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IN THE CIRCUIT COURT, SEVENTH  
JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, IN AND FOR  
FLAGLER COUNTY, FLORIDA

CASE NO.: 2025 CF 000498

STATE OF FLORIDA

vs.

APPEAL TRANSCRIPT  
SENTENCING HEARING

MELVIN LAPENA ADONA,

Defendant.

\* \* \* \* \*

(STENOGRAPHICALLY TRANSCRIBED VIA DIGITAL RECORDING)  
TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS  
BEFORE THE HONORABLE DAWN NICHOLS,  
CIRCUIT COURT JUDGE

\* \* \* \* \*

DATE: March 4, 2026

TIME: Commenced: 1:30 p.m.

LOCATION: Kim C. Hammond Justice Center  
1769 East Moody Boulevard  
Bunnell, Florida

STENOGRAPHICALLY  
TRANSCRIBED BY: Susan Lee Parkinson  
Registered Merit Reporter  
Registered Professional Reporter  
Notary Public - State of FL

\* \* \* \* \*

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

2 (audio begins)

3 THE COURT: That leaves us with the Adona  
4 case.

5 MS. CLARK: I believe so.

6 THE COURT: Is that correct?

7 MS. CLARK: Yes, Your Honor.

8 THE COURT: Okay. All right. Okay. All  
9 right. So --

10 MR. DELGADO: Your Honor, can we approach  
11 briefly?

12 THE COURT: You can.

13 (inaudible bench-side conference)

14 THE COURT: So the attorneys had a very good  
15 idea. We've got a hearing that's about to come up  
16 on the Adona case and so the attorneys were very  
17 good about getting me some footage they wanted me  
18 to see in advance, that can be very disturbing for  
19 people to see and so they've asked and I tried to  
20 open it on my computer and it wouldn't open on my  
21 computer, so I'm gonna step back off for a few  
22 minutes and I'm gonna go view this footage and  
23 we'll be back in just a few minutes, but I wanted  
24 to let everybody know that that's what I was doing,  
25 so thank you.

1 THE BAILIFF: All rise.

2 THE COURT: So we will be in a brief --

3 MR. MCCLURE: Why don't you play it in here?

4 THE COURT: -- brief recess.

5 MR. MCCLURE: Play it in here, so we can all  
6 see it.

7 THE COURT: So let me tell you why, sir. So  
8 first and foremost, I can't have folks speaking  
9 out. If you want to say something, I just ask that  
10 you raise your hand but --

11 THE BAILIFF: Let her finish, please.

12 MR. MCCLURE: I'm sorry. (Unintelligible.)

13 THE COURT: Would you please let me finish.

14 MR. MCCLURE: Yes, ma'am.

15 THE COURT: While some people may want to see  
16 this, it is incredibly disturbing and there is some  
17 family members that don't want this seen in public.  
18 Now, if you ever want to see it, you can ask the  
19 State Attorney's Office, you can go to their office  
20 and make an appointment to see it, but I'm the one  
21 that's gonna be determining the sentence and I feel  
22 it's important and necessary that I see it.

23 Thank you.

24 (brief recess)

25 THE COURT: All right. Everyone please be

1 seated. All right. Let me make sure I have Zoom  
2 on, cause we have a lot of people. All right.  
3 I've got Zoom back on.

4 So first let me just set a few parameters. I  
5 received a lot of letters. I've read every single  
6 one of them. I will hear from victims and victims'  
7 next of kin if they want to say anything. I need  
8 to have people be respectful in this courtroom. If  
9 there are out -- so I'm laying out the ground rules  
10 ahead of time.

11 If there are outbursts, I'm gonna ask one of  
12 the deputies to quietly escort people out, so if  
13 you want to be present for this entire proceeding  
14 and I want everybody to be present for the entire  
15 proceeding, I ask that you be -- to show  
16 appropriate courtroom decorum.

17 Now, with that said, I'm gonna tell you right  
18 now that I am not going to make anybody in this  
19 courtroom happy today. That's just, that's been  
20 the day today. It's never intentional, ever, but  
21 as I told the one other case that has nothing in  
22 comparison to this case, I can't put all the pieces  
23 back together again. I don't have that ability. I  
24 don't have the ability to bring people back. I  
25 don't have the ability to put people back together

1 again, because I know there are catastrophic  
2 injuries for the individual who survived.

3 Even the trauma that law enforcement went  
4 through witnessing the accident and doing his best  
5 to render aid into resuscitate individuals, when  
6 something like this happens, it doesn't just affect  
7 the individual people who were killed or greatly  
8 harmed, it affects their family members, it affects  
9 members of the community, the first responders, the  
10 defendant, the defendant's family, the ripple  
11 effect is tremendous and so what I want to do is, I  
12 want to be respectful to those who need to be heard  
13 today, with the understanding that there is no way  
14 I have the ability to make any of this right.

15 With that said, Mr. Delgado, Miss Clark, who  
16 would like to proceed first?

17 MS. CLARK: Your Honor, I do have some things  
18 I want to admit into evidence for purposes of the  
19 sentencing. The flash drive, which you've  
20 reviewed, which contains the autopsy reports for  
21 both Miss Fisher, Miss Martin, the toxicology  
22 report for the defendant contains the Terranova  
23 video and the body camera video of Deputy Punsky,  
24 so I would admit that as State's Exhibit 1 for the  
25 sentencing.

1 MR. DELGADO: No objection.

2 THE COURT: So admitted.

3 MS. CLARK: And then I sent you ahead of time,  
4 I've been receiving a number of letters from mostly  
5 friends --

6 THE COURT: Yeah.

7 MS. CLARK: -- some family members. I do  
8 expect there's gonna be some family members who  
9 will be testifying, but I have, all those that I  
10 submitted to you by email the last several days,  
11 I'm gonna admit those as State's Exhibit 2 --

12 THE COURT: Please --

13 MS. CLARK: -- in paper form for the record as  
14 well.

15 THE COURT: Please do, and just for the  
16 record, all of those letters have been read by the  
17 Court.

18 THE CLERK: (Unintelligible.)

19 THE COURT: No, you can go ahead and put them  
20 in the court file. Thank you.

21 MS. CLARK: And then I also have a photograph  
22 of each of the deceased victims that I wanted to  
23 admit as well. The first one is gonna be of  
24 Miss Fisher, photographed when she was alive, that  
25 will be State's 3, and then one of Miss Martin as

1 well, which will be State's 4.

2 And then before I call any of the victims or  
3 before next of kin, I did want to call two officers  
4 briefly, Your Honor.

5 THE COURT: You may do so.

6 MS. CLARK: First one I'd call is Trooper  
7 Justin Bowen.

8 THE COURT: Good afternoon.

9 MS. CLARK: May I proceed, Your Honor?

10 THE COURT: You may.

11 THEREUPON,

12 TROOPER JUSTIN BOWEN

13 was called as a witness and, having been duly sworn by  
14 the Clerk of Court, testified upon his oath as follows:

15 DIRECT EXAMINATION

16 BY MS. CLARK:

17 Q Could you please state your name for the  
18 record.

19 A Sure. It's Corporal Justin Bowen.

20 Q And you're employed with the Florida Highway  
21 Patrol; is that correct?

22 A I am.

23 Q How long have you been with that agency?

24 A I've been with that agency for 12 and a half  
25 years.

1 Q And are you a THI with that agency?

2 A I've been in traffic homicide for the last  
3 five and a half years.

4 Q Okay. And fair to say, you were the lead  
5 investigator in this particular case?

6 A I was.

7 Q Okay. And you actually responded to the scene  
8 the night that it occurred; is that correct?

9 A I did.

10 Q And when you responded and began your  
11 investigation, were you able to confirm that the  
12 defendant, Mr. Adona, never called 911?

13 A That's correct.

14 Q Were you able to confirm that the only person  
15 he did in fact call was his son?

16 A That's correct.

17 Q And you were able to confirm that, obviously,  
18 he never returned to the crash scene itself, he remained  
19 at Terranova's; is that correct?

