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**Collection:** Blackwell, Morton: Files  
**Folder Title:** Victims' Bill of Rights (1 of 2)  
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# WITHDRAWAL SHEET

## Ronald Reagan Library

**Collection Name** BLACKWELL, MORTON: FILES

**Withdrawer**

RBW 6/22/2011

**File Folder** VICTIMS' BILL OF RIGHTS (1 OF 2)

**FOIA**

F06-0055/07

**Box Number** 27

POTTER, CLAIRE

36

DOC NO	Doc Type	Document Description	No of Pages	Doc Date	Restrictions
1	LETTER	RE. RAPE LAWS	1	2/17/1982	B6
2	LETTER	RE. CRIME VICTIMS' CIVIL LITIGATION	1	3/4/1982	B6
3	LETTER	RE. CRIME VICTIMS' CIVIL LITIGATION	3	1/31/1982	B6
4	LETTER	RE. CRIME VICTIMS' CIVIL LITIGATION	1	2/22/1982	B6

### Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

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C. Closed in accordance with restrictions contained in donor's deed of gift.

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CHIEFS OF POLICE

# CRIME VICTIMS BILL OF RIGHTS



The International Association of Chiefs of Police hereby declares the following to be the incontrovertible rights of all crime victims, and urges its membership to establish procedures and train personnel towards their recognition and implementation to the extent that personnel and resource capabilities allow. In addition to all rights and privileges presently observed, it is the policy of the International Association of Chiefs of Police that crime victims are entitled:

1. To be free from intimidation;
2. To be told of financial assistance and social services available and how to apply for them;
3. To be provided a secure area during interviews and court proceedings, and to be notified if presence in court is not needed;
4. To a quick return of stolen or other personal property when no longer needed as evidence;
5. To a speedy disposition of the case, and to be periodically informed of case status and final disposition; and, wherever personnel and resource capabilities allow, to be notified in felony cases whenever the perpetrator is released from custody;
6. To be interviewed by a female official in the case of rape and other sexual offenses, wherever personnel and resource capabilities allow.



PASSED UNANIMOUSLY BY THE  
IACP BOARD OF OFFICERS ON MARCH 12, 1983.

600 Three Island Blvd.  
Hallandale, Florida 33023  
February 7, 1983

Mr. Morton Blackwell  
White House  
Room 191 OEOB  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Morton:

I am enclosing the Victim's Bill of Rights of which we spoke this week. It was compiled from the thousands upon thousands of letters I have received from victims of crime telling me of their own personal horror stories, and from Victim's Advocate's groups such as NOVA of which I am a member of the Board of Directors.

I have worked for almost twelve months with IACP President, Jim Damos, Executive Director Norm Darwick and with their legal department, Bob Ingrassani re: the legal aspects. It has received the stamp of approval of the IACP. At least, it's something for victims until legislation is passed, and we both know how quickly that moves.

Incidentally, Morton, I have six legislators in six states ready to introduce Proposition 8, the toughest and most comprehensive anti-crime bill ever passed in the country. Poor Paul Gann, representative from California, found it necessary to secure the signatures of 665,000 Californians before this bill could even be introduced there. Proposition 8 was deemed constitutional by the liberal California Supreme Court, and they wouldn't even hear of its repeal. That mandate of the people should be heard in State capitols across the land - it's about time.

The original bill of rights had more provisions, but for legal reasons and/or the fact that some provisions required unavailable appropriations, they were eliminated.

I have attempted unsuccessfully to get 7-11 (Southland Corp.), who made such a pro-victim grandstand play at the IACP Convention in Atlanta November 17, 1982 to fund the printing (27" x 14") of this Bill of Rights, and they refused.

If necessary, I shall expend that grand sum of \$17,000 (John Stein - NOVA's cost projection), or Southland's cost projection of \$20,000 myself if I have to, but the public will know of this, to be sure.

*MS  
get from IACP  
from Damos or  
Lois Hemminger  
a copy of  
what  
the  
IACP  
I want  
to draft  
a letter  
from  
Pres.  
to IACP*

Mr. Morton Blackwell  
February 7, 1983

Norm Darwick has agreed to its being posted right alongside that "glorious" Miranda Decision. What I requested from you was that the President officially announce April 17-23 National Crime Victim's Week (or whatever you'd like to call it), and to state publically that until legislation is passed, that the police departments of this country have adopted this Bill of Rights as policy.

It is a tremendous feather in their caps, and it should be for the administrations as well. I don't want to take any bows or credit for it - your administration and the police departments may have the glory. All I am seeking is some dignity for my victims.

Incidentally, Morton, when California Representative, Paul Gann, who was successful - no thanks to anyone - for getting Proposition 8 passed in California and he approached 7-11 for support, he was told that they "didn't want to offend the lawless". This is a most sad state of affairs. I went to California for Paul and he took the issue directly to the people via the media. It passed by a 12% margin, very high indeed, for a bill so comprehensive and dramatic.

I know you fellows have your credibility problems especailly as pertains to the economy - I'm not impervious to this fact, that this can't be your first priority. However, the administration needs something positive to present to the public, and this should be it. I live by the power of public relations.

I shall be looking forward to a speedy response from your office. (You have my phone numbers.)

In any case, I personally, shall have this Bill of Rights posted in the 50,000 police stations across the country by April 17th.

Sincerely,

CONNIE FRANCIS

CF/aml  
Enclosures

PRESERVATION COPY

Sincerely yours  
Mrs. Barbara Russo

WILL BE GREATLY APPRECIATED.  
ANY LITERATURE YOU CAN PROVIDE  
OBTAINING ALL THE FACTS PERTAINING TO THIS  
PRELIMINARY REPORT, WE ARE VERY INTERESTED IN  
OF A SHOOTING, COMMITTED BY ONE LOUIS BOURGHE,  
SINCE MY HUSBAND WAS A VICTIM  
MAY SEEK RESTITUTION FROM THE PAROLE BOARD.  
CRIMES COMMITTED BY PAROLE VIOLATORS. — THAT THEY  
UNDETERMINED A LIKE MENTION FIRST ABOUT VICTIMS OF  
AND IN HER DISCUSSION WITH MR. GIFFIN, SHE  
WAS SPECIFICALLY ON THE MARI GIFFIN SHOW  
CRIME ANALYSIS, A RAPE VICTIM,

DEAR SIR:

Mrs. Barbara Russo  
Mrs. Andrews Ave.  
Brook, NY 10467

Barbara Russo  
Mrs. Andrews Ave.  
Brook, NY 10467

VIROBIA BEACH, VA.  
VACOR

(Rape  
Letter)Oct. 31<sup>st</sup>, 1981

Dear Connie,

Our family is so happy that you are resuming your career. You really have a special, God given talent, that needs to be shared with all of us.

We also know the trauma you have gone through. We were a family that never said the word "rape" & certainly never thought it would happen to any in our family, but on July 5, 1975 at 10:00 A.M. we received a call from our beautiful 19 yr. old daughter, from the hospital, (she had been shipped around to) saying she had been raped! We were archaic as far as rape goes - & she was the first to report rape to the Rape Emergency Assistance League - & such things as "one here in Corona would rape anyone", "did you ask for it" & on. Because of my daughters & I, we now have our Police Force, hospital etc., schooled on the subject and intelligent enough on rape to treat it as a violent crime. We also got the high school & junior hi to have lectures every year. Linda went through months of horror - & afraid to be alone etc. If we can help - please call on us. Sincerely, Raymond

March 3, 1982

Another harassing phone call tonight prompted me to finally write this letter. I heard Miss Connie Francis on a talk show, saying how she felt plea bargaining was very unfair to the victims of a crime. I wish I could tell her or someone about "plea bargaining" on the part of the person harassing us has done to our lives.

