
Franklin D. Roosevelt — “The Great Communicator”
The Master Speech Files, 1898, 1910-1945

**Series 2: “ You have nothing to fear but fear itself.” FDR
and the New Deal**

File No. 756

1934 December 10

**Address to the Attorney General's Crime
Conference**

During the past two years there have been uppermost in our minds the problems of feeding and clothing the destitute, making secure the foundations of our agricultural, industrial and financial structures, and releasing and directing the vital forces that make for a healthy national life. As a component part of the large objective we include our constant struggle to safeguard ourselves against the attacks of the lawless and the criminal elements of our population.

Relentlessly and without compromise the Department of Justice has moved forward in its major offensive against these forces. With increasing effectiveness, state and local agencies are directing their efforts

toward the achievement of law enforcement; and with them, in more marked degree than ever before, the Federal Government has worked toward the common objective.

It is a privilege to pay tribute to the men and women who, in many capacities, official and otherwise, have contributed to our growing success. To a much greater extent than is generally realized our law enforcement officers throughout the country have rendered devoted, conscientious and effective service, often under exasperating and hazardous circumstances.

Their effectiveness has, unfortunately, been impaired because of inadequate organization, unscientific administration and lack of public support and understanding.

In many instances we may as well frankly admit, bandits have been better equipped and better organized than have the officials who are supposed to keep them in check. This is particularly true because of the lack of coordination between local agencies within the states. It is, also, contributed to in serious measure by the lack of facilities for training skilled men for the work of detection, apprehension and prosecution of accused persons, and by similar lack of facilities for the study and supervision of certain types of criminals capable of rehabilitation.

It is important, too, that we recognize clearly the increasing scope and complexity of the problem of criminal

law administration. Undoubtedly there are unfortunate aspects of our national life which seriously threaten the American home; increase the danger of juvenile delinquency and multiply offenses against the good order of society. The regulation of the illicit traffic in drugs, the prevention of commerce in stolen goods, and generally, the interstate character of offenses attributable to the roving criminal have presented national problems against which primitive forms of law enforcement are relatively powerless.

It is equally necessary that we realize the importance of common action all along the line -- starting with crime prevention itself and carrying this common action all the

way through to prosecution and punishment.

Effective detection of criminals may be rendered useless by ineffective prosecution or by unintelligent judicial disposition. Beneficent and promising procedures, such as probation and parole, may become actually sources of danger, if ignorantly or indifferently administered. So, too, reliance on mere repression cannot take the place of intelligent training and guidance of youth.

We have come to a time when our need is to discover more fully and to direct more purposefully into useful channels that greatest of all natural resources, the genius of the younger generation. Crime is a symptom of social

disorder. Widespread increase in capacity to substitute order for disorder is the remedy.

This can come only through expert service in marshalling the assets of home, school, church, community and other social agencies, to work in common purpose with our law enforcement agencies. We deceive ourselves when we fail to realize that it is an interrelated problem of immense difficulty. Scientific research, highly trained personnel, expert service are just as necessary here as in any field of human endeavor. To the extent that we provide, instead, unscientific methods, poorly trained personnel and hit-or-miss procedures, we may expect

bungling, heartbreaking results.

I am delighted, therefore, that the Attorney General has called you together for this Conference. The country knows that under his leadership we are getting better results than ever before.

It is heartening and reassuring to the people of the United States that you have gathered here for this purpose. They are looking to you for guidance and intelligent leadership. They have a right to expect from you a constructive program of action in which they as individuals, and collectively as communities and organizations, may participate. It should be a challenge to you to respond to these expectations.

The task of this thoroughly representative conference is two-fold.

First, I ask you to plan and to construct with scientific care a constantly improving administrative structure -- a structure which will tie together every crime preventing, law enforcing agency of every branch of Government -- the Federal Government, the forty eight state governments and all of the local governments, including counties, cities and towns.

Your second task is of equal importance. An administrative structure that is perfect will still be ineffective in its results unless the people of the United States understand the larger purposes and cooperate

with these purposes.