20 A That's correct.

21 Q Until he was apprehended?

22 A Yes.

23 MS. CLARK: Okay. I don't have any other  
24 questions.

25 MR. DELGADO: Nothing from the defense.

1 THE COURT: Thank you. May I, I just want to  
2 ask some questions.

3 MS. CLARK: Please.

4 THE COURT: So how soon from the time, if you  
5 know, from the time of the accident to his  
6 apprehension, how much time lapsed?

7 TROOPER BOWEN: I had a little issue  
8 downloading the body-worn camera footage from  
9 Deputy Punsky. He was there that night.

10 THE COURT: So he may know who --

11 TROOPER BOWEN: He may have noted the time on  
12 the warrant, but it was, I believe, it was in  
13 excess of 15 minutes. The only one I could view  
14 was Tarranova's --

15 THE COURT: Okay.

16 TROOPER BOWEN: -- due to some computer  
17 issues.

18 THE COURT: All right. So this wasn't hours,  
19 days, weeks, it was within 15 to 20 minutes?

20 TROOPER BOWEN: Correct.

21 THE COURT: Okay. How was the lighting where  
22 the pedestrians, the victims, crossed? Was it well  
23 lit?

24 TROOPER BOWEN: I would say so, yes, Your  
25 Honor. There are streetlights on both sides of the

1 roadway and there's ambient lighting coming from  
2 the businesses in that area. I believe it was  
3 right across from, I believe it's Crossroads or --

4 THE COURT: Okay. Cause the video I saw  
5 appeared to be very, very dark.

6 TROOPER BOWEN: It's pretty well lit compared  
7 to other parts of this area. If you travel five  
8 minutes north on US-1, there's no --  
9 (unintelligible) -- or nothing.

10 THE COURT: Okay. And was there a crosswalk  
11 there for anybody to cross across the street?

12 TROOPER BOWEN: There was.

13 THE COURT: There was a crosswalk?

14 TROOPER BOWEN: Correct.

15 THE COURT: Did they -- did the pedestrians  
16 use the crosswalk?

17 TROOPER BOWEN: No, they did not.

18 THE COURT: Counsel, any other questions in  
19 light of what I asked?

20 MS. CLARK: No, Your Honor.

21 THE COURT: Mr. Delgado?

22 MR. DELGADO: No, Your Honor.

23 THE COURT: Okay. Sir, thank you very much  
24 for your time.

25 TROOPER BOWEN: Thank you.

1 MS. CLARK: The State would call Deputy  
2 Cameron Punsky.

3 THE COURT: Good afternoon.

4 MS. CLARK: May I proceed, Your Honor?

5 THE COURT: You may.

6 THEREUPON,

7 DEPUTY CAMERON PUNSKY

8 was called as a witness and, having been duly sworn by  
9 the Clerk of Court, testified upon his oath as follows:

10 DIRECT EXAMINATION

11 BY MS. CLARK:

12 Q And, Deputy, can you give us your name for the  
13 record, please.

14 A Deputy Cameron Punsky.

15 Q And how long have you been with the Flagler  
16 County Sheriff's Office?

17 A Just over five years.

18 Q And during that time have you been working  
19 road patrol?

20 A Yes.

21 Q As part of your duties with road patrol, I'm  
22 assuming you do traffic stops for speeding and things of  
23 that nature?

24 A Yes.

25 Q Are you radar certified?

1 A Yes.

2 Q Are you able to estimate speed based upon your  
3 experience over the last five years?

4 A Yes.

5 Q Okay. Now, I understand that you were working  
6 on the night that this accident occurred; is that  
7 correct?

8 A Yes.

9 Q And you were not supposed to be involved in  
10 this necessarily, but my understanding is that you were  
11 actually transporting an inmate to the jail at the time  
12 this accident occurred; is that correct?

13 A Yes.

14 Q And were you traveling southbound on US-1 at  
15 the time the accident occurred?

16 A Yes.

17 Q So just before the accident occurred, can you  
18 describe for the Court what it was that you kind of  
19 observed as you were driving down US-1.

20 A As I was traveling down US-1, in the distance  
21 I saw three individuals crossing the street into the  
22 median from a local bar area. I saw them from quite a  
23 distance, I started slowing down. I ended up coming to  
24 a complete stop just to make sure that they made it all  
25 the way through and as they made it to the median, I

1 started going just a little bit.

2 You want me to continue for everything I saw?

3 Q Please.

4 A From there, in the distance I saw lights  
5 coming in my direction at a high rate of speed. I'm in  
6 the area often, it's a 35-mile an hour zone and I could  
7 tell they was coming at a high rate of speed.

8 I turned my head to see, look if the  
9 pedestrians made it over in time and I saw that they  
10 were still kind of struggling to get over, they were  
11 carrying the female that was in the middle and I came to  
12 a complete stop and I saw the truck wasn't stopping and  
13 as I turned my head, I saw the truck collide with three  
14 pedestrians and they all went airborne.

15 From there, because I had an arrestee in my  
16 vehicle as well, I had communicated to dispatch, I did a  
17 U-turn, turned my lights on, gave out the description  
18 for the vehicle and from there the vehicle was gone, I  
19 couldn't see anything, I just saw that it was a white  
20 pickup truck and I called out the direction of travel.

21 I got out and I started doing CPR on a male.  
22 From there I moved on to the female that was in the  
23 middle, tried doing CPR on her and the third female that  
24 I saw was obviously deceased, so I returned back to the  
25 male and female and tried my best.

1 Q Now, I want to go back to when you were  
2 driving and you said you were able to see these three  
3 persons walking across US-1. About how far away do you  
4 think you were when you initially saw them?

5 A About 20 yards from where I was.

6 Q Okay. And was it lit enough that you were  
7 able to see them, driving?

8 A I saw them from a pretty good distance, yes.

9 Q Okay. And I know you're obviously familiar  
10 with that roadway; is that correct?

11 A Yes.

12 Q And are there lights on that roadway that  
13 would have illuminated both north and southbound lanes?

14 A I can't recall if they're northbound to  
15 southbound. Yes, there's lights outside of that local  
16 bar in the area and then also the intersection is pretty  
17 well lit.

18 Q I know you said that the speed is 35 miles an  
19 hour in that particular area and you believe that the  
20 truck, that was going the opposite direction, struck the  
21 three individuals was traveling faster than that,  
22 correct?

23 A Yes.

24 Q Do you have an estimate as to how fast it was  
25 traveling?

1 A I estimated about 65 to 70 miles an hour.

2 Q Did you ever hear brakes before impact?

3 A All I heard was the impact.

4 Q Okay. So you didn't have any indication that  
5 the truck had slowed down?

6 A No.

7 Q And I know you said that, you know, you were  
8 able to see a white truck, you gave a description --

9 A Uh-huh.

10 Q -- and you're immediately doing a U-turn.

11 A Yes.

12 Q Other than it traveling northbound, did you  
13 have any idea where the truck had gone?

14 A Not at all. Right when I did my U-turn, it  
15 was gone.

16 Q Okay. And I know you obviously remained on  
17 scene rendering aid and EVAC shows up as well. At some  
18 point do you become aware that they believe they may  
19 have located the truck?

20 A Yes.

21 Q And where was that located?

22 A It was parked outside of Tarranova's Pizza.

23 Q So up the street from where you were?

24 A Just about maybe one street, two streets from  
25 the crash location.

1 Q And once you were aware that the truck had  
2 been located, did you in fact actually go over to that  
3 location?

4 A I did.

5 Q How long do you think you were on scene before  
6 you went to that location?

7 A About 15 minutes. I was trying to see if  
8 anybody had surveillance footage or any witnesses or  
9 anything like that.

10 Q Okay. And when you got to Tarranova's, were  
11 there other officers responding to that particular  
12 location?

13 A Yes.

14 Q And is that when the defendant was taken into  
15 custody?

16 A Yes.

17 Q So about 15 to 20 minutes after the accident?

18 A Yes.

19 Q Okay. And at no time did the driver of that  
20 truck ever come back to the scene where the pedestrians  
21 were hit to indicate to you that he in fact was the  
22 driver?

