

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
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ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL BOARD  
+ + + + +  
MEETING

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IN THE MATTER OF:                   :  
  :  
Hiwot Ethiopian                    :  
Restaurant & Market, LLC,       :  
t/a Hiwot Ethiopian               :  
Restaurant & Market               : Fact Finding  
5333 Georgia Avenue NW         : Hearing  
License #100297                   :  
Retailer CR - ANC 4D             :  
Case #21-251-00008               :  
  :  
(MPD Request for a               :  
Fact Finding Hearing)             :  
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Thursday  
June 10, 2021

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

PRESENT:  
DONOVAN W. ANDERSON, Chairperson  
BOBBY CATO, JR., Member  
RAFI ALIYA CROCKETT, Member  
EDWARD S. GRANDIS, Member  
JENI HANSEN, Member  
JAMES SHORT, JR., Member

ALSO PRESENT:  
SIMONE ANDREWS, DC ABRA Staff  
MARK RUIZ, DC ABRA Investigator  
SARA TESHOME, Licensee

1 P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

2 11:35 a.m.

3 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: All right. The  
4 next case on our calendar is the Fact-Finding  
5 Hearing, Case Number 2125100008, Hiwot Ethiopian  
6 Restaurant & Market, License Number 100297.

7 Ms. Andrews, will you please elevate  
8 the rights of the owner and investigator for this  
9 case, please?

10 MS. ANDREWS: Sure, stand by.

11 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Thank you.

12 MS. Teshome, your rights have been  
13 elevated. Mr. Ruiz, rights have been elevated.

14 That's all, Mr. Chair.

15 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Thank you.

16 Good morning. This is a Fact-Finding  
17 Hearing. The reason why it is a Fact-Finding  
18 Hearing is that an incident occurred -- hold on a  
19 minute.

20 The ABC Board received a letter from  
21 the police department from -- I'm sorry.  
22 Received a letter from Robert J. Santis who is  
23 the Chief of Police on May 27th, 2021, basically  
24 regarding the establishment and the infractions  
25 that occurred that there was an incident that

1 occurred on May 26, 2021, at 9:15 p.m. where  
2 someone was stabbed at the establishment. And so  
3 the Chief of Police asked us to have a Fact-  
4 Finding Hearing so we can get some further  
5 information regarding that issue. So, that's why  
6 we're here.

7 The purpose of the Fact-Finding we're  
8 here trying to gather information. No one is  
9 under. We're not taking -- this is a more  
10 informal proceeding so no one will be under oath  
11 and the ABC Board will just gather some  
12 information and then we will determine what  
13 further action, if any we will take. Is everyone  
14 clear?

15 MS. TESHOME: Yes.

16 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: All right. Let  
17 me have the parties identify themselves. Also, I  
18 need you to state and spell your name for the  
19 record and we'll start with the owner, the  
20 licensee, please.

21 MS. TESHOME: Okay. My name is Sara  
22 Teshome. Sara, S-A-R-A, last name Teshome, T-E-  
23 S-H-O-M-E. I'm the owner of the restaurant.

24 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Thank you, Ms.  
25 Teshome.

1 Mr. Ruiz?

2 MR. RUIZ: Yes, good morning. This is  
3 Mark Ruiz, M-A-R-K R-U-I-Z.

4 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: All right.  
5 Okay, thank you.

6 Mr. Ruiz, where are you currently  
7 employed, sir?

8 MR. RUIZ: With the Alcoholic Beverage  
9 Regulation Administration.

10 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Can elevate your  
11 volume, sir, I can't hear. Maybe that's better.

12 And what's your role at the Agency,  
13 sir?

14 MR. RUIZ: I am an investigator to  
15 inspect and investigate the establishments  
16 located within the District of Columbia.

17 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: And how long  
18 have you been employed by the Agency?

19 MR. RUIZ: Two years and four months.

20 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Are you familiar  
21 with the Hiwot Ethiopian Restaurant and Market?

22 MR. RUIZ: Yes, I am.

23 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: And how are you  
24 familiar with the establishment, sir?

