

No. _____

In the Supreme Court of the United States

AMADI SOSA,
Petitioner,

v.

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS,
Respondent.

On Petition for a Writ of Certiorari
to the Supreme Judicial Court
of Massachusetts

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Commonwealth v. Sosa

Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts

May 5, 2023, Argued; November 30, 2023, Decided

SJC-12166.

Reporter

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COMMONWEALTH VS. AMADI SOSA.

Prior History: [***1] Hampden. INDICTMENTS found and returned in the Superior Court Department on February 11, 2014.

The cases were tried before *Daniel A. Ford*, J.; a motion for a new trial, filed on August 23, 2019, was heard by *Douglas H. Wilkins*, J., and a motion for reconsideration was considered by him.

Counsel: *John M. Thompson (Linda J. Thompson also present)* for the defendant.

David L. Sheppard-Brick, Assistant District Attorney, for the Commonwealth.

Judges: Present: BUDD, C.J., GAZIANO, CYPHER, KAFKER, & GEORGES, JJ.

Opinion by: GEORGES

Opinion

[**11] **GEORGES**, J. This is a companion case to Commonwealth v. Leiva, 484 Mass. 766, 146 N.E.3d 1093 (2020). There, we affirmed the

convictions of Julio Brian Leiva, who was tried together with the defendant for the shooting death of William Serrano during an attempted robbery. *Id.* at 767, 769, 770 n.2. A Hampden County jury convicted the defendant of murder in the first degree on theories of deliberate premeditation and felony-murder, as well as armed assault with the intent to rob and unlawful possession of ammunition. Before us are the defendant's consolidated appeals [**12] from his convictions and from the denial of his motion for a new [***2] trial.

The defendant has asserted numerous errors. He contends that the trial judge erred by (1) denying the defendant's motion for relief from prejudicial joinder, or otherwise failing to sever his trial from that of his codefendant, Leiva; (2) allowing the prosecutor to use an unauthenticated video recording during the course of trial; (3) denying the defendant's motion for a required finding of not guilty on the charge of murder in the first degree; (4) failing to instruct the jury on an essential element of the charge of unlawful possession of ammunition; and (5) failing to instruct the jury on involuntary manslaughter. The defendant further contends, with respect to his motion for a new trial, that the motion judge erred both in failing to

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hold an evidentiary hearing and in denying the defendant's motion. Finally, the defendant requests relief pursuant to G. L. c. 278, § 33E.

[*106] We discern no reversible error with respect to the defendant's convictions of murder in the first degree and armed assault with the intent to rob. Additionally, after a thorough review of the record, we decline to exercise our authority under G. L. c. 278, § 33E. Accordingly, we affirm the defendant's convictions of murder in the first degree and **[***3]** armed assault with the intent to rob. We also affirm the denial of the defendant's motion for a new trial. However, because of an error in the jury instructions, the defendant's conviction of unlawful possession of ammunition must be vacated.

1. *Background.* a. *Facts.* We summarize the facts the jury could have found, reserving further discussion of the facts for our analysis *infra*.

On November 10, 2013, the day of the shooting, the victim joined his girlfriend for dinner at her sister's residence in Springfield. About twenty minutes after the couple arrived, Leiva joined them, uninvited. Leiva and the victim's girlfriend had previously dated, ending their relationship about six months prior to the shooting; they remained friendly after their relationship ended.

Leiva stayed in the kitchen for about thirty minutes, eating and sending text messages on his cell phone before abruptly leaving and returning about fifteen minutes later. After another ten to fifteen minutes had passed, Leiva departed again. He left through the back door of the house onto a small porch

where he passed by the victim, who was seated in a chair with the girlfriend on his lap. Leiva, the victim, and the girlfriend **[***4]** were the only people on the porch.

The girlfriend observed the defendant walk down the porch stairs, then around to the right, where he disappeared behind the porch. A few minutes later, Leiva reemerged from behind the porch, followed closely by two men in dark sweatshirts with raised hoods. The girlfriend recognized one of the men as the defendant, a friend of Leiva, whom she had known for over six months and with whom she frequently socialized. As the three men approached the porch steps, the girlfriend could see that Leiva was carrying what appeared to be a shotgun or rifle with a sawed-off barrel.¹ She had previously seen this same gun at the defendant's residence.

Coming onto the porch, Leiva first pointed the barrel of the gun at the girlfriend, who was attempting to block the top of the stairway. The three men pushed past her and surrounded the **[*107]** victim, with Leiva now aiming the gun at the victim's **[**13]** chest. Leiva then instructed the other two men to "run his pockets," at which point the two men bent over to reach into the victim's pockets. Although the girlfriend did not see what, if anything, they retrieved, the victim was in possession of two cell phones earlier that evening, and **[***5]** only one was discovered among the victim's belongings.

When the victim, who was still seated in the chair, pleaded to be left alone, Leiva

¹ Police never recovered the gun used by Leiva.

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shot the victim seven times. The defendant and the other man stood on either side of Leiva, looking on while facing the victim as the shots rang out. Hearing the gunshots, the girlfriend's sister called 911. Several minutes later, a responding officer entered the sister's living room and found the victim, who, while screaming and bleeding, had managed to crawl inside. The victim was transported to the hospital, where he later died in surgery. After leaving the area, Leiva explained to a friend that he "went to go rob somebody" while he was with two associates but that things went wrong.

b. *Procedural history.* In February 2014, a Hampden County grand jury indicted the defendant for murder in the first degree, G. L. c. 265, § 1; armed assault with intent to murder, G. L. c. 265, § 18 (b); armed robbery, G. L. c. 265, § 17; armed assault with intent to rob, G. L. c. 265, § 18 (b); and unlawful possession of ammunition, G. L. c. 269, § 10 (h).

The defendant's joint trial with his codefendant, Leiva, commenced in January 2016. Before trial, defense counsel filed a motion for relief from prejudicial joinder, seeking to sever the two cases on the grounds [***6] that the defenses would be antagonistic. The trial judge denied this motion. At the close of the Commonwealth's case, the trial judge allowed the defendant's motion for required findings of not guilty as to the charge of armed assault with intent to murder but otherwise denied the motion with respect to the remaining charges.

The jury acquitted the defendant of armed robbery but found him guilty of

murder in the first degree on theories of deliberate premeditation and felony-murder with attempted commission of armed robbery as the predicate felony, guilty of armed assault with the intent to rob, and guilty of unlawful possession of ammunition.

The defendant timely appealed. While his direct appeal was pending, the defendant filed a motion in this court for a new trial pursuant to Mass. R. Crim. P. 30 (b), as appearing in 435 Mass. [*108] 1501 (2001). We remanded the defendant's motion to the Superior Court. After an evidentiary hearing, the motion judge, who was not the trial judge, denied the defendant's motion. The defendant's motion to reconsider was likewise denied. Thereafter, the defendant appealed from the denial of his motion for a new trial, which we consolidated with his direct appeal.

c. *The trial.* At trial, [***7] the Commonwealth proceeded against the defendant as a joint venturer with Leiva in the armed robbery and murder of the victim. In support of its theory, the Commonwealth primarily relied upon the girlfriend's testimony concerning the events that evening, including identifying the defendant as one of the other two men involved in the shooting. See Leiva, 484 Mass. at 769-770. The girlfriend's timeline of events was corroborated by surveillance footage that was recorded at an apartment building where Leiva would frequently stay while visiting Springfield, which depicted Leiva at various points on the evening of the shooting.² Id. at 768, 770.

² The apartment building was approximately a two-minute walk from the sister's residence.

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[14]** Additionally, the Commonwealth's ballistics expert opined that seven shell casings recovered from the crime scene had been fired from the same weapon, as were five bullets recovered from the scene of the shooting and the victim's body. *Id.* at 770-771. The police seized from the defendant's residence live rounds of ammunition of the same caliber and bearing the same manufacturer's markings as the shells recovered from the crime scene. *Id.*

The defendant's primary defense was that he had been misidentified. In support of this theory, counsel for the defendant pointed to numerous factors in his closing, **[***8]** including the girlfriend's mistaken identification of the defendant due to her focus on the gun, the darkness of the setting, and the presence of hoods on Leiva's associates, as well as the girlfriend's mistaken identification of another of Leiva's associates.

The defendant himself did not testify; Leiva, however, did — in narrative form — which the judge permitted him to do pursuant to *Mass. R. Prof. C. 3.3 (e)*, as appearing at 471 Mass. 1416 (2015) (*rule 3.3 (e)*). See *Leiva*, 484 Mass. at 771-773. The judge also prohibited counsel from referencing the invocation of *rule 3.3 (e)* and strongly cautioned them against examining Leiva on this topic. Leiva testified that, while he had visited the sister's residence on the day of the shooting, he left to purchase some **[*109]** marijuana, did not see the defendant, and did not shoot the victim. *Id.* at 771.

2. Discussion. **a. Standard of review.** "Where we consider, as we do here, a

defendant's direct appeal from a conviction of murder in the first degree together with an appeal from the denial of a motion for a new trial, we review the whole case under *G. L. c. 278, § 33E.*" *Commonwealth v. Goitia*, 480 Mass. 763, 768, 108 N.E.3d 993 (2018). "Where the claims are preserved, we review for prejudicial error" (quotation and citation omitted). *Commonwealth v. Gamboa*, 490 Mass. 294, 299 n.8, 190 N.E.3d 469 (2022). For claims that are unpreserved, and for "other errors we discover after a comprehensive **[***9]** review of the entire record, [we review] for a substantial likelihood of a miscarriage of justice." *Commonwealth v. Upton*, 484 Mass. 155, 160, 139 N.E.3d 1159 (2020).

b. Severance of the codefendants' trials. The defendant first argues that severing his trial from the trial of his codefendant, Leiva, was constitutionally required to protect his due process rights and his right to confrontation,³ and that the trial judge's denial of his motion for relief from prejudicial joinder was otherwise an abuse of discretion. These arguments center on Leiva's testimony pursuant to *rule 3.3 (e)*.

We have previously concluded that "[t]he procedures used to implement *rule 3.3 (e)* at the ... trial were proper" and that the trial judge's "rulings relative to the form of [Leiva]'s testimony ... did not constitute error." *Leiva*, 484 Mass. at 784-785. Nonetheless, we reexamine

³ Because, as we conclude *infra*, there was no error, we need not reach the defendant's argument that the alleged errors were structural. See *Commonwealth v. Scott*, 470 Mass. 320, 337 n.15, 21 N.E.3d 954 (2014).

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the propriety of this procedure and testimony in the context of the nontestifying defendant's severance arguments.⁴

[15]** i. *Due process.* The defendant asserts that severance was constitutionally required because the Commonwealth knowingly used Leiva's false testimony to secure the defendant's conviction, or allowed for Leiva's false testimony to go uncorrected, thereby violating the defendant's due process rights. As the defendant did **[*110]** not raise **[***10]** this issue at trial,⁵ we review for a substantial likelihood of a miscarriage of justice. See *Commonwealth v. Ware*, 482 Mass. 717, 721-722, 128 N.E.3d 29 (2019). We conclude that there was no error.

It is true that "[t]he Commonwealth may not present testimony at trial which [it] knows or should know is false" (quotation omitted). *Ware*, 482 Mass. at 721, quoting *Commonwealth v. Forte*, 469 Mass. 469, 490, 14 N.E.3d 900 (2014). "Nor may the Commonwealth, 'although not soliciting false evidence, allow[] it to go uncorrected when it appears.'" *Ware*, *supra*, quoting *Commonwealth v. Hurst*, 364 Mass. 604,

⁴ We decline to hold, as the defendant insists, that **rule 3.3 (e)** is "designed solely for use in single-defendant trials." Because the defendant cites no legal authority in support of this proposition and presents it in cursory fashion, "we are not obligated to consider it here." *Halstrom v. Dube*, 481 Mass. 480, 483 n.8, 116 N.E.3d 626 (2019).

⁵ Although the defendant's motion for relief from prejudicial joinder does not appear in the record, there is no indication that defense counsel ever argued, in writing or orally, that the motion should be granted because of Leiva's false testimony.

