

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF WYOMING

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

Casper, Wyoming

January 8, 2018
3:35 p.m.

MARICHU RIVERAL SCHATZA, BRENDON
JOHN WHITTLE, MARY JOY CAIPANG
HENSON, HUGO JIMENEZ VIELMAS,
CATALINA CHAVEZ MERCADO,
JENNIFER LILIEITH PITTER, JESSICA
ALVAREZ, OSCAR GERONIMO
GANDARILLA PEREZ, MICHAEL
ANGELOV THOMPSON, PRAPARAT
JOEST, YUWEN ZHANG, ROSA ELENA
RUIZ DE GUEVARA, MARIANA ZBUR,
MARLIN ELAINE TAYLOR, and
JULIETA CERNA YOUNG,

Ewing T. Kerr
Federal Courthouse

Petitioners.

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

BEFORE THE HONORABLE SCOTT W. SKAVDAHL
UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE

APPEARANCES:

For the Government: MR. DAVID A. KUBICHEK
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Court Reporter: MS. ANNE BOWLINE, RMR, CRR
Official U.S. Court Reporter
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Casper, Wyoming 82601
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1 (Proceedings commenced at 3:35 p.m., January 8, 2018.)

2 THE COURT: Thank you. Please be seated. Good
3 afternoon, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to the Townsend
4 Justice Center. I want to thank Judge Sullins, Judge Wilking,
5 and Judge Forgey, whom I have displaced from his courtroom,
6 for this opportunity to conduct this naturalization ceremony.

7 The Court will suspend the local rules on cameras and
8 recording devices. However, I would ask that you double-check
9 your cell phones to make sure they're turned to silence.

10 It is the tradition at the beginning of these
11 naturalization ceremonies to recognize those citizens and
12 families of those citizens who have paid the ultimate price in
13 defending what so many in this world seek: the freedom and
14 benefits of being a United States citizen. As of this
15 morning, 6,947 American men and women have been killed in
16 action while involved in military operations in Afghanistan
17 and Iraq. In addition, 52,644 United States citizens have
18 been wounded in action during these military operations.

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

22 Thank you.

23 The United States District Court for the District of
24 Wyoming is sitting in special session for this naturalization
25 ceremony of foreign nationals to become United States

1 citizens. It is with great honor, pride, and privilege that I
2 am able to conduct today's ceremony inducting 15 new United
3 States citizens, who originate from nine or eight different
4 countries -- we'll find out for sure in a moment -- from
5 around the world. The Federal District Court of Wyoming,
6 including Chief Judge Freudenthal and Judge Johnson, extend
7 their congratulations to you and your families.

8 I would ask the Deputy Clerk of Court to make a roll
9 call of prospective applicants for United States citizenship,
10 and if you could please stand when your name is called.

11 THE COURTROOM DEPUTY: Marichu Rivera Schatza,
12 Brendon John Whittle, Mary Joy Caipang Henson, Hugo Jimenez
13 Vielmas, Catalina Chavez Mercado, Jennifer Lilieth Pitter,
14 Jessica Alvarez, Oscar Geronimo Gandarilla Perez, Michael
15 Angelov Thompson, Praparat Joest, Yuwen Zhang, Rosa Elena Ruiz
16 De Guevara, Mariana Zbur, Marlin Elaine Taylor, Julieta Cerna
17 Young.

18 THE COURT: Thank you. You may be seated.

19 Colonel Schmotzer, at this time I would ask if you
20 could post the colors for the Natrona County High School Color
21 Guard.

22 And, ladies and gentlemen, if you would please stand.

23 (Posting of the colors.)

24 THE COURT: At this time, fellow citizens, it is our
25 obligation to show our allegiance in making our Pledge of

1 Allegiance, and I'll ask you to remain standing for the
2 singing of our national anthem.

3 At this time I would recognize Jonathan True for the
4 singing [sic] of the Pledge of Allegiance.

5 (Recitation of Pledge of Allegiance.)

