## IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

## IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO

## HONORABLE BRADEN C. WOODS

DEPARTMENT 608

ELIZABETH QUINN, as an individual and a trustee of the Ayres Quinn Family Living Trust; CAROLINE AYERS, as an individual and a trustee of the Ayres Quinn Family Living Trust; GREG GRUSZYNSKI, an individual; and DERRLYN TOM, an individual,

CERTIFIED COPY

Plaintiffs,

vs.

MARY R. COULTON, an individual, ELYSA STEIN, an individual, NEIL STRAGHALIS, an individual, and DOES 1-50, inclusive,

Defendants.
\_\_\_\_\_/
RELATED CROSS-ACTION /

REPORTER'S TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

MONDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2024

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		Page 3
1	SESSIONS	
2		PAGE
3	MONDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2024	
4	MORNING SESSION	4
5		
6	INDEX OF EXAMINATIONS	
7	(NONE THIS SESSION)	
8		
9	INDEX OF EXHIBITS	
10	(NONE THIS SESSION)	
11		
12		
13		
14		
15		
16		
17		
18		
19		
20		
21		
22		
23		
24		
25		

Page 4

1 ---000---

2 MONDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2024

9:03 A.M.

- 3 MORNING SESSION
- 4 PROCEEDINGS
- 5 THE COURT: Going back on record in the matters
- 6 of Quinn, Ayers, Gruszynski, Tom, Plaintiffs vs. Mary
- 7 Coulten, Defendant, Case No. CGC-23-606844.
- Appearances, please, starting with the Plaintiff.
- 9 MR. BLUM: Good morning, your Honor. For all
- 10 plaintiffs, Steven Blum of Blum, Collins & Ho.
- 11 MR. HO: Good morning, your Honor. Gary Ho for
- 12 the plaintiffs.
- 13 THE COURT: Defense?
- 14 MR. RADCLIFFE: Scott Radcliffe for Defendant.
- MR. ROUDA: Good morning, your Honor. I'm David
- 16 Rouda. I'm the personal counsel for Ms. Coulten.
- 17 THE COURT: Personal as it Cumis or as --
- 18 MR. ROUDA: As an individual, yes.
- 19 MR. RADCLIFFE: Just to be clear, I just want the
- 20 Court to know there is no Cumis counsel in this case.
- 21 THE COURT: Individual. Okay. Got it.
- Where to start? Okay. Start with this: Over
- 23 the weekend, Court received an e-mail.
- 24 (An off-the-record discussion was held.)
- THE COURT: Over the weekend Department 608, the

- 1 court e-mail, received an e-mail from Mr. Rouda
- 2 indicating, in short, Ms. Coulten wished to waive jury.
- 3 The Court did not respond to his e-mail because I
- 4 didn't know who you were, sir. I had seen your name in
- 5 the pleadings, but since you had not been at either trial
- 6 call, you weren't here at all last week during the motions
- 7 in limine; the Court was not sure who you were or what
- 8 role you were still playing in the matter. It seemed in
- 9 the past you had represented former defendants. So I only
- 10 responded to the e-mail to Mr. Radcliffe and the
- 11 plaintiff's counsel.
- 12 Court's e-mail was two questions: One, do the
- 13 plaintiffs waive trial by jury; and, two, who is this
- 14 Mr. Rouda person? So the Court did get a response
- 15 approximately 11-something last night p.m. from
- 16 Plaintiffs' counsel indicating their clients wish to waive
- 17 jury. I'll hear from the plaintiffs first.
- 18 Where do we stand on that, gentlemen? You -- and
- 19 I use the universal "you" -- made the demand for jury
- 20 duty. You posted the fees back in October of 2023 via the
- 21 CM110 form. The judicial council case management
- 22 statement form also indicated the plaintiffs were
- 23 demanding a jury trial. Where do we stand this morning on
- 24 Monday?
- MR. BLUM: Good morning, your Honor. Plaintiffs

- 1 waive jury and are prepared to proceed with a court trial,
- 2 bench trial. We would be happy to do so.
- 3 THE COURT: That's all four Plaintiffs' counsel?
- 4 MR. BLUM: Correct, your Honor.
- 5 THE COURT: At approximately 7:00 a.m. this
- 6 morning the Court and all counsel received an e-mail from
- 7 Mr. Radcliffe indicating Ms. Coulten was not waiving jury
- 8 and was demanding a jury trial.
- 9 Ms. Coulten, I'm going to let the attorneys speak
- 10 for you, and hear from you after.
- 11 Mr. Radcliffe, I'm going to start with you.
- 12 What's your position this morning? You've spoken to
- 13 Ms. Coulten. Also, did you post jury fees this morning?
- 14 Taking judicial notice of the court file, it appeared only
- 15 the plaintiffs' side and also the cross-defendant's side,
- 16 which is both the plaintiff, they are the only ones who
- 17 posted and demanded a jury trial and posted the fees.
- 18 So where do you stand, you and Ms. Coulten, this
- 19 morning?
- 20 MR. RADCLIFFE: So just to be clear, you
- 21 obviously read the brief that I submitted to the Court,
- 22 and you understand maybe my position that there's a
- 23 difference between the insurer and the insured.
- 24 Ms. Coulten, I understand, she wishes to waive jury trial.
- 25 The insurer, who has the right to control the defense and

- 1 the litigation strategy, does not waive the right to a
- 2 jury trial.
- 3 The jury fees were posted under 631(b). If one
- 4 side -- if there's multiple defendants, if one defendant
- 5 posts jury fees, that is sufficient for all defendants.
- 6 And since the codefendants had already posted fees on
- 7 August 23, 2023 -- that would be Stein and Straghalis as
- 8 Defendants -- we were not required to post additional jury
- 9 fees.
- 10 THE COURT: What was the date?
- MR. RADCLIFFE: August 23, 2023.
- 12 THE COURT: Did they post them as defendants or
- 13 as cross-complainants?
- 14 MR. RADCLIFFE: I believe defendants.
- 15 THE COURT: Finish your comments.
- 16 MR. RADCLIFFE: So given what I have stated and
- 17 based on the brief that I stated earlier, the defense
- 18 requests a jury trial, understanding, of course,
- 19 Ms. Coulten, it is her wish not to have a jury trial. But
- 20 under the authorities that I've cited, it is the insured
- 21 that gets to make the call here.
- MR. BLUM: Your Honor, I have not been -- I've
- 23 not seen a copy of the brief. Is there a copy available?
- 24 THE COURT: For the record Mr. Radcliffe has
- 25 provided a courtesy copy to Plaintiffs' counsel.

- 1 Mr. Rouda, I'll hear from you briefly. You
- 2 started out the ball rolling in all this, so if you have
- 3 any comments on the matter, I'll hear from you briefly,
- 4 sir.
- 5 MR. ROUDA: I'm sorry, did you say Mr. Rouda?
- 6 THE COURT: Yes.
- 7 MR. ROUDA: Okay. Your Honor, I just skimmed his
- 8 brief quickly, and it seems that Mr. Radcliffe is under
- 9 the belief that defense -- the right to control the
- 10 strategy of the defense of the litigation is the same
- 11 thing as the right to control Ms. Coulten's right to a
- 12 jury trial. And it says -- and that's not correct.
- 13 The right to control a jury trial is specified in
- 14 the Rules of Professional Conduct in California, Rule 1.2,
- 15 Authority. It says -- Rule 1.2, "The Scope of
- 16 Representation and Allocation of Authority." And in
- 17 paragraph -- in the first paragraph of that, it says inter
- 18 alia, "Except as otherwise provided by law in a criminal
- 19 case, the lawyer shall abide by the client's decision,
- 20 after consultation with the lawyer, as to the plea to be
- 21 entered" -- and that's not applicable here. Then it says,
- 22 "whether to waive jury trial and whether the client will
- 23 testify."
- 24 Those all remain in Ms. Coulten's control. She
- 25 has a right to decide this, not the insurer. Of course,

- 1 the insurer has the right to control the strategy. But
- 2 when it comes to constitutional rights like jury trial,
- 3 that's in the client, and that's under the Rules of
- 4 Professional Responsibility.
- 5 I'll also point out that Ms. Coulten is
- 6 Mr. Radcliffe's only client. The insured has not filed an
- 7 interpleader action in this case.
- 8 THE COURT: Continue, sir.
- 9 MR. ROUDA: Yeah, the insured has not filed an
- 10 interpleader action in this case. They are not a party to
- 11 this lawsuit. They are not the clients under the Rules of
- 12 Professional Conduct. So I believe that Mr. Radcliffe is
- 13 confusing the -- definitely the ability of the insured to
- 14 control the defense, but not the right to a jury trial or
- 15 whether to waive that, and that's explicitly stated in
- 16 Rule 1.2.
- 17 THE COURT: Thank you, sir.
- 18 MR. ROUDA: You're welcome.
- 19 And I think Mrs. Coulten would like to be heard,
- 20 if possible. If your Honor will so allow her.
- 21 Also, your Honor, just for the record, I was here
- 22 last week for the motions in limine. I wasn't -- I did
- 23 not make an appearance on the record, you're correct, but
- 24 I was in the gallery for the first half of the motions in
- 25 limine up until the lunch hour.

- 1 THE COURT: Thank you, sir.
- 2 MR. ROUDA: You're welcome.
- 3 THE COURT: For the record, after taking judicial
- 4 notice of the court file, I did find the jury fees being
- 5 posted by the former defendants Stein and Straghalis, as
- 6 stated by Mr. Radcliffe, on or around August 23, 2023.
- 7 Ms. Coulten, good morning. Thank you very much
- 8 for being here. Happy to hear from you briefly, ma'am. I
- 9 don't want to hear anything about your case per se, but
- 10 regarding this issue of trial by jury or trial by court,
- 11 is there anything briefly you want to tell me on that?
- 12 I'm happy to hear you, ma'am.
- MS. COULTEN: Yes, your Honor. I distinctly told
- 14 Mr. Radcliffe yesterday in an e-mail that I wanted a bench
- 15 trial rather than a jury trial. That would be much more
- 16 convenient for me and much less time-consuming.
- 17 Apparently, Mr. Radcliffe seems to be representing the
- 18 insurance company more than he is representing my wishes.
- 19 THE COURT: I'm sure both your attorneys told you
- 20 in terms of timing, this trial is scheduled to be done by
- 21 the 1st, a week from Friday. Technically, on a bench
- 22 trial I have 90 days to take action, do things that I need
- 23 to do to make sure I do it correctly. I'm sure they
- 24 explained that to you, but I do want to sort of say that
- 25 out loud in terms of what's, quote, "quicker" or -- but.

- 1 Okay. Thank you, ma'am.
- 2 Plaintiffs -- gentleman in the audience, is he a
- 3 plaintiff in this matter or just a gentleman in the
- 4 audience?
- 5 MR. BLUM: This is Mr. Simien. He's an attorney
- 6 with our firm.
- 7 THE COURT: Okay.
- 8 MR. BLUM: He's doing all the work behind the
- 9 scenes.
- 10 THE COURT: Understood. I have the same. It's
- 11 called my clerk.
- Prepared to move on on this. Mr. Radcliffe,
- 13 anything, sir, you wish to add?
- MR. RADCLIFFE: Yes, your Honor.
- I think the argument has been made by Mr. Rouda
- 16 fails to take into account that we have a tripartite
- 17 relationship. And the citation that he referred to does
- 18 not take that into account. When you look at the law,
- 19 it's very clear who gets to manage and control the
- 20 litigation. As you saw from the authorities that I cited,
- 21 they have the absolute right. He has not cited any
- 22 authority to you to suggest otherwise. And I think what
- 23 I've cited to you is controlling.
- I understand Ms. Coulten's wishes; however, this
- 25 is a tripartite relationship where the carrier does have a

- 1 right to control the defense. And California law on that
- 2 point is controlling.
- 3 THE COURT: Not to go too far down the rabbit
- 4 hole, but I thought, based on my reading -- may be
- 5 incorrect -- when it's a tripartite relationship, isn't
- 6 the third prong Cumis counsel, C-U-M-I-S, being paid by
- 7 the insurer as opposed to independent?
- 8 MR. RADCLIFFE: So there is no Cumis counsel in
- 9 this situation. If there was Cumis counsel, then, you
- 10 know, they would be appointed by the insurance company.
- 11 They would then have the right to control the litigation.
- 12 But there is no Cumis counsel, so we're not in that
- 13 situation. Tripartite is just, you know, the insured and
- 14 the insurer.
- 15 THE COURT: Thank you, sir.
- 16 Mr. Blum?
- 17 MR. BLUM: Blum.
- 18 THE COURT: I'm sorry, sir.
- 19 MR. BLUM: That's okay. I was thinking of
- 20 changing it away.
- 21 THE COURT: No, no.
- MR. BLUM: "Blum" rhymes with "plum," "dumb," lot
- 23 of bad words.
- 24 THE COURT: I'll stick with the fruit.
- MR. BLUM: Yes.

