

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE MIDDLE DISTRICT OF FLORIDA
TAMPA DIVISION

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,)	
)	
Plaintiff,)	
)	
vs.)	Case No.: 8:21-CR-348
)	
JEREMY BROWN,)	
)	
Defendant.)	
)	

EXCERPT OF JURY TRIAL PROCEEDINGS
TESTIMONY OF CHARLES GEORGE
BEFORE THE HONORABLE SUSAN C. BUCKLEW

December 7, 2022
9:52 a.m. to 10:17 a.m.

APPEARANCES:

FOR THE PLAINTIFF: DANIEL J. MARCET, ESQUIRE
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950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
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FOR THE DEFENDANT: ROGER FUTERMAN, ESQUIRE
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13620 49th Street North
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Clearwater, Florida 33762

ALSO PRESENT: JEREMY BROWN, DEFENDANT
BRETT LINDSEY, HSI AGENT

(Proceedings recorded by mechanical stenography, transcript
produced by computer-aided transcription.)

REPORTED BY:

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Charles George - Direct Examination

1 (Excerpt of Proceedings at 9:52 a.m.)

2 **THE COURT:** You may call your next witness.

3 **MR. GOEDMAN:** United States calls FBI Task Force
4 Officer Charles George.

5 **THE COURT:** Sir, if you'll come forward to be sworn.

6 **THE COURTROOM DEPUTY:** Please raise your right hand.

7 WHEREUPON,

8 **CHARLES GEORGE,**

9 was called as a witness and, after having been first duly
10 sworn, testified as follows:

11 **DIRECT EXAMINATION**

12 **THE COURTROOM DEPUTY:** Please state your name for the
13 record and spell your name.

14 **THE WITNESS:** Charles George. C-h-a-r-l-e-s,
15 G-e-o-r-g-e.

16 **THE COURTROOM DEPUTY:** Thank you, sir. Please take
17 the witness stand.

18 **THE COURT:** Mr. Goedman.

19 **BY MR. GOEDMAN:**

20 **Q.** Good morning.

21 **A.** Good morning.

22 **Q.** Please state your name for the jury.

23 **A.** Yes, Charles George.

24 **Q.** Mr. George, where are you currently employed?

25 **A.** I'm employed at Tampa Police Department.

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Charles George - Direct Examination

1 Q. Do you work with the FBI in that capacity?

2 A. I do.

3 Q. Did you participate in the search of the defendant's home
4 on September 2021?

5 A. Yes, I did.

6 Q. Come back to that in a minute.

7 Let's talk a little about your police career. How long
8 have you worked in the Tampa Police Department?

9 A. I've worked for Tampa Police Department for 22 years.

10 Q. Do you have any particular specialization within the
11 police department?

12 A. I do. I am a FBI certified bomb technician. I'm on the
13 bomb squad.

14 Q. What does a bomb technician do exactly?

15 A. For bomb technicians, we're all trained in one school. We
16 are essentially -- we're all hazmat technicians. So anytime a
17 public safety threat presents itself, whether it could be
18 something that's believed to be hazardous, everything from,
19 say, a powder or a chemical, something along those lines
20 chemically related to an improvised explosive device, military
21 ordinance, commercial explosives, when those things present
22 themselves in the public and law enforcement are involved, then
23 we come out to those types of incidents and work those.

24 Q. Over your career as a bomb tech, what kind of training
25 have you received?

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1 A. So we're required by the FBI to train minimum two days a
2 month and one week a year. I got certified at the hazardous
3 devices school in Huntsville, Alabama, which is a six-week
4 class. And then after that, I have attended numerous advanced
5 training from improvised explosives, hand-entry techniques on
6 how to hand enter improvised explosive devices, ordinance
7 recognition for military ordinance, and there's a myriad of
8 training over the last 16 years that I've been on the bomb
9 squad that I've attended and completed.

10 Q. So during your time as a bomb tech or in the Tampa Police
11 Department more generally, how many search warrants do you
12 think you've executed or participated in?

13 A. Conservatively, at least 100.

14 Q. In those searches, have you seen search teams turn off
15 security cameras that might be present at the search site?

