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UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
CENTRAL DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,
Plaintiff,

Docket No. 17-20037

vs.

Peoria, Illinois
June 12, 2019
9:00 a.m.

BRENDT A. CHRISTENSEN,
Defendant.

J U R Y T R I A L

(Volume 8A)

BEFORE THE HONORABLE JAMES E. SHADID

UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE

NANCY MERSOT, CSR-RPR
Official Court Reporter
U.S. District Court
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Peoria, Illinois 61602
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Proceedings recorded by mechanical stenography;
transcript produced by computer.

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(In open court, 9:00 a.m.)

THE COURT: All right. Good morning, everybody.

Let me call the case the United States v. Brendt Christensen, 17-20037.

Mr. Brendt Christensen is present in open court his attorneys: Mr. Tucker, Miss Brain, Mr. Taseff, and Ms. Pollock.

The government is present by: Mr. Miller; Mr. Nelson; Mr. Freres; Agent Huckstadt; and Agent Manganaro, assisting, as well as Staci Klayer.

With that in mind, before we begin, let me address a matter. The defense, as indicated yesterday, would be filing a Motion to Continue. It is filed this morning, Docket Number 375, a Motion to Continue the trial based on the civil suit filed on behalf of the Zhang family against Thomas Miebach, Jennifer Maupin, and the defendant.

The government would not have had a chance to respond as yet. The government indicated yesterday they would be opposed to the motion without response, then the Court has considered the motion.

Anybody wish to be heard further on the matter before I address it?

MS. POLLOCK: No, Your Honor, the motion speaks for itself.

THE COURT: The government wish to be heard on the matter?

MR. MILLER: No, I believe the Court knows our position opposing the motion.

THE COURT: An Order that we will entered this day reads as follows:

Defendant has filed a Motion to Continue based on the civil suit that I just referenced. The civil suit was filed on June 7, 2019, on behalf of the family and Miss Zhang, and against the defendant and two counsellors at the University of Illinois Counseling Center.

The defendant asked for a continuance until discovery closes in the civil case. In effect, the defense asked for what could be up to a two-year continuance. They allege mitigating evidence would be produced in civil discovery including but not limited to deposition interrogatories and document production. Although it is true that the defendant may not have been to depose the two counselors named in the civil suit, or propounded interrogatories, the defendant was able to subpoena documents from the Counseling Center and will be able to call two

counselors to testify at trial. The defendant is also secured an expert, Dr. Zoline, to testify about the counseling that Mr. Christensen received giving the timing of the request of the continuance, the extensive preparation of both sides for trial, the scheduling of witnesses for trial and the overall history and posture of the case to this point, request to indefinitely reschedule or for any other delay in the trial at this point does not serve the interest of justice.

Accordingly, the motion is respectfully denied.

With that in mind then, is the government ready for trial?

MR. MILLER: We are, Your Honor.

THE COURT: With in mind has the defense in consultation with your client, are you ready or ready to proceed to trial?

MS. POLLOCK: Yes, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Thank you.

All right. Is there anything else that we should address before we call in the jurors?

At this point, when the jurors are situated, I will have them sworn in. I will read some preliminary instructions to them about rules for

criminal cases, about evidence, and about their conduct. And then we would proceed to opening statements.

Are the parties ready for that.

MR. MILLER: Yes, Your Honor.

MS. POLLOCK: Yes, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Okay. Very good. Let's bring the jury in.

All right. Thank you. Please be seated.

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for being prompt this morning so we can start as schedule.

As you come in, you can be seated. We will remain standing as a courtesy to you and as a courtesy to the process.

With that in mind, I know that you were told, I hope that you were told that you could bring bottle water down here with you, if you feel the need to do so.

We are prepared to start the case of the United States v. Brendt Christensen. I have previously introduced you to the parties. I won't introduce you again.

I have previously read to you the proposed statement of the case and the indictment. I will read to you again the charges during the preliminary

instructions.

Before we begin, I'm going to give you some preliminary instructions that will help you understand the process and follow along with the case. There will be a complete set of written instructions at the conclusion of the case so these are not by any means the complete set of instructions that you will receive.

Let me start:

Oh, first off let me have you sworn.

If you will stand and raise your right hands.

(Jury sworn, 9:07 a.m.)

THE COURT: Okay. Thank you. Please be seated.

All right. If at any time you cannot hear a witness, although I do not believe that will be an issue, please get our attention somehow.

Those of you that are the four alternates sitting there, if that screen is blocking your view, we can shift it so that it doesn't block your view of the witness.

All right. With that in mind, it will be your duty to find from the evidence what the facts are. You and you alone will be the judges of the

facts. You will then have to apply those facts to those -- you will then have to apply to those facts the law as I will give to you. You must follow the law whether you agree with it or not.

Nothing the Court says or does during the course of this trial is intended to indicate or should be taken by you as indicating what your verdict should be.

The evidence from which you will find the facts will consist of the testimony of the witnesses, documents, and other things received into the record as exhibits and any facts that the lawyers agree to or stipulate to or that the Court may instruct you to find.

Certain things are not evidence and must not be considered by you. I will list them for you now:

Statements arguments and questions by lawyers are not evidence.

Objections to questions are not evidence. Lawyers have an obligation to their clients to make objections when they believe evidence being offered is improper under the rules of evidence. You should not be influenced by the objection or by the Court's ruling on it. If the objection is sustained, ignore the question. If it is overruled, treat the answer

like any other. If you are instructed that some item of evidence is received for a limited purpose only, you must follow that instruction.

Testimony that the Court has excluded or told you to disregard is not evidence and must not be considered.

Anything that you may have seen other heard outside the courtroom is not evidence and must be disregarded. You are to decide the case solely on the evidence presented here in the courtroom.

There are two kind of evidence: direct and circumstantial. A direct evidence is proof of a fact such as testimony of an eyewitness. Circumstantial evidence is proof of facts from which you may infer or conclude that other facts exist. I will give you further instructions on these as well as other matters at the end of the case. Keep in mind that you may consider both kinds of evidence.

It will be up to you to decide which witnesses to believe, which witnesses not to believe, how much of any witness's testimony to accept or reject. I will give some guidelines for determining the credibility of witnesses at the end of the case.

This is a criminal case. I previously

instructed you on three basic rules. I will repeat them.

First, the defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty. The indictment brought by the government against the defendant is an accusation, nothing more. It is not proof of guilt or anything else. The defendant therefore starts out with a clean slate.

Second, the burden of proof is on the government until the very end of the case. The defendant has no burden to prove his or her innocence or to present any evidence or to testify. Since the defendant has the right to remain silent, the law prohibits you from arriving at your verdict by considering the defendant may not have testified.

Third, the government must prove the defendant's guilt beyond a reasonable doubt. I will give you further instructions on this point later.

In this case, the defendant is charged in three counts.

Count 1, kidnapping resulting in death.

Count 2, false statement.

Count 3, false statement.

The defendant has pleaded not guilty.

I will give you detailed instructions on the

law at the end of the case and those instructions will control your deliberations and decision.

Now, a few words about your conduct as jurors:

First, I instruct that you during the trial you are not to discuss the case with anyone or permit anyone to discuss it with you. Until you retire to the jury room at the end of the case to deliberate on your verdict you are simply not -- you simply are not to talk about this case.

Second, do not read or listen or anything touching on this case in any way. If anyone tries to talk to you about it, bring it to my attention immediately.

Third, do not try to do any reach or make any investigation on your own about the case.

Finally, do not form any opinion until all of the evidence is in. Keep an open mind until you start your deliberations at the end of the case.

If you want to take notes during the course of the trial, you may do so. However, you may find it difficult to take detailed notes and pay attention to what the witnesses are saying at the same time. If you do take notes be sure that your note taking does not interfere with your listening

and considering all of the evidence. Also, if you do take notes, do not discuss them with anyone else before you begin your deliberations. Do not take your notes home with you at the end of the day. Leave them in the jury room. We will take care of them. If you choose not to take notes, remember it is your own individual responsibility to listen carefully to the evidence. You cannot give this responsibility to someone else who is taking notes. We depend on the judgment of all members of the jury. You all must remember the evidence in this case.

The trial will now begin. The government will make an opening statement, which is simply an outline to help you understand the evidence as it comes in. The defendant may but does not have to make an opening statement. Opening statements are neither evidence nor argument. The government will then present its witnesses, and counsel for the defendant may cross-examine them. Following the government's case, the defendant may, if he wishes, present witnesses whom the government may cross-examine. After of the evidence is in, the attorneys will present their closing arguments to summarize and interpret the evidence for you, and I

will instruct you on the law. After that, you will then deliberate to begin to reach your verdict.

With that in mind, opening statements from the government.

Mr. Miller.

MR. MILLER: Thank you, Your Honor.

Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, he kidnapped her. He murdered her. He covered up his crime.

Two years ago, on a pleasant June day, Yingying Zhang was waiting for a bus on the University of Illinois campus.

The defendant, Brendt Christensen, kidnapped her and took her to his apartment where he raped her, brutally assaulted her, and took her life. He then attempted to cover up his crime. Her remains have never been found.

He kidnapped her. He murdered her. He covered up his crime.

As Judge Shadid told you, my name is Eugene Miller. It's my honor and privilege to represent the United States of America in this case, and especially to speak for Yingying Zhang, who can no longer speak for herself.

It is also my honor and privilege to be

trying this case with federal fellow prosecutors: James Nelson, Bryan Freres, and with Special Agents Andrew Huckstadt and Anthony Manganaro of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Because much of the evidence in this case will be presented through electronic means, we are also fortunate to have the assistance of Staci Klayer, a paralegal with the U.S. Attorney's office.

On June 9, 2017, just over two years ago, Yingying Zhang was 26 years old and she was pursuing her dream.

If we can show Exhibit 1A.

Exhibit 1A is a photograph of Yingying Zhang. It was almost summer on the University of Illinois campus and many of the students have gone home, but Yingying had not gone home. In fact, she was far from home. She had come to work and research at the University of Illinois from her home in China arriving on campus in late April.

She had already obtained a college degree, advanced degree in China, and now Professor Kaiyu Guan at the University of Illinois had provided her with the opportunity to come to the university as a visiting scholar where she could continue her research in crop sciences, studying photosynthesis

in soybeans and corn. She hoped to get the doctorate degree and evidentially to return to China where she could teach.

It was her first time in the United States. It was her first time outside of China. So she said good-bye to her mom, and her dad, and her younger brother and left them in her hometown of Nanping in China. And she said good-bye to her long time boyfriend, Xiaolin Hou, who planned to marry Yingying in October.

When she first arrived, she didn't know anyone and she got housing at the University of Illinois Orchard Downs housing complex located on the southeast part of campus. But by June 9th, she was looking to move apartments to save some money and maybe get a roommate. So she put an application in at the One North apartment complex north of campus. She arranged that morning of June 9th to meet later in the day with Rontrez Stone, who was the marketing manager for the One North apartment complex. She did have a problem, she didn't have a car, so she had to navigate the summer bus schedule to make her way from the south part of campus to the north part of campus.

That morning she worked in her cubicle at

Turner Hall on campus, then returned to Orchard Downs, where she lived, around lunch.

At 1:30 p.m. she texted Rontrez Stone and told him that she was running late, and she would plan to meet with him at 2:10 p.m. on Friday, June 9th. Five minutes later she got on the Teal line MTD bus and took that from Orchard Downs to on campus to the intersection of Springfield and Mathews Streets where she got off the bus to catch a connection to the 22 Limited, which would take her to One North.

But when she got off the bus, she was on the north side of Springfield and the bus was on the south side, so she missed her bus. She waved at it as the bus went down the street. She even ran after the bus. And as she ran after the bus on Springfield Avenue headed east, a black Saturn Astra passed her going west. She followed the bus even as the bus went a block down and turned on the next block and went north on Goodwin Avenue. And she even ran up Goodwin Avenue, but she didn't catch the bus and the bus went on.

