1	UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA			
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3	United States of Amer	ica,) Criminal Action) No. 1:21-cr-00403-RC	
4	Pl	aintiff,) Sentencing (via Zoom)	
5	VS.)	
6	Nicole Prado,) Washington, D.C.) February 7, 2022	
7	De	fendant.) Time: 11:00 a.m.	
8		t of Conton	- (via 700m)	
9	Transcript of <u>Sentencing</u> (via Zoom) Held Before The Honorable Rudolph Contreras (via Zoom) United States District Judge			
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11	A	P P E A R A	ANCES	
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13	For the Government: (via Zoom)	DEPARTME	Mona Furst DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE	
14		301 Nort	h Main, Suite 1200 Kansas 67052	
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16	For the Defendant: (via Zoom)	LAW OFFI	Joan C. Robin LAW OFFICE OF JONI C. ROBIN 114 North Alfred Street	
17			ia, Virginia 22314	
18	Also Present:	Robert W	alters, Probation Officer	
19	Stenographic Official	Court Repo	rter:	
20	(via Zoom)	Nancy J.	Meyer	
21		Certifie	ed Diplomate Reporter d Realtime Reporter titution Avenue, Northwest	
22			on, D.C. 20001	
23		202 001		
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<u>PROCEEDINGS</u>

(REPORTER'S NOTE: This hearing was held during the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions and is subject to the limitations of technology associated with the use of technology, including but not limited to telephone and video signal interference, static, signal interruptions, and other restrictions and limitations associated with remote court reporting via telephone, speakerphone, and/or videoconferencing.)

THE COURTROOM DEPUTY: This is Criminal Action 21-403, United States v. Nicole Prado.

For the United States, I have Mona Furst. For Nicole Prado, I have Joan Robin. Our probation officer is Robert Walters; and, again, our court reporter is Nancy Meyer.

All parties are present.

THE COURT: Good morning, everybody. Are we ready to get started?

MS. FURST: Your Honor, this is Mona Furst. The government is ready.

MS. ROBIN: Good morning, Your Honor. Joni Robin on behalf of Ms. Prado, who is present and on the screen. We are ready as well.

THE COURT: Let's start with the CARES Act colloquy. The Chief Judge in this district has authorized the use of videoconferencing for sentencings because it cannot be conducted in person without seriously jeopardizing public health and safety. We're prepared to proceed by videoconferencing for this hearing.

1 Do the parties believe that proceeding today via 2 videoconference rather than waiting until a hearing can be 3 safely held in person is in the interests of justice? Ms. Robin? 4 5 MS. ROBIN: Yes, Your Honor. On behalf of Ms. Prado, we do. 6 7 THE COURT: Okay. Can you make a little bit of a 8 record as to why it's preferable to proceed today rather than 9 waiting until the unforeseen day in which COVID is gone and 10 people can safely appear in person again? 11 MS. ROBIN: Well, Your Honor, Ms. Prado lives in 12 Florida with her two young children, who are ages 2 and 13 6 months; and currently, while we are, I think, on the tail end 14 of a COVID surge, we are, nevertheless, not fully recovered 15 from the Omicron surge. And given the number of variants that 16 have been coming out -- and there's also talk about another 17 variant related to the Omicron's variant -- it seems like we 18 could be waiting forever. Ms. Prado's anxious to have this 19 sentencing happen and move on with her life. 20 THE COURT: Ms. Furst, do you have a contrary view? 21 MS. FURST: No, Your Honor. I concur. 22 THE COURT: Okay. Ms. Prado, do you agree, after 23 having consulted with your counsel, to participate in today's 24 sentencing hearing using videoconference rather than being

physically present in the courtroom?

25

1 THE DEFENDANT: Good morning, Your Honor. And that's 2 correct. 3 THE COURT: Okay. And are you comfortable with the videoconferencing equipment made available to you? 4 5 THE DEFENDANT: Yes, Your Honor. THE COURT: Okay. And do you have a way in which you 6 7 can communicate privately with your attorney during this 8 hearing, if necessary? 9 THE DEFENDANT: Yes, Your Honor. I have my phone 10 beside me, in case. 11 THE COURT: Okay. And this Zoom technology also has 12 an ability where if you want to speak to your counsel 13 privately, you can ask the courtroom deputy to do that. And we 14 can put you in a separate virtual conference room where just 15 you and your attorney are present and no one else can hear or 16 see what goes on in that breakout room. So if you need to do 17 that, by all means ask. 18 THE DEFENDANT: Thank you. 19 THE COURT: The Court finds that the use of the VTC 20 is necessary because it is not practical to appear in person 21 and proceeding by VTC today is justified because the interests 22 of justice will be harmed without a prompt hearing; and the 23 defendant, after consultation with counsel, has consented to 24 proceeding in this fashion. 25 So let's start -- or let's move on now to the joint

1 motion to correct the statement of offense that's in the 2 docket, ECF No. 37. 3 Ms. Furst, you're in agreement with that? That was a joint motion? 4 5 MS. FURST: It is, Your Honor. As I got more into 6 the weeds, I realized that the time frame was not quite as 7 broad as I originally thought. So I am in agreement. 8 THE COURT: And, obviously, Ms. Robin you are as 9 well; right? 10 MS. ROBIN: Yes, Your Honor. 11 THE COURT: I'm going to grant that motion to correct 12 the statement of offense, and Exhibit 1 to that motion will 13 become the operative statement of facts. 14 All right. Ms. Prado and defense counsel, have you reviewed the presentence report as revised following the 15 16 defense and the government's submissions? 17 MS. ROBIN: Yes, we have, Your Honor. 18 THE COURT: Okay. And any additional objections? 19 MS. ROBIN: No additional objections. I have one 20 very brief correction and just one, I guess, update. But very 21 brief. 22 The first is to paragraph 47. Just wanted to -- that 23 references -- Ms. Prado had indicated the name of a provider 24 that she was going to be seeking treatment from related to her 25 postpartum depression symptoms. Since the interview, she has

