



Department of Justice

DRAFT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 1999
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STATEMENT BY ATTORNEY GENERAL JANET RENO

"Last night, a gunman walked into the Wedgewood Baptist Church in Fort Worth, Texas. He opened fire on the worshipers and shattered a youth prayer service. 13 people were shot. His gunfire killed 7.

"The thought of gunfire in a place of worship should be inconceivable, but for families, for others, last night the inconceivable became a reality.

"As a nation, we are profoundly touched by these tragic deaths, by the pain of the innocent victims, their families and friends, the congregation of the Wedgewood Baptist Church, and the community as a whole. Our hearts go out to all of them.

"The FBI has been on the scene since last evening, lending its assistance to the local authorities. We have offered continued assistance to the Ft. Worth police and to the mayor of Ft. Worth. We are prepared to assist in any way that we can.

"In 1999 alone we have watched as innocent people were gunned down while attending school, while walking home from a church or synagogue, while playing at a summer camp, while working in their offices, while delivering mail, and now, while worshiping in their church.

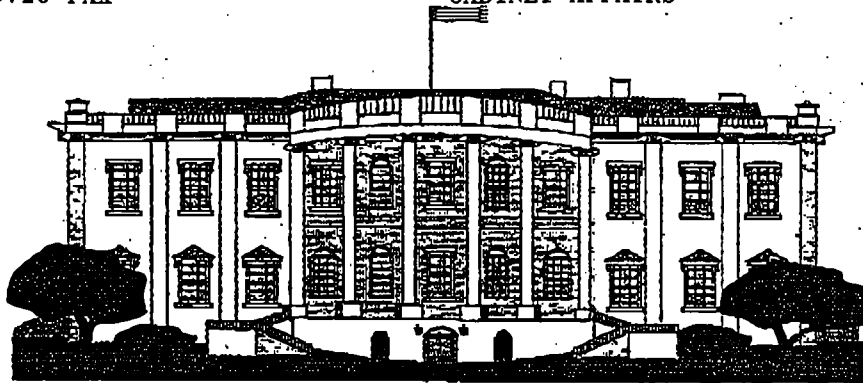
"This morning we have many more questions than answers about last night's tragedy. We will search for those answers and try, as another community mourns its dead, to find a way to end this type of senseless and destructive violence.

"It's going to require the commitment of all Americans to look at the issue of how we handle guns, of how we deal with mental illness, of how we deal with hate. We do not know what the situation is here, but all of these events cry out for America to come together and to address them in an effective, permanent manner."

99-419

- 10 loudshots
in jacket
9mm
- .380 caliber
- 1 pipe bomb forecast.
- 7 dead (South
Texas)

DRAFT



The White House
OFFICE OF CABINET AFFAIRS

Date: 9/23/99

To: Leanne Shimabakuro

Fax: 456 - 7028

From: Setti Warren

Pages: 3 (Including this cover sheet)

Comments:

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OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

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Setti,

Following up on our conversation, here's some information from the Navy re Larry Gene Ashbrook. This biographical data has already been released to the press.

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The attached document(s) has been reviewed for classified information. I certify that no classified information is contained within and hereby authorize its release.

Release Name

Date: 09/23/99

TOTAL P.02

BIOGRAPHICAL DATAName: Larry Gene AshbrookDate Enlisted in U.S. Navy: 27 Jun 72 (USNR)Inactive Reserve Time in Service: 4 yrs, 7 mosActive Duty Time in Service: 7 yrs, 5 mosActive Duty Service Dates/Assignments:

27 Oct 72 - 04 Jan 73	Naval Air Station (NAS) Dallas, TX
10 Feb 73 - 07 Feb 75	Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron Eight
13 Feb 79 - 21 Jun 79	Patrol Squadron Thirty, NAS Jacksonville, FL
22 Jun 79 - 05 Dec 83	Patrol Squadron Fifty-Six, NAS Jacksonville, FL

Date of Discharge: 5 Dec 83; discharged as result of conviction at Special-Court Martial for violation of Uniform Code of Military Justice, Article 134: Use of a Schedule I Controlled Substance (Marijuana). Awarded reduction in rate to E-4, received (Other Than Honorable) discharge.

