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**Record Group/Collection:** George H.W. Bush Presidential Records  
**Collection/Office of Origin:** Speechwriting, White House Office of  
**Series:** Speech Files Draft Files  
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**OA/ID Number:** 13532  
**Folder ID Number:** 13532-003

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**Folder Title:**  
Community of Oakwood 5/21/90 [OA 5374]

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Stack:	Row:	Section:	Shelf:	Position:
<b>G</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>

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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary  
(Los Angeles, California)

For Immediate Release

May 21, 1990

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT  
TO THE COMMUNITY OF OAKWOOD

Webster Residence  
Los Angeles, California

12:07 P.M. PDT

THE PRESIDENT: Well, it's a beautiful day, and I'm delighted to be here. Thank you, Foster Webster, for inviting me into your home today. I'm pleased to have with me today Director Bill Bennett, who's doing such an outstanding job leading our country's fight against drugs. (Applause.) And, of course, another leader in that fight -- your own great United States Senator Pete Wilson. (Applause.) But here in Los Angeles you also have a talented and dedicated Chief of Police, a man I respect greatly, Darryl Gates with us here today. (Applause.) Doing a great job and doing it right.

I also want to mention Jim Hahn with us, your City Attorney. (Applause.) And your City Councilperson Ruth Galenter here today. (Applause.) Thank you to the community of Oakwood for this welcome and for the extraordinary example of neighborhood unity and dedication which you set for us all. You're truly a point of light -- Darryl Gates says, that's no point of light, this is a beacon of light for the entire country, leading others out of the darkness. (Applause.)

The world which we see now from Mr. Webster's front yard is a good one. Carved on the face of this community is a message of family and future. We see a neighborhood united -- no longer out of fear, but out of strength.

This world is one of hope. But the world of this community's memory is not. This vivid world which still haunts many here was a cruel one. One whose inhumanity and hopelessness dominated their lives -- where drugs and crime made them prisoners of fear. It's from this shattered world that the members of the Oakwood neighborhood crafted a new dream.

They wanted to be free in their own homes. So working with the police, they decided to reclaim their streets. To reclaim their children. To reclaim their future. And they are succeeding. (Applause.)

The first time some neighbors met with the police to discuss what they could do, two police cars were parked outside a resident's home while the officers talked with the people inside. But on the corner across the street, in defiant mockery of the police, drug dealers continued to sell their poison. It was a world of drive-by shootings; of frustrated anger that exploded in gang graffiti, vandalism, armed robberies and, above all, the obsessed tragedy of drug abuse. It was a world held captive to crime -- a world without center, without safety, without sense.

But since the community undertook its quest to clean up their streets, police estimate that drug- and gang-related crimes in Oakwood have declined 44 percent. (Applause.)

The darkness of drugs, crime and fear is being banished. In its place shines the light of honor, respect, and family pride.

MORE

When the legendary bird called the Phoenix was destroyed by fire, it rose again from its own ashes -- reborn stronger than ever. Oakwood is a phoenix. It's a magnificent reminder of the power of the human heart.

I want to tell you the story of two boys who grew up here right in this neighborhood, these neighborhoods. It's not his name, but let's call the first one Michael. A few years ago, a picture of Michael might have shown him playing baseball down the block -- loving the game, loving the moment. But later would come other pictures. One of him around the corner from the baseball diamond he loved, selling drugs in its shadow. Another of him in gang colors, his gun blasting into the night.

Today we see a final picture. His heart hollow, his eyes empty, he drags himself bitterly through the prison he now calls home. He is lost to us now. His life was as brief as the frozen image in that first photograph of innocent youth -- when his eyes were looking brightly toward a future he will never see.

Yet, in Oakwood, the memory of the emptiness of his lost life will last forever. So will the emptiness left by the devastation of his own neighborhood -- shattered by his streetside dealing, rampages of violence, his shootings. For he was Oakwood. His life was the route to take a few years ago when you grew up here with nothing but drugs and crime and hate as your models.

But finally, there came a moment when the people of this community could no longer bear what they lived with every day: the wasted lives of those who terrorize and who are terrorized.

Michael may never have a second chance. But the Oakwood residents became determined that the rest of their community would have a second chance. A chance to face the sun together.

Let's call the next boy Paul. Last month, when neighbors were holding their candlelight vigil for a drug-free community, a woman noticed a little kid, a little six-year-old boy at the side, just watching on curiously. "What's going on?" he asked. She explained that the vigil celebrated his neighborhood's rebirth. Then she asked him where his parents were. "I don't have any," he answered. It turned out he lived with his grandmother and his uncle, a drug dealer. The boy walked away. The woman thought, well, that's the sad end of another sad story.

But a little while later, as the vigil continued, she saw him again, shyly joining the others. Dressed in his best clothes, he stood in the soft light of a hundred candles, with a candle of his own in one hand, his grandmother's hand in the other.

If Oakwood had continued the way it was going, Paul, too, might have been lost to us -- in the tragedy of death or the blank-eyed hopelessness of prison.

Instead, he can now grow up playing on a community baseball team coached by the policemen Michael and his gang had spent their young lives taunting. He will help his neighbors paint over the violent graffiti with which Michael's gang had scarred the face of the neighborhood. He will grow up knowing that there is an alternative to drugs and crime. And its name is hope.

That's what we celebrate today. More than this community's freedom from the oppression of crime and despair, we celebrate their hope. Their determination. Their spirit.

In a special way, when the first people decided to take back their community, they lit the first candle of hope. When more and more of their neighbors joined them, their unified spirit shone with a light that banished the darkness of despair.

Thanks to the vision, courage and wisdom of the residents of Oakwood, we are today witnessing the wonder of a

rebirth. It's more than a rebirth of community. It's a rebirth of hope, of life and of the future. And so today I am proud to name the Oakwood community the 148th National Point of Light, for the inspiration and the example that you are setting for our entire country. (Applause.)

Oakwood proves that no community has to accept things as they are. Americans don't have to live in fear. Crime, drugs, hunger, homelessness and so many other social problems can be driven from every community, if every community cares enough to light the candle of hope.

God bless each and every one of you for what you're doing, setting an outstanding example for our great country. And God bless the United States of America. Thank you all. (Applause.)

END

12:15 P.M. PDT

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END

12:15 P.M. PDT

REMARKS TO THE COMMUNITY OF OAKWOOD  
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA / MAY 21, 1990

THANK YOU, FOSTER WEBSTER, FOR HAVING ME AT YOUR HOME TODAY. I'M PLEASED TO HAVE WITH ME TODAY DIRECTOR BILL BENNET WHO'S DOING SUCH AN OUTSTANDING JOB LEADING THIS COUNTRY'S FIGHT AGAINST DRUGS AND, OF COURSE, ANOTHER LEADER IN THAT FIGHT - YOUR OWN GREAT UNITED STATES SENATOR, PETE WILSON. BUT HERE IN L.A. YOU ALSO HAVE A TALENTED AND DEDICATED CHIEF OF POLICE -- DARRYL GATES -- DOING A TOUGH JOB AND DOING IT RIGHT.

- 2 -

I ALSO WANT TO MENTION YOUR CITY ATTORNEY JIM HAHN AND YOUR CITY COUNCIL PERSON RUTH GALENTER HERE TODAY. THANK YOU TO THE COMMUNITY OF OAKWOOD FOR WELCOMING ME HERE, AND FOR THE EXTRAORDINARY EXAMPLE OF NEIGHBORHOOD UNITY AND DEDICATION WHICH YOU SET FOR US ALL. YOU TRULY ARE A POINT OF LIGHT, LEADING OTHERS OUT OF THE DARKNESS.

