TESTIMONY OF TINA MARIE GONTER
BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
OF THE UNITED STATES SENATE

"The False Claims Act Correction Act (S. 2041): Strengthening the Government's Most Effective Tool Against Fraud for the 21st Century"

February 27, 2008

Good morning, Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee. My name is Tina Gonter. I am what many people call a whistleblower. I used to be uncomfortable with that term, but now I understand that it means someone who has no choice but to do the right thing when others are willing to turn a blind eye. In my case, what dozens of others were willing to let slide was the safety of the sailors aboard the submarine fleet of the United States Navy. The False Claims Act allowed me to report terrible misconduct by a subcontractor which had gone on for years. Much of this misconduct was known to the prime contractors. As a result of my case, two senior executives of a defense contractor went to federal prison, their company was, we hope, rehabilitated, and the Navy had the opportunity to assess the extent to which it was harmed by delivery and installation of thousands of potentially-nonconforming submarine valves.

Despite overwhelming evidence that Navy prime contractors General Dynamics and Northrop Grumman knew what was going on at Hunt, the government did not intervene in our case against them. Because the False Claims Act allows *qui tam* relators to go forward on their own when the government decides not to intervene, we were able to carry our case forward to resolution. If this right did not exist, our case would have disappeared. We would have gotten almost nothing for reporting this massive fraud against the taxpayers and spending four years of our lives helping the

government investigate the extent of the fraud.

Also, if the False Claims Act did not permit cases against subcontractors, then Hunt Valve would have been immune for its massive fraud against the taxpayers.

I am here today to ask that you make sure that those who know of danger to American troops or American citizens be able to come forward with confidence that the False Claims Act lives up to its full potential by ensuring that relators can carry on cases against government contractors even when the government decides not to participate; by ensuring that subcontractors and suppliers who cheat the taxpayers not be able to hide behind the skirts of prime contractors; and by ensuring that the False Claims Act's protection of those who are retaliated against for doing the right thing is as strong as possible.

Background.

After the *U.S.S. Thresher (SSN 593)* and all 129 men aboard were lost in 8,400 feet of water on April 10, 1963, because a pipe joint failed, the Navy imposed the strictest quality requirements in history on suppliers who choose to make parts for submarines. This program is called "Level One/SUBSAFE," and requires cradle-to-grave documentation on all major systems. The point of the system is that if a valve or other part has a problem, documents exist which allow the Navy to trace that problem back to its source and figure out what other parts are affected and what submarines may be impacted.

My husband, Bill, and I worked for many years as civilian employees of the Department of Defense, until 1996. We were assigned to the Quality Assurance

Department of Norfolk Navy Shipyard. My title was Nuclear Mechanical Systems Inspector. I learned all about Level One/SUBSAFE because it was my job to ensure that its strict standards were met. I completed a four-year quality assurance apprenticeship with the Department of the Navy. I held Level 2 certifications in Radiographic Inspection, Material Certification, Visual Inspection, Magnetic Particle Inspection, Liquid Penetrant Inspection, and Precision Measurement Devices. I was trained and/or certified in ISO 9000, Supplier Source Inspections, QC Marking and Material Verifications, Receipt Inspection, Level 1 Material Handling, Storage, Inspection and Certification, Valve Repair Inspection, Hydrostatic Testing, Welding Procedures and Joint Design.

While at the Shipyard, my responsibilities included verifying that the paperwork relating to valves and other components to be installed on Navy submarines was in order. Once a valve is assembled, many critical surfaces and components are not accessible, and the certifications and inspection reports which are completed by the manufacturer are the only available evidence of what lies beneath the surface.

In 1996, Bill, a Vietnam combat veteran of the United States Navy, and I decided to move to Rogers, Ohio, where he had grown up. He had inherited some land from his father and we planned to build our dream house. Our plans for an early retirement were dashed when I was diagnosed with cancer. My treatment wiped out our savings. Once I recovered, we both looked for jobs.

In mid-1999, Bill got a job at Hunt Valve Company in Salem, Ohio, close to Youngstown. Hunt made valves for nuclear submarines and the uranium enrichment

process. These are not valves like on a kitchen sink: Some of them are six feet across, weigh several thousand pounds and cost tens of thousands of dollars. Others are smaller, but all the valves, no matter what size, are to be manufactured to precise standards, and inspected to be sure that those precise standards are met.

