

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 9, 2023
3:38 p.m.

DAPHNE ANN SHEEHAN; EDUARDO
DOMINGUEZ LUJAN; MARIA CABRAL;
LESTER GONZALES ABESAMES; APPLE
LAUREN ESPIRITU; KIM SCHIOLDAN;
KAMILLE SCHIOLDAN; ELIE FAHED;
JOANNE FAHED; POLLY ROSE
EVANGELISTA GRENIER; DAVID
MONTOKA RUIZ; IRYNA VANIURSKAYA;
LUIS ANDRADE CORDINGLY; MIGUEL
ANGEL XOCHITOTOTL CORONA; DANILA
YEVGENEVICH ANDREEV; OLHA
WASITOWSKI; KRISTINE DESIANA
FLANIGAN; KEVIN HERRERA; SALUMIE
TUYOR TRANDAHL; YURI
ALEXANDROVICH VASILYEV,

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:

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

1 (Proceedings commenced at 3:38 p.m., January 9, 2023.)

2 THE COURTROOM DEPUTY: Hear ye, hear ye, hear ye.
3 The United States District Court for the District of Wyoming
4 is now in session, the Honorable Scott W. Skavdahl presiding.
5 God save this country and this Honorable Court.

6 THE COURT: Thank you. Please be seated.

7 Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to
8 the Ewing T. Kerr Federal Courthouse. The Court will suspend
9 all rules regarding the use of cameras and recording devices
10 for this special proceeding. I would ask, however, if you
11 have such a device if you could make sure it's on mute.

12 We are here this afternoon to conduct a
13 naturalization ceremony, and I welcome all those new United
14 States citizens to be sworn in, their friends and their
15 family, and those members of the Armed Forces that have given
16 us the opportunity to be here today to enjoy such rights and
17 privileges.

18 It is a tradition at the beginning of these
19 naturalization ceremonies to recognize those citizens and
20 families of those citizens who have paid the ultimate price in
21 defending what so many in this world seek, the freedom and
22 benefits of being a United States citizen.

23 As of this morning, 7,076 American men and women have
24 been killed in action while involved in military operations in
25 the Middle East. In addition, 53,337 United States military

1 personnel have been wounded in action during these military
2 operations.

3 Let us take a moment of silence and recognize these
4 American heroes and their families, whose sacrifice cannot be
5 measured and loss will never be recovered.

6 (Moment of silence.)

7 THE COURT: Thank you.

8 The United States District Court for the District of
9 Wyoming is in special session for the naturalization of
10 foreign nationals to be United States citizens. It is with
11 great honor, pride, and privilege that I'm able to conduct
12 today's ceremony naturalizing, if my number is correct, 20 new
13 U.S. citizens from 11 different countries around the world.

14 The Federal District Court of Wyoming, including
15 Judges Johnson, Freudenthal, and Rankin, extend their
16 congratulations to you, your family, and your friends.

17 I would ask at this time if I could have Ms. Anna
18 Katrina Blanco with the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration
19 Service make a roll call of the prospective applicants for
20 U.S. citizenship. If you could please raise your hand when
21 your name is called.

22 MS. BLANCO: We have Daphne Ann Sheehan from Canada;
23 Eduardo Dominguez Lujan from Mexico; Maria Cabral from India;
24 Lester Gonzales Abesames from Philippines; Apple Lauren
25 Espiritu from Philippines; Kim Schioldan from Denmark; Kamille

1 Schioldon from Denmark; Elie Fahed from France; Joanne Fahed
2 from France; Polly Rose Evangelista Grenier from Philippines;
3 David Montoya Ruiz from Mexico; Iryna Vaniurskaya from
4 Belarus.

5 We have Luis Andrade Cordingly from Portugal; Miguel
6 Angel Xochitototl Corona from Mexico; Danila Yevgenevich
7 Andreev from Russia; Olha Wasitowski from Ukraine; Kristine
8 Desiana Flanigan from Indonesia; Kevin Herrera from Mexico;
9 Salumie Tuyor Trandahl from Philippines; and Yuri
10 Alexandrovich Vasilyev from Russia.

