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CITIZENS
COMMITTEE
ON
THE JUVENILE COURT

APPOINTED BY THE CIRCUIT COURT OF COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS, HARRY G. COMERFORD, CHIEF JUDGE

Gangs, Juvenile Court, And The Community: What Can Be Done?

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Citizens Committee On
Juvenile Court Of Cook County

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Annual Meeting
March 7, 1985

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Gangs, Juvenile Court, And The Community: What Can Be Done?

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INTRODUCTION

The Citizens Committee on the Juvenile Court, established in 1962, is an advisory body to the presiding judge and administration of the Juvenile Court and the administration of the Juvenile Temporary Detention Center. Its members are appointed by the Chief Judge of the Circuit Court, the Honorable Harry G. Comerford, and represent the legal, academic, social service, religious, labor, business, law enforcement, and volunteer communities of Cook County. The committee's interest in the gang problem is generated by its concern for those youth coming before the Court due to gang involvement and for the witnesses, the victims, and families affected by this formidable problem. While the committee acknowledges the complexity of the gang problem and any future solution designed to neutralize its enormous destructive power, members sought to provide a forum in which social service agencies, court personnel, community agencies, and the public could hear from the experts in the field as well as those in charge of fashioning formal responses to the gang problem. To this end, the committee organized its Annual Meeting around the issue of gangs and the options available to citizens and institutions.

The problem of street gangs in Chicago is not new. There is, however, renewed concern over gang activity in the city coupled with the realization that new approaches to fight gangs must be developed.

Street gangs have existed in Chicago from the turn of the century and have been identified with most, if not all, of the city's ethnic groups. After World War II, Chicago's street gangs became better armed and, consequently, more violent. However, not much attention was paid to gang activities in Chicago until the latter half of the 1960s. Thus, for example, no city-wide police unit existed to investigate gangs and their turfs until Mayor Richard J. Daley declared a "War on Gangs," in 1967. Until recently, the war on gangs was seen strictly as a law enforcement function, and the evident inability of the police department to control such violence was regarded throughout these years as an internal police matter that could best be remedied by reorganizing the police department's anti-gang unit. Such reorganizations occurred in 1967, 1968, 1973, 1979, 1980, 1981, and 1983. Obviously, the solution for the city's gang problem between 1967 and 1984 was based on the maxim of organizational cynicism, "When in doubt organize."*

In December 1984 the Chicago Police Department and the city administration decided to develop a new anti-gang strategy that would combine law enforcement efforts with community involvement. Consequently, a Task Force on Youth Crime Prevention, under the

*For a more detailed explanation see Gad J. Bensinger, "Chicago Youth Gangs: A New Old Problem," Journal of Crime and Justice, Vol. VII (1984), pp. 1-16.

chairmanship of Michael Holewinski, was appointed by Mayor Washington to recommend a citywide anti-gang program. During the ensuing months, the task force gathered information and solicited suggestions in meetings with city and county officials, as well as community leaders in 25 city neighborhoods. As explained by Michael Holewinski in this document, a comprehensive anti-gang approach was developed by the task force, which emphasizes community involvement and mobilization, prevention programs, and enforcement activities. Central to this new strategy is a crisis intervention program, based on the Crisis Intervention Network model experimented with and discussed below by Dr. Irving Spergel.

The reactions of the panelists and the other participants, documented herein, manifest both the excitement and the apprehension of some of the people most intimately involved in providing services to the city's youth. Their views deserve to be taken seriously.

Of course, much remains to be learned and experimented with before a more definite solution to Chicago's gang problem emerges. Towards this end, we are pleased to offer this document to the members of the Citizens Committee on the Juvenile Court and any other interested individuals.

Gad J. Bensinger

Marlene E. Stern

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OPENING REMARKS

John J. Casey:

On behalf of the Citizens Committee of the Juvenile Court of Cook County I welcome you to our discussion on "Gangs, Juvenile Court and the Community." The Citizens Committee has been an enigma to some, hope to many others but, by and large, an unknown factor to most. We are a group that has attempted to "unpuzzle," if you would, the problems that arise in the juvenile court. As we work with the problems of "unpuzzling" the difficulties of this system, each and every active member of this committee has acquired a great deal of respect for the dedicated people working within the Cook County juvenile justice system. As I look around this room and see the representatives of so many groups and organizations, I can say with some pride that we have been successful in creating dialogue with and between the various factors that impact upon the court.

Through the years the active members of the Committee have also acquired an understanding of how to bring about change within this juvenile justice system without fanfare and without undue disruption to those working within the system. There are any number of accomplishments of which we, as members of the Citizens Committee, are justifiably proud, but it is not my intent to present you with a list of those accomplishments for that is not our modus operandi. On this fact, you must simply take my word.

Before introducing our guest of honor, Mike Jackson, let me

for just a brief moment speak of our retiring Executive Director, Pat Mannix.

Pat Mannix has been Executive Director of the Citizens Committee on the Juvenile Court for 10 years. She is a direct, forceful person who has given her all to this committee and to this community. We owe her a great deal, and on behalf of this community and particularly all past and present members of this committee allow me to say thank you Pat for a tremendous job. There is, though, one rumor I feel I must put to rest. Pat is not retiring for the purpose of taking advantage of her social security benefits and her county pension. She, in fact, is moving to Atlanta, Georgia, with her husband and I suspect she will be making the same great contribution to that community that she has made to ours.

We are blessed today to have with us Mike Jackson who, in a few short years, has had a tremendous impact upon the channel 7 viewing area. I don't know how many of you have had occasion to view Mike Jackson on his nine o'clock Sunday morning interview show but he is outstanding. He has won three Emmy awards in the last four years and I am sure will be the recipient of many more. Mike attended the University of Illinois, did his graduate school work at Northwestern University and then joined WLS-TV as a political reporter in December of 1983. Some of you might remember when he was with WMAQ-TV on Monitor 5. The man is outstanding and I am sure that you will enjoy our program today-"Gangs, Juvenile Court and the Community: What Can Be Done?"

