simo

מאת: ronald lowy [dowyesq@hotmail.com] ושלה: 22:55 2003 נשלח:

אל: info@411ws.com

נושא: Fwd: Transcript: USA vs. Simo Elbaz-3503

>Subject: Transcript: USA vs. Simo Elbaz-3503 >Date: Wed, 10 Sep 2003 16:46:46 EDT

>

> > >

> > >

>

> > >

> >

> >

> >

> > >

> > > >

> > > >

>

> > > >

> > > > >

> > >

>

> > >

REPORTED BY:

JERALD M. MEYERS, RPR-CM

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA MIAMI DIVISION

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

Case No. 03-20139-Cr-MARRA

Plaintiff,

MIAMI, FLORIDA MARCH 5, 2003

SIMO ELBAZ, et al.,

vs.

Defendants.

TRANSCRIPT OF INITIAL APPEARANCE & BOND HEARING BEFORE THE HONORABLE STEPHEN T. BROWN, UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE

APPEARANCES:

FOR THE GOVERNMENT:

BY: RICHARD BOSCOVICH, A.U.S.A. United States Attorney's Office 99 N.E. 4th Street

Miami, FL 33132

FOR THE DEFENDANT:

PETER RABEN, ESQ. 200 S. Biscayne Blvd. Miami, FL 33131 Mi FL 33128-7797 - 305/374-8108

```
1 Anything you say can and may be used against you in a court
   2 of law, but you each have the right to remain silent at all
>
   3 proceedings, including this one.
>
               Each of you has the right to an attorney if you
   5 wish one, but if you cannot afford one, the Court will
>
>
   6 appoint one for you, but you each have the right to your
   7 own attorney at all proceedings, including this one.
               When you appear in front of me individually, I
>
  9 will ask you if you understood these rights, as I have just
>10 explained them. If you have any questions or there is
>11 anything that you don't understand, we will deal with it at
>12 that time.
              In addition, you may have a right to have a bond
>13
>14 hearing. You may have a right to be released on bond.
              Finally, when you appear in front of me, I will
>15
>16 see to it that you are informed of the charges that have
>17 been made against you.
              Now, we are not dealing today with the question
>18
>19 of your quilt or innocence regarding those charges. My
>20 only purpose is to make sure that you understand what it is
>21 that the government has charged you with.
>22
              Now, Mr. Elbaz?
>23
              THE DEFENDANT: Yes, Your Honor.
>24
              THE COURT: Did you understand your right to
>25 remain silent as I just explained it?
```

