not listen to each other. They are frozen in the dichotomy between conservative or liberal, tough or coddling. Those who believe the answer is gun control do not listen to those who want the death penalty. Those who believe severe punishment is the answer cannot see the necessity of limiting guns. Furthermore, both advocates of gun control and advocates of tougher sentencing often fail to see the connections between societal violence and poverty, family disintegration, and exploitative media violence. Instead of confronting reality, more and more people look for the magic bullet that will stop violence dead in its tracks. The *truth*, however, is much more difficult.

Truth Number 1: There is no miracle cure, and the answer lies closer to home than to Washington, D.C..

²⁹ See generally *Sharp Fall in Crime Figures Contradicted by Survey*, THE INDEPENDENT (U.K.), Sept. 28, 1994, at 1. In the one-year period ending in June 1994, there were 668 homicides in the United Kingdom. *Id.* The population of the United Kingdom in 1993 was 48.5 million. *1993-Based Population Projections for Local Authority Areas in England*, REUTERS, Nov. 29, 1994, available in WESTLAW, Int'l News database.

Truth Number 2: Violence will not be stopped by soft words. Every person who uses violence must pay the price in lost freedom, and "doing time." Especially for the young, this must be a memory that one does not ever want to repeat.

Truth Number 3: We will never counter violence unless we restrict the handguns used in eighty percent of America's gun murders. What is common sense to people of virtually every other country in the world becomes a constitutional crisis for us.

Truth Number 4: There is no substitute for a job. If we can move those on the bottom of the economic ladder up just a few rungs, our efforts against violence will have acquired a powerful ally.

Truth Number 5: Violence is a phenomenon caused by twisted values and the loss of self-control. The formation of values and self-discipline begins in childhood, and teaching them is the job of parents. Unless we instill them in all our children, we have only ourselves to blame.

Truth Number 6: We need to make it as unfashionable to sell violence in America as it is to smoke cigarettes. We do not need censorship; we need enhanced citizenship, particularly in the board rooms.

Truth Number 7: Drugs and violence go together like gunpowder and a match. To ignore addiction as a national problem is to sentence many more Americans to death.

Those are the truths.

A national rebellion against violence requires that individuals, communities, and all levels of government work together. Why? Because people do not live in isolation. They live in communities where they go to church, play sports, pick up groceries, and raise their children. Often, however, they live in fear. What they do not realize is the power they possess if they work together. In the 1960's, an aroused citizenry that focused on an evil, albeit legally sanctioned racism, ended racial discrimination under the law and furthered the cause of justice. Today, an aroused citizenry focusing on the evil violence chipping away at the foundation of our society, can restore our streets to order and further the cause of liberty. A "street thug" can intimidate an *individual*, but he cannot intimidate a unified and energized *community*.

IV. REDEFINING THE GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSIBILITIES

Politicians have to stop treating security like a product that the government delivers to your home. We must create security for ourselves in the same context where violence occurs—the family and the community. At the national level, we can set standards, set limits, spread innovative ideas, create uniform rules, gather data, and insure that those who commit federally prohibited violence pay for it by a swift loss of freedom and in some cases, such as drug kingpins who murder, by the loss of their lives. The real battles, however, are the ones against violent crimes committed by the young and those occurring within the family. These battles will not be waged at the federal level. Like education, where the federal government has only about six percent of the nation's resources, with respect to crime prevention, the federal government has only about thirteen percent of the nation's crime resources. Thus, the crime bill will seem like a false promise if we forget our individual obligations as police officers, local officials, teachers, parents, spouses, and citizens.

Nevertheless, there are some common-sense actions that the federal government can encourage that would help prevent gun violence, challenge young people with the possibility of a future without violence, and raise awareness of domestic violence while providing women with a way out.