So she went up to the next bus stop at Clark and Goodwin Avenue, and she waited for the next bus. While she waited, a man in a black Saturn Astra

pulled up alongside her. He was a complete stranger. It was the defendant, Brendt Christensen. And he would be the last person to see her alive.

You see, while Yingying was on campus pursuing her dream on June 9th, the defendant was on campus pursuing something dark, something evil; he was pursuing a kidnapping and murder.

She didn't know when she was there that the defendant had been driving around campus earlier that morning looking to carry out his plan. She didn't know that before she even came to this country, the defendant had gone down this dark path that led to this very moment.

In the defendant's own words, he led a double life. Highly intelligent, he attended University of Wisconsin at Stevens Point, University of Wisconsin at Madison. He was accepted into the University of Illinois doctorate program in physics. He met his wife, Michelle Zortman, while he was attending college in Stevens Point, Wisconsin. And together in 2013, they moved to Champaign-Urbana.

They moved into an apartment on the west side of Champaign, the Stonegate Village Apartments. They moved into Apartment 2E at 2503 West Springfield Avenue. They used one bedroom as an

office that had desks and computers. And the other bedroom was the master bedroom with two twin beds put together to form a king size bed.

But by 2016, December of 2016, the defendant developed an interest beyond his marriage and beyond his interest in physics classes. He developed an interest in serial killers. Men acting alone, for their own gratification, engaging in multiple murders over an extended period of time. He was particularly fascinated by serial killer Ted Bundy, and by the book "American Psycho" where the main character leads a double life as a serial killer.

With the defendant, again, planning how to abduct and to kill someone; in the spring of 2017, he did research on the internet on serial killers with both his computer and his cell phone. And Judge Shadid will instruct you that cell phone was an instrumentality of interstate commerce. He downloaded photos of women in bondage. He visited websites that discussed kidnapping and abductions, even explored so-called consensual abductions online. He even ordered in March in return a six foot long duffle bag from Amazon.

As the defendant traveled down this dark path, his grades suffered, his marriage broke down,

and he dropped from the doctorate program to the master's program.

In February of 2017, his wife troubled by his conduct, which also included abusing alcohol and prescription drugs, began dating another man, Ryan Vela, with the defendant's full agreement as they engaged in what's called an "open marriage." And the defendant began dating other women, including a woman named Terra Bullis, who he met on the website OK Cupid.

Terra introduced him to her BDSM community, and that refers to individuals interested in erotic bondage, discipline, dominance, and submission. In this relationship, the defendant was the dominant and his girlfriend was the submissive.

In March of 2017, the defendant revealed a portion of his double life to a counselor at the University of Illinois Counseling Center. The reason he visited he said was because his wife wanted to separate and that she didn't like his drinking. But about 40 minutes into that interview, the counselor asked him why he had noted on his paperwork that he had thought of harming others. And the defendant said he didn't want to mention this but he was always interested in bad guys. He

admitted that he had gone to online forums for serial killers that fascinated him. He mentioned that Ted Bundy was really attractive and had killed people. He admitted that he had gone pretty far down the path of thinking about abducting and killing someone, including how to do it, and admitted he'd identified the type of victim he would choose. He claimed that he had not followed anyone to this point. And he claimed that he was done with the thoughts, or he wouldn't be talking about them now.

But the defendant wasn't done with the thoughts. Far from it. His online fascination with serial killers and abductions continued after that time in March. In April he texted his girlfriend about purchasing bed restraints, a blindfold, and a gag.

And by the end of May he had gone further down that further dark path as he texted his girlfriend: "Fading into nothingness is the default for most people. You want to know what terrifies me, it's that. I will not fade away. I refuse. I don't care how I will be remembered, just that I am: good, bad, revered, infamous; I don't care. Think back over the past 2000 years, who do you know? The

people who pushed the limits and those who supported them. Fading into nothingness is not an option. I would rather destroy humanity than let that happen; I know most would disagree."

So by May the defendant had the intent and he had the plan, but he needed the opportunity. That opportunity came when he learned that his wife would be leaving town the weekend of June 9th, traveling to Wisconsin Dells with her boyfriend. So to prepare for that weekend, the defendant ordered another large green duffel bag from Amazon. He ordered it online on Saturday, June 3rd, 2017. It was a super tough heavyweight cotton canvas duffel bag, size colossal, six feet long and two feet high and wide. UPS delivered it to his apartment on June 6th, three days before his wife left for the weekend.

And the defendant had previously discussed its usefulness online at a website called FetLife using his cell phone. He discussed on that website an abduction fantasy involving kidnapping and rape with a woman online. And he said his plan was to bind you, gag you, and likely put you in a large duffel bag so no one could see you, and then get you in my trunk, backseat.

Early the very early morning hours of Friday, June 9th, the defendant's wife and her boyfriend left town, leaving the defendant alone in his apartment for the weekend.

On the morning of June 9, before 8:00 a.m., the defendant went to a Schnucks grocery store located near his residence. He was wearing a black T-shirt, and he had mirrored aviator sunglasses in his pocket, and he purchased a bottle of Admiral Nelson's spiced rum. He had facial hair at that time but he went home and he shaved.

And while Yingying was researching at Turner Hall that morning, the defendant spent the morning driving around campus in his four-door 2008 Saturn Astra hatchback. He was looking for a victim.

And at 9:30 a.m., he saw Emily Hogan, a graduate student at the University of Illinois. She was walking alone to a nearby bus stop. He pulled up next to her on Soughton Street, just east of Lincoln Avenue. He was wearing the black T-shirt. He was wearing the mirrored aviator sunglasses. He told her that he was an undercover police officer. And he pulled a badge out from under his shirt. He asked her if she would answer a few questions and she walked over to the car, and said, "Yes." Then

he asked her to get in the car. She said, "No." And he said, "Well, if you see anything suspicious, call the police" and drove off.

Emily Hogan found this suspicious. She immediately called the police and reported this incident with this individual in the black car, which was the defendant. She also posted a warning on Facebook about someone driving around pretending to be a police officer. Doesn't appear Yingying ever saw that warning.

The defendant does not give up on his plan that day after Emily Hogan's failed abduction.

At noon, he responded to a text from his girlfriend, noting "You don't do the anything casual thing, from breathing to fine dining, to...murder."

At 1:30 p.m. the defendant was driving around campus again.

And at 1:57 p.m. he was driving west on Springfield when he saw Yingying running after the bus. He then drove down Springfield, circled around ultimately heading up north on Wright Street, east on University Avenue, and then coming south down Goodwin Avenue seeing Yingying standing alone under a tree at the bus stop at Clark and Goodwin.

The defendant then circled around the block

so that he was approaching Yingying from the south. She was on the east side of the street. He pulled up in his black Saturn Astra. And as he did with Emily Hogan, he spoke with her for a minute, posing as an undercover police officer. Unlike Emily Hogan, Yingying got in the car. And shut the door.

The defendant drove north across University Avenue in the direction of the One North apartments but he didn't take her there. Instead he executed his plan to kidnap and murder her.

By 2:28 p.m., 20 minutes approximately after she got in the car, he had disabled her iPhone and was no longer receiving signals.

The defendant is about six foot tall, over 200 pounds. Yingying was barely five foot four, 110 pounds. He bound her hands. And he took her back to his apartment. And he took her to his bedroom where he raped her. And he assaulted her. And she bled on his bed. And her blood ran down the wall to the baseboard, into the carpet underneath the bed. He choked her, by his estimate, for about ten minutes. But she fought for her life against this man she had never met before, in this place that she had never been before. And then he carried her to his bathroom and put her in the bathtub. He hit in

her in the head with the Louisville Slugger baseball bat in his words "as hard as he could" and broke open her head. He then stabbed her in the neck. And she grabbed for it, and he cut off her head.

Thousands of miles from the parents that gave her life, alone, with a stranger, Yingying Zhang breathes her last breath.

The defendant ended her life abruptly without warning, without explanation.

Having ended Yingying's life, the defendant's coverup began. Still Friday, his wife wasn't coming back until Monday or at least until Sunday evening, so he had a couple of days to get rid of the evidence. He was smart. He had planned this. So he was able to get rid of almost all of the evidence. He got rid of Yingying's iPhone, her clothes, her backpack have never have been found. He got rid of Yingying's remains. They have never been found.

But he kept the mattresses where he raped her, and he kept the baseball bat that he used to hit her in the head. He spent much of the weekend cleaning, and, again, he was able to get rid of almost all of the evidence. He cleaned the Saturn Astra. Cleaned the blood off the mattresses.

Cleaned the blood off the wall and the baseboard and the carpet. He cleaned the blood off of the baseball bat. He went to Walmart on Sunday and he bought Drano, and Swiffer pads. He cleaned his carpet and his put Drano down the pipes, but he didn't clean behind the baseboard. And he didn't clean under the carpet.

By the time his wife returned to the apartment on Sunday, there was no visible sign in the Astra or the apartment that he had kidnapped and murdered Yingying. While there was no visible sign of her murder. Her disappearance is noted very quickly.

Professor Guan and Yingying's co-workers became concerned when she didn't return from lunch. They couldn't reach her by phone. They couldn't find her. Her finance, Xiaolin, who was in China couldn't reach her. And by Friday night, Professor Guan reported Yingying missing to the University of Illinois Police Department.

They took the report and began searching for her. They learned that she had not shown up for the 2:10 appointment with Rontrez Stone at the One north apartments. They began canvassing areas where she might have gone. They learned that the last her

cell phone had any contact with the cell tower was around 2:28 p.m., possibly around downtown Champaign. And they looked for her there, but they couldn't find her. They reviewed hours of video in the MTD bus system and from the University of Illinois cameras.

And on Saturday, June 10th, Officer Tara Hurless, of the University of Illinois Police Department, identified video of Yingying getting on the Teal line bus and going to Springfield and Mathews.

Early on the morning of Monday, June 12th, Telecommunication Officer Kenny Costa found video that showed Yingying getting in a black Saturn Astra at the stop at Clark and Goodwin Streets.

So on Monday with evidence Yingying had been abducted in a Saturn Astra, which is an instrumentality of interstate commerce, the FBI became involved in the investigation treating it as a potential federal kidnapping case.

The FBI publicized Yingying's disappearance and publicized that they were looking for a black Saturn Astra. The FBI obtained a list of 2008 Saturn Astras that were registered in Champaign County.

The Astra was only produced by Saturn for a couple years, so there weren't very many. In fact, there were only about 26 that were registered in Champaign County and out of those, there were only about 18 that were four-door hatchbacks.

FBI agents then on the evening of Monday, June 12th began interviewing all of the Saturn Astra owners in Champaign County. One of those registered owners was the defendant, Brendt Christensen. So on Monday evening, three days after Yingying's murder, FBI agent Michael Carter and Joel Smith went to the defendant's apartment to interview him. They met with the defendant and his wife in the apartment. They told them that they were searching for the missing University of Illinois scholar. The defendant calmly replied that he heard about the missing scholar and knew that the car resembled his car. So the agents asked him where he was between the 2 and 3:00 p.m. on Friday when he was abducted.

He initially couldn't remember, he told the agents. So they asked him if he could check his texts. And he looked at his texts and said he had got a text from his girlfriend, Terra Bullis, around 1:00 but he hadn't responded until around 4:00 p.m. so he thought he must have been sleeping during that

time. Ultimately, he told them that he stayed at the apartment all day on Friday, then he slept and played video games.

Agents asked to look around and to search the Astra and that the defendant agreed. So Agents Carter and Smith briefly looked around the apartment and didn't find anything. They looked at the Astra, also didn't find anything, so they left to go interview other Saturn Astra owners.