I ask you, therefore, to do all in your power to interpret the problem of crime to the people of this country. They must realize the many implications of that word "Crime." It is not enough that they become interested in one phase only. At one moment popular resentment and anger may be roused by an outbreak of some particular form of crime such, for example, as widespread banditry; or at another moment, of appalling kidnappings; or at another of widespread drug peddling; or at another of horrifying lynchings.

It is your positive duty to keep before the country

the facts in regard to crime as a whole -- great crimes, lesser crimes and little crimes -- to build up a body of public opinion which, I regret to be compelled to say, is not in this day and age sufficiently active or alive to the situation in which we find ourselves.

I want the backing of every man, every woman and every adolescent child in every state of the United States and in every county of every state -- their backing for what you and the officers of law and order are trying to accomplish.

The sustained interest and assistance of the organizations here represented can become a public

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Franklin D. Roosevelt

(Orig. reading copy)

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THIS INFORMATION TO ANYONE OUTSIDE YOUR AGENCY

- 11 -

Crime Conference
Dec 10

ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT
to the
Attorney General's Crime Conference
Monday, December 10, 1934, 9.30 P.M.

During the past two years there have been uppermost in our minds the problems of feeding and clothing the destitute, making secure the foundations of our agricultural, industrial and financial structures, and releasing and directing the vital forces that make for a healthy national life. As a component part of the large objective we include our constant struggle to safeguard ourselves against the attacks of the lawless and the criminal elements of our population.

Relentlessly and without compromise the Department of Justice has moved forward in its major offensive against these forces. With increasing effectiveness, state and local agencies are directing their efforts toward the achievement of law enforcement; and with them, in more marked degree than ever before, the Federal Government has worked toward the common objective.

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Franklin D. Roosevelt Library

This is a transcript made by the White House stenographer from his shorthand notes taken at the time the speech was made. Underlining indicates words extemporaneously added to the previously prepared reading copy text. Words in parentheses are words that were omitted when the speech was delivered, though they appear in the previously prepared reading copy text.

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country have rendered devoted, conscientious and effective service, often under exasperating and hazardous circumstances.

Their effectiveness has, unfortunately, been impaired because of inadequate organization, unscientific administration and lack of public support and understanding. In many instances, we may as well frankly admit, bandits have been better equipped and better organized than have the officials who are supposed to keep them in check. This is particularly true because of the lack of coordination between local agencies within the states. It is, also, contributed to in serious measure by the lack of facilities for training skilled men for the work of detection, apprehension and prosecution of accused persons, and by similar lack of facilities for the study and supervision of certain types of criminals capable of rehabilitation.

It is important, too, that we recognize clearly the increasing scope and complexity of the problem of criminal law administration. Undoubtedly there are unfortunate aspects of our national life which seriously threaten the American home; increase the danger of juvenile delinquency and multiply offenses against the good order of society. The regulation of the illicit traffic in drugs, the prevention of commerce in stolen goods, and generally, the interstate character of

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We have come to a time when our need is to discover more fully and to direct more purposefully into useful channels that greatest of all natural resources, the genius of the younger generation. Crime is a symptom of social disorder. Widespread increase in capacity to substitute order for disorder is the remedy.

This can come only through expert service in marshalling the assets of home, school, church, community and other social agencies to work in common purpose with our law

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First, I ask you to plan and to construct with scientific care a constantly improving administrative

structure -- a structure which will tie together every crime preventing, law enforcing agency of every branch of Government -- the Federal Government, the forty-eight state governments and all of the local governments, including counties, cities and towns.

Your second task is of equal importance. An administrative structure that is perfect will still be ineffective in its results unless the people of the United States understand the larger purposes and cooperate with these purposes.

I ask you, therefore, to do all in your power to interpret the problem of crime to the people of this country. They must realize the many implications of that word "crime". It is not enough that they become interested in one phase only. At one moment popular resentment and anger may be roused by an outbreak of some particular form of crime such, for example, as widespread banditry; or at another moment, of appalling kidnappings; or at another of widespread drug peddling; or at another of horrifying lynchings.

It is your positive duty to keep before the country the facts in regard to crime as a whole -- great crimes, lesser crimes and little crimes -- to build up a body of public opinion which, I regret to be compelled to say, is not in this day and age sufficiently active or alive to the situation in which we find ourselves.