>

```
THE DEFENDANT: Yes, I do.
              THE COURT: Do you understand your right to an
   3 attorney as I just explained it?
>
>
              THE DEFENDANT: Yes.
>
>
              THE COURT: You are charged with a conspiracy to
>
  6 commit wire fraud. Do you understand that?
>
              THE DEFENDANT: Yes, Your Honor.
>
              THE COURT: Mr. Raben. Okay. Mr. Raben, you are
> 9 filing a temporary appearance?
>10
             MR. RABEN: Yes, I am.
             THE COURT: Government, bond recommendation,
>11
>12 please.
             MR. BOSCOVICH: Yes, Your Honor. At this point
>13
>14 the United States spoke to defense counsel. We are
>15 changing our recommendation to a higher corporate surety
>16 bond.
             We would like that the defendant's current wife,
>17
>18 which I understand is an attorney, a member of the Florida
>19 Bar, and has refiled some paperwork with the I.N.S. because
>20 they are remarried and he is upping his I.N.S. paper work,
>21 that she, in fact, put that under oath that, in fact, she
>22 is married to the defendant and she, in fact, has filed for
>23 his permanent residency because of their marriage.
             If she is able to do that, we recommend a
>24
>25 $250,000 corporate surety bond with a Nebbia condition,
>
>
```

```
1 Your Honor.
              MR. RABEN: Your Honor, we would agree with the
  3 government. We spoke to Mr. Boscovich and we showed him a
  4 document entitled "permanent resident" or address status.
>
              Mr. Boscovich agreed that the government would
   6 not ask for the 10 days hold to inquire from the I.N.S. his
  7 status if his wife is an American citizen, and is also an
>
  8 attorney would swear under oath, under penalty of perjury
  9 and risk losing her Bar card, as to whether he is here
>10 legally or not. We have no objection to that inquiry.
             THE COURT: Okay. Before we get to that, what is
>11
>12 the defendant's position as it regards the bond, the
>13 $250,000 corporate surety bond with a Nebbia? Are you
>14 going to want a bond hearing?
             MR. RABEN: I am, yes, Your Honor. We are
>15
>16 prepared to proceed or wait until the end of calendar;
>17 whatever the Court would like.
             THE COURT: Okay. We will deal with the swearing
>18
>19 part after we get to the bond hearing part, if you catch my
>20 drift.
             MR. RABEN: Yes, Your Honor.
>21
             THE COURT: Okay. I am going to come back to
>22
>23 this on the bond hearing.
             MR. RABEN: Thank you.
>24
>25
                 [There was a short recess].
```

```
THE COURT: Let's go back to Mr. Raben.
               THE CLERK: The middle of page 4, the United
  3 States of America versus Simo Elbaz, case number 03-20139-
>
  4 Criminal-Marra.
>
               THE COURT: Let me see if I can find that
  6 Pretrial Services report. I have got it. All right. The
  7 government has requested a $250,000 corporate surety bond
>
  8 with a Nebbia condition. Government, go ahead and proceed,
  9 please.
             MR. BOSCOVICH: Yes, Your Honor. The defendant
>10
>11 is charged in every single count, Mr. Elbaz, of the
>12 indictment.
>13
              We consider him to be the lead defendant in the
>14 case. This, as you well know, Your Honor, involves the
>15 interstate transportation of household goods; consumer
>16 goods.
>17
              In essence, what the case entails is they were
>18 given, that is, the consumers were given an artificially
>19 low estimate on the Web site or one of several Web sites
>20 owned or operated by the defendant.
>21
             Once the estimate was given and the consumer
>22 would sign up or sign the contract or agree for the actual
>23 transportation of the household goods, one of the
>24 defendant's companies or one of the companies under his
>25 control, a truck would appear at the residence and would
>
```

```
1 then proceed to load the consumer's goods onto the truck.
               Generally, the modus operandi of the conspiracy
>
   3 is as follows:
              After the goods had been loaded onto the truck,
   5 the foreperson of the truck or the foreman of the truck
  6 would then advise the person, that is the consumer, that
  7 there their household belongings occupied were more cubic
  8 feet than had been originally estimated, and based on that
  9 and several other excuses, such as packing or packaging
>10 material would at times double, triple or if not quadruple
>11 the price of the move.
>12
             Effectively at that point many consumers would
>13 obviously complain. At times they requested that their
>14 goods be taken off the truck immediately. They were denied
>15 that.
>16
             This defendant, using aliases, was actually put on
>17 the phone to speak to the consumers on some occasions, and
>18 at that point they would literally tell the consumers one of
>19 several scenarios.
             One was, "We will discuss the price later," and
>20
>21 drive away with their goods and/or they would go ahead and
>22 have them sign a blank bill of lading and they will discuss
>23 the discrepancy later or simply drive away with the goods,
>24 effectively extorting the consumers at a later date, that if
>25 they did not pay the inflated price claimed by the company
```

