

RECLAIMING OUR YOUTH FROM VIOLENCE†

THE REVEREND JESSE JACKSON*

There is a sense in which many of us express anxiety or cynicism and some fear because of the results of the November 1994 elections. Those who have very high expectations in Congress have a great sense of disappointment about the elections. Fundamentally, the members of Congress are simply rotating chairs and name plates on furniture. The walls are not expanding, just chairs rotating. Yesterday's majority leaders will be tomorrow's lobbyists. They submitted their resumes with yesterday's GATT vote. Yesterday's minority leaders will be tomorrow's majority leaders; so that the elephant and the donkey will keep dancing to a tune quite different than the tune of city hall steps, of churches, of rural farms, of the labor union halls, of the corners where the desperate do perish.

Our youth are the most precious resource that we have—they will make the decisions that will shape our future. They are our future. The destiny of our country and our hope of the future lie in their hands. But more than that, the children are our future. They are also our "right now." They are our joy and our pain right now. They are our hope and our hurt right now. They are our crisis and our creation right now.

Today, there seems to be a cultural assault on our youth. A barrage of negatives describe them: "at risk," "on the edge," "X generation," "ticking time bomb," "angry." Our expectation for them is low. The lives we often live in front of them, the example we set for them, is often low. We provide for them glorified mass media sex, without love—leading at least to unhealthy and unwanted babies. We offer them commercialized violence, easy access to guns and drugs, and mindless materialism as a value system; and they respond—shootings in schools, drugs, teenage pregnancies, HIV, AIDS, diseases.

We become angry with the children and offer orphanages for them, street corners for their unwed mothers and a twenty-four-hour-a-day, big, anonymous industrial jail complex for their fathers. All of these are attacks upon our children. These jails are not built for senior

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* President, National Rainbow Coalition. Keynote Address delivered at Boston College Law School, December 3, 1994. The footnotes in this address were researched by the staff of the *Boston College Law Review*. The *Review* is responsible for any errors of citation or substance.

citizens. They are not built for the wealthy. Only a few penthouses in the jails are reserved for the more-than-corrupt politicians who find themselves caught every now and then. These are our children under attack.

We subject our children to violence from the day they are born. Their parents beat them. They watch fathers beat mothers. They watch beatings and stabbings and shootings on television and at the movies all of their lives. It's no wonder that today violent crime among youth has reached epidemic proportions. They simply mirror the activity and languishing patterns and values of the adults in power. They don't have the power to arrest the adults that they imitate, or to get PAC money and get lobbyists to challenge the adults that they emulate and imitate. They are mirror reflections of the adult population, and those who have power can maim them and put names on them and make them walk under the battering weight of those names.

Gingrich should understand these children's situation; Quayle may not because of the cultural or class divide, but Gingrich should understand. All these titles that sociologists have come up with have reasonable application to Gingrich: dysfunctional family, adopted, poor, at risk, stepfather, angry, recycled divorce, ticking time bomb, X factor, rage. Gingrich should understand the burden of breaking this circle. Plus, according to Murray's definition,¹ Gingrich is at the bottom of the curve with the rest of us, he should understand, he comes from the bottom of that curve. Gingrich is a desperate father engaging in overcompensating behavior, trying to crash the rich that always rejected him. He's upwardly mobile, seeking a comfort zone of privilege from those who offer the privileges, the perks, the PACs and the private planes.

These children look very much like those who were there to lead them. There are some things that we know about this crime business, two things specifically. One, that we have spent a lot of money over the past decade trying to reduce crime; and two, what we've done has not worked very well. If we've learned nothing else, hopefully we have learned that we must do at least some things differently.

What have we done over the past decade? Well, we've increased our prison population by 160%² at a cost of between \$20,000 and

¹ RICHARD J. HERRNSTEIN & CHARLES MURRAY, *THE BELL CURVE: INTELLIGENCE AND CLASS STRUCTURE IN AMERICAN LIFE* 269-315 (1994) (arguing low scores on intelligence tests reflects genetically and environmentally influenced differences in cognitive ability).