- 1 THE COURT: I'll hear from you briefly, sir.
- 2 MR. BLUM: Thank you.
- 3 Obviously, my clients have an interest in moving
- 4 this case along and having the Court hear it and not get
- 5 bogged down with the added expense and delay and so forth
- 6 of a jury.
- 7 I'm -- just like to observe, I did just read the
- 8 brief provided by Mr. Radcliffe this morning. None of
- 9 those cases refer to the determination of whether or not
- 10 to have a jury hear one's case. I do think that that's a
- 11 constitutional right. Mr. Rouda just said that. It's in
- 12 the Seventh Amendment of the US Constitution and whatever
- 13 analogue there is in the State constitution. I don't know
- 14 what it is off the top of my head.
- But that is -- seems to me to be a right that
- 16 belongs to the client. In this -- and in this instance,
- 17 the client is Ms. Coulten. The insurance company is
- 18 paying for a lawyer to represent Ms. Coulten, but
- 19 nonetheless, it is Ms. Coulten who is on trial here, so to
- 20 speak. And I think that it's her right.
- 21 And I think that the -- the rule that Mr. -- I
- 22 think it was 1.2 of the Code of Professional
- 23 Responsibility -- or whatever it's called in these days --
- 24 says that that right rests in the client, and that the
- 25 lawyer must follow the client's instruction, meaning the

- 1 lawyer doesn't get to make up his own mind if the client
- 2 wants something different, No. 1.
- And, No. 2, you know, the client is the client.
- 4 The insurance company isn't -- the client is the client,
- 5 you know. And if the insurance company wants to take a
- 6 position different from the client, it seems to me that
- 7 the insurance company needs to come in here with a lawyer
- 8 who is not in this very conflicted position that
- 9 Mr. Radcliffe finds himself in now. You know, does he
- 10 speak for his client to whom he holds a fiduciary
- 11 obligation as -- and to whom he owes an ethical obligation
- 12 under the rules? Or does he answer to the insurance
- 13 company?
- 14 If the insurance company is trying to make a
- 15 call -- if he's going to be the insurance company's
- 16 lawyer, then he can't be Ms. Coulten's lawyer. The
- 17 insurance company has to file a complaint in intervention
- 18 or something if they want to take a stand on such a
- 19 critical issue as the right to jury trial. Seems to me
- 20 the default, therefore, seems to ought to go to the right
- 21 of the client, as stated in the rules.
- 22 THE COURT: Sir, you are agreeing -- and I think
- 23 Mr. Rouda agrees since none of you brought it up -- the
- 24 insurance policy in this particular case does indicate
- 25 that the insurance company is in charge of the litigation.

- 1 It's not one of the carve-outs in very few or very rare
- 2 insurance policies where the client is -- controls
- 3 litigation. That always seems to be the exception.
- 4 So since neither one of you have said it, it
- 5 sounds like you do agree that in this particular insurance
- 6 policy, Ms. Coulten's -- in this particular case that the
- 7 insurance company does have the lead as the counsel; is
- 8 that fair?
- 9 MR. BLUM: I haven't read the insurance policy,
- 10 so I cannot comment on that. I can just say that my
- 11 clients want the Court to decide this case, and I believe
- 12 that the waiver by Ms. Coulten is binding, and we don't
- 13 think that an insurance company can override a client's
- 14 and litigant's desire. And if they want to take it up
- 15 afterwards between them, great. But for right now, the
- 16 insurance company has no say. They're not a party to this
- 17 case. The only party is Ms. -- on the defense is
- 18 Ms. Coulten.
- 19 If the insurance company wants to say something,
- 20 that's between them. But as to us and our position, my
- 21 clients' position, we are dealing with Ms. Coulten on the
- 22 other side, okay. It's Quinn, Ayers and so forth vs.
- 23 Coulten, not versus the insurance company. If it were the
- 24 insurance, sure. Maybe. But it's not. And we have to
- 25 proceed in this case as if insurance doesn't count, right.

- 1 You know, otherwise, I'm going to start talking about
- 2 insurance throughout the whole case. I mean, there's no
- 3 motion in limine keeping me from doing that and no order
- 4 keeping me from doing that.
- 5 But, frankly, if we are litigating against the
- 6 insurance and the insurance company has the right to waive
- 7 jury trial -- I mean, not waive jury trial -- or anyway,
- 8 disregard the client, then I'm litigating against the
- 9 insurance company. I think it raises a lot of very
- 10 problematic issues.
- Now, that said -- excuse me just a moment.
- 12 (An attorney/client discussion was held.)
- 13 MR. BLUM: That said, I want to try to be
- 14 practical for a moment. I mean, I think I've been
- 15 practical all along, but I want to bring in another
- 16 consideration that may impact this and how we proceed
- 17 going forward in the case.
- 18 My clients wish to drop or dismiss Cause of
- 19 Action 1 and Cause of Action 2 and proceed only on Cause
- 20 of Action 3, which is the right of lateral support. And
- 21 that involves, I believe, the Court making some
- 22 preliminary decisions, and, you know, whatever they are,
- 23 we will stick by them.
- 24 But I am very convinced that we have an absolute
- 25 right of lateral support. And we submitted to the Court

- 1 in paragraph -- or Section 17:19 and 17:20 from Miller and
- 2 Starr, which is the preeminent treatise on California real
- 3 estate. And I wish I had written that as my brief in the
- 4 opposition to the MJOP because it states --
- 5 MR. RADCLIFFE: I'm just going to object. We're
- 6 not here to rehash the --
- 7 MR. BLUM: Excuse me, I'm speaking.
- 8 THE COURT: I'm going to stop both of you
- 9 gentlemen.
- 10 Let's do first things first. Let's just take it
- 11 one step at a time, and then you may want to pivot from
- 12 that position or stick to that position, whatever it may
- 13 be. This is still the jury trial issue.
- No. 1, I've considered the arguments of counsel.
- 15 Paperwork that was filed, read, considered CCP631, Code of
- 16 Civil Procedure 631. Also I've considered TriCoast
- 17 Builders, T-R-I-C-O-A-S-T but one word, TriCoast, but
- 18 there is a capital C, Builders, Inc., vs. Fonnegra.
- 19 Somewhat deals with this particular situation. One side
- 20 at the last minute says we'll waive jury, the other side
- 21 having paid the jury fees, et cetera, et cetera. It also
- 22 goes and talks about a lot of California corporate appeal
- 23 cases, but it's the latest case from 2024 from California
- 24 Supreme Court. The cite is, I think, 15 Cal.5th,
- 25 page 766.

- 1 This particular case under these particular
- 2 circumstances, I do believe the insurance company sort of
- 3 is in charge of this particular case. A Rules of
- 4 Professional Responsibility, if Mr. Radcliffe is in
- 5 violation of it, that's for the State bar to deal with,
- 6 but citing the Professional Rules of Responsibility isn't
- 7 really a legal determination of who decides what's a jury
- 8 trial and what's a court trial.
- 9 To Mr. Blum's point, I believe it's California
- 10 Constitution Section I, Subsection 16, that talks about a
- 11 right to a jury trial here in California. I believe
- 12 that's the State Constitution that authorizes and
- 13 guarantees that. And then when I read the CCP in
- 14 conjunction with that, while the Court is happy to take
- 15 waivers from the plaintiff, the defense is demanding a
- 16 jury trial. Jury fees have been paid essentially by both
- 17 sides, so we will move forward with a jury trial.
- 18 MR. ROUDA: Your Honor, may I say one last thing?
- 19 THE COURT: No, sir. I heard from you briefly.
- 20 You saw part of the motions in limine, but once I sort of
- 21 rule on something, unless it's really something new or if
- 22 you're going to correct the record because I said "Smith"
- 23 and it's really "Jones," happy to hear from you. But to
- 24 reargue to me a second time, no, we'll never get through
- 25 anything. So I'm not trying to chastise you about it.

- 1 I'm giving you a heads up, and I said it out loud for the
- 2 benefit of the three attorneys.
- 3 If you want to check with your client about
- 4 something, she's raising her hand at me, go ahead.
- 5 But we will move forward with a jury trial in
- 6 this matter.
- 7 MR. RADCLIFFE: Your Honor, may I ask a point of
- 8 clarification on a different issue that was raised?
- 9 THE COURT: No. I'm going to follow my checklist
- 10 and in the end if there's something to be brought back up,
- 11 so be it.
- 12 All right. Now I'll turn to the oral request
- 13 possibly by the plaintiff. Yes, sir. If you want to
- 14 finish your thought or based upon the Court's ruling, you
- 15 have a different thought, and you're withdrawing your sort
- 16 of request, where do we stand, sir?
- 17 MR. BLUM: Your Honor, we dismiss Cause of
- 18 Action 1 in our First Amended Complaint, or nuisance, and
- 19 Cause of Action 2 for negligence. And we rest on and will
- 20 pursue Cause of Action 3 for removal of lateral and
- 21 subjacent support. In this case it's really only lateral
- 22 support.
- 23 So it is our view that there is an absolute right
- 24 of lateral support, as stated in the authorities that we
- 25 provided to the Court recently in whatever the last

- 1 submission was. But in particular, Miller and Starr
- 2 Sections 17:19, Lateral Support, Common Law Rule. And the
- 3 other section, which is 17:20, labeled Lateral Support
- 4 Statutory Modifications of the Common Law Rule.
- 5 So that's where we are. And, you know, it is
- 6 strict liability in a sense. It is --
- 7 THE COURT: You don't need to argue it to me at
- 8 this point, sir.
- 9 MR. BLUM: Okay. I just wanted to make sure our
- 10 position is clear, and we are ready to proceed on that
- 11 basis.
- 12 THE COURT: All right. Mr. Radcliffe?
- 13 MR. RADCLIFFE: I'd just like clarification that
- 14 it is with prejudice.
- 15 THE COURT: That's -- we're about to pick a jury,
- 16 but with prejudice, sir?
- 17 MR. BLUM: Yes, your Honor.
- 18 THE COURT: Anything else, Mr. Radcliffe? Any
- 19 other comments on that?
- MR. RADCLIFFE: No.
- 21 THE COURT: All right. All right. Plaintiffs
- 22 file motion to dismiss with prejudice Cause of Action 1,
- 23 Cause of Action 2 is granted.
- Next on the Court's checklist was Defense Motion
- 25 in Limine No. 26 to, quote, "exclude new opinions by

- 1 Mr. Shires regarding the property line, "S-H-I-R-E-S. The
- 2 Court did not receive a written opposition, but the Court
- 3 did receive a trial brief by the plaintiffs which somewhat
- 4 touched upon this particular subject.
- 5 But it's your motion, Mr. Radcliffe, I'll hear
- 6 from you first briefly. I've read your papers.
- 7 MR. RADCLIFFE: I have nothing additional to
- 8 submit, your Honor. At least not at this time unless
- 9 Plaintiff raises an issue.
- 10 THE COURT: Can you clarify for the Court what is
- 11 it you're asking the Court to exclude? I'm looking at
- 12 your papers, but I would like to hear it directly from
- 13 you.
- MR. RADCLIFFE: Can I have just one second,
- 15 please?
- 16 THE COURT: Sure.
- 17 MR. RADCLIFFE: Sure, your Honor.
- 18 As addressed in my brief, the defense is moving
- 19 to exclude Plaintiffs' retained expert Mr. Shires from
- 20 testifying as to his opinion as to the location of the
- 21 property boundaries, opinions on the boundaries in the
- 22 Geometrix survey and the location of the wall with respect
- 23 to where he believes the boundaries may be and whose
- 24 property the wall he believes is on, if anybody in
- 25 particular.