Now before the agents had arrived to interview him on Monday night, he had already gone to Schnucks earlier that day to buy more Drano, to buy kitchen garbage bags. He also searched on Google for information on iPhone tracking. The defendant didn't have an iPhone, but Yingying did.

After the agents left, the defendant further cleaned his Saturn Astra, and the next morning he cleared from his Google Chrome web browser all browsing history. He also put in a maintenance request at his apartment to have the grout in his bathroom treated for mold.

The search for Yingying continued on Tuesday, June 13th and Wednesday June 14th. FBI agents assisted by UIPD officers continued to canvass areas looking for Yingying. They obtained

and reviewed video hoping to find some video of Yingying with a black Saturn Astra. They tried to identify the license plate on the Astra, but they were unable to from the video.

But on Wednesday, June 14th, U of I Police Department, Officer James Carter, was reviewing video when he noticed a defect in the front right hubcap of the Saturn Astra that picked up Yingying: a spot missing between the edge of the hubcap and the edge of the tire. He also noticed that the Astra had a sunroof.

Special Agent Joel Smith of the FBI recalled that the Astra that the defendant had had a sunroof. So around 5:50 p.m. that day, he and Special Agent Katherine Tenaglia of the FBI went out to the defendant's apartment and looked at the Astra, and they observed the front right hubcap defect on the car that picked up Yingying was matched by the front right hubcap of the defendant's Astra. Based on that information, the FBI obtained a federal search warrant to seize the defendant's car. And just before midnight on June 14th, heading into Thursday, June 15, seven FBI agents, along with UIPD officers, went to the defendant's apartment. They woke up the defendant, his wife. They told him that they had a

search warrant for the Astra, and they told the defendant if he would speak with them. The defendant agreed.

He had accompanied Special Agent Anthony Manganaro and Detective Eric Stiverson from the University of Illinois Police Department to the FBI office, which was located just a few blocks away from his apartment. His wife stayed and spoke with Special Agents Andy Huckstadt and Katie Tenaglia. And the agents learned for the first time about the defendant's relationship with his girlfriend, Terra Bullis.

The defendant's wife signed a consent to search the apartment. The agents seized his computer, the defendant's computer, and his cell phone, along with a pair of mirrored aviator-style sunglasses that they found.

Meanwhile Agent Manganaro and Detective Stiverson interviewed the defendant. That interview was audio and video recorded. During the interview, the defendant acknowledged that he previously told Joel Smith on June 12th that he was home all day playing video games and taking a nap. He repeated that lie to the agents on the 15th. In fact, he expanded it. He said that he was home playing video

games literally all day.

The agents told him that they had video of a Saturn Astra driving around campus. The defendant said he had seen the videos but he didn't see himself in the videos. The defendant told the agents that he wanted to see the videos. Detective Stiverson interrupted him. He told him that he knew that the defendant had picked up Yingying in his Saturn Astra. And the defendant's demeanor changed. He took a long pause. Began breathing heavy. His hands began to shake, and then he claimed that he might have mixed up Friday and Saturday when he had talked to the agents.

For the first time he admitted he did pick up a girl, but he didn't think it was Yingying. He said that she was distressed and she was speaking broken English. He said that he gave her a short ride a few blocks north, but he made a wrong turn and she freaked out so she got out of the car. Agents questioned him further about this story but he stuck to it.

After he admitted that he picked up someone, he was detained most of Thursday, June 15th. During this time officers obtained a search warrant for his apartment. And late that night and into the early

morning, Illinois State Police Crime Scene Investigators, December Melville and Tim Lemasters, processed his apartment as a crime scene.

They went to the defendant's bedroom where they found three reddish stains on the defendant's mattresses, two smaller stains in the middle of mattress, and a large stain at the end of the mattress near the wall. They used wet cotton swabs to test each of these stains and take samples to be sent off for DNA testing.

The agents also found in that same bedroom the baseball bat the defendant used to hit Yingying. Now the agents didn't know that at the time, and there were no visible stains on the bat, but they used a substance called Starlight Bloodhound, which is a name for a chemical that is called luminal. And luminal is a chemical that can be used to flores when it comes in contact with certain substances, biological fluids, blood, and other fluid, like cleaning products. And the use of Starlight Bloodhound revealed a stain on the baseball bat. So December Melville used another cotton swab, wet it down to take a sample of that stain for DNA testing.

As the search for Yingying continued, Special Agent Huckstadt approached the defendant's

girlfriend, Terra Bullis. He had an interview with her and asked her if she would assist in the investigation by recording her conversations with the defendant. And although she said that she loved the defendant, she agreed to assist, reasoning that if he hadn't done this, it would help exonerate him.

The defendant was released from custody early on Friday, June 16th. For the next two weeks he was under surveillance by the FBI 24 hours a day. And for those next two weeks he also engaged in recorded conversations with his girlfriend, Terra Bullis.

On June 17th, the defendant came back into the FBI office to speak with Special Agents Michael Carter and Brian Schenkelberg, that conversation was recorded as well. The defendant said he wanted to clear things up. He offered an explanation for the duffle bag that the agents had learned about. He said that he used it to transport a cat tree to his girlfriend, Terra Bullis. His girlfriend never saw that duffle bag or any cat tree.

He also volunteered that he nicked his finger when he was in the Saturn Astra and bled if there was trace elements of blood in the car. Otherwise, he repeated the story he had told before.

He had picked someone up and let them out a few blocks later.

Agents asked him to go and show where he let this person out. So they went with him to the area where she had been abducted at Goodwin and Clark, and he directed them around the area, ostensibly where he let her out, but he couldn't be definite and he couldn't be specific.

The defendant while he was under FBI surveillance continued to speak with his girlfriend and she continued to record those conversations unbeknownst to him, meanwhile the search for Yingying continued.

If we could publish Government's Exhibit 1D.

Yingying's finance, Xiaolin Hou, who was at the very back, came to the United States with her father, who is to the left, next to her mother on the right, with Yingying in the middle. Xiaolin and her father came from China to the United States to look for Yingying. And Xiaolin, along with the Chinese Students Association at the University of Illinois helped organize a vigil, an event to try to obtain more information about where Yingying might be. It was called a Memorial Walk. And it was scheduled on June 29th, 20 days after Yingying had

gone missing.

The Memorial Walk started at the Cranden Center on campus with the group then walking to the location where Yingying had been abducted, and then returning back to the Cranden Center for a concert.

The defendant -- and this event was highly publicized -- the defendant had been following online the press coverage of the disappearance of Yingying. He decided to attend. And he ordered his submissive girlfriend, Terra Bullis, to attend with him and she did, wearing an FBI wire. The defendant explained to her the reason that he wanted to go to the Memorial Walk, "I just want to see how many people were here. They are here for me."

He described over the next couple of hours to her that he had kidnapped and murdered Yingying. He described to her how hard Yingying had fought against him and how hard she had fought for her life. He described how he cut her clothes off and just started doing stuff to her, although he got bored; just didn't care because there was nothing to her and didn't orgasm.

He described in detail how he choked her, how he split her head open with the bat, how he stabbed her, how he decapitated her.

Asked how the authorities would catch him, he replied, "They have the bat I hit her head with," but he refused to tell what he did with Yingying's remains. He said, "Yingying is gone. She is never going to be found," he bragged. "The FBI has looked for her. The police and FBI don't know where she is. I'm apparently very good at this." He claimed they will never find her. "The family won't leave until she is found. They are going to leave empty-handed because they will never find her. She is gone forever."

Now keep in mind that the defendant is only on trial here for the kidnapping of Yingying resulting in her death and for his false statements, not for any other crimes. But in discussing Yingying's murder, the defendant also bragged at the Memorial Walk that he had other victims. In fact, he told his girlfriend that he had been at this since he was 19 years old; that Yingying was his 13th victim; that Yingying was the only person that produced evidence that led back to him; and he didn't know any of the other victims' names.

Now the FBI has not identified the names of any other victims. And they have not identified any other evidence that does lead back to the defendant.

But nonetheless, the defendant bragged that killing Yingying was his legacy. And that the last serial killer at his level was Ted Bundy.

The next day June 30th, the FBI arrested the defendant, and they executed another search warrant at his apartment. The search started with the Springfield FDR evidence response team and before they began the search they called in McHenry County Sheriff's Deputy Jeremy Bruketta. He has a trained cadaver detecting dog named Sage. Sage detected presence of the smell of cadaver in the bathroom where the defendant murdered Yingying. The Emergency Response Team seized numerous items. They seized the defendant's laptop. They seized duct tape. They seized the two mattresses. They even seized a trap from the sink underneath the bathtub.

On July 1st, the Chicago Emergency Response Team from the FBI took over the search, and they used something called an alternative light source, like a black light that can reveal the presence of biological fluids and other fluids. In this case, the alterative light source revealed handprints and swabbing on the drywall and the carpet up against and underneath the defendant's bed that made it appear that someone had engaged in a lot of cleaning

in that area.

And so FBI Special Agent Doug Seccombe and Courtney Corbett pulled up the carpet underneath the bed revealing the dark reddish stain on the under side of the carpet and the padding and along the carpet tack board and the baseboard. The stain tested positive for blood and agents collected the stained carpet and the tack strip and the baseboard and the drywall and they sent them to the FBI Laboratory in Quantico, Virginia, along with the swabs that were taken from the stain on the baseball bat and the three stains that were on the defendant's mattress.

The FBI forensic biologist, Amanda Bakker, conducted DNA testing on those items. And I think by now most know that DNA stands for deoxyribonucleic acid, which is a unique identifier of human beings.

Amanda Baker found DNA on all of those items. And she compared it to the known DNA of Yingying Zhang. She identified Yingying Zhang's DNA on the swab taken from the baseball bat. She identified Yingying's DNA on the blood stained carpet. She identified Yingying's DNA on the drywall behind the defendant's bed. She identified

Yingying's DNA on the tack strip. She identified Yingying's DNA on all three swabs that were taken from the three reddish stains on the defendant's mattress. She also interpreted serology or blood tests.

She identified blood on the carpet that had Yingying's DNA. She identified blood on the baseboard that had Yingying's DNA, and she identified blood on the tack strip that had Yingying's DNA.

The defendant is charged with kidnapping Yingying Zhang resulting in her death and false statements to FBI agents.

Kidnapping is a federal crime, whereas here the defendant used instrumentality of interstate commerce, including the Saturn Astra and the cell phone, to plan and carry it out.

Because the FBI agents were investigating the kidnapping, his false statements to them are also federal crimes.

Now during the trial, you are going to have the opportunity to hear from numerous witnesses. For example, you will hear from Xiaolin Hou, from Kaiyu Guan, from Rontrez Stone, about how Yingying came to be at that bus stop at Clark and Goodwin on

June 9, 2017.

You will hear from the many FBI agents and University of Illinois Police Department officers who investigated Yinying's disappearance including the multiple interviews that they had with the defendant at various times.

You are going to hear from the crime scene investigators that collected evidence, from Douglas Seccombe, and Courtney Corbett, and Mike McGuire from the FBI, and from December Melville and Timothy Lamasters from the Illinois State Police.

You are going to hear from the FBI experts who examined evidence, from computer forensic examiner William O'Sullivan who examined the electronic evidence, the phone, the computer from the defendant. From cell phone analyst, Greg Catey, who analyzed phone records in this case; and forensic biologist, Amanda Baker, who identified blood and the victim's DNA on the numerous items seized from the defendant's apartment.

And you will hear from the defendant's prior girlfriend, Terra Bullis, regarding the numerous conversations she had with the defendant that were recorded by the FBI.

