

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE DISTRICT OF WYOMING

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In the Matter of the  
Naturalization and Granting of  
United States Citizenship to:

Victoria Cruz Albers, Joan	Casper, Wyoming
Elizabeth Buxton, Christopher	May 11, 2015
Cabinta Cruz, Perla Anahi	3:31 p.m.
Renteria Cruz, Mayra	
Carabajal-Arce, Joann Lee	Casper College
Colina, Katarzyne Clingman,	Wheeler Concert Hall
Elisha Caraig Dignadice, Laura	
Rodriguez Estepe, Roberto	
Antonia Garcia, Alla Gidovlenko,	
Maria Concepcion Gonzalez,	
Andrew William Gorrie, Danielle	
Teresa Gorrie, Pamela McCallum	
Gorrie, Scott James Gorrie,	
Khalid Hamdi, Guadalupe Garcia	
Hernandez, Kamil Leman, Rostand	
A. Lendoye, Marili Bacus	
Lirette, Elena McIntosh, Igor	
Nicolaevich Maistrov, Gerald	
Bruce Moriarty, Maria Luisa	
Sandoval, Larissa Rocha Skinner,	
Joana Rosa Stauffer, Isela	
Vargas, and Kornkanok Wegner,	

Petitioners.

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TRANSCRIPT OF HEARING ON PETITIONS FOR  
UNITED STATES CITIZENSHIP AND NATURALIZATION CEREMONY

BEFORE THE HONORABLE SCOTT W. SKAVDAHL  
United States District Judge, Presiding

APPEARANCES:

For the Government: MR. DAVID A. KUBICHEK  
United States Attorney's Office  
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Court Reporter: ANNE BOWLINE, RMR, CRR  
Official U.S. Court Reporter  
111 South Wolcott Street, Room 217  
Casper, Wyoming 82601  
(307) 235-3376

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1 (Proceedings commenced at 3:31 p.m.,  
2 May 11, 2015.)

3 THE COURT: Thank you. Good afternoon. Please be  
4 seated. Welcome to the Casper College Wheeler Concert Hall  
5 for the naturalization ceremony. The Court will suspend the  
6 local rules on cameras and recording devices, and I'd remind  
7 you to just check to make sure that your cell phones are  
8 turned to silent.

9 It has been a tradition in these naturalization  
10 ceremonies to recognize those citizens and families of those  
11 citizens who have paid the ultimate price in defending what so  
12 many in this world seek: the freedom and benefits of being a  
13 United States citizen. As of today's date, 6,846 American men  
14 and women have been killed in action while involved in the  
15 military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. In addition,  
16 52,295 United States citizens have been wounded in action in  
17 these military operations.

18 Let us take a moment of silence and recognize these  
19 American heroes and those families whose sacrifice cannot be  
20 measured and whose loss cannot be recovered.

21 (Moment of silence.)

22 THE COURT: Thank you. The United States District  
23 Court for the District of Wyoming is in special session. And  
24 I have to say that this is the first time I've ever stood and  
25 talked about this without a bench in front of me, so I've got

1 a podium so I'll try to acclimate. But it is a great  
2 privilege and honor to be able to conduct this ceremony here  
3 today in this fine facility.

4 This session is for the naturalization of foreign  
5 nationals to the United States as citizens. It is with great  
6 honor, pride, and privilege that I am able to conduct this  
7 ceremony today inducting 29 new United States citizens. The  
8 Federal District Court of Wyoming, including Chief Judge  
9 Freudenthal and Judge Johnson, extend their congratulations to  
10 you, your families, and your friends.

11 I would ask the Deputy Clerk of Court to make a roll  
12 call of prospective applicants for U.S. citizenship. And what  
13 I would do is simply ask to verify that those citizens as  
14 identified on the petition as submitted to this Court are  
15 present and accounted for.