- 1 As I've cited to you in my brief, most
- 2 importantly, he was not disclosed on these issues
- 3 whatsoever. I relied on the disclosure, as you know, from
- 4 reading my brief. He --
- 5 THE COURT: Only because time is of the essence,
- 6 sir, I need to jump in.
- 7 MR. RADCLIFFE: Sure.
- 8 THE COURT: What about Plaintiffs' brief where
- 9 they cite to question and answer, question you asked and
- 10 the answer provided by the gentleman within the depo?
- 11 MR. RADCLIFFE: Yes, I can address that. I know
- 12 what you're referring to.
- 13 THE COURT: Yes, go ahead.
- MR. RADCLIFFE: Essentially, what I understood
- 15 him to say in that was that he believed that the Geometrix
- 16 survey said something, not that he had a separate opinion
- 17 on that. And it was because he wasn't disclosed on
- 18 providing opinions on the Geometrix survey or the
- 19 boundaries or anything like that. So I think there's a
- 20 big distinction between what he thinks another document
- 21 says and him providing an opinion as a retained expert on
- 22 that subject. I mean, you got to disclose him on this.
- 23 That's what the whole point of the statute is to provide
- 24 notice.
- 25 If they wanted to say, "Hey, we're going to

- 1 disclose him on this," they were absolutely required by
- 2 statute to file a motion seeking leave to amend the
- 3 general substance and the nature of his testimony.
- 4 They've had several months. They never did. They knew my
- 5 motions were pending. They still never moved. So, you
- 6 know, I withdrew our surveyor on this issue, who I did
- 7 disclose on issues relating to the Geometrix survey,
- 8 property boundaries, things like that.
- 9 So, you know, I think it's highly prejudicial,
- 10 given that I've taken actual actions in reliance upon
- 11 their failure to disclose him. And I think that's
- 12 ultimately what's controlling. And as you look at the
- 13 case I cited to, Muller vs. Fresno Community Hospital &
- 14 Medical Center, the citation's on page 3, line 14, the
- 15 only remedy is exclusion.
- 16 THE COURT: Can I ask you to turn to the
- 17 plaintiffs' offer of proof provided on Friday, going to
- 18 their catch exhibits that Geometrix, G-E-O-M-E-T-R-I-X.
- 19 We've been referring to it as a survey in short.
- 20 Regarding the survey with the red additions, has it ever
- 21 been provided to you?
- MR. HO: Yes.
- 23 THE COURT: Sorry, I was asking the defense.
- MR. RADCLIFFE: That was provided to me when it
- 25 was given to the Court, not beforehand.

- 1 The other thing that I would like to just note is
- 2 that the information that he relies upon in his
- 3 declaration that was submitted to the Court recently,
- 4 those documents, the Google Earth that he verified with,
- 5 his file did not include those documents. So now he is
- 6 relying on documents that were not produced to confirm an
- 7 opinion that he was never disclosed on.
- 8 THE COURT: Got it.
- 9 Plaintiff, happy to hear from you.
- 10 MR. HO: Your Honor, the disclosure is broad
- 11 enough to cover this. Mr. Shires was designated to
- 12 testify about the cause of the wall failure and the
- 13 mitigation design. And an essential part of that is to
- 14 determine the location of the wall.
- And per your Honor's request, he -- in his
- 16 declaration, he was simply explaining how he reached the
- 17 survey. He's not offering an expert opinion on the survey
- 18 because, as we argued last week, we don't need an expert
- 19 opinion on the survey. It's a reliable document from the
- 20 public record.
- 21 So, you know, again, we are standing by Evidence
- 22 Code Section 1280. And this -- he's not offering his
- 23 expert opinion on this. And even if he is, I think his
- 24 expert disclosure is broad enough to cover that.
- 25 THE COURT: Can I ask a follow-up on what

- 1 Mr. Radcliffe said? The diagram that he provided as an
- 2 exhibit with the red markings on it, has that ever been
- 3 disclosed?
- 4 MR. RADCLIFFE: The answer is no.
- 5 THE COURT: Sorry -- it's hard to tell because I
- 6 have glasses sometimes, and I don't always turn my head.
- 7 So I was actually talking to Plaintiff this time.
- 8 MR. HO: The Google Earth image?
- 9 THE COURT: Step back. Exhibit A attached to
- 10 your declaration, Patrick Shires.
- 11 MR. HO: That's right.
- 12 THE COURT: Okay. There's one survey with no
- 13 markings on it, and the second page is the survey with
- 14 markings. Has the one with markings ever been provided?
- 15 MR. HO: The ones with markings were done in
- 16 response to your Honor's request last week. So, you know,
- 17 we provided them to Mr. Radcliffe last Friday when it was
- 18 done.
- 19 THE COURT: All right. And what about the Google
- 20 Earth maps referenced in his declaration, that is what he
- 21 used?
- MR. HO: Your Honor, I'll have to check up on
- 23 that. I can't tell you with 100 percent certainty whether
- 24 it's been produced or not. But they're Google Earth
- 25 images; they're easily verifiable.

- 1 THE COURT: But you still have to turn it over.
- 2 MR. RADCLIFFE: I can confirm it was not
- 3 provided. I checked his file.
- 4 THE COURT: Anything else you wish to add, sir?
- 5 MR. HO: I don't have anything additional, your
- 6 Honor.
- 7 THE COURT: You have the last word,
- 8 Mr. Radcliffe, because it's your motion.
- 9 MR. RADCLIFFE: Thank you, your Honor.
- 10 As you look at what his disclosure was from his
- 11 expert disclosure, page 3. I've cited it. I just want to
- 12 make my record. He was disclosed on three topics and
- 13 three topics only: The causes of damage to the
- 14 Plaintiffs' properties and the slope on properties; that's
- 15 one. The causes of the wall failure; that's two. Slope
- 16 stability and required recommended scope of repair; that's
- 17 three.
- Nowhere in there is there anything touching upon
- 19 survey, a Geometrix survey. They have known about this
- 20 issue. This was an issue that they have put in front of
- 21 this case, and they have never disclosed anybody on this
- 22 issue. I will say this is extremely prejudicial. I've
- 23 got this stuff, you know, Friday before trial, and this
- 24 has been continued multiple times. I can't bring an
- 25 expert now to counter this stuff if this is coming in.

- 1 This is just -- this is the exact opposite of
- 2 what the statute would allow for, and they absolutely were
- 3 required to file a motion to amend if they wanted this.
- 4 And this is not even close to providing any disclosure for
- 5 me.
- 6 THE COURT: Thank you, gentlemen.
- 7 The motion will be granted in part, denied in
- 8 part. The gentleman will be able to state his opinion
- 9 since it was bought up in deposition. That's his opinion
- 10 that the wall was on the downhill neighbor's side of the
- 11 property. He can use a clean copy of the Geometrix survey
- 12 to explain, but the reference to the Google Earth maps is
- 13 out. It's excluded. Should have been turned over.
- 14 The red lines -- with all respect to you two
- 15 gentlemen, and I'm referring to Plaintiffs' counsel, this
- 16 is such a -- in some ways a lynch pin to the case. Either
- 17 your witness sandbagged you or somebody else has been
- 18 sandbagging. There's no way this should not have been
- 19 turned over.
- 20 I find it hard to believe -- and I do want to
- 21 hear the gentleman, and maybe we'll do it outside the
- 22 presence of the jury. He put this together in less than
- 23 24 hours? Somehow I think he had it and has been sitting
- 24 on it, but we'll find out. Probably outside the presence
- 25 of the jury.

- 1 He may be an expert surveyor, has been doing it
- 2 for 50 years or something of that nature, but to put this
- 3 together so quickly at the Court's request on a Thursday
- 4 afternoon, get it cranked out by Friday morning, he's
- 5 known about this the whole time and has been sitting on
- 6 it. So it's out.
- 7 And I'll possibly take other actions, depending
- 8 upon his testimony and his believability and credibility
- 9 about it. And maybe it was, as you state, gentlemen,
- 10 "Hey, the judge asked for this last minute. Can you put
- 11 this in writing for us?" And maybe he is an expert and
- 12 can print it out so quickly. As I say, we shall see.
- But either way, it's out. It should have been
- 14 turned over long ago. But in terms of him stating his
- 15 opinion about the boundary and what he bases it on, that
- 16 is in. But Google Earth is out, and the new Geometrix
- 17 survey that he has created is also out and excluded.
- 18 MR. RADCLIFFE: Point of clarification?
- 19 THE COURT: Yes.
- 20 MR. RADCLIFFE: On the Court's part, allowing him
- 21 to opine on the downhill side of the property, is it the
- 22 Court's ruling that he can opine that he believes the
- 23 Geometrix survey says that, or that he has a separate
- 24 opinion separate and apart from the Geometrix?
- 25 THE COURT: "Based upon the survey" is what he

- 1 stated. So.
- 2 MR. RADCLIFFE: Not that he has an independent
- 3 opinion?
- 4 THE COURT: Correct. Well, they sort of go hand
- 5 in hand. Based upon that, I think -- based upon the
- 6 survey, I think it is because that's part of the other
- 7 question. So based upon the survey only, not his personal
- 8 opinion. So that's part of the motion being granted on
- 9 your side.
- 10 Next. All right. In terms of jury selection,
- 11 I'm going to do hardships. I thought about doing it at
- 12 the same time, but unfortunately, my experience is that
- 13 jurors jump on the bandwagon of other jurors. If I grant
- 14 a hardship in front of everybody, then other jurors jump
- 15 on it. So we're going to use the form.
- 16 It will take me about 30 minutes, 45 minutes to
- 17 do the hardships. I give them about a 15-minute speech
- 18 begging them to do their service. They will fill out a
- 19 form. It takes me 30 to 45 minutes to review that. And
- 20 then I will tell you who has been excused for hardships.
- 21 You'll just mark them off of your random list.
- 22 If I deny a hardship, I will give you copy of it
- 23 so you know that they asked, their reason for asking and
- 24 that it was denied, so you'll have knowledge about that.
- 25 Then we'll turn straight to jury selection.

- 1 I have about ten minutes of introductory
- 2 comments. Then I will turn it over to you two for
- 3 mini-openings, five minutes max. So I'll essentially
- 4 introduce myself, introduce my staff, introduce the
- 5 parties. And then right after that, I'll turn to the
- 6 plaintiff first. You'll have five minutes for a
- 7 mini-opening. There's a clock right above the jury, so
- 8 please, I will cut you off mid-sentence if you hit five
- 9 minutes, and then I will turn it over to the defense for
- 10 mini-opening.
- 11 The reason the Court is doing a mini-opening is
- 12 because the parties did not agree upon a statement for the
- 13 jury, and as indicated, I allow them to do that. So that
- 14 will be the statement to be jury. Since there's not a
- 15 agreed-upon one, it will be your mini-openings.
- 16 The parties will then have -- after I finish my
- 17 questioning, each side will have 45 minutes to question
- 18 the 24 jurors. If we exhaust through peremptory
- 19 challenges and have to bring in a new group of folks, then
- 20 you'll get 20 minutes after that with the new jurors only.
- 21 Refresh my recollection because I do have a
- 22 hybrid assignment, criminal and civil, it's six
- 23 peremptories in civil, correct?
- Okay. Both sides nodded their head in the
- 25 affirmative. Thank you for that.

