REPORTER'S RECORD
VOLUME 1 OF 1 VOLUME
TRIAL COURT CAUSE NOS. 2009-65182, 2011-69848, 2012-56777, 2012-70085, 2013-20993, 2013-54068, 2013-63489, 2013-64273

IN THE INTEREST OF GENEVIEVE ) IN THE DISTRICT COURT MYLES AND JORDYN MYLES, CHILDREN,

IN THE RE: JENNIFER CLEVELAND,) AN ADULT

IN THE MATTER OF
THE MARRIAGE OF
MARY MAGDELENA ABREGO
AND
MARK ANTHONY ABREGO
AND IN THE INTEREST OF DAMIAN ANTHONY ABREGO, A CHILD, ET AL

311TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT

## RECUSAL HEARING

$\qquad$

On the 18th day of December, 2013, the following proceedings came on to be held in the above-titled and numbered cause before the Honorable Don Ritter, Judge Presiding, held in Houston, Harris County, Texas.

Proceedings reported by computerized stenotype machine.

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THE COURT: First case is Nebo?
MR. BROWN: Correct, Your Honor.
THE COURT: Okay. Whose motion is this?
MR. BROWN: Ours.
THE COURT: Okay. And this is a motion to recuse; is that right?

MR. BROWN: Yes, sir. May I approach the Court so $I$ can hear what you're saying?

THE COURT: Sure. All the lawyers come up.

MR. BROWN: We have filed eight motions and they are set sequentially all day long. It will be the same evidence to all of them and we ask you to consider letting us try all of them at the same time for time's sake.

THE COURT: Okay. Are you all together?
MR. BROWN: Yes, sir, Your Honor.
MR. TRAVERS: And I'm opposing counsel on Nebo only.

THE COURT: Do the other lawyers on the other cases know that we're trying them all together?

MR. BROWN: Yes, sir.
THE COURT: Are they here?
MR. WALDROP: I contacted them all and none of them are opposed to the motion and some are on
their way here, Your Honor.
THE COURT: Okay. Well, the ones that are here and they're not opposed to that, $I$ don't have any problem. Also, the bailiff informed me that Channel 13 wants to take a couple of shots through the door back there and $I$ said I don't have any problem with it.

Are you looking at me?
MR. BROWN: Yes, sir. I'm trying to decide which is your best side so we can tell them --

THE COURT: I don't have a good side any way you look at it. So nobody has a problem with that?

MR. BROWN: No.
MR. TRAVERS: No, sir.
THE COURT: That's fine with me. Now, I understand the first thing or order of business is the motion to quash the witness subpoena?

MR. BROWN: There appear to be several of them.

THE COURT: Several?
MR. BROWN: Motions to quash.
THE COURT: Who are those?
MS. TEACHEY: Judge, I'm Lisa Teachey. I'm the staff attorney for the Harris County District Courts. I have motions to quash the subpoena for Judge Pratt in all eight cases.

THE COURT: Okay.
MS. TEACHEY: They've been filed this morning.

THE COURT: Are we going to hear those first?

MS. TEACHEY: I would like to if the Court - -

THE COURT: Sure, that's fine.
MR. ENOS: Judge, my name is Greg Enos. I have a motion to quash a subpoena on me. Although I'm here this morning, $I$ just can't be available this afternoon or tomorrow, so $I$ don't know how this plan to do them all together will affect me, but $I$ also have a motion to quash as well.

THE COURT: Okay.
MR. BROWN: I can assure the Court we're going to be through today.

THE COURT: Well, he might have something to do this afternoon.

MR. BROWN: And if that happens, I have no problem with taking testimony, the six or seven questions $I$ have to ask him, over the telephone to corroborate other evidence that we're putting on.

THE COURT: Whose case are you here on, Mr. Enos?

MR. ENOS: I was subpoenaed on all eight cases, Judge.

THE COURT: Okay.
MR. BROWN: Mr. Enos prosecuted a motion to recuse yesterday against Judge Pratt. Whether it was granted or not, I wasn't here.

MR. ENOS: It was granted.
THE COURT: Well, what's relevant about that? You know me, I'll get down to relevance the first thing.

MR. BROWN: Sure.
THE COURT: And what is relevant about his? What does he know that we need to know in these?

MR. BROWN: If what we put before you is true, that there was backdating of documents, changing of court records and the like, there are two other cases, three other cases that we know that has occurred, so in proving that, we would show a continuing course of conduct on the part of Judge Pratt.

THE COURT: Okay. Now, were any of those relevant? I mean, does any of that have anything to do with the motion to recuse on these particular cases?

MR. BROWN: Yes, sir.
THE COURT: In what way?
MR. BROWN: Well, because we say the same
thing occurred in these cases, that there was a backdating of documents, a changing of court records that occurred to the detriment --

THE COURT: Of these cases?
MR. BROWN: Yes.
THE COURT: How?
MR. BROWN: Well, for instance, one, there was a decree that was allegedly entered on October 31st, 2013. Never even in the JIMS system, wasn't in the Court's file, no docket sheet shows that, and we went down and perused the Court's file, went on JIMS virtually every day, and then magically it shows up at a point in time after a motion to recuse was filed on her. We see a pattern of this type of activity happening where judgments are backdated, sometimes to the point of over 30 days when appeal can't be taken.

THE COURT: Okay, I understand all that, and I've read the newspapers about her. What I'm trying to figure out --

MR. BROWN: I haven't.
THE COURT: I've read every newspaper article that's involved Judge Pratt in all this.

MR. BROWN: Yes, sir.
THE COURT: What I'm trying to figure is why any of that would recuse her on these specific
cases.
MR. BROWN: Well, it is corroborative of the evidence that we will give you. It shows a continuing course of conduct, the same type of conduct.

THE COURT: How does it affect these particular cases?

MR. WALDROP: Your Honor, if I may.
THE COURT: No. Let me hear from him and then I'll hear from you.

MR. BROWN: Because if there's evidence that the same thing is occurring or has occurred in other cases pending in her court under similar conditions, $I$ submit to the Court --

THE COURT: Okay. Well, I'm going to look at Rule 18 as you go along and if you can't prove up some specific act, omission or statement that comes under Rule 18(a), then we'll take a look at it then.

MR. BROWN: Well, we have more than 18(a) and (b).

THE COURT: Where else can you go?
MR. BROWN: Violation of criminal statute that refers back to $18(b)$.

THE COURT: Okay. Well, you'll have to let me look at that.

Go ahead.

MR. WALDROP: Thank you, Your Honor. There was a letter put out where many attorneys signed their name, asking Judge Pratt to step down, and that was a direct result of his criminal complaint against her. That is why he is a necessary witness as well and to corroborate that letter. That letter and every attorney who signed it leads to bias under 18(b), I believe it is, (b)(2), which is bias, so that's also why Mr. Enos is relevant.

MR. BROWN: But there will be very few questions asked of Mr. Enos. Believe me, I would be happy to have him somewhere else.

MR. ENOS: Well, Judge, I'm here now. I don't know why $I$ couldn't testify this morning so I could do my business in Galveston. And as far as these allegations against Judge Pratt, I don't have personal knowledge of them. I did file a complaint, but it was based on information $I$ obtained from other people's cases. So I don't have personal knowledge of these things because they didn't occur in my cases. I'm certainly happy to assist these gentlemen in court any way I can, but in my situation, I don't have firsthand knowledge of any of this other than $I$ did file a criminal complaint.

MR. BROWN: Until I make my proffer on
what we have personal knowledge of, $I$ can't call him to corroborate, coming under Texas Rule of Evidence 406 to show habit, routine or practice.

THE COURT: Well, are you talking about Judge Pratt's habits?

MR. BROWN: Yes.
THE COURT: Okay. I'm still probably going to need to be convinced that she did something under the rule or the criminal statute that you talk about. I'm not familiar with it.

MR. BROWN: I understand the burden of proof. There is a presumption she has acted correctly, and we have to overcome that presumption. I know what our burden is. I've practiced in front of you for years. We can put on straight evidence, and if you overrule, $I$ 'm not going to argue with you.

THE COURT: Okay. Is everybody here? You've been subpoenaed on all eight cases; is that right?

MR. ENOS: Yes, sir.
THE COURT: Are all the lawyers here on all the eight cases?

MR. WARD: Your Honor, my name is Todd Ward. I represent Marilyn Epps, and she's going to assert the Fifth Amendment right.

MR. CLARK: Your Honor, my name is Robert Clark. As with Mr. Enos, I've been subpoenaed on all eight cases as well. I'm here to assist.

MR. ENOS: Well, we have a lot of witnesses here, Judge, but $I$ don't think we have opposing counsel on most of those eight cases.

MR. WALDROP: And as I've said, they are all unopposed. Everyone. I know Mary Quinn is on her way and I know Stephanie Proffitt is on her way.

THE COURT: Well, I'm just trying to get him out of the courtroom, if $I$ can.

MR. BROWN: I'm happy to take the answer to very few questions if $I$ can tie him up under his testimony from counsel by telephone. I don't want to keep him from going and practicing in Galveston County.

THE COURT: Come up here and we'll get you to take the oath.

If the others have a problem with it, they can come back tomorrow sometime.

MR. BROWN: Oh, I see.
THE COURT: Yeah, I mean, if the others have a problem with it, they can read the transcript and if they still have got a problem, they can all come back tomorrow and he can come back tomorrow.

Would that be all right?

MR. ENOS: Well, I actually have more conflicts tomorrow, and if I'm here -- if I'm here now, I don't know why I couldn't testify now.

THE COURT: Well, I can look at these motions to quash and just go ahead and do it that way.

MR. BROWN: I'm sorry?
THE COURT: You've got a motion to quash, right?

MR. ENOS: Yes, sir. It was electronically filed. I have a copy here. Apparently --

THE COURT: Let me look at your copy because it will take all the rest of the day for me to pull it up.

MR. ENOS: Yes, sir.
THE COURT: Thank you. Let me take a quick look at it. So this was a trial witness subpoenaed that you rendered?

MR. ENOS: Yes, sir.
THE COURT: Did they ask you for a lot of documents, is that it?

MR. ENOS: No, sir. They just asked me -- served me yesterday with a subpoena in eight cases and they only gave me $\$ 10$ instead of 80 , 1 think. We're thinking of a class action for all of these witnesses
here. So we got short-changed.
MR. BROWN: We gave him what he was worth, if it please the Court.

