

Jill: Welcome back to #SistersInLaw with Joyce Vance, Barb McQuade, me, Jill Wine-Banks. We're missing Kimberly Atkins-Stohr today, but we're sure she's going to be back next week and we will miss her until then. Check out our brand new, they celebrate the resistance. Notice how we got sis from Sisters-in-law into resistance. Go to politicon.com/merch. The shirts are really, really good-looking, and that's because our very own and very talented designer, Kimberly Atkins-Stohr to help to design them. But let's get onto the show because today we're going to be discussing DOGE, although some people have said we should be calling it Doggy and Bondi taking action as soon as she gets to the Department of Justice, and we'll talk about what's going on with the firings at the FBI. Those are all pretty heavy duty topics. And so before we get to that, I want to start our conversation talking about the Super Bowl. Barb, you're such a sports fan. What are your plans for Sunday?

Barb: Well, I will be watching with friends and I'm looking forward to seeing the friends, but this year is a little bit disappointing because we all thought this was our year for the Lions, and instead it's the same old Chiefs versus Eagles. So I'll watch, but I'm not terribly excited about the game. Maybe next year. But you know what I am excited about, Jill, that you might like in the afternoon every year on Super Bowl Sunday is the Puppy Bowl. Do you know what the Puppy Bowl is?

Jill: I don't. Tell me what it is because of course I will love anything to do with puppies.

Barb: So every year on Super Bowl Sunday, I think this is, I don't know, they've been doing it 20 years or something. On Animal Planet, they have adorable puppies who are rescue dogs. They put them on a field and they run around a little bit, but they're adorable dogs and it promotes rescuing dogs from shelters. And so they promote shelters, they promote rescue dogs, they give information about how you can go to your local shelter and adopt a dog or a puppy. And this year I looked it up online, Jill, just for you. They play every year for the Lombardy trophy. This year we'll feature both the largest dog who's ever played in it. Levi the Great Dane at 70 pounds, and also the smallest puppy of all time Sweetpea who weighs 1.7 pounds.

Jill: Oh, my gosh.

Barb: So I can't wait to see the Puppy Bowl 2:00 PM on Sunday.

Jill: I am going to be watching the Puppy Bowl. I hope everyone listening to us right now tunes in and please support rescues. It is the best. One of my favorite dogs ever was a rescue, but of course, he's absolutely replaced in my heart by Brisby, who we know will be in the Barkathon. And Joyce, what are you going to do for Super Bowl Sunday?

Joyce: Well, like Barb, I'm a big fan of the Puppy Bowl and it's sort of exciting times because I'm going to out myself and say we're getting a puppy at end of the month, so it's going to be our own personal Puppy Bowl in a couple of weeks. And we'll sort of enjoy watching the Puppy Bowl ahead of that time. But I'm going to send Bob off to watch the Super Bowl with some of his friends and I'm going to stay home and cook like a really good dinner for our two oldest kids who are not football fans and me. So I guess I'm going to be the anti Super Bowl house on Sunday.

Jill: Well, I'm joining you, of course. I'll watch the Puppy Bowl and my husband will watch the game. And I am not sure whether I'll go to a movie or what exactly I'll do, but I definitely will not be watching the game, although I do know this much about it, that it's possible that this could be a three-peat, which would be a world record, I guess, that no team has ever won three in a row. And so do we care about that or are we just rooting for the team that Claire McCaskill loves?

Barb: Well, I do like that Patrick Mahomes. He's pretty fun, so I always enjoy watching him play.

Hey, I don't know if you guys have tried these new HexClad pots and pans, but they're fabulous. Whether it's eating healthier, saving money, or elevating your life, HexClad is about to be your kitchen's new best friend. Get rid of those scratched up pans and mismatched tools and get started with cookware, that's as stylish as it is functional. With HexClad, cooking becomes easier, cleanup is quicker. The part I really like and every meal feels more special.

Joyce: I never clean up because Bob and I have this deal.

Jill: Well played. Sister.

Joyce: I cook, he cleans. And so I'm always happy to find something that makes his part of that bargain a little bit easier. HexClad has redefined the game with their hybrid technology. They've combined the durability of stainless steel, the nonstick ease we all love and cast iron's versatility. And the best part is that it's all wrapped up in a really gorgeous, sleek design that just sort of makes you smile every time you walk into the kitchen and pull it out to use. I mean, this cookware, it's not just a kitchen essential, it's the kitchen upgrade. My family loves them, unfortunately, a little bit too much because my oldest child who's in his own first place has run off with most of mine. I'm going to need to get a second set and keep it well hidden.

Jill: I don't normally think about how nice they look, but they do look really, really good. And it does make me happy. And I love your point, Joyce, about the cleanup because I have the same deal with my husband except that he sometimes doesn't exactly do the cleanup, but with HexClad, he finds it so easy that he doesn't mind cleaning up. So it's really, really nice.

Barb: Personally, I love their pepper mill. Have you guys seen that thing? It has a perfect mix of precision and elegance that will make you feel like a total pro who can sprinkle seasoning like a Michelin star chef. I just keep piling it on until somebody says when even when it gets to be piled up to their neck. If it's good enough for Master Chef Gordon Ramsay, you know it's got to be top-notch. He trusts HexClad in his home and his Michelin star kitchens. Plus with their lifetime warranty, you can rest easy knowing you're investing in cookware you'll never need to replace. And I have good news for a limited time only, our listeners can get 10% off your order with our exclusive link. Just head to hexclad.com/sisters.

Jill: February in Chicago is very cold. That means it's a great time to create comfort food, and that means it's a great time to treat yourself to the best cookware on the market, cookware

that cleans easily and never burns your food. And for a limited time, only our listeners can get 10% off your order with our exclusive link. Just head to hexclad.com/sisters. Support our show and check them out at [hexclad, H-E-X-C-L-A-D .com/sisters](https://hexclad.com/sisters). Make sure to let them know we sent you. Bon appétit. Food tastes better cooked in HexClad's revolutionary cookware. The link is in our show notes.

Joyce: Well, DOGE seems to be the word of the weak with the Elon Musk led quasi governmental office doing more to tear down government than it's doing to build it up. This is characteristic of so much of what we're seeing with Donald Trump who has this love, hate, but mostly hate relationship with the government that he's supposed to be in charge of. And what's different about this Musk-led effort to reform government, which by the way, that can be good, right? Government can use a little bit of reform now and then a little bit of streamlining a check for waste. Nobody will critique that. But what's different about this is that it's led by the world's richest man. He apparently doesn't have enough to do running his business ventures like Tesla, SpaceX and Twitter. So he's leading this band of young malleable boys in changing government. And it's really weird because there are all sorts of conflicts of interest, as you might can imagine, from someone who owns those businesses with trying to change up the operations of government.