The problem is that I'm not positive that this is the correct address she gave. If you would acknowledge that it is and that someone would listen to our story, I know I would feel better. If I could just tell the story to someone who understands!

I'm enclosing an envelope for your reply. We are really at a point where we don't know where to look for help or hope.

Sincerely,

Mrs C. E. Montague  
P.O. Box 2171

Carson City, Nev., 89402

(702) 882-0546

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1 LETTER

1 2/17/1982 B6

RE. RAPE LAWS

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2 LETTER

1 3/4/1982 B6

RE. CRIME VICTIMS' CIVIL LITIGATION

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\*101 87 x 11  
I am writing this letter  
after watching Corinne Frances  
on the New Griffen show  
at which time she told  
all about her terrible time  
she had after her traumatic  
attack.

My story is much worse  
because I lost a 31 year old  
husband at the hands of  
a maniac killer

My name is Corinne  
Zuckerman I have two sons  
who are now 9 1/2 yrs old &  
7 1/2 yrs old. At the time of my  
husband's tragic death my  
sons were 2 yrs old and  
3 months old.

This took place in his  
place of business a Liquor store  
on 72nd st & 3rd Ave in N.Y.C.  
a very affluent neighborhood

On July 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1974 at 5 o'clock  
It was raining very hard and  
there were no customers in the  
store, he walked in and  
asked for the money in the  
register which was given to  
him by the manager.  
My husband was in the  
back, he went to the back  
and asked if he had anymore  
money at which time he handed  
him an envelope with several  
thousand dollars. Just then  
he pointed the gun right into  
his face & fired at him &  
he was killed instantly.

The police dept knew just  
who they were looking for  
because he was out on parole  
& he didn't report to the board  
however it took about six months  
until he was captured. There  
were several detectives on the

③

heart attack and resigned from the force.

He was released from State Mattawan Hospital for the criminal offense. He spent about 26 years in out of institutions and this is what they let out to commit more crimes at his own will. When he was caught at that time he was 42 years old his name is Mc Cullen a white red haired male who is an alcoholic and going around holding up stores & robbing & killing.

I am out of touch and don't know what happened to him & what his punishment is, whatever it is it could never be justified.

④

As you can understand what I have been going through trying to bring up my two boys without the help or love of a father.

My husband left no family he was an only child with no parents, & parent are both dead. He died before this happened.

I understand that this "Valor" will be able to do something, she (course) said it is an <sup>financial</sup> legal organization that helps victims sue the Parole Board or whoever is responsible for letting these maniacs be out on the streets to commit crimes that they were far away for in the first place. I tried to come and give them as much info as I could.

or anything <sup>⑤</sup> else you have to  
know please contact me as  
soon as possible.

Thanking you for  
anything you can do to help  
I am,  
Yours Respectfully

Mrs Corinne Zuckerman  
7800 Shore Front Parkway  
Rockaway Beach  
New York, N Y

11693

Telephone No 212-945-0354

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*Connie Francis*

May 12, 1982

Chief James P. Damos  
International Association of Chiefs of Police  
Public Headquarters  
6801 Delmar Boulevard  
University City, Missouri 63130

RE: BULLETIN BOARD ON VICTIMS BILL OF RIGHTS TO BE POSTED IN CLEAR  
VIEW THROUGHOUT THE POLICE PRECINCTS OF THE UNITED STATES

Dear Jim:

As we discussed at the forum in Washington on April 17, 1982, I  
am submitting to you as promised, finally, the bulletin board of  
Victim's Rights.

It sounds like a big contract, but I know we can do it, and, with  
your help and mine and some others in Washington, nothing to me  
is impossible. Since I am a novice at this Jim, I'm only responding  
and addressing myself to the horrendous problems and the horror  
stories of the victims of violence based on the thousands of letters  
I receive from them. Some of these suggestions will be good and  
feasible ones, some perhaps unworkable, and some even outside the  
law. I'm not an attorney. Therefore, I will be depending on you  
to implement as many of them as you can within proper guidelines.  
(In no special order.)

- (1) THE RIGHT OF THE VICTIM TO BE TREATED WITH DIGNITY  
AND CONSIDERATION AND TO RECEIVE CORDIAL ASSISTANCE  
FOR THEIR COOPERATION.
- (2) THE RIGHT FOR A VICTIM'S FAMILY TO BE NOTIFIED IMME-  
DIATELY OF HOSPITALIZATION OR EMERGENCY ROOM TREATMENT.
- (3) THE RIGHT OF A VICTIM TO BE QUESTIONED IN A PRIVATE  
ROOM WITHOUT INTERRUPTIONS.
- (4) THE RIGHT OF A VICTIM TO CALL IN HIS OWN COUNSEL.
- (5) THE RIGHT OF A VICTIM TO BE GIVEN INFORMATION AS TO  
THE PROGRESS OF A CASE FROM THE INITIAL POLICE INVESTI-  
GATION OF THE CASE TO THE FINAL DISPOSITION.



- (6) THE RIGHT OF A VICTIM TO CONFER WITH THE PROSECUTOR OR DISTRICT ATTORNEY AND TO HAVE HIS CASE EXPLAINED IN LAY LANGUAGE.
- (7) THE RIGHT OF A VICTIM TO BE INFORMED OF ANY DECISIONS REGARDING HIS CASE ON BAIL, PLEA-BARGAINING OR SENTENCING.
- (8) THE RIGHT OF THE VICTIM TO BE INFORMED WHEN HIS OFFENDER HAS BEEN RELEASED FROM BAIL, PAROLE OR PRISON SENTENCE.
- (9) THE RIGHT OF THE VICTIM TO BE NOTIFIED OF ANY DELAY OR POSTPONEMENT OF HIS APPEARANCE IN COURT.

(Many policemen have complained that they themselves are not informed of court postponements or delays, and, therefore, cannot notify the victims. Whatever can be done to obviate this situation should be done, so that witnesses do not have to bear the out-of-pocket expenses and missed pay that results. Also, many times this occurs unexpectedly because of some act or maneuver by the defense attorney after everyone is already in court.)

We are currently trying to enact uniform state laws, (very time-consuming to be sure) but, in the meantime, the least we can do is to come up with a general meeting of the minds; hopefully some uniform philosophies regarding victims; for instance to compel judges to levy fixed fines on each convicted offender which would be put into a pool for victim's compensation for their transportation, meals, day care, parking expenses, missed pay, the mental and physical injuries sustained and their rehabilitation. This has happened very successfully already in the state of Pennsylvania.

- (10) WHENEVER POSSIBLE, VICTIMS SHOULD BE QUESTIONED IN THE SECURITY AND FAMILIARITY OF THEIR OWN HOME.
- (11) THE RIGHT OF THE VICTIM TO HAVE HIS MEDICAL, EMOTIONAL AND EMERGENCY NEEDS TAKEN CARE OF BEFORE BEING QUESTIONED.