Bill and I knew about Hunt from our work at the Navy Shipyard and believed that it was a reputable company.[1] Bill's job involved reviewing paperwork and on their face, Hunt's paperwork seemed to be in order.

The Truth About Hunt.

A few months later, I got a job at Hunt. My title was Military Quality Assurance Manager. Supposedly, my job was to help make sure that Hunt's production of critical submarine valves complied with the Navy's strict quality and manufacturing

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[1] According to a DoD press release regarding the conviction of one of Hunt's senior executives:

> Hunt Valve is a major supplier of valves and valve parts to the U.S. Navy. These valves are used in Level I/SUBSAFE and non-Level I applications. Hunt Valve also marketed valves under the brand names of Union Flonetics, WAECO Valves, Morland Valves and PJ Valves. From 1993 to 2003, Hunt Valve sold approximately 40,000 valves to the Navy or prime contractors of which approximately 15,000 were Level 1/SUBSAFE.
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> Hunt Valve supplied valves directly to the Navy and to prime contractors of the Department of Defense. The company also sold spare valves and valve parts directly to the government through the Naval Inventory Control Point (NAVICP), Mechanicsburg, PA and the Defense Supply Center Columbus (DSCC), Columbus, OH. These valves are used on five Navy programs including Seawolf class submarines, Virginia class submarines, AEGIS class Arleigh Burke guided missile destroyers, nuclear-powered aircraft carriers and the amphibious transport dock. Hunt Valve also supplied valves to the Department of Energy and the United States Enrichment Corporation, a certificate of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. These valves are used on containers that store and transport uranium hexafluoride (UF6) and depleted uranium hexafluoride (DUF6).

requirements. I was excited to be back in the submarine quality-assurance business.

Within just a few days, I began to suspect that Hunt was committing fraud. Its personnel routinely falsified certified paperwork, skipped inspections, and cheated on production. They used the wrong materials and did not supervise their subcontractors. Once I started trying to get my arms around the scope of the problem, I learned that these things had been going on for more than a decade without anyone doing anything about it, much less telling the Navy about these systemic problems. Hunt was devoted to creating paperwork which looked great but had little to do with the valves it shipped.

Hunt was a disaster waiting to happen.

As a former civilian Navy Inspector, I was shocked at the extreme level of violations I saw. I was even more shocked that dozens of people—including employees from General Dynamics who were actually on-site at Hunt most days—not only knew about these problems, but had watched it happen for years. But nobody did anything about it, and bogus valves just kept shipping out. I made my concerns known to management, who ignored me—they knew full well what they were doing. When I attempted to order that things were done correctly, my instructions were ignored. I knew that the men and women aboard our nuclear submarines and ships were exposed to the risk that a Hunt valve would fail at sea. I began taking copies of documents home because I was afraid that evidence was being changed on a daily basis to hide the problems which I saw before my eyes.

2001: Blowing the Whistle.

Because I had heard about the False Claims Act, I contacted Rick Morgan, a lawyer who had experience with the False Claims Act and with quality systems. At first, he did not believe that things could possibly be as bad as I said. He and his partner Jennifer Verkamp, spent more than a month working with me to understand why I was so concerned about what was going on at Hunt. Then Rick set up a meeting with agents of the Defense Criminal Investigative Service.

My husband and I met with DCIS Agents Jay Strauch and Mike Hampp in early March 2001. That meeting, which was the first of too many to count, started after work and lasted until late that night. Believing I had only one opportunity to convince the government of the problems, I poured out my story to the agents, who expressed concerns that if my allegations could be proved, the impact to the Department of Defense was serious. Prior to the meeting, my lawyers had helped me organize the documents I had copied and make notes of what was happening and the agents seemed convinced that there were serious issues with Hunt Valve. The agents explained that a case like this, their ability to prove the allegations would be greatly improved if I would agree to wear a tape recorder and record conversations with Hunt Valve and General Dynamics employees. Although I was fearful of wearing a recorder, I knew I had to do it. They had brought what they called "consensual monitoring" equipment with them, and I left the meeting with a miniature tape recorder and body microphone. I was "enrolled as a confidential source" for the Department of Defense in a criminal investigation of Hunt Valve Company and its customers.