16 THE COURTROOM DEPUTY: Victoria Cruz Albers, Joan  
17 Elizabeth Buxton, Christopher Cabinta Cruz, Perla Anahi  
18 Renteria Cruz, Mayra Carabajal-Arce, Joann Lee Colina,  
19 Katarzyne Clingman, Elisha Caraig Dignadice, Laura Rodriguez  
20 Estepe, Roberto Antonia Garcia, Alla Gidovlenko, Maria  
21 Concepcion Gonzalez, Andrew William Gorrie, Danielle Teresa  
22 Gorrie, Pamela McCallum Gorrie, Scott James Gorrie, Khalid  
23 Hamdi, Guadalupe Garcia Hernandez, Kamil Leman, Rostand A.  
24 Lendoye, Marili Bacus Lirette, Elena McIntosh, Igor  
25 Nicolaevich Maistrov, Gerald Bruce Moriarty, Maria Luisa

1 Sandoval, Larissa Rocha Skinner, Joana Rosa Stauffer, Isela  
2 Vargas, and Kornkanok Wegner.

3 All citizens are accounted for.

4 THE COURT: All citizens are present. Thank you.  
5 You may be seated.

6 Colonel Smoltzer, at this time you may post the  
7 colors for the Natrona County High School Color Guard.

8 Ladies and gentlemen, would you please stand.

9 (Posting of the colors.)

10 THE COURT: Fellow citizens, it is your obligation  
11 and ours to show our allegiance to this country at this time  
12 by making our Pledge of Allegiance, and then remain standing  
13 for the playing of our national anthem.

14 (Recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.)

15 (Video of national anthem played.)

16 THE COURT: Thank you.

17 Colonel Smoltzer, would you please retire the colors  
18 with our thanks and gratitude for your participation.

19 (Retiring of the colors.)

20 THE COURT: At this time I would recognize Mr. David  
21 Kubichek, representing the Attorney General of the United  
22 States, Assistant United States Attorney for the District of  
23 Wyoming, for presentation of his petition.

24 MR. KUBICHEK: Thank you, Your Honor. Each of the  
25 aforementioned individuals are before the Court this afternoon for

1 a hearing on their petitions for naturalization. Each of them  
2 has been interviewed and examined under oath by a designated  
3 examiner of the Citizenship and Immigration Service, who has  
4 completed a background and character investigation of them.  
5 The Citizenship and Immigration Service indicates in their  
6 correspondence that each of these petitioners has met all of  
7 the requirements for naturalization and are well qualified as  
8 desirable candidates for United States citizenship.

9 Therefore, Your Honor, on the recommendation of the  
10 immigration officer and on behalf of the Attorney General of  
11 the United States and the President of the United States, it  
12 is my privilege to move that each of them be admitted to  
13 citizenship upon the taking of the oath.

14 THE COURT: Thank you, Mr. Kubichek.

15 On the petition of the United States, the Court finds  
16 that each of the applicants identified has satisfied the legal  
17 requirements to become citizens of the United States and  
18 therefore will grant the petition and will enter the order  
19 allowing these petitioners to become citizens of the United  
20 States of America.

21 Our new citizens, if you would please face me at this  
22 time and raise your right hand. And if everyone would please  
23 be seated.

24 (Oath taken as follows:

25 "I hereby declare, on oath, that I

1           absolutely and entirely renounce and abjure all  
2           allegiance and fidelity to any foreign prince,  
3           potentate, state or sovereignty of whom or which  
4           I have heretofore been a subject or citizen;  
5           that I will support and defend the Constitution  
6           and laws of the United States of America against  
7           all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will  
8           bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that  
9           I will bear arms on behalf of the United States  
10          when required by law; that I will perform  
11          noncombatant service in the Armed Forces of the  
12          United States when required by law; that I will  
13          perform work of national importance under  
14          civilian direction when required by law; and  
15          that I take this obligation freely without any  
16          mental reservation or purpose of evasion; so  
17          help me God.")

18                 THE COURT: Congratulations. Please join me in  
19          welcoming these new citizens of the United States.

20                 In some ways it feels like a graduation. I mean,  
21          well, it is, and you've got the highest degree attainable. At  
22          this time we'll have the presentation of the certificates to  
23          the new United States citizens.