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1
      had three appointments with that particular provider that's
2
      been named --
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                 THE COURT: Ms. Prado, we had a -- or at least --
                 MS. ROBIN: I wanted to make that update.
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 5
                 THE COURT: Your audio, at least for me, broke up a
 6
       little bit. Can you start again after since the -- since the
7
       interview.
                 MS. ROBIN: Certainly. Since the interview, I'm
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 9
       saying -- I'm getting a message -- sorry -- saying that my
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       connection is unstable. Are you able to hear me okay?
11
                 THE COURT: So far, yeah, but occasionally it goes
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      out a little bit, as well as the video kind of freezes a little
13
      bit.
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                 MS. ROBIN: Okay. In the meantime --
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                 THE COURT REPORTER: Ms. Robin, let me --
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                 MS. ROBIN: Yes.
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                 THE COURT REPORTER: Judge, should she perhaps call
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       in on the public line? Leave her video up muted, but then call
19
       in on the audio line.
20
                 THE COURT: I don't know. Has that been working
21
      better?
22
                 THE COURT REPORTER: I feel it has, yes, but Tanya
23
      may have some insight also.
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                 THE COURTROOM DEPUTY: It has.
25
                 THE COURT: Okay.
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                 THE COURTROOM DEPUTY: Ms. Robin, there is a
2
       telephone number in the invitation. Once you join that
 3
       telephone number --
                MS. ROBIN: Okay.
 4
 5
                 THE COURTROOM DEPUTY: -- you can use the meeting
 6
       code and hit pound.
 7
                MS. ROBIN: In the meantime, I'm seeing if I can
      access through a hardwire on my desktop.
 8
 9
              Okay. I see a phone number for -- oh, I think I'm -- I
10
       think I might be able to -- I'm connecting now through my
11
      hardwired computer. So that might be a better option.
12
                 THE COURTROOM DEPUTY: Okay. We have you now.
13
                MS. ROBIN: I'm going to log off of the other one.
14
                 THE COURTROOM DEPUTY: Okay.
15
                MS. ROBIN: I apologize. Are you able to hear me
16
      now, Your Honor? Your Honor, are you able to hear me now?
17
                 THE COURT: Yes, yes. It sounds great.
18
                MS. ROBIN: Okay. Wonderful. Sorry about that.
19
              I -- where I was -- what I was saying is that with
20
       respect to -- to paragraph 47, since Ms. Prado had the PSR
21
       interview, she has had three appointments with that particular
22
      provider. So I just wanted to update that with respect to the
23
       PSR.
24
              And then the second point is paragraph 51 indicates that
25
       she received her degree in finance and graphic design.
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should be fine arts and graphic design.

THE COURT: I wondered that, given the school, but thank you for the correction.

MS. ROBIN: That's all. Thank you, Your Honor.

THE COURT: All right. So the Court will accept the presentence report as its findings of fact on issues not in dispute.

Defendant has pleaded guilty to a Class B misdemeanor to which the sentencing guidelines do not apply. Therefore, I will assess and determine the proper sentence in this case by reference to and consideration of all the relevant factors pursuant to the sentencing statute at 18 U.S.C. 3553(a).

Defendant pled guilty to Count 4, parading, demonstrating, or picketing in a Capitol Building in violation of 40 U.S.C. § 5104(e)(2)(G). The defendant has no significant criminal history. There's a DWI there and a driving on a suspended license. The maximum term of imprisonment for this offense is six months, and the maximum fine is \$5,000.

Would the government like to address the Court regarding sentencing?

MS. FURST: I would, Your Honor. Thank you.

As the Court knows, the events of January 6th, 2021, will forever be burned in our collective minds. A crowd that was watching their President at a rally to protest the 2020 presidential election turned into an angry violent mob by

the time the rioters made it to the Capitol Grounds.

Vice President Pence was inside under Secret Service

protection, and Congress was in session to certify the

presidential election results.

The people at the Capitol that day were upset about that election, and many believed that it had been fraught with fraud and that such fraud needed to be addressed with their members of Congress. But what the mob did was address Congress causing tear gas to be deployed, alarms on sealed doors to be activated, damage to property, and injury and death to those there.

The defendant voluntarily chose to attend the rally, and the rally was called Stop the Steal. And the speakers had encouraged the crowd to go to the Capitol and stop the certification of the presidential election. As the Court of Appeals recounted in Trump v. Thompson, decided December 9th of 2021, vice president -- I'm sorry -- President Trump -- former President Trump told the crowd to -- in which the defendant was listening -- that the election was rigged and stolen and that we were going to walk down Pennsylvania Avenue to the Capitol and were going to try and give our Republicans the kind of pride and boldness they need to take back our country. And the President at that time warned, "You'll never take back our country with weakness." "We fight like hell." "And if you don't fight like hell, you're not going to have a country

anymore." Now, as the defendant walked to the Capitol, there were chants of "Stop the Steal" all around her.

Importantly, she told the FBI that she actually anticipated violence that day and knew it was a possibility, and this was because her husband had expressed concern about her going alone when he knew there had been violence at other such events. She willingly went to the Capitol, even though she told the FBI she thought they weren't supposed to go up on the grounds. And when she arrived, she took a picture of tear gas in the air, but she continued to go forward. She entered the building, and she entered the office of the ranking member of the House Appropriations Committee.

The damage to the Capitol was all around her,

Your Honor. There were fallen and broken barriers, bike racks,

torn scaffolding. As rioters climbed to the upper areas, the

defendant herself took pictures of people climbing on the

scaffolding, as well as, as I said, pictures of the tear gas

that was in the air.

Once she got inside, she saw, as she told the FBI, rioters were spraying fire retardant on officers inside the building. And she documented an officer on the first floor as she was leaving who was excitant and frightened, asking if there was a shooter in the building.

And all this material that was from the inside of the building, Your Honor, she removed from her phone. When the

agent went through the phone, pursuant to a search warrant, there was a missing gap of the time that she was inside the building. She removed, as she told the FBI, that material the evening of January 6th because she was concerned that she shouldn't have it on her phone. And yet when we obtained the phone from counsel, there was no mention of anything that had been removed. We did not learn about that material until we did the proffer pursuant to the plea agreement.