For the next several months, I wore the recorder under my clothes every work day. Before I went to work in the morning, I had to make sure that the recorder was securely strapped under my clothes so that it could not be seen, and had to make sure that it operated properly. I spent each day trying to do my best to make sure that defective valves did not ship out of Hunt while also engaging my co-workers and others in conversations about the fraud that they were committing. If there was a lot going on, I would have to go into the restroom and change the tape in order to get all that was said. We made copies of documents showing the use of bad parts or procedures, or skipped or falsified inspections, when we could, and carried them under our clothes or in files to hide them in a box so that the agents could find them later. Every night, I had to catalog the day's tapes, make notes about what topics were discussed, and talk to my lawyers and the investigators about what had happened that day. Even so I knew that there was much more fraud at Hunt than I could ever document. I was sometimes physically ill from the stress and fear of these activities, and of course my husband was worried sick about me and the future of our family. I recorded hundreds of hours of conversation which filled almost 8,000 transcript pages.

In April 2001, my husband and I filed a *qui tam* case under the False Claims Act. From the beginning, we put enormous resources into our case. The government did not have the resources to transcribe all the tapes, and my lawyers helped with that; in addition, Mary Jones, their paralegal, and I each listened to every tape and compared it to the transcripts. This took thousands of hours. My lawyers were able to dedicate so much effort to our case because they not only believed in our case, but

knew that if we won our False Claims Act case, with or without the government, the defendants would have to pay my legal fees.

Bill and I feared constantly for our jobs and our personal safety. We were always looking over our shoulders and I worried every day that someone would figure out that I was taping. I had a recurrence of cancer, and major surgery. I knew that chemotherapy would make me sick, and so I skipped those treatments and went to work earlier than my doctors recommended because I knew how important the government's investigation was, and that without my tapes that investigation would not proceed.

It is impossible to exaggerate how bad things were at Hunt. For example, Hunt's janitor routinely did inspections of valves and valve parts—something which was never documented but which my tapes proved to be true. When the Quality Manager used fingernail polish to trick a General Dynamics inspector, his bragging about it was recorded for all time. And when welders admitted that they cut corners all the time, the tapes backed up my observations.

Although what was going on at Hunt made me sick, I was even more troubled by the response of General Dynamics and Northrop Grumman, which were the prime government contractors. General Dynamics had an employee named Harry Arnold who worked onsite at Hunt Valve. Mr. Arnold and I talked frequently about how bad things were. He told me that he never had any confidence in Hunt's ability to produce valves which met the Navy's requirements. Another time, he told me he had "lost all confidence" in Hunt. I recorded many statements by Mr. Arnold, and many conver-

sations between him and Hunt management. Here are just a couple of examples.

- In March, Hunt was ready to ship a valve which was not inspected. I required an inspection, which showed that the valve was seriously cracked. Mr. Arnold talked to his managers at General Dynamics and told Hunt that while the valve would be rejected, Hunt would not be required to provide a report showing why it had not been tested and what would be done, which is called "cause and corrective action." Mr. Arnold said his boss, Mr. Smelings, said to tell Hunt management he was giving them an "Easter present."

- One day, Mr. Arnold said to me, "I don't know how you're ever gonna straighten this mess out, I just don't even know where to begin." When I asked him if he had any suggestions, Mr. Arnold replied "Yeah, stick of dynamite, blow this freaking place up."

Hunt's Non-Destructive Testing Inspector routinely signed NDT reports falsely certifying that testing was done when it was not, or when he did not know that it had been; routinely performed nondestructive testing without following contractually-required procedures; and routinely permitted uncertified personnel to perform nondestructive testing after which he would certify that the testing had been conducted by certified personnel.

In August, Hunt became fed up with my constant efforts to get its personnel to do their jobs and fired me. I was told that I was fired because it cost Hunt so much to fix the problems I found that it could not afford my $64,000 salary. But I believe that I was fired because Hunt knew that I was unwilling to allow it to cut corners on Level One submarine hardware and insisted that Hunt follow the Navy's requirements. Laughably, I was told that there was an "extensive cut" that "affected my job," but I was the only person fired.

On September 17, 2001, the Defense Department, with the help of the Nuclear

Regulatory Commission, the Naval Criminal Investigative Service, and the Department of Energy, swarmed Hunt Valve with a search warrant and more than 40 federal agents. They took all of Hunt's records—well over a million pages worth. They copied all the computer data and hard drives in the plant. They also found and recovered our box of "hot documents," which corroborated much of the fraud at Hunt.

