

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:

Casper, Wyoming  
May 8, 2023  
3:33 p.m.

STINE TURGEON; IGNACIA SANCHEZ  
DE ROSALES; DYLAN KEITH GAMONGAN  
GARCIA; SOPHIE GRACE BARKSDALE;  
RHEA MAY CALUZA JUDAN; GILBERTO  
ESTOLAS JUDAN; STEPHANIE JOAN  
MUNDLE; CARMEN ROSENDO GONZALEZ  
URRIETA; ISRAEL BARCENAS  
ORNELAS; MARIA JOSE NUNEZ  
RODRIGUEZ; ELIZA ANDERSON; TINA  
LEE MARIE RAMER; KARIN BROEMER;  
LADY DENNYS SANCHEZ-GAVILANES;  
GENTLE FORDJOUR KENTIN; PRAGYAN  
MISHRA; INGRID MARCELA SIMON;  
PHI HAU CHI; ANDREW CAYABAS  
BILANGO; XIN ZHANG; JIANGTAO LI;  
ELEANOR HELEN BILLY,

Ewing T. Kerr  
Federal Courthouse

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

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APPEARANCES:

For the Government: DAVID KUBICHEK  
United States Attorney's Office  
100 East B Street, Suite 2211  
Casper, Wyoming 82602

Court Reporter: MEGAN STRAWN, RPR, CRR  
Official U.S. Court Reporter  
111 South Wolcott Street, Room 217  
Casper, Wyoming 82601

*Proceedings recorded by stenography; transcript produced by  
computer-aided transcription.*

1 (Proceedings commenced at 3:33 p.m., May 8, 2023.)

2 THE COURT: Thank you. Please be seated.

3 Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to  
4 the Ewing T. Kerr Federal Courthouse. The Court will suspend  
5 all rules on cameras and recording devices. I would ask,  
6 however, if you have any cell phones that you place them on  
7 silent mode.

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 freedom and  
12 benefits of becoming a United States citizen.

13 As of this morning, 7,076 American men and women have  
14 been killed in action while involved in military operations in  
15 the Middle East. In addition, 53,356 United States military  
16 personnel have been wounded in action during these military  
17 operations.

18 Let us take a moment of silence and recognize these  
19 American heroes and their families whose sacrifice cannot be  
20 measured and whose loss will never be recovered.

21 (Moment of silence.)

22 THE COURT: Thank you.

23 The United States District Court for the District of  
24 Wyoming is in special session for the naturalization of  
25 foreign nationals to be United States citizens. It is with

1 great honor, pride, and privilege that I am able to conduct  
2 today's ceremony naturalizing 22 new United States citizens  
3 from 16 different countries around the world.

4 The Federal District Court of Wyoming, including  
5 Judges Johnson, Freudenthal, and Rankin, extend their  
6 congratulations to you and your families and friends.

7 I would ask at this time if, Ms. Blanco, because you  
8 can say their names better than I, with the U.S. Citizenship  
9 and Immigration Service, could you make a roll call of  
10 prospective applicants for U.S. citizens. And if you could  
11 please raise your hand when your name is called so we make  
12 sure that we have everyone here.

13 Ms. Blanco.

14 MS. BLANCO: Stine Turgeon, Ignacia Sanchez De  
15 Rosales, Dylan Keith Gamongan Garcia, Sophie Grace Barksdale,  
16 Rhea May Caluza Judan, Gilberto Estolas Judan, Stephanie Joan  
17 Mundle, Carmen Rosendo Gonzalez Urrieta, Israel Barcenas  
18 Ornelas, Maria Jose Nunez Rodriguez, Eliza Anderson, Tina Lee  
19 Marie Ramer, Karin Broemer, Lady Dennys Sanchez-Gavilanes,  
20 Gentle Fordjour Kentin, Pragyan Mishra, Ingrid Marcela Simon,  
21 Phi Hau Chi, Andrew Cayabas Bilango, Xin Zhang, Jiangtao Li,  
22 Eleanor Helen Billy.

23 THE COURT: All right. I would note all are present.

24 One of the most fundamental acts that we do as  
25 citizens is to pledge our allegiance to the flag of the United

1 States. And I would ask if we could have the Color Guard come  
2 forward for the posting of the flags as well as then stand,  
3 and we'll remain standing for the Pledge of Allegiance and  
4 "The Star-Spangled Banner."

5 (Reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.)

6 (Playing "The Star-Spangled Banner.")

7 THE COURT: Thank you, Colonel Johnson. Please be  
8 seated.

9 I would also thank Colter Paris, Diego Alcaraz,  
10 Mr. Cadwell, and Mr. Frank for their assistance with the Color  
11 Guard.