23 A No.

24 Q Obviously, didn't assist in rendering aid?

25 A No.

1 MS. CLARK: Give me just one second. I don't  
2 have any other questions.

3 MR. DELGADO: Nothing from the defense.

4 THE COURT: Thank you. Thank you, sir, very  
5 much.

6 MS. CLARK: May I proceed?

7 THE COURT: You may.

8 MS. CLARK: Mr. McClure.

9 MR. MCCLURE: Yeah.

10 THE COURT: Come on up.

11 MS. CLARK: Do we want him to take a seat,  
12 Your Honor?

13 THE COURT: It's up to you, Miss Clark. If  
14 it's gonna be a few minutes, he's welcome to have a  
15 seat.

16 MS. CLARK: It's going to be a couple minutes,  
17 yeah.

18 THE COURT: Come on up. You okay?

19 MR. MCCLURE: I'm wonderful, ma'am.

20 THE COURT: All right.

21 THEREUPON,

22 PHILIP MCCLURE

23 was called as a witness and, having been duly sworn by  
24 the Clerk of Court, testified upon his oath as follows:

25

1 DIRECT EXAMINATION

2 BY MS. CLARK:

3 Q All right. Mr. McClure, can you give us your  
4 name for the record, please.

5 A Philip McClure.

6 Q And can you spell your last name, please.

7 A M-C-C-L-U-R-E.

8 Q And, Mr. McClure, fair to say you were one of  
9 the three pedestrians that was hit that night, correct?

10 A That is correct.

11 Q Okay. And you were with both Miss Fisher and  
12 Miss Martin, who were friends of yours, correct?

13 A That is correct.

14 Q Okay. And fair to say, you all had left, I  
15 think it was Crossroads; is that right?

16 A That is fair.

17 Q Okay. And you all were walking, obviously,  
18 across US-1?

19 A Yes, ma'am.

20 Q Now, I understand that you spent quite a bit  
21 of time in the hospital; is that correct?

22 A I did.

23 Q How long were you in the hospital?

24 A I can't tell you exact day. It was 30 what --  
25 44 days.

1 Q Over a month, definitely?

2 A Well, they kicked me out when his insurance  
3 ran out.

4 Q And can you give us an idea of what sort of  
5 injuries you had as a result of this.

6 A Over 30 broken bones, double punctured lungs,  
7 I've had four surgeries reconstructing the shoulder that  
8 was hanging down by my armpit.

9 Q Okay.

10 A I've been now diagnosed with stage 2 cancer  
11 because my intestines were tore up enough they said, you  
12 may have cancer all your life and may never come back  
13 until some blunt force trauma, and now I have cancer  
14 so...

15 Q Okay. And I know you said multiple surgeries  
16 on your shoulder?

17 A That is correct, ma'am.

18 Q Did you have any other surgeries in addition  
19 to the shoulder surgeries?

20 A Yeah. I can't recollect what the hell it was.

21 Q Let me ask you this. Do you have any  
22 anticipated additional surgeries?

23 A Well, probably they will need to cut my  
24 intestines out, so I'm not saying that was from the  
25 wreck, but I'm saying it's pretty good coincidence.

1 Q And, obviously, 30 broken bones is  
2 excruciating and very painful. Do you have long-term  
3 issues?

4 A I still have four broken ribs that they say  
5 will never -- if I want to have them ever fixed, they're  
6 gonna have to go in and open me up and take them out.

7 Q Okay.

8 A Cause if I do something wrong, it will poke  
9 me, it will poke me in the liver, kidneys.

10 Q Okay.

11 A So, yeah, there's --

12 Q And, obviously, I'm assuming you're having  
13 long-term issues as a result of these injuries; is that  
14 correct?

15 A Yeah.

16 Q Can you explain what that is.

17 A Well, put it in layman's terms, it's a pain in  
18 the ass to get out of bed every day, it's a pain in the  
19 ass to sit down like this for more than 20 minutes.

20 Q Okay.

21 A It's just, it's no fun.

22 Q No, I'm sure not and that's what I want to  
23 make sure that the Court understands.

24 A No, it's excruciating pain every day, even  
25 breathing.

1 Q Okay. And I know that you wanted to speak  
2 with respect to the sentence, so I want to give you an  
3 opportunity to do that as well. So before we get to  
4 that, is there anything else regarding your medical that  
5 we haven't talked about that you think the Court should  
6 know?

7 A Well, I mean, throw up a baseball bat, run it  
8 over and pick up all the pieces and see how you glue it  
9 back together and see how effective it would be.

10 Q So let's get to the sentence itself. I know  
11 that you're not in agreement with it, right?

12 A No, ma'am.

13 Q And you know what the parameters are. It's  
14 between four and ten years prison and then ten years of  
15 probation with a bunch of conditions to follow and I  
16 know you and I have spoken about it and you were not in  
17 agreement with it and I told you you would have your  
18 opportunity to say what you wanted to say regarding the  
19 sentence, so I'm gonna give you that opportunity to do  
20 that.

21 What is it you would like the Court to know  
22 with respect to the sentence?

23 THE COURT: Respectfully, please.

24 MR. MCCLURE: Yes, ma'am.

25 THE COURT: Go ahead.

1           MR. MCCLURE: Well, respectfully, what's this  
2           been going on now, two years, 47 days and so many  
3           hours. I've missed two birthdays of two of my good  
4           friends. I'm not gonna go back to see their  
5           headstones any time soon. I don't get to spend  
6           Christmas with them. Not gonna get a call from  
7           them, say, hey, I'm having a birthday party,  
8           neither are their children or their grandchildren.  
9           I mean, they're both grandparents, they both have  
10          children.

11           He got to spend his last two birthdays at home  
12          and that's why I understand everybody on that side  
13          is upset, cause he's gonna be gone for four years,  
14          but, guess what, they will get to spend the fifth  
15          one with him. We'll never get to spend another one  
16          with ours.

17           I'm just saying, I'm saying, worst comes to  
18          worst, if he only gets four, they're gonna get to  
19          spend a birthday with him. We're now never going  
20          to spend a birthday with ours ever again, ever.

21 BY MS. CLARK:

22           Q       No, I know and certainly I think the Court  
23          understands.

24           A       That's all I need to say.  
25

1 Q Okay. Is there anything else you would like  
2 to say?

3 A There is, but I'm being respectful.

4 THE COURT: That is much appreciated.

5 MS. CLARK: Thank you, sir. I don't have any  
6 other questions.

7 THE COURT: Mr. Delgado, anything?

8 MR. DELGADO: Nothing.

9 THE COURT: Thank you very much. Miss Clark.

10 MS. CLARK: Yes, and I'm not sure if some of  
11 these people are in person or on Zoom, so I'm gonna  
12 find out first if Koy Spada is in person.

13 Koy, did you still want to speak, sir? No.  
14 Okay. How about Austin Spada?

15 MR. KOY SPADA: He's not here. I'm the only  
16 one.

17 MS. CLARK: Then I think Amanda Chambers is on  
18 Zoom.

19 THE COURT: Miss Chambers?

20 THE BAILIFF: She's on mute.

21 THE COURT: Okay. Miss Chambers, we can't  
22 hear you, so if you can unmute yourself. There you  
23 go.

24 MS. CHAMBERS: Yes.

25 THE COURT: Thank you.

1 MS. CHAMBERS: Yes, your Honor, I'm here.

2 THE COURT: Go ahead.

3 MS. CLARK: And, your Honor, if I could ask a  
4 few questions, if that's all right.

5 THE COURT: You may, yes, ma'am.

6 THEREUPON,

7 AMANDA CHAMBERS

8 was called as a witness and, having been duly sworn by  
9 the Clerk of Court, testified upon her oath as follows:

10 DIRECT EXAMINATION

11 BY MS. CLARK:

12 Q Miss Chambers, can you please state your name  
13 for the record.

14 A Yes. My name is Amanda Chambers.

15 Q And how are you related to Miss Martin?

16 A I'm her little sister.

17 Q Okay. So I want to ask you a little bit about  
18 Miss Martin. How long had she lived in Flagler County  
19 before she had passed away?

