

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF TENNESSEE
WESTERN DIVISION

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,)	
)	
Plaintiff,)	
)	
VS.)	CR. NO.
)	
)	
)	
)	
Defendant.)	

Members of the Jury:

It is now my duty to instruct you on the rules of law that you must follow and apply in deciding this case. When I have finished you will go to the jury room and begin your discussions -- what we call your deliberations.

It will be your duty to decide whether the government has proved beyond a reasonable doubt the specific facts necessary to find the defendant guilty of the crimes charged in the indictment.

You must make your decision only on the basis of the testimony and other evidence presented here during the trial; and you must not be influenced in any way by either sympathy or prejudice for or against the defendant or the government.

You must also follow the law as I explain it to you whether you agree with that law or not; and you must follow all of my instructions as a whole. You may not single out, or disregard, any of the Court's instructions on the law.

The indictment or formal charge against the defendant is not evidence of guilt. Indeed, the defendant is presumed by the law to be innocent. The law does not require the defendant to prove his innocence or produce any evidence at all. The government has the burden of proving the defendant guilty beyond a reasonable doubt as to the charge in the indictment, and if it fails to do so you must find the defendant not guilty as to that charge.

While the government's burden of proof is a strict or heavy burden, it is not necessary that a defendant's guilt be proved beyond all possible doubt. It is only required that the government's proof exclude any "reasonable doubt" concerning a defendant's guilt.

A "reasonable doubt" is a real doubt, based upon reason and common sense after careful and impartial consideration of all the evidence in the case.

Proof beyond a reasonable doubt, therefore, is proof of such a convincing character that you would be willing to rely and act upon it without hesitation in the most important of your own affairs. If you are convinced that the defendant has been proved guilty beyond a reasonable doubt, say so. If you are not convinced, say so.

As stated earlier you must consider only the evidence that I have admitted in the case. The term "evidence" includes the testimony of the witnesses, the exhibits admitted in the record and any facts of which the court has taken judicial notice. Remember that anything the lawyers say is not evidence in the case. It is your own recollection and interpretation of the evidence that controls. What the lawyers say is not binding upon you.

In considering the evidence you may make deductions and reach conclusions which reason and common sense lead you to make; and you should not be concerned about whether the evidence is direct or circumstantial. "Direct evidence" is the testimony of one who asserts actual knowledge of a fact, such as an eye witness. "Circumstantial evidence" is proof of a chain of facts and circumstances indicating that the defendant is either guilty or not guilty. The law makes no distinction between the weight you may give to either direct or circumstantial evidence.

Also you should not assume from anything I may have said or done that I have any opinion concerning any of the issues in this case. Except for my instructions to you, you should disregard anything I may have said in arriving at your own decision concerning the facts.

Single Defendant
Multiple Crimes (2.01A)

The defendant has been charged with ___ crimes, specifically, ___ counts of _____. The number of charges is no evidence of guilt, and this should not influence your decision in any way. It is your duty to separately consider the evidence that relates to each charge, and to return a separate verdict for each one. For each charge, you must decide whether the government has presented proof beyond a reasonable doubt that the defendant is guilty of that particular charge.

Your decision on the one charge, whether it is guilty or not guilty, should not influence your decision on any of the other charges.

You are instructed that the Court has taken judicial notice of the fact that _____ is located in Shelby County, Tennessee, which is located in the Western District of Tennessee.

Since you are the fact-finders in this case, you may, but are not required to, accept this fact as conclusively established.

Stipulations

While we were hearing evidence, you were told that the government and the defendant agreed, or stipulated to certain facts. This means simply that the government and the defendant both accept these facts. There is no disagreement over these facts, so there was no need for evidence by either side on these points. You may accept these facts, even though nothing more was said about them one way or the other. This, of course, is all for you the jury to decide.

The parties in this case have stipulated that the defendant, prior to the dates alleged in the indictment, has been convicted of a crime punishable by imprisonment for a term exceeding one year.

Number of Witnesses
Credibility

Now, in saying that you must consider all of the evidence, I do not mean that you must accept all of the evidence as true or accurate. You should decide whether you believe what each witness had to say, and how important that testimony was. In making that decision you may believe or disbelieve any witness, in whole or in part. Also, the number of witnesses testifying concerning any particular dispute is not controlling. You may decide that the testimony of a smaller number of witnesses concerning any fact in dispute is more believable than the testimony of a larger number of witnesses to the contrary.

In deciding whether you believe or do not believe any witness, I suggest that you ask yourself a few questions: Did the person impress you as one who was telling the truth? Did he or she have any particular reason not to tell the truth? Did he or she have a personal interest in the outcome of the case? Did the witness seem to have a good memory? Did the witness have the opportunity and ability to observe accurately the things he or she testified about? Did he or she appear to understand the questions clearly and answer them directly? Did the witness's testimony differ from the testimony of other witnesses?

You should also ask yourself whether there was evidence tending to prove that the witness testified falsely concerning some important fact; or, whether there was evidence that at some other time the witness said or did something, or failed to say or do something, which was different from the testimony he or she gave before you during the trial.

