

# Reno flies to Miami for Elian dispute

WASHINGTON (AP) — Attorney General Janet Reno traveled to Miami Wednesday to try to personally help settle the four-month-old, international dispute over custody of 6-year-old Cuban shipwreck survivor Elian Gonzalez.

"She's planning to work out a resolution, trying to meet with the parties concerned to seek a cooperative settlement in this case," Justice Department spokesperson Myron Marlin announced.

Meantime, federal officials continued working on a letter telling Elian's Miami relatives to give him up Thursday, or perhaps Friday. But they missed their informal target of sending it by early afternoon.

Marlin said Reno would meet with the Miami relatives who have cared for Elian since he was found last Thanksgiving floating in the Atlantic off Florida after the boat carrying him, his mother and others sank during an escape from Cuba. Elian's mother and 10 others drowned. But Reno was not planning to deliver the letter of instructions herself, he said.

Reno also met with community leaders in Miami, where angry Cuban exiles have vowed to prevent the boy's return to his father, Juan Miguel Gonzalez, in Cuba because it is ruled by Fidel Castro, whom they fled.

Reno was taking a dramatic step in the government's effort to help forge a last-minute separate peace between the Miami relatives and Elian's father that could lead to a prompt and peaceful transfer.

Earlier Wednesday, Juan Miguel Gonzalez indicated, however, in a meeting with the Rev. Joan Brown Campbell that he was through with negotiating. "He is going to simply ask now that the attorney general issue a court order and that the boy be returned immediately to him," she said.

She said he is "frustrated because the negotiations broke down, and he doesn't have his son."

Nevertheless, the Cuban American National Foundation, a Cuban exile group, said it still hoped to set up a meeting.

The Justice Department was not prepared to wait forever and planned to issue instructions for Elian's transfer in a letter

**"She's planning to work out a resolution, trying to meet with the parties concerned to seek a cooperative settlement in this case."**

— Myron Marlin  
Justice Department  
spokesperson

to his Miami relatives Wednesday afternoon.

"We are continuing to encourage that the adults meet at the same time we are moving forward with finalizing the letter, which we expect to send by early afternoon unless other events make it unnecessary," Justice spokesperson Carole Florman said Wednesday morning.

Shortly before midnight Tuesday, Lazaro Gonzalez, Elian's great-uncle, called off a meeting that had been scheduled for today, saying the 6-year-old Cuban shipwreck survivor did not want to go. Elian was "extremely afraid" about the proposed meeting in Washington, family lawyer Roger Bernstein said on NBC's "Today."

Justice's Florman said, "The best result would be for Juan Miguel and Lazaro to agree on a turnover procedure that makes them both happy and benefits Elian. But we're not backing off our

position that a transfer needs to go forward quickly."

Lazaro Gonzalez took the boy today to the Miami Beach home of Sister Jeanne O'Laughlin, the president of Barry University, who hosted Elian's grandmothers during a visit in January. Family spokesman Armando Gutierrez said the nun's house would be a quieter setting for Elian.

The great-uncle had proposed her house as a neutral setting for a meeting, even though O'Laughlin said after the grandmothers' visit that she thought Elian should remain in the United States.

The family's decision to move the boy to O'Laughlin's house was viewed by some observers close to the talks as a positive step to remove him from the crowds of Cuban exiles outside Lazaro's house in Miami's Little Havana who are protesting moves to return him to Cuba.

It was learned that the letter ordering that Elian be turned over to his father calls for the transfer at Opa-locka airport to occur at 9 a.m. Thursday, but it was understood that if the letter was not sent until late Wednesday, the transfer date would be shifted to Friday.

# Clinton backs Colorado gun show sales reform

DENVER (AP) — President Clinton threw his support behind a ballot initiative for new restrictions on firearms sales at gun shows Wednesday. But the state's Republican governor boycotted Clinton's appearance even though he agrees with the president on the issue.

Some Columbine parents also were resentful of the visit, which came one week before the anniversary of the high school massacre. They feared the tragedy was being politicized.

Clinton came here to express support for a state ballot measure seeking to close a loophole that allows guns to be purchased at gun shows without a background check. The lack of a background check allowed a friend to buy weapons for the two teen-age Columbine killers, who were among the 15 dead.

Legislation on the matter failed in the Colorado Legislature this year. Sane Alternatives to the Firearms Epidemic, a group organized after Columbine, has

launched a petition campaign issue on the ballot this November.

"There is just as much support for this idea among Republicans among Democrats," said John Republican who is co-president of SAFE. "When the name-calling ... I have no doubt the voters of Colorado will approve this measure."

"The country is looking to Colorado will approve this measure with a broken heart over Columbine. We know it's a state where people put aside their partisan differences maybe even their lifetime grudges look at the facts. Other states, low your lead. I hope and progress will follow your lead."

But Clinton's visit prompted dismay in the Columbine community already. I think he ought to have home," said Steve Cordova, a rights activist whose daughter was (safely) from the school.

Thursday, April 13  
The ninth-ranked team has defeated...  
Before the Aggie Saturday in Austin will host Texas A&M...  
will face the Islam...  
44th-ranked Gold...  
While a victory in exclamation point...  
lar season, A&M...  
he Aggies will not...  
"Our approach...  
utilize every mat...  
ment," Cass said...  
looking past any...

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