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Ligger C. Turke

June 30, 2021. Judge Lamberth. 3:00.

THE CLERK: Good afternoon, Your Honor. We're on the record in Criminal Case 21-3, United States of America versus Jacob Anthony Chansley. Counsel, please identify yourselves for the record.

MR. NELSON: Good afternoon, Your Honor. Jim Nelson for the United States standing in for Kim Paschall.

THE COURT: All right.

MR. WATKINS: Albert Watkins present here on behalf of the defendant, Jacob Chansley.

THE COURT: Okay. Mr. Chansley, can you hear me okay?

THE DEFENDANT: Yes, Your Honor. I can. Thank you.

THE COURT: Okay. All right. Mr. Watkins, we're here on your motion. So you may proceed.

MR. WATKINS: Thank you, Your Honor.

I do not want to put this Court through the burden of having a re-recital of an extraordinary amount of information that's been set forth in the original motion, the response in opposition submitted by the government and the reply filed by the defendant. I do not want to belabor the supplemental briefing on the issue of the flight risk. But I do want to highlight matters of importance. Since the initial detention hearing conducted

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by this Court, significant additional new information and evidence has come forth which supports the proposition that the gravamen of the evidence relied upon by the Court in the initial ruling of this Court for pretrial opposing or denying pretrial release of Mr. Chansley was erroneous. The new evidence includes the ascertainment that the finial and flag pole and flag which the government represented to this Court was a dangerous weapon and which this Court had every right to rely on on the accuracy of this affirmative longstanding representation of the government which was made at the first detention hearing in front of the magistrate in Phoenix, it was and has been since determined that that flag, that flag pole and that finial have been in the possession of the government since the defendant voluntarily surrendered himself in Phoenix on January 9 and provided the government with access to introduction of that flag pole, flag and finial. Only to find out that, you know, the government which obviously did not present the flag pole or the inspection by parties much less the Court, that flag pole and that finial and the flag were not able to be used as a deadly weapon. fact, that finial had no screw or no nail that would affix it to the pole. But rather if you see the images, all of the images of the defendant as he travels up to, into through and outside of the Capitol building on

January 6th, he is holding that pole upright, perpendicular to the ground and he's doing that for a reason. Because if he tilted it, the finial and the flag would fall off. It was not able to be used as a weapon.

And despite the fact that the government had that flag pole and finial and flag in its possession, the government insisted on representing to this Court that it was a deadly weapon when pointedly sua spontae by the Court and asked by the Court if it was a deadly weapon.

In addition to that, we as we noted with the Court in our briefing, we made a public plea for video footage, video footage that the government dismissed because the links that we provided to this Court depicting the defendant traveling up to, through and outside of the Capitol after he traversed its hallways, because the links were on YouTube, they were somehow worthless. They were open to the public. They were from the public. No. Indeed those were videos that we posted on YouTube to acquire the links so that we could incorporate the links into the brief.

so we have a -- the new information is basically a video montage of not entirely but most steps taken by the defendant as he traversed the hallways of the Capitol, which depict among other things efforts on the part of the defendant to garner the friendly return of a stolen shield

by an individual in the Capitol back to the police, the thwarting of the much maligned muffin theft in the break room in the Senate outside of the Senate chamber. We had video that clearly depicted the defendant assisting law enforcement in emptying out the chamber and the Capitol after the President told everyone it was time to go home.

We demonstrated through the video that we provided to the government that the defendant was the recipient of express permission granted by a high ranking member of the Capitol Police force, Capitol Police department, being one of the high ranking inspectors.

We provided the government with video footage depicting the defendant traversing the halls of the Capitol in line with law enforcement as they were emptying out the Capitol. We provided video of the defendant on his bull horn telling people to get out of the chamber and to get out of the Capitol.

We provided video to the government depicting the defendant standing on the elevated what was then grassy circle area in the upper west balcony of the Capitol. It's now just dirt. As people passed by him, hundreds of them passed by him into the Capitol before the defendant entered the Capitol, the defendant was standing on that grassy circle allowing selfies to be taken of him by others.