After the raid, Hunt management held meetings where they said that Hunt did nothing wrong and the government was on a witch hunt. The president of the company had the gall to compare the "attack" on Hunt to the destruction of the World Trade Centers just a week earlier. Hourly workers made threats to "take care of whoever did this."

Bill was still working for the company, but we decided he had to leave because we feared for his safety—and mine. When he was at work, I carried a pistol from room to room in our house. Unknown cars were coming partway up our rural driveway and we felt like we were in danger.

Bill resigned from Hunt. Our family income went from $106,000 a year to zero. We sold our property, in which we had heavily invested, at a huge loss so that we would have money to live on.

2002–2005: Supporting the Government

In order to help the agents make sense of the huge volume of records they seized, we moved to Columbus, where we had no family or friends. Because our *qui tam* case was under seal, we couldn't tell anyone—not even our friends and family—what we were doing. Our lawyers became like family as I spent the next two years working

almost full-time going through those files with the help of my lawyers and their staff, and answering question after question about what the documents showed. The government did not have enough people assigned to the case to review the files. For many months, the civil part of the Justice Department did not want us involved in the file review, even though we had moved to Columbus to perform that review, because they were worried that we would try to take credit for claims we didn't already know about. The Defense Department investigators and the criminal prosecutor on the case, Assistant United States Attorney Richard Blake, insisted that our work was necessary to their criminal prosecution. For many months, that was the only way we could get access to Hunt's records, even though the government had no personnel who could review the records.

After we exhausted the money from selling our house, Bill got a quality-assurance job with the Defense Logistic Agency. I continued working on the investigation. Our income was well below half what it would have been if, like everybody else, we had decided to just keep our mouths shut about what was going on at Hunt Valve Company.

Our review of the documents seized from Hunt, which we performed in tandem with John Carruthers and Bob Hardin of the Defense Contract Audit Agency ("DCAA"), showed—among many other things—that more than half of Hunt's certifications were demonstrably falsified; that Hunt welding personnel were improperly and illegally qualified; and that material was not properly documented or maintained.

We also met with many Navy engineers and scientists. One such meeting,

which took place in September of 2002, was attended by 17 government employees, including experts in welding, quality assurance, engineering, and submarine valves. They questioned us for two full days. I believe they shared our concern with the gravity of the situation at Hunt, because shortly afterward they sent a huge audit team of Navy and civilian experts to survey conditions at Hunt. We were not surprised to learn that the auditors found that things were no better a year after the search warrant was executed than while we were there, because we believed that Hunt's people simply did not know how to do it right, and the shipbuilders never showed them.

We were shocked to learn that the Navy allowed Northrop Grumman and General Dynamics to conduct an inspection of some Hunt valves which had been delivered. This was very concerning to us, because I knew from my conversations with Harry Arnold and other people from the prime contractors that those two companies—the same companies accused of inspecting, buying and installing valves which they knew, or at a minimum should have known, were bogus—were a huge part of the problem. I could not for the life of me understand why an independent company was not tasked with testing the valves. When I expressed my wonderment at this, however, my concerns were dismissed even as Bill and I were thanked for our service.

In any event, the contractors looked at 331 valves, and identified 495 physical defects—an average of 1.5 defects per valve. Since the Level 1/SUBSAFE watchwords are "ZERO DEFECTS," we thought this was significant. Moreover, early in the investigation, the Navy actually concluded that *all* of Hunt Valve's paperwork was fraudulent and decreed that it had to be completely ignored—meaning that the

taxpayers and the Navy were cheated every time they got a Hunt valve.

At the same time the Navy was investigating, we also spent many days meeting with investigators for the Department of Energy and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission regarding Hunt's fraudulent sale of uranium hexafluoride ("UF_6") containment valves. Public exposure to UF_6 is the primary health and safety hazard for consideration at gaseous diffusion plants. Hunt made and sold tens of thousands of those valves without using proper procedures or properly-trained personnel.[2] A number of Hunt's valves failed tests conducted by the NRC.

2005–06: Going it Alone

Because Bill and I blew the whistle, Hunt Quality Manager Wayne Aldrich pled guilty to fraud and went to federal prison for almost three years.[3] My boss, Hunt Vice

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[2] As stated in the Criminal Information against Hunt Quality Manager Wayne Aldrich,

> Hunt Valve supplied valves to the United States Enrichment Corporation ("USEC") and DOE through USEC, for use on containers that transport and are part of the processing and storage of uranium hexafluoride (UF6) and depleted uranium hexafluoride ("DUF6") at various sites, including the Paducah Gaseous Diffusion Plant, Paducah, Kentucky; the Portsmouth Gaseous Diffusion Plant, Portsmouth, Ohio; and, the East Tennessee Technology Park ("K-25"), Oak Ridge, Tennessee.

