

MELISSA HOLYOAK, United States Attorney (#9832)
CARLOS A. ESQUEDA, Assistant United States Attorney (#5386)
Attorneys for the United States of America
Office of the United States Attorney
111 South Main Street, Suite 1800
Salt Lake City, Utah 84111-2176
Telephone: (801)524-5682

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
DISTRICT OF UTAH**

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

Plaintiff,

v.

ELLESHIA ANNE SEYMOUR,

Defendant.

**UNITED STATES' MOTION FOR
DETENTION**

Case No. 2:26-cr-00015 DS

☐ The United States is not seeking detention.

☒ The United States moves for detention based on current information. The United States' positions in this preliminary pleading could change after reviewing the Pretrial Report or learning of additional evidence. The United States reserves the right to assert positions even if the boxes next to those positions are not checked below, raise additional arguments, and file additional pleadings in support of detention. The United States' motion for detention is:

☒ Pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 3142(f)(1) because defendant is charged with:

☐ (A) a crime of violence (*see* 18 U.S.C. § 3156(a)(4)), a violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1591 (sex trafficking of children), or an offense under § 2332b(g)(5)(B) (specific enumerated crimes) for which a maximum term of imprisonment of 10 years or more is prescribed; **or**

☐ (B) an offense for which the maximum sentence is life imprisonment or death;
or

- ☐ (C) an offense for which a maximum term of imprisonment of 10 years or more is prescribed in the Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C. §§ 801-904), the Controlled Substances Import and Export Act (21 U.S.C. §§ 951-971), or Chapter 705 of Title 46, U.S.C. (46 U.S.C. §§ 70501-70508); **or**
- ☐ (D) any felony if the defendant has been convicted of two or more offenses described in (a) through (c) above, or two or more State or local offenses that would have been offenses described in (a) through (c) above if a circumstance giving rise to Federal jurisdiction had existed, or a combination of such offenses; **or**
- ☒ (E) any felony that is not otherwise a crime of violence but involves: **(i) a minor victim; (ii) the possession or use of a firearm or destructive device (as defined in 18 U.S.C. § 921); (iii) any other dangerous weapon; or (iv) a failure to register under 18 U.S.C. § 2250;**

OR

- ☐ Pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 3142(f)(2) because the case involves:
 - ☒ (A) a serious risk the defendant will flee; **or**
 - ☒ (B) a serious risk the defendant will obstruct or attempt to obstruct justice, or threaten, injure, intimidate, attempt to threaten, injure or intimidate a prospective witness or juror.

Procedure

The defendant may seek a continuance of the detention hearing of up to five days, and the United States may seek a continuance of up to three days. 18 U.S.C. § 3142(f). During any such continuance, the defendant shall be detained. *Id.* The rules concerning the admissibility of evidence do not apply at the detention hearing. *Id.* The United States has the burden of persuasion by clear and convincing evidence that no condition or combination of conditions of release will reasonably the safety of any other person and the community or by a preponderance of evidence that no condition or combination of conditions of release will reasonably assure the defendant's appearance as required. *Id.*; *United States v. Cisneros*, 328 F.3d 610, 616 (10th Cir. 2003).

Rebuttable Presumption

- ☐ A rebuttable presumption applies, and the defendant bears the burden to produce

some credible evidence to rebut this presumption. The United States acknowledges that it retains the burden of persuasion. The statutory presumption applies:

- ☐ Pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 3142(e)(2) (*previous violator*): There is a rebuttable presumption that no condition or combination of conditions will reasonably assure the safety of any other person and the community because:
 - (A) the defendant has previously been convicted of a Federal offense that is described in 18 U.S.C. § 3142(f)(1), or of a State or local offense that would have been such an offense if a circumstance giving rise to Federal jurisdiction had existed; **and**
 - (B) the defendant committed that offense while on release pending trial for a Federal, State, or local offense; **and**
 - (C) a period of not more than five years has elapsed since the date of conviction, or the release of the defendant from imprisonment, for that, whichever is later.
- ☐ Pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 3142(e)(3) (*narcotics, firearm, other offenses*): There is a rebuttable presumption that no condition or combination of conditions will reasonably assure the appearance of the defendant as required and the safety of the community because there is probable cause to believe that the defendant committed one or more of the following offenses:
 - ☐ (A) an offense for which a maximum term of imprisonment of 10 years or more is prescribed in the Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C. §§ 801-904), the Controlled Substances Import and Export Act (21 U.S.C. §§ 951-971), or Chapter 705 of Title 46, U.S.C. (46 U.S.C. §§ 70501-70508);
 - ☐ (B) an offense under 18 U.S.C. §§ 924(c), 956(a), or 2332b;
 - ☐ (C) an offense listed in 18 U.S.C. § 2332b(g)(5)(B) for which a maximum term of imprisonment of 10 or more is prescribed;
 - ☐ (D) an offense under Chapter 77 of Title 18, U.S.C. (18 U.S.C. §§ 1581-1597) for which a maximum term of imprisonment of 20 years or more is prescribed; **or**
 - ☐ (E) an offense involving a minor victim under 18 U.S.C. §§ 1201, 1591, 2241, 2242, 2244(a)(1), 2245, 2251, 2251A, 2252(a)(1), 2252(a)(2), 2252(a)(3), 2252A(a)(1), 2252A(a)(2), 2252A(a)(3), 2252A(a)(4), 2260, 2421, 2422, 2423, or 2425.

Factors to Be Considered

The United States may present arguments, proffer evidence, or provide testimony at the scheduled detention hearing supporting the detention of the defendant including,

but not limited to:

- ☒ The nature and circumstances of the offense charged, including whether the offense is a crime of violence, a violation of section 1591, a Federal crime of terrorism, or involves a minor victim or a controlled substance, firearm, or destructive device. (18 U.S.C. § 3142(g)(1)).

The defendant took her children on a scheduled visit in accordance with a Utah State Court order. The defendant was to return her minor children to their respective fathers on December 5, 2025. However, the defendant created a ruse that she had the children on a trip to visit family members in Minnesota, but in truth in fact she boarded an international flight bound for Amsterdam, Netherlands with a final destination to Split, Croatia.

On December 2, 2025, Police officers responded to a request for a welfare check for SEYMOUR at her residence. The responding officer found the apartment unlocked and, after making entry, determined no resident or occupant was present. The responding officer also attempted unsuccessfully to contact SEYMOUR by phone. SEYMOUR is the biological mother of four minor children, hereafter identified as Minor Victim 1 (MV1), Minor Victim 2 (MV2), Minor Victim 3 (MV3), and Minor Victim 4 (MV4).

AC, a coworker of SEYMOUR, was contacted and reported she had not heard from SEYMOUR since November 29, 2025, and that SEYMOUR normally responds promptly to calls and messages. AC reported she had attempted to contact SEYMOUR in the days leading up to the welfare check but had not heard back from SEYMOUR. AC noted SEYMOUR has custody of her minor children and is normally at the residence with her children. AC reported she and others contacted SEYMOUR'S landlord who confirmed SEYMOUR was not at home.

Another friend, TC, reported she had not heard from SEYMOUR since November 29, 2025. TC stated SEYMOUR had reported she was flying with her four children on November 30, 2025, to Minnesota to reconnect with family. SEYMOUR told T.C. her estranged biological family would pay for the flights; however, TC had no confirmation they arrived and expressed concern because SEYMOUR had not confirmed arrival as she stated she would. TC expressed concern about SEYMOUR'S mental state as she had experienced financial struggles, depression, and emotional breakdowns.

Police Offices also contacted SEYMOUR'S former boyfriend, SD. SD stated he and SEYMOUR broke up approximately one week prior and that she blocked him from contacting her on November 29, 2025, following repeated attempts by SD to contact SEYMOUR. SD mentioned he and SEYMOUR had recently discussed obtaining passports and leaving the country. SEYMOUR had recently expressed concern to SD about certain biblical events and "end of time," and he believed she had been influenced by TikTok videos.

Salt Lake City Airport Police eventually located SEYMOUR's vehicle in the Salt Lake City airport economy parking lot and viewed surveillance video showing SEYMOUR and the four children entering the airport on November 29, 2025, and boarding a flight.

On December 3, 2025, KS, who is Elleshia's former husband and the biological father of MV1, MV2, and MV3, reported the discovery of a notebook inside SEYMOUR's apartment containing notes to shred documents, discard her phone, purchase a prepaid phone, and take passports. KS also reported he opened passport-related envelopes for the children inside the trash. KS further reported that SEYMOUR had deleted her social media accounts and believed SEYMOUR had left the country with the children.