12 At this time I would ask that the Clerk of Court play  
13 the President's video.

14 (Message from the President of the United States.)

15 THE COURT: Thank you.

16 At this time I would recognize Wyoming Assistant  
17 United States Attorney, Mr. David Kubichek, representing the  
18 Attorney General of the United States, Merit Garland, for the  
19 presentation of the petition.

20 MR. KUBICHEK: May it please the Court.

21 THE COURT: Counsel.

22 MR. KUBICHEK: Your Honor, before the Court today are  
23 individuals here for a hearing on their petitions for  
24 naturalization. Each of these prospective citizens has  
25 successfully completed all of the steps necessary for

1 eligibility for United States citizenship. Moreover, the  
2 United States Citizenship and Immigration Service has  
3 completed its processes with respect to each of them,  
4 including the necessary background investigations.

5           Having successfully negotiated each of those hurdles,  
6 we are advised that each of these individuals is well  
7 qualified to be admitted to citizenship.

8           Therefore, Your Honor, the United States hereby moves  
9 the Court to admit each of them to United States citizenship  
10 upon their taking of the required oath.

11           THE COURT: Thank you, Mr. Kubichek.

12           On the petition of the United States, the Court finds  
13 that each of the applicants identified has satisfied the legal  
14 requirements to become citizens of the United States of  
15 America and, therefore, will grant the petition and enter an  
16 order allowing these petitioners to become citizens of the  
17 United States of America subject to the taking of the oath.

18           If you would all rise, and if you would please face  
19 me and repeat after me.

20           And those of you who want to get in a better place  
21 for a picture, you may do so.

22           I, state your name --

23           THE PETITIONERS: I, (stating names) --

24           THE COURT: -- hereby declare, on oath --

25           THE PETITIONERS: -- hereby declare, on oath --

1 THE COURT: -- that I absolutely and entirely --

2 THE PETITIONERS: -- that I absolutely and

3 entirely --

4 THE COURT: -- renounce and abjure --

5 THE PETITIONERS: -- renounce and abjure --

6 THE COURT: -- all allegiance and fidelity --

7 THE PETITIONERS: -- all allegiance and fidelity --

8 THE COURT: -- to any foreign prince, potentate --

9 THE PETITIONERS: -- to any foreign prince,

10 potentate --

11 THE COURT: -- state, or sovereignty --

12 THE PETITIONERS: -- state, or sovereignty --

13 THE COURT: -- of whom or which --

14 THE PETITIONERS: -- of whom or which --

15 THE COURT: -- I have heretofore been --

16 THE PETITIONERS: -- I have heretofore been --

17 THE COURT: -- a subject or citizen --

18 THE PETITIONERS: -- a subject or citizen --

19 THE COURT: -- that I will support and defend --

20 THE PETITIONERS: -- that I will support and

21 defend --

22 THE COURT: -- the Constitution and laws --

23 THE PETITIONERS: -- the Constitution and laws --

24 THE COURT: -- of the United States of America --

25 THE PETITIONERS: -- of the United States of

1 America --

2 THE COURT: -- against all enemies --

3 THE PETITIONERS: -- against all enemies --

4 THE COURT: -- foreign and domestic --

5 THE PETITIONERS: -- foreign and domestic --

6 THE COURT: -- that I will bear true faith --

7 THE PETITIONERS: -- that I will bear true faith --

8 THE COURT: -- and allegiance to the same --

9 THE PETITIONERS: -- and allegiance to the same --

10 THE COURT: -- that I will bear arms --

11 THE PETITIONERS: -- that I will bear arms --

12 THE COURT: -- on behalf of the United States --

13 THE PETITIONERS: -- on behalf of the United

14 States --

15 THE COURT: -- when required by law.

16 THE PETITIONERS: -- when required by law.

17 THE COURT: I take this obligation freely --

18 THE PETITIONERS: I take this obligation freely --

19 THE COURT: -- without any mental reservation --

20 THE PETITIONERS: -- without any mental

21 reservation --

22 THE COURT: -- or purpose of evasion.

23 THE PETITIONERS: -- or purpose of evasion.

24 THE COURT: So help me God.

25 THE PETITIONERS: So help me God.

1 THE COURT: Please help me in congratulating our  
2 newest United States citizens.

3 (Applause.)

4 THE COURT: I would present the certificates to our  
5 newest citizens.

6 If I can begin in the right row.

7 (Presentation of certificates.)

