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REMARKS FOR THE BACK-TO-SCHOOL ADDRESS
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 1988

-- HELLO. I'M HERE IN THE ~~ROOM~~ LIBRARY OF THE WHITE HOUSE,
SURROUNDED BY SOME FRIENDS OF MINE. WE'RE HERE BECAUSE WE HAVE
SOMETHING IMPORTANT TO TALK ABOUT AS YOU START THE SCHOOL YEAR
. . . AND THAT'S DRUGS.

-- AT SOME POINT DURING THIS SCHOOL YEAR, MANY OF YOU ARE
GOING TO BE OFFERED DRUGS. IT MAY HAPPEN WHILE YOU'RE ACTUALLY
IN SCHOOL. IT MAY HAPPEN AFTER SCHOOL ON YOUR WAY HOME. IT MAY
HAPPEN OVER AT A FRIEND'S HOUSE.

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-- SOMEONE MAY OFFER TO GIVE YOU THE DRUGS OR PERHAPS SELL
THEM TO YOU. THIS SOMEONE MAY BE A TOTAL STRANGER OR YOUR VERY
BEST FRIEND. THIS PERSON MAY PRESSURE YOU TO USE DRUGS BY DARING
YOU TO TRY THEM OR BY SAYING EVERYBODY DOES IT, OR BY SIMPLY
SAYING, "OH, COME ON, LET'S JUST SEE WHAT IT'S LIKE."

-- YOUR ANSWER WILL BE THE MOST IMPORTANT DECISION YOU HAVE
MADE IN YOUR LIFE. IT IS AN ADULT DECISION THAT ONLY YOU CAN
MAKE. ADULTS CAN TELL YOU WHEN TO BE HOME; THEY CAN TELL YOU

WHAT TIME TO GO TO BED, OR HOW MUCH TELEVISION YOU CAN WATCH, OR HOW LOUD YOU CAN PLAY THE STEREO. BUT THE MOST IMPORTANT DECISION IN YOUR LIFE RIGHT NOW HAS TO DO WITH DRUGS, AND YOU -- NOT YOUR PARENTS, NOT YOUR TEACHERS, NOT YOUR FRIENDS -- ARE IN CONTROL OF THAT DECISION.

-- SOONER OR LATER SOMEONE'S GOING TO OFFER YOU DRUGS. AND WHEN THIS HAPPENS, YOUR PARENTS AND YOUR TEACHERS AREN'T GOING TO BE AROUND. IT'S GOING TO BE JUST YOU. AND AT THIS MOMENT YOU

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ARE TOTALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR YOURSELF AND FOR YOUR LIFE. AND YOU HAVE THE POWER TO SAY YES OR TO SAY NO.

-- IF YOU SAY YES, WELL, I'M NOT GOING TO TELL YOU ABOUT ALL THE SAD THINGS THAT CAN HAPPEN. I'M NOT GOING TO TRY AND SCARE YOU, BECAUSE I BELIEVE YOU ALREADY KNOW HOW BAD DRUGS CAN BE.

-- EVEN THOUGH YOU UNDERSTAND HOW DANGEROUS DRUGS ARE, I REALIZE IT CAN STILL BE HARD TO SAY NO. YOUR FRIENDS MAY ENCOURAGE YOU TO TRY THEM. OR YOU MAY LIVE IN AN AREA WHERE

DRUGS ARE ALL AROUND YOU. OR MAYBE THERE'S NO ONE AT HOME FOR YOU AFTER SCHOOL, SO YOU'RE LONELY OR BORED, AND YOU THINK, WELL, MAYBE IT WILL BE A THRILL. I KNEW ONE YOUNG MAN WHO USED DRUGS TO GET EVEN WITH HIS PARENTS, AND HE DID HURT THEM, BUT HE HURT HIMSELF MUCH MORE.

-- THE BEST WAY TO SHOW YOU ARE YOUR OWN PERSON, THE BEST WAY TO FEEL GOOD ABOUT YOURSELF IS TO SAY NO TO DRUGS. BECAUSE BY SAYING NO, YOU'RE ALSO SAYING, "HEY, LOOK, I'M RESPONSIBLE.

I'M NOT DUMB. I CAN BE TRUSTED TO DO WHAT'S BEST FOR ME."

-- EVEN THE ADULTS WHO USE DRUGS AREN'T THAT MATURE. I KNOW SOME ADULTS THINK YOU'RE JUST KIDS, THAT YOU DON'T REALLY UNDERSTAND THE WORLD AND WHAT GOES ON OUT THERE. THEY DON'T UNDERSTAND THAT YOU FEEL THINGS AS MUCH AS YOU DO. BUT I KNOW BETTER. I KNOW HOW SMART YOU ARE. AND I KNOW YOU UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE OF WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT.

-- AND THERE ARE OTHER YOUNG PEOPLE WHO FEEL AND THINK THE

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SAME WAY YOU DO, AND I HAVE A FEW OF THEM WITH ME TODAY, PLUS AN INSTRUCTOR FROM THE YMCA HERE IN WASHINGTON. WHY DON'T WE LISTEN FOR A FEW MINUTES.

[GROUP SEGMENT]

KIDS FINAL LINE: JUST SAY NO!

[MRS. REAGAN JOINS THE KIDS.]

-- WELL, YOU CAN SEE AND HEAR WHAT MY FRIENDS ARE GOING TO SAY WHEN THEY'RE OFFERED DRUGS. I HOPE YOU WILL JOIN WITH THEM

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AND MILLIONS OF OTHER YOUNG PEOPLE AND GIVE THE SAME ANSWER.

-- I CARE ABOUT YOU AND WHAT HAPPENS TO YOU. I WANT YOU TO LIVE A HAPPY LIFE. THERE IS NOT ONE PERSON WHO IS HAPPY BECAUSE THEY USED DRUGS, BUT THERE ARE COUNTLESS THOUSANDS WHO ARE UNHAPPY AND WHOSE LIVES HAVE BEEN RUINED.

(THE CAMERA PULLS BACK TO SEE MRS. REAGAN SURROUNDED ONCE AGAIN BY THE CHILDREN.)

-- I REALIZE THE DECISION IS YOURS, BUT, PLEASE . . . JUST
SAY NO.

(THE KIDS JOIN WITH MRS. REAGAN WHEN SHE SAYS THE LAST
THREE WORDS.)

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