(The offender's defense attorney will see that you do at least this for his man, and at the taxpayer's expense.)

- (12) THE RIGHT OF THE VICTIM TO BE NOTIFIED OF WHAT CRIME VICTIMS ADVOCATE GROUPS AND RAPE CRISIS CENTERS CAN HELP AND FOR THE POLICE TO WORK CLOSELY WITH THESE GROUPS AS SOON AS THE VICTIM IS BROUGHT INTO THE STATION.

- (23) THE RIGHT OF A VICTIM TO PROCEED IN CIVIL SUITS FOR RECOVERY OF DAMAGES - TO BE ABLE TO PLACE A LIEN ON ANY PROFITS RECEIVED BY HIS ASSAILANT AS A RESULT OF THE SALE OF HIS STORY TO THE MEDIA.

(This is being done right now in New York in the Jack Abbott case where all of Abbott's royalties are currently being held up pending disposition of the civil suit brought by the family of the murdered victim.)

- (24) THE RIGHT OF A VICTIM THROUGH THE USE OF PHOTOGRAPHS AS EVIDENCE, TO HAVE HIS RECOVERED IDENTIFIABLE PROPERTY RETURNED TO HIM SPEEDILY - PROVIDED HE MAKES SUCH PROPERTY AVAILABLE FOR TRIAL, IF NECESSARY.

(I recently learned that it sometimes takes years to retrieve what rightfully belongs to the victim. In one sad letter I recently received from the parents of a murdered young girl, I was advised that after many futile efforts on their part to have their daughter's possessions returned, they learned after three years that her personal and sentimental possessions had been auctioned off publicly. If I had been their attorney, I would have sued whomever was responsible for this.)

- (25) THE RIGHT OF A VICTIM TO HAVE A VICTIM IMPACT STATEMENT PRESENTED PRIOR TO SENTENCING BY THE JUDGE. JUST WHAT AFFECT HAS THIS CRIME HAD UPON THE VICTIM, HIS FAMILY OR SURVIVORS HIS HEALTH (MENTAL AND PHYSICAL) HIS FINANCES AND/OR HIS LIFE'S WORK?
- (26) THE RIGHT OF THE VICTIM TO HAVE HIS EMPLOYER CONTACTED SO THAT HE DOES NOT LOSE HIS DAY'S PAY OR HIS JOB, AS SOMETIMES OCCURS WHEN HE RESPONDS (OFTEN UNNECESSARILY) TO A SUBPOENA TO APPEAR IN COURT.
- (27) VICTIMS AND WITNESSES HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE FREE FROM INTIMIDATION AND TO AS MUCH MAXIMUM PROTECTION FROM HARM BY THE LAW AS POSSIBLE --A TALL ORDER AT BEST.
- (28) A VICTIM OR WITNESS HAS A RIGHT TO BE INFORMED OF POST-SENTENCING HEARING AFFECTING THE PROBATION OR PAROLE OF OFFENDER.
- (29) RAPE IS THE LEAST REPORTED CRIME IN AMERICA. WHY? BECAUSE WHAT SANE WOMAN WANTS TO UNDERGO THE HUMILIATION, THE DEHUMANIZATION, THE PUBLIC DISCLOSURE OF A SEXUAL CRIME, THE ORDEAL OF A TRIAL OF THIS SORT ALONG WITH THE DISCLOSURE OF HER PAST, PERSONAL LIFE IN SOME JURISDICTIONS, THE EFFECTS ON HER PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

OR MARRIAGE. (50% OF ALL RAPE VICTIMS EVENTUALLY DIVORCE.) BECAUSE OF THE UNUSUAL AND DELICATE ASPECTS OF THIS CRIME, THIS VICTIM ABOVE ALL, SHOULD BE TREATED WITH DIGNITY AND SENSITIVITY AT A TIME WHEN SHE FEELS INTIMIDATED, VULNERABLE, VIOLATED, EMBARRASSED, AND OFTEN IN SHOCK. (YOU SEE, IT TOOK ME ONLY SEVEN YEARS TO RECOVER).

(In a 1974 New York study I learned that one person in over 2400 indictments served time in prison for rape. No wonder it is the least reported crime! Women know the futility of it, and so often they are treated as the criminal instead of the victim. Why are women forced to take lie detector tests? When a person has his liquor store broken into and cash is taken (not so nearly devastating a crime) do you require a lie detector test from the store owner?)

Why is it that in some jurisdictions rape is tantamount to murder, while in others it is practically sluffed off? If only the men of the law could read the heartbreaking letters, the everlasting fear and the shattered lives of the victims of this crime you might greatly change your attitude. Many of the victims I have personally called were very near suicide because "no one cared". How would you as men feel to have your bodies thus violated against your will? Male rape these days incidentally, especially upon teenage boys, is more prevalent than you can imagine and even less reported than female rapes because of the shame a boy would have to face among his peers. His family would probably have to move to another town or state. So it happens often and you don't even know of it. I do!

- (30) INFORM THE VICTIM IF YOU BELIEVE THERE CAN BE A CIVIL SUIT INSTITUTED IN A PARTICULAR CASE - AS IN MINE, WHERE THE HOWARD JOHNSON MOTEL GROSSLY FAILED TO PROVIDE A SAFE ROOM. PERHAPS THERE SHOULD BE A LIST POSTED OF REPUTABLE NEGLIGENCE ATTORNEYS SPECIALIZING IN SUCH NEGLIGENCE CASES, WHO WOULD WORK ON A CONTINGENCY BASIS.

(Jim, I have been notified by Ray Marvin, Executive director of the National Association of Attorneys General that the date of their conference conflicts with an appearance I have to make in Cohasset, Mass. and that is unfortunate for both of us. However, something very important will occur on Monday, July 19, 1982. I will be able to address all of the District Attorneys and Prosecutors who will be having a conference in Boston on that date. I think, in the long run, that this is fortunate for us because it is probably more important to reach District Attorneys and Prosecutors than Attorneys General of each state. It would have been nice to do both. Would you care to join us on that date?)

(31) FOR THE POLICE TO REPRESENT THE VICTIM'S CONCERN IN CHARGING AND BAIL DECISIONS WHEN THE VICTIM CANNOT BE PRESENT.

Jim, I am sure every person in America who has knowledge of what it feels like to be a victim of violence applauds your efforts and your concern. You are an unique individual, and I thank you once again.

Warmest wishes,

CONNIE FRANCIS

cc: Mr. Darwick

P.S. I was pleased to learn today from Senator Heinz's office that many of my additions to his bill have been adopted.

# CITIZEN'S COMMITTEE TO STOP CRIME

3385 Arden Way • Sacramento, CA 95825 • (916) 482-6220

UL GANN  
Chairman

## VICTIM'S BILL OF RIGHTS



### RESTITUTION

declares that convicted criminals will be held financially liable for their actions, and that victims will enjoy the right to restitution.

### IN SCHOOLS

declares that all students have an inalienable right to attend schools which are safe, secure and peaceful.

### SEARCH-AND-SEIZURE

makes it easier to collect and use evidence against criminal defendants by reforming the state's exclusionary rule to the U. S. Constitution.

### PUBLIC SAFETY BAIL

declares public safety the main concern when setting bail or granting release.