THE WORLD WHICH WE SEE NOW FROM MR. WEBSTER'S FRONT YARD IS A GOOD ONE.

CARVED ON THE FACE OF THIS COMMUNITY IS A MESSAGE OF FAMILY AND FUTURE. WE SEE A NEIGHBORHOOD UNITED -- NO LONGER OUT OF FEAR, BUT OUT OF STRENGTH.

THIS WORLD IS ONE OF HOPE. BUT THE WORLD OF THIS COMMUNITY'S MEMORY IS NOT. THIS VIVID WORLD WHICH STILL HAUNTS MANY HERE WAS A CRUEL ONE. ONE WHOSE INHUMANITY AND HOPELESSNESS DOMINATED THEIR LIVES -- WHERE DRUGS AND CRIME MADE THEM PRISONERS OF FEAR.

IT IS FROM THIS SHATTERED WORLD THAT THE MEMBERS OF THE OAKWOOD NEIGHBORHOOD CRAFTED A NEW DREAM.

THEY WANTED TO BE FREE IN THEIR OWN HOMES.

SO, WORKING WITH THE POLICE, THEY DECIDED TO RECLAIM THEIR STREETS. TO RECLAIM THEIR CHILDREN. TO RECLAIM THEIR FUTURE. // AND THEY ARE SUCCEEDING.

THE FIRST TIME SOME NEIGHBORS MET WITH THE POLICE TO DISCUSS WHAT THEY COULD DO, TWO POLICE CARS WERE PARKED OUTSIDE A RESIDENT'S HOME WHILE THE OFFICERS TALKED WITH THE PEOPLE INSIDE.

BUT ON THE CORNER ACROSS THE STREET, IN DEFIANT MOCKERY OF THE POLICE, DRUG DEALERS CONTINUED TO SELL THEIR POISON. IT WAS A WORLD OF DRIVE-BY SHOOTINGS. OF FRUSTRATED ANGER THAT EXPLODED IN GANG GRAFFITI, VANDALISM, ARMED ROBBERIES, AND, ABOVE ALL, THE OBSESSED TRAGEDY OF DRUG ABUSE. IT WAS A WORLD HELD CAPTIVE TO CRIME -- A WORLD WITHOUT CENTER, WITHOUT SAFETY, WITHOUT SENSE.

BUT SINCE THE COMMUNITY UNDERTOOK ITS QUEST TO CLEAN UP THEIR STREETS, POLICE ESTIMATE THAT DRUG- AND GANG-RELATED CRIMES IN OAKWOOD HAVE DECLINED 44 PERCENT. OAKWOOD IS NO LONGER A SETTING FOR TERROR. IT IS A NEIGHBORHOOD FOR HOPE.

THE DARKNESS OF DRUGS, CRIME AND FEAR IS BEING BANISHED. IN ITS PLACE SHINES THE LIGHT OF HONOR, RESPECT, AND FAMILY PRIDE.

WHEN THE LEGENDARY BIRD CALLED THE PHOENIX WAS DESTROYED BY FIRE, IT ROSE AGAIN FROM ITS OWN ASHES -- REBORN STRONGER THAN EVER. OAKWOOD IS A PHOENIX. IT IS A MAGNIFICENT REMINDER OF THE POWER OF THE HUMAN HEART.

I WANT TO TELL YOU THE STORY OF TWO BOYS WHO GREW UP HERE.

IT'S NOT HIS NAME, BUT LET'S CALL THE FIRST ONE "MICHAEL".

A FEW YEARS AGO, A PICTURE OF MICHAEL MIGHT HAVE SHOWN HIM PLAYING BASEBALL DOWN THE BLOCK -- LOVING THE GAME AND LOVING THE MOMENT. BUT LATER WOULD COME OTHER PICTURES. ONE OF HIM AROUND THE CORNER FROM THE BASEBALL DIAMOND HE LOVED, SELLING DRUGS IN THE SHADOWS. ANOTHER OF HIM IN GANG COLORS, HIS GUN BLAZING INTO THE NIGHT.

TODAY, WE SEE A FINAL PICTURE. HIS HEART HOLLOW, HIS EYES EMPTY, HE DRAGS HIMSELF BITTERLY THROUGH THE PRISON HE NOW CALLS HOME. HE IS LOST TO US NOW. HIS LIFE WAS AS BRIEF AS THE FROZEN IMAGE IN THAT FIRST PHOTOGRAPH OF INNOCENT YOUTH -- WHEN HIS EYES WERE LOOKING BRIGHTLY TOWARD A FUTURE HE WILL NEVER SEE.

YET, IN OAKWOOD, THE MEMORY OF THE EMPTINESS OF HIS LOST LIFE WILL LAST FOREVER.

SO WILL THE EMPTINESS LEFT BY THE DEVASTATION OF HIS OWN NEIGHBORHOOD -- SHATTERED BY HIS STREETSIDE DEALING, HIS RAMPAGES OF VIOLENCE, HIS SHOOTINGS. FOR HE WAS OAKWOOD. HIS LIFE WAS THE ROUTE TO TAKE A FEW YEARS AGO WHEN YOU GREW UP HERE WITH NOTHING BUT DRUGS AND CRIME AND HATE AS YOUR MODELS.

BUT FINALLY THERE CAME A MOMENT WHEN THE PEOPLE OF THIS COMMUNITY COULD NO LONGER BEAR WHAT THEY LIVED WITH EVERY DAY: THE WASTED LIVES OF THOSE WHO TERRORIZE AND THOSE WHO ARE TERRORIZED.

MICHAEL MAY NEVER HAVE A SECOND CHANCE. BUT THE OAKWOOD RESIDENTS BECAME DETERMINED THAT THE REST OF THEIR COMMUNITY WOULD HAVE A SECOND CHANCE. A CHANCE TO FACE THE SUN TOGETHER, NOT COWER SEPARATELY IN THE SHADOWS OF FEAR.

LET'S CALL THE NEXT BOY "PAUL". LAST MONTH, WHEN NEIGHBORS WERE HOLDING THEIR CANDLELIGHT VIGIL FOR A DRUG-FREE COMMUNITY, A WOMAN NOTICED A LITTLE SIX-YEAR-OLD BOY AT THE SIDE, WATCHING CURIOUSLY.

"WHAT'S GOING ON?" HE ASKED. SHE EXPLAINED THAT THE VIGIL CELEBRATED HIS NEIGHBORHOOD'S REBIRTH. THEN SHE ASKED HIM WHERE HIS PARENTS WERE. "I DON'T HAVE ANY," HE ANSWERED. IT TURNED OUT HE LIVED WITH HIS GRANDMOTHER AND HIS UNCLE, A DRUG DEALER. THE BOY WALKED AWAY. THE WOMAN THOUGHT THAT WAS THE SAD END OF ANOTHER SAD STORY.

BUT A LITTLE WHILE LATER, AS THE VIGIL CONTINUED, SHE SAW HIM AGAIN, SHYLY JOINING THE OTHERS.

DRESSED IN HIS BEST CLOTHES, HE STOOD IN THE SOFT LIGHT OF A HUNDRED CANDLES, WITH A CANDLE OF HIS OWN IN ONE HAND AND HIS GRANDMOTHER'S HAND IN THE OTHER.

IF OAKWOOD HAD CONTINUED THE WAY IT WAS GOING, PAUL TOO MIGHT HAVE BEEN LOST TO US -- IN THE TRAGEDY OF DEATH OR THE BLANK-EYED HOPELESSNESS OF PRISON.

