DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA + + + + + ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE AND CANNABIS BOARD + + + + + MEETING

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IN THE MATTER OF:	:		
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Focus DC, LLC	:		
t/a Focus DC	:		
1348 H Street NE	:	Summary	Action
Retailer CR - ANC	6A :	Hearing	
License No. 118015	:		
Case #24-251-00001	:		
	:		
(Assault With a	:		
Deadly Weapon)	:		

Wednesday February 7, 2024

The Alcoholic Beverage and Cannabis Board met via WebEx videoconference, Chairperson Donovan W. Anderson presiding.

PRESENT:

DONOVAN W. ANDERSON, Chairperson SILAS GRANT, JR., Member JAMES SHORT, JR., Member

ALSO PRESENT:

JOSE ORELLANA, DC ABCA Staff NEB ALI, Licensee JAMES WIGGINS, Licensee ANDREW KLINE, Licensee Counsel CAMERON MIXON, Licensee Counsel ANTHONY CELO, DC OAG INVESTIGATOR MARK RUIZ

1	P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S
2	(1:39 p.m.)
3	CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: The next case
4	on our calendar is a Summary Suspension Hearing
5	for Case No. 24-251-00001, Focus DC, License No.
6	118015.
7	Good afternoon, Mr. Orellana. Can you
8	please elevate the rights of the licensee and the
9	government in this case?
10	MR. ORELLANA: Sure thing. Andrew
11	Kline, your access has been elevated. Anthony
12	Celo, your access has been elevated. Cameron
13	Mixon, your access has been elevated. James
14	Wiggins, your access has been elevated.
15	Investigator Mark Ruiz, your access has been
16	elevated. Neb Ali, your access has been
17	elevated.
18	MR. KLINE: Can you hear me?
19	CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Yes, we can
20	hear you, Mr. Kline. It looks like you're in
21	vacation land somewhere. Maybe that's why you're
22	unable to hear us. You're still you're
23	enjoying your background says that you're in
24	vacation land, so that's probably why you can't
25	hear us, but we can hear you though.
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1	If you speak, I believe we because
2	I saw that the frame light up Mr so, can you
3	hear me, Mr. Kline?
4	Mr. Mixon, are you able to text Mr.
5	Kline and communicate with him? Because
6	MR. MIXON: Probably should
7	MR. KLINE: One minute.
8	MR. MIXON: We heard you.
9	CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: No, I think the
10	issue was that he said he couldn't hear us.
11	MR. MIXON: Oh, the other way.
12	CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Yes. You can
13	mute your line, please. Thank you.
14	(Pause.)
15	MR. KLINE: I've signed in from
16	another device. If you would elevate me on that
17	one? Hopefully, I'll be able to hear you.
18	CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Mr. Orellana,
19	can you please elevate Mr. Kline on thank you.
20	Thank you.
21	MR. KLINE: I have been on meetings
22	all week and have not had any problems.
23	CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: But I still
24	can't see you, Mr. Kline. No, I cannot see you.
25	I can hear you, but I can't see you. Okay. All
I	u de la constante de

1 right. I can see you. 2 You know, Mr. Kline, I cannot believe 3 you came back from vacation that quickly. 4 (Laughter.) 5 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: All right. Good afternoon, everyone. 6 7 MR. KLINE: Good afternoon. 8 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: All right. Let 9 me have the parties identify themselves for the 10 record. Let's start with the government. 11 MR. CELO: Good afternoon, Members of 12 the Board. Assistant Attorney General Anthony 13 Celo, A-N-T-H-O-N-Y, C-E-L-O, here on behalf of 14 the District. 15 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Mr. Celo, if 16 this case goes to a hearing, does the government have any witnesses they wish to call? 17 Can you 18 please identify them just for the record? 19 MR. CELO: It would be Investigator 20 Mark Ruiz. 21 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Mr. Ruiz, can 2.2 you identify yourself for the record, please? 23 MR. RUIZ: Yes. ABCA Investigator Mark Ruiz, M-A-R-K, R-U-I-Z. 24 25 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Good afternoon,

