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DEX 1

1 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF VIRGINIA 2 Alexandria Division 3 MICHAEL DRIGGS, et al., : Civil Case No. 1:23-cv-1124-DJN-JFA 4 : Plaintiffs : 5 : v. 6 : CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE : January 30, 2024 7 10:00 a.m. AGENCY, : : 8 Defendant : : 9 TRANSCRIPT OF TELEPHONIC STATUS CONFERENCE 10 BEFORE THE HONORABLE DAVID J. NOVAK UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE 11 **APPEARANCES:** 12 FOR THE PLAINTIFFS: JOHN CLARKE 13 LAW OFFICE OF JOHN H. CLARKE 1629 K Street, NW 14 Suite 300 Washington, DC 20006 15 202-344-0776 16 FOR THE DEFENDANT: DENNIS CARL BARGHAAN, JR. MATTHEW METZGER 17 UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE 2100 Jamieson Avenue 18 Alexandria, VA 22314 703-299-3700 19 20 OFFICIAL COURT REPORTER: REBECCA STONESTREET, RPR, CRR U.S. District Court, 9th Floor 21 401 Courthouse Square Alexandria, Virginia 22314 22 (240) 426-7767 23 (Pages 1 - 10)24 25 COMPUTERIZED TRANSCRIPTION OF STENOGRAPHIC NOTES

1 PROCEEDINGS 2 THE COURT: We're going to go on the record here. This 3 is Driggs, et al. versus the CIA, civil case 1:23-CV-1124. Who do I have for the plaintiff? 4 5 MR. CLARKE: Hi, Your Honor. John Clarke on behalf of 6 the plaintiffs. 7 THE COURT: And who do I have for the defense? 8 MR. BARGHAAN: Good morning, Your Honor. Assistant 9 U.S. Attorney Dennis Barghaan and Matt Metzger for the CIA. 10 THE COURT: Okay. Very good. So obviously this case 11 is now assigned to me. Have you guys tried to work this out 12 yet? This is a FOIA case. Have you worked this out? 13 MR. BARGHAAN: Your Honor, we've tried and I think 14 we've made some progress in it. This is a FOIA request that was filed with the agency in July of 2023. This civil action was 15 16 instituted in August of 2023. And the FOIA request seeks a 17 large number of records regarding Korean War prisoners of war, 18 and thus it gets into a great deal of national security 19 information and classified information. 20 Mr. Clarke and I have conferred; we've agreed on some 21 things, we have not agreed on others. I have spoken with my 22 client this morning. They have confirmed that their search for 23 records is complete, but that's the first part of the process.

They are now going through the documents for responsiveness and for any exemptions in FOIA that need to be applied, which can be

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1 a time-consuming process because of the nature of the records at 2 issue.

3 THE COURT: All right. Mr. Clarke, do you want to add 4 anything to that?

5 MR. CLARKE: Yes, Your Honor. I have asked the 6 government to let me know whether or not they're going to search 7 their operational records, and our position is that if they say 8 no, if they are not going to search their operational records, 9 then I think the matter would be ripe for a motion for partial 10 summary judgment on that issue.

11 And what I'm trying to avoid is multiple rounds of 12 summary judgment briefing, so that if they come back and say, "Oh, here are our records; no, we didn't search our operational 13 14 records," then I'm going to have to -- then I would file a motion to ask them, I think that they would -- to order them to 15 16 search the operational records. I think - in fact, I'm pretty 17 confident - that that would be granted. Then we would start all 18 over again and they would go back and search their operational 19 records.

20 So what I've suggested is that I file a motion for 21 partial summary judgment on that issue, and there are some other 22 issues, collateral estoppel and perhaps news media status. If I 23 could just get an answer from the CIA as to whether or not 24 they're going to search their operational records, then I can 25 file a motion, and also on the issue of collateral estoppel, I

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1 can file a motion for partial summary judgment on that.

Now, the government has said, well, that's not usually the way FOIA cases work, and they do not want to deviate from that practice. I do not agree. Most FOIA cases - in fact, virtually all FOIA cases - are resolved by summary judgment, so a partial summary judgment is not unusual in the FOIA -- in FOIA.

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8 So I'm asking only that the CIA tell me whether or not 9 they're going to search their operational records, tell me 10 whether or not they're going to assert collateral estoppel, and 11 whether or not they're going to deny news media status. I think 12 that if they do that, it would really move this case along quite 13 a bit.

I have a case in the District of Columbia that's now on appeal that has been ongoing for 20 years against the CIA for Vietnam records, and there's really no point to it. I think --THE COURT: Hold on. All right. I got it. I don't need to know about this other case.