8 THE COURT: Thank you. Please be seated.

9 At this time I would recognize various patriotic  
10 organizations that have gathered and have been able to join us  
11 today for their presentations, and I would start with the  
12 Daughters of the American Revolution.

13 MS. TRUMBULL: Congratulations on your citizenship,  
14 and welcome. We have -- we are passing out bags that have a  
15 key chain and a flag, and the key chain is our gift to you.  
16 It's Wyoming jade, and it is our state's official gemstone.  
17 And it was once called "the green gold of Wyoming."

18 From ancient times, jade has been valuable and sought  
19 after. Many attribute qualities of luck, prosperity, healing,  
20 balance, peace, harmony, and many others to this beautiful  
21 stone. We hope that wherever your American journey and  
22 adventures take you, it will be full of all these things, and  
23 this small piece of Wyoming will go with you to remind you  
24 where it all began.

25 I would like to read to you an observation that

1 President Reagan read in his last speech as president:

2           *You can go to live in France, but you cannot become a*  
3 *Frenchman. You can go to live in Germany or Turkey or Japan,*  
4 *but you cannot become a German, a Turk, or Japanese. But*  
5 *anyone from any corner of the earth can come to live in*  
6 *America and become an American.*

7           We are thankful that you're here.

8           THE COURT: Thank you very much, ladies.

9           And I would note Ms. Canon, Ms. Bennett,  
10 Ms. Trumbull, Ms. Ariones (phonetic), Ms. Redmond, and  
11 Ms. Goolsby.

12           There's one I couldn't -- I can't read the writing.  
13 Forgive my eyes. Ms. Bowman? Judy or Trudy?

14           MS. BENNETT: Bennett?

15           THE COURT: Judy Bennett. I'm sorry. I should have  
16 known. Forgive me.

17           Let me -- at this time I would recognize the American  
18 Legion.

19           MR. WELCH: Thank you, Your Honor.

20           Welcome. Congratulations. The American Legion was  
21 established in 1919 after World War I. Many of the soldiers  
22 came home and didn't have jobs, so they needed support. So  
23 they banded together and created the American Legion, which we  
24 don't care where you served: stateside, in combat zone, or  
25 wherever. If you swore to defend the country, the American

1 Legion is open for you.

2 It was established in 1919, which is also when the  
3 charter for Casper was enacted. So we've been 104 years in  
4 Casper as American Legion.

5 So we want to make sure that we're taking care of our  
6 returning veterans, and we're proud to be part of the United  
7 States Veterans Council, which we honor all of our fallen at  
8 funerals.

9 We've got some flag etiquette and some swag bags, as  
10 we used to call them.

11 (Pause in the proceedings.)

12 MR. WELCH: Thank you, Your Honor.

13 THE COURT: Thank you, Mr. Welch.

14 Thank you very much, gentlemen.

15 Veterans of Foreign Wars, Mr. Blackford.

16 MR. BLACKFORD: My name is Ernie Blackford. I'm with  
17 the VFW, which stands for Veterans of Foreign Wars. To become  
18 a member of the VFW, you would need to have served during a  
19 time of conflict on foreign soil. And we are here to support  
20 the veterans and the veterans' families. And we welcome you  
21 all, and we have some flags to give out to you.

22 (Pause in the proceedings.)

23 THE COURT: Thank you very much, gentlemen.

24 And I also would recognize Mr. Laurenz on behalf of  
25 the United States Veterans Council of Natrona County.

1 MR. LAURENZ: Thank you, Your Honor.

2 My name's Hank Laurenz. I'm president of the Natrona  
3 County United Veterans Council, which is a combination of all  
4 of the veterans organizations in Natrona County: the VFW, the  
5 Legion. The cap I'm wearing is from the Marine Corps League.  
6 We all band together to help the veterans that can't be helped  
7 during the normal 8-to-5 day.

8 So, with that, we founded -- actually, it was an idea  
9 of the State of Wyoming that this was to happen, that in each  
10 county, the veterans organizations would band together because  
11 they have more influence, more money, everything else to help  
12 the veterans.

13 Luckily or unluckily, either way you want to look at  
14 it, the only place it took was here. So -- in fact, we're  
15 having a meeting later tonight on that.

16 But, with that, we consider it an honor to help the  
17 veterans. The best thing we can take -- well, not the best  
18 thing we can probably do in life, but the best honor I feel in  
19 life is helping the family when our veterans finally leave  
20 this world.

21 And, with that, I'd like to say thank you for all  
22 becoming -- all of you becoming American citizens, and I hope  
23 you enjoy and treasure it and honor it. Thank you.