1	sir.
2	MR. RUIZ: Good afternoon.
3	CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Mr. Kline, can
4	you please identify yourself for the record and
5	who's with you?
6	MR. KLINE: Yes. Good afternoon,
7	Chairman Anderson and Members of the Board.
8	Andrew Kline on behalf of the licensee. I'm with
9	the Veritas Law Firm.
10	With me is Cameron Mixon also an
11	attorney with the Veritas Law Firm, and then
12	principal of the client, Neb Ali, and then we
13	also have Mr. James Wiggins who will be heading
14	up security.
15	CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Alright so,
16	thank you.
17	Mr. Mixon, can you please identify
18	yourself for the record, please?
19	MR. MIXON: Good afternoon. Cameron
20	Mixon, Attorney with the Veritas Law Firm,
21	counsel for the licensee. That's C-A-M-E-R-O-N,
22	M-I-X-O-N.
23	CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Good afternoon,
24	sir.
25	Mr. Ali, can you please identify
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1	yourself for the record by spelling and stating
2	your name?
3	MR. ALI: Good afternoon, everyone.
4	It's Neb Ali, N-E-B-I-U, last name Ali, A-L-I.
5	CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Mr. Ali, do you
6	have a camera you can turn on, sir?
7	MR. ALI: Sure. Give me one
8	CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Thank you.
9	MR. ALI: It should be on right now.
10	CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: All right.
11	Thank you, Mr. Ali.
12	And I saw that you were the two
13	gentlemen who are there. I heard Mr. Wiggins, so
14	can Mr. Wiggins please identify himself for the
15	record by spelling and stating his name?
16	MR. WIGGINS: James Wiggins,
17	Founder/Director Sirius Dignitary Security
18	Service.
19	CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Now, spell your
20	name. Spell your name, please, sir.
21	MR. WIGGINS: J-A-M-E-S, W-I-G-G-I-N-
22	S.
23	CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Thank you, sir.
24	All right.
25	Good afternoon, everyone. This is a
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1 Summary Suspension Hearing. And I guess for the 2 Summary Suspension Hearing, are the parties ready to move forward? 3 4 MR. CELO: There are preliminary 5 matters, Mr. Chair, specifically an Offer in Compromise for Board approval which has been --6 7 it's resubmitted. CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: All right. 8 So 9 what I'll ask then for you to do is then, sir, why don't you tell us why we're here, what 10 11 brought this action, and then you can summarize. You don't have to read the entire 12 13 Offer in Compromise, but you can summarize it by 14 putting the salient details on the record, and 15 then we'll move on from there. MR. CELO: 16 Thank you, Mr. Chair. In 17 brief, this summary suspension involves an 18 incident which occurred on New Year's Eve --19 well, the morning of New Year's Day in which a fight broke out involving the licensee, Focus DC 20 Security, and some patrons. 21 2.2 The fight spilled out into the street 23 as the patrons were ejected from the 2.4 establishment. At some point, the security, one 25 of the security guards broke away from the fight

and pulled out a concealed pistol.

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One of the patrons appears to have gone to a vehicle and retrieved a pistol of his own from the trunk of that vehicle. The fight can be seen on camera, but it moves down the street.

7 And once the fight does get outside of 8 camera range, there are two distinct bursts of 9 gunfire, and those shots that was fired injured a 10 separate innocent bystander who had just exited 11 the establishment.

Following the shooting, there were issues surrounding what the government alleges and what is contested to be a cover-up of the facts, including instructing the security guard to go home and not wait for MPD who arrived on the scene within minutes of the incident.

18 In terms of the Offer in Compromise,
19 in summary, the Offer in Compromise contains five
20 provisions.

The first provision is that a security plan be implemented with this establishment. The security plan contains 25 distinct requirements, which I will not go through each of them right here.

I will note for the record that it is 1 2 my understanding that the licensee has already submitted the security plan for Board approval, 3 and it appears that the security plan does 4 5 comport to the terms contained within the OIC, and it is also my understanding that the security 6 7 plan has been reviewed and signed by what appears to be all current employees of the licensee. 8 9 In addition to the security plan, before the suspension is listed, the licensee 10 11 shall ensure that all security cameras are in 12 working order and that footage from all cameras 13 can be saved and maintained for at least 30 days. Before the Board lifts the suspension, 14 15 the licensee shall pay fines totaling \$6,000 to 16 include a \$1,000 fine for using the establishment in an unlawful or disorderly purpose; under D.C. 17 18 Code 25-823A2, a \$1,000 fine for hiring armed 19 security personnel who were not appointed by the 20 mayor as special police officers or as a security 21 officer with the security officer's management 2.2 branch; under D.C. Code 25-823A1, a \$2,000 fine 23 for interfering with an ongoing investigation by concealing evidence; under 25-283A5C, a \$1,000 24 25 fine for illegally causing the firearm to be in

