

SCOTT BLOCH SENTENCING BLOCKED BY THE COURT

I have been a bit busy lately, so this is a tad late; but I should probably give the update on the Scott Bloch criminal sentencing that was scheduled for 9:30 am Monday morning May 13 in DC District Court in front of Judge Robert L. Wilkins. As you will recall, this blog has covered the Bloch case closely over the years due to its symbolism for government accountability and/or lack thereof.

The most recent coverage was immediately prior to the sentencing, and was in the form of a comprehensive post entitled "Former Bush Special Counsel Scott Bloch Bullies Journalists and Threatens 1st Amend Speech Before Criminal Sentencing". As promised, a copy of said post was mailed to the court and it was entered on the docket. Several others sent letters as well, such as here for example.

The upshot is that Judge Robert L. Wilkins heard the voices. In what I can only describe as truly commendable, yet still refreshingly surprising, this is what happened at sentencing as described by Ann Marimow of the Washington Post:

The legal odyssey of Scott J. Bloch, the former head of the federal agency that protects government whistleblowers, continued Monday when a federal judge balked at proceeding with sentencing because of what he called an "improperly sanitized version of events."

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But U.S. District Judge Robert L. Wilkins chastised attorneys on both sides for presenting a narrow account of Bloch's actions that the judge said doesn't fully describe the conduct at issue. Wilkins said he was uncomfortable issuing a sentence until a fuller

description of Bloch's actions was in the record.

Sentencing documents, Wilkins noted, make little mention of Bloch's previous deal with the U.S. Attorney's Office in which he pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor charge of contempt of Congress.

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In the current case, federal guidelines call for a sentence from zero to six months in prison. But prosecutors have agreed not to oppose a period of probation and want Bloch to pay a \$5,000 fine and complete 200 hours of community service.

Wilkins suggested Monday, however, that he intends to consider Bloch's conduct related to the previous case, which could expose him to jail time. The judge pointed specifically to Bloch's position as a presidential appointee, a "position of public trust, operating with little oversight."

Bloch's sentencing hearing has been rescheduled for June 24.

We will try to do another update on status again before the next sentencing date on June 24. But, for now, hat's off to Judge Robert L. Wilkins for hearing the voices of the public who object to the whitewash that was being applied to the misconduct in high office by Scott Bloch. Maybe there is hope for this Rule of Law thing after all.