

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF WYOMING

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

MENG JUN LIN, NATIVIDAD SALAS,
NORMA PADUA BAUTISTA, JOCHEN
RUDOLF SPOENLEIN, KARINA GARCIA
CORTEZ, MELINDA HAROUTUNIAN,
WALTER ALATORRE, DANIELA
ATANASOVA KOLEVA, PATRICIA
CANDELARIA, EUGENIO MORENO,
RENEE WHITNEY LEWTON, KATJA
BIRGIT BRADLEY, OSWALDO FELIPE,
SU KYUNG LEE, AMIT MAHENDRA
THAKAR, RODOLFO JR. SUPENA STA
MARIA, SHERRY ANNETTE JASS,
PERRY LEVITICUS GILBERT, BOJAN
JANKOVIC, SUCHADA GIBSON, MIN
CHEN, NUTTAWAN MEEKS,

Casper, Wyoming
September 11, 2017
3:46 p.m.

Petitioners.

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

BEFORE THE HONORABLE SCOTT W. SKAVDAHL
UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE

APPEARANCES:

For the Movant: MS. STEPHANIE HAMBRICK
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*Proceedings recorded by stenography; transcript produced by
computer-aided transcription.*

1 (Proceedings commenced at 3:46 p.m., September 11, 2017.)

2 THE COURT: Thank you. Please be seated. Good
3 afternoon, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to the Ewing T.
4 Kerr Federal Courthouse for this naturalization ceremony. The
5 Court will suspend the local rules on cameras and recording
6 devices; however, I would ask that you double-check your cell
7 phones and make sure they're turned to silent.

8 It is a tradition at the beginning of these
9 naturalization ceremonies to recognize those citizens and
10 families of those citizens who have paid the ultimate price in
11 defending what so many in this world seek: the freedoms and
12 benefits of becoming and being a United States citizen. As of
13 this morning, 6,938 American men and women have been killed in
14 action while involved in military operations in Afghanistan
15 and Iraq. In addition, 52,615 United States citizens have
16 been wounded in action during these military operations.

17 In addition to these men and women who have been
18 killed and injured in these conflicts today, today is the 16th
19 anniversary of the terrorist attacks giving rise to these
20 conflicts, a date and tragedy forever etched in our landscape
21 and our history books. As a result of those terrorist
22 attacks, 2,977 people lost their lives.

23 Let us take a moment of silence and recognize these
24 needlessly lost and those American heroes and their families
25 whose sacrifice cannot be measured and whose loss will never

1 be recovered.

2 Thank you.

3 The United States District Court for the District of
4 Wyoming is in special session for the naturalization of
5 foreign nationals to be United States citizens. It is with
6 great honor, pride, and privilege that I'm able to conduct
7 today's ceremony inducting 22 new United States citizens who
8 originate from 13 different countries from around the world.
9 The Federal District Court of Wyoming, including Chief Judge
10 Freudenthal and Judge Johnson, extend their congratulations to
11 you, your family, and friends.

12 At this time I would ask the Deputy Clerk of Court to
13 make a roll call of prospective applicants for U.S.
14 citizenship. If you could please stand when your name is
15 called.

16 THE COURTROOM DEPUTY: Jochen Rudolf Spoenlein,
17 Natividad Salas, Norma Padua Bautista, Karina Garcia Cortez,
18 Melinda Haroutunian, Walter Alatorre, Daniela Atanasova
19 Koleva, Patricia Candelaria, Eugenio Moreno, Renee Whitney
20 Lewton, Katja Birgit Bradley, Oswaldo Felipe, Su Kyung Lee,
21 Amit Mahendra Thakar, Rodolfo Jr. Supena Sta Maria, Sherry
22 Annette Jass, Perry Leviticus Gilbert, Bojan Jankovic, Suchada
23 Gibson, Min Chen, Nuttawan Meeks.

24 THE COURT: Thank you. Is there anyone who believes
25 they're an applicant whose name has not been called? All

1 right. I think we have everyone. Please be seated.

2 Colonel Schmotzer, I would ask the Natrona County
3 High School Color Guard to please post the colors at this
4 time. Please rise for the posting of the colors.

5 (Posting of the colors.)