6 THE COURT: At this time I would ask Anna Swanson to
7 come forward and sing the Star-Spangled Banner.

8 (Singing of the national anthem.)

9 (Applause.)

10 THE COURT: Thank you, Anna, and thank you, Jonathan.
11 I'd go ahead and ask for the removal of the colors.

12 (Retiring of the colors.)

13 THE COURT: Thank you. Please be seated.

14 At this time I would recognize Mr. David Kubichek,
15 representing the Attorney General of the United States.
16 Mr. Kubichek, I understand you may have a petition.

17 MR. KUBICHEK: May it please the Court.

18 THE COURT: Counsel.

19 MR. KUBICHEK: Your Honor, before the Court today are
20 individuals who are here for a hearing on their petitions for
21 naturalization. Each of these individuals has successfully
22 completed all of the steps necessary to be eligible for United
23 States citizenship. Moreover, the United States Citizenship
24 and Immigration Service has advised that it has completed its
25 processes with respect to each of these individuals, including

1 the necessary background checks. You're advised that each of
2 them is well qualified to be admitted to citizenship.

3 Therefore, Your Honor, on behalf of the Attorney
4 General of the United States and the President, it's my
5 privilege to hereby move the Court to admit each of these
6 individuals to United States citizenship upon their taking of
7 the oath.

8 THE COURT: Thank you, Mr. Kubichek.

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

15 To our newest United States citizens, if you would
16 please face me at this time and raise your right hand and
17 repeat after me. If you would go ahead and stand, please.

18 I -- state your name -- hereby declare on oath that I
19 absolutely and entirely renounce and abjure all allegiance and
20 fidelity to any foreign prince or potentate, state or
21 sovereignty of whom or which I have heretofore been a subject
22 or citizen; that I will support and defend the constitution
23 and laws of the United States of America against all enemies,
24 foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and
25 allegiance to the same; and that I will bear arms on behalf of

1 the United States when required by law; and I will perform
2 noncombat service in the Armed Forces of the United States
3 when required by the law. I take this obligation freely,
4 without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion, so help
5 me God.

6 Congratulations.

7 (Applause.)

8 THE COURT: At this time I would ask the Clerk of
9 Court to assist me in presenting the certificates to our
10 newest citizens. And those of you who wish to come forward,
11 family members who wish to take a picture, you're welcome to
12 do so.

13 (Discussions off the record.)

14 THE COURT: At this time I would ask for the
15 presentation of the President's video.

16 (Playing video.)

17 THE COURT: I still remember how to run the controls.
18 It's been a while.

19 At this time, ladies and gentlemen, I'd ask if the
20 newest United States citizens, if you would like to just
21 recognize those friends and family that are here with you
22 today and tell us one thing about today that you're -- that
23 makes you excited.

24 (New citizens introduce themselves.)

25 THE COURT: Thank you. Congratulations to all of

1 you.

2 At this time I would recognize the Congressional
3 delegation. In this country, when you don't like something
4 about the federal government or the laws of the federal
5 government, these are the individuals you contact. And I
6 would recognize on behalf of Senator Enzi's office Mr. Rogers.
7 On behalf of Senator Barrasso's office, Nolan -- is it Rap or
8 Rad?

9 MR. RAP: Rap.

10 THE COURT: -- Rap, and Bethany Raver. On behalf of
11 Representative Cheney's office, Jackie King and Linx Clark.
12 And they have some materials that they will hand out to you
13 that will facilitate your ability to contact and get ahold of
14 our representatives.

15 (Discussions off the record.)