INSTEAD, HE CAN NOW GROW UP PLAYING ON A COMMUNITY BASEBALL TEAM COACHED BY THE POLICEMEN MICHAEL AND HIS GANG HAD SPENT THEIR YOUNG LIVES TAUNTING. HE WILL HELP HIS NEIGHBORS PAINT OVER THE VIOLENT GRAFFITI WITH WHICH MICHAEL'S GANG HAD SCARRED THE FACE OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD. HE WILL GROW UP KNOWING THAT THERE IS AN ALTERNATIVE TO DRUGS AND CRIME. AND ITS NAME IS HOPE.

THAT IS WHAT WE CELEBRATE TODAY. MORE THAN THIS COMMUNITY'S FREEDOM FROM THE OPPRESSION OF CRIME AND DESPAIR, WE CELEBRATE THEIR HOPE. THEIR DETERMINATION. THEIR SPIRIT.

IN A SPECIAL WAY, WHEN THE FIRST PEOPLE DECIDED TO TAKE BACK THEIR COMMUNITY, THEY LIT THE FIRST CANDLE OF HOPE. WHEN MORE AND MORE OF THEIR NEIGHBORS JOINED THEM, THEIR UNIFIED SPIRIT SHONE WITH A LIGHT THAT BANISHED THE DARKNESS OF DESPAIR.

FROM SUCH DREAMS ARE TODAY'S MIRACLES MADE.

THANKS TO THE VISION, COURAGE AND WISDOM OF THE RESIDENTS OF OAKWOOD, WE ARE TODAY WITNESSING THE WONDER OF A REBIRTH. IT IS MORE THAN A REBIRTH OF COMMUNITY. IT IS A REBIRTH OF HOPE, OF LIFE AND OF THE FUTURE. AND SO TODAY I AM PROUD TO NAME THE OAKWOOD COMMUNITY THE 148TH POINT OF LIGHT, FOR THE INSPIRATION AND THE EXAMPLE THEY SET FOR OUR NATION.

YOU TRULY SHOW THAT THE DEFINITION OF A SUCCESSFUL LIFE MUST INCLUDE SERVING OTHERS.

BECAUSE YOU SHARE THIS AWARD TOGETHER, YOU REALIZE THAT IT MATTERS NOT WHO GETS THE CREDIT, BUT WHAT IS ACCOMPLISHED. YOU PROVE THAT IF EVERY COMMUNITY COULD BAND TOGETHER AS YOU HAVE DONE, WE COULD SEE THE SPIRIT OF OAKWOOD SPREAD -- STREET BY STREET, NEIGHBORHOOD BY NEIGHBORHOOD, CITY BY CITY. OAKWOOD PROVES THAT NO COMMUNITY HAS TO ACCEPT THINGS AS THEY ARE.

AMERICANS DON'T HAVE TO LIVE IN FEAR. CRIME, DRUGS, HUNGER, HOMELESSNESS AND SO MANY OTHER SOCIAL PROBLEMS CAN BE DRIVEN FROM EVERY COMMUNITY, IF EVERY COMMUNITY CARES ENOUGH TO LIGHT THE CANDLE OF HOPE.

GOD BLESS EACH OF YOU, GOD BLESS THE COMMUNITY OF OAKWOOD, AND GOD BLESS ALL OF US.

# # #

**WHITE HOUSE STAFFING MEMORANDUM**

DATE: 05/15/90 ACTION/CONCURRENCE/COMMENT DUE BY: 1:00 pm 05/17

SUBJECT: PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: OAKWOOD COMMUNITY, LOS ANGELES, CA  
(05/15 11:40pm)

	ACTION FYI			ACTION FYI	
VICE PRESIDENT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	MCCLURE <i>N/C</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SUNUNU	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	NEWMAN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SCOWCROFT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	PORTER <i>N/C</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
DARMAN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	ROGICH	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
BATES <i>N/C</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	UNTERMAYER	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
CARD	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	ROGERS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
CICCONI	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	PINKERTON	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
DEMAREST	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	WINSTON	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
FITZWATER	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	PETERSMEYER	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
GRAY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	BENNETT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
HAGIN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

REMARKS:

Please provide any comments/recommendations directly to Chriss Winston by 1:00 pm on Thursday, 05/17, with a copy to my office. Thanks.

RESPONSE:

James W. Cicconi  
 Assistant to the President  
 and Deputy to the Chief of Staff  
 Ext. 2702

(Hinchliffe/Fried)  
May 15, 1990 11:40 p.m.  
OAKWOOD

1990 MAY 16 PM 6:16  
PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS:

OAKWOOD COMMUNITY  
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA  
May 21, 1990

Thank you, Foster Webster, for inviting me to your home today. Thank you to the community of Oakwood for welcoming me here. And thank you especially to the Oakwood Beautification Committee for the extraordinary example of neighborhood unity and dedication which you set for us all. You truly are a Point of Light, leading others out of the darkness.

The world which we see now from Foster Webster's porch is a good one. Carved on the face of this community is a message of family and future. We see a neighborhood united -- no longer out of fear, but out of strength.

This world is one of hope. But the world of Mr. Webster's memory is not. This vivid world which still haunts him was a cruel one. One whose inhumanity and hopelessness dominated his life -- where drugs and crime made him a prisoner of fear. It is from this shattered world that Mr. Webster and his neighbors crafted a new dream.

They wanted to be free in their own homes.

So, working with the police, they formed the Oakwood Beautification Committee to reclaim their streets. To reclaim their children. To reclaim their future. // **And they are succeeding.**

At their first meeting, two police cars were parked outside while the officers talked with the committee. But on the corner across the street, in defiant mockery of the police, drug dealers continued to sell their poison. It was a world of drive-by shootings. Of

frustrated anger that exploded in gang graffiti, vandalism and armed robberies. It was a world held captive to crime -- a world without center, without safety, without sense.

But since the committee undertook its quest to clean up the streets, police estimate that drug- and gang-related crimes in Oakwood have declined 44 percent. Oakwood is no longer a setting for terror. It is a neighborhood for hope.

The darkness of drugs, crime and fear is being banished. In its place shines the light of honor, respect, and family pride.

When the legendary bird called the Phoenix was destroyed by fire, it rose again from its own ashes -- reborn stronger than ever. Oakwood is a Phoenix. We see it soaring and we marvel. It is a magnificent reminder of the power of the human heart.

I want to tell you the story of two boys who grew up here.

Let's call the first one Michael. A few years ago, a picture of Michael might have shown him playing baseball down the block -- loving the game and loving the moment. But later would come other pictures. One of him around the corner from the baseball diamond he loved, selling drugs in the shadows. Another of him in gang colors, blazing a gun into the night.

Today, we see a final picture. His heart hollow, his eyes empty, he drags himself bitterly through a prison where he will probably spend the rest of his life. He is lost to us now. His life was as brief as the frozen image in that first photograph of innocent youth -- when his eyes were looking brightly toward a future he will never see.

Yet, in Oakwood, the memory of the emptiness of his lost life will last forever. So will the emptiness left by the devastation of his own neighborhood -- shattered by his streetside dealing, his rampages of violence, his shootings. For he was Oakwood. His life was the route to take a few years ago when you grew up here with nothing but drugs and crime and hate as your models.

But finally there came a moment when people like Foster Webster and his neighbors could no longer bear what they lived with every day: the wasted lives of those who terrorize and those who are terrorized.