>

```
>
    1 owned or controlled by this defendant, they would never see
    2 their goods again.
. >
             In essence, in a nutshell, Your, Honor that is the
    4 essence of the conspiracy. Our position is that he is the
 >
   5 lead defendant in the case, owning the companies that is the
 > 6 moving companies and/or controlling the on other moving
 > 7 companies under which his Web cite operated, Your Honor.
                THE COURT: Okay. That's all good and well. Is
    9 there anything further about risk of flight or anything
 >10 like that having to do with this bond?
              MR. BOSCOVICH: Oh, yes, Your Honor. Originally
  >11
  >12 the United States requested or was going to request
  >13 pretrial detention.
               We reviewed the A-File; that is, the Immigration
  >14
  >15 & Naturalization service file on this particular
  >16 individual.
                Upon reviewing this file, I noted that he is an
  >17
  >18 Israeli national, not a U.S. national and came into the
  >19 United States and tried to change his status to become a
  >20 permanent resident based on marriage.
                We determined that the marriage was based on a
  >21
  >22 person of Cuban extraction in the United States, and he
  >23 filed that petition with the I.N.S., I believe it was on --
  >24 one second, Judge. I have it written out.
                I believe the petition was on 10-16-2002. It has
   >25
```

```
1 now come to our attention, Your Honor, that upon the arrest
>
   2 of this defendant, he was, in fact, not living with the
>
   3 woman who had claimed marriage on the I.N.S. papers and,
>
   4 therefore, which had supported the basis of his temporary
   5 status here in the United States and was rather he now
   6 claims he is married to another U.S. citizen, and at this
>
   7 point is when I spoke to counsel for the defendant, and he
>
>
   8 told me that this new woman is, in fact, his current legal
>
   9 wife.
              She is a U.S. resident that supposedly has
>10
>11 divorced the previous Cuban wife which he had based his
>12 previous request, and he has refiled for a permanent
>13 residency status based on this new marriage, and that's
>14 where we left talking, Your Honor, before we were put
>15 towards the end of the calendar.
              THE COURT: Okay. Anything further from the
>16
>17 government?
>18
              MR. BOSCOVICH: Nothing further from the United
>19 States other than, Your Honor, he does have extensive ties
>20 in Israel. He travels extensively to Israel. In fact, in
>21 his A-file I noted that during the pendency of his first
>22 application, he requested authorization to come and go to
>23 Israel on several occasions.
              On one occasion he stated that it was to see his
>24
>25 relatives and/or family business, and he stays at times up
>
>
```

```
•10 ...
  1 to 3 weeks in Israel, which is a rather extensive amount of
  2 time, given the frequency of his travel. That's all,
  3 Judge.
>
               THE COURT: Thank you. Mr. Raben.
              MR. RABEN: If the Court please, on behalf of
  6 Mr. Elbaz, first, can I ask that his wife come forward?
  7 The marshals have asked for security reasons that she stay
   8 back.
>
               THE COURT: Sure.
>
              MR. RABEN: Your Honor, my client is charged in
>10
>11 every count because the government has alleged in their
>12 predicate acts that he was the owner of the business, and
>13 many of the allegations are based upon the aider and
 >14 abettor principle.
              Second, this rendition by Mr. Boscovich was
 >15
 >16 accurate, but it was a little misleading. Mr. Elbaz had
 >17 been married to a Cuban woman who was a permanent resident.
              He applied to be a permanent resident. He was
 >18
 >19 divorced from her, so he abandoned that application.
               Subsequently, he married Niomi Zimmerman, and I
 >20
 >21 have for the Court a certificate of marriage that I asked
 >22 Ms. Zimmerman to bring today, and I will show Mr. Boscovich
 >23 so that the marriage is in existence, and I have
 >24 Ms. Zimmerman's passport.
               Ms. Zimmerman not only is his wife, but she is
 >25
```

```
1 also his I.N.S. attorney. Ms. Zimmerman is an attorney.
   2 She has been for 5 years, and she's house counsel. She has
   3 worked for Progressive Insurance for the last 8 to 9 years.
               She is here both to elucidate to the Court
>
   5 anything the Court would like, and also to satisfy the
