

Page 91 14 My name is Beth 15 Kotsovolos, and Matthew, obviously, the 16 previous speaker, is my husband. 17 When you look upon my husband and 18 myself, you may not see the battle scars of 19 the past two years, but they are there. 20 Despair, depression, disbelieve, anger, 21 suicidal ideation, and post-traumatic stress 22 disorder. They are there.

Page 92 1 To put it bluntly, the post-LASIK 2 symptoms of severe dry eye and unremitting eye 3 pain almost destroyed our family. My children 4 almost lost their father. 5 As I look upon the Panel today, I 6 see that many of you are LASIK surgeons or 7 have close ties to LASIK surgeons. I truly, 8 truly hope that today you can put your vested 9 ties with LASIK aside and be objective, and 10 really listen to what we have to say, the 11 people who have walked in the shoes of LASIK 12 failure. 13 So I ask the media now that you 14 hold the FDA accountable for their decisions 15 regarding whether or not the minority matter. 16 I also ask the media to not stop here, and to 17 continue investigating the stories of LASIK 18 failures and shine the light on the link 19 between bad LASIK outcomes and suicidal 20 ideation. 21 Think of the numbers of LASIK 22 surgeries that are done annually. Based on Page 93 1 the complication rates stated, LASIK is 2 destroying thousands and thousands of patients 3 and family lives. How many will it take for 4 you to recognize that LASIK cannot continue in 5 its current form? 6 I spoke to a gentleman by the name 7 of Roger from Wisconsin. His brother, Robert, 8 was a great outdoorsman. He was a champion at 9 pack burro racing. 10 Robert kept a journal in his last 11 months before he took his life. He wrote that 12 the constant unremitting eye pain, burning, 13 post-LASIK was unbearable. He said that the 14 pain was too much to overcome. He couldn't 15 live that way anymore. 16 A young doctor who had LASIK in the 17 summer of 2003 committed suicide in September 18 of 2004. This doctor consulted with many 19 physicians in search of solutions to his post- 20 LASIK visual disturbances. He committed 21 suicide after realizing that the solutions to 22 his physical post-LASIK complications were Page 94 1 nonexistent. 2 Major Eric J. Rupert is a military 3 physician serving in Iraq. His LASIK surgery 4 was done in July of 2003. He states, "I 5 strongly believe that the loss of tear 6 function which is deemed an acceptable 7 downside to LASIK surgery is, in fact, not at 8 all acceptable for many people who lead active 9 lifestyles." 10 Finally, Linda Knuckles had LASIK 11 surgery in January of 2007. She went from 12 doctor to doctor in her city and experts long 13 distance, trying to find help to get her life 14 back. Linda states in her testimonial, "I 15 could not escape the intense burning, even 16 with my eyes closed. I didn't want to get out 17 of bed anymore and face the day. If this is 18 what my life was going to be like, I wasn't 19 even sure I wanted to go on living. I began 20 to think about death being the only escape 21 from misery. Along with the guilt of choosing 22 to have the ill-fated elective surgery, I had Page 95 1 to live with the guilt of what effect this was 2 having on my husband and children. I was an 3 empty shell of my pre-LASIK self in my own 4 personal hell." 5 As I read those words for the first 6 time, I was astounded as to how very similar 7 her words were to my husband's, and listening 8 to all the testimonials today again it is just 9 over and over I am hearing the same thing from 10 LASIK patients who have similar complications. 11 Linda goes on further to explain: 12 "Ten years ago I had cancer. Although it was 13 scary and difficult, I got through the surgery 14 and treatment without needing any anti- 15 depressants. In 20 minutes, as the 16 advertisers say, all of our lives were 17 permanently altered." 18 It is time for the FDA to stand up 19 and protect the public for whom it is 20 entrusted to serve. LASIK has wreaked havoc 21 upon thousands and thousands of families. The 22 eye is the most vital sensory organ that Page 96 1 significantly impacts our quality of life. We 2 use our eyes every second of the day. 3 When you permanently damage a 4

person's previously healthy eyes, that 5 person's physical and emotional state will be 6 significantly impacted. Anyone who states 7 otherwise lacks common sense or is 8 disingenuous. 9 Permanently damaging a person's 10 most vital sensory organ with no Plan B fix is 11 not a straw that breaks the camel's back. 12 It's the 200 pound gorilla that brings most 13 post-LASIK complications -- 14 CHAIRPERSON WEISS: Would you be 15 able to wrap up? We are on the red again. 16 MS. KOTSOVOLOS: Sure. I ask that 17 the FDA begin investigation of post-LASIK 18 depression and suicide ideation and its 19 clinical -- 20 CHAIRPERSON WEISS: Thank you very 21 much. We are now going to go to our next 22 speaker, Mr. Michael Klein.