I think if you wrote DOGE as a script, you'd get laughed out of the room because it's implausible. But here we are, just last month, Elon Musk wrote an op-ed that we discussed with you in a German newspaper arguing that the future of that country was a far-right party with members who espoused Nazi-esque ideas. And now here we are again with this guy trying to figure out what the future of a democratic nation should look like.

So DOGE was created by one of Trump's day one executive orders. Technically, it reorganized an entity in the executive office of the president called the US Digital Service as the US DOGE service. And it gave it the job of modernizing federal technology and software to maximize government efficiency and productivity. But that's not exactly how it's playing out. Jill, can you talk a little bit about what's going on here? Because late last week there were two big cases, challenging DOGE. There's one at Labor, one at Treasury. What's the basis for those lawsuits? What's the complaint about DOGE and where do the cases stand?

Jill: Well, these cases aren't directly challenging DOGE, which I think is going to be coming, which is this even a legal entity? Can it get funded? Should it have any powers at all? But these two cases are both based on the departments cooperating with DOGE employees who may or may not be special government employees. It's unclear, but giving outsiders very confidential information. So it's a violation. It's being brought by different labor unions and one, there was a hearing today that's going on as we're speaking, so I don't know what the outcome is.

So the first lawsuit is against the Treasury Department, which has a very, very secret and important fiscal services unit that pays out trillions of dollars to people and receives trillions of dollars from people. So it is really, really important. It of course has everyone's social security number, everyone's address, it has all kinds of medical information about you, it has everything.

And that case is before a judge in the District of Columbia, Kollar-Kotelly. And that has been handled by an agreement between the parties, which she is going to have a hearing, but not until March on whether or not there should be an injunction against them, the Department of the Treasury sharing any information with DOGE and DOGE's employees.

In the meantime, DOGE has some special government employees working there, and those two employees have been given read-only access, although the two who were there, one has resigned because he was caught. You mentioned Nazism in your opening Joyce, he had some racist Nazi-like posts approving of eugenics, and so he's out now. He's gone. And that one will be decided going forward.

The other case is against the Department of Labor, and it's very similar. And that's the one where Judge Bates is having a hearing right now on whether to grant a temporary restraining order. Anyway. So we're waiting to hear whether he will grant a temporary restraining order or whether they will settle themselves between the parties not allowing access outside of the Department of Labor for any purpose. Because our privacy laws, the privacy law of 1974, and the other laws do not allow that kind of disclosure and it could really end up being a very serious violation of privacy if that information is shared.

Joyce: So this sounds like really good news. The courts are telling Musk, no. But Barb, I got to ask, I mean, are there any ongoing risks to the integrity of government information and government systems even with these court orders in place? You're not by itself with.

Barb: Oh my gosh, absolutely.

Jill: Right. We dealt with hackers in cyber crimes and I think it's naive to think that this ends any risk. Yeah?

Barb: Yeah. I mean, when you have government employees doing very sensitive work like this, number one, they're vetted for merit to make sure they have the skills necessary, but they're also subjected to a detailed background check to make sure they don't have any loyalties to hostile foreign adversaries or that they're not in a position to be compromised. People who have gambling addictions or drug addictions who don't want that information revealed could be leveraged when they have access to this kind of stuff. So the records that are included here are tax records for all Americans, all social security numbers, all employment records, Medicare health records, student loan records, for 2.4 million federal employees and all the former federal employees, like all three of us, personnel files that has the names of our children and social security numbers of them. So all kinds of really sensitive data there.

And so, one, that could be a vulnerability to a foreign hostile adversary if these systems are not being safeguarded the way they ought to be. I think there's a lack of transparency that should be concerning to everybody when you've got a government employee, there's oversight and accountability if they fail to perform their job as they're supposed to do. And finally, today there's a report that one of these DOGE employees was fired from his prior job for sharing data with a competitor. So talk about failing the background check. He didn't even get a background check. So it's a really dangerous and reckless thing to be just allowing Elon Musk and his minions who are young men without the kinds of experience and background check that we ordinarily require for these sensitive positions.

Joyce: Yeah. So I think that's a savvy assessment. I mean, we've got this whole issue of folks with a lot of access in a court that may have some trouble checking to cut it off. There's this interesting nuance here because enforcement looks different if DOGE is a governmental agency, and even though the EO purports to create a governmental agency, it's not entirely clear that this part of it what Musk is doing is considered government. They seem to have the prerogatives of government without any of the rules. And so we're starting to see FOIA requests from a number of different entities that will hopefully clarify their status.

But Jill, what about Musk himself? Is he a federal employee? And if so, what are the implications of his being a federal employee? Would he have to comply with ethics and financial disclosure rules or anything else?

Jill: As with all of these questions, it's complicated, but the answer is apparently yes, he is what's called a special government employee. And I say that because the White House has admitted that that's what he is or has said that's what he is. And because I don't believe much of what they say, I can't be sure, but that's what they're saying. And in that case, ethics and conflict rules apply unless he has a waiver. Now, we don't know that he has a waiver, and in fact, he can't get a waiver if his interest in one of the companies that has a conflict is substantial. There's no way that anyone could say that his interest in the companies that he owns is not substantial. So I don't think he would be eligible legally for a waiver. It is a criminal offense to take on and be involved in anything that benefits yourself or your family.

So when he makes decisions that would help him in, let's say, China or against any of his competitors in the space fields, that would be illegal, not just morally wrong and ethically wrong, but illegal. He is, as a special government employee, he can only work 130 days with or without pay. The pay is not the issue, but he can't advise on any matter where he has an interest and he cannot, after he does this service, ever intervene with an agency he worked with as a special government employee. I would be watching that because when his time here is over, I'm sure he's not going to stay out of government because of his issues.

And then there's one other issue, which is does he have to file financial disclosure information? And the answer is yes, but if he isn't paid more than a GS-15, which is about \$123,000 a year, he doesn't have to have it be public, it would be confidential. So he might have to file, but it would be confidential.

So we have to see, does he have to get a waiver, could he get a waiver? And in any event, since it appears he didn't get a waiver, all the work he's done up to this point would not be in compliance with the rules. So I think that his involvement is too substantial for him to get a waiver, probably too substantial for him to be a special government employee.