Now -- and you will also hear from the case

agents, from Special Agent Anthony Manganaro and Special Agent Andrew Huckstadt regarding the investigation and the numerous documents and evidence that established the defendant's guilt.

During the trial you are also going to have the opportunity to see exhibits, both videos and audio recordings. You will see video of the defendant admitting to the University of Illinois counselor regarding being pretty far down the path towards identifying the victim. You will see video of Yingying trying to catch the 22 Limited bus, and video of Yingying getting into the defendant's black Saturn Astra.

You will see photographs of the victim's apartment. You will see photographs of the multiple searches of the defendant's apartment on June 15, and June 30th and July 1st of 2018. And importantly you will hear the defendant's statements to his girlfriend during the Memorial Walk for Yingying.

Now because there is some background noise during these discussions that were out in with the group, some are hard to hear, especially in a large courtroom. Therefore, we will have headphones for you to be able to listen to these conversations, so that you -- and we also have a transcript that will

aid you in listening to these conversations. You will hear from the defendant's own words and in awful detail how he kidnapped, raped, tortured, and murdered her.

The defendant committed these crimes beyond any doubt, then he tried to cover them up.

Yingying's remains have never been recovered. Therefore, at the conclusion of this case, this stage of the case, we will ask you to return three verdicts of guilty. Thank you.

THE COURT: Thank you, Mr. Miller.

For the defense. Mr. Taseff.

MR. TASEFF: My name is George Taseff, and together with my colleagues, Elisabeth Pollock, Robert Tucker, and Julie Brain; it is our privilege to represent the citizen accused in this case, Brendt Christensen.

Folks, we meet today during the most tragic and hostile of circumstances. Circumstances that are difficult to grasp and are incomprehensible in every respect.

For the next several days we will come face-to-face with the grim facts that the government counsel has described to us that will frame the issues you must decide from the evidence that will

be presented at this first stage of this case.

So let me just say here at the outset, it will be startling for many of you to hear, Brendt Christensen is responsible for the death of Yingying.

Brendt Christensen killed Yingying.

And nothing that we say or do during this phase of the trial is intended or will be meant to sidestep or deny that Brendt is responsible for the death of Miss Zhang.

So in view of what I just said, some of you may be asking why are we having a trial in this first stage? The answer to that is that Brendt Christensen is on trial for his life in this case.

And as Judge Shadid has explained to you, we are going to have a trial at the first stage of the case, and, if necessary, at the second stage of the case. This is a legal process that we must follow. And we will proceed through both stages, if necessary, so that you, the jury, can render facts, find facts, and render verdicts on both guilt, and, if necessary, the sentence.

Now, moreover, while we have acknowledged that Brendt is responsible for the death of Miss Zhang, we take serious issue with various

aspects of the government's version of what it claims happened, and how those things happened, and why those things happened. So there are several factual issues and disputes that will require your resolution in a trial of this case and that is the reason we are proceeding through this first phase of this case.

Let me tell you about some of those things where we take issue with the government and the evidence at trial that will be presented. The government has just told you in great detail about a recorded conversation between Terra Bullis and Brendt Christensen on June 29, 2017, on the campus of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana, where Brendt said several things, terrible things about what he did to Miss Zhang. And I acknowledge, all of us acknowledge, some of the things that you're going to hear Brendt say on that tape-recorded conversation are shocking and are horrible.

One of those matters that Mr. Miller has said that the evidence will show that you're going to hear is this mention by Brendt on the tape that Miss Zhang is the 13th victim. Ladies and gentlemen, the evidence is going to show that that's just false. It is not only false, there is no way

that it can be proven.

But the evidence is going to show at the time of this conversation on June 29th between Miss Bullis and Brendt Christensen, Brendt had been drinking heavily throughout the day. In fact, the tape-recorded conversation will reveal, you will hear, that Miss Bullis explained, "You have been drinking," and that she will admit when she testifies that she believed that he was intoxicated. In fact, during other portions of the taped-recorded conversation, you will hear her say to Brendt that Brendt is slurring his speech, and that she's having trouble understanding what he is saying.

So the evidence that you're going to hear during the trial of this case as to this conversation of June 29th, which the government has said in its opening statement is the linchpin about what Brendt did, how he did it; it will have to be resolved through your resolution of contested facts.

So it's very important at this stage of the case that you keep an open mind and you listen to all of the evidence, because the circumstances surrounding the statement of June 29th will be an issue that we will take issue with.

The evidence will also show with respect to

this statement about 12 other victims, that following Brendt's arrest on June 30, 2017, the FBI aggressively investigated Brendt's claim, launching a multi-state search for any evidence that could possibly link Brendt to any other unsolved crimes. Their agents will admit to you when they testify that as a result of all of this work over the past two years, they have not found one shred of evidence linking Brendt to any other case. Certainly nothing to corroborate or to support or to prove that there were any other victims of Brendt Christensen.

So you need to know who Brendt was and what he was going through in his state of mind on June 29th of 2017, and the nature of his relationship with Terra Bullis, and his personal history over the previous 18 months. He was in a downward spiral in his life. You need to know these things to help you decide whether you can believe some or all of that portion of the conversation Brendt had with Terra Bullis on June 29th.

Same goes for the tape-recorded counseling session that government counsel mentioned that Brendt had with counselors at the University of Illinois Counseling Center on March 21st of 2017. But what the evidence will show is that some ten

weeks before the faithful day of June 9th, Brendt Christensen visited the counseling service to talk to counselors about his alcohol and substance abuse issues.

The reason he did that is because two days earlier, as the evidence will show you, you will hear from Michelle Zortman, his former wife; she had given him an ultimatum; she said that she wanted a divorce; that Brendt's drinking was causing serious problems in their marriage and it was driving depression and sleep issues and other problems that Brendt had suffered through for much of his life. And that he was failing in his school, he was chronically depressed, sitting home watching -- playing video games and she had enough.

So Brendt decided two days after that, that he would go and get help for his drinking. You're going to see reports, an intake record. You're actually going to watch and hear a tape-recorded counseling session. And the reason this was tape-recorded is because the person who was conducting the interview Carin Molenaar was a doctoral intern at the University of Illinois counseling, so they tape-recorded this training. And you're going to watch the interview of Brendt

Christensen when he talks to the counselor in a clinical context about why he was there.

What you're going to see from that video, ladies and gentlemen, and hear in Brendt's own words, he told the doctoral intern that he was having trouble with alcohol; that it was ruining his life. You're going to hear him say how he was experiencing problems with mixing the alcohol with other medications. And you're going to hear them talk about experiencing thoughts, deeply intrusive thoughts, persist thoughts of harming himself and harming others.

So you're going to hear and see evidence about that Counseling Center interview, and that coupled with the tape-recorded conversation between Miss Bullis and Mr. Christensen on June 29th, will involve matters that we take great issue with, with respect to the government's representations made to you in its opening statement about his state of mind and what actually happened in this case.

Let me tell you what the evidence will show about Brendt Christensen and the events leading up to June 9th of 2017, that will come through the evidence in this case and the witnesses that you will hear.

As background, Brendt was born in 1989. So he was 28 years old in 2017. Born and raised in Stevens Point, Wisconsin; his father, Mike; his mother, Ellen; his older brother, Matt; his younger sister, Andrea. He graduated from high school in Stevens Point. Met his wife, Michelle, and married her in 2011.

In the spring of 2013, Brendt graduated from the University of Wisconsin Madison with a double major in both math and physics. He was admitted to the University of Illinois doctoral program following his graduation from the University of Wisconsin. U of I's program is considered, and you will hear, one of the most prestigious in the country.

The fall of 2013, Brendt and his wife, Michelle, moved from Madison, Wisconsin to Champaign-Urbana. They got an apartment in Champaign. Michelle went to work as a loan officer in a local bank. Brendt went to work as a doctoral candidate in the physics program, University of Illinois. And for three semesters in the doctoral program, Brendt Christensen did really well, but in his fourth semester, and thereafter, things began falling apart. His alcohol consumption increased.

Sleep issues arose. Depression problems surfaced. Problems that he has experienced from childhood which came at him unrelentingly in 2015 and 2016.

These problems that he was experiencing while studying for his doctoral program and handling all of the workload and classes and readings assigned began manifesting in his daily activities. His work suffered. He missed classes. His academic advisors began telling him that he needed to get counseling. Things were beginning to spiral. And then in the summer of 2016, he ceased work on his doctoral degree, switching instead to get a master's degree. From there everything went downhill. Indeed it hit rock bottom in the fall of 2016, when Brendt, this brilliant graduate student, who starts off strong and is making As during his first three semesters; in the fall of 2016, ladies and gentlemen, Brendt Christensen the doctoral candidate gets straight Fs in all of his classes.

By this time and into early 2017, Michelle, as she will tell you, became very unhappy in their marriage. Brendt's drinking was out of control. He was chronically depressed. His sleep issues rendered him dysfunctional. His grades were plummeting. His future was gravely uncertain.

Michelle began seeing somebody, a friend of hers at work, a guy named Ryan Vela. In March of 2017, Michelle tells Brendt that she wants a divorce. She will tell you that Brendt was devastated, because up to that point, the two of them were practically inseparable. They were each other's universe. They were all they had, Brendt in particular. They had no friends locally. They did not keep touch with childhood friends from Wisconsin. They were distant from their parents, and especially Brendt's father, his siblings. They had no one there in Champaign-Urbana but each other.

When Michelle tells Brendt in March of 2018 that she wants a divorce, two days later Brendt goes to the Counseling Center. He goes to the Counseling Center for help. He goes for help because of his alcohol and substance abuse. He goes for help and fills out an intake form at the Counseling Center on March 21st. And he's asked on the form, "Why are you coming here?" And you will see that form. It will be introduced in evidence.

Brendt Christensen indicates on that intake form: "Alcohol and drugs are ruining my life."

He also indicates on the form that he's having thoughts, thoughts of harming himself,

thoughts of harming others. So when he sits down with Carin Molenaar, the doctoral intern, during the tape-recorded interview at the counseling service, he tells her, and you're going to hear, that he can't stop drinking; that he is abusing alcohol with pain medications including Vicodin; that Michelle doesn't like his drinking, and, in fact, it is pushing her away from him. And that it cost her just two days earlier to tell him that she wants to leave. And the only reason they are going to stay together, the only basis, is that they can have this open relationship where they can see other people. Michelle as that point was getting very interested in a new boyfriend, Ryan, from work.

You are going to hear Brendt say in his own word what impact that had upon him. Michelle was the only person in his life at that time. And the counselor says that, "Yes, you're isolated here on campus and you're failing."

And that Brendt says, "I dropped out of the doctoral program preferring just to get my master's and he get on with life and get a job," which you're going to hear him say, you're going to hear him say to the counselor that for the first time in his life, he considered himself a total failure in

everything.

Then the intern -- you're going to see this and you're going to hear it from the tape -- the intern asks, "What about these questions about wanting to hurt yourself?"

Brendt says, "Yeah."

"What about, do you ever indicate" -- "You indicate on the form, have you ever had thoughts of hurting others?" She asked, "Are those only thoughts or plans?"

You hear Brendt say, "Well, I've made plans."

"How far along are those plans that you've had?"

"They are pretty far."

"Have you purchased anything for those plans?"

"Yeah."

"Have you considered specific persons?"

"Not really; but types of people, yes."

And then you hear the intern say, "Thank you for your candor." Thank you for sharing those matters with her.

And Brendt says, "Yeah, I know. I know how this makes me look. I want to get help. I'm not

that kind of person."

The counseling service made an appointment for Brendt to come back on March 30th. So nine days later, after acknowledging to a clinical intern at the Center that he was having persistent thoughts of harming others, he comes back to the Counseling Center, and this time meets with two licensed counselors.

And you're going to hear and see the records that he tells them the same thing. He tells them the same thing and more about these thoughts.