20 A She had actually been there twice, but I want  
21 to say, probably a total of four years.

22 Q Okay. I understand she has two sons; is that  
23 right?

24 A Yes, Austin and Koy.

25 Q Okay. How old is Koy?

1 A Koy is 26.

2 Q And how old is Austin?

3 A 30.

4 Q And do either of them have any children?

5 A Yes, Austin does. He has two little girls and  
6 a little boy on the way.

7 Q Okay. And what are the names of Austin's  
8 daughters?

9 A Ophelia and Everlee.

10 Q And how old is Ophelia?

11 A Ophelia is a little over a year old.

12 Q Okay. And how old is Everlee?

13 A She's five.

14 Q And did Miss Martin ever get to meet Ophelia?

15 A She didn't.

16 Q Okay. And I think you said there's a grandson  
17 on the way?

18 A There is.

19 Q All right. And what did Miss Martin do for a  
20 living before she passed away?

21 A She was a dispatcher.

22 Q Okay. Now, did you want to either read a  
23 statement or did you want to say anything regarding the  
24 sentencing?

25 A I would like to read a statement.

1 Q Okay. And I know you and I had talked about  
2 the resolution in this case, correct?

3 A That's correct.

4 Q And we had spoken at length about it and the  
5 reasoning for the resolution and you all were in  
6 agreement with it; is that correct?

7 A Yes, ma'am.

8 Q Okay. So if you want to read your statement.  
9 I may have additional questions for you after you're  
10 finished.

11 A Absolutely. Your Honor, my name is Amanda.  
12 As you know, I am the sister of Jackie. I want you to  
13 know, Jackie was full of life, she was very hard  
14 working, she was very joyful and a very kind person, who  
15 brought so much light into everybody's lives.

16 She was a devoted mother of two wonderful  
17 boys, who needed her now more than ever. She was the  
18 person that I leaned on, my best friend. Her loss has  
19 shattered our family in ways that words can barely  
20 describe.

21 She was taken from her two boys, she was taken  
22 from her mother, who should never have to bury your  
23 child, and she was taken from all of us who depended on  
24 her, loved her and expected her to be part of our life  
25 for many more years to come.

1           Today I want the Court to know the pain of  
2   losing Jackie was made even harder of how we heard of  
3   her death. We found out from the Internet and from  
4   friends. There was no one to answer questions, no one  
5   to guide us, no one to let us know what had happened.  
6   We had to learn it all from the Internet. I'm sorry.

7           As for Mr. Adona, I would like him to know  
8   that I do forgive him. I do forgive you, but  
9   forgiveness does not erase the reality of your choices.  
10   Leaving the scene, not rendering aid to three people who  
11   were laying lifeless in a road, that was a terrible  
12   decision and it was heartbreaking.

13           Driving drunk is also another choice, running  
14   from what happened was also another choice and in the  
15   audio-recording you can be heard saying you knew you  
16   were in trouble. I just wish you could have stopped and  
17   rendered aid to them. All of the time you spent there  
18   worrying about being in trouble, maybe the help would  
19   have changed the outcome.

20           Like has been said, you've had two years since  
21   that night. At the same time our family has had to bury  
22   a daughter, a mother. Four months to the day later my  
23   dad passed of cancer. He was actively passing when that  
24   happened to my sister. So now my mom has had to deal  
25   with both of these things.

1           And, yet, all I want you to know, Mr. Adona,  
2           is that God will forgive you if you allow him into your  
3           heart. I can only imagine the pain that your family is  
4           feeling now knowing that they will lose you temporarily  
5           while you serve your sentence, but our loss is forever.

6           This tragedy was a result of a series of very  
7           poor decisions, decisions that destroyed families on  
8           both sides. Nothing done here today will bring Jackie  
9           or Georgette back, but I hope you choose to honor both  
10          of those lives that were lost by your poor decisions by  
11          changing your own going forward. I hope you never  
12          forget those people.

13          Thank you, Your Honor.

14          THE COURT: Ma'am, thank you very much for  
15          your statement. Thank you.

16          MS. CLARK: And I don't have any other  
17          questions of Miss Chambers.

18          MR. DELGADO: Nothing.

19          MS. CHAMBERS: Thank you.

20          MS. CLARK: Is Jack Fisher here?

21          UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: No.

22          MS. CLARK: How about Linda Fisher? And how  
23          about Eric Beck?

24          MR. BECK: Yup.

25          MS. CLARK: May I proceed, Your Honor?

1 THE COURT: You may.

2 THEREUPON,

3 ERIC BECK

4 was called as a witness and, having been duly sworn by  
5 the Clerk of Court, testified upon his oath as follows:

6 DIRECT EXAMINATION

7 BY MS. CLARK:

8 Q Mr. Beck, could you please state your name for  
9 the record.

10 A Eric Beck.

11 Q And you are related to Miss Fisher; is that  
12 right?

13 A She's my sister.

14 Q Okay. So I want to ask a little bit about  
15 your sister before you give us --

16 A Yes, ma'am.

17 Q -- what you would like to hear. Okay. Your  
18 sister, did she have any children?

19 A Yes, ma'am.

20 Q And what are the children's names?

21 A Jack Fisher and Jesse Fisher.

22 Q Okay. And how old are Jack and Jesse,  
23 approximately?

24 A Jesse is 25, Jack is 22 or 23.

25 Q Okay. Are either of her sons married?

1 A No.

2 Q Do either of her sons have any children?

3 A Yes.

4 Q Okay. Can you tell me the names and ages of  
5 the children?

6 A Teagan Fisher, she's third or fourth grade, I  
7 think, at most.

8 Q Okay.

9 A I'm not good with ages.

10 Q It's okay. Just do your best. So the one  
11 granddaughter?

12 A Yes.

13 Q Okay. And, Miss Fisher, how long has she  
14 lived here in Flagler County?

15 A This was before they built the Matanzas road  
16 exit.

17 Q Okay. So a while?

18 A Yes.

19 Q Okay. And what did your sister do for a  
20 living?

21 A My sister, she didn't work because she had  
22 Crohn's.

23 Q Okay. And I know that we have a lot of folks  
24 here in the courtroom that I assume are friends with  
25 both of these women, as well --

1           A     Yes.

2           Q     -- as Mr. McClure, and they're all here in  
3 support of them. Tell me a little bit about your  
4 sister.

5           A     My sister was someone that, she made an  
6 impression on everybody, she would do everything to help  
7 somebody no matter what it was, she was the glue that  
8 held my family together.

9                     My nephews, after she died, they became lost.  
10 No matter what I did, I couldn't -- (unintelligible). I  
11 lost my best friend. I couldn't protect her. She  
12 protected me as a kid. I tried to protect her as an  
13 adult.

14                     She's gone through Crohn's, C. diff, she had a  
15 cough real bad, she fought it all. One time the doctor  
16 would weigh her in pounds and ounces and she fought  
17 through it all. And her husband passed away from  
18 complications from 911. He and her both worked Ground  
19 Zero, but he had -- (unintelligible) -- and after that  
20 she moved in with me. I had my best friend living with  
21 me.

22                     And after what, in September, we lost our dad  
23 too from Parkinson's. It was just me and her and my  
24 nephews and I'm trying to get them to live the right  
25 life and this just didn't help it at all, nothing.

1           You know, everyone here had been touched by  
2 both their lives, everybody. I look at that entire side  
3 right there and nobody knows what to do with themselves,  
4 cause she was always there for everybody. Now I've gone  
5 two Christmases, two holidays, two everything without  
6 her. She'll never come back. Nobody can put that back  
7 together. I mean, the only thing I got left of her is  
8 her dog, who is a hundred pound couch potato.

