UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
MIDDLE DISTRICT OF FLORIDA
ORLANDO DIVISION

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

v. CASE NO. 6:22-cr-00201-AGM-LHP

JOSHUA EDWARDS

JOINT STATUS REPORT

The United States of America, by Gregory W. Kehoe, United States Attorney for the Middle District of Florida, and counsel for the defendant, Andrew Searle, Esq. and Corey Cohen, Esq., jointly file this status report in response to the Court's order dated November 26, 2025 (Doc. 314):

1. ***Case Status:*** On December 7, 2022, a grand jury returned a six-count indictment against two defendants, Evan Edwards and Joshua Edwards. Joshua Edwards is the only remaining defendant.[1] The pending charges against Joshua Edwards include the following: conspiracy to commit bank fraud, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1349 (Count One); bank fraud, in violation of 18 U.S.C. §§ 1344 and 2 (Count Two); false statement to a lending institution, in violation of 18 U.S.C. §§ 1014 and 2 (Count Three); and visa fraud, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1546(a) (Count Six). The defendant's initial appearance commenced on December 14, 2022, at which time the defendant was ordered detained pending trial. Docs. 9, 21, 263, 267, 270. Competency proceedings were ongoing from December 14, 2022 through

[1] The charges against Evan Edwards were dismissed. Doc. 254.

March 31, 2025, the date on which the U.S. District Court found that the defendant had been restored to competency. Doc. 251. After Joshua Edwards was found competent to proceed to trial, status conferences were held on April 8, 2025, May 13, 2025, and September 11, 2025. Doc. 257, 275, 304. The case is presently set for the January 2026 trial term. Doc. 308.

Defense counsel further reports the following: Throughout the proceedings, defense counsel has had significant and consistent difficulties substantively communicating with Mr. Edwards. On numerous occasions, Mr. Edwards has refused to meet with defense counsel. On those occasions where Mr. Edwards has met with defense counsel, he has, for the most part, been unable or unwilling to communicate in any meaningful way.

Based on the foregoing challenges, defense counsel Andrew C. Searle, Esq. has had to file multiple motions to withdraw, which, this Court has denied. Docs. 146, 150-151, 252, 258, 264, 280, 285-286. Most recently, on July 17, 2025, the Court appointed Corey Cohen, Esq. ("Mr. Cohen") as co-counsel in this case, pursuant to the Criminal Justice Act, 18 U.S.C. § 3006A. Doc. 286. In doing so, the Court found that "given the issues involved and the procedural posture of this case, that this is an extremely difficult case, and that the interests of justice require the appointment of co-counsel to assist Defendant throughout the remainder of this litigation." *Id.* Unfortunately, since Mr. Cohen's appointment, Mr. Edwards has continued to present difficulties with regard to his ability to communicate with counsel. *See* Doc. 288.

On August 25, 2025, the Court held a hearing and denied Mr. Edwards's most recent motion seeking another competency evaluation. Docs. 296, 298.

2. ***Possibility of Plea:*** The government offered a plea agreement to Joshua Edwards, which he has not accepted. On October 29, 2025, defense counsel met with Mr. Edwards in an attempt to review the government's plea offer, however, defense counsel were unable to meaningfully review or discuss the plea agreement with the defendant. Based on the foregoing, defense counsel does not believe the defendant is capable of knowingly and voluntarily pleading guilty.

3. ***Number of Trial Days:*** The parties anticipate 5 days would be required for trial. The parties respectfully request a trial date certain beginning on or after January 26, 2026, or a date in February 2026.

4. ***Pending Motions:*** There are no pending motions.

5. ***Speedy Trial:*** From the date of the commencement of the initial appearance in this case (December 14, 2022) through the date on which Joshua Edwards was found by the U.S. District Court to be competent to proceed (March 31, 2025); and the time from April 8, 2025 through January 31, 2026 is "excludable time" under 18 U.S.C. § 3161(h). Thus, seven days of speedy trial have run (the time between March 31, 2025 and April 8, 2025). As such, there are 63 days left on the speedy trial clock.

WHEREFORE, the parties respectfully request a trial date in this matter commencing no earlier than January 26, 2026 and accompanying deadlines for

pretrial motions as well as for filing proposed jury instructions, voir dire questions, and a verdict form.

Respectfully submitted,

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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that on December 16, 2025, I electronically filed the foregoing with the Clerk of the Court by using the CM/ECF system which will send a notice of electronic filing to the following:

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