6 THE COURT: Fellow citizens, it is our obligation to
7 show our allegiance to this country at this time by making our
8 pledge of allegiance, and then we will remain standing for the
9 playing of our national anthem.

10 At this time I would ask if I can have Devon Jass
11 come forward and lead us in the pledge of allegiance.

12 (Recitation of the pledge of allegiance.)

13 THE COURT: Thank you, Devon. Your mom is very
14 proud, your family too.

15 (Playing of national anthem.)

16 THE COURT: Thank you. Please be seated. I thank
17 Colonel Schmotzer and DeMeeka Armstrong, Ethan Bourchardt,
18 Cooper Hanneman, Jordan Clark, and Paulo Benabise for their
19 assistance today.

20 At this time I would recognize Ms. Stephanie
21 Hambrick, representing the Attorney General of the United
22 States, for presentation of the petition. Ms. Hambrick.

23 MS. HAMBRICK: Thank you, Your Honor. May it please
24 the Court.

25 THE COURT: Counsel.

1 MS. HAMBRICK: My name is Stephanie Hambrick, and I'm
2 here as a representative of the United States Attorney's
3 Office for the District of Wyoming and in proxy for the United
4 States Attorney General.

5 It is my privilege, Your Honor, to recognize the
6 individuals who appear in person today for hearing on their
7 respective petitions for naturalization as United States
8 citizens. Each of these individuals has been interviewed and
9 examined under oath by a designated examiner of the United
10 States Citizenship and Immigration Services, who has in turn
11 completed the character and background investigation.
12 Citizenship and Immigration Services indicates that each of
13 these individuals has met all requirements for naturalization
14 and is well qualified as a desirable candidate for United
15 States citizenship.

16 As a fellow citizen of the United States, I want to
17 welcome and congratulate each of these petitioners on this
18 very special occasion. And so on the recommendation of the
19 immigration officer, it is my distinct honor to move that
20 these 22 petitioners be granted United States citizenship upon
21 taking the oath.

22 Thank you, Your Honor.

23 THE COURT: Thank you, Ms. Hambrick.

24 On the petition of the United States, the Court finds
25 that each of these applicants identified has satisfied the

1 requirements to become citizens of the United States and
2 therefore will grant the petition and enter an order allowing
3 these petitioners to become United States citizens upon taking
4 the oath.

5 And if our newest United States citizens would please
6 rise and raise your right hand and repeat after me, I would
7 administer the oath. And those of you who wish to get a
8 picture, you're free to move around the courtroom.

9 If you'll repeat after me: I -- state your name --
10 hereby declare on oath that I absolutely and entirely renounce
11 and abjure all allegiance and fidelity to any foreign prince
12 or potentate, state or sovereignty, of whom or which I have
13 heretofore been a subject or citizen; that I will support and
14 defend the Constitution and laws of the United States of
15 America against all enemies, foreign and domestic; and that I
16 will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; and that I
17 will bear arms on behalf of the United States when required by
18 law; that I will perform noncombat service in the Armed Forces
19 of the United States when required by law. I take this
20 obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose
21 of evasion, so help me God.

22 Congratulations, our 22 newest United States
23 citizens.

24 (Applause.)

25 THE COURT: If you want to have a seat at this time,

1 we have some certificates. And ladies and gentlemen, I
2 apologize. We had some confusion in this process. We'll try
3 to make it smoother next time. But we're going to present you
4 a packet -- or we'll actually give you the certificates, and
5 then at the end of the ceremony, what I'm going to ask is that
6 if you could come to the corner table here and sign those if
7 you haven't signed them. We're going to give you clipboards
8 so you can move those around and sign them. But they have not
9 been signed in advance, and I apologize for that because of
10 the delay there. But we'll hand these out at this time.

11 (Handing out certificates.)

12 THE COURT: Go ahead and have a seat. At this time I
13 would ask our newest citizens if you could introduce yourself
14 and any family you might have here today, and tell us one
15 thing that you are excited about today.

16 (Discussion off the record.)

17 THE COURT: It is always humbling to hear from our
18 newest United States citizens. The joy, the excitement, the
19 emotion that you show means a lot to us as citizens because it
20 reinforces how great of a country we feel that we have to live
21 in and be a part of. So it's great to hear from you all.

