

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE SIXTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT  
IN AND FOR PINELLAS COUNTY, FLORIDA

Case Number: 22-09348CFANO

STATE OF FLORIDA,

Plaintiff,

VS.

JUAN ARIEL MOLINA-SALLES,

Defendant.

---

DEPOSITION OF: ROBERTO SOSA  
TAKEN BY: Counsel for the Defendant  
DATE: March 27, 2024  
TIME: 3:02 p.m. - 3:26 p.m.  
PLACE: ZOOM videoconference  
REPORTED BY: Tamara M. Pacheco, RPR  
Notary Public, State of FL

Pages 1 - 27

## ZOOM VIDEOCONFERENCE APPEARANCES

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EXHIBITS

(No exhibits were marked for identification.)

1 WHEREUPON,

2 ROBERTO SOSA

3 (the deponent herein, being first duly sworn, was examined  
4 and testified as follows:)

5 EXAMINATION

6 BY MS. DELIBERATO:

7 Q Good afternoon. Could you please state and  
8 spell your name for the record.

9 A Sure. My name is Roberto Sosa. My first name  
10 is spelled R-O-B-E-R-T-O. Last name Sosa, S-O-S-A.

11 Q And how are you employed?

12 A I'm employed with the Pinellas County Sheriff's  
13 office assigned to the Robbery/Homicide Unit.

14 Q Okay. My name is Maria DeLiberato. I'm an  
15 assistant public defender. I, along with Nichole  
16 Blaquiere, represent Juan Molina-Salles. It's case number  
17 22-30523211 -- 232, sorry. And present for the State is  
18 Elizabeth Constantine.

19 I have that you authored one supplement. I'm  
20 trying to pull it up. I think it's 53.

21 A Fifty-three. Yes, ma'am.

22 Q And that's the only one that you authored?

23 A Yes.

24 Q How long have you been employed with the  
25 sheriff's office?

1 A Since March of -- March 21st, 2016.

2 Q Any prior law enforcement experience before  
3 that?

4 A Yes. I had six-and-a-half years with the  
5 Brevard County Sheriff's Office.

6 Q Okay. Anything other than Brevard and PCSO?

7 A No, that's it.

8 Q And during your time at Brevard or PCSO, ever  
9 had any complaints sustained against you for any reason?

10 A No, ma'am.

11 Q Were you working on the night of September 22nd,  
12 2022?

13 A Yes.

14 Q And where were you working?

15 A In regards to this case, we were called out to  
16 the interstate at 275 near the Ulmerton exit I believe.

17 Q And did you go out immediately when the call  
18 came out as a deputy-involved crash?

19 A No. I was notified after everything occurred  
20 by, I believe, Corporal John Syers.

21 Q Was that you specifically for translation  
22 purposes?

23 A No. At the time, no, I didn't know that I was  
24 needed for translation purposes.

25 Q Okay. So what were you called out for?

1           A     It was a unit response to investigate the  
2 incident that occurred.

3           Q     And when you got on scene, what was happening?

4           A     People were trying to organize the scene and try  
5 to obtain information of what occurred because there was a  
6 lot of people, and we didn't know, you know, what occurred  
7 yet. We were still trying to get the facts and  
8 circumstances of what happened.

9           Q     Okay. When did you arrive on scene?

10          A     The time?

11          Q     Yeah.

12          A     I don't know. I don't remember.

13          Q     Like, was it after midnight? The crash happened  
14 between sort of 10ish, around 10 p.m., a little before 11  
15 I think.

16          A     Yes. It was around -- anytime after that.  
17 Probably within midnight, 1 a.m. Around there I would  
18 say. It was definitely dark, early morning hours.

19          Q     And what was the first thing that you were asked  
20 to do?

21          A     The first thing I was asked to do? I don't  
22 remember.

23          Q     That's okay. My notes indicated -- like all the  
24 reports indicate that you mostly just provided translation  
25 support for the interviews, with the exception of you

1 conducted one interview yourself. Does that sound right?