² Mark Pazniokas, *Tough Stands on Crime May Ignore Reality*, *HARTFORD COURANT*, Oct. 20, 1994, at A1.

\$60,000 per inmate annually.³ And, of course, once we increased the prison population, we had to build more prisons.⁴ We've executed more people in the past decade.⁵ We know that when you include the cost of trials and appeals it costs more to execute a person than to imprison him or her for life.⁶ We've transferred more juveniles to the adult criminal justice system.⁷

In 1992, the United States had the highest incarceration rate in the entire world, higher than South Africa and the former Soviet Union: the arrest rate in the world was about 100 per 100,000; in the former Soviet Union, it was 268 per 100,000; in Apartheid South Africa, it was 314 per 100,000; in America, it was 450 per 100,000.⁸ Among young blacks, the arrest rate is over 1600 per 100,000 juveniles;⁹ in the inner city, the arrest rate for those under age twenty-five is almost 3000 per 100,000,¹⁰ the highest arrest rate on earth. The arrest rate for violent crime among juveniles has tripled since 1965,¹¹ and we're the

³ See Jill Smolowe, . . . *And Throw Away the Key*, TIME, Feb. 7, 1994, at 54 (placing average cost per inmate at \$23,500, and average cost per inmate at maximum-security facilities at \$74,862 per year); see also BUREAU OF JUSTICE STATISTICS, U.S. DEPT. OF JUSTICE, SOURCEBOOK OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE STATISTICS—1993, at 13 (Kathleen Maguire & Ann L. Pastore eds., 1994) (listing average annual operating expenditures per inmate for state and federal facilities) [hereinafter DOJ 1993 SOURCEBOOK].

⁴ Smolowe, *supra* note 3, at 54.

⁵ Legal Defense Fund Capital Punishment Project, *Execution Update*, Fall 1994, at 2 (noting that 137 executions were completed between 1990 and 1994 as compared to 117 between the reinstitution of capital punishment in 1976 and 1989).

⁶ David Yepsen, *What's the Price of Executing a Killer*, DES MOINES REG., Nov. 7, 1994, at 2.

⁷ NATIONAL CENTER FOR JUVENILE JUSTICE, U.S. DEPT. OF JUSTICE, OFFICE OF JUVENILE JUSTICE DELINQUENCY PREVENTION JUVENILE COURT STATISTICS 1991, at 12 (1994) (noting 39% increase between 1987 and 1991 in number of juvenile cases transferred to criminal, or adult, justice system) [hereinafter OJJDP COURT STATISTICS].

⁸ MARC MAUER, THE SENTENCING PROJECT, AMERICANS BEHIND BARS: ONE YEAR LATER 4 (1992). An update published in September 1994 showed that Russia has overtaken the United States, jailing 558 of every 100,000 citizens, even though the U.S. rate of incarceration rose to 519 per 100,000, with South Africa still in a distant third place at 368 per 100,000. MARC MAUER, THE SENTENCING PROJECT, AMERICANS BEHIND BARS: A COMPARISON OF INTERNATIONAL RATES OF INCARCERATION, 1992–1993, at 4 (1994).

⁹ OJJDP COURT STATISTICS, *supra* note 7, at 28, 89 (dividing arrest rates for juveniles classified as "black" by total juvenile population results in an arrest rate of 1621 per 100,000 juveniles).

¹⁰ FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION, U.S. DEPT. OF JUSTICE, UNIFORM CRIME REPORTS FOR THE U.S. 1993, at 242 (1994) (dividing the number of arrests of individuals under age 25 by the estimated population results in a rate of 2859 arrests per 100,000) [hereinafter 1993 UNIFORM CRIME REPORTS].

