

Text 2

SIMPSON: No, I want you to tell me how you're going to be able to get the Republicans and Democrats in Congress to work together better than these two gentlemen.

PEROT: Oh, I'm sorry. Well, I've listened to both sides, and if they would talk to one another instead of throwing rocks, I think we could get a lot done. And, among other things, I would say, okay, over here in this Senate committee to the chairman who is anxious to get this bill passed, the president who is anxious, I'd say rather than just yelling at one another, why don't we find out where we're apart, try to get together, get the bill passed and give the people the benefits and not play party politics right now. And I think the press would follow that so closely that probably they would get it done. That's the way I would do it. I doubt if they'll give me the chance, but I will drop everything and go work on it.

SIMPSON: Okay, I have a question here.

AUDIENCE QUESTION: My question was originally for Governor Clinton, but I think I would welcome a response from all three candidates. As you are aware, crime is rampant in our cities. And in the Richmond area – and I'm sure it's happened elsewhere – 12-year-olds are carrying guns to school. And I'm sure when our Founding Fathers wrote the Constitution they did not mean for the right to bear arms to apply to 12-year-olds. So I'm asking: Where do you stand on gun control, and what do you plan to do about it?

SIMPSON: Governor Clinton?

CLINTON: I support the right to keep and bear arms. I live in a state where over half the adults have hunting or fishing licenses, or both. But I believe we have to have some way of checking hand guns before they're sold, to check the criminal history, the mental health history, and the age of people who are buying them. Therefore I support the Brady bill which would impose a national waiting period unless and until a state did what only Virginia has done now, which is to automate its records. Once you automate your records, then you don't have to have a waiting period, but at least you can check. I also think we should have frankly restrictions on assault weapons whose only purpose is to kill. We need to give the police a fighting chance in our urban areas where the gangs are building up. The third thing I would say – it doesn't bear directly on gun control, but it's very important – we need more police on the street. There is a crime bill which would put more police on the street, which was killed for this session by a filibuster in the Senate, mostly by Republican senators, and I think it's a shame it didn't pass, I think it should be made the law – but it had the Brady bill in it, the waiting period. I also believe that we should offer college scholarships to people who will agree to work them off as police officers, and I think, as we reduce our military forces, we should let people earn military retirement by coming out and working as police officers. Thirty years ago there were three police officers on the street for every crime; today there are three crimes for every police officer. In the communities which have had real success putting police officers near schools where kids carry weapons, to get the weapons out of the schools, are on the same blocks, you've seen crime go down. In Houston there's been a 15- percent drop in the crime rate in the last year because of the work the mayor did there in increasing the police force. So I know it can work; I've seen it happen.

SIMPSON: Thank you. President Bush?

BUSH: I think you put your finger on a major problem. I talk about strengthening the American family and it's very hard to strengthen the family if people are scared to walk down to the corner store and, you know, send their kid down to get a loaf of bread. It's very hard. I have been fighting for very strong anti-crime legislation – habeas corpus reform, so you don't have these endless appeals, so when somebody gets sentenced, hey, this is for real. I've been fighting for changes in the exclusionary rule so if an honest cop stops somebody and makes a technical mistake, the criminal doesn't go away. I'll probably get into a fight in this room with some but I happen to think that we need stronger death penalties for those that kill police officers. Virginia's in the lead in this, as Governor Clinton properly said, on this identification system for firearms. I am not for national registration of firearms. Some of the states that have the toughest anti-gun laws have the highest levels of crime. I am for the right, as the governor says- -I'm a sportsman and I don't think you ought to eliminate all kinds of weapons. But I was not for the bill that he was talking about because it was not tough enough on the criminal. I'm very pleased that the Fraternal Order of Police in Little Rock, Arkansas endorsed me because I think they see I'm trying to strengthen the anti-crime legislation. We've got more money going out for local police than any previous administration. So we've got to get it under control and there's one last point I'd make. Drugs. We have got to win our national strategy against drugs, the fight against drugs. And we're making some progress, doing a little better on interdiction. We're not doing as well amongst the people that get to be habitual drug-users. The good news is, and I think it's true in Richmond, teenage use is down of cocaine, substantially, 60% in the last couple of years. So we're making progress but until we get that one done, we're not going to solve the neighborhood crime problem.

SIMPSON: Mr. Perot, there are young black males in America dying at unprecedented rates
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PEROT: I didn't get to make a comment on this.

SIMPSON: Yes, I'm getting to that.

PEROT: Oh, you're going to let me. Excuse me.