And Ms. Robin has said in her reply, well, we never asked for it. But, Your Honor, you can't ask for something you don't know existed. As far as the government was concerned, that material had been deleted and destroyed.

There was no evidence of a peace- -- peaceful demonstration that day on January 6th. The area where this defendant walked in, the upper west terrace doors, Your Honor, she had to pass by the southwest [sic] wing doors. And those doors had been breached twice, at 2:12 and then again about 2:45. There was a large crowd there trying to get in at the time she would have been up at the upper west terrace. And the Senate wing doors are just a few yards from where she entered the building.

Now, the defendant has said that the door was open, officers were standing there, people were going in trying to shake the officers' hands. She herself said thank you as she entered. Your Honor, just because the door was open doesn't

mean it was lawful to enter, and just because she said thank you doesn't mean the officers were giving her permission to go in the building.

That building had been closed since March of 2020. That building was closed that day because of the certification of the election. It was all around. Nobody went through -- nobody went through metal detectors. They just poured in. It is -- it's like you watch a jewelry store being broken into and just after the robbers leave, you walk in and take some things as well. Just because you didn't break the doors down doesn't mean you're not just as guilty.

And in this particular situation, as Your Honor knows, the police were overwhelmed. There were hundreds of people in the building that day, possibly even a thousand, and these officers were outnumbered at least four to one. In every area where the doors were breached, they were trying to hold back the mob, and they couldn't do it. And so it's not unreasonable for them to have decided to step aside and perhaps go somewhere else to see if they can help them. Just because they're standing there shaken, surprised, doesn't mean it was okay to go in.

The defendant and hundreds of others at the Capitol that day formed a collective that tried to bring down the government from within. This particular defendant did not commit any violence, but her presence there, along with the hundreds of

other people that were there from all over the country, this was the hive mind acting together. Their presence, presence in numbers, allowed the people who did commit violence, who did break into doors, who did break into windows, allowed them to do that because they had strength in numbers.

Now, Your Honor, the thing that's very telling about Ms. Prado in this situation, she went in, as we said in the amended statement of the offense, about 17 minutes. She went in the upper west doors. Those doors are alarmed. And in -- I think it's Exhibit 1 that I submitted to the Court, this is an exhibit that was taken by another January 6th defendant shortly before she would have entered. This was at the time when the doors were opened by rioters from the inside. You can hear the alarm in that exhibit, and that exhibit goes about a minute and 45 seconds.

And Ms. Prado would have come in shortly thereafter,

Your Honor. She would have heard that alarm. And the officers

standing at the door -- as indicated in the still shots that

both the government and the defense have provided -- what can

they do? They're overcome. People are pouring in, and there's

two of them standing at the door from what we can tell.

Now, Your Honor, I -- I will note that she also went to the second floor and she also went to the third floor. And that is where the appropriations office is located, and that door is marked with appropriations at the top of it,

Your Honor, and that is the office for the ranking member of the House Appropriations Committee. And she went inside for a period of minutes. She admitted she went inside. She saw other people in there. She saw a man take a beer out of a refrigerator and then decided it was time to leave.

And she went back out. There are officers at this point on the third floor with weapons. And this is about 2:50, Your Honor. The shooting of Ashli Babbitt had happened minutes before. So there's officers with weapons all over the building. They direct her downstairs. On the second floor, she's directed to the first floor, and it's on the first floor where she encounters the officer who's frantically saying, "Do you know anything about a shooter?" And then she and the others are -- are told to go outside. And she went outside.

Your Honor, I tried to compare her actions with similar defendants in January 6th cases who went into sensitive spaces, such as Officer [sic] Merkley's room or the Senate lounge area. This is why we are recommending a term of 14 days' incarceration, followed by 3 years of probation, and a \$500 restitution, with 60 hours of community service, and the \$10 special assessment.

I truly believe, Your Honor, that this defendant, as indicated in the presentence report, could benefit after incarceration from a continued term of supervision, but I believe that she deserves the incarceration for her actions

that day, her knowledge that day, and her continuous -- her continuous route in the building, even seeing officers being attacked in the building and -- and remaining in the building and then going into the House member's appropriation room.

Your Honor, I would also like to address -- the defense had mentioned some cases in their memo. *Eliel Rosa* case, this individual pled pretty early on, Your Honor, and he did not go into a sensitive space, nor did he destroy any evidence.

The Danielle Doyle case, she also pled early. I think she was, like, in the first dozen to plead. She tried to rush in, and law enforcement stopped her, and she fell at the threshold. She did have some bad texts before and after and talked about the violence, but she's really not someone to compare Ms. Prado to.

The *Tutrow* case, Your Honor, that situation -- we had recommended 60 days of incarceration. The court there found that that particular defendant was on a good course towards mental health counseling and wanted to have the defendant stay on that mental health counseling and so determined that probation for that particular defendant, who carried a knife and lied to the FBI, was important for the mental health component.

And then in the Zachary and Kelsey Wilson case, we had recommended the same sentence that we recommended here,

14 days' incarceration. The judge determined that probation

was more appropriate based mostly upon life hurdles that one of the individuals had overcome. They did go into the Speaker's suite. And they also had young children. However, in this case, Ms. Prado has a husband who has told probation that if she is incarcerated, he will be able to take care of the children.

And then, lastly, the *Stepakoff* case, which Your Honor had before you. And as you know, this is the attorney who became a rabbi, and he did post a lot of bad stuff on social media. We -- we did recommend incarceration, and Your Honor gave him probation and a fine.

Now, Your Honor, I do recognize your position that it doesn't make sense to incarcerate nonviolent misdemeanants like this individual with the concern with COVID. But, Your Honor, there are college dorms. There are senior citizen homes.

There are group settings, including jails all over the country, that have been dealing with the coronavirus for two years. And agencies have not stopped arresting people, and courts have not stopped putting people in jail. There are things in place — distancing, masking — both for vaccinated and unvaccinated people, and I would just urge the Court to consider all the facts in this case and follow the government's recommendations.

Thank you, Your Honor.

THE COURT: All right. Thank you.