Michael will never have a second chance. But the Oakwood residents became determined that the rest of their community would have a second chance. A chance to face the sun together, not cower separately in the shadows of fear.

Let's call the next boy Paul.

Last month, when neighbors were holding their candlelight vigil for a drug-free community, one of the organizers noticed a little six-year-old boy at the side, watching curiously. "What's going on?" he asked. She explained that the vigil celebrated his neighborhood's rebirth. Then she asked him where his parents were. "I don't have any," he answered. It turned out he lived with his grandmother and his uncle, a drug dealer. The boy slowly walked away. The woman thought that was the sad end of another sad story.

But a little while later, as the vigil continued, she saw him again, shyly joining the others. Dressed in his best clothes, he stood in the soft light of a hundred candles, with a candle of his own in one hand and his grandmother's hand in the other.

If Oakwood had continued the way it was going, Paul too might have been lost to us -- in the endless darkness of death or the blank-eyed hopelessness of prison.

Instead, he can now grow up playing on a neighborhood baseball team coached by the policemen Michael and his gang had spent their young lives taunting. He will help the Oakwood Committee paint over the violent graffiti with which Michael's gang had scarred the face of the neighborhood. He will grow up knowing that there is an alternative to drugs and crime. And its name is hope.

That is what we celebrate today. More than this community's freedom from the oppression of crime and despair, we celebrate their hope. Their determination. Their spirit.

In a special way, when he organized the Oakwood Beautification Committee, Foster Webster lit the first candle of hope. When his neighbors joined in, their unified spirit shone with a light that banished the darkness of despair. From such dreams are today's miracles made.

Thanks to the vision, courage and wisdom of Foster Webster and his neighbors, we are today witnessing the wonder of a rebirth. It is more than a rebirth of community. It is a rebirth of hope, of life and of the future. And so today I am proud to name the Oakwood Beautification Committee the 148th Point of Light, for the inspiration and the example they set for our nation.

God bless Oakwood, and God bless you all.

# # # # #

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

May 17, 1990

MEMORANDUM FOR CHRISS WINSTON

FROM: JIM PINKERTON

SUBJECT: Oakwood Community Draft

One minor comment.

2,6,6 "...blazing a gun into the night."

Using the verb "to blaze" transitively, he cannot be blazing a gun, although (intransitively) his gun can blaze into the night.

###

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

May 17, 1990

90 MAY 17 P3:08 ✓

MEMORANDUM FOR CHRISS WINSTON

FROM: ROGER B. PORTER *RBP*

SUBJECT: Presidential Remarks: Oakwood Community, Los Angeles, CA

We have reviewed the attached draft and have no suggested changes from a policy standpoint. We approve of the draft remarks in their current form.

cc: James W. Cicconi

**WHITE HOUSE STAFFING MEMORANDUM**

DATE: 05/15/90 ACTION/CONCURRENCE/COMMENT DUE BY: 1:00 pm 05/17

SUBJECT: PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: OAKWOOD COMMUNITY, LOS ANGELES, CA  
(05/15 11:40pm)

	ACTION FYI			ACTION FYI	
VICE PRESIDENT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	MCCLURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SUNUNU	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	NEWMAN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SCOWCROFT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	PORTER	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
DARMAN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	ROGICH	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
BATES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	UNTERMAYER	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
CARD	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<u>ROGERS</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
CICCONI	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<u>PINKERTON</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
DEMAREST	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>WINSTON</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
FITZWATER	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<u>PETERSMEYER</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
GRAY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>BENNETT</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
HAGIN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>                    </u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

REMARKS: Please provide any comments/recommendations directly to Chriss Winston by 1:00 pm on Thursday, 05/17, with a copy to my office. Thanks.

RESPONSE:

James W. Cicconi  
 Assistant to the President  
 and Deputy to the Chief of Staff  
 Ext. 2702

(Hinchliffe/Fried)  
May 15, 1990 11:40 p.m.  
OAKWOOD

1990 MAY 16 PM 6:16  
PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS:

OAKWOOD COMMUNITY  
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA  
May 21, 1990

Thank you, Foster Webster, for inviting me to your home today. Thank you to the community of Oakwood for welcoming me here. And thank you especially to the Oakwood Beautification Committee for the extraordinary example of neighborhood unity and dedication which you set for us all. You truly are a Point of Light, leading others out of the darkness.

The world which we see now from Foster Webster's porch is a good one. Carved on the face of this community is a message of family and future. We see a neighborhood united -- no longer out of fear, but out of strength.

This world is one of hope. But the world of Mr. Webster's memory is not. This vivid world which still haunts him was a cruel one. One whose inhumanity and hopelessness dominated his life -- where drugs and crime made him a prisoner of fear. It is from this shattered world that Mr. Webster and his neighbors crafted a new dream.

They wanted to be free in their own homes.

So, working with the police, they formed the Oakwood Beautification Committee to reclaim their streets. To reclaim their children. To reclaim their future. // **And they are succeeding.**

At their first meeting, two police cars were parked outside while the officers talked with the committee. But on the corner across the street, in defiant mockery of the police, drug dealers continued to sell their poison. It was a world of drive-by shootings. Of

frustrated anger that exploded in gang graffiti, vandalism and armed robberies. It was a world held captive to crime -- a world without center, without safety, without sense.

But since the committee undertook its quest to clean up the streets, police estimate that drug- and gang-related crimes in Oakwood have declined 44 percent. Oakwood is no longer a setting for terror. It is a neighborhood for hope.

The darkness of drugs, crime and fear is being banished. In its place shines the light of honor, respect, and family pride.

When the legendary bird called the Phoenix was destroyed by fire, it rose again from its own ashes -- reborn stronger than ever. Oakwood is a Phoenix. We see it soaring and we marvel. It is a magnificent reminder of the power of the human heart.

I want to tell you the story of two boys who grew up here.

Let's call the first one Michael. A few years ago, a picture of Michael might have shown him playing baseball down the block -- loving the game and loving the moment. But later would come other pictures. One of him around the corner from the baseball diamond he loved, selling drugs in the shadows. Another of him in gang colors, blazing a gun into the night.

Today, we see a final picture. His heart hollow, his eyes empty, he drags himself bitterly through a prison where he will probably spend the rest of his life. He is lost to us now. His life was as brief as the frozen image in that first photograph of innocent youth -- when his eyes were looking brightly toward a future he will never see.

Yet, in Oakwood, the memory of the emptiness of his lost life will last forever. So will the emptiness left by the devastation of his own neighborhood -- shattered by his streetside dealing, his rampages of violence, his shootings. For he was Oakwood. His life was the route to take a few years ago when you grew up here with nothing but drugs and crime and hate as your models.

But finally there came a moment when people like Foster Webster and his neighbors could no longer bear what they lived with every day: the wasted lives of those who terrorize and those who are terrorized.

Michael will never have a second chance. But the Oakwood residents became determined that the rest of their community would have a second chance. A chance to face the sun together, not cower separately in the shadows of fear.

Let's call the next boy Paul.

Last month, when neighbors were holding their candlelight vigil for a drug-free community, one of the organizers noticed a little six-year-old boy at the side, watching curiously. "What's going on?" he asked. She explained that the vigil celebrated his neighborhood's rebirth. Then she asked him where his parents were. "I don't have any," he answered. It turned out he lived with his grandmother and his uncle, a drug dealer. The boy slowly walked away. The woman thought that was the sad end of another sad story.

But a little while later, as the vigil continued, she saw him again, shyly joining the others. Dressed in his best clothes, he stood in the soft light of a hundred candles, with a candle of his own in one hand and his grandmother's hand in the other.