Joyce: Well, that sort of sobering stuff, because I mean it sort of raises so many of the issues that we're all wondering about and specifically how enforceable is any of this stuff? I mean, Barb, where do you think this is all headed? Who wins in the rule of law versus Elon Musk and Jill, I'd love to hear what you think, too.

Barb: At least the song says, Joyce, I fought the law and the law won. That's where I hope this ends. These lawsuits...

Joyce: That's my warm-up music when I teach criminal law, Barb.

Barb: Oh, is it your whack-up? You whack. I love it. I love it. Whack-up.

This Federal Advisory Committee Act. It's an act of Congress, and it says that if the president wants to bring in private advisors, which prior presidents have done, President Clinton did it, President George W. Bush did it, President Obama did it. But they have to comply with all of these rules. And so this lawsuit really is about forcing the DOGE to comply with all of these rules. And so they have to have a charter, it has to be filed. They have to keep records of all that they're doing. They have to keep meeting minutes. They have to have a defined responsibility. They have to share open meetings. They have to be open to the public.

So if they're not doing all these things and they are not, they are in violation of this law, and so I think we are going to see a court order them to cease and desist their work until they comply with this law. So maybe in the end, they grudgingly agree to comply and they start being more transparent and file a charter and do the things they're required to do under this federal statute. But if not, I think judges are, even if Congress is allowing Donald Trump to run roughshod over the law, I don't think courts are going to do that.

Jill: I agree with Barb completely, but I would add one other thing aside from their total failure to comply with all of this, and we've all served on commissions that have been set up where there's Open Meeting Act and a Freedom of Information Act information. There's going to be some more lawsuits. The State Attorneys General are talking about filing a lawsuit against Treasury in which they might challenge the total legality of it.

But the real issue is, we now have court orders, one that said the federal grant freeze was not legal and it had to be lifted, but it still seems like the freeze has not been lifted. So that raises the question of whether the government, whatever, however you define it, is going to comply with court orders because the courts are starting to step in and save us. And a lot of pro bono groups are bringing these lawsuits. State Attorneys General are bringing them, but if they don't comply, what's the answer? When you have a Department of Justice that won't enforce it? When you have a president who won't enforce it? What's the answer? That's the part that scares me the most. Can either of you give me some comfort on this?

Joyce: No. I can't.

Barb: No. I can't. JD Vance quoted Andrew Jackson saying, "What if the courts rule against you and saying, we'll then let them enforce it." Really scary.

Joyce: Okay, now wait, I have to step in here because that's disinformation. He didn't actually say that. I wanted to quote that. The other night in something I was writing, so I look to that.

Barb: Oh, really? JD Vance didn't say it.

Joyce: No. JD Vance did.

Barb: Oh, but Andrew Jackson didn't.

Joyce: I learned that he did not actually say that that was part of the apocrypha that surrounded that event, but it's such a great quote, right? Because I think that that's-

Barb: Well, it's a horrible quote, but the fact that he's attributing it to Andrew Jackson just gives it the worst.

Joyce: Yeah.

Barb: Some credibility when there's none. It's just JD Vance saying this. Oh, God.

Joyce: I mean, I say it's a great quote because it's the epic fear here, right? It's like we're teetering right on the edge of a constitutional crisis. And the question is, what is a court going to do? Because ultimately courts rely on the executive branch to enforce criminal contempt orders or orders like that. I mean, we always say the Supreme Court doesn't have an army that goes out and enforces its orders. And so that's why in this moment, it's going to be important for the courts and Congress to do its job. And I have not seen any signs of Congress doing its job.

Jill: I know it's so terrifying that we have to even raise this issue that the government might not comply. That's terrifying.

Joyce: This episode of #SistersInLaw is brought to you by one of our favorites, Wildgrain. If you're not familiar with Wildgrain already, it's the first bake-from-frozen subscription box for artisanal breads, pastries and pastas. Wildgrain's boxes are fully customizable to your tastes and dietary restrictions, and there's some really exciting news.

In addition to their classic variety box, they recently launched a new gluten-free box and a 100% vegan plant-based box. Best of all, Wildgrain takes the hassle out of baking since all the items bake-from-frozen in 25 minutes or less, and there is no mess or cleanup.

Barb: I'm really missing Kim this week for a lot of reasons, but mostly the way she says croissant when she talks about how much she loves Wildgrain and they are good. I love how fast Wildgrain goes from the box to our table. Whenever we have guests over and we want to take our meal to the next level, it's the first thing I think of. It's kind of a cheat because it's so easy. It's perfect for delicious meals or snacks for Super Bowl Sunday.

Jill: I love watching the color and flavor come alive when the giant croissants. Did I do that okay, Barb? What do you think? Croissants.

Barb: If you know Kim, but it wasn't bad.

Jill: Oh, okay. Anyway, while they're heating up, the aroma is just amazing. It's true for all of the bread and pastries coming from the oven. It really makes me feel like I've baked something, even though all I did was take it out of my freezer and put it in. Oftentimes without even a pan, you just put it on the rack in your oven and cook it for 20 minutes and you have this fabulous, fabulous bread. As soon as the smell reaches my family, they

come running. Wildgrain items are delicious, super high quality and easy to make. I can guarantee that Chocolate Croissant... Tried it again.

Barb: Pretty good.

Jill: Chocolate Croissant will be a big hit.

Joyce: I can taste them already. Thanks for that. That's all I'm going to be able to think about while we're doing the podcast today y'all. But seriously, if you're ready to bring all your favorite carbs right to your doorstep, be sure to check out Wildgrain so you can begin building your own box of artisanal breads, pastas, and pastries.

And for a limited time, Wildgrain is offering our listeners \$30 off the first box plus free croissant in every box. Did I do okay, Barb?

Barb: Mm-hmm. Yeah, I don't know French.

Jill: It's okay. It's okay. It's okay.

Barb: We miss you Kim.

Joyce: When you go to Wildgrain...

Barb: We miss you Kim.

Joyce: Yeah, we do miss you, Kim. Come back and say croissant for us. But in the meantime, y'all run out and get them for yourself. When you go to wildgrain.com/sisters, you can start your subscription. Free croissants in every box and \$30 off your first box when you go to wildgrain.com/sisters. That's wildgrain.com/sisters or use promo code sisters at checkout. You can find that link in our show notes.

Jill: And you know what? The pasta is so amazing. We don't pay enough attention to that.

Barb: The pasta was really good.

