

NBC's *Today*

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[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Opening Statements in Hunter Biden Trial]

HODA KOTB: Meantime, opening statements begin this morning in the federal gun case against Hunter Biden, jury selection during yesterday's start of the trial, with First Lady Dr. Jill Biden making a surprise appearance in court on her birthday. NBC's Ryan Nobles joins us now from the courthouse in Wilmington, Delaware. Hey Ryan, Good morning.

RYAN NOBLES: Hoda, good morning. And prosecutors plan to argue this morning that Hunter Biden lied on a federal form before purchasing a handgun. The President's son has pleaded "not guilty" and his famous family is now rushing to his defense. The President's son, Hunter Biden, facing a criminal trial and the prospect of jail time, getting support from the First Family right from the start. First Lady Jill Biden in the courtroom for jury selection, sitting just a few feet behind her son and whispering in his ear throughout the marathon day. His father, the President, issuing a rare statement addressing the case. "As the President, I don't and won't comment on pending federal cases. But as a dad, I have boundless love for my son." The First Lady and Biden's legal team listening closely as dozens of potential jurors were asked questions about their backgrounds and possible connections to the Biden family. In the end, 12 jurors were seated. six men and six women with four alternates. Six of the jurors had owned a gun or had a family member who purchased a gun. One juror was a Secret Service agent. And four of the jurors had family members who struggled with addiction, a key theme in this case. Prosecutors charged Biden after a plea deal on separate tax charges fell apart, a process Republicans have attacked.

SENATOR ERIC SCHMITT (R-MO): They were trying to wipe away everything under the cover of darkness. Thankfully, the judge asked them questions. And so, you know, he is going to have his day in court.

NOBLES: But Democrats counter that the Bidens have respected the judicial process. It is expected that a series of Biden family members will be with Hunter in court as the trial plays out. And the first witness expected to testify this morning is an FBI special agent who played a key role in the investigation. The entire trial expected to last a little more than a week. It's not clear yet if Hunter Biden will testify in his own defense, Hoda.

KOTB: Alright, Ryan Nobles for us there, in Wilmington. Ryan, thank you!