MR. ENOS: But my point is, $I$ have a conflict this afternoon, which I can probably work around, but tomorrow I'm in Galveston.

THE COURT: Well, you're here for today.
MR. ENOS: Yes, sir.
THE COURT: Okay. Now, tell me what it is that you expect to prove of him. I guess the other lawyers are going to be trying to prove the same thing. Did you all confer with the other lawyers on these motions to recuse?

MR. WALDROP: We've conferred to the extent we could on it.

MR. BROWN: Yeah, and we sat through the testimony yesterday.

THE COURT: Were you here yesterday, Mr. Enos?

MR. ENOS: Yes, sir. My law firm had a motion to recuse yesterday, which was granted.

MR. BROWN: And I was shocked when it was granted. It was a poor presentation.

MR. ENOS: So, Judge, I'm here and I brought stuff to work on and $I$ can be here, but tomorrow
would work a real hardship on my clients and my law firm if I --

THE COURT: Let's get you to take the oath. You all can ask him what you want to.
(Witness sworn)
THE COURT: Mr. Brown? Which one?
You all know the rules. One lawyer per witness.

MR. WALDROP: Yes, sir.
GREG B. ENOS,
having been first duly sworn, testified as follows:
DIRECT EXAMINATION
Q (BY MR. WALDROP) Mr. Enos, would you state your name for the Court, please?

A Greg Enos.
Q And you published a news letter; is that correct?

A Yes.
Q And you also filed a criminal complaint against Judge Pratt; isn't that correct?

A I did.
Q What did you base that criminal complaint on?
A I had obtained information from various attorneys about cases involving Judge Pratt, and some of those seemed to involve backdating of court orders, so I
started my own journalistic investigation. I contacted the attorneys on all those cases. I wrote a rough draft of an article. I sent a rough draft of my article to the attorneys, asking them to verify the information. Some of them did not respond. Some of them sent me corrections. Some of them sent me documents. I talked to a few of the attorneys. I talked to one of the clients in one of the cases. Before $I$ filed my complaint with the District Attorney, I sent a copy to Judge Pratt as a courtesy and asked her to tell me if $I$ had anything wrong, if there were corrections that were needed, and then --

Q Did you receive a response from Judge Pratt?
A I did not.
MR. WALDROP: May I approach, Your Honor?
THE COURT: Yes.
MR. WALDROP: I would like to show the witness what has been premarked as Movant's Exhibit 1.

Q (BY MR. WALDROP) Would you tell the Court what that document is?

A Exhibit 1 is a copy of the second criminal complaint $I$ filed. I filed another one on October 21st, and then as a result of the publicity about that, I heard about another even more clear-cut case of backdating court orders, plus $I$ had also received a
correction. In fairness to Judge Pratt, I wanted to make a correction, so that's why this says Version 2, October 27th.

Q So that would be the live complaint?
A Yes. That was sent to the District Attorney minus the exhibits. What $I$ sent the District Attorney was a notebook that had about this many exhibits to it. This is the actual body of the complaint.

Q And how many cases were listed in your complaint?

A I believe four.
Q And specifically what does your complaint allege as to those cases?

A That in each of those cases, one of them on several occasions, that Judge Pratt signed orders but then dated them for dates apparently weeks or months prior to the date she actually signed the order.

Q What is the first case that is alleged in your complaint?

A A case called Bates.
Q And who is the lead attorney on that case? MR. TRAVERS: Objection, Your Honor. I think the witness is testifying about a document that's not in evidence. I don't think it's been offered.

MR. WALDROP: Offer Movant's Exhibit 1.

MR. TRAVERS: No objection.
THE COURT: It's admitted.
MR. WALDROP: Thank you, Mack.
A And, counsel, I didn't bring my complete set of records with me. I don't think I actually mentioned the attorneys' names in some of these cases, so $I$ off the top of my head do not recall.

Q (BY MR. WALDROP) In Bates, we're talking about Marcia Zimmerman. Does that ring a bell?

A Yes, actually it does.
Q Okay. And in researching your Bates case that you put in your complaint, what investigation did you conduct?

A I looked at court documents. On this one I actually went to the courthouse to try and look at the court file. I talked to two of the three attorneys involved in the case and $I$ sent a rough draft of this section about the Bates case to the attorneys and told them if I've got something wrong, if I've got an error, please let me know.

Q What did you find in the Bates case regarding backdating specifically?

A That in this case Judge Pratt had heard an enforcement filed by a father who wasn't allowed to see his child. She never issued a ruling. Finally, after
many months, the father's attorneys filed a writ of mandamus. The Court of Appeals issued an order granting the writ of mandamus, and the very next day an order appeared by Judge Pratt that purported to be dated about eight or nine months before the mandamus decision.

Q What's wrong with that, the date on her order, Judge Pratt's?

A The Court of Appeals issued its mandamus order on May 14th. On May 15th, this document appeared, signed by Judge Pratt, dated in her writing August 1st, 2012.

Q My question is, why is that something that's subject of a criminal complaint?

A Well, as I understand the criminal statute on tampering with a government record, knowingly making a false entry in a government record, which is defined by the Penal Code to include court documents, is a crime, plus in this instance, if you hold a woman in contempt but don't tell her and don't tell the other parties until nine months later, her order held the respondent in contempt, sentenced her to 180 days in jail, suspended it as long as the father had all his visitation. He didn't know that he had the right to get to do that. She didn't know. She faced incarceration. So in this instance issuing an order and backdating it
affected the constitutional rights of both parents.
Q So that backdating is why you filed your criminal complaint on Bates?

A That's correct.
Q And DuPont, who's the lead attorney on this case?

A You know, I honestly don't remember the names on this one either.

Q Does Rob Clark ring a bell?
A Oh, yes. Mr. Clark was the attorney on the DuPont case.

MR. BROWN: If it please the Court, there is another lawyer involved that has shown up.

THE COURT: Would you state your name just for the record, please?

MS. PROFFITT: Yes, Your Honor. My name is Stephanie Proffitt. I am the amicus attorney on the Abrego matter.

MR. WALDROP I just ask if she's opposed or unopposed to the motion to recuse.

MS. PROFFITT: I'm unopposed to the motion to recuse.

THE COURT: Unopposed to the motion to recuse Judge Pratt?

MS. PROFFITT: Correct.

THE COURT: Okay. Does that make a difference to me?

MS. PROFFITT: I don't know.
THE COURT: I'm wondering if two lawyers can - -

MS. PROFFITT: My decision doesn't --
THE COURT: Well, I'm just wondering if two lawyers who oppose each other can get together and recuse the judge.

MR. BROWN: Apparently not.
MS. PROFFITT: And, Your Honor, technically I'm not opposing counsel. I am the amicus attorney appointed by the Court. Ms. Farah Kamal, who I do not see, is the opposing party to Mr. Waldrop.

MR. WALDROP: That's correct, who is unopposed as well, and we spoke with her yesterday.

MS. PROFFITT: And since there's not a lot of chairs, I'm going to sit back and --

THE COURT: Sure. Are you aware that Mr. Enos is on the witness stand as a result of a witness subpoena and he has filed a motion to quash the subpoena, but we've got him on the witness stand anyway.

MS. PROFFITT: Okay. Thank you, Your
Honor.
Q (BY MR. WALDROP) Same drill in the DuPont
case. In your investigation, what did you do?
A I looked at court documents, I talked to attorneys in the case, $I$ faxed a rought draft of this section of my paper to the attorneys and asked for their corrections.

Q And what did you find in the DuPont case?
A In this case these people had a divorce trial in February of 2013 but never could get a ruling. They kept checking with the court coordinator and he would confirm there was no ruling. On May 14 th the Court of Appeals in the Bates case issued its decision and told Judge Pratt that she had to rule in the Bates case. On May 15th, the same day that the order mysteriously appeared in the Bates case, Judge Pratt's court faxed a rendition in the DuPont case to the attorneys. Faxed May 15th. Signed by the Judge and dated February 15th, 2013. And in that instance what was faxed to the attorneys is a document that's entitled Judge's Rendition and it does not have a file stamp. What appeared in the District Clerk's file was the exact same document with a file stamp.

Q So faxed May 15 th but signed February 15th, 2013?

A Correct.
Q How do you know that's backdated, Mr. Enos?

A Well, the file-stamp version has a file stamp date of February 15th. If it was file stamped on February 15th and faxed to the attorneys, that would have appeared on what was faxed to the attorneys, but what the attorneys got lacks the file stamp.

Q Is that the basis that you filed your criminal complaint on DuPont?

A Well, not only that, but the attorneys were checking with the court coordinator and he told them there had not been a ruling. So how could the Judge have ruled three months before, and the coordinator, who was checking, not know there was a ruling?

Q You're saying both attorneys on the DuPont case were checking?

A Well, I know at least for sure Mr. Clark was. And not only that, the attorneys weren't notified of the ruling, and the entry date that is on her order was never calendared as an entry date in the clerk's computer.

Q And wasn't there an issue with the clerk's initials on the file stamp in that case? There was a shifting of clerks and one clerk's initials appeared, but they didn't work there at the time; is that right?

A Right. The good lady that us attorneys loved and appreciated who worked as a clerk did not work in

Judge Pratt's court on February 15th.
Q Who was that good lady?
A As I understand those initials, they were Marilyn Epps'.

Q And whose initials were on the order?
A Well, I believe the ME is Marilyn Epps.
Q And the date of the order, she did not work there at the time, is that what you're testifying to?

A Well, that's what $I$ was told by Chris Daniel, the District Clerk.

Q Let's go to the Hernandez case, same drill. Tell the Court your investigation on the --

THE COURT: How many are we going to go through? I mean, I'm not going to go through all of them.

MR. WALDROP: Okay.
THE COURT: If there's one or two, you can ask him if every one of them was the same or something like that.

MR. WALDROP: I can sum it up, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Not one at a time.
MR. WALDROP: Yes, sir.
Q (BY MR. WALDROP) For each case listed in your complaint, did you find a backdating of orders by Judge

Pratt?
A I found evidence that would lead a reasonable person to believe the orders had been backdated. I wasn't obviously personally there to see it happen, but in each of these instances lawyers who are familiar with family law and how courts operate would know that it's just seemingly impossible that they could have been signed on the dates Judge Pratt dated them.