¹¹ DOJ 1993 SOURCEBOOK, *supra* note 3, at 447 (noting arrest rate per 100,000 inhabitants for violent crime for those under age 18 increased from 57.9 in 1965 to 209.4 in 1992).

only country in the Western World to execute juveniles.¹² We share this dubious honor with countries like Iraq and Saudi Arabia.¹³

But despite all the people who have been contained and executed and all the money that has been spent, can we honestly say that we have significantly reduced crime in the country? Most people will tell you that they do not feel safer today than they did ten years ago. Most people agree that the problems have gotten worse, especially the problem of violent crime among our young people.¹⁴

Yet despite the failure of the very expensive non-remedies of the past decade, we are apparently, amazingly enough, continuing to throw good money after bad. The recently passed federal crime bill authorizes expenditure of \$30.2 billion.¹⁵ Over seventy-five percent of its funding is for prison and law enforcement.¹⁶ It also enacts over fifty new death penalty provisions.¹⁷ Despite all the fuss about "pork" and midnight basketball, only \$6.9 billion, a mere twenty-three percent of the funding, is committed to prevention.¹⁸ And now Gingrich, Dole, Jesse Helms and Gramm intend to cut that out.¹⁹

So what should we be doing about this crime problem and about juvenile crime in particular? Apparently, even the experts disagree. They disagree on the causes of crime, and they disagree on the solutions. Some say the causes lie entirely with the parents and the child's upbringing.²⁰ Some say the causes are the result of social problems and

¹² See AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL, UN MEMBER STATES AND THEIR POSITIONS ON THE DEATH PENALTY FOR CRIMES COMMITTED BY PERSONS BELOW 18 YEARS OF AGE 1-13 (1994) (noting that over the last 10 years nine individuals in the U.S. have been executed for crimes they committed while less than 18 years of age) [hereinafter AMNESTY REPORT]. In *Stanford v. Kentucky*, the United States Supreme Court held that neither a "historical nor a modern societal consensus" forbade the imposition of capital punishment on any person who murders at 16 or 17 years of age. 492 U.S. 361, 380 (1989). The dissent disagreed and stated that to take the life of a person for a crime committed before they were eighteen years old was cruel and unusual punishment. *Id.* at 382 (Brennan, J., dissenting).

¹³ See AMNESTY REPORT, *supra* note 12, at 6, 11.

¹⁴ Walter L. Upegrave & Amanda Walmac, *You're Safer Than You Think*, MONEY, June 1, 1994, at 114 (indicating that 88% of a representative adult sample of the U.S. population felt that crime was at an all-time high).

¹⁵ See Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, Pub. L. No. 103-322, 108 Stat. 1982 (1994).

¹⁶ See *What's in the New Crime Law*, USA TODAY, Sept. 14, 1994, at 11A (compiling the funding figures for the various programs authorized by the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994—\$13.4 billion going to law enforcement and \$9.9 billion for new prisons).

¹⁷ See *id.*

¹⁸ See *id.*

¹⁹ See John Harwood, *Gingrich's Troops, Entering Senate, May Clash with Dole Agenda as They Seek Speedy Change*, WALL ST. J., Nov. 16, 1994, at A30 (noting that second item in the GOP's Contract With America calls for "cuts in social spending from . . . [the 1994] crime bill").

²⁰ DOJ 1993 SOURCEBOOK, *supra* note 3, at 172 (surveying attitudes towards causes of crime).

the environment.²¹ Some want to lock up everyone and throw away the key, and others don't want to hold anybody accountable or responsible for their behavior if they have had a difficult life.²² Like most complex issues in life, neither the causes nor the solutions are easy. Usually, the most effective approach is a comprehensive strategy with a combination of solutions. I'm no expert, but I think I'm right that the causes lie both in the home and the social environment. Likewise, the solutions lie both in preventive measures and in holding people accountable for their behavior. It's not an "either/or" situation.

There are those who say that the problems of crime and juvenile violence are caused by lack of family structure and inadequate parental responsibility and supervision.²³ But how can you separate a family and its internal problems from the social environment in which it lives? Can a mother really give her children the supervision and nurturing they need when she is worried about where the next meal will come from? Can a father spend time with his son when he has to work two jobs just to make ends meet? Can a mother supervise her children after school when she has to work and there is no adult-supervised recreation in her community? Can a mother on welfare work when there are no jobs, and even if she finds a job, there is no day care for her babies or health care for her family?