608, 307 N.E.2d 835 (1974). A conviction obtained in either scenario "must fall under the *Fourteenth Amendment*" to the United States Constitution. *Napue v. Illinois*, 360 U.S. 264, 269, 79 S. Ct. 1173, 3 L. Ed. 2d 1217 (1959). Here, it is clear that the Commonwealth did not affirmatively present false testimony, given that Leiva was not the Commonwealth's witness, so the question is whether the Commonwealth allowed Leiva's testimony to go uncorrected when it knew or should have known that his testimony was false.

In order to correct testimony that is known to be false, a prosecutor must "take such remedial measures before the jury retire[] as are necessary to ensure that [they are] not deceived." *Gomez v. Commissioner of Correction*, 336 Conn. 168, 189, 243 A.3d 1163 (2020). Although the precise remedial measures employed may vary depending on the circumstances of a case, one such means of correcting false testimony is, of course, cross-examination. See *Leiva*, 484 Mass. at 784 n.19 (¶ ("Our system[] ... hedges against **[***11]** the risk that judgment will be rendered on false premises by providing for rigorous cross-examination ..."). See also *Hoffa v. United States*, 385 U.S. 293, 311, 87 S. Ct. 408, 17 L. Ed. 2d 374 (1966) ("The established safeguards of the Anglo-American legal system leave the veracity of a witness to be tested by cross-examination, and the credibility of his testimony to be determined by a properly instructed jury").

Here, the prosecutor challenged the veracity of much of Leiva's narrative testimony by conducting a vigorous and

thorough cross-examination. For example, the prosecutor showed surveillance footage, depicting an individual running shortly after the murder. Although Leiva disputed that he was this individual, he conceded — in response to the prosecutor's questions — that he is depicted in the footage at times before and after the running individual can **[*111]** be seen. The implication was clear: the prosecutor sought for the jury to infer, contrary to Leiva's testimony, that the running individual was in fact Leiva. Indeed, the prosecutor explicitly stated during closing arguments that the jury "would have every right to draw the inference" that this individual was Leiva.

[16]** With the prosecutor having rigorously cross-examined ~~Leiva~~ Leiva, it was for the jury to determine **[***12]** whether he was telling the truth. See *Forte*, 469 Mass. at 490. Indeed, there can be no doubt that the jury were not deceived by Leiva; in order to convict him, the jury needed to reject Leiva's version of events. ~~Leiva~~

Nonetheless, the defendant points out that the prosecutor asked Leiva on cross-examination whether he was trying "to help [his] friend Amadi out," and further asked Leiva why he decided to testify. By doing so, the defendant argues, the prosecutor was insinuating that Leiva was "Sosa's witness." As improper as these questions may have been, the defendant's theory has a fatal flaw: Leiva never answered, as the trial judge sustained objections to these questions before Leiva could do so. The jury had been previously instructed that, if an objection was sustained, they were to disregard the question and not

speculate as to what the answer might have been. See *Commonwealth v. Andrade*, 488 Mass. 522, 535, 174 N.E.3d 281 (2021) ("Jurors are presumed to follow the instructions given"). Accordingly, because the prosecutor did not knowingly use, or knowingly fail to correct, false testimony from Leiva, the defendant's due process rights were not violated. ⁶

ii. *Right to confrontation*. The defendant next claims that severance was required because he was deprived of a constitutional **[***13]** right to cross-examine Leiva on a "critical issue of bias": that Leiva was testifying falsely pursuant to *rule 3.3 (e)*. We review for abuse of discretion and conclude that the trial judge did not abuse his discretion by restricting cross-examination of Leiva's invocation of *rule 3.3 (e)*. See *Commonwealth v. Miles*, 420 Mass. 67, 71-72, 648 N.E.2d 719 (1995).

"Both the *Sixth Amendment* [to the United States Constitution] and *art. 12 [of the Massachusetts Declaration of Rights]* guarantee a criminal defendant's right to confront the witnesses against him through cross-examination." *Miles*, 420 Mass. at 71. "In determining whether a defendant's constitutional right to cross-examine and

⁶ We also reject the defendant's claim that the trial judge misled the jury by placing Leiva under oath, as if to suggest that Leiva's testimony was true. Swearing or affirming one's duty to testify truthfully is a prerequisite to testifying. See *Commonwealth v. Stewart*, 454 Mass. 527, 531, 911 N.E.2d 161 (2009). If placing a witness under oath could somehow be construed as an endorsement of the veracity of his or her testimony, it would be impossible for the jury to ever engage in their role of determining witness credibility. See *Commonwealth v. Casey (No. 1)*, 442 Mass. 1, 8, 809 N.E.2d 980 (2004).

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thus to confront a witness against him has been denied because of an unreasonable limitation of cross-examination, we weigh the materiality of the witness's direct testimony and the degree of the restriction on cross-examination." *Id.* at 72, citing *Commonwealth v. Kirouac*, 405 Mass. 557, 561, 542 N.E.2d 270 (1989).

While criminal defendants have a right to cross-examine prosecution witnesses concerning their bias, a judge may properly foreclose such examination where the theory of bias is "too tenuous" or "too speculative." *Commonwealth v. Bui*, 419 Mass. 392, 401-402, 645 N.E.2d 689, cert. denied, 516 U.S. 861, 116 S. Ct. 170, 133 L. Ed. 2d 111 (1995). Here, the connection between the invocation of *rule 3.3 (e)* and any conceivable bias on Leiva's part is simply too tenuous. The defendant does not adequately explain how the invocation of *rule 3.3 (e)* would motivate Leiva to testify falsely. [***14] At best, he seems to vaguely suggest that preventing cross-examination on this topic would somehow [**17] incentivize Leiva to perjure himself because the falsity of his testimony would be shielded from disclosure. But the judge did not prevent counsel from attacking the actual substance of Leiva's testimony; indeed, as we explained *supra*, the prosecutor did so to great effect.

Moreover, we do not accept the notion that Leiva would have been encouraged to perjure himself through the invocation of *rule 3.3 (e)*, particularly where the record demonstrates that Leiva's attorney confirmed at sidebar that he had advised Leiva in accordance with the

rule. The advice required of counsel under *rule 3.3 (e)* is designed to dissuade false testimony, not encourage it. See *Mass. R. Prof. C. 3.3 (e)* ("In a criminal case, defense counsel ... has a duty strongly to discourage the client from testifying falsely, advising that such a course is unlawful, will have substantial adverse consequences, and should not be followed"). Given the attenuation between *rule 3.3 (e)* and Leiva's motive for testifying, the judge did not abuse his discretion.

iii. *Prejudicial joinder*. The defendant's final argument concerning severance is that the judge abused his discretion in denying [***15] the defendant's motion for relief from prejudicial joinder. "Absent a constitutional requirement for severance, joinder and severance are matters committed to the sound discretion of the trial judge." *Commonwealth v. McAfee*, 430 Mass. 483, 485, 722 N.E.2d 1 (1999). Accordingly, we review the judge's denial of the motion [*113] for relief from prejudicial joinder for abuse of discretion. See *Commonwealth v. Akara*, 465 Mass. 245, 256, 988 N.E.2d 430 (2013). We conclude that there was no error.

"A judge should sever trials if a defendant meets the burden of proving that (1) the defenses are 'antagonistic to the point of being mutually exclusive,' or (2) 'the prejudice resulting from a joint trial is so compelling that it prevents a defendant from obtaining a fair trial'" (citations omitted). *Commonwealth v. Siny Van Tran*, 460 Mass. 535, 542, 953 N.E.2d 139 (2011). Regarding the first basis, "defenses are mutually antagonistic and irreconcilable where the

'sole defense of each [is] the guilt of the other.'" *Id.*, quoting *Commonwealth v. Stewart*, 450 Mass. 25, 31, 875 N.E.2d 846 (2007). It is not enough to require severance simply because the defendants "assert inconsistent trial strategies," *Siny Van Tran, supra*, or because "a defendant would stand a better chance of acquittal if tried alone," *Commonwealth v. DePina*, 476 Mass. 614, 629, 73 N.E.3d 221 (2017).

Here, the defenses of Leiva and the defendant were not mutually antagonistic. Indeed, we previously noted that the defendant and Leiva "advanced entirely consistent trial defenses." *Leiva*, 484 Mass. at 793 n.35. The [***16] defendant asserted that he was misidentified as one of the participants, and Leiva similarly denied that he shot the victim. Under the facts of this case, the jury were free to conclude both that the defendant was misidentified and that Leiva did not shoot the victim. See *Commonwealth v. Watson*, 487 Mass. 156, 168-169, 165 N.E.3d 1015 (2021) (defenses not so mutually antagonistic requiring severance where codefendants argued misidentification and lack of involvement). Thus, "as the jury could have accepted either codefendant's argument while at the same time acquitting the other," the defenses presented were not mutually antagonistic. *Commonwealth v. Fan*, 490 Mass. 433, 440, 191 N.E.3d 1027 (2022).

Likewise, Leiva's testimony, which in no way implicated the defendant, did not prevent the defendant from receiving a fair [**18] trial. Rather than pointing the finger at the defendant, Leiva

testified that he had not seen the defendant on the day of the murder, and he denied having referred to the defendant in connection with the shooting. Among his scant testimony that even related to the defendant, Leiva acknowledged that he had initially asked a friend to pick him up at the defendant's address on the night of the shooting, before changing his request to a different address. But this same information had already been introduced [***17] in evidence independently through the friend's testimony, as well as through a printout of text messages exchanged between Leiva [*114] and the friend. Thus, Leiva's testimony on this point "was at best cumulative" of other evidence in the record. *Commonwealth v. Vasquez*, 462 Mass. 827, 837, 971 N.E.2d 783 (2012). Accordingly, the judge did not abuse his discretion in denying the defendant's motion.

c. *Use of compilation video recording.* A Springfield police officer testified at trial that, shortly after the night of the shooting, he extracted surveillance footage from a digital video recorder that was provided by the property management office at the apartment building where Leiva went on the night of the shooting. The complete video footage contained several camera angles of the property, spanning multiple hours around the time of the shooting. From this longer, multiple-hour video footage, a condensed video recording (compilation video) was created, culled to what was relevant to the shooting. The defendant argues that the trial judge erred in allowing the prosecutor to use this compilation video because it was never authenticated, marked for

identification, or admitted in evidence.⁷ In response, the Commonwealth emphasizes that the complete footage, from [***18] which the compilation was derived, was admitted in evidence.

As defendant's counsel objected to the use of the compilation video, "we review to determine whether the judge abused [his] discretion and, if so, whether the error resulted in prejudice to the defendant" (quotation and citation omitted). Commonwealth v. Davis, 487 Mass. 448, 465 (2021), S.C., 491 Mass. 1011 (2023). "An error is not prejudicial if it did not influence the jury, or had but very slight effect" (quotation and citation omitted). Commonwealth v. Irene, 462 Mass. 600, 618, 970 N.E.2d 291, cert. denied, 568 U.S. 968, 133 S. Ct. 487, 184 L. Ed. 2d 306 (2012). We conclude that, assuming error, the defendant was not prejudiced by the prosecutor's use of the compilation video.

The defendant does not argue that the complete footage itself was erroneously admitted, where testimony was offered to authenticate that footage. In particular, an officer described at trial how the complete surveillance footage was transported and copied. Additionally, an employee from the property management office testified as to how this footage was provided to the police, and offered various details concerning the cameras that recorded this footage.

Further, it is undisputed that the

⁷ The prosecutor used the compilation video at several points during his cross-examination of Leiva. The prosecutor also showed various clips from the compilation video to the jury during closing arguments.

compilation video was a subset of this longer surveillance footage that had already been admitted [*115] in evidence. There is no indication that, for [***19] example, the visuals contained within the compilation video were somehow digitally altered to depict events that were different from those depicted in the complete footage. We have reviewed the compilation video and compared it to [**19] the corresponding times from the original surveillance footage. Based upon our review, we conclude that the sequencing of certain events from the longer video footage into the compilation video "added little to the Commonwealth's case and detracted little from the defendant's theory at trial." Commonwealth v. Wood, 90 Mass. App. Ct. 271, 282, 58 N.E.3d 1056 (2016).

Therefore, under these circumstances, we are convinced that the defendant suffered no prejudice. See Commonwealth v. Kozubal, 488 Mass. 575, 588, 174 N.E.3d 1169 (2021), cert. denied, 142 S. Ct. 2723, 212 L. Ed. 2d 787 (2022) (even if admission of isolated text messages between defendant and victim was error, defendant was not prejudiced, "given the cumulative nature of the evidence, including the admission of the many text messages between the defendant and the victim that the defendant does not contest").