Q Based on the timeline, the appellants and also the clerk's initials that you mentioned earlier; is that correct?

A That and just the sequence of events. Each of these cases kind of cascaded on one to the other, that once one mandamus was issued and she was publicly criticized by the Court of Appeals for not issuing an order, these other orders started being issued, and you can just set them on a calendar and see when things happened and realize that unless she was signing orders and somehow stashing them for months before she gave them to her clerks, it just could not have happened in the sequence she claims.

Q And I'm going to latch on to what you said about a calendar, when you look at a calendar or a timeline. Did you find a habit, routine or a practice of Judge Pratt backdating orders?

A Yes.
MR. WALDROP: Pass the witness, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Okay. You got any questions? MS. TEACHEY: Judge, I'm here for the limited purpose of the motion to quash. I can't address the merits on behalf of Judge Pratt under a recusal.

THE COURT: Okay. Well, actually right now we're just talking about his actual evidence in the case, right?

MR. WALDROP: That's correct, Your Honor. And to talk about her motion to quash, I would like to ask him a couple of follow-up questions, because one of her allegations is we can't get it from any other source. We have to show that. And I want to ask Mr. Enos whether he has ever worked in the court or has any inside knowledge of the court.

THE COURT: Okay.
Q (BY MR. WALDROP CONT'D) Mr. Enos, do you work in the 311th District Court?

A I do not.
Q Do you have any inside knowledge as to the inner workings of the 311th, practice of the 311th?

A Not really, other than what you observe as a lawyer sitting out in the courtroom, but I've never
worked there as a clerk and I've never gone back and see how they handle their paperwork.

Q When someone files something, you don't know the process that follows, to whom each document goes in the court and the practice of the court; is that correct?

A I do not.
Q Have you ceased taking cases in the 311th Court?

A That is correct. I don't think I would do my clients a service at this point to represent them in that court.

Q And tell the Court why you ceased taking cases.

A I think I've caused Judge Pratt enough problems, that $I$ don't think people should be able to hire a lawyer and then use the lawyer to get out of Judge Pratt's court, so I'm not taking cases either because they randomly are already in her court or because lawyers come to me and want to use me as an excuse to get out of court.

MR. WALDROP: Pass the witness, Your
Honor.
MS. TEACHEY: Judge, I'm in kind of a little sticky situation here. I just need the record to
reflect that $I$ am not asking him any questions on the merits of the recusal, because $I$ can only ask him questions on the merits of my motion to quash. So if $I$ can please have that on the record before $I$ begin, $I$ would just like to ask him a simple question regarding the motion to quash only.

THE COURT: Sure.

## CROSS-EXAMINATION

Q (BY MS. TEACHEY) Mr. Enos, I'm Lisa Teachey. I'm the staff attorney for the District Courts. I'm here today on a motion to quash for Judge Pratt.

A It's good to meet you.
Q Nice to meet you, too. My question is, do you have any knowledge of how the 311th Court worked in Causes 2013-54068, 2013-54068-- I just said that one --2009-65182, 2001-69848 -- they're the eight you've been subpoenaed in, sir -- 2012-70085, 2013-63489, 2013-64273, 2013-20993 and 2012-56777?

A I don't know anything about those cases and I don't know how the Court handles those cases.

Q And so you don't know any -- you would not be able to tell this Court anything regarding Judge Pratt's behavior in any of these cases, would you?

A I would not.
Q Thank you.

THE COURT: Mr. Travers?
MR. TRAVERS: Just a couple of quick questions, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Sure.

## CROSS - EXAMINATION

Q (BY MR. TRAVERS) Mr. Enos, you are licensed to practice law in the State of Texas?

A I am currently.
Q How long have you been so licensed?
A 27 years.
Q Do you hold any special certifications issued
by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization?
A I'm board certified in family law.
MR. TRAVERS: Pass the witness, Your
Honor.
MR. WALDROP: Nothing further, Your
Honor.
THE COURT: Anybody else?
Thank you, Mr. Enos. You are excused for the duration of this hearing.

MR. ENOS: Thank you, Judge.
THE COURT: Okay. Well, we're going to take up the motion to quash.

MS. TEACHEY: Thank you, sir.
THE COURT: Can I look at your motion? I
don't think I've got a hard copy.
MS. TEACHEY: Yes, sir. They're all the same motion for all eight causes.

MR. BROWN: May I address the Court?
Because of the threshold question we have to meet, I ask you to take up the motion to quash on Judge Pratt after we've taken it up on the District Attorney's Office and the District Clerk's Office and on Ms. Epps, because the threshold question --

THE COURT: Do you have motions to quash on all them?

MR. BROWN: There's a bunch of them back there, yes, sir.

MS. VINSON: Good morning, Your Honor. I'm here on behalf of the Harris County Attorney's Office. I filed a motion to quash and grant a protective order for the District Clerk, Chris Daniel.

MS. TEACHEY: Judge, my concern in this is that, as I stated earlier, I am here for the limited purpose of the motion to quash. I can't be here and argue for Judge Pratt if we get into too many facts about the case on the recusal.

THE COURT: No, why don't we go ahead and take up this motion.

MS. TEACHEY: Thank you.

THE COURT: Okay. What she says is almost the gospel truth from way back, right, in the motion to quash?

MR. BROWN: No.
THE COURT: Well, I mean, the law she cited, it's my understanding of it from way back.

MR. BROWN: Well, since 1941, yes, sir.
MS. TEACHEY: Judge, $I$ didn't cite any 1941 cases.

THE COURT: Okay. I'm not asking you to agree with me. What are you going to try to prove to Judge Pratt that you can't get from other means?

MR. BROWN: I have to ask these three lawyers questions in front of you to prove that to you. we have subpoenaed --

THE COURT: Well, if you can get the information from those three lawyers, then why do we need Judge Pratt?

MR. BROWN: Well, they're here with motions for protection themselves.

THE COURT: I'm not going to argue with this. The motion to quash is granted.

MR. BROWN: May I make a record?
THE COURT: Yes.
MS. TEACHEY: Judge, may I clarify that?

Is that in all eight cases that it's been granted? THE COURT: Yes, all eight.

MR. BROWN: May I make a record?
THE COURT REPORTER: One at a time, please.

THE COURT: Go ahead.
MR. BROWN: Yes, sir. We have subpoenaed from the District Attorney's Office the documents that they received from the District Clerk's Office that we think show the backdating of the documents. The District Attorney's Office has filed a motion for protection and has refused to give us any documents that would allow us to prove the scheme of backdating in the 311th.

We have subpoenaed from the District Clerk's Office, and with counsel here to quash that, the same information, the file that would allow us to demonstrate to this Court and put in this record that the backdating was indeed occurring. They have filed a motion to quash that and intend not to give us documents to make the record show this.

Additionally, the clerk who was working in the 311 th at the time that most of these situations occurred is Marilyn Epps. She is here with her attorney.

THE COURT: I understand that she's not going to -- she's going to take the Fifth Amendment, so what good is that going to do?

MR. BROWN: Well, under Texas law, if you take the Fifth, the trier of fact is able to make a reasonable inference. But what it does, I have come up with the three other places, the three other witnesses, the three other entities that $I$ could get evidence from to show indeed a backdating scheme of documents on behalf of Judge Pratt. Every one of them has filed a motion to quash or is going to take the Fifth Amendment. There is no other place to look other than Judge Denise Pratt, Judge of the 311th Judicial District Court of Houston, Harris County, Texas.

THE COURT: Well, I've got to go back. I keep going back, and $I$ haven't got a satisfactory answer yet. Let's assume that she does everything that he said and that you say, what has she done that would cause her to be recused? I mean, what specific act is prohibited either by the Penal Code, as you stated, and I haven't looked at that yet, or by Rule 18(a), what specific act has she done that would cause a recusal, assuming that all these other things are true?

MR. BROWN: Well, if indeed there is a backdating of documents in a manner that affects the
rights of parties to appeal her ruling, or the lack, that is a felony in the State of Texas, under Texas Penal Code, Section 37.10, tampering with governmental record. 37.10, Subsection (a): A person commits an offense if he knowingly makes a false entry in, or false alteration of, a governmental record; makes, presents or uses a governmental record with knowledge of its falsity.

Now, the problem with that, as the Court recalls, a divorce lawyer, a divorce judge signed a judgment and then their timetable starts --

THE COURT: I understand all that. Tell me something $I$ don't know. Tell me why -- I mean, tell me something $I$ don't know. What did she do in violation of 18(a)?

MR. BROWN: Here's what $I$ have to do.
THE COURT: I'm not going to get it, am I? You're not going to tell me, are you?

MR. BROWN: Yes, I am.
THE COURT: Well, do it then.
MR. BROWN: She backdated documents. She backdated documents, but, Judge, please --

THE COURT: Under Rule 18(a), you know what that does to cause her to be recused. Apparently she's going to have criminal problems.

MR. BROWN: I just want to make a record.
THE COURT: That may solve this whole thing. I don't know.

MR. BROWN: Judge, I'm not arguing with you. I just want to make a record. We're told by the Courts that we can call a judge. We're told by the Courts that we have to --

THE COURT: Wait a minute. I just ruled on that, so that's not going to happen.

MR. BROWN: But $I$ want to make a record in case someone decides to, as fruitless as it may be, file an appeal. We're allowed to make a record. That's why we're having this hearing.

THE COURT: Okay. So what is -- I mean, an argument is not really a record.

MR. BROWN: No, sir. I'm willing to take testimony from the --

THE COURT: Not from the Judge. I already ruled on that. Now, you can bring these others up and we'll --

MR. BROWN: But $I$ do want to take testimony from the Judge.

THE COURT: Well, I've already ruled on that, and you're not going to.

MR. BROWN: Yes, sir, but if you hear
this evidence --
THE COURT: Have a seat, because I'm not going to argue with you anyway. I already ruled on that.

MR. BROWN: May I finish making my offer of proof to the appellate court?

THE COURT: You're not arguing proof. You're arguing arguments.

MR. BROWN: No, I'm going to call these people and make my --

THE COURT: Well, you can do that after she leaves.

MR. BROWN: Okay. Thank you, Judge.
MS. TEACHEY: Judge, may I submit -- I don't have it with me -- but a small order that says this was granted later this afternoon?