I want the backing of every man, every woman and every adolescent child in every state of the United States and in every county of every state -- their backing for what you and the officers of law and order are trying to accomplish.

The sustained interest and assistance of the organizations here represented can become a public service of high significance in the social life of the Nation -- a service to which the American people, I am confident, will not fail to respond.

ADDRESS

OF

THE PRESIDENT

At the Attorney General's Crime
Conference, Constitution Hall,
Washington, D. C., December 10,
1934.

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Release is automatic, at 9:30 P. M., Eastern Standard Time, Monday, December 10, 1934. Please safeguard against premature publication.

STEPHEN EARLY

Assistant Secretary to the President.

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(END)

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SUGGESTED ADDRESS

BY

The President

to be delivered at

The Attorney General's Crime Conference

Constitution Hall, Washington, D. C.

Monday, Dec. 10, 1934 at 9:30 P. M.

During the past two years there have been uppermost in our minds the problems of feeding and clothing the destitute, making secure the foundations of our agricultural, industrial and financial structures, and releasing and directing the vital forces that make for a healthy national life. *As a component part of the large objective we include* ~~Not less interesting to me, however, and only relatively less important, is our constant struggle to safeguard ourselves against the attacks of the lawless and criminal elements of our population.~~

CR Relentlessly and without compromise the Department of Justice has moved forward in its major offensive against these forces. With increasing effectiveness ~~the state and local agencies have done their part toward~~ *we directing their efforts* the achievement of ~~a better social order. In more marked degree than ever before, the state and federal agencies have worked together toward~~ *law enforcement and with their government has* ~~their common objective.~~ *the*

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For preparation of
Reading Copy and
Stencils + Stencils first, S.E.

ADDRESS OF
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I I ask you, therefore, to do all in your power to interpret the problem of crime to the people of this country. They must realize the many implications of that word "Crime." It is not enough that they become interested in one phase only. ^{At one moment} At ~~some period~~ popular resentment and anger may be roused by an outbreak of some particular form of crime such, for example, as widespread banditry; or at another ^{moment} ~~time~~ of appalling kidnappings; or at another ~~time~~ of widespread drug peddling; or at another ~~time~~ of horrifying lynchings. *I*

It is your positive duty to keep before the country the facts in regard to crime as a whole -- great crimes, lesser crimes and little crimes -- to build up a body of public opinion which I regret to be compelled to say is not in this day and age sufficiently active or alive to the situation in which we find ourselves.

-6-

I want the backing of every man, ^{every} woman and child in ^{every} state -- their backing for what you and the officers of law and order are trying to accomplish. *very robust*

The sustained interest and assistance of the organizations here represented can become a public service of high significance in the social life of the nation -- a service to which the American people, I am confident, will not fail to respond.

(End)

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STATEMENTS FILE
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FOR THE PRESS

CAUTION: The following address of the President, to be delivered at the Attorney General's Crime Conference, Constitution Hall, Washington, D. C., at 9:30 P. M. today must be held for release.

NOTE: Release is automatic, at 9:30 P. M., Eastern Standard Time, Monday, December 10, 1934. Please safeguard against premature publication.

STEPHEN EARLY
Assistant Secretary to the President.

of some time
During the past two years there have been uppermost in our minds the problems of feeding and clothing the destitute, making secure the foundations of our agricultural, industrial and financial structures, and releasing and directing the vital forces that make for a healthy national life. As a component part of the large objective we include our constant struggle to safeguard ourselves against the attacks of the lawless and the criminal elements of our population.

