

ORIGINAL

ADDRESS

BY

THE HONORABLE GRIFFIN B. BELL
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES

BEFORE

23RD ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF
INTERNATIONAL DOWNTOWN EXECUTIVES ASSOCIATION

Atlanta, Georgia
September 20, 1977

Pages 1 thru 15

Hoover Reporting Co., Inc.
320 Massachusetts Avenue, N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20002
546-6666

1
2 ADDRESS

3 BY

4 THE HONORABLE GRIFFIN B. BELL
5 ATTORNEY GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES
6

7 BEFORE

8
9 23RD ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF
10 INTERNATIONAL DOWNTOWN EXECUTIVES ASSOCIATION
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21

22 8:00 P.M.

23 TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 1977

24 ATLANTA, GEORGIA
25

P R O C E E D I N G S

1
2 ATTORNEY GENERAL BELL: Thank you.

3 Chairman Harold Brockey, an old friend, Vice Mayor
4 Paul West, and my friend and former colleague Bob Strickland,
5 and ladies and gentlemen:

6 It's a great pleasure to be here. It would be a
7 please to speak to you any time, but it's more than a pleasure
8 to be able to get out of Washington.

9 [Laughter.]

10 Some of us call it "Survival City."

11 Bob says I'm a native of Americus, and that's true.
12 That's a little town down in south Georgia. It happens to be
13 nine miles from Plains. And that would explain how I came to
14 be Attorney General, --

15 [Laughter.]

16 -- it was a geographical accident.

17 I've known the President a long time. In fact, I've
18 known him all his life, because I'm older than he is. And in
19 later days, in recent days I've been thinking a lot about
20 that, and I'm able to say that probably the best thing about
21 the two of us is that neither one of us has served any time
22 in a federal or State penitentiary.

23 [Laughter.]

24 Somebody complained one day in a news conference with
25 Jody Powell about having so many people in Washington now from

1 Georgia. He said, "Who's left in Georgia?" He said, "The
2 smart ones."

3 [Laughter.]

4 One of the most prophetic statements made in modern
5 times.

6 [Laughter.]

7 There's a columnist who writes for the New York Times
8 by the name of Bill Safire who particularly likes me, he
9 writes a lot about me.

10 [Laughter.]

11 I have recused myself, as judges do, in the Bert
12 Lance matter, because of several reasons; and he had a comment
13 in the New York Times last week, and I don't know if it was a
14 typographical error or if he's just a smart man, but he
15 transposed two letters, and he changed "recused" to "rescued";
16 he said that I had rescued myself from the Bert Lance case.

17 So he came by to interview me, and I congratulated
18 him on his brilliance, you know, the way he could turn a
19 phrase and switch two letters around, to make things seem
20 completely different. And he admitted it was a typographical
21 error.

22 So this week he wrote something about it again and
23 said, "Even though it was a typographical error, it conveyed a
24 great thought." So there's no way you can win.

25 Someone asked me last week if I missed being on the

1 bench. Well, I was on the bench, and I left, and I was back
2 in the law practice for a short time. And I said, I don't
3 know, I either miss being on the bench or in the law practice;
4 but I'm missing something mighty bad.

5 [Laughter.]

6 And the last thing I'll say along that line. Last
7 night I went up to the Pocono Mountains in Pennsylvania
8 to make a speech. I didn't really know where I was going,
9 and they landed the plane an hour and ten minutes away from
10 the hotel, and I finally got there and made a speech. Well,
11 when we got to this compound that I was going in, I knew I
12 shouldn't have been there because it seemed like it was a
13 private club, a different kind of atmosphere.

14 [Laughter.]

15 They had a gateman there, and the FBI was driving
16 the car, I was sitting on the back seat, four of us in the
17 car, and the gateman said, "Is that the Lieutenant Colonel?"
18 And they said, "This is the Lieutenant Colonel." That's the
19 last name, you know, I was judge, I was Mister, -- General,
20 that's something that's hard to get to, they used to call it
21 -- we've got about six or seven people around there with
22 "General" in their names. Everybody in the building goes by
23 "General", male and female.