1 an establishment that serves alcohol in violation 2 of D.C. Code 7-2509.077, which would be enforced under 25-823A1; and finally a \$1,000 fine for 3 interfering with an investigation by providing 4 5 false or misleading statements under 25-823A5D. Fourth, before the suspension is 6 7 listed, a compliance walkthrough shall occur with 8 an ABCA investigator. And fifth, the suspension 9 shall lift once all of the previously mentioned requirements have been met. 10 11 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: And I quess I'm 12 trying to find out just how is it that this Offer 13 in Compromise addresses the issue at hand? 14 MR. CELO: So primarily, Mr. Chair, the District believes that this Offer in 15 16 Compromise addresses the issues at hand because 17 of the exacting nature of the security plan. As 18 I said, I won't go through every one of the 25 19 requirements, but it does require that there be 20 no firearms in the establishment, including 21 through employees. 2.2 It requires that all patrons of all 23 genders are subject to pat-downs at the relevant 24 hours, specifically after 10 p.m., and follow-up 25 wanding based on the resulting, of the results of

Neal R. Gross and Co., Inc. Washington DC the pat-downs.

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It requires specific protocols for handling violent incidents, for cooperating and contacting the Metropolitan Police Department, for handling weapons or violent incidents on the scene.

7 It requires that security pass 8 criminal background checks, and it does require 9 specific protocols for operating security, minimum numbers of security, and other methods of 10 11 operation that if the security plan is followed, we believe will secure the safety of District 12 13 residents, visitors, and the community. 14 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: All right. 15 Thank you, sir. 16 Any questions by any Board members of the government and the Offer in Compromise? 17 18 Go ahead, Mr. Short. 19 MEMBER SHORT: The only comment I'd 20 like to make is, I find it quite disturbing about a gun being in the location of this licensee's 21

establishment, and more troubling that a securityperson would have a conceal.

I hope and pray that we don't have any more incidents of this. Luckily no one was

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1 killed, although someone was wounded, and the 2 Board duly notes that. Hopefully, this OIC will be complied with, and that we will not see this 3 licensee and certainly anything like this ever 4 5 again. I wish them well, and hopefully, 6 7 they'll be a successful business there on 8th 8 Street, but, again, I'll consider it to be a very 9 troubled trespass of public safety and of the 10 community having guns unpermitted to be so in 11 establishments that are regulated by the District of Columbia, ABCA Board. 12 13 Thank you, Mr. Chair. 14 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Thank you, Mr. 15 Short. Any other questions? 16 MEMBER GRANT: None from me, Mr. 17 Chair. 18 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Okay. All 19 right. Thank you, Mr. Grant. 20 Mr. Kline, it's my understanding 21 there's an Offer in Compromise. And Mr. Celo 2.2 summarized the terms of the agreement. Is this 23 your understanding, sir, of the Offer in 24 Compromise? 25 MR. KLINE: Yes, it is, Mr.

Chairperson.

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2 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: And is your 3 client aware that by accepting an Offer in 4 Compromise that they're giving their right to a 5 hearing? MR. KLINE: 6 Yes. 7 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: And is your 8 client also aware that by accepting an Offer in 9 Compromise, they give up their right to appeal 10 this matter? 11 MR. KLINE: Yes. 12 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: All right. I, 13 then, will make a motion that the Offer in 14 Compromise be accepted. Is there a second? 15 MEMBER SHORT: Mr. Short, I second. 16 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Mr. Short has seconded the motion. We'll have a roll call 17 18 vote. 19 Mr. Short? 20 MEMBER SHORT: Mr. Short, I agree. 21 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Mr. Grant? 2.2 (No audible response.) 23 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: And Mr. 24 Anderson, I agree. The matter, therefore, has 25 passed 3-0.

I would like to thank the parties for
 coming to an agreement and wish you well. Thank
 you very much.

MR. KLINE:

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

5 And, Mr. Short, thanks for your 6 And I really hope I'm not before you comments. 7 again on a case involving a handgun. I think this is my fifth or sixth, and I just think it's 8 9 unfortunate what's happening in our society with 10 respect to the proliferation of weapons. So, 11 appreciate your comments and appreciate the Board 12 accepting the Offer in Compromise.