24 Gentlemen, please stand.

25 THE COURT: Thank you, Mr. Laurenz.

1 MR. LAURENZ: Your Honor.

2 Also, with that -- I missed one other thing -- George  
3 Williams called me and asked me that I do that during the  
4 ceremony today because he's having a few medical issues, and  
5 he plans on attending the next one.

6 THE COURT: We'll look forward to his attendance.  
7 And, thank you, gentlemen, for your attendance and your  
8 service.

9 Let me recognize the Small Business Administration.  
10 A lot of you are entrepreneurs, and America is a great place  
11 for them. And I would recognize Amy Lea and Tammy Hanshaw on  
12 behalf of the Small Business Administration for some  
13 information they have.

14 MS. LEA: Thank you so much, Your Honor.

15 THE COURT: Thank you.

16 MS. LEA: We have many resources that can help you  
17 start and grow a business here in Wyoming, and we're happy to  
18 help. We'll pass around some resources. Please come see us,  
19 anything we can do to help.

20 (Pause in the proceedings.)

21 THE COURT: Thank you very much, ladies.

22 One of the things that you have now been vested with  
23 is the right and power to vote. It is an extremely important  
24 one, and it is one that I strongly encourage you to exercise.  
25 To the extent you do not like the things that are going on,

1 there are representatives and senators in the United States  
2 Congress that you can speak to, and you can also vote.

3 I would recognize, on behalf of U.S. Senator John  
4 Barrasso's office, Ms. Kelly and Ms. Vollmer, and I think they  
5 have some letters and communication to circulate to you.

6 I would also recognize Senator Lummis's office,  
7 Mr. French.

8 And Representative Hageman's office, Ms. Hedges and  
9 Ms. Scaling.

10 (Pause in the proceedings.)

11 THE COURT: Thank you very much.

12 Let me recognize one last person. Their presence  
13 today and their hard work would not have let this day come to  
14 fruition for you all. Ms. Blanco, thank you and the U.S.  
15 Citizenship and Immigration Service office for the work that  
16 you've done to get everyone here today, paperized and  
17 everything done so that they could be sworn in as new United  
18 States citizens.

19 I also point out Ms. Blanco because it's going to be  
20 important, if any paperwork is in error or concerns, she is a  
21 contact and is where you'll need to go to make sure that  
22 everything is in order to the extent there's any concerns or  
23 questions.

24 So thank you, Ms. Blanco, for your efforts and your  
25 beautiful pronunciation of the names.

1 MS. BLANCO: Thank you. It was my pleasure.

2 (Applause.)

3 THE COURT: Thank you all.

4 One of the most enjoyable and memorable components of  
5 this ceremony -- naturalization ceremony is the opportunity to  
6 hear from you as new United States citizens, not that I want  
7 to turn you into public speakers. All I would ask is if you  
8 wish to introduce yourself, any of your family or friends that  
9 are here with you today, and just tell us one thing that makes  
10 you excited about today's event.

11 And with that, I would recognize beginning with  
12 Ms. Turgeon.

13 MS. TURGEON: Sure. Yes. Stine Turgeon. I've been  
14 here --

15 THE COURT: Let me give you a microphone.

16 MS. TURGEON: I'm Stine Turgeon, and I've been in  
17 Wyoming for 22 years. I'm excited to be here with my husband  
18 and my two sons. Back in 2016 I got my graduate degree from  
19 University of Wyoming, and my sons were down there, too. And  
20 it's a special moment, so thank you.

21 THE COURT: Congratulations.

22 (Applause.)

23 THE COURT: Where is your sons and husband? They  
24 have to stand.

25 There they are. Congratulations.

1 (Applause.)

2 MS. ROSALES: I'm Ignacia Rosales. I'm living here  
3 in Wyoming for 14 years, because I moved from California. I'm  
4 coming to the United States on '85. And here is my daughter.  
5 My husband is not here. He's working. Thank you.

6 THE COURT: Thank you. Congratulations.

7 (Applause.)

8 MR. GARCIA: My name is Dylan. I've been living in  
9 Wyoming for seven years. I'm here with my dad and my little  
10 sister, and I'm happy to be here.

11 THE COURT: Congratulations. We're glad to have you.

12 (Applause.)

13 MS. BARKSDALE: My name is Sophie Barksdale. I've  
14 been living here for seven years. My son and husband were not  
15 able to be with me today, but that was them calling to say  
16 that they're with me in spirit. So, yeah, I appreciate you  
17 all. Thank you.

18 THE COURT: Congratulations. Thank you.

19 (Applause.)

20 MS. JUDAN: I'm Rhea May Judan. I'm here for eight  
21 years, and I have my daughter with me.

22 THE COURT: Congratulations.

23 (Applause.)