PANELISTS' REMARKS AND AUDIENCE DISCUSSION

Mike Jackson:

I do not want this to be an academic discussion; I want it to be time for us all to share opinions, impressions, and concerns we have so that, whether we are from community groups, the judiciary, the gangs, or whatever, we will have a little better understanding of what drives us all. The theory behind this is, of course, that we will have a better understanding of where our common interests lie and how we can move together to make this a better town to live in.

First, let me introduce the people who are going to sit up here. In no special order, they are: the Honorable Arthur Hamilton, Presiding Judge of the Juvenile Division of The Circuit Court of Cook County; Michael Holewinski, Chairman of the Mayor's Task Force on Youth Crime Prevention; Jaime Rivera, Team Administrator and Creative Arts Specialist for Youth Guidance; Luis V., a former gang member, and Irving Spergel, Professor in the School of Social Service Administration at the University of Chicago. I want to have Dr. Spergel get us started with some of his thoughts on an issue that is of particular concern to him. You may know that he has been instrumental in a demonstration program, which is trying to alleviate some of the problems of gang crimes, and that he is widely quoted as one who has studied gang violence across the country.

I want ideas to come out of this meeting. I have, therefore, encouraged all the panel members to interrupt each other if they feel a need to do so, so that we can generate ideas during the time we are together.

DR. IRVING SPERGEL:

I am pleased to be here and hope I can make some contribution to the discussion. I want to do three things: One is to give you some general background, particularly statistics, about the gang problem in Chicago. Another is to discuss the CRISP Project briefly, and then finally, to look at some implications possibly for probation.

What is the gang problem? We have difficulties defining it. What a gang problem is in this city may not be a gang problem in other cities. What we are talking about essentially is what the police define as a gang problem in Chicago, that is, young people, essentially, in one gang involved in some kind of conflict with the young people in another gang. For example, if a couple of gang members go into a jewelry store, rob it, and shoot the owner, that is not a gang problem in this city, although it is a gang problem in Los Angeles. I think Chicago's definition is a good one. It focuses specifically on the problem. However, we need to have also data--not yet available--on the delinquent or criminal things that gang members do that may not be gang related. Okay, so we're talking about gang incidents as reported to and defined by the police, mainly certain Part I serious crimes including gang related homicide, robbery, aggravated assault and aggravated battery; and Part II gang crimes, including simple assault, simple battery, intimidation, possession of weapon, and gang recruitment.

We need also to disabuse ourselves of the notion that gang crime is primarily a juvenile problem. It is mainly an older adolescent and young adult problem. Based on analysis of twenty months of recent gang crime data (1982-1984) from four high gang crime police districts, dealing with 1,400 cases involving about 4,000 young people, the mean age of the offender was 18; the median age was 17; 61.5 percent of the gang crime offenders were 17 years of age and older. Eighty-five percent of the offenders were between 16 and 19 years. In other words, the gang problem is a youth problem, but it does not very well fit Juvenile Court jurisdiction. This is not to deny that children and youth join gangs and manifest gang problems at an earlier age. Some research suggests that delinquency may be a first stage and gang crime a later stage. Gang youth are characterized by a strong sense of failure. They are not in a school, have troubles at home, no jobs. The gang becomes an organization of social and emotional support for them. It also gets them into a lot of trouble.

Finally, in respect to the age issue, we should note that the average age of the gang homicide offender is 19 years. The victim is about 20. Eighty percent of gang homicides are not committed by juveniles. So one needs to get an appropriate perspective on what we mean by youth gang crime. The Chicago police still identify the problem as teenage gang crime. In a sense, they are correct; in another sense, they are not. It is

predominantly an older adolescent and young adult problem.

In terms of gender, the gang problem directly involves primarily males. About 95 percent of the offenders of Part I and Part II gang crimes are male. Victims are mainly male, although females are relatively more often victims than offenders. While females are sometimes part of or closely affiliated with male gangs, they tend not to be directly involved in gang violence. The issue of whether they contribute indirectly to gang tension or rivalry, conceal weapons, or in other ways cause gangs to fight, is not clear.

The gangs in Chicago, at the present time, are mainly Hispanic and black. Hispanic gangs tend to be multiracial or multiethnic. Black gangs are essentially all black. This largely reflects neighborhood residential patterns in Chicago. These two ethnic and racial gangs comprise about 90 percent of the gang problem. The gang problem exists in many parts of Chicago. But it is concentrated in about two or three Hispanic communities, and it is more diffused in the black communities, although centered to some extent around some of the largest public housing projects. It is important to note that some of the lowest-income black communities in the city are not necessarily the most violent gang crime communities. Many low-income black communities are residentially stable. There is only a limited correlation between the problem of violent gangs and the problem of poverty. The gang problem is also related to

the acculturation problem of populations new to the city. Earlier this century, the Irish, the Italians, the Jews, and other poor non-urban populations coming into the cities, had special difficulties of acculturation. Some of their kids end up in gangs.

We should note that the gang problem at the present time is becoming increasingly severe in the black community. The observation is based on gang homicides, probably our most reliable statistics. Between 1978 and about 1981, gang homicides were mainly Hispanic; about 60 percent of the offenders were Hispanic and 30 percent were black. Blacks, to some extent, were under represented as a proportion of total population in gang crime during that period. Since 1980 or 1981, the pattern had changed. The problem has gotten absolutely and relatively more serious in the black community and has somewhat stabilized in the Hispanic community. Thus, the gang problem has grown worse. Between 1981 and 1984, that is four years, we had a total of 283 gang homicides, an average of 71 gang homicides per year, which is the highest we have had in the city since records were kept, i.e., since 1967. The next highest four-year period was between 1969 and 1972 when we had 233 gang homicides, or average of 58.