Last Rank Held: AW3 (E-4) Aviation Warfare Systems OperatorMilitary Schools:

Aviation Warfare Systems Operator (AW) "A" School
P-3C VP Readiness Acoustic Operator Training
P-3 Fleet Acoustic Operator Proficiency Training
Non-acoustic Equipment Operator Training
Acoustic Equipment Operator Training

History of Promotions:

AW2 (E-5)	16 Jan 80
AW3 (E-4)	16 May 74
AWAN (E-3)	15 Jul 73
AWAA (E-2)	27 Oct 72
AWAR (E-1)	25 Oct 72

Awards and Decorations:

National Defense Service Medal
Naval Reserve Meritorious Service Medal
Humanitarian Service Medal
Sea Service Ribbon



SEPTEMBER 16, 11:19 EDT

Reno Laments Hate Crimes

By MICHELLE MITTELSTADT
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Lamenting the latest mass shooting in the United States, Attorney General Janet Reno said today Americans must look hard at the issue of ``how we handle guns, of how we deal with mental illness, of how we deal with hate."

Reno, discussing the killing rampage Wednesday night at a Baptist church in Fort Worth, Texas, said, ``The thought of gunfire in a place of worship should be inconceivable. But for families, for others last night, the inconceivable became a reality."

She made the remarks at her weekly news conference.

Discussing recent shooting episodes, including the Atlanta massacre and a spate of school shootings, the attorney general said FBI agents are on the scene in Fort Worth. ``We are prepared to assist in any way that we can," she said.

A gunman identified by police as Larry Gene Ashbrook of Fort Worth burst into a church service and opened fire. Seven people were fatally shot, and the gunman killed himself.

``In 1999 alone," Reno said, ``we have watched as innocent people were gunned down while attending school, while walking home from a church or synagogue, while playing at a summer camp, while working in their offices, while delivering mail and now while worshiping in their church."

``This morning, we have ... many more questions than answers," she added. ``We will search for those answers and try, as another community mourns its dead, to find a way to end this type of senseless and destructive violence.

``It is going to require the commitment of all Americans to look at the issue of how we handle guns, of how we deal with mental illness, of how we deal with hate," she said. ``We don't know what the situation is here, but all of these events cry out for America to come together and to address them in an effective, permanent manner."

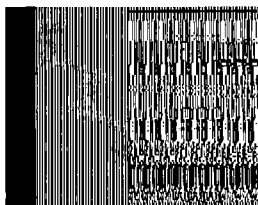
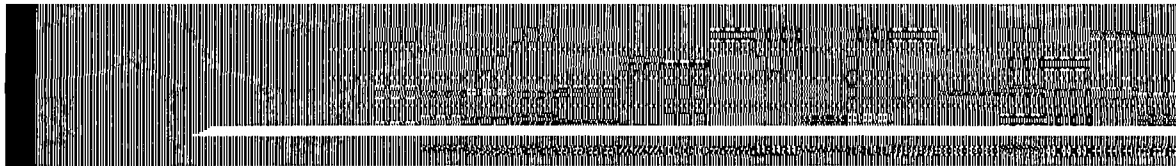
She renewed her call for legislation the Clinton administration has been seeking in Congress to place tighter curbs on handguns.

``I would hope that people would look, not just at what handguns have done to America this year, not in the context of this case, but what handguns have done to America over the last many years," Reno said, ``and that this nation would listen to its people who again and again cry out for ... asking government to make sure that we take reasonable steps to ensure that guns are not placed in the hands of people who are not lawfully entitled to have them."

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Clinton, Reno Condemn Killings

By Michelle Mittelstadt

Associated Press Writer

Thursday, September 16, 1999; 3:46 p.m. EDT

WASHINGTON (AP) -- Americans must find a way to protect young people -- "as if it were our own children being targeted" -- President Clinton said Thursday as he and Attorney General Janet Reno decried the latest deadly shootings.

"Yet again, we have seen a sanctuary violated by gun violence, taking children brimming with faith and promise and hope before their time," Clinton told reporters at the White House.

"We know we have to redouble our efforts to protect our children," the president said. He expressed sadness for Wednesday's attack on Wedgwood Baptist Church in Fort Worth, where a gunman killed seven worshippers and wounded seven others before killing himself.

"We know we have to act as if it were our own children being targeted," Clinton said.

Earlier, during her weekly briefing, Reno also deplored the carnage.

"The thought of gunfire in a place of worship should be inconceivable. But for families, for others last night, the inconceivable became a reality," she said.

"In 1999 alone, we have watched as innocent people were gunned down while attending school, while walking home from a church or synagogue, while playing at a summer camp, while working in their offices, while delivering mail and now while worshiping in their church," she said.

Clinton, who has urged Congress to pass laws restricting sales at gun shows and requiring childproof locks, made no mention of gun control Thursday. But he said the attack underscores the need to address a rise in gun violence.

"We know that there is nothing we can do to assure that this will never happen," Clinton said. "But there is a lot more we can do to assure it will happen more rarely. I can only hope that the shock of this event will spur that kind of action."