Finally, we note that while the defendant suffered no prejudice here, the better practice is to authenticate excerpts that have been copied from an exhibit, even when the complete exhibit itself has already been authenticated and admitted in evidence, to ensure that

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those **[***20]** excerpts are accurate copies. See Commonwealth v. Leneski, 66 Mass. App. Ct. 291, 294, 846 N.E.2d 1195 (2006) ("properly authenticated" copy of videotape is admissible if otherwise relevant). Additionally, although the Commonwealth did not do so here, parties should explore the viability of admitting excerpts of voluminous video recordings pursuant to Mass. G. Evid. § 1006 (2023), particularly where a jury may find it "difficult to master the technology necessary to find and view the relevant parts of the [complete] videos in the jury room." Commonwealth v. Suarez, 95 Mass. App. Ct. 562, 571-572, 129 N.E.3d 297 (2019) (no abuse of discretion in admitting compilation of surveillance videos pursuant to Mass. G. Evid. § 1006).

d. *Deliberate premeditation.* The defendant also contends that the trial judge erred in denying his motion for a required finding of not guilty on the charge of murder in the first degree based upon the theory of deliberate premeditation. He claims the evidence was insufficient for the jury to find that he intended to kill the victim, reasoning that because Leiva's intent to kill is not attributable to the defendant, the evidence at best supported an inference that the defendant intended to rob or intimidate the **[*116]** victim. Additionally, the defendant maintains that the evidence was insufficient to establish deliberate premeditation, reasoning that, since "the **[***21]** abrupt shooting" was a "surprise" to him, the defendant's intent was not "the product of cool reflection." See Commonwealth v. Colas, 486 Mass. 831, 836, 162 N.E.3d 1192 (2021), quoting

Commonwealth v. Tavares, 471 Mass. 430, 435, 30 N.E.3d 91 (2015). Although we acknowledge that the issue is close, we conclude that the trial judge did not err.

In reviewing the denial of such a motion, we ask whether "the Commonwealth's evidence, together with reasonable inferences therefrom, when viewed in its light most favorable to the Commonwealth, is sufficient to persuade a rational jury of the defendant's guilt beyond a reasonable doubt" (quotation and citation omitted). Commonwealth v. Gibson, 488 Mass. 854, 857, 179 N.E.3d 51 (2022). "The relevant question is whether the evidence would permit a jury to find guilt, not whether the evidence requires such a finding." Commonwealth v. Brown, 401 Mass. 745, 747, 519 N.E.2d 1291 (1988).

For the defendant to be convicted on a theory of deliberate premeditation, the Commonwealth had to prove that he "had or shared an intent to kill or cause **[**20]** death" (quotation and citation omitted). Tavares, 471 Mass. at 435. Additionally, the Commonwealth had to prove that the decision to kill "was the product of cool reflection" (citation omitted). Colas, 486 Mass. at 836. "Circumstantial evidence alone may be sufficient to prove deliberate premeditation." Commonwealth v. Salazar, 481 Mass. 105, 111, 112 N.E.3d 781 (2018). "No particular period of reflection is required for deliberate premeditation to be found." Commonwealth v. Chipman, 418 Mass. 262, 269, 635 N.E.2d 1204 (1994). "Thus, if there was **[***22]** evidence presented from which the jury could infer that the defendant intended to kill

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[the victim], and the decision was the result of some period of reflection, however short, then the defendant's motion ... was properly denied." *Tavares, supra.*

Here, when viewed in the light most favorable to the Commonwealth, there was sufficient evidence from which the jury could infer that the defendant shared Leiva's intent to kill the victim, and that this shared intent was the product of a period of reflection. Although Leiva's intent is not imputed to the defendant, "[t]he jury may infer the requisite mental state [for a joint venturer] from [his] knowledge of the circumstances and subsequent participation in the offense" (citation omitted). *Commonwealth v. Freeman, 442 Mass. 779, 782-783 (2004), S.C., 451 Mass. 1006 (2008)*. Thus, the defendant's intent can be "inferred [***117**] from evidence that [the] defendant (a) observed [Leiva] demonstrate or express lethal intent (e.g., by producing a gun) and (b) thereafter took some step to help carry out that intent." *Commonwealth v. Gonzalez, 475 Mass. 396, 416-417, 56 N.E.3d 1271 (2016)*.

As defense counsel conceded at oral argument before this court, there was sufficient evidence that the defendant knew that Leiva possessed a gun. Indeed, the defendant had ample opportunity to observe the gun, given that [*****23**] the defendant was standing next to Leiva, the encounter took several minutes, and Leiva pointed the gun at the girlfriend before aiming it at the victim. See *Commonwealth v. Norris, 462 Mass. 131, 140, 967 N.E.2d 113 (2012)*. Although the

Commonwealth was not obligated to prove that the defendant knew Leiva was armed, the defendant's knowledge is probative as to his intent. See *Commonwealth v. Rosa, 468 Mass. 231, 245, 9 N.E.3d 832 (2014)* (proof of defendant's knowledge that coventurer is armed is not required).

Additionally, there was sufficient evidence for the jury to conclude that the defendant supplied both the gun and the ammunition, including (1) the girlfriend's testimony that she had previously seen the murder weapon at the defendant's residence and that the defendant was friends with Leiva; (2) the girlfriend's testimony that she witnessed Leiva disappear behind the porch and re-emerge with the defendant while holding a gun; and (3) expert testimony that the caliber and manufacturer markings of the ammunition found in the defendant's basement matched the caliber of the bullets recovered from the victim's body and the markings on the casings found at the crime scene. See *Commonwealth v. Beliard, 443 Mass. 79, 81-82, 86, 819 N.E.2d 556 (2004)*. See also *Gonzalez, 475 Mass. at 416* ("knowledge and intent [may be] inferred ... when a defendant brings a gun to the scene of the killing, but does not [*****24**] [himself] fire the fatal shot").

We also look to the defendant's conduct at the time of the shooting to infer intent. See *Freeman, 442 Mass. at 782-783*. First, the defendant complied with Leiva's instruction to "run" [****21**] the victim's pockets.⁸ Second, as Leiva shot

⁸To be sure, an intent to rob cannot be conflated with an intent to kill. See *Commonwealth v. Mandile, 403*

the victim seven times, the defendant stood by Leiva's side facing the victim.

[*118] While mere presence at a crime scene is not sufficient to establish intent, when viewing the evidence in the light most favorable to the Commonwealth, the jury did not have to infer that the defendant's intent was merely to rob or intimidate the victim as he suggests. See *Gonzalez*, 475 Mass. at 414. To the contrary, the evidence at trial demonstrated that the three men were positioned in such a way as to effectively block the victim from the kitchen door and the porch stairs — his only two means of escape. In other words, the victim was “[t]rapped in his chair” on the small porch, while the three men stood over him. *Leiva*, 484 Mass. at 767. Thus, the jury could have reasonably inferred that the defendant flanked Leiva, towering over the victim with the intent of making the crime succeed. See *Commonwealth v. Bonner*, 489 Mass. 268, 279, 182 N.E.3d 311 (2022) (defendant standing next to shooter, who continued to aim gun at victim after shooting, was probative as to defendant's shared intent to **[***25]** kill victim); *Watson*, 487 Mass. at 163 (reasonable for jury to infer defendant's role was to block street so others could not interfere while coventurer shot victim). That is, a rational jury could reasonably infer that the defendant helped block the victim

Mass. 93, 100 n.11, 525 N.E.2d 1322 (1988). However, conduct that could support an inference that a defendant intended to rob a victim may, under the right circumstances, also support an inference that a defendant intended to kill a victim. See, e.g., *Freeman*, 442 Mass. at 783. Here, even if this conduct is more probative as to the defendant's intent to rob the victim, it nonetheless has some weight as to the defendant's intent to kill the victim, particularly given that the defendant knew that Leiva was armed.

from escaping to ensure that Leiva could accomplish his goal: shooting and killing the victim.

While the inference that the defendant intended to block the victim from escaping is not itself inescapable, “reasonable inferences ... need not be necessary or inescapable, only reasonable and possible” (quotations and citation omitted). *Commonwealth v. Schoener*, 491 Mass. 706, 714, 206 N.E.3d 552 (2023). Moreover, “[t]he line that separates mere knowledge of unlawful conduct and participation in it, is ‘often vague and uncertain. It is within the province of the jury to determine from the evidence whether a particular defendant [has] crossed that line.’” *Norris*, 462 Mass. at 140, quoting *Commonwealth v. Longo*, 402 Mass. 482, 487, 524 N.E.2d 67 (1988). Therefore, there was sufficient evidence for a rational jury to conclude that the defendant intended to kill the victim.

There was likewise sufficient evidence for a rational jury to conclude that the defendant's intent was a product of deliberate premeditation. Given the abrupt comings and goings of Leiva over the course of the evening, and the defendant's sudden **[***26]** appearance from behind the porch alongside Leiva, who was at that point wielding a firearm, a jury could reasonably infer that **[*119]** the defendant was “lying in wait” with the murder weapon until the right time to provide the weapon to Leiva and join him in a confrontation with the victim. *Tavares*, 471 Mass. at 435-436. See *Commonwealth v. Robinson*, 482 Mass. 741, 746, 128 N.E.3d 50 (2019) (“Deliberate premeditation can be

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inferred from the bringing of a firearm to the scene of the killing ...").

felony-murder "is invalid."

[22]** Further, there is no evidence that the defendant was "surprise[d]," as he claims; rather, the evidence was that he freely stood by Leiva's side as the victim was shot seven times. Accordingly, "[t]his case ... does not suggest plain spontaneity or tainted premeditation." *Commonwealth v. Rivera*, 482 Mass. 259, 272, 121 N.E.3d 1251 (2019). In short, while any one fact in this case would have been insufficient on its own, "the entirety of the facts presented 'form[ed] a fabric of proof that was sufficient to warrant the jury's finding beyond a reasonable doubt that the defendant' was guilty of murder in the first degree on a theory of deliberate premeditation as a joint venturer." *Commonwealth v. Javier*, 481 Mass. 268, 285, 114 N.E.3d 945 (2019), quoting *Commonwealth v. Rojas*, 388 Mass. 626, 630, 447 N.E.2d 4 (1983).

e. *Felony-murder*. The defendant also argues that there was insufficient evidence to support his conviction of felony-murder in the first degree with the attempted commission **[***27]** of armed robbery as the predicate felony. Although not clearly articulated in the defendant's briefing, the defendant's argument appears to suggest that the trial judge was required to instruct the jury that they had to find, as an essential "factual" element of felony-murder, that the maximum sentence for the predicate felony — armed robbery — is "punishable by a maximum sentence of life imprisonment." Because the jury were not so instructed and no "evidence" of this "fact" was presented, the defendant contends, his conviction of

We disagree. The penalty for armed robbery, as with other criminal offenses, is set by statute; thus, the maximum sentence allowable for armed robbery is a matter of statutory interpretation — "a pure question of law." *Commonwealth v. Cintolo*, 415 Mass. 358, 359, 613 N.E.2d 509 (1993). Accordingly, this question is "for the judge, not the jury." *Commonwealth v. Trotto*, 487 Mass. 708, 735, 169 N.E.3d 883 (2021). Here, as the defendant concedes, the trial judge correctly instructed the jury that armed robbery is, as a matter of law, a felony with a maximum sentence of life imprisonment. See *G. L. c. 265*, § 17. Accordingly, the defendant's argument fails.

[*120] f. Unlawful possession of ammunition. In his brief, the defendant argues, with respect to his conviction of unlawful possession **[***28]** of ammunition under *G. L. c. 269*, § 10 (h), that there was insufficient evidence that he knew that Leiva's firearm was loaded.⁹ Subsequently, in light of the United States Supreme Court's holding in *New York State Rifle & Pistol Ass'n v. Bruen*, 142 S. Ct. 2111, 2122, 213 L. Ed. 2d 387 (2022), that the *Second Amendment to the United States Constitution* protects an individual's right to carry a firearm outside the home, this court concluded that "licensure is ... an essential element of the crime of unlawful possession of ammunition under *G. L. c. 269*, § 10 (h)."

⁹ The Commonwealth proceeded on a theory that the defendant constructively possessed the ammunition found at the crime scene; he was not charged in connection with the ammunition seized from his residence.

