

rifled through my desk—I saw this on tape—assumed the chair that is being held now by the President of the Senate, posed for pictures, made all sorts of signs, left notes behind, and tore up the Capitol Building. At the end of the day, 140 law enforcement officers were hurt, and 4 lost their lives. That was the reality of what happened on January 6.

Do we expect the Justice Department to do nothing about the hundreds of people who stormed this Capitol? We saw it on videotape. Nobody is making this up. What they did was to prosecute them for the crimes that they committed. Many of them were sentenced, and many of them pled guilty when they saw the videotapes that portrayed exactly what they did on that day. The Justice Department prosecuted them, and many of them ended up in jail—some of them with serious sentences for their serious misconduct.

Now comes the new President, Donald Trump, and on his first day in office, he absolves them from criminal guilt and tells them they are free to go.

A question has to be asked of the American people: If someone came bursting into your home or your church or your school and tore it up, beat up those who were trying to maintain order and did it all on videotape, should they be held responsible for it?

I certainly think so. That is certainly true when it comes to this building, which represents the symbol of America and our democracy. If you want to desecrate this building, you should pay the price.

The American people deserve an Attorney General who will acknowledge that reality, who will protect the fundamental rights of this country, demonstrate independence and integrity, and remain faithful to the Constitution, the country, and the rule of law.

Ms. Bondi, during the course of her testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee, was also asked about Kash Patel, the President's nominee to head up the Federal Bureau of Investigation. She made it clear that she supports him. I don't. I don't because he doesn't have the experience to hold the job. He certainly has nothing in his background to suggest that he can supervise 38,000 FBI agents and employees and 400 field offices around the world trying to keep America safe every single day. Yet she stood behind him.

I fear Ms. Bondi will only protect and remain faithful to one person throughout this whole experience, and that is the President who is giving her this opportunity.

I urge my colleagues to look carefully at her record and the record of Kash Patel. They are a team in this effort, and they should be held accountable for what they have said and written and the positions that they have taken in support of the President, even when his positions are not consistent, in my mind, with the equal and free administration of justice.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. BRITT). The Senator from Iowa.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATIONS

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, over the last 3 or 4 years, I have come to the floor to discuss with my colleagues information that I get from whistleblowers in the FBI and the Department of Justice, most of it dealing with the subject of the critical weaponization of people at the highest levels of the FBI and their violating of protocol, getting involved in political situations that the FBI has no business being in.

Last week, when Mr. Patel was before my Judiciary Committee, I released some new emails that I have gotten that show further involvement of certain people in the case against Trump that Jack Smith headed up. I am here today because, when I released those emails, last week, there was a New York Times story that got it all wrong. So, today, I want to bring to my colleagues' attention a January 30, 2025, New York Times article from Adam Goldman and Alan Feuer about my and Senator JOHNSON's oversight of the FBI.

In that article they said: "FBI emails released Thursday showed that agents and officials followed standard procedure" when opening the Trump elector case.

Well, they read it wrong, and I am going to tell you why they read it wrong.

The article written by these two can be summed up like this: a very wet kiss to the politically biased leadership within the FBI.

Last week, Senator JOHNSON and I made public FBI records that showed a snapshot into the origins of the Jack Smith elector case against Trump. Those records included a February 14, 2022, email from Assistant Special Agent in Charge Thibault to his subordinate agent, Michelle Ball. The subject line of that email was "Elector Matter."

My office has been told that Thibault handpicked subordinate agents, including Michelle Ball and Jamie Garman, who are both referenced in the documents that I released, to conceal his role as an initiating agent. The documents Senator JOHNSON and I released support that.

In the February 2022 email, Special Agent Thibault says, in part: "Here is [the] draft opening language we discussed." Attached to that email is a Word document titled "Elector." That Word document, when opened, contains information that became part of the predicated document that would later be approved to open the case code-named "Arctic Frost." That was all about prosecuting then-Citizen Trump.

When opening the Word document, it says this: "Author: Timothy Thibault." It also says this: "Last modified by: Timothy Thibault."