- 1 And we'll do challenges for cause in the back.
- 2 So after I finish my questioning, after you finish your
- 3 questioning, I'll ask the gentlemen to approach. There's
- 4 a library behind this courtroom; we'll go in there.
- 5 Defense will tell me your challenges for cause. I'll just
- 6 need the numbers only. And if I need explanation, I'll
- 7 ask you for explanation. I'll ask for the plaintiffs'
- 8 challenges for cause. Just give me the numbers, and I'll
- 9 rule upon those. And if I grant any, then I'll replace
- 10 them and then give a short version of my jury selection
- 11 voir dire. And then I'll give you five minutes,
- 12 essentially four minutes per person, for the people who
- 13 are challenged for cause.
- 14 Also, over the weekend -- I believe it was
- 15 Friday -- Court sent counsel proposed pre-jury
- 16 instructions. Also indicated you have until Sunday at
- 17 noon for any objections, but just asking out loud: Any
- 18 objection to the six instructions I plan on giving,
- 19 Mr. Radcliffe?
- MR. RADCLIFFE: No.
- 21 THE COURT: How about Plaintiffs' team?
- 22 MR. BLUM: No objections, your Honor.
- 23 THE COURT: Okay. Thank you, gentlemen.
- 24 All right. Any brief questions before we get the
- 25 process moving? Plaintiff first.

- 1 MR. BLUM: Motion in Limine No. 16, the Court has
- 2 not ruled on, and it seems that -- I would request, if
- 3 possible, a ruling on that before we pick a jury. It's
- 4 sort of --
- 5 THE COURT: Refresh my recollection since there's
- 6 30 motions in limine. Just tell me the subject matter.
- 7 MR. BLUM: I'm sorry. It's called Defendant's
- 8 Motion in Limine No. 16 for an order excluding claims for
- 9 strict liability or negligence per se based on Civil Code
- 10 Section 832. So essentially, it goes to the heart of our
- 11 sole cause of action. And if the Court is going to grant
- 12 it, then we're done. And if it's not, then we move on.
- 13 But I don't want to waste time if we're done.
- 14 THE COURT: Are you prepared to address that,
- 15 Mr. Radcliffe? If you already did in writing --
- MR. RADCLIFFE: I do have a supplemental brief
- 17 that I would -- declaration that I wanted to give to the
- 18 Court on the issue of the negligence per se as to authored
- 19 discovery responses, and my representation to the Court is
- 20 in all of the plaintiff's Form Interrogatory 14.1
- 21 responses, they were all asked if they were contending
- 22 that the defendant or any party had violated any statute,
- 23 ordinance or regulation, and they all answered "no."
- And so for negligence per se, that would bar them
- 25 from arguing a negligence per se argument. I don't think

- 1 it applies anyways, but they should have raised this issue
- 2 in discovery if they felt there was a violation of the
- 3 statute. They all confirmed in verified responses that
- 4 they did not. I have that as a supplemental declaration
- 5 to give to the Court.
- 6 THE COURT: Plaintiffs may have your minute. I'm
- 7 prepared to rule on probably 90 percent of it.
- 8 MR. BLUM: I don't think that form interrogatory
- 9 is intended to apply to this type of case. That's -- you
- 10 know, car accidents and things like that. So I think
- 11 that's kind of silly. It's not a violation of the law.
- 12 It's rather that my clients are entitled to lateral
- 13 support. And it's a common law right as well as codified.
- 14 I'm happy to proceed on the common law right.
- 15 THE COURT: For the record, with the invitation
- 16 of counsel, I read and considered papers filed at the
- 17 motion in front of Judge Haines on Cause of Action No. 3.
- 18 We have already talked about his ruling on the record. So
- 19 I read the briefs filed by the plaintiff, the defense and
- 20 also the former defendants were still involved in the
- 21 case, so I did read and consider their papers as well.
- 22 They were pretty short.
- 23 So I'll rule this way: Whether we call it,
- 24 quote, "strict liability" or a form of strict liability,
- 25 the Court respectfully disagrees with the analysis put

- 1 forth by the plaintiffs' team. As I understand their
- 2 argument in terms of, quote, "strict liability," the
- 3 common law rule, every case they cite talks about
- 4 excavation. If there's an excavation, then there's an
- 5 affirmative action, affirmative action is done to the land
- 6 that results in damage, then a negligence standard
- 7 applies.
- 8 Or stated another way: If there's an excavation
- 9 and the parties follow 832 of the Civil Code, provided
- 10 notice, things of that nature, so long as the excavator
- 11 exercised ordinary care and skill, they were not
- 12 negligent, then they could be liable for damage.
- 13 If a landowner -- and you use these phrases
- 14 purposefully, "landowner" versus an "excavator," if they
- 15 follow the reasoning of Plaintiffs' counsel, if a
- 16 landowner does nothing, doesn't take any affirmative
- 17 action, none of their lessees or lessors take any action,
- 18 they don't trespass upon the land and there's an act of
- 19 God -- I'm not religious but an act of God, act of
- 20 weather, so rain, earthquake -- results in damage, then
- 21 there should be strict liability on the other person, on
- 22 the other landowner.
- 23 Even when you read Miller -- and I'm going to
- 24 read the moving papers to the plaintiff -- they
- 25 consistently leave out two words later when it talks about

- 1 liability and excavator. Or two words before on the same
- 2 line, it says "excavator." If an excavator does not
- 3 comply with Civil Code 832, the Court agrees, common law
- 4 and strict liability.
- If an excavator complies with 832, and there's
- 6 still damage, then there's negligence. But I respectfully
- 7 and totally disagree that if a particular landowner does
- 8 nothing, and there's an act of God or earthquake,
- 9 something of that nature and damage is caused, that
- 10 there's somehow strict liability, the Court respectfully
- 11 disagrees and will not be giving that instruction to the
- 12 jury.
- Even when you read, and for sake of argument,
- 14 that it is a learned treatise, Miller, let's start with
- 15 Plaintiffs' opposition to Ms. Coulten's motion for the
- 16 judgment on the pleadings, that third cause of action.
- 17 I'm not revisiting what Judge Haines did, but in terms of
- 18 that paperwork, they cite the landslide and subsidi- --
- 19 S-U-B-S-I-D-E-N-C-E by building book, Section 7.15,
- 20 Lateral and Subjacent support. Second paragraph:
- 21 "At common law the excavator who denied his
- 22 neighbor lateral or subjacent support for his property was
- 23 subject to strict liability." The excavator. And when
- 24 you read the cases, Marin Municipal Water District, which
- 25 was cited by Judge Haines, that was an excavation case.

- 1 Again, citing to the plaintiffs' brief and the case law
- 2 they cited, next paragraph, "If the excavator complies
- 3 with requirements of Civil Code 832, the common law rule
- 4 of strict liability does not apply."
- 5 When you go to the next page in the moving
- 6 papers, top of the page, page 147, under Section 832, 1,
- 7 "The excavator must give notice" -- couple lines down --
- 8 "the excavator's liability is determined" -- next
- 9 paragraph -- "when a excavator is intended to be deeper
- 10 than the foundation" -- sorry, "excavation." Next
- 11 paragraph. Next paragraph. Next paragraph. Citing case
- 12 law, all talk about excavation.
- When I read Plaintiffs' trial brief, which is the
- 14 more relevant one at this point in time in terms of their
- 15 argument regarding, quote, "strict liability" and common
- 16 law rule, you go to Miller, 17:19 section, as touched upon
- 17 by counsel. Second line, "Common law rule of absolute
- 18 liability, period. "An excavator's liability arises
- 19 from" -- and it goes from there. Next paragraph, "At
- 20 common law, a property owner has an absolute right to
- 21 lateral support in all circumstance and a,
- 22 C-O-T-E-R-M-I-N-O-U-S, owner who excavated on his
- 23 property," and it goes on from there.
- Next line, "An excavating owner acted at his own
- 25 peril and was liable for all damages" -- goes on from

- 1 there. Fourth paragraph, "The rule of absolute liability
- 2 does not apply to improvements, period. "The common law
- 3 rule of absolute liability applies only to the protection
- 4 of adjoining land" -- line continues. The next line in
- 5 the same paragraph, "The excavator is not liable for
- 6 damages" -- it goes on. Next paragraph, "Under the common
- 7 law rule, an excavating owner is not liable if the
- 8 adjoining land" -- it goes on from there.
- 9 Each of those paragraphs cites to a case. Some
- 10 of the cases were cited within the moving papers by the
- 11 plaintiff. I've read and considered those cases going
- 12 back to the 1946 case that we touched upon last week,
- 13 again, that was an excavation case. So I read all these
- 14 cases in Miller, and yesterday was a long day, but it is
- 15 what it is.
- And, well, counsel cites and puts in quotes,
- 17 common law rule liability, in particular page 5, line 16
- 18 and 17: "As the Court of Appeal held in Wharam,
- 19 W-H-A-R-A-M, comma, the absolute right to lateral support
- 20 is, quote, 'incident to the land itself,' close quote, and
- 21 exists with or without excavation." And Plaintiffs' cite
- 22 to Wharam, 58 Cal.2nd, page 346, citing a particular page,
- 23 349.
- Wharam was an excavation case, and to say that
- 25 this common law right exists with or without excavation,

- 1 case law does not follow that. Case law does not match
- 2 that. And that is why the request to instruct the jury
- 3 that there's, quote, "strict liability" or a form of
- 4 strict liability, that request is denied.
- 5 And lastly, touch upon the other big case cited
- 6 by Plaintiffs' counsel, Sager, S-A-G-E-R, vs. O'Connell,
- 7 O, apostrophe, -C-O-N-N-E-L-L, a 1944 case, 67 Cal.2d,
- 8 page 27, that also was an excavation case. And the
- 9 standard was negligence, not strict liability.
- Now, don't need to beat a dead horse with this.
- 11 Page 6, moving papers, Exhibit A, citing to the Miller and
- 12 Starr -- Starr is S-T-A, two R's, -R-R -- real estate
- 13 book, line 23, "What has been modified is that a
- 14 landowner, "ellipse, ellipse, ellipse, "is permitted to
- 15 excavate free from" -- and it goes on from there. So the
- 16 Court respectfully disagrees with the analysis by
- 17 Plaintiff that Miller and Starr makes it clear that,
- 18 quote, "strict liability," close quote, still applies to
- 19 the removal of lateral support not involving excavation.
- Does negligence still apply? Yes. Whether it's
- 21 under 832 or the owner of a wall barrier, if they're still
- 22 negligent, yes, the jurors will be informed of that and
- 23 liability can be had. But to say it's strict liability if
- 24 then, Court disagrees based upon the law and case law.
- We do not need to make a distinction between

- 1 "negligence" and "negligence per se" at this time. I'm
- 2 still working on that. I don't think I can agree with
- 3 Mr. Radcliffe in terms of the interrogatories and things
- 4 of that nature making negligence per se, but I still have
- 5 to research that point. But I spent most of my time
- 6 yesterday and over the past few days since this has been
- 7 coming up, including when the motions in limine were
- 8 filed, to figure out if the law is a strict liability for
- 9 acts of God, essentially. And I disagree with that.
- 10 Okay. All right. Anything else before the jury
- 11 comes in, sir, and not on this particular point?
- MR. BLUM: Yes, your Honor.
- 13 THE COURT: Go ahead.
- 14 MR. BLUM: Given the Court's ruling and given
- 15 that we have dismissed our first two causes of action, it
- 16 might make sense for Mr. Radcliffe to make a motion to
- 17 dismiss our case. Sometimes it is the case -- and I
- 18 learned this early on in my career in antitrust cases --
- 19 we sometimes try cases for appeal. We sometimes --
- 20 sometimes that's just the way things work, and this is an
- 21 important appellate issue. It's an important legal issue.
- 22 We respect your Honor's opinion on this, but we just
- 23 happen to disagree with it.
- 24 THE COURT: Fair enough.
- MR. BLUM: We think that it's an important issue

- 1 for the entire state. We think that we are well founded
- 2 in the history of the law and that when extensive briefing
- 3 is done and addressed by the court -- I say broadly
- 4 speaking -- we think that we will prevail, and we would
- 5 like to test that. So I --
- 6 THE COURT: Can I ask a question? And you're not
- 7 going to hurt my feelings, I swear. Have you had a trial
- 8 court instruct a jury in such a manner? And it's -- you
- 9 can take the Fifth also. I'm just curious about it
- 10 because I appreciate your briefing and to your point, you
- 11 know, we disagree on this particular point. But have you
- 12 had a trial court -- because I looked for non-published
- 13 cases also. Westlaw can be a great thing in so many ways.
- 14 But I looked for non-published case up and down the State,
- 15 and I couldn't find anything one way or the another per
- 16 se.
- MR. BLUM: You know, I can't really say one way
- 18 or the other because I've been doing this for such a long
- 19 time, and there's so many different types of cases. Some
- 20 are landslides, and some are wall failures, and some are
- 21 subsidence and so on. So the answer is maybe. I don't
- 22 know. I can't remember.
- 23 THE COURT: Okay. That's fair. I'm not holding
- 24 it against you. I'm just curious. Finish your thought,
- 25 sir.