Here's how we're going to do this: We're going to have a status date in 60 days. Government, you're to sit down with your client within the next 30 days and resolve as much of this stuff as you can resolve. Answer the questions that Mr. Clarke just answered about the searches and stuff, and then in 45 days you're going to file a joint pleading telling me what's in dispute and what's not.

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1 I'm not doing partial summary judgment, so forget about 2 that. But what I want to know -- to me, this is a discovery 3 search issue first, so I want to know what is in dispute, what is not in dispute. I want a joint pleading not exceeding 4 5 20 pages in 45 days. We'll do a call in 60 days. 6 I'm expecting, though, the government to resolve the 7 vast majority of this such that there's not much in dispute. 8 The searches are done. Mr. Barghaan, you've told me that. So 9 it's you getting with your client, getting with Mr. Clarke, 10 sifting it through, so I know exactly what the dispute is. And 11 then we'll figure out how we're going to proceed during a call 12 in 60 days. 13 All right. So let's look at the calendar here at 14 60 davs. 15 MR. CLARKE: Your Honor --16 THE COURT: Hold on a second. Just hold on a second. 17 What do you look like on the afternoon of April 9th? It's a 18 Tuesday. 19 MR. BARGHAAN: Your Honor, that is the date of the next 20 status conference with Your Honor telephonically. Is that 21 correct? 22 THE COURT: Yeah, that's why we do it. We do a call, 23 but I'm requiring you to get this stuff done in 30 days and then 24 have a meet and confer with Mr. Clarke, and then you-all give me 25 in 45 days a joint position on what's left.

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1 I'm expecting you to get this worked out, so hopefully 2 there's not going to be a whole lot left. If there is, I'll 3 figure it out and we'll talk about it and how we're going to proceed during the call on the 9th. Okay? 4 5 MR. CLARKE: Your Honor, will the Court issue an order 6 on this? 7 THE COURT: Yes, of course. 8 MR. CLARKE: Okay. And I also have another question I 9 would like to ask the Court. I served, with the complaint, 10 interrogatories and requests for admissions. And the interrogatories I think can -- we can put that on the back 11 12 burner, but the request for admissions, not so. 13 So I would ask --14 THE COURT: Why? Why? I'm telling them to work this 15 out for vou. That's what I'm telling you. Why is it that you 16 need the admissions right now? MR. CLARKE: I can wait. 17 18 THE COURT: I know you can. Look, there's a way to do 19 this. And actually, Mr. Clarke, if you listen to me, this is 20 going to play out a lot faster for you because I'm a no-nonsense 21 quy. And Mr. Barghaan and I -- Mr. Barghaan knows that because 22 I worked with him a long time ago. So he knows I'm not putting 23 up with this. So we're going to get this done. 24 So my question to you was, are you available at 25 3 o'clock on April 9th?

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1 MR. CLARKE: Yes, Your Honor, I am.

2 THE COURT: Okay. Mr. Barghaan?

3 MR. BARGHAAN: I am.

4 THE COURT: So we're going to have a call then. But 5 your position paper, your joint paper is going to be due no 6 later than March 22nd for the joint paper.

So, Mr. Barghaan, I'm counting on you, though, within the next month, to sort this through with your client and then produce as much stuff as you can, and that way we can distill the dispute down to what we really need to fight about. And then the two of you will file a joint position, not exceeding 20 pages, telling me what's left that the fight is about. Okay? But again, I'm expecting this to either all be resolved

14 or to be narrowed down to a minutiae of information.

15 Everybody got the game plan? Mr. Barghaan, you got it, 16 first?

17 MR. BARGHAAN: Understood.

18 THE COURT: Mr. Clarke, you got it?

19 MR. CLARKE: Yes, Your Honor. Thank you.

20 THE COURT: Okay. Good. I look forward to talking to 21 you on April 9th.

By the way, if you resolve everything and the joint paper says, hey, there's nothing to fight about, we'll cancel the call on the 9th, which would be the best outcome for all of us. We'll all be a lot healthier and happier if we get that

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1	done.
2	All right. Have a good day. Take care.
3	MR. BARGHAAN: Thank you, Your Honor.
4	MR. CLARKE: Thank you, Your Honor.
5	(Off the record at 10:12 a.m.)
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14	CERTIFICATE OF OFFICIAL COURT REPORTER
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16	I, Rebecca Stonestreet, certify that the foregoing is a
17	correct transcript from the record of proceedings in the
18	above-entitled matter.
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21	//Rebecca Stonestreet 2/7/24
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