  6 government's concern about his alien status. That is, I
  7 produced to the government a form I-485 which is a
  8 permanent resident or adjustment status form, being
  9 divorced from the Cuban woman.
>10
              Marrying Ms. Zimmerman, who is also a U.S.
>11 citizen, he filed an updated request for permanent resident
>12 status, and that is pending I.N.S. determination.
              Notwithstanding the existence of this ongoing
>13
>14 investigation, you know, it is a double-edged sword.
>15
              Flight, yes, Mr. Elbaz did fly back and forth
>16 overseas to Israel over the last 6 months. While the
>17 government says that he has ties to Israel, first of all,
>18 he is married to an American citizen and owns a home here.
              Second, notwithstanding that he knew the ongoing
>19
>20 nature of this investigation, every time he returned from
>21 Israel and, in fact, I showed the government that my client
>22 had to fill out requests to I.N.S. to allow him to travel
>23 and to be able to come back to the United States, because
>24 if you are no legal here, when you leave you are barred
>25 re-entry.
```

```
>
>
  1
              Mr. Elbaz filed legitimate requests so that he
  2 was able to leave and come back. So I point out to the
  3 Court that, notwithstanding the fact that he knew this
  4 investigation was ongoing, he left to Israel and came back,
  5 and this is over 3 times.
>
              Ms. Zimmerman is here. She is married to my
>
  7 client. They are a home owner, and as set forth in the
  8 Pretrial Services report, they own the home that has about
  9 $80,000.
>
             She has a salary of approximately $70,000. I
>10
>11 have her 1040's here indicating her income.
             What I am suggesting to the Court is a $250,000
>12
>13 corporate bond is rather onerous for this individual.
             Mr. Elbaz is self-employed. He is no longer
>14
>15 affiliated with any of the companies set forth in the
>16 indictment. I think he has about $500 in a bank account
>17 which is set forth in the forfeiture allegation.
            However, he and his wife have a joint bank
>18
>19 account, as most married couples which has about $4,000 in
>20 it.
           What I am asking is a significant personal surety
>21
>22 bond which can be co-signed by Niomi Zimmerman. And as the
>23 Court is aware, she has stable income and she is able to
>24 earn a substantial amount of money; however, not enough to
>25 cover the premium unanimous on a $250,000 bond.
```

```
13
              I would also ask this Court to consider, in
>
  2 conjunction with that, either a moderate 10 percent bond or
>
  3 small corporate surety bond if this court feels as though a
>
   4 corporate surety might be necessary to assure the
>
   5 whereabouts of Mr. Elbaz.
>
              So I appreciate the government's willingness to
>
  7 even taken our proffer regarding the legitimacy of the
  8 client so that they are not asking for a 10 day hold or
  9 pretrial detention.
              Nevertheless, I think $250,000 is rather onerous
>10
>11 under, one, the facts of this case. We are not talking
>12 about any guns, drugs or violence and, 2, where he is
>13 married to an officer of the court who is going to sign in
>14 any amount this court determines is appropriate. Thank
>15 you.
              THE COURT: Who owns the home? I am asking you,
 >16
 >17 Mr. Raben.
              MR. RABEN: I understand the wife does.
 >18
              THE COURT: Okay. Let's have Ms. Zimmerman step
 >19
 >20 over to the microphone, please.
             MR. RABEN: Here.
 >21
              THE COURT: The microphone.
 >22
               THE CLERK: Raise your right hand.
 >23
 >24 (Whereupon the witness was duly sworn by the Clerk of the
 >25 Court)
```

```
THE CLERK: Please state your full name, for the
  2 record, and spell your last name.
              THE WITNESS: Niomi Ann Zimmerman,
  4 Z-i-m-m-e-r-m-a-n shit.
              THE COURT: I am not going to inquire into the
  6 immigration status. If you want to ask any questions, that
  7 is fine, Mr. Boscovich.
             MR. BOSCOVICH: May I, Your Honor?
  9
             THE COURT: Go ahead.
             MR. BOSCOVICH: Thank you.
>10
>11
                       CROSS EXAMINATION
>12 BY MR. BOSCOVICH:
>13 Q. Ms. Zimmerman, now, you have been married to Simo Elbaz
>14 since January 29th of 2003; is that correct?
        February 8th. January 29th is the day that we applied
>15 A.
>16 for the license.