11 THE COURT: Welcome.

12 Thank you. I'm glad that I did not have to say those
13 names. Welcome.

14 One of the most fundamental acts we do as citizens is
15 to pledge our allegiance to the flag of the United States. I
16 understand there's some young boys and girls out there that
17 would like to help me in saying the Pledge of Allegiance, and
18 if you would come forward at this time and stand with me down
19 here in the well.

20 And if you could please all rise.

21 (Reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.)

22 THE COURT: Thank you very much. If you could remain
23 standing for the playing of "The Star-Spangled Banner."

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

25 THE COURT: Thank you. Please be seated.

1 Normally we would have the color guard, but they were
2 unavailable today, so I apologize.

3 At this time, I would ask for the playing of the
4 President's video.

5 (Playing message from President Biden.)

6 THE COURT: Thank you.

7 At this time, I would recognize Mr. David Kubichek,
8 Assistant United States Attorney representing the Attorney
9 General of the United States, Mr. Merrick Garland, on the
10 petition.

11 MR. KUBICHEK: May it please the Court.

12 THE COURT: Counsel.

13 MR. KUBICHEK: Before the Court today are individuals
14 here for a hearing on their petitions for naturalization.
15 Each of them has accomplished successfully all of the steps
16 necessary for eligibility for United States citizenship.
17 Moreover, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service has
18 completed its processes with respect to each of these
19 individuals, including the necessary background
20 investigations.

21 Having successfully negotiated all of those hurdles,
22 we are advised that each of them is well qualified to be
23 admitted to citizenship. Therefore, Your Honor, the United
24 States thereby moves the Court to admit each of these
25 individuals to the United States on their taking of the

1 requisite oath.

2 THE COURT: Thank you, Mr. Kubichek. Sorry for the
3 echo.

4 On the petition of the United States of America, the
5 Court would find that each of these applicants identified and
6 previously notified has satisfied the legal requirements to
7 become a citizen of the United States and, therefore, will
8 grant the petition and enter the order allowing these
9 petitioners to become citizens of the United States of
10 America.

11 I would direct the filing of the order of the Court
12 granting the petitions for naturalization.

13 And, our newest citizens, there is one last hurdle
14 you must cross. If you would please all rise and raise your
15 right hand and repeat after me.

16 And those of you who wish to get a better picture are
17 free to do so at this time.

18 If you would please repeat: I, state your name --

19 PETITIONERS: I, (stating names) --

20 THE COURT: -- hereby declare on oath --

21 PETITIONERS: -- hereby declare on oath --

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

23 PETITIONERS: -- that I absolutely and entirely --

24 THE COURT: -- renounce and abjure --

25 PETITIONERS: -- renounce and abjure --

1 THE COURT: -- all allegiance and fidelity --
2 PETITIONERS: -- all allegiance and fidelity --
3 THE COURT: -- to any foreign prince or potentate --
4 PETITIONERS: -- to any foreign prince or
5 potentate --
6 THE COURT: -- state or sovereignty --
7 PETITIONERS: -- state or sovereignty --
8 THE COURT: -- of whom or which --
9 PETITIONERS: -- of whom or which --
10 THE COURT: -- I have heretofore been --
11 PETITIONERS: -- I have heretofore been --
12 THE COURT: -- a subject or citizen.
13 PETITIONERS: -- a subject or citizen.
14 THE COURT: That I will support and defend --
15 PETITIONERS: That I will support and defend --
16 THE COURT: -- the Constitution and laws --
17 PETITIONERS: -- the Constitution and laws --
18 THE COURT: -- of the United States of America --
19 PETITIONERS: -- of the United States of America --
20 THE COURT: -- against all enemies --
21 PETITIONERS: -- against all enemies --
22 THE COURT: -- foreign and domestic.
23 PETITIONERS: -- foreign and domestic.
24 THE COURT: That I will bear true faith --
25 PETITIONERS: That I will bear true faith --

1 THE COURT: -- and allegiance to the same.

2 PETITIONERS -- and allegiance to the same.

3 THE COURT: That I will bear arms --

4 PETITIONERS: That I will bear arms --

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

6 PETITIONERS: -- on behalf of of the United States --

7 THE COURT: -- when required by law.

8 PETITIONERS: -- when required by law.

9 THE COURT: I take this obligation freely --

10 PETITIONERS: I take this obligation freely --

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

12 PETITIONERS: -- without any mental reservation --

13 THE COURT: -- or purpose of evasion.

14 PETITIONERS: -- or purpose of evasion.

15 THE COURT: So help me God.

16 PETITIONERS: So help me God.

17 THE COURT: Congratulations to our newest U.S.

18 citizens.