9           THE COURT: I was gonna say, what kind of dog?

10          MR. BECK: It's a Pit/Boxer mix that thinks  
11 she's a 10-pound lap dog, sleeps with me every  
12 night.

13          And, you know, she wouldn't want me getting  
14 mad and acting out and everything else, because she  
15 always tried to teach me not to do that and I'm  
16 trying to use the right words and still have  
17 compassion for everyone.

18          On April 1st, I'll have 14 years sober and I  
19 think about everything that's going on and how I  
20 want to be mad, because I know I used some harsh  
21 tones in the letters that I wrote. I do apologize  
22 for that.

23          THE COURT: It's all right. I read them all.

24          MR. BECK: Thank you. No, I mean, I didn't  
25 mean that way. You know, I mean, like I say, I

1 lost my best friend. I'm glad dad wasn't alive  
2 when this happened, because he was 87 and he would  
3 have killed him. I don't know what my dad would  
4 have done.

5 You know, I mean, every one of my friends,  
6 they're all here. They took off from work to be  
7 here when a tin of coffee costs \$20. They all took  
8 off a day's worth of work to be here.

9 I mean, there's nothing anybody can do. This  
10 man, he was at the bar drinking. I used to drink,  
11 so I understand what it is and the compulsion to  
12 get behind the wheel of a car when you're drinking  
13 is strong. I myself will truly say, I have handed  
14 my keys off more times than I can count. I was on  
15 first-name basis with all the cab drivers in my  
16 town when I used to drink, because I drove a tow  
17 truck and I saw the cost on the road, I've had to  
18 watch the fire trucks hose down the blood and  
19 scrape body parts off the road.

20 I know the cost and I never did it, but this  
21 man decided to get behind the wheel of his car, him  
22 and his wife both. She could have very easily said  
23 no -- (unintelligible) -- I mean, anything. Then  
24 they decided to haul ass down Route 1.

25 We all live in this town and I guess you live

1 here too?

2 THE COURT: I'm Volusia/Flagler, yes.

3 MR. BECK: Okay. So if you ever go to the  
4 courthouse, you have to go on -- not the  
5 courthouse, but the jailhouse, you have to pass  
6 that light. It is well lit. We're on that all the  
7 time and we know when you're coming up from the  
8 south, as soon as you hit that IGA supermarket,  
9 it's 35 and everybody slams on their brakes,  
10 because usually there's a cop sitting there and I  
11 can't afford tickets, you know, and we take our  
12 time getting through there, between like 35 and 40.  
13 I mean, that's your normal average speed, I'm not a  
14 prick about it, you know, but he's rolling at 70.

15 You know you're in Bunnell and you know  
16 there's a bar right on the corner. I mean, any  
17 time you're near a bar, I swear, a drunk person has  
18 the same mentality of a child chasing a ball and  
19 you have to be careful when you go past these  
20 things and he didn't.

21 He was rolling through, didn't even hit his  
22 brakes and then they go hide behind the bushes that  
23 are right at Tarranova's and watched them take  
24 their last breath and then calls his son, says, I  
25 think I killed somebody. Why didn't he call his

1 son at the bar to come and get him. Nothing.  
2 Nothing. Couldn't even be a man and walk over.

3 If he would have been a man and walked over, I  
4 would ask for compassion. I've done things wrong  
5 and I've owned up to it and I've been a man about  
6 it, I've taken my licks in life, but he didn't. He  
7 went and hit and watched them die. What type of  
8 man are you? And then he gets a deal like this.

9 THE COURT: I'm gonna talk some more about  
10 that.

11 MR. BECK: Because if you're stuck between the  
12 four and the ten, can you do ten day-for-day?

13 THE COURT: So I'm gonna take some time, as a  
14 matter of fact, after I hear from both sides, I'm  
15 gonna take a brief recess and then I'm gonna come  
16 out and talk to everybody, and like I said, I don't  
17 know that everybody is gonna agree with me, but I'm  
18 gonna explain what the ruling will be.

19 MR. BECK: And you run drug court, right?

20 THE COURT: I do.

21 MR. BECK: When he gets out, put him on drug  
22 court, help him out, because, obviously, he's got  
23 to be drinking heavy for what he did. Maybe that  
24 might help him, because -- (unintelligible).

25 For as much anger as I have, I don't want to

1 be that heartless person, you know, I hope when he  
2 gets there, he gets in AA and everything else, you  
3 know, because you've got to make something of it  
4 while you're sitting in there. If not, you're just  
5 gonna waste away in a box and maybe that's what you  
6 deserve. I don't know. I don't know how to be  
7 angry or be compassionate. I'm trying to find a  
8 medium through both of them.

9 Thank you, ma'am. I don't know what more to  
10 say. I want to thank you for giving me my five  
11 minutes.

12 THE COURT: Absolutely. Any questions?

13 MS. CLARK: No. Thank you.

14 THE COURT: Any questions?

15 MR. DELGADO: No.

16 THE COURT: Thank you, sir, very much. Thank  
17 you.

18 MS. CLARK: Your Honor, I believe that's all  
19 the family members. I don't have any other  
20 witnesses.

21 THE COURT: Mr. Delgado?

22 MR. DELGADO: Thank you, Judge. Your Honor,  
23 we had filed three letters. I'm sure you've read  
24 them.

25 THE COURT: I have.

1 MR. DELGADO: I just want to let you put a  
2 name to a face. Would Miss Melanie Nordstrom stand  
3 up. Your Honor, you have a letter from her. Thank  
4 you very much.

5 THE COURT: Thank you.

6 MR. DELGADO: Mr. Wendell Hash, please stand  
7 up. Judge, you have a letter from him as well.  
8 And then would Phil Haley please stand up. Judge,  
9 you have a letter from him as well.

10 And just would everybody here who is here on  
11 the Adona matter, on behalf of Mr. Adona, will they  
12 just stand up so the judge can see who they are,  
13 please. Thank you very much.

14 THE COURT: Thank you.

15 MR. DELGADO: Judge, I just, you know, every  
16 one of those people would have wanted to come up  
17 and speak, but I think it just belabors the point  
18 that the other folks have already made in their  
19 letter, so what I'd like to do is go ahead and call  
20 Mr. Adona's brother, his wife and Mr. Adona only as  
21 our witnesses. Okay?

22 THE COURT: Thank you.

23 MR. DELGADO: And ask you to consider what's  
24 in the letters as well as what you've seen in court  
25 today.

1 THE COURT: Absolutely.

2 MR. DELGADO: Thank you. So, Judge, I'll  
3 start off with Joseph Adona and I don't believe  
4 these witnesses have previously been sworn, Madam  
5 Clerk, but, thank you.

6 THE CLERK: Raise your right hand. Do you  
7 swear or affirm the testimony you're about to give  
8 will be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but  
9 the truth, so help you God?

10 MR. JOSEPH ADONA: I do.

11 THE COURT: Come on up. Good afternoon.

12 MR. DELGADO: May I inquire, Your Honor?

13 THE COURT: You may.

14 THEREUPON,

15 JOSEPH ADONA  
16 was called as a witness and, having been duly sworn by  
17 the Clerk of Court, testified upon his oath as follows:

18 DIRECT EXAMINATION

19 BY MR. DELGADO:

20 Q Sir, can you state your name for us, please.

21 A Joseph Adona.

22 Q Mr. Adona, how are you related to Melvin  
23 Adona?

24 A He's my older brother.

25 Q He's your older brother?

1 A Uh-huh.

2 Q And how old are you?

3 A 42.

4 Q Okay. And where do you live?

5 A Ormond Beach.

6 Q Okay. Are you born and raised in Volusia

7 County?

8 A Yes.

9 Q Okay. What would you like to tell the Court  
10 about your brother, Melvin Adona?

11 A I wasn't expecting to be here in this setting.  
12 I just wrote something and I just simply want to read  
13 it, if that's okay.