16 A. I have.

17 Q. Why do they do that?

18 A. So the first concern always for law enforcement is officer
19 safety. So ultimately when you're searching a house or
20 entering a residence, you don't know who's inside. We plan for
21 the worst and hope for the best. We hope that there's no one
22 inside, but conversely we plan for there to be multiple people
23 that are armed inside the residence. So turning off a camera,
24 from the officer safety perspective, is the first and foremost
25 just to enter the house to do a search.

Charles George - Direct Examination

1 Q. And so just so I understand it first, so there's the
2 search, and is there anything that happens before the search
3 team goes this the house?

4 A. Yes. We'll clear the residence to make sure there are no
5 humans inside the residence that could present a threat.

6 Q. Right. So when you're -- when the team goes -- what's the
7 team that goes in that does the clearing?

8 A. So the entry team or your initial clearing team.

9 Q. And when that entry team is going into the house, do they
10 know if there's people inside?

11 A. They do not.

12 Q. Do they know if those people are armed?

13 A. They do not.

14 Q. Do they know what those people's intentions might be?

15 A. No.

16 Q. So what's the risk in that situation?

17 A. The risk is that you go into it unknown and someone could
18 have a tactical advantage on you by seeing you on camera,
19 knowing when you're coming, and plan to essentially assault you
20 or possibly harm you.

21 Q. Is that the only reason why a clearance team may want to
22 turn off security cameras on a search site?

23 A. I mean, ultimately looking at tactics, it's not something
24 that we would want to, say, make a public record. So if that
25 was recorded and someone released that to the public, you know,

Charles George - Direct Examination

1 what we do and how we clear things and how we move and clear
2 through a room, that would be a concern if it, you know, became
3 a public record.

4 Q. So to make sure I'm understanding you, you mean the
5 homeowner or the residents of the home might have saved copies
6 of those --

7 MR. FUTERMAN: Your Honor, I'm just going to object
8 to any leading nature of this question.

9 THE COURT: Sustained.

10 BY MR. GOEDMAN:

11 Q. Do security cameras at search sites sometimes record
12 video?

13 A. They do.

14 Q. Who controls that video?

15 A. Typically the homeowner.

16 Q. What could the homeowner do with those copies of those
17 videos?

18 A. They could take the recording and they could release it to
19 the public.

20 Q. During the hundreds of searches you've gone on, have you
21 seen officers or agents wearing masks?

22 A. I have.

23 Q. Have you worn a mask at a search site?

24 A. I have.

25 Q. Did you wear a mask -- sorry. Did you wear a mask when

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Charles George - Direct Examination

1 you were searching the defendant's property?

2 A. I did.

3 Q. What kind of mask was that?

4 A. It was a COVID mask.

5 Q. Have you seen --

6 A. A cloth mask.

7 Q. Sorry. What was that?

8 A. It was like a cloth COVID mask.

9 Q. Have you seen agents or officers wear other types of
10 masks?

11 A. I have.

12 Q. What do those look like?

13 A. Typically to cover your whole head with the exception of
14 your eyes exposed.

15 Q. Why would an officer wear a mask like that?

16 A. In most cases, if someone is working undercover, they
17 wouldn't want their identity to be known to people at the
18 search site or on camera for the purpose of identifying them if
19 they do undercover work.

20 Q. Why would an undercover officer care if their identity was
21 known?

22 A. Undercover work can be dangerous in and by itself, but if
23 you were on or off duty and they knew who you were and you were
24 doing undercover work, it poses a high safety risk to the
25 undercover that does that kind of work in the community.

Charles George - Direct Examination

1 Q. Let's talk about the day September 30th. As the search
2 began, you were on site?

3 A. I was.

4 Q. And what was your initial role at the search?

5 A. Just general search to assist in the searching of the
6 residence.

7 Q. How long did you do that for?

8 A. Approximately two hours.

9 Q. Were your duties interrupted at some point?

10 A. They were.

11 Q. What happened?

12 A. I was contacted by Task Force Officer Belvin Sanchez, who
13 advised me he was searching an RV on the property, and he found
14 something of concern he believed were hand grenades. And
15 because I'm a bomb tech, he requested my assistance.