Jill: Everybody should get the pasta. Oh my God, the cavatappi and the... They're all fabulous. They're really good.

Joyce: Easy for you to say.

Jill: In a bunch of memos that completely mirror Project 2025, the new Attorney General, Pam Bondi, within hours of being confirmed, issued 14 memos in 15 minutes, and we can't cover them all because they all need discussion. But I think what I want to do is have each of you pick one or two that you think really deserve our listener's attention, and let's cover those because they run the range from dropping foreign election interference prosecutions and foreign agent registration prosecutions, and the memos cover the death penalty and sanctuary cities. And I mean, it's really a broad range of things that are terrifying AUSAs and lawyers in the Department of Justice, because she demanded that

they be zealous advocates of the president's agenda, and she called them his lawyers, not the people's lawyers.

And I know all three of us were very proud to go to court and say on behalf of the people, and I can't imagine what it would be like where we had the right to choose cases that were just and prosecutable to not have those powers and to have to now face making a Sophie's choice about whether to stay or take the resignation that's been offered, which may or may not ever be legal and ever be followed through on whether they'll ever get paid. So Barb, what one do you want to talk about first?

Barb: Oh man, there's so many to choose from, but Jill, I think the one that really hits me as the worst is the one that creates a weaponization working group. The title of this is Disinformation and Gaslighting. It's called Restoring the Integrity and Credibility of the Department of Justice. And then it quotes Donald Trump saying that the Department of Justice had engaged in an unprecedented third-world weaponization of prosecutorial power to upend the democratic process. I mean, this is about the criminal prosecutions against Donald Trump for trying to steal the 2020 election for retaining government documents after he left office, all of these things, the prosecution of the January 6th defendants, and without any acknowledgement of her hypocrisy, she then goes on to direct DOJ employees to actually weaponize law enforcement. And she says they're going to root out corruption. And then she lists a number of people that can only be seen as a target list for retribution.

Jack Smith is there. Any federal prosecutor who assisted Manhattan DA Alvin Bragg, who of course prosecuted Trump for falsifying business records. Any federal attorney who helped Letitia James, who of course won that big \$450 million civil judgment against Trump for the fraudulent business practices of the Trump investigation. DOJ personnel who worked on cases against the January 6th attackers and accuses them of improper investigative tactics and unethical prosecutions. It's pretty rich. In light of the fact that during her confirmation hearings just a week ago, she said under oath, there will never be an enemy's list within the Department of Justice. Well, here it is, shame on us for believing her. And this is...

Joyce: Wait, you didn't believe her. I knew you didn't believe her. We talked about it.

Jill: Wait a second. Who believed her? Yeah.

Barb: Just believe her because we talked about it.

Jill: You did not.

Barb: All right. Well, yeah, I guess no, but probably nobody believe her.

Joyce: Shame all those Republican Senators.

Barb: They didn't believe her either, probably.

Joyce: Yeah, that's true.

Barb: As we all know, prosecutors abide by what's known as the principles of federal prosecution. They were passed after the Watergate scandal. It's internal policy guidance for DOJ lawyers. And it says that attorneys for the government may not be influenced by political association, activities or beliefs. Prosecutors I worked with for 20 years at the US Attorney's Office in Detroit worked on cases based on facts and law. One thing that I think Donald Trump and Pam Bondi just don't get because they're such political animals, they're so transactional, is the idea that someone isn't just bipartisan, they are nonpartisan. And the idea that if you prosecuted me, you must be against me and now I'm going to come against you. That is what Trump discusses in the art of the deal. If you come after me, I'm coming after you times 10 because I'm going to teach everybody else a lesson that you never mess with me.

And so this is really upending the concept of the Department of Justice for the past 40 years, and I find it really, really painful. I don't know how we get through this for the next four years, and those poor people who find themselves on the wrong end of this target, I think should brace themselves for injustice.

Jill: Absolutely true. And I think to your point about the internal conflict in the two different memos saying we're going to go after that weaponization that the Biden administration did, but we're going to go after. I mean, it's just so awful. So Joyce, what do you want to talk about first?

Joyce: It's such rich pickings. I mean, one thing I'll say is, look, let's not be naive. Attorney's general don't write all of these memos by themselves with no help, but they do have significant input because it's their justice department and they should be thoughtful about the direction they want to take it. And the fact that Pam Bondi slammed down these 14 memos the same day she took office suggests to me that they were not written by her. She wouldn't even have had time to read all of them and figure out what was in them and what they meant for the Justice Department before she entered them. So this tells me that this is somebody else's agenda. It's either a Project 2025 agenda or a Donald Trump agenda or a hybrid of those two. And I think that's a real sort of a cautionary point about what we can expect to see from this attorney general.

I think something that caught my eye, and this is not going to get a whole lot of attention, but this is a memo that doesn't do anything affirmative. Instead, it just rescinds, it takes back a memo that Merrick Garland had put into effect during his time in office. This is rescinding his memo on environmental justice, and that was a Biden era directive to prioritize enforcement of environmental laws in disadvantaged and low income communities. It was a real priority for me during my time in office in Birmingham because of historical discrimination in the state that I live in. Parts of North Birmingham that were poorer sorts of areas that were inhabited primarily by Black people had become dumping grounds for companies that were engaged in mining or other sorts of industrial practices that produced waste products. And something that we dealt with were utterly devastating statistics for childhood cancers, for asthma, for other kinds of diseases as a result of that environmental injustice, we were able to actually get EPA to come over from Atlanta and open a satellite office.

And ultimately, I mean it was like crazy stuff. They had to dig out three feet of contaminated dirt and replace it in order to restore a significant part of one of the neighborhoods that we dealt with. So I have this deep feeling for how important this work

is, but not to Pam Bondi. She has wiped it out with one stroke of her signature. And this is what she said. She said, "I'm doing this 'to ensure that the department engages in the even-handed administration of justice.'" And I think that that's really abominable. If this was a level playing field starting out, if this vision that, oh, the Justice Department shouldn't be giving extra benefits to one subset of people, if that was what this was about, that would be one thing, but it's not. It's about ignoring historical disadvantage and historical discrimination and trying to claim that you're the good guy and it's super offensive.

Jill: Absolutely true. I'm going to talk about one that also has a internal inconsistency, and it's a very short memo called Restoring a Measure of Justice to the families of victims of Commuted Murderers. So it's a direct attack on the commutation of most federal prisoners on death row to life without parole. And of course, the internal inconsistency is she says, "Well, the Department of Justice is going to explore opportunities to let the victim's families go public with how it affected them." And she's also going to help local prosecutors to bring new murder charges against these federal prisoners on state murder charges. Thirdly, she's going to make sure that the conditions of confinement for the 37 prisoners who were commuted are as bad as they could possibly be because she says it has to be consistent with the security risks these inmates pose, which is not based on fact as far as I can tell.