22 And at this time I would point out that in this
23 country we have the right and obligation to participate in our
24 democracy. To do that, you vote. You'll do a number of
25 things -- we'll talk about that -- but the first part is that

1 you have people that are part of your elected officials and
2 our national elected officials: Senator Enzi, Senator
3 Barrasso, and Representative Lummis [sic]. And I believe on
4 behalf of Senator Enzi we have Mr. Rogers, who has some
5 information to send out to you. We also on behalf of Senator
6 Barrasso have Ms. Vollmer and Ms. -- or Mr. Sheehan, Patrick
7 Sheehan. And on behalf of Representative Cheney's office we
8 have Ms. King. What they'll do is hand you some information.
9 So whenever you want to complain about what is going on in
10 Washington, D.C., call those numbers. They are now your
11 elected officials.

12 So I would ask at this time, ladies and gentlemen, if
13 you would hand out the information to our new citizens.

14 (Discussion off the record.)

15 THE COURT: At this time there are various patriotic
16 organizations and organizations comprised of men and women who
17 have given their years of service, blood, sweat, and tears to
18 this country who are here today and also have some materials
19 that they would like to hand out to you. Let me first
20 recognize the Daughters and Sons of the American Revolution.
21 Members of that organization that I believe are present today
22 are Ms. Haines, Ms. Orcutt, Ms. King, Ms. Barnes,
23 Ms. Bromley, Ms. Jarvis, Ms. Russell, and Mr. James Russell,
24 and Ms. Rigel. I don't know if I got that right or not. But
25 at any rate, they have some materials.

1 And, Daughters of the American Revolution, if I could
2 have one of you tell us a little bit just so people know what
3 it is that you're handing out and your pedigree or background.
4 If you would go ahead and do that at this time.

5 MS. BROMLEY: Well, my name is Robin Bromley. We are
6 very honored because we had forebears who fought in the
7 American Revolution, so because of that we are honored to be
8 in this organization. Unlike you, who chose to be here and
9 become citizens, we only became citizens because of our birth,
10 and we feel very, very fortunate. But our goals are
11 supporting education, patriotism, and historic preservation.

12 And we are just very, very happy to be here and hear
13 your stories. It really touches all of us, and we're very,
14 very proud of you because we know it's a very difficult thing
15 to do. Thank you. And we have some historic documents to
16 give to you.

17 THE COURT: Thank you. If you want to do that now,
18 that would be great.

19 We also have on behalf of the United Veterans Council
20 of Natrona County Mr. Cohee, and I believe we also have
21 Mr. Greer on behalf of the Disabled American Veterans. They
22 have some materials that they'd like to distribute at this
23 time, and I would recognize you for doing so. Thank you for
24 being here.

25 MR. COHEE: Thank you, sir.

1 THE COURT: Thank you, Mr. Greer. Thank you,
2 Mr. Cohee.

3 At this time I would recognize Ms. Hambrick on behalf
4 of the Attorney General of the United States for any remarks.

5 MS. HAMBRICK: So what a great day. I can't even
6 imagine how you are feeling. This is my first opportunity to
7 participate in a ceremony like this, and I know it's made my
8 heart pound a little bit, and it was kind of up in my throat.
9 And it's just been so exciting, I can't imagine how it must
10 feel for you all.

11 I think it's been made a little extra special as it
12 comes on the anniversary of 9/11, which is a reminder to all
13 of us what it really means to be an American citizen. A few
14 years after 9/11 they named this day Patriot Day, and so you
15 all got to be Americans on Patriot Day. So I think it's a
16 good time to ask ourselves, what is a patriot and what does it
17 mean to be a patriot? A patriot is one who loves his or her
18 country and supports its authority and interests.

19 We've made a lot of progress as a country since 9/11.
20 Over 7 million people have studied and taken the test and
21 taken the oath of allegiance that you all took here today.
22 These 7 million people and you make our country better and
23 stronger. From 2001 to 2016, over 116,000 members of the
24 American military have become naturalized citizens.

25 The oath of allegiance you took today has led to

1 American citizenship for over 220 years, and now you are all a
2 part of that very history. You're now not only citizens but
3 you are also patriots. What can you do to be a true patriot?
4 We see it all around us every day, and we're seeing it in
5 these days right now in the aftermath of Hurricanes Harvey and
6 Irma. We've seen people from across the country come together
7 and send money and help to those people in need that live
8 thousands of miles away. That happens all the time, not only
9 with 9/11 but natural disasters.