We know that children who are abused are more likely to commit violent crimes, but isn't it more likely that a mother will smack her child rather than hug him when she has to deal with the daily stresses of a life of poverty and reduced life options? You just can't separate economic justice from crime. You can't separate economic violence from criminal violence. We know that stronger families and more parental responsibility will reduce crime, but we also know that the families can't be strong and parents can't be responsible when there is no money for food, housing, clothing or health care for their children.

Welfare, as we know it, certainly is not the answer. Most people on welfare don't want to be there. They want a job. We want welfare reform. But we don't agree with Mr. Gingrich's way of doing it. He wants to kick unwed minor mothers off welfare very soon and put their children in orphanages if they can't afford to feed them.²⁴ Fourteen

²¹ *Id.*

²² See Richard Lacayo, *Lock 'Em Up!*, TIME, Feb. 7, 1994, at 50 (noting that 81% of those polled in a nation-wide survey favored requiring life imprisonment for anyone convicted of three serious crimes).

²³ DOJ 1993 SOURCEBOOK, *supra* note 3, at 172 (surveying attitudes towards causes of crime).

²⁴ See Harwood, *supra* note 19, at A30 (noting that the third provision of the GOP's Contract With America would deny "welfare [payments] to unwed minor mothers, [and] cut off most

million people are on Aid to Families with Dependent Children, nine million of them children.²⁵ Orphanages and more jails are morally bankrupt and fiscally irresponsible. It sounds more like Nazi Germany and Apartheid South Africa than Democratic America.

The best way to fight crime and welfare is with education and jobs. We want to fight welfare. Welfare is the caboose of America's economic train. Capital formation is the engine. Our priorities are first, *wealth*, second, work—welfare, if all else fails. We all want to be in the dream car, the engine of economic opportunity, and not in the nightmare caboose of recycled welfare and pain.

The engine is where wealth and babies and mortgages and loans and credit and property and choice schools are. The second part is the dining car. It's where jobs and opportunity happen to be. If you're redlined out of the engine, and the dining car is disconnected and rerouted onto the fast track of NAFTA or GATT, enter the inner-city: plants are closing; jobs leaving; tax base eroding; families disintegrating; fathers withdrawing; mothers overburdened; children alienated, estranged, hurting, planning their funerals rather than their futures, driven further never by hope, almost always backwards by fear—and they're trapped in this recycled violence.

And now we've got: the engine, which will lock out all; the dining car, which is derailed; and all those trapped in the caboose; and others who have built a troop train to watch the caboose because it's exploding. We're not fighting for welfare. We're fighting for wealth and jobs, for the American dream, the hope and the possibility.

People are not in the caboose because of genetics or corporate information or laws. They're back there because they've been redlined, assigned to the caboose or kicked off the track altogether. If welfare is the caboose and capital formation is the engine, many people are on welfare because redlining has denied access to capital and credit. If given access to the engine, they could help drive this country's economy. So many of these people have been locked out of the engine and pushed into the caboose as a result of racial discrimination, redlining and other tactics.

welfare after two years"); see also Martha Ezzard, *Next to Newt's Orphanages What's Wrong with Homes for Unwed Fathers?*, ATLANTA J. & CONST., Nov. 21, 1994, at A10 (crediting Newt Gingrich with devising plan to remove children from "welfare mothers" and put them in orphanages).

²⁵ *After Elections, Both Parties Vow to Enact Far-Reaching Changes in Welfare*, BALTIMORE SUN, Nov. 13, 1994, at 22A.

Percy Sutton of New York City was for twelve years the Borough President of Manhattan, an able lawyer, a credible public servant, who purposely left that position as Borough President, who had kept New York's economy running for 12 years, who helped design the cable system arrangement and bring it low. He gathered capital to buy WLIB, a black-oriented radio station. He had to go to six different banks to borrow the money to buy WLIB—locked out of the engine, forced towards the caboose.

So many people have been pushed into the caboose that it has become like a crowded cattle car, affecting behavior patterns and causing people to turn on each other and recycle their pain and become self-destructive. And contrary to what Murray says, it is not because they're genetically inclined to behave this way.²⁶ It is because they have been locked out and crowded in. Instead of moving people out of the caboose and into the engine, the American Dream of self-determination and wealth, or the dining car of opportunity, jobs, capital, and credit, this country has circled the caboose with police, locked people in, and contained them in prisons and jails. The more we have focused just on locking them up and locking them out, the worse the problems have become.