Ms. Robin.

MS. ROBIN: Thank you, Your Honor.

Your Honor, as I indicated, Ms. Prado is 30 years old, a mother of two young children, one of whom is still nursing. She has no history of violence. And as we know, she didn't engage in violence that day nor property destruction nor theft of property, and she didn't encourage anyone else to do so. In fact, she didn't chant or cheer. She was virtually silent, not engaging with the crowd, until the very end.

When police approached her, she complied with their directions and, in fact, instructed another demonstrator -- or admonished another demonstrator to comply with police instructions as well. That was the extent of her interacting with the crowd.

Apart from that, she was silent. And we know this -it's corroborated by the fact of the CCT- -- CCTV video
footage, which the defense in this case provided to the
Court, which I think is very, very telling. In nearly -- I
don't know. There are eight or nine videos of -- of
Ms. Prado, and in none of them is she doing anything other than
walking around, occasionally looking around, and taking
photographs, carrying her small handheld flag, not interacting
with anyone.

I know, certainly, that we cannot devoid this case from the background of January 6th, but it is important, as the government acknowledges, I think, to put everyone on a spectrum

and their behavior on a spectrum. And while I don't -certainly it's up to the Court to decide which factors matter
most to it, I do think that their test actually corroborates
and supports our argument that a probationary sentence without
home confinement is the most appropriate.

Before I get into that, I do want to mention a couple of things and just correct -- or clarify a couple of points that the government has made. The government says that Ms. Prado went there anticipating violence; that she told police in her interview that she knew that other rallies had been violent. That's not entirely -- that's a little bit misleading. Because what she told police was not that she anticipated any violence with police, but that other -- at other -- at another rally she had seen counterprotesters engage with protesters, not violence upon police, though. And I think that's kind of a significant distinction, and the reason why she brought that up was because of concerns her husband had about her own safety and whether or not she would be safe protesting.

All along, she has been quite adamant that her -- her intent was to peacefully protest, and that's corroborated by the CCTV video footage. She did nothing to antagonize police at all that day or subsequent thereto; and, again, we know that because she had two encounters that day, the first as soon as she entered, where she thanked the officer.

We point that out not to say that it was -- she thinks

it was okay, not to suggest that that's some sort of a legal defense. It's not. She understands that, and that's why she pled guilty. But it does certainly distinguish her case from cases where there are just throngs of protesters literally pushing past police or entering in through broken doorways or entering in through broken windows where there's violence evident.

You can see from the CCTV footage of her entry; it was quite different than in a number of those situations. There weren't hundreds of people pouring in. At the time she entered, there was probably about eight or nine protesters walking in the hallway in towards the inner doors. She was the last of -- she was actually towards the very end. And there weren't just two officers at the door. There were about four. And you can tell that because the video shows within seconds after her entering that second enter of doors, you see officers walking out. And even as they walk out, they're not attempting to stop the protesters for walking in.

I don't point that out to disparage the officers. They had an impossible job that day. But I do point it out because I think it's relevant to Ms. Prado's intent. Obviously, you know, if she was encountering officers telling her actively to leave or, you know, trying to press the crowd back, that's a very different mindset than what Ms. Prado had that day. So her mindset, I think, is -- is very much consistent with what

she did, which is she thanked the officer, much as the protester in front of her thanked him and went to shake his hand as well. So that was her mindset when she walked in.

When she -- and I think that kind of transitions into the government's first prong: whether, when, and how they entered the Capitol.

In terms of the second prong, whether or not the defendant encouraged violence, we know that she didn't. We know that she didn't encourage violence or property destruction. There was -- there was a limited instance where she observed violence, direct, immediate violence, and that's the area that she documented -- she gave the photograph to police -- where she saw an individual from all the way across the room. So she wasn't close to the individual, but she saw him from all the way across the room. She took a photo of the individual dispersing a fire hydrant in the air. You can see from the photo, it's obvious that it's several feet away from the officer.

THE COURT: Fire extinguisher?

MS. ROBIN: Yes, fire extinguisher.

And, as I said, you can see from the photo that it's several feet away from the officer. But it is something she documented.

And then let's talk about what she did thereafter. She immediately left that area. Any time that she observed

something that was clearly criminal in her mind, you know, like such as direct contact with police, she immediately exited the area. And she went back into the rotunda, which is where she had come from. And as I said, she has provided that photograph to — to the prosecution. Whether or not that assisted them with the prosecution of another, I don't know, but she's provided to them all of the photographs.

So -- and I'll get to that point in a moment. But with respect to the third prong, she certainly didn't encourage property destruction either. And, in fact, this is the second interaction, if you want to call it that, that she observed someone drinking a beer in -- in one of the secured areas. She was uncomfortable enough with it -- she didn't actually observe him take it from the refrigerator. That was a misstatement, but she did observe him drinking it. And it was -- made her uncomfortable enough that she actually asked the individual, "Where did you get that from?" And when he said he got it from a refrigerator in the office, she left. She was uncomfortable with that and she left.

So -- so that's her reaction to other protesters engaging in either petty theft or direct violence with police. Her reaction was to remove herself. Should she have taken it further? Yes. She should have left the building entirely, but she certainly wasn't actively encouraging the violence, and she would immediately remove herself in the two situations that she

observed conduct rising to the level of obvious criminality.

Your Honor, moving onto the next prong, it talks about whether or not the defendant destroyed evidence. And here, I guess, we'll just have to agree to disagree, because I don't -- I don't know the situation where the government has claimed when someone intentionally preserves evidence, that that was actually destroying it. The only reason why they have those photos is because she didn't destroy it. They didn't charge her for six months. If she wanted to destroy evidence, get rid of it, she had plenty of opportunity to do so. She didn't.

She moved some photos off of her phone. Every single photo she moved off of it, she saved onto a thumb drive. When she was contacted by the FBI six months after the fact about the fact that she had a warrant, she immediately arranged through counsel to turn herself in.

