

Schoolgirl lectures Bush on horrors of the 'murderous' death penalty

WASHINGTON (AP)—President Bush, who advocates the death penalty for some drug crimes, received a surprise lecture during an anti-drug program yesterday from a 13-year-old who called the punishment murder.

"To me, killing someone that has committed a very serious crime is wrong," Chantee Charles, a seventh-grader from nearby Arlington, Va., said at a Rose Garden ceremony. "It does not solve anything. All it does is take someone else's life."

Taking it all in stride, Bush complimented Chantee and two other students invited to speak for doing a good job expressing "what's on your heart" without worrying "if people agree with you or not."

Bush, who has advocated the death penalty for drug kingpins and for those who kill law enforcement officers, was presiding over a ceremony honoring the Los Angeles-based Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) program.

At the ceremony, part of Bush's continuing effort to promote his new anti-drug strategy, three Washington-area students who are members of the DARE program were invited to read essays.

While the other two stuck to drug themes, Chantee used most of her allotted time to attack the death penalty.

Saying "probably thousands" of innocent prisoners have been executed, she argued that death penalty proponents "miss the point that the prisoner has a family too."

"The guard that turns on the switch to electrocute the prisoner is just as much a murderer as the person who has committed the crime," she said.

"The guy who kills the prisoner must feel guilty afterwards. But I guess they get paid for it," she said. "If I had one wish, I'd wish that the death penalty never existed."

"DARE has taught me to make



President Bush shows a pen to a group of children after signing a proclamation in the Rose Garden. Among the group are Barbara Bush and Chantee Charles, 13, who criticized the death penalty.

my own decisions and not let friends make them for me," she added.

Chantee, a student at Arlington's Thomas Jefferson Intermediate School, later told reporters she was unaware of Bush's strong support for the death penalty for certain crimes.

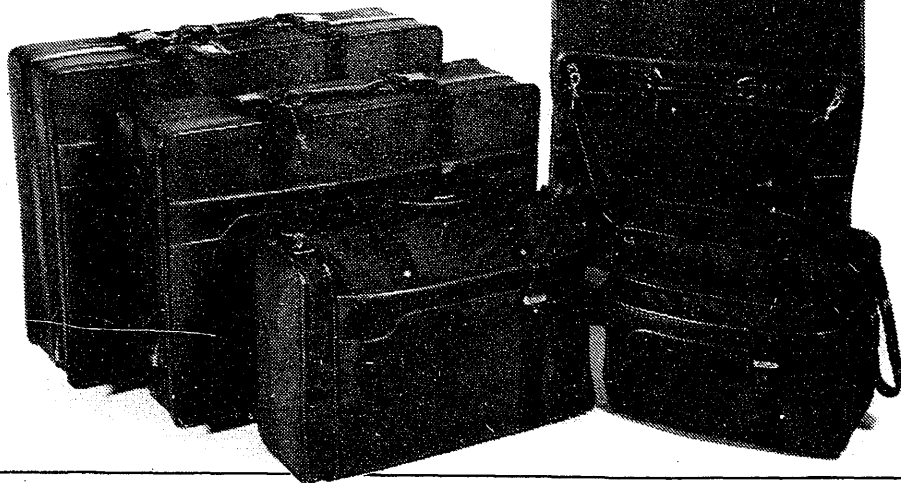
She said she had not intended to be provocative, but "I don't like the idea of people getting killed. It was just a topic I wanted to write about."

Maria Sheehan, a White House aide who helped coordinate the program, said the three students were picked to speak by local leaders of the DARE program. "We let them say what they wanted," she said.

"My turn," Bush joked after the three students had made their presentations.

He told the student speakers, "It's not easy to get up in front of a big, scary audience like this and do such a good job—say what's on your heart, not worry if people agree with you or not."

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President will appear at Jersey GOP event

The Republican State Committee officially confirmed yesterday that President Bush will be in New Jersey on Sept. 22 to help the GOP raise money for the fall campaign.

Peter Verniero, the executive director of the GOP state committee, said Bush will attend a \$500-a-plate luncheon at the Ramada Renaissance Hotel in East Brunswick.

The Bush luncheon will be the second big-ticket fund-raiser for the state GOP. The party said it netted \$1.1 million Saturday at its annual Governor's Ball. GOP officials hope the Bush luncheon will bring in another \$500,000.

The President's visit will be his first political stop in New Jersey since winning the White House last fall. He made a nonpolitical trip into the state in the spring to attend an educational conference in Union.

Bush carried New Jersey in last

year's presidential race after making nearly a dozen appearances during the 1988 campaign. It was the sixth consecutive time the GOP presidential candidate had won New Jersey.

New Jersey is one of only two states holding gubernatorial elections this fall. The other is Virginia.

Money being raised by the state GOP is earmarked for party voter registration programs, voter identification and get-out-the-vote drives on behalf of the gubernatorial and Assembly ticket.

Verniero said he would not comment on whether the state GOP would launch a television advertising campaign similar to the one the Democratic State Committee is scheduled to begin tomorrow.

The Democrats plan to spend \$1 million in the next two weeks on television commercials supporting party candidates this fall.

Three seized with cocaine

Orange police last night arrested three men and confiscated drugs worth an estimated \$6,000 during a raid at a William Street apartment.

Rod Bradshaw, 29, a resident of the unit, was arrested along with James Rawls, 25, of S. Harrison Street and Salahuddin Webb, 19, of Beech Street, both in neighboring East Orange, said Police Director Charles Cobbett.

Officers from the detective bureau and vice squad conducted the raid

about 7:30 p.m., confiscating 1½ ounces of cocaine, 150 vials of cocaine, packaging materials and cutting agents, Cobbett said.

The three were charged with possession of cocaine, possession of cocaine with intent to distribute, conspiracy to distribute cocaine and possession of drug paraphernalia.

They were being held without bail in the municipal jail pending arraignments today.

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