

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

v.

RALPH JOSEPH CELENTANO III,

*Defendant.*

Criminal Action No. 22-186 (TJK)

**COURT'S PROPOSED PRELIMINARY JURY INSTRUCTIONS**

**Preliminary Instruction Before Trial (1.102)**

Before we begin the trial, I want to explain some of the legal rules that will be important in this trial. I want to emphasize that these remarks are not meant to be a substitute for the detailed instructions that I will give at the end of the trial just before you start your deliberations. These preliminary instructions are intended to give you a sense of what will be going on in the courtroom and what your responsibilities as jurors will be.

**Preliminary Instruction When Note-Taking is Permitted (1.105A)**

When you took your seats, you probably noticed that each of you had a notebook and pencil waiting for you. That is because I permit jurors to take notes during trial if they wish. Whether you take notes or not is entirely up to you. Many people find that taking notes helps them remember testimony and evidence; others find it distracts them from listening to the witnesses.

You will be permitted to take your notebooks back with you into the jury room during deliberations. You should remember, however, that your notes are only an aid to your memory. They are not evidence in the case, and they should not replace your own memory of the evidence. Those jurors who do not take notes should rely on their own memory of the evidence and should

not be influenced by another juror's notes.

Other than during your deliberations, the notebooks will remain locked in the courtroom during recesses and overnight. You will not be able to take the notebooks with you as you come and go, and you will not be permitted to take them home with you overnight. At the end of the trial, when you come back to the courtroom to deliver your verdict, your notebooks will be collected, and the pages will be torn out and destroyed. No one, including myself, will ever look at any notes you have taken, so you may feel free to write whatever you wish.

**Preliminary Instruction to Jury Where Identity of Alternates is Not Disclosed (1.107)**

You have probably noticed that there are fourteen (14) of you sitting in the jury box. Only twelve (12) of you will retire to deliberate in this matter. Before any of you even entered the courtroom, we randomly selected the alternates' seats. I will not disclose who the alternate jurors are until the end of my final instructions just before you begin your deliberations. As any seat might turn out to be an alternate's seat, it is important that each of you think of yourselves as regular jurors during this trial, and that all of you give this case your fullest and most serious attention.

**A Juror's Recognition of a Witness or Other Party Connected to the Case (1.108)**

At the beginning of the jury selection process, you were introduced to the parties and lawyers, and potential witnesses were identified for you by name. Others were identified to you only by name. If, at any time during this trial, you suddenly realize that you recognize or might know any witness, lawyer, someone who is mentioned in the testimony or evidence, or anyone else connected with this case in any way, you should raise your hand immediately and ask to speak with me.

**Preliminary Instruction Before Trial (continued) (1.102)**

Now let me explain briefly some of the procedures we will follow and some of the rules of law that will be important in this case. This is a criminal case in which a grand jury returned an indictment.

In this case, the grand jury charged the defendant with the following crimes in the indictment: Count One, Assaulting, Resisting, or Impeding Certain Officers, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 111(a)(1); Count Two, Obstructing, Impeding, or Interfering with Certain Officers Incident to and during the Commission of a Civil Disorder, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 231(a)(3); Count Three, Unlawfully Entering and Remaining in a Restricted Building or Grounds, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1752(a)(1); Count Four, Disorderly and Disruptive Conduct in a Restricted Building or Grounds, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1752(a)(2); Count Five, Engaging in Physical Violence in a Restricted Building or Grounds, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1752(a)(4); Count Six, Act of Physical Violence in the Capitol Grounds or Buildings, in violation of 40 U.S.C. § 5104(e)(2)(F); and Count Seven, Obstruction of an Official Proceeding and Aiding and Abetting, in violation of 18 U.S.C. §§ 1512(c)(2), 2.

You should understand clearly that the indictment is not evidence. The indictment is just a formal way of charging a person with a crime in order to bring him or her to trial. You must not think of the indictment as any evidence of the guilt of the defendant or draw any conclusion about the guilt of the defendant just because he has been indicted.

At the end of the trial, you will have to decide whether or not the evidence presented has convinced you beyond a reasonable doubt that the defendant committed the offenses with which he has been charged.