If Oakwood had continued the way it was going, Paul too might have been lost to us -- in the endless darkness of death or the blank-eyed hopelessness of prison.

Instead, he can now grow up playing on a neighborhood baseball team coached by the policemen Michael and his gang had spent their young lives taunting. He will help the Oakwood Committee paint over the violent graffiti with which Michael's gang had scarred the face of the neighborhood. He will grow up knowing that there is an alternative to drugs and crime. And its name is hope.

That is what we celebrate today. More than this community's freedom from the oppression of crime and despair, we celebrate their hope. Their determination. Their spirit.

In a special way, when he organized the Oakwood Beautification Committee, Foster Webster lit the first candle of hope. When his neighbors joined in, their unified spirit shone with a light that banished the darkness of despair. From such dreams are today's miracles made.

Thanks to the vision, courage and wisdom of Foster Webster and his neighbors, we are today witnessing the wonder of a rebirth. It is more than a rebirth of community. It is a rebirth of hope, of life and of the future. And so today I am proud to name the Oakwood Beautification Committee the 148th Point of Light, for the inspiration and the example they set for our nation.

God bless Oakwood, and God bless you all.

# # # # #

# WHITE HOUSE STAFFING MEMORANDUM

90 MAY 17 P3:08

DATE: 05/15/90

ACTION/CONCURRENCE/COMMENT DUE BY: 1:00 pm 05/17

SUBJECT: PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: OAKWOOD COMMUNITY, LOS ANGELES, CA  
(05/15 11:40pm)

	ACTION FYI			ACTION FYI	
VICE PRESIDENT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	MCCLURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SUNUNU	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	NEWMAN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SCOWCROFT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	PORTER	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
DARMAN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	ROGICH	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
BATES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	UNTERMAYER	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
CARD	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	ROGERS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
CICCONI	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	PINKERTON	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
DEMAREST	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	WINSTON	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
FITZWATER	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	PETERSMEYER	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
GRAY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	BENNETT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
HAGIN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

REMARKS: Please provide any comments/recommendations directly to Chriss Winston by 1:00 pm on Thursday, 05/17, with a copy to my office. Thanks.

RESPONSE: *5/17 OK. S.R.*

James W. Cicconi  
Assistant to the President  
and Deputy to the Chief of Staff  
Ext. 2702

(Hinchliffe/Fried)  
May 15, 1990 11:40 p.m.  
OAKWOOD

1990 MAY 16 PM 6:16  
PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS:

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LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA  
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The world which we see now from Foster Webster's porch is a good one. Carved on the face of this community is a message of family and future. We see a neighborhood united -- no longer out of fear, but out of strength.

This world is one of hope. But the world of Mr. Webster's memory is not. This vivid world which still haunts him was a cruel one. One whose inhumanity and hopelessness dominated his life -- where drugs and crime made him a prisoner of fear. It is from this shattered world that Mr. Webster and his neighbors crafted a new dream.

They wanted to be free in their own homes.

So, working with the police, they formed the Oakwood Beautification Committee to reclaim their streets. To reclaim their children. To reclaim their future. // **And they are succeeding.**

At their first meeting, two police cars were parked outside while the officers talked with the committee. But on the corner across the street, in defiant mockery of the police, drug dealers continued to sell their poison. It was a world of drive-by shootings. Of

frustrated anger that exploded in gang graffiti, vandalism and armed robberies. It was a world held captive to crime -- a world without center, without safety, without sense.

But since the committee undertook its quest to clean up the streets, police estimate that drug- and gang-related crimes in Oakwood have declined 44 percent. Oakwood is no longer a setting for terror. It is a neighborhood for hope.

The darkness of drugs, crime and fear is being banished. In its place shines the light of honor, respect, and family pride.

When the legendary bird called the Phoenix was destroyed by fire, it rose again from its own ashes -- reborn stronger than ever. Oakwood is a Phoenix. We see it soaring and we marvel. It is a magnificent reminder of the power of the human heart.

I want to tell you the story of two boys who grew up here.

Let's call the first one Michael. A few years ago, a picture of Michael might have shown him playing baseball down the block -- loving the game and loving the moment. But later would come other pictures. One of him around the corner from the baseball diamond he loved, selling drugs in the shadows. Another of him in gang colors, blazing a gun into the night.

Today, we see a final picture. His heart hollow, his eyes empty, he drags himself bitterly through a prison where he will probably spend the rest of his life. He is lost to us now. His life was as brief as the frozen image in that first photograph of innocent youth -- when his eyes were looking brightly toward a future he will never see.

Yet, in Oakwood, the memory of the emptiness of his lost life will last forever. So will the emptiness left by the devastation of his own neighborhood -- shattered by his streetside dealing, his rampages of violence, his shootings. For he was Oakwood. His life was the route to take a few years ago when you grew up here with nothing but drugs and crime and hate as your models.

But finally there came a moment when people like Foster Webster and his neighbors could no longer bear what they lived with every day: the wasted lives of those who terrorize and those who are terrorized.

Michael will never have a second chance. But the Oakwood residents became determined that the rest of their community would have a second chance. A chance to face the sun together, not cower separately in the shadows of fear.

Let's call the next boy Paul.

Last month, when neighbors were holding their candlelight vigil for a drug-free community, one of the organizers noticed a little six-year-old boy at the side, watching curiously. "What's going on?" he asked. She explained that the vigil celebrated his neighborhood's rebirth. Then she asked him where his parents were. "I don't have any," he answered. It turned out he lived with his grandmother and his uncle, a drug dealer. The boy slowly walked away. The woman thought that was the sad end of another sad story.

But a little while later, as the vigil continued, she saw him again, shyly joining the others. Dressed in his best clothes, he stood in the soft light of a hundred candles, with a candle of his own in one hand and his grandmother's hand in the other.

If Oakwood had continued the way it was going, Paul too might have been lost to us -- in the endless darkness of death or the blank-eyed hopelessness of prison.

Instead, he can now grow up playing on a neighborhood baseball team coached by the policemen Michael and his gang had spent their young lives taunting. He will help the Oakwood Committee paint over the violent graffiti with which Michael's gang had scarred the face of the neighborhood. He will grow up knowing that there is an alternative to drugs and crime. And its name is hope.

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# # # # #

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(05/15 11:40pm)

	ACTION FYI			ACTION FYI	
VICE PRESIDENT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	MCCLURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SUNUNU	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	NEWMAN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SCOWCROFT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	PORTER	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
DARMAN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	ROGICH	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
BATES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	UNTERMAYER	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
CARD	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	ROGERS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
CICCONI	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	PINKERTON	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
DEMAREST	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	WINSTON	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
FITZWATER	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	PETERSMEYER	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
GRAY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	BENNETT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
HAGIN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

REMARKS: Please provide any comments/recommendations directly to Chriss Winston by 1:00 pm on Thursday, 05/17, with a copy to my office. Thanks.

RESPONSE: 5/17 10am  
 On ACP =  
 Please see markings on pages 2 and 3. Thanks  
 per Daniel Cassel, J.O. 018-21-174-06, #176, mt 2992

James W. Cicconi  
 Assistant to the President  
 and Deputy to the Chief of Staff  
 Ext. 2702

(Hinchliffe/Fried)  
May 15, 1990 11:40 p.m.  
OAKWOOD

1990 MAY 16 PM 6:16  
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May 21, 1990

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*Info note only* \* [The typical convicted drug trafficker serves only 22 months in a prison.]