25 MR. RUIZ: The presence on this

1 particular occasion received an MPD251  
2 investigation an assault with a deadly weapon,  
3 specifically, a knife that occurred inside the  
4 establishment on May 26, 2021, at approximately  
5 9:15 p.m.

6 Upon initial receipt of the report  
7 reviewing the MPD251 it was apparent that Officer  
8 Hayshack received a radio run for a stabbing at  
9 this location, arrived on the scene and met with  
10 identified in his report as W1 which is the ABC  
11 Manager that was operating the establishment at  
12 the time identified as Mr. Secur Odoho. He met  
13 with him in front of the establishment. He also  
14 alerted him to the victim that was stabbed who  
15 was located inside the establishment laying on  
16 the floor conscious, breathing but suffering from  
17 a stab wound to his stomach.

18 W1 who is Mr. Secur who is the ABC  
19 Manager of Hiwot Restaurant reported that the  
20 victim was inside drinking when the suspect  
21 walked in attempting to sell numerous items at  
22 which time Mr. Secur denied the sales and asked  
23 him to leave the building.

24 During that time the victim within the  
25 est

1 identified Mr. Teshome, began speaking to the  
2 suspect vulgar language, cussing at him as well  
3 as making statements in regards to, "I will kill  
4 you." At which time Mr. Secur attempted to  
5 separate the parties, asked the suspect to leave  
6 the store several times which he just relocated  
7 himself to the end of the bar by the entrance  
8 while the victim attempted to pay his tab so he  
9 could "Meet the suspect outside." At which time  
10 the suspect walked over to the victim and stabbed  
11 him in the stomach and then fled from the  
12 establishment down the street at which Mr. Secur  
13 assured that he was leaving as well as notified  
14 911 immediately.

15 On Thursday, May 27, 2021, I did visit  
16 the establishment myself. I spoke and met and  
17 spoke with Mr. Secur who verified the facts that  
18 I reviewed. He said the victim made those  
19 statements, "I will kill you" continued to  
20 agitate the suspect, wouldn't leave after being  
21 told several times to leave after attempting to  
22 see what he identified as hair brushes.

23 Mr. Teshome also stated that normally  
24 his establishment is locked and access controlled  
25 who he allows into the restaurant but at this

1 time another customer who was waiting for a  
2 RideShare had left the establishment at this time  
3 at which time the suspect entered with an  
4 electric scooter, made the statements that he  
5 made.

6 During my visit Mr. Odoho played the  
7 surveillance video of this incident for myself at  
8 which I was able to record with my Government-  
9 issued phone due to some issues with playback and  
10 didn't know it was easier to play the video that  
11 way so I do have that video available for you  
12 today if you wish to review it, the incident.

13 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: That's it?

14 MR. RUIZ: Yes.

15 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Was the video  
16 player or was the player video in your --

17 MR. RUIZ: It's a player video.

18 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: The reason why  
19 because in the letter from the police they're  
20 saying that the video wasn't clear. I was just  
21 trying to find out where was the discrepancy.

22 MR. RUIZ: You could identify the  
23 incident. At the time of recording this there  
24 were two camera angles that would have shown  
25 this shot but one of them was not visible during

1 the review. I will note that I did visit this  
2 establishment last week after the authoring of  
3 this report and spoke with the owner who stated  
4 she's been in contact with the family who the  
5 victim has survived. It was a non-life-  
6 threatening injury at which time I had asked to  
7 review the video again and this time I was  
8 actually able to see another angle from the  
9 opposite end. It's still the same incident, it's  
10 the same view. I mean, everything was the same.  
11 Nothing additional. It's just two different  
12 views.

13 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: But the camera  
14 was a clear view?

15 MR. RUIZ: Yes.

16 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: All right.  
17 Thank you.

18 Did you observe any ABRA violations at  
19 any point during your investigation?

20 MR. RUIZ: I did not.

21 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: All right.  
22 Thanks.

23 All right. Ma'am, is there anything  
24 you want to state, Ms. Teshome. I'm sorry,  
25 pronounce your name for me one more time, please.



1 MS. TESHOME: Teshome, last name  
2 Teshome.

3 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Ms. Teshome, is  
4 there anything that you want to say?