### PROSECUTION FOR PRIOR CONVICTIONS/HABITUAL OFFENDERS

allows the use of prior felony convictions for impeachment or enhancement sentences, and provides longer prison terms for serious, habitual offenders.

### INSANITY/INCOMPETENCY

abolishes the diminished capacity or "twinkie" defense, and limits the use of insanity pleas.

### VICTIM'S STATEMENTS

restores victims the right to appear and testify at sentencing and parole hearings for both juvenile and adult offenders.

### PLEA BARGAINING

prohibits plea bargaining for most serious felony offenses.

### SENTENCING FOR DANGEROUS OFFENDER

clamps down on violent & habitual juvenile offenders, and declares that for serious felony convictions, only minors may be sent to C.Y.A.

PRESERVATION COPY

Supporting

THE "VICTIMS' BILL OF RIGHTS"

MENTALLY DISORDERED SEX OFFENDERS

Protects children and adults against sex offenders by sending convicted offenders to prison.

Tuesday, November 16, 1982

Civic Center

Atlanta, Georgia

International Association of Chiefs of  
Police (IACP) Convention

9 A.M.

My name is Connie Francis, and I'm a victim of crime. Aside from President Reagan, it's a dubious distinction to be called America's most famous victim of crime. That's why I'm here today. I'm here to make a positive difference in two major areas.

The first is to finalize a Victims' Bill of Rights which will be disseminated to all precincts, boroughs, station houses throughout the country. Lord knows, we victims need that. And the second is to begin a concerted and a well-planned effort to alter and to improve the lusterless image of the policeman in America today. You fellas know better than anyone else, that you've had rotten press - real bad. And it's really time we turned it around.

I was having dinner last night with Jim and a few people, and I heard a policeman refer to himself as a cop. I don't like that word. I don't let my little boy use it. And I believe that in order to improve your image, you have to start at home first. Think of yourselves as I was brought up

PRESERVATION COPY

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to think of you. I was never allowed to say the word 'cop'. It has a derogatory connotation to it. Let's scratch it from our vocabulary.

Of course, 'cop' is one of the nicer words that we've been called for many years. (I've made myself one of you. I've made myself a partner.) That you've been called. Anyway, I think it's about time we turned it all around. All of life is public relations, really. You're either selling yourself, or a product, or a business, or an idea or an image. And life is P.R.

In November of '74, I was the victim of a rape. Incidentally, I want to thank the gentlemen of the police department in Nassau County, because you were wonderful to me.

I was once a very visible, public figure - all my life, really - until that eventful night which irrevocably changed the course of my entire life. I didn't grant an interview for seven years. I couldn't say the word 'rape' until a year and a half ago. And I felt very much like being a most private citizen. Nonetheless, over those past seven years, I became somewhat of a symbol, receiving thousands and thousands of letters from the victims of crime in America. All the while, I was feeling so helpless, because I couldn't do anything at all for these poor unfortunates, due to the fact that I was



such a lost soul myself.

So lost, in fact, that for one year after the rape, my mother would have to put the clothes on the bed for me that I would be wearing that particular day, because I couldn't attend to the even simplest details of daily living. One month after the rape I was unable to diaper my own newly adopted baby son, because at age 34, I was as helpless as a baby myself. I am not a retiring, or easily-frightened woman. Really, I'm not. I'm a fighter! Or I'd always been that way, at least. I couldn't believe my own reaction to this crime. Where was my mind, my spirit, my confidence, and my guts? I don't know where they were. They disappeared.

Well, that's history now. I'm strong again, back to myself, and I'm not helpless anymore. I'm not confused by statistics, or bi-partisan politics which is causing so much misery to so many Americans. And that, ladies and gentlemen, makes me infinitely more qualified - to speak for the victims of crime than most other people.

As law enforcement officers - the laws of the land coerce you - they compel you to safeguard the rights of the criminal, the wrong-doers of our society. But there are virtually no laws on the books that compel you, as officers, to safeguard

the rights of the innocent and often powerless law-abiding citizen who, through usually no fault of his own, is reduced to being a most ordinary victim. And this is such a sad and distorted state of affairs!

Of course we care about civil rights in this country, but who's civil rights first? For far too many years now, the only outrage, the only outcry, the only civil rights legislation passed in this country have been those laws enacted to protect the civil rights of the offenders, these blights on our beautiful country. And the criminal, above everyone else, knows the odds are with him. If I had his odds, I'd take them every day at the racetrack. There simply is no effective deterrent to the commission of a crime today in this country.

Former Governor Byrne of New Jersey is a good friend of mine for many, many years. I campaigned for him. I like him very much. He's a nice man. A couple of times he vetoed the death penalty. When he did that, he vetoed the mandate of the people, because they wanted it. He didn't do his job. He wasn't acting as the public servant he was elected to be. (I'm sorry, Brendan.)

He wrote to me that these were his personal convictions, which

he could not repudiate in all good conscience. I suggested to Brendan that in that case, he become a columnist or an author, and then he could say and do whatever he pleased and didn't have to be accountable to the people.

The overriding responsibility of our elected officials is to the people. They are public servants. And there is no accountability to us, anymore. People have to be accountable for the wrongs that they do. We learn this when we are two years old. If you do something wrong, you get punished. Except, of course, if you live in America and are so fiercely protected by so many misguided souls.

What's it like to be a victim of violence if you haven't experienced it? All of you fellows see it everyday - but no amount of reading or hearing about it will help you to understand the mental and physical anguish of it. The disbelief that this really happened to you.

The fear, the nightmares, the violation, the disruption of your life and the lives of the ones you love, the withdrawal, the depression that follows, and sometimes leads to a nervous breakdown, as it did in my case. And I'm not a nervous girl.

The dehumanization, the loss of faith in government, in

God, and in mankind. Often a total loss of motivation and concentration, the futility and the hopelessness, the staggering financial burdens, the permanent disabilities, the terror, the injuries and the death.

The knowledge that, not unlike a child, you are no longer in control of your own life anymore. Those wounds that will never heal. And the knowledge that you will never feel safe again (I know I won't) or be quite the same person again.

And if that weren't enough, then the victim goes through what we call the "second injury". The apathy, the callousness, and the knowledge that you are just another case number. The total injustice of "justice" as it exists in this country today, The discovery of that elaborate, and very effective wall of protection, that has been successfully erected around the criminal in this country, through artificial and contrived loopholes in the law. It's a joke. The constant fear of retaliation, the shock when one realizes just what the American criminal justice system has become, And what a misnomer that is! The delays, the postponements, the loss of wages and sometimes one's job, as a result of serving under a subpoena as a witness. The unpleasantry of being fingerprinted. The humiliation of a rape examination. I remember it well.

I'm writing my autobiography right now, and rather than talk about it, I'll just read to you from the pages of my book which has not been published yet. It was after the rape when I was taken to the, I believe, Nassau County Medical Center. I'm really not sure where I was taken.

"In the examining room at the hospital, I lay on a metal table. It felt cold through my thin robe." (This was, ladies and gentlemen, following a performance one night at the Westbury Music Fair, when I went back to the Howard Johnson's Motel). The door was in locked position, and with slight maneuvering, (as the people from the Nassau County Police Department can tell you), the door was able to be opened. With a court order six months later, in 50% of the rooms that were examined, the same thing could be done. In the room I had stayed, the door had never been repaired. The slash in the screen door was still there - six or seven months after the fact." The room was Spartan-bare, except for a sink with a pedal, a clock, the metal table and me. I waited for one hour and five minutes. I shall never forget that feeling - that devastating isolation - so completely shut off from the rest of the world.