- MR. BLUM: So if Mr. Radcliffe would like to make
- 2 the proper motion, perhaps we will be done today and be
- 3 back in a year.
- 4 THE COURT: Or not.
- 5 MR. BLUM: Or not. Who knows.
- 6 THE COURT: And so I'm clear, sir, so the record
- 7 is clear as possible, you're not pushing, asking the Court
- 8 to even pursue it on a negligence theory?
- 9 MR. BLUM: It's not alleged anymore, your Honor.
- 10 It's -- we are -- it's strict liability or nothing at this
- 11 point.
- MR. HO: Your Honor, if I may clarify.
- 13 THE COURT: Sure.
- 14 MR. HO: I'm looking at the First Amended
- 15 Complaint. If you look at the remaining sole cause of
- 16 action, third cause of action, it doesn't allege
- 17 negligence. So it's entirely based on strict liability.
- 18 THE COURT: Well, the reason I ask, though, is
- 19 because it was Judge Haines' ruling that while labels
- 20 don't matter, it seemed by denying the motion to dismiss
- 21 on the pleadings, he said negligence could still be a
- 22 theory under Cause Of Action No. 3.
- MR. BLUM: His ruling says, quote, "At a minimum,
- 24 Plaintiffs stated -- at a minimum, Plaintiffs stated a
- 25 cause of action for negligence and the title of the third

- 1 cause of action may be disregarded." The point being that
- 2 he did leave in Section 832, and I guess it's being
- 3 relitigated now and this part is coming arguably to a
- 4 different conclusion. So be it. You know, we'll have it,
- 5 you know, decided by the system.
- 6 THE COURT: Understood.
- 7 Mr. Radcliffe, your position, sir?
- 8 MR. RADCLIFFE: I agree with the Court, and I
- 9 will --
- 10 THE COURT: Lean in for Ms. Bellen. I've been
- 11 giving her a hard time because I haven't been speaking
- 12 into the mic, so help her.
- 13 MR. RADCLIFFE: I'm in agreement with the Court.
- 14 I'll keep it brief. It's their case. If they want to
- 15 make a dismissal, their cause of action, they are more
- 16 than welcome to.
- 17 MR. BLUM: We are not dismissing the cause of
- 18 action, your Honor. We're asking or suggesting that
- 19 either Mr. Radcliffe make a motion for judgment or the
- 20 Court do it sua sponte. We're not going to do it. We
- 21 oppose it, but it still needs to be done.
- 22 THE COURT: Understood. I saw the subtle
- 23 difference.
- 24 So, Mr. Radcliffe, how do you wish to proceed,
- 25 sir?

- 1 MR. RADCLIFFE: Sure. I'll ask for judgment in
- 2 favor of Defendant and against Plaintiffs.
- 3 THE COURT: State that phrase one more time.
- 4 MR. RADCLIFFE: Defendant is asking the Court to
- 5 enter a judgment in favor of Defendant Mary Coulten on all
- 6 claims and against Plaintiffs, all plaintiffs, on all
- 7 claims.
- 8 MR. BLUM: There's only one claim.
- 9 THE COURT: Only one claim; am I correct? All
- 10 right.
- 11 Plaintiffs, are you prepared to accept that, as
- 12 stated by Mr. Radcliffe?
- MR. BLUM: Well, obviously, we oppose it, but
- 14 c'est la vie.
- 15 THE COURT: All right. And you gentlemen know
- 16 even better than I do. Words matter; phrasing matters,
- 17 so.
- 18 MR. BLUM: Let me be clear about one thing:
- 19 Mr. Radcliffe said, I believe, he is moving for judgment
- 20 on all claims, which I take to mean causes of action, but
- 21 we have previously dismissed with prejudice Causes of
- 22 Action 1 and 2. Therefore, his motion must be directed
- 23 only to Cause of Action No. 3 in the First Amended
- 24 Complaint.
- MR. RADCLIFFE: And what I meant by that would be

- 1 all remaining claims. Maybe I should be more specific.
- 2 MR. BLUM: Well, there's only one remaining
- 3 claim, your Honor.
- 4 THE COURT: It's okay, gentlemen.
- 5 All right. Over Plaintiffs' objection, Defense
- 6 motion is granted, dismiss the last cause of action,
- 7 No. 3. I'll leave it at that.
- 8 All right. Any other dangling issues from
- 9 Plaintiffs' side?
- 10 MR. BLUM: Excuse me, your Honor.
- 11 THE COURT: Sure. Take your time.
- 12 (An attorney/client discussion was held.)
- MR. BLUM: No, your Honor.
- 14 THE COURT: Any dangling issues from the defense
- 15 side?
- MR. RADCLIFFE: No. Thank you for your time.
- 17 THE COURT: All right. All of you be well. It
- 18 was a learning experience, and I'll keep my eye on any
- 19 appellate matters. My unit's not involved, that's what
- 20 they're there for, and I'll happily follow their lead.
- 21 All right. Everybody be well.
- MR. RADCLIFFE: Your Honor, I assume there will
- 23 be -- the Court will enter some type of written judgment,
- 24 and it will be on file in some period of time, short
- 25 order?

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1
            MR. HO: Mr. Radcliffe can send a proposal.
 2
            MR. RADCLIFFE: I can send a proposal. Or either
   way. That's why I'm trying to clarify.
 3
             THE COURT: On this record, why don't you send a
 4
   proposal. Send it to counsel and send it to the Court.
 5
   And then if I have to, I will modify it. But if you want
 7
   to do a proposal, that will be great.
 8
            MR. RADCLIFFE: Thank you, your Honor.
 9
            (Whereupon proceedings concluded at 10:08 AM)
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1	REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE
2	
3	
4	I, ELLEN VALENTINE BELLEN, CSR NO. 9575, a Certified
5	Shorthand Reporter of the State of California, do hereby certify
6	that the foregoing proceedings in the within-entitled cause were
7	reported by me, a disinterested person, and thereafter
8	transcribed under my direction into typewriting and is a true and
9	correct transcription of said proceedings.
10	I further certify that I am not of counsel or attorney
11	for either or any of the parties in the foregoing proceedings and
12	caption named, nor in any way interested in the outcome of the
13	cause named in said caption.
14	Dated the 12th of November, 2024.
15	
16	400
17	ELLEN VALENTINE DELLEN CCD NO. 0575
18	ELLEN VALENTINE BELLEN, CSR NO. 9575
19	
20	
21	
22	
23	
24	
25	

	<b>23</b> 7:7,11 10:6 38:13	<b>707</b> 2:3	actions 23:10 28:7
-	<b>2377</b> 2:7	<b>766</b> 17:25	acts 39:9
<b>000</b> 4:1 45:10	<b>24</b> 27:23 30:18	<b>790017-3604</b> 2:4	<b>actual</b> 23:10
-C-O-N-N-E-L-L 38:7	<b>26</b> 20:25	<b>7:00</b> 6:5	add 11:13 26:4
-R-R 38:12	<b>27</b> 38:8		added 13:5
	<b>2829</b> 1:21	8	additional 7:8 21:7 26:5
<u> </u>	3	<b>832</b> 32:10 34:9 35:3,5 36:3,6 38:21 42:2	additions 23:20
<b>1</b> 14:2 16:19 17:14 19:18 20:22 36:6 43:22	3 16:20 19:20 23:14 26:11 33:17 41:22 43:23 44:7 30 29:16,19 32:6 346 37:22 349 37:23	-	address 22:11 32:14
<b>1-50</b> 1:14		9	addressed 21:18 40:
<b>1.2</b> 8:14,15 9:16 13:22		<b>90</b> 10:22 33:7	adjoining 37:4,8
<b>100</b> 2:7 25:23		<b>90017-3604</b> 2:3	affirmative 30:25 34:
<b>100</b> 2.7 25.23 <b>10:08</b> 45:9		90017-3004 2.3 916 333-3375 2:8	16
11-something 5:15		<b>94118-1125</b> 2:11	afternoon 28:4
<b>11-50</b> mething 5.15		94116-1125 2.11 94947 1:21	<b>agree</b> 15:5 30:12 39:2
<b>1144</b> 2.11 <b>1280</b> 24:22	4	<b>95670</b> 2:7	42:8
<b>14</b> 23:14	<b>4</b> 3:4 <b>415-328-6644</b> 1:22	<b>9575</b> 1:25	agreed-upon 30:15
<b>14.</b> 23.14 <b>14.1</b> 32:20		<b>9:03</b> 4:2	agreeing 14:22
<b>14.1</b> 32.20 <b>147</b> 36:6	<b>415-518-7683</b> 2:12	9.03 4.2	agreement 42:13
<b>15</b> 17:24	<b>45</b> 29:16,19 30:17	A	<b>agrees</b> 14:23 35:3 <b>ahead</b> 19:4 22:13 39:
<b>15</b> -minute 29:17	<b>4880</b> 2:3	4.0.0.5	alia 8:18
<b>16</b> 18:10 32:1,8 37:17		<b>a.m.</b> 4:2 6:5	
<b>17</b> 37:18	5	abide 8:19	allege 41:16 alleged 41:9
<b>17:19</b> 17:1 20:2 36:16	<b>5</b> 37:17	ability 9:13	Allocation 8:16
<b>17:20</b> 17:1 20:3	<b>50</b> 28:2	<b>absolute</b> 11:21 16:24 19:23 36:17,20 37:1,3,	
<b>1944</b> 38:7	<b>58</b> 37:22	19	allowing 28:20 ALVES 2:6
<b>1946</b> 37:12		absolutely 23:1 27:2	amend 23:2 27:3
1st 10:21	6	accept 43:11	Amended 19:18 41:1
	<b>6</b> 38:11	accidents 33:10	43:23
2	<b>608</b> 1:4 4:25	account 11:16,18	Amendment 13:12
<b>2</b> 14:3 16:19 19:19	<b>631</b> 17:16	act 34:18,19 35:8	analogue 13:13
20:23 43:22	<b>631(b)</b> 7:3	<b>acted</b> 36:24	analysis 33:25 38:16
<b>20</b> 30:20	<b>67</b> 38:7	<b>action</b> 9:7,10 10:22 16:19,20 19:18,19,20	Angeles 2:3,4
<b>2023</b> 5:20 7:7,11 10:6		20:22,23 32:11 33:17	antitrust 39:18
<b>2024</b> 1:19 3:3 4:2 17:23	7	34:5,17 35:16 39:15 41:16,22,25 42:1,15,18	anymore 41:9
<b>21</b> 1:19 3:3 4:2	<b>7.15</b> 35:19	43:20,22,23 44:6	apostrophe 38:7