5 MS. TESHOME: It's basically the same  
6 but it's -- I was not there. My husband was  
7 there which is the ABC Manager and I talked to  
8 him and what happened exactly. And the customer  
9 he comes before too and what happened and when  
10 the guys enter -- those guys, you know, on the  
11 street they always come. Sometimes they hungry  
12 for food. We feed give them, you know. And just  
13 there is no problem. But on that date and he --  
14 they bring -- and sometimes they bring, they ask,  
15 do you want to buy this. We refuse but even you  
16 refusing tell them to go out they say, we have  
17 right to ask the customer, we're not here for  
18 you. They argue with you. They don't go just  
19 right away or something. But my husband told  
20 them to go and at the same time the other guys  
21 and found out he said, hey, you're not supposed  
22 to bring to the people's business location to  
23 sell something. You need to go out. And the  
24 other guy, the seller, and said, called an F word  
25 and not his business, blah, blah. He was

1 confronting him and at the same time, I want to  
2 meet you outside. I know you, you know, and  
3 between that my husband said, you need to go out.  
4 So, the other customer said, I mean, my husband  
5 told me -- my husband remind he said, he called  
6 them F word and he called him names like, what is  
7 that the F like fagot or something. He called  
8 him like that and the customer got upset and he  
9 said, I'll kill you, okay. Wait for me outside.  
10 And he stand up and he has little knife there,  
11 very little look like a box cutter knife and it  
12 was fast. Every action was fact and he poke him  
13 and he run. So, my husband run after the guy  
14 because always in front of our restaurant there  
15 are police officer sitting there observing the  
16 area. So, my husband think those police was  
17 there trying to arrest them. So, he find out  
18 they're not there. He come back and call 911.  
19 And the police came and took him, was very fast  
20 incident.

21 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: All right. I  
22 don't have any questions. Any questions from any  
23 Board Members?

24 Anything in light of what happened?  
25 Is there anything that you could have done to

1 prevent this incident? I'm asking Ms. Teshome.

2 MS. TESHOME: You mean, no, yeah, of  
3 course. I mean, even we're not going to allow  
4 the customer anymore to that place because we  
5 don't want -- we don't want to have this kind of  
6 violation. I've been there almost like since  
7 2015 and, I mean, if he comes back and the  
8 customer I'm not going to allow the customer  
9 because I don't want any kind of -- this kind of  
10 situation again.

11 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Now, you're  
12 saying that, I think you said that they exit and  
13 enter today the establishment is controlled.  
14 Explain that.

15 MS. TESHOME: Not all the time. It's  
16 a misunderstanding I guess when my husband wants  
17 to tell the investigator. Sometimes like, some  
18 nights you see activities on the street to have  
19 which especially Kennedy. There are so many  
20 activated.

21 When we see some weird activity  
22 outside we lock the door because we don't want to  
23 do after they get inside we don't want to deal,  
24 you know, go outside or something. We just lock.  
25 We see the people, you know, just normal

1 customer, peaceful customer we let them inside.  
2 If not, we don't even open the door. Just  
3 sometimes we use some kind of lock action --

4 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: All right.

5 MS. TESHOME: -- not like all the time  
6 or not that much problem, I mean. Just some  
7 areas better on Kennedy. Our area not that much  
8 problem.

9 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: But I know that  
10 you're trying to do what's secure by just want to  
11 let you know that you cannot lock the door while  
12 you have customers in the establishment so that's  
13 something you need to be careful of.

14 MS. TESHOME: Okay. I'm just -- when  
15 we see, you know, some kind of weird activity we  
16 just, even the customer want us to do that, you  
17 know.

18 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Well, of course,  
19 you can do what you need to do to keep yourself  
20 and your customer safe. I'm just saying that you  
21 can't -- there are emergencies. There are  
22 emergencies that you need to do what you need to  
23 do to get through the emergency. I just said you  
24 cannot routinely lock the door while you have  
25 customers there. But, of course, if there are

1 emergencies then one can take the emergency  
2 precaution to protect yourself and the customers.  
3 But, I just want to make sure that the door is  
4 not locked routinely so a customer cannot freely  
5 exit just in case --

6 MS. TESHOME: No.

7 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: -- there's an  
8 emergency the customer cannot freely exit the  
9 establishment.