13 MEMBER SHORT: Thank you, Mr. Kline. 14 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: And because 15 this case is over, and I appreciate what you've 16 stated, Mr. Kline, and one of the unfortunate 17 things that we've been dealing with here in the 18 District of Columbia, it's weapons in 19 establishment.

And what the Board -- what's of concerning to the Board is how the licensee responds, what is it the licensee does to prevent this from happening, so if the licensee has done its best effort, if you have the proper security, if you have the proper equipment to ensure that

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Neal R. Gross and Co., Inc. Washington DC this doesn't get in the property, if -unfortunately, people are going to do certain things that we can't prevent, but as long as the licensee has done his part to ensure that its guests are safe, then the Board will take that into consideration.

And as long as the licensee doesn't cover it up because in the time I've been here as Chair, and I'm saying this more so to the licensee, more licensees get in trouble not because of the action itself. It is your response -- it's your response to it.

13 It is your response in trying to cover 14 it up. It's your response to say it didn't 15 happen or it's your response that I don't have a 16 camera, I don't have any camera, you don't turn 17 the video.

And that's how you get in trouble with the Board. It is your response. It's not for the underlying -- for the most part, it's not for the underlying action, and I hope you take that in consideration is that it's how you respond to when an incident occurs in your establishment, okay?

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MR. KLINE: Great. Thank you, Mr.

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2	CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: All right.
3	Thank you very much. Have a great day. Let me -
4	- well, let me close the record since we're now
5	at the end of the Board's business for the day.
6	All right. As Chairperson of the
7	Alcoholic Beverage and Cannabis Board for the
8	District of Columbia, and in accordance with
9	Title 3, Chapter 4 or 5 Office of Open
10	Government, I move that the ABC Board hold a
11	closed meeting on February 14th for the purpose
12	of discussing and hearing reports concerning
13	ongoing or planned investigations of alleged
14	criminal or civil misconduct or violations of law
15	or regulations and seeking legal advice from our
16	legal counsel, on the Board's investigative
17	agenda, legal agenda, and licensing agenda for
18	February 14th as published in the D.C. Register
19	on February 9th.
20	Is there a second?
21	MEMBER GRANT: I second that motion.
22	CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Mr. Grant has
23	seconded the motion. I will now take a roll call
24	vote and the motion before us now is that it's
25	been seconded.

1	Mr. Short?
2	MEMBER SHORT: Mr. Short, I agree.
3	CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Mr. Grant?
4	MEMBER GRANT: Mr. Grant, I agree.
5	CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Mr. Anderson,
6	I agree. As it appears that the motion has
7	passed, I hereby give notice that the ABC Board
8	will hold this closed meeting pursuant to the
9	Open Meetings Act. Notice will also be posted on
10	the ABC Board Hearing Room bulletin board, placed
11	on electronic calendar on ABCA's website, and
12	published in the D.C. Register in as timely a
13	manner as practical.
14	We are now adjourned for the day. I
15	would like to thank the members of the public who
16	participated in the hearing. And I want to thank
17	all the parties who participated in this hearing
18	today.
19	Have a great day. We are now
20	adjourned for the day. And the Board, your work
21	for the day is done. Thank you very much. Have
22	a great day. See you next week. All right,
23	then, bye-bye.
24	(Whereupon, the above-entitled matter
25	went off the record at 2:01 p.m.)

Α **A-L-I** 6:4 **A-N-T-H-O-N-Y** 4:13 **ABC** 16:10 17:7.10 **ABCA** 1:19 4:23 10:8 12:12 ABCA's 17:11 able 3:4.17 above-entitled 17:24 accepted 13:14 accepting 13:3,8 14:12 access 2:11,12,13,14 2:15.16 **Act** 17:9 action 1:7 7:11 15:11 15:21 addition 9:9 addresses 10:13,16 adjourned 17:14,20 advice 16:15 afternoon 2:7 4:6,7,11 4:25 5:2,6,19,23 6:3 6:25 agenda 16:17,17,17 agree 13:20,24 17:2,4,6 agreement 12:22 14:2 ahead 11:18 alcohol 10:1 Alcoholic 1:2,13 16:7 **Ali** 1:20 2:16 5:12,25 6:3,4,4,5,7,9,11 alleged 16:13 alleges 8:13 Alright 5:15 **ANC** 1:7 Anderson 1:14,16 2:3 2:19 3:9,12,18,23 4:5 4:8,15,21,25 5:3,7,15 5:23 6:5,8,10,19,23 7:8 10:11 11:14 12:14 12:18 13:2,7,12,16,21 13:23,24 14:14 16:2 16:22 17:3.5.5 Andrew 1:21 2:10 5:8 Anthony 1:22 2:11 4:12 appeal 13:9 appears 8:2 9:4,7 17:6 appointed 9:19 appreciate 14:11,11,15 **approval** 7:6 9:3 armed 9:18 arrived 8:16 Assault 1:9 Assistant 4:12 attorney 4:12 5:11,20 audible 13:22 aware 13:3.8