KS reported that he and SEYMOUR share joint custody of MV1, MV2, and MV3 pursuant to a Decree of Divorce entered September 13, 2021, and that they communicate through a family communication application. KS stated the children were last physically seen by him on November 24, 2025, when he dropped them off at school. KS was supposed to regain custody of the children again on December 5, 2025, pursuant to his and Seymour's custody agreement. SEYMOUR did not notify KS of her intent to travel internationally with the children, contrary to the custody order. KS believed SEYMOUR forged his signature on passport applications for the children as he did not sign any documentation authorizing or facilitating international travel. The children were not returned by the required date in violation of the custody order.

MV 4 is the biological child of KB. KB is SEYMOUR's second husband, and they share joint legal custody pursuant to a Decree of Divorce and Judgment entered on August 19, 2024. KB acknowledged signing paperwork for a passport for MV4 but was not aware SEYMOUR intended to leave the country. KB also reported that he received a voicemail from SEYMOUR on December 2, 2025, at 11:35 PM. SEYMOUR said that she was in France with the children and reminded him that she had to get them out of the country because the "end times is coming." SEYMOUR indicated that she would keep KB updated and wanted him to join them eventually. SEYMOUR also asked KB not to let KS know where she was. Both KS and KB describe SEYMOUR as a "Doomsdayer" a person who believes in the imminent destruction of the world.

Salt Lake City Officers confirmed the four minor children and SEYMOUR left with passports, that the vehicle was abandoned at the airport, and that the current location of the minor children remains unknown. All four children were entered into NCIC as missing persons. Detectives later verified that SEYMOUR and the children left Salt Lake International Airport on November 29, 2025, at 4:00 PM via Delta flight 56. According to publicly available open-source information, Delta flight 56 was a direct flight from Salt Lake City to Amsterdam, Netherlands. SEYMOUR'S travel itinerary included flights to Zagreb, Croatia, and from there to Split, Croatia, as the final destination.

On December 5, 2025, FBI Salt Lake City received an email communication sent by an attorney, who identified herself as legal counsel for SEYMOUR. The attorney reported she believed SEYMOUR had left the country with MV1, MV2, MV3, and MV4. The attorney further stated she believed SEYMOUR had no intent to return to the United States or was incapable of understanding the gravity of her actions.

The attorney stated she was contacted by the children's daycare provider and by SEYMOUR's coworker on December 2, 2025. Both reported SEYMOUR and the children could not be located. The attorney stated she received information that a person named DeGraw located journal entries at SEYMOUR's residence that appeared to indicate SEYMOUR planned to leave the country with the children. The attorney further stated that DeGraw located receipts indicating passports were paid for mostly in cash.

The attorney stated that her attempts to contact SEYMOUR by text failed and messages returned undelivered, and that all attempts to contact SEYMOUR were unsuccessful. The attorney also reported information indicating SEYMOUR may be with an individual known through social media, possibly in Rome.

Pursuant to the Decree of Divorce between SEYMOUR and KS entered in the Fourth Judicial District Court on September 13, 2021, the parties are awarded joint custody of their minor children, namely MV1, MV2, and MV3. SEYMOUR was designated as the custodial parent with parent time awarded to her for approximately sixty percent of the time, and Kendall was designated the non-custodial parent with parent time awarded to him for approximately forty percent of the time. The Decree requires that significant decisions regarding the children be mutually decided, with the mother having final authority if the parties are unable to agree. The Decree further provides that neither parent shall do anything that would prevent the other parent from exercising parent-time. It additionally specifies that whenever the children travel overnight with either parent, the parent must provide the other parent with an itinerary of travel dates, destinations, and locations where the children or traveling parent can be reached and must identify a third person knowledgeable of the children's whereabouts.

Pursuant to the Decree of Divorce and Judgment between SEYMOUR and KB entered in the Fourth Judicial District Court and signed August 19, 2024, the parties were awarded joint legal custody of their minor child, MV4. SEYMOUR was designated as the custodial parent. Under that Decree, significant decisions affecting the child's health, education, and care require communication between the parents. The Decree specifically states that if the child is to travel for more than thirty days, the parent arranging travel will notify the other parent at least thirty days in advance, and will provide the travel schedule, locations, and contact phone numbers. The Decree requires prompt notice and communication of any significant information involving the child and mandates that the parties cooperate so that neither parent interferes with the other's ordered parent-time.