10 MS. TESHOME: No.

11 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: All right. I  
12 don't have any other questions.

13 I'm not sure if I asked if I asked if  
14 there are any questions by any Board Members and  
15 did I ask that question already? All right.

16 So, I mean, I'll make a motion that we  
17 take no further action on this matter. I  
18 appreciate the fact that you are here today. I  
19 see that you take this matter seriously. The  
20 chief of police asked us to have a fact-finding  
21 hearing. We requested that you be here. You're  
22 here. You're forthright and I appreciate that.

23 The investigator testified that he did  
24 not see any ABRA violations, that you're  
25 establishment freely showed that your with ABRA

1 and so I appreciate that, the cooperation and how  
2 this business operate. And I'm just hoping that  
3 you don't have any other incidents on your block  
4 and you keep yourself and your customer safe.

5 So, with that as I said before, I'll  
6 make a motion that we take no further action. Is  
7 there a second? Do I have a --

8 MEMBER CROCKETT: Second.

9 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Ok. Thank you,  
10 Ms. Crockett. I'll take a Roll Call Vote.

11 Mr. Short? I can't hear you, Mr.  
12 Short.

13 MR. SHORT: I agree.

14 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: All right.  
15 Thank you.

16 Mr. Cato:

17 MEMBER CATO: Bobby Cato, I agree.

18 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Ms. Crockett?

19 MEMBER CROCKETT: Rafi Crockett, I  
20 agree.

21 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: And, Ms. Hansen?

22 MS. HANSEN: Jeni Hansen, I agree.

23 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: And Mr.

24 Anderson, I agree.

25 Thank you. Fact-Finding 500. Thank

1 you, folks, for appearing here today and the  
2 Board will take no further action because based  
3 on your explanation and it doesn't appear that  
4 this was something that within your control.  
5 Your establishment and your husband who is an ABC  
6 Manager as you stated called the police  
7 immediately and provided assistance to the  
8 customer. And you turned over the video to ABRA  
9 and said there was really no issue as far as ABRA  
10 is concerned that you did not cooperate with the  
11 process. I appreciate that.