At that moment, I never felt less like Connie Francis. But then again, I never felt less like a human being either.

At the police station lying there in my yellow robe and in my misery, one thought consumed me. "I'll make things normal again! I'll just do my show! Of course! I'll go right back on that stage tonight."

Everytime when bad things happened in my life, singing on stage always seemed to make them better. For me a stage or recording booth, is the single most natural place to be." (I don't know how to be nervous with people.)" Every single one of those nights, I did my show! Why can't I do it now - just one more time? Why should tonight be any different?... But it was. A stage wasn't something I wouldn't see for several thousand nights to come.

Clinging desperately to my plan, it was the only thing that got me through that day. I don't remember how I got to the police station. I was taken to a room - still wearing that yellow robe, still unwashed - and questioned by two male police officers. When they asked me to tell them what happened, I just stared at them blankly ." (I think the officers said in court that I was rocking back and forth. I cried hysterically, rocking back and forth in my seat like a baby.)

"During this time, while I alternated between periods of

lucidity and periods of hysteria, I was fingerprinted - so that the police would be able to tell my prints from any others they might find in the room. Only later did it strike me as odd that I, the victim, was fingerprinted like a criminal.

How can I talk to these men? How could any man know the self-loathing - the disgust I feel right now... they couldn't, it's impossible. I won't - I just can't - I can not talk to them. Finally, thank God, they left and two women entered the room - two very gentle police-women. I wanted to throw my arms around them and embrace them. I felt a bit of relief, and I told them sketchily, as much as I could bear to think of at this point.

For months - years afterwards - I would wake up in cold sweats, shattered by the graphic memories, the horrifying, chilling details of those hours; these thoughts I will surely live with the rest of my life - the ones I'll never be able to block from my mind. And some of these things I knew, even then, I'd never tell another living soul. And I never have.

"Did he say anything to you during the act itself, Connie?" Donna Alden, the nice policewoman on the rape squad, wanted to know.

I nodded embarrassed. "What did he say to you, dear?"

I looked into her kind eyes and then away. "He told me to move more," I barely whispered.

They took me into a room with a one-way mirror. I could see six or seven men, black men, in a lineup.

"Tell us something the rapist said to you, Connie;" the policeman asked me.

"He said...he asked me, "How old do you think I am?"

Each of these men, in turn, repeated the sentence: How old do you think I am? "

Then suddenly, I heard that voice! Slightly New England, incongruous, not black. "That's him! Oh God, I'm sure that's him!" I screamed. As the door to the corridor flung open, (I understand that this is not police practice. It's just something that occurred - part of the group of men filed out, and I saw him there. There's no doubt about it! I'll kill him!

I flung myself at him, mindlessly screaming words I have never said before in public or in private. I pounded



Because of the unusual and delicate aspects of this crime, this victim, above all, should be treated with dignity and sensitivity at a time when she feels ashamed, vulnerable, violated, intimidated and very often in shock. It took me only seven years to recover.

One depressing 1971, New York statistic - 2,415 founded rapes. 1,085 arrests. 100 cases went to the Grand Jury. You got 34 indictments, 18 convictions. That's like 1%. Don't check me on math. I'm lousy at math.

While a woman's sexual history may be trotted out before a jury and all the world to know, the man's sexual history, including 50 previous rape convictions for rape, may not be introduced.

Rape carries in it the fear among males of false accusation. A New York City female Rape Squad found that only 2% of all rape complaints were false - 2% - about the same false report rate that is usual for other kinds of felonies.

As a well-known individual I have absolutely no right to complain. As a human being, I have every right to complain. I was treated quite royally all the way down the line by our "Criminal Injustice system" as I called it. Let's make no mistake about it - that's exactly what it is--just what it says--a system of justice for the criminal.

But I am Connie Francis and a VIP. From the thousands of letters I've received over the years, I know that this special treatment is not accorded most victims. Not so much by the boys in blue, as by the "system" itself...It just doesn't work that way.

You law enforcement officials see so many more victims than you do criminals, and after a while even the most well-intentioned of you becomes hardened and inured to their plight. I guess you have to for your own sanity. But where exactly does that leave the victim? And who is to be his champion? I have yet to sing songs, but for now I guess, it's me.

This is my proposed Bill of Rights. I'd like to, first of all, leave this convention, have a press conference and tell the American people that you're good guys. You're not the public enemy. You're a friend. Let's face it, you've had awful press. Why? Forget 'why'.

Look at the movies that come out of Hollywood. Hollywood fare like Serpico, The Seven-Ups, The Choirboys. You won't win friends and influence people with those movies. So you had better go out, and be your own best PR firm.

I'm speaking to - who's the gentleman last night, Jim, who

was speaking with us at dinner in the public relations department? Doug.....He puts out newsletters on a monthly basis, and I asked him if he features police men and he said "Yes. Once a year." I said, "Why? Why don't you feature a policeman throughout the country a month? That's not so difficult. It's important."

And Jim, you said, "The press doesn't want to print that." You're wrong. America's a country with a great big kind heart. You all should know that. And the press is not just interested in negative stories. The press is a reflection of what's happening in the country. They report it as it is.

Why do you keep the good things you do a closely-guarded secret? You don't get any points for modesty, gentlemen. The press is always interested in a good, human interest story, because we have big hearts. We love to hear human interest stories. We love to cry. Go out and tell the people about the good things that you do - the many altruistic and unheralded services you do for the public. (I wish I could work for you guys for a year).

This is the Bill of Rights:

1. THE RIGHT OF THE VICTIM TO BE TREATED WITH DIGNITY AND CONSIDERATION AND TO RECEIVE CORDIAL ASSISTANCE FOR THEIR COOPERATION.
2. FOR THE FAMILY TO BE NOTIFIED IMMEDIATELY OF HOSPITALIZATION OR EMERGENCY ROOM TREATMENT.
3. TO CALL IN HIS OWN COUNCIL.
4. TO BE GIVEN INFORMATION AS TO THE PROGRESS OF A CASE FROM THE INITIAL POLICE INVESTIGATION OF THE CASE TO ITS FINAL DISPOSITION.
5. TO CONFER WITH THE PROSECUTOR OR DISTRICT ATTORNEY AND TO HAVE HIS CASE EXPLAINED IN LAY LANGUAGE.
6. TO BE INFORMED OF ANY DECISIONS REGARDING HIS CASE ON BAIL, PLEA BARGAINING OR SENTENCING.
7. TO BE INFORMED WHEN HIS OFFENDER HAS BEEN RELEASED FROM BAIL, PAROLE OR PRISON SENTENCE.
8. TO BE NOTIFIED OF ANY DELAY OR POSTPONEMENT OF HIS APPEARANCE IN COURT.

I know this is hard for you fellas, because very often you don't know - you're not notified. And the criminal decides to show up when he's in good voice, like the first Monday in October, or whatever, and you don't know either, so you can't notify the victim. But when you can, you should, because victims and witnesses miss

their pay. They can lose their jobs.