2 A Yes, ma'am.

3 Q So the translation interviews that you did, can  
4 you tell me how that works? Are you just straight up  
5 translating the questions and the answers, or are you also  
6 participating in the interrogation?

7 A Primarily, I was just translating the question  
8 and the answer.

9 Q Okay. So primarily. Was there times where you  
10 would like step in and ask your own questions?

11 A Sometimes. And there would be also some times  
12 when, because of the flow of the language, it wasn't  
13 feasible to stop and then relay what was being told to me  
14 and then start again with another follow-up question  
15 because of how the Spanish language is. Sometimes, you  
16 know, I just allowed the person to talk; and then I would  
17 occasionally do a follow-up question, but then I would  
18 regurgitate everything to Corporal Syers.

19 Q Okay. And all of these interviews were audio  
20 recorded?

21 A Yes, ma'am. Uh-huh.

22 Q Did you have a body-worn camera as well?

23 A I do, but I didn't have one on that night.

24 Q Okay. You didn't that night is what I meant.

25 A Yeah, yeah. That night, no.

1 Q Is there a standard procedure for when you're  
2 offering translation services. Are you supposed to -- do  
3 you ever use certified interpreters, or is it just kind of  
4 like, hey, we know you speak Spanish, come and help us?  
5 How does that work?

6 A Typically, with investigating cases from our  
7 level, from law enforcement, it's typically who speaks the  
8 language, and then you respond and assist in that way.  
9 I've had in court proceedings where they actually will  
10 seek a certified translator. In our case, you know, we  
11 just look for deputies who can speak the language and  
12 translate that way.

13 Q Okay. Do you have a list of folks, the  
14 interviews that you conducted?

15 A I don't have a list here in front of me, but  
16 they were all the people that Corporal Syers interviewed  
17 in his supplements.

18 Q Anything -- and I have all the transcripts, so I  
19 don't need to go through every single one. But anything  
20 about the interviews that stand out? Obviously, you're  
21 getting to talk to these people in their native language.  
22 Did you have any sort of concerns about whether they were  
23 being forthcoming or not or anything like that? Can you  
24 give me your general impressions of these interviews?

25 A Well, after we start reviewing video footage,



1 after we conducted the first initial interviews, we got  
2 some information that was -- that wasn't accurate what  
3 they were providing us, and then when we interviewed them  
4 again to confront them on certain video footage we found,  
5 we learned new information that was consistent with the  
6 video surveillance that we viewed.

7 Q So what do you mean? what kind of information  
8 were they not giving you at the beginning?

9 A So I don't remember the person's name right now  
10 off the top of my head. The one -- the individual who  
11 gave the helmet and the traffic vest to Juan  
12 Molina-Salles, certain information he was providing to us  
13 during the initial interview wasn't correct. It wasn't  
14 accurate after reviewing the video surveillance with his  
15 interaction with Mr. Salles after Deputy Hartwick was  
16 struck.

17 Q Okay.

18 A There was other instances that I personally  
19 noted when we were getting initial information, like their  
20 name, date of birth, and they would tell us where they  
21 came -- where they're from originally, where they were  
22 born. The accent from my personal experience didn't match  
23 where they were coming from. They would say they were  
24 from Puerto Rico, but the accent didn't match when they  
25 spoke Spanish. So that kind of -- that kind of alerted me

1 in a way. Afterwards we found out they weren't being  
2 truthful with us. They weren't from Puerto Rico. They  
3 were from South America.

4 Q Okay. And where are you from?

5 A My parents are from -- they were born in Cuba.

6 Q Okay. So you are able to sort of note and  
7 determine various accents in the Spanish language just  
8 based on your own sort of upbringing and cultural  
9 experience?

10 A Yes, ma'am, especially where I grew up. Up  
11 north, there was a lot of different people from  
12 different -- you know, Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico,  
13 Cuba and South America. They just have different accents.  
14 Different words they use mean different things.