**Apparently** 10:17 authority 8:15,16 16:13 17:7 19:17 20:9, **call** 5:6 7:21 14:15 11:22 17 31:22 32:1,7 33:8 33:23 **appeal** 17:22 37:18 39:12,14,25 40:17 41:1, authorizes 18:12 called 11:11 13:23 32:7 39:19 5,9,23 42:17 43:8,13,18 appearance 9:23 Ayers 1:7 4:6 15:22 44:2,10,13 capital 17:18 Blum's 18:9 Appearances 2:1 4:8 car 33:10 **Ayres** 1:7,8 **Blvd** 2:3 care 34:11 appeared 6:14 В appellate 39:21 44:19 bogged 13:5 **career** 39:18 book 35:19 38:13 applicable 8:21 **CAROLINE** 1:7 back 4:5 5:20 19:10 25:9 31:1 37:12 41:3 applies 33:1 34:7 37:3 bought 27:9 carrier 11:25 38:18 **bad** 12:23 boundaries 21:21,23 carve-outs 15:1 **apply** 33:9 36:4 37:2 22:19 23:8 **ball** 8:2 **case** 4:7,20 5:21 8:19 38:20 boundary 28:15 9:7,10 10:9 13:4,10 bandwagon 29:13 appointed 12:10 14:24 15:6,11,17,25 **BOX** 1:21 bar 18:5 32:24 16:2,17 17:23 18:1,3 approach 31:3 **BRADEN** 1:3 barrier 38:21 19:21 23:13 26:21 approximately 5:15 27:16 33:9.21 34:3 **briefing** 40:2,10 **based** 7:17 12:4 19:14 35:25 36:1,11 37:9,12, 6:5 28:25 29:5,7 32:9 38:24 **briefly** 8:1,3 10:8,11 13,24 38:1,5,7,8,24 **AREA** 1:20 41:17 39:17 40:14 42:14 13:1 18:19 21:6 arguably 42:3 **bases** 28:15 **briefs** 33:19 cases 13:9 17:23 35:24 37:10,11,14 39:18,19 argue 20:7 **basis** 20:11 **bring** 16:15 26:24 40:13,19 argued 24:18 30:19 **BAY** 1:20 catch 23:18 arguing 32:25 broad 24:10,24 beat 38:10 caused 35:9 argument 11:15 32:25 broadly 40:3 begging 29:18 **CCP** 18:13 34:2 35:13 36:15 brought 14:23 19:10 belief 8:9 **CCP631** 17:15 arguments 17:14 **Builders** 17:17,18 believability 28:8 **Center** 23:14 **arises** 36:18 building 35:19 believed 22:15 certainty 25:23 assignment 30:22 **believes** 21:23,24 C **cetera** 17:21 **assume** 44:22 28:22 CGC-23-606844 1:8 attached 25:9 Bellen 1:25 42:10 c'est 43:14 4:7 attorney 2:5,9,12 11:5 **belongs** 13:16 C-O-T-E-R-M-I-N-O-Uchallenged 31:13 attorney/client 16:12 bench 6:2 10:14,21 **S** 36:22 **challenges** 30:19 31:1, 44:12 benefit 19:2 C-U-M-I-S 12:6 5,8 attorneys 6:9 10:19 bhart@ **CA** 1:21 2:3,4,7,11 changing 12:20 19:2 bayareatrialreporters Cal.2d 38:7 **charge** 14:25 18:3 audience 11:2,4 .com 1:25 Cal.2nd 37:22 August 7:7,11 10:6 chastise 18:25 **biq** 22:20 38:5 **Cal.5th** 17:24 check 19:3 25:22 authored 32:18 binding 15:12 California 1:1 8:14 checked 26:3 authorities 7:20 11:20 **Blum** 2:2,5 4:9,10 5:25 12:1 17:2,22,23 18:9,11 19:24 6:4 7:22 11:5,8 12:16, checklist 19:9 20:24

17,19,22,25 13:2 15:9

circumstance 36:21 circumstances 18:2 citation 11:17 citation's 23:14 cite 17:24 22:9 34:3 35:18 37:21 **cited** 7:20 11:20,21,23 22:1 23:13 26:11 35:25 36:2 37:10 38:5 cites 37:9,16 citing 18:6 36:1,11 37:22 38:11 **civil** 17:16 30:22,23 32:9 34:9 35:3 36:3 **claim** 43:8,9 44:3 claims 32:8 43:6,7,20 44:1 clarification 19:8 20:13 28:18 **clarify** 21:10 41:12 45:3 **clean** 27:11 **clear** 4:19 6:20 11:19 20:10 38:17 41:6,7 43:18 **clerk** 11:11 **client** 8:22 9:3,6 13:16, 17,24 14:1,3,4,6,10,21 15:2 16:8 19:3 client's 8:19 13:25 15:13 clients 5:16 9:11 13:3 15:11 16:18 33:12 clients' 15:21 **clock** 30:7 close 27:4 37:20 38:18 CM110 5:21 Code 13:22 17:15 24:22 32:9 34:9 35:3 36:3

codefendants 7:6

codified 33:13

**Collins** 2:2 4:10 comma 37:19 comment 15:10 comments 7:15 8:3 20:19 30:2 **common** 20:2,4 33:13, 14 34:3 35:3,21 36:3, 15,17,20 37:2,6,17,25 Community 23:13 company 10:18 12:10 13:17 14:4,5,7,13,14, 17,25 15:7,13,16,19,23 16:6,9 18:2 company's 14:15 complaint 14:17 19:18 41:15 43:24 complies 35:5 36:2 comply 35:3 concluded 45:9 conclusion 42:4 Conduct 8:14 9:12 confirm 24:6 26:2 confirmed 33:3 conflicted 14:8 confusing 9:13 conjunction 18:14 consideration 16:16 considered 17:14.15. 16 33:16 37:11 consistently 34:25 constitution 13:12,13 18:10,12 constitutional 9:2 13:11 consultation 8:20 contending 32:21 Continue 9:8 continued 26:24

continues 37:4

**control** 6:25 8:9,11,13, 15,25 35:3,10 37:18 24 9:1,14 11:19 12:1,11 38:16,24 39:13,24 40:3, 6,8,12,23 41:4,6,7,13, controlling 11:23 12:2 18 42:6,8,10,13,20,22 23:12 43:3,4,9,15 44:4,11,14, controls 15:2 17,23 45:4,5 convenient 10:16 Court's 5:12 19:14 20:24 28:3,20,22 39:14 convinced 16:24 courtesy 7:25 copy 7:23,25 27:11 29:22 courtroom 31:4 cover 24:11,24 corporate 17:22 cranked 28:4 **correct** 6:4 8:12 9:23 18:22 29:4 30:23 43:9 created 28:17 correctly 10:23 credibility 28:8 Coulten 4:7,16 5:2 6:7, criminal 8:18 30:22 9,13,18,24 7:19 9:5,19 critical 14:19 10:7,13 13:17,18,19 15:12,18,21,23 43:5 CROSS-ACTION 1:16 Coulten's 8:11,24 cross-complainants 11:24 14:16 15:6 35:15 7:13 COULTON 1:13 cross-defendant's council 5:21 6:15 **CSR** 1:25 counsel 4:16,20 5:11, 16 6:3,6 7:25 12:6,8,9, Cumis 4:17,20 12:6,8, 12 15:7 17:14 27:15 9.12 31:15 33:16 34:15 36:17 37:16 38:6 45:5 curious 40:9,24 **count** 15:25 cut 30:8 counter 26:25 D COUNTY 1:2 couple 36:7 damage 26:13 34:6,12,

damage 26:13 34:6,12 20 35:6,9 damages 36:25 37:6 dangling 44:8,14 date 7:10 David 2:12 4:15 day 37:14 days 10:22 13:23 39:6 dead 38:10 deal 18:5 dealing 15:21

**court** 1:1 4:5,13,17,20,

21,23,25 5:1,3,7,14 6:1,

3,5,6,14,21 7:10,12,15,

24 8:6 9:8,17 10:1,3,4,

10,19 11:7,10 12:3,15,

18,21,24 13:1,4 14:22

15:11 16:21,25 17:8,24 18:8,14,19 19:9,25

20:7,12,15,18,21 21:2,

23:16,23,25 24:3,8,25

25:5,9,12,19 26:1,4,7

5,11,14,18,19 33:5,6,

10,11,16 22:5,8,13

27:6 28:19,25 29:4 30:11 31:15,21,23 32:1,

**deals** 17:19 determine 24:14 **excavator's** 36:8,18 Е decide 8:25 15:11 determined 36:8 exception 15:3 decided 42:5 diagram 25:1 exclude 20:25 21:11,19 e-mail 4:23 5:1,3,10,12 6:6 10:14 decides 18:7 difference 6:23 42:23 **excluded** 27:13 28:17 earlier 7:17 decision 8:19 dire 31:11 excluding 32:8 early 39:18 decisions 16:22 directed 43:22 exclusion 23:15 **Earth** 24:4 25:8,20,24 declaration 24:3,16 directly 21:12 **excuse** 16:11 17:7 27:12 28:16 25:10,20 32:17 33:4 44:10 disagree 35:7 39:9,23 earthquake 34:20 35:8 deeper 36:9 40:11 excused 29:20 **easily** 25:25 exercised 34:11 default 14:20 disagrees 33:25 35:11 38:16,24 **ELIZABETH** 1:6 defendant 2:6 4:7,14 exhaust 30:18 7:4 32:22 43:2,4,5 disclose 22:22 23:1,7, **ELLEN** 1:25 **exhibit** 25:2.9 38:11 **Defendant's** 32:7 **ellipse** 38:14 exhibits 3:9 23:18 disclosed 22:2,17 24:7 defendants 1:15 5:9 **ELYSA** 1:13 25:3 26:12,21 exists 37:21,25 7:4,5,8,12,14 10:5 end 19:10 33:20 **disclosure** 22:3 24:10, expense 13:5 24 26:10,11 27:4 enter 43:5 44:23 defense 4:13 6:25 7:17 experience 29:12 8:9,10 9:14 12:1 15:17 **discovery** 32:19 33:2 44:18 entered 8:21 18:15 20:24 21:18 discussion 4:24 16:12 **expert** 21:19 22:21 entire 40:1 23:23 30:9 31:5 33:19 44:12 24:17,18,23,24 26:11, 44:5,14 entitled 33:12 25 28:1.11 dismiss 16:18 19:17 **delay** 13:5 essence 22:5 20:22 39:17 41:20 44:6 explain 27:12 demand 5:19 essential 24:13 dismissal 42:15 explained 10:24 demanded 6:17 essentially 18:16 dismissed 39:15 43:21 explaining 24:16 22:14 30:3 31:12 32:10 demanding 5:23 6:8 dismissing 42:17 explanation 31:6,7 39:9 18:15 disregard 16:8 explicitly 9:15 estate 17:3 38:12 denied 27:7 29:24 35:21 38:4 disregarded 42:1 extensive 40:2 ethical 14:11 deny 29:22 distinction 22:20 extremely 26:22 Evidence 24:21 38:25 denying 41:20 eye 44:18 exact 27:1 distinctly 10:13 **Department** 1:4 4:25 **EXAMINATIONS** 3:6 District 35:24 F depending 28:7 excavate 38:15 document 22:20 24:19 depo 22:10 excavated 36:22 fails 11:16 **documents** 24:4,5,6 deposition 27:9 failure 23:11 24:12 **excavating** 36:24 37:7 downhill 27:10 28:21 26:15 **DERRLYN** 1:9 excavation 34:4,8 **drop** 16:18 failures 40:20 35:25 36:10,12 37:13, design 24:13 21,24,25 38:8,19 dumb 12:22 fair 15:8 39:24 40:23 designated 24:11 excavator 34:10.14 duty 5:20 **Family** 1:7,8 **desire** 15:14 35:1,2,5,21,23 36:2,7,9 37:5 favor 43:2,5 determination 13:9 18:7