And as a result of what he told them on March 30, one of the counselors sent him an email on the university email system and it recommended that he contact a facility called Rosecrance in Champaign-Urbana. It's a local addiction treatment center. And that the addiction's treatment center Rosecrance had an array of services and that Brendt could go there and seek counseling as a form of one-stop shopping.

So Brendt left the counseling on March 30th with the recommendation of the counselling service that he go somewhere else to get help.

Before he can make any attempt to go look elsewhere, he meets Terra Bullis. Brendt had posted

on OK Cupid that he was interested in meeting other people because his wife, Michelle, was seeing Ryan, and he was desperate for some kind of companionship.

On April 2nd, Terra Bullis responds to his OK Cupid post by saying, "I don't want to sound like a creeper, but you look gorgeous." The two of them meet shortly thereafter. They discuss and within a week they have the beginnings of a relationship. The relationship wherein Terra Bullis introduces Brendt Christensen to BDSM, and takes him to places and sexual context that he had never been.

So in that mental state, he launches into a new relationship with Terra Bullis is based upon, as the evidence will show, and Miss Bullis will explain this is in large part role play. With parties with partners, consenting adults assume certain roles as dominant and submissive. And that their sexual relations are based upon those roles involving power and submission, and pain, and violence in a consensual adult sexual context.

So within weeks of this relationship between Brendt and Miss Bullis commencing, excessive drinking continues. And texts between him and Miss Bullis, that you're going to see, reveal that his depression, and his sense of hopelessness for

his life are worsening.

Indeed you will see one of those texts where Brendt describes in detail how everything is falling apart and he says just that: "My life is falling apart."

So the week of June 5th, Brendt learns that his wife, Michelle, is leaving for a weekend retreat with Ryan. He learns that they are going to, of all places, Wisconsin Dells for the weekend. And they are going to be staying at the very same resort that Brendt and Michelle spent their honeymoon in 2011.

So in the early morning hours, Friday June 9th, at about 2:00 a.m., Michelle leaves the apartment with Brendt present to go with Ryan to Wisconsin Dells. And shortly thereafter, Brendt gets a text from Terra Bullis that she's occupied with another man having sex and unavailable for him to talk with her. So Brendt is alone in the apartment. No one anywhere to turn to. And he hits ground zero. Rock bottom. Gets up. It is 7:30 in the morning. And you will see the surveillance pictures. He enters the Schnucks grocery store. Proceeds directly to the liquor department where he purchases the largest bottle of cheap rum and walks out the door as 7:45 a.m., the perfect storm has

converged.

Throughout the day, spends time drinking, driving around. At 2:00 that afternoon, he does the unthinkable. At the intersection of Clark and Goodwin, you will see the video of the black Astra pulling up. You will see Miss Zhang getting in. As I referenced earlier, Brendt takes her to his apartment where he kills her.

Within three days of Miss Zhang's disappearance, the FBI and local authorities are already making the case against Brendt Christensen. The video surfaces of the black Astra. The authorities then identify the registered owners. Information comes forward. And within five days of June 9th, the FBI had search warrants for Brendt's car and for his apartment.

With all of this that you will hear there is plenty of evidence to cause you to question what you can believe about what Brendt says on that tape-recorded conversation of June 29th because on that tape he says that there are 12 other victims. There is no evidence of this. It will show that the FBI has investigated this as thoroughly as they can over two years and they have found not one shred of evidence to link Brendt to any other crime or to

corroborate that false claim anywhere.

The statement Brendt made on that tape while drunk and slurring of his speech, Miss Bullis was wearing a wire, she was cooperating actively with the FBI. The evidence I believe will cause you to cast doubt on the truthfulness of many of the things that Brendt says on that tape as well.

This is a tragedy of immense proportions. In sum, you're going to hear information at this trial about Brendt's life's trajectory. About how his life was falling apart and disintegrating from 2015 to 2017, about his efforts of getting help for his drinking at the university's counseling center and his startling revelations to three professional counselors of his persistent and intrusive thoughts of harming others; and about his state of mind, his life's status when he made those recorded statements to Miss Bullis on June 29th. And with all that, you're going to have more comprehensive understanding of these tragic events, how this bright and promising and brilliant graduating student with no history of violence committed this horrible crime.

As the evidence in this case unfolds, ladies and gentlemen, please, please, be vigilant to your

oath as jurors; that you will listen and consider all of the evidence fairly and impartially while serving on this case. Keep your heart and your mind open to all that you're going to hear.

Thank you.

THE COURT: Thank you, Mr. Taseff. At this time why don't we take a 15 to 20 minute recess. We will get the courtroom ready for our first witness.

Okay. Thank you. Please do not discuss this matter with anybody including yourselves.

Thank you.

(Jury absent, 10:28 a.m.)

THE COURT: Counsel, just stay put for a moment.

Can I see counsel in chambers for a minute?

Thank you.

(In chambers, 10:32 a.m.)

[REDACTED]

MR. FRERES: Yes, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Anything to address before the jury is brought in?

Okay. Let's bring them in.

(Jury present, 7:52 a.m.)

THE COURT: In the audience when the jury comes in, you notice we are standing, you don't have to stand. We are standing as a courtesy to the process and to them.

Thank you.

(Jury present, 10:52 a.m.)

THE COURT: Okay. Thank you.

Please be seated. Okay.

First witness from the government please.

MR. FRERES: Ezzard Hoskins, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Sir, do you want come forward please. As you approach raise your right hand.

(Witness sworn.)

THE COURT: Have a seat. We will get you situated, and then Mr. Freres, whenever you're ready.

EZZARD HOSKINS,

after having been duly sworn, testified as follows:

DIRECT EXAMINATION

BY MR. FRERES:

Q. Good morning.

A. Good morning, sir.

Q. Will you please state your name and spell your last name for our record.

A. My name is Ezzard Charles Hoskins, Jr. My last name is Hoskins, H-o-s-k-i-n-s.

Q. How are you employed?

A. I am a police officer, University of Illinois Police Department.

Q. What is your current title?

A. In the Patrol Division.

Q. Can you describe your duties for us please?

A. Community policing, community relations, calls -- answering calls for service.

Q. How long have you been employed with what I'll call UIPD?

A. I have been with UIPD for 12 years now.

Q. Have you ever worked with any other law enforcement agencies?

A. No, I have not.

Q. Prior to working for UIPD what did you do?

A. I was an United States Marine Corps. I served four years on active duty, Operation Decisive Endeavor, Delivered Guard, and also served in

Illinois Army National Guard as a medic.

Q. And the operation referencing, was that in Bosnia, Albania in --

A. Bosnia, Albania conflict, '09.

Q. I'm going to direct your attention to June 9th of 2017, were you employed by the U of I Police Department at that time?

A. Yes.

Q. What were your duties -- scratch that.

Were your duties the same then as they are today?

A. They are, yeah.

Q. In other words, you were a police officer dealing with community policing?

A. Same thing.

Q. Were you working on June 9, 2017?

A. Yes.

Q. What shift were you working?

A. Second shift, which goes from 4:00 p.m. to 2:00 a.m.

Q. Now did something happen on the evening of June 9th that prompted you to begin an investigation?

A. Yes.

Q. And was that a meeting that you had?

A. Yes, Professor Guan and his colleagues that came to post U of I Police Department.

Q. And who is Professor Guan?

A. Professor Guan, he was reporting person regarding this particular incident.

Q. Is he a professor at the University of Illinois?

A. Yes, he is.

Q. Did he come to meet with you at the UIPD?

A. Yes, him from his colleagues.

Q. What he report to you?

A. He reported to me that Yingying Zhang, that she had been missing for several hours and that he was concerned about her whereabouts.

Q. Did he indicate that he had -- that Miss Zhang had been working him?

A. Yes, I indicated that.

Q. And did he give you any idea on where he thought she may be going?

A. He had relayed to me that there was a high probability that she may have went to One North apartment complex in Urbana, and apparently she was going there, I guess, to either see an apartment or to sign a lease or something to that effect.

Q. Did you get a phone number or any other ways of methods of contacting Miss Zhang from Professor

Guam?

A. Yes, he provided a name, also a phone number what-have-you, where she lived at.

Q. Roughly, how long would you say this meeting with Professor Guan last?

A. No more than, probably, no more, I would say, probably between 20, 30 minutes of that.

Q. After that meeting, did you attempt to gather any additional information about Yingying?

A. Yes, also went inside -- we have a telecommunication room, and I spoke to the telecommunicators and I got her information we gave it to them and then they also produced descriptors of her and gave me a photograph of her.

Q. What was that photograph from?

A. It comes from the I-card system. Any time we have students register and come to the U of I, whether faculty or staff or what-have-you. They get issued an identification card and it has a photograph of them.

Q. Were you able to obtain her I-card photo?

A. Yes.

Q. Now after meeting with Professor Guan did you begin to search for Yingying?

A. Yes, I did.

Q. Did you start on campus?

A. Yes, I did.

Q. Can you tell us a little bit about that?

A. Basically, I searched the main areas of -- basically, I started with looking at the Illini Union, went inside of that building. That is the flagship building of U of I campus. All of the times you have a lot of traffic come through there, so I started there. I took her picture with me. I went inside the building. Asked several people did they know her. Did they happen to see her. I walked down the hallways and looked around to see if she was inside the building.

Q. Did you check any other campus hot spots or anywhere else on campus?

A. Also went to a couple restaurants in the area CoCo Creme, Cafe Bene, and several of the restaurants. And I chose these specific areas because predominantly a lot of the Asian students, they go to these restaurants, they are very popular amongst Asian students.

Q. Does the University of Illinois have a very sizeable population of students from foreign countries?

A. Yes, it is very diverse.

Q. Now at some point after -- well, let me I guess ask one more question related to this.

When you were going to these restaurants what were you doing?

A. Of course, I had a picture. I would walk up to several people and say, have you seen this young lady, do you happen to know her, you know, just kind of canvassing the area.

Q. Did you find anything during those interactions on campus that helped your investigation?

A. No, I did not.

Q. After that, did you check any public transportation areas in Champaign-Urbana?

A. Yes, I went over to the Illinois bus terminal.

Q. And explain what is the Illinois terminal for us?

A. The Illinois bus terminal is the main transportation hub that is in the city of Champaign. It's off in the university. I have MTD, which is the Mass Transit District, but you also have Greyhound, Amtrak, Ubers, cabs, what-have-you. This is the main thoroughfare for traffic to go to and from throughout the city.

Q. And what did you do when you were at Illinois terminal?

A. I walked inside, spoke to staff, spoke to security guards, spoke to just general patrons in the area and asked have you seen them. Also tried to look at videotape that may be available, what-have you.

Q. Were you showing people the photo you had gotten of Yingying?

A. Yes, I was.

Q. Had anybody there seen or heard of her?

A. No, they did not.

Q. Did any of your video reviews show her on any of the video?

A. No.

Q. Now after the Illinois terminal, did you eventually go to the Orchard Downs apartments?

A. Yes, I did.

Q. What is the Orchard Down apartments?

A. The Orchard Downs apartments are a major apartment complex that is owned, operated, and maintained by the University of Illinois.

Q. Is it student housing?

A. It is student housing. Also you have UIC grades, just a diverse population, facility, staff, what-have-you.

Q. Did anybody know of Orchard Downs at the time?

A. Has it was relayed to me that Miss Zhang, Yingying Zhang, she stayed on Orchard Downs.

Q. When you went out here for the first time, tell us what you did on that first time you went to Orchard Downs?

A. When I went out the first time, I searched the area, basically driving around. If I saw someone on the sidewalk, I asked could you come over here and speak to me. I showed the photograph. I canvassed the area basically and then after I went to Miss Zhang's apartment.