16 Q. After Special Agent -- or Task Force Officer Sanchez
17 called out from the RV, what did you do?

18 A. There was another bomb technician on site that's on the
19 squad with me. I made contact with him, and we formulated a
20 plan to enter the RV to determine if there were in fact
21 possible hand grenades inside the RV.

22 Q. Did you take any safety precautions?

23 A. I did.

24 Q. What were those?

25 A. So we donned some personal protective equipment, tactical

Charles George - Direct Examination

1 vests, ballistic helmets, eye protection, and then just gloves
2 for crime-scene integrity.

3 Q. Were any steps taken to protect the other agents on site?

4 A. Yes. So ultimately, you know, anytime you're dealing with
5 a potential improvised explosive device or anything that could
6 explode, safety is very important for the people working on
7 whatever we're doing and the people that are at the scene. So
8 we wanted to make sure that the other folks that were on site
9 searching were behind hard cover, meaning we put them in front
10 of the house so they were not in line of site of the RV, where
11 we were going to be working, should something happen when we're
12 doing that. We made sure they were off at a safe distance and
13 behind the residence so they weren't in line of site of the RV.

14 Q. You mentioned the term "hard cover." What is that?

15 A. Yeah. So hard cover would be -- obviously, I'm sitting
16 behind this and this is wood. Fragmentation could go through
17 this. Concrete blocks, engine blocks, super dense material is
18 what we refer to as hard cover. So should something blow up,
19 that material would hopefully stop it before it hit you.

20 So we made sure we repositioned our search team that was
21 on site to around the front of the residence so they were in
22 front of the house and not next to the RV or where they could
23 see us at the RV.

24 Q. In terms of the gear, the protective gear you put on, you
25 mentioned a helmet.

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1 A. Ballistic helmet and ballistic vest.

2 Q. Anything else?

3 A. Yeah. Eye protection, and then gloves, like I said, for
4 crime-scene integrity, make sure they were sterile gloves.

5 Q. You had your gear on. What did you do next?

6 A. I obtained the camera from the -- from the photographer on
7 scene, and myself and Special Agent Nicolussi proceeded inside
8 the RV.

9 Q. Where did you go in the RV once you entered?

10 A. When we entered, we went towards the rear, Task Officer
11 Sanchez told me it was on the bed. There was a chest rig or
12 vest on the bed that had some grenades he believed in the side
13 pouches of the vest. So we proceeded to the rear of the RV.

14 Q. All right. Showing the witness Government Exhibit 11F.
15 Do you recognize this picture?

16 A. I do.

17 Q. What are we looking at?

18 A. So this is the photo that I took of the chest rig or vest.
19 As the wearer would wear this, you can see where there's the
20 silver magazines on the front. If that is the front, the way
21 the wearer would wear this vest, the pouch there that has an
22 open flap, you can see the top of what is a suspected hand
23 grenade. That would be on the wearer's right side. And that
24 is essentially what I took a photo of.

25 Q. The item inside of that pouch, what is that?

Charles George - Direct Examination

1 A. So the item inside the pouch believed -- looked like it
2 was a hand grenade.

3 Q. Showing the witness what has been entered as Exhibit 13A,
4 if I can get it to work.

5 What are we looking at here?

6 A. This is a top-down photo of the grenade removed from the
7 pouch, of the top of the grenade looking straight down over it.

8 Q. And who took this photo?

9 A. I took this photo.

10 Q. And whose hands are in this photo?

11 A. Special Agent Nicolussi.

12 Q. Showing the witness Government's Exhibit 13B.

13 What are we looking at here?

14 A. This is a side view of that grenade that was removed from
15 the right pouch on the vest.

16 Q. And, again, did you take this picture?

17 A. I did.

18 Q. Whose hands?

19 A. Special Agent Nicolussi.

20 Q. Showing the witness Government Exhibit Number 13C.

21 What are we looking at here?

22 A. This would be the pouch that would be on the wearer's left
23 side of the vest that also had another suspected hand grenade
24 in it.