9. THE RIGHT OF THE VICTIM TO HAVE HIS MEDICAL, EMOTIONAL AND EMERGENCY NEEDS TAKEN CARE OF BEFORE BEING QUESTIONED.  
(The offender's defense attorney will see to it that you do at least this for his man, and at the taxpayer's expense.)
10. THE RIGHT OF THE VICTIM TO BE NOTIFIED OF WHAT CRIME VICTIMS ADVOCATE GROUPS AND RAPE CRISIS CENTERS CAN HELP AND FOR THE POLICE TO WORK CLOSELY WITH THESE GROUPS AS SOON AS THE VICTIM IS BROUGHT INTO THE STATION.  
(And, if you do, then you will see an immediate turn around in public attitude toward the police department. This is a sensitive area, and I feel that perhaps you and I together can help to generate a spirit of cooperation and unity with these groups. They're usually selfless people. I am sure many police consider these groups meddlesome, but many of these agencies do help immensely. I know they've prevented many girls from committing suicide that I've sent there, and they can relieve you of many burdens and make life easier for you.)
11. ARRANGE FOR A FEMALE OFFICER TO INTERVIEW A VICTIM OF RAPE.
12. TO HAVE INVESTIGATORS AND FIELD OFFICERS FAMILIAR WITH THE CASE, LEAVE CALLING CARDS SO VICTIMS CAN CONTACT THEM EASILY - 24 HOURS A DAY, IF NECESSARY - AN

"ALERT SYSTEM" OF SOME SORT.

(It's an awful feeling to walk out of that precinct.

You feel so scared.)

13. TO PROVIDE INFORMATION AS TO WHAT STATE COMPENSATION EXISTS UNDER THE LAW FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME BY FIELD OFFICERS AND AT POLICE HEADQUARTERS. THIS SHOULD BE POSTED ON THE BULLETIN BOARD SO PEOPLE CAN SEE IT.

14. THE RIGHT OF A VICTIM TO PROCEED IN CIVIL SUITS FOR RECOVERY OF DAMAGES - TO BE ABLE TO PLACE A LIEN ON ANY PROFITS RECEIVED BY HIS ASSAILANT AS A RESULT OF THE SALE OF HIS STORY TO THE MEDIA.

(This is being done right now in New York, in the Jack Abbot case.)

15. THE RIGHT OF A VICTIM THROUGH THE USE OF PHOTOGRAPHS AS EVIDENCE, TO HAVE HIS RECOVERED IDENTIFIABLE PROPERTY RETURNED TO HIM SPEEDILY - PROVIDED HE MAKES SUCH PROPERTY AVAILABLE FOR TRIAL, IF NECESSARY.

I got a letter a few weeks ago. It was from the parents of a murdered, teen-age girl. I was advised that after many futile efforts on their part to have their daughter's possessions recovered, after three and a half years, her personal and sentimental possessions had been auctioned off and put up for sale. (I wish I'd been their lawyer.)

16. THE RIGHT OF THE VICTIM TO HAVE A VICTIM IMPACT STATEMENT PRESENTED PRIOR TO SENTENCING BY THE JUDGE.

Just what effect, (don't you think it should be taken into consideration) did this crime have upon the victim and his family? Psychologically, financially, emotionally?

17. THE RIGHT OF THE VICTIM TO HAVE HIS EMPLOYER CONTACTED, SO THAT HE DOESN'T LOSE HIS DAY'S PAY OR HIS JOB WHEN HE RESPONDS TO A SUPOENA.

18. THE RIGHT TO BE FREE FROM INTIMIDATION.

Or as much as you can give us, and that isn't much, is it? Very difficult. A tall order at best.

19. TO BE INFORMED OF POST-SENTENCING HEARING AFFECTING THE PAROLE OF THE OFFENDER.

I'd sure want to know if the fellow who raped me was in the neighborhood.

20. FOR THE POLICE TO PRESENT THE VICTIM'S CONCERN IN CHARGING IN BAIL DECISION WHEN THE VICTIM FOR SOME REASON, PROBABLY HIS HEALTH, CANNOT BE PRESENT.

Rape is the only crime in this country where a victim in most jurisdictions, has to prove her innocence, - where the burden of proof automatically shifts to the Victim.

It is accepted without question that a Robbery victim need not prove he resisted, - that by handing over his money he "consented to the act" and therefore, there

was no crime. Indeed, Police usually advise citizens not to resist a Robbery. Successful resistance to a robbery these days is considered heroic. Up until a few weeks ago, (I went up to Albany and spoke to the gentlemen up there) they had a law called the "Earnest Resistance" law in New York. You had to show real resistance to a rape in order to prosecute.

I told the gentlemen up there that if I had abided by their law, (which incidentally, is contrary, to what the New York City Police Department tells victims and what the rape crisis groups tell victims) that if I had listened to them, I would be dead now. I wouldn't be here speaking with you.

Even if your assailant isn't armed, a woman is just physically weaker, and she does run the risk of death. The man doesn't need a weapon. You're stronger, you big guys out there. Well, we went up there and finally ... (They've been trying since '74 to get this law repealed) and they did, thank goodness, a few weeks ago.

Why is it in some jurisdictions rape is tantamount to murder? Dallas County, we love you. I'm taking a film crew down to Dallas County, and we're filming a show called "Rape Spotlight on Dallas." I found out that



Billy Prince, (Hi Billy, if you're out there)  
Dr. Pette, Steve Wade, the prosecutor or the DA,  
(whatever it's called in Dallas) and the judges -  
(our judges - that's a subject for a whole other conference) - all of them in Dallas County work together,  
and there's a 50% conviction rate on rape. That's  
very, very high.

For a first rape conviction in Dallas County, I think,  
the sentence is seventy some odd years. I think  
in most counties (it works for Dallas, so whatever works  
for you is fine) but in most counties, it would be too  
steep a sentence. And in many cases when people say,  
"Lets use the death penalty. Let's cut off his arms" -  
It's not gonna happen, folks. We live in America. We're  
not in Salem, you know. If the sentence is too strict,  
too rigid, it will militate against a conviction. The  
jury or judge will be reluctant to impose that sentence. There  
has to be certain guidelines that are realistic. If you men of  
the law saw some of the heartbreaking letters I receive (I  
wanted to bring some of them with me) the everlasting fear  
and of the shattered lives of the victims of this crime,  
you might greatly change your attitude. So many were close  
to suicide because "no one cared".

How would you men feel to have your bodies thus violated

against your will? Male rape these days incidentally, is on the rampage. It's more prevalent than you can possibly imagine, and far less reported than female rapes, because of the shame that a young boy practically has to endure among his peers. Most families who've written me about this dilemma had to move away from their homes. So it happens often, and you don't even know of it. I do, because I get the letters. They don't report it. How can they? It's just another manifestation that there're some sick people out there.

The American public has had it. They're not interested in statistics, unless they happen to be one of them. They're not interested in the wasted years and the millions and millions of dollars you hear about every day that are spent on the sociological, psychological and socio-economic reasons why people kill and maim other people.

They're not interested. There isn't time for that anymore. They're interested in the freedom from fear for themselves and their families. They want to make it for to the Seven Eleven( see, I gave you guys a plug) or to the supermærkæt or to the subway or to work

without getting maimed, raped, mugged, or killed.

The problem of violent crime today is a gigantic one.

There's a bill in Washington (this was true a few months ago, I don't know if it's still true).