В **back** 4:3 background 2:23 11:8 based 10:25 behalf 4:13 5:8 **believe** 3:1 4:2 11:12 believes 10:15 best 14:24 Beverage 1:2,13 16:7 board 1:2,14 4:12 5:7 7:6 9:3,14 11:16 12:2 12:12 14:11,20,21 15:5,19 16:7,10 17:7 17:10,10,20 **Board's** 16:5,16 branch 9:22 brief 7:17 broke 7:20,25 brought 7:11 bulletin 17:10 bursts 8:8 business 12:7 16:5 bye-bye 17:23 bystander 8:10

С C-A-M-E-R-O-N 5:21 C-E-L-O 4:13 calendar 2:4 17:11 call 4:17 13:17 16:23 camera 6:6 8:5,8 15:16 15:16 cameras 9:11,12 Cameron 1:21 2:12 5:10.19 Cannabis 1:2,13 16:7 case 1:8 2:3,5,9 4:16 14:7,15 causing 9:25 Celo 1:22 2:12 4:11,13 4:15,19 7:4,16 10:14 12:21 certain 15:2 certainly 12:4 Chair 7:5,16 10:14 12:13,17 14:4 15:9 16:1 Chairman 5:7 Chairperson 1:14,16 2:3,19 3:9,12,18,23 4:5,8,15,21,25 5:3,15 5:23 6:5,8,10,19,23 7:8 10:11 11:14 12:14 12:18 13:1,2,7,12,16 13:21,23 14:14 16:2,6 16:22 17:3,5 **Chapter** 16:9 checks 11:8

civil 16:14 **client** 5:12 13:3,8 **close** 16:4 **closed** 16:11 17:8 **Code** 9:18.22 10:2 Columbia 1:1 12:12 14:18 16:8 coming 14:2 comment 11:19 **comments** 14:6,11 communicate 3:5 community 11:13 12:10 compliance 10:7 complied 12:3 comport 9:5 Compromise 7:6,13 8:18,19 10:13,16 11:17 12:21,24 13:4,9 13:14 14:12 conceal 11:23 concealed 8:1 concealing 9:24 concerning 14:21 16:12 consider 12:8 consideration 15:6.22 contacting 11:4 contained 9:5 contains 8:19,23 contested 8:14 cooperating 11:3 counsel 1:21,21 5:21 16:16 **cover** 15:8,13 cover-up 8:14 **CR** 1:7 criminal 11:8 16:14 current 9:8 D **D.C** 9:17,22 10:2 16:18 17:12 day 7:19 16:3,5 17:14 17:19,20,21,22 days 9:13 DC 1:6,6,19,22 2:5 7:20 **Deadly** 1:10 dealing 14:17 **Department** 11:4 details 7:14 device 3:16 Dignitary 6:17 discussing 16:12 disorderly 9:17 distinct 8:8,23 District 1:1 4:14 10:15 11:12 12:11 14:18

disturbing 11:20 **Donovan** 1:14,16 duly 12:2 E effort 14:24 ejected 7:23 electronic 17:11 elevate 2:8 3:16,19 elevated 2:11,12,13,14 2:16,17 employees 9:8 10:21 enforced 10:2 enjoying 2:23 ensure 9:11 14:25 15:4 entire 7:12 equipment 14:25 establishment 7:24 8:11,22 9:16 10:1,20 11:22 14:19 15:23 establishments 12:11 Eve 7:18 evidence 9:24 exacting 10:17 exited 8:10 F facts 8:15 false 10:5 February 1:12 16:11,18 16:19 **fifth** 10:8 14:8 fight 7:20,22,25 8:4,7 finally 10:3 find 10:12 11:20 fine 9:16,18,22,25 10:3 fines 9:15 firearm 9:25 firearms 10:20 fired 8:9 Firm 5:9,11,20 first 8:21 five 8:19 **Focus** 1:6,6 2:5 7:20 follow-up 10:24 followed 11:11 Following 8:12 footage 9:12 forward 7:3 Founder/Director 6:17 **Fourth** 10:6 frame 3:2 G genders 10:23