Q. Had you learned the identity of her apartment from Professor Guan?

A. Yes.

MR. FRERES: Your Honor, may I approach the witness?

THE COURT: You may?

BY MR. FRERES:

Q. Before I do that -- did you enter the apartment this first time?

A. No, I did not.

Q. Did you leave anything before you left?

A. Prior to me leaving, I went up to the apartment, knocked on the door, and before I left, I left my business card.

Q. What was the purpose of doing that?

A. Just in case Miss Zhang she came back, she would have a point of contact, she could call me and notify me that she was okay or where her whereabouts were.

Q. Where did you leave the business card?

A. I left it up on -- by her front door. There was an area where I could place the card there and I left it there.

Q. I'm going to hand what you we've marked as Government's Exhibit 12-1 and 12-5, and I'm just going to ask you to take a look at those.

Do you recognize those photographs, Officer Hoskins?

A. Yes, I do.

Q. What are you looking at there?

A. A side view of the apartment complex where Miss Zhang stayed.

Q. Would that be the Orchard Downs apartments?

A. Yes, that would be Orchard Downs.

Q. And is that 12-1 that you are referring to?

A. 12-1, yes.

Q. 12-5, what are you looking at in that photograph?

A. I am looking at the car to the left, and also

I'm looking at the front door of Miss Zhang's apartment.

Q. Do those photographs fairly and accurately depict what you observed on June 9th?

A. Yes, they do.

MR. FRERES: Your Honor, I'm moving to admit 12-1 and 12-5.

MS. POLLOCK: No objection, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Admitted.

MR. FRERES: Can we publish these, Your Honor.

THE COURT: You may.

BY MR. FRERES:

Q. We have now got Government Exhibit 12-1 up on the screen. Can you see that, Officer Hoskins?

A. Yes.

Q. Explain to us where Miss Zhang's apartment is on this photograph?

A. As you go up to the stairwell, her apartment is directly to the right of top.

Q. So it's on the second story?

A. Second story.

Q. Is it at the top of the stairwell there?

A. At the top, yes.

Q. All right. Now we've got Government's

Exhibit 12-5 here. And tell us what we are looking at here Officer Hoskins.

A. You are looking at my business card.

Q. Would this have been what she left the first time that you went to Orchard Downs on June 9th?

A. Yes, it has my conduct information, my name.

Q. I believe you said that you testified that you knocked on the door and nobody answered; is that correct?

A. Nobody answered.

Q. And after first instance of Orchard Downs, did you travel to another apartment complex in Urbana?

A. Yes, I did.

Q. Where did you go?

A. I went to One North apartments in Urbana.

Q. Where is One North in relation to Orchard Downs?

A. At the intersection of Bradley and Lincoln. It sits on the northwest corner of the intersection.

Q. And where is Orchard Downs, is it straight south of One North?

A. Orchard Downs is southeast of One North. And it sits off of Orchard and Florida Avenue.

Q. Is it a significant distance between the two locations?

A. Yes.

Q. Now what did you do when you were at One North?

A. When I went into One North, I accessed, I went inside the facility and I went into the welcome center, which is pretty much like a complex. It has a swimming pool in it. It also has several of the areas where people can come inside the facility, and it also has a leasing office.

Q. What time did you go out there?

A. I went out there approximately, probably -- I'm trying to recall the exact time, but....

Q. Was it after dark?

A. It was dark. It was dark at the time.

Q. Was the leasing office open?

A. The leasing office was closed. There was no staff in the leasing office out there.

Q. Were you able to speak to anybody at One North?

A. I spoke to a couple that was there; I showed them the photo. I showed photos of Miss Zhang, no one knew of her. And then also spoke to a security guard that worked for security house.

Q. And had he -- did he offer you anything that assisted in your investigation?

A. No, he did not.

Q. Now at some point after -- still on June 9-- th did you return to Orchard Downs?

A. Yes, I did.

Q. Tell us about this instance.

A. I returned to Orchard Downs because I had received a call from -- he basically had call to post I, if what I believe, what I recall, called the Post I, Dr., Professor Guan, and I met him and his colleagues out at Orchard Downs. They were in front of Miss Zhang's apartment.

Q. This would have been after your meeting with them at the UIPD?

A. Yes.

Q. And once you were out at Orchard Downs, what, if anything, did you do?

A. I contacted housing staff, housing staff came out and they gave us access to Miss Zhang's apartment.

Q. Before you did that, did you knock or anything to see --

A. We knocked. We announced our presence just to make sure, and I noticed that the card was still there. And we asked staff, housing staff come out and they accessed the apartment for us.

Q. Did you go inside the apartment?

A. Me, and Officer Sanders, badge number 158, we went inside the apartment. Housing staff did not

come in the apartment with us. We went need only.

Q. Did Professor Guan or any of his colleagues go up?

A. No.

Q. Once you were inside the apartment, was it dark?

A. It was dark, yes.

Q. Did you go walk through all of the room of the apartment?

A. Yes, I did.

Q. Did you disturb anything while you were there?

A. No, we did not.

Q. Was there anything of note that you recall from the living room area of the apartment?

A. When I walked in the living room, came through the front door. There was an unassembled bicycle that was in the living room, and then there was a corridor. And off to the corridor, off to my side over here, there was a kitchen. Saw several items inside that, typical things, pots, pans, what-have-you, dishes. Went down the corridor. Off to the side, there was a bathroom. Typical every day bathroom. One particular thing that I do remember when I went in there, there was a trash can on the floor and inside that trash can there was an feminine pad, Tampon, what-have-you, and it was

soiled. Possibly indicating that Miss Zhang had been on menstrual cycle. I left out of there and went further and turned off to the right, and I went into her bedroom.

Q. Did you observe her bed?

A. Yeah, her bed was directly in front of me and the covers were slightly pulled back as if someone had slept in it at some point.

Q. Was there anything on dressers or counters inside the bedroom of note?

A. Yes, I turned over here to my side to the left, there was a dresser and on the dresser I saw some currency, some money.

Q. United States currency?

A. I can't recall exactly. I believe it was U.S. currency.

Q. And, again, I believe you testified to this already. Did you disturb anything while you were inside?

A. No, I did not.

Q. Did you find Yingying?

A. No, I did not.

Q. So, what did you and the other officer do at that point?

A. At that point, we cleared -- we made sure that

everything was intact and we left out -- we secured the residence.

Q. How would you characterize what you observed inside the apartment?

A. The apartment had a system of organization as if someone at the time currently was living there. And it looked as though they had probably planned to come back. It looked as though somebody had lived there.

Q. After that, you said you had gathered Yingying's phon number; is that correct?

A. Yes.

Q. Did you attempt to call that number at any point?

A. Yes, I called it several times throughout the today.

Q. Okay. What would happen when you called it?

A. It would ring. It would ring, and at some point it would go to voice mail.

Q. Did anybody ever answer?

A. No one every answered.

Q. As you were doing this, did you eventually ask to distribute Yingying's photo to anybody else?

A. Yes, I went inside the telecommunication office of our police department and I relayed her

information to them, and I requested that they disseminate what is called a message, MBC message and sent it to surrounding police departments with her information.

Q. Did you actually work a extended shift that night?

A. Yes, I did.

Q. Did it continue into the following morning?

A. Yes, that shift ran from 2:00 a.m. to 7:00 in the morning.

Q. Right before your shift, your extended shift ended 7:00 a.m. what eventually did you do?

A. I went back out to Orchard Downs to Miss Zhang's apartment. Of course I went back up there to see if she was there and knocked on the door. No one answered.

Q. Was the card still there?

A. The card was still there.

Q. And then after that did your shift end, did you go home to rest?

A. My shift ended and I went home.

Q. Did you return to duty later that evening on June 10th?

A. Yes.

Q. And what, if anything, did you do once you

returned to duty?

A. I came back on shift and then around about 5:30 I went back out to or Orchard Downs, and I had an officer accompany -- Officer Lewis, badge number 131, we went to Miss Zhang's apartment and we contacted housing staff, housing staff came out. They once again opened the apartment for us. They did not come in. We went inside. We did not disturb anything. We just looked throughout the apartment. It still was in the same condition as it was previously.

Q. Had anything changed?

A. Nothing changed.

Q. Did you find Miss Zhang?

A. No, we did not.

MR. FRERES: Your Honor, I have no further questions.

THE COURT: Cross-examination.

MS. POLLOCK: One moment, Your Honor.

No cross-examination.

THE COURT: Okay. You may step down, sir.
We will push that away.

Next witness.

MR. MILLER: The United States will call
Xiaolin Hou.

THE COURT: Sir, do you want to come forward please.

(Witness sworn.)

THE COURT: Thank you, sir.

Please have a seat. We will help you get situated.

Mr. Miller, whenever you're ready.

XIAOLIN HOU,

after having been duly sworn, testified as follows:

DIRECT EXAMINATION

BY MR. MILLER:

Q. Will you please tell the jurors your name and spell your name for the court reporter.

A. My name is Xiaolin Hou, X-i-a-o-l-i-n, H-o-u.

Q. And how old are you?

A. 30 years old.

Q. Where do you currently live?

A. Beijing, China.

Q. Were you born and raised in China?

A. Yes.

Q. What is your first language?

A. Chinese.

Q. You, obviously, speak and understand English as well?

A. Yes.

Q. When did you learn to speak English?

A. Primary school, about six years old.

Q. And will you please let us know if you don't understand the question?

A. Of course.

Q. Did you attend college?

A. Yes.

Q. Where did you attend college?

A. In Sun Yat-Sen University in Guangdong, China.

Q. And is that Sun Yat-Sen spelled S-u-n
Y-a-t-S-e-n?

A. Yes.

Q. And did you -- what year did you graduate from Sun Yat-Sen University?

A. 2013.

Q. Did you attend schooling after that?

A. Yes.

Q. Where did you go after that?

A. I went to Peking University for my doctorate degree.

Q. How many -- let me ask, you when did you get your doctorate from Peking University?

A. This summer.

Q. And what is your doctorate degree in what field?

A. Environmental engineering.

Q. Are you married?

A. No.

Q. Have you ever been married?

A. No.

Q. Was there a time that you were planning to be married?

A. Yes.

Q. And when was the time you were planning to be married?

A. I plan to get married with Yingying in October of 2017.

Q. I'm going to show you what has been marked as Government Exhibit 1A, 1B, 1C, and 1D.

A. Okay.

Q. First of all, do you recognize Government's Exhibit 1A?

A. Yeah. This is my girlfriend, Yingying.

MR. MILLER: And we ask to admit and publish Government's Exhibit 1A.

THE COURT: Any objection?

MS. BRAIN: No, Your Honor.

THE COURT: You may publish.

BY MR. MILLER:

Q. And do you know approximately when this photograph was taken?

A. Yes, it is about the summer of 2017.

Q. And if you could look at Government's Exhibit 1B.

A. Yeah.

Q. And do you recognize Government's Exhibit 1B?

A. Yes. This is Yingying.

Q. And I would ask to admit and publish Government's Exhibit 1B.

THE COURT: Any objection?

MS. BRAIN: No, Your Honor.

THE COURT: You may publish.

BY MR. MILLER:

Q. Can you describe for us what we see in Government's Exhibit 1B?

A. I see Yingying was at a supper with a friend in Beijing.

Q. That was before she came to the United States?

A. Yes.

Q. And if you could look at Government's Exhibit 1C.

Do you recognize that?

A. Yes.

Q. And what is Government's Exhibit 1C?

A. This Yingying.

MR. MILLER: Your Honor, we would ask and

admit Government's Exhibit 1.

THE COURT: Any objection?

MS. BRAIN: No, Your Honor.

THE COURT: It will be admitted.