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Commonwealth v. Guardado, 491 Mass. 666, 692, 206 N.E.3d 512 (2023) (Guardado I), vacated in part, 493 Mass. 1, 12, 220 N.E.3d 102 (2023) (Guardado II). The defendant thereafter filed a supplemental brief in which he argues that our holding in Guardado I necessitates that his unlawful possession conviction be vacated and remanded for entry of a judgment of acquittal.

[23]** We agree that the defendant's conviction must be vacated. It is a violation of a defendant's Second Amendment and due process rights "when he [i]s convicted of unlawfully possessing ammunition although the jury were not instructed that licensure is an essential element of the crime." Guardado I, 491 Mass. at 693. "[T]he Commonwealth carries the burden of proving each element of a charged crime." Id. at 682. Here, the jury were not instructed that the Commonwealth had the burden of proving the defendant's lack of licensure as an element of the crime. Thus, the defendant's unlawful possession conviction must be vacated.

However, we disagree **[***29]** with the defendant's proposal to remand for entry of a judgment of acquittal. The proper remedy under these circumstances is to remand for a new trial. See Guardado II, 493 Mass. at 6-7, 12. Accordingly, the Commonwealth shall have an opportunity to prove that the defendant unlawfully possessed ammunition. Id. at 2-3, 12.

g. *Manslaughter instruction.* The defendant next argues that the judge erred in denying his request for an involuntary manslaughter instruction.

The defendant reasons that the jury could have found that the defendant acted "wanton[ly]" or "reckless[ly]" in accompanying Leiva to merely frighten or intimidate the victim, rather than to kill or rob him. As the defendant requested an **[*121]** involuntary manslaughter instruction at trial, we review for prejudicial error. See Commonwealth v. Pina, 481 Mass. 413, 422, 116 N.E.3d 575 (2019). We conclude that, even assuming that the judge erred, there was no prejudice.

Ordinarily, in the case of felony-murder, "the defendant is not entitled to an instruction on manslaughter" (citation omitted). Commonwealth v. Carter, 475 Mass. 512, 523, 58 N.E.3d 318 (2016). Nonetheless, "[a]n instruction on involuntary manslaughter is appropriate in a felony-murder case ... if there is evidence that the defendant was merely engaged in wanton [or] reckless conduct." Commonwealth v. Donovan, 422 Mass. 349, 353, 662 N.E.2d 692 (1996). Here, while the jury were not instructed **[***30]** on involuntary manslaughter, the trial judge did instruct the jury on murder in the second degree, based on theories of both malice and felony-murder. Because the jury found the defendant guilty of murder in the first degree based on both theories, the judge's instruction on murder in the second degree precludes any conclusion of prejudice. See Commonwealth v. Chase, 433 Mass. 293, 300, 741 N.E.2d 59 (2001) ("This is not a case where the failure to instruct on a lesser included offense left the jury with no alternative between a murder conviction and an acquittal"). See also Donovan, *supra* at 354 ("If the jury believed that the defendant shared some lesser intent

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than that required for [the underlying felony for felony-murder in the first degree], they had the option of returning a verdict of murder in the second degree. They did not").

h. *Motion for a new trial.* i. *Ineffective assistance of counsel.* In his motion for a new trial, the defendant asserted that his trial counsel was ineffective because he failed to timely file a motion to suppress the ballistics evidence seized from the basement of the apartment building where the defendant resided. The defendant maintained that the search warrant affidavit of Springfield police Detective Timothy Kenney [***31] failed to establish probable cause to search the basement for firearms, ammunition, and related evidence. In denying the defendant's motion for a new trial, the motion judge concluded that there was [**24] probable cause to search the basement common area.

On appeal, the defendant reiterates his argument that there was no probable cause to search the basement for ammunition or firearms, and therefore, the motion judge erred in concluding otherwise. The Commonwealth counters that the defendant lacked a reasonable expectation of privacy in the basement, and therefore no search occurred in the constitutional sense. The defendant

[*122] asserts that the Commonwealth's argument must be disregarded because the record is incomplete as to whether the basement is a common area. The defendant's argument misses the mark.

Where, as here, a defendant's motion for a new trial based on ineffective

assistance of counsel has been denied and we are reviewing it alongside his direct appeal pursuant to G. L. c. 278, § 33E, our task is to determine whether counsel erred and, if he did, whether that error "was likely to have influenced the jury's conclusion" (citation omitted). Commonwealth v. Montez, 450 Mass. 736, 754, 881 N.E.2d 753 (2008). More specifically, "the defendant must show that the motion [***32] to suppress would have been successful, and that failing to bring such a motion ... created a substantial likelihood of a miscarriage of justice." Commonwealth v. Banville, 457 Mass. 530, 534, 931 N.E.2d 457 (2010).

Here, the evidence presented in connection with the defendant's motion for a new trial implicates, at a minimum, a likelihood that the basement is a common area.¹⁰ The basement was part of a three-family residence. In general, occupants of a multiunit residence lack a reasonable expectation of privacy in its common areas. See, e.g., Commonwealth v. Montanez, 410 Mass. 290, 302, 571 N.E.2d 1372 (1991). That said, the question whether such an occupant has a reasonable expectation of privacy in a purportedly common area "cannot be answered categorically." Commonwealth v. Dora, 57 Mass. App. Ct. 141, 144-145, 781 N.E.2d 62 (2003).

¹⁰ For example, at an evidentiary hearing on the defendant's motion for a new trial, Detective Kenney testified that the basement could be accessed through a staircase that connects to each apartment. Additionally, there were no clearly marked areas in the basement that could be used to attribute ownership to particular individuals. However, Detective Kenney could not recall whether the basement had a door or whether he forced entry to gain access to the basement.

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If that question were to be answered in the negative, then "the police [were] free to search [the basement] without a warrant and without probable cause." *Commonwealth v. Porter P.*, 456 Mass. 254, 259, 923 N.E.2d 36 (2010).

However, we need not answer that question. It is true that some details regarding the basement are unclear.¹¹ But this is precisely why a motion to suppress would have failed — because it is the defendant's burden to demonstrate that he had a reasonable expectation of privacy in the basement and its contents at the time **[*123]** of the search, rather than the Commonwealth's burden to show that he had no reasonable **[***33]** expectation of privacy. See *Commonwealth v. Netto*, 438 Mass. 686, 697, 783 N.E.2d 439 (2003). Therefore, "if the record is unclear," the defendant has failed to meet his burden. *Id.* In this context, the defendant's burden on his motion **[**25]** for a new trial is the same as the burden he would have had if his trial counsel had filed a motion to suppress; that is, in order to meet his burden of demonstrating that a motion to suppress would have been successful for purposes of his motion for a new trial, the defendant was obligated to present sufficient evidence that demonstrated he had a reasonable expectation of privacy in the basement. See *Commonwealth v. Druce*, 453 Mass. 686, 703, 905 N.E.2d

¹¹ For example, it is unclear whether, assuming that the basement had a door, it was locked at the time of the search. It is likewise unclear who actually used the basement and whether any residents were excluded from using the basement. We express no opinion as to the precise facts that would have been required for the defendant to demonstrate a reasonable expectation of privacy in this case.

70 (2009) ("A defendant who seeks a new trial based on ineffective assistance of counsel bears the burden of proving the ineffectiveness").

Here, nothing that the defendant submitted in support of his motion for a new trial resolves whether he had a reasonable expectation of privacy in the basement. Without even, for example, a signed affidavit from the defendant providing additional details concerning the basement, the defendant did not satisfy his threshold burden of demonstrating that a search in the constitutional sense had occurred at all. See *Commonwealth v. D'Onofrio*, 396 Mass. 711, 714, 488 N.E.2d 410 (1986).

While the motion judge did not address whether the defendant had a reasonable **[***34]** expectation of privacy, "[a]n appellate court is free to affirm a ruling on grounds different from those relied on by the motion judge if the correct or preferred basis for affirmance is supported by the record and the findings." *Commonwealth v. Va Meng Joe*, 425 Mass. 99, 102, 682 N.E.2d 586 (1997). The record clearly supports the conclusion that the defendant did not meet his threshold burden of demonstrating that he had a reasonable expectation of privacy in the basement. Accordingly, the motion judge did not err in denying the defendant's motion for a new trial.

ii. *Evidentiary hearing.* The defendant also argues, with respect to his motion for a new trial, that the motion judge erred in failing to hold an evidentiary hearing. However, the motion judge did hold an evidentiary hearing. After this evidentiary hearing, the defendant did

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not request another hearing in his motion for reconsideration. Thus, the motion judge concluded that another hearing was unnecessary and adopted the defendant's version of the facts.

Where the trial court had already conducted an evidentiary hearing, and where the defendant made no request for another, it [***124**] would have been "fair to conclude that the defendant was proceeding on the facts from the existing ... record." *Commonwealth v. Pimental*, 54 Mass. App. Ct. 325, 333, 764 N.E.2d 940 (2002). [*****35**] In any event, the motion judge properly exercised his discretion in determining that another hearing was unwarranted, as he could have reasonably concluded that the briefing and documents before him "were sufficient to allow him to reach an informed decision." *Commonwealth v. Barry*, 481 Mass. 388, 401, 116 N.E.3d 554 (2019).

i. *Review under G. L. c. 278, § 33E.* Finally, we have reviewed the entire record and discern no basis upon which to exercise our extraordinary authority under *G. L. c. 278, § 33E*.¹²

[26]** 3. *Conclusion.* For the reasons stated, the defendant's convictions of

murder in the first degree and armed assault with intent to rob are affirmed. The trial court's orders denying the defendant's motion for a new trial and the defendant's motion for reconsideration of the same are likewise affirmed. We vacate and set aside the conviction of unlawful possession of ammunition and remand to the Superior Court for a new trial on the unlawful possession indictment.

So ordered.

End of Document

¹² To the extent we do not discuss other arguments made by the defendant (including arguments on duplicative convictions, an alleged error in the jury instruction on felony-murder in the second degree, alleged ambiguities between the attempted commission of armed robbery and the commission of armed assault with intent to rob, the alleged irrelevance of certain photographic evidence, and omissions from Detective Kenney's search warrant affidavit), they "have not been overlooked. We find nothing in them that requires discussion." See *Commonwealth v. Domanski*, 332 Mass. 66, 78, 123 N.E.2d 368 (1954).

SUPREME JUDICIAL COURT
for the Commonwealth
Case Docket

COMMONWEALTH v AMADI SOSA
SJC-12166

CASE HEADER

Case Status	Decided, Rescript issued	Status Date	03/18/2024
Nature	Murder1 appeal	Entry Date	09/09/2016
Appellant	Defendant	Case Type	Criminal
Brief Status		Brief Due	
Quorum	Budd, C.J., Gaziano, Cypher, Kafker, Georges, Jr., JJ.		
Argued Date	05/05/2023	Decision Date	11/30/2023
AC/SJ Number		Citation	493 Mass. 104
DAR/FAR Number		Lower Ct Number	
Lower Court	Hampden Superior Court	Lower Ct Judge	Daniel A. Ford, J.
Route to SJC	Direct Entry: Murder 1		

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Transcripts received: 10 volumes (on CD). Transcripts dates: 12/02/15, 01/19/16, 01/20/16, 01/21/16, 01/25/16, 01/26/16, 01/27/16, 01/28/16, 01/29/16 and 02/02/16. (Scanned)

Transcripts received: 1 volume (on CD). Transcripts date: 2/21/20 (Evidentiary Hearing). (Scanned)

Previous caption and citation: Commonwealth v. Leiva, 484 Mass. 766.

INVOLVED PARTY

Commonwealth

Plaintiff/Appellee

Red brief & appendix filed
2 Enls, 288 Days

Amadi Sosa

Defendant/Appellant

Blue brief & reply brief filed
8 Exts, 1222 Days
15 Enls, 926 Days

Julio B. Leiva

Defendant

Blue brief & appendix filed
8 Exts, 607 Days

Massachusetts Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers

Amicus

Amicus brief filed

ATTORNEY APPEARANCE

Katherine E. McMahon, A.D.A.
David L. Sheppard-Brick, A.D.A.