General 4:12 gentlemen 6:13 give 6:7 13:9 17:7

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16:8

giving 13:4 go 8:16,24 10:18 11:18 goes 4:16 going 15:2 **Good** 2:7 4:6,7,11,25 5:2,6,19,23 6:3,25 government 2:9 4:10 4:16 8:13 11:17 16:10 Grant 1:17 12:16,19 13:21 16:21,22 17:3,4 17:4 great 15:25 16:3 17:19 17:22 guard 8:15 guards 7:25 guess 7:1 10:11 guests 15:5 gun 11:21 gunfire 8:9 guns 12:10 н H 1:7 hand 10:13,16 handgun 14:7 handling 11:3,5 happen 15:15 happening 14:9,23 heading 5:13 hear 2:18.20.22.25.25 3:3.10.17.25 heard 3:8 6:13 hearing 1:7 2:4 4:16 7:1 7:2 13:5 16:12 17:10 17:16.17 hiring 9:18 hold 16:10 17:8 home 8:16 hope 11:24 14:6 15:21 hopefully 3:17 12:2,6 hours 10:24 L identify 4:9,18,22 5:4 5:17,25 6:14 illegally 9:25 implemented 8:22 incident 7:18 8:17 15:23 incidents 11:3,5,25 include 9:16 including 8:15 10:20 injured 8:9 innocent 8:10 instructing 8:15 interfering 9:23 10:4 investigation 9:23 10:4 investigations 16:13

matters 7:5 investigative 16:16 investigator 1:22 2:15 4:19,23 10:8 involves 7:17 involving 7:20 14:7 issue 3:10 10:13 issues 8:13 10:16 J J-A-M-E-S 6:21 James 1:17,20 2:13 5:13 6:16 **JOSE** 1:19 **JR** 1:17,17 Κ killed 12:1 Kline 1:21 2:11,18,20 3:3,5,7,15,19,21,24 4:2,7 5:3,6,8 12:20,25 13:6,11 14:4,13,16 15:25 know 4:2 L land 2:21.24 Laughter 4:4 law 5:9,11,20 16:14 legal 16:15,16,17 Let's 4:10 License 1:8 2:5 licensee 1:20,20,21,21 2:8 5:8,21 7:20 9:2,8 9:10,15 12:4 14:21,22 14:23 15:4,7,10 licensee's 11:21 licensees 15:10 licensing 16:17 lift 10:9 lifts 9:14 light 3:2 line 3:13 listed 9:10 10:7 **LLC** 1:6 location 11:21 long 15:3,7 looks 2:20 Luckily 11:25 Μ M-A-R-K 4:24 M-I-X-O-N 5:22 maintained 9:13 management 9:21

mayor 9:20 meeting 1:3 16:11 17:8 meetings 3:21 17:9 Member 1:17,17 11:19 12:16 13:15,20 14:13 16:21 17:2,4 members 4:11 5:7 11:16 17:15 mentioned 10:9 met 1:14 10:10 methods 11:10 Metropolitan 11:4 **minimum** 11:10 minute 3:7 **minutes** 8:17 misconduct 16:14 misleading 10:5 Mixon 1:21 2:13 3:4,6,8 3:11 5:10,17,19,20 morning 7:19 motion 13:13,17 16:21 16:23,24 17:6 move 7:3,15 16:10 **moves** 8:5 **MPD** 8:16 mute 3:13 Ν N-E-B-I-U 6:4 name 6:2,4,15,20,20 nature 10:17 **NE** 1:7 Neb 1:20 2:16 5:12 6:4 New 7:18.19 note 9:1 notes 12:2 notice 17:7.9 numbers 11:10 0 **OAG** 1:22 occur 10:7 occurred 7:18 occurs 15:23 Offer 7:5,13 8:18,19 10:12,15 11:17 12:21 12:23 13:3,8,13 14:12 **Office** 16:9 officer 9:21 officer's 9:21 officers 9:20 **Oh** 3:11 OIC 9:5 12:2 okay 3:25 12:18 15:24 once 8:7 10:9 ongoing 9:23 16:13 **Open** 16:9 17:9