The fact that a witness has been convicted of a felony offense is another factor you may consider in deciding whether you believe his testimony.

You should keep in mind, of course, that a simple mistake by a witness does not necessarily mean that the witness was not telling the truth as he or she remembers it, because people naturally tend to forget some things or remember other things inaccurately. So, if a witness has made a misstatement, you need to consider whether that misstatement was simply an innocent lapse of memory or an intentional falsehood; and that may depend on whether it has to do with an important fact or with only an unimportant detail.

You have heard the defendant testify. Earlier, I talked to you about the "credibility" or the "believability" of the witnesses. And I suggested some things for you to consider in evaluating each witness's testimony.

You should consider those same things in evaluating the defendant's testimony.

A defendant has an absolute right not to testify. The fact that he did not testify cannot be considered by you in any way. Do not even discuss it in your deliberation.

Remember that it is up to the government to prove the defendant guilty beyond a reasonable doubt. It is not up to the defendant to prove that he is innocent.

Law Enforcement
Witnesses

You have heard the testimony of law enforcement officials. The fact that a witness may be employed by the city or county government as a law enforcement official does not mean that his or her testimony is necessarily deserving of more or less consideration or greater or lesser weight than that of an ordinary witness.

It is your decision, after reviewing all the evidence, whether to accept the testimony of the law enforcement witnesses and to give to that testimony whatever weight, if any, you find it deserves.

You have heard the testimony of _____, _____ expert.
An expert witness has special knowledge or experience that allows
the witness to give an opinion.

You do not have to accept an expert's opinion. In deciding
how much weight to give it, you should consider the witness's
qualifications and how he reached his conclusions.

Remember that you alone decide how much of a witness's
testimony to believe, and how much weight it deserves.

Indictment
Not Guilty Plea

I told you at the outset that this case was initiated through an indictment. An indictment is but a formal method of accusing the defendant of a crime. It includes the government's theory of the case, and we will be going over in a few minutes the substance of the indictment. The indictment is not evidence of any kind against an accused.

The defendant has pleaded not guilty to the charges contained in the indictment. This plea puts in issue each of the essential elements of the offense as described in these instructions and imposes upon the government the burden of establishing each of these elements by proof beyond a reasonable doubt.

I will read the indictment to you once again so that you are well aware of the charges made in the indictment.

The indictment reads:

You will note that the indictment charges that the offense was committed "on or about" a certain date. The government does not have to prove with certainty the exact date of the alleged offense. It is sufficient if the government proves beyond a reasonable doubt that the offense was committed on a date reasonably near the date alleged.

I caution you, members of the jury, that you are here to determine from the evidence in this case whether the defendant is guilty or not guilty of Counts _____ of the indictment. The defendant is on trial only for the specific offenses alleged in the indictment.

Also, the question of punishment should never be considered by the jury in any way in deciding the case. If the defendant is convicted the matter of punishment is for the judge to determine.

You are here to determine the guilt or innocence of the accused defendant from the evidence in this case. You are not called upon to return a verdict as to the guilt or innocence of any other person or persons. You must determine whether or not the evidence in the case convinces you beyond a reasonable doubt of the guilt of the accused without regard to any belief you may have about guilt or innocence of any other person or persons.

Any verdict you reach in the jury room, whether guilty or not guilty, must be unanimous. In other words, to return a verdict you must all agree. Your deliberations will be secret; you will never have to explain your verdict to anyone.

It is your duty as jurors to discuss the case with one another in an effort to reach agreement if you can do so. Each of you must decide the case for yourself, but only after full consideration of the evidence with the other members of the jury. While you are discussing the case do not hesitate to re-examine your own opinion and change your mind if you become convinced that you were wrong. But do not give up your honest beliefs solely because the others think differently or merely to get the case over with.

Remember, that in a very real way you are judges -- judges of the facts. Your only interest is to seek the truth from the evidence in the case.

When you go to the jury room you should first select one of your members to act as your foreperson. The foreperson will preside over your deliberations and will speak for you here in court.

A form of verdict has been prepared for your convenience. The verdict form will be placed in a folder and handed to you by the marshal. At any time that you are not deliberating (i.e., when at lunch or during a break in deliberations), the folder and verdict form should be delivered to the marshal who will deliver it to the courtroom clerk for safekeeping.

[EXPLAIN VERDICT]

You will take the verdict form to the jury room and when you have reached unanimous agreement you will have your foreperson fill in the verdict form, date and sign it, and then return to the courtroom.

If you should desire to communicate with me at any time, please write down your message or question and pass the note to the marshal who will bring it to my attention. I will then respond as promptly as possible, either in writing or by having you returned to the courtroom so that I can address you orally. I caution you,

however, with regard to any message or question you might send, that you should not tell me your numerical division at the time.

If you feel a need to see the exhibits which are not being sent to you for further examination, advise the marshal and I will take up your request at that time.

[ANY JURY ALTERNATES NOT ALREADY EXCUSED,
SHOULD BE EXCUSED AT THIS TIME].

You may now retire to begin your deliberations.