There are major social facts related to the gang problem. The first is that there are lots of weapons around. Eighty percent of gang homicides involve use of a handgun. I am not sure that our young people are any more hostile or aggressive

than they used to be. But they do have access to more sophisticated weaponry, at least the older teenagers do. This relates to the second social fact. We probably have more older gang members than we have had at any time since World War II. Our older teenagers used to be able to grow out of gangs, but this is now more difficult. Where can they go? The job market has changed. Core or persistent gang members are not trained; they are poorly educated. They have few family ties or controls. They are not attached to existing institutions. The gang serves as an alternative institution for those who have not made it. The gangs with their older membership are becoming a base for the creation of sources of illegitimate income. The gangs are more organized than they used to be, although it would be a mistake to assume that most are highly organized. They remain, largely, loosely knit associations.

If you are interested in causes of violent gangs, we may identify and speculate about a combination of factors: the weakness of the family ties and supports, the fragmentation and instability of community structure which results either from immigration of new and unacculturated populations, and from reduced community agency supports, controls, and social opportunities in the older black ghettos.

I want to turn to a discussion of our CRISP Project. A couple of years ago, I was concerned with the small size of our community organization training program at The School of Social

Service Administration. We did not have enough community organization students, and one of the ways to attract them was to provide additional scholarship help. I approached the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services for such assistance and also to see if we could not simultaneously do something about the gang problem. Originally, I was interested in funding for a community organization training and gang project in conjunction with the police department. But that did not work out. Instead, the Department suggested that we try something new in the Humboldt Park area. We had already initiated some research in the area the prior year and had some community contacts. We thought we would try a street work approach and adapt a model that seemed to have been successful in Philadelphia. That CIN or Crisis Intervention Network model was converted into something we called Crisis Intervention Services Project - CRISP. We did certain things that they did and certain things they did not do. We did not have all their money, and we did not have as sophisticated a communication system. We were not very mobile, and we depended for staff a little bit more on former gang leaders who were highly committed to resolving the gang problem. (We also used our own graduate students along with these former gang leaders.) However, we did not start from scratch. There were already preliminary community efforts developed particularly around the Puerto Rican Festival to deal with this particular problem through improved security, i.e., keeping the park calm

during the five or six days of festival in June. We had one key project objective: It was to reduce gang violence. I think some of the prior projects and some of the prior research erred because they assumed that one needed to deal with the whole package of delinquency, gang violence and non-gang-related violence. But it is too difficult to achieve all that. I think some of the newer approaches, particularly the one in Philadelphia, pull the problem apart. Evidence suggests that we can deal somewhat more effectively with gang violence than with delinquency generally. Gang violence may be a less difficult problem to deal with than other kinds of criminality, not that these forms of deviance are unrelated, but I believe they are separable for policy and program purposes.

The project involved six former gang leaders, four of our own students, and a couple of part-time staff: a programmer-researcher-secretary, as well as myself for \$135,000. The project lasted for a year, from late September, 1983, to early September, 1984. They worked 20 to 35 hours a week. Teams of workers were on the streets between six in the evening and twelve midnight or one in the morning every day. The intervention approach was situational. In part it was kind of sophisticated babysitting: keep guys from shooting each other and retaliating. The youths admitted they did not want to get shot. They were ambivalent about violence. They knew they could get hurt, but they could not control events. They could not control themselves

or the other guys, so our community workers were there, moving around, talking to the fellows, advising them, preventing retaliation. The workers were able to move across the gang coalitions. We had contact with all the key gangs in the area. Our community workers had reputations and current influence. They had served time for very serious gang crime offenses, but all had demonstrated experience in either social agencies or in volunteer services in efforts to help youths in the community. During the entire Project period, they were not in any trouble. They were efficient. They were very helpful, with the aid of the graduate students, in dealing with the gang problem through a crisis and mediation approach.

Another element of the program was cooperation from the police department. There were frequent meetings with Commander Pleines and his Gang Crime Unit. The Youth Division referred 58 juveniles, 14 to 16 years old, for Project service. They were arrested and referred to the Project for minor offenses such as graffiti writing, disorderly conduct, or simple assault. We worked with about half of them, the other half was a comparison group. The total group accounted for 570 offenses including not only minor but also serious crimes of arson, kidnapping, aggravated assault and battery, robbery. One juvenile had 59 prior offenses, three others had 24 or more. Some had served time in institutions, so in fact, many were serious offenders. We worked with some of them intensively, particularly those who

were already known to us from the streets. We counseled them, went to their homes and schools, tried to get them into decent programs and find for them part-time jobs.

Our third program component was assisting local neighborhood groups to mobilize to deal with the problem. We worked with some block clubs or neighborhood groups in terms of accepting individual referrals, mediating conflicts with gangs, supporting a variety of neighborhood efforts, including expunging graffiti, parades and fairs dealing with the problem. We worked closely with some of the churches and schools. In fact, we were in one of the local high schools almost every day for several months and getting kids not to wear colors, resolving fights, bringing some of the kids to school, helping cool out threats from gangs to kids who were trying to go to school. However, we did not organize block clubs or tenant groups, or mobilize local citizens. Our efforts were in fact limited by time, resources, and a relatively fragmented community.

Our fourth component was something that Betty Begg and the Department of Human Services helped us with: A Project Advisory Committee of all the key formal community agencies and organizations that could deal with the gang problem, including juvenile and adult probation, various police units, local public and private agencies, neighborhood groups, churches--the Protestant and Catholic churches were all fully involved. Representatives from the Mayor's Office, the Board of Education,

and local legislators occasionally showed up at the Advisory Committee meetings. We were getting about 35 to 40 people coming in on a regular basis every month to look at the program, react to it, perhaps to examine or re-examine what they themselves could do about the problem. A major community-wide conference on gangs was successfully organized toward the end of the Project period. It was a good effort and had citywide policy mobilization implications consequences.