19 (Applause.)

20 THE COURT: At this time, we'll present our
21 certificates of citizenship, and then we'll turn to the
22 patriotic organizations.

23 (Distribution of certificates.)

24 THE COURT: Go ahead and have a seat.

25 At this time, I would recognize various patriotic

1 organizations that are here today, and I would start with the
2 Daughters of the American Revolution as well as, I believe,
3 the Society of U.S. Daughters -- or are they together?

4 MS. TRUMBULL: Good afternoon. My name is Kristen
5 Trumbull, and I'm here on behalf of the Fort Caspar Chapter,
6 Daughters of the American Revolution. We're a women's service
7 organization focusing on historic preservation, education, and
8 patriotism.

9 I consider myself very lucky to have been born in the
10 United States. It's something that I take great pride in.
11 Each of you have had a unique journey arriving at this
12 celebration today, none of which were easy, I'm sure. Whether
13 you came by boat, plane, bus, or foot, you made the necessary
14 steps to join us all as American citizens today.

15 You have surpassed many difficult adjustments that
16 come with moving to a new country and fought hard to become an
17 American, just like me and my DAR sisters. I commend you on
18 your hard work and dedication to achieve this status.

19 As an eighth grade honor's history student, I had to
20 take a test and complete the hundred questions that are
21 possible for the United States citizenship test. Let's just
22 say my score was laughable, and I'm sure even today.

23 As a communications student, I know that this road
24 has been filled with many obstacles, such as language
25 barriers, new cultural norms, and everything else that comes

1 with immersing oneself in a different nation.

2 I would like to welcome you, on behalf of the Fort
3 Caspar Chapter, NSDAR, as our newest countrymen. We ask only
4 that you love America, cherish her, honor her, protect her,
5 and embrace all of the possibilities you are given. May God
6 bless each and every one of you on your new journey.

7 As a gift today, you are receiving Wyoming jade.
8 It's our state's official gemstone and was once called "green
9 gold of Wyoming."

10 Welcome. Congratulations.

11 (Applause.)

12 THE COURT: Thank you.

13 I would also recognize the Wyoming Society of U.S.
14 Daughters of 1812.

15 All right. I think -- all combined. Okay.

16 I would, at this time, recognize the United Veterans
17 Council of Natrona County.

18 MR. LAURENZ: Thank you very much.

19 We welcome you all as you become United States
20 citizens, and we welcome you greatly and hope you do well.
21 Thank you.

22 MR. WILLIAMS: Your Honor, it's a pleasure to be here
23 this evening. We appreciate the telephone call that I got so
24 we could pass it on.

25 Once again, wow. It is so good to be here, and it is

1 so happy to see all these new citizens who are now our
2 brothers and sisters. The oath that you took, this is what
3 these gentlemen took, also, with this addition: Not only did
4 they promise to protect this Constitution, but if means so,
5 they would give up their life.

6 You're going to hear from some of the finest groups
7 there are. The United -- Natrona County Veterans, he is going
8 to explain to you what his job is with them.

9 Then you're going to hear from the American Legion.
10 The American Legion will also be able to explain what they do,
11 and it's a fine organization.

12 The VFW, you will hear from them, and they will
13 explain what they do, also.

14 The Disabled American Veterans, who are not here, but
15 I can tell you they are a fine group of young men and women.
16 They probably hold the most medals than any organization there
17 is, because they're exactly that: a disabled American
18 veteran, and they are here to serve you.

19 And if you have a chance, we have two cemeteries in
20 this state: one is the National Cemetery in Cheyenne. If you
21 go to Cheyenne, please stop by and look at our veterans.
22 They're here. They died for you. Cheyenne also -- the
23 National Cemetery in the city of Cheyenne has our veterans
24 from all of the wars, all of the wars except, I believe, the
25 American Revolution.

1 There is a cemetery here that these young men
2 support. It's in Evansville, Wyoming. If you get a chance,
3 please go to Evansville. Look at that cemetery and take a
4 moment of silence and say thank you, for we did this for you.