16 THE COURT: Thank you.

17 At this time I would recognize the members of the
18 Daughters of the American Revolution to hand out some items
19 from them. And I would ask, Ms. Vanderveen, if you could tell
20 us what you're handing out and just the nature of the origin
21 of your group, which might be self-evident from the title, but
22 just in case

23 MS. VANDERVEEN: These are historic documents in
24 here, and we've done this for a while for all the new
25 citizens, Daughters of the American Revolution. And we wish

1 you a lot of -- oh, Daughters of the American Revolution, we
2 have patriots -- my great-great-great-great-great-great-
3 grandfather fought in the American Revolution and -- at the
4 age of 17. And it was a -- it's been interesting to go back
5 into history and to find out about the family and, you know,
6 what he did and what he was like. And it's a very exciting
7 organization. It's a service organization, Daughters of the
8 American Revolution. We do a lot of things for the community
9 and for people, and we want to welcome you to the United
10 States and to America.

11 THE COURT: Thank you. And I believe you have some
12 things if you want to go ahead and hand them out at this time.

13 And each of these ladies can trace their roots back
14 to actual members of the American Revolution who fought for
15 and were instrumental in creating this country.

16 We also have various members of veterans groups here
17 in Natrona County, including Disabled American Veterans, who
18 are represented by Mr. Williams and Mr. Neville; and the
19 United Veterans Council of Natrona County and Elks Lodge,
20 represented by Mr. Cohee. And it seems like I'm missing one
21 additional person. Am I?

22 MR. COHEE: Two. VFW did not arrive, nor did the
23 American Legion.

24 THE COURT: I would note their absence, but we've got
25 the A team. These gentlemen have some items that they would

1 like to present to you as a memorial or a memento for today's
2 events and a reminder as to what benefits you are receiving
3 and why you're receiving them.

4 Mr. Cohee, Mr. Neville, Mr. Williams.

5 MR. COHEE: A flag pin from the Veterans Council and
6 a flag booklet from the Elks Lodge.

7 MR. WILLIAMS: From the Disabled American Veterans,
8 we have our Wyoming bronco with a D-A-V on it. The Disabled
9 American Veterans took the same oath that you did, and we went
10 one step further and said that if we had to, we would give our
11 life, and 200,000 of my comrades have just done that for all
12 of us. Thank you very much. We appreciate you joining the
13 country.

14 MR. COHEE: Thank you, Your Honor.

15 THE COURT: Thank you, gentlemen, for your service
16 and for your assistance here today.

17 Ladies and gentlemen, a couple other people that are
18 important in your lives or may be important in your lives in
19 the future. First, Mr. Johnson, who's joining us today, and
20 he is responsible for shepherding all of these applications
21 through the system and getting you so -- to today. And if
22 something happens in terms of any loss of documentation or if
23 you intend to travel and need to get some documentation so
24 that you can make sure you get back to your home country, the
25 United States of America, it will be important to confer with

1 him and make sure that you have those or at least the
2 Immigrations and Customs -- Citizenship and Immigration
3 Services office.

4 Also here with you today, some of you are
5 entrepreneurs, no doubt. And to the extent that you are, the
6 Small Business Administration -- Amy Lea is here on behalf of
7 the Small Business Administration. And that is an
8 organization, governmental entity that assists small
9 businesses and entrepreneurs, such as yourselves. Thank you.

10 At this time I would recognize Mr. David Kubichek on
11 behalf of the Attorney General of the United States for
12 remarks. Mr. Kubichek.

13 MR. KUBICHEK: May it please the Court.

14 THE COURT: Counsel.

15 MR. KUBICHEK: Ladies and gentlemen, new citizens,
16 I've been at this business now for 40-plus years. I've done
17 about everything that could possibly come my way as a lawyer
18 for the Department of Justice and the United States and -- but
19 the one thing that has always meant the most to me is the
20 opportunity to do this thing. Because when we gather together
21 to welcome new citizens, it's not simply an important day for
22 you -- it is that for sure -- but for all of us who are
23 privileged and lucky enough to be here to participate in this,
24 it's a reaffirmation of our faith in our country and our
25 belief in our country and the values that it stands for. And

1 that's -- that's really important.