10 We see it every day in the heated political debates
11 that occur on our television, people speaking up for what they
12 believe is the best for this country even if we don't all
13 agree. All of those people on every side are patriots.

14 You can be a patriot by pursuing the American dream.
15 There are a lot of famous citizens who have come here to do
16 just that: Nobel Prize winners like Albert Einstein and Henry
17 Kissinger, politicians like Madeleine Albright. She was the
18 first woman Secretary of State for the United States. She was
19 not born in the United States. We have Arnold
20 Schwarzenegger, who was the governor of California. And we
21 currently have five members of the United States Congress who
22 are naturalized citizens.

23 But you don't have to become rich and famous to be a
24 patriot or to pursue the American dream. More importantly,
25 what you can do and what you are doing is being neighbors,

1 coworkers, family, friends, and active members of our
2 community. And you can be a patriot by continuing to fulfill
3 those roles. You can be a patriot by taking care of one
4 another, by promoting equality and social justice, by
5 exercising our voice with your right to vote at all levels of
6 government. You can be a patriot by sharing with your
7 communities your experiences, your ideas, your values, your
8 lives, and your journeys here to America. That is what makes
9 America better and stronger. That is what it means to be a
10 true patriot.

11 On behalf of your new country, the United States of
12 America, I congratulate you all today.

13 Thank you, Your Honor.

14 THE COURT: Thank you.

15 I contemplated, because today being the 16th
16 anniversary of the 9/11 tragedy, playing a video I played a
17 couple years ago. But I was afraid Mr. Cohee might not come
18 back, and there were some others. It was a -- it was a very
19 dark video in some ways, but it also reminds us of what we
20 have endured and our country has endured. But this is too
21 happy of a moment for you, your family, and friends to sit
22 through that. But I don't want us to forget about that
23 either.

24 Congratulations. You've earned your citizenship,
25 which grants you the right and the obligation to enjoy the

1 privileges you now possess as a United States citizen to vote
2 and participate in our Government. It is unique. But each of
3 our three branches of government allow and require your
4 participation. Citizens fill the elected positions in the
5 legislature and executive branch. Citizens vote for those
6 individuals to fill those positions. Citizens sit in those
7 jury boxes and sit in judgment on other citizens. And without
8 those citizens sitting in jury boxes, our system of justice
9 would not work in this country. Our branches of government
10 would not work, and they are dependent upon your citizen
11 participation. It is what our forefathers envisioned,
12 sacrificed, and fought for.

13 We are the greatest nation on earth because we, the
14 people, govern ourselves. And you are now part of the United
15 States of America, we, not one individual, but united as a
16 collection of many who have unified to form a more perfect
17 union. And may it always be that way. Please don't be that
18 citizen that immediately sits on their hands and allows others
19 with less wisdom and compassion to run our government. The
20 failure to exercise your rights we have as citizens runs the
21 risk of losing them.

22 To our newest United States citizens, thank you for
23 wanting to be a part of this incredible country. May it be an
24 asylum of happiness, success, and repose. But may those of us
25 who are United States citizens be reminded what we have

1 cherished and sought after by others throughout the world and
2 even today threats to our system of government are currently
3 being defended against. Be proud and grateful to be an
4 American.

5 16 years ago today our government and independence
6 was attacked not because of who we are but for what we stand
7 for: freedom, the freedom to be what you want to be and
8 prosper from your own hard work. And regardless of your
9 gender, origin, or religion, may that always be the case. And
10 may God continue to bless these United States of America.
11 Congratulations.

12 We'll stand in recess.

13 (Proceedings concluded at 4:29 p.m., September 11, 2017.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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3 I, ANNE BOWLINE, Court Reporter in the state of
4 Wyoming, a Registered Merit Reporter and Certified Realtime
5 Reporter, do hereby certify that I reported by machine
6 shorthand the proceedings contained herein on the
7 aforementioned subject on the date herein set forth, and that
8 the foregoing 14 pages constitute a full, true and correct
9 transcript.

10 Dated this 10th day of October, 2017.

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13
14 /s/ Anne Bowline

15 ANNE BOWLINE
16 Registered Merit Reporter
17 Certified Realtime Reporter
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