14 THE COURT: Have you read it?

15 MR. DELGADO: Yeah.

16 MR. JOSEPH ADONA: I sent it.

17 THE COURT: Okay.

18 MR. JOSEPH ADONA: First of all, thank you for  
19 allowing me the opportunity to speak on behalf of  
20 our family and, first of all, I'd also like to  
21 offer my most sincere condolences to the family  
22 affected by this.

23 Forty-two years ago I was brought home to a  
24 grieving household because my cousin was struck by  
25 a car the day after I was born, so, unfortunately,

1 we do have some minor semblance of the emotion that  
2 you guys are going through.

3 Now, I'm nobody to nobody and I obviously  
4 cannot speak on details, however, I can speak as a  
5 younger brother who has idolized his older brother  
6 for as long as I can remember. I used to study his  
7 every move, so I could be just like him. When he  
8 became a husband, I knew that's what I wanted.  
9 When he became a father, I knew I wanted children  
10 of my own. As a result, I know him better than he  
11 knows himself, excuse me, and I can tell everyone  
12 in this courtroom with the utmost confidence that  
13 since this accident occurred, I've seen my brother  
14 live with complete and utter remorse, not remorse  
15 for himself, not remorse for how his life has taken  
16 a turn, sincere remorse for the lives affected by  
17 his moment of weakness.

18 If he could go back and change it all, he  
19 would, he said so himself, not just because he's  
20 here in this situation today, because his goal has  
21 always been to spread positivity to those around  
22 him and never to cause harm.

23 Do not mistake this as a plea of sympathy or  
24 plea for sympathy for my brother, but simply as a  
25 statement from his younger brother on the nature of

1 his character and on the man that I know he is,  
2 which is a simple man that has lived a simple life  
3 and has never hurt anyone. Without context, simply  
4 put, some may see him as a bad man, however, this  
5 couldn't be farther from the truth.

6 In closing, no matter what happens here today,  
7 I would like to once again offer sincere  
8 condolences, as none of us in my family take any of  
9 this lightly and, once again, thank you for  
10 allowing me the time and the opportunity to shed a  
11 little bit more light on who he really is.

12 MR. DELGADO: Thank you. I don't have any  
13 further questions.

14 MS. CLARK: No questions, Your Honor.

15 MR. DELGADO: Thank you very much. Your  
16 Honor, next I'd like to call Miss Sara Adona,  
17 Melvin Adona's wife.

18 THE CLERK: Do you swear or affirm the  
19 testimony you're about to give will be the truth,  
20 the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help  
21 you God?

22 MS. SARA ADONA: Yes.

23 THEREUPON,

24 SARA ADONA

25 was called as a witness and, having been duly sworn by

1 the Clerk of Court, testified upon her oath as follows:

2 DIRECT EXAMINATION

3 BY MR. DELGADO:

4 Q Ma'am, can you state your name for us, please.

5 A Sara Adona.

6 Q And how are you related to Melvin Adona?

7 A I'm his wife.

8 Q Okay. How long have you all been married?

9 A Twenty-eight years.

10 Q Okay. Do you have children?

11 A One.

12 Q Okay. How old is that child?

13 A 27.

14 Q Okay. What do you do for a living?

15 A I'm in jewelry sales.

16 Q Okay. Now, Miss Adona, I want to just kind of  
17 ask, I know you've got a statement or something that you  
18 want to speak to, but I do just want to get a little bit  
19 of background information or some information from you  
20 about the time from when the accident happened until  
21 when your husband was arrested. Okay?

22 A Okay.

23 Q Obviously, you were with him the night of the  
24 accident?

25 A Yes.

1 Q Okay. And from that time until he was  
2 arrested about a year or so passed?

3 A Yes.

4 Q During that time were you essentially given  
5 like a lawsuit or a claim made on your insurance for the  
6 injuries and accident that had happened?

7 A Personal?

8 Q Yes.

9 A Yes.

10 Q Okay. And did your insurance company resolve  
11 that claim?

12 A Yes.

13 Q In addition to the money from the insurance,  
14 did you and your husband contribute your personal money  
15 to the settlement on top of the insurance money?

16 A We were able to do \$2,500 to two of the  
17 victims.

18 Q Okay. And that money came from your personal  
19 savings?

20 A Yes.

21 Q Did you have any savings left after then?

22 A No.

23 Q Okay. What kind of work does your husband do?

24 A He works for a granite countertop.

25 Q Is he the owner and CEO of the granite

1 countertop? What does he do there?

2 A No. He runs the machines.

3 Q Okay. And, obviously, he was driving that  
4 night?

5 A Yes.

6 Q Since that time has he -- where has the  
7 vehicle been since the time of the --

8 A Impound.

9 Q Okay. So for two years or so?

10 A Yes.

11 Q Okay. And have you been still having to make  
12 payments on the vehicle, insure it and all that?

13 A Still making payments and still insuring it.

14 Q Okay. Has your husband been driving since  
15 this incident?

16 A Rarely.

17 Q Okay. Why hasn't he been driving?

18 A Just not comfortable.

19 Q He can't get behind the vehicle?

20 A Yeah.

21 Q He has a license though, right?

22 A Yes, he has a license. It's just very, very  
23 difficult.

24 Q Okay.

25 A I mean, basically, he was brought to work

1 almost every day since the accident.

2 Q Okay. Someone took him to work every day?

3 A Yes, would pick him up and drop him off.

4 Q All right. Now, I mean, immediately after the  
5 accident, you knew that there were gonna be some sort of  
6 criminal prosecution, right?

7 A Yes.

8 Q Okay. And so for the last -- from the time of  
9 the accident till he was arrested, did any part of you  
10 think that this day would never come?

11 A Absolutely not. We knew the day would come.

12 Q Okay. And, I mean, and Mr. Adona, obviously,  
13 he wasn't arrested, but did he leave Volusia County, did  
14 he do anything to change as far as like him going to  
15 work and just trying to basically stay in the same  
16 place, do the same thing?

17 A He never left, I mean, Volusia or Flagler. We  
18 did nothing. We've lived in basically prison for two  
19 years waiting for this.

20 Q Okay. And then when Mr. Adona was arrested,  
21 that kind of began this next phase of it?

22 A Correct.

23 Q Okay. And that was about a year or so after  
24 the accident?

25 A Year and three months.

1 Q Okay. And I think you've said that, you know,  
2 about the driving, but how has Mr. Adona's personality  
3 been or how has his kind of behavior been since the  
4 accident?

5 A He's not the same.

6 Q Okay. Can you elaborate on that for us at  
7 all?

8 A Just it's very hard. We used to be outgoing,  
9 we used to do a lot of different things and he has not  
10 wanted to do anything.

11 Q Okay. Let's just pause for a second. Okay.  
12 Now, Miss Adona, I know that there's some things you  
13 want to tell the people in the room, as well as the  
14 Court. Did you prepare a statement?

15 A Yes, I have something.

16 Q And part of the reason that you did that was  
17 it's difficult for you to speak here today, right?

18 A It's very hard for me to speak about.

19 Q Okay. And before we get to that, I mean, you  
20 showed up today knowing that your husband is going to  
21 prison for between four to ten years at the end of --  
22 four o'clock, whenever this hearing ends, right?

23 A Yes.

24 Q Okay. What would you like to tell the judge  
25 or anyone that's listening about the situation for them

1 to understand a little bit better from Mr. Adona's  
2 perspective or your perspective?

3 A I'm gonna read my statement.

4 Q If that would be easier for you, I think  
5 that's okay.

6 A Your Honor, nothing replaces the remorse we  
7 feel over this tragedy. It is something that we will  
8 carry with us for the rest of our lives. To the  
9 families who have been hurt, we are truly sorry. There  
10 are no words that can undo what was lost. For the past  
11 two years we've lived with this every single day. It  
12 took over a year for my husband to be arrested and  
13 during that time he lived with guilt and anguish in his  
14 mind.

15 We understand nothing can bring back what was  
16 taken. We pray the families may one day find it in  
17 their hearts to forgive us for this tragedy.