25 Q. And you took this picture?

Charles George - Direct Examination

1 A. I did.

2 Q. And whose hands again are shown in this photo?

3 A. Special Agent Nicolussi.

4 Q. All right. Showing the witness Government Exhibit
5 Number 13E.

6 What are we looking at here?

7 A. This is the photo -- side photo of that grenade that was
8 removed from the left pouch.

9 Q. And did you take this picture as well?

10 A. I did.

11 Q. After taking these pictures of the grenades inside the RV,
12 what did you do next?

13 A. We carried them outside so we could conduct x-ray
14 diagnostics.

15 Q. Showing the witness Government Exhibit Number 13F.

16 What are we looking at here?

17 A. So this is a photo that I took of the grenade that was
18 removed from the right pouch of the vest with a scale, with a
19 measuring scale in the photo.

20 Q. Why do you measure the grenades at the site?

21 A. A scale in the crime-scene photo will show, you know, its
22 condition at the time that we were assessing it. So this would
23 show us now today, since this is, you know, some time ago, what
24 the size was, so if you were -- know what the size was of the
25 item that we were taking a photo of.

Charles George - Direct Examination

1 Q. Showing the witness what has been admitted as Government
2 Exhibit Number 13J.

3 What are we looking at here?

4 A. So this is an x-ray of one of the suspected hand grenades.

5 Q. Why do you x-ray the grenades on site?

6 A. Well, if it was inert, like sometimes we'll go out to
7 calls in the field of bomb squad operations and a grenade may
8 not be live. You can buy inert ones that don't -- aren't
9 dangerous and they're not live. So ultimately we wanted to
10 assess via an x-ray, much like we take photographs of the
11 outside, this allows us, as bomb techs, to take photographs of
12 the inside to determine if there are maybe some components
13 present that would indicate it was possibly live.

14 Q. And were there components present that would indicate a
15 live grenade?

16 A. There are.

17 Q. After you finished x-raying the grenades, what did you do
18 next?

19 A. We collected them as evidence, and they got placed into
20 paper bags and then into a container to transport them.

21 Q. And were you involved in transporting them away from the
22 site?

23 A. I was in the vehicle that transported them, yes.

24 Q. Where were they taken?

25 A. They were taken to the Tampa Police Department bomb

Charles George - Cross-Examination

1 operation center where they were secured.

2 Q. And why were they taken to Tampa bomb operations center
3 rather than the FBI?

4 A. The FBI does not have a container suitable to hold
5 explosives. The bomb squad -- the Tampa bomb squad has an
6 ATF-approved explosives magazine where this evidence can be
7 stored, and that's why it was taken there.

8 MR. GOEDMAN: Thank you. No further questions.
9 Tender the witness.

10 THE COURT: Mr. Futerman.

11 MR. FUTERMAN: Thank you, Your Honor.

12 CROSS-EXAMINATION

13 BY MR. FUTERMAN:

14 Q. Good morning, Agent George.

15 A. Good morning.

16 Q. Talk about September 30th, the search of Mr. Brown's house
17 as opposed to generalities. In this particular case, when
18 multiple agents arrived at Mr. Brown's house, he's outside with
19 his girlfriend, the owner of the house, Tylen Aldridge.
20 Right?

21 A. I believe so. I did not have any interaction with
22 Mr. Brown or his girlfriend.

23 Q. Okay. You said a search team goes into the house, which
24 they did in this case particularly. Correct?

25 A. Correct.

Charles George - Cross-Examination

1 Q. And obviously they want to make sure that there's no one
2 in there and it's safe and people aren't acting up. Right?

3 A. Correct.

4 Q. And that's what happened in this case. People went into
5 the house to make sure there was no one in there and everything
6 was safe. Right?

7 A. Correct.

8 Q. There were a couple of friendly dogs in there. Right?

9 A. Yes, sir.

10 Q. That's about it. But you said, then, for officer safety,
11 they turn off the cameras.

12 A. Correct.

13 Q. How -- once you've cleared the house, you see no one is in
14 there other than a couple friendly dogs, how does turning the
15 cameras off make it more safe for the team? Because safety is
16 not an issue at that point. The cameras are either on or off
17 to see what's going on. It's not more safe at that point.
18 There's no one in there. Right?

19 A. Correct.

20 Q. So --

21 **THE COURT:** What is the question you're asking?