THE COURT: Sure.
MS. TEACHEY: Thank you so much. May I be excused?

THE COURT: Yes.
Do you want to do Ms. Epps next?
MR. WALDROP: Yes, Your Honor.
MR. BROWN: No objection.
May I proceed, sir?
THE COURT: I've got to give her the oath
first.
MR. BROWN: I'm sorry. I thought everybody was under oath.

THE COURT: I don't think I did everybody here under oath.

MR. BROWN: I see three, four other witnesses here. Might this be a good time to do that?

THE COURT: If you don't mind, I'll kind of take it as I go.

MR. BROWN: Absolutely. No problem with that.
(Witness sworn)
THE COURT: Now, somebody has got a question and --

Go ahead, sir.
MARILYN EPPS,
having been first duly sworn, testified as follows:
DIRECT EXAMINATION
Q (BY MR. BROWN) State your name for the record, please.

A Marilyn Renee Epps.
Q How are you employed?
MR. WARD: Pardon me. She will assert her Fifth Amendment privilege, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Okay. There's an objection
to it. She's going to assert her Fifth Amendment privilege. We've got that on the record. Are you going to go through all these questions?

MR. BROWN: Yes, sir. If it please the Court, I am.

THE COURT: Well, I'm trying to figure out, you know, what good that does. You say $I$ can make a...

MR. BROWN: Reasonable inference.
THE COURT: Huh?
MR. BROWN: A reasonable inference.
THE COURT: Isn't that the same as having her testify against herself?

MR. BROWN: Not on the civil side it's not. The First Court of Appeals has made that explicitly clear. On the criminal side it is. On the civil side, a civil court -- a family court may make a reasonable inference from the taking of the Fifth Amendment by someone's testifying.

THE COURT: Okay. Would that be an inference against her or against Judge Pratt?

MR. BROWN: Both.
THE COURT: I don't see how it would be an inference against Judge Pratt.

MR. BROWN: May I approach the Court
because I'm having trouble hearing.
THE COURT: Is this on?
MR. BROWN: Yeah, but $I$ don't hear real well. I'm not coming up here to argue. I just want to hear what you're saying.

MR. WARD: If I can make a suggestion. Maybe he submits his questions as a proffer and Ms. Epps is going to assert her fifth Amendment privilege to every one of those to save time for everybody.

THE COURT: That's fine. Let's do it that way.

MR. BROWN: Of course we haven't typed that up because no one suggested that before we got here today.

THE COURT: I know. So now is the proper way, I sustain? I mean, if I sustain or overrule, right? I don't know what the other way is. Sometimes they're granted. Only when you have an objection, it is sustained, granted, overruled. So what is the proper deal for somebody who is asserting their Fifth Amendment right?

MR. WARD: Judge, my suggestion is that if the Court recognizes that Ms. Epps --

THE COURT: I'm sorry?
MR. WARD: My suggestion is that if you
see that Ms. Epps asserts her Fifth Amendment privilege, you recognize that and you order her or order her not to answer any more questions on her Fifth Amendment privileges she's clearly asserted.

MR. BROWN: May I address the Court?
THE COURT: Sure.
MR. BROWN: You're not making an objection. Counsel, we don't make objections.

THE COURT: That's what $I$ was trying to figure out.

MR. BROWN: Clients assert a Fifth Amendment privilege.

THE COURT: And then we've got a response maybe.

MR. BROWN: How interesting. You may make a reasonable inference from it, you may not. You are the trier of fact and the trier of law in this case, so as you listen to her take the Fifth on specific questions, you make whatever you make of it because you are the trier of fact.

THE COURT: You ask the questions, he makes these assertions on Fifth Amendment rights and I'll just keep my mouth shut.

MR. BROWN: No objection.
THE COURT: Okay.

MR. BROWN: Well, no. I didn't -- I mean, $I$ hope you didn't misinterpret that.

THE COURT: No.
MR. WARD: I was under the impression we were going to do a proffer of the questions and she asserts her Fifth Amendment to every one of those to save everybody time.

THE COURT: Right.
MR. BROWN: Well, I'll do it right now.
THE COURT: That's my understanding.
Okay, Mr. Brown.
Q (BY MR. BROWN CONT'D) Ma'am, would you state your name?

A Marilyn Renee Epps.
Q Ma'am, how are you employed?
MR. WARD: Your Honor, Ms. Epps asserts her Fifth Amendment privilege.

Q (BY MR. BROWN) Ma'am, have you ever been an assistant district clerk in Harris County, Texas?

MR. WARD: Your Honor, Ms. Epps asserts her Fifth Amendment privilege.

Q (BY MR. BROWN) Ma'am, in that capacity have you ever been assigned to the 311th Judicial District Court as a --

MR. WARD: Your Honor --

THE COURT REPORTER: Can you let him finish?

Q (BY MR. BROWN) Ma'am, during -- have you ever been assigned as a deputy district clerk for Harris County, the 311th Judicial District Court of Houston, Harris County, Texas?

MR. WARD: Your Honor, Ms. Epps asserts her Fifth Amendment privilege.

Q (BY MR. BROWN) Did you ever work in the Court, the 311th Judicial District Court, when Judge Denise Pratt was the sitting judge of that court?

MR. WARD: Your Honor, Ms. Epps asserts her Fifth Amendment privilege.

Q (BY MR. BROWN) In the performing of the duties of a district clerk assigned to a family court, is the docketing of documents that are final important?

MR. WARD: Your Honor, Ms. Epps asserts her Fifth Amendment privilege.

Q (BY MR. BROWN) When a document is filed in a district court in front of a clerk, do you put a file stamp on it?

MR. WARD: Your Honor, Ms. Epps asserts
her Fifth Amendment privilege.
Q (BY MR. BROWN) And does that file stamp show the date and approximate time of the filing of the
document?
MR. WARD: Your Honor, Ms. Epps asserts her Fifth Amendment privilege.

Q (BY MR. BROWN) Is a docket sheet a piece of paper that the Judge or someone assigned by her to sit for her makes entries on that show what occurred in the court?

MR. WARD: Your Honor, Ms. Epps asserts her Fifth Amendment privilege.

Q (BY MR. BROWN) In the course of business of an assistant district clerk in a Harris County family court, is it the job of the clerk to keep track and possession of the docket sheets?

MR. WARD: Your Honor, Ms. Epps asserts her Fifth Amendment privilege.

Q (BY MR. BROWN) Has Judge Denise Pratt ever instructed you to place a date on a document that was not the date that you placed on the document? By that, I mean -- strike that.

MR. BROWN: May I ask the question over? That's a bad question. Sustained. I'll do it over again.

Q (BY MR. BROWN) Ma'am, has Judge Pratt ever asked you to put a date on a document that was different from the date that you were asked to put it on a
document?
MR. WARD: Your Honor, Ms. Epps asserts her Fifth Amendment privilege.

Q (BY MR. BROWN) Are you familiar -- excuse me. Were you district clerk assigned to the 311th Judicial District Clerk -- excuse me -- assigned to the 311th Judicial District Court when the matter of Skeele vs. Skeele was pending?

MR. WARD: Your Honor, Ms. Epps asserts her Fifth Amendment privilege.

Q (BY MR. BROWN) Did you backdate any documents on the Skeele matter?

MR. WARD: Your Honor, Ms. Epps asserts her Fifth Amendment privilege.

Q (BY MR. BROWN) By backdate, I mean place a date on the document that reflects that something occurred that did not actually occur on that day?

MR. WARD: Your Honor, Ms. Epps asserts
her Fifth Amendment privilege.
Q (BY MR. BROWN) Did you ever backdate any documents in the Domangue, D-o-m-a-n-g-u-e, Krause case, Cause No. 2013-63489?

MR. WARD: Your Honor, Ms. Epps asserts her Fifth Amendment privilege.

Q (BY MR. BROWN) Do you know if any other clerk
backdated documents in that case?
MR. WARD: Your Honor, Ms. Epps asserts her Fifth Amendment privilege.

Q (BY MR. BROWN) Do you know if Judge Denise Pratt directed any other clerk to backdate documents in that case?

MR. WARD: Your Honor, Ms. Epps asserts her Fifth Amendment privilege.

Q (BY MR. BROWN) Back to the Skeele case for just a moment. Do you know whether or not any other district clerk backdated documents in that case?

MR. WARD: Your Honor, Ms. Epps asserts her Fifth Amendment privilege.

Q And do you know whether or not Judge Pratt instructed any clerk to backdate documents in that case?

MR. WARD: Your Honor, Ms. Epps asserts her Fifth Amendment privilege.

Q (BY MR. BROWN) Now, I asked you about six different cases: Cause No. 2012-13293, in the matter of the marriage of Hollas; Cause No. 2011-69848, in the matter of the marriage of Abrego; Cause No. 2009-65182, in the interest of the Myles children; Cause No. 2013-54068, in the matter of the marriage of Nebo; and Cause No. 2005-41978, in the interest of the Reddick children. Did you backdate any documents in those
cases?
MR. WARD: Your Honor, Ms. Epps asserts her Fifth Amendment privilege.

Q (BY MR. BROWN) By that, I mean, did you put a date on the document that something occurred on a given date when it did not occur on that date?

MR. WARD: Your Honor, Ms. Epps asserts her Fifth Amendment privilege.

Q (BY MR. BROWN) Do you know if any other assistant district clerk for Harris County assigned to the 311th backdated documents under that definition?

MR. WARD: Your Honor, Ms. Epps asserts her Fifth Amendment privilege.

Q (BY MR. BROWN) Do you know whether Judge Denise Pratt instructed any assistant district clerk to backdate documents in those cases?

MR. WARD: Your Honor, Ms. Epps asserts her Fifth Amendment privilege.

Q (BY MR. BROWN) Ms. Epps, you were in the courtroom a while ago when Greg Enos testified, were you not?

MR. WARD: She asserts her Fifth Amendment privilege, Your Honor.

Q (BY MR. BROWN) The cases that he testified about, to your knowledge, did you backdate any
documents?
MR. WARD: Ms. Epps asserts her Fifth Amendment privilege, Your Honor.

Q (BY MR. BROWN) To your knowledge, did the Judge instruct any other assistant district clerk to backdate documents in those cases?

MR. WARD: Ms. Epps asserts her Fifth Amendment privilege, Your Honor.