15 Q Okay. So is it fair to say you had a suspicion  
16 that the Archer Western workers that you were interviewing  
17 were giving misinformation about their identification and  
18 sort of their nationality?

19 A I would say just nationality and where they were  
20 saying they were from based on their accent. I didn't --  
21 at the time, I didn't even know their names were also  
22 fake.

23 Q Sure. And I'm just asking for your impression;  
24 so whatever they are, they are. Did it seem that they  
25 were trying to, like, evade what actually happened in the

1 accident, or were they concerned about consequences for  
2 themselves for immigration purposes? Does that make  
3 sense?

4 A Uh-huh.

5 Q I'm trying to understand how they were being  
6 dishonest, whether it was about what they say happened or  
7 sort of about their own status?

8 A I think it was about both. It was a little bit  
9 of both.

10 Q Did they seem hesitant and scared?

11 A I would say hesitant. I don't know scared.  
12 Hesitant for sure.

13 Q Okay. Were there any higher-ups from Archer  
14 western around, like any supervisors or anything like that  
15 watching them be interviewed by the police?

16 A No, not that I'm aware of.

17 Q Okay. Did they -- did they get asked any  
18 questions about any, like, Archer western policies or  
19 anything like that in terms of who their supervisors were?

20 A They were asked questions about policies and  
21 training in regard to operating machinery but not  
22 supervisors, not that I remember.

23 Q Okay. In the interview that you conducted on  
24 your own of Allan Amador -- is that right?

25 A Yes, ma'am.

1 Q How was it that came about that you went to  
2 conduct that interview?

3 A Well, we found out -- reading the synopsis in my  
4 report, we found out that Juan sent messages to him after  
5 the incident occurred requesting for Allan to pick him up,  
6 and that's how we decided to go interview Allan so we can  
7 obtain information of what was spoken about on the phone  
8 with Juan.

9 Q And was he living with Juan at the time?

10 A From my understanding, they were roommates at  
11 the time.

12 Q Who went to interview Mr. Amador?

13 A I did. I don't remember if someone was with me.

14 Q And no body-worn camera at that time, right?

15 A No. Huh-uh.

16 Q Did you audio record the interview or video or  
17 both?

18 A I did audio. I submitted it into -- I  
19 transferred the audio to CDR, and it was placed in  
20 evidence.

21 Q I have the transcript. Any particular reason  
22 you did audio and not video?

23 A No. I can't remember at the time if our  
24 body-worn cameras were issued. Maybe they were. But  
25 using an audio recorder was our normal practice forever

1 until this new technology came out with body-worn cameras.  
2 It took a little bit, I guess, for all of us to get used  
3 to start using it and not the audio recorder. I've seen  
4 myself use it a lot more now, body-worn camera for certain  
5 interviews. So that would be the reason why I didn't use  
6 it back then. The recorder was just -- it's always on  
7 you. It's quick, turn it on.

8 Q And you conducted that interview entirely in  
9 Spanish, right?

10 A Yes, ma'am.

11 Q And then I have a transcript, which is in  
12 English. Did you translate that or somebody else?

13 A No, somebody else did.

14 Q Do you know who did the translation? Is that  
15 somebody in your department?

16 A No. I believe if -- I was looking at the report  
17 earlier at the bottom. whichever company it's sent to.  
18 Marialba Baez. I don't know if that's the person.  
19 whoever did the transcription when we send it out, they're  
20 the ones that translate it to English.

21 Q I didn't know if that was somebody -- it just  
22 says State of Florida, County of Hillsborough. I didn't  
23 know if that was somebody in law enforcement.

24 A Yeah, I don't know.

25 Q You're not sure.

1           A     I'm not sure.

2           Q     What do you remember about Mr. Amador? I have  
3 the transcript. I don't need to go through every detail,  
4 but what do you remember about his demeanor?

5           A     He was shocked, and he didn't want to  
6 participate in whatever Juan was telling him to do. He  
7 basically told him to be truthful with law enforcement and  
8 to turn himself in.

