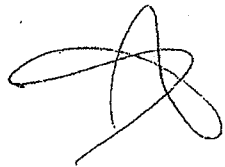


SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE HEARINGS

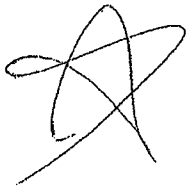
April 30, 1997

Discussion between Chairman Senator Orrin G. Hatch and Attorney General Janet Reno

HATCH: Well, let me just ask you — just one special case. And the case I'm going to raise is Kenneth Trentadue. Mr. Trentadue, as you know, died in the Federal Transfer Center in Oklahoma City, and the circumstances of his death in the Oklahoma City Transfer Center are, to say the least, suspicious. Now I don't want to point fingers, so I won't say more on that and as to who may have done it. But in addition, the Bureau of Prisons investigation seems to contain numerous flaws. On December 13, 1996, four months ago, I sent a request to the Department of Justice for information on the death of Kenneth Trentadue. Three months later, on March 13, 1997, the Department responded. The Department said only that it could not discuss the case because it is pending before a Grand Jury. **Now I am troubled by the Department's response and I fear the Department is not taking this investigation seriously.** I hope you are, but I fear you are not. I understand the following facts are undisputed. Mr. Trentadue was in the federal custody on August 21, 1995. He was reportedly found hanging in a cell by a ligature the following morning. After his death, the cell was cleaned even though it was a potential crime scene. The State Medical Examiner was denied access to the cell immediately after the death occurred. Later the Medical Examiner was given access to the cell. He used a blood detecting substance and he detected the presence of blood throughout the cell, indicating a violent struggle. Also, the Bureau of Prisons sought to cremate the body prior to shipment of the body to the family and I've seen pictures of the body, it was extremely battered and bruised.



HATCH: Now, there are other facts. But let me leave it at that for now. I understand the sensitivity of criminal investigations and I do not want to interfere with a pending case. With that thing said, **I believe that there are some serious questions to be answered as to how this Federal Transfer Center handled this investigation.** Again, since the Department of Justice refuses to respond, many accusations and questions are unresolved. What is more, I've been told that the Grand Jury responsible for this case is meeting only once a month for only two to three hours each time. **And that plain doesn't seem adequate to me under the circumstances.**



HATCH: Now, I would just like to know why so little time is devoted to this case. And can we rely on a thorough review of this matter and a resolution of this matter in a way that results in justice? **Because this does involve a constituent of mine out in Salt Lake City, so I am very concerned about it.**

RENO Senator . . .

HATCH: Yes?

RENO: This is something that I follow and have, on each occasions, that we've discussed it, asked . . .

HATCH: Right.

RENO: . . . whether there was sufficient staff, whether they had the resources they need to properly pursue it. And we'll continue to do everything we can to make sure that it is pursued consistent with the evidence and the law.

HATCH: Well, that's great, but my point is, is that it doesn't seem to be being pursued like -- in that manner and it's now two years old.

RENO: Well -- I will review your concerns . . .

HATCH: Will you?

RENO: . . . with the prosecutors to make sure that everything is being done that we can do.

HATCH: Well, if you would, because two to three hours a month is not a very active Grand Jury. And I think in this matter deserves to be brought to a fruitful conclusion. And it's apparent to me that -- that not only are these facts suspicious, but it looks as though somebody in the Bureau of Prisons or having relationships with the Bureau of Prisons murdered the man. And if that's so . . .

RENO: Again . . .

HATCH: . . . we ought to find out about it.

RENO: . . . I think it is important that I not comment on . . .

HATCH: I understand.

RENO: . . . on your recitation of the facts. But just know that we will do everything we can to see that the matter is vigorously pursued.

HATCH: Well, if you can, I appreciate it.