

ZOOM VIDEOCONFERENCE APPEARANCES

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EXHIBITS

(No exhibits were marked for identification.)

1 WHEREUPON,

2 AARON BEREZNAY

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

5 EXAMINATION

6 BY MS. DELIBERATO:

7 Q Good morning.

8 A Good morning.

9 Q It's Detective Bereznyay. Is that correct?

10 A Yes.

11 Q My name is Nichole Blaquiere, and with Ms. Maria
12 DeLiberato, we have the privilege of representing Mr. Juan
13 Molina-Salles in this case. Mr. Nathan Vonderheide and
14 Ms. Constantine, they are running late, and we're starting
15 without them. They said that's fine, so we're going to
16 get going because we have about twenty more to go today.
17 okay?

18 A Okay.

19 Q Do you have a copy of your report with you
20 today?

21 A I do.

22 Q Okay. Just let us know if you need to review it
23 to answer any of the questions. Just let us know that's
24 what you're referring to in advance.

25 A Okay.

1 Q I imagine this isn't your first deposition
2 either, correct?

3 A No, it's not.

4 Q Awesome. So you know just to not use uh-huh and
5 say yes or no. If you don't know something, just let us
6 know.

7 A Okay.

8 Q Can you please state your full name and title
9 for the record.

10 A Detective Aaron Bereznay.

11 Q And where are you working?

12 A I work for the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office
13 in the Robbery-Homicide Unit.

14 Q How long have you worked for them?

15 A The Sheriff's office or in the Robbery-Homicide
16 Unit.

17 Q Both.

18 A I've been with the Sheriff's office for about
19 twelve-and-a-half years. I've been in the
20 Robbery-Homicide Unit for three.

21 Q Any experience prior to PCSO?

22 A No.

23 Q Okay. Any work complaints sustained against you
24 ever?

25 A No.

1 Q You did write a supplement in this case you
2 mentioned at the beginning, but do you have any
3 independent memory of this case as well?

4 A A little.

5 Q Okay. You said you have reviewed your report.
6 Do you need to amend it or anything before we get started?

7 A No.

8 Q Go ahead and tell me your involvement in your
9 case, and try to make it as linear as possible.

10 A I was called out to the area of Roosevelt
11 Boulevard and I-275 on September 22nd, 2022. I got there.
12 Shortly after, I was told that there was two semi-trucks
13 on the shoulder of the road which may have video. I went
14 and talked to each driver. They confirmed that there was
15 video on the roadway while they were out there.

16 At that point, I contacted our Video Forensic
17 unit to -- the drivers weren't able to access it, so I
18 contacted our video unit and they responded. While we
19 were waiting for them to come get the video, I was told
20 that one of our Digital Forensic Unit people had already
21 obtained the video, and I submitted that video as
22 evidence.

23 Q Okay. Who did you obtain the video from? Do
24 you recall?

25 A Who did I get it from as far as like Archer?

1 Q How it manifested.

2 A I think it was Jody Situllo (phonetic).

3 Q And what did Jody hand you? A flash drive?

4 A I think it was a USB, yeah.

5 Q Okay. Did you yourself do any of the
6 downloading of the material onto the flash drive?

7 A No.

8 Q Now, was this both semi-trucks or the red one or
9 the white one?

10 A It was both.

11 Q Did you go over the video with either of the
12 truck drivers that day?

13 A No. Well, very cursory. I was looking at it on
14 such a small monitor that I couldn't see a whole lot. The
15 monitor inside the thing was too really small to get any
16 details. So we just downloaded it, and I gave it to the
17 case agent.

18 Q Okay. So you might have talked to either
19 Mr. McLean, who drove one of the semis, or Mr. Francey who
20 drive one of the other semis?

21 A I spoke to them, and they just basically
22 confirmed to me that they had video. Then they weren't
23 able to download it, so then I got somebody started who
24 had the ability to download it.

25 Q Okay. So maybe just to clarify my question --

1 and my apologies -- so this is my phone. When you were --
2 after it was downloaded or even before it was downloaded
3 -- yeah, after it was downloaded, did you go over any of
4 the video that was on the flash drive with either of
5 those --

6 A No. No.

7 Q Okay. I'm going to just finish the question --
8 with either of those civilians, Mr. McLean or Mr. Francey?

9 A No. No, I did not.

10 Q Okay. And then did you watch the videos on the
11 semi-truck before it was placed on the flash drives?

12 A Some of it. Not in its entirety. Just a little
13 bit of it.

14 Q What did you watch? From which -- can you
15 identify from which vehicle, please?

16 A I think it was the red one more than the white
17 one. I just saw traffic coming by. Again, the screen was
18 so small and such low resolution in the darkness, you
19 couldn't see much on that tiny screen.

20 Q Okay. In the red semi-truck video, did you see
21 the front-loader in question --

22 A I don't recall. Yeah, I don't recall seeing it.

23 Q Okay. And you're doing great on your answers,
24 Mr. Berezney. Just do your best, please, to wait for the
25 end of my question for Tammy.