18 Unfortunately, on that fateful night tragedy struck, I  
19 awoke to my husband in sheer panic, I didn't know what  
20 to do. I tried to calm him and understand what had  
21 happened as best as I could. He kept saying he had no  
22 side mirror and couldn't see what had happened, he  
23 froze.

24 When we realized the gravity of the situation,  
25 we saw that police were already at the scene. In that

1 moment of being frozen, he panicked, he made the  
2 decision to call our son and that will always be one of  
3 our deepest regrets. The shock and fear overwhelmed  
4 him.

5 After everything happened, he sought  
6 counseling to work through his grief and turmoil. For  
7 the next year we could not drive down the roads we once  
8 took to work, we could not even sleep in our own bed,  
9 the weight of what happened consumed us.

10 I can only describe the man I have known and  
11 loved for over 30 years. He is the most kind and caring  
12 man I've ever known. Truly to know him is to love him.  
13 He worked so hard to provide for our family. He is a  
14 leader at work and at home he is our foundation. With  
15 the help and strength of the lord above, we will  
16 continue to learn from this, to grow and to ensure  
17 nothing like this ever happens again. Thank you for  
18 hearing my thoughts.

19 MR. DELGADO: Thank you, Sara. I don't have  
20 any further questions, Your Honor.

21 MS. CLARK: Just a couple quick questions.

22 CROSS-EXAMINATION

23 BY MS. CLARK:

24 Q Miss Adona, I understand before the accident  
25 occurred, you and your husband had been at a Christmas

1 work party for your employment; is that correct?

2 A That is correct.

3 Q And at that work party, I'm assuming that food  
4 and alcohol was being served?

5 A Yes.

6 Q And your husband had been drinking that night?

7 A Yes.

8 Q Also found in his system was cannabis. Was he  
9 a regular cannabis user?

10 A Yes.

11 Q Had he used that day as far as you know?

12 A I don't recall.

13 Q Okay. Was he using cannabis at the party?

14 A No.

15 Q Just alcohol?

16 A Yes.

17 Q Do you know how many drinks he had?

18 A Three.

19 Q Okay. And you had been drinking as well?

20 A Yes.

21 Q Okay. And it's your testimony you were asleep  
22 at the time of the accident?

23 A Yes.

24 MS. CLARK: I don't have any other questions.

25 MR. DELGADO: Nothing further.

1 THE COURT: You may step down.

2 MR. DELGADO: Your Honor, at this time I'd  
3 like to call Mr. Adona, Melvin Adona.

4 THE CLERK: He was sworn.

5 MR. DELGADO: Oh, he was. My bad.

6 THE CLERK: That's okay.

7 MR. DELGADO: I grabbed you prematurely.

8 THE COURT: And Mr. Adona and Mr. Delgado, if  
9 you don't mind, if he's gonna make any general  
10 statements to the family, if he could either direct  
11 them to the Court --

12 MR. DELGADO: Or to me.

13 THE COURT: -- or to you.

14 MR. DELGADO: Yeah, that would be fine.

15 THE COURT: You can come on up, sir.

16 THEREUPON,

17 MELVIN ADONA

18 was called as a witness and, having been duly sworn by  
19 the Clerk of Court, testified upon his oath as follows:

20 DIRECT EXAMINATION

21 BY MR. DELGADO:

22 Q Sir, can you state your name for us, please.

23 A It's Melvin Adona.

24 Q Okay. And, Mr. Adona, you're the defendant in  
25 this case?

1 A Yes.

2 Q All right. And as the judge said and I know  
3 because we've talked, obviously, that there's some  
4 things that you want to tell the families and the people  
5 whose lives have been impacted, but as the judge said,  
6 you know, address me --

7 A Yes.

8 Q -- or address the judge, either way, that's  
9 fine, but don't address the crowd. I think it's just  
10 best that you either speak to me or speak to the judge.  
11 Okay?

12 A Yes.

13 Q And before we get to your kind of remarks, I  
14 wanted to just get some background information. How  
15 long have you -- how old are you?

16 A I'm 52.

17 Q Okay. And how long have you lived in  
18 Volusia/Flagler County?

19 A I have lived in Volusia/Flagler pretty much  
20 all my life.

21 Q Okay. I think you were in Wisconsin for a few  
22 years, but other than that, right?

23 A A few years, yeah.

24 Q So born in Volusia County?

25 A Born in Volusia County, Daytona Beach.

1 Q And you're married, you have a family?

2 A Yes.

3 Q And raised that family here in Volusia/Flagler  
4 County?

5 A Yes.

6 Q Okay. And what kind of work do you do?

7 A I work for a granite company.

8 Q And what do you do with that company?

9 A I run machines that cut the granite.

10 Q Okay. Now, obviously, you know, two years ago  
11 you were involved in this incident, right?

12 A Yes.

13 Q Okay. And then a year passed, about a year  
14 passed before you were arrested?

15 A Yes.

16 Q Okay.

17 A Correct.

18 Q And in the year from when the accident  
19 happened until you were arrested, did you think you were  
20 not gonna be charged with a crime, did you think you got  
21 away with something?

22 A Not at all.

23 Q Okay. What were your thoughts during that  
24 period of time?

25 A I -- I was lost in my own head. I just went

1 to work every day. It's everything I thought about  
2 every day.

3 Q This incident?

4 A Yes, correct.

5 Q Did you seek any kind of counseling or therapy  
6 at all in that time period?

7 A Yes, I went to go seek some counseling to try  
8 and help cope with what has happened.

9 Q Okay. And then ultimately you were arrested  
10 and bonded out, right?

11 A Yes, sir.

12 Q Okay. And then that brings us to here today?

13 A Yes.

14 Q Now, you made a decision to enter a plea and  
15 accept responsibility in the form of at least four years  
16 in prison, up to ten years in prison, with another  
17 decade of probation; is that correct?

18 A Yes.

19 Q And you showed up here today knowing that  
20 you're leaving here, going off to state prison for some  
21 undetermined amount of time, between four and ten years?

22 A Yes, sir.

23 Q Okay. And right after the accident, you knew,  
24 even before you had been arrested, that you were facing  
25 a significant prison sentence?

1 A Yes.

2 Q Okay. And you didn't try to, you know, leave  
3 town or anything like that, you stayed and tried to do  
4 the best you could going forward?

5 A Yes.

6 Q Okay. Your wife told us and I know from  
7 speaking to you, you haven't been driving since this  
8 accident very much, if at all?

9 A No, it was rare.

10 Q And why -- you have a driver's license?

11 A Yes, I do.

12 Q And why were you not driving?

13 A I just couldn't get myself to be on the road  
14 behind the wheel.

15 Q Okay. Now, the night of all of this, we've  
16 seen the video, I mean, you stopped about a block or two  
17 away from the accident and just didn't call the police,  
18 you called your son, right?

19 A That's correct.

20 Q Was there anything about -- what was going  
21 through your mind, like why did you not just go back to  
22 the scene, what happened?

23 A I froze. I didn't know what to do. I was  
24 stuck in my head what had happened.

25 Q What thoughts do you have about that night and

1 what might have been different if you had gone back?

2 A Could have helped out.

3 Q I'm sorry, I can't hear you.

4 A It could have helped out.

5 Q Okay. You think things might have been  
6 different if you'd gone back?

7 A No, I expected something.

8 Q I'm sorry?

9 A I never -- I expected something, an outcome  
10 from this. I never expected to have anything else  
11 different.

12 Q No, but I'm saying, do you think that the  
13 people -- when you say, you think about if you had gone  
14 back as far as, you could have helped the people; is  
15 that what you're saying?

16 A Yes.

17 Q Okay. Not that it would have changed what  
18 happened, but you could have changed their outcome,  
19 medically or --

20 A Could have changed their outcome, yes.

21 Q Okay. Do you have any kind of, I mean, were  
22 you ever in the military, anything like that? Do you  
23 have any kind of training to deal with high-stress  
24 situations?