operating 11:9 operation 11:11 order 9:12 **Orellana** 1:19 2:7,10 3:18 outside 8:7 Ρ P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S 2:1 **p.m** 2:2 10:24 17:25 part 15:4,20 participated 17:16,17 parties 4:9 7:2 14:1 17:17 pass 11:7 passed 13:25 17:7 pat-downs 10:23 11:1 patrons 7:21,23 8:2 10:22 **Pause** 3:14 pay 9:15 **people** 15:2 person 11:23 personnel 9:19 pistol 8:1.3 placed 17:10 plan 8:22,23 9:3,4,7,9 10:17 11:11 planned 16:13 please 2:8 3:13,19 4:18 4:22 5:4,17,18,25 6:14,20 point 7:24 police 9:20 11:4 posted 17:9 practical 17:13 pray 11:24 preliminary 7:4 **PRESENT** 1:15,18 presiding 1:14 prevent 14:22 15:3 previously 10:9 primarily 10:14 principal 5:12 probably 2:24 3:6 problems 3:22 proliferation 14:10 proper 14:24,25 property 15:1 protocols 11:2,9 providing 10:4 provision 8:21 provisions 8:20 **public** 12:9 17:15 published 16:18 17:12 pulled 8:1 purpose 9:17 16:11

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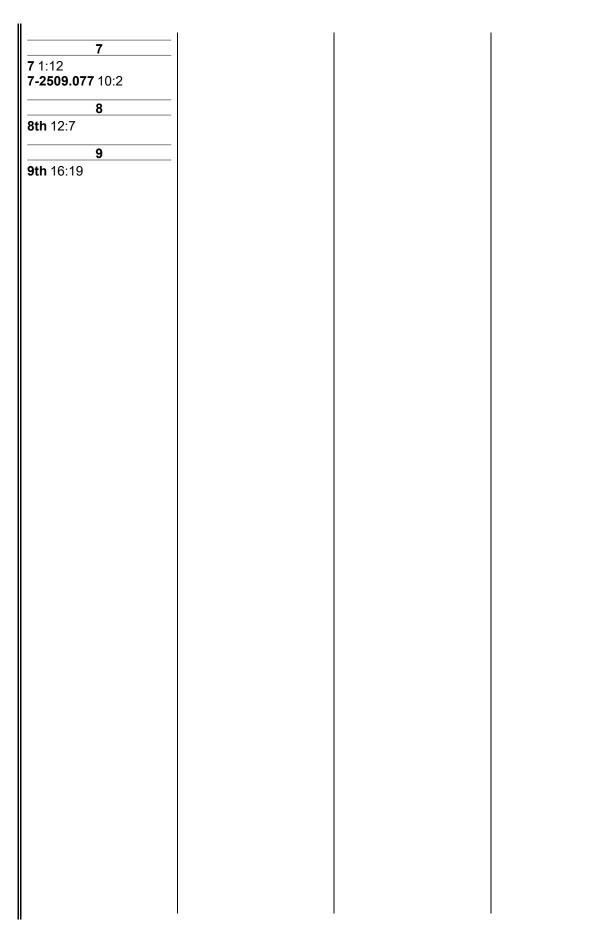
manner 17:13

