

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE SEVENTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
IN AND FOR BROWARD COUNTY, FLORIDA

Administrative Order No. 2022-8-Gen

**RULES GOVERNING MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND MEDIA
DURING COURT PROCEEDINGS IN *STATE V. NIKOLAS JACOB CRUZ***

(a) Pursuant to Article V, section 2(d) of the Florida Constitution, and section 43.26, Florida Statutes, the chief judge of each judicial circuit is charged with the authority and the power to do everything necessary to promote the prompt and efficient administration of justice.

(b) Florida Rule of General Practice and Judicial Administration 2.215(b)(3) states the chief judge “shall, considering available resources, ensure the efficient and proper administration of all courts within [this] circuit.”

(c) Special interest and/or high visibility proceedings require procedures and special accommodations to ensure full access to the proceedings by the public and media without compromising the right of any litigant to a fair and orderly trial.

(d) Seventeenth Judicial Circuit Administrative Order 2018-14-Crim designates *State of Florida v. Nikolas Jacob Cruz*, Case No. 18-001958CF10A, a high-profile case.

(e) In accordance with the authority vested in the Chief Judge pursuant to Article V, section 2(d) of the Florida Constitution, section 43.26, Florida Statutes and Florida Rule of General Practice and Judicial Administration 2.215, it is hereby **ORDERED** as follows:

(1) **General Provisions**

- a. Courtroom 17150 on the 17th floor of the West Tower of the Broward County Main Judicial Complex will be used for this trial. Not everyone who wishes to be present during the proceedings may be accommodated in the courtroom. There are a limited number of seats available for the litigants, victims and family members of victims, family members of the defendant, and members of the media and public.

- b. The courtroom deputy will open the courtroom for all spectators shortly before the proceedings begin each day. You must be seated at least five (5) minutes prior to the time for the start of the court session.
- c. **Security Screening.** All spectators and their belongings will be subject to a security screening upon entry into the courthouse and again prior to entering the courtroom.

(2) **Courtroom Seating**

- a. Seating will be prioritized for victims and family members of victims, members of the defendant's family, and media personnel displaying a court-issued media credential. The Trial Court Administrator or designee shall coordinate daily media access in consultation with the media committee.
- b. Seats for all others will be provided on a first-come, first-serve basis and will be subject to availability.

(3) **Rules Governing Media**

- a. **Parking.** Members of the media may park their vehicles free of charge in areas designated by BSO, Broward County, and/or the City of Fort Lauderdale. Parking is, however, limited, and only those media entities displaying a court-issued parking placard may park in these locations. Parking in any other location may be subject to fees or other restrictions.
- b. **Use of Electronic Devices within the Courtroom.**
 - i. **Cellular telephones and other similar electronic devices.** Members of the media within the courtroom may utilize cellular telephones for texting, organizational functions, research and writing functions, and other data transmission functions, except as otherwise provided herein. Cellular telephones and other similar electronic devices cannot be used to capture or send photographs, or record or send audio or video. All cellular telephones must be placed in either silent or vibrate mode. All Bluetooth and similar wireless devices must be turned off, removed from the wearer, and secured out of sight.

ii. **Laptop computers and other similar electronic devices.** Members of the media within the courtroom may utilize laptop computers or similar electronic devices provided the devices operate silently on the user's lap and do not require additional seating space. No laptop computer or other similar electronic device shall be used to capture or send photographs, or record or send audio or video. Use of a laptop computer or other similar device shall be used solely to record and transmit text data entered by the user. Only laptop computers or similar devices with virtual or silent keyboards are permitted and they must operate on battery power. Cabling of extension cords and power supplies is prohibited. Other devices equipped with virtual keyboards such as tablets (e.g., iPads and similar electronic devices) may be utilized solely for text recording and transmission.

c. **Media Room.** A space designated by the Office of the Trial Court Administrator prior to the commencement of the proceedings will serve as the media room. Only media displaying a court-issued media credential will be permitted access to the media room. Such access, however, is dependent on the availability of space.

d. **Media Interviews.** Media interviews and "live shots" are permitted only in areas designated by the Trial Court Administrator or designee. One (1) pool hallway video camera and one (1) still camera will be permitted outside the courtroom in a location designated by the Office of the Trial Court Administrator. The operator of the pool hallway video camera may share footage that is captured with other media entities. However, no media entity shall simultaneously live stream such footage to the public. Any pooling arrangements are the sole responsibility of the media.

(4) **Rules Governing All Spectators.**

a. Quiet and order shall be maintained at all times. Audible comments of any kind during the court proceedings or provocative or uncivil behavior within the courtroom or courthouse will not be tolerated. There shall be no gestures, facial expressions, or the like, suggesting approval or disapproval during the proceedings.

- b. All spectators are expected to dress in a manner consistent with the decorum of a judicial proceeding. No chewing gum and no food or drink is permitted in the courtroom at any time.
- c. **Entry and Exit During Court Proceedings.** All spectators shall be seated at least five (5) minutes prior to the scheduled start of the court proceedings. The presiding judge has discretion to implement protocols for entry and exit during the court proceedings, to control the conduct of the proceedings, and to prevent distractions.

(5) **Court Security Authority.** Any spectator who creates a visual or auditory disturbance during the court proceedings or within the courthouse may be removed from the courtroom and/or building at the discretion of the Broward Sheriff's Office.

(6) Any person violating this Administrative Order will be subject to the discipline of the Court, including but not limited to, the Court's contempt authority, immediate removal from the courtroom, prohibition from returning to the courtroom or a possible ban from courthouse access.

(7) Copies of this Administrative Order shall be displayed outside Courtroom WW17150 and any room designated by the Office of the Trial Court Administrator.

(8) This Administrative Order is a companion to and shall not be read to invalidate, supersede or vacate any existing administrative order governing the media or the use of cellular telephone and other electronic devices in the courtrooms and court proceedings. To the extent this Administrative Order conflicts with any existing administrative order, this Administrative Order shall prevail solely as it applies to proceedings in *State of Florida v. Nikolas Jacob Cruz*.

This Administrative Order vacates and supersedes Administrative Order 2021-60-Gen.

DONE AND ORDERED in Chambers, Fort Lauderdale, Florida, this 1st day of February, 2022.

/s/ Jack Tuter
Jack Tuter, Chief Judge