It's a complete rewrite of the criminal justice code.

And it's been sitting in front of the desk of a Representative, I believe it is Michigan, named Conyers.

I don't know who he is. For two years. I asked

"Why aren't you working on this bill?" Well, he

seems to think he has a better bill, just a little

bit better. It really isn't very far different. And,

while he's contemplating his bill for two years,

19,000 people are getting killed out in the streets.

Really, it's a shame. Bi-partisan politics are destroying this country.

Most federal crimes - we just had this Heinz-Laxalt Victims Bill

passed. We really tried with this bill out in Washington.

And it finally got past the House Judiciary a few weeks

ago. It's a good bill and I wrote a few of the clauses

in it.

However, most federal crimes (the federal laws that

are passed) are not crimes of violence. They're crimes

of greed and money, and I'm really not interested in that. I'm interested in the people. It takes a special kind of person to go out and hurt and kill somebody else. That's what I'm interested in. And it's the citizens of the states that suffer the horrors of violence. And changing the laws in each and every state, it's very time consuming. But we're working on it.

A man from California (he ran for the U.S. Senate and lost), by the name of Paul Gann - he's just an average American guy - called me at the beginning of the summer. He said he needed my help in getting an anti-crime bill passed in California. A very strong anti-crime bill. He was just an average American citizen. There were no self-serving interests involved, no politics, no axes to grind. I checked out his past stand on crime with an organization called ALEC in Washington. They come up with the voting record on any issue of any politician within half an hour - local, federal, state, whatever. And as you boys say, I guess, he "checked out".

In Sacramento, he proposed the toughest, most comprehensive anti-crime bill ever. Even stronger than Attorney General William French Smith's bill, and I'm familiar with that. This is really a comprehensive bill. Of course, it would be

difficult to get past federally; the constitutionality of it will be questioned.

On a trip to California, I took this bill to the people, through the media - the best way to do it. There wasn't 4½¢ to spend on a campaign to publicize this bill. But on June 8th Proposition 8 became law in California. It isn't a perfect bill; it has its flaws. But it is a clear and cogent mandate from the people about how they feel about crime. And it should be heard in state capitols across the land. Proposition 8 won by a 12% margin. Very high, indeed, for a crime bill so dramatic and so comprehensive.

Of course, it was challenged - by people whom you would expect to challenge it. I called California last night. I didn't want to say anything inaccurate here. I spoke with Paul Gann. And he told me that the California Supreme Court has declared Proposition 8 to be constitutional and would not even consider the repeal of it. Whoopie do, folks! Here's what it says. Here are some of the provisions of Proposition 8 currently in the state of California: (Let's hear it for California!)

It greatly expands the evidence prosecutors can introduce in court. The most important rule - the rules of evidence. The exclusionary rule got thrown right out the window in California, folks! How about that? It greatly diminishes insanity pleas!

If any of you people out there have any suggestions about this bill - if you have someone to propose it in your particular state. - please call Jim Damos. Jim will call me, and we'll go out to your state; and we'll make it law. You just propose it; and we'll make it law. It abolishes the defense of "diminished capacity," resulting from the use of drugs or alcohol. It adds five years, not three to the sentences of persons convicted of serious felonies. It says that a judge must consider the public safety in setting bail. HALLELUJIA! There's a victim impact statement that's given to the judge. Now, in California - I lost it, but I know what the provisions are anyway. In California, the prosecutor is now allowed to introduce the past, criminal history of the defendant. It's a wonderful, wonderful bill. It closes up aaaaall the little loopholes that we get fed-up with, - all those little bugaboo rules. Oh, yeah! And it calls for

mandatory sentencing of convicted felons of serious crimes, over the age of 18 - taking as much of the discretion away from our judges. Because Lord knows, they have not done right by us - many of them.

I gave this speech in Washington in May, Jim, at the National Forum on Victims. I want to tell the people about the good things that you do. Let me know about them so that I can tell the people. I said this in Washington that day: "It's difficult for me to understand why, in this day and age, anyone would want to become a police officer. These individuals, generally, are hard working, responsible people. After years of repeated exposure in the "front lines", so to speak, they are emotionally depleted, frustrated and burnt out. And they too, feel most betrayed by the criminal injustice system and its turnstile "justice".

There are so many minuses to their job. The inherent stress...the resulting family problems...the reluctance of prosecutors to take cases to trial...the leniency of the judges...the verbal abuse and negative attitude of the public...(which we're going to try to change) the isolation...the low pay, the arbitrary rules and procedures...the excessive paper work which really should be done in large part, by clerical workers... (we need you out on the streets)

few opportunities for advancement or recognition.... constant work overload, the ever-present fear of repeated exposure day in and day out to injury and death. The months, and sometimes years, spent on a case, And the ensuing trial which so often results in seeing (because of those technical loopholes I spoke of) the criminal leave the courtroom smiling, happy and free. What frustration! What futility!

And to the people that we voted into office, I said to them that day:

"I receive upwards of 1000 letters a week from victims of violent crime. Hopefully, with your help, gentlemen, if you respond to the outrage of the American people, whose very lives are in your hands, you have the power to make America safer again. It's not an easy task, Mr. Congressman, but you are extravagantly rewarded in prestige and all the trappings of your position of power for your labors. It isn't as complicated or as impossible as everyone leads us to believe. And it does not have to be done "in due time". How often I've heard the old cry "Things can't be done overnight". Well, work a little harder, fellas. You owe us!



I am here today because I happen to love my country. And I feel that I can make a positive difference. I'll do everything in my power to achieve this. I won't mince words with you or the media. It's a nice feeling of freedom to be able to say what you really feel and not have to worry about whom you're offending. Because my only concern is the people. I view crime only in terms of human suffering, that's all.

I'm not running for office. I'm not here as a Republican or a Democrat, or anything else. I'm not a spokesman for the Administration. I'm not a fanatic, or a person seeking revenge for a crime that was perpetrated on me. (I just happened to be at the wrong place at the wrong time.) I'm not here to gain publicity. I've had far too much of that already (unfortunately, very often, the wrong kind.) Nor am I here to make friends of the people in government - our law-makers. If I do make friends - that would make me very happy. If I don't, it won't make me unhappy at all.

I have no obligation - no accountability to anyone. The only accountability due us as Americans is that accountability of the people who make the laws of this

country — the law enforcers, and those judges, our administrators of justice, — for each of you owes us, and has not given us, the American people, answers or solutions. Each of you in your own way, has failed to protect the citizens of this most glorious country.

I hope that we'll finally have our day in court — we the victims of crime and violence in America — 1.5 million of us a year, (not to mention all of those people in our lives who are affected,) which has irrevocable changed the course of our lives. Some of us, you see, will never be quite the same. I hope that we'll be heard by at least some of you out there — NOW!

Let's do a good job. OK, everybody? And let's get together, and do something for the people. And I will go out there, and do my best to do something for you, fellas. Thank you very much for sitting so long and quietly.

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

April 18, 1983

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT  
AT CEREMONY FOR OBSERVANCE OF  
NATIONAL CRIME VICTIMS WEEK

The Rose Garden

1:45 P.M. EST

ATTORNEY GENERAL SMITH: Mr. President, last year you appointed a commission on the victims of crime, called the Task Force on the Victims of Crime, to study the problems of victims and to make recommendations to vindicate the rights of victims. That task force completed its work. They have 68 recommendations. And those recommendations are now being studied by those of us at the Justice Department and others who are concerned with this problem, victims being the forgotten people in the criminal justice system.