John M. Thompson, Esquire

Linda J. Thompson, Esquire

Andrew S. Crouch, Esquire - Withdrawn

Stephen Paul Maidman, Esquire - Inactive

David Rassoul Rangaviz, Esquire

Kristopher Neil Austin, Esquire

Michael Barry Hoven, Esquire

DOCUMENTS

[Appellant Leiva Brief](#)

[Appellant Sosa Brief](#)

[Appellee Commonwealth Leiva Brief](#)

[Appellee Commonwealth Sosa Brief](#)

[Amicus MA Association Crim Defense Lawyers Leiva Brief](#)

[Appellant Sosa Reply Brief](#)

[Appellant Sosa Supplemental Brief](#)

DOCKET ENTRIES

Entry Date **Paper** **Entry Text**

09/09/2016	#1	Entered. Notice to counsel.
01/05/2017	#2	MOTION to extend to 05/04/2017 filing of brief or Motion for New Trial for Julio B. Leiva by Stephen Paul Maidman, Esquire. (ALLOWED to May 4, 2017)
01/12/2017	#3	MOTION to extend to 05/04/2017 filing of brief of Amadi J. Sosa by Andrew S. Crouch, Esquire. (ALLOWED to May 4, 2017)
04/28/2017	#4	MOTION to extend to 08/02/2017 filing of brief of motion for new trial of Julio B. Leiva by Stephen Paul Maidman, Esquire. (ALLOWED to August 2, 2017)
05/08/2017	#5	MOTION to extend to 08/02/2017 filing of brief of Amadi J. Sosa by Andrew S. Crouch, Esquire. (ALLOWED to August 2, 2017)
07/26/2017	#6	MOTION to extend to 10/31/2017 filing of brief of Julio B. Leiva by Stephen Paul Maidman, Esquire. (ALLOWED to October 31, 2017).

08/04/2017 #7 MOTION to extend to 10/31/2017 filing of brief of Amadi J. Sosa by Andrew S. Crouch, Esquire. (ALLOWED to October 31, 2017, to provide time to complete and file the brief.)

08/11/2017 #8 MOTION TO WITHDRAW APPEARANCE for Amadi J. Sosa by Andrew S. Crouch, Esquire. (The motion to withdraw is ALLOWED conditioned upon the entry of appearance of Linda Thompson, Esquire.)

08/25/2017 #9 Notice of assignment of counsel from CPCs. Atty. Linda Thompson for Amadi Sosa.

09/07/2017 #10 APPEARANCE of Linda J. Thompson, Esquire for Amadi J. Sosa.

10/30/2017 #11 MOTION to extend to 03/01/2018 filing of brief of Amadi J. Sosa by Linda J. Thompson, Esquire. (ALLOWED to March 1, 2018)

10/30/2017 #12 MOTION to extend to 01/11/2018 filing of brief of Julio B. Leiva by Stephen Paul Maidman, Esquire. (ALLOWED to January 11, 2018)

01/08/2018 #13 MOTION to extend to 03/12/2018 filing of brief or motion for new trial of Julio B. Leiva by Stephen Paul Maidman, Esquire. (ALLOWED to March 12, 2018)

02/28/2018 #14 MOTION to extend to 06/26/2018 filing of brief of Amadi J. Sosa by Linda J. Thompson, Esquire. (ALLOWED to June 26, 2018, for the reasons stated in the motion).

03/09/2018 #15 MOTION to extend to 05/11/2018 filing of brief of Julio B. Leiva by Stephen Paul Maidman, Esquire. (ALLOWED to May 11, 2018, for the reason cited in the affidavit of counsel).

05/09/2018 #16 MOTION to extend to 07/10/2018 filing of brief of Julio B. Leiva by Stephen Paul Maidman, Esquire. (ALLOWED to July 10, 2018)

06/21/2018 #17 MOTION to extend to 10/24/2018 filing of brief or motion for new trial of Amadi J. Sosa by Linda J. Thompson, Esquire. (ALLOWED to October 24, 2018, to provide time for filing the brief or motion for new trial).

07/06/2018 #18 MOTION to extend to 09/10/2018 filing of brief of Julio B. Leiva by Stephen Paul Maidman, Esquire. (ALLOWED to September 10, 2018)

08/15/2018 #19 SERVICE of brief & appendix for Defendant/Appellant Julio B. Leiva by Stephen Paul Maidman, Esquire.

10/30/2018 #20 ORDER: The defendant Amadi J. Sosa shall file a status report within 7 days. By the Court.

11/05/2018 #21 APPEARANCE of John M. Thompson, Esquire for Amadi J. Sosa.

11/05/2018 #22 STATUS REPORT AND MOTION to extend to 01/30/2019 filing of brief or Motion for New Trial of Amadi J. Sosa by John M. Thompson, Esquire. (ALLOWED to January 30, 2019)

01/04/2019 #23 NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF ELECTRONIC FILING: The clerk's office will accept briefs, appendices, motions, status reports, and correspondence through eFileMA effective immediately. Please note that after review and docketing of e-filed briefs and appendices, the clerk will require a limited number of paper copies to be filed. Parties are free to file their briefs and record appendices under the revised rules of appellate procedure prior to their effective date, March 1, 2019.

01/25/2019 #24 Motion to extend to date for filing of appellant's brief filed for Amadi J. Sosa by Attorney John Thompson. (See Paper No. 26.)

01/29/2019 #25 NOTICE OF STATUS CONFERENCE: A STATUS CONFERENCE has been scheduled in this matter for THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2019, at 11:00 A.M., in Courtroom 1, John Adams Courthouse, One Pemberton Square, Boston, Massachusetts. (Botsford, J., presiding as Special Master).

02/19/2019 #26 NOTICE: The parties having appeared for a status conference before Special Master Margot Botsford on February 14, 2019, it is reported and recommended that Amadi J. Sosa's motion for new trial shall be filed on or before August 1, 2019. The defendant's brief shall be filed on or before February 5, 2020, and the Commonwealth's brief shall be filed on or before May 5, 2020.

02/19/2019 #27 MOTION to Sever the Defendants' Appeals, filed for Commonwealth by Katherine E. McMahon, A.D.A.. (The motion to sever the defendants' appeal is ALLOWED. The Commonwealth's brief in response to defendant Leiva's brief is due on or before May 20, 2019.)

02/28/2019 #28 ORDER: Upon consideration of the report of the Special Master, it is ORDERED that Amadi J. Sosa's motion for new trial shall be filed on or before August 1, 2019. The defendant's brief shall be filed on or before February 5, 2020. The Commonwealth's brief shall be filed on or before May 5, 2020. By the Court.

04/29/2019 #29 Appellee brief filed for Commonwealth by David Sheppard-Brick, A.D.A..

04/30/2019 The clerk's office has received the Commonwealth's brief through e-fileMA. The brief has been accepted for filing and entered on the docket. The Commonwealth shall file with the clerk 4 copies of the brief within 7 days. The clerk's office may require additional copies if necessary.

05/02/2019 #30 Additional 4 copies of appellee's brief filed by Commonwealth.

05/30/2019 #31 NOTICE OF TELEPHONE CONFERENCE: A telephone conference has been scheduled in Commonwealth v. Amadi J. Sosa for THURSDAY, JUNE 6, 2019, at 10:00 A.M. (Botsford, J., presiding as Special Master).

06/27/2019 #32 ORDERED for argument on September 10. Notice sent.

07/30/2019 #33 Motion for enlargement of time for filing motion for new trial filed for Amadi J. Sosa by Attorney John Thompson. (ALLOWED to August 23, 2019).

08/20/2019 #34 Amicus brief filed for the Massachusetts Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers by Attorney Michael Hoven, Attorney K. Neil Austin, and Attorney David Rangaviz.

08/20/2019 #35 Motion to File Amicus Brief filed for the Massachusetts Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers by Attorney Michael Hoven, Attorney K. Neil Austin, and Attorney David Rangaviz. (Referred to the Quorum)

08/21/2019 The clerk's office has received the amicus brief filed for the Massachusetts Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers through e-fileMA. The brief has been accepted for filing and entered on the docket. Four copies of the brief shall be filed with the clerk's office within 5 days. The clerk's office may require additional copies if necessary.

08/22/2019 #36	Additional 4 copies of amicus brief filed by Massachusetts Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers.
08/23/2019 #37	MOTION FOR NEW TRIAL filed for Amadi J. Sosa by Attorney John Thompson.
08/23/2019 #38	ORDER: Upon consideration of Amadi J. Sosa's motion for new trial, it is ORDERED that the motion be, and hereby is, remanded for disposition to the Hampden Division, case number 1479CR00139, Superior Court Department of the Trial Court. The defendant shall file a copy of the motion with the Clerk for Hampden Superior Court. An appeal, if any, is to be consolidated with the appeal of the conviction. It is FURTHER ORDERED that the defendant file status reports at sixty (60) day intervals with the Clerk of the Supreme Judicial Court for the Commonwealth. By the Court.
09/10/2019	Oral argument held. (Gants, C.J., Lenk, J., Lowy, J., Cypher, J., Kafker, J.). View Webcast
10/15/2019 #39	LETTER from Julio B. Leiva to request an audio recording of oral argument. (CD of oral argument mailed out.)
10/23/2019 #40	STATUS LETTER filed for Amadi J. Sosa by Attorney John Thompson.
10/23/2019 #41	It is ORDERED that the Clerk of the Superior Court shall transmit to the Clerk of the Supreme Judicial Court for the Commonwealth Exhibit 20 in the above-captioned matter. By the Court
01/17/2020 #42	STATUS LETTER filed for Amadi J. Sosa by Attorney John Thompson.
01/22/2020 #43	ORDER waiving 130-Day rule.
01/31/2020 #44	Motion to stay date for filing brief and appendix until disposition of motion for new trial filed for Amadi J. Sosa by Attorney John Thompson. (ALLOWED)
06/09/2020 #45	RESCRIPT (Full Opinion): For the reasons stated in the opinion, the defendant's convictions are affirmed. (By the Court) (Entry applies to defendant Julio Leiva).
07/02/2020 #46	ORDER: The defendant Amadi J. Sosa's brief is due on or before October 2, 2020; the Commonwealth's brief is due on or before December 2, 2020. By the Court.
07/10/2020 #47	STATUS LETTER filed for Amadi J. Sosa by Attorney John Thompson.
07/10/2020 #48	STATUS LETTER filed for Amadi J. Sosa by Attorney John Thompson.
09/21/2020 #49	Assembly of the Record on denial of defendant's motion for reconsideration of memorandum of decision and order on defendant's first motion for a new trial and supporting memorandum received from Hampden Superior Court.
09/25/2020	RESCRIPT ISSUED to trial court.
10/21/2020 #50	ORDER: The defendant shall file a status report within 7 days. By the Court.
10/26/2020 #51	Status Letter, Motion to Consolidate Appeals, and Motion to enlarge time for filing brief and appendix filed for Amadi J. Sosa by Attorney John Thompson. (ALLOWED, in part. The defendant's brief is due on or before February 1, 2021. Further enlargements of time should not be anticipated.)
02/02/2021 #52	Status Report and Motion to extend to date for filing of brief filed for Amadi J. Sosa by Attorney John Thompson. (ALLOWED to May 5, 2021. Further enlargements of time should not be anticipated.)
05/06/2021 #53	ORDER: The defendant shall file a status report within 7 days. By the Court.
05/06/2021 #54	Motion to extend to date for filing of appellant's brief filed for Amadi J. Sosa by Attorney John Thompson. (ALLOWED to July 16, 2021. Further enlargements of time should not be anticipated.)
07/16/2021 #55	Motion to extend to date for filing of appellant's brief filed for Amadi J. Sosa by Attorney John Thompson. (ALLOWED to September 17, 2021. No further enlargements.)
09/17/2021 #56	Status Report and Motion to extend to date for filing of appellant's brief filed for Amadi J. Sosa by Attorney John Thompson. (ALLOWED to October 19, 2021. No further enlargements.)
10/19/2021 #57	Status Report and Motion to extend to date for filing of appellant's brief filed for Amadi J. Sosa by Attorney John Thompson. (ALLOWED to November 2, 2021. No further enlargements.)
10/25/2021 #58	Status Report and Motion to enlarge time for filing appellant's brief filed for Amadi J. Sosa by Attorney John Thompson. (For the reasons stated in the motion, the motion to enlarge time for filing brief and appendix is ALLOWED. The defendant's brief is due on or before January 7, 2022.)
01/06/2022 #59	Motion to extend to date for filing of appellant's brief filed for Amadi J. Sosa by Attorney John Thompson. (ALLOWED to February 8, 2022.)
02/08/2022 #60	Status report and Motion to extend to date for filing of appellant's brief filed for Amadi J. Sosa by Attorney John Thompson. (ALLOWED to March 1, 2022)
03/08/2022 #61	Status report and Motion to extend to date for filing of appellant's brief filed for Amadi J. Sosa by Attorney John Thompson. (ALLOWED to March 22, 2022.)
03/22/2022 #62	Motion to extend to date for filing of appellant's brief filed for Amadi J. Sosa by Attorney John Thompson. (ALLOWED to April 1, 2022.)
04/01/2022 #63	Motion to extend to date for filing of appellant's brief filed for Amadi J. Sosa by Attorney John Thompson. (ALLOWED to April 8, 2022.)
04/08/2022 #64	Appellant brief filed for Amadi J. Sosa by Attorney John Thompson. (Note: Conforming brief was filed on August 23, 2022. See paper #71.)
04/08/2022 #65	Appendix filed for Amadi J. Sosa by Attorney John Thompson.
04/08/2022 #66	MOTION to file non-conforming brief filed for Amadi J. Sosa by Attorney John Thompson.
04/12/2022 #67	ORDER OF REFERENCE of Paper #66 (Motion to file non-conforming brief filed for Amadi J. Sosa by Attorney John Thompson) to single justice for disposition. (By the Court)