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The video footage that we provided to the government included clear depiction of the defendant having the door held open for him by Officer Robichaux as he entered into the Senate chamber.

We provided to the government clear video footage depicting my client, Mr. Chansley, walking into the Capitol through doorways that were being held by and lined by law enforcement. We provided video footage of numerous instance of friendly, respectful interaction by and between the defendant with law enforcement both inside of and afterwards outside of the Capitol where law enforcement were in his immediate vicinity, said nothing about nor did they seek to seize the flag pole with the flag on it and the finial on top. This despite that being the same flag pole that was donned as part of the Shaman costume, if you will, worn by Mr. Chansley for a period leading up to January 6th. That included times when including on January 6th when there were security check points where weapons going down to nail clippers and pocket knives were being confiscated. No such confiscation or seizure of the flag, flag pole or finial occurred with Mr. Chansley.

The most interesting and I believe probative issue that has come to light during the course of our briefings had been the mental health issues that the prior

or pre-existing mental health vulnerabilities that were diagnosed or noted during psych exams when the defendant was in the custody of the U.S. military as a member of the armed forces in 2006. And, Your Honor, I have confirmed that the psych exam has concluded and we understand the results of that exam will be forthcoming in short order.

We have been forced and compelled to face the reality that the government is opting to vigorously fight the pretrial release of the defendant despite the fact that I was able to provide the government and this Court with nothing short of 20-something defendants who were charged with crimes arising out of January 6th that involved violence, theft, destruction, weapons, vitriol and the various acts, all of whom were released for pretrial release, many of whom were released on their own recognizance.

And the Court in its decision, this Court in its decision in denying the pretrial release relied very heavily, overwhelming heavily on the representation of the government about the deadliness of the weapon, the flag pole, the spear, whether you call it a spear or a finial, and this information in turn put us all in a position of having to address with a really elevated degree of clarity that the lip service that is given -- very genuine lip service that is given by the government by and through its

what I call boots on the ground, the Assistant U.S.

Attorney is based on a learned appreciation for not just the videos that we have provided including other videos that were demonstrative of an elevated degree of cooperation by Mr. Chansley. But that there is a dichotomy between the knowledge and position of the boots on the ground, the Assistant U.S. Attorneys, and those up the chain of command who are forcing and compelling their boots on the ground, the Assistant U.S. Attorneys not to have the role, the traditional role that they have in addressing counts and the reconciliation of cases by means of various forms of pretrial disposition.

In addition, what has not been brought to the fore for the benefit of this Court is that since the initial hearing, a great deal of collaborative undertaking was pursued on behalf of and by the defendant such as to permit not one, but multiple debriefings to be conducted by the FBI and the Assistant U.S. Attorney of the defendant. This was done without promises. This was not done without a plea deal. This was not done as part of a formal proffer. It was done as a debriefing. And the cooperation, the assistance, the information, the video that had been provided to the government by the defendant demonstrate a wholesale commitment by the defendant doing that which is right for the country, that which is right

for the government. And at the end of the day that which is properly demonstrative of a sense of responsibility and prudence living up to his longstanding love of his country.

The government has gone so far as to suggest that the pretrial release of Mr. Chansley should not be granted. And what's really telling is that as part of that opposition, when it was brought to the government and the Court's attention that we now were aware of the fact that that flag pole wasn't useless. It was nothing more than a thimble or a clan on a hot July day. It was no more dangerous than that.

The government in its response in opposition did not mention the flag, did not argue the flag, did not attempt to again characterize it as a weapon. And in fact certainly did not bring to the Court or to permit me to any access to the flag or the finial or the pole. That wholesale absence of addressing that issue is one which I as counsel respect. If I was in the Assistant U.S. Attorney's shoes, I would probably do the same thing except I would also say Court, you're right or the defendant is right, that finial wasn't held on to the top of that flag pole such as to render it a deadly weapon; you are right, the defendant is right; in fact if you tipped that flag pole over, that finial would fall over.