2 One thing I usually comment about when I am lucky
3 enough to have this opportunity is you-all are different from
4 most of us citizens in this room by virtue of the fact you-all
5 had to earn it. You had to work for it. You had to study.
6 You had to take tests. You had to pass a background
7 investigation. You had to go through an interview process.
8 You had to do a lot. Most of us just won the birth lottery.
9 I didn't do anything. I just happened -- my mom happened to
10 be a citizen. She was born in Casper, Wyoming, back in 1920.
11 I was born up at the Wyoming Medical Center in 1952, and I
12 didn't have to do a darn thing.

13 You-all are different because you made a commitment
14 to be a part of the United States, and you had to back up that
15 commitment with a lot of effort. And so all of us here who
16 are at least thinking, thoughtful citizens really appreciate
17 what you've done to join us. And I am hopeful that we can
18 justify your confidence in us. I hope we can.

19 There is by virtue of our being born here a certain
20 amount of arrogance some of us feel about how we're
21 privileged, and I'm not worried about any of you feeling that
22 way. You feel blessed and privileged and fortunate to have
23 made these steps and made this journey and come to this
24 conclusion, and God bless you. That is special. And I hope
25 by your example all of us who didn't have to do that will be

1 thoughtful about our good fortune and recommit ourselves to
2 being -- to being good citizens.

3 Now, this ceremony, you've gotten stuff from all
4 kinds of organizations, and they participate with us every
5 time we have one of these ceremonies. And -- but I like to
6 recognize them in a sort of different way when we do this
7 because there's something really special about each of them.

8 You heard a little bit of history of the ladies from
9 the Daughters of the American Revolution. They're important
10 in this ceremony every time we do it, not just for the goodies
11 that they hand out but because symbolically they represent our
12 roots. You know, and if you think back, the fact that America
13 became this country that we know and we love today was not an
14 accident and it was not simply an event of fortuity. It took
15 incredible courage, incredible courage for the founders of our
16 country to stake out -- they weren't poor people. They were
17 among the wealthiest people in the society back in the 1700s.

18 But they wanted to create a country that was
19 committed to liberty and to freedom and to individual
20 opportunity, and that wasn't a future that they saw as a part
21 of their continuing alliance with the -- with Great Britain
22 and the commonwealth. So they staked out and they said,
23 "We're going to have our own country." That was an incredibly
24 brave thing to do in part because every one of them was
25 putting their life on the line, and I do not mean that

1 figuratively. As one of our founders said, "We better hang
2 together because if we don't, we will surely hang separately."

3 So they put their lives on the line and every one of
4 the great ancestors of the ladies over here put their lives on
5 the line on the basis of a thought, an idea that maybe we
6 could do this thing. And -- and a lot of their forebears
7 weren't rich people. They weren't privileged people, but they
8 signed up with George Washington and the crew and they fought
9 a battle and they fought a war and they won, and thus was born
10 the United States.

11 So we honor our ladies who are Daughters of the
12 American Revolution because they remind us in the flesh of
13 where we came from and how hard it was and what a little
14 miracle it was that we became a country. And we need to
15 remember that. This is a special thing, and it's not a gimme.

16 Now, we have these gentlemen sitting over here that
17 are veterans, and I've had people say, "Why do we spend so
18 much time talking about these guys, a bunch of old retreads
19 over here?" They're more worn out than I am, and that's
20 saying something. But they're not only heroes in their own
21 right because they voluntarily put their lives on the line to
22 defend America, but they represent generations and generations
23 of Americans who did that dating back to the Revolutionary War
24 and the War of 1812 and the Civil War and the Spanish-American
25 War and World War I, World War II, and Korea and Vietnam and

1 all of the more recent conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan.
2 They're not only here because they're heroes individually but
3 because they represent heroes without whom and without whose
4 sacrifice we aren't the country that we are. So we honor them
5 and we honor them symbolically and individually.

6 We have our people from the legislative branches of
7 government, from the senators' offices and from Congressman
8 Cheney's office. They're important because they're not only
9 important individually but because they represent a system of
10 government that our founders established in 1789, when the
11 constitution was adopted, and it established three parts of
12 the government. There's the legislative branch that is
13 representative of us. They're our voices. We hire them. We
14 don't like them, we can fire them. You know, not every
15 country in the world is like that, and we have fair elections
16 to do that for the most part.