12 All right. So, thank you very much  
13 and have a great day.

14 MS. TESHOME: All right. Thank you so  
15 much.

16 (Whereupon, the above proceeding was  
17 concluded at 11:52 a.m.)  
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A	Avenue 1:8	14:18,19,19	F
<b>a.m</b> 2:2 15:17 <b>ABC</b> 2:20 3:11 5:10,18 9:7 15:5 <b>able</b> 7:8 8:8 <b>ABRA</b> 1:23,24 8:18 13:24,25 15:8,9 <b>access</b> 6:24 <b>action</b> 3:13 10:12 12:3 13:17 14:6 15:2 <b>activated</b> 11:20 <b>activities</b> 11:18 <b>activity</b> 11:21 12:15 <b>additional</b> 8:11 <b>Administration</b> 4:9 <b>Agency</b> 4:12,18 <b>agitate</b> 6:20 <b>agree</b> 14:13,17,20,22 14:24 <b>Alcoholic</b> 1:2,14 4:8 <b>alerted</b> 5:14 <b>ALIYA</b> 1:19 <b>allow</b> 11:3,8 <b>allows</b> 6:25 <b>ANC</b> 1:9 <b>Anderson</b> 1:15,18 2:3 2:11,15 3:16,24 4:4 4:10,17,20,23 7:13,15 7:18 8:13,16,21 9:3 10:21 11:11 12:4,9,18 13:7,11 14:9,14,18,21 14:23,24 <b>Andrews</b> 1:23 2:7,10 <b>angle</b> 8:8 <b>angles</b> 7:24 <b>anymore</b> 11:4 <b>apparent</b> 5:7 <b>appear</b> 15:3 <b>appearing</b> 15:1 <b>appreciate</b> 13:18,22 14:1 15:11 <b>approximately</b> 5:4 <b>area</b> 10:16 12:7 <b>areas</b> 12:7 <b>argue</b> 9:18 <b>arrest</b> 10:17 <b>arrived</b> 5:9 <b>asked</b> 3:3 5:22 6:5 8:6 13:13,13,20 <b>asking</b> 11:1 <b>assault</b> 5:2 <b>assistance</b> 15:7 <b>assured</b> 6:13 <b>attempted</b> 6:4,8 <b>attempting</b> 5:21 6:21 <b>authoring</b> 8:2 <b>available</b> 7:11 <b>ave</b> 7:24	<b>back</b> 10:18 11:7 <b>bar</b> 6:7 <b>based</b> 15:2 <b>basically</b> 2:23 9:5 <b>began</b> 6:1 <b>better</b> 4:11 12:7 <b>Beverage</b> 1:2,14 4:8 <b>blah</b> 9:25,25 <b>block</b> 14:3 <b>Board</b> 1:2,14 2:20 3:11 10:23 13:14 15:2 <b>Bobby</b> 1:18 14:17 <b>box</b> 10:11 <b>breathing</b> 5:16 <b>bring</b> 9:14,14,22 <b>brushes</b> 6:22 <b>building</b> 5:23 <b>business</b> 9:22,25 14:2 <b>buy</b> 9:15	<b>currently</b> 4:6 <b>cussing</b> 6:2 <b>customer</b> 7:1 9:8,17 10:4,8 11:4,8,8 12:1,1 12:16,20 13:4,8 14:4 15:8 <b>customers</b> 12:12,25 13:2 <b>cutter</b> 10:11	<b>F</b> 9:24 10:6,7 <b>fact</b> 1:7,11 10:12 13:18 <b>Fact-</b> 3:3 <b>fact-finding</b> 2:4,16,17 3:7 13:20 14:25 <b>facts</b> 6:17 <b>fagot</b> 10:7 <b>familiar</b> 4:20,24 <b>family</b> 8:4 <b>far</b> 15:9
	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	
	<b>calendar</b> 2:4 <b>call</b> 10:18 14:10 <b>called</b> 9:24 10:5,6,7 15:6 <b>camera</b> 7:24 8:13 <b>careful</b> 12:13 <b>case</b> 1:9 2:4,5,9 13:5 <b>Cato</b> 1:18 14:16,17,17 <b>Chair</b> 2:14 <b>Chairperson</b> 1:15,18 2:3,11,15 3:16,24 4:4 4:10,17,20,23 7:13,15 7:18 8:13,16,21 9:3 10:21 11:11 12:4,9,18 13:7,11 14:9,14,18,21 14:23 <b>chief</b> 2:23 3:3 13:20 <b>clear</b> 3:14 7:20 8:14 <b>Columbia</b> 1:1 4:16 <b>come</b> 9:11 10:18 <b>comes</b> 9:9 11:7 <b>concerned</b> 15:10 <b>concluded</b> 15:17 <b>confronting</b> 10:1 <b>conscious</b> 5:16 <b>contact</b> 8:4 <b>continued</b> 6:19 <b>control</b> 1:2,14 15:4 <b>controlled</b> 6:24 11:13 <b>cooperate</b> 15:10 <b>cooperation</b> 14:1 <b>course</b> 11:3 12:18,25 <b>CR</b> 1:9 <b>Crockett</b> 1:19 14:8,10	<b>date</b> 9:13 <b>day</b> 15:13 <b>DC</b> 1:23,24 <b>deadly</b> 5:2 <b>deal</b> 11:23 <b>denied</b> 5:22 <b>department</b> 2:21 <b>determine</b> 3:12 <b>different</b> 8:11 <b>discrepancy</b> 7:21 <b>District</b> 1:1 4:16 <b>Donovan</b> 1:15,18 <b>door</b> 11:22 12:2,11,24 13:3 <b>drinking</b> 5:20 <b>due</b> 7:9	<b>fast</b> 10:12,19 <b>feed</b> 9:12 <b>find</b> 7:21 10:17 <b>Finding</b> 1:7,11 3:4 <b>fled</b> 6:11 <b>floor</b> 5:16 <b>folks</b> 15:1 <b>food</b> 9:12 <b>forthright</b> 13:22 <b>found</b> 9:21 <b>four</b> 4:19 <b>freely</b> 13:4,8,25 <b>front</b> 5:13 10:14 <b>further</b> 3:4,13 13:17 14:6 15:2
		<b>E</b>	<b>G</b>
		<b>easier</b> 7:10 <b>EDWARD</b> 1:19 <b>electric</b> 7:4 <b>elevate</b> 2:7 4:10 <b>elevated</b> 2:13,13 <b>emergencies</b> 12:21,22 13:1 <b>emergency</b> 12:23 13:1 13:8 <b>employed</b> 4:7,18 <b>enter</b> 9:10 11:13 <b>entered</b> 7:3 <b>entrance</b> 6:7 <b>especially</b> 11:19 <b>est</b> 5:25 <b>establishment</b> 2:24 3:2 4:24 5:4,11,13,15 6:12,16,24 7:2 8:2 11:13 12:12 13:9,25 15:5 <b>establishments</b> 4:15 <b>Ethiopian</b> 1:6,7 2:5 4:21 <b>exactly</b> 9:8 <b>exit</b> 11:12 13:5,8 <b>Explain</b> 11:14 <b>explanation</b> 15:3	<b>gather</b> 3:8,11 <b>Georgia</b> 1:8 <b>give</b> 9:12 <b>Government-</b> 7:8 <b>GRANDIS</b> 1:19 <b>guess</b> 11:16
			<b>H</b>
			<b>h</b> 7:24 <b>hair</b> 6:22 <b>Hansen</b> 1:20 14:21,22 14:22 <b>happened</b> 9:8,9 10:24 <b>Hayshack</b> 5:8 <b>hear</b> 4:11 14:11 <b>hearing</b> 1:8,11 2:5,17 2:18 3:4 13:21 <b>hey</b> 9:21 <b>Hiwot</b> 1:6,7 2:5 4:21 5:19 <b>hold</b> 2:18 <b>hoping</b> 14:2 <b>hungry</b> 9:11 <b>husband</b> 9:6,19 10:3,4 10:5,13,16 11:16 15:5
			<b>I</b>
			<b>identified</b> 5:10,12 6:1 6:22