BY MR. MILLER:

Q. Can you please describe for us -- first of all, down when they photograph was taken?

A. Yes. I took this photograph of Yingying just before she left China about March of 2017, yes.

Q. Where was this photograph taken?

A. Summer Palace in Beijing.

Q. Approximately, what year did you and Yingying first meet?

A. We meet in our first year of college, that is 2009, Sun Yat-Sen University.

Q. And what were you studying at that time?

A. Yes. We are in the same class. We share the same major, environment science.

Q. And physically, if you could tell us, how tall was Yingying?

A. 159 centimeters.

Q. And if I may is that approximately, if you know, is that approximately five foot three inches at all?

A. Yes.

Q. And if you know, what was her size; how much did

she weigh?

A. Size; small, I think.

Q. Now did you eventually begin a dating relationship with Yingying?

A. Yeah. I began to date with her during the first of the year, the end of the first year of college.

Q. Where was Yingying from originally before she came to college?

A. Fuijian Province in China.

Q. And what city in the Fuijian Province?

A. Nanping, Nanping city.

Q. Did you visit her at her home?

A. Yes.

Q. And did you meet her parents there?

A. Yes.

Q. And do you know her father's name?

A. Ronggao Zhang.

Q. Can you spell his name for the court reporter?

A. R-o-n-g-g-a-o, Z-h-a-n-g.

Q. Can you identify him in the courtroom here today?

A. I see the father is sitting there. Yes, in the front row, yes.

Q. Okay. And do you know Yingying's mother's name?

A. Lifeng Ye.

Q. Could you spell Li leave?

A. L-i-f-e-n-g, sorry. L-i-f-e-n-g, Y-e.

Q. And is she here in -- has she traveled here to the United States for this trial as well?

A. Yes.

Q. I'm going to show you -- if you could look at Government's Exhibit 1D.

Do you recognize that?

A. Yeah.

Q. And what is Government's Exhibit 1D?

THE COURT: Hold on one second. If you want to set them here for now.

A. Thank you. It is me and the family.

MR. MILLER: We would ask to admit and publish Government Exhibit 1D.

THE COURT: Any objection?

MS. BRAIN: No, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Admitted, and you may publish.

BY MR. MILLER:

Q. Can you then tell us approximately when this photograph was taken?

A. It is taken on the winter of 2013, I think.

Q. And where was this taken?

A. It is taken in the hometown the, Wuyi Mountains in Nanping.

Q. And I think you said this is you, and Yingying, and her parents?

A. Yes.

Q. Did you -- how would you describe the relationship between Yingying and her parents?

A. They have very good relationship. And they take care of each other. I think all of the family members are -- they are warm and nice and they live a very, very happy life.

Q. Does that include Yingying's younger brother as well?

A. Yes.

Q. Did -- since you went to graduate school, I assume you did as well at Sun Yat-Sen University?

A. Yes.

Q. Did Yingying do well -- also do well?

A. Yes.

Q. In fact, what were your class ranks when you were at Sun Yat-Sen University. I'm sorry, Sun Yat-Sen university?

A. Can you repeat that?

Q. Yes, I apologize. What were your class ranks when you graduated.

A. I'm the first one, and Yingying was the second one.

Q. And where did you continue your schooling after graduating from the university?

A. We both went to the Peking University.

Q. And did you both continue to date at that time?

A. Yeah, of course.

Q. And did you each continue to study the same subject matter?

A. Yes.

Q. And that's environmental engineering?

A. Yes.

Q. What year did you and Yingying graduate from Peking University?

A. She graduated a little earlier than me. She graduated in 2016, and I just graduated this year.

Q. Let me turn your attention to 2017.

A. Okay.

Q. Did Yingying leave China in 2017?

A. Yes.

Q. And so you had known Yingying approximately eight years by this time?

A. Yes.

Q. What was the status of your relationship when she left China?

A. What is the relation of both of us?

Q. Yes, what was your relationship with Yingying

when you left?

A. Boyfriend and girlfriend.

Q. Did you have any plans regarding your relationship at the time she left? I think you mentioned before in October you had some plans with Yingying.

A. Yes, that's right.

Q. What were those plans?

A. We planned to have an engagement and get married in October of 2017.

Q. And do you know what her professional plans were regarding your schooling when she came to the United States?

A. She planned to finish her PhD at UIC, and in the future she may return to China and become a professor at the university.

Q. When did she leave China?

A. In April 2017.

Q. And when did you last see her?

A. About 20 or 21 in April of 2017.

Q. Now when Yingying came to the United States, did she share bank accounts with a member of the family?

A. Yes.

Q. And could you please tell us about that?

A. She shared bank account with my father because

at that time she did not have a credit card to pay for daily life. So my father gave his card to Yingying and she bring that card here to the United States.

Q. Did you keep in touch with Yingying after she came to the United States?

A. Yes, almost every day.

Q. And how did you do that?

A. We keep in touch using the phone and also some kind of social medias.

Q. And what type of phone did she have?

A. iPhone.

Q. Was there -- was there some difficulty with the time differences between Champaign and Beijing?

A. Yes, of course.

Q. What is the time difference?

A. Thirteen hours.

Q. Was there a day that took place in June of 2017 when you couldn't reach Yingying?

A. Yeah, that is June 9th here and June 10th in Beijing.

Q. And how did you -- well, let me step back a little bit. Let me ask you about the day before, the last time you had contact with Yingying. How did you have contact with her?

A. I talked with her on the phone.

Q. Did you discuss with her her plans the next day?

A. Yes.

Q. And what, what were her plans for the next day?

A. She going to sign a lease for a new apartment.

Q. And did she discuss why she was looking for a new apartment?

A. Yes. She wanted to have a cheaper apartment to save some money, and she also wants some roommates together.

Q. Did she express any intent to you to go anywhere the next day besides to sign that new lease?

A. Can you repeat that?

Q. Did she -- did she suggest any other plans to you the next day besides going to sign that new lease?

A. Suggest other plans? What do you mean "other plans"?

Q. Did she say she was going to go somewhere else besides -- did she say she was going to leave the university?

A. No, no, no, of course not, yeah.

Q. Now after that conversation, did you ever speak with her again?

A. No.

Q. Let me turn your attention then to how did you first find out that Yingying was missing?

A. I was told by a colleagues here at the U of I and she told me they cannot get in touch with her. So she knew I feel shocked and terrible because I think Yingying is such a soulful girl and she never let others worry about her so in my point of view she face some difficulty.

Q. Did you attempt to reach her?

A. Of course, I call her phone again and again and also try to contact her friends, her colleagues, but nothing was found.

Q. Did you eventually come to the United States to look for her?

A. Yes.

Q. And when did you do that?

A. I came here with Lifeng and her father in June 2017.

Q. Had you been to the United States before that?

A. No.

Q. After you arrived in the United States, what did you do to look for her?

A. We do a lot of search. Actually, we were searching for her all the time when we are here in the United States, almost every week I think. We

searched the parks, the abandoned houses. We don't have a destination but we will never give up the hope to find her.

Q. I'm going to show what you has been previously marked as Government's Exhibit 4B. And do you recognize Government's Exhibit 4B?

A. Yes. This is Yingying on the bus.

MR. MILLER: And, Your Honor, we would ask permission to admit and publish Government's Exhibit 4B?

THE COURT: Any objection?

MS. BRAIN: None, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Be admitted.

BY MR. MILLER:

Q. This is a photograph of Yingying getting on the bus?

A. Yes.

Q. Twenty days after she was missing on June 29th, had you found her yet?

A. No.

Q. Was there an event held for her on the University of Illinois campus?

A. Yes.

Q. Can you describe that event for the members of the jury?

A. I remember that day was 29, June 29th, and on that day we have a walk to through to the bus stop where Yingying got into the car, and then we walk back to the Cranden Center to have a small concert there to get people's attention to help us to find her. About one or 200 people were there, I think.

Q. Now, have you had any contact with Yingying since June 8th?

A. No.

Q. Did -- did she use her or anyone use her account with your father's credit card since that date?

A. No.

Q. And have you continued to search for Yingying?

A. Of course, yeah.

Q. You have not found her yet?

A. Yes, yes, I never found her.

MR. MILLER: No further questions.

THE COURT: Cross-examination.

MS. BRAIN: No questions, Your Honor.

Thank you.

THE COURT: You may step down, sir. Let's help you out there.

Push that back. Thank you, sir. Slide at that back. Thank you.

How do you feel we are on time as it

pertains to your next witness?

MR. FRERES: Fifteen minutes, Your Honor.

Thank you.

THE COURT: Call your next witness.

MR. FRERES: Randy Fouts, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Sir, will you come forward please.

RANDY FOUTS,

after having been duly sworn, testified as follows:

DIRECT EXAMINATION

BY MR. FRERES:

Q. Morning, sir.

A. Morning.

Q. Will you please state your name and spell your last name for the our record?

A. Randy Fouts, F-o-u-t-s.

Q. Are you currently employed?

A. Yes.

Q. Where are you employed?

A. Champaign-Urbana, Mass Transit District.

Q. What is your currently title?

A. I'm the assistant operations director.

Q. Can you tell us a little about the Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District?

A. It's a public transportation transit system for

Champaign-Urbana and parts of Savoy.

Q. And what are your duties there?

A. My duties include everything within the operations department, scheduling, complaints, dealing with operators, schedules, vacations, that kind of thing. We look at video complaints from the public. We look at video from reports that the operators put in and handling insurance and claims and things like that.

Q. How long have you worked with -- what I'm going to call MTD?

A. I've been at MTD for nine years. I've been in this position for four.

Q. What else have you done with MTD?

A. I was driver for five years.

Q. A bus driver?

A. Yes.

Q. Does that make you pretty familiar with the routes that MTD services?

A. Very much so.

Q. Prior to working MTD, did you have any other employment?

A. I was -- I worked -- quite a bit of employment. I worked for in marketing for seven years. Prior to that, I was a police officer in Urbana for nine

years. And then I had little one-year stints with different companies, Prudential and Philips Lifeline. Was also an athletic director at a Judah Christian High School.

Q. Did you attend college?

A. Yes.

Q. Where did you go?

A. Taylor University in Upland, Indiana.

Q. And what did you study?

A. I studied mass communication.

Q. And did you obtain a degree?

A. Yes. I have a bachelor's degree.

Q. Now, you mentioned a little bit about what CUMTD is. What does MT primarily serve? What does it do? What is its function?

A. Our function is transportation for those who either cannot drive or don't wish to drive through the city, Champaign-Urbana. It's a district of Champaign-Urbana and parts of Savoy. We transport people for whatever needs they have.

Q. Is Savoy a city that's appended to the south end of Champaign?

A. It's a village on the south side.

Q. And does MTD service the University of Illinois campus?

A. Yes, we do.

Q. How many buses does MTD currently have?

A. Currently we have around 112 to 114. I'm not sure -- we just got some new ones in, I'm not sure how many we got.

Q. Are there set routes what the buses service?

A. Yes.

Q. Does each route contain multiple buses?

A. Yes.

Q. What is the purpose of that?

A. Frequency of stops, the routes can be as long as, technically, from one end to the other could be two hours going one direction. So we put several buses on there so that the frequency is cut down to -- majority of them are half hour on campus. It's more like 10 minutes, 10 15 minutes.

Q. Could the frequency with which the buses stop, does that change at various point during the year?

A. Yeah, we are contracted with the University of Illinois for when they are in session. So, we have several -- a lot more routes that are frequency in routes during the U of I times. When the U of I is not in session, we reduce our service.

Q. Does -- I believe you may have said this but does the MTD have different types of buses in vans?

A. We have vans which are 19 passenger vans. And then we have 30 foot buses. We have 40 foot buses which is the majority of our fleet, and then we also have 60 foot articulated busses.

