

Lesley Wolf – Opening Statement

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to speak briefly.

Only a few short weeks ago, I left the Department of Justice after serving as an Assistant United States Attorney for more than 16 years. It is because of my work as an Assistant United States Attorney that I find myself sitting here today. During my tenure with DOJ, and in particular with the United States Attorney's Office for the District of Delaware, I took great pride in being a part of the work done and the mission of the Department to seek justice, exercise reasoned judgment, and to do so in a fair and evenhanded manner. When I started with the Department, Alberto Gonzalez was the Attorney General. I served through Attorneys General Mukasey, Holder, Lynch, Sessions, Barr, and finally Garland. My time in the office spanned four different presidential administrations and three different United States Attorneys. Despite these changes and, at times, evolving priorities of the Department and the District, the core mission did not waver. Nor did my own commitment to the fair and just administration of federal criminal laws. At no time did politics play a role in or in any way impact my work as a federal prosecutor.

Guided by the principles of federal prosecution and the Justice Manual, as well as steadfastly complying with statutory mandates and my ethical obligations, throughout my career I followed the facts and applied the law in each and every case I handled. When there were decisions to be made, I sought the input of and collaborated with my colleagues—attorneys and investigators alike—and made the decisions that I believed would best serve the investigation while still complying with law and policy. This was not always an easy task. There is no one size fits all for federal prosecutions – each case presents its own unique circumstances and challenges. Different and at times evolving policies, guidelines, and statutory and ethical obligations are often at play due to the particular nature of an investigation. And against this backdrop, there is room for disagreement. A proper and appropriate decision and course of action did not always please everyone. But again, such decisions were never made in a vacuum and were always guided by the principles of justice and fairness as I've described.

Throughout my career, I have prided myself on being able to adeptly navigate those challenges and to maintain positive relationships with investigators, even in times when we may not have seen eye to eye. I have worked with so many wonderful people, many of whom I consider to be the truest of friends. Having spent the majority of my career as a federal prosecutor, the people with whom I have collaborated over the years have become like family—together we have celebrated marriages and the arrival of children, reluctantly cheered retirements, and grieved the losses of loved ones. While it may seem odd to those outside of the DOJ, this closeness is not uncommon when you have unified dedication to such a critically important mission – the pursuit of justice. In each and every case I maintained a professional and collaborative relationship – because doing so is in the best interests of the investigation and enabled me to be the best I could as a federal prosecutor. Just as politics have no place in the work of the Justice Department, neither do personal feelings, unchecked emotions, or ego. And I don't think there is any mystery surrounding

the fact that sleepless nights tend to accompany serving as an AUSA. One thing that has never kept me awake, however, is wondering whether I deviated from my own moral compass, ethical obligations, or critically, what I genuinely believed to be in the best interests of an investigation. As I was reminded daily by the words of Justice Sutherland in *Berger v. United States*, which remain prominently posted on the wall of the US Attorney's Office in Delaware, the end goal was not to win at all costs and by any means, but instead to vigorously and fairly pursue justice.

My voluntary appearance here today is not without an overwhelming feeling of frustration and disappointment because, as much as I would invite the opportunity to explain the decisions made and accurately describe the actions taken, I will not be permitted to answer most of the questions you have for me. It should come as no surprise to the Committee that, as a former DOJ employee, I am significantly constrained by and must strictly adhere to the authorization provided by the Department of Justice, as well as those obligations imposed by Federal Rule of Criminal Procedure 6(e) and the relevant laws governing disclosure of tax information. I am here voluntarily precisely because I respect the law. I loved being an AUSA and have always taken enormous pride in doing the right thing. The allegations made against my colleagues and me have had a profound impact on me both professionally and personally. In light of the ongoing nature of the investigation, I am legally obligated at this time to largely remain silent as to those allegations, beyond stating the truth which is that, at all times while serving as an AUSA, I acted consistently with the Justice Manual, DOJ policy directives, and my statutory/legal and ethical obligations; I followed the facts where they led, and made decisions in the best interests of the investigation. This includes, but is by no means limited to, policies and rules governing politically sensitive investigations, election year sensitivities, attorney search warrants, search warrant filter requirements, and professional conduct rules barring contact with represented parties.

My desire to serve my community and my country, such a great source of pride, has recently come at significant cost. As a private person, the once routine and mundane details of my life have become the subject of public interest in an invasive and disturbing manner. Far worse, I have been threatened and harassed, causing me to fear for my own and my family's safety. I mentioned earlier that I recently left the U.S. Attorney's Office. My decision to do so long pre-dated and was unconnected to the baseless allegations made against me. In fact, I agreed to stay with the office months longer than planned because of my belief that my family and I were safer while I remained an AUSA. I have no doubt that after today the threats and harassment and my own fear stemming from them will heighten exponentially. This not only scares me, but as someone who loves this country, it also breaks my heart. We are living in a day and age where politics and winning seem to be paramount and the truth has become collateral damage. It is my sincere hope that at least by my voluntary appearance here today, I can convey that as far as I am aware, any narrative that suggests, much less insists that political influence played a role in any matter I handled, is a false one.

Nonetheless I am here today, again, voluntarily and sincerely hope that the limited information I am permitted to share with you provides some reassurance, if not to the

committee, then at least to the American people, whom I have been so proud to have served for the majority of my professional life.