5 And these children you hear in the background, that
6 is our greatest joy.

7 God bless you. We love you, and thank you for
8 choosing us.

9 (Applause.)

10 MR. LAURENZ: What George was alluding to, the
11 Natrona County United Veterans Council is a combination of all
12 of the veterans' organizations. With that, we support the
13 Oregon Trail Cemetery and accomplish most of the veteran
14 honors that are out there. In fact, we will be doing three
15 this week: one tomorrow of a gentleman that came back from
16 Minnesota. He was a World War II Navy veteran of the Pacific
17 campaign, and he wished to be interred here. So we'll be
18 accomplishing that tomorrow at 1:00.

19 We have another one for a young person out of the
20 Coast Guard that passed away in a traffic accident and a third
21 one next Saturday. So with that, we find it a great honor to
22 take and help the parents, the loved ones with the final
23 closure with the burial or internment of their loved one.

24 And with that, we'd like to present you with the
25 flag.

1 (Distribution of commemorative flags.)

2 THE COURT: Thank you, gentlemen. Thank you.

3 MR. WELCH: Myself, my name's Dean Welch. Former
4 Navy, former Army National Guard. Retired after 27 years.
5 And our Post Vice Commander is Larry Winzenried. He was
6 retired Air Force.

7 So we're -- our organization basically is there for
8 any -- any enlisted or officer of the United States military.
9 It doesn't matter where you served, in the U.S. or overseas,
10 you can be a member of the American Legion.

11 The Veterans of Foreign Wars, they're a separate
12 issue. You have to be actually in combat.

13 We serve our communities. We support our youth
14 programs. And our most recent project we're proud of is our
15 Veterans of Wyoming Fallen Veterans Memorial, which is out on
16 13th Street by the fairgrounds going towards the old Fort
17 Caspar. We built that this summer, and it has the names of
18 every Wyoming citizen that was killed in combat since the
19 Spanish American War.

20 So there's an old saying that a man dies twice: once
21 when he stops breathing; the second time when he stops hearing
22 his name. So we invite everyone to go out, read the names,
23 respect those guys that gave their lives for our freedom.

24 (Distribution of commemorative materials.)

25 MR. WILLIAMS: As these two young men are coming by,

1 there's another organization called the VFW, Veterans of
2 Foreign Wars. It's pretty self-explanatory, veterans of
3 foreign wars. That means these veterans actually fought boots
4 on ground in foreign countries for us so that we can enjoy the
5 freedom we have today.

6 MR. WELCH: Congratulations from the American Legion
7 to all of our new citizens.

8 (Applause.)

9 MR. WILLIAMS: If these gentlemen will face his
10 Honor.

11 His Honor, once again, we thank you and your court
12 for the service that you do for our country and for allowing
13 us to be here.

14 And salute.

15 THE COURT: Thank you. Thank you, gentlemen, and all
16 of those in the armed services that have defended and
17 sacrificed so much to that we can enjoy what we have today.

18 One of the additional things that is important about
19 you becoming a United States citizen is, is your right to
20 vote, your right to have a say in what happens in this
21 country. And our representatives that are here -- or their
22 offices -- elected offices today, U.S. Senator John Barrasso's
23 office, I believe Ms. Taylor, Ms. Goodell, and Mr. French. We
24 also would note Senator Lummis and Representative Hageman are
25 the three federally elected officials in the state of Wyoming.

1 So whenever you want to be heard, go to the ballot, pick up
2 your phone, and let it be known.

3 With that, I would recognize the representatives for
4 the handing out of letters so that you know what number to
5 call.

6 (Presentation of letters by Wyoming Congressional
7 Delegation.)

8 THE COURT: And last but not least, as a country of
9 entrepreneurs and the ability to earn a living, one of the
10 entities represented today, the Small Business Administration.

11 Ms. Lee and Ms. Farris, I believe you have some
12 handouts.

13 (Presentation of materials from the Wyoming Small Business
14 Administration.)

15 THE COURT: Thank you.

16 At this time, what I would like to do is give you, as
17 new U.S. citizens, the opportunity to tell us where you're
18 here from in terms of in Wyoming or Colorado or where you are
19 now located and now citizens, and also, anyone that you have
20 here today that you would like to thank and anything that you
21 would like to tell us about this day and why it's so important
22 to you.