But the real important thing is she says this in the face of ignoring the pardons of 1,600 violent offenders on January 6th, people who caused death and mayhem, injured police officers, they're all pardoned. They're not just commuted to a smaller sentence, they are pardoned. It's as if they had never been convicted. And to the extent she says, well, the Department of Justice worked hard to get these murder convictions. Well, the Department of Justice worked really hard to get the convictions of all of the violations on January 6th. So it just seems so hypocritical to me that I had to pick that one as one.

So let's keep going. I mean, there are so many good ones to pick. Barb, what's your second one?

Barb: Well, I'll combine two.

Jill: Good.

Barb: Because there are two relating to DEI. One is about DEI internally within the Department of Justice, and the other is about DEI outside the Department of Justice. So committing to ending all diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility laws claiming that these programs are somehow illegal discrimination. So first, this is advancing disinformation, and there is a narrative out there that diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility programs are somehow illegal and discriminatory. The law prohibits discrimination. You cannot hire people on the basis of their race or their gender or any of these other things. What these things do is to fight discrimination by promoting diversity, which means we're not going to hire people simply who are members of one race. Equity meaning we're going to treat people equally. Inclusion means we're going to have rules where we make sure that everybody gets the same training.

We want to retain everybody. We want to recruit people in a broad way and accessibility that's required under the Americans with Disabilities Act. If somebody is in a wheelchair

or has a visual impairment or whatever it is, if they could be reasonably accommodated, you must do that under the law. So the one that's seeking to eradicate and prosecute and go after these with lawsuits, go after some of these programs externally is really just based on a lie. Internally, they can really do whatever they want. If they want to get rid of all DEIA programs except for the accessibility which is required under the Americans with Disabilities Act, they can do it, but I will tell you, this is not what they are portraying it to be. This is not an effort to hire in a discriminatory fashion.

In a federal workplace what DEI looks like, I can tell you what it looked like for me at the US Attorney's Office. Some of it was cultural competency training, and so we learned some important things because of the various communities that we serve. So for example, we learn that in some cultures, if somebody does not make direct eye contact with a law enforcement official, it might not mean that they are suspicious. It might mean that it is a sign of respect. That was important to know. We were taught that just because people run from the police doesn't necessarily mean they're guilty of a crime. It may be that they fear being beat up by the police. And so having that sort of training to learn about different perspectives, I think made us better public servants, better able to explain cases to a jury and better able to persuade them and better able to serve the 10 million people who live in Michigan. So this really is, I think, an effort to promote this idea that there's been so-called reverse discrimination for the past four years and we're going to make America white again.

Jill: I'm so glad you picked those and it's interesting because both of the memos you are talking about do involve disinformation, which of course is part of your expertise, so I'm glad you did that. One other thing on this DEI stuff is when they now extend it, as you said, they can do it internally, whatever they want, it's a policy, they can do it. Except for ADA, which they must do. But when they start saying that we're going to prosecute outside, any company that has a DEI program means you're not going to get a government contract unless you drop DEI. And that can have a really chilling effect. And the benefits of DEI are enormous. Workplaces that are diverse are much better. Companies with a diverse workforce are much more profitable than those that aren't. So I think it's really a terrible thing. I'm going to add, I guess for my second one. Oh wait, Joyce, it's your turn. You didn't go second. You go second.

Joyce: Yeah. Again, I'm picking one of the more obscure ones, but this one is the total elimination of cartels and transnational criminal organizations. It sounds really good, right? Who doesn't want to eliminate cartels and transnational crime? The problem is those are already Justice Department policies, and what this memo actually does buried in this memo is a real problem. The problem is what it means DOJ won't be doing going forward, because here's what it does, it disbands Task Force KleptoCapture, which is the department's kleptocracy team established by Merrick Garland to hold Russian oligarchs accountable by enforcing sanctions, export restrictions, and economic countermeasures that the US and its allies had imposed on Russia for invading Ukraine. This targeted crimes by Russian officials, but also by government aligned elites who were working with them to help them avoid being discovered in violating these sorts of rules. In other words, this was really important work.

Pam Bondi says, "Oh, no ma'am, not on my watch." So in just two years, this task force restrained, seized and obtained judgments to forfeit almost \$700 million in assets from Russia enablers for a variety of different kinds of violations of law. It was a very real

measure of our support for Ukraine, a very real measure of a way that we could isolate Russia and hold it accountable for what it was doing. The most sobering assessment that I've heard of this measure came from someone who had a lot of familiarity with how these units operated, and they said, "You can't get much more Putin friendly than this." Sort of a sobering thought.

Jill: It's really sad that this is happening. I'm going to end with one that I also think is a real warning about what is going to happen for the Department of Justice in the next four years, and it's not good. It sounds good. It's a memo that says, restoring the integrity and credibility of the Department of Justice, but it's such a false headline, so to speak, totally misleading. It is really a threat to everyone who works at the Department of Justice that they better follow whatever Donald Trump wants, that they have to do exactly what he has in his agenda. It says, "You have to be a zealous advocate, and if you have to think about whether you're going to argue vehemently for anything that is being challenged in the courts, you're going to be fired." That's really basically what it says and it does refer to the lawyers as Donald Trump's lawyers, and as Barb said, it targets people. So it's really bad.

We may have to do more on these memos because each of them is something that really does threaten how we have always had justice done fairly in this country, and so it's requiring things that I think are very unhealthy for our system of justice.

Joyce: They're all their own little fresh piece of hell.

Jill: If you're looking for shapewear designed for you, you need to meet Honeylove. Honeylove is an independent female-founded brand designed by women who actually wear shapewear. Honeylove has something for any occasion with designs made to support you in comfort. Whether it's a work day or a workout day, Honeylove's shapewear is supportive and wire-free. Thanks to bonding technology that lifts without underwire. With Honeylove, you'll be ready no matter what the day brings to you.