04/15/2022 #68	Single Justice decision on Order of Reference for Paper #66. "... it is hereby ORDERED the motion be, and hereby is, ALLOWED IN PART. The defendant may file a non-conforming brief, containing not more than five thousand (5,000) words in excess of the amount allowed by Rule 20(a)(2)(a) of the Massachusetts Rules of Appellate Procedure." (Wendlandt, J.) (SJ-2022-M011)
07/07/2022 #69	ORDER: The defendant shall file a status report within 7 days. By the Court.
07/13/2022 #70	STATUS LETTER filed for Amadi J. Sosa by Attorney John Thompson. (Status noted. The defendant's brief shall be filed on or before August 12, 2022.)
08/22/2022 #71	Appellant brief filed for Amadi J. Sosa by Attorney John Thompson. (Note: Appendix was previously filed through eFileMA on April 8, 2022. See paper 65.)
08/22/2022 #72	Motion to file brief late filed for Amadi J. Sosa by Attorney John Thompson. (ALLOWED to August 22, 2022.)
08/23/2022	The clerk's office has received the appellant's brief through e-fileMA. The brief has been accepted for filing and entered on the docket. The appellant shall file with the clerk 4 copies of the brief within 5 days. Appellant's record appendix was previously filed through eFileMA on April 8, 2022. The appellant shall file 3 copies of the appendix. The clerk's office may require additional copies if necessary.
08/26/2022 #73	Additional 4 copies of appellant's brief and 3 copies of appendix filed by Amadi J. Sosa.
10/11/2022 #74	Motion to extend to date for filing of appellee's brief filed for Commonwealth by David Sheppard-Brick, A.D.A.. (ALLOWED to February 21, 2023)
01/24/2023 #75	NOTICE of April and May argument sent.
02/01/2023 #76	Appellee brief filed for Commonwealth by Attorney David Sheppard-Brick.
02/01/2023 #77	Appendix filed for Commonwealth by Attorney David Sheppard-Brick.
02/01/2023 #78	MOTION to exceed page limit filed for Commonwealth by Attorney David Sheppard-Brick. (ALLOWED)
02/03/2023	The clerk's office has received the appellee's brief through e-fileMA. The brief has been accepted for filing and entered on the docket. The appellee shall file with the clerk 4 copies of the brief within 5 days. The clerk's office may require additional copies if necessary. (NOTE: The cover of the brief shall be red.)
02/06/2023 #79	Additional 4 copies of appellee's brief filed by Commonwealth.
02/08/2023 #80	Motion to extend to date for filing of appellant's reply brief filed for Amadi J. Sosa by Attorney John Thompson. (ALLOWED to March 24, 2023.)
02/23/2023 #81	ORDERED for argument on May 5.
03/23/2023 #82	Reply brief filed for Amadi J. Sosa by Attorney John Thompson.
03/23/2023 #83	MOTION to exceed page limit filed for Amadi J. Sosa by Attorney John Thompson. (ALLOWED)
03/30/2023	The clerk's office has received the appellant's reply brief through e-fileMA. The reply brief has been accepted for filing and entered on the docket. The appellant shall file with the clerk 4 copies of the brief within 5 days. The clerk's office may require additional copies if necessary. (NOTE: The cover of the reply brief shall be grey.)
04/05/2023 #84	Additional 4 copies of appellant's reply brief filed by Amadi J. Sosa.
04/26/2023 #85	Appellant Supplemental Brief filed for Amadi J. Sosa by Attorney John Thompson.
04/26/2023 #86	Motion to file Supplemental Brief filed for Amadi J. Sosa by Attorney John Thompson. (Referred to the Quorum)
04/27/2023	The clerk's office has received the appellant's supplemental brief through e-fileMA. The brief has been accepted for filing and entered on the docket. The appellant shall file with the clerk 4 copies of the brief within 5 days. The clerk's office may require additional copies if necessary. (NOTE: The cover of the supplemental brief shall be blue.)
05/04/2023 #87	Additional 4 copies of appellant's supplemental brief filed by Amadi J. Sosa.
05/05/2023	Oral argument held. (Budd, C.J., Gaziano, J., Cypher, J., Kafker, J., Georges, Jr., J.). View Webcast
05/15/2023 #88	NOTICE: The video recording of the oral argument in this matter has been posted to the SJC YouTube archive. Subscribe and view: https://www.youtube.com/c/massachusettssupremecourt .
07/19/2023 #89	It is ORDERED that the Clerk of the Superior Court shall transmit to the Clerk of the Supreme Judicial Court for the Commonwealth exhibits in the above-captioned matter.
09/11/2023 #90	ORDER waiving 130-Day rule.
11/30/2023 #91	RESCRIPT (Full Opinion): The defendant's convictions of murder in the first degree and armed assault with intent to rob are affirmed. The trial court's orders denying the defendant's motion for a new trial and the defendant's motion for reconsideration of the same are likewise affirmed. We vacate and set aside the conviction of unlawful possession of ammunition and remand to the Superior Court for a new trial on the unlawful possession indictment. (By the Court)
12/04/2023 #92	Motion for time extension to file a motion for reconsideration or modification of decision filed for Amadi Sosa by Attorney John Thompson. (ALLOWED to January 5, 2024.)
12/28/2023 #93	Motion to further enlarge time for filing motion for reconsideration or modification filed for Amadi Sosa by Attorney John Thompson. (ALLOWED to January 12, 2024.)
01/12/2024 #94	Motion for time extension to file a motion for reconsideration or modification of decision filed for Amadi Sosa by Attorney John Thompson. (ALLOWED to January 19, 2024.)
01/19/2024 #95	Motion for Reconsideration or Modification filed for Amadi Sosa by Attorney John Thompson.
01/19/2024 #96	MOTION to exceed page limit filed for Amadi Sosa by Attorney John Thompson. (The motion to exceed the page limit is ALLOWED.)
02/16/2024 #97	DENIAL of Motion for Reconsideration. (By the Court).
02/20/2024 #98	Supplemental Motion for New Trial filed for Amadi Sosa by Attorney John Thompson.

03/01/2024 #99	Joint proposed briefing schedule on motion for new trial filed for Commonwealth and Amadi Sosa by Attorney John Thompson.
03/18/2024 #100	RESCRIPT ISSUED to trial court.
03/18/2024 #101	Memorandum in Support of Supplemental Motion for New Trial filed for Amadi Sosa by Attorney John Thompson.
03/26/2024 #102	Response to motion for new trial filed for Commonwealth by David Sheppard-Brick, ADA.
04/19/2024 #103	ORDER: The Motion filed on February 20, 2024 [Papers # 98 & 101] is denied.
04/22/2024 #104	Motion to vacate dismissal order or to allow to amend supplemental motion for new trial nunc pro tunc filed for Amadi Sosa by Attorney John Thompson. (6/13/2024: The Motion is Denied).
04/22/2024 #105	Motion for leave to amend supplemental motion for new trial nunc pro tunc filed for Amadi Sosa by Attorney John Thompson. (6/13/2024: The Motion is Denied).
05/09/2024 #106	Motion for clarification of case status and for procedural order re submission of motion to vacate Paper # 104 and motion for leave to amend Paper # 105 for adjudication filed for Amadi Sosa by Attorney John Thompson. (6/13/2024: The Motion is Denied).
05/21/2024 #107	U.S. Supreme Court Notice: Motion to file certiorari petition late was allowed to July 15, 2024.

As of 06/13/2024 4:20pm

ALM Sup. Jud. Ct. Rule 3:07, R.P.C. Rule 3.3

Current with rule changes received through June 20, 2024

MA - Massachusetts Court Rules > Supreme Judicial Court > A. Rules of the Supreme Judicial Court > Chapter Three. Ethical Requirements and Rules concerning the Practice of Law > Rule 3:07. Massachusetts Rules of Professional Conduct > ADVOCATE

Rule 3.3. Candor Toward the Tribunal

(a) A lawyer shall not knowingly:

- (1)** make a false statement of fact or law to a tribunal or fail to correct a false statement of material fact or law previously made to the tribunal by the lawyer;
- (2)** fail to disclose to the tribunal legal authority in the controlling jurisdiction known to the lawyer to be directly adverse to the position of the client and not disclosed by opposing counsel; or
- (3)** offer evidence that the lawyer knows to be false, except as provided in Rule 3.3(e). If a lawyer, the lawyer's client, or a witness called by the lawyer, has offered material evidence and the lawyer comes to know of its falsity, the lawyer shall take reasonable remedial measures, including if necessary, disclosure to the tribunal. A lawyer may refuse to offer evidence, other than the testimony of a defendant in a criminal matter, that the lawyer reasonably believes is false

(b) A lawyer who represents a client in an adjudicative proceeding and who knows that a person intends to engage, is engaging or has engaged in criminal or fraudulent conduct related to the proceeding shall take reasonable remedial measures, including, if necessary, disclosure to the tribunal.

(c) The duties stated in paragraphs (a) and (b) continue to the conclusion of the proceeding including all appeals, and apply even if compliance requires disclosure of information otherwise protected by Rule 1.6.

(d) In an *ex parte* proceeding, a lawyer shall inform the tribunal of all material facts known to the lawyer that will enable the tribunal to make an informed decision, whether or not the facts are adverse.

(e) In a criminal case, defense counsel who knows that the defendant, the client, intends to testify falsely may not aid the client in constructing false testimony, and has a duty strongly to discourage the client from testifying falsely, advising that such a course is unlawful, will have substantial adverse consequences, and should not be followed.

(1) If a lawyer discovers this intention before accepting the representation of the client, the lawyer shall not accept the representation.

(2) If, in the course of representing a defendant prior to trial, the lawyer discovers this intention and is unable to persuade the client not to testify falsely, the lawyer shall seek to withdraw from the representation, requesting any required permission. Disclosure of privileged or prejudicial information shall be made only to the extent necessary to effect the withdrawal. If disclosure of privileged or prejudicial information is necessary, the lawyer shall make an application to withdraw ex parte to a judge other than the judge who will preside at the trial and shall seek to be heard in camera and have the record of the proceeding, except for an order granting leave to withdraw, impounded. If the lawyer is unable to obtain the required permission to withdraw, the lawyer may not prevent the client from testifying.

(3) If a criminal trial has commenced and the lawyer discovers that the client intends to testify falsely at trial, the lawyer need not file a motion to withdraw from the case if the lawyer reasonably believes that seeking to withdraw will prejudice the client. If, during the client's testimony or after the client has testified, the lawyer knows that the client has testified falsely, the lawyer shall call upon the client to rectify the false testimony and, if the client refuses or is unable to do so, the lawyer shall not reveal the false testimony to the tribunal. In no event may the lawyer examine the client in such a manner as to elicit any testimony from the client the lawyer knows to be false, and the lawyer shall not argue the probative value of the false testimony in closing argument or in any other proceedings, including appeals.

History

Amended March 26, 2015, effective July 1, 2015.