Q (BY MR. BROWN) Now, ma'am, have you been granted immunity by the Harris County District Attorney's Office with respect to the possible prosecution of Judge Denise Pratt?

MR. WARD: Your Honor, she asserts her Fifth Amendment privilege.

MR. BROWN: If it please the Court, may I argue that point of law? If she has -- if she's been granted immunity, there is no way that the fact that she has been granted immunity can tend to incriminate her.

THE COURT: I have no idea what immunity she may have been granted. It may have been for one case, a dozen.

MR. BROWN: And that's why I'm asking.
THE COURT: You can ask whatever you want to, but --

MR. BROWN: Thank you, sir.

Q (BY MR. BROWN) My question, Ms. Epps, have you been granted immunity by the Harris County District Attorney's Office on any matter having to do with you being an assistant district Harris County clerk serving in the 311th?

MR. WARD: Your Honor, she asserts her Fifth Amendment privilege. She could be charged with anything.

THE COURT: I will not compel her to testify about that.

MR. BROWN: I'm sorry, I didn't hear what you said.

THE COURT: I won't compel her to testify. If the DA did it, they're over there. I mean, they're right in this building.

MR. BROWN: That's fine, Judge. I just didn't hear you.

THE COURT: Okay.
MR. BROWN: I'm not arguing with you.
THE COURT: Well, I'm sorry, I can't hear, I can't talk, I'm deaf. Is this on?

MR. BROWN: Well, I'm sorry, I'm deaf. I woke up and I'm 63 years old, my hair's turning gray and I can't hear anything anymore.

THE COURT: Well, I'm trying the best I
can.
MR. BROWN: And you don't mind me coming up to hear, do you?

THE COURT: Oh, no.
MR. BROWN: Thank you. Pass the witness.
MR. TRAVERS: No questions.
THE COURT: Let's see, do we got anybody else in here?

Mr. Clark, are you involved in this proceeding?

MR. BROWN: He's a witness.
MR. CLARK: Just like Mr. Enos, Judge, I'm subpoenaed on all eight cases. I'll be happy to knock my testimony out this morning so I don't have to come back later either.

THE COURT: Okay.
MR. WARD: May she be excused, Your Honor?

THE COURT: Yes. Thank you for coming in, Ms. Epps.

Okay, we've got another motion to quash?
MR. BROWN: Yes, sir, two more.
THE COURT: Okay. Which one will you have next?

MS. VINSON: Good morning, Your Honor.

I'm here on behalf of Chris Daniel, the District Clerk. I filed eight motions to quash as well. He was subpoenaed on eight different cases to produce documents and to provide testimony. We're asking that you quash those subpoenas and grant the protective order on Mr. Daniel's behalf.

THE COURT: I think we're going about this backwards. I don't know if his testimony is necessary or what you plan to prove by him is relevant to -- I keep going back to Rule 18(a). I haven't seen anything yet that would indicate that you proved up any reason for recusal. There may be some reasons, but you haven't done it yet.

MR. BROWN: Yes, sir, because you haven't compelled these people to bring us the documents that we ask. Were the documents tendered -- these are public records. These are public records kept by the District Clerk's Office. We've been trying to -- if they are tendered, then we will use that to prove the grounds for recusal.

THE COURT: Wait a minute. What's in them that would cause a recusal?

MR. BROWN: I don't know. It is my belief, on information and belief, there are handwritten notes from Judge Pratt to clerks, telling them to
backdate documents. On information and belief from what I've heard from other lawyers, there is the timeline demonstrated in numerous cases where, because of Judge Pratt's actions, people have learned of entries of decrees at a point in time after the 30 days had run for the filing of the motion.

THE COURT: Okay.
MR. BROWN: It further shows --
THE COURT: Wait a minute. I'm just going to ask one more question.

MR. BROWN: Yes, Your Honor.
THE COURT: Are any of those to do with these cases on today's docket or any on tomorrow's docket?

MR. BROWN: Yes, sir.
THE COURT: You think there's some things
by Judge Pratt in those files --
MR. BROWN: Yes, sir, on the first four.
THE COURT: -- that would say -- that
would cause her to be recused?
MR. BROWN: Yes, sir.
THE COURT: What do you think's in them?
MR. BROWN: Exactly what I've said.
THE COURT: You're guessing.
MR. BROWN: No, sir, I'm not. You're
going to have direct testimony --
THE COURT: Well, what's in them then? If you're not guessing, what's in them?

MR. BROWN: May I finish a sentence? I'm sorry, sir.

THE COURT: I'm sorry. Go ahead.
MR. BROWN: What is in them, on the four that we're talking about here, are documents on the first four cases that Mr. Waldrop was involved with and they will show the backdating of documents. They will further show the bias against he and his clients because he, like Mr. Enos, had to seek redress at the appellate courts. He had to file a motion for contempt and a motion to compel against Judge Pratt. I think it was in the 1st or 14th, I forget. But at any rate, they -- the Courts sent back specific orders for Judge Pratt to do something. Those records will be shown in the records of the Court.

Additionally, you will see time frames that shortly thereafter adverse rulings came that no judge would have made. You will see, if we got the documents that we subpoenaed, that there is a course of conduct on behalf of Judge Pratt that shows bias towards the lawyers who have filed actions against her or grievances against her in the Court of Appeals.

If I had those documents, I could show you. I have them on four of them, but $I$ want to show a continuing course of conduct as 406 of the Texas Rules of Evidence allows us to do. And, besides, they're public documents.

THE COURT: They're what?
MR. BROWN: They're public documents.
THE COURT: Well, why doesn't somebody bring them over here? He doesn't have to come, but somebody who knows what they're saying, right? I mean, this is really important to the balance of lives of a lot of people, and $I$ know that the District Clerk didn't want to go come over here himself, but is there somebody that can bring those documents over here? Are they specific enough or do they just apply to these cases?

MR. WALDROP: These cases, Your Honor.
THE COURT: Can somebody bring them over? He doesn't have to come.

MS. VINSON: And, Judge, you do have the duces tecum as part of my motion. The problem is, they're not related to these cases. What they're related to, Your Honor, are to the criminal investigation involving the Judge, which makes the documents confidential and privileged. They don't even mention these particular cases in their duces tecum, so
they're requesting information that is, as I stated, privileged and confidential, and testimony about that --

THE COURT: We're only talking about these cases.

MR. BROWN: That's fine. Those are the ones that were tendered to the District Attorney's Office. But the District Clerk can't hide a document by giving it to the District Attorney's Office. All I want are these cases.

THE COURT: Can you get these cases?
MS. VINSON: Judge, I'm happy to talk to Mr. Brown and see what documents we can agree to hand over regarding these cases. The way his subpoena reads is all the information that Mr. Daniel turned over to the District Attorney's Office pursuant to a grand jury subpoena, which makes them confidential.

THE COURT: Right. Okay.
MR. BROWN: I'm not asking what went to the grand jury. I just want the public documents.

THE COURT: You just want the ones that pertain to the cases that we're going to hear, the recusal motions?

MR. BROWN: Yes, and the cases that have been testified to by Mr. -- what is his name -Mr. Enos.

THE COURT: No, just the ones that pertain to these cases. She's got some bias to these lawyers -- this lawyer here. He's the lawyer in the case, is he not?

MR. BROWN: That's correct, sir.
MR. WALDROP: Yes, sir.
THE COURT: I mean, you're not involved in these cases except --

MR. BROWN: Thankfully, no.
THE COURT: Okay. So the ones that -are you going to take the witness stand and tell me why --

MR. WALDROP: I am, yes, sir.
THE COURT: So let's get that done or get whatever you want to done, and we'll get back to you. Do you have a place where we can call you?

MS. VINSON: Judge, if $I$ can make a recommendation. Can I ask that you grant my motions and require that Petitioners' counsel file a new subpoena specifically stating what documents? Because if you read their subpoena now, again, Judge, it just goes to these confidential and privileged documents. It's not clear. So that we're all on the same page, give us a new subpoena with a request for documents related to these eight cases so that $I$ can make the appropriate
responses.
THE COURT: Do you know what documents you want out of these cases?

MR. BROWN: Yes.
THE COURT: Can you all write it down?
MR. BROWN: Right now on those cause numbers.

THE COURT: Okay. And I'll give you about ten minutes to do that.

MR. BROWN: You're not going anywhere, are you? We're going to continue, right?

THE COURT: I'm going to let you write it down and let her go get them while we do the rest of this.

MR. BROWN: I understand that. Thank you, sir.

They want to find out from the DA's office now. Do you want to go ahead and do it now?

THE COURT: Okay. What's the DA got?
MR. DURFEE: Good morning, Judge. My name is Scott Durfee. I'm the assistant general counsel for the DA's office. We filed a motion to quash this morning. The subpoena was directed to the chief of our Public Integrity Division. Her name is Terese Buess. Ms. Buess has been subpoenaed to appear and provide
testimony and also provide records.
What we would like to do is make a representation to the Court, and it's reflected in the motion to quash that we have, is that everything that's being sought here, whether it's testimony or evidentiary, relates to a pending criminal investigation that Ms. Buess is heading up. It is not resolved at this point and remains pending, and it would infringe upon both the work product privileges of the District Attorney's Office and it also would infringe upon issues of grand jury secrecy and also law enforcement privilege that's been recognized by the Texas Supreme Court.

MR. BROWN: And my response to that is, that may be right. It's wrong. A district clerk ought not to be able to give a document to the DA and keep civil courts from getting copies of it. But that's what he's maintaining, so that is yet another way that we cannot gain the evidence that $I$ could get from putting Judge Pratt on the stand and asking questions of her. And I ask you at this point in time, not to fight, but to revisit that and reconsider it.

THE COURT: What?
MR. BROWN: That I would be allowed to put Judge Pratt on, because there's no other way I could get the information. Ms. Epps takes the Fifth. Mr.

Durfee shows up and says that for some reason the DA's office doesn't have to give no evidence, and we can get no other evidence except in a limited matter from the District Clerk. I'm not trying to argue. I'm just asking you to reconsider.

THE COURT: Well, the reconsideration asking will be denied.

MR. BROWN: I'm shocked.
THE COURT: I don't see any reason why the DA has to bring all their investigative materials over, which is what it amounts to. If you've got something else before we get through with this and I think it's probably necessary to prove the rest of it up, then we'll ask him to come back over to see what they've got.