17 They're our voices, and so it's important that we
18 look at them and we remember that an important part of what
19 makes America the place that it is is we have elected
20 representatives who listen to us for the most part and
21 represent our interests in Congress, in that big body back in
22 Washington, that assembly that tries to find the will of the
23 American people and act on it.

24 Then we have Judge Skavdahl, who represents the
25 judicial branch. He not only gets to approve your petitions,

1 but he represents an important part of the triad that is
2 American government. And a free and independent judicial
3 system is critical for how we carry on here, because he's a
4 check -- the judicial branch is a check on the excesses of
5 both the executive branch that I represent and the legislative
6 branch, and also in combination with people who sit where
7 you're sitting. And perhaps you'll be sitting there as jurors
8 someday.

9 Maybe the most important part of our democracy is the
10 fact in the administration of our laws, we invite our citizens
11 to participate. We don't have court systems where you're
12 brought into court on some charge and you've got people
13 wearing hoods or masks or anything deciding what'll happen to
14 you. I'm a prosecutor. When we charge somebody with a crime,
15 at the end of the day they're entitled to have 12 of you
16 sitting in this box decide whether they're guilty or innocent,
17 not the judge, not me, not some committee, but 12 citizens who
18 get to vote. And their word's final for the most part. If I
19 don't like it, I can't do anything about it. That's an
20 incredibly powerful thing about our country that isn't always
21 true everywhere else.

22 At the end of the day, the most critical part of our
23 judicial system is that the citizens are in charge, not me,
24 not the judge. He'll tell you the instructions and the law,
25 but you-all are the final say of how it applies to the facts.

1 And that's a huge thing.

2 So all of this symbolically is a representation of
3 the country that you're signing up for. Now, a couple of
4 things. I ask you -- you look around. You don't all look
5 alike, do you? No. And that was a choice we made 200-odd-20
6 years ago, that we're going to be a country that's going to be
7 comprised of people from all over the world that are united
8 only in a set of beliefs and understandings about a good civil
9 society. And those things are the ideas embodied in our
10 constitution: liberty, freedom, the right to live out your
11 life without having the government looking over your shoulder
12 all the time. Those are the things that -- and the idea that
13 you can carry on your religion, you can carry on your belief
14 systems without having to conform to any one or another
15 particular idea.

16 So we have a country of 350-odd-million people, and
17 they look just like you do. We're all different, and that's
18 our strength, can be our strength, you know, but it places
19 demands on us. To function, to be as Abraham Lincoln said in
20 his Gettysburg address, for a country designed under the
21 principles we were designed on, a country conceived in liberty
22 and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created
23 equal and will be undertaken by a government of the people, by
24 the people, and for the people, it can function only so long
25 as we all believe in that, only so long as we all share a

1 certain set of ideas that we're all equal and we're not more
2 equal than somebody else based on the color of our skin or the
3 kind of religion we have or any of that. We all have equal
4 opportunity, and if we don't believe that, we're not really
5 good Americans.

6 So now that you've signed up, look around. The
7 people you see are Americans, and give them the respect
8 they're due. And hopefully they'll do the same for you, as
9 they do most of us most of the time. We're not perfect. You
10 know, we have our warts, but we can get better. And there's a
11 principle of physics and engineering called entropy, and
12 basically what it means is that an ordered system, if left to
13 its own devices, is going to spin out of control into disorder
14 at some point.

15 And what that means in terms of a civic society is we
16 have to continuously work on keeping it together to answer
17 Lincoln's question whether a nation like ours can long endure,
18 and it can. We've endured for 220, 230-odd years, but we have
19 to keep working on it. We keep having to make it more
20 perfect.