24 But last night I was Lieutenant -- "Is the Lieutenant
25 Colonel in there?" and that's who I was.

1 Well, I want to talk to you tonight about crime in
2 our cities, and crime in general. And this is the first
3 major speech that I've made, since becoming Attorney General,
4 on crime. And the reason I'm so long in getting around to it
5 -- it has been eight months -- is that we've been making our
6 plans, and I want to tell you something tonight about what
7 we're doing.

8 Crime in our cities is one of the most serious
9 problems confronting this nation. I want to tell you what the
10 Department of Justice is doing to combat some forms of crime,
11 particularly organized crime, narcotics, public corruption,
12 and white-collar crimes.

13 The average citizen hears and thinks and thinks
14 more along the lines of what I call local crimes: robbery,
15 mugging, burglary, assault -- that sort of thing. These are
16 local crime problems.

17 Thomas Jefferson once said, "Were we directed from
18 Washington when to sow and when to reap, we should want the
19 bread." And that has a lot to do with the crime problem in
20 America.

21 You have to look to the State courts, and you have to
22 look to the local courts, for justice in this country. Federal
23 judges in the federal courts, in the federal system, handle
24 about five percent of these problems; the rest are left to the
25 local communities.

1 Now, in the Department of Justice, we have little to
2 do with that problem, except to offer leadership and to offer
3 some financial help, and to offer some expertise through the
4 FBI, DEA, when you need somebody to help out, to cooperate.

5 I don't mean to minimize what the federal government
6 ought to be doing, but I do want to emphasize that you've
7 got to look to your local government and your State government
8 for detecting and prosecuting these types of crimes.

9 We furnish some money through the LEAA, to the
10 prisons, to the police, to the prosecutors, and we are now
11 furnishing some money to the court system. We are trying to
12 restructure the LEAA in a way where we take out the overhead,
13 and save the money for use in fighting crime and having a
14 better criminal justice system. We are trying to modernize
15 the federal code of criminal law, so that this will not only
16 be a model for others who might want to use it, but to make
17 the administration of criminal justice, on the federal level,
18 more effective.

19 We are doing a great deal in the area of juvenile
20 justice, and these things will tie in to what you do, of course,
21 on the State level.

22 We are working on some gun control legislation for
23 handguns, but, there again, it will be left to the local
24 communities. We are working on a system so that we can help
25 the local communities, but the local communities will still be

1 in charge.

2 We have created in the Department of Justice
3 something called the Office for Improving the Administration
4 of Justice, a separate department, and we are doing a lot of
5 things on the federal level, improving the courts and the
6 procedures, making justice more accessible to the American
7 people. But we are also doing something on the local
8 level. We established some Justice Centers, three, on an
9 experimental basis: one's going to be in Atlanta, one in
10 Kansas City, one in Los Angeles. The one in Atlanta will be
11 run by the State court system. The one in Kansas City by the
12 City Manager. And the one in Los Angeles by the bar
13 association. We are going to try three to see what we can
14 make of those, and hopefully to keep a lot of things out of
15 court that now go to court, so that the courts, the police,
16 will have more time left for more serious matters.

17 Now, what are we doing? What are we doing about the
18 crime that we ought to be responsible for?

19 Well, let's begin with organized crime. What is
20 organized crime? We hear a lot about it. Let me define it to
21 you. It's a business. I'm referring to two or more
22 individuals associated in common enterprises to commit crime
23 for profit, with the intent of the enterprise to perpetuate
24 itself, despite the laws, of one or more of its members.

25 It's my view that one of the most serious problems

1 confronting law enforcement authorities comes from these
2 illegal business enterprises, and they are businesses.

3 The Department of Justice continues to mount and
4 press its efforts to combat these traditional organized crime
5 fields of loan sharking, gambling, protection, and extortion.

6 I have, however, assigned a high priority to the
7 development of a comprehensive approach to investigating and
8 prosecuting organized crime involvement in various forms of
9 labor racketeering, public corruption, and the infiltration of
10 legitimate businesses by organized crime.