Every defendant in a criminal case is presumed to be innocent. This presumption of

innocence remains with the defendant throughout the trial unless and until he or she is proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt. The burden is on the government to prove the defendant guilty beyond a reasonable doubt, and that burden of proof never shifts throughout the trial. The law does not require a defendant to prove his or her innocence or to produce any evidence. If you find that the government has proven beyond a reasonable doubt every element of a particular offense with which the defendant is charged, it is your duty to find him guilty of that offense. On the other hand, if you find that the government has failed to prove any element of a particular offense beyond a reasonable doubt, you must find the defendant not guilty of that offense.

As I explain how the trial will proceed, I will refer to the “government” and to the “defense” or the “defendant.” When I mention the “government,” I am referring to Assistant United States Attorneys Ms. Schesnol and Mr. Nohria. When I mention the defendant or the defense, I am referring to either the defendant Mr. Celentano or his attorneys, Ms. Sherman and Ms. Wozencroft.

As the first step in this trial, the government and the defendant will have an opportunity to make opening statements. The defendant may make an opening statement immediately after the government’s opening statement or he may wait until the beginning of the defendant’s case, or he may choose not to make an opening statement at all. You should understand that the opening statements are not evidence. They are intended only to help you understand the evidence that the lawyers expect will be introduced.

After the opening statement or statements, the government will put on what is called its case-in-chief. This means that the government will call witnesses to the witness stand and ask them questions. This is called direct examination. When the government is finished, the defense may ask questions. This is called cross-examination. When the defense is finished, the government may have brief re-direct examination. After the government presents its evidence, the

defendant may present evidence, but he is not required to do so. The law does not require a defendant to prove his or her innocence or to produce any evidence. If the defendant does put on evidence, defense counsel will call witnesses to the stand and ask questions on direct examination, the prosecutors will cross-examine, and defense counsel may have brief re-direct examination. When the defense is finished, the government may offer a rebuttal case, which would operate along the same lines as its case-in-chief.

At the end of the evidence I will tell you in detail about the rules of law that you must follow when you consider what your verdicts shall be. Then, each side will have an opportunity to make a closing argument in support of its case. The lawyers' closing arguments, just like their opening statements, are not evidence in this case. They are only intended to help you understand the evidence and what each side claims the evidence shows. Finally, at the end of the closing arguments, I will have a few additional instructions for you before you begin your deliberations. Your verdicts must be unanimous; that is, all twelve jurors must agree on the verdicts.

I want to briefly describe my responsibilities as the judge and your responsibilities as the jury. My responsibility is to conduct this trial in an orderly, fair, and efficient manner, to rule on legal questions that come up in the course of the trial, and to instruct you about the law that applies to this case. It is your sworn duty as jurors to accept and apply the law as I state it to you.

Your responsibility as jurors is to determine the facts in the case. You—and only you—are the judges of the facts. You alone determine the weight, the effect, and the value of the evidence, as well as the credibility or believability of the witnesses. You must consider and weigh the testimony of all witnesses who appear before you. You alone must decide the extent to which you believe any witness.

You must pay very careful attention to the testimony of all of the witnesses because you

will not have any transcripts or summaries of the testimony available to you during your deliberations. You will have to rely entirely on your memory and your notes if you choose to take any.

During this trial, I may rule on motions and objections by the lawyers, make comments to lawyers, question the witnesses, and instruct you on the law. You should not take any of my statements or actions as any indication of my opinion about how you should decide the facts. If you think that somehow I have expressed or even hinted at any opinion as to the facts in this case, you should disregard it. The verdict in this case is your sole and exclusive responsibility.

You may consider only the evidence properly admitted in this case. That evidence includes the sworn testimony of witnesses and the exhibits admitted into evidence. Sometimes a lawyer's question suggests the existence of a fact, but the lawyer's question alone is not evidence. If the evidence includes anything other than testimony and exhibits, I will instruct you about these other types of evidence when they are admitted during the trial.

During the trial, if the court or a lawyer makes a statement or asks a question that refers to evidence that you remember differently, you should rely on your memory of the evidence during your deliberations.

The lawyers may object when the other side asks a question, makes an argument, or offers evidence that the objecting lawyer believes is not properly admissible. You must not hold such objections against the lawyer who makes them or the party he or she represents. It is the lawyer's responsibility to object to evidence that they believe is not admissible.

If I sustain an objection to a question asked by a lawyer, the question must be withdrawn, and you must not guess or speculate what the answer to the question would have been. If a question is asked and answered, and I then rule that the answer should be stricken from the record, you must disregard both the question and the answer in your deliberations. You should follow this same

rule if any of the exhibits are stricken.