Yet, in Oakwood, the memory of the emptiness of his lost life will last forever. So will the emptiness left by the devastation of his own neighborhood -- shattered by his streetside dealing, his rampages of violence, his shootings. For he ~~was~~ Oakwood. His life was the route to take a few years ago when you grew up here with nothing but drugs and crime and hate as your models.

But finally there came a moment when people like Foster Webster and his neighbors could no longer bear what they lived with every day: the wasted lives of those who terrorize and those who are terrorized.

Michael, <sup>may</sup>~~will~~ never have a second chance. But the Oakwood residents became determined that the rest of their community would have a second chance. A chance to face the sun together, not cower separately in the shadows of fear.

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# # # # # #

# WHITE HOUSE STAFFING MEMORANDUM

DATE: 05/17/90 ACTION/CONCURRENCE/COMMENT DUE BY: 1:00 pm 05/17

SUBJECT: PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: OAKWOOD COMMUNITY, LOS ANGELES, CA  
(05/15 11:40pm)

	ACTION FYI			ACTION	FYI
VICE PRESIDENT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	MCCLURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SUNUNU	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	NEWMAN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SCOWCROFT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	PORTER	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
DARMAN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	ROGICH	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
BATES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	UNTERMAYER	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
CARD	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<u>ROGERS</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
CICCONI	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<u>PINKERTON</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
DEMAREST	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>WINSTON</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
FITZWATER	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<u>PETERSMEYER</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
GRAY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>BENNETT</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
HAGIN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**REMARKS:**  
 Please provide any comments/recommendations directly to Chriss Winston by 1:00 pm on Thursday, 05/17, with a copy to my office. Thanks.

**RESPONSE:**  
 NO COMMENT. THANKS.  
 HOLLY WILLIAMSON *Holly*  
 5-17-90


90 MAY 17 P2:39

James W. Cicconi  
 Assistant to the President  
 and Deputy to the Chief of Staff  
 Ext. 2702

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

May 17, 1990

MEMORANDUM FOR CHRISS WINSTON  
DEPUTY ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT  
FOR COMMUNICATIONS

FROM: NELSON LUND   
ASSOCIATE COUNSEL TO THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: Draft Presidential Remarks: Oakwood Community

At the request of James W. Cicconi, Counsel's office has reviewed the captioned remarks. We have no legal objections.

We appreciate having had the opportunity to review these remarks.

cc: James W. Cicconi

90 MAY 17 12:44

Document No. 141630**WHITE HOUSE STAFFING MEMORANDUM**DATE: 05/15/90 ACTION/CONCURRENCE/COMMENT DUE BY: 1:00 pm 05/17 ✓SUBJECT: PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: OAKWOOD COMMUNITY, LOS ANGELES, CA  
(05/15 11:40pm)

	ACTION FYI			ACTION FYI	
VICE PRESIDENT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<del>MCCLURE</del>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SUNUNU	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	NEWMAN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SCOWCROFT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	PORTER	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
DARMAN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	ROGICH	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
BATES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	UNTERMEYER	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
CARD	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<u>ROGERS</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
CICCONI	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<u>PINKERTON</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
DEMAREST	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>WINSTON</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
FITZWATER	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<u>PETERSMEYER</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
GRAY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>BENNETT</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
HAGIN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<u>          </u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## REMARKS:

Please provide any comments/recommendations directly to Chriss Winston by 1:00 pm on Thursday, 05/17, with a copy to my office. Thanks.

## RESPONSE:

✓ No Comment 5/17/90  
90 MAY 17 2:05 PM '90

James W. Cicconi  
Assistant to the President  
and Deputy to the Chief of Staff  
Ext. 2702

(Hinchliffe/Fried)  
May 15, 1990 11:40 p.m.  
OAKWOOD

PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: OAKWOOD COMMUNITY  
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA  
May 21, 1990

Thank you, Foster Webster, for inviting me to your home today. Thank you to the community of Oakwood for welcoming me here. And thank you especially to the Oakwood Beautification Committee for the extraordinary example of neighborhood unity and dedication which you set for us all. You truly are a Point of Light, leading others out of the darkness.

The world which we see now from Foster Webster's porch is a good one. Carved on the face of this community is a message of family and future. We see a neighborhood united -- no longer out of fear, but out of strength.

This world is one of hope. But the world of Mr. Webster's memory is not. This vivid world which still haunts him was a cruel one. One whose inhumanity and hopelessness dominated his life -- where drugs and crime made him a prisoner of fear. It is from this shattered world that Mr. Webster and his neighbors crafted a new dream.

They wanted to be free in their own homes.

So, working with the police, they formed the Oakwood Beautification Committee to reclaim their streets. To reclaim their children. To reclaim their future. // **And they are succeeding.**

At their first meeting, two police cars were parked outside while the officers talked with the committee. But on the corner across the street, in defiant mockery of the police, drug dealers continued to sell their poison. It was a world of drive-by shootings. Of

frustrated anger that exploded in gang graffiti, vandalism and armed robberies. It was a world held captive to crime -- a world without center, without safety, without sense.

But since the committee undertook its quest to clean up the streets, police estimate that drug- and gang-related crimes in Oakwood have declined 44 percent. Oakwood is no longer a setting for terror. It is a neighborhood for hope.

The darkness of drugs, crime and fear is being banished. In its place shines the light of honor, respect, and family pride.

When the legendary bird called the Phoenix was destroyed by fire, it rose again from its own ashes -- reborn stronger than ever. Oakwood is a Phoenix. We see it soaring and we marvel. It is a magnificent reminder of the power of the human heart.

I want to tell you the story of two boys who grew up here.

Let's call the first one Michael. A few years ago, a picture of Michael might have shown him playing baseball down the block -- loving the game and loving the moment. But later would come other pictures. One of him around the corner from the baseball diamond he loved, selling drugs in the shadows. Another of him in gang colors, blazing a gun into the night.

Today, we see a final picture. His heart hollow, his eyes empty, he drags himself bitterly through a prison where he will probably spend the rest of his life. He is lost to us now. His life was as brief as the frozen image in that first photograph of innocent youth -- when his eyes were looking brightly toward a future he will never see.

Yet, in Oakwood, the memory of the emptiness of his lost life will last forever. So will the emptiness left by the devastation of his own neighborhood -- shattered by his streetside dealing, his rampages of violence, his shootings. For he was Oakwood. His life was the route to take a few years ago when you grew up here with nothing but drugs and crime and hate as your models.

But finally there came a moment when people like Foster Webster and his neighbors could no longer bear what they lived with every day: the wasted lives of those who terrorize and those who are terrorized.

Michael will never have a second chance. But the Oakwood residents became determined that the rest of their community would have a second chance. A chance to face the sun together, not cower separately in the shadows of fear.

Let's call the next boy Paul.

Last month, when neighbors were holding their candlelight vigil for a drug-free community, one of the organizers noticed a little six-year-old boy at the side, watching curiously. "What's going on?" he asked. She explained that the vigil celebrated his neighborhood's rebirth. Then she asked him where his parents were. "I don't have any," he answered. It turned out he lived with his grandmother and his uncle, a drug dealer. The boy slowly walked away. The woman thought that was the sad end of another sad story.

But a little while later, as the vigil continued, she saw him again, shyly joining the others. Dressed in his best clothes, he stood in the soft light of a hundred candles, with a candle of his own in one hand and his grandmother's hand in the other.

If Oakwood had continued the way it was going, Paul too might have been lost to us -- in the endless darkness of death or the blank-eyed hopelessness of prison.