Joyce: With winter in full swing. Honeylove is an amazing pairing with cozy sweaters and outdoor exercise, and I really love how comfortable the leggings are. They're perfect for everything from yoga to relaxing by the fire. The fabric is really soft, so you'll want to leave your Honeylove on all day. Now, Honeylove is my go-to base layer on chilly days. And thanks to their targeted compression technology, I never feel like I'm suffocating in my clothes even when I have to put a lot of layers on. I love how they use that targeted compression to enhance style instead of suffocating you. And simply put, Honeylove is designed to work with your body, not against it. Better yet, Honeylove goes on easy with high-quality fabrics and stunning design details that feel amazing and look even better. You deserve shapewear that's lightweight and comfortable without sacrificing support. It's the foundation for any great outfit.

Barb: Well, I don't like to talk about my foundational garments, but I will say hypothetically, if someone were to ask, I would say, Honeylove is the perfect undergarment for women with narrow shoulders just saying, no slippage of the strap, fits great, looks great, and so now looking great is easy. Just start every outfit with Honeylove and build out your style from there. Honeylove shapewear is designed to move with you. So say goodbye to pesky shapewear that rolls down as soon as you start to move and groove. Instead, treat yourself to the best bras and shapewear on the market. Save 20% off Honeylove at

Honeylove.com/sisters. Use our exclusive link to get 20% off at honeylove.com/sisters to find your perfect fit. After you purchase, they'll ask you where you heard about them. Please support our show and tell them we sent you. Elevate your comfort and elevate your style with Honeylove. The link is in our show notes.

Last Friday, the acting deputy attorney general ordered the firing of eight supervisory FBI officials and asked the acting FBI director for the names of all FBI personnel who participated in investigating the cases arising from the January 6th attack on the US Capitol, likely thousands of agents. Of course, this came after Trump had pardoned or commuted the sentences of 1,600 defendants who were charged with crimes including assaulting police officers. And at least one of those defendants has pledged retribution against the people who put him in prison.

In the memo, lest there be any confusion about the purpose of this request for all the names, the subject line was terminations. So first, let me ask about the purported reason for these terminations and whether there's any basis to think it's true. Jill, what do they say is the reason that they want these names?

Jill: Let me start with, it isn't a legitimate basis. It's completely phony. It is retribution, and let's not kid ourselves by saying it's anything else than that. But they're saying that it was part of weaponization, that it presents a grave danger to our nation to let them stay on that they can't be trusted. This is ridiculous. It did, by the way, bring me back into touch with the head FBI agent for the Watergate case who called me in grave concern for his fellow agents as to what's going on.

Barb: Oh, so nice. Wow.

Jill: So that was Angie. Hi. I don't know if you listen to the podcast, but if you don't, you should. I was very glad to talk to him, but I didn't have very good news for him because they're, they're doing it. And let's admit it's not just the FBI, they fired the lawyers who were involved in these cases. They are threatening the entire CIA. They may have already through non-secure channels given the list of new hires at the CIA in a way that could leak and endanger those people. I mean, there's so much bad stuff going on, but there is no legitimate reason for this, so the answer to your question is none.

Barb: Okay. And then let me ask you again, Jill, what's the normal process for removing an FBI agent? Say they didn't engage in misconduct hypothetically, and it happens from time to time. What's the process supposed to look like, right? Is it supposed to be, I don't like that you worked on this case, you're out, or is there a more formal process?

Jill: There is a more formal process, and it would never be, I don't like the case you worked on that I assigned you to, which is of course what happens. And many of these agents, by the way, were like, "Would get a call saying, this person came to Washington and did this terrible thing, but he's in your jurisdiction. Could you go interview his neighbors?" That's all it was. I mean, this wasn't like they picked people to randomly target. That wasn't what happened. But normally you would get a notice that you are being let go, and you would then appeal first to the Office of Professional Responsibility, which by the way, was created by Attorney General Levi, who was the attorney general after Watergate, who was hired to restore credibility to the department because of the attorney's general who ended up in jail.

And it was intended to deal with professional misconduct that had been rampant during Watergate. And then after they do something, you get to appeal to the Merit System Protection Board, which replaced the Civil Service Commission, which is what existed when I was a justice employee, and it's interesting because the mission and vision and primary function of the Merit System Review Board is to protect the merit system and its principles, which are that you cannot ever use a firing for political or other prohibited personnel practices. And that's exactly what this is clearly. But it was also, when I was delving into this, the vision includes making sure we have a highly qualified, diverse federal workforce. And I thought that was interesting. Obviously, they're going to have to take that off their website because diverse workforce can no longer be handled.

Barb: Yeah, that's right.

Jill: But I love that the word diverse just stuck out at me, but it is to prevent political firings. And so that's what's happening here. You can only hope that the merit system will protect these FBI agents who will not be fired for having worked on an assigned case.

Barb: Yeah, Donald Trump always complains about witch hunts. This really feels like a witch hunt. Joyce, one of the lines that keeps showing up in all these termination memos and other things is a line that employees who participated in prior cases against the January 6th defendants cannot be trusted. And here's the money line. You ready? To implement the president's agenda faithfully. What do you make of that line? Is that the job of an FBI agent to implement the president's agenda?

Joyce: Well, I'm going to answer a different question first and then I'll answer that one because obviously the answer to that one is no, but in some sense, look, I don't want to give this short shrift, right? Presidents do set agendas. They don't dictate which criminal cases get done or which affirmative civil cases get investigated, but it's okay for a president to say, even if you and I don't agree with that, or for an attorney general to say, our priority is going to be going after deadbeat daddies, and I'm not just drawing that one out of the hat by the way, when Ms. Reno was the attorney general, she directed prosecutors to go after deadbeat daddies in cases that crossed interstate lines, because those cases were tough for DAs to do. They couldn't chase across state lines. A lot of federal prosecutors didn't think that that was a good priority for the Justice Department, but she was the AG, it was within her rights to set it. It was our job to execute the priority.

So in that sense, yes, and the problem is there is absolutely zero evidence that FBI agents, including the ones who worked on January 6th cases, won't execute those sorts of priorities writ large. And so we know that this is about something else. This isn't about their ability to do their jobs, as you say, Barb, in a nonpartisan way, which is what the president is entitled to expect from them. This is just small potatoes, retribution. If you worked on a case that involved me or my followers, I'm going to show you. I think that that's frankly the takeaway here. It's not that these folks can't be trusted, it's that they haven't exhibited personal loyalty to Donald Trump. Instead, they've shown their willingness to uphold their oath to the Constitution.

Barb: Yeah, it's really problematic, as you said, the visual of Pam Bondi standing outside the White House and saying she's the president's lawyer. No.

Joyce: A little bit troubling.