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You know, it is obviously our duty and our burden to show that this new evidence and that this new information is sufficient to warrant reopening the detention hearing. But the government is now going so far as to assert that the defendant is a flight risk because he lives in a state that borders an international boundary somehow rendering citizens close to Mexico and citizens close to Canada less entitled to their lawful rights to pretrial release.

So, Your Honor, given the totality of the circumstances, given the new evidence, given the new information, given that which has been set forth in the full briefing of these issues that are before the Court, we request that the Court grant the defendant pretrial release subject to those conditions that are deemed appropriate by this Court. There are plenty of terms and conditions that be can set forth. If the government does not like Arizona despite the fact that Mr. Chansley has never owned a passport, speaks no foreign language, has never been out of this country except with the military, has lived in Phoenix all of his life, his mother has lived in Phoenix all of his life. His mother has lived in the same home for all of Jacob's life virtually and Mr. Chansley lives with his mother. His maternal grandfather lives there. His maternal step grandmother lives there in

very close proximity. The maternal grandfather is the sole significant male role model up with whom defendant grew.

The defendant's -- two of the defendant's siblings reside in Phoenix. Of course, the defendant has made his home in Phoenix, has worked in Phoenix. And, yes, he has had prior to his self peaceful self surrender worked in Phoenix.

Now what's interesting also is the government mischaracterized virtually everything about the defendant, trying to make him out to be everything from any drug user, mischaracterizing the government's own FBI forms and reports that were disclosed as part of discovery, has made it clear that the defendant did not try any drugs ever. Didn't use any drugs other than marijuana. That the defendant had not consumed alcohol for many, many years preceding peacefully self-surrendering.

The government failed to note for the Court that the second the defendant learned of the interest in him by the FBI, he didn't wait until he returned to Phoenix. He was on the grid. He got on his phone. He called the FBI. He spoke freely with them. He spoke honestly with them. He was truthful with them as he was throughout protracted debriefings.

The government knows the defendant is not lying.

The government knows the defendant made representations that helped the government, provided the government access to video that the government would not have otherwise had that related to the theft of classified material from the Capitol on January 6th.

So we have before us a unique opportunity to take advantage of this hearing and permit the defendant pretrial release. If Arizona is not the place for the defendant because it's close to Mexico, we have alternative arrangements available for him in a secure location in St. Louis, close proximity to my office that I am confident will give rise to no concern on the part of pretrial services. I'll be happy to talk to you in detail about that off the record, off the public record to avoid disclosure of names and locations.

We have healthcare lined up, mental healthcare lined up for the defendant in both Phoenix and St. Louis and it's mental healthcare that's needed. The goal objective is to take a man who has a high degree of mental acuity and capacity to hold it together to not only be appreciative of his role in getting where he is today, but being able to play a role in his defense, to assist his counsel, to assist his counsel in assisting him and that's something because of COVID, because of confinement, because of representations made by the government, because

of the cumbersome nature of communication by telephone or by video conferencing, and to be in person simply cannot be accomplished.

With that obviously an oral supplement to the briefs that have been filed with the Court, I would request this Court take those measures necessary to order the pretrial release of the defendant subject to and pursuant to those terms and conditions that the Court deems appropriate to ensure the safety not only of the defendant, but obviously to secure his presence here.

The defendant is a man who needs some attention that he is not able to get. I want to be able to put this Court in a position of a high degree of comfort knowing that this case is able to be deposed of one way or another with a competent, cogent, articulate defendant. And this defendant is capable of that. But in an environment involving socio stresses associated with protracted indefinite solitary confinement, that's not going to happen. And that's an injustice for the defendant, but for all of us because of the historical import of January 6th and because of just basically the most fundamental tenets of our justice system. This is a man who has zero, zero criminal history and an overwhelming longstanding commitment to all that is nonviolent.

