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Draft 1
May 8, 1992
5:00 p.m.

PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: RADIO BROADCAST
SATURDAY, MAY 9, 1992

Less than 24 hours ago, I returned from Los Angeles -- and today I'd like to use this opportunity to report on what I saw, and what I heard.

By now, each one of us has seen images of hate and horror we won't soon forget. But what I saw during my time in Los Angeles -- even in the hardest-hit parts of South Central L.A. -- should give us all cause for hope.

Everywhere, the people I talked with told me about the acts of individual heroism -- about the extraordinary courage of ordinary people. Some braved the gangs of looters, to form "bucket brigades" to put out fires when the firetrucks couldn't get through. Some stood against the angry mobs -- reached across the barrier of color -- to save lives. / Many of these aren't the stories you'll see on the nightly news -- but they are stories that tell us the power of simple human decency.

I went to L.A. to meet with community leaders -- to get first-hand information as to how best the federal government could help speed the recovery. Part of it is to provide -- as we're doing now -- federal funds to help shop-owners get their businesses open again, funds to help the people who lost jobs when the places they worked were burned-out. But beyond this

immediate, emergency assistance -- I set out a broader agenda, a means of bringing hope and opportunity to our inner cities.

First, we've got to preserve order, keep the peace: because families can't thrive, children can't learn, jobs can't flourish in a climate of fear. That's why I announced yesterday a \$19 million dollar initiative I call "Weed and Seed" for the city of Los Angeles: a program that "weeds out" the gang leaders, drug dealers and career criminals -- and then "seeds" the community with expanded employment, educational and social services.

Second, we must spark an economic revival in urban America. That means establishing Enterprise Zones in our inner cities -- and reforming our welfare system -- to help people with individual initiative work and save.

Third, we must revolutionize American education. That's why we've built our America 2000 strategy around innovations like choice, competition and community action. Children in our inner cities deserve the same opportunities that kids in our suburbs have.

Four, we must promote new hope through home ownership. That's the aim behind my HOPE initiative -- to give the least-advantaged among us a stake in their neighborhood, by turning public housing tenants into homeowners.

At every turn during my time in L.A., I heard people talking about the principles that guide these initiatives: Personal responsibility. Opportunity. Ownership. Independence. Dignity. //

I can already hear some of the critics out there. They'll say: you've proposed all this before." That's true -- they're right. But now it's time to act on these proposals -- time to try something new. My first order of business now that I am back in Washington is to build a bipartisan effort in support of immediate action on this agenda.

So far I have spoken about what government can do. Now let me talk about what society must do. Because government alone cannot create the scale and energy needed to transform the lives of people in need. And all over America, people have already found the answers for themselves -- and they're taking action to make things better. //

You can find them everywhere -- including South Central L.A. I met a man there named Lou Dantzler -- a bear of a man who runs the Challengers Boy's and Girl's Club. He started it out of the back of an old pick-up truck, with a group of kids who wanted to get off the streets. Today, across from a burned-out block in South Central L.A., the Boys and Girls Club stands unscarred. No, it wasn't a miracle that the building was left standing. The real miracle is what goes on inside. / It's a place kids can go to get the concern and the love they need -- a place where people care.

That's why guaranteeing a hopeful future for the children of our cities is about a lot more than rebuilding burned out buildings. It's about building a new American community.

This I know: We have the strength and spirit -- in our government, in our communities, and in ourselves -- to transform America into the nation we have dreamed of for generations.

Thank you for listening -- and may God bless the United States of America.

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