MR. BROWN: What I've asked for was not the entirety of the file, $I$ don't think.

MR. DURFEE: You did.
THE COURT: Sure you did.
MR. BROWN: Well, he did it. I didn't. What we wanted to see basically was the handwritten notes or emails from Judge Pratt that were obtained from the District Clerk's Office. I heard your ruling. I'm not going to argue. I just want to get it on the record.

THE COURT: Okay. Your motion to quash is granted.

MR. DURFEE: Thank you, Judge. We have a proposed order with the clerk.

THE COURT: Okay. And so do you want to talk to this lawyer from the DA, one of you, and see what she can bring over here by agreement and then we'll get on with the rest of it.

Is there anybody else in here on a motion
to quash?
MR. BROWN: What a pleasant surprise, no one else.

THE COURT: I thought Mr. Clark did.
MR. CLARK: I don't have a motion, Judge. I was just subpoenaed as a witness.

MR. WALDROP: Your Honor, we reached an agreement on the eight cases on individual subpoenas. A call has been made and the answer was?

MS. VINSON: I conferred with Mr. Daniel, Your Honor, and he said there are no such emails. They do not exist.

MR. WALDROP: And my question is, as to these eight cases, you're telling the Court that there are no notes whatsoever or no emails in existence or that have been deleted?

MS. VINSON: No, that's not what I'm telling the Court. I'm saying per our agreement of producing documents that were not handed over to the grand jury pursuant to their criminal investigation, no emails are known to exist. They haven't asked for any public documents. They're aware that they can get those on the District Attorney's file. I would be happy to help them if that was something they were looking for, but what they want are notes and emails. We conferred with Mr. Daniel and there is nothing that he has in his possession that he hasn't handed over and that is privileged under the law enforcement privilege.

MR. WALDROP: Got a record. Thank you, Judge.

THE COURT: Okay. Is anything going to be delivered pursuant to your agreement?

MS. VINSON: No, Judge.
THE COURT: Okay. Well, then I don't have to worry about getting it into evidence or not. Okay. Good enough. Thank you very much.

MS. VINSON: Judge, I'm asking you to grant my motion. You've granted the motion of protective order?

THE COURT: Well, you already got an agreement, right?

MS. VINSON: Yes, sir.
THE COURT: That's as far as I'm going with it.

MS. VINSON: Okay. Thank you, Judge. May I be excused, Your Honor?

THE COURT: Sure.
Who else you got?
MR. BROWN: Matthew Waldrop, he is my next witness. He has not been sworn.
(Witness sworn)
MR. BROWN: May I approach the witness?
THE COURT: Yes. Before we start, is there any lawyer here that's going to be making objections or cross-examination?

MR. TRAVERS: I am as it pertains to the Nebo, N-e-b-o, case, but I don't think I'm going to have much.

THE COURT: Okay. All right, sir.
Mr. Brown, you may start.
MR. BROWN: I have a book of exhibits. Do you want a separate book for you to look at?

THE COURT: Oh, no. As soon as you get done, I'll take a look at them. Are you going to put the whole thing in evidence at one time?

MR. BROWN: No, sir. I am going to go
item by item.
THE COURT: Okay. Go ahead.
MR. BROWN: How will you know --
THE COURT: However you want to do it is fine with me.

MR. BROWN: I just want to know how to go about --

THE COURT: No, go ahead. Do it your way. I don't have a problem with it.

MR. WALDROP: We can give you a binder, Judge. We have an extra, since there are no objections, I don't think.

THE COURT: Well, I mean, I'm just going to look at it. It's going to be part of the record.

MR. BROWN: If it please the Court, I offer marked Plaintiff's Exhibits 2 through 29 at this point in time.

THE COURT: Okay. They are all admitted without any objection.

MR. TRAVERS: No objection.
MR. BROWN: May I begin with my
interrogation? Was he sworn?
THE COURT: Yes, sir.

## WILLIAM MATTHEW WALDROP,

having been first duly sworn, testified as follows:
DIRECT EXAMINATION
Q (BY MR. BROWN) State your name for the record, please.

A William Matthew Waldrop.
Q What do you do for a living?
A I'm an attorney.
Q Do you have a primary area of practice?
A Yes, sir, I do.
Q What is that?
A Family law.
Q Now, before the Court, this morning and tomorrow, are motions to recuse Judge Pratt on eight different cases. Is that a true statement?

A That is true.
Q Who is lead counsel on all of those cases?
A I am.
Q The first case in order is the matter of Roch-Skeele vs. Russell Skeele. Is that a true statement?

A Yes, sir. I think the first case is Nebo.
Q Well, I'm looking at your order, excuse me, your motion for recusal that was filed on November 6th, '13.

MR. BROWN: May I approach the witness?
THE COURT: Yes, sir. You don't have to ask again. Go about your business.

MR. BROWN: Okay. I don't want to get in
trouble. I don't have any bond money.
Q (BY MR. BROWN) Isn't the first one Skeele, sir?

A It's Skeele, yes, sir.
Q Now, let's talk about that one. What was the nature of that case?

A That is a divorce with four children.
Q What was your -- what part did you play in it?
A I represented the wife, Rochelle Skeele.
Q Now, prior to the time that Skeele occurred, did you have a case in there styled Reddick?

A I did.
Q And is that a motion subject of this motion?
A It is not.
Q And why not?
A Because it's on appeal and -- well, it's on appeal.

Q Okay. In the Reddick case, what type of case was that?

A That was a child support modification. I represented Troy Reddick to reduce his child support.

Q And who represented the other side?
A At trial it would be Mack Travers.
Q Is Mr. Travers sitting here with us?
A He is.
Q Was the case tried?
A The case was tried, yes, sir.
Q When was it tried?
A It was tried November 22nd, 2011.
Q What makes you think that?
A Because that's when $I$ remember trying the case.

Q Have you reviewed the docket sheet of the Court?

A I have reviewed it many times, yes, sir.
Q And do we have a copy of that? We do right there. If you would put it up there. It's a docket sheet. There you go. And does the docket sheet reflect indeed there was a trial on the day that you testified to?

A The docket sheet does reflect there was a trial on that date, yes.

Q And is it dated?
A It is dated November 22nd, 2011, at the top left of the docket sheet.

Q When was judgment entered on that case?

A Judgment was entered allegedly on March 2nd on the docket.

Q Was a decree signed at any point in time?
A A decree was signed at some point in time, yes, sir.

Q What, if anything, happened on the 30th day of October, 2013, relative to that case?

A The 30th of October, I believe that's when I filed a motion -- I don't know that anything happened on October 30th.

Q You and Mr. Travers tried Reddick?
A Yes, sir.
Q How long was it before you got a rendition?
A We tried it on November 22nd. It would have been two-and-a-half months, roughly.

Q Well, you don't complain about that, do you?
A Well, I think any attorney would complain about that.

Q Do you think somehow you getting held off that period of time showed some bias against you?

A At that point $I$ did not think that, no.
Q Did you think at that time it showed a lack of impartiality towards you or anybody involved with the Reddick case?

A At that point $I$ did not.

Q Then what happened?
A After that time we received a docket sheet that you had up previously and it set an entry date for February.

Q February of 2000?
A 12 at this point.
Q Because the initial trial was 2011. Is that a true statement?

A That is true.
Q Okay. Now we're in 2012?
A Correct.
Q What occurred next?
A The next would be the entry of the order, but there was an entry hearing that we attended, and I think that's the next slide.

Q Who prepared that order?
A I believe Mr. Travers prepared that order.
Q Was there an objection to its entry?
A We objected to the entry and we also filed a motion for new trial and for reconsideration, which was heard on March 2nd.

Q Is that date significant in some way?
A It's very significant, yes.
Q What's the significance of it?
A Because that would be the date -- normally a
judge would sign an order either denying the new trial or granting it and it would begin to run the appellate timeline. It would either be that date or shortly thereafter, so that's why that date is significant. At the hearing she told us we will take it under advisement. That was her ruling.

Q And the hearing was on what date?
A March 2nd, 2012.
Q And she signed it on when?
A According to JIMS, she signed it on March $2 n d$, but that was not on JIMS until some time until June.

Q Did you understand my question? Do you have a docket that shows when she signed it?

A I do have that document.
Q And that's what I'm asking. When was it signed?

A It is dated March 2nd.
Q When is the first time it appeared in the records of the Court?

A In June of 2012.
Q After the June after March?
A That's correct.
Q Did you check the file of the Court?
A I did.
Q Why was it of interest to you?

A Because $I$ was, after having filed a motion for new trial, filing an appeal immediately. I needed an order that I could appeal both the denial of the new trial and -- it's not a decree, it was an order denying his modification. And actually she did modify it very slightly. But that's why $I$ needed it, for appellate timeline purposes.

Q For purposes of our record, can any lawyer access JIMS?

A Yes.
Q And did you access it in this case?
A Yes.
Q How long after the trial of the lawsuit?
A After the trial of the lawsuit and the motion for new trial hearing, it would be roughly a weekly basis that we checked it as did my client.

Q And JIMS alleged that the order was entered when?

A Alleged that the order was entered by agreement of the parties, is what JIMS says, which is not true, on March 2 nd and that the motion for new trial was denied on March 8th.

Q When was the motion for new trial heard?
A March 2nd.
Q When did the first document show the denial
appear in the Court's file, to your knowledge?
A To my knowledge, sometime in June.
Q When is the first time it appeared on JIMS?
A Same.
Q The same what?
A The same date, sometime in June.
Q Is it your testimony that, say, April 15th of 2012, that neither document showed to have been entered by the Court on the JIMS system?

A That's correct.
Q And that it was checked at least weekly?
A At least weekly.
Q Did you inquire of the Court as to where these documents might be?

A We did.
Q Who did you ask?
A I believe it was Kerry or whoever the clerk was at the time.

Q Did you approach the Court and ask to see the judgment?

A I did not approach the Court, no, sir.
Q Did you approach the head clerk?
A The head clerk at the time, yes, sir.
Q And what did she tell you?
A That there was no order, or she would look for
the file was the basic response, that we'll look for it. She prefaced this by saying -- when you go into the 311th, it's very crowded and they're not at the time likely just go run and grab a file for you.

Q Did she tell you the file was lost?
A She did not tell me the file was lost, no.
Q Now, what happened next in that case?
A What happened next was my client informed me that new amounts of child support were being withheld from his paycheck.