23 MS. SHEEHAN: Hi there. My name is Daphne Sheehan,
24 and I'm living in Gillette, Wyoming. I'm from Canada, British
25 Columbia. And I moved down with my ex-husband and have two

1 lovely children down here, and that's why I would like to stay
2 down in Gillette, Wyoming. I work at the United States Postal
3 System and really quite enjoy it.

4 THE COURT: Congratulations and welcome.

5 (Applause.)

6 MR. DOMINGUEZ: I'm Eduardo Dominguez. (Speaking in
7 Spanish.)

8 THE COURT: Welcome. Congratulations.

9 MS. CABRAL: Hi. My name is Maria. I am originally
10 from India, but I live in Casper, Wyoming, now. And those are
11 my children making noise there. I am so sorry.

12 THE COURT: They're excited.

13 MS. CABRAL: They are. But I'm really happy and so
14 glad that -- for my husband and this opportunity. Thank you.

15 THE COURT: Congratulations.

16 (Applause.)

17 MR. ABESAMES: Hi. I'm Lester Abesames. I came from
18 Philippines. I live now in Casper, Wyoming. That's all.

19 THE COURT: Congratulations.

20 (Applause.)

21 MS. ABESAMES: Hi. My name is Apple Abesames. I go
22 by Lauren. I came here from Manila, Philippines. This is my
23 dad. But now I manage the sole independent bookstore in town.
24 I actually see some patrons of ours in the audience. And I
25 guess I just -- this is really cool to witness. My parents

1 sacrificed a lot. It's afforded me a lot of opportunities.
2 So it's pretty cool.

3 THE COURT: Congratulations.

4 (Applause.)

5 MR. SCHIOLDAN: My name is Kim Schioldan. I'm born
6 in Copenhagen, Denmark. I was 15 when I started thinking
7 about moving to America and living in America. When I was 25,
8 I packed up with my wife of four weeks at the time, and we
9 moved to America. We moved to Los Angeles, initially. In
10 2004, we moved to Las Vegas, and we moved to Casper, Wyoming,
11 in 2021.

12 We are super excited about today. It's been a long
13 way coming, and we are honored for the whole ceremony. Thank
14 you so much.

15 THE COURT: Congratulations.

16 (Applause.)

17 MR. FAHED: Elie Fahed. Originally born in Beirut,
18 Lebanon, and then moved to France and continued my medical
19 studies in the U.S.A., Massachusetts, California. And I've
20 been a practicing physician here for the last ten years in
21 Casper.

22 Thank you all for accepting us as fellow citizens. I
23 would like to acknowledge Nick and Maggie Azar, our adoptive
24 parents; Daniel, our lovely son. One day you'll understand
25 we're doing this for you. And, Shareen (phonetic), you're

1 next on the list, my sister-in-law.

2 Thank you all.

3 THE COURT: Congratulations. Thank you.

4 (Applause.)

5 MS. FAHED: I'm Joanne Fahed. I'm his --

6 THE COURT: Better half?

7 MS. FAHED: -- wife. I've been here nine years now,
8 and it's really an honor to be a citizen. Thank you all.

9 THE COURT: Thank you.

10 (Applause.)

11 MS. GRENIER: My name is Polly Grenier. I'm
12 originally from the Philippines. I live in Jackson Hole,
13 Wyoming, now. I'm with my -- oh, they left -- my husband and
14 my toddler at the back. Yeah. I work at the Four Seasons
15 now, and moving here is a really good opportunity for me.
16 Thank you.

17 THE COURT: Congratulations.

18 (Applause.)

19 MR. RUIZ: Hi. My name is David. I was born in
20 Mexico. So I moved here for school, and now I'm here for my
21 wife. So thank you.

22 THE COURT: Congratulations.

23 (Applause.)

24 MS. VANIURSKAYA: Hi. My name is Iryna Vaniurskaya.
25 I moved from Belarus. It's a country next to Russia, Ukraine.

1 Now everyone is aware. I moved here nine years ago because my
2 twin sister, I have one, moved here 30 years ago. Then my mom
3 moved here 20 years ago, and they like it. I decided for
4 myself, should I try? I tried, and I like it, too. Thank you
5 so much.

6 THE COURT: Congratulations.

7 (Applause.)