The evaluation of CRISP was greatly aided by the interest and support of the Gang Crime Unit, Chicago Police Department. Evaluation of ten months of Project operations indicated a statistically significant relative reduction in Part I Crimes, particularly aggravated assault and aggravated battery, in the target area, compared to the remainder of the 14th and 25th Police Districts. The Project also did a little better in the target area in respect to the serious gang crimes compared to the 10th and 13th Districts. The reduction of Part I and to some extent Part II offenses was especially marked in respect to juveniles and those parts of the target area where youths received intensive services.

We also evaluated effects of the program on individual youths referred by the Police Department's Youth Division. The results here were somewhat similar to those at the aggregate level, at least in respect to Part I gang-related crimes. None of the juveniles receiving intensive service were involved in

Part I crimes during the ten-month Project operations period. However, there was no effect on Part II or the less serious gang-related crimes. Also, there may have been a slight, but not statistically significant, balloon effect on non-gang-related crime, such as burglary, theft and drug possession. Our individual level data suggest a strong positive effect in respect to reduction or control of serious gang-related violence, but little effect on non-gang-related juvenile crime.

I come now to implications of the Project for probation service. It seems to me that probation and parole can play a very important role in the control and prevention of crime by gang youths. An intensive outreach approach to serious and violent juvenile gang offenders is required. Probation can supply increased community supervision of gang youths prone to involvement in non-gang (as well as gang-related) crime. These youths are often in and out of jail and institutions. Probation can provide not only social support but important social controls preventing these youths from further acts that are destructive both to the youths themselves as well as to the community. Appropriate use of detention and short stays of reinstitutionalization may not be inappropriate and certainly cost effective. Such a probation approach should be highly coordinated if not integrated with the city's contemplated crisis intervention approach. The specific elements of a juvenile probation program with this population should be unique to the city and county;

nevertheless, it can draw and improve on the models already developed in Los Angeles and Philadelphia, and perhaps elsewhere.

Finally, it seems to me, a balanced, coordinated, justice system approach is essential for dealing effectively with the serious gang problem. An approach in which only two units of the system--the police and the state's attorney's office--mainly carry out responsibility for attacking the problem is insufficient. In fact, probation is well positioned to deal effectively with the repeat violent juvenile offender, who is often a gang member.

Jackson:

Thank you very much. Mike Holewinski, please, very quickly, respond to Dr. Spergel's notions and relate it to what is going to happen in a little while.

Holewinski:

I became familiar with Dr. Spergel's program about seven or eight months ago in a series of meetings in the Humboldt Park community. When we looked around at what was being done in the city, it was obvious that the problem was not being abated, that it was still with us. Even though we had instituted a pilot project gang control program through the Chicago Police Department, we were still unsettled as to whether this was an all inclusive approach. So we were looking for different options, and Dr. Spergel's program is one that we did review.

What the administration will propose this afternoon* is a slightly broader concept. As you heard, I think, the Crisis Intervention Services Project focused very heavily on minimizing the violence--stopping the killing, trying to deal with that. That is an important objective. But in structuring a plan for the entire City of Chicago, it was our feeling that other communities set other priorities for dealing with young people. There are probably two differences that I would like to lay out. One is that we are not going to focus simply on hard-core gang members. If you look at youth crime statistics, there are crimes committed in substantial numbers by young people who are not members of gangs, so we want to view the program in a broader fashion.

Secondly, with regard to intervention, we are going to propose to the City Council that the city establish a centralized communication system for dealing with young people, for enhancing our ability to network all of the existing youth service agencies in the city, and that we incorporate in the project the use of street workers or outreach workers to work in the communities in dealing with and reaching out to young people.

It is our view that these teams will do different things in

*Editor's Note: A news conference was scheduled by Mayor Washington that very afternoon to unveil some of the preliminary conclusions of the Task Force on Youth Crime Prevention.

different communities. In some communities their focus will by necessity be directed to minimizing the violence and trying to stop that very serious problem. In others, they may be more proactive in linking young people up to other support programs that may exist in the community for people with serious family problems or alcohol and drug abuse. Our overall objective is to rely on existing strong community networks in Chicago, to be proactive in terms of reaching out to young people, rather than be reactive in terms of waiting for them to come into the system or stumble into the system in some fashion or another.

We propose to do two things initially. One is to create a network, which we are calling for now the Chicago Intervention Network. It will centralize communication and outreach. Secondly and simultaneously, we propose to fund community agencies, and maybe some new projects, in several areas. For example, in the areas of youth development (kind of broadly defined to include employment opportunities, after-school programming, recreational programming), victim/witness assistance (because one thing we heard as we went all over the City of Chicago is that victims and witnesses do not have enough confidence in the system to step forward and participate and that it is an increasing problem in terms of going forward with prosecutions in both the adult and juvenile courts) and family support programs (those family support programs would be geared to dealing with another problem that was raised consistently as

we went through Chicago's communities; namely the difficulty that some parents have in dealing with their children, the feeling of isolation that they may have and the overall problems of family discord). So we would be looking for community-based programs to deal with these problems. Obviously, employment opportunities are tied into the summer employment program.

That broadly is what we propose to do at this juncture. It is initially a \$2 million program, about half of which is intended to enhance community services. We view it as a collective effort.

Let me make just one other point. The City of Chicago was not in this alone. Many people worked on the task force, representing many state agencies and private agencies. The state's attorney's office participated too. The City's pocket is not bottomless. We do not propose to come up with a panacea. Many other agencies that have participated have indicated their interest in pooling resources. That's what we are really interested in. We are interested in getting agencies that fund projects in these areas at the same table to set priorities and make sure we do not duplicate each other. To the extent limited resources are available, we want to steer them to Chicago's neighborhoods to make sure that there is a meaningful structure for alternatives for young people.