THE COURT: I think you started the right way by

talking about in order to reopen the detention decision, I have to look at what conditions have changed, what material information that was unknown at the time of the original decision. And I understand the arguments you've made about what changed on the dangerousness question. I'm not sure that there's any different information now that I had at the time of the initial decision though on risk of flight. What is the new information on risk of flight that I didn't have at the time of the initial decision and there has to be something material that has changed.

MR. WATKINS: Yes, Your Honor. In the initial hearing, I did not provide the Court with nor did I have information about the longstanding tenure of residency of the defendant in Phoenix or the ties that he had in Phoenix including the lifetime of residency in Phoenix for all of the years of her life of the mother of the defendant, the close proximity of the mother of the defendant to the siblings of the defendant in Phoenix, the grandfather of the defendant in Phoenix, the cousins and other relatives of the defendant in Phoenix.

what I was not aware of at the time nor was the Court was the -- what were the vulnerability issues that are longstanding which I believe play a really important role in the Court's evaluation of new information and

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evidence. Those mental vulnerabilities are not -- are not are not fictional. They were not created out of thin air. They are documented by the government's own records, albeit through the U.S. military. But that longstanding period between 2006 and the present without a blemish of criminality showing up in the record of the defendant reflection indicates that absent the socio stressors that trigger the vulnerabilities that are reflected in the medical records and described more fully in the narrative provided to the doctor conducting the psych exam pursuant to the request of the court puts us all in the position of -- even the government -- having a high degree of comfort with the ability of the defendant to navigate peacefully in a fashion wholly compliant with the directive of the Court, especially the directive to return to court.

I cannot understate the importance or overstate the importance of the weapon, the flag pole because that was the corpus that served as the basis for the decision of this Court to deny the initial request for pretrial detention. The flight risk issue, the response of the government was jaw dropping for me because I don't know how to respond to an agent acting on behalf of the government in the form of an Assistant U.S. Attorney to the Department of Justice suggesting that somehow because

an accused lives in a state that borders another country 1 2 that somehow the burden on that defendant should be 3 greater. THE COURT: Did the person at Colorado that you 4 talked to give you an indication of when their initial 5 report might be sent along to me to advocate for that? 6 MR. WATKINS: Yes, Your Honor. I will represent 7 to this Court that the information that I garnered was 8 directly from my client. I did not speak to the doctor. 9 My client indicated to me that he was told that the final 10 portion of a protracted series of meetings with the doctor 11 assigned to this matter concluded the end of last week at 12 13 which time my client was advised that the report would be finalized in very short order because she understood the 14 importance of it to the Court and that she anticipated the 15 Bureau of Prisons would be picking him up for transport 16 back to Alexandria anywhere from two days to two weeks. 17 18 That was the window --THE COURT: All right. That's helpful. okay. 19 All right. Mr. Nelson? 20 MR. NELSON: Yes, Your Honor. Thank you. 21 Briefly, I would just note that the most important factor 22 before the Court is whether there is new or material 23 information with regard to the detention proceedings. 24 Counsel for the defendant has been talking for more than 25

20 minutes and hasn't said a single thing he hasn't said before. This is all whether or not there was a weapon, whether or not the defendant was at the front of the line or back of the line or walked in through open doors. All of that is disproven by the actual video footage from inside the Capitol.

The defendant did not walk in through doors held open by the police. The video was clear that he was part of the very first group of people who pushed past the police. He entered the Capitol through a window broken open by Dominic Pasolla. It's on CCTV. It's made all the more easy to discern by the fact that the defendant wore a buffalo hat and face paint. He's not easy to miss.

It's very clear from the footage that the defendant pushed his way into the Senate chamber alongside Officer Robichaux as Officer Robichaux is telling him he should leave and instead walks up onto the dais, sits in the vice president's chair, writes a threatening note, all the while consistent with the defendant calling the vice president a "fucking traitor." There is no new information here.