9           Q     Okay. And it looks like -- it also looks like  
10 from the transcript he described Juan as nervous. Does  
11 that sound right?

12          A     May have. I didn't read that part of the  
13 transcription. If it says it there --

14          Q     Yeah. He said because of his nerves.

15          A     Uh-huh.

16          Q     Was he nervous talking to you?

17          A     No. Allan? He wasn't nervous.

18          Q     Okay. And he showed you his phone and the  
19 messages and all of those things, right?

20          A     Yes, ma'am. I took a picture of it. I think I  
21 attached it to the report, yeah.

22          Q     Okay. And then basically, the sort of gist of  
23 the interview was that Juan called him and said, hey, can  
24 you pick me up, and he said he wasn't going to come and  
25 pick him up?

1 A Right.

2 Q And that was --

3 A He wasn't going to get involved in it.

4 Q Yeah. One second. It was a little unclear from  
5 the transcript. He's playing audio messages for you. Was  
6 Juan leaving him audio messages, or were they talking on  
7 the phone?

8 A No. They had -- if he was listening to  
9 messages, it had to be leaving audio messages. Because he  
10 was already I believe in custody at the time when I went  
11 to go interview him.

12 Q Right, but it's just a little confusing from the  
13 transcript. He said Juan called him on the phone, but  
14 then the transcript says audio message playing. So did  
15 Juan also leave him voicemails, or was he sending him  
16 voice memos? That's what I didn't understand.

17 A If I remember correctly, they were voice memos.  
18 Yeah.

19 Q Okay. And are they -- they're captured on the  
20 recording because he was playing them to you while the  
21 recording was going?

22 A Yes, ma'am. Yeah.

23 Q Okay. At first, it sounds like Allan kept  
24 telling him send me the location. Did he want Juan to  
25 send him the pin of his phone or something?

1           A     Yeah. There was a conversation about where his  
2 location was so that -- yeah, basically see what his  
3 location was so he can get picked up.

4           Q     Okay. And at some point he talked to his -- he  
5 also talked to Juan's brother in Honduras I assume?

6           A     I don't remember that off the top of my head  
7 right now. Is that what it says in the transcript?

8           Q     The transcript, yeah, said his brother called  
9 me, and I asked his brother to tell him to turn himself  
10 in.

11          A     Okay.

12          Q     Any other interviews that you conducted yourself  
13 other than this interview with Mr. Amador?

14          A     No, ma'am. That's the only one I did by myself.

15          Q     Okay. And that looks like it was almost two  
16 days later. So it was the 24th in the morning. Did  
17 you -- when you got to the apartment, did Allan show you  
18 Juan's room or anything like that? Anything that you can  
19 tell me about the apartment?

20          A     No, ma'am. The interview was actually outside  
21 next to my car.

22          Q     Did you ever go inside the apartment?

23          A     No.

24          Q     Did you participate ever in any search of Juan's  
25 apartment or anything like that?



1 A No, ma'am.

2 Q Do you know if one of those took place?

3 A Not that I'm aware of.

4 Q And it looks like he basically talked to him  
5 like two or three times, like 1 a.m., 2 a.m., and 3 a.m.  
6 Does that sound right?

7 A Yeah. He talked to him a few times, yeah.

8 Q Okay. And I was just trying to find the place  
9 about the nerves. Just give me one second to look at the  
10 transcript. He said -- he says, I mean, he was nervous.  
11 You said, Yes. Well, I think he was nervous. You said,  
12 Yes. He said, He was mostly nervous. Then he called me  
13 and everything. He asked me to pick him up, and I said  
14 no. I told him I wouldn't pick him up.

15 So he does -- he at least describes Juan as  
16 sounding nervous?

17 A Correct.

18 Q And did you ever have any interaction with  
19 Mr. Molina-Salles at all?

20 A Yes. I was in the translation for the interview  
21 with Corporal Syers.

22 Q For his interview?

23 A Yeah. Uh-huh.

24 Q And so -- but again, was that you translating  
25 the same kind of way we talked about it before? So you

1 were translating but sometimes always asking your own  
2 questions?

