

Speech by Robert Morgan
Attorney General of North Carolina
Fayetteville Exchange Club
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It is always a pleasure for me to receive an invitation to come to Fayetteville to visit or to speak because when I am here I not only feel like I am among home folks ----- I am among home folks.

You people here in Fayetteville and Cumberland County have been so kind to me over the years and especially during the last several months that I can hardly begin to thank you. Allow me on this occasion to again express my appreciation and tell you how very much we already are enjoying serving as your Attorney General. It is a high honor you have bestowed upon us, and we intend to do everything within our power to merit the confidence you have placed in us and the support which you have given us.

But tonight let us turn our attention to the problems of law enforcement, especially those of the local officers, and the problem of crime prevention in 1969.

Needless to say, the problems confronting law enforcement today are almost overwhelming. The statistics of major crimes, according to the FBI, climb at the amazing rate of 15 to 20 per cent a year. The total number of serious crimes in the United States during 1969 is expected to exceed 4.5 million. I know you have heard that seven serious crimes, including a violent crime, are committed every minute in this country. On the average, some person is murdered every 43 minutes. There is a robbery every 20 seconds, a larceny of \$50.00 or more every 30 seconds.

There is little doubt that the people are concerned about this trend toward lawlessness ---- they are concerned about "crime prevention", the problems of law enforcement, and the responsibility of the people to help make the law enforcement officer's job easier and more effective. But the problem looks so big that many of our people really don't know where

to begin to attack it.----- to curb the rising crime rate,
to make sure that the law is obeyed, and that justice is
available to all of our people.

Where do North Carolinians----- citizens of Fayetteville
and Cumberland County---- begin to attack the increasing crime
rate, a national problem?

Crime, like so many other "national" problems, is a
national problem merely because it is a widespread state and
local problem. And if state and local problems are to be solved,
they must in truth, be solved at home. For unless we solve the
problems of crime in our own localities, they will never be
solved because in the vast majority of cases, crime is committed
in the community of the criminal, and unless he is apprehended
by local officials, chances are great that he will never be
apprehended at all.

There is much misunderstanding about this, for we most often think of crime in terms of riots, massive civil disobedience, and the dramatic encounters between fictional criminals and officers most often portrayed on t.v. and their super-detectives who can see invisible clues and produce criminals and convictions alike out of the crystal ball of pure rational activity. But this is not an accurate picture. Let me read you a passage out of The Challenge of Crime in a Free Society--the report of the president's commission on law enforcement and administration of justice:

" In the present state of police knowledge and organization many crimes are, in fact, not solvable. In the great majority of cases, personal identification by the victim or witness is the only clue to the identity of the criminal. . . . Scientific crime detection, popular fiction to the contrary notwithstanding, at present is a limited tool. . . . By and

large, the most productive kinds of criminal investigation today are first, questioning a person who may have some knowledge of the identity of a criminal and, second, tracing stolen property.

" Successful crime solution also depends on good patrol work. [In Los Angeles, for instance] nine-tenths of the arrests were made by patrolmen rather than by detectives. . . .

" There appears to be a correlation between crime solution and the time it takes for patrol officers to respond to a call. The average response time in cases in which arrests were made is 4.1 minutes. . . . Almost thirty-six percent of all arrests are made within one-half hour of the commission of the crime; more than forty-eight percent are made within two hours.

" What these figures suggest . . . is that rapid arrival by the police at the scene of the crime is of sufficient importance that ways should be found of getting persons with investigative expertise to criminal scenes with the greatest possible rapidity. "

Obviously only a local law enforcement officer can respond to a crime in these ways. Once a crime is "cold," the probability of its solution is very low.

Thus if we are to have effective law enforcement, the public must be made aware of facts such as these. The weight of public opinion must be brought to bear in support of local law enforcement agencies, for we shall not have effective local law enforcement until the people know the problems with which police and sheriffs have to deal. Only then can we expect the

people to provide the support and benefits which local law enforcement agencies must have.

I have pledged that as your attorney general I would use the office as a means of educating the people to the needs of law enforcement agencies on all levels of government, and I hope that our efforts will help to create incentives for local law enforcement agencies such as better pay, retirement and other fringe benefits.

During the last few days we have made several speeches throughout the state urging greater support for law enforcement in this State. Charles Dunn, the new Director of the State Bureau of Investigation, this past week made an average of two speeches a day also urging much needed support. I think he summed the situation up well in a statement to the Raleigh Exchange Club:

"To do the necessary job in crime prevention and law enforcement," he said, "it is going to cost more money."

"The old saying that 'you get what you pay for' has not held true in law enforcement. The people generally have received and are receiving today far more in law enforcement than they are paying for."

But as your attorney general, I propose to make the office of attorney general more responsive to your immediate needs as law enforcement officials. The effect that recent judicial decisions have had on police practices is well known by you all. I have been told that because of those decisions, local law enforcement officials quite often need immediate legal advice on how to deal with a suspected criminal in ways that will not violate his constitutional rights. As attorney

general of North Carolina, I expect to make available in the office of the attorney general, lawyers who will respond immediately to questions from local law enforcement officials about such legal matters, and to make available to local law enforcement officials the full resources of the office of attorney general whenever such aid is requested, for I believe that only in this way can we expect our local law enforcement officials to respond adequately to the growing demands made upon them by the public.

Crime is a national problem, but it is our problem. If America is to preserve its greatness, we Americans must control and reduce the amount of crime being perpetrated within our society. Success in this effort will depend not merely on the efforts of the police, courts, and correction agencies, but upon the interest, cooperation, and participation of schools,

businesses, social agencies, private groups, and especially individual citizens. As attorney general, I intend to utilize the resources of that office to engender this interest, cooperation, and participation, for I believe that the attorney general's office is the only state office that has the resources and authority to engage in these activities and that without such an office, our war against crime cannot succeed and that if we do not succeed, our American way of life cannot endure.