Today, Senator JOHNSON and I will be publicly releasing a new email that we

have obtained that was sent from Thibault to Michelle Ball and Jamie Garman on March 1, 2022. In the email, Thibault says: "To add . . . will come by to discuss." The document was attached to the email, with language to be added to the Arctic Frost document opening the investigation against Trump.

The document attached to the email lists the author and modifier as—you guess it—Thibault.

The document itself is titled "Arctic Frost," and it adds President Trump as a criminal subject to the investigation. Notably, the document lists then-Chairman DURBIN's 2021 investigative report on Trump to help justify that Trump yet fails to use my 2021 report, which provided much needed context.

Now, the New York Times article said the FBI records Senator JOHNSON and I made public "showed that agents and officials followed standard procedure," but that totally ignores the facts and evidence, let alone not even considering the FBI rules for making these determinations for opening a prosecution case.

So I go to these rules. Section 7.7.1 in the FBI's Domestic Investigations and Operations Guide—and that is, essentially, the FBI's manual—is titled, "Opening Documentation."

That rule shows the work flow approval and makes clear that supervisors—I want to emphasize "supervisors"—are to approve the work product provided to them. The point here is Thibault did not conduct himself like that sort of a supervisor.

In other words, the intent of this rule, based on its plain text, is that subordinate agents provide work product to supervising agents for the latter's approval. Should there be any doubt about this intent, look no further than section 3.5.2.3 titled "No Self-Approval Rule." That rule says, in part: "an approval official (and the rule uses the word supervisor to define this person) may not self-approve his/her own work activity. An independent evaluation and approval of these activities must be obtained, including the opening and closing of any Assessment or predicated investigation."

Then the rule says this: "In the event that an FBI employee errantly conducts a self-approval, the approval is considered substantial non-compliance and must be documented." So that leaves you with Thibault self-approving something that he wasn't supposed to self-approve.

Moreover, another FBI document defines "general roles and privileges" of supervisors as this: "Supervisor—assigns leads; approves documents; assigns squad current workload."

None of this says that a supervisor like Thibault is allowed to draft and open a case and approve it for themselves.

Based on the facts and the evidence that Senator JOHNSON and I have obtained to date, and based on the FBI's own rules, Thibault essentially self-approved his own case, in violation of FBI

rules, which means this guy was out to get Trump as fast as he could.

According to this case that, again, I say is named Arctic Frost, as they code-named the Trump case, it was defective from the very start, not only from a political infection standpoint but also because of substantial non-compliance with FBI rules.

Getting back to the New York Times article, at this point, the paper simply is an FBI stenographer and propagandist, parroting FBI lies, claiming emails released by me and Senator JOHNSON “showed that agents and officials followed standard procedure” when opening Arctic Frost.

As with most of the information in the leaks the FBI has laundered through Goldman, the truth is quite the opposite of the FBI and the New York Times’ narrative.

Does the New York Times believe that it is normal for an Assistant Special Agent in Charge to prepare case predication for the opening of an investigation and then feed it to a street agent? And add to that doing it to a former President of the United States.

Is it normal for FBI agents to ignore sources that counteract the predication they so badly manufacture? Is it normal for an Assistant Special Agent in Charge to boast anti-Trump social media poses under his true name and title while he is overseeing the most politically sensitive investigation for the FBI? Is it normal for an Assistant Special Agent in Charge responsible for the most sensitive political investigations in the FBI to be forced to resign for partisanship on the job and then be found to have violated the Hatch Act for that same partisanship?

It seems to this Senator that the New York Times has become the paid publicist of senior members of the FBI, an unethical quid pro quo of pushing their narratives in exchange for publishing false information.

On the occasion of the latest article as a mouthpiece for nameless FBI sources, I invite the New York Times editorial board to undertake its own investigation into Goldman’s receipt of one-sided law enforcement information leaked to him from FBI employees. Absent that, continued New York Times reporting in this area is inherently questionable.

Now, I started this by talking about occasionally, from time to time, I come to the U.S. Senate floor to discuss information I get from whistleblowers that deals with the political weaponization of the FBI. I released some of those emails last week at the Patel hearing.