Massachusetts Court Rules Annotated
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End of Document

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
SUPERIOR COURT DEPARTMENT OF THE TRIAL COURT

HAMPDEN, SS.

DOCKET NO: HDCR2014-00139

COMMONWEALTH
V.
AMADI JOSE SOSA

Allowed as to Count 2
✓ Denied as to other counts.

**MOTION FOR A REQUIRED FINDING OF NOT GUILTY AT THE CLOSE OF THE
COMMONWEALTH'S CASE**

DAJ/AB
1/27/16

The defendant moves, pursuant to Mass. R. Crim. P. 25, that this Honorable Court enter a finding of not guilty on the above-numbered indictment(s) at the close of the Commonwealth's case.

As reasons therefore, the evidence as presented by the Commonwealth is insufficient, as a matter of both fact and law, to sustain conviction(s) on the charge(s) against the defendant.

THE DEFENDANT
By His/Her Attorney

Edward B. Fogarty

Edward B. Fogarty, Esq.
173090
1145 Main Street * Suite 503
Springfield, MA 01103
Tel: 413.827.0174
Fax: 866.843.1608 (toll free)
email: efogarty@charter.net
url: www.fogartylegalservices.com

Date: January 26, 2016

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE: I certify I have caused a copy of the foregoing to be served upon parties to this case. Edward B. Fogarty

1-27-16 A52

a 25

15

Pages 1-218

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

HAMPDEN, SS.

SUPERIOR COURT DEPARTMENT
OF THE TRIAL COURT

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

Docket #14-138
and #14-139

V.

JULIO LEIVA and AMADI SOSA

Trial before
THE HONORABLE DANIEL A. FORD

11 APPEARANCES:

For the Commonwealth:

12 Hampden County District Attorney's Office
50 State Street
13 Springfield, MA 01103
By: Eduardo Velazquez

15 For the Defendant Leiva

15 for the defendant Belva.
16 Alan Black and Emily Shallcross
48 Round Hill Rd.
Northampton, MA 01060

18 For the Defendant, Sosa:

18 for the Defendant Sosa:
19 Edward B. Fogarty and Andrew Ott
101 State Street
Springfield, MA 01103

Springfield, Massachusetts
January 27, 2016

Christie L. Aarons, RPR
Official Court Reporter

I N D E X

		Direct	Cross	Redirect	Recross
3	Witness:				
4	Thomas Murphy	13			
	(By Mr. Black:)		53		
5	(By Mr. Fogarty:)		54		
6	Dr. Eleanor Winston	60			
	(By Mr. Black:)		70		
7	Robert Welton	73			
8	(By Mr. Black:)		83		
9	Kevin Lee	85			
	(By Mr. Black:)		90		
10	Kevin Shippee	91			
11	(By Mr. Black:)		94		
	(By Mr. Fogarty:)		98		
12	Julio Leiva				
13	(By Mr. Black:)	131			
	(By Mr. Fogarty:)		134		
14	(By Mr. Velazquez:)		135		
15					

16	Exhibits:	Page:
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17	40 Boots	49
	41 Personal paper of Amadi Sosa	89

19	ID Exhibits	Page:
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20	B - Email from medical examiner	9
	C - Ballistics documents	44
21	D - Autopsy photographs	208

1 in that room.

2 COURT OFFICER: We've got it.

3 MR. BLACK: Oh, you do. Thank you.

4 (A luncheon recess was taken.)

5 (Court reconvenes.)

6 THE COURT: We are waiting for the defendants to be
7 brought out, I think.

8 (Defendants present.)

9 THE COURT: All right, counsel. Where do we stand?

10 MR. BLACK: Your Honor, I need to approach sidebar and
11 I need to approach sidebar with the defendant.

12 THE COURT: Why?

13 MR. BLACK: If I can go sidebar first and I can
14 explain this to you and then I'm going to have to do this.
15 I'll explain to you why at sidebar.

16 THE COURT: Ex parte?

17 MR. BLACK: No.

18 THE COURT: All right.

19 (The following discussion took place at sidebar:)

20 MR. BLACK: The defendant under Rule 1.2-A wants to
21 testify. Under Rule 3.3 of the Mass Rules of Professional
22 Conduct I have had a long discussion with the Board of Bar
23 Overseers and I was cited Commonwealth versus Mitchell,
24 which is an '03 case that lays out exactly the procedure,
25 and I went over it with her last night.

1 The first thing that needs to be done is I need to
2 invoke that rule on the record with him present at sidebar.
3 That was -- she said this is required under Commonwealth
4 versus Mitchell.

5 THE COURT: What is the citation for Mitchell?

6 MR. BLACK: 438, 535, an '03 case. I'm following what
7 I've been told at this point. All I do is bring him up and
8 I say to you that I am invoking the rule and then --

9 THE COURT: What does the rule say?

10 MR. BLACK: The rule says that if -- well, it's a rule
11 about -- actually, I don't want to put it on the record what
12 the rule is. Seriously. I ask the Court to look up 3.3.
13 It's involving supporting perjury and my duties under that
14 clause and there are certain things I cannot do after this.
15 I'm just following what I've been told. I'm very clear that
16 I'm doing what I'm told what the rule and the case says.

17 I know what to do. But after I invoke the rule, then
18 what I was told to say, it's up to the judge as to what you
19 want to do with it. But if he wants to take the stand, the
20 only question I can ask him is, Mr. Leiva what do you want
21 to tell the jury? And then I sit down. And that's all I
22 can ask. He is allowed to narrate. I am allowed to object.
23 I'm allowed to object to any objections -- I'm sorry, I'm
24 allowed to object to any questions. And I cannot use
25 anything he says in closing argument.

1 And then after he's done testifying, I need to have a
2 sit-down with him for five minutes. And I have a certain
3 obligation to say certain things that are confidential to
4 him after the testimony. That's it. It's actually fairly
5 straightforward.

6 THE COURT: Do you want to say anything,
7 Mr. Velazquez?

8 MR. VELAZQUEZ: Your Honor, it's tough because I'm
9 not sure if he's going to implicate or not implicate the
10 co-defendant. There was some issues with respect to that.
11 I think -- I mean, that's -- so without having any kind of
12 outline or understanding as to what he may testify to, I
13 expect that --

14 THE COURT: It's not a Bruton problem. If he
15 testifies, he can be cross-examined by Mr. Fogarty, if he --

16 MR. VELAZQUEZ: Exactly.

17 THE COURT: All right. So you say he has to be told
18 and you have to tell me that in his presence?

19 MR. BLACK: He has to be up here, yes.

20 THE COURT: All right.

21 (In open court:) Mr. Court Officer, I'm going to ask
22 Mr. Leiva to come to the sidebar, please.

23 (Mr. Leiva approaches sidebar.)

24 THE COURT: All right. For the record, Mr. Leiva is
25 present at sidebar. Mr. Black, you may proceed.

1 MR. BLACK: Thank you, Your Honor. At this point in
2 time I'm invoking Rule 3.3 of the Mass Rules of Criminal
3 Conduct.

4 THE COURT: Is that all?

5 MR. BLACK: That's all I need to say. And I ask --
6 what I need to do is ask the Court for clarification or
7 guidance as to what to do next.

8 THE COURT: So do you have any suggestions for me?

9 MR. BLACK: That's what I was told to ask the Court,
10 as to what to do. But I do know if he takes the stand, I
11 can ask him that one question and then I sit down. I have
12 advised him as to what I'm supposed to advise him.

13 THE COURT: Is that correct, Mr. Leiva? Has Mr. Black
14 advised you of these issues?

15 MR. LEIVA: Yes, sir, he told me what Rule 3.3
16 consists of.

17 THE COURT: Are you clear about what he told you?

18 MR. LEIVA: Yes.

19 THE COURT: All right. I don't know what else to do.

20 MR. BLACK: Unless you want to read Mitchell or read
21 the rule.

22 THE COURT: 303?

23 MR. BLACK: 3.3 of the Mass Rules of Criminal
24 Professional Conduct. And do you want the cite of Mitchell?

25 THE COURT: Please.

1 MR. BLACK: 438, 535.

2 THE COURT: Tell me again.

3 MR. BLACK: 438, 535. And I believe the page
4 number -- I don't have it on here.

5 THE COURT: All right. Mr. Ginley, could I impose
6 upon you -- we don't have that here on the bench. Can you
7 get me the Mass Reports volume 438?

8 MR. BLACK: 438.

9 MR. VELAZQUEZ: Your Honor, may we take a ten-minute
10 recess so I can at least look at that and figure out how I
11 want to approach my response to this, if any.

12 THE COURT: Sure. But let me just look at the rule
13 first.

14 MR. BLACK: Your Honor, can Mr. Leiva sit down?

15 THE COURT: Yes. 303, Mr. Black?

16 (Mr. Leiva returns to counsel table.)

17 MR. BLACK: I have it down as 3.3.

18 THE COURT: Okay. Hold on. 3.3, candor toward the
19 tribunal.

20 MR. BLACK: That's it.

21 THE COURT: Subsection E?

22 MR. BLACK: Subsection E, yes, that's the subsection.

23 THE COURT: In a criminal case, defense counsel who
24 knows that the defendant, client, intends to testify falsely
25 may not aid the client in constructing false testimony and

1 has a duty strongly to discourage the client from testifying
2 falsely, advising that such a course is unlawful and will
3 have substantial adverse consequences and should not be
4 followed. If a criminal trial has commenced and the lawyer
5 discovers that the client intends to testify falsely at
6 trial, the lawyer need not file a motion to withdraw from
7 the case if the lawyer believes that seeking to withdraw
8 would prejudice the client.

9 MR. BLACK: And I made that determination that it
10 would.

11 THE COURT: If during the client's testimony or after
12 the client has testified the lawyer knows that the client
13 has testified falsely, the lawyer shall call upon the client
14 to rectify the false testimony, and if the client refuses or
15 is unable to do so, the lawyer shall not reveal the false
16 testimony to the tribunal. In no event may the lawyer
17 examine the client in such a manner as to elicit any
18 testimony from the client the lawyer knows to be false,
19 and the lawyer shall not argue the probative value of the
20 false testimony during closing argument or in any other
21 proceedings.

22 MR. BLACK: That's the rule.

23 THE COURT: So you said when he finishes you have
24 to --

25 MR. BLACK: I would talk to him for a couple minutes.

1 THE COURT: -- speak to him if you think that he has
2 testified falsely?

3 MR. BLACK: I don't want to make that representation.
4 I would talk to him for five minutes afterwards.

5 THE COURT: But if you think he has, you have to call
6 upon him to rectify the false testimony, if that's what you
7 think.

8 MR. BLACK: But I don't have to disclose that to you
9 or the Court.

10 THE COURT: Correct.

11 MR. BLACK: As a matter of fact I can't.

12 THE COURT: That's right.

13 MR. FOGARTY: I have a question of that rule.

14 MR. BLACK: Let him read Mitchell.

15 THE COURT: 438, 535.

16 MR. BLACK: Yes. It lays all this out and it's good
17 law. I Shepardized it.

18 (Judge reading.)

19 THE COURT: The Mitchell case talks about a lawyer
20 with 35 years experience. How many years do you have,
21 Mr. Black?

22 MR. BLACK: Thirty.

23 THE COURT: Thirty years experience. Practices
24 primarily criminal defense.

25 MR. BLACK: Yes. 85 percent. And, Your Honor, to be

1 clear, all I'm doing is invoking the rule. I'm not making
2 any representations of anything and I'm not allowed to. I'm
3 asking the Court to instruct counsel not to mention this and
4 not to mention the rule or anything of that sort.

5 THE COURT: So the narrative form of testimony was
6 properly directed. This approach was adopted in 1971.
7 The narrative approach continues to be a commonly accepted
8 method of dealing with client perjury. All right.

9 MR. BLACK: It seems relatively clear.

10 THE COURT: So just to be clear, Mr. Black, the Court
11 says, when the question of perjured testimony from a
12 defendant arises, it requires the lawyer before invoking the
13 rule to act in good faith and firm basis in objective fact.
14 I gather you have done that?

15 MR. BLACK: I have followed my obligations under the
16 rule and the caselaw.

17 THE COURT: Once the matter is called to the Court's
18 attention, the judge will instruct the lawyer how to
19 proceed.