24 MR. JUDAN: I'm Gilberto Judan. I've been here for  
25 almost seven years. And my wife, and my daughter there.

1 Thank you.

2 THE COURT: Congratulations.

3 (Applause.)

4 MS. MUNDLE: My name is Stephanie Mundle. I've been  
5 living in the United States for ten years and Wyoming for just  
6 over two, and it's just an honor to be in such an amazing  
7 country and the best state in our --

8 (Applause.)

9 MS. MUNDLE: Thank you. And my husband -- my husband  
10 who brought me to this great country, so thank you.

11 THE COURT: Congratulations.

12 (Applause.)

13 MR. URRIETA: First, thank you, Your Honor. I want  
14 to thank my wife for 14 years. I live here in Wyoming for 25,  
15 24 years. And thank you, thank you for everything.

16 (Applause.)

17 MR. URRIETA: My kids, my home, I want to stay here.  
18 And I thank you guys for -- for letting me stay here, and  
19 thank you very much, Your Honor.

20 THE COURT: Thank you.

21 (Applause.)

22 MR. BARCENAS: My name is Israel Barcenas, and I've  
23 been here almost 20 years. I represent the Natrona Sheriff's  
24 Department, working on site. So I'm so happy to receive my  
25 citizenship. This country treat me really good.

1           My boss is there -- thank you for coming in -- and my  
2 family. Thank you.

3           (Applause.)

4           MS. SANCHEZ: I'm Lady Sanchez. I moved here nine  
5 years ago. So my husband, his family is coming, too, and so  
6 happy for citizenship today.

7           THE COURT: Congratulations.

8           (Applause.)

9           MS. GENTLE: I'm Kirsten Gentle, and I've been in the  
10 United States for six years and in Wyoming for three years.  
11 I'm here with my dad, my pastor, and my church family --

12          (Applause.)

13          MS. GENTLE: -- and I'm just happy to be following in  
14 my dad's footsteps. He got his citizenship three years ago.  
15 So thank you for having us.

16          THE COURT: Congratulations.

17          (Applause.)

18          MS. MISHRA: Hello, everyone. My name is Pragyan,  
19 and I come, originally, from India. When I came here to the  
20 United States for my studies, it was for better opportunities,  
21 to get better higher education, more better studies. So it  
22 definitely did compare to what I expected and much more.

23                 But I also would like to say that, in general,  
24 staying in Wyoming, the people are very personal. The  
25 ceremony here was very personal and very touching. I have

1 never seen such a very intimate ceremony where everybody was  
2 recognized, everybody's name was said, the family members are  
3 recognized as well as each and every person who contributed to  
4 making this happen was recognized. So it's definitely what  
5 shows about Wyoming.

6           So, yeah, it just feels great to be finally a U.S.  
7 citizen, but more so because Wyoming also represents what the  
8 U.S. Constitution says. I have seen that. People follow it  
9 to the letter, and that's great. It's all about what -- the  
10 forefathers wrote an amazing U.S. Constitution. It's one of  
11 the strongest, the most -- most republican and democratic U.S.  
12 constitution I've ever read.

13           So I'm really proud to be part of it. And thank you,  
14 each and every one who helped me come along this way. My  
15 family is with me in spirit, but all of you can be part of my  
16 celebration. Thank you.

17           (Applause.)

18           MS. SIMON: My name is Ingrid Simon. I am from Costa  
19 Rica, but I move here seven years ago. I have two years  
20 living here in this beautiful state. I love Casper, the  
21 people. I am so proud that I live here. I am happy to become  
22 a citizen finally because it was a long, long way, but I'm  
23 very proud. Thank you so much.

24           (Applause.)

25           MR. CHI: My name is Phi Chi. I'm from Vietnam. So

1 I moved here ten year ago. So I really like America, and  
2 so -- I'm so excited for become a citizen today. Thank you so  
3 much.

4 (Applause.)

5 MR. BILANGO: Hello. My name is Andrew Bilango.  
6 I've been here in Wyoming for like eight years now, and we  
7 came over to America at, like, December 14, 2004. I remember  
8 because my family framed it in our wall. And I would like to  
9 thank my mother, who is right there, for sticking with me and  
10 being here with me today.

11 (Applause.)

12 MS. ZHANG: My name is Xin Zhang. I'm so excited,  
13 and I'm proud to be an American. America and American people  
14 gave us -- our family a lot, try to do best. And thank you,  
15 my friends, to celebrate with us today. And thank you,  
16 everyone. And thank you, our two boys to be here, celebrate  
17 me, and my husband, to be American. God bless America. Thank  
18 you.