25 A Not at all.

1           MR. DELGADO: All right. And I know that you  
2 prepared a statement. With the Court's permission,  
3 I'd like for him to just go ahead and read that  
4 statement, if he could.

5           THE COURT: And you've reviewed it.

6           MR. MELVIN ADONA: Your Honor, I'm not very  
7 good at speaking and I'm not sure there are words  
8 that can fully express what I need to say, but I  
9 want to apologize directly to the families for the  
10 pain and loss that I caused.

11           There are no words that can fix what I've  
12 done. This happened because of my actions. I  
13 failed you. I take full responsibility. In that  
14 moment I froze. I did not do what I should have  
15 done. I had a responsibility to react and I  
16 didn't. The failure is mine.

17           I will live with these consequences for the  
18 rest of my life. I know nothing I say will change  
19 the past. I know your loved ones are not coming  
20 back, the hugs, the conversations, the laughter,  
21 those moments are gone because of what happened.  
22 I will carry this reality with me for the rest of  
23 my life.

24           For the past two years I have lived every day  
25 knowing what I did and knowing this day would come.

1 I have replayed them over and over. I wish I had  
2 made a different choice.

3 I've sought counseling to cope with what  
4 happened, to confront my failure, not to excuse it,  
5 but to face it and understand it. I know that  
6 whatever pain I've felt does not compare to what  
7 the families have endured.

8 I am not asking for sympathy. I know there  
9 are consequences and I accept them. I cannot undo  
10 what I have done, but I can choose who I become  
11 from here. If I'm ever given the opportunity, I  
12 hope to use what I have learned and help others  
13 make better choices and to prevent anyone else from  
14 repeating my failure.

15 You deserve better from me. I'm deeply sorry.  
16 I'm sorry for my failure. I'm sorry for not being  
17 the person I should have been. I do not expect  
18 forgiveness, but I hope one day there can be some  
19 measure of peace and closure for the families and  
20 in time I hope to work toward forgiving myself by  
21 living in a way that reflects the seriousness of  
22 what I have done.

23 MR. DELGADO: I don't have any more questions.

24 MS. CLARK: I just have a few questions.

25

1 CROSS-EXAMINATION

2 BY MS. CLARK:

3 Q Mr. Adona, the night this occurred you had  
4 been at a Christmas party with your wife, correct?

5 A Yes, ma'am.

6 Q In Ormond Beach?

7 A Yes.

8 Q Correct? You were drinking at that party?

9 A Yes.

10 Q And then you got behind the wheel and drove  
11 from Ormond Beach, all the way north into Flagler  
12 County?

13 A Yes, ma'am.

14 Q Correct? And after this accident occurred,  
15 you knew you had hit those pedestrians, correct?

16 A No, ma'am.

17 Q So when we hear you on Tarranova's saying you  
18 hit those people --

19 A I had walked around the vehicle. That's when  
20 I realized what I hit.

21 Q Okay. And even while staying there at  
22 Tarranova's, realizing you had hit at least one person,  
23 you didn't go back to the scene, you didn't call 911,  
24 correct?

25 A No, ma'am.

1 Q You say you froze, but in reality, you also  
2 knew you'd been drinking, right?

3 A Yes, ma'am.

4 Q And you knew the police were on scene?

5 A Yes.

6 MS. CLARK: Okay. I don't have any other  
7 questions.

8 MR. DELGADO: Nothing.

9 THE COURT: Sir, thank you. You can step  
10 down. Any other witnesses?

11 MR. DELGADO: No more evidence from the  
12 defense, Your Honor.

13 THE COURT: I'm gonna take a ten minute recess  
14 just to gather my thoughts and to take some notes  
15 and then I'll hear argument from both sides.

16 THE BAILIFF: All rise.

17 (brief recess)

18 THE COURT: Everyone please be seated. First  
19 I want to thank the attorneys both in this case for  
20 their very professional presentations. This is an  
21 incredibly difficult case. These are some of the  
22 worst cases as judges and lawyers we have to  
23 handle. I also want to thank the family members  
24 and the friends of all of the participants that  
25 were here today.

1 I also want to thank the deputy, who after  
2 what he had just witnessed, had the ability to call  
3 for assistance and to quickly render aid. He was  
4 very understandably shaken by what he had seen.  
5 Some people freeze. People can say that the people  
6 who freeze are cowards. Others rise to the  
7 occasion and Deputy Punskey did just that and  
8 likely, very likely, saved Mr. McClure's life.

9 I absolutely believe that Mr. Adona is  
10 remorseful, I absolutely believe that, however, two  
11 people are dead and one person miraculously  
12 survived. I do not know, sir, how you survived.

13 The primary purpose of the sentencing statutes  
14 in the state of Florida is punishment and one -- I  
15 think two individuals mentioned that family members  
16 and friends of Jackie and Georgette will never get  
17 to enjoy holidays or events with them. Mr. Adona's  
18 family can at least visit him in prison.

19 I do not think that Mr. Adona is a terrible  
20 person. I think he is one of the individuals who  
21 froze and not rise to the occasion to do what was  
22 right. I don't know how many of us would be able  
23 to do what the deputy did in this case, but it is  
24 amazing when you see the differences in the  
25 reactions to what happened.

1           Mr. Adona, you are adjudicated guilty. You  
2           are sentenced to ten years with the Department of  
3           Corrections, with credit for how much time in --

4           THE CLERK: Two days.

5           THE COURT: -- with credit for two days in.  
6           On the second-degree felony, it's followed by five  
7           years' probation and the first-degree felony is  
8           followed by ten years' probation with the following  
9           conditions.

10          He will go straight from prison to residential  
11          substance abuse treatment, hold for bed space. He  
12          will be required as a condition of his probation to  
13          successfully complete residential substance abuse  
14          treatment. No illegal drugs, no alcohol, random  
15          UAs, no visiting bars or places that primarily sell  
16          alcohol.

17          He must take the Alcohol Safety Education  
18          Class, Victim Awareness Panel, 120 community  
19          service hours in a trauma center where speaking to  
20          youth about the dangers of DUI and traffic-related  
21          offenses, no buyout of those hours, MRT program,  
22          three year driver's license suspension, no contact  
23          with the victims' families.

24          On the DUI, an adjudication of guilt. That's  
25          a time served because it's a misdemeanor. The DUI

1 fine and any DUI conditions that are required by  
2 statute, those I believe are what I set forth above  
3 in the probation.

4 Have I missed anything on that?

5 MS. CLARK: I don't believe so, Your Honor.

6 THE COURT: And then the standard fines and  
7 costs are imposed, if so requested by the State.

8 MS. CLARK: They are, Your Honor.

9 THE COURT: \$100 cost of investigation and  
10 cost of prosecution. All of the counts will run  
11 concurrent with one another and then, sir, you do  
12 have 30 days from today's date to file a notice of  
13 appeal with the Clerk of Court, should you wish to  
14 do so, and if you can't afford a lawyer, a lawyer  
15 would be appointed to represent you.

16 I want to thank everyone here today. I am  
17 sorry for everyone involved and thank you for  
18 listening and participating. This hearing is  
19 adjourned.

20 MS. CLARK: Thank you, Your Honor.

21 THE CLERK: Just to confirm, on Count IV, is  
22 that ten years' DOC as well?

23 MS. CLARK: It is. It's a second-degree  
24 felony.

25 THE COURT: Lindsey, I'll come back out and

1 sign this stuff later. I'm gonna step out.

2 (end of audio)

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## REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

STATE OF FLORIDA )  
COUNTY OF VOLUSIA )

I, SUSAN LEE PARKINSON, RPR, RMR, certify that I was authorized to and did stenographically transcribe the foregoing proceedings via digital recording and that the transcript is a true and complete record of my stenographic notes to the best of my ability.

I further certify that I am not a relative, employee, attorney, or counsel of any of the parties, nor am I a relative or employee of any of the parties' attorney or counsel connected with the action, nor am I financially interested in the action.

Dated this 11th day of May, 2026.



SUSAN LEE PARKINSON, RPR, RMR  
COURT REPORTER