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Conference on Drug Awareness. Sept. 27,
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(Parvin/AB)
September 24, 1982
9:30 a.m.

MRS. REAGAN: GOVERNOR'S CONFERENCE ON DRUG AWARENESS
SEPTEMBER 27, 1982

- Thank you for your welcome. Before I say anything else, I want to commend Governor James for calling this conference -- the first of its kind in Alabama. And I also want to compliment Mayor Folmar for his battle here in Montgomery against the drug epidemic.

- As I was thinking over what to say today, I remembered that Helen Keller grew up in Alabama. Here was a girl whose young life was a void of silence and darkness, a void most of us cannot even comprehend. Yet there are children in this State today who are just as removed from the world, except that the void is inside them. Drugs have killed their hope, their promise, their spirit, their love. Drugs have turned them against their friends and families and toward a world of pain and isolation, though they may not realize it. This conference is about preventing that darkness from enveloping any more of our children.

- You know being a parent is the greatest challenge we have in life and the one for which we have no training at all. Owen Spann in San Francisco who lost a son to drugs said, "When you become a parent, you find yourself in a series of peaks and valleys, highs and lows, moments when you wonder if your

children will ever amount to anything and other moments of complete pride and joy."

-- Another father once wrote of his son, "No man can possibly know what life means, what the world means, until he has a child and loves it. And then the whole universe changes and nothing will ever seem exactly as "it seemed before." Well, neither does anything seem the same once a child develops a drug problem. It destroys a family. I believe drug abuse, which crosses all lines, is one of our country's greatest problems. We're talking about our next generation and what will happen to them.

-- You will hear other stories of heartbreak at this conference, but in spite of everything I remain optimistic. I am encouraged because people finally are coming together to face up to the problem of drug abuse. Parents are becoming more involved, more knowledgeable, and I think professionals now feel that something can be done.

-- Let me say in closing, I'm told that your State motto is "We Dare Defend Our Rights." Well, what this conference is saying is we dare to defend our children. And as long as drug abuse is a threat, as long as our kids are endangered, I know there will be people like you there to defend them. Thank you, Governor, for allowing me to be part of your conference, and thank you all for what you're doing.

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-- I've heard from so many people since I started speaking about drug abuse among our youth. A man whose son had died of an overdose wrote that a person can anticipate the loss of a parent, even a spouse, but one cannot accept the loss of a son or daughter. It simply is not the way life was

meant to be. And there are other kinds of losses that drugs cause -- losses of a child's personality and identity.

-- Let me read to you part of a letter I received: "I am the grandmother of a grandson who began taking drugs at age 13. We had no idea he was doing it. His personality changed and where he had been a good boy, he became entirely different. At 20 he was caught holding up a grocery store. He had been stealing from his parents, too. He was given five years in prison. He has given us so many heartaches."

-- I know this conference will hear other stories of heartache. Yet in spite of the harsh realities of drugs, I am optimistic. I am encouraged because people finally are coming together to fight drug abuse and are making progress. As I travel around, I can feel a confidence returning to parents and professionals that something can be done. And I am delighted you here in Alabama are feeling that confidence, too.

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Drugs

(Parvin) ^{AB}
September 21, 1982
~~11:00 a.m.~~

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September 24, 1982
9:30 a.m.

MRS. REAGAN: LITTLE ROCK HIGH SCHOOL
SEPTEMBER 28, 1982

-- Thank you, Mr. Maple and thank all of you for that warm welcome. I know Mr. Maple must be a good, strict principal. He even made the Secret Service carry hall passes. But I'm delighted to be with you today -- even you slopmores.*

-- I want you to use your imagination for a moment. Imagine someone who is a star football player and a member of the honor society. Someone who is loaded with personality and good friends, like many of you are. Imagine someone who seems to have everything going for him. Then imagine this someone starts to take drugs and his grades drop to D's and F's, and his coach kicks him off the team because he never comes to practice. Imagine that his personality and smile turn to vacant, uncaring stares. Imagine his friends and family try to help him but he refuses their offers of love. He even steals from them. Well, you don't have to imagine all that, because a mother wrote me those very things about her son.

-- Now I know you hear a lot of scare stories from adults like me. When I was young I never paid much attention to them either. But in a few moments you are going to hear

* The running gag in school assemblies is calling sophomores "slopmores".

one story directly from the lips of someone who's been on drugs. Carl Eller played with the Minnosota Vikings. Yet no blocker in the NFL ever hit him as hard as drugs. As big as Carl is, he was brought down by something that is measured in ounces -- cocaine.

-- There are many young people who do not take drugs and I do not mean to imply that all do in any way. But while many do not use them, there are others who are dependent and do not know it. Right now in this auditorium it's possible there are a few who need help with a drug problem. That is nothing to be ashamed of, but I want those individuals to know there are people who love you for yourself, people who want to reach out and hold you and tell you life can be all right again, and help you put it back together so that you can have a full, productive, interesting, happy life -- the way it was intended to be.

-- Carl is going to tell you his personal story. And as he does I want you to remember that we are here today because we care about you and because we want your lives to be as complete and bright as possible. Thank you for inviting me and will you now make Carl feel as welcome as you've made me feel.

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-- Most young people do not take drugs and I do not mean to imply that in any way. But while many do not use drugs, there are others who are dependent and do not know it. Right now in this auditorium I believe there are a few who desperately need help with a drug problem. That is nothing to be ashamed of. I want those individuals to know there are people who love you for yourself, people who want to reach out and hold you and tell you life can be all right again, people who can help end your suffering.

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~~Certainly I know that all~~ young people do not take drugs, and I do not mean to imply that in any way. But while many do not use drugs, there are others who are dependent and do not know it. Right now in this auditorium I believe there are a few who desperately need help with a drug problem. That is nothing to be ashamed of. I want *those individuals* ~~you~~ to know there are people who love you for yourself, people who want to reach out and hold you and tell you life can be all right again, *people who* ~~They~~ can help end your suffering.

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Thank you, Mr. Maple and thank all of you for that warm welcome. I'm delighted to be with all of you today--even you slopmores.* But I really am proud of Central High. This school knows about the word success--just look at its history, its ^{academic achievements} National Merit scholars, or its football team.

Send some copy all papers.

--In a way, success is what I want to talk about today. I want you to use your imagination for a moment. Imagine someone who is a star football player and a member of the honor society. Imagine someone who is loaded with personality and good friends, like many of you are. Imagine someone who seems to have everything going for him. Then imagine this someone starts to take drugs and his grades drop to Ds and Fs, and his coach kicks off the team because he never comes to practice. Imagine ^{that} his personality and smile turn to vacant, uncaring stares. Imagine his friends and family try to help him but he ^{refuses their offers of love.} ~~doesn't want anything to do with them.~~ He even steals from them. Well, you don't have to imagine all that, because a mother wrote to me those very things about her son.

~~I know I know you hear a lot of scare stories from adults like~~

Set → me. When I was young I never paid any attention to the scare stories of adults either. But in a few moments you are going to hear one story directly from the lips of someone who's been on drugs. Insert A here.

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~~Someone else right now is going to tell you of his ordeal~~

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Insert
A
to prev
page

-- Carl is going to tell you his very personal story now. And as he does I want you to remember that we are here today because we care about you and because we want your lives to be as full and happy as possible. Thank you ~~for everything~~ and will you now ~~make~~ ^{make} Carl feel ~~as welcome~~ ^{as you've made me feel}.