19 (Applause.)

20 MR. LI: Hello. My name is Michael Li. And I've  
21 lived in Wyoming around ten years. And today I come with my  
22 best friend, my two boys, and my beautiful wife. And thank  
23 you all. Thank you.

24 (Applause.)

25 MS. BILLY: Hi. My name is Eleanor Billy. I'm from

1 the Caribbean, Trinidad and Tobago. I love this land. I love  
2 Wyoming. My mom brought us here. My daughter is here, my  
3 friends from Kenya. And I thank God for being with you all  
4 beautiful friends, and I thank God for blessing this land, and  
5 I pray that the people of America will remember in God we  
6 trust. And please remember the God who bless us in this land.  
7 I thank God for you, the judge. I thank God for people.  
8 Please believe that America is a blessed land. And I give God  
9 thanks and praise for being in Wyoming.

10 I love this land. It is a beautiful place. It  
11 remind me of Trinidad and Tobago. It's beautiful. The people  
12 are beautiful. They're loving, and they show love. And I  
13 thank God for each and every one of you. God bless you.

14 (Applause.)

15 MS. RODRIGUEZ: My name is Maria. I'm from  
16 Venezuela. I'm happy to be here with my family and all you  
17 guys. And I'm happy to be in a place where I can feel free  
18 and -- just that, opportunities and liberty. Thank you.

19 (Applause.)

20 MS. ANDERSON: My name is Eliza Anderson, and I moved  
21 here six years ago from Latvia. And I have my husband and two  
22 little children there in the back, and they're the reason I'm  
23 here, and I'm happy to be here, so thank you.

24 THE COURT: We're happy to have you. Thank you.

25 (Applause.)

1 MS. RAMER: This is going to be bad. I'm Tina. I  
2 came here for a six-month contract, and 28 years later I'm  
3 still here.

4 My oldest daughter is married and has blessed me with  
5 two grandchildren, American. My son also married and has  
6 blessed me with a grandson, American. And my youngest  
7 daughter is here today, American, born here. So that's enough  
8 for me. Thank you, everybody.

9 (Applause.)

10 MS. BROEMER: My name is Karin. I've actually been  
11 here for a very long time. I got brought over with my  
12 husband. He was in the military, stationed in Germany. I've  
13 been in here since '91. Actually, I've been here longer than  
14 I have in Germany. Since then, I guess I seen pretty much  
15 East Coast, West Coast, and most of it in between. I like  
16 Wyoming. This is the retirement state because he finally got  
17 out.

18 The people kind of remind me of the ignorant Germans  
19 that we got at home: stubborn, headstrong, ignorant, and they  
20 take an awful long time to warm up.

21 THE COURT: Thank you.

22 (Applause.)

23 THE COURT: I appreciate you sharing your thoughts  
24 and your family and friends with us today. And, again,  
25 congratulations.

1           Mr. Kubichek I would recognize for remarks on behalf  
2 of the United States Attorney General.

3           MR. KUBICHEK: On behalf of the Attorney General of  
4 the United States, whom I represent here today, I want to say  
5 congratulations and thank you. Thank you for making this  
6 effort to become one of us.

7           You know, lots of us in this room won the birth  
8 lottery. We didn't have to do anything; we just got born  
9 here. There wasn't much to that. I'm, you know, about six  
10 blocks from where I started. And I was fortunate enough to  
11 have a nice life here and around the country.

12           But you all had to work for this. You had to get  
13 here, which isn't always the easiest thing. You had to take  
14 tests. You had to study. You had to take an oath today to  
15 memorialize your commitment to be a citizen of the United  
16 States, which carries with it all kinds of opportunities, all  
17 kinds of chances to make a life for yourself here under, as  
18 one of our friends discussed, a wonderful constitutional  
19 system that guarantees much, but it also asks much of you now.

20           You know, a society, a system of government like we  
21 have, is, in many respects, a strong thing, but it's also a  
22 fragile thing. You know, we can carry on here year after year  
23 only if everybody kind of signs up and agrees that we're going  
24 to participate and we're going to work towards making us  
25 better.

1           You know, there's a theory of thermodynamics called  
2 entropy, and some of you who are really smart know what that  
3 means. I had to look it up again, but it sort of means that,  
4 you know, all kinds of systems in the world, there's sort of a  
5 gravitational pull from order to disorder. And you see it in  
6 the universe. Stars, you know, they fall apart at some point.  
7 You see it in yourself as you get -- you know, we're born,  
8 we're tough, we're strong, we grow up, life is good, and then  
9 entropy really starts raising its head, and we start falling  
10 apart. I've got 71 and a half years of falling apart under my  
11 belt, and I can tell you I see it every day.