24                 And what I would ask is those family members who wish  
25          to to come forward, and I'll hand the certificates. And some

1 of you are family, and so if the family will come forward at  
2 once, then we'll present the certificates at that time.

3 So at this time the Clerk of Court will call the roll  
4 and will hand out certificates, and if you wish to come  
5 forward.

6 THE COURTROOM DEPUTY: Christopher Cabinta Cruz.

7 Victoria Cruz Albers.

8 Perla Anahi Renteria Cruz.

9 Joan Elizabeth Buxton.

10 THE COURT: Your brother and sister can come back.  
11 We missed the picture.

12 THE COURTROOM DEPUTY: Joann Lee Colina.

13 Mayra Carabajal-Arce.

14 Elisha Caraig Dignadice.

15 Katarzyne Clingman.

16 Roberto Antonio Garcia.

17 THE COURT: You guys can have a seat if you wish.

18 And those of you who are taking the photos can come  
19 down to the front and prepare.

20 THE COURTROOM DEPUTY: Laura Rodriguez Estepe.

21 Maria Concepcion Gonzalez.

22 Alla Gidovlenko.

23 The Gorrie family: Danielle, Andrew, Scott, and  
24 Pamela.

25 Guadalupe Garcia Hernandez.

1 Khalid Hamdi.

2 Rostand Lendoye.

3 Kamil Leman.

4 Elena McIntosh.

5 Marili Bacus Lirette.

6 Gerald Bruce Moriarty.

7 Igor Nicolaevich Maistrov.

8 Larissa Rocha Skinner.

9 Maria Luisa Sandoval.

10 Isela Vargas.

11 Joana Rosa Stauffer.

12 Kornkanok Wegner.

13 THE COURT: At this time I would ask that we play a  
14 message from the President of the United States of America.

15 (Playing video.)

16 THE COURT: At this time I'd recognize the  
17 presentation of letters by Wyoming's Congressional delegation.  
18 I don't have the names.

19 MS. McCRARY: Karen McCrary.

20 THE COURT: If you would like to -- at this time  
21 Senator Barrasso's office.

22 MS. LITTLE: Brianna Little.

23 MS. KING: Jacquie King with Congresswoman Loomis's  
24 office.

25 THE COURT: If you'd like to present those to the new

1 United States citizens.

2 And the newest United States citizens, you now have a  
3 voice in our democracy. And anytime you want to exercise that  
4 voice and complain about anything that the United States  
5 government does, the phone number is in this letter. See, I  
6 don't make the law; I just enforce it.

7 (Presentation of letters.)

8 THE COURT: At this time I would recognized Mr. Gary  
9 Cohee on behalf of various patriotic organizations for  
10 presentations by those organizations. Mr. Cohee.

11 MS. EVERETT: Ladies and gentlemen, I'm a member of  
12 the Daughters of the American Revolution. And some of my  
13 fellow sisters are here to give some information to our new  
14 citizens.

15 THE COURT: Thank you.

16 Also, I believe we have someone from the United  
17 Veterans Council of Natrona County, Veterans of Foreign Wars.

18 MR. COHEE: Gary Cohee.

19 THE COURT: Anyone from Disabled Veterans of America  
20 and American Legion?

21 MR. WILLIAMS: Please the Court. We have pins to  
22 give from the Disabled American Veterans, Your Honor. We have  
23 bucking horse pins for the new citizens.

24 THE COURT: Thank you. Mr. Welch.

25 MR. WELCH: Thank you, Your Honor. Dean Welch, post

1 master of the American Legion. My vice commander is here as  
2 well, Rich Larimore. We have some flags to present to the new  
3 citizens.

4 THE COURT: At this time the Court could recognize  
5 Mr. Ron Akin on behalf of the patriotic organizations.

6 MR. NEVILLE: Thank you, Your Honor. Ron Akin was --  
7 can you hear me? Ron Akin was unable to be here. I was  
8 prevailed upon to take his place today. My name's Don  
9 Neville, and until Saturday I was the Disabled American  
10 Veterans Department of Wyoming commander. We have a new  
11 commander as of Saturday.