1 A Okay.

2 Q So did you talk to any of the lay witnesses on
3 scene besides Mr. McLean or Mr. Francey?

4 A I did not.

5 Q Okay. What else did you do besides take the USB
6 flash drive from Jody Situllo (phonetic)?

7 A At one point, I think I sat out by a car that we
8 thought could potentially be Mr. Molina-Salles' vehicle
9 for a bit, and then I was called back.

10 Q Okay. Yeah, I think I read in Deputy Mitchell's
11 report, he referenced that you were requesting his Honda
12 CRV to be sent to the Forensic Services Division to be
13 processed. Do you recall that?

14 A Yes.

15 Q Okay. And then it looks like it was impounded
16 and not sent to the Forensic Services?

17 A Right.

18 Q What was the basis of the change in where the
19 CRV went?

20 A That I don't know.

21 Q Okay. Was anything revealed in the CRV that you
22 recall?

23 A No. I never went inside. I never really looked
24 into it.

25 Q I think in your report you mentioned you got a

1 call from Corporal Syers about -- first line maybe in your
2 narrative. You indicated you got a call from Corporal
3 Syers about a deceased person. Was he more specific than
4 that on the phone?

5 A No.

6 Q He didn't say it was a deceased deputy?

7 A I don't recall. He may have.

8 Q Okay. What was that conversation like? Do you
9 recall?

10 A We don't get a lot of information. Generally,
11 it's respond here, this is where it's at.

12 Q Okay.

13 A We usually don't get a tremendous amount of
14 information until we get there.

15 Q And how long did you stay on scene that day?

16 A Maybe -- I don't recall exactly, but maybe
17 somewhere in the realm of maybe eight -- on scene maybe
18 eight to ten hours.

19 Q So you stayed through the night and into the
20 next morning?

21 A Yes.

22 Q Is that your normal shift?

23 A No.

24 Q What's your regular shift?

25 A My regular shift is 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.

1 Q And had you worked that day already before being
2 called out the evening of September 22nd?

3 A I believe -- I believe so. I don't remember. I
4 work Tuesday to Friday. I can't remember what day of the
5 week that was.

6 Q Okay. Had you gotten any sleep that evening
7 when you got called out? Do you remember?

8 A I think I had gotten maybe an hour.

9 Q Okay. Do you know -- did you know Deputy
10 Michael Hartwick?

11 A Yes.

12 Q How close were you guys?

13 A We were friendly. We were friendly at work.

14 Q Any out-of-work relationship?

15 A No.

16 Q How long had you known about him and been
17 friendly with him on the job?

18 A How long had I known him?

19 Q Yeah.

20 A Probably somewhere between six, seven, eight
21 years.

22 Q Did he have any concerns about the Archer
23 western detail and its safety?

24 A I didn't know anything about it.

25 Q Okay. I mean, you talked to him in the past,

1 right?

2 A He never spoke anything about that detail.

3 Q Okay. Were you there when Juan Molina-Salles
4 was arrested the next morning on September 23rd?

5 A I don't believe so. I was working, but I don't
6 believe I was on scene anymore.

7 Q Okay. Did you have any body camera on you that
8 evening while you were working the scene for Deputy
9 Hartwick's death?

10 A No.

11 Q Let me just doublecheck.

12 (Pause in deposition.)

13 Q Did you have any other duties on scene that day?

14 A No.

15 Q And did you direct specialist Kristi Klotz about
16 some of the processing that you wanted done on the Honda
17 CRV?

18 A I don't believe so, no.

19 Q Okay. Did you have anything to do with writing
20 the warrant for the front-loader --

21 A No.

22 Q -- or for the Honda CRV?

23 A No.

24 Q Anything else about this case that you recall
25 that we haven't gone over already?

1 A No.

2 Q Oh, were you involved in the civil lawsuit?

3 A No.

4 Q And have you done any research about this case
5 or Mr. Juan Molina-Salles independent of what you did that
6 evening?

7 A No.

8 Q And have you been a party to any internal
9 meetings about this case?

10 A Not that I can recall.

11 Q Have you understood all my questions today?

12 A Yes.

13 Q Have you been able to answer them accurately and
14 to the best of your ability today?

15 A Yes.

16 MS. BLAQUIERE: I don't have anymore questions.
17 I don't see any state attorneys to see if they have
18 questions yet, so we are good to go. Do you want to
19 read or waive about whether or not your deposition
20 answers are accurate?

21 THE DEPONENT: No.

22 MS. BLAQUIERE: So you'll waive?

23 THE DEPONENT: Yes.

24 (Deposition concludes at 10:47 a.m.)

25

1 COUNTY OF PINELLAS)

2 STATE OF FLORIDA)

3 CERTIFICATE OF OATH

4

5 I, the undersigned authority, certify that AARON
6 BEREZNAY personally appeared before me and was duly sworn.

7 witness my hand and official seal this 13th day
8 of January, 2025.

9

10

Tamara M. Pacheco

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

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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 AARON BEREZNAVY; 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