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Extra Copies of Briefing Papers, March 1994: Interview with USA Today Reporters About Crime Bill

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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

March 21, 1994

INTERVIEW WITH USA TODAY

DATE: Tuesday, March 22, 1994

LOCATION: Oval Office

TIME: 2:00 pm to 2:30 pm

From: Rahm Emanuel, Bruce Reed,
and Jonathan Prince

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this interview is to communicate your overarching crime message to a large audience. *USA Today* reaches a key readership, to whom crime and violence is a primary concern.

In particular, you should send a strong message that we must stop the crime and violence for the children of this country.

II. BACKGROUND

USA Today has devoted significant coverage to crime and violence in America, and to Clinton Administration efforts to have a positive impact in the fight against crime. They have agreed to limit this 30 minute interview to a discussion of that subject. The interview will be published on Wednesday, just as the House is expected to take up the Crime Bill on the floor.

BIG THEMES

Children & Violence. Much of your recent public activity on crime has been related to the impact of crime and violence on young people: last week's PSA launching; ABC's Kids' Town Hall with Polly Klaas' sister; the national service forum in Brooklyn where you met Sherman Speers. We believe that additional repetition of this theme will be useful -- and raising public (and congressional) consciousness of crime's young victims will particularly useful as the House votes this week.

- **Growing up in Hope.** As you did in the kids' town hall, you should draw a contrast between the dangers of your youth and the dangers of today: bullies in the schoolyard vs. drug dealers with guns.

Safe Schools: We need to give safe schools, and safe places, back to our children. The safe schools initiative in the crime bill will provide grant funds to high crime school districts aimed at preventing crime.

Youth Handgun Safety Act: Passed earlier by the House, and in the Senate version of the Crime Bill, when adopted, it will help us to keep guns out of the hands of children. Young people are 15 times more likely than older Americans to be the victims of gun violence.

- **Polly Klaas' half-sister, Anna Nichol.** Anna's story -- cowbells on her doorknob, rope-traps in her bedroom -- is a vivid example of the fear that children live with every day.

Three Strikes and You're Out: Anyone committing serious, violent felonies on three or more occasions should go to prison for the rest of his or her life. This law might have kept Polly Klaas alive -- and Anna Nichol's dreams free of nightmares.

Mark Klaas, Polly Klaas' father, has endorsed your three-strikes proposal. He simultaneously attacked Governor Pete Wilson's version of three-strikes.

- **Alicia Brown and Sherman Speers.** Alicia has tragically lost six friends to senseless violence; Sherman is paralyzed for life because of it -- but both remain determined to make something of themselves and to help others do the same.

Youth Employment and Skills (YES) Crime Reduction Program: YES is a targeted program to reduce and prevent crime by saturating high-crime, high-poverty neighborhoods with youth employment opportunities. The proposal emphasizes private sector job placement and demands continued good behavior as a requirement for participation.

III. PARTICIPANTS

Adam Nagourney, USA Today
Bill Nichols, USA Today

IV. PRESS PLAN

Interview

V. SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

Half hour interview

VI. REMARKS REQUIRED

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TAB E