12           Well, societies and systems of government are the  
13 same. It doesn't mean it's inevitable that they'll fall  
14 apart, but in order to keep them at a good, healthy system, it  
15 requires all of us to participate. It requires the energy we  
16 can all put into it to keep it functioning.

17           So, here, you all signed up. You took an oath today  
18 to support and defend the laws of the United States. And you  
19 signed up, inferentially, at least, to participate in this  
20 system; to vote, right? That's one of the things you get to  
21 do, and you should do.

22           You have a right to free speech here, which you may  
23 not have always had wherever you came from, and we encourage  
24 that. But there are reciprocal obligations to all of that.  
25 You have the right to speak; you have an obligation to listen

1 and to be tolerant and to be understanding.

2           We can't make it if we're always at war with each  
3 other. We can't do it. And we will suffer the slings and  
4 arrows of maximum entropy if we don't settle down and listen  
5 to each other and be tolerant and appreciate each other.

6           You guys, look around. Look at each other. You are  
7 fundamentally different. We have people of all different skin  
8 colors, all different backgrounds. You know, it's one thing  
9 if you come from a fairly homogeneous society where everybody  
10 has the same religious traditions and all that. Even those  
11 people don't get along all the time, right?

12           But now look at you. You come from all over the  
13 place, all kinds of different traditions. You came here to  
14 make a better life because this is the place that offers  
15 things that almost no one else in the -- nowhere else in the  
16 world offers.

17           But, to make it work, we all have to do our part.  
18 And that's to participate, that's to be tolerant, that's to be  
19 understanding of other people who may have traveled a  
20 different road than you did. So they may come at life in a  
21 different way than you do from a different perspective, but we  
22 all have to be tolerant, and we all have to listen to be a  
23 good citizen.

24           So right to speak, that's this part (indicating), but  
25 this part (indicating) has to work, too, and this part

1 (indicating) has to work.

2           Now, when we have these ceremonies, one of the things  
3 we always do is we always -- we have these gentlemen here.  
4 And, you know, they give out some bags and things, but that's  
5 not really why they're here. They're here because they  
6 represent people who put their lives on the line to preserve  
7 our way of life. You know, they signed up to support and  
8 defend the constitution in the hardest way possible. Because,  
9 periodically, throughout history -- you all know this --  
10 countries get mad, countries want to have wars with other  
11 countries to either acquire them or defeat them or whatever.  
12 For us to carry on here, we need these guys to protect us and  
13 defend us.

14           We have the ladies from the Daughters of the American  
15 Revolution here sort of to remind us of the same thing. We  
16 didn't just sprout like a weed in your garden or a flower in  
17 the desert out of nothing. We had a bunch of guys back in  
18 1775 and '76 who didn't like operating under the thumb of a  
19 foreign king when they had no say in what was going on.

20           So -- and these were not the poor people in the  
21 colonies. They were well-to-do. They were going to be fine  
22 either way. They just didn't like operating under that system  
23 at all.

24           So they banded together -- the Jeffersons, the  
25 Franklins, the Adamses, the Washingtons -- and they pledged

1 their lives and their fortunes. And just think back what a  
2 thing that was to take on the strongest military force in the  
3 world because they had a belief in the system. They had a  
4 belief in human dignity and human liberty, and they wanted to  
5 establish a country, a nation here, that was founded on those  
6 principles.

7           There was no reason in the world they should have  
8 thought that would work. None. It was stupid. But they  
9 pledged together to do it. They had an amazing, magnificent  
10 leader in George Washington. They declared their  
11 independence, and they won it.

12           Their ancestors did that, and we're proud to have  
13 them here to remind us what an incredible sacrifice that was,  
14 and we owe them what we have today. So we're thankful to  
15 them.

16           (Applause.)

17           MR. KUBICHEK: And we do this thing we did today in  
18 this courtroom which is symbolic of what all of this is really  
19 ultimately about: a country that's dedicated to the  
20 proposition that we're all equal from when we start, and we  
21 all will have equal opportunities. And the law will govern  
22 how our society operates, not just whoever happens to be the  
23 king or the prince or, as your oath said, no more potentates,  
24 whatever those guys are. None of that.

25           We're going to have a system of law, and this is the

1 place where we most celebrate that institution that separates  
2 us from a lot of places in the world. Because, here, we come  
3 together. The judge has a role to be the arbiter of the legal  
4 stuff. But when we have a criminal case, he decides some of  
5 the rules, but whether someone's convicted or not, that  
6 depends on you.