Jackson:

Questions for Mr. Holewinski?

Audience Participant:

I am a probation officer at Juvenile Court. You mentioned the victim. I am wondering, how do we protect these victims? They are the ones who are really the fearful ones, since the gangs come back. You mentioned that only slightly. I am worried about them also.

Holewinski:

Well, we are not going to propose a model program, but several programs in that regard have been suggested. Just recently we sent out a request for proposals asking community groups to define for us what type of support mechanisms for victims they would recommend. One thing that seems obvious to us is that there is a need to intervene at an earlier point in time. For instance, when the victim is hospitalized. That is probably the point at which somebody in authority ought to be there to make sure that victims understand the way the system works. To make sure that the trauma is dealt with not only in terms of the medical things that are already in place. And also, and to some extent this feeds into Dr. Spergel's approach, maybe try to minimize retaliation, where the person in the hospital to whom one is reaching out, is a gang member who was just shot. Dr. Spergel's program did this very successfully in a couple of instances. So, again, we do not have a defined program that we want to specify for every community in Chicago. I think it is going to take on a different complexion in different areas.

Audience Participant:

I am from the University of Chicago. Let me just further that point. The program sounds so diffused. No focus, no goal. No way for knowing whether your money is making any difference. How will you know whether you are doing any good?

Howewinski:

Well, I am not sure exactly how you can measure this. One of the tendencies in terms of measuring any such program is to gear everything to the homicide rate. I think that is a very problematic measure. The choices before the committee were to deal with just the hard-core gang members or broaden the program so as to also deal with young people in general. It was our observation, from what we heard in Chicago's communities and from what we have heard from the political establishment in terms of fifty City Council members, that a narrowly focused program would have, first of all, very little chance of success, and, secondly, would not get the allocation of resources. It is my feeling that what this does is allow us to start support a number of pilot projects and, on a broad range, decide what is successful in the long run, without putting all our eggs in one basket.

Jackson:

Political reporters have to ask this question. You are saying that from a political standpoint you could not get the money to do this unless it were broad enough that everybody could....

Holewinski:

I think that that would represent an additional difficulty and be a very difficult thing to sell to the Chicago City Council.

Audience Participant:

I am with the State's Attorney's Citizens Task Force. My questions is kind of drastic. What do you think about changing the term "Gang"? You know, every remark is about a "gang". Maybe some of these smart people could think of a new approach, a new word, and try to make it kind of positive. And then the other thing is that nobody wants to talk about what is going on in our living rooms every day. There are some terrible stories, showing how to kill in different ways every day. This is very important, and I think everybody ought to work on it.

Holewinski:

It should be obvious to everybody, and I am sure it is to every one here, that there is no magic solution for this problem. Dr. Spergel, when he talked about the causes for gang development and gang crimes said that it revolved around the weakness of family, weakness of community, lack of opportunity, etc. Interestingly enough, Dr. Spergel and I, and I know some of the other people here, were at a symposium last week in which a Harvard professor traced approaches to gang violence back to 1922. Only a finite set of approaches have been defined. Some have been modestly successful. Most often, however, there is a

difficulty in quantifying the results.

Audience Participant:

I am a probation officer and education advocate for the Juvenile Court in Cook County. My vested interest in terms of gang problems is in and around schools. There certainly is a high rate of intimidation of students coming to and from school, and I am wondering, in terms of the programs that are being projected, how active has the Chicago Board of Education been in planning and identifying the problems either in a particular school area or in neighborhoods where somehow those schools can be considered "safe ground"? I also hope that some type of in-service training be done with the principals and staffs in those schools on an intensive basis because many do not recognize that they have gang problems. They are not even familiar with gang colors.

Holewinski:

Without question, the major institution dealing with young people is the school system, and that is where a tremendous amount of attention ought to be directed. With regard to your comments on safe zones, what I have given you is really a broad brush of the system that we intend to propose. But we are going to be making other recommendations. One will be legislative, and to that extent, one of the things that Mayor Washington intends to support in Springfield is legislation that creates disincentives to engage in that kind of criminal activity around

schools. In other words, to try to lead us in the direction of school areas being safe zones. The reality is, though, that we are not going to rely simply on increasing penalties under the law. We want to have a fuller approach. The police department attempts to work very closely with the system in identifying those problems. There has been mixed successes and some failures. We are working with the School Board now as part of this effort to try and make sure that this is an integrated approach.

Jackson:

Dr. Spergel, if I may, I remember from reading some of the things that you have written that around 70 percent of the violent crime related to gangs occurs around schools. In light of that, is this an appropriate legislative response or not?

Spergel:

I think the statistic is correct in one sense. There have been a couple of studies on the number of gang crime arrests on school grounds or within the school itself, and in Chicago the figures run around 7 or 8 percent, which is very small, and it may not be accurate. One of the problems is the reporting of gang crime. Much depends on whether the school reports. Some schools in the city have limited gang problems, and are reporting or calling the police all the time. I know one school that reported two gang crimes over the course of a year, and we were there almost every day for a period of months trying to deal with

the gang problem. So the statistics may not be terribly reliable.

Jackson:

In a nutshell, are you supportive of this kind of legislation?

Spergel:

Well, I am supportive of any approach which does two things: 1) supports these kids, helps them deal with the sense that they are social failures; 2) socially controls them. You can not center on one approach or the other. You have to have both approaches. You have to help troubled and troublesome kids, and you have to control them. You must have strong police and court involvement, as well as special social programs for them. You have to protect the good kids and local citizens. A complex approach is required and it can be developed.

Jackson:

This is an important point to make, because often times the response to dealing with this problem is done in one of two fashions; either to go totally with a kind of social work mechanism or to lock everybody up.