To the extent that it's new, it's not material. The defense counsel may have found videos which he thinks might be useful in defeating elements of the offenses at trial, but none of them go to the actual factors before

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the Court. And they certainly don't bear on the risk of dangerousness for flight if the defendant is released. It is simply recycled arguments and reworded hyperbole that, first of all, the defendant didn't do what the videos show him doing. Or if he did, he was brainwashed along the lines of 60 Minutes interview under the guise of a legal call by the sitting president of the United States. Or if the Court doesn't believe that, he was incompetent on January 6th and remains incompetent today. interestingly, Your Honor, that last point which the defense says is its most probative point is critically important for the Court because if the defendant is actually incompetent which the psyche eval hasn't come back yet, then the Court can't release him. We have to go through civil commitment proceedings to have him held.

So this is — to the extent that there's anything here for the Court to rule on, it's not ripe because we have an incompetence standard to review before we go down any further down the path. And so I would say to the Court that, first of all, there is no basis to reopen the detention hearing. But to the extent that there is, we cannot do anything until we hear back on the defendant's competence.

THE COURT: All right. I had a couple of questions for the government as well.

MR. NELSON: Yes, Your Honor.

THE COURT: In the supplemental brief, the government said that the defendant is one of the prominent figures of QAnon, but other than the evidence of his ability to quickly raise large sums of money for travel through non-traditional sources, does the government hold any evidence that the defendant actually has a leadership role in QAnon or what evidence does the government have about what he really is as to QAnon or what his role is as to QAnon?

MR. NELSON: Your Honor, to answer your question, I think that largely that information is unknown to the government other than the defendant's I would say outspokenness with regard to QAnon and its positions vis-a-vis in particular the election.

THE COURT: Okay. If the Court were to release the defendant to some sort of home confinement or some other conditions that the defendant is proposing now and order that he not use the Internet in the interim, would that mitigate the risk that he could use -- raise money to travel or what -- how do you address that as a mitigating factor because of QAnon? I don't quite understand how that works in the government's view.

MR. NELSON: Well, Your Honor, I just -- realistically, I don't think that -- and I mean no

disrespect to the Court, but I don't know how you put somebody on release with the condition that they not access the Internet because accessing the Internet can be done from so many different devices and in such an anonymous way as to make it virtually unenforceable. And I think that's the real issue. It can be done from anywhere by so many different devices that I don't know how any supervising agency would enforce that condition.

MR. WATKINS: Your Honor, if I may?
THE COURT: Yes.

MR. WATKINS: The government debriefed Mr.

Chansley on a number of occasions. One of the subject matters that was thoroughly vetted and inquired about for a protracted period was how Mr. Chansley could afford to get to Washington, D.C. for the MAGA Man March in September and then again for the — or in, yeah, and then again for the January 6th event. And the government knows exactly how Mr. Chansley did it. He drove a car. He drove in a car with another individual. The other individual put in money and Mr. Chansley had received \$500 in cash from an individual that was named by Mr. Chansley. The government knows who it is. They vetted it out. They understood it. The government knows that Mr. Chansley has been removed from every social media platform. The government also knows that Mr. Chansley had a very limited

following on those social media platforms in the first 1 2 place. The government knows that the defendant is not a 3 man of wealth capable of raising large funds, large amount 4 5 of money quickly, slowly over time. They know that the defendant is a man of simple means who is not someone who 6 is navigating the Internet on a routine basis except when 7 he's able to garner access to the Internet. His family 8 9 home is not one, as I understand it right now, that not only doesn't have Internet service now, hasn't had it for 10 11 a protracted period. The fact is, Your Honor, whether he had access 12 13 to the Internet or not, Jacob Chansley, the Shaman, the guy with the horns is being not only disinterested in 14 politics and all of that, but he's the last person in the 15 world that anybody who was a part of QAnon would want 16 17 anything to do with between now and the end of the world. THE COURT: All right. Anything else, 18 Mr. Nelson, you wanted to add? 19 20 MR. NELSON: No, Your Honor. Thank you. THE COURT: Okay. Mr. Watkins, anything else 21 you wanted to add? 22 MR. WATKINS: Yes, Your Honor. 23 THE COURT: I'll give you the last word. 24