Instead, he can now grow up playing on a neighborhood baseball team coached by the policemen Michael and his gang had spent their young lives taunting. He will help the Oakwood Committee paint over the violent graffiti with which Michael's gang had scarred the face of the neighborhood. He will grow up knowing that there is an alternative to drugs and crime. And its name is hope.

That is what we celebrate today. More than this community's freedom from the oppression of crime and despair, we celebrate their hope. Their determination. Their spirit.

In a special way, when he organized the Oakwood Beautification Committee, Foster Webster lit the first candle of hope. When his neighbors joined in, their unified spirit shone with a light that banished the darkness of despair. From such dreams are today's miracles made.

Thanks to the vision, courage and wisdom of Foster Webster and his neighbors, we are today witnessing the wonder of a rebirth. It is more than a rebirth of community. It is a rebirth of hope, of life and of the future. And so today I am proud to name the Oakwood Beautification Committee the 148th Point of Light, for the inspiration and the example they set for our nation.

God bless Oakwood, and God bless you all.

# # # # # #

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

Date:

5/17/90

TO:

Chris Winston

FROM:

CLARK KENT ERVIN  
Office of National Service  
Room 100, OEOB  
x6266

CKE

- Action
- Your Comment
- Let's Talk
- FYI

The Oakwood Draft is the best spec we've seen on our subject. We think that it's absolutely first due!

# WHITE HOUSE STAFFING MEMORANDUM

DATE: 05/15/90 ACTION/CONCURRENCE/COMMENT DUE BY: 1:00 pm 05/17

SUBJECT: PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: OAKWOOD COMMUNITY, LOS ANGELES, CA  
(05/15 11:40pm)

	ACTION FYI			ACTION FYI	
VICE PRESIDENT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	MCCLURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SUNUNU	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	NEWMAN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SCOWCROFT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	PORTER	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
DARMAN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	ROGICH	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
BATES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	UNTERMAYER	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
CARD	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	ROGERS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
CICCONI	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	PINKERTON	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
DEMAREST	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	WINSTON	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
FITZWATER	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	PETERSMEYER	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
GRAY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	BENNETT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
HAGIN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

REMARKS: Please provide any comments/recommendations directly to Chriss Winston by 1:00 pm on Thursday, 05/17, with a copy to my office. Thanks.

RESPONSE:

60 : 114 21 MAY 17 03

James W. Cicconi  
Assistant to the President  
and Deputy to the Chief of Staff  
Ext. 2702

(Hinchliffe/Fried)  
May 15, 1990 11:40 p.m.  
OAKWOOD

1990 MAY 16 PM 6:16  
PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS:

OAKWOOD COMMUNITY  
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA  
May 21, 1990

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So, working with the police, they formed the Oakwood Beautification Committee to reclaim their streets. To reclaim their children. To reclaim their future. // **And they are succeeding.**

At their first meeting, two police cars were parked outside while the officers talked with the committee. But on the corner across the street, in defiant mockery of the police, drug dealers continued to sell their poison. It was a world of drive-by shootings. Of

frustrated anger that exploded in gang graffiti, vandalism and armed robberies. It was a world held captive to crime -- a world without center, without safety, without sense.

But since the committee undertook its quest to clean up the streets, police estimate that drug- and gang-related crimes in Oakwood have declined 44 percent. Oakwood is no longer a setting for terror. It is a neighborhood for hope.

The darkness of drugs, crime and fear is being banished. In its place shines the light of honor, respect, and family pride.

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I want to tell you the story of two boys who grew up here.

Let's call the first one Michael. A few years ago, a picture of Michael might have shown him playing baseball down the block -- loving the game and loving the moment. But later would come other pictures. One of him around the corner from the baseball diamond he loved, selling drugs in the shadows. Another of him in gang colors, blazing a gun into the night.

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Yet, in Oakwood, the memory of the emptiness of his lost life will last forever. So will the emptiness left by the devastation of his own neighborhood -- shattered by his streetside dealing, his rampages of violence, his shootings. For he ~~was~~ Oakwood. His life was the route to take a few years ago when you grew up here with nothing but drugs and crime and hate as your models.

But finally there came a moment when people like Foster Webster and his neighbors could no longer bear what they lived with every day: the wasted lives of those who terrorize and those who are terrorized.

Michael will never have a second chance. But the Oakwood residents became determined that the rest of their community would have a second chance. A chance to face the sun together, not cower separately in the shadows of fear.

Let's call the next boy Paul. <sup>(11)</sup> <sup>(11)</sup>

Last month, when neighbors were holding their candlelight vigil for a drug-free community, one of the organizers noticed a little six-year-old boy at the side, watching curiously. "What's going on?" he asked. She explained that the vigil celebrated his neighborhood's rebirth. Then she asked him where his parents were. "I don't have any," he answered. It turned out he lived with his grandmother and his uncle, a drug dealer. The boy slowly walked away. The woman thought that was the sad end of another sad story.

But a little while later, as the vigil continued, she saw him again, shyly joining the others. Dressed in his best clothes, he stood in the soft light of a hundred candles, with a candle of his own in one hand and his grandmother's hand in the other.

If Oakwood had continued the way it was going, Paul too might have been lost to us -- in the endless darkness of death or the blank-eyed hopelessness of prison.

Instead, he can now grow up playing on a neighborhood baseball team coached by the policemen Michael and his gang had spent their young lives taunting. He will help the Oakwood Committee paint over the violent graffiti with which Michael's gang had scarred the face of the neighborhood. He will grow up knowing that there is an alternative to drugs and crime. And its name is hope.

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In a special way, when he organized the Oakwood Beautification Committee, Foster Webster lit the first candle of hope. When his neighbors joined in, their unified spirit shone with a light that banished the darkness of despair. From such dreams are today's miracles made.

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God bless Oakwood, and God bless you all.

# # # # #

*Each one of you... my conviction... "Fork now" in America... any definition of a successful life must include serving others.*

*forming what I'd call a "Point of Light Action Group"*

*for direct and communitarian action*

*Oakwood proves that no community has to accept things as they are. Americans don't have to live in fear. Crime, drugs, hunger, homelessness and any other social problem can be driven from every community, if only every community will band together as ~~this~~ you have done.*

**WHITE HOUSE STAFFING MEMORANDUM**

DATE: 05/15/90 ACTION/CONCURRENCE/COMMENT DUE BY: 1:00 pm 05/17

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GRAY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	BENNETT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
HAGIN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

REMARKS: Please provide any comments/recommendations directly to Chriss Winston by 1:00 pm on Thursday, 05/17, with a copy to my office. Thanks.

RESPONSE:

James W. Cicconi  
 Assistant to the President  
 and Deputy to the Chief of Staff  
 Ext. 2702



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But finally there came a moment when people like Foster Webster ~~and his neighbors~~ could no longer bear what they lived with every day: the wasted lives of those who terrorize and those who are terrorized.

Michael will never have a second chance. But the Oakwood residents became determined that the rest of their community would have a second chance. A chance to face the sun together, not cower separately in the shadows of fear.

Let's call the next boy <sup>(11)</sup> <sup>(11)</sup> Paul.

Last month, when neighbors ~~were holding their candlelight vigil for a drug-free community~~, one of the ~~organizers~~ <sup>group</sup> noticed a little six-year-old boy at the side, watching curiously. "What's going on?" he asked. ~~She explained that the vigil celebrated his neighborhood's rebirth.~~ Then ~~she~~ <sup>S</sup>he asked him where his parents were. "I don't have any," he answered. It turned out he lived with his grandmother and his uncle, a drug dealer. The boy slowly walked away. The woman thought that was the sad end of another sad story.

