

**TRANSCRIPT OF ADDRESS TO MARSHALL CITY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
JULY 3, 2001**

Mr. Glasser: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to the annual Fourth of July dinner of the Marshall City Chamber of Commerce. We are all having a wonderful time, right?

Each year we have a special guest speaker to remind us of what this holiday is all about. Tonight we have someone most of us have gotten to know very well, indeed, this past year Oz Harter.

Oz owns and manages a number of small businesses here in Marshall City. The Oz Bookstore, The Oz supermarket, the Oz Retirement Home, and - most recently - the Oz Motor Works which specializes in motorcycle repairs, over on Madison Street. Oz knows how to succeed in business, and is here tonight to talk about America and business.

Oz grew up in a little city in Illinois, Moline, right on the Mississippi River, and graduated from Moline High School in 1988. Oz made a great decision - to come to Marshall State University to study business. After receiving a B.S. in Business Studies in 1993 Oz matriculated at the Marshall State School of Law. Oz also opened the Oz Discount Bookstore across the street from the University. Soon the University Bookstore had to lower its prices, to compete with Oz. The students are now getting good prices on their books, at both Oz's and at the University. They can also sit down and have a nice cup of coffee at Oz's. In effect, Oz ended the University Bookstore's monopoly on selling textbooks, and we are all better for it - especially if we have children attending college here (which I am proud to say I do).

Well, as you all know, Oz soon tired of reading all those statutes and cases, and left the world of academics to become a full-time entrepreneur. In early 1995 Oz purchased the old Krungle's supermarket, revamped it into a modern supermarket complete with a coffee bar and a wine section, and two years ago won a Chamber of Commerce award as the most promising businessperson in Marshall City. In 1997 Oz took over several retirement homes and turned them around. You all know the story: these retirement homes were a scandal and were the subject of a newspaper reports which were, well, scandalous. The nursing homes, retirement homes, have been turned around. Most recently Oz bought the Schecter Motorcycle Works,

which had become a hangout for motorcycle gangs, cleaned it up. Oz has turned it into a wonderful business establishment.

Now, Oz may not be a bookworm, a gourmet, a retiree, or a biker - but Oz knows how to succeed in business. Oz, I can safely say is an entrepreneur with integrity, and who insists on honesty. Oz will remain a force and a leader for many years to come here in Marshall City as we redevelop, grow, and prosper.

Ladies and gentlemen, members of the Marshall Chamber of Commerce, and everyone within earshot - I am pleased to introduce Oz.

Remarks of Oz Harter

Good evening. Happy Fourth of July.

My old college speech teacher told me the three rules of giving a good speech: be interesting, be brief, be seated.

This Fourth of July we celebrate 225 years of independence. We have, as a nation, come a long way. We have overcome many adversities, corrected many wrongs, and fought the good fight. We now stand high and alone amongst the nations of the world.

If there is any frontier to conquer, it is not the bottom of the ocean or the reaches of outer space. Today's frontier? The conquest of crime against our citizens and our businesses. Crimes - especially small crimes - are like termites in a building. Ignore them, and soon the building will fall down. I am not talking about the war on drugs which is going nowhere and is costing us billions of dollars in law enforcement and incarceration. We either fight to win, or we cut our losses and seek a truce. We all know that America had the strength and courage to admit that Prohibition failed in the first third of the 20th century, and we should have the same strength and courage to admit that Prohibition II failed in the final third of the 20th century. Liquor is regulated; drugs should be regulated. In the end we will all have more money in our pockets.

I am talking about the real crimes - the crimes against American-owned businesses. We are far too tolerant of the criminals who commit what many people call "small crimes." Now I am being serious when I say, we should not tolerate these so-called small crimes. There are no small crimes. They add up and destroy the quality of our lives and hurt our businesses. Shoplifting kills our profit margins and forces small businesses to raise prices or go out of business. Yet, dozens of shoplifting cases are dropped each week here in the

Thompson County Courthouse, largely because of merchant indifference to the need to actually prosecute these parasites.

Unlicensed street peddling, panhandling, littering, noise pollution, shoplifting - all are so-called "small crimes." Think of how they add up to undermine the quality of life and the integrity of our businesses

We cannot be tolerant here. They are the termites. Left alone, they will ruin the social and business structure that we depend on for our comfort and happiness.

We need a zero tolerance policy towards these identifiable evils. We must use three principles to fight them with: Zero tolerance, zero tolerance, and more zero tolerance.

We need a tough policy of arrest, prosecution, and follow-up. Zero tolerance.

We are not talking about the death penalty or long prison terms. I am talking about zero tolerance resulting in terms of probation where the wrongdoers perform community service: picking up litter, cleaning public buildings, helping our social agencies feed the poor. We can rehabilitate the community while we rehabilitate the wrongdoers.

I am very proud to be called an honest entrepreneur. I am proud to be noticed, the way Joe Glasser just did, for my integrity. I want a business environment which has integrity.

Let me also talk about identity theft. The State of Marshall, I believe two years ago, passed some new and tough laws to deal with identity theft. Yet, I think merchants and the police are tolerant of this insidious practice.

Well, I am calling for zero tolerance. Don't just reject the suspicious ID. Call the police. Don't just tell the underage would-be purchaser of alcohol to get lost. Call the police. Tell your employees, call the police. Zero tolerance.

Then follow up. We have to support the prosecutors, show up in court, make sure the witnesses show up, whether that's you or your security guards, or your employees go to court and prosecute these cases.

Be vigorous in supporting a zero tolerance policy here in Marshall City.

So, that's what I want to say this Fourth of July. This is wonderful country and a wonderful community. We have to work to keep it wonderful for the real Americans. Bless you all.

Mr. Glasser: Thank you, Oz. Well, that gives us something to think about. Yes, sir?

Member of the audience: On this identity theft thing, don't you think that you'd flood the courthouse with a lot of meaningless cases? I mean, if a kid tried to buy a pack of cigarettes with a

Oz: Zero tolerance. The word will get around fast. People will stop trying to use phony IDs if we make clear that we will not tolerate any and I mean any abuse.

Member of audience: Sometimes people make mistakes, you know, like when

Oz: Look, every once in a while - it is rare - an innocent person might be convicted, but it's worth it to restore sanity to local businesses, which are being bled into bankruptcy by small-time crooks. We are not talking about jail time or the death penalty here; we are talking about a little pat on the wrist, maybe some community service.

Maybe we are too accustomed to worrying about the criminals and not worrying about the working American people and the American business people. Let me tell you something: You probably know I went to law school here at Marshall State School of Law for a while. Know why I left? The Criminal Law teachers were always defending the criminals. The Corporation Law teachers were always talking about the greed and fraudulent practices of the businessman - one teacher told us that Business Law was the study of human greed and man's avarice. That's what future lawyers are taught.

Somebody had better start to stick up for the little guy trying to hold together a business and a family.

Anyway, the fireworks outside are about to begin, so I'll quit before we have fireworks in here. Thank you very much everyone, and have Happy Fourth.