

United States v. Brendt Christensen
Case No. 17-20037

Exhibit 112 TR-2

Transcribed Testimony of Kaiyun Zhao on October 23, 2018

Agent: AUSA Eugene Miller
INT 1: Interpreter 1
INT 2: Interpreter 2
ZHAO: Kaiyun Zhao

Agent: *Um, please tell us your name.*

INT 1: Please tell us your name.

ZHAO: ZHAO Kaiyun.

[BREAK IN AUDIO]

Agent: *How old are you?*

INT 1: Um, how old are you?

ZHAO: Twenty eight years old.

[BREAK IN AUDIO]

Agent: *Um, do you recall when your first met Yingying ZHANG?*

INT 1: Do you recall when you first met ZHANG Yingying?

ZHAO: Mm, it should be when we first started graduate school in September 2013, the fall semester. We met at the new student orientation at Peking University Shenzhen Graduate School, which was in Shenzhen. Because our dorms were next to each other--I don't remember exactly where we first met, either in our dorm or our classroom building--we decided to check out the campus together. We had normal interaction, just like classmates.

[BREAK IN AUDIO]

Agent: *And, uh, did you become friends with Yingying?*

INT 1: Did you become friends at the time?

ZHAO: Mm, yes. We were very good friends.

[BREAK IN AUDIO]

Agent: *Uh, Did, um, did Yingying talk about, uh, like her family while she was growing up?*

INT 1: Did ZHANG Yingying talk about her family, her life while growing up?

ZHAO: Uh, she talked about it in our casual conversation. In my recollection, she mentioned she had a younger brother and she was very kind to her younger brother. Her younger brother is a few year her junior and Yingying would--As a graduate student, she received money from stipend and scholarship--save up the money and use it to buy gifts for her younger brother. Um, she brought her brother shoes. On her desk in the dorm was a picture of her with family: her parents, her younger brother, and herself. She called her parents every week. Uh, she once told us if she went home, she would visit her grandma and her grandma would cook her lots of delicious food. She sometimes brought the food to school to share with us.

[BREAK IN AUDIO]

Agent: *Uh, how did [pause, female whispering], how did Yingying feel about her family?*

INT 1: How did ZHANG Yingying feel about her family? How do you think she felt?

ZHAO: I think ZHANG Yingying certainly loved her family very much. After graduation, she went to Beijing, studied, and worked at the Chinese Academy of Sciences for some time. Uh, at the time, we rarely saw each other. She was in Beijing and I was in Shanghai. We just chatted within our group via WeChat. She mentioned she had saved some money to buy some appliances for her family to improve their quality of life. She bought them a microwave and a refrigerator. She also said she wanted to study in the US. She said she wasn't ready but she would try her best. She would stay in Beijing for another year to work for a scholarship. To put it simply, she was a person who really cared for her family. She knew her family is not rich. She wanted to fulfill her dream of studying abroad with her own effort, not to burden her parents.

[BREAK IN AUDIO]

Agent: *How do you describe Yingying's personality?*

INT 1: How do you describe ZHANG Yingying's personality?

ZHAO: Hmm, her personality . . . Like I just said, she really liked to smile. She was a very personable person. I remember when school just started, I would--There were dozens of new students who didn't know each other--observe quietly. Yingying would come over and initiate a chat with you. She was very good at connecting with other people. I remember we were going to have a party for new students. She was very active in organizing performances from different classes and took the lead to offer ideas for the party. As for her studies, uh . . . She also enjoyed good food because her undergraduate study--

INT 2: [OV] What did she enjoy?

ZHAO: Good food.

INT 2: Oh, good food. The food you eat.

ZHAO: Oh, right, good food. Because she did her undergraduate study in Guangzhou, where it is famous for its food. Uh, she would cook some light food in the dorm and shared with us. I mean, she was very generous. She was an optimistic person. Oh, one more thing. I think she--How do I put? She ran regularly when she was in school. And she was very disciplined with her studies. She was someone who knew what she wanted and would work hard for it.