>17 Q. Okay. So since February of this year?
>18 A. Yes.
>19 Q. Now, do you currently reside with him full time?
>20 A. Yes.
>21 Q. And how long have you known the defendant?
>22 A. About a year.
>23 Q. Now, you are also his immigration lawyer. And did you
>24 file papers to change his status here in the United States?
>25 A. Yes.
```

```
> 1 Q.
         And did you review any divorce documents or documents
> 2 that he had been previously married and divorced?
  3 A. Yes.
        And those papers and divorce is, in fact, final?
  4 Q.
  5 A.
        Yes.
  6 Q. And in terms of his residence, how long have you two
  7 been actively living together?
  8 A.
         A couple months. A few months.
  9 Q.
       So even for a period of time before you were actually
>10 married, correct?
>11 A.
        Yes.
>12 Q.
       And are you a member of the Florida Bar?
>13 A. Yes, I am.
       And are you a member in good standing at this point?
>14 Q.
       Yes, I am.
>15 A.
>16 Q. And how long have you been a member of the Bar?
>17 A. Since early 1999.
>18 Q. And you understand that all of the information given
>19 here today is under oath; is that correct?
>20 A. Yes. Yes.
             MR. BOSCOVICH: No further questions from the
>21
>22 United States.
             THE COURT: Okay. Ma'am, do you own the home?
>23
             THE WITNESS: Yes, I do, Your Honor.
>24
>25
             THE COURT: When did you buy it, approximately,
```

```
THE WITNESS: 2 years ago.
               THE COURT: Okay. What is it approximate fair
> 3 market value?
              THE WITNESS: About $200,000.
               THE COURT: Is there an outstanding mortgage on
  6 it?
>
              THE WITNESS: Yes, for about $130,000.
  7
               THE COURT: Okay. How much was put on it as a
> 9 down payment?
             THE WITNESS: About $10,000.
>10
             THE COURT: Okay. How did the equity go up so
>11
>12 much in 2 or 3 years?
             THE WITNESS: Property values. I have an
>13
>14 appraisal.
>15
             MR. RABEN: Your Honor, I have an appraisal and a
>16 mortgage if you would like to see it.
             THE COURT: No, no. Okay. I am not doubting
>17
>18 anybody, at least not yet. I am asking questions. Okay.
>19 You, ma'am, are not a defendant before this court.
             THE WITNESS: No, I am not.
>20
             THE COURT: Okay. That was not a question. That
>21
>22 was a statement. The Court has no jurisdiction over you.
>23 If I allow this defendant to be released on some sort of a
>24 bond and I allow you to sign on this bond, will you agree
>25 that you will not sell or further encumber the home pending
```

```
> 1 the outcome of these proceedings?
              THE WITNESS: Yes, I do.
              THE COURT: Okay. I have no other questions for
  4 Ms. Zimmerman. Do you, Mr. Boscovich?
              MR. BOSCOVICH: Just one quick question.
  6 Ms. Zimmerman, who actually provided the monies for the
  7 down payment of the house?
               THE WITNESS: It was my own money.
               THE COURT: Was it your own money?
>
>
              THE WITNESS: Yes.
>10
              THE COURT: Incidentally, in terms of maintenance
>11
>12 of the house and the cost of living and expenses, who
>13 primarily supports the home? Is it a shared venture, or is
>14 it primarily you or is it primarily Mr. Elbaz?
              THE WITNESS: Primarily it is me.
 >15
              MR. BOSCOVICH: Primarily it is you?
 >16
              THE WITNESS: Yes.
 >17
              MR. BOSCOVICH: No further questions from the
 >18
 >19 United States.
               THE COURT: Thank you, ma'am. You may step back.
 >20
               Mr. Raben, I have now established something about
 >21
 >22 some money in a back account and some equity in a home.
               Do you have anything else that you wish this
 >23
 >24 Court to consider in terms of items that may reasonably
 >25 assure the defendant's appearance here?
```

```
MR. RABEN: No, Your Honor. I believe that the
   1
   2 government would not recommend a bond if they believed he
   3 was a risk of flight.
>
               I know Pretrial Services has recommended curfew
>
>
   5 and electronic monitoring. The Court has a vast amount of
>
   6 experience in that area and, obviously, the defendant would
  7 agree to any conditions of release that the court deemed
  8 appropriate sufficient to assure his appearance. So we
  9 rely on the Court's judgment.
             THE COURT: All right. I have heard the argument