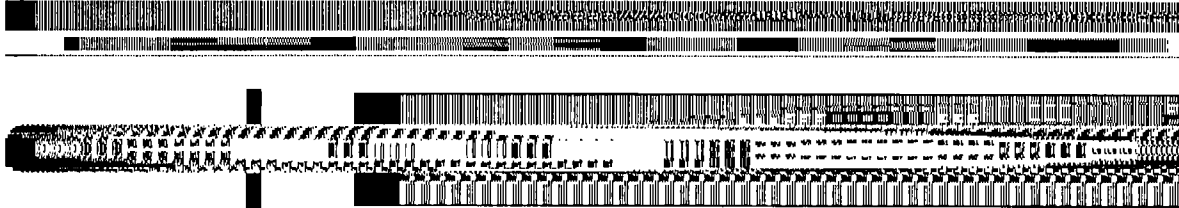
Reno, meantime, said gun control must be among the steps to lessen violence.

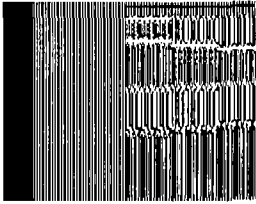
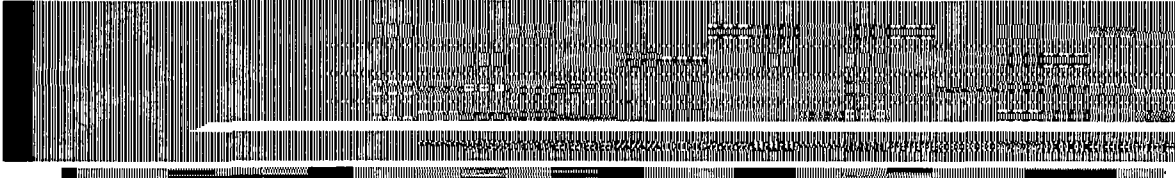
"I would hope that people would look, not just at what handguns have done to America this year, not in the context of this case, but

what handguns have done to America over the last many years, and that this nation would listen to its people who again and again cry out ... asking government to make sure that we take reasonable steps to ensure that guns are not placed in the hands of people who are not lawfully entitled to have them," she said.

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Bush: 'Wave of Evil' Sweeping U.S

By Ron Fournier

AP Political Writer

Thursday, September 16, 1999; 3:36 p.m. EDT

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (AP) -- Republican presidential candidate George W. Bush said Thursday that "a wave of evil" -- not a lack of gun control laws -- is the cause of rampant gun violence in America.

Scrapping two fund-raisers to rush home to Texas and the scene of a deadly shooting spree, the GOP front-runner said the tragedy had not softened his pro-gun views.

"I don't know of a law -- a governmental law -- that will put love in people's hearts," the Texas governor told reporters at a news conference. He toured a local elementary school and met privately with former President Gerald Ford before leaving for Texas.

His eyes red and moist, Bush said: "It's hard to explain how hatred lurks in somebody's heart to the point where he walks into a church where children and adults were seeking God's guidance and shoots them."

Seven people were fatally shot Wednesday night at a Fort Worth, Texas, Baptist church before the gunman killed himself in a pew. Authorities did not know the man's motive.

The shooting posed a potential political problem for the two-term governor who signed a 1995 law allowing Texans to carry concealed weapons with a permit. Democrats have questioned his commitment to federal and state efforts to require background checks at gun shows.

Bush, who spoke to police in Texas shortly before the news conference, said he was told the suspect did not have a concealed-weapons permit. "I don't know his background, but it sounds to me like he's mentally deranged," Bush said. "You bet, I'd like to make sure people like him don't have guns."

Yet he didn't budge from his belief that new anti-gun laws are not the answer.

"There seems to be a wave of evil passing through America now and we as a society can pass laws and hold people accountable for the decisions they make, but our hopes and prayers have got to be that there is more love in society," he said.

"This man obviously was acting as a result of evil in his heart," Bush said. "I would hope that Americans would collectively pray

for love in people's heart."

Like most Republicans generally in line with the National Rifle Association, Bush said current laws need to be enforced. Punish people who illegally sell guns or who commit crimes with a gun; keep weapons out of the hands of felons and mentally ill people; ban certain assault weapons and require background checks at gun shows, he said.

However, he embraced a GOP-backed bill in the House this year which the White House and gun-control advocates said would weaken existing laws governing gun shows. Democrats in Texas criticize Bush for failing to back a state gun show bill, though the governor said federal law made the measure unworkable.

Bush said that "most Americans want somebody reasonable who has a rational view" of the topic.

He canceled the remainder of his Michigan trip, including a gathering of state Republicans on Mackinaw Island.

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