[BREAK IN AUDIO]

Agent: *And um, can you describe some of the ways that she demonstrated her friendship to you.*

INT 1: Can you describe some of the things that can demonstrate your friendship?

ZHAO: Hmm, I remember in the third year of graduate school, right before graduation--In order to get our degree, we must meet one requirement: we must publish a paper. Uh, at the time, I, because of my major, I needed to do experiment, but my experiment was not going well. I was under a lot of stress; I was very worried that I couldn't graduate and get my degree. She took the initiative to help me with my analysis. She didn't just comfort me verbally, but also came to look at my experiment. She did well academically, good at research. She offered to check my experiment and identified issues. She gave me ideas on how to write a paper to showcase innovative ideas. She was a great help to me in this aspect. I am really grateful to Yingying.

[BREAK IN AUDIO]

Agent: *What types of activities did you and Yingying like to do together?*

INT 1: When you and ZHANG Yingying were together, what were the things you two did together?

ZHAO: Mm, we, during the first year of graduate school, we went to many classes together. We took those common core classes together. Later in the second year, we started our respective research projects. We rarely had same classes anymore, but we sometimes went to the library together. Also, after working in the lab, we would have lunch or supper together. Uh, in the evening, since we lived in the same dorm, we talked, shared with each other what happened during the day and our thoughts on certain things. Um, also, on weekends, we went to different places in Shenzhen together. We went to many interesting places. One time, we went to a place in Shenzhen called Window of the World. They had *Color Run* [PH], an activity in which people pad colored powder onto their bodies and run into other people so that everybody was covered in powder of many colors. We went to this activity together. We also went to, like, Shenzhen Flower Park, where people buy flowers. Anyways, we together did many things girls like to do. At the time, besides Yingying and I, there was also ZHANG Xiao. ZHANG Xiao was also in Shenzhen then. The three of us had a very

close relationship. It went on until graduation. We didn't want to part company with each other. We took lots of pictures together, but that didn't satisfy us. We even took studio photos for keepsake. After graduation, we couldn't see each other often, but we often chatted through WeChat, quite a few times a week.

[BREAK IN AUDIO]

Agent: *Did, uh, Yingying do well in graduate school?*

INT 1: Did ZHANG Yingying do well in graduate school?

ZHAO: She did really well academically. We had a total of 27 or 28 students in our class. I can't be certain now, but she definitely was in the top ten percent.

[BREAK IN AUDIO]

Agent: *Can you tell us about her singing?*

INT 1: Can you tell us about her singing?

ZHAO: Um, about her singing, two stories. First, she competed at our, the Ten Best Singers contest when we were studying in Shenzhen, and she finished, uh . . . How did she finish? Anyway, there were a few dozen contenders and she was in top ten, not top three. She didn't finish top three, but top ten. And her stage performance was quite dazzling. Since I don't have a talent in this area, I really admire her. Um, the second story is she started a band. The band was--The area where our school is located is called College Park. Besides Peking University, there is also Tsinghua [University], HUT, Harbin University of Technology, graduate schools from these three universities. Each graduate school had a band and they would organize concerts and shows. Yingying's band performed once and Yingying was the lead singer. I remember she bought a dress for the performance and we even helped her alter her dress in the dorm so it will *bling bling*, more bright and shiny. We sewed shiny pieces onto the dress. On stage, she was a sweet little girl with great energy, which was in sharp contrast to her rigorousness in real life. I mean her talents are multi-faceted, as well as her personality.

[BREAK IN AUDIO]

Agent: *How did she, uh, feel about studying in the United States?*

INT 1: How did she feel about studying abroad? What were her thoughts?

ZHAO: Hmm, did you mean--

INT 1: [OV] Her feelings.

ZHAO: Her feelings, Okay. After she went to the US, since it was a totally new environment, she had some adjusting to do. She would communicate with us through WeChat and she would share with us, for example, how she looked for housing. What a coincidence. The number of her first apartment in the US is also 2013, same as the

room number of our dorm in Peking University. She took a picture of it and sent me the picture. And [she shared with us] her everyday life, for example, her lab. She also took pictures of her working in the lab and sent us the pictures. I think she had many expectations for the new environment. She left China in such a hurry. She planned to take a trip to China in September, September of 2017, and we were going to take the opportunity to catch up with each other.