And then she also saved them significant time and expense of having to execute search warrants. Admittedly, the FBI told her they had search warrants that they could execute if they wanted to; it would be easier on everyone involved if she — if she wanted to voluntarily provide the information they were seeking. Of course, she was happy to do so. They provided us with a list of what they were looking for. They wanted all of these items that she was wearing. She provided that. They wanted her phone. Had they asked for every photograph she took that day, then certainly that would have

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been provided. Because when she gave me her phone, she also gave me the thumb drive, but as counsel, my job, quite frankly, is not to anticipate the needs or the investigation of law enforcement. It's to comply with -- with the request. THE COURT: But she didn't disclose that she had moved the pictures from the phone to the thumb drive at the first interview, did she? MS. ROBIN: She did -- she disclosed that at the very first interview, absolutely. The first interview they had with her was post-plea, and she disclosed it. That's how they -that's how she -- they asked immediately for those photographs, and I provided them. THE COURT: So the FBI did not interview her prior -right around the time of the events? MS. ROBIN: No. Only to the extent that they asked her inside the building, "Are you aware of whether or not there's an active shooter in the building?" And -- because that must have been the around time that the officer had shot Ashli Babbitt, is my quess. THE COURT: So the only -- the only time the FBI interviewed her was as part of the requirement of the plea? MS. ROBIN: That's correct. That's correct. THE COURT: Okay. MS. ROBIN: And she -- and she admitted and acknowledged at that time that she did have photos that she

transferred to the thumb drive; that -- you know, and that she had actually provided them to me at the same time she provided me her cell phone.

And, quite frankly, I -- I remember specifically having a conversation with a colleague about, well, the government asked for the phone. They haven't asked for all the photographs. You know, what sort of ethical obligation do I have? And I determined that my ethical obligation, you know, pre any sort of plea offer, pre -- you know, not knowing whether or not any plea offer would be made, certainly was to appropriately, not -- zealously represent my client and disclose what they asked for, certainly, but not act as an investigator on their team. And, quite frankly, I -- I think that was the appropriate choice. I think the rules of ethics for a defense attorney would require that.

So -- Ms. Prado, though, she did nothing wrong. She did everything you would want a client to do. And so when she gave me the thumb drive, I kept it in a secure location, knowing that if and when the government would ask for it, that we would provide it. But they hadn't asked for it at that point. The moment they asked for it, it was provided.

So certainly there's -- there was no destruction of evidence, and not even an attempt to destroy the evidence because she had -- if she attempted -- really intended to do so, they wouldn't have half of the photographs that they

included in their memo.

THE COURT: But isn't it sort of the same as -- if someone knows the FBI is going to execute a search warrant on their house and takes a box of files and puts it in the trunk of their car and then stays silent, isn't that sort of the same?

MS. ROBIN: They didn't get the photos from her phone. That's important. They -- the -- the photos -- sometimes you can retrieve deleted images. That's -- that's not where they got from them. They had been -- you know, transferred so long ago that --

THE COURT: I know. But the thumb drive they didn't get until after the plea; is that right?

MS. ROBIN: That's right. And I -- my response to that would be, the only way that they would have known about the thumb drive would be if she had made statements. She's protected by the Fifth Amendment, and it can't be used against her that she didn't volunteer those statements. She wasn't interviewed prior to the fact. So -- and, quite frankly, had she been interviewed, she would have disclosed it.

So to the extent, I think, the government wants to hold anyone culpable, hold me culpable for not disclosing it to the government because they didn't ask for it. And, quite frankly, I -- I -- I think if I had done the reverse, it would have arguably have been a violation of my rules of, you know,

zealousness to my client at that early point in time when I hadn't seen any discovery and hadn't -- certainly no plea offer had been extended.

So, you know, I -- I actually don't agree at all that that should be held against Ms. Prado. She did everything you would want someone in that circumstance to do. And she was not the one dealing directly with the government. I was. And I provided them everything that they asked for but, again, didn't think it was my job to anticipate what they should have asked for.

So with respect to that cooperation component, I -- I think it's also worth mentioning that, you know, she also -- not only did she comply with law enforcement, but she did comply and submit to a really lengthy proffer session. She also has complied completely with all the conditions of her pretrial services -- so that has not been an issue at all -- and, certainly, entered the plea at her -- at her first possible opportunity in light of her health complications, which no one could have predicted.

With respect to the Prong No. 7, statements and postings on social media, Ms. Prado didn't engage in any sort of promotion of the January 6th attack and -- on social media or -- or otherwise. I know the prosecution makes reference to the fact that her husband posted a video on his own Instagram. Well, she certainly didn't encourage him to do so, and she

didn't do so. She had multiple social media accounts. She didn't post it on any of hers. His was a private account.

Again, you know, he actually was not charged because he never entered the building.

But I don't believe that her husband posting something without her encouragement should qualify as -- as anything against her, particularly in light of the fact that the video is something that he spontaneously narrated, and she, obviously, in the video is not wild about the fact that he was even filming and attempted -- made a halfhearted attempt to kind of hide her face.

So, Your Honor, the final prong that they have mentioned is whether or not the -- whether or not the defendant had any sort of remorse or contrition, and, obviously, Ms. Prado has expressed that in her letter. She is remorseful for her actions that day; very clearly, in retrospect, would not have done it if given the opportunity to go back in time and -- and has -- you know, has suffered substantially just with respect to her own family, as well as been publicized quite -- quite a bit in the -- in the news.

And I guess there's one story where the news took particular interest in her because she was pregnant. At one of the status hearings that came out. And so that in and of itself became a whole -- became a whole story. So she's -- she's certainly been the center of a lot of media inquiries as

well.

Your Honor, just a couple of other things. One factor that's not in the government's test, but I do think it's worth pointing out, is her intentions in coming to D.C. There are a number of instances where individuals actually posted on social media or texted other individuals about really wanting to come to D.C. for the fight. And that was not the case at all with Ms. Prado. Her intentions were quite clear. Twofold, really. One, to take photographs for her digital photography assignment, and two, to peacefully protest in support of President Trump -- former President Trump. She's always maintained that. She never had any sort of preplanning, no coordinated activities with anyone. Certainly no hive mind, as the prosecution suggests. She didn't interact with anybody that day and -- and did not engage in any sort of social media posts after the fact.