11 This approach will include the concentration on the
12 flow of illegal funds from organized criminal activities,
13 tracing them from the initial crime that produces the revenue
14 to the end use, whether it be legal or illegal, or for profit.

15 I want the Department of Justice to focus on
16 eliminating the enterprises of organized crime, rather than
17 simply prosecuting individuals on a case-by-case basis.

18 I find this has never been tried before, to go at
19 eliminating the enterprise, whether you have to use criminal
20 law or even civil law we might use sometime. We are focusing
21 on the enterprise, how to eliminate the enterprise.

22 In terms of specific steps, we are revitalizing the
23 strike forces on organized crime in 13 major cities, and the
24 respective U. S. Attorney's offices which have organized crime
25 units in those offices. We have established three field offices

1 under parent strike forces: Phoenix, Las Vegas, and
2 Honolulu.

3 I have directed the top officials in the Department's
4 Criminal Division to explore new ways of attacking organized
5 crime groups. We may need to direct new attention to the
6 South, the Southwest parts of the United States, the so-called
7 Sun Belt.

8 I have instructed the Criminal Division's organized
9 crime and racketeering section to concentrate on involvement
10 of organized crime in illicit drug traffic, which is a major
11 -- if not the major -- criminal problem in this country.

12 I expect the strike forces to give strong support to a drug
13 enforcement program, which we announced in Washington last
14 Tuesday.

15 Under this program, the FBI and the Drug Enforcement
16 Administration will form joint teams to attack drug
17 trafficking by organized crime. We are putting drugs and
18 organized crime as they interact under this new approach.
19 We are trying this out in three cities, to begin with: New
20 York, Chicago, and Los Angeles.

21 These teams are FBI agents, DEA agents, who will be
22 assisted by two prosecutors in each city, one designated by
23 the U. S. Attorney in the city and one by the Criminal
24 Division of the Department of Justice in Washington.

25 My view is that the Department will be able to

1 combine the expertise of the FBI in general criminal organized
2 crime and conspiracy, the conspiracy areas.-- this is where
3 the FBI has great expertise -- with the investigative skills
4 of DEA in narcotic matters.

5 We had around 100 FBI, DEA agents come to Quantico,
6 Virginia, at the FBI Academy, in recent days, training; and
7 those teams have been -- those three teams now have been
8 trained, and they have gone to these cities. They are now in
9 business. I have high hopes for this approach to doing
10 something about the bigger drug trafficker.

11 There are a lot of things that will tie into this
12 later on, in the President's reorganization program on law
13 enforcement -- which, incidentally, is headed up by Tread Davis
14 from Atlanta -- is not only looking into what we do at the
15 Justice Department, where we have the FBI and the DEA, but
16 they are looking at all the other -- and there are many of
17 them -- parts of the government that have something to do with
18 law enforcement. The most notable one being what we call the
19 AT&F, the Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms agents, there are
20 about 4200 people in that group.

21 And then, of course, we have the Border Patrol of
22 Customs -- I don't know how much of this will be put together
23 or where, but we're looking into it.

24 The President recently announced the selection of a
25 new head of the FBI, Judge Frank Johnson of Montgomery. He's a

1 man of uncommon skill and conscience, and I am sure will serve
2 with distinction. I've known him for a long time, and I have
3 great confidence in him.

4 He will replace Director Clarence Kelley, who has
5 asked to retire in January 1978. Director Kelley has done an
6 outstanding job in directing the Bureau in a period of
7 transition.

8 Under his leadership there have been significant
9 improvements within the Bureau, in his management capabilities,
10 and in the adoption of a quality approach to its investiga-
11 tion business, as distinguished from quantity. Agents of
12 the FBI are so well trained and so able that it is necessary
13 to convert them into handling more difficult type investiga-
14 tions and let somebody else in local law enforcement handle
15 the most simple matters. And that's been done under Director
16 Kelley.