You are not permitted to discuss this case with anyone until this case is submitted to you for your decision at the end of my final instructions. This means that, until the case is submitted to you, you may not talk about it even with your fellow jurors. This is because we don't want you making decisions until you've heard all the evidence and the instructions of law. In addition, you may not talk about the case with anyone else. It should go without saying that you also may not write about the case electronically through any blog, posting, or other communication, including "social networking" sites such as Facebook or Twitter until you have delivered your verdict and the case is over. This is because you must decide the case based on what happens here in the courtroom, not on what someone may or may not tell you outside the courtroom. I'm sure that, when we take our first recess, you will call home or work and tell them you have been selected for a jury. They will undoubtedly ask what kind of case you're sitting on. You may tell them it is a criminal case, but nothing else. Now, when the case is over, you may discuss any part of it with anyone you wish, but until then, you may not do so.

Although it is a natural human tendency to talk with people with whom you may come into contact, you must not talk to any of the parties, their attorneys, or any witnesses in this case during the time you serve on this jury. If you encounter anyone connected with the case outside the courtroom, you should avoid having any conversation with them, overhearing their conversation, or having any contact with them at all. For example, if you find yourself in a courthouse corridor, elevator, or any other location where the case is being discussed by attorneys, parties, witnesses, or anyone else, you should immediately leave the area to avoid hearing such discussions. If you do overhear a discussion about the case, you should report that to me as soon as you can. Finally, if you see any of the attorneys or witnesses involved in the case and they turn and walk away from

you, they are not being rude; they are merely following the same instruction that I gave to them.

It is very unlikely, but if someone tries to talk to you about the case, you should refuse to do so and immediately let me know by telling the clerk or the marshal. Don't tell the other jurors; just let me know, and I'll bring you in to discuss it.

Between now and when you are discharged from jury duty, you must not provide to or receive from anyone, including friends, co-workers, and family members, any information about your jury service. You may tell those who need to know where you are, that you have been picked for a jury, and how long the case may take. However, you must not give anyone any information about the case itself or the people involved in the case. You must also warn people not to try to say anything to you or write to you about your jury service or the case. This includes face-to-face, phone, or computer communications.

In this age of electronic communication, I want to stress that you must not use electronic devices or computers to talk about this case, including tweeting, texting, blogging, e-mailing, posting information on a website or chat room, or any other means at all. Do not send or accept messages, including email and text messages, about your jury service. You must not disclose your thoughts about your jury service or ask for advice on how to decide issue in the case.

You must decide the facts based on the evidence presented in court and according to the legal principles about which I will instruct you. You are not permitted, during the course of the trial, to conduct any independent investigation or research about the case. That means, for example, you cannot use the internet to do research about the facts or the law or the people involved in the case. Research includes something even as simple or seemingly harmless as using the internet to look up a legal term or view a satellite photo of the scene of the alleged crime.

I want to explain the reasons why you should not conduct your own investigation. All



parties have a right to have the case decided only on evidence and legal rules that they know about and that they have a chance to respond to. Relying on information you get outside this courtroom is unfair because the parties would not have a chance to refute, correct, or explain it. Unfortunately, information that we get over the internet or from other sources may be incomplete or misleading or just plain wrong. It is up to you to decide whether to credit any evidence presented in court, and only the evidence presented in court may be considered. If evidence or legal information has not been presented in court, you cannot consider it or rely on it.

Moreover, if any of you do your own research about the facts or the law, this may result in different jurors basing their decisions on different information. Each juror must make his or her decision based on the same evidence and under the same rules.

In some cases, there may be reports in the newspaper or on the radio, internet, or television concerning the case while the trial is ongoing. If there should be such media coverage in this case, you may be tempted to read, listen to, or watch it. You must not read, listen to, or watch such reports because you must decide this case solely on the evidence presented in this courtroom. If any publicity about this trial inadvertently comes to your attention during trial, do not discuss it with other jurors or anyone else. Just let me or my clerk know as soon after it happens as you can, and I will then briefly discuss it with you.

After I submit the case to you, you may discuss it only when I instruct you to do so, and only in the jury room and only in the presence of all your fellow jurors. It is important that you keep an open mind and not decide any issue in the case until after I submit the entire case to you with my final instructions.