Now, what once was a problem has deteriorated into a condition. Problems can be solved; conditions must be healed. It takes longer, and it costs more. We must make some basic choices. Will we continue down this failed path? Will we lift our children up? Or will we lock them up?

Is three strikes and you're out the answer? If the crime is vicious enough and the person is sick enough, one strike is enough. Why two more strikes? And judges already have that power. The whole angry notion of let's lock him up, put him up, burn him up, is mean-spirited and says something about a shrinking morality and the lack of vision and hope. Shall we not focus rather on four balls and you're on, brothers, rather than three strikes and you're out? If you were a baseball pitcher, bases were loaded in the bottom of the ninth, and you struck out Ted Williams and Willie Mays and Hank Aaron, you'd call yourself a great pitcher. If you struck out three batless, homeless, fatherless children with rickrack bats, you shouldn't feel so wonderful about yourself.

²⁶ HERRNSTEIN & MURRAY, *supra* note 1, at 269-315 (documenting that African Americans score lower on intelligence tests than European Americans and arguing that this disparity reflects genetically and environmentally influenced differences in cognitive ability).

What about four balls and you're on? Prenatal care and Headstart, ball one. We know it works. An adequately funded public education, ball two. Sixty-two percent of those in jail are high school dropouts;²⁷ seventy-five percent are functionally illiterate.²⁸ A marketable skill or access to college, ball three; and the job, ball four; and they're on. Let's lift these children up, not just lock them up. These are *our* children.

We need a formula for development. How do you turn red-lines into green-lines, turn pain into power? When West and East Germany were united—reunited—as one country, West Germany transferred \$100 billion to East Germany for development.²⁹ West Germany made the judgment to lift up East Germany, to have an even playing field because they, in fact, could not have two countries under one flag without having civil war.

Rostenkowski went to Poland, to his motherland, and tried to call the Congress. After six hours, he couldn't get a telephone call through. So how can a country develop, you ask, without basic infrastructure? Poland had been redlined under Communism. Congress put together in 1989 the Polish-American Enterprise Fund, led by the United States, with an eight member board—six Polish Americans including Lane Kirkland and Zbigniew Brzezinski.³⁰ We made \$240 million available to Poland and \$60 million to Hungary.³¹ We made forty-year loans, at three-quarters of one percent, first payment due in ten years. This was designed to greenline a redlined zone and lift them up, not lock them up; and as they rise, our market can expand. It's called a development formula.

Can we do at least as much for Roxbury and Harlem as we do for Poland and Hungary? We must invest in our communities. The cost of not investing is too great. The Children's Defense Fund recently issued a report which shows that it costs \$36 billion a year to keep children in poverty.³² It costs \$36 billion a year to keep them in poverty. Doesn't it make more sense to invest in our children? It costs \$7000 a year to

²⁷ DOJ 1993 SOURCEBOOK, *supra* note 3, at 611.

²⁸ Richard A. Tewksbury & Gennaro F. Vito, *Improving the Educational Skills of Jail Inmates: Preliminary Program Findings*, 58 FED. PROBATION 55, 56 (1994) (citing a Correctional Education Association estimate that 75% of adult American inmates are illiterate).

²⁹ Catherine Bolgar, *East German Investment Rises*, WALL ST. J., Mar. 25, 1994, at A6 (noting that from 1991 to 1993 over \$203 billion had been invested towards developing eastern Germany).

³⁰ See Support for East European Democracy Act of 1989, Pub. L. 101-179, 103 Stat. 1298 (1989).

³¹ 22 U.S.C. § 5421 (Supp. II 1990).