>10
>11 of counsel and the evidence before this Court.
>12
             As ties, well, without making a comment on the
>13 state of marriage in today's world, this is a new marriage,
>14 and as marital ties go and ties go in general, this is not
>15 as stable, obviously, as a long-term marriage, or anything
>16 like that, and this defendant does have significant ties
>17 outside of the United States.
             I, therefore, at least in principle, agree with
>18
>19 the government that a corporate surety bond is necessary to
>20 reasonably assure the defendant's appearance.
             The charges against this defendant are serious,
>21
>22 but I am not going to set a $250,000 incorporate bond.
>23 What I am going to set is a $50,000 corporate surety bond
>24 with a Nebbia condition.
             I am also going to set a $100,000 personal surety
>25
```

```
1 bond to be co-signed by the defendant's wife. The
  2 additional conditions of bond will be as follows:
              The defendant is to surrender travel documents if
  4 he has any. Travel is restricted to the Southern District
  5 of Florida. He is to report to Pretrial Services as
  6 directed.
>
              He is to maintain a 9 p.m. to 6 a.m. curfew, to
>
>
  8 be electronically monitored at defendant's expense. Any
  9 other conditions the government wishes this Court to
>10 consider?
>11
             MR. BOSCOVICH: Well, yes, Your Honor, that he
>12 not engage in any interstate transportation of consumer
>13 goods; that is, the moving industry, Judge.
>14
             THE COURT: Okay. Fair enough. Stay away from
>15 the moving industry. Anything else, Mr. Boscovich?
             MR. BOSCOVICH: That's enough, Judge.
>16
             THE COURT: Okay. Mr. Raben, how much time do
>17
>18 you need on report re: counsel please, sir?
>19
             MR. RABEN: A week, Your Honor.
             THE COURT: Any objection, government?
>20
             MR. BOSCOVICH: I am sorry, Judge. I apologize.
>21
>22 I missed that. I was talking to Pretrial Services.
             THE COURT: Mr. Raben wants a whole week on
>23
>24 report re: counsel.
             MR. BOSCOVICH: That's fine with the United
>25
>
```

```
20
  1 States, Judge.
>
>
               THE COURT: Okay. The report re: counsel will be
>
  3 Tuesday, March 11, 2003 at 10:00 a.m; arraignment, the same
>
   4 date, same time.
>
               MR. RABEN: Your Honor, could I move it to a day
   6 before or a day after?
>
               THE COURT: Sure. The day before I don't have to
>
>
  8 ask the government. A day after I do. What will it be?
>
>
               MR. RABEN: Monday is fine.
>
              THE COURT: Okay. Then we will change that to
>10
>11 report re: counsel and the arraignment will be Monday March
>12 10, 2003 at 10:00 a.m.
>13
              MR. RABEN: The matter of the Nebbia, does Your
>14 Honor want, pursuant to your practice, that I address this
>15 with the government because we are talking about $7,500.
              My client's wife has a stock fund which is
>16
>17 significantly higher than that which she would utilize to
>18 pay for the corporate surety. And if you would like to
>19 hear testimony and evidence from that, we are prepared to
>20 do that right now.
              THE COURT: What you are going to do is you are
>21
>22 going to go through the Nebbia with Mr. Boscovich. He may
>23 need some time. I don't know, but I am not going to take
>24 up the time right now.
              MR. RABEN: I understand.
>25
>
```

```
. 21, .
>
>
               THE COURT: If we can resolve it today and I can
  2 accommodate you, I will, but if I can't I won't. So if you
  3 all are still here at the end of the calendar, I will say
>
  4 why.
               MR. RABEN: All right.
  5
  6
               THE COURT: Okay.
>
  7
               MR. RABEN: Thank you.
>
>
              (Whereupon the proceedings were concluded)
  8
>
>
   9
>
>10
>11
>
>12
>13
>14
>15
>
>16
>
>17
>18
>19
>20
>21
>22
>23
>24
>25
```

```
-22
>
>
                         CERTIFICATE
>
   1
>
            I hereby certify that the foregoing is an accurate
>
>
   3 transcription of proceedings in the above-entitled matter.
>
>
   4
>
>
>
        DATE
                            JERALD M. MEYERS, RPR-CM
                            Miami, FL 33128-7797
>
   6
>
   7
>
>
   в
>
>
   9
>
>10
>
>11
>12
>13
>
>14
>
>15
>
>16
>17
>
>18
>19
>20
>21
>22
>23
>24
>25
>
>
```

Fast, faster, fastest: Upgrade to Cable or DSL today! https://broadband.msn.com