**identify** 3:17 7:22  
**immediately** 6:14 15:7  
**incident** 2:18,25 7:7,12  
 7:23 8:9 10:20 11:1  
**incidents** 14:3  
**informal** 3:10  
**information** 3:5,8,12  
**infractions** 2:24  
**initial** 5:6  
**injury** 8:6  
**inside** 5:3,15,20 11:23  
 12:1  
**inspect** 4:15  
**investigate** 4:15  
**investigation** 5:2 8:19  
**investigator** 1:24 2:8  
 4:14 11:17 13:23  
**issue** 3:5 15:9  
**issued** 7:9  
**issues** 7:9  
**items** 5:21

---

**J**


---

**J** 2:22  
**JAMES** 1:20  
**Jeni** 1:20 14:22  
**JR** 1:18,20  
**June** 1:13

---

**K**


---

**keep** 12:19 14:4  
**Kennedy** 11:19 12:7  
**kill** 6:3,19 10:9  
**knife** 5:3 10:10,11

---

**L**


---

**language** 6:2  
**laying** 5:15  
**leave** 5:23 6:5,20,21  
**leaving** 6:13  
**left** 7:2  
**letter** 2:20,22 7:19  
**License** 1:8 2:6  
**licensee** 1:25 3:20  
**light** 10:24  
**little** 10:10,11  
**LLC** 1:6  
**located** 4:16 5:15  
**location** 5:9 9:22  
**lock** 11:22,24 12:3,11  
 12:24  
**locked** 6:24 13:4  
**long** 4:17  
**look** 10:11

---

**M**


---

**M-A-R-K** 4:3  
**Ma'am** 8:23

**making** 6:3  
**Manager** 5:11,19 9:7  
 15:6  
**Mark** 1:24 4:3  
**Market** 1:6,7 2:6 4:21  
**matter** 1:5 13:17,19  
**mean** 8:10 10:4 11:2,3  
 11:7 12:6 13:16  
**meet** 6:9 10:2  
**MEETING** 1:3  
**Member** 1:18,19,19,20  
 1:20 14:8,17,19  
**Members** 10:23 13:14  
**met** 1:15 5:9,12 6:16  
**minute** 2:19  
**misunderstanding**  
 11:16  
**months** 4:19  
**morning** 2:16 4:2  
**motion** 13:16 14:6  
**MPD** 1:10  
**MPD251** 5:1,7