ı

9,13 12:13

9:1 12:7,14

**insurer** 6:23,25 8:25

feelings 40:7 half 9:24 Hospital 23:13 G **fees** 5:20 6:13,17 7:3,5, hand 19:4 29:4,5 hour 9:25 6,9 10:4 17:21 18:16 hours 27:23 **happen** 39:23 G-E-O-M-E-T-R-I-X felt 33:2 23:18 happily 44:20 hurt 40:7 fiduciary 14:10 gallery 9:24 **happy** 6:2 10:8,12 **hybrid** 30:22 figure 39:8 18:14,23 24:9 33:14 Gary 2:5 4:11 file 6:14 10:4 14:17 hard 25:5 27:20 42:11 general 23:3 20:22 23:2 24:5 26:3 **hardship** 29:14,22 gentleman 11:2,3 27:3 44:24 **image** 25:8 22:10 27:8,21 hardships 29:11,17,20 filed 9:6,9 17:15 33:16, **images** 25:25 gentlemen 5:18 17:9 19 39:8 head 13:14 25:6 30:24 27:6,15 28:9 31:3,23 **impact** 16:16 fill 29:18 **heads** 19:1 43:15 44:4 **important** 39:21,25 find 10:4 27:20,24 **hear** 5:17 6:10 8:1.3 Geometrix 21:22 importantly 22:2 40:15 10:8,9,12 13:1,4,10 22:15,18 23:7,18 26:19 18:23 21:5,12 24:9 27:11 28:16,23,24 improvements 37:2 finds 14:9 27:21 **give** 29:17,22 31:8,10, incident 37:20 finish 7:15 19:14 30:16 heard 9:19 18:19 11 32:17 33:5 36:7 31:2 40:24 include 24:5 heart 32:10 qiving 19:1 31:18 35:11 firm 2:10 11:6 including 39:7 42:11 held 4:24 16:12 37:18 folks 30:19 inclusive 1:14 44:12 glasses 25:6 follow 13:25 19:9 34:9, incorrect 12:5 **Hey** 22:25 28:10 God 34:19 35:8 39:9 15 38:1 44:20 independent 12:7 29:2 highly 23:9 Gold 2:7 follow-up 24:25 **INDEX** 3:6.9 history 40:2 good 4:9,11,15 5:25 Fonnegra 17:18 10:7 indicating 5:2,16 6:7 hit 30:8 **form** 5:21,22 29:15,19 Google 24:4 25:8,19,24 individual 1:6,8,9,10, **Ho** 2:2,5 4:10,11 23:22 32:20 33:8,24 38:3 27:12 28:16 13,14 4:18,21 24:10 25:8,11,15,22 **forward** 16:17 18:17 26:5 41:12,14 45:1 grant 29:13 31:9 32:11 information 24:2 19:5 **holding** 40:23 granted 20:23 27:7 informed 38:22 foundation 36:10 29:8 44:6 holds 14:10 instance 13:16 founded 40:1 great 15:15 40:13 45:7 hole 12:4 instruct 38:2 40:8 Fourth 37:1 **GREG** 1:9 **Honor** 4:9,11,15 5:25 instruction 13:25 Francisco 1:2 2:11 6:4 7:22 8:7 9:20,21 group 30:19 35:11 frankly 16:5 10:13 11:14 18:18 19:7, Gruszynski 1:9 4:6 instructions 31:16,18 17 20:17 21:8,17 24:10 free 38:15 25:22 26:6,9 31:22 guarantees 18:13 **insurance** 10:18 12:10 **Fresno** 23:13 39:12 41:9.12 42:18 13:17 14:4,5,7,12,14, **guess** 42:2 44:3,10,13,22 45:8 15,17,24,25 15:2,5,7,9, Friday 10:21 23:17 13,16,19,23,24,25 16:2, 25:17 26:23 28:4 31:15 **Honor's** 24:15 25:16 Н 6,9 18:2 39.22 front 26:20 29:14 33:17 insured 6:23 7:20 9:6. **HONORABLE** 1:3 Haines 33:17 35:17,25 fruit 12:24

Haines' 41:19

horse 38:10

intended 33:9 36:9 inter 8:17 interest 13:3 interpleader 9:7,10 interrogatories 39:3

interrogatory 32:20 33:8

intervention 14:17 introduce 30:4

introductory 30:1

invitation 33:15

involved 33:20 44:19

involves 16:21

involving 38:19

**issue** 10:10 14:19 17:13 19:8 21:9 23:6 26:20,22 32:18 33:1 39:21,25

**issues** 16:10 22:2 23:7 44:8,14

## J

Jones 18:23

**judge** 28:10 33:17 35:17,25 41:19

judgment 35:16 42:19 43:1,5,19 44:23

judicial 5:21 6:14 10:3

jump 22:6 29:13,14

**jurors** 29:13,14 30:18, 20 38:22

jury 5:2,13,17,19,23 6:1,7,8,13,17,24 7:2,3, 5,8,18,19 8:12,13,22 9:2,14 10:4,10,15 13:6, 10 14:19 16:7 17:13,20, 21 18:7,11,16,17 19:5 20:15 27:22,25 29:10, 25 30:7,13,14 31:10 32:3 35:12 38:2 39:10 40:8

## Κ

keeping 16:3,4 kind 33:11 knew 23:4 knowledge 29:24

## L

la 43:14 labeled 20:3 labels 41:19 Lake 2:11

land 34:5,18 37:4,8,20

landowner 34:13,14, 16,22 35:7 38:14

landslide 35:18

landslides 40:20

lastly 38:5

lateral 16:20,25 19:20, 21,24 20:2,3 33:12 35:20,22 36:21 37:19 38:19

latest 17:23

law 2:10 8:18 11:18 12:1 20:2,4 33:11,13,14 34:3 35:3,21 36:1,3,12, 16,17,20 37:2,7,17,25 38:1,24 39:8 40:2

lawsuit 9:11

**lawyer** 8:19,20 13:18, 25 14:1,7,16

lead 15:7 44:20

**Lean** 42:10

learned 35:14 39:18

learning 44:18

**leave** 23:2 34:25 42:2 44:7

legal 18:7 39:21

**lessees** 34:17

lessors 34:17

**liability** 20:6 32:9 33:24 34:2,21 35:1,4,10,23 36:4,8,15,18 37:1,3,17 38:3,4,9,18,23 39:8 41:10,17

**liable** 34:12 36:25 37:5,

library 31:4

**limine** 5:7 9:22,25 16:3 18:20 20:25 32:1,6,8 39:7

lines 27:14 36:7

list 29:21

litigant's 15:14

litigating 16:5,8

litigation 7:1 8:10 11:20 12:11 14:25 15:3

**Living** 1:7,8

**LLP** 2:2,6

location 21:20,22 24:14

**long** 28:14 34:10 37:14 40:18

looked 40:12,14

Los 2:3,4

lot 12:22 16:9 17:22

loud 10:25 19:1 31:17

lunch 9:25

lynch 27:16

## M

made 5:19 11:15

**make** 7:21 9:23 10:23 14:1,14 20:9 26:12 38:25 39:16 41:1 42:15, 19

**makes** 38:17

making 16:21 39:4

**manage** 11:19

management 5:21

manner 40:8

maps 25:20 27:12

**Marin** 35:24

mark 29:21

markings 25:2,13,14, 15

Mary 1:13 4:6 43:5

**match** 38:1

**matter** 5:8 8:3 11:3 19:6 32:6 41:20 43:16

**matters** 4:5 43:16 44:19

max 30:3

Meadow 2:7

meaning 13:25

meant 43:25

Medical 23:14

mic 42:12

mid-sentence 30:8

**Miller** 17:1 20:1 34:23 35:14 36:16 37:14 38:11,17

mind 14:1

mini-opening 30:7,10,

mini-openings 30:3,

minimum 41:23,24

**minute** 17:20 28:10 33:6

**minutes** 29:16,19 30:1, 3,6,9,17,20 31:11,12

mitigation 24:13

**MJOP** 17:4

Modifications 20:4

modified 38:13

modify 45:6

moment 16:11,14

**prejudice** 20:14,16,22

**prejudicial** 23:9 26:22

43:21

notice 6:14 10:4 22:24 Monday 1:19 3:3 4:2 **pin** 27:16 Ρ 5:24 34:10 36:7 **pivot** 17:11 months 23:4 NOVATO 1:21 **plaintiff** 4:8 6:16 11:3 **p.m.** 5:15 morning 3:4 4:3,9,11, nuisance 19:18 18:15 19:13 21:9 24:9 **P.O.** 1:21 15 5:23,25 6:6,12,13,19 25:7 30:6 31:25 33:19 **numbers** 31:6,8 10:7 13:8 28:4 34:24 37:11 38:17 paid 12:6 17:21 18:16 motion 16:3 20:22,24 plaintiff's 5:11 32:20 papers 21:6,12 33:16, 0 21:5 23:2 26:8 27:3.7 21 34:24 36:6 37:10 **plaintiffs** 1:11 2:2 4:6, 29:8 32:1,8 33:17 35:15 38:11 10,12 5:13,17,22,25 O'CONNELL 38:6 39:16 41:2,20 42:19 11:2 20:21 21:3 33:6 paperwork 17:15 43:22 44:6 object 17:5 41:24 43:2,6,11 35:18 motions 5:6 9:22,24 objection 31:18 44:5 **plaintiffs'** 5:16 6:3,15 **paragraph** 8:17 17:1 18:20 23:5 32:6 39:7 7:25 21:19 22:8 23:17 objections 31:17,22 35:20 36:2,9,11,19 move 11:12 18:17 19:5 26:14 27:15 31:7,21 37:1,5,6 obligation 14:11 32:12 34:1,15 35:15 36:1,13 paragraphs 37:9 37:21 38:6 44:5,9 observe 13:7 **moved** 23:5 part 18:20 24:13 27:7,8 **plan** 31:18 October 1:19 3:3 4:2 moving 13:3 21:18 28:20 29:6,8 42:3 5:20 31:25 34:24 36:5 37:10 playing 5:8 parties 30:5,12,16 34:9 38:11 43:19 off-the-record 4:24 plea 8:20 party 9:10 15:16,17 Muller 23:13 offer 23:17 **pleadings** 5:5 35:16 32:22 multiple 7:4 26:24 41:21 offering 24:17,22 past 5:9 39:6 Municipal 35:24 **plum** 12:22 one's 13:10 Patrick 25:10 **point** 9:5 12:2 18:9 19:7 opine 28:21,22 **paying** 13:18 Ν 20:8 22:23 28:18 36:14 opinion 21:20 22:16,21 39:5,11 40:10,11 41:11 **PC** 2:10 24:7,17,19,23 27:8,9 42:1 nature 23:3 28:2 34:10 28:15,24 29:3,8 39:22 pending 23:5 35:9 39:4 policies 15:2 **people** 31:12 opinions 20:25 21:21 **negligence** 19:19 32:9, policy 14:24 15:6,9 22:18 18,24,25 34:6 35:6 percent 25:23 33:7 **position** 6:12,22 14:6,8 38:9,20 39:1,4 41:8,17, oppose 42:21 43:13 peremptories 30:23 15:20,21 17:12 20:10 21,25 opposed 12:7 42:7 peremptory 30:18 negligent 34:12 38:22 opposite 27:1 possibly 19:13 28:7 peril 36:25 neighbor 35:22 opposition 17:4 21:2 post 6:13 7:8,12 period 36:18 37:2 neighbor's 27:10 35:15 44:24 posted 5:20 6:17 7:3,6 **NEIL** 1:14 oral 19:12 10:5 permitted 38:14 **night** 5:15 order 16:3 32:8 44:25 posts 7:5 person 5:14 31:12 nodded 30:24 ordinance 32:23 34:21 **practical** 16:14,15 non-published 40:12, ordinary 34:11 personal 4:16,17 29:7 **pre-jury** 31:15 override 15:13 phrase 43:3 preeminent 17:2