Q. The big 60 foot busses do they have anything sort of distinctive in the middle?

A. The accordion thing in the middle because the bus actually bends in the middle as it turns corners.

Q. Now does CUMTD maintain video surveillance as part of its operations?

A. Yes, we do.

Q. What's the purpose of that?

A. The purpose -- there are several purposes. One purpose is for insurance, for claims. One is for liability, for safety, for -- also for investigating complaints or reports, and for insurance, that kind of thing.

Q. Where does your CUMTD maintain its cameras if at all?

A. The cameras are on the buses. We have cameras on the buses. We also have cameras in our kiosks, some off our kiosks and also in our facilities.

Q. Do all of the buses have cameras?

A. Yes.

Q. Can you describe like approximately how many cameras the buses each have?

A. The 30 or 40 foot busses have eight cameras each and the 60 foot busses have 15 cameras.

Q. Do the cameras show different angles?

A. Yes, they do.

Q. Do the bus stops also -- I think you mentioned this -- have cameras at the kiosks as well?

A. Some do, select areas have cameras in the kiosks, which will cover the immediate area of that kiosk.

Q. Does CUMTD use any specific software for its camera systems?

A. We have actually three different softwares that we use. The kiosks are used by -- it's a company called Milestone. The -- we are in the process now -- half of our fleet uses Apollo, and half of our fleet uses a company call Mobile View. We are in the process of switching over from Apollo to Mobile View, so it is a process.

Q. Sure. In June of 2017, were the buses using any software in particular?

A. Most of them were Apollo at that time. Every bus that is age 2016 or newer was installed with Mobile View but at that point in time, we had very

few of those.

Q. How was the video footage stored?

A. It's stored on a hard drive, DVR, within the bus itself. And so in order to view it, we -- with the Apollo system, we have to actually physically remove the hard drives out of the bus.

Q. At some point in time does the system override?

A. Yes, it has -- depending on how long -- how much time the bus is out it will override. It can give us anywhere from a week and a half to two weeks.

Again, that would be the 60 foot buses, not quite that much because, there is so many more cameras so it overrides quicker.

Q. Did -- you also mentioned the other software system. Are those stored on hard drives as well?

A. They are -- well, the mobile -- I'm sorry -- the Milestone 16, which is our kiosks and our facilities are stored on a server within our facilities. The Mobile View is stored on a hard drive; however, it's also accessible through Wi-Fi.

Q. Whether we are talking about Apollo or Milestone or Mobile View does CUMTD have any way to manipulate or alter the video system?

A. None whatsoever. Each one has -- they may be a little bit different but they are very similar

proprietary safeguards against that. We have no equipment that would be able to do that but even if we did, according to what everybody has told us within the companies that we are using this from, if we were to try and override it or do anything with it, it would become unusable.

Q. Now do you -- do you -- does CUMTD frequently work with law enforcement whenever there may be a complaint or something on the bus?

A. Quite frequently, yes.

Q. As part of that can that involve retrieving video footage from buses and kiosks?

A. Yes.

Q. Directing your attention to June of 2017, did CUMTD provide various bus and kiosk footage to FBI and UIPD law enforcement agents?

A. Yes.

MR. FRERES: Your Honor, may I approach the witness?

THE COURT: You may.

BY MR. FRERES:

Q. Sir, I'm going to happened you what we have marked as Government's Exhibit 4A, which is, I believe is four disks in there. Prior to your testimony today, have you had an opportunity to look

at the contents of that exhibit?

A. Yes.

Q. And does that contain CUMTD bus and kiosk footage that would have been stored on your servers and hard drives?

A. Yes.

Q. And has it been manipulated altered in any way?

A. No, it cannot be from what I know.

MR. FRERES: Your Honor, I move to admit 4A?

THE COURT: Any objection?

MS. BRAIN: No, Your Honor.

THE COURT: It will be admitted.

BY MR. FRERES:

Q. Staci, can you bring up 4A-1 please.

We are going to put up on the screen here Government's 4A-1.

Can you see that, sir?

A. Yes.

Q. Tell us -- it look like if my math is correct, 15 cameras?

A. Yes.

Q. Tell us what we are looking at here.

A. This would be the camera footage from one of our 60 foot buses, particularly from bus number 112.

Q. When you say bus 112, do you know that because

of the number in the box?

A. It shows the bus number and the camera number up in the top left-hand corner.

Q. Do all of these cameras sort of operate in conjunction at one time if the video were playing?

A. Yes, they would all be at the same time.

Q. And how would you -- if you wanted to look at any individual one individual camera with your system, how does it work?

A. If you click on one camera, it will become full screen and at that point it would also, the audio would also engage.

Q. Give us just a brief overview of what we're looking at with each of the angles here?

A. Camera one is the front camera coming through the windshield of the bus. It's placed right down on the dash, or, actually, it's based off of camera two; it's actually secured to the top part of the windshield facing straight out.

Camera two is the one behind the -- the equipment box which is directly behind the driver which shows us the view of the front door, parts of the driver, and then various things right in front of the front portion of the bus.

Camera three is a video from the front door

area and it shows back toward the rear of the bus, the front part of the compartment.

Front four shows up the front -- the articulated buses have three doors. This would be the middle door's section that you see in camera four.

Q. I'm going to pause you right there. When you are saying cameras one, two, three, four, are those the four straight across the top?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. What about the second row there?

A. Camera five is showing -- it's a mid section of the bus. The silver part in the middle would be a the hub where the bus rotates. And it is facing toward the back.

Camera six is right next to camera five except that it is facing the other direction and it is going toward the front of the bus; you can see the driver in the windshield portion of that.

Camera seven is covering the rear part of the bus. The doors that are in that frame are the rear doors. And in the back area.

Camera eight is a closer up view of that, it's right next to the doors. It's also showing the back portion.

Then camera nine is just the portion above the steps, which is the very back of the bus behind the rear door.

Camera ten is from the back of the bus moving toward the front or showing the rear doors toward the front of the bus.

Then camera 11 is an external camera. It is -- it is on the front right above the door. The front door, and it shoots down the side of the bus.

Camera 12 is another one of the external rear cameras. It is -- I believe it's right close to the doors shooting down the side of the bus.

Camera 13 is shooting the rear doors from the side as well that -- all from the curb side.

And camera 14 and camera 15 are both external cameras on the driver side shooting down the side of the camera. One -- camera 14 is more toward the front; camera 15 is more toward the back.

Q. And would this -- thank you for that explanation.

Would this picture here would that be on the Apollo software?

A. Yes, that is Apollo.

Q. Is there ever a time where the Apollo timestamps could be off a little bit?

A. We have been using the Apollo software for many, many years and it is -- some of the DVRs have been pulled multiple times and at times one might get pulled inappropriately by a supervisor which might adjust the timestamp. We found that a few of the Apollo software or Apollo DVRs, the timestamp may be off by one our hour, and it will an hour ahead, for example, if it were actually 5:00, it might show the time of 6:00.

MR. FRERES: May I approach, again, Your Honor.

BY MR. FRERES:

Q. Now Mr. Fouts, you also indicated that you drove for CUMTD for a while?

A. Correct.

Q. Are you familiar with the bus routes?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. I'm going to hand you what I have marked as Government's Exhibit 2C and ask you to take a look at that.

A. Yes.

Q. Do you recognize that?

A. Yes.

Q. Tell us about what you're looking at there.

A. This is actually a -- showing two of our routes,

the Teal and the 22 Illini Limited. And it is also showing us -- what it is showing us where the route normally goes where it is scheduled to go, and it is also because of that time frame it is construction so it is showing you the reroute that we were taking at that very time.

Q. In that fair and accurate depictions for those two bus routes in June of 2017?

A. Yes, it is.

Q. As well as today?

A. Yes -- well, we are not doing the reroutes today, but, yes.

Q. Correct. Thank you.

MR. FRERES: Your Honor, I move to admit Government's Exhibit 2C.

THE COURT: Any objection?

MS. BRAIN: No, Your Honor.

THE COURT: It will be admitted.

BY MR. FRERES:

Q. All right. We have Exhibit 2C up on the screen here. And it look like there is purple and an orangish-red line; do you see those, Mr. Fouts?

A. Yes.

Q. Is there a key up at the tope there on the upper left corner there about which line is which?

A. Yes, the purple is Teal and the orange is 22 Illini Limited.

Q. Given your familiarity with MTD, if I were to give you two locations in Champaign, would you be able to tell me the optimal bus routes to get to that location?

A. Yes.

Q. Are you familiar with the Orchard Downs apartments in Champaign?

A. Yes, I am.

Q. Is that student housing?

A. That is student housing on the southeast part of campus.

Q. And are you also familiar with the One North apartment complex?

A. Yes, I am.

Q. Is that also primarily student housing?

A. It's a mix. It's student housing -- a lot of students do live there, yes, but it is private housing. And it is up on North Lincoln, just north of Bradley in Urbana.

Q. If somebody were to ask you, how would I get from Orchard Downs to One North would you tell them any particular lines to take?

A. Probably the quickest route to go, the most

efficient would be to take the Teal from Orchard Downs to campus, at this time during -- it would be the Illini Union, although that was closed at that time, but then catch the 22 Illini Limited north to the One North apartments.

Q. Now I'm going to direct your attention going back to June of 2017. Was there a little bit construction going back on campus?

A. Yes. Queen Street was completely closed which included the U of I Union.

Q. Did that prompt the MTD to alter the bus routes?

A. Correct. Instead of going down Green Street, the Teal, which was going westbound, would have proceeded straight north on Goodwin to Springfield, and then turn west on Springfield to right straight to regular route. The Illini Limited, the Illini Limited would have gone straight north on Wright Street to Springfield, and then east to Goodwin and then regular route.

MR. FRERES: Okay. Can we zoom back out for a second, Staci.

Your Honor, does he have the capability to do the screen touching?

THE COURT: Yes.

BY MR. FRERES:

Q. Sir, I'm going to ask you, if you can, that screen you should be able to touch and circle things. Can you circle where the Orchard Downs apartments are on this map?

A. This area right here is Orchard Downs.

Q. And then how about the One North apartment?

A. One North is right here.

Q. And so is the purple line there, the Teal line that will take someone to campus?

A. Yes.

Q. And is the reddish-orange line, the 22 Limited, that would take someone from campus to --

A. Yes.

THE COURT: Mr. Freres, I think at the point you would like that screen shot and saved.

MR. FRERES: Can we do that, Your Honor, and make this 2C-1.

THE COURT: Is it done.

MR. FRERES: Yes.

THE COURT: Very good.

MR. FRERES: I don't have any further questions of this witness, Your Honor. Thank you.

THE COURT: Cross-examination.

MS. BRAIN: No, Your Honor. Thank you.

THE COURT: Okay. You may step down, sir.

Okay. I think this would be a good time to break for lunch. We have witnesses available after lunch, correct? Should we resume about 1:20. It is 10 to 12:00 now.

MR. MILLER: That will be fine, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Resume about 1:20. Please do not discuss this matter with anybody including yourselves.

I think that we have made it so that your cell phones can be available to you over the noon hour so that you can catch up with work, family, but please do not use them as I instructed you to not do your own research, investigate, watch anything about this case or read anything about the case. As well, you are welcome to stay in the jury room. There is a vending downstairs. You are welcome to leave the building. If you are in the building, I just caution you that other people are in the building and if they are discussing the case, please do your best to maybe move away from that or not pay attention to it.

If it's raining and for some reason you don't have umbrellas, I don't think the vending area downstairs has sandwiches available, if you didn't

bring your lunch, but we will see what we can do on that going forward, but I can't help you today.

Okay. So be in recess until 1:20 at this point. Thank you.

(Jury absent, 11:53 a.m.)

THE COURT: Anything? We will be in recess.

(A recess was taken, 11:54 a.m.)