She also, I think importantly, brought -- she didn't bring any -- apart from -- she didn't bring any gear that would indicate, like, an obvious intention or awareness that she was going to be engaging in any sort of violent activity. Some of these individuals brought goggles or protective eyewear. She wasn't -- she didn't bring any of that. It simply wasn't in her mindset whatsoever.

With respect --

THE COURT: The digital media class, I was a little

bit confused because when I looked at the exhibit, the date on it seemed to postdate the events here. So I was unclear as to the actual chronology of things.

MS. ROBIN: She, in fact, submitted photographs from January 6th for that assignment. If -- maybe the date might have been from -- I don't know when she printed it out or when she downloaded it, but the assignment -- and -- and she would be happy, I think, you know, to -- to testify to this under the oath -- under oath, if necessary. The assignment, 100 percent, predated January 6th and she, in fact, turned in photographs from January 6th into the assignment, so...

Your Honor, in terms of general deterrence, you know, the -- the government, I think, mentions in a lot of these cases that -- the need for -- for general deterrence. Specific deterrence, I don't think, is as much of an issue in this case because Ms. Prado, as you've seen for yourself, has a very limited criminal history that predates her marriage. The only thing being the DWI and driving on suspended that predates her marriage and children.

But in terms of general deterrence, I indicated in this -- the memo -- and, certainly, it's the certainty of being caught and not necessarily the harshness of the punishment that really deters would-be offenders, but I also think it bears pointing out -- and the government really touched on this in their argument -- that the people who are the most responsible

for January 6th, the people in positions of power who engaged in deliberate misinformation campaigns and encouraged the invasion on the Capitol, they're the ones who need most to be -- to be deterred. Now, I think, you know, so far it hasn't occurred that any of them have faced criminal prosecution.

But, certainly, overzealously punishing the least culpable and nonviolent offenders, I don't believe, promotes general deterrence and, arguably, is counterproductive to that goal. I don't -- again, in terms of the ultimate requirement here, which is to issue a sentence that is no greater than necessary to achieve the goals of 3553(a), I would just, I guess, touch base, very briefly, on the fact of not only do we believe that act of confinement is -- is greater than necessary but also, I think, that home confinement in this case is not necessary in order to achieve those factors. And I say that in light of her very limited conduct.

I know that the government makes reference to the fact that she was in the building for 17 minutes, as were a number of other individuals who were sentenced only to probation. The government makes reference to the location; that she made it, you know, to one of the offices of the ranking member. I would submit that that location is much more relevant and important to someone who knows or has some sort of an agenda, knows where they're going.

Ms. Prado had never been in the building before, had no

idea where she was wandering. She was following the crowd and taking photographs. Doesn't -- certainly doesn't forgive the behavior of -- of entering and remaining in the building, but I think it, again, distinguishes it from the behavior of individuals who had a particular agenda, a particular, you know, malicious agenda or intent to actually occupy these offices.

When she walked into the office, she very quickly left thereafter after realizing the -- observing the individual with the beer that made her very uncomfortable and caused her to leave and then to look for a public restroom, what she was doing for several minutes, before she was eventually encountered by an officer and asked to leave.

The only other thing I'll say on that point is it's also particularly apparent from watching the CCTV footage that none of the officers who encountered her viewed her as any sort of threat whatsoever. She encountered a number of officers. In this video, you can see lots of officers walking past. I counted, I think, at least half a dozen that she crossed paths with. Now, none of whom, you know -- none of whom made any attempt to -- to tell her to leave or -- you know, or to -- certainly no physical attempt to get her to move.

And a lot of those -- I recognize in the building that day, there were definitely areas where it was just so overcrowded that it would have been impossible for police to

even interact with individual protesters. A lot of the video you see of her, she's, in some of them, the only one on screen. In others there are -- you know, there are other individuals about; but, most importantly, there wasn't the immediate -- again, I'm not criticizing the officers on that day. I -- they did everything that you would -- could imagine that they could do in order to get through the day.

But judging from Ms. Prado's mens rea, her state of mind, when she is walking around and crossing paths with officers who are not asking her to leave, in -- in her head, you know, that certainly distinguishes her from other individuals who are in different areas of the building.

Finally, Your Honor, the only other thing I'll -- that I do think is worth mentioning is in light of her limited contact, in light of the fact that she's the primary caretaker for two young children -- yes, she's married, but her husband works two jobs. Her husband, obviously, can't breastfeed the infant. So if she were -- if the government's request for active jail time were granted, it would -- it would certainly substantially interrupt the family, the children, and so forth.

Home confinement, though, Your Honor, also, I think, is greater than necessary in light of her conduct and also in light of the fact that she is someone who suffers from postpartum depression. She has been actively seeking treatment. She -- part of that treatment and, quite frankly,

socialization -- part of that treatment involves her going to counseling sessions, but also part of it is just trying to get out and about and socialization, including going to church every Sunday at 2:00 p.m. for mass. She and -- she takes her two children every Sunday to mass. In fact, her daughter's baptism is coming up on February 20th.

So I think that given her mental health situation, home confinement would certainly exacerbate the symptoms of postpartum depression that she has experienced and is currently experiencing.

THE COURT: How about -- how about -- because I do intend to impose something. How would she be able to comply with the curfew if home confinement would exacerbate, you know, being in the house 24 hours a day with two infants and -- would exacerbate her postpartum depression? I understand that, and I don't want to punish the kids either because they want -- you know, especially in sunny south Florida, they want to get outside. How would a curfew work?

MS. ROBIN: I think that curfew is a reasonable option. I -- I -- you know, certainly her socialization with the children would occur, you know, during the day. And so I -- I -- I would suggest -- I don't know -- 7:00 p.m., but I'd certainly defer to the Court on that. I think that's a reasonable -- reasonable balance.

THE COURT: Okay. Now, the husband, you had

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      mentioned that he -- that he travels on occasion, but when he's
      not traveling, does he work out of an office or does he work in
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       the home remotely?
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                 MS. ROBIN: I will preface that by saying I can't say
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      with certainty. My understanding is he works outside of the
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      home. I think it is just Ms. Prado that works inside of the
 7
      home, but it's possible that he may do both. Ms. Prado could
 8
      probably answer that question better.
 9
                 THE DEFENDANT: Yes.
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                 THE COURT: That's the other question I had. Go
11
       ahead, Ms. Prado.
12
                 THE DEFENDANT: Thank you.
13
              He does do both. So sometimes he has to go out to
14
       certain locations. Sometimes he works from home. It just all
      depends.
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16
                 THE COURT: Okay. All right. Other than that
17
      question, do you want to address the Court?
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                 THE DEFENDANT: Me?
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                 THE COURT: Yes.
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                 THE DEFENDANT: Sorry. Not -- not at this moment, I
21
       think.
22
              Yes, I mean, I realize I should not have gone into the
23
      building, and it is a decision that has haunted my family and
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      me ever since that's happened. And I also have provided a
25
      written statement, and it was filed by my attorney. I decided
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to file the written statement just because I tend to be able to, I guess, express myself more clearly written as opposed to verbally, especially with such a serious matter. It made sense to me to do it that way.

THE COURT: Okay. Thank you.

All right. We'll start off with the financial issues. With respect to restitution, the parties have agreed for a \$500 payment to the Clerk of the Court to be forwarded to the Architect of the Capitol as restitution. So I will impose that requirement.

There's a maximum fine of \$5,000. Although probation has indicated that Ms. Prado does have an ability to pay a fine, I believe only a modest fine is in order to help compensate the government for a portion of its supervision of defendant for the past year and into the next. So I'm going to impose a fine of \$742.

The Court is to impose a sentence sufficient but not greater than necessary to comply with the purposes of the subsection. I'm to consider the nature and circumstances of the offense and the history and characteristics of the defendant and impose a sentence that reflects the seriousness of the offense, promotes respect for the law, and provides just punishment for the offense.

Of course, the offense is serious. A number of my colleagues have spoken very eloquently about this. The

defendant took part in a mob riot that took place at the Capitol on January 6th, 2021. Many of the rioters engaged in violence and some destroyed property. I have watched numerous videos of rioters engaging in hand-to-hand combat with police officials.

It was not a peaceful event. More than a hundred law enforcement officers were injured on that day. Moreover, the Capitol sustained almost \$1.5 million in property damage. Many of the rioters intended to block the certification of the votes for President Joe Biden, and although the rioters failed to block that certification, they delayed it for several hours.

The security breach forced lawmakers to hide inside the House gallery until they could be evacuated to undisclosed locations. In short, the rioters' actions threatened the peaceful transfer of power and a direct attack on our nation's democracy.

With that said, no evidence has been presented that shows defendant assaulting law enforcement or destroying property. After entering the Capitol Building through an entrance that was open by exiting rioters, defendant entered the Capitol Building for about 17 minutes. During that 17 minutes, however, she did cover a lot of ground, traveling through different areas of the building, going to different floors, and entered a private space, the House appropriations room. However, she did exit the building when police asked her

to do so.

The riot was successful in delaying the certification in large part because of the numbers of participants involved, which simply overwhelmed the outnumbered law enforcement officers present. So regardless of the defendant's intentions, because she contributed to these numbers, she has to be held accountable for her actions and the results to which her actions contributed.

The defendant also moved the electronic evidence from her phone to a thumb drive and -- which was not provided -- the thumb drive was not provided to the FBI until later, after she pled guilty during the required debriefing. Although this doesn't rise to the level of destruction of property, it does evidence some concealment of what evidence she had and what actions she took part of -- she took part in. But other than this, she was cooperative with the investigation by submitting to an interview, providing the clothing she wore, and providing access to her phone. To her credit, she pleaded guilty at an early juncture.

Otherwise, defendant has little criminal history. She's a 30-year-old mother of a 2-year-old infant and -- a 2-year-old and an infant. She has a college degree in graphic design. She appears to have been gainfully employed for most of her youth, but currently focuses the majority of her energies on raising her two children.

However, the defendant's upbringing was not ideal. Her parents divorced when she was about 11. She and her siblings were kidnapped by her mother and taken to live in Bolivia, receiving neglectful care while there for about a three-month period until she was returned to Maryland.

Ms. Prado is now married to her husband who has a stable, well-paying job in Florida. So she appears to have a strong family support system in place.

The Court is to impose a sentence that affords deterrence to criminal conduct, protects the public from further crimes of the defendant. The events of January 6th involved the rather unprecedented confluence of events spurred by then President Trump and a number of his prominent allies who bear much responsibility for what occurred on that day.

Since her arrest, defendant seems to have done well while on release status. The Court is confident that given her lack of prior criminal history and a lack of a violent past,

Ms. Prado is unlikely to reoffend, will not be emotionally swept up in irrational actions, will not be a risk to the public. With respect to general deterrence, the Court does not believe incarceration is necessary to deter other nonviolent protesters from crossing the line into lawbreaking.

The defendant's ordeal through the criminal justice system finds restitution, community service, and probation with

a possible home confinement or a curfew should serve as an adequate deterrent to those that can be deterred. The Court is to provide the defendant with needed educational or vocational training, medical care, or other correctional treatment in the most effective manner. Nothing has been brought to my attention in this respect.

I'm to consider the kinds of sentences available. Given the nature of the crime and defendant's lack of criminal history, the Court is considering a period of probation that may contain restrictions and impose home confinement or a curfew for a short period of time. Even if the Court were inclined to consider a short term of incarceration, it would not be prudent to impose one given the COVID pandemic.

Moreover, given the defendant's child-caring responsibilities and her suffering from postpartum depression, home confinement doesn't necessarily seem appropriate given that this may inadvertently exacerbate the postpartum depression and indirectly impose a punishment on the two children. So the Court is also considering a curfew instead.

The Court is to assess the kinds of sentences and the sentencing range established for the applicable category of offense committed by the applicable category of defendant as set forth in the guidelines. The guidelines -- the Court is cognizant that the guidelines don't apply here. No pertinent policy statements issued by the Sentencing Commission have been

brought to my attention.