Audience Participant:

In regards to the funding, you mentioned it would go to the major agencies throughout the city. There are small community groups that have no funds. They are out there because the City of Chicago is made up of so many different people coming from

different countries - Laotian, Cambodian, people from India, Pakistan, you name it. These children also are getting to the point where they are having to protect themselves from the other ethnic groups, and they are forming gangs. There are small community groups out there dealing with these youngsters trying to help them from becoming gang members. Would it be possible for these small groups to get some funding?

Holewinski:

It is not our intention to place any limit on the size of the group, and if I said large agencies, I misspoke. Any existing agency meeting the legal requirements for dealing with government is eligible. It is our anticipation that a fair number of smaller grants will be made to encourage community crime prevention efforts where people are running CB patrols and that type of thing.

Audience Participant:

Probation officer, Juvenile Court. I would like to ask to what extent will parents be involved?

Holewinski:

That is another thing that was stressed during the community meetings. What we intend to do is to divide the city into nine areas. Each area will have an advisory council which is going to stress parent involvement and parent inclusion in the plan. It will incorporate an attempt to mobilize communities to deal positively with young people, and it is acknowledged that an

incredibly important part of that is parent and community involvement. Over and over again, we heard people say to us "You aren't going to solve this problem. These are our children. These are our neighbors' children, and we have a stake in it." And that is correct. We do not want to replace the neighborhood. We do not want to replace the parent. We want to assist and we are going to put in support mechanisms to try to encourage parents. We are also going to recruit them for the area councils.

Jaime Rivera:

I would like to respond to the question brought up in regards to the schools because I work with Youth Guidance, which is a non-profit social service organization that works in the Chicago public school system. I have been at Clemente High School for ten years, and I administer a team of nine social workers and para-professionals. One of the things that we have noticed, because in our district there is a tremendous gang problem, is a lack of leadership by the Chicago public school system. The district superintendent, the principals and people under them in administration have to begin to provide the leadership in the school system and admit the fact that they have a problem related to gangs. This statement is not meant to offend anybody in the school system, except those who will be offended by it. I am serious. I think that one of the things Dr. Spergel had pointed out is that there are very few statistics

indicating that there are any kind of gang-related offenses coming from the schools. That was the same issue in respect to the dropout rate. We all know that recently it came out in public that the dropout rate in the City of Chicago and also in the state is in excess of 53 percent. Now, what were we getting in terms of official numbers? We were getting 8 percent. We were getting 6 percent. We were getting all these very low figures. Someone has been selling us a bad bill of goods. People need to take responsibility. Who is in charge here? That is one of the key issues that we are beginning to address in the West Town/Humboldt Park area. Let's be fair and honest. Let us not also lay the blame just solely on the parents. We are all equally to blame. All of us. So rather than to lay blame, what we are trying to do now is solve the problem. Within the schools, teachers have to be informed. I will give you an example. We have a faculty of 250 teachers at Clemente High School. I would say that 80 percent of those teachers who came into that district before Dr. Spergel's CRISP project, did not know anything about gangs. And what I mean by anything is that they did not know what these kids were doing in regards to what they call representing--the use of their colors, the use of their symbols--the reasons why they were in it, what they got out of it, and how the dynamics in those classrooms were occurring when opposing group members sitting in the same class were creating some type of tension. The rest of the students sitting in the

class knew exactly what was going on. Why couldn't the teacher know? What we found was that the administration wanted to be very protective of the teachers. Well, I do not think that they were being very smart or giving very much credit to these adults. Because if they can't handle what is actually going on there, they have no business being there. They have to be supportive. They have to be informed. They have to have information that is correct and accurate so that they can manage their classrooms. Those are issues that nobody wants to speak about. I need to address that because nobody is talking about what is going on inside those four walls. Since I am in there, I want to talk about it and bring it up because I think it is crucial.

Jackson:

If I may take liberties, Luis, I would like to ask you a couple of questions. You are identified to me as a former gang member, is that accurate?

Luis:

Yes.

Jackson:

How long were you involved in a gang? How old were you when you got started?

Luis:

When I got started I was going to a grammar school called Chopin Upper Grade Center. I was about 13 or 14 years old. My

case is different because when I was on my way to school, I used to get chased to school and chased back home. I used to get caught sometimes and I paid for being caught. But, the problem is now ten times worse than before.

Jackson:

What is it that would have kept you from getting involved with the gangs? This program that Mike Holewinski is talking about, does that make any sense?

Luis:

The program that he is talking about, it does not make any sense to me at all. I did not even understand much of what he said. He was just beating around the bush.

Jackson:

Okay, if you had to add up four things that you think would be important in keeping young men and young women from getting involved in gang activities, what would they be? I mean what motivates you to do that?

Luis:

First of all, I would motivate the parents. The problem starts at home with the parents. A lot of parents get divorced, have problems, they can not cope with their bills. I mean there are some families where the husband after work goes straight to a bar, and when he comes home starts beating up his wife and kids. You know, it is actually what they see. They suffer. They do not get any love and attention at home. So they will go and get

it on the street.

Jackson:

Excuse me, the Judge is nodding his head in approval. Is that what you see, Judge Hamilton?

Judge Arthur Hamilton:

Yes, and I would like to expand upon my remarks, but I don't want to interrupt the young man's comments. So, if he has more to say, let him say it, and then I will state my opinion.

Luis:

It is a problem that is growing constantly. There is one thing that I have not heard mentioned here yet, that these kids--they are 12, 13, 14--see their 17-year-old gang member making \$200 to \$300 a day selling drugs. They say, "Wow. That looks good. That looks better than going to school." And then on the news they hear all about these teachers, with all these strikes and everything. They say, "All they want to do is strike, I'll be outside selling drugs."

Jackson:

Luis, what can a parent do to stop that from happening?

Luis:

Well, the parents have to get more involved. One day when I was young, I took my mother to a PTA meeting. She was asking me a hundred questions, you know. Like, who goes to PTA meetings?