17:24

Mark 1:22 2:15 4:20.24

matter 1:5 13:10,24

pursuant 17:8	second 13:14,15 16:20	tell 7:10	we've 14:17
putting 7:14	16:21	terms 8:18 9:5 12:22	Weapon 1:10
P	seconded 13:17 16:23	text 3:4	weapons 11:5 14:10,1
Q	16:25	thank 3:13,19,20 5:16	WebEx 1:14
questions 11:16 12:15	secure 11:12	6:8,11,23 7:16 11:15	website 17:11
quickly 4:3	security 5:14 6:17 7:21	12:13,14,19 14:1,2,4	Wednesday 1:11
quite 11:20	7:24,25 8:15,21,23	14:13 15:25 16:3	week 3:22 17:22
	9:3,4,6,9,11,19,20,21	17:15,16,21	went 17:25
R	10:17 11:7,9,10,11,22	thanks 14:5	Wiggins 1:20 2:14 5:1
R-U-I-Z 4:24	14:24	thing 2:10	6:13,14,16,16,21
range 8:8	see 3:24,24,25 4:1 12:3	things 14:17 15:3	wish 4:17 12:6 14:2
read 7:12	17:22	think 3:9 14:7,8	witnesses 4:17
ready 7:2	seeking 16:15	time 15:8	work 17:20
really 14:6	seen 8:5	timely 17:12	working 9:12
record 4:10,18,22 5:4	separate 8:10	Title 16:9	wounded 12:1
5:18 6:1,15 7:14 9:1	serves 10:1	today 17:18	
16:4 17:25	Service 6:18	totaling 9:15	X
Register 16:18 17:12	shooting 8:12	trespass 12:9	
	Short 1:17 11:18,19	trouble 15:10,18	Y
regulated 12:11			
regulations 16:15	12:15 13:15,15,16,19	troubled 12:9	Year's 7:18,19
relevant 10:23	13:20,20 14:5,13 17:1	troubling 11:22	
reports 16:12	17:2,2	trunk 8:4	Z
require 10:19 11:8	shots 8:9	trying 10:12 15:13	
requirements 8:23	signed 3:15 9:7	turn 6:6 15:16	0
10:10,19	SILAS 1:17	two 6:12 8:8	
requires 10:22 11:2,7	sir 5:1,24 6:6,20,23 7:9		1
residents 11:13	11:15 12:23	U	1,000 9:16,18,24 10:3
respect 14:10	Sirius 6:17	unable 2:22	1:39 2:2
respond 15:22	sixth 14:8	underlying 15:20,21	10 10:24
responds 14:22	society 14:9	understanding 9:2,6	118015 1:8 2:6
response 13:22 15:12	speak 3:1	12:20,23	1348 1:7
	special 9:20	unfortunate 14:9,16	
15:12,13,14,15,19			14th 16:11,18
resubmitted 7:7	specific 11:2,9	unfortunately 15:2	2
resulting 10:25	specifically 7:5 10:24	unlawful 9:17	
results 10:25	spell 6:19,20	unpermitted 12:10	2,000 9:22
Retailer 1:7	spelling 6:1,15	·	2:01 17:25
retrieved 8:3	spilled 7:22	V	2024 1:12
reviewed 9:7	Staff 1:19	vacation 2:21,24 4:3	24-251-00001 1:8 2:5
right 4:1,5,8 6:9,10,24	start 4:10	vehicle 8:3,4	25 8:23 10:18
7:8 8:24 11:14 12:19	stated 14:16	Veritas 5:9,11,20	25-283A5C 9:24
13:4,9,12 16:2,6	statements 10:5	video 15:17	25-823A1 9:22 10:3
17:22	stating 6:1,15	videoconference 1:14	25-823A2 9:18
rights 2:8	street 1:7 7:22 8:6 12:8	violation 10:1	25-823A5D 10:5
roll 13:17 16:23	subject 10:23	violations 16:14	23-823A3D 10.3
Room 17:10	submitted 9:3	violent 11:3,5	3
	successful 12:7	,	
Ruiz 1:22 2:15 4:20,21		visitors 11:13	3 16:9
4:23,24 5:2	summarize 7:11,13	vote 13:18 16:24	3-0 13:25
	summarized 12:22		30 9:13
<u> </u>	summary 1:7 2:4 7:1,2	W	
S 6:22	7:17 8:19	W 1:14,16	4
safe 15:5	Sure 2:10 6:7	W-I-G-G-I-N- 6:21	4 16:9
safety 11:12 12:9	surrounding 8:13	wait 8:16	
salient 7:14	suspension 2:4 7:1,2	walkthrough 10:7	5
saved 9:13	7:17 9:10,14 10:6,8	wanding 10:25	5 16:9
saw 3:2 6:12		want 17:16	0 10.0
saw 0.2 0.12 saying 15:9	Т	way 3:11	6
says 2:23	t/a 1:6	we'll 7:15 13:17	
scene 8:17 11:6	take 15:5,21 16:23	we're 7:10 16:4	6,000 9:15
SCEILE 0. 1/ 11.0	Land 10.0,21 10.20	WEIE/.10 10.4	6A 1:7



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