20 MR. BLACK: That's why I was asking.

21 THE COURT: The judge will have to rely on the
22 representations of counsel which of necessity will be
23 cryptic because counsel is the one that must make the
24 disclosure while maintaining client confidences and allowing
25 for continued zealous advocacy at trial.

1 MR. BLACK: Correct.

2 THE COURT: Before giving the instruction the judge is
3 not required to hold an evidentiary hearing or to conduct a
4 colloquy, although the latter may be appropriate if it
5 appears the defendant does not understand the situation that
6 he has created.

7 Well, I asked him if he did understand what you told
8 him and he said he does.

9 It is acceptable for the defendant to testify by means
10 of an open narrative. If the defendant, now informed, moves
11 for appointment of new counsel or a mistrial, the judge
12 should deny the motions unless the defendant can demonstrate
13 that such motions must be allowed to prevent a miscarriage
14 of justice.

15 There has been no such motion made.

16 No comprehensive canon can be written on all aspects
17 of practical implementation because each case will have its
18 own idiosyncrasies and the judge cannot then be informed of
19 the details underlying counsel's invocation of Rule 3.3.
20 The judge possesses considerable discretion to vary any of
21 the procedures discussed if the interests of justice or the
22 effective management of the trial so requires.

23 Okay. I guess my instruction would be to follow the
24 suggestions set forth in Mitchell and I will permit him to
25 give a narrative.

1 MR. BLACK: And I'll ask the one question and sit
2 down.

3 THE COURT: And he will be cross-examined by
4 Mr. Fogarty, if he chooses, and Mr. Velazquez, if he
5 chooses.

6 MR. FOGARTY: And I understand that cross-examination
7 is without limitation?

8 THE COURT: That's right.

9 MR. BLACK: But I am -- one thing.

10 THE COURT: You're allowed to object.

11 MR. BLACK: I'm allowed to object.

12 THE COURT: And I also think that -- I agree that in
13 final argument neither counsel may tell the jury that he is
14 invoking this rule.

15 MR. BLACK: And I would ask that they don't ask him
16 about that either and there is nothing of that brought up.

17 THE COURT: Well --

18 MR. BLACK: I think that would create issues.

19 THE COURT: Well, depending on what he says, I'll have
20 to -- I mean, I can understand what you're saying. I can't
21 imagine a scenario where I would allow counsel to ask if he
22 has invoked Rule 3.3. The jury is not going to know what
23 that is and if I tell the jury what it is, that's pretty
24 prejudicial.

25 MR. BLACK: Yeah, that would be.

1 THE COURT: So I don't think I would allow counsel to
2 ask about the rule. But I'll wait until I hear his direct
3 examination before I make a final ruling on it. I would ask
4 you both, counsel, if you intend to ask that question, come
5 to sidebar first and get a ruling from me about that before
6 you ask.

7 MR. VELAZQUEZ: Sure, Your Honor.

8 MR. FOGARTY: Of course.

9 THE COURT: Okay. So do you still need ten minutes?

10 MR. VELAZQUEZ: I do.

11 THE COURT: Okay.

12 MR. FOGARTY: Just another clarification before we get
13 to final argument. I assume Mr. Velazquez and I can make
14 free use of whatever he has to say?

15 THE COURT: What he has to say, but not the fact that
16 Mr. Black invoked the rule. No. No. What he testifies to.

17 MR. BLACK: And I can't.

18 THE COURT: Now, while we're here, what about your
19 client?

20 MR. FOGARTY: He will not testify.

21 THE COURT: He will not? Okay.

22 All right. So we'll give you ten minutes,
23 Mr. Velazquez.

24 MR. VELAZQUEZ: Yes, please.

25 THE COURT: And we will come back and proceed.

1 MR. VELAZQUEZ: Thank you.

2 THE COURT: Thank you.

3 (End of sidebar discussion.)

4 (A recess was taken.)

5 (Court reconvenes at 2:40 p.m.)

6 THE COURT: All right. Mr. Velazquez, have you had
7 the time you needed?

8 MR. VELAZQUEZ: Yes, Your Honor. I'm satisfied.

9 THE COURT: Okay.

10 MR. FOGARTY: Your Honor, just for the record, I
11 renew my motion for relief from prejudicial joinder.

12 THE COURT: Denied. All right. Bring the jury in,
13 please.

14 (Jury enters.)

15 THE COURT: All right, jurors. Again, thank you very
16 much for your patience. Another issue came up that required
17 my attention and took more time than I hoped it would but we
18 resolved it and we are prepared to go forward. Again, I
19 apologize for keep you waiting. I very much appreciate your
20 patience and understanding.

21 Mr. Black, you may proceed.

22 MR. BLACK: Thank you, Your Honor. The defense calls
23 Mr. Julio Leiva to the stand.

24 JULIO LEIVA, duly sworn.

25 THE CLERK: Step forward and be seated.

1 MR. FOGARTY: Judge, one more thing, when you're
2 ready.

3 THE COURT: What is that?

4 MR. FOGARTY: I know it's -- I don't mean to irritate
5 the Court by renewing my motion to sever. I think I'm
6 required to so I'm renewing it one final time.

7 THE COURT: Well, I don't mean to irritate you.
8 The motion is denied.

9 All right. Now, how much time are you asking for to
10 argue? The rule says you have 30 minutes. I can give you
11 more time if you ask for it, within reason. But then if you
12 ask for more and I give it to you, I'm going to hold you to
13 it. Mr. Black, how much time do you think you need to
14 argue?

15 MR. BLACK: Well, I assumed Mr. Velazquez was going
16 to ask for more time than I would ask for but I would ask
17 for --

18 THE COURT: He has to respond to two arguments.

19 MR. BLACK: He does. I would say that it's fair for
20 whatever time he takes that I get that time.

21 THE COURT: No. How much time do you want?

22 MR. BLACK: Okay. I probably won't be more than 30
23 minutes, but I'll ask for 40 at this point.

24 THE COURT: I'll give you 40 minutes.

25 Mr. Fogarty, how much time you want?

1 MR. FOGARTY: I understand if I ask for 40 and only
2 use 30 --

3 THE COURT: That's fine.

4 MR. FOGARTY: Then that would be my --

5 THE COURT: Okay. I'll give you 40. And
6 Mr. Velazquez, how much time do you need to respond to the
7 two arguments? If I give you 45, will that --

8 MR. VELAZQUEZ: I think 45 would be more than enough
9 time.

10 THE COURT: Okay. Each defense counsel has 40 and the
11 Commonwealth has 45.

12 I have a couple of questions about the charge.
13 When I give the example of attempt to commit the armed
14 robbery, the standard language as an example for intent, the
15 standard language is if a pickpocket reaches in someone's
16 pocket and the pocket is empty, that's attempted larceny.
17 Well, that's a little too close to the facts of this case,
18 it seems to me.

19 MR. BLACK: I agree.

20 THE COURT: And the other example is if you shoot at
21 someone and miss, you know, that -- well, that's also --
22 this is a shooting case. So I'm a little hesitant to use
23 that as an example. What I thought about doing was saying,
24 you know, a person can be found guilty of attempted rape if
25 he tries to penetrate the victim but is unable to do so.

1 Number one, whether the defendant was indifferent to,
2 or took pleasure in the suffering of the deceased.

3 Number two, the consciousness or degree of suffering of
4 the deceased.

5 Number three, the extent of the injuries to the
6 deceased.

7 Number four, the amount of blows actually delivered.

8 Number five, the manner, degree and severity of the
9 force used.

10 Number six, the nature of the weapon, instrument or
11 method used.

12 And number seven, the disproportion between the means
13 needed to cause death, and those actually employed.

14 This seventh factor refers to whether the means used
15 were excessive and out of proportion to what would be needed
16 to kill a person. You may not make a finding of extreme
17 atrocity or cruelty unless it is based on one or more of
18 those seven factors that I have just listed for you.

19 Next I will turn to the theory of felony murder in the
20 first degree.

21 A defendant is guilty of felony murder in the first
22 degree if the Commonwealth proves beyond a reasonable doubt
23 that the victim was unlawfully killed during the defendant's
24 commission or attempted commission of a felony with a
25 maximum sentence of life imprisonment.

1 Again, you must consider this theory of murder in the
2 first degree regardless whether or not you find the
3 Commonwealth has proven murder in the first degree with
4 deliberate premeditation or extreme atrocity or cruelty.

5 Under the theory of felony murder, the only intent
6 which the Commonwealth must prove is the intent to commit
7 the underlying felony.

8 The Commonwealth need not prove that the defendant
9 intended to kill the victim, or intended the act that
10 resulted in the victim's death.

11 To prove the defendant guilty of felony murder in the
12 first degree, the Commonwealth must prove the following
13 three elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

14 Number one, that the defendant committed or attempted
15 to commit a felony with a maximum sentence of imprisonment
16 for life.

17 Number two, that the killing occurred during the
18 commission or attempted commission of the underlying felony.

19 And number three, that the underlying felony was
20 inherently dangerous to human life.

21 The first element is that the defendant committed or
22 attempted to commit a felony with a maximum sentence of
23 imprisonment for life.

24 In this case, the Commonwealth is alleging that the
25 defendant was committing or attempting to commit the crime

1 of armed robbery.

2 I instruct you, as a matter of law, that armed robbery
3 is a felony, with a maximum sentence of life imprisonment.
4 And I will be instructing you on the elements of armed
5 robbery in a few moments.

6 The second element is that the killing occurred during
7 the commission or attempted commission of the underlying
8 felony of armed robbery.

9 The Commonwealth must prove beyond a reasonable doubt
10 that the killing occurred in connection with the felony and
11 at substantially the same time and place.

12 The third element is that the underlying felony was
13 inherently dangerous and I instruct you that as a matter of
14 law, armed robbery is inherently dangerous to human life.

15 Now, if the Commonwealth has not proven murder in the
16 first degree, you must then consider murder in the second
17 degree.

18 To prove murder in the second degree, the Commonwealth
19 must prove the following elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

20 Number one, that the defendant caused the death of the
21 victim Mr. Serrano.

22 And number two, that the defendant intended to kill
23 Mr. Serrano, or intended to cause grievous bodily harm to
24 Mr. Serrano, or intended to do an act which in the
25 circumstances known to the defendant, a reasonable person

1 would have known created a plain and strong likelihood that
2 death would result.

3 Now, you must also consider the possibility of a
4 verdict of second degree felony murder.

5 A defendant is guilty of felony murder in the second
6 degree if the Commonwealth has proven beyond a reasonable
7 doubt that the victim was unlawfully killed during the
8 defendant's commission or attempted commission of a felony
9 with a maximum sentence of less than life imprisonment.

10 To prove the defendant guilty of felony murder in the
11 second degree, the Commonwealth must prove the following
12 elements beyond a reasonable doubt:

13 Number one, that the defendant committed or attempted
14 to commit a felony with a maximum sentence of less than life
15 imprisonment.

16 Number two, that the killing occurred during the
17 commission or attempted commission of that underlying
18 felony.

19 And number three, that the underlying felony was
20 inherently dangerous to human life.

21 All but the first element is the same, as in felony
22 murder in the first degree.

23 The first element in felony murder in the second degree
24 differs from felony murder in the first degree in that with
25 felony murder in the second degree the Commonwealth must

1 prove that the defendant committed or attempted to commit a
2 felony with a maximum sentence of less than life in prison.

3 In this case, the Commonwealth alleges that the
4 defendant committed the crime of armed assault with intent
5 to rob.

6 I instruct you that armed assault with intent to rob is
7 a felony with a maximum sentence of less than life
8 imprisonment.

9 And, again, I'll be instructing you on the elements of
10 armed assault with intent to rob in a few moments.

11 And I will also tell you that as a matter of law, armed
12 assault with intent to rob is inherently dangerous to human
13 life.

14 Let me now turn to the counts charging -- oh, before I
15 move on from that, let me also say to you, members of the
16 jury, that if the evidence convinces you beyond a reasonable
17 doubt that the defendant is guilty of a criminal offense,
18 you have a duty to find the defendant guilty of the most
19 serious offense that the Commonwealth has proven beyond a
20 reasonable doubt.

21 If the evidence does not prove beyond a reasonable
22 doubt that the defendant is guilty of any offense charged,
23 then you must find him not guilty.

24 I will now turn to the charge of armed robbery.

25 General Laws Chapter 265, Section 17 provides in part: