

{Sidebar regarding the quality of interpreters}

(A CONFERENCE WAS HELD AT THE BENCH, NOT REPORTED.)

THE COURT: MADAM REPORTER, MAY I HAVE YOU HERE BRIEFLY, PLEASE?

(THE FOLLOWING PROCEEDINGS WERE HELD AT THE BENCH:)

THE COURT: WE'RE OVER HERE AT SIDEBAR.

MR. COCHRAN, EARLIER BEFORE WE ASKED THE COURT REPORTER TO STEP OVER HERE, BEFORE SHE DROPPED HER MACHINE, YOU WERE GOING TO TELL US THAT YOU -- APPARENTLY YOU RECEIVED A PHONE CALL REGARDING THE QUALITY OF THE TRANSLATION?

MR. COCHRAN: I GOT A FAX INDICATING FROM -- THIS IS FROM SKIP TAFT'S OFFICE -- THAT THE INTERPRETER WAS TERRIBLE AND SHE WAS INTERPRETING EVERYTHING INSTEAD OF TRANSLATING.

"WE THINK IT MIGHT BE HARMFUL TO ROSA'S TESTIMONY. PLEASE TELL J.C." I HADN'T NOTICED, BUT THE ANSWERS SEEM TO BE ABOUT WHAT WE HAD EXPECTED.

I ALSO HEARD FROM MR. BLASIER DURING THE BREAK, SOME PEOPLE WHO SPEAK SPANISH ON THE 12TH FLOOR HAD SAID WE'RE STILL HAVING A PROBLEM WITH -- EVEN THOUGH IT'S A DIFFERENT INTERPRETER, I THOUGHT I SHOULD BRING IT TO THE COURT'S ATTENTION.

I WOULDN'T ASK THE COURT TO DO ANYTHING AT THIS POINT, BUT THE COURT SPEAKS APPARENTLY SOME SPANISH, AND WE CAN MONITOR THIS. APPARENTLY IT HAS TO DO WITH SALVADOREAN DIALECT OR SOMETHING. I DON'T KNOW.

I JUST WANTED TO ALERT EVERYBODY OF THE PROBLEM.

THE COURT: IF YOU RECALL, WE GOT THIS INTERPRETER SPECIFICALLY BECAUSE SHE WAS BORN IN EL SALVADOR AND IS FAMILIAR WITH THE DIALECT, AND SHE IS THE BEST SALVADOREAN-BORN COURT INTERPRETER WE HAVE AVAILABLE.

AND IF YOU'RE -- NOT THAT THIS REALLY MEANS ANYTHING, BUT, YOU KNOW, KNOWING A LITTLE SPANISH IN THIS SITUATION IS DANGEROUS. BUT AS THE CHAIR OF THE JUDICIAL COUNCIL ADVISORY COMMITTEE OF COURT INTERPRETERS, I'M VERY FAMILIAR WITH THE PROBLEMS.

AND THE PROBLEM THAT WE'RE DEALING WITH, MOST PEOPLE DON'T KNOW THERE ARE 60 MAJOR DIALECTS OF THE SPANISH LANGUAGE. SO ONLY PERSONS WHO SPEAK OTHER DIALECTS LISTENING TO THIS MAY HAVE AN IDEA WHAT THE PROBLEM IS.

I DON'T SEE A PROBLEM. BUT IT'S A GOOD THING WE HAVE A VIDEO AND AUDIO RECORD OF THIS. SO IF THERE'S ANY DISPUTE, WE CAN RESOLVE IT AT THE APPROPRIATE TIME IF NECESSARY. SO FAR, I HAVEN'T HEARD ANYTHING THAT SOUNDED OUT OF ORDER. WE'LL PUT THAT ON THE RECORD.

MS. CLARK: LET ME INDICATE ALSO, YOUR HONOR, I HAVE SOMEONE PRESENT IN THE COURTROOM FLUENT IN SPANISH WHO HAS BEEN LISTENING FOR ACCURACY AND HAS INDICATED THAT THIS IS A LOT BETTER THAN THE INTERPRETER WE WERE USING YESTERDAY. THIS ONE IS REALLY TRANSLATING AND NOT INTERPRETING AS WAS OCCURRING YESTERDAY.

ESSENTIALLY, I ALSO SPEAK SPANISH, AND IT APPEARS TO ME THAT IT IS MUCH MORE ACCURATE AND LITERAL IN THE TRANSLATION THAN IT WAS PREVIOUSLY. AND THIRDLY, UNLIKE YESTERDAY, WE HAVEN'T RECEIVED ANY COMPLAINTS AS FAR AS ACCURACY.

MR. DARDEN: BEFORE WE GO BACK, IF I CAN INQUIRE, HAS THE COURT BEGUN THINKING WHAT WE WILL DO WITH MISS LOPEZ OVERNIGHT?

THE COURT: YES. I'VE CONTEMPLATED THAT, BUT WE'LL GET TO THAT AT 4:30.

MR. COCHRAN: SINCE YOU ACCUSE US OF DOING EVERYTHING, REMEMBER, THE JUDGE SAID HE WAS GOING TO PUT HER UP AND WE SAID WE WOULD TRY TO DO THAT. REMEMBER, THE COURT SAID HE WOULD PROVIDE -- THEY CALLED IN ABOUT THAT.

MS. CLARK: ABOUT --

MR. COCHRAN: THE JUDGE SAID THE COURT WOULD PROVIDE ACCOMMODATIONS. WHEN I WALKED UP, I ASKED THE COURT -- I KNOW YOU WEREN'T HERE, BUT I SAID, WELL, JUDGE WE'LL TRY TO MAKE SURE SHE GETS SOME ACCOMMODATIONS AND NOBODY SHOULD TALK ABOUT THAT. REMEMBER THAT, JUDGE?

MS. CLARK: I WASN'T HERE.

THE COURT: OKAY.

MR. COCHRAN: IS THAT RIGHT, JUDGE?

MR. DARDEN: I DIDN'T AGREE TO THAT.

THE COURT: MR. COCHRAN VOLUNTEERED TO TAKE CARE OF THOSE ARRANGEMENTS.

MR. COCHRAN: I UNDERSTAND.

MR. DARDEN: WHAT WERE THE ACCOMMODATIONS?

THE COURT: AT A NICE HOTEL.

MR. COCHRAN: WE AGREED I WOULD DO IT. THE COURT AGREED TO DO IT SO NOBODY WOULD MAKE A BIG THING OF IT.

MR. DARDEN: I HEARD YOU GUYS TALKING ABOUT IT. WHAT WERE THE ACCOMMODATIONS? I STILL THINK I HAVE A RIGHT TO KNOW.

THE COURT: YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO KNOW, AND UNFORTUNATELY -- OFF THE RECORD.

(A CONFERENCE WAS HELD AT THE BENCH, NOT REPORTED.)

THE COURT: ALL RIGHT. LET'S GO.

MR. COCHRAN: WE'RE READY TO GO.

THE COURT: LET'S GO.