**phrases** 34:13

phrasing 43:16

pick 20:15 32:3

owes 14:11

38:21

owner 36:20,22,24 37:7

nonetheless 13:19

noon 31:17

note 24:1

relies 24:2 preliminary 16:22 reached 24:16 **put** 26:20 27:22 28:2,10 33:25 prepared 6:1 11:12 read 6:21 13:7 15:9 religious 34:19 32:14 33:7 43:11 puts 37:16 17:15 18:13 21:6 33:16, relitigated 42:3 19,21 34:23,24 35:13, presence 27:22,24 24 36:13 37:11,13 relying 24:6 Q **pretty** 33:22 reading 12:4 22:4 remain 8:24 prevail 40:4 question 22:9 29:7 ready 20:10 remaining 41:15 44:1, 30:17 40:6 previously 43:21 real 17:2 38:12 questioning 30:17 **print** 28:12 remedy 23:15 reargue 18:24 31:2,3 problematic 16:10 remember 40:22 reason 29:23 30:11 questions 5:12 31:24 Procedure 17:16 41:18 removal 19:20 38:19 quicker 10:25 proceed 6:1 15:25 reasoning 34:15 repair 26:16 quickly 8:8 28:3,12 16:16,19 20:10 33:14 **receive** 21:2,3 replace 31:9 42:24 **Quinn** 1:6,7,8 4:6 15:22 received 4:23 5:1 6:6 REPORTED 1:24 **proceedings** 1:18 45:9 quote 10:25 20:25 recently 19:25 24:3 REPORTER'S 1:18 33:24 34:2 36:15 37:20 **process** 31:25 38:3,18 41:23 recollection 30:21 **REPORTERS** 1:20 produced 24:6 25:24 32:5 **quotes** 37:16 represent 13:18 Professional 8:14 9:4, recommended 26:16 12 13:22 18:4,6 representation 8:16 R record 4:5 7:24 9:21,23 32:19 **prong** 12:6 10:3 18:22 24:20 26:12 represented 5:9 **R's** 38:12 **proof** 23:17 33:15,18 41:6 45:4 representing 10:17,18 rabbit 12:3 red 23:20 25:2 27:14 proper 41:2 request 19:12,16 24:15 Radcliffe 2:6,8 4:14,19 refer 13:9 properties 26:14 25:16 28:3 32:2 38:2,4 5:10 6:7,11,20 7:11,14, reference 27:12 property 21:1,21,24 16,24 8:8 9:12 10:6,14, requests 7:18 23:8 27:11 28:21 35:22 17 11:12,14 12:8 13:8 referenced 25:20 36:20,23 required 7:8 23:1 14:9 17:5 18:4 19:7 referred 11:17 26:16 27:3 20:12,13,18,20 21:5,7, proposal 45:1,2,5,7 14,17 22:7,11,14 23:24 referring 22:12 23:19 requirements 36:3 proposed 31:15 25:1,4,17 26:2,8,9 27:15 research 39:5 28:18,20 29:2 31:19,20 protection 37:3 Refresh 30:21 32:5 32:15,16 39:3,16 41:1 respect 21:22 27:14 provide 22:23 42:7,8,13,19,24 43:1,4, regulation 32:23 39:22 12,19,25 44:16,22 45:1, **provided** 7:25 8:18 rehash 17:6 respectfully 33:25 13:8 19:25 22:10 23:17, 35:6,10 38:16 **RELATED** 1:16 21,24 25:1,14,17 26:3 Radcliffe's 9:6 34:9 respond 5:3 relating 23:7 rain 34:20 **providing** 22:18,21 responded 5:10 relationship 11:17,25 raised 19:8 33:1 27:4 12:5 **response** 5:14 25:16 raises 16:9 21:9 **public** 24:20 relevant 36:14 responses 32:19,21 raising 19:4 purposefully 34:14 33:3 reliable 24:19 random 29:21 pursue 19:20 41:8 Responsibility 9:4 reliance 23:10 13:23 18:4,6 rare 15:1 pushing 41:7 relied 22:3

Scott 2:8 4:14 **rest** 19:19 19:15 29:4 32:4 step 17:11 25:9 rests 13:24 section 17:1 18:10 **sounds** 15:5 Steven 2:5 4:10 20:3 24:22 32:10 35:19 results 34:6,20 **speak** 6:9 13:20 14:10 **stick** 12:24 16:23 17:12 36:6,16 42:2 retained 21:19 22:21 **speaking** 17:7 40:4 **stop** 17:8 Sections 20:2 42:11 **review** 29:19 Straghalis 1:14 7:7 seeking 23:2 specific 44:1 10:5 revisiting 35:17 selection 29:10,25 **speech** 29:17 straight 29:25 **rhymes** 12:22 31:10 **spent** 39:5 **strategy** 7:1 8:10 9:1 rights 9:2 **send** 45:1,2,4,5 spoken 6:12 Street 2:11 River 2:7 **sense** 20:6 39:16 **strict** 20:6 32:9 33:24 **sponte** 42:20 role 5:8 separate 22:16 28:23, 34:2,21 35:4,10,23 24 sradcliff@ rolling 8:2 36:4,15 38:3,4,9,18,23 alvesradcliffe.com service 29:18 39:8 41:10,17 **Rouda** 2:10,12 4:15,16, 2:9 **SESSION** 3:4,7,10 4:3 stuff 26:23,25 18 5:1,14 8:1,5,7 9:9,18 stability 26:16 10:2 11:15 13:11 14:23 SESSIONS 3:1 sua 42:20 18:18 **staff** 30:4 Seventh 13:12 subjacent 19:21 35:20, rule 8:14,15 9:16 13:21 stand 5:18,23 6:18 22 Shires 21:1.19 24:11 18:21 20:2,4 31:9 33:7, 14:18 19:16 23 34:3 36:3,16,17 25:10 **subject** 21:4 22:22 standard 34:6 38:9 37:1,3,7,17 32:6 35:23 **short** 5:2 23:19 31:10 standing 24:21 ruled 32:2 submission 20:1 33:22 44:24 **Starr** 17:2 20:1 38:12, rules 8:14 9:3,11 14:12, **side** 6:15 7:4 15:22 submit 21:8 21 18:3,6 17:19,20 27:10 28:21 **submitted** 6:21 16:25 29:9 30:17 44:9,15 start 4:22 6:11 16:1 ruling 19:14 28:22 32:3 35:14 33:18 39:14 41:19,23 sides 18:17 30:24 Subsection 18:10 started 8:2 **silly** 33:11 subsidence 40:21 S starting 4:8 **Simien** 11:5 **subsidi-** 35:18 **state** 1:1 13:13 18:5,12 **simply** 24:16 **S-A-G-E-R** 38:6 substance 23:3 27:8 28:9 40:1,14 43:3 sir 5:4 8:4 9:8,17 10:1 S-H-I-R-E-S 21:1 **subtle** 42:22 **stated** 7:16,17 9:15 11:13 12:15,18 13:1 **S-T-A** 38:12 10:6 14:21 19:24 29:1 14:22 18:19 19:13,16 sufficient 7:5 34:8 41:24 43:12 20:8,16 22:6 26:4 39:11 S-U-B-S-I-D-E-N-C-E suggest 11:22 40:25 41:6 42:7,25 statement 5:22 30:12, 35:19 14 suggesting 42:18 sitting 27:23 28:5 **Sager** 38:6 **Sunday** 31:16 states 17:4 situation 12:9,13 17:19 **sake** 35:13 stating 28:14 SUPERIOR 1:1 skill 34:11 San 1:2 2:11 statute 22:23 23:2 27:2 supplemental 32:16 skimmed 8:7 sandbagged 27:17 32:22 33:3 33:4 **slope** 26:14,15 sandbagging 27:18 Statutory 20:4 **support** 16:20,25 Smith 18:22 19:21,22,24 20:2,3 **scenes** 11:9 **Ste** 2:3,7 33:13 35:20,22 36:21 sole 32:11 41:15 scheduled 10:20 **Stein** 1:13 7:7 10:5 37:19 38:19 sort 10:24 18:2,20 scope 8:15 26:16

survey 21:22 22:16,18 23:7,19,20 24:17,19 25:12,13 26:19 27:11 28:17,23,25 29:6,7 surveyor 23:6 28:1 swear 40:7 system 42:5 Т T-R-I-C-O-A-S-T 17:17 takes 29:19 taking 6:14 10:3 talk 36:12 talked 33:18 talking 16:1 25:7 talks 17:22 18:10 34:3. 25 team 31:21 34:1 Technically 10:21 ten 30:1 **terms** 10:20,25 28:14 29:10 34:2 35:17 36:14 39:3 test 40:5 testify 8:23 24:12 testifying 21:20 testimony 23:3 28:8 theory 41:8,22 thing 8:11 18:18 24:1 40:13 43:18 things 10:22 17:10 23:8 33:10 34:10 39:3, 20 thinking 12:19 thinks 22:20 thought 12:4 19:14,15 29:11 40:24

Thursday 28:3

Supreme 17:24

time 17:11 18:24 21:8 22:5 25:7 28:5 29:12 32:13 36:14 39:1,5 40:19 42:11 43:3 44:11, 16,24 time-consuming 10:16 times 26:24 timing 10:20 title 41:25 today 41:2 told 10:13,19 **Tom** 1:9 4:6 top 13:14 36:6 topics 26:12,13 totally 35:7 touch 38:5 touched 21:4 36:16 37:12 touching 26:18 TRANSCRIPT 1:18 treatise 17:2 35:14

trespass 34:18 trial 1:20 5:5,13,23 6:1, 2,8,17,24 7:2,18,19 8:12,13,22 9:2,14 10:10,15,20,22 13:19 14:19 16:7 17:13 18:8, 11,16,17 19:5 21:3 26:23 36:13 40:7,12

**Tricoast** 17:16,17 **tripartite** 11:16,25 12:5,13

**Trust** 1:7,9 **trustee** 1:6,8

**turn** 19:12 23:16 25:6 26:1 29:25 30:2,5,9

turned 27:13,19 28:14

type 33:9 44:23 types 40:19

U

ultimately 23:12 understand 6:22.24 11:24 34:1 understanding 7:18 understood 11:10 22:14 42:6,22 unit's 44:19 universal 5:19

V

**VALENTINE** 1:25 verifiable 25:25 verified 24:4 33:3 version 31:10 versus 15:23 34:14 vie 43:14 view 19:23 violated 32:22 violation 18:5 33:2,11 voir 31:11

W

W-H-A-R-A-M 37:19 waive 5:2,13,16 6:1,24 7:1 8:22 9:15 16:6,7 17:20 **waiver** 15:12 **waivers** 18:15 waiving 6:7 wall 21:22,24 24:12,14 26:15 27:10 38:21 40:20

wanted 10:14 20:9 22:25 27:3 32:17 waste 32:13

Water 35:24

ways 27:16 40:13 weather 34:20 week 5:6 9:22 10:21 24:18 25:16 37:12 weekend 4:23,25 31:14 Westlaw 40:13 Wharam 37:18,22,24 whatsoever 22:3 Wilshire 2:3 wished 5:2 wishes 6:24 10:18 11:24 withdrawing 19:15 withdrew 23:6 **WOODS** 1:3 word 17:17 26:7 words 12:23 34:25 35:1 43:16 work 11:8 39:20 working 39:2 writing 28:11 32:15 written 17:3 21:2 44:23

Υ

year 41:3 years 28:2 yesterday 10:14 37:14 39:6