But a little while later, as the vigil continued, she saw him again, shyly joining the others. Dressed in his best clothes, he stood in the soft light of a hundred candles, with a candle of his own in one hand and his grandmother's hand in the other.

If Oakwood had continued the way it was going, Paul too might have been lost to us -- in the endless darkness of death or the blank-eyed hopelessness of prison.

Instead, he can now grow up playing on a neighborhood baseball team coached by the policemen Michael and his gang had spent their young lives taunting. He will help the Oakwood Committee paint over the violent graffiti with which Michael's gang had scarred the face of the neighborhood. He will grow up knowing that there is an alternative to drugs and crime. And its name is hope.

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God bless Oakwood, and God bless you all.

# # # # #

Oakwood proves that no community has to accept things as they are. Crime, drugs, hunger, homelessness and any other social problems can be driven from every community, if only every community will lead to do as you have done. (see back)

his neighbors

forming what I'd call a "Point of Light Action Group"

the members of this

community

residents of the

Community

each one of you my conviction that from now on in America

my definition of a successful life will include serving these.

my direct and consequential action

## A community

Members of a community ~~are~~ should be bound together ~~not~~ just by something larger than geography. ~~Every~~ The members of every community should be bound by ~~the~~ a shared sense of commitment to each other. ~~the~~  
~~the members of the Indian community, every~~

not important who gets credit but what accomplished

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN

May 17, 1990

INFORMATION

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

THROUGH:           CHRISS WINSTON *CW*  
FROM:                BETH HINCHLIFFE *BH*  
SUBJECT:             OAKWOOD COMMUNITY ADDRESS

*OK*  
*1 tiny change*  
*CSB*  
*///*

I. SUMMARY

On Monday, May 21, at 11:30 a.m., you will address members of the Oakwood (California) community. The neighborhood is being named the 148th Daily Point of Light for its unified efforts to reclaim its streets from drugs and crime. You will be speaking from the front lawn of the home of Foster Webster, an elderly and longtime resident of this 10-block neighborhood.

II. DISCUSSION

The attached remarks (8 minutes, cards) honor the community for its extraordinary example of coming together for a common cause. The text uses the stories of two young residents of Oakwood to illustrate the impact of the neighborhood's efforts. It also celebrates Oakwood as an inspiration to other communities to band together to improve their own lives.

(Hinchliffe/Fried) OAKWOOD  
May 17, 1990 4:06 p.m.

PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: OAKWOOD COMMUNITY (LOS ANGELES)  
May 21, 1990

Thank you, Foster Webster, for having me at your home today. Thank you to the community of Oakwood for welcoming me here, and for the extraordinary example of neighborhood unity and dedication which you set for us all. You truly are a Point of Light, leading others out of the darkness.

The world which we see now from Mr. Webster's front yard is a good one. Carved on the face of this community is a message of family and future. We see a neighborhood united -- no longer out of fear, but out of strength.

This world is one of hope. But the world of this community's memory is not. This vivid world which still haunts many here was a cruel one. One whose inhumanity and hopelessness dominated their lives -- where drugs and crime made them prisoners of fear. It is from this shattered world that the members of the Oakwood neighborhood crafted a new dream.

They wanted to be free in their own homes.

So, working with the police, they determined to reclaim their streets. To reclaim their children. To reclaim their future. // And they are succeeding.

The first time some neighbors met with the police to discuss what they could do, two police cars were parked outside a resident's home while the officers talked with the people inside. But on the corner across the street, in defiant mockery of the police, drug dealers continued to sell their poison. It was a world of drive-by shootings. Of frustrated anger that exploded in gang graffiti, vandalism, armed

robberies, and, above all, the obsessed tragedy of drug abuse. It was a world held captive to crime -- a world without center, without safety, without sense.

But since the community undertook its quest to clean up their streets, police estimate that drug- and gang-related crimes in Oakwood have declined 44 percent. Oakwood is no longer a setting for terror. It is a neighborhood for hope.

The darkness of drugs, crime and fear is being banished. In its place shines the light of honor, respect, and family pride.

When the legendary bird called the phoenix was destroyed by fire, it rose again from its own ashes -- reborn stronger than ever.

Oakwood is a phoenix. ~~We see it searing and we marvel.~~ It is a magnificent reminder of the power of the human heart.

I want to tell you the story of two boys who grew up here.

It's not his name, but let's call the first one "Michael". A few years ago, a picture of Michael might have shown him playing baseball down the block -- loving the game and loving the moment. But later would come other pictures. One of him around the corner from the baseball diamond he loved, selling drugs in the shadows. Another of him in gang colors, his gun blazing into the night.

Today, we see a final picture. His heart hollow, his eyes empty, he drags himself bitterly through the prison he now calls home. He is lost to us now. His life was as brief as the frozen image in that first photograph of innocent youth -- when his eyes were looking brightly toward a future he will never see.

Yet, in Oakwood, the memory of the emptiness of his lost life will last forever. So will the emptiness left by the devastation of his own neighborhood -- shattered by his streetside dealing, his

rampages of violence, his shootings. For he was Oakwood. His life was the route to take a few years ago when you grew up here with nothing but drugs and crime and hate as your models.

But finally there came a moment when the people of this community could no longer bear what they lived with every day: the wasted lives of those who terrorize and those who are terrorized.

Michael may never have a second chance. But the Oakwood residents became determined that the rest of their community would have a second chance. A chance to face the sun together, not cower separately in the shadows of fear.

Let's call the next boy "Paul". Last month, when neighbors were holding their candlelight vigil for a drug-free community, a woman noticed a little six-year-old boy at the side, watching curiously. "What's going on?" he asked. She explained that the vigil celebrated his neighborhood's rebirth. Then she asked him where his parents were. "I don't have any," he answered. It turned out he lived with his grandmother and his uncle, a drug dealer. The boy walked away. The woman thought that was the sad end of another sad story.

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If Oakwood had continued the way it was going, Paul too might have been lost to us -- in the tragedy of death or the blank-eyed hopelessness of prison.

Instead, he can now grow up playing on a community baseball team coached by the policemen Michael and his gang had spent their young lives taunting. He will help his neighbors paint over the violent

graffiti with which Michael's gang had scarred the face of the neighborhood. He will grow up knowing that there is an alternative to drugs and crime. And its name is hope.

That is what we celebrate today. More than this community's freedom from the oppression of crime and despair, we celebrate their hope. Their determination. Their spirit.

In a special way, when the first people decided to take back their community, they lit the first candle of hope. When more and more of their neighbors joined them, their unified spirit shone with a light that banished the darkness of despair. From such dreams are today's miracles made.

Thanks to the vision, courage and wisdom of the residents of Oakwood, we are today witnessing the wonder of a rebirth. It is more than a rebirth of community. It is a rebirth of hope, of life and of the future. And so today I am proud to name the Oakwood community the 148th Point of Light, for the inspiration and the example they set for our nation. You truly show that the definition of a successful life must include serving others.

Because you share this award together, you realize that it matters not who gets the credit, but what is accomplished. You prove that if every community could band together as you have done, we could see the spirit of Oakwood spread -- street by street, neighborhood by neighborhood, city by city. Oakwood proves that no community has to accept things as they are. Americans don't have to live in fear. Crime, drugs, hunger, homelessness and so many other social problems can be driven from every community, if every community cares enough to light the candle of hope.

God bless each of you, God bless the community of Oakwood, and God bless all of us.