8 MR. CORDINGLY: Hi. I'm Luis Cordingly. I moved
9 here from Portugal -- to here from Portugal, Azores. I'm very
10 thankful for this country. I'm so proud of being American
11 citizen. Thanks to America. I love you guys. Thanks.

12 THE COURT: Congratulations.

13 (Applause.)

14 MR. CORONA: Hello. My name is Miguel Corona, and
15 I'm here from Mexico, and I would like to thank my family for
16 being here for me.

17 (Applause.)

18 MR. ANDREEV: My name is Danila Andreev, I'm from
19 Russia, and I live in Evansville, Wyoming. Thank you.

20 MS. WASITOWSKI: My name is Olha. I came from
21 Ukraine. I'm living in Sheridan. I have lovely three
22 children and my -- the best husband in the world. And I'm
23 thankful for America to give me that opportunity to become an
24 American. And thank you very much for helping Ukraine.

25 THE COURT: You're very welcome.

1 (Applause.)

2 MS. FLANIGAN: Hi. I'm Kristine Flanigan from --
3 originally from Jakarta, Indonesia. I came to the United
4 States, Casper, Wyoming, exactly on -- ten years ago January
5 15 -- January 5, 2013 --

6 THE COURT: One moment, ma'am. We're going to reset
7 something to see if we can't get rid of that annoying tin
8 voice. It's not yours.

9 (Pause in the proceedings.)

10 THE COURT: A moment of silence while we restart.

11 (Pause in the proceedings.)

12 MS. FLANIGAN: I will start from the beginning again.
13 My name is Kristine Flanigan. I'm originally from
14 Jakarta, Indonesia. I moved to United States ten years ago,
15 exact time is January 5, 2013. And the first time I landed is
16 in Casper, Wyoming.

17 I live with my husband and my two kids here. And I'm
18 proud. Finally, I made it. I become a United States citizen
19 of America. Thank you.

20 THE COURT: Thank you. Congratulations.

21 (Applause.)

22 MR. HERRERA: Hi. My name is Kevin Herrera. I'm
23 from Mexico. I'm here -- it's been six years already. I used
24 to serve in the army in Mexico. And, you know, I loved to
25 serve over there and protect people, but I realized it's kind

1 of useless over there.

2 So I decided to come to this country. My brother was
3 here before I, and I want to have the sense of, like, actually
4 doing something. And I feel like here, in this country, I can
5 actually fulfill that desire. Thank you.

6 THE COURT: Thank you.

7 (Applause.)

8 MS. TRANDAHL: Hi, everyone. Hi. First of all, I
9 will -- I'm grateful for God's blessings for this big day. It
10 is so grateful to be a American citizen. And I am Salumie
11 Trandahl, originally from Cebu, Philippines, and residing
12 Upton, Wyoming. And I'm with my husband with my three kids
13 with me. And I'm so grateful for what God done and this
14 blessings and opportunity that he gave to my life.

15 And congratulations for everyone, and have a good and
16 great day ahead.

17 THE COURT: Congratulations. Thank you.

18 (Applause.)

19 MR. VASILYEV: Hi. My name is Yuri. I moved from
20 Saint Petersburg, Russia, about seven years ago. I moved
21 to -- with my mom -- actually, with my mother to Tennessee
22 first; Indiana; and now I'm here in Casper, Wyoming. And,
23 yeah, I'm grateful to be here. Thank you very much.

24 THE COURT: Congratulations. Welcome.

25 (Applause.)

1 THE COURT: Congratulations to you all. Thank you
2 for sharing a little bit about yourself with us. At this
3 time, I would recognize Mr. Kubichek on behalf of the United
4 States Attorney General for your remarks.

5 MR. KUBICHEK: You're a really good looking bunch of
6 new citizens, let me start there.

7 There is a -- in the not necessarily religious sense
8 but a sort of sacramental quality to this process that we go
9 through today. Welcoming you as new fellow citizens -- and I
10 underscore the word "fellow" -- today reminds all of us -- and
11 the way we go about this ceremony reminds us of how special it
12 is that we are all still here celebrating our country, your
13 country now.