---

**N**


---

**name** 3:18,21,22 8:25  
 9:1  
**names** 10:6  
**need** 3:18 9:23 10:3  
 12:13,19,22,22  
**nights** 11:18  
**non-life-** 8:5  
**normal** 11:25  
**normally** 6:23  
**note** 8:1  
**notified** 6:13  
**Number** 2:5,6  
**numerous** 5:21  
**NW** 1:8

---

**O**


---

**oath** 3:10  
**observe** 8:18  
**observing** 10:15  
**occasion** 5:1  
**occurred** 2:18,25 3:1  
 5:3  
**Odoho** 5:12 7:6  
**officer** 5:7 10:15  
**Ok** 14:9  
**open** 12:2  
**operate** 14:2  
**operating** 5:11  
**opposite** 8:9  
**outside** 6:9 10:2,9  
 11:22,24  
**owner** 2:8 3:19,23 8:3

---

**P**


---

**P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S**  
 2:1  
**p.m** 3:1 5:5  
**particular** 5:1  
**parties** 3:17 6:5  
**pay** 6:8  
**peaceful** 12:1  
**people** 11:25  
**people's** 9:22  
**phone** 7:9  
**place** 11:4  
**play** 7:10  
**playback** 7:9  
**played** 7:6  
**player** 7:16,16,17  
**please** 2:7,9 3:20 8:25  
**point** 8:19  
**poke** 10:12  
**police** 2:21,23 3:3 7:19  
 10:15,16,19 13:20  
 15:6

**precaution** 13:2  
**presence** 4:25  
**PRESENT** 1:17,22  
**presiding** 1:15  
**prevent** 11:1  
**problem** 9:13 12:6,8  
**proceeding** 3:10 15:16  
**process** 15:11  
**pronounce** 8:25  
**protect** 13:2  
**provided** 15:7  
**purpose** 3:7

---

**Q**


---

**question** 13:15  
**questions** 10:22,22  
 13:12,14

---

**R**


---

**R-U-I-Z** 4:3  
**radio** 5:8  
**Rafi** 1:19 14:19  
**reason** 2:17 7:18  
**receipt** 5:6  
**received** 2:20,22 5:1,8  
**record** 3:19 7:8  
**recording** 7:23  
**refuse** 9:15  
**refusing** 9:16  
**regarding** 2:24 3:5  
**regards** 6:3  
**Regulation** 4:9  
**relocated** 6:6  
**remind** 10:5  
**report** 5:6,10 8:3  
**reported** 5:19  
**Request** 1:10

**requested** 13:21  
**restaurant** 1:6,7 2:6  
 3:23 4:21 5:19 6:25  
 10:14  
**Retailer** 1:9  
**review** 7:12 8:1,7  
**reviewed** 6:18  
**reviewing** 5:7  
**RideShare** 7:2  
**rights** 2:8,12,13  
**Robert** 2:22  
**role** 4:12  
**Roll** 14:10  
**routinely** 12:24 13:4  
**Ruiz** 1:24 2:13 4:1,2,3,6  
 4:8,14,19,22,25 7:14  
 7:17,22 8:15,20  
**run** 5:8 10:13,13

---

**S**


---

**S** 1:19  
**S-A-R-A** 3:22  
**S-H-O-M-E** 3:23  
**safe** 12:20 14:4  
**sales** 5:22  
**Santis** 2:22  
**Sara** 1:25 3:21,22  
**saying** 7:20 11:12  
 12:20  
**scene** 5:9  
**scooter** 7:4  
**second** 14:7,8  
**Secur** 5:12,18,22 6:4,12  
 6:17  
**secure** 12:10  
**sell** 5:21 9:23  
**seller** 9:24  
**separate** 6:5  
**seriously** 13:19  
**Short** 1:20 14:11,12,13  
**shot** 7:25  
**showed** 13:25  
**shown** 7:24  
**SIMONE** 1:23  
**sir** 4:7,11,13,24  
**sitting** 10:15  
**situation** 11:10  
**sorry** 2:21 8:24  
**speaking** 6:1  
**specifically** 5:3  
**spell** 3:18  
**spoke** 6:16,17 8:3  
**stab** 5:17  
**stabbed** 3:2 5:14 6:10  
**stabbing** 5:8  
**Staff** 1:23  
**stand** 2:10 10:10  
**start** 3:19