22 That's a compound question. Are you asking if anyone was in
23 there, or are you asking what you said before?

24 **BY MR. FUTERMAN:**

25 Q. So is the cameras turned off to preserves officers'

Charles George - Cross-Examination

1 tactics?

2 A. Well, and techniques. As I said on direct was that, you
3 know, we're in there and we're searching and what methods we're
4 using to search and how we're prosecuting the scene is
5 something that, you know, there -- it's law enforcement
6 training and techniques and tactics and procedures. So that
7 is -- typically the cameras aren't turned back on. They're
8 left off so we can conduct our search and do that without
9 having to worry about it getting distributed as a public
10 record.

11 Q. What's a secret tactic about searching a house?

12 A. There's no secret tactic.

13 Q. Okay. So you said that you want to make it more safe or
14 to not show what people are doing, why, if it's so secret -- if
15 it's not secret, why not just have the cameras, like body cam
16 or leave the cameras on, to show as you're searching the house
17 what you're doing?

18 A. I guess it's possible you could.

19 Q. If you're concerned about the identity of officers in this
20 case, so were officers -- and it's hot. It's September.
21 Right? There were officers with just their eyes being shown.
22 Correct?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. All right. So in this particular search, there were
25 people with like ski masks type of thing with just their eyes

Charles George - Cross-Examination

1 being shown. Correct?

2 A. Possibly.

3 Q. Okay.

4 THE COURT: I'm sorry. That's not an answer.

5 What --

6 THE WITNESS: Sorry, Your Honor. I don't recall if
7 people were wearing those at this search, that particular style
8 mask.

9 BY MR. FUTERMAN:

10 Q. Would it refresh your election if I showed you a picture?

11 A. Sure.

12 MR. FUTERMAN: If I may have a second, Your Honor.

13 Your Honor, may I approach the witness?

14 THE COURT: You may.

15 BY MR. FUTERMAN:

16 Q. I want you to look at this picture and first of all ask
17 you if that might refresh your recollection as of
18 September 30th of an agent wearing that mask?

19 A. Yes. It appears to be an agent from my squad.

20 Q. Okay.

21 MR. FUTERMAN: And, Your Honor, at this point, I'd
22 like to admit which will be Defense Exhibit 116. Well,
23 actually, I'll just reserve. That's fine.

24 THE COURT: You'll what?

25 MR. GOEDMAN: Your Honor, we --

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Charles George - Cross-Examination

1 **MR. FUTERMAN:** I'll just reserve on that.

2 **THE COURT:** All right.

3 **BY MR. FUTERMAN:**

4 **Q.** But having seen that picture, you now agree that it was
5 agents from your squad with a ski mask on with only the eyes
6 being shown. Right?

7 **A.** Yes, sir.

8 **Q.** You said there's nothing secret about the tactics that the
9 cameras are switched off. Right?

10 **A.** Yes.

11 **Q.** And even the cameras that are showing of the search of the
12 RV, because the RV and residence are separate. Correct?

13 **A.** They are separate.

14 **Q.** They were in separate places. Correct?

15 **A.** Yes.

16 **Q.** And you're not the one that found the grenades in the RV.
17 Correct?

18 **A.** I'm not.

19 **Q.** You don't know who put them there. Right?

20 **A.** That's correct.

21 **Q.** You don't know when they were put there. Correct?

22 **A.** Correct.

23 **Q.** And you're not the one that found the classified CD in the
24 RV.

25 **A.** Correct.

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Charles George - Cross-Examination

1 Q. You don't know when that was put in there.

2 A. Correct.

3 Q. And you don't know why.

4 A. Correct.

5 Q. Now, the -- from the FBI, Agent George, the acting
6 supervisor special agent was Christopher Franck. Right?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. And he is the supervisor on scene to supervise to make
9 sure everything doesn't -- is done properly. Correct?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. That's the whole -- it sounds simplified, but, hence,
12 supervising the other agents. Correct?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. And he would go into the house as a supervisor, clear the
15 house, and then make sure that everything is done properly.
16 Correct?