14 And if you think about it, you think about the
15 progression of this ceremony after you pledged allegiance and
16 you all took your oath, which is a solemn oath and very
17 similar to the oath that these gentlemen took when they signed
18 up to defend our country and the oath that I took some 46
19 years ago to support and defend the Constitution of the United
20 States, the oath that Judge Skavdahl took; and similar,
21 probably, to the oath that our Daughters of the American
22 Revolution and the revolution -- or the War of 1812, their
23 ancestors took or what they had in their heart when they were
24 fighting to establish this country in the first instance and
25 then to defend it the first time, which was in 1812.

1 None of that was easy stuff. We think about our
2 founders, their ancestors. They were taking on the greatest
3 military force in the world. And these weren't radical, poor
4 people or anything. They were well enriched farmers. They
5 were in the upper class, socially, at their time. They didn't
6 have to do that. They were set.

7 But there was something wrong about life here in the
8 1700s, because they were under the thumb of a foreign ruler, a
9 king, and a parliament they had no say in at all. And they
10 were subject to tariffs and taxes and all of that, religious
11 indignities, and they had no chance to participate in that.

12 And so they got together in Philadelphia and said, We
13 need to do something. We need to declare our independence and
14 establish ourselves as a new, free nation dedicated to
15 principles that would be totally anathema to what they had in
16 England or most other kingdoms, monarchies, empires in the
17 world; and that is, as Lincoln said later on at Gettysburg, a
18 nation founded on the notion that all of us are created equal.

19 So they declared our independence under the
20 leadership of George Washington. You all know about him.
21 They managed to win that battle and establish our country.
22 And then some 13 years later in 1789, we established the
23 Constitution that you all swore to protect and defend today.

24 It would be great if it had been an easy road and
25 these gentlemen didn't have to put their lives on the line,

1 but probably the nature of the beast being what it is and our
2 seemingly unwillingness to collectively get along all over the
3 world, we've had to put up or shut up several times. And
4 we've lost thousands and thousands and thousands of dedicated
5 men and women who have put their lives on the line to make
6 sure that you could have this day today and that we could
7 collectively swear once again that we are members of --
8 citizens of the United States. As President Biden said, his
9 most honored title. My most honored title and now yours.

10 But what we do know is it isn't free. You know,
11 there are no guarantees. You know, Lincoln at Gettysburg said
12 the question of the great Civil War was whether a nation so
13 dedicated to those principles could endure. And we've had to
14 re-establish that time and time again, and we still do.

15 So what that means for you is, you know, there's not
16 a free ride from here on out. You have obligations as well as
17 all the rights that you've acquired today. A lot of them are
18 just being a good person, you know. You have a right to speak
19 your mind, but you have a commensurate obligation to listen to
20 the people that are around you. Give them the respect that --
21 you don't have to agree with them, but you have to give them
22 the respect that goes with being a fellow citizen.

23 You have to respect our systems a little bit. You
24 know, I mean, you have to vote. You should vote -- you don't
25 have to vote, because that's part of your freedom, but you

1 should. You should be informed, and you should participate in
2 selecting our leaders, including our Congress and senators.

3 And then, at the end of the day, you should respect
4 the outcome. Seems to be sort of an old-fashioned idea. But
5 when you have elections, somebody's going to win, but
6 somebody's going to lose. That's the nature of democracy, and
7 we all have to buy into that or we're done. We can't -- we
8 cannot further endure.

9 So I am so proud today to participate in, like I
10 said, this sacrament of investing our country with new people,
11 with new talents, new traditions, wonderful histories. I wish
12 I could sit down with all of you and just visit about where
13 you came from, what you do. Because by your coming here and
14 trusting us to be the place you want to live and you want your
15 children to live, you have done us an enormous honor, and
16 you've made us richer.

17 And I am honored to be here today. I always am. You
18 know, most of us here, we didn't have to do anything. You
19 know, I just got born, you know, up the street. That wasn't
20 hard. Wasn't hard on me. My mama probably thought
21 differently.

22 But the point is that I didn't have to take a test.
23 I didn't have to study. Nobody did my background. I just --
24 I just got here. You all earned it. And part of why we all
25 come to this ceremony is to remind ourselves how special this

1 is, and it is.