12 The topic today is about doing something  
13 extraordinary, and I've come up with a few examples. First  
14 example will be Lieutenant Caspar Collins, who Casper was  
15 originally named after. This took place 150 years ago. The  
16 other example I'd like to say is Staff Sergeant Salvatore  
17 Giunta of the United States Army and what he did in 2007  
18 earned him the Medal of Honor.

19 Lieutenant Caspar Collins was passing through,  
20 stopping overnight at the Platte River Station. To make a  
21 long story short, there were Indians in the area. There was a  
22 supply trade staying up for the night.

23 In the morning the commander beside him sent him out  
24 to rescue the supply train. All of the officers in the post  
25 refused to go. They were volunteers. They were short of men,

1 and they did not want to take the chance of something  
2 happening. The commander ordered Lieutenant Collins to go.  
3 Although Lieutenant Collins (inaudible) and the major did not  
4 have any, Lieutenant Collins went ahead of 25 troops.

5 After they left the post and got out in the  
6 countryside, they realized there were a lot more enemies than  
7 they had seen. There were, according to all reports,  
8 literally thousands of Indians. They were amassing for an  
9 attack.

10 Lieutenant Collins gave the order to attack and then  
11 realized that he was outflanked by more Indians than they'd  
12 seen. He gave the order to return to the station, and as the  
13 troops were returning to the station, Lieutenant Collins  
14 following behind, they heard a wounded trooper call out. He  
15 turned out and found the trooper had been wounded, and he  
16 returned to save the trooper. Unfortunately, he was  
17 surrounded, and he was killed.

18 You can -- you can hear a lot more about what  
19 happened at the Platte River Station and what happened to  
20 Lieutenant Collins at Fort Caspar at the museum.

21 The other example is Lieutenant Salvatore Giunta. He  
22 was the first recipient of the Medal of Honor since the  
23 Vietnam War. In 2007 in Afghanistan, Staff Sergeant Giunta  
24 and his -- Staff Sergeant excuse me. His troops were ambushed  
25 by the Taliban. During the fight several troops were killed

1 or wounded. He observed that one of the troopers was being  
2 dragged away by the Taliban, realizing they wanted that man  
3 for their purposes of -- I'm sorry -- for their propaganda  
4 purposes.

5           Immediately, in another fire fight he immediately  
6 chased after and killed one, chased off the other one. And  
7 then the sergeant, in his words, he grabbed his buddy by his  
8 arm and dragged him back. For that and other things he did  
9 during that fire fight he earned the Medal of Honor.

10           Now, these were two ordinary people that did  
11 something very extraordinary. How does that relate to you?  
12 Well, you new citizens, you've done something extraordinary  
13 too. You're all ordinary people, but you've done something  
14 very extraordinary. You've done what it takes. You've done  
15 the sacrifice, the time, and the work in order to become  
16 citizens in the greatest nation on the face of this earth.  
17 You've done something wonderful, something extraordinary, and  
18 you should be proud of yourselves. We're all proud you.  
19 That's why we're here today. For that, I salute you.

20           THE COURT: At this time I would recognize Mr. David  
21 Kubichek, Assistant United States Attorney for the District of  
22 Wyoming. Thank you, Mr. Kubichek.

23           MR. KUBICHEK: Thank you, Your Honor. May it please  
24 the Court.

25           THE COURT: Counsel.

1           MR. KUBICHEK: Ladies and gentlemen, today is an  
2 extraordinary day in many respects. We've been doing this  
3 ceremony in more or less the way that we've done it today for  
4 20-odd years, since Judge Skavdahl's predecessor, Judge  
5 Downes, decided that this occasion was worthy of something  
6 more formal than just the taking of an oath in a private  
7 setting.