Q And when did that come about?
A That came about, $I$ believe it was, sometime between May 24th and June 10th. But I think May 24 th is when it started to come out, so he informed me of it between that period and the order appearing.

Q Now, the order was allegedly entered when?
A Again, order, May 2 nd -- or March 2nd and denying new trial March 8th.

Q And so the order would have had an order for the Court to take child support out and send to your client?

A That's correct.
Q Or send to your client's former spouse?
A And his employer, correct.
Q And it was allegedly signed on March?

A March 2nd.
Q Was child support taken out for the month of March?

A No, sir.
Q Taken out for the month of April?
A Not to my knowledge, no, sir.
Q Did you see any documentation that led you to believe that indeed the judgment in the case had been signed at the point in time that the JIMS system alleged?

A No documentation, no.
Q Any documentation that led you to believe that the motion for new trial had been overruled at the point in time that the JIMS system evidenced?

A No.
Q What, if anything, happened next in this case?
A I immediately went and researched the file. I went up to the Court, found out that the order had been signed and had been dated both March 2nd and March 8th. At that time $I$ knew that $I$ was well beyond my appellate timeline but, nonetheless, filed a notice of appeal in this case.

Q And did it go to the 1st or 14 th?
A It went to the 1st, as it was after June, I believe, when $I$ filed my notice of appeal.

Q Well, if it was more than 30 days after the entry of judgment, how were you allowed to file a motion -- excuse me -- an appeal in the Court of Appeals?

A I requested permission.
Q And of who, of what?
A Of the 1st Court of Appeals for an extension of time to file notice of appeal.

Q Is that document one of our exhibits?
A It is.
Q And what exhibit is that?
A I don't have an index.
Q Never mind. And so what, almost 90 days after the entry of judgment, the Court of Appeals allowed you to file a late notice of appeal?

A That is correct.
Q That's what your testimony is?
A That is my testimony, yes, sir.
Q What, if anything, happened next at the Court of Appeals?

A They granted my motion on July 18th.
Q Of 2000?
A 12 .
Q Now, did you have any other cases pending in the 311th at that time?

A At that time $I$ did. I can't recall specifically which ones they were.

Q Was Skeele one of them?
A At that time $I$ do not think so.
Q What next happened in the Reddick case?
A I filed my appellate brief.
Q Approximately when?
A September 14th, 2012.
Q What happened next?
A The Court of Appeals issued -- appellee filed their brief as well and then the Court of Appeals issued an order titled Order of Abatement, and that order of abatement was March 22nd, 2013.

Q Okay. You filed -- you had your pending appeal?

A Correct.
Q Now, did you ask for a -- did you file a request for findings of fact and conclusions of law at any point in time prior to January 1st, 2013?

A Intentionally I did not.
Q Why?
A Because the whole basis of my appeal was that there was zero evidence to support her decision.

Q Did Mr. Travers file?
A He did not file a findings of fact, to my
recollection, no, sir.
Q What happened early 2013 on the Reddick case?
A Early, meaning about March 22nd they issued their order of abatement, the 1st Court of Appeals.

Q "They" meaning who?
A The 1st Court of Appeals.
Q And the 1st Court of Appeals abated what case?
A They abated the Reddick case at the appellate level and ordered, in the last few paragraphs of page one of that order, the 311th to issue findings of fact and conclusions of law in compliance with the Iliff $v$. Iliff case regarding underemployment.

Q And that Court's order is in evidence as Exhibit 9-- no, 6?

A That's correct.
Q And that order, 1 abated the lower court case?
A The appellate case, it abated that case.
Q Abated the lower court case?
A No, sir. It abated the appellate case and ordered the lower court to do something.

Q Okay. And what did it order the lower court to do?

A It says within 30 days of the date of this order, to issue findings of fact in accordance with the Iliff opinion, indicating whether or not it found Troy

Reddick to be intentionally underemployed --
Q And then what occurred?
A -- and any other findings.
Q Then what occurred?
A Really nothing, not within the 30 days.
Q Did the Court ever file findings of fact and conclusions of law?

A Ever?
Q Yes.
A It did eventually, yes, sir.
Q When?
A After $I$ had to file a motion to compel.
Q That's my next question. What circumstances surrounding the Court finally filing a motion -- excuse me -- filing findings of fact and conclusions of law?

A I filed a motion to compel and for contempt against the 311th Court and Judge Denise Pratt.

Q Why did you do that?
A Because mandamus was not appropriate, since they had already been ordered to do something.

Q At this point how long had the Reddick case been pending?

A Since -- off the best of my recollection, early 2011. My involvement, though, was October of 2011, something like that. Maybe earlier than that.

Q What, if anything, did the appellate court do with reference to your motion, motion to compel and motion for contempt?

A The appellate court gave them an additional 30 days.

Q Gave who an additional 30 days?
A Judge Pratt. And so she basically asked for an entry date to enter findings of fact and conclusions of law.

Q I'm sorry. Go ahead.
A So based on their order in response to my motion to compel, she wanted to, I guess, enter or have an entry date for findings of fact.

Q How do you know that is what she wanted?
A I think she called our office and set it for like a Friday. She called on a Wednesday and set it for a Friday-kind-of-thing.

Q The Judge personally or one of her minions?
A One of her minions, and I think spoke to my paralegal.

Q Then what occurred in the Reddick case in the 311th?

A In the 311th, I filed objections to her findings of fact and conclusions of law.

Q Based on what?

A Two things really. That there were no facts that she could find, but, more importantly, that she had dismissed the case while it was on appeal.

Q So you take the case up on appeal. The Court of Appeals abates. How does the case get dismissed in the 311th?

A I don't know, but $I$ do have a dismissal order with her signature on it.

Q At a point in time when it was on appeal?
A Definitely on appeal.
Q At a point in time when you had filed a motion to compel and for contempt against her?

A I don't know if that was on file at the time. I do know that -- I think the abatement was. Yeah, I don't recall the time that she dismissed it.

Q What, if anything, was backdated in the Reddick case in the 311th?

A The order was backdated. The denial for new trial was backdated.

Q Why is that a big deal? Why do you care?
A It's a big deal because it affects my client's appellate timeline, his rights on appeal. Had I not been granted grace from the 1st Court of Appeals, he would have no right of appeal. He would have nothing, because we were watching the order and the new trial,
denial or the granting of, to see when we could file this.

Q What is the Skeele case?
A The Skeele case is a divorce, four children. I represent wife.

Q Is it one of the cases we have before Judge Ritter today seeking a recusal?

A That's correct, it is.
Q And do you feel that the lower court, 311th, Judge Pratt, has failed to be impartial to you and your client in that case?

A Unequivocally so.
Q Do you feel that she has shown a personal bias against your client through you?

A On this case, yes.
Q And what do you base that on, counsel?
A I base it on the fact that $I$ filed a motion to recuse, and subsequent to the filing of the motion to recuse in this that we're here today for, an order mysteriously appeared signed.

THE COURT: I'm sorry, I didn't understand.

A An order mysteriously signed by Judge Pratt on allegedly October 29th appeared after I had filed my motion.

Q Was Skeele tried?
A Skeele was not tried. It was mediated.
Q By who?
A Allyson Brupbacher.
Q And was there a successful mediation?
A There was a successful mediation, yes, sir.
Q And did the -- was there a decree based on the mediation prepared?

A Yes, there was a decree prepared, yes, sir, and presented on October 30th.

Q I wasn't quite there yet, counsel. I'm sorry.
Did you sign the proposed decree?
A Yes, sir.
Q Did opposing counsel sign the proposed decree?
A Yes, sir.
Q And was it presented to the Court?
A Yes, sir.
Q On what date?
A October 30th.
Q Of what year?
A 2013 .
Q This year?
A Yes, sir.
Q Two or three months ago?
A Yes, sir.

Q Was the case proved up?
A The case was proved up, yes, sir.
Q By prove up, what do you mean?
A Basically put on testimony of a witness saying that it's fair and equitable and in the best interest of the children.

Q For purposes of our appellate record, you recite the things that have to be testified to to support a decree of divorce?

A That's correct.
Q Did anybody object to that testimony?
A No one objected to the testimony.
Q Did anyone, to your knowledge, object to the entry of the decree?

A Yes.
Q Who?
A The associate judge objected to the entry of the decree and gave specific reasons.

Q Judge Newey?
A Yes, sir.
Q Why? What was wrong with your decree?
A He basically said that the Hague Convention language in there, that Judge Pratt would not sign it and that Court would not accept it.

THE COURT: What kind of language?

THE WITNESS: Hague Convention with
International Abduction.
Q (BY MR. BROWN) Is that language that the Family Practice Manual has in its decrees?

A Correct.
Q So if one parent runs off with the child to a Hague Convention country, it is much easier to return the child to the United States?

A That is correct.
Q And Judge Newey objected to that?
A He said specifically he objected because Judge Pratt would not sign it.

Q Well, judge of the court gets to do that, right?

A Yes, sir.
Q Okay. Well, then what happened?
A After that we were given an entry date to presumably go fix the decree and come back and have it entered.

Q Now, the point in time we're talking about, is that before or after Judge Pratt received orders from the appellate court on your cases?

A Oh, that's definitely after.
Q How long after?
A The order of abatement was dated March 22nd,
and the second order giving her additional time, I don't know when that is. I would have to look it up.

Q Was it in the early fall of 2013?
A It was in the early fall of 2013.
Q That was the order that she had to file and prepare findings of fact and conclusions of law, right?

A That is correct.
Q Did her affect change toward you?
A Yes.
Q When she addressed you, was it different than it had been, say, a year or so ago?

A Yes, in one particular case.
Q Which case was that?
A That's in the Abrego case.
Q Okay. We'll get there in a moment. Now, in Skeele, it's S-k-e-e-l-e, right?

A Yes, sir.
Q You submitted the order, correct?
A That's correct.
Q And filed it?
A Yes, sir.
Q In November of 2013?
A We submitted the order October 30th during the prove-up and it was rejected.

Q What, if anything, happened next?