Now, what Patel is all about, by President Trump appointing him to FBI Director, is simply to see that none of this stuff that I have discussed in previous speeches on the floor of the U.S. Senate ever happens again and that the FBI is going to be a law enforcement Agency and not a political weaponization organization. And I say that about the people that are on the

seventh floor of the Hoover FBI Building. I am not condemning the people that are working FBI cases in Iowa or any of the other 49 States because they are doing their job. But they should have the full support of the seventh floor of the building and not be concerned about prosecuting a former President of the United States, now re-elected as the 47th President of the United States.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. HOEVEN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NOMINATION OF CHRISTOPHER WRIGHT

Mr. HOEVEN. Madam President, I am pleased to come to the floor today to urge my colleagues to confirm Chris Wright to be Secretary of Energy.

Mr. Wright has demonstrated tremendous leadership in the energy industry over the past more than 30 years. He is a true pioneer in advancing new technologies that unlocked the shale energy revolution in our country.

When I started as Governor of North Dakota in 2000, our State was producing about 100,000 barrels of oil per day, but that production was declining. We produced from the old traditional vertical wells, going down as much as 2 miles in some cases, some cases more. So we had to do something different. We started a new energy plan. We called it EmPower North Dakota to promote the development of all of our energy resources to help make our State the energy powerhouse that it is today.

We developed the right regulatory and tax climate to encourage energy development. We worked to bring talent to our State with the best entrepreneurial mindset. That included energy leaders like Mr. Wright, people that have the latest and greatest understanding of new technologies and the power to innovate.

Mr. Wright has said he became fascinated with energy at a young age, working on fusion energy and later solar energy during his studies at MIT and then graduate school at UC Berkeley.

He started Pinnacle Technologies, the company that actually started the hydraulic fracturing mapping industry. He was a pioneer in that effort, helping to locate more commercially viable shale energy reserves. He then started another company, Liberty Energy, to unlock the potential of those reserves and to do it with the smallest footprint and the best environmental stewardship. Mr. Wright worked to advance new breakthroughs in hydraulic fracturing, commercializing new tech-

nology to improve the productivity of oil wells in the Bakken shale formation.

As a result of innovators like Mr. Wright, North Dakota went from producing less than 100,000 barrels of oil a day when I started as Governor to a high of 1.5 million barrels of oil a day.

Our Nation’s vast energy reserves of coal, oil, and natural gas are not a liability; they are one of our most important strategic assets. Each additional barrel of U.S. oil offsets production from Russia, from Iran, from Venezuela, and from other adversaries with little to no regard for environmental standards.

Mr. Wright understands that affordable and reliable energy is foundational to our economy, to our quality life, and, in fact, our national security. As energy demand continues to grow both at home and abroad, Mr. Wright knows it takes innovation, not regulation, to rise to this challenge. For example, in North Dakota, we are leading the way to crack the code on carbon capture technologies.

Mr. Wright will bring the right vision to the Department of Energy, supporting the deployment of all these new technologies so that we can truly become not only energy independent, energy secure, but, in fact, energy dominant.

Mr. Wright received strong bipartisan support from our Energy and Natural Resources Committee, and I urge all of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support his confirmation to be the next Secretary for the Department of Energy.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

NOMINATION OF CHRISTOPHER WRIGHT

Mr. LEE. Madam President, you don’t need to be an economist to know that something went terribly wrong over the last 4 years. Just ask any family paying their utility bills and buying appliances or filling up their cars with gas at the pump. Prices skyrocketed, and wages haven’t kept pace—not even close. When Americans opened their energy bills, they didn’t see climate plans; they saw costs piling up and questions they couldn’t answer: Why is this so expensive? Why is Washington making it so much worse?

With America’s abundant resources of oil, gas, nuclear, geothermal, hydropower, et cetera, Biden’s Secretary of Energy could have spearheaded an era of energy dominance and energy abundance. Instead, the opposite happened. Secretary Granholm used her position to funnel taxpayer dollars to her friends in Michigan, while the rest of the country struggled under soaring energy prices and mounting inflation. Under Secretary Granholm, the Department of Energy was reduced to a taxpayer-funded piggy bank for political allies and for her pet projects.