Barb: The lawyers of people. Very troubling. I want to ask you both about these lawsuits that have been filed now seeking to block the firing of these agents without their due process rights and the potential release of their names, which could be very dangerous if publicly released. So first, I want to ask about some terms. Jill, there was a court hearing where a judge entered a temporary restraining order, a TRO. First, I want to ask you, what is a TRO? And then maybe you can tell us what the judge ordered.

Jill: So let me start by saying why the release of their names could be dangerous. And that's because the January 6th rioters have been released and are like a militia waiting to attack the people who prosecuted them and who investigated them. So that's a danger. If they were in jail still, it would be less dangerous, but that's what happened. Anyway, a TRO is a temporary restraining order, and that means it is something that is an emergency where a party will come to court and say, if I don't get this action stopped immediately, enjoined immediately, bad things are going to happen and nothing will happen on the other side if we hold the status quo. So that's what a temporary restraining order is. And then it allows time for the parties to come to court and present arguments for A permanent, an eventual permanent injunction of the action.

So we start with a TRO, and then usually the next step is a preliminary injunction where there's more arguments that are had and more facts are before the judge to determine whether it really does need a more long-term while they then go back to file papers and make arguments about a permanent injunction.

Barb: Yeah. Okay. So now that we know what that is and what that's all about, one of these lawsuits is actually a class action. Joyce, can you explain what a class action is?

Joyce: Yeah, so a class action in this case is a great example of it. You've got a number of FBI agents come forward and say, look, they're just eight or nine of us, but we are representative of a much larger class of people who all have the ability to assert these similar sorts of legal claims. This is a civil case, not a criminal one. And so what happens next is called a class certification proceeding where those agents have the opportunity to come forward and show both that they have representative claims for a class and that it would be more efficient, that it would be a fairer process for the court to certify a class rather than having a whole bunch of different lawsuits with people proceeding separately.

And there are different kinds of class certifications. In some situations, people have to opt in to be part of the class. In more rare circumstances, people have to opt out to not be included. But we are a long way from that sort of process taking place because right now, as Jill explained, we're just looking at whether or not there's going to be a temporary restraining order and a preliminary injunction that will freeze the status quo in place while this litigation moves forward.

Barb: If these agents are fired, as we said, potentially thousands, right, because as Jill described, it could be somebody who got a lead to work on a case anywhere in the country. These defendants were not arrested on January 6th. They were investigated after that day in every state. I'm sure Michigan had a ton of these defendants. And so there are probably some FBI agents in Michigan who are at risk, and so they're certainly waiting, I'm sure, to see how their case shakes out. What do you guys think is the likely outcome here? Do you think that these are strong claims? Jill, let me ask you first and then Joyce, what do you think is going to happen here?

Jill: Well, first, let me say the judge has set the hearing quite a ways off. It's not, I think, until March 25th on the preliminary injunction, but that's because the government and the plaintiffs agreed that there would be no public release until that hearing, so there's no official TRO entered. It's by agreement of the government. The government said, okay, we will not allow public release. I think it's a very strong case that there is no reason for a public release of their names. It doesn't get to, are they all going to be fired? Because that's the real bottom line issue. This case is to stop the release of their names being identified as having worked on these cases.

Barb: How about you, Joyce? Where do you think this is going?

Joyce: Yeah, it's tough I think to say this early, right? Because the plaintiffs in the class action lawsuit, they've argued, they have a lot of different claims. They've argued that firing them would violate protections against political retaliation under the Civil Service Reform Act, they have First Amendment claims for political expression. They're arguing Fifth Amendment due process protections, and in the other case, the FBI Agents Association case, they're making similar claims. Those cases have, at least for now, been co-joined so that they can move forward because of those similarities. But the agents are also arguing that publication or dissemination of the surveys that involve their roles in these investigations could violate the Privacy Act and lead to harm against them, what Jill was talking about. So lots of different claims. We haven't yet seen the briefing to see how solid it is. But my instinct is that because of the sorts of protections that are afforded to members of the civil service, and those protections are much stronger for law enforcement agents than they are for prosecutors, I think that they're likely to prevail on at least some of these claims.

And you guys will recall from the first Trump administration how he's always his own worst enemy. You can just imagine him going out and saying, "Well, of course I'm going to fire all of these people. They investigated me," or something like that. That will fuel the agent's case. So I think we'll learn more as this goes underway. I think it's interesting that in the agent's case that they came forward and agreed to this stay to the preliminary or rather to the temporary injunction while they prepare the case. Almost as though they know that they have some problems and they want to get their ducks back in order.

Barb: Yeah, I think the disclosure of the names is certainly one that's strong, but I also think the due process rights, I mean, there are processes for removing agents from misconduct. They have a right to this Office of Professional Responsibility internal process, and then they can appeal to the US Merit Selection Board. And if they're being denied those rights, maybe they plan to follow through once they hunt out that the agents they think did something wrong. But it seems like those claims are strong, and if nothing else, perhaps these lawsuits will force the FBI to give the agents those proper procedural protections.

The other thing I want to mention is because this involves thousands of agents, imagine if they actually do follow through and fire all these people. These are agents all across the country. Our country will be less safe if we immediately lose thousands of agents because the onboarding process for an FBI agent takes something like 18 months. By the time they get recruited and trained and sent out to a field office. These are experienced agents, so our law enforcement will suffer. So it's not just the individual agents who are worried about here, it's the American public.

Joyce: I mean, Barb, I want to underscore what you're saying because it's not just four months in Quantico that makes an FBI agent, right? It's years of experience and understanding how to do stuff. I heard Frank Figliuzzi on TV a couple of days earlier this week, former agent, and Frank was saying, "For the first year that you're in your first office agency, you're just trying to find the water cooler in the bathroom, right? You're just figuring out how it works." And so this really would leave us poorly protected. And if this, as many people have suggested, isn't Donald Trump trying to seize the opportunity to create an FBI that's loyal to him personally, the country is poorly served by that.

Jill: If you haven't already listened to my new YouTube show, Just The Facts, I hope that you will go on to our show notes today and find a link to it or just search on YouTube to find Just The Facts with me, Jill Wine-Banks, the Watergate, girl, because facts are more important than ever, and each show looks at the facts that matter, facts that will help you make wise decisions. Please join me.

Now it's time for our favorite part of the show. We love the questions you send us because they really make us think. They're very challenging and sometimes I go, "Boy, I wish I knew the answer to that one." If you have a question for us, please email us at sistersinlaw.politicon.com or tag us on social media using #SistersInLaw. If we don't get to your questions during the show, keep an eye on our feeds throughout the week because we sometimes answer your questions personally on our social media feeds.