[BREAK IN AUDIO]

Agent: *What, uh, what difficulties, or obstacles did Yingying face and overcome to study in the United States?*

INT 1: What difficulties, challenges, or obstacles did she face to study in the United States?

ZHAO: Hmm, her biggest challenge, I think, must be finance. I mean her family could only give her very little support. She didn't want her parents--What her parents could offer was limited, yet she wanted to fulfill her dream, so she had to count on herself.

[BREAK IN AUDIO]

Agent: *Uh, did, uh, Yingying share with you her hopes and dreams, um, for the future?*

INT 1: Did ZHANG Yingying share with you her hopes and plans for the future?

ZHAO: When we were graduating, we talked about this a lot. Um, Yingying, she did say she would return to China after she finished her education. She would then get married, marry HOU Xiaolin, and continue her carrier in science research. That's about it. She had hoped to improve the life of her family with her own efforts.

[BREAK IN AUDIO]

Agent: *How did you react when you found out she was missing?*

INT 1: How did you react when you found out she was missing?

ZHAO: It was a weekend. I got up a bit late that morning. I saw the news around nine o'clock. My first reaction to the news was like that I was hit by a bolt of lightning. I couldn't fathom why something like that could happen. Then, I thought, maybe her cell phone battery died, maybe she got lost given that she just arrived in the US and she still didn't know the place well and she didn't have a car. But, based on what we know about her, she would surely find a way--If her cell phone battery died, she certainly would borrow someone's phone to tell us she was safe or return to her residence or school as soon as possible. She definitely would figure out a way to resolve any issues. She was a very reliable person. She wouldn't play senseless disappearance or make others worry. This I do know about her. She wouldn't play hoax. We felt that she must have run into some difficulty. Who would have thought it was such as heart wrenching incident?

[BREAK IN AUDIO]

Agent: *How has, um, Yingying's loss impacted you personally?*

INT 1: How has ZHANG Yingying's loss impacted you personally?

ZHAO: Hmm . . . [sobbing.] *Sorry.* After this happened, we really wanted the media in China to follow it. Somebody started a forum on Weibo. Later on, [pause] the Central China Television's [CCTV] "First Response" or something, anyway it was CCTV that reported the news. I was in complete denial at the beginning. After China's official news media had reported the incident, I realized this really happened. There was also a special report about safety of students studying in the US. I usually fill that I don't have much to do with what is showing on CCTV, but now the person dearest to me was showing on the screen. It was so hard to believe. I just felt so heartbroken. After that, for quite a while, I often dreamed of our times together in school. [sobbing]

[BREAK IN AUDIO]

ZHAO: Think about this. Even an outside person, a classmate was hurting so badly, so heart broken. How would her family, her parents bear all this?

INT 2: [clearing throat]

ZHAO: As things stand, they still haven't found . . . It is really torment to her parents every day that goes by.

[BREAK IN AUDIO]

Agent: *And you have any photographs of Yingying on your phone here you could show?*

INT 1; Do you have any photographs of ZHANG Yingying on your phone here that you can show to camera?

ZHAO: Yes.

[BREAK IN AUDIO]

ZHAO: Okay. This photo shows the four of us who are members of our WeChat group that I talked about, four close classmates. We took this photo at the gate of Shenzhen Flower Park that I told you earlier.

[BREAK IN AUDIO]

ZHAO: And, this one, this one doesn't show any surroundings. This is a selfie, taken when we went sightseeing in Guilin together. We were in a small boat on the Lijiang River. That's why we were wearing lifejackets.

[BREAK IN AUDIO]

ZHAO: This was also taken on the Lijiang River.

[BREAK IN AUDIO]

ZHAO: This is a photo of my class at the commencement ceremony held at Qiu Deba Stadium in Beijing.

[BREAK IN AUDIO]

[END OF RECORDING]