State + Local Agencies
Relentlessly and without compromise the Department of Justice has moved forward in its major offensive against these forces. With increasing effectiveness, state and local agencies are directing their efforts toward the achievement of law enforcement; and with them, in more marked degree than ever before, the Federal Government has worked toward the common objective.

to me
It is a privilege to pay tribute to the men and women who, in many capacities, official and otherwise, have contributed to our growing success. To a much greater extent than is generally realized our law enforcement officers throughout the country have rendered devoted, conscientious and effective service, often under exasperating and hazardous circumstances. *as we know*

Their effectiveness has, unfortunately, been impaired because of inadequate organization, unscientific administration and lack of public support and understanding. In many instances, we may as well frankly admit, bandits have been better equipped and better organized than have the officials who are supposed to keep them in check. This is particularly true because of the lack of coordination between local agencies within the states. It is, also, contributed to in serious measure by the lack of facilities for training skilled men for the work of detection, apprehension and prosecution of accused persons, and by similar lack of facilities for the study and supervision of certain types of criminals capable of rehabilitation. *42*

It is important, too, that we recognize clearly the increasing scope and complexity of the problem of criminal law administration. Undoubtedly there are unfortunate aspects of our national life which seriously threaten the American home; increase the danger of juvenile delinquency and multiply offenses against the good order of society. The regulation of the illicit traffic in drugs, the prevention of commerce in stolen goods, and generally, the interstate character of offenses attributable to the roving criminal have presented national problems against which primitive forms of law enforcement are relatively powerless.

Don't allow

It is equally necessary that we realize the importance of common action all along the line -- starting with crime prevention itself and carrying this common action all the way through to prosecution and punishment.

Effective detection of criminals may be rendered useless by ineffective prosecution or by unintelligent judicial disposition. Beneficent and promising procedures, such as probation and parole, may become actually sources of danger, if ignorantly or indifferently administered. So, too, reliance on mere repression cannot take the place of intelligent training and guidance of youth.

We have come to a time when our need is to discover more fully and to direct more purposefully into useful channels that greatest of all natural resources, the genius of the younger generation. Crime is a symptom of social disorder. Widespread increase in capacity to substitute order for disorder is the remedy.

This can come only through expert service in marshalling the assets of home, school, church, community and other social agencies, to work in common purpose with our law enforcement agencies. We deceive ourselves when we fail to realize that it is an interrelated problem of immense difficulty. Scientific research, highly trained personnel, expert service are just as necessary here as in any field of human endeavor. To the extent that we provide, instead, unscientific methods, poorly trained personnel and hit-or-miss procedures, we may expect bungling, heartbreaking results.

Diff. of Justice Agency

I am delighted, therefore, that the Attorney General has called you together for this Conference. The country knows that under his leadership we are getting better results than ever before.

It is heartening and reassuring to the people of the United States that you have gathered here for this purpose. They are looking to you for guidance and intelligent leadership. They have a right to expect from you a constructive program of action in which they as individuals, and collectively as communities and organizations, may participate. It should be a challenge to you to respond to these expectations.

good people

The task of this thoroughly representative conference is two-fold.

seems to me to be

First, I ask you to plan and to construct with scientific care a constantly improving administrative structure-- a structure which will tie together every crime preventing, law enforcing agency of every branch of Government -- the Federal Government, the forty eight state governments and all of the local governments, including counties, cities and towns.

Said a lot here

Your second task is of equal importance. An administrative structure that is perfect will still be ineffective in its results unless the people of the United States understand the larger purposes and cooperate with these purposes.

I ask you, therefore, to do all in your power to interpret the problem of crime to the people of this country. They must realize the many implications of that word "Crime." It is not enough that they become interested in one phase only. At one moment popular resentment and anger may be roused by an outbreak of some particular form of crime such, for example, as widespread banditry; or at another moment, of appalling kidnappings; or at another of widespread drug peddling; or at another of horrifying lynchings.

It is your positive duty to keep before the country the facts in regard to crime as a whole -- great crimes, lesser crimes and little crimes -- to build up a body of public opinion which, I regret to be compelled to say, is not in this day and age sufficiently active or alive to the situation in which we find ourselves.

young I want the backing of every man, every woman and every adolescent child in every state of the United States and in every county of every state -- their backing for what you and the officers of law and order are trying to accomplish.

The sustained interest and assistance of the organizations here represented can become a public service of high significance in the social life of the nation -- a service to which the American people, I am confident, will not fail to respond.

(END)

SALARY LIST

RECEIVED from the management of **THE RAPLEY THEATRE COMPANY**, the amount set opposite our respective names, in full payment and satisfaction of any and all claims which we have against said management, and we do hereby release the said management of any and all claims of whatsoever name and nature we have against them to date.

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.....Manager.