The chairman of that commission -- that task force was Mrs. Lois Herrington, a distinguished lawyer from California, who is the acting head of our Office of Justice Assistance, Research and Statistics. And I would like to introduce her to you now. Lois.

MRS. HERRINGTON: Thank you. You may all sit down.

Thank you very much, Mr. Attorney General, Mr. President, Mr. Vice President. It's an honor and a pleasure to be here with you this afternoon.

Mr. President, when you established this task force, you led the nation into a new era in the treatment of victims of crime. Never before has any president recognized the plight of those forgotten by the criminal justice system. It is my privilege to introduce to you five citizens who have given invaluable assistance to your task force. They represent hundreds of others who came forward, some at great personal sacrifice, to inform us all of the depth of this problem.

Mrs. Evelyn Blackwell is a widow from Washington, D.C. She has given us a special sense of the problems crime imposes on senior citizens. And she is a model for how those courageous citizens can fight back.

Since 1975, her home has been broken into five times and her limited income has prevented her from replacing most of those things taken from her.

Gradually, she came to fear that no place, including her home, was safe. But because of her spirit and a refusal to give up, Mrs. Blackwell has been working to combat crime in her neighborhood, especially crimes against the elderly.

In addition, she and a staff of 40 volunteers accompany elderly victims to court to ease the burden of this process on them.

Her creative and productive response to her own misfortune serves as an inspiration to all who are working to improve the lot of victims in this country.

Mr. President, may I present Mrs. Evelyn Blackwell.

(Applause.)

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Mr. Elvus Regalia is a California pharmacist who was driven out of business by crime. Mr. Regalia owned and operated his own pharmacy for some 24 years during which time he was burglarized six times and robbed on three separate occasions.

During one robbery, he and two others were held hostage at gunpoint. Mr. Regalia always cooperated with authorities, even though numerous court appearances required that he repeatedly close his business. Eventually, the financial drain on his business, coupled with increasing fear, forced Mr. Regalia to sell the business he and his family had worked to build.

He now works as a pharmacist in San Quentin Prison. And he testified that although he rubs elbows with murderers and convicts now, he feels safer than the neighborhood pharmacist who serves the public. Mr. President, I would like you to meet Mr. Elvus Regalia. (Applause.)

Mrs. Geraldine Strong is a victim of crime whose injuries were magnified by the callous way she was treated in the legal system. Mrs. Strong was at work one morning at a Maryland public library when an assailant with a long criminal history kidnapped her at gunpoint, held her captive for three hours while he raped, robbed and repeatedly threatened to kill her if she ever testified against him.

Though Mrs. Strong's attacker was arrested at the scene of the crime, it took the system a year to bring him to trial. Mrs. Strong told your task force that, "My disillusionment with the judicial system is many times more painful than the attacks on me."

But she has not succumbed to her disillusionment. She has volunteered to help train law enforcement professionals to improve their sensitivity and service to victims of crime. Mr. President, I would like you to meet Mrs. Geraldine Strong. (Applause.)

All too often the pain and suffering that victims of crime experience continues long after the passage of the criminal event itself. Last year, three men entered the St. Louis home of Harold and Lily Tuthill and savagely beat them both.

In addition to taking money, these criminals stole the momentos of their lifetime together. Efficient police work led to the quick apprehension of the criminals. But the Tuthills have spent long periods in hospitals recovering from their physical and psychological injuries.

The continuing fear that resulted from the attack forced them to move from their home of 40 years. Their lives will never truly be the same. Mr. President, I would like you to meet Mr. Harold Tuthill. Mr. Tuthill. (Applause.)

Mrs. Betty Jane Spencer is a brave and dedicated woman. In February 1977, four men with

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shotguns entered the Spencer home in rural Indiana, robbed the family, murdered Mrs. Spencer's four sons and shot her three times.

When apprehended, the killers admitted they had picked a house at random to kill everyone in it, "for the fun of it." The ringleader of the group was on parole and he and another killer were also free on bail awaiting trial for other crimes.

Mrs. Spencer went to work to improve the system of justice in her state. As a result of her efforts and of citizens like her, more than 20 laws have been changed to better protect and assist victims of crime in Indiana.

She has been a true champion of the cause of crime victims and I'm very proud to introduce her to you. Mr. President, I would like you to meet Betty Jane Spencer. (Applause.)

THE PRESIDENT: Attorney General Smith, Mrs. Herrington, and ladies and gentlemen standing here in the Rose Garden, listening to these dreadful stories of senseless brutality seems almost unreal. But for far too many of our citizens, the threat of violent crime is, as we've heard, all too real.

I would like to thank all of you, Mrs. Blackwell, Mrs. Strong, Mrs. Spencer, Mr. Regalia, and Mr. Tuthill, as well as all the citizens who have come forward to help us come to grips with this very serious problem. You've acted in the highest tradition of our country. By your courage and selflessness, you've done your nation a great service. I think the time has come when we, as a free people, should face up to some hard decisions about crime.

The crime epidemic threat has spread throughout our country and it's no uncontrollable disease, much less an irreversible tide. Nor is it some inevitable sociological phenomenon traceable to urbanization or modern society. It is, instead, and in large measure, a cumulative result of too much emphasis on the protection of the rights of the accused and too little concern for our government's responsibility to protect the lives, homes, and rights of our law-abiding citizens. We should be proud that our criminal justice system protects the constitutional rights of the accused; but over the past few years that system has allowed the safeguards protecting the rights of the innocent to be torn away. This has so complicated the system, clogged our courts, reduced the chances of conviction -- as well as the level of punishment once a criminal is convicted -- that the criminal element now calculates that crime really does pay.

The suffering of these victims we've met today and the millions of others as well, is testimony to the inequity and the inadequacy of today's system. Our Task Force on Victims of Crime called the neglect and mistreatment of crime victims a national disgrace. I heartily agree. What we have to do now is move forward to correct this disgrace and at the same time to clear away the roadblocks that prevent the authorities from doing their job. But we need your help. Prompt enactment of our anti-crime package, particularly the bail reform and sentencing provisions, is needed

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to protect victims from criminals. The voice of the people must be heard in the Congress.

It will take time and hard work to undo the distortions of our criminal justice system that brought on this wave of crime. But under Attorney General Smith and his leadership, we're moving on these tough questions.

Finally, while Washington is a vital part of tackling the problem, it will also take the coordinated efforts of people in state and local government and in every walk of life to get this situation under control. Without action at the state and local level, our federal efforts can achieve little.

Ultimately, if we're to succeed, each of us, as citizens, must do his or her part not only through contacting elected officials, though that always helps, but also by watching out for our friends, our families and our communities. Crime prevention is no longer just a job for the police. Every level of government and Americans everywhere must take an active part. Many neighborhoods have a crime watch program. I would hope that more and more of our citizens take the time and effort to get involved.

So thank you all for what you're doing and, together, I'm confident that we can begin to make America safe again. Thank you. (Applause.)

MRS. HERRINGTON: Mr. President, I know that I speak on behalf of these courageous Americans and citizens around this nation that thank you for your dedication and your concern. (Applause.)

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1:58 P.M. EST