On December 2, 2025, SEYMOUR contacted KB by a new cell phone number Brady subsequently received two voicemails. The voicemails stated the caller was SEYMOUR.

In the first voicemail, SEYMOUR explained she was in France in an Airbnb and stated she needed to obtain the passports because the end times were coming, and she needed to move MV4. SEYMOUR described herself as a “mama bear” and said she got MV4 out and they were going to be okay. SEYMOUR also stated she will reach out to Brady when she obtained another permanent residence. SEYMOUR explained she was going day-to-day until she found a permanent location and when that happens, she would come get KB so he could be with MV4. In the second voicemail, SEYMOUR stated, “it’s me again,” and requested KB not tell KS where she was. SEYMOUR again confirmed that she was in France and the kids were safe.

SEYMOUR’s attorney, friends, and ex-husbands have all expressed concerns about her mental stability. They all noted SEYMOUR had significant trauma in her past that continued to influence her decisions. Investigators located SEYMOUR’S TikTok page through which SEYMOUR shared many posts that claimed the end of times was coming and people should get supplies and prepare for the end. SEYMOUR also noted in her message to KB that she took the children out of the country because the end of times was coming.

The FBI has received information indicating an individual believed to share end of times beliefs had recently travelled to Italy and told family members he needed to help a friend move to Croatia. The individual has the same name as a person whose email is attached to SEYMOUR’S travel itinerary. An FBI Agent contacted the individual who was believed to have travelled to Croatia. That individual reported he was represented by counsel, but he knew the children were safe and had a good idea where they were, though he had not recently seen them. The individual’s attorney later contacted the FBI and provided an address where SEYMOUR and the children might be located. That address was in Blato, Croatia.

Croatian authorities notified FBI that they discovered SEYMOUR in Dubrovnik, Croatia. A Third party had also notified Croatian authorities that she recognized SEYMOUR and the children as missing from the United States through social media accounts. Croatian authorities arrested SEYMOUR and took custody of the four minor children. The Children were reunited with their respective fathers. Seymour challenged extradition in the Croatian Courts. The Croatian Courts granted the United States request for extradition and SEYMOUR was returned to the United States.

- ☒ The weight of evidence against the defendant. (18 U.S.C. § 3142(g)(2)).

The weight against the defendant is very strong and should be weighed heavily against her. The defendant went to great lengths to hide her true intentions and conceal her actual locations. Evidence indicate that the defendant's never intended to return the children to the United States. The defendant abandoned her home, quit her job, took her property, falsified passport applications and ended all contact with friends and family.

- ☒ The history and characteristics of the defendant including the defendant's character, physical and mental condition, family ties, employment, financial resources, length of residence in the community, community ties, past conduct, history relating to drug or alcohol abuse, criminal history and record concerning court proceedings. (18 U.S.C. § 3142(g)(3)(A)).

The defendant has no criminal history but has a pending state custodial interference case with an active warrant.

Many describe the defendant as possessing mental health issues.

- ☐ Whether, at time of the current offense or arrest, the defendant was on probation, parole, or other release pending trial, sentencing, appeal, or completion of sentence for an offense under Federal, State, or local law. (18 U.S.C. § 3142(g)(3)(B)).
- ☒ The nature and seriousness of danger to any person or to the community that would be posed by the defendant's release. (18 U.S.C. § 3142(g)(4)).
- ☐ The defendant's lack of legal status in the United States. The defendant's legal status is:
- ☐ How the defendant would be subject to removal or deportation after serving a period of incarceration.
- ☒ The defendant's significant family or other ties outside of the United States.
- ☒ The defendant's use of aliases or false documents.
- ☒ The defendant's prior attempts to evade law enforcement.
- ☒ How the defendant's proposed residence, employment, or proposed treatment programs have not been verified.
- ☐ The defendant's prior failures to appear for court proceedings.

☒ Other reasons including: The defendant fled the United States with the children in violation of a state court order with the intent to seek residency in Croatia and to avoid extradition.

Victim Notification

☐ The United States has notified any identified victim, or attempted to do so, pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 3771.

☒ The position of the victims on the detention of the defendant is that the victims would seek detention of the defendant.

☒ The victims in this matter seek a no contact order.

☐ This matter does not involve a victim requiring notification.

DATED this 18th day of June 2026.

/s/ Carlos A. Esqueda

CARLOS A. ESQUEDA

Assistant United States Attorney