8           So we began this tradition, as I say, 20 years ago in  
9 the U.S. courthouse downtown, and we would often have the  
10 ceremony for two or three or four new citizens, sometimes a  
11 dozen and a half. Today we have 29 of you, which is the  
12 reason we had to go off our usual campus to this campus. So  
13 if we seem a little awkward in our presentations and the like,  
14 it's because the venue is a little new and we're not  
15 altogether sure how to avoid tripping over our feet here.

16           But what we're celebrating here today is the same  
17 thing, and that is an enormous amount of work and passion and  
18 commitment that all of you have demonstrated by taking this  
19 step to join us as citizens of this great nation. Most of us  
20 here did it the easy way: We just drew the birth lottery  
21 card, and we got it for free. I didn't have to do anything  
22 except be born here. I didn't have to take a test. I didn't  
23 have to learn a language. I didn't have to know anything  
24 about the history. I just got to grow up. I was really  
25 lucky.

1           But there's something extra special about what  
2 you-all did, because you didn't join us out of a freak of  
3 nature. You joined us because that was something you were  
4 committed to doing. And so we are especially honored today  
5 for you joining us and doing that work, and I want to thank  
6 you on behalf of the Attorney General of the United States and  
7 the President, who you heard from, for entrusting your futures  
8 to our country.

9           Now, one of the things we celebrate by this tradition  
10 and one of the things that we honor every time we gather  
11 together for this occasion are the men and women who represent  
12 us in the military. We have four of them here, four gentlemen  
13 here today who are participating in this ceremony.

14           We wonder, well, what's the big deal about that?  
15 Well, you know, what we celebrate today is a tradition that  
16 dates back to our founding fathers. Those were colonists.  
17 They didn't start out as citizens. They were mostly men of  
18 means, men of significant wealth.

19           They didn't need to do this, but they were men of  
20 principle and they believed that all men were endowed with  
21 certain rights and that they derived from God, not from a  
22 king, and that a government that is comprised of  
23 representatives voted by the people, selected by the people  
24 rather than by some monarchical genetic hierarchy thing was  
25 the only right and fair and just system. And they believed in

1 that so much that they put their fortunes and their lives on  
2 the line.

3 In 1776 they threw down the gauntlet. They told King  
4 George, "We're done," and they fought a war which, if we were  
5 betting, we would say they had no chance. But -- and they  
6 were overmatched. The British army and the British navy was  
7 the most powerful in the world.

8 But through grit and determination and an  
9 extraordinary general by the name of George Washington,  
10 incredibly principled people fighting for their independence  
11 and for the concepts of liberty and equality, freedom  
12 regardless of what you look like or where you came from, they  
13 fought for that and they won. So we honor them today.

14 And then when we look back, we think -- maybe not  
15 quite so far back in history. We look in the mid-19th  
16 Century, when we had a civil war. Whether our country would  
17 endure, whether those principles would endure were on the  
18 line. We had another great president, Abraham Lincoln. And  
19 hundreds of thousands of our citizens died for the proposition  
20 that all men were created equal and we are a government of the  
21 people, by the people, and for the people, and we wouldn't be  
22 torn apart. And they fought and they died for that.

23 And since then, we've had two world wars. We had a  
24 big conflict in Vietnam. We fought Desert Storm. We've had a  
25 war in Iraq and now a war in Afghanistan. In each and every

1 one of those occasions, these men and their counterparts laid  
2 down their lives, put them on the line to preserve our country  
3 and to preserve our liberties and preserve the principles upon  
4 which we're founded and without which we don't matter. If we  
5 don't stand for equality, if we don't stand for fairness and  
6 justice for everybody, then we don't matter; we're just a  
7 place with a lot of people. That's why we honor our veterans.

8           Now, that's all pretty serious stuff, and that's part  
9 of one of the traditions that we honor when we have this  
10 celebration every year. But it's still a celebration, and we  
11 are so excited to have all of you with us now. And we have --  
12 I think I counted like 15 different countries today that  
13 you-all represent, including a fellow from the Czech Republic,  
14 which is the old sod for me. But this is great.