<p><b>state</b> 3:18 8:24  <b>stated</b> 6:23 8:3 15:6  <b>statements</b> 6:3,19 7:4  <b>stomach</b> 5:17 6:11  <b>store</b> 6:6  <b>street</b> 6:12 9:11 11:18  <b>suffering</b> 5:16  <b>supposed</b> 9:21  <b>surveillance</b> 7:7  <b>survived</b> 8:5  <b>suspect</b> 5:20 6:2,5,9,10          6:20 7:3</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>T</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>T-E-</b> 3:22  <b>t/a</b> 1:7  <b>tab</b> 6:8  <b>talked</b> 9:7  <b>tell</b> 9:16 11:17  <b>Teshome</b> 1:25 2:12          3:15,21,22,22,25 6:1          6:23 8:24 9:1,1,2,3,5          11:1,2,15 12:5,14          13:6,10 15:14  <b>testified</b> 13:23  <b>thank</b> 2:11,15 3:24 4:5          8:17 14:9,15,25,25          15:12,14  <b>Thanks</b> 8:22  <b>threatening</b> 8:6  <b>Thursday</b> 1:12 6:15  <b>times</b> 6:6,21  <b>today</b> 7:12 11:13 13:18          15:1  <b>told</b> 6:21 9:19 10:5  <b>trying</b> 3:8 7:21 10:17          12:10  <b>turned</b> 15:8  <b>two</b> 4:19 7:24 8:11</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>U</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>upset</b> 10:8  <b>use</b> 12:3</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>V</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>verified</b> 6:17  <b>victim</b> 5:14,20,24 6:8          6:10,18 8:5  <b>video</b> 7:7,10,11,15,16          7:17,20 8:7 15:8  <b>videoconference</b> 1:15  <b>view</b> 8:10,14  <b>views</b> 8:12  <b>violation</b> 11:6  <b>violations</b> 8:18 13:24  <b>visible</b> 7:25  <b>visit</b> 6:15 7:6 8:1  <b>volume</b> 4:11</p>	<p><b>Vote</b> 14:10  <b>vulgar</b> 6:2</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>W</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>W</b> 1:15,18  <b>W1</b> 5:10,18  <b>Wait</b> 10:9  <b>waiting</b> 7:1  <b>walked</b> 5:21 6:10  <b>wants</b> 11:16  <b>wasn't</b> 7:20  <b>way</b> 7:11  <b>weapon</b> 5:2  <b>WebEx</b> 1:15  <b>week</b> 8:2  <b>weird</b> 11:21 12:15  <b>wish</b> 7:12  <b>word</b> 9:24 10:6  <b>wouldn't</b> 6:20  <b>wound</b> 5:17</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>X</b></p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Y</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>years</b> 4:19</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Z</b></p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>0</b></p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>1</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>10</b> 1:13  <b>100297</b> 1:8 2:6  <b>11:35</b> 2:2  <b>11:52</b> 15:17</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>2</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>2015</b> 11:7  <b>2021</b> 1:13 2:23 3:1 5:4          6:15  <b>21-251-00008</b> 1:9  <b>2125100008</b> 2:5  <b>26</b> 3:1 5:4  <b>27</b> 6:15  <b>27th</b> 2:23</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>3</b></p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>4</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>4D</b> 1:9</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>5</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>500</b> 14:25  <b>5333</b> 1:8</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>6</b></p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>7</b></p>	<hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>8</b></p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>9</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>9:15</b> 3:1 5:5  <b>911</b> 6:14 10:18</p>
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This is to certify that the foregoing transcript

In the matter of: Hiwot Ethiopian Restaurant

Before: DCABRA

Date: 06-10-21

Place: teleconference

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my direction; further, that said transcript is a  
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