

Court Notes Program



What we're covering

- Goals and structure of notetaking program
- Step by step
 - Getting ready
 - Notetaking
 - Sharing notes
- Tips and Tricks
- Background on this hearing

Goals and structure

Intended audience

- Defendants and attorneys
 - It's hard for them to know what happened in court. The more info, the better!
- Media and social media people
- Campaigns and strategy
 - Important to have a sense of what's happening in court
- Supporters of defendants

**DFW SUPPORT
COMMITTEE**

1. Your Name

2. Email

Overall Structure

- Share your contact info (email and signal username or phone number) via form
- Sign up for shifts (2 morning, 2 afternoon, 2 transcribers)
- Notetakers send notes to coordinating email, which sends to transcribers
- Notes and transcriptions shared with team



How will it happen?

- We are looking for handwritten notes that are neat and as close to verbatim as possible
- Notetakers scan using a phone app like GeniusScan and send to coordinating email
- Transcribers transcribe the notes and send back to coordinating email.



Step by step
instructions



Before you show up

- Get the best grip on the case you can
 - Legal proceedings can be confusing. The more prepared you are the better
- Make sure you have supplies for the day of, know how to get to the courthouse, how parking and security work, etc.
- Make sure you have a working scanner app
- Check your email the evening before, and
 - Confirm that you'll make it
 - Review and maybe print the update abbreviations sheet
 - Make sure court is still happening



Showing up to court

- Bring multiple writing utensils and things to write on – legal pads work great (it's like this is what they're made for!)
- You (likely) won't be able to use electronics in the courtroom or even bring phones into the courthouse
- Don't bring contraband!
- Try to find other notetakers and supporters – it builds community and you can check for key points you might have missed later!

Taking notes (more on this later)

- Take notes the whole time, to the extent possible
- The more you capture the more info everyone else will have to work with
- Be sure to :
 - **UNDERLINE** decisions and dates
 - *****Star***** juicy quotes (Try to get them word for word!)

After Court

- If possible, connect with friendly people
 - Make sure you share an understanding of what happened,
 - Did the judge make rulings? What were they? Will the judge make a ruling later?
 - When are the parties next expected in court?
 - If defense counsel is friendly and can help you understand, that's great!
- If any of these key points are confusing to you and the defense attorney isn't available, you can try asking the court clerk.

Summary Email

- While still in court or immediately after, send an email with
 - Your scanned notes (using an app like GeniusScan)
 - Decisions/rulings (made in court or promised for later)
 - Juicy quotes
 - Any reflections or incidents
- Better to just send notes if you can't compose the email in a timely manner

Tips and Tricks



Preliminary hearings

- Preliminary hearings can be more challenging for notetaking than trials
- Instead of presenting information to laypeople, lawyers are mostly talking to one another
- It's often a continuation of a conversation that's been happening in motions
- You can focus on the judge
- Also, state court can be more challenging than federal – sometimes attorneys are given less of a chance to argue their motions, so it's harder to understand what's happening

‘As close to verbatim as possible’?

- Insight for attorneys
 - Writing down words that don’t make sense is useful – might make sense to other people using the notes. Case names and other legal terms may fly back and forth
 - Especially useful
- Direct exams can be very scripted, officers may answer precisely
- Let everyone know how the state is thinking about the case
- Not inadvertently making assumptions
- Seeing allegations ahead of time helps attorneys and media people prepare

Efficiency and Readability

- Abbreviations are key! We're hoping to send out a cheat sheet with terms that will come up repeatedly, like the charges
- In a single defendant case, it's useful to use
 - π for the prosecution
 - Δ (delta) for the defendant/defense attorney
 - J for the judge
- Add periodic timestamps every half hour or so to line up notes and help people stay oriented
- If you use your own abbreviations, add a key to your notes and we can update the cheatsheet

Court Decorum

- Wear something decent – business casual or clean jeans and shirt
- Situational awareness
 - Media, surveillance, harassment
- Don't talk to jurors
 - especially not about the case
 - keep any incidental interaction e.g. dropped pen minimal

'This specific
hearing

Key info

- Date: Jan 8
- Trial Date: Jan 12
- Defense attorneys are Frank Sellers, Dustin Hoffman, and McCall Hoops
- Defendant Dario Sanchez
- Judge Bosworth
- Charges:
 - Hindering the prosecution of terrorism
 - Tampering with or fabricating physical evidence
- At least two motions will be argued

413TH DISTRICT COURT
JOHNSON COUNTY, TEXAS
By: Barbara Calfee

STATE OF TEXAS
V.
DARIO EMMANUEL SANCHEZ
CASE NO. DC-F202500792

MOTION TO QUASH/DISMISS INDICTMENT

TO THE HONORABLE JUDGE BOSWORTH:

Now comes Dario Emmanuel Sanchez, Defendant, and moves this Court to quash and dismiss the indictment, and in support thereof would show the Court the following:

I.

Count One states that Defendant:

with intent to hinder the arrest or prosecution of John Thomas or Benjamin Song, for an offense under Section 76.02 or 76.03 of the Texas Penal Code, provide or aid in providing John Thomas or

Motion to dismiss the indictment

- **No notice**
 - Notice is important for a criminal proceeding. This indictment doesn't specify if the crime is a felony or misdemeanor (The district court has exclusive jurisdiction on felony cases, cases involving title to land, and election contest cases.)
 - The statute is internally referential
 - The indictment has to say *on the face of it* what it's charging
- **No Jurisdiction**
 - If it could be a misdemeanor the judge has no jurisdiction (different court would)
- **No *physical* evidence tampered with**
 - Chat logs are noncorporeal

Second Motion to Compel State to Comply with its Discovery Obligations

- Defendant has filed 5 requests for discovery
- State has only provided 104 pages of pdf – no digital media or anything
- “Prayer”
 - Either compel the court to provide discovery and if they don’t exclude it at trial
 - Or hold them in contempt

Key Links

- Contact form
- Shift Signup
- Motions for Sanchez Case
- Abbreviations list