Jackson:

Luis, let me ask the audience a question. How many of you

have kids in school? Now, put down your hand if you go to PTA meetings.

Luis:

Thank you. See, like in our Hispanic community.....

Jackson:

What did you see, Luis, a third, a half?

Luis:

The PTA has been existing for a long time, but nobody gets involved. They do not care. They would rather stay home watching a soap opera or something than going to a PTA meeting.

Jackson:

What do you say to a parent who says, "Gosh, the kid spends all his time at school. I might as well let the school worry about it."

Luis:

In Puerto Rico, the teachers are the kids' second parents. Over there, when the kids do something wrong, the teacher pulls them by the ear. Here, when a teacher pulls a kid by the ear, the mother will pound the teacher's head or something. There has to be more respect, and there has to be more involvement. I heard something here about putting these kids in jail. That is not going to work because they have been doing that all the time. When the cops grab a kid on the corner, it gives him a reputation. "Hey, man, I went to jail, so I'm bad." You know, then the others look up to him. So that is not going to work.

That is definitely not going to work.

Jackson:

I want to ask the probation people a question. How much do you get the families involved, when you have a child that has trouble with the law?

Audience Participant:

In juvenile probation, that is the first step.

Jackson:

Do you find the parents responsive?

Audience Participant:

Oh, yes. After the child has been convicted of a crime, we go to the home, the community, the school, we deal with the parents directly. We have to get information from them as to what the major problem is. The child may have stolen a purse, but there may be other things. There could be incest, alcoholism, drug use, breakdown within the family. Somebody may be ill. There are all kinds of things that go on, so probation officers work very intensely with the family, the schools or whatever resources we can use within a community.

Hamilton:

First of all, I wish to say that I appreciate the presence of the members of our Citizens Committee, who have been very helpful to the administration of the Juvenile Court, at least for the past three and a half years since I have been presiding judge. I am sure they were helpful to the previous presiding

judge, too. I am also appreciative of the members of our judiciary and our probation staff who are here.

In listening to Mr. Holewinski and Dr. Spergel, I think they echo what is the consensus among those who have studied the problem, not just the gang problem but also that of the serious violent juvenile offenders. That is the realization that although there is certainly a need for crisis intervention, there is also a need to deal with the crisis that we are facing from day-to-day with respect to antisocial violent behavior on the part of our youth and young adults. But more is needed. In essence, I think that all authorities agree that this is an extremely complex problem that has been alluded to by Professor Spergel and others.

This is a very complicated problem. There are many factors that go into the root causes of serious delinquency, and although it is a complicated problem, and there is no simple answer, I will hazard that it is more complicated because, in fact, there is a simple answer, and I will get to that later. It is complicated in that courts and organizations, such as the CRISP program that Professor Spergel set up, are essential for the short-range goal of dealing with those who are obviously antisocial in their conduct. But, courts and such programs can not do the job alone. A few months ago, a two-year study, funded by the Office of Juvenile Delinquency Prevention, was issued by the 40 presiding judges from the largest metropolitan courts in

the country. One primary finding was that courts or agencies can do very little to prevent serious violent offenses, where the social institutions in the youth's environment are weak and disorganized, or non-existent. In other words, where schools are inadequate (we have seen report after report in recent months showing that schools are in fact inadequate nationwide and that in large metropolitan areas, such as Chicago, they are even more inadequate), where families are disorganized, where communities are disorganized, and where there is a general failure of will on the part of the community to deal with the problems of youth, there is very little that the courts can do.

When I said that it is a complex question I was thinking in terms of the complexity of problems that prevent the people of metropolitan Chicago from dealing forthrightly with the problem of serious delinquency because there are ethnic rivalries and tensions, there are different interests, and there are those who are more concerned about their tax bill than they are about any responsibility for the disadvantaged among us, or those who need special services. This, of course, is sort of a repeat of something that is said very often in a derogatory sense--that is to say that judges and soft headed social workers are more concerned about the failure of society and that poor misguided children should be treated with a light tap on the wrist. Well, now, that has been repeated so often that some people are afraid to say it. But, I will say it. I believe that the youth who are

dangerous to society should be put away. But I am convinced that the vast majority among them, even though they are a danger and should be put away, are in fact victims of our society.

And so, that is why I am so pleased with the program that Mr. Holewinski is proposing. I don't say that it is the answer to all of the problems because, again, it is a complex problem, but it is important. It is a step toward building a community-wide consensus and a realization by more and more people that it is cost effective to deal with the root causes of delinquency and crime in this community. It is also important because it alerts leaders of the community and parents to their responsibility in raising and nurturing children.

Earlier I said that this complex problem has a simple answer. In the inimitable words of Pogo, "We have (has) met the enemy, and it is us."

Audience Participant:

I agree and I disagree with one point that the judge makes. I do not think that "to put them away" is really the answer. I think that that only perpetuates the network of gang intelligence. What I mean by that is that it is well known that when a guy becomes a juvenile offender, and he is a repeat offender, he ultimately ends up in one of the penal institutions, which in fact are hotbeds of gang intelligence and gang philosophy, and that is where basically our gang leaders are bred. The penal system educates offenders in all the latest gang

techniques and gang philosophies, and that perpetuates the whole gang understanding.

Luis:

Nine out of ten youth that go to jail come out worse. They do the same thing and even worse. Sometimes these kids think it is better to be in prison than outside.

Jackson:

I am thinking about the Reagan Administration's "get tough" on crime attitude. Does that have any impact on this group?