3 A I don't remember specifically if I was asking my  
4 own questions, but it was translating in that sense of  
5 Corporal Syers asking a question. I'll translate it to  
6 Mr. Salles. Mr. Salles would tell me the answer, and I'll  
7 translate it back to Mr. -- Corporal Syers. That was the  
8 majority of the interview, yeah.

9 Q Okay. And did you read him his Miranda rights?

10 A He had to have been. His rights, he wasn't free  
11 to leave. He was in a room, the interview room, so yes.

12 Q But do you remember you specifically doing that?

13 A Off the top of my head right now, no. I would  
14 have to view the report to see what it says.

15 Q What do you -- that's something if you're  
16 translating, do you read them -- is there a Spanish form?

17 A There is a Spanish form. There are times when I  
18 read it. There are also times when I have them read the  
19 form out loud to me in Spanish so we can make sure that  
20 they understand because they're reading it for themselves  
21 as well.

22 Q Okay. Obviously, we have audio and video  
23 recording of the interview.

24 A Yeah. That would be captured, absolutely.

25 Q What do you remember about Mr. Molina-Salles'

1 demeanor during that interview?

2 A There were times when he became emotional,  
3 started crying. Really, that's the only thing that stands  
4 out that I remember off the top of my head right now.

5 Q Was he cooperative?

6 A In the sense of providing us information?  
7 Cooperative in that way?

8 Q Yeah, in answering questions.

9 A Yeah. He was cooperative answering questions.

10 Q Okay. And you said he got emotional at times.  
11 Did he talk to you sort of about any of the reasons why he  
12 hid or anything like that that you can recall? I know the  
13 transcript speaks for itself.

14 A I can't remember. I can't remember specifically  
15 what he said in regards to that right now. I have no  
16 memory.

17 Q Do you remember learning anything about his  
18 immigration status during that interview?

19 A No. Just that he's from Honduras. Yeah, that's  
20 all I can remember.

21 Q Okay. And by the time the interview had taken  
22 place, they list kind of like midday on the 23rd, right?

23 A It was definitely during the day, yeah.

24 Q So he had -- I know everyone had been awake at  
25 that point for many, many, many hours, right?

1           A     I know I was. I can't speak for everyone else  
2 because I don't know when certain people got on scene or  
3 what rest they had, but definitely I was.

4           Q     Right. So you got on scene -- what time did you  
5 go to work that day?

6           A     Normal time was 7 or 8 o'clock.

7           Q     So you would have been 7 or 8 on the 22nd, and  
8 this is kind of mid afternoon on the 23rd that this is  
9 happening, and you didn't get any sleep?

10          A     No, ma'am.

11          Q     After this day and then the day on the 23rd  
12 interviewing Mr. Amador, did you have any other  
13 involvement?

14          A     No, not that I remember.

15          Q     Did you attend any briefings or meetings in your  
16 department or the State Attorney's office about it?

17          A     I attended meetings probably months after the  
18 fact, I think, but I don't remember with who or why right  
19 now to be honest with you. My involvement was just to  
20 attend. I didn't speak or anything. I was just there  
21 just making sure if something needed to be translated.

22          Q     Do you think you had a meeting in the Sheriff's  
23 office or with the State?

24          A     No, it was somewhere in Tampa after the fact. I  
25 don't remember. I think it had to do with -- I don't know

1 if it was Immigration. I don't remember. It was  
2 something to do with the federal government.

3 Q There was a couple of things. So it's possible  
4 that it was an investigation into Archer Western?

5 A It could be, yeah.

6 Q Does that sound right?

7 A Yeah, probably.

8 Q Do you know Special Agent Lopez, Javier Lopez?  
9 Does that name sound familiar at all?

10 A No, ma'am.

11 Q There was also a civil case in this matter where  
12 Deputy Hartwick's family filed suit against Archer  
13 Western --

14 A Oh, okay.

15 Q -- and Mr. Molina-Salles. So there was some  
16 depositions there. Did you participate in that in any  
17 way?

18 A Nothing, no.

19 Q So the meeting that you're talking about is a  
20 federal law enforcement kind of investigation potentially  
21 either into Archer Western or maybe into Mr. Molina-Salles  
22 and the identification?