³² Marian Wright Edelman, *Introduction to ARLOC SHERMAN, WASTING AMERICA'S FUTURE—THE CHILDREN'S DEFENSE FUND REPORT ON THE COSTS OF CHILD POVERTY* at xix (1994).

educate them, less than the \$20,000 to \$60,000 a year it costs to keep them in jail.³³

At the Rainbow Coalition, we are on a crusade to reclaim our children. As I travel around the country, I would ask the parents to do just five basic things. Just five things. One, take your child to school; two, meet your child's teachers; three, exchange home numbers—teachers teach children differently when they know the parents and children behave differently when parents and teachers know each other; four, turn the TV off at least three hours a night; and five, pick up the report card every nine weeks. I will say it one more time: Take your child to school. Meet your child's teachers. Exchange home numbers. Turn off the TV at least three hours a night. And pick up your child's report card every nine weeks.

Those who will become the very best in athletics more or less follow such a rhythm. Parents tend to meet the coaches, and the coaches tend to know the parents. Between parents and coaches there is a discipline factor, and they practice at least three hours a day without a radio, TV or telephone. If we spend three hours a night on reading and writing and counting without TV, we will slam-dunk school as we slam-dunk basketballs. It's a matter of priority and values.

That's why it makes more sense to hire 25,000 new coaches than 100,000 new police because students run *to* coaches and run *from* police. Coaches have a much better track record at developing youth than police.

That's why we're trying to get 100 churches in this area—100 churches who will meet with judges—to develop a rapport between ministers and judges. We have this process going on in Washington. One hundred churches will commit to reclaim at least ten youths each year, and to get members of their congregation to accept seven or eight hours for basic mentoring, nurturing, and training. One-hundred churches reclaiming ten youths per year as alternatives to unnecessary jails.

A suburban youth steals a car, smokes pot, or breaks the law, and comes to court on Monday morning, December 5th. A mother is sitting there. A parent, a rabbi or minister is sitting there; and the judge says, "See you in court on January 10th, you are out on your own recognizance." Church, temple, synagogue, parent.

An inner-city youth commits the same crime. May be a good person, may be a bad person, but there's no parent, no infrastructure.

³³ See *supra* note 3 and accompanying text.

December 5th, judge says, "We'll see you in court January 10th, you wait in jail until then."

We can at least provide the infrastructure so the judges will have the righteous alternative if they choose to be just judges. If, in fact, 100 congregations in 100 communities will do just that, that's 100,000 youths to be spared the cost of recycling the pain of going to jail. We must believe in them.

As we lift them up, we must teach them responsibility. As we invest in our children and our communities, we must teach our youth, teach them to resist the temptation to give in to the expectations of those around them. They must stop killing and maiming each other. They must stop walking away from their homes and abandoning the babies that they make. Even though they have been pushed into the caboose and locked out of the engine, they must be encouraged to develop extraordinary strength of character and fortitude. They must be taught the dream.

There's nothing more sinister to me than someone who is a professor or professional or a teacher who tries to tell somebody that they can't make it "because," rather than to make "it in spite of." Much of life is an "in spite of" proposition. Our young people must use what they have to maintain their gains, and they must fight to attain what they need. Many of our young people have athletic talent, not because they are genetically superior, but because they practice and work at it. We would say, "My God, you come from the ghetto, and you have to run and tackle, and you sweat, and others hit you from the blind side sometimes, and the referees are not fast sometimes, and big crowds of people, some of them may be cheering and cheering, and you might jump, and you're poor, and you might come down and hurt yourself real bad, and because you can't walk good, you'd be cripple." Our young people must be recruited not just for the football team at the great university, but for its classrooms as well. They must understand that they are as capable of excelling in the classroom as they are on the basketball court.

We shouldn't convince them to believe that you can't make it "because of"—you must make it "in spite of." That's why if Newt Gingrich can make it—all of them can. Newt comes from a dysfunctional household; Bill Clinton comes from a dysfunctional household; I come from one. And if Newt can make it, and Bill can make it, all of us can make it.

The victims are not responsible for being down. They must be responsible for getting up. The victims are not responsible for being down. They must be responsible for getting up. Any significant structural change has always been led by victims whose spirit was bigger

than the circumstances that subjected them to an unfair predicament. Somehow they determined that their interest in survival and freedom and justice have to conquer the odds.