[3] According to the government's press release,

> Aldrich worked for Hunt Valve from April 1980 until he resigned in May 2001. Aldrich was the Quality Assurance Manager from April 1992 until he resigned. The investigation disclosed that from approximately April 1992 to May 2001, Aldrich and other co-conspirators altered and created false documentation and delivered or caused the delivery of valves that failed to conform to physical and contractual requirements mandated by the U.S. Government. Aldrich used scanners, computers and facsimile machines to alter vendor certifications by changing revision dates, adding signatures and adding or changing test results; falsified Hunt Valve certifications indicating non-destructive testing (NDT) was performed when he knew it had not been;

President Larry Kelly, went to prison for two years.[4] I do not believe that these convictions ever could have been obtained without our whistleblowing and, just as important, without our continued gathering and assessing of evidence from 2001-2004. These two are convicted felons and they can never work on another government contract for the rest of their lives.

Hunt Valve was sold and is under new management. We pray that it is doing a better job and hope that its customers, who continue to be Northrop Grumman and General Dynamics, are doing their job of ensuring that Hunt supplies conforming valves. The Navy, we were told, has revamped the way it buys and inspects hardware for its ships. The agents in charge of the case, for whom I have profound respect, have told me that they believe this to be one of the most important cases of their careers. The DoD, NRC, NCIS and Department of Energy agents, by the way, received an

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> permitted non-certified personnel to perform NDT inspections; and manufactured or repaired valves using unapproved and improper techniques and procedures. As a result of Aldrich's actions a sample of the valves supplied by Hunt Valve were tested by the U.S. Navy and their shipbuilders at a cost of over $4 million.

[4] In the plea agreement which Kelly filed with the U.S. District Court he admits that he:

> Aided in the falsification and delivery to the United States Navy and the U.S. Department of Energy of certification packets for valves that did not meet requirements for traceability of component parts to their origin; and
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> Aided in the submission of falsified certifications when he learned that a subordinate employee had altered the original documents by adding information to the certifications and faxing the certifications from one Hunt Valve fax machine to another in the same building to make the documents appear "fuzzy."

award from the President's Council on Integrity and Efficiency for their work on this case. That award said:

> This award recognizes the members of the Hunt Valve Investigative Team for outstanding performance and sustained distinguished performance for their efforts to protect United States military personnel and the nation's nuclear programs in the investigation of large scale, complex corporate fraud by a U.S. Government contractor.

Agents Strauch and Hampp, who spearheaded the government's effort, received a separate award from the DoD Inspector General.

Much was done, but much more could have been done. The Justice Department never sought subpoenas from General Dynamics or Northrop Grumman, and the government never, so far as we know, investigated how much those prime contractors knew about Hunt's misconduct—or how many other subcontractors were using subcontracts with these companies to defraud the Navy and deliver bogus submarine hardware.

We also found evidence that Hunt was forced by General Dynamics to use a company called All Stainless to cheat on General Dynamics's minority subcontractor promises to the Navy by having All Stainless act as a "distributor" of Hunt Valves, even though all it did was shuffle paperwork and get paid a kickback by Hunt. Under this arrangement, General Dynamics required Hunt to pay as much as 3% of its price to All Stainless for doing nothing, and of course this additional expense got passed through to the taxpayers. To our knowledge, nothing was done to recover the money paid by the government on this and similar arrangements.

In early 2005, our case was still under seal. The judge assigned to it, Honorable Dan Aaron Polster in Cleveland, became frustrated with the duration of the seal and ordered the government to make its intervention decision.

The government decided to intervene against Hunt Valve. In fact, Hunt Valve *begged* the government to intervene, to protect Hunt from our lawsuit. Hunt had delivered an estimated 40,000 suspect valves with bogus paperwork to the shipbuilders and the Navy. 15,000 of those valves were required to meet Level 1/SUBSAFE standards. Hunt also had delivered thousands of improperly-inspected and, in some cases, obviously-defective valves for containment of hazardous nuclear byproducts. There is no way to know how many of those valves include bad workmanship, incorrect materials, or would have failed proper inspection. We estimated the loss to the government in the tens of millions of dollars. The government's investigation alone cost at least $4.2 million.