The Court is to impose a sentence that avoids unwarranted sentence disparities among defendants with similar records who have been found guilty of similar conduct. The government had provided a chart that lists a number of the January 6th defendant sentencings, but there is not enough granular information there to make apt comparisons. However, the list does make it clear that the government has recommended noncustodial home confinement probation sentences in a number of these cases and in a limited number of cases proposed straight probation. The Court finds that hard to distinguish this case from those.

We've already dealt with the \$500 restitution as agreed to by the parties that the Court will impose.

I will now indicate the sentence to be imposed, but counsel will have one more opportunity to make any legal objections before the sentence is actually imposed.

Ms. Robin, do you have any objections to any of the factors I've considered?

MS. ROBIN: No, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Ms. Furst?

MS. FURST: No, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Okay. Ms. Prado, it is the government -it is the judgment of the Court that you are hereby sentenced
to serve a 12-month term of probation on Count 4. This term of

probation shall also include a two-month term of a curfew from 7:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m.

You are further ordered to pay a special assessment of \$10 and a fine of \$742 as to Count 4. You are ordered to make restitution to the Architect of the Capitol in the amount of \$500, and these financial obligations shall be paid at a rate of \$105 per month. Special assessment and fine are payable to the Clerk of the Court for the U.S. District Court.

Within 30 days of any change of address, you shall notify the Clerk of the Court of the change until such time as the financial obligation is paid in full.

While on supervision, you shall not possess an illegal controlled substance, and you shall not commit another federal, state, or local crime. You shall also abide by the general conditions of supervision adopted by the U.S. Probation Office, which will be set forth in the judgment and commitment order, as well as the following special conditions:

You -- we will impose location monitoring where you will be monitored by radiofrequency or GPS monitoring for the 60-day period of the curfew, and as I indicated, the curfew will be in effect from 7:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. for that 60-day period.

There will be some more details about the location monitoring in the judgment and commitment order.

Until all the financial obligations imposed are satisfied, there will be some financial information disclosure

1 requirements requiring you to give probation financial 2 information to assess your ability to pay the fine and the 3 restitution. You shall also complete 60 hours of community service 4 5 within 6 months. The probation office will supervise the 6 participation in the program by approving the program, and you 7 have to provide written verification of the completed hours to 8 a probation officer. 9 Counsel, any reason other than those previously stated 10 and argued why the sentence should not be imposed as just 11 stated? Ms. Robin? 12 13 MS. ROBIN: No, Your Honor. 14 THE COURT: Ms. Furst? 15 MS. FURST: No, Your Honor. 16 THE COURT: Okay. I'll impose the sentence as just 17 stated. 18 I gather that there are three counts, 1, 2, and 3, that 19 need to be dismissed from the information; is that right, 20 Ms. Furst? 21 MS. FURST: Yes, Your Honor. I so move. 22 THE COURT: Okay. That will be granted. 23 Ms. Prado, you were convicted by a plea of guilty. 24 can appeal your conviction if you believe that your guilty plea 25 was somehow involuntary or if there's some other fundamental

defect in the proceedings that was not waived by your guilty plea, although I note that the guilty plea has an extensive waiver of appellate rights or collateral attack rights. So if you're inclined to appeal, talk to your attorney about that.

And you also under certain circumstances have a statutory right to appeal your sentence that wouldn't have been waived by your guilty plea. So talk to your attorney about that as well.

To the extent you do appeal, you have the right to apply for leave to appeal in forma pauperis. That means without the payment of costs. And if you request and qualify, the Clerk of the Court will prepare and file a notice of appeal on your behalf, although I note you're represented by very able counsel who can assist you in that process.

But, most importantly, with few exceptions, any notice of appeal must be filed within 14 days of the entry of judgment. It usually takes two or three days to get the entry of judgment posted on the docket. So 14 days after that would be when an appeal is due.

Probation has asked that the supervision be transferred to the Southern District of Florida.

Does anyone have any objection to that?

Ms. Robin?

MS. ROBIN: No, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Okay. Ms. Furst?

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                 MS. FURST: No, Your Honor. I think that makes
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       sense.
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                 THE COURT: Okay. So once I get the paperwork from
       probation, I'll go ahead and enter that transfer as well.
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 5
                 THE PROBATION OFFICER: Yes, Your Honor, a couple --
 6
       a couple points of clarification. All drug testing has been
 7
       waived?
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                 THE COURT: I have not waived the drug testing.
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       There is -- the defendant does have some history of drug use,
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       although it doesn't seem to be recent, but I'm leaving the drug
11
       testing in place.
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                 THE PROBATION OFFICER: Okay. And if you could just
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       on the record -- I understand we're transferring jurisdiction,
14
       but we have to have on the record it's okay to release the
15
       presentence report and other documents to those other -- to the
16
       other district.
17
                 THE COURT: Of course. You can release that
18
       information to the other district.
19
                 THE PROBATION OFFICER: Thank you.
20
                 THE COURT: All right. Anything else we need to
21
       resolve today?
22
             Ms. Robin?
23
                 MS. ROBIN: No, Your Honor. Thank you.
24
                 THE COURT: Ms. Furst?
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                 MS. FURST: No, Your Honor. Thank you.
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THE COURT: All right. Ms. Prado, good luck to you.
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              Thank you. You're excused.
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                  (Proceedings were concluded at 12:08 p.m.)
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1	CERTIFICATE OF OFFICIAL COURT REPORTER		
2			
3	I, Nancy J. Meyer, Registered Diplomate Reporter,		
4	Certified Realtime Reporter, do hereby certify that the above		
5	and foregoing constitutes a true and accurate transcript of my		
6	stenograph notes and is a full, true, and complete transcript		
7	of the proceedings to the best of my ability.		
8			
9	Dated this 10th day of March, 2022.		
10			
11	/s/ Nancy J. Meyer Nancy J. Meyer		
12	Official Court Reporter Registered Diplomate Reporter		
13	Certified Realtime Reporter 333 Constitution Avenue Northwest		
14	Washington, D.C. 20001		
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