2 So be good citizens. Be kind to each other and
3 respectful. When Judge Skavdahl sends you a subpoena to come
4 down here and be on a jury, honor it. Participate. This
5 is -- you know, this is one of the sacred places in our
6 democracy, you know, because one of the things that separates
7 America from the rest of the world is we are a country of law.
8 And it's fitting that we celebrate your introduction as
9 citizens here. Because as I say, we have a process that lets
10 citizens be the ultimate judges.

11 You know, he participates. I participate as a
12 prosecutor and a lawyer for the Government. But at the end of
13 the day, the people who decide stuff are citizens, not a
14 prince and not a king and not some unelected bureaucrat but
15 you all.

16 And one of your jobs now is if you're called, don't
17 try to get out of it. Come down and serve. And vote. Make
18 the world better. Share your traditions. Share your
19 histories. We are a blended country. We are mongrels in
20 every sense of the word, and that makes it harder for us
21 because we don't all have shared histories and traditions. We
22 just have a shared belief and a set of principles.

23 So I am honored again as I stand here -- and I've
24 been doing this for 30 years now, practically, and I've never
25 lost a citizen yet. I haven't lost a one of you. A few of

1 you didn't show up, but eventually we got you all sworn in,
2 and it's the proudest thing that I do.

3 So thank you all for signing up and believing in us.
4 You make us better. You make us better. Thank you.

5 Thank you, Your Honor.

6 (Applause.)

7 THE COURT: Thank you, Mr. Kubichek.

8 Congratulations to you, your family, and friends.
9 You've waited long enough. I can't imagine being 15 years old
10 or 17 years old and looking forward to the potential of being
11 able to come to the United States and then getting married
12 and, four weeks later, sailing across the seas or flying
13 across the countries.

14 As Mr. Kubichek had mentioned, a lot of us were
15 gifted the right of citizenship. And in some ways -- well,
16 not in some ways. This ceremony and ceremonies like this and
17 hearing how much it means to you who have earned it is special
18 because it reminds us just how lucky we are to have what we
19 have. We haven't had to endure wars in a long time. We
20 haven't had to endure those things on our own soils, with
21 limited exception. But it is the gift of citizenship that is
22 still worth getting, and that means a great deal.

23 No person or country or government is perfect.
24 Nonetheless, hopefully as a country, we can collectively
25 recognize our failings and seek to improve who we are as a

1 people and as a country. To improve, we must all participate
2 lest we stand silent and fail to exercise our rights. Vote
3 and support our Constitution and recognize it is we, the
4 people, that govern. It is not a person. It is not a king or
5 a queen or a prince or potentate. It is all of us. And if we
6 fail, it is because all of us have failed. If we fail to
7 support and defend our rights, we run the risk of extinction,
8 just like any other government.

9 Our Constitution is simply a paper document. Without
10 people believing in it and defending it, it becomes valueless.

11 Thank you for wanting to become a part of this
12 incredible country. While this country is not perfect, for
13 over 240 years, it has provided a sanctuary for freedom and
14 served as an incubator for the opportunity and advancement of
15 all man and womankind.

16 With your energy, skills and talent, I encourage to
17 you make us more diverse and talented. Exercise your rights
18 and freedoms but also appreciate and respect the divergent
19 views and beliefs that make this country what it is.

20 This is the greatest nation on earth, but to remain
21 so, we must appreciate how and why we enjoy the freedoms we
22 do. It is not because we all think and believe the same, but
23 rather, because we respect each other's diversity of beliefs
24 which allows we, the people, to govern ourselves.

25 You are now part of us, that richly woven fabric of

1 the United States of America. We do not exist as individuals
2 but a collection of many united to form a more perfect union.
3 May that always be the case.

4 God bless you all, and God bless the United States.
5 We'll stand in recess.

6 (Proceedings concluded at 4:35 p.m., January 9, 2023.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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2
3 I, MEGAN E. STRAWN, Federal Official Court Reporter
4 for the United States District Court for the District of
5 Wyoming, a Registered Professional Reporter and Certified
6 Realtime Reporter, do hereby certify that I reported by
7 machine shorthand the proceedings contained herein on the
8 aforementioned subject on the date herein set forth, and that
9 the foregoing 29 pages constitute a full, true, and correct
10 transcript.

11 Dated this 11th day of January 2023.

12
13
14
15 */s/ Megan E. Strawn*

16 MEGAN E. STRAWN
17 Registered Professional Reporter
18 Certified Realtime Reporter
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