MR. WATKINS: Thank you very much. You know,

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the government obviously has its job to do. Mr. Nelson, I'm very respectful of, I don't know him, he is in a difficult position right now. He does not know the full extent and nature of the debriefings and all of the miles and miles of footage and information that is available and has been available to the Assistant U.S. Attorney. But, you know, there's two things that are really, really important here. It's disingenuous for the government, for the Department of Justice to say there and to this Court at this time and say there's nothing new, there's no new evidence. We're in a pandemic era. We're conducting hearings before this Court remotely. I don't have the defendant sitting at my side able to whisper in my already compromised ears to tell me in the midst of a hearing, oh, by the way, that flag pole, that finial was on top, it wasn't affixed; if I tilted it down, it would have fallen off.

What the problem is that renders the disingenuous nature of the government's representations appalling is that the government knew and if they didn't know, they sure should have because they possessed that flag, that flag pole and that finial since the very day that the defendant voluntarily and peacefully surrendered himself on January 9, that was just as the defendant said he would do when he had called the FBI on January 8th and

talked to them on the phone and said, yes, you want to talk to me, I'll talk to you, I'll be there, I'll be there tomorrow, I'll see you then and he showed up and exactly as he said.

This is not a man who's off the grid. It's not a man who is trying to hide. It's not a man who has demonstrated criminal background on any level ever. He represented to the Court that he had a ticket in Oklahoma on the way home from the January 6th events and in fact made sure that they got taken care of. It's not outstanding. It's not an issue. A traffic ticket.

here is that the government is going to say, yes, we knew it, we didn't represent to the Court that this finial just would fall off and maybe we didn't know it, but we should have known it, but I'm not going to point to that either; I'm simply going to say what's new. Well, what's new is really a big deal, especially in light of the basis for the decision of this Court at the initial detention hearing.

As to the government's representations about the mental vulnerabilities of my client, there's an issue.

And I'm the first one to admit that I am probably the least touchy feely and socially sensitive human being in the world. But the fact is there are multiple forms of

mental health vulnerability that don't render somebody in need of civil commitment.

There are transient fluid mental health vulnerabilities and those vulnerabilities can take a person who falls well inside the bell curve of what you and I and Mr. Nelson may describe as normal and render them because of some stressful or stressor or what they call socio stressor event a person who is well outside that bell curve of normalcy. Be it a transient form of schizophrenia and aggressive or fluid form of Aspergers, a combination, bipolarity, again a combination.

what we're trying to do here is to avoid having our client being someone who is not capable and have to be civilly committed. What we're trying to do is maintain the integrity of these proceedings. What we're trying to do is to make sure that justice is served in a fashion which means there is meaning to these proceedings, there is a reason for the government having charged the defendant, there is a reason why the defendant should have the right and the ability to move forward with his defense and his rights under the Constitution as a defendant, but not to have the government put him in a position because they have chosen to misrepresent to the Court the nature and character of a very important element of the Court's decision and simply say, oh, you know, we knew or maybe we

1 should have known, but we didn't do anything about and, you know, that's the basis, he needs to be committed now. 2 He needs to be committed because for a hundred and fifty 3 days, he's been sitting in solitary confinement 22, 23 4 hours a day. On the best day of the most mentally sane 5 and healthy human being in the world, you are going to 6 turn into a blithering idiot in a hundred and fifty days 7 with no end in sight. 8 I want my client to be able to be in a position 9 to confront his own -- the consequences of his own 10 actions, to do it in a learned fashion and to dispose of 11 this case, to maintain the integrity of the disposition 12 for the benefit of the government, for the benefit of the 13 defendant and for the benefit of this Court. 14 15 THE COURT: All right. The matter is submitted. I'll rule as promptly as I can. Thank you very much, 16 17 counsel. MR. WATKINS: Thank you, Your Honor. 18 MR. NELSON: Thank you, Your Honor. 19 20 21 22 23 24 25