15           Now you-all have all the privileges that all of us  
16 who were born here have, and you have the same  
17 responsibilities. You have civic responsibilities. You need  
18 to vote. At some point or another Judge Skavdahl may order  
19 you to come down to Federal Court and be a juror, and you'll  
20 have to do that or have a pretty darned good excuse. And he's  
21 a pretty tough cookie when it comes to that.

22           And you-all have obligations that aren't really  
23 written down as laws that are just part of basic civic  
24 participation. You have an obligation to stay informed and to  
25 know about what's going on in your country, to participate in

1 your community and your schools where your children go, to  
2 share your culture with us, because all of that makes us  
3 stronger. The whole theory of America is that we're not the  
4 same. We don't look the same. We're not all the same color.  
5 You know, our ancestors come from wildly divergent places.

6 But the combination of all of that, as we used to  
7 refer to it as the melting pot, all of that makes us richer  
8 and stronger and better. So share your culture, share your  
9 food. That's one of my favorite parts about it. Your  
10 traditions make us stronger and make America every day a  
11 little bit more like our founders hoped we could become.

12 We're not there. Abraham Lincoln in his Gettysburg  
13 address talked about the fact that this is really an  
14 experiment. There were no guarantees in the Civil War, and he  
15 said the question presented ultimately in the Civil War was  
16 whether any nation, this nation founded on the concepts of  
17 equal rights and liberty and with an idea of a government by  
18 the people, of the people, and for the people, whether that  
19 can endure. That's a question that was certainly front and  
20 center in 1860 and in 1864, but it's not answered finally  
21 today either.

22 We all as citizens have to work every single day to  
23 keep making the answer to that question yes, and it's not  
24 easy. And we look around, and we're not a perfect place. We  
25 have a lot of knuckleheads. You know, it's hard work making

1 this work, and we all have to make ourselves every single day  
2 believe in what America stands for, and you-all now are  
3 joining us in that task.

4           And I am so proud today to welcome you as new U.S.  
5 citizens on behalf, as I said, of Attorney General Loretta  
6 Lynch, who is brand-new to the job, and the President. So  
7 thank you all for your hard work. Thank you for joining us as  
8 citizens, and God bless you all. Thank you.

9           THE COURT: Thank you, Mr. Kubichek.

10           This country was formed by those immigrants who  
11 desired to escape the oppression and tyranny of others, to  
12 have freedom and a more fair and just society and government,  
13 a government by the people and for the people. Its formation  
14 and resulting rights came at a great cost to many and to many  
15 the ultimate cost.

16           Men and women in the armed forces on a daily basis  
17 face challenges for our freedoms and everyday lives, and every  
18 day we hear reports of those who seek to attack and those who  
19 are attacked for exercising the rights that we have taken for  
20 granted and now have. The cost of our freedom and the  
21 resulting rights we enjoy continue to be paid.

22           I hope that all citizens of the greatest country on  
23 Earth, newly sworn and existing, recognize and appreciate we  
24 are united as Americans, and the freedoms we enjoy are not  
25 because of our individuality but rather because of the common

1 commitment we have made to one another as fellow citizens of  
2 the United States of America. We are a woven blanket of many  
3 colors from many countries. Together we form an effective  
4 blanket, with warmth and comfort.

5           This citizenship does not come without obligation.  
6 We are obligated and committed to one another, to support and  
7 defend what we have, not our individual interests. We have  
8 the duty to serve, to be engaged and to participate in our  
9 government by the people. Citizens of many other countries  
10 see these duties as opportunities. May we always have the  
11 opportunity so that we continue to have that opportunity.

12           To our newest 29 United States citizens from 15  
13 different countries, thank you for wanting to be a part of  
14 this collective commitment and those of us who already are a  
15 part of it be reminded that what we have cherished is sought  
16 after by others throughout the world. Be proud to be an  
17 American. May that always be the case, and may God continue  
18 to bless the United States of America. Congratulations.  
19 Thank you for becoming United States citizens.

20           With that, we will stand in recess. Congratulations.

21           (Proceedings concluded at 4:34 p.m.,  
22           May 11, 2015.)

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