Slave masters do not retire, nor do they decide to end slavery. The victims must lead the abolition movement and end the slave trade. Oppressors don't retire. The oppressed must change their minds. Pimps don't retire. The prostitutes must regain their character and fight back. Oppressors will live off perks and privileges of oppression. The oppressed must change their minds. The Bible says that we shall be transformed, not by Republicans or Democrats, we shall be transformed by the renewal of our minds.

The number one threat to social progress today among African Americans and poor people, the number one threat, is the cycle of self-destructive violence. Most of the killing and violence is not political, and it's not racial. It's domestic and random.³⁴ Although in numerical terms, it's more white than black, the minority community can least afford to use statistical comparisons to blunt the cutting edge of self-destructive violence.

We have the power right now to stop killing each other. We have the power right now to love each other. We have the power right now to raise a baby, to love the baby that we make. We've got the power right now to study three hours a night without the TV and use our minds as we use our muscles. We've got that power right now.

This self-destructive tool is used against social justice—in what ways? Well, when you add up those who are shot and die, plus those who are shot and injured and don't die—one eye, one leg, one kidney, colostomy bag, brain injury—plus those who have HIV and AIDS—which by and large tend to reflect undisciplined sex or drug use—plus, those in jail who did a shooting—that's self-destructive behavior. We have to break that cycle—it hurts us in two ways. It hurts us because of the obvious pain and time spent in emergency rooms, funerals, and graveyards. It also hurts us because it creates a climate that allows oppressors to rationalize oppressive behavior.

The reason why Dr. King and Gandhi and Mandela put so much focus on non-violence is because you cannot go forward unless you maintain the discipline to keep the struggle alive. Suppose that in the drive from Egypt to Canaan, about halfway through, Moses had to run to the back of the line to stop a couple of killings. By the time he got back up front, the waters might have closed on all of them. You do not stop the great march of freedom because of self-destructive violence.

³⁴ See 1993 UNIFORM CRIME REPORTS, *supra* note 10, at 20 (listing murder circumstances by relationship).

On the march from Selma to Montgomery, the press was trying to find out some dirt on the leaders—if they had found a couple of rapes and a case of sodomy and one or two drug busts between Selma and Montgomery, we would not have gotten the right to vote.

Those who will be free have this burden of discipline, character and determination. This character thing, this modern talk about putting character above color, that is not just liberation, that is real stuff. This character thing—this crime repellent, this violence repellent, this inferiority repellent—this inner something is missing when mom is playing and daddy isn't there.

A partner and friend of mine two days ago said something about the words "home training," and it resounded in my mind. I had not heard the term in a long time. When my friend first explained home training, it simply was that no matter how radical a house was, no matter how abandoned the play lots were, no matter what the segregation was like, no matter how dysfunctional the whole neighborhood was, there was a strength that we all had, a burden on our worst day, to inject that something in our children called home training—don't steal, respect people.

One Christmas, my Daddy got laid off at the bank because he refused to negotiate his dignity away. He worked for Mr. Timbleton, who was all tell pretty near a good man. One Sunday after church, Daddy took my brother and me by the bank. We were about seven or eight years old. He was teaching us how to buff floors and how to empty the garbage cans and then dust off the desks. And he said, "At this bank, if you see a twenty-dollar bill in that can, that's not an accident. That is a test to see if you will steal it. If you cannot resist stealing that twenty dollars, then, son, you cannot keep the key to this bank, and you cannot risk your family's life options for five, ten or twenty dollars." Third-grade man. Home training. Teaching this character thing.

The door opened and Mr. Timbleton walked in with two of his friends, honest and pretty decent guys. He said "Hey, Charlie, come here," and it was in that tone. Daddy kept buffing, and my brother kind of looked up because there were three of them; and Mr. Timbleton said, "Now, Charlie, you heard me," and his friend starts, "and come here." He knew that Daddy had three jobs—at the bank, the lawyer's building, and the judge's office—and all three were his janitorial company. He knew Mama was sick. He knew our family. And then Daddy didn't move, and I had this anxiety that my daddy might react in some violent way or do something that was unpredictable.

Mr. Timbleton said, "Now, Charlie, if you don't come now, I'm going to kick you."