17 A. I can't speak to what he did.

18 Q. I get that.

19 A. But he is responsible for the location, the operation,
20 yes.

21 Q. And that's what I wanted to make sure. He's responsible
22 for the location and the operation. Right?

23 A. Yes, sir.

24 Q. And he's responsible to make sure that his -- not his, per
25 se, but the agents that he's supervising search properly and

Charles George - Redirect Examination

1 follow procedures. Correct?

2 A. Yes, sir.

3 Q. All right. As the supervisor, you would appear on scene,
4 and you wouldn't leave the scene until, you know, very close to
5 the whole scene is cleared and pictures are taken and the
6 evidence is photographed. Correct?

7 A. I can't speak for what a supervisor would do.

8 Q. Okay. Well, you would think he's supervising the whole
9 operation. Right?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. Okay. You wouldn't expect him to show up and then run off
12 and take a trip to Disney or work. Right?

13 A. Would I expect that?

14 Q. Yeah.

15 A. I would not.

16 MR. FUTERMAN: All right. I have no more questions,
17 Your Honor.

18 THE COURT: All right.

19 Redirect.

20 REDIRECT EXAMINATION

21 BY MR. GOEDMAN:

22 Q. Few more, Mr. George.

23 The picture that defense counsel just showed you, do you
24 have any idea when that was taken?

25 A. I do not.

Charles George - Redirect Examination

1 Q. Have you ever seen it before?

2 A. I have not.

3 Q. In this -- at the September 30th search, do you have any
4 idea when the cameras were turned off?

5 A. I do not.

6 Q. But based on your experience, cameras are typically turned
7 off when -- when are cameras typically turned off?

8 A. As soon as possible. Ideally before you make that initial
9 entry to search, to clear the house for persons.

10 Q. After the safety risk of the clearing team has been
11 removed or resolved, are there other reasons why the cameras
12 should be turned off?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. Please explain those reasons.

15 A. For the purposes of, you know, whatever procedures we're
16 following, the tactics, techniques, and procedures of the
17 search, how we're handling the evidence, how it is handled, is
18 for those reasons.

19 Q. There's a search methodology?

20 A. There is.

21 MR. FUTERMAN: Your Honor, I'm going to object to the
22 leading.

23 THE COURT: Sustained.

24 BY MR. GOEDMAN:

25 Q. Defense counsel mentioned Special Agent Franck. Was he

Charles George - Redirect Examination

1 the only supervisor on site that day?

2 A. He was not.

3 Q. Was he in fact the arresting supervisor?

4 MR. FUTERMAN: Your Honor, again, leading.

5 THE COURT: Sustained. Rephrase your question.

6 BY MR. GOEDMAN:

7 Q. If Special Agent Franck -- do you know exactly what role
8 Special Agent Franck had that day?

9 A. He was the acting supervisor on the squad.

10 Q. Was he focused on the arrest or the search?

11 A. Managing essentially both.

12 MR. GOEDMAN: No further questions, Your Honor.

13 THE COURT: All right. Thank you. You may step
14 down.

15 THE WITNESS: Thank you, Judge.

16 (Excerpt of Proceedings concluded at 10:17 a.m.)

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1 CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

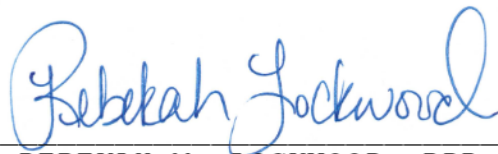
2 STATE OF FLORIDA

3 COUNTY OF HILLSBOROUGH

4 I, Rebekah M. Lockwood, RDR, CRR, do hereby certify
5 that I was authorized to and did stenographically report the
6 foregoing proceedings; and that the foregoing pages constitute
7 a true and complete computer-aided transcription of my original
8 stenographic notes to the best of my knowledge, skill, and
9 ability.

10 I further certify that I am not a relative, employee,
11 attorney, or counsel of any of the parties, nor am I a relative
12 or employee of any of the parties' attorneys or counsel
13 connected with the action, nor am I financially interested in
14 the action.

15 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand at Tampa,
16 Hillsborough County, Florida, this 19th day of December 2022.

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21 REBEKAH M. LOCKWOOD, RDR, CRR
22 Official Court Reporter
23 United States District Court
24 Middle District of Florida
25