

Judge THOMAS. That is the way I am with conduct like that, whether it is sex harassment or slurs or anything else. I don't play games.

Senator SIMPSON. And so that was the end of Ms. Wright, who is now going to come and tell us perhaps about more parts of the anatomy. I am sure of that. And a totally discredited and, we had just as well get to the nub of things here, a totally discredited witness who does have cold feet.

Well, Mr. Chairman, you know all of us have been through this stuff in life, but never to this degree. I have done my old stuff about my past, and shared those old saws.

But I will tell you, I do love Shakespeare, and Shakespeare would love this. This is all Shakespeare. This is about love and hate, and cheating and distrust, and kindness and disgust, and avarice and jealousy and envy, all those things that make that remarkable bard read today.

But boy, I will tell you, one came to my head, and I just went and got it out of the back of the book. Othello, read Othello, and don't ever forget this line: "Good name in man and woman, dear my Lord"—do you remember this scene?

* * * is the immediate jewel of their souls. Who steals my purse, steals trash. 'Tis something, nothing. 'Twas mine, 'tis his, and has been slave to thousands. But he that filches from me my good name, robs me of that which not enriches him, and makes me poor indeed.

What a tragedy. What a disgusting tragedy.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator DeConcini?

Senator DECONCINI. Mr. Chairman, I have some questions, and it may take more than 5 minutes. I hope I could just follow them up and get this over with, rather than waiting around.

Judge I have great empathy with what you have been through. I happen to have a little experience, going through an awful process. I think this is atrocious. I went through an atrocious process that I thought I would never get over, but I did. Just like you, I had a strong family, I believed in myself, and I did not do the things I was accused of, so I have a kind of a feeling of what you have gone through. Mine was not a sexual harassment charge, but I felt just about as bad as you did. I thought I was going to die. Thanks to my wife and family and some good friends, that didn't happen.

And when the leaks came toward this Senator, I must say there wasn't a howl except from the Chairman of the Ethics Committee, who stood up on the floor of the Senate, and the Majority Leader, and very few other people stood up on the floor of the Senate, as they did when the leaks came about you. So if nothing else, at least for this Senator, somebody gives a damn about leaks and breaking the rules, and maybe we will finally put an end to leaks, which I think caused you to go through what you have had to go through.

Now, Judge Thomas, I think the question that Chairman Biden asked you, and you answered it in such a manner that it really is irrelevant, was how all this happened. The fact is that it happened, no matter whether Ms. Hill plotted it, whether she was paid to do it, whether her conscience drove her to do it. The fact is that it has, in your judgment, ruined your name, and that you died two weeks ago.

Is that fair, to restate your position?

Judge THOMAS. It is fair.

Senator DECONCINI. Now, Judge, based on that—and I think that the circumstances that give rise to these allegations against you are—I can't believe I am here myself. I can't believe that this process is taking place, to a U.S. Appellate Court Judge who has been confirmed three times by this body, a life appointment, I can't believe you are even here and I am even here. I am ashamed to be part of this process.

But nevertheless, that is my job, and I am here because the Senate said, "Go back and do it again." We did it. We did it right, I believe. I think the chairman protected Ms. Hill, as she wanted to be protected, and he did it with the spirit of protecting her rights. And now, I won't go into the press any more, I have beat up on them enough I guess, but we are here because it was leaked and the press released it.

I don't think Professor Hill will ever fully recover from what she has gone through, regardless of what happens to you, and I don't know whether you will. And my question to you is, do you think you can recover from dying a thousand deaths, having your name and your reputation ripped from you through this process? Can you recover as an individual and serve on the Supreme Court?

Judge THOMAS. Senator, there is also a positive side of this.

Senator DECONCINI. Tell me what it is, except raising the awareness of sex harassment, and I don't say that is minimal, but I think that awareness is out there and has been out there for a long time, if I may say myself, and I didn't need this experience to raise it for me, but please don't let me interrupt what you say is the positive side. Believe me, I am looking for one; I am praying for one.

Judge THOMAS. During this process, the last 105 days, and the last 2½ weeks especially, I have never had such an outpouring of love and affection and friendship in people who know me, not people making these scurrilous assertions but people who know me, supporting me and caring for me, helping me to recover from it and survive it—my wife; my son, whose reaction is just to be terribly angry.

I think it showed me just how vulnerable I am as a human being, and any American, that these kinds of charges can be given validity in a process such as this, and the destruction it can do. It has given me that sense.

I think it has also shown people in our country what is happening. I didn't want them to see what happened to me. I didn't want my personal life or allegations about my sexual habits or anything else broadcast in every living room in the United States. But they see this process for what it is, and I think that is good, and hopefully it never happens to another American.

Yes, I can heal. As I said in my opening remarks, I will simply walk down the Hill, if I am not confirmed, that will be it, and continue my job as Court of Appeals Judge, and hopefully live a long life, enjoy my neighbors and my friends, my son, cut my grass, go to McDonald's, and drive my car, and just be a good citizen and a good judge and a good father and a good husband. Yes, I will survive. My question was, will the country survive, and hopefully it will.

Senator DECONCINI. And if you are confirmed?

Judge THOMAS. I will survive, a different person. I would have hoped, Senator, when I was nominated, that it would have been an occasion for joy. There has never been a single day of joy in this process. There has never been one minute of joy in having been nominated to the Supreme Court of the United States of America.

Senator DECONCINI. Judge Thomas, you said—correct me if I am wrong—after 10 days or whatever it was, 90 witnesses and your 5 days, I thought you were not just being gracious but being sincere, where you thanked the chairman and this committee and, as you said today, you would have liked to receive more votes here but you didn't, and that was the process. As I remember your words, you said, "I think I have been treated fairly, and I have no quarrel or no ill feelings." Am I restating that correctly, how you felt after your formal hearing?

Judge THOMAS. That is right, Senator.

Senator DECONCINI. And I can understand that you don't feel that way today, and my question continues to go to the sense of you being confirmed. What does it do to somebody? Does it affect their ability to approach cases, as you indicated, and satisfactorily so to this Senator, approach cases as a Supreme Court Judge? Can you be reborn in the sense of the loss that you have had to suffer here in the last 2 weeks? And how do you cope with it, if you care to say? And if you don't, I will understand.

Judge THOMAS. Senator, there is one thing that I have learned over my life, and that is that I will be back.

The other thing that I have learned in this process are things that we discussed in the real confirmation hearing, and that is our rights being protected, what rights we have as citizens of this country, what constitutional rights, what is our relationship with our Government. And as I sit here on matters such as privacy, matters such as procedures for charges against individuals in a criminal context or a civil context, this has heightened my awareness of the importance of those protections, the importance of something that we discussed in theory—privacy, due process, equal protection, fairness.

Senator DECONCINI. Judge, is it safe to say that—what a way to have to come to it, and this Senator was satisfied you didn't have to come to it, that you met the threshold for my vote—what you are now saying to us is that through this God-awful experience you will be more sensitive towards the rights of the accused, and that is because your rights have been violated. Is that correct?

Judge THOMAS. I have been an accused.

Senator DECONCINI. And your rights—

Judge THOMAS. Were violated, as far as—

Senator DECONCINI [continuing]. Were violated?

Judge THOMAS. I think strongly so.

Senator DECONCINI. Thank you, Judge Thomas.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. The Senator from South Carolina.

Senator THURMOND. Mr. Chairman, it has been mentioned here about he has been confirmed three times. My recollection is four times, as the assistant in the Civil Rights Division, and twice in EEOC, wasn't it?

Judge THOMAS. That is right, Senator.