And I saw Daddy stop and take all those keys off his belt and said, "Now, Mr. Timbleton, you take these keys because I can't stop you from kicking me, and you can't take the leg back that let you do the kicking, and I will be in big trouble about you and this damn job, and you're not going to embarrass me in front of my boys. Take all three of these jobs. You know Helen is sick and it's Christmas-time. My dignity is non-negotiable." He had a third-grade education, and Mom was sick, but we didn't have to steal, and Daddy didn't have to politic away his dignity for a job.

I remember going home and Mama said, "We've got to go to the church to the Christmas basket give-away."

Daddy said, "We can't go. We can't go because we don't have any gifts to give away."

Mom said, "The Pastor will be disappointed because we should at least give ourselves. We can at least take the two boys, and we can all sing in the choir, and the Pastor will be glad about that."

So we walked about four miles across town to church. We had no car. We got there that night. They shared fruits and all of us came back without baskets. I will never forget walking up our steps at six Briar Street. We got to the twelfth step, it's where we stayed then, and there were six bags of groceries there. We thought that somebody made a mistake because we lived at 6-A, and 6-B was a duplex house. We said they might have made a mistake, and Mr. and Mrs. Scott said, "No, they left them for you."

We said, "No. They couldn't have left them because we didn't order any groceries; and besides, we couldn't pay for them this time."

Mama said, "I'll tell you. This boy who drives the grocery truck made a mistake. He left these bags here, and if he can't account, he will get fired. We can't let that happen to him, so we'll hold them until he comes back around."

So Dad said, "Jesse, you're in charge of putting these fruits up under the tree and in the kitchen; Helen, we'll put the meat in the freezer until they come, and we will wait." He said to my brother and me, "Now, don't eat these apples and oranges, they are sweet, but they are not yours, and there's a dozen. I know what twelve is, and so don't bother them. Just because we're poor, you don't have to steal and just because you're hungry, you don't have to run out and take what belongs to someone else."

I'm talking about home training. I'm talking about this character thing, this inner something. I remember after about the fourth day, Mr. Davis came in the house, and says, "You know, Helen, these boys are no good."

She said, "What happened this time?"

He said, "Well, you know, all these groceries under the tree and in the kitchen, they wouldn't put them up."

She said, "It wasn't their fault this time. Somebody made a mistake and left these groceries at the house, and we just held them until they would come by."

And he said, "I knew that Charlie was laid off and you were sick, so I got the groceries." Mr. Davis could neither read nor write.

Mama said, "But nobody wrote anything on the basket."

Mr. Davis said, "But you know I can't read and write. I didn't know what was happening, so I brought them by." This character thing.

It's not so instantaneous and so quick and slick, but there is something basic about this thing; and that is why I hope you who are lawyers and judges and social workers will not give up. Don't think these children can't learn it, and don't think it won't pay off. Every time it comes in glorious ways. Sometimes you are exposed to a lot of character and might miss it, like the Rodney King beating a few years ago. The Rodney King beating, that was a racist act. Those four white police beat Rodney King nearly to death, but don't conclude all whites are racists on that basis. Had not George Halliday filmed the beating and taken it public, you would never know Rodney King ever existed.

George Halliday is a hero. Rodney King was the victim, not the hero. We have turned our backs on George Halliday. Somehow he's seen as a betrayer because he exposed a lynching, and, in the end, he couldn't keep it for some perverse joy. That boy had to turn that film in. We know about Rodney King, not because of Rodney King, but because of George Halliday. He was above culture, up to something called character, that thing that comes from down here.

Then when those four police were released, blacks went crazy, and they exploded, they rioted, they rebelled, and you saw four young blacks trying to beat Reginald Denny, a white truck driver, nearly to death, which was the wrong thing to do. Bush called them thugs, trying to appeal to the white spirit, but don't forget this: When that truck driver had been beaten, four young blacks saw it on TV and came from their individual homes and saved him and took him to the hospital where a black doctor performed surgery and saved his life.

Beyond culture—beyond culture is character. The infrastructure of jobs, justice and health care, and that power of wealth on the inside called character and caring and loving. We must go beyond color and up to character. We must invest in our children and lift them up. We must support our families with jobs and education. We must keep hope alive.

Thank you very much.