The government settled with Hunt for $666,000 paid over several years. Bill and I shared 15% of this amount with our lawyers. Hunt is still making small payments. While we could have objected to the settlement, the government represented to us that it was more important for Hunt to keep making valves than for the government to be paid for its losses.

Although we had rooms full of evidence, the Justice Department decided not to intervene in our case against General Dynamics and Northrop Grumman. This decision was never explained to us. However, much later, we were present when the judge was told that the Navy believed that if it recovered money from General

Dynamics and Northrop Grumman, they would just add the money to a future contract bid and the Navy would end up paying them back.

Because the *qui tam* provisions of the False Claims Act allow whistleblowers to go forward on their own, we were able to proceed, and after much anxious soul-searching and much analysis by our lawyers, we decided that we had to carry our case forward. Our lawyers served our 116-page Amended Complaint on the defendants. The shipyards were represented by Mr. Boese's firm and other huge Washington law firms. They filed massive motions to dismiss, contending that we *still* did not have enough evidence, because we did not have the bills that the shipyards submitted to the Navy for the submarines. The shipyards also tried to convince the Judge that the government had concluded that our case against them was worthless because it did not intervene. However, Judge Polster "invited" the Justice Department and the Navy to participate in settlement discussions, and they debunked the defendants' statements.

In the fall of 2005, we settled our case with the shipyards for $12.6 million. Most of the money went to the Navy, of course, but my husband and I shared 29% of the money (before taxes, of course) with our lawyers. We bought a small house in Jacksonville to be close to our daughter and are getting on with our lives as best we can. Neither of us can ever work in our chosen field, using the skills we learned over decades as nuclear quality-assurance specialists, because our history as whistleblowers is but a Google search away.

If the Justice Department's decision not to intervene against General

Dynamics and the other defendants had ended my case, my husband and I would have gotten virtually nothing for the loss of our jobs and the many years we spent helping the government investigate Hunt Valve and the corporate felons who worked for it. Instead, because we and our lawyers were able to forge ahead, we were able to put our lives back together.

Several of the Amendments now under consideration are relevant to my case. We had access to the claims submitted to General Dynamics and Northrop Grumman by Hunt Valve, but not the claims they submitted to the Navy. Some would say that we could not make our case without them. I hope you make it crystal clear that we could—that is, that subcontractors who cheat the government are no different than prime contractors who cheat the government. Perhaps, if Civil Investigative Demands had been easier to obtain and use, the Justice Department would have sought information from the shipyards. Hunt hid its misconduct for many years, and clarifying the statute of limitations is important. We suspected that Hunt's customers encouraged Hunt to fire me. I don't know whether this is true, but it is important to clarify that anyone who retaliates against a whistleblower be held to answer—not just "employers." And there should be no question that when somebody like me reviews documents to help the government, that is not a "public disclosure" under the Act.

Without the False Claims Act, I would not have been able to force the government to focus on the fraud at Hunt Valve Company. I am eternally grateful to the United States Congress for making that possible. Maybe I would have tried

to get someone to pay attention, but I don't think they would have believed me. More likely, I would have left the company, and lain awake at night worrying that my inaction would cost sailors' lives. Perhaps more important, without the strong *qui tam* provisions in the False Claims Act, the shipyards would have suffered no consequences for what they did.

A Navy website about the Level 1/SUBSAFE Program says: "The bitterness of poor quality lingers long after the sweetness of meeting a schedule is forgotten." In fact, however, the government contractors in this case wasted untold millions of federal dollars because they were more concerned with their schedules—and the incentives they got for meeting those schedules—than with taking the time and expending the effort to require Hunt Valve Company to do the job for which it was paid millions of federal taxpayer dollars. From this whistleblower's chair, it looks like a pretty sweet deal for them.

There are other Tina Gonters out there. Senators, anyone who says there are not also other Hunt Valve Companies out there is kidding herself—and not reading the news. I have read this Committee's report from 1986 and while my experience shows that you accomplished much of what you set out to achieve, work remains to be done.

Thank you for allowing me to tell you my story. It is a profound honor to appear before you in support of the False Claims Act Amendments. I urge you in the strongest possible terms to do everything you can to help others like me to do the right thing. Do not doubt that in addition to the billions of dollars recovered under the False Claims Act, lives hang in the balance.