23 A Yeah. I don't remember what it was for, but I  
24 do remember it was a federal government agency.

25 Q Somewhere in Tampa?

1 A Somewhere in Tampa, yeah.

2 Q Did you follow the case at all on the news,  
3 learn anything about my client or his immigration status  
4 or Archer western or anything like that?

5 A No, ma'am. Huh-uh.

6 Q Did you have any experience with this  
7 construction detail at Archer western, this off-duty that  
8 a lot of officers were working?

9 A No, ma'am.

10 Q Did you ever work the off-duty construction  
11 detail?

12 A No. Huh-uh.

13 Q Did you know Deputy Hartwick well?

14 A I never met him.

15 MS. DELIBERATO: Okay. I don't believe I have  
16 any further questions.

17 THE DEPONENT: Say again. You froze on my end.  
18 I don't know if you were asking a question.

19 MS. DELIBERATO: I don't have questions, but my  
20 co-counsel may. She is muted. If she does, she will  
21 just have to unmute herself.

22 MS. BLAQUIERE: Yeah.

23 EXAMINATION

24 BY MS. BLAQUIERE:

25 Q Did you say which agency it might have been

1 doing the investigation?

2 A The federal agency?

3 Q Yes.

4 A No, I don't remember. I don't even know if they  
5 were doing an investigation. Like I said, it was just a  
6 meeting. I don't remember the whole context of it or why  
7 we were there at the time. I know if I was involved in  
8 this case, it was most likely because of translation  
9 purposes.

10 MS. BLAQUIERE: Okay. Thank you.

11 MS. CONSTANTINE: I don't have any questions.

12 MS. DELIBERATO: I have one follow-up. I'm  
13 sorry, Liz. I've been doing this all afternoon. My  
14 brain is fried.

15 EXAMINATION

16 BY MS. DELIBERATO:

17 Q Your law enforcement experience, how long have  
18 you been with PCSO?

19 A I got hired here March 21st, 2016.

20 Q Okay. And then Brevard before that?

21 A Yes, ma'am.

22 Q Okay. I did do that. I wanted to make sure.  
23 My brain is totally, totally fried.

24 A No worries.

25 MS. DELIBERATO: Wonderful. I don't have any

1 further questions and neither does Ms. Constantine.  
2 You're all set.

3 (Deposition concludes at 3:26 p.m.)  
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1 COUNTY OF PINELLAS )

2 STATE OF FLORIDA )

3 CERTIFICATE OF OATH

4

5 I, the undersigned authority, certify that  
6 ROBERTO SOSA personally appeared before me by ZOOM  
7 videoconference and was duly sworn.

8 witness my hand and official seal this 24th day  
9 of September, 2024.

10

11

Tamara M. Pacheco

12

Tamara M. Pacheco, RPR  
COMMISSION # 474485  
EXPIRES: March 30, 2028

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ERRATA SHEET

IN THE CASE OF: STATE OF FL V. JUAN MOLINA-SALLES  
NAME OF DEPONENT: ROBERTO SOSA  
CASE NUMBER: 22-09348CFANO

Please read the transcript of your deposition.  
If you feel you need to make corrections, please note on  
this page. DO NOT mark on the transcript itself.  
Sign and date the transcript below.

PAGE	LINE	ERROR/AMENDMENT	REASON FOR CHANGE

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CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

STATE OF FLORIDA )

COUNTY OF PINELLAS )

I, Tamara M. Pacheco, certify that I was authorized to and did stenographically report the Deposition of ROBERTO SOSA; that a review of the transcript was requested; and that the transcript is a true and complete record of my stenographic notes.

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

Tamara M. Pacheco

Tamara M. Pacheco, RPR