7           We pick 12 citizens at random who come in here. They  
8 judge the facts. I represent the Government. We present  
9 facts. Somebody represents the defendant. They may present  
10 facts. And then, ultimately, a jury of citizens decides. Not  
11 a judge, not a senator, not a president. You guys.

12           And that is the most important part of who we are is,  
13 ultimately, a society where you guys are the last word, we all  
14 are, if we participate.

15           So some day you may be called to come down here to be  
16 a juror, and I hope we see you then if you are. It does  
17 happen. Over the course of time, I've seen a few of our new  
18 citizens show up in here, and that's kind of exciting.

19           But that's one of your obligations. There are many.  
20 But from this day forward, do one thing: Help us to be  
21 better. You've already made us better today by your presence  
22 and by your effort. And stay at it. Make us richer. Make us  
23 more prosperous. Make us more free. Help us keep the United  
24 States of America a going concern into the future, because we  
25 need all of you to help.

1           So thank you again for all that you have done to be  
2 here today. Thank you for the honor it is for me to be here  
3 to participate in this for you.

4           Thank you, Your Honor.

5           THE COURT: Thank you, Mr. Kubichek.

6           (Applause.)

7           THE COURT: Just a few closing remarks.

8           First, congratulations to you, your family, and your  
9 friends. The importance of this event to you all cannot be  
10 overstated. In listening to each of you talk about your  
11 journey and why you're so glad to be here today, seven years  
12 is the least period of time that I heard that you had to stick  
13 at this. 40 years, some. What an incredible journey.

14           As Mr. Kubichek had said, some of us got the lottery.  
15 We were born here. Instantaneous. Add water. Hopefully, we  
16 don't forget how hard you have worked and these gentlemen and  
17 their predecessors, these ladies and their families have  
18 worked to provide us with the opportunities and the freedoms  
19 that we have.

20           You've done it the right way. You've gone through  
21 that paper chase. You've dotted the i's, and you've crossed  
22 your t's. No person or country or government is perfect, and  
23 we are certainly no exception. Nonetheless, hopefully, as a  
24 country, we can collectively recognize our failings and seek  
25 to improve who we are as a people and as a country.

1           To improve, we must all participate lest we stand  
2 silent and fail to exercise our rights and support our  
3 constitution and recognize it is we, the people, who must  
4 exercise and support and defend our rights.

5           Absent that execution and exercising, we run the risk  
6 of extinction just like any other government. Our  
7 constitution is simply a piece of paper. Unless people  
8 believe in it, defend it, and support it, it will simply  
9 disappear.

10           I would also add that our constitution was crafted  
11 not based upon a universal ideology but, rather, a compromise  
12 and appreciation that no singular idea or system was superior;  
13 but, rather, an amalgamation of views and systems came  
14 together to provide a structure that has endured for over 240  
15 years.

16           Today, as I was going with my daughter, having worked  
17 out, there was a news report. I apologize, but it just -- it  
18 illustrates how lucky we are. 203 people have been executed  
19 in Iran in the last year ranging from blasphemy to whatever  
20 else of rights they were exercising. They were executed.  
21 They were not allowed to speak with their family. Their  
22 families weren't allowed to be part of anything.

23           Two people were hanged today.

24           That is why we pledge allegiance to America. That is  
25 why you becoming an American is such a big deal. That is why

1 the rule of law makes a difference. We are not swearing  
2 allegiance to a new king, to a potentate, a prince, a  
3 dictator, ayatollah. It is to America, and it is to that  
4 structure that we owe. And with your enthusiasm, skills, and  
5 talents, I encourage you to make us a more diverse and  
6 talented country and democracy.

7           Vote, exercise your rights and freedoms, but  
8 appreciate and respect the divergent views and beliefs that  
9 have made this country what it is.

10           This is the greatest nation on earth, but, to remain  
11 so, we must appreciate how and why we enjoy the freedoms we  
12 do. It is not because we all think and believe the same but,  
13 rather, we respect each other's diversity, our beliefs, which  
14 allow us, we, the people, to govern ourselves.

15           You are now part of this richly woven fabric of the  
16 United States of America. You have become an American. We do  
17 not exist as individuals but a collection of many, united to  
18 form a more perfect union. May it always be that way, and may  
19 God continue to bless the United States of America and you and  
20 your families.

21           Thank you all for your attendance today and your  
22 commitment to the United States of America. We'll stand in  
23 recess.

24           (Proceedings concluded at 4:33 p.m., May 8, 2023.)

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