17 Judge Johnson will be making his own judgment about
18 the Bureau and implementing his own management decisions, but
19 I have been very impressed, in the eight months I've been there,
20 with the capacity and the capabilities of the Bureau and the
21 personnel. And I can say the same thing about the Drug
22 Enforcement Administration. They are a new agency. They ran
23 on hard times as they were getting going, but Peter Bensinger
24 is the head of the agency and I think has done a great job, and
25 he came to me with the idea that they needed help from the

1 FBI, and that's how we put these teams together, it was his
2 idea. He said they didn't have the expertise in developing
3 conspiracy cases, and they don't have any accountants in the
4 DEA, this is the sort of people you need to go after these
5 people who are smarter than we are; it's them against us.
6 And you've got to have experts if you're going to do anything
7 about this.

8 One last thing I want to talk about, that's white-
9 collar crime. And I exclude things like antitrust violations,
10 industrial espionage. I relate really to consumer fraud,
11 credit card fraud, payoffs and kickbacks, securities and
12 insurance fraud, embezzlement, and those sorts of things.
13 That's one type of white-collar crime, and they hit businesses
14 in the downtown area, the suburban area alike. But -- and
15 we're trying to do something about those sort of things,
16 where you need the federal government to work on crimes that
17 cross State lines, involving interstate commerce.

18 I'm more worried, really, about crimes against the
19 government: Medicare, Medicaid fraud; government contracts
20 fraud. I have a feeling that we've been living in an affluent
21 time, and that we have an abundance, even an over-abundance of
22 government programs, and there are a lot of people in this
23 country that are not too careful with public money. And I
24 sometimes, in my South Georgia way of saying things, call that
25 stealing from the government. And I'm opposed to that.

1 [Applause.]

2 And we're doing something about it. We are turning
3 the computers back on the other side. I've seen one case
4 that the FBI is investigating, where the computer printouts
5 fill two rooms, but we have people there that know what they're
6 doing. And we're going to do something about that.

7 I have 200 FBI agents right now assigned to doing
8 something about Medicare and Medicaid fraud, just for
9 openers.

10 So this is the sort of thing that I think the
11 American public wants something done about, and we're
12 going to do something about it.

13 And the other thing is the public corruption, public
14 officials. We're doing a lot of that. That was started
15 under President Ford, and we have something called the Public
16 Integrity Unit in the Department of Justice, and we get a
17 lot of complaints, of course, about that; but we're trying to
18 make things better, make public officials more honest.

19 And organized crime, white-collar crime, public
20 corruption, and the drug problem particularly, that's the four
21 things that we're trying to concentrate on.

22 We're getting up a paper right now on organized
23 crime. We have been meeting with the President about it.
24 He wants to really make an effort to see if we can't do some-
25 thing about it.

1 I'm very impressed with the people that I have in
2 the Justice Department. I have some really able people.
3 I'm impressed with the Bureau, as I said, with the Drug
4 Enforcement Administration, and we have good prosecutors out
5 over the nation, 94 U. S. Attorney's offices, and I'm
6 working very closely with the State Attorneys General, the
7 chiefs of the large city police departments; I'm trying to
8 give leadership in a country where we have state, local and
9 federal systems, but somebody has to be the leader to bring
10 them together.

11 I think if we do these things, and if we change our
12 attitude, and we are serious about crime, we can do something,
13 we can gain, we can make gains. I sometimes think of
14 Pogo's famous line: "We have found the enemy and it is us."

15 And when I go to American Bar meetings, I get voted
16 down, 2 to 1, on the proposition that we're going to give
17 every witness in the grand jury their own lawyer. Then I
18 know we're not serious about crime, because we can never
19 prosecute organized crime any more if we could do that.
20 If they can take the grand jury away from us and know and report
21 everything that's going on before we ever lay out our case,
22 then there is no hope.

23 But we'll have another day on that. We won't settle
24 that at the American Bar meeting, we'll settle it in the
25 Congress, when we get over there; and we've not given up on

1 that sort of a fight.

2 That's what I mean by attitude. If we want to do
3 something about crime, we can. And I think that is the
4 sort of approach, beginning on a local level and going all the
5 way to the top and demanding that something be done about it,
6 it will, in the end, cause us to win.

7 It's a pleasure to be with you.

8 Thank you very much.

9 [Applause.]

10 - - -

11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25