
INTRODUCTORY JURY INSTRUCTIONS - CRIMINAL

INSTRUCTION NO. 1

Members of the jury: Now that you have been sworn, I will give you initial instructions to help guide you during the course of the trial.

The trial begins with opening statements. An opening statement is not an argument or evidence, it is, instead a roadmap or outline of the anticipated evidence which the attorney gives to help you understand the evidence as it is presented. The Government begins. Then, counsel for the Defendant(s) may, but is not required to, make an opening statement.

The Government then presents its witnesses, and counsel for the Defendant(s) may cross-examine them. Following the Government's case, the Defendant(s) may, if he/she wishes, present witnesses whom the Government may cross-examine. If the Defendant(s) present(s) a case, the Government may present witnesses in rebuttal. After all the evidence is in, I will instruct you as to the applicable law. Then the attorneys will present their closing arguments beginning with the Government, then the Defendant(s), then a final word from the Government. Following closing arguments you will retire to deliberate on your verdict.

INSTRUCTION NO. 2

As mentioned in the jury selection process, the judge and the jury work as a team, each performing distinct and separate jobs.

My job as the judge is to make sure that the trial process moves smoothly and properly, to determine the law that applies to this controversy and to instruct you as to the law. I will make rulings on certain legal issues and evidentiary issues as we go along. You might analogize the evidentiary rulings to a football game when the referee declares a ball in or out of bounds. These rulings will determine whether evidence is “in bounds,” and therefore something you should consider, or whether it is “out of bounds,” and therefore not subject to your consideration.

At times you may be excused from the courtroom or the attorneys may come to the bench for a private conference. We will try to minimize any inconvenience to you, but these conferences are a natural and essential part of the trial process. The attorneys will be addressing issues such as which order witnesses will be presented in, whether the parties can agree on certain facts, the applicable law, and so on.

After all the evidence is presented, I will give you final instructions as to the applicable law. You will each have copies of the final instructions and I will read them to you. I will also provide you with a form to record your verdict. The instructions and verdict form will help guide you in your deliberations.

Your job as jurors is: (1) to listen to and review the evidence; (2) to decide the facts in this case – that is, what actually happened; (3) to apply the law to the facts that you find; and (4) to reach a decision as to whether the Defendant(s) is/are guilty of the charge brought against him or her. That decision is called a verdict. You must follow the law whether you agree with it or not. Nothing I say or do during the course of the trial is intended to indicate, or should be understood by you as indicating what your verdict should be.

INSTRUCTION NO. 3

You listen to and review the evidence during a trial in order to determine the facts. For example, in a traffic accident case, one person might testify that when a car went through the intersection the light was red; another person might testify that the light was green. You, as jurors, would evaluate the testimony of both witnesses and all other evidence to decide whether the light was red or green.

The evidence which you may consider consists of the testimony of witnesses, documents and other things received as exhibits, any facts that the lawyers agree to by stipulation and any facts that I instruct you to find.

There are two kinds of evidence - direct and circumstantial. You may consider both kinds of evidence. Direct evidence is direct proof of a fact - for example, testimony of a witness who saw an event. Circumstantial evidence establishes a fact from which you may infer or conclude that other facts exist. As an example of circumstantial evidence please imagine that a person walks into a room carrying an umbrella and wearing a wet raincoat. That could be circumstantial evidence from which you might conclude it was raining outside. It is not direct evidence that it is raining, because no one has said that they saw it raining. Instead, you may draw an inference from the umbrella and wet raincoat. You are not required to draw this inference. Instead, you might conclude that other events better explain the umbrella and wet raincoat; perhaps you observed a sprinkler running near the entrance to the building. You make decisions based on direct and circumstantial evidence every day, and should use your experience in everyday life to help you make your decisions here.

With regard to testimony, it is up to you to decide which witnesses to believe and which not to believe and how much of any witness' testimony to accept or reject. You should use the same tools, observations, and methods you use in your everyday life to help you decide who

should be believed and who should not. However, because you will only hear one witness at a time, you should wait until you have heard all of the evidence before you make up your mind as to whether to believe the testimony of any witness and before you decide about the existence of any particular fact.

INSTRUCTION NO. 4

There are certain things that are **not evidence**, and you may not consider these things in determining the facts.

(1) Statements, arguments, questions or objections by the attorneys **are not evidence**. Lawyers have an obligation to make statements and arguments, to ask questions and to object to evidence that they believe is improper under the rules of evidence (i.e., out of bounds). Do not be influenced by any evidentiary objection, my ruling on it or the frequency of objections made by any attorney. If the objection is sustained, you should ignore the answer to the question; if I overrule the objection, treat the answer like any other.

(2) Instructions or admonitions to counsel **are not evidence**. They are imposed to assure that the trial process is proper.

(3) If I tell you to disregard a particular statement, **that statement is not evidence**. You must put that statement out of your mind and not consider it for any purpose. In some instances you may be instructed that the evidence can be received for a particular purpose only. In that case, you must consider it only for the particular purpose specified.

(4) Anything you see or hear outside the courtroom **is not evidence**. You must limit yourself to the evidence presented here in the courtroom.

(5) During the course of the trial, people may enter and leave the courtroom or counsel tables. You should not concern yourself with this - **it is not evidence**.

INSTRUCTION NO. 5

As you know, this is a criminal case. There are three basic rules about a criminal case that you must keep in mind.

(1) The Defendant(s) is/are presumed innocent unless proven guilty. The indictment against the Defendant(s) is only an accusation, nothing more. It is not proof of guilt or anything else. The Defendant(s) therefore start(s) out with a clean slate.

(2) The burden of proof is always on the Government. The Defendant(s) has/have no burden to prove his/her innocence, or to present any evidence or to testify. Since the Defendant(s) has/have the right to remain silent, the law prohibits you from arriving at your verdict by considering that the Defendant(s) did not testify.

(3) The Government must prove a Defendant's guilt beyond a reasonable doubt. I will give you further instructions on this point later, but bear in mind that in this respect a criminal case is different from a civil case.

INSTRUCTION NO. 6

Now, a few words about your conduct during the case.

(1) You may take notes during the trial. The Courtroom Deputy will give you a notebook with a pad of paper and a pencil or pen for that purpose. Unless instructed to the contrary, the notebook should be left on your seat anytime you leave the courtroom. You may use your notes to help you recall evidence when you deliberate, but do not rely on your notes or anybody else's if they do not agree with your recollection. Everyone takes notes in different formats, detail and of different things. They are only to be used as an aid to your memory as to what you saw and heard.

(2) You will not be able to ask questions of the witnesses or their attorneys. If you have a problem or a particular need in or outside of the courtroom, please let the Courtroom Deputy know.

(3) During the trial you are not to talk about the case with anyone or permit anyone to discuss it with you. This means that you cannot discuss the case with other jurors until the trial is over and you begin deliberations. You are not to discuss the case with anyone other than a juror (i.e., your spouse, family, friend or court personnel) until after the jury has reached its verdict and you have been discharged.

(4) Do not read or listen to anything reported by the media or press that relates to this case- this means newspapers, TV or any other medium. If anyone should try to talk to you about it, tell the Courtroom Deputy, who will tell me.

(5) Do not do any research or make any investigation, about the case on your own. This prohibition includes reference to books, prior media reports and the internet.

(6) Keep an open mind and do not form any opinion until all the evidence has been presented and you begin deliberations with your co-jurors. Once you begin deliberations, you

may only discuss the case if all jurors are present.