

Voir Dire: United States v. Lang. 12-cr-43-wmc

1. Statement of the case: As you know from the written questionnaire you filled out earlier this morning, this is a criminal case, in which the defendant, Ralph Lang, is charged with using a firearm in an attempt to injure, intimidate and interfere with individuals at a Planned Parenthood clinic in Madison, Wisconsin. The defendant has entered a plea of not guilty to the charges against him.

2. Scheduling: this case will begin today and should conclude by this Friday. The trial will ordinarily run from 8:30 am to 5:30 pm with a morning break, one hour lunch and an afternoon break. Are any of you actually unable to sit as jurors because of this schedule?

3. Do you have any other limitations that would make it difficult for you to serve, for example, back pain, hearing loss or other physical condition?

4. The court reads Pattern Jury Instructions of the Seventh Circuit:

The defendant is presumed to be innocent of the charges against him. This presumption remains with the defendant throughout every stage of the trial and during your deliberations on the verdict, and is not overcome unless from all the evidence in the case you are convinced beyond a reasonable doubt that the defendant is guilty.

The government has the burden of proving the guilt of the defendant beyond a reasonable doubt, and this burden remains on the government throughout the case. The defendant is not required to prove his innocence or to produce any evidence.

The defendant has an absolute right not to testify. The fact that the defendant does not testify cannot be considered by you in any way in arriving at your verdict.

Would any of you be unable or unwilling to follow these instructions?

5. Ask counsel to introduce themselves, the defendant and the case agent. Ask whether jurors know them.

6. Invite each juror, in turn, to rise, and provide the following information:

Name, age, and city or town of residence.

Marital status and number of children, if any.

Current occupation (former if retired).

Current (or former) occupation of your spouse and any adult children.

Any military service, including branch, rank and approximate date of discharge.

Level of education, and major areas of study, if any.

Memberships in any groups or organizations.

Hobbies and leisure-time activities.

Favorite types of reading material.

Favorite types of television shows.

Whether you regularly listen to talk radio, and if so, to which programs.

Whether you regularly use the internet to visit sites other than e-mail or personal business, and if so, what types of sites you visit most often.

Whether you have any bumper stickers on your vehicle and what they say.

7. Do any of you in the jury box know each other from before today?

8. Do any of you, by virtue of past dealings with the United States government or for any other reason, have any bias for or against the government in a criminal case?

9. Have any of you, your relatives, or close friends ever worked for the local, county, state, or federal government? Would this affect your ability to be impartial in this case?

10. Have any of you, your relatives, or close friends ever worked for, or had other professional contact with any law enforcement, investigative or security company or agency, or any prison? Would this affect your ability to be impartial in this case?

11. Would any of you judge the credibility of a witness who was a law enforcement officer or government employee differently from other witnesses solely because of his or her official position?

12. If the defendant were to choose to testify, would any of you judge his credibility differently from other witnesses solely because it was the defendant who was testifying?

13. Have any of you, your relatives, or close friends ever been the victim of any crime? Would this affect your ability to be impartial in this case?

14. Have any of you, your relatives, or close friends ever been a witness in a trial? Is there anything about this experience that might affect your ability to be impartial in this case?

15. Have any of you, your relatives, or close friends ever had any negative experience with any lawyer, any court, or any legal proceeding that would affect your ability to be impartial in this case?

16. How many of you have served previously as a juror in another case? Please tell us in which court you served, approximately when, the type of cases you heard, whether you were foreperson, and the verdicts.

17. If at the conclusion of the trial you were to be convinced of the defendant's guilt beyond a reasonable doubt, is there any one of you who would not, or could not, return a verdict of guilty?

18. If at the conclusion of the trial you were not to be convinced of the defendant's guilt beyond a reasonable doubt, is there any one of you who would not, or could not, return a verdict of not guilty?

19. Do you know of any reason whatever, either suggested by these questions or otherwise, why you could not sit as a trial juror with absolute impartiality to all the parties in this case?

JUROR BACKGROUND INFORMATION

When asked to do so by the court, please stand and provide the following information about yourself:

Name, age, and city or town of residence.

Marital status and number of children, if any.

Current occupation (former if retired).

Current (or former) occupation of your spouse and any adult children.

Any military service, including branch, rank and approximate date of discharge.

Level of education, and major areas of study, if any.

Memberships in any groups or organizations.

Hobbies and leisure-time activities.

Favorite types of reading material.

Favorite types of television shows.

Whether you regularly listen to talk radio, and if so, to which programs.

Whether you regularly use the internet to visit sites other than e-mail or personal business, and if so, what types of sites you visit most often.

Whether you have any bumper stickers on your vehicle and what they say.