Audience Participant:

I am the Executive Director of a Child Welfare Agency in town, and also the Chairperson of the Youth Committee for the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless. I think that we are leading toward something that we are not taking real advantage of. You asked if the Reagan Administration had an impact. I think that all of us are forgetting a couple of things. We are seeing in this city not only increased gang violence, but also an increase in the numbers of runaway and homeless youth--some 10,000 that we know of. We see an increase in sexual victimization of young people on the streets and in the homes. We are talking about the need for prevention, to do some long-term social policy planning. By the time we have a kid who is 18, he has been so involved in antisocial behavior, and his family is so disrupted by that time, that it will take a superhuman effort to change that kid's life. We must get to the point in this country where

we recognize the need for early intervention. We ought to realize, for instance, that when mothers take their children into the emergency room in hospitals, and doctors turn their heads away because they do not want to recognize sexual victimization or abuse, that we are creating problems which will be further exacerbated as that child gets older and more entrenched in negative and self-destructive patterns.

Audience Participant:

I am Coordinator of Counseling at West Side Holistic Family Center and a former juvenile probation officer. I agree with Mr. Rivera that the time for blame is over. To blame really avoids responsibility. I also believe that if this problem is going to be dealt with, we are going to have to network together. We have the potential to make an impact, if we work together. And that is why I am concerned about the plan of Mr. Holewinski. I am concerned about how effective the networking will be and the preventive aspects of these programs.

Rivera:

I do too. I wish to respond to that briefly. In our community there are social service agencies as well as other local institutions like the police, the church, schools and so forth. I have noticed and perceived over the past ten years a lack of effective communication and coordination by all these institutions and social service agencies. They work sort of like on their own turf. You know, as adults, we are not so different.

We have our own little turfs and vested interests that we want to protect, and we do not coordinate or coalesce or network because we are competing for the same pie, or whatever. We found that when parents, churchs, schools, police departments, park districts, courts and so forth coordinate actively and openly, we get the strength and not the weakness that Dr. Spergel had pointed out earlier in terms of what happens in some of these communities. That is an effective strategy. It is just that the differences have to be put aside, and a lot of communication has to take place time and time again. Otherwise, it won't work.

Audience Participant:

I am Executive Vice President of the Better Boys Foundation and a member of the Mayor's Task Force on Youth Crime Prevention. As a member of that committee, I have been critical in committee meetings about the lack of a method for determining how the proposed coordination will take place. I have been concerned about the lack of built-in measures to ensure accountability in the plan that Mike Holewinski talked about. I am also concerned about the lack of an evaluation component in that plan. At the request of city officials we have submitted an alternate plan. I guess it is a little like an ant crawling up an elephant's leg with rape on its mind. We have proposed to the city that a youth authority be created--an unassailable group of men and women who can weather the difficult political storm and speak to the broad range of complex issues on a continuing

basis. We need a youth commission in this city. We need a youth authority. We need a top level group of people who have high credibility to look after the interests of the children in all of the neighborhoods of this city.

Jackson:

I am sorry that we are out of time. I want to thank everybody for it has been a pleasure to stand up here and move things along. Am I allowed a closing thought? It strikes me that there are similarities within organizations and structures. For instance in sports, you can think about football teams, they all follow the same rules, but some teams win while other teams don't. So it really does depend on the quality of the people and what they are willing to do together. So, go do it!

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

JOHN J. CASEY:- CHAIRMAN, CITIZENS COMMITTEE ON THE JUVENILE COURT

Mr. Casey joined the Citizens Committee in 1973 and was appointed chairman in 1982. He holds a J.D. from Northwestern University School of Law and is a partner in the firm Mathewson, Hamblet and Casey.

HONORABLE ARTHUR N. HAMILTON - PRESIDING JUDGE, JUVENILE DIVISION OF THE CIRCUIT COURT OF COOK COUNTY

Judge Hamilton, a graduate of the Chicago-Kent (IIT) College of Law, was appointed to the bench in 1971. Prior to being named Presiding Judge of the Juvenile Division in 1981, he heard cases on a Dependent/Neglect calendar for nine years. He is a member of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, the Illinois Council of Juvenile Court Judges, the Chicago Regional Youth Planning Committee, and the Illinois Commission on Children.

MICHAEL HOLEWINSKI - CHAIRPERSON, MAYOR'S TASK FORCE ON YOUTH CRIME PREVENTION

Mr. Holewinski, Administrative Assistant to Mayor Harold Washington, is responsible for the development of policy on human services and public safety issues. He is chair of the Human Services Sub-cabinet which is comprised of all city departments involved in human services programming. Mr. Holewinski is an attorney and a former state representative. He has served on the

Illinois Commission on Children and the Statewide Health Coordination Council.

MICHAEL JACKSON - POLITICAL REPORTER, WLS-TV (PANEL MODERATOR)

Mr. Jackson, a member of the board of directors of Youth Guidance, received a management degree from Northwestern University's Graduate School of Business. He has been a political reporter with WLS-TV since December 1983, where he also hosts "Eyewitness Forum". Previously, Mr. Jackson worked for six years at WMAQ-TV as a reporter/weekend anchor and before that as a correspondent for NBC News.

JAIME RIVERA - TEAM ADMINISTRATOR/CREATIVE ARTS SPECIALIST, YOUTH GUIDANCE

Mr. Rivera, a Master's Degree Social Worker, has been administrator of the Youth Guidance program serving Roberto Clemente High School since 1974. Prior to that time his work experiences utilized his undergraduate training in photography and graphic arts. Mr. Rivera is a member of the Hispanic Alliance for Career Enhancement, the American Art Therapy Association and the Legislative Commission on Hispanic Dropouts.

IRVING A. SPERGEL - PROFESSOR, SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SERVICE ADMINISTRATION, UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

After working for the New York City Youth Board and the Lenox Hill Neighborhood Association, Dr. Spergel joined the faculty of the School of Social Service Administration in 1960. Since then he has written extensively about community organization, juvenile

delinquency, and work with gangs. In addition, he has received research grants from a variety of sources including the U.S. Department of Justice, the Illinois Law Enforcement Commission, the Department of Children and Family Services and the Chicago Public Schools.

LUIS V. - FORMER GANG MEMBER