21 So you-all help out. You helped out today just by
22 signing up, and keep helping. Be involved in your
23 communities. Be involved in our kids' schools, participate.
24 President George H.W. Bush back in 1988, '89 talked about
25 volunteerism and how important that is, and it really is. You

1 don't have to be -- you don't have to do great things. If you
2 do a lot of little things just to make your world a little
3 better for you and for everyone else, that all adds up. Pick
4 up litter. Join an organization at your kids' school. Help
5 out. Bring doughnuts sometimes, do whatever. Just -- you
6 know, there are a zillion opportunities here to make it
7 better. Snatch a couple of them. If everybody does a couple
8 of acts of kindness a week, we're better, we're stronger. And
9 it all adds up. So participate. For sure vote, because
10 that's one of the privileges that you earn by your
11 citizenship. Cheerfully join us on jury duty when you're
12 called, and we'll try to -- we'll try to make that worth
13 your while.

14 And then just be a part of your community. Share
15 your traditions. Just because you're now an American doesn't
16 mean that the traditions of where you came from aren't
17 important. They are. They're part of what make our country
18 rich and interesting. So do that.

19 And thank you again. The judge will have some
20 remarks, and then -- I don't know. Do we have cookies today?

21 THE COURT: I believe we do -- no, we don't.

22 MR. KUBICHEK: Then we'll have cookies, celebrate the
23 way it deserves to be celebrated. So thank you all very much
24 for the privilege of representing you in front of the Court
25 and getting you all signed up and for the privilege of being

1 able to talk to you. I'm very pleased and very honored to be
2 here today. Thank you.

3 (Applause.)

4 THE COURT: I was about to say that I have very few
5 words because no one wants to be that person standing between
6 individuals and cakes and cookies, but I guess that's not the
7 case. So I'll still be short.

8 There are just a few words I can add. First,
9 congratulations. Unlike those of us who were born here,
10 you've earned your citizenship, and that grants you the
11 obligation to enjoy the privileges you now possess as United
12 States citizens. That includes the right and the duty to vote
13 and participate in our government.

14 Our government is unique. As Mr. Kubichek noted, we
15 have three branches of government. Each of those branches
16 allow and require and depend upon your participation.
17 Citizens fill the elected positions in our legislative and
18 executive branches. Those citizens are selected by way of the
19 votes cast by the citizens who support them. And our judicial
20 branch only operates based upon jurors sitting in the seats
21 you're in today, sitting in judgment over fellow citizens or
22 other individuals who are charged with crimes and in civil
23 litigation over individuals to determine who's at fault. So
24 there is an absolute need for each of you to exercise your
25 obligations and rights as United States citizens. It is what

1 our forefathers envisioned and sacrificed and fought for.

2 We are the greatest nation on Earth because we the
3 people govern ourselves. And you are now part of that, the
4 U.S., the United States of America. We are not one individual
5 but united as a collection of many who have unified to form a
6 more perfect union. It's interesting if you think about it.
7 The exercise of our individual rights are mutually dependent
8 upon the recognizing of others' individual rights. That's the
9 freedom we enjoy in this country, but it also comes with the
10 cost of recognizing others' rights to engage in that same
11 conduct. Please don't be a citizen that mutely sits on their
12 hands and allows others with less wisdom and compassion to run
13 our government. The failure to exercise your rights as
14 citizens runs the risk of loses them.

15 To our newest United States citizens, thank you for
16 wanting to be a part of this incredible country. May it be an
17 asylum for happiness, success, and repose. And may those of
18 us who are United States citizens be reminded what we have is
19 cherished and sought after by others throughout this world,
20 and even today threats to our system of government are being
21 defended against by men and women. Be proud and grateful to
22 be an American. As an American, you have the freedom to be
23 what you want to be, to prosper from your own hard work
24 regardless of your gender, origin, or religion. May that
25 always be the case, and may God continue to bless the United

1 States of America. Congratulations.

2 We'll stand in recess.

3 (Proceedings concluded at 4:28 p.m., January 8, 2018.)

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