First, I believe that everyone who buys a handgun must have a national identity card with their picture on it, similar to a driver's license. All gun transfers should be registered, with tough penalties for those who refuse. Moreover, no one should be allowed to purchase more than one handgun per month, and gun dealers should have to pay \$1,000 per year for a license. These changes would, at the least, hasten the arrival of the day when only law-abiding citizens have guns. Technology might also help. If we can develop heat-seeking missiles, certainly we can invent remote metal-sensing devices that will allow police forces, augmented by the police corps volunteers, to seize more illegal guns and to disrupt the commerce of armed street criminals.

Second, communities should have greater access to their public schools. With federal support, schools should remain open in the evenings, on weekends, and during the summer for community use. The school is the most underutilized asset in urban America.

Churches, synagogues, mosques, and community development corporations should be allowed to provide the mentoring, safehaven, and guidance all of whose absence too often contribute to delinquency. The availability of the school would also give the community a place to focus public and private resources to win back the minds and hearts that the streets of today have captured.

Third, to counter domestic violence, we need to get it out of the closet and then help women find a way out of such a brutal environment. Domestic violence is a problem at all income levels. It is more than a serious health care problem, it is a social sickness, a tragedy that is destroying families, and an experience that spreads violence to future generations.

Every man's home may be his castle, but it is not his torture chamber in which he can physically and mentally abuse those who are weaker than him without any consequences. Many men will deny the impulse and the existence of such behavior. Like alcoholics that have not quite reformed, they promise their partners, and the world, that the latest episode of violence will be their last. Too often, however, they go back on their word, and the cycle of committing aggression, blaming the victim, and seeking forgiveness starts all over again. We can wait no longer for universal personal reform.

When a woman is the victim of domestic violence, she must have a place to go. There should be a counseling hotline so that experienced professionals can guide her to an appropriate place. Above all, we must provide enough battered spouse shelters with sufficient resources so that women have a place to temporarily relocate and escape the fear of a threatening phone call or knock on the door in the middle of the night.

But we have to do more than just give women a place to go after they have been beaten. We have to prevent the violence in the first place. I suggest that every health professional—doctors, nurses, physician's assistants, social workers—be trained to recognize domestic violence and to ask female patients about it. Asking the question hopefully will free women from considering domestic violence as a "family matter" that they are not sanctioned to discuss, even with their doctor. At a minimum, domestic violence should not be treated as a preexisting condition to deny women health insurance.

But it is not just up to health care professionals. If we are going to stop domestic violence, each of us, in our own spheres of influence—home, work, PTA, Little League—have an obligation to acknowledge that it occurs, recognize it when we see it, and say something about it. It is so much easier to overlook it, turn the other way, regard it exclusively as a family matter, or pretend we do not have any responsibility. But if we are really going to prevent it, we all must do our fair share.

These three proposals will not end violence in America, but combined with the federal crime bill and, more importantly, with an energized national community prepared to cooperate with the police and with each other, they will take us further along the path toward greater security.

CONCLUSION

A friend of mine, a member of the Japanese Diet, recently told me that as his two girls were growing up, he looked forward to them coming to the United States as exchange students and he also looked forward to visiting them and vacationing here with his wife. Now he tells me that he is sending his daughters to England, and that he and his wife are vacationing in Europe. "Why?" I asked him. He replied, "The guns, the drugs, the violence—Senator, unless you get control of them, you'll lose a lot more than a few tourists; you'll no longer be the model democracy for the world."

The only way to achieve our aim of a seventy-five percent reduction in homicide rates within a decade, in a way that is consistent with our democracy, is to assume individual responsibility. We must enlist all who love their communities and their nation in a rebellion that is waged locally, neighbor by neighbor, building by building, and at the same time, we must build bonds of community that render violence moot.

The world of love and the world of trust must be provided with enough resources to fight the fires of violence. All who believe in the worlds of love and trust must join the rebellion against violence. If we do not, the riot in Camden Middle School will spread to more schools and the story of the 2-year-old going for her 4-year-old brother's throat will be just one among many chapters of future pain. The fires that feed the blaze of violence can only be extinguished when all of us act as citizens to achieve what every-

one in a democracy deserves—the right to live a life without fear of unexpected random violence whether on the street, at the school, or in the home.