And today, we have some really good questions. I'm going to start with you, Joyce. Here's a question for you from Nancy in Florida. Nancy says, "I have called and emailed all my state and federal representatives. They do not care about my concerns. Do you have any encouragement for me?"

Joyce: Oh, Nancy, my sister. I feel your pain sitting here in Alabama where actually this week I've been involved in an effort with some of my friends to get our senators to discuss with us our feelings and their feelings in advance of confirmation votes for some of Donald Trump's cabinet nominees. And let's just say it's been tough to get in touch, and I think that that's discouraging. I don't think it means that we give up. I think it's really important, if your senator, who by the way is your employee, if they don't want to talk to you, then I think that means you need to keep trying and take every effort that you can to make sure that they are fired if their performance doesn't live up to your expectations. I mean, if your senator can't even respond or give you a hearing, if you persistently try to get in touch with them for 30 days, well, I think that says something about them, and that's information worth sharing.

And of course you have friends, I'm sure, and maybe you, like me, might want to gather 20 or 30 like-minded women or friends and see if your senator would engage with that group. And of course, your senators and your members of Congress aren't your only elected representatives. You have governors, you have state and local officials, and I think sometimes you can get a better response from some of the state or local officials, but it's really important to not silence your voice because they're trying to ignore you. If you do that, they win. And so I had this conversation with my former Senator Doug Jones last week, and Doug said, "The important thing is to keep trying to try to start the ripple in the stream that becomes a bigger wave because yes, each one of us, you and me on our own, we're just one voice."

But when I reach out to my friends, then all of a sudden my senators know that there's a group of people persistently trying to speak with them. Maybe that'll catch on. And I remember the Tea Party era meetings with members of Congress that really laid bare some very important views and differences. And I think that that's the goal here. I don't think we should let our elected officials hide behind security barriers in their offices. I think that their duty is to engage with us, to talk with us, to share their views, and that will only happen if we force that.

Jill: I love your idea of involving friends and family in this effort and making it multiply your voice. I think that's really important. I reached out to a group of my friends and said, we have to talk about what we can do. Illinois doesn't have a problem. We have two Democratic senators. We have great Democratic House of Representatives members, but we have two states surrounding us that really need our help. And so we're getting together talking about what can we do to help Wisconsin and Indiana. Barb, I have a great question for you. Outside of #SistersInLaw, where do you recommend that I get my news?

Barb: Oh, this is such a good question. When I do book talks, this is a topic that often comes up and I often address because for me, one of the most important answer is that you get your news from more than one source because I think if you only look at one source, even if the information is accurate, it may be incomplete because the editors of that publication have their own editorial judgment and they're going to pass on the news they think is important. So I think there are a few things you need to do. One is make sure you're consuming local news. So a local newspaper, if you have one, so many are disappearing, or a local NPR affiliate. So many of those stations are all about building community because that's really important to know what's going on in your own community. And I think that is something that can help build community and build the kind of civic trust that we need in society.

In addition, I think that if you're looking for national news, again, I think a variety matters. If you read the New York Times, you should also read the Washington Post. I like to look at MSNBC because I think they present accurate information, even if it has a progressive viewpoint. If you want to get more balanced coverage, I think PBS or the BBC. So interesting to read about coverage from another country about what's happening in the United States. They think we've gone mad. I will also plug The Contrarian, which is a new news publication started by Jennifer Rubin that Joyce and I contribute to. And of course Civil Discourse, which is Joyce's newsletter. You may say I don't have time for all of those and I understand, but pick a couple so that you're getting your news from more than one source.

Jill: One last question for today from Helene in New York, and Helene wants to know when questioning and challenging a nominee, democratic senators will read aloud the egregious statements, threats and dangerous policy positions. The nominee has put forth in public venues only to have the nominee deny or not recollect having made these statements. She wants to know, is it permissible for senators to display documentary video evidence of the nominee making these statements? And the answer is, it absolutely is. But you only have these ridiculously limited time slots, five minutes. I don't know what Congress is doing that is so important that they can't afford to give everyone two rounds of questioning, maybe even three, and to make the rounds longer so that they can engage in a dialogue. It takes time to do that. And I think the Democrats need to do a much better

job of being visual and having, instead of saying, "Here's a big stack of papers," you have to highlight one on a chart behind you or the videos, I think we could do much better in the questioning.

And it's not just that they don't remember, they blatantly lie. Think about Pam Bondi's confirmation hearing. Think about Kash Patel's, and then look at what they're doing. Look at Hegseth. Pam Bondi said she would follow the law. Well, that's what I'm seeing in her first days in office. So I think that's a great question, and I hope that we can improve the confirmation process in a way that will allow it to be more embarrassing for the Republicans to vote for completely unqualified people and people who have very bad views. And for the people watching these hearings to understand what is being voted on and what they can get.

Thank you for listening to #SistersInLaw with Joyce Vance, Barb McQuade and me, Jill Wine-Banks. Kimberly Atkins-Stohr will be back with us next week. Follow #SistersInLaw wherever you listen, and please give us a five star review because that really is how other people will find the show. And please show some love to this week's sponsors: HexClad, Wildgrain and Honeylove. They are all great companies. The links are in our show notes. Please support them because they make this podcast possible. See you next week with another episode #SistersInLaw.

Barb: I can't wait to meet your puppy, Joyce. What kind is it?

Joyce: No, we're so excited.

Barb: Is it a German Shepherd?

Joyce: It's a German Shepherd. And I'll tell you the short version of the story. After we lost our boxer, a random woman who reads my newsletter, had emailed to ask me a question and mentioned how sad she was about our boxer, and she got me at this emotional moment and I was like, "Yeah, it's really horrible. And I've never had to find a puppy before without my mother-in-law who was a dog breeder." She emailed back like 30 seconds later, and she's like, "I knew your mother-in-law really well," because Bob's mom was sort of a big deal in the dog world. And she was like, "Do you guys want a German Shepherd?" And I was like, "Yeah, that's what we want." And she said, "Well, I know the best breeder in the country. I'll get you a puppy." She has a January litter, so we are getting a little girl from a really good breeder in [inaudible 01:14:40].

Barb: So that picture you sent around, Joyce, is that the dog?

Joyce: That's our puppy. That's our puppy.

Barb: That's the dog. Uh-huh.

Joyce: Yeah. Yeah.

Jill: So cute. So cute.