A We were given an entry date.
Q By who?
A By the clerk, and I think that was going to be -- we still had a trial date of 11-11-2013 and our entry date is actually still showing on JIMS, believe it or not, as --

Q Sir, would you give an entry date?
A Yes.
Q When?
A January 17th, 2014.
Q Thank you. Now, was the case set for trial?
A The case was set for trial, yes.
Q And the case was set for trial when?
A November 11th.
Q Of what year?
A 2013 .
Q Was the case tried?
A The case was never tried.
Q Why? Did you settle it?
A We previously settled it, yes, sir.
Q Now, has a decree been entered at this point in time?

A A decree has been entered, yes, sir.
Q Was that before or after you filed the motion to recuse?

A I believe it was after.
Q What makes you think that?
A A couple things. Number one --
Q Tell us, please.
A Yes, sir. I received an email from Mary Quinn, my opposing counsel, asking what to do about the Hague Convention language and whether we should remove it. The next day $I$ filed a motion to recuse in these eight cases. After that time, Mary Quinn spoke with Bonnie in the 311th -- and I don't know a Bonnie -asking about this case and what the status of the order was.

Q Was an order actually signed?
A At that time $I$ believe not.
Q What makes you think that, sir?
A Because it was not on JIMS and because we had been rejected on October 30th by Judge Newey, and above him, Judge Pratt.

Q Had you gone down and looked at the Court's file?

A At that time $I$ had not.
Q When did you begin researching the Court's file?

A My office began on November 8th, and there's an email, $I$ think there, where she telephones the Court
and they inform us that we are off of the, $I$ believe it was the trial docket, the earlier trial docket.

Q The earlier trial docket being the November trial docket?

A That's correct. And they told us that we are off of the docket. We had an entry date, but no mention of the order was ever given. So based on Mary Quinn receiving a voicemail from Bonnie and then calling them back in my own office, finding out that we're passed on trial but no order entered, $I$ concluded that no order had been signed at that point. There's an additional reason on the JIMS sheet as well.

Q Which is?
A The JIMS sheet shows -- if we could go back to that.

Q Well, my final line of questions on this case, is if we go to JIMS right now, is there a date that shows it was signed and entered?

A I don't know that she actually put it in JIMS, to be honest. I would have to look at the JIMS sheet. But I do know that the status was passed, and the reason was recusal, and $I$ think that's what is reflected in the timeline, but we are still set for trial in this case.

Q Why do you think that shows a bias against

A Well, I think she backdated the order but did not update it on JIMS.

Q Backdated what order?
A The final decree of divorce in this case.
Q That's what I'm asking. You got a final decree of divorce in the case, right?

A I do.
Q And it shows what date?
A I believe it shows the October 31st, the day after the prove-up.

Q We have a copy of it here, correct?
A Yes, sir.
Q It's in evidence in front of this Court, correct?

A It is.
Q Do you believe it was signed on that date?
A Absolutely not.
Q Why not?
A For a couple of reasons. We had called the Court -- first of all, we had been rejected by the court due to Hague Convention language. We called the Court, asking about entry and the order and we're not told about it. Opposing counsel called and left a message and on November 9th finally got in touch with the Judge, at which time she was told that the order was signed on

November 9th. And upon looking at it, it bears the date of October 31st, which would be prior to my motion to recuse.

Q How does that compromise your client?
A If she signs a motion while a motion to recuse is pending, $I$ don't believe it's a valid decree.

Q It's void, is that what our case law tells us?
A I believe so, yes, sir.
Q Let me ask you this. Was there another situation where a decree was entered and you learned about it after the point in time where there had been an opportunity to appeal?

A I don't think as to a decree, no, sir.
Q Now, the Reddick case is still going on, correct?

A Yes, sir, it is.
Q Still on appeal?
A Yes, sir. We filed supplemental briefs this month -- I'm sorry -- last month, November.

Q Abrego?
A Yeah, Abrego.
Q Is cause number what? 2011-69848?
A Yes, sir.
Q What type of case was that?
A It was a divorce with one child.

Q And it was filed when?
A 2011. And it was paused, abated due to bankruptcy for a time.

Q Was there a motion for emergency relief seeking a stay of foreclosure filed?

A There was, yes, sir.
Q By who?
A By me.
Q And you represented who?
A The wife, Mary Abrego.
Q Now, these folks had a house that was in foreclosure, correct?

A That is correct.
Q And they had received notice that it was going to be posted and their house was going to be sold out from under them?

A That's correct.
Q What, if anything, of a factual basis did that have to do with you filing a motion for emergency relief?

A As a factual basis, I needed relief because originally it was going to be foreclosed in April and we had a June 3rd trial date, so $I$ needed emergency relief. My client was able to negotiate with her mortgage lender to push that date back, but that date was only pushed
back until June 4th, which happened to be the day after trial. So we had a hearing again. It was passed, and then we had a hearing on a motion for continuance and my emergency motion were heard.

Q Now, in the middle of this trial timewise did the 311th receive the appellate court's order of abatement on the Reddick matter?

A Yes, sir, it did, March 22nd it received that order.

Q What happened next in the Abrego matter?
A I think May 21st is when we had our hearing. There were two of my motions. Opposing counsel had served discovery upon me. That was untimely, so we basically objected to it, and before she could file a motion for continuance to stretch out the trial date --

Q "She" being the?
A Opposing counsel. We filed an objection to the continuance, stating both our emergency relief and that if you grant this continuance, the house will be foreclosed on. That was also mentioned at the hearing.

Q Was there any testimony that contradicted that?

A No, sir.
Q Was the continuance granted?
A The continuance was granted, yes, sir.

Q And the date for trial was set when relative to the foreclosure date?

A It was set for sometime after it. The foreclosure date was the date following the hearing.

Q Was all this made known to the Judge?
A It was made known to the Judge.
Q And between the parties, which party was most compromised by that?

A Absolutely my client.
Q The one that you represented?
A Frankly, it would be the kid. It would be the child would be the most compromised because he lost his house.

Q Was the trial date set for June 4 th and the house was foreclosed on June 3rd?

A That's correct. June 4th was the foreclosure, I believe, and then $I$ know title transferred June 17th at the trial.

Q This occurred how long after the Court received the first correspondence from the appellate court on the Reddick case?

A They received it in March, so it would be April, May and June. About three months.

Q Was the Judge respectful to you when you were trying this case?

A This particular case, absolutely not.
Q Tell us what her affect was with you.
A When we had our hearing on our objection to the continuance and emergency motion, $I$ was sitting in the jury box closest to the Judge. The Judge was calling her docket and called some case name I did not recognize and turned to her clerk, who was on the left, and said "Is this William Waldrop?" meaning me. The clerk shakes her head and says "No." Teresa Waldrop, who is a practicing family attorney, was in the courtroom at the time and she stood up and took credit for that case and said "Judge, that's my case," and Judge Pratt proceeded with the docket call. Mine being a 2011 case was way down the line and she eventually called us. I answered for it, said "Yes, two motions, objection to continuance and emergency motion for relief." And then at the end of docket call she immediately called my case and immediately denied it.

Q What's wrong with that? You get to go to the front of the docket. That's a good thing, isn't it?

A It's a great thing unless you know you're getting denied.

Q Montgomery case was filed 3-23 of '13, was it not? Excuse me. Strike that. Tell us about the Montgomery case.

A Property-only case. No children. Substantial, you know, property case. We reached an agreement.

Q When?
A The agreement was reached by letter with Rick Ramos' firm on May 19th, 2013.

Q And that was before or after Judge Pratt received the first correspondence on the Reddick case?

A About two months after.
Q Did you guys prove that case up, not the Reddick case, the Montgomery case?

A We did, and there is a record that we provided the Court today as well. That was proven on May 20th, 2013.

Q May 20th?
A Yes, sir.
Q Is that date of some significance?
A Only that it was after the letter of agreement and that we went in and proved it up and that it was pretty close --

Q Was the decree entered on the 20th?
A The decree was not entered on the 20th, no, sir.

Q Was it entered on the 21st?
A It was not, no, sir.

Q What happened on June 27th, 2013?
A I filed my motion to compel the 311th Court and Denise Pratt to comply with the order of the 1st Court of Appeals.

Q Was the decree entered at anytime in the over a month before you filed that motion with the appellate court, was the decree entered in the Montgomery case?

A August 9th. Slightly over a month.
Q No. Listen to me. You proved it up on 5-20, right?

A Yes, sir.
Q And you filed your contempt against Judge Pratt on 6-23-13?

A That's correct.
Q From the period of time from 5-20 to 6-23-13, was your decree entered?

A It was not entered.
Q Even though it was proven up?
A Yes, sir.
Q Had a decree been submitted?
A I don't know that it had been at that time.
Q How would she have entered a decree if you hadn't presented it to her?

A Right. I don't think it was submitted at that time.

Q Why not?
A There really were some issues with the clients and the typing of the decree.

Q And who was on the other side?
A Rick Ramos.
Q On August 9th what occurred?
A She signed the decree.
Q Over objection?
A No, it was an agreed decree.
Q August 9th of this year?
A Yes, sir.
Q Is it your belief she signed it on August 9th? Do you have any reason to doubt the decree, the date and time on the decree?

A Other than, you know, every other order she signed for me before was not particularly on that date.

Q Now, did any party in that case file a motion for new trial?

A Yes.
Q Who?
A Mr. Ramos' ex-client, Mrs. Montgomery.
Q Now, the decree purports to be signed on August 9th.

A That's correct.
Q What makes you think it was signed on

August 9th?
A The file stamp on it.
Q Is Judge Pratt's signature on it?
A Yes, sir.
Q Was Rick Ramos representing her, the lady, when she filed a motion for new trial?

A No, sir.
Q What day was it filed?
A The motion for new trial was filed on September 9th, 2013.

Q It was more or less 30 days after the signing --

A August --
Q You got to let me finish my question, guy. MR. BROWN: Excuse me, Judge.

THE COURT: It's not my problem. It's the court reporter's.

Q (BY MR. BROWN) Was the motion for new trial filed at that point in time after 30 days had run?

A Yes, sir.
Q Is that significant somehow in Texas jurisprudence?

A Yes, it is.
Q How many days after the decree was filed -signed by the Court was the motion for new trial filed?

A 31 .
Q Well, it was filed on the 9th, August 9th. Excuse me. The decree was signed on the 9th. The motion for new trial was filed on the 13th, so that's what, about 34 days?

A No, I think it's September 9th, and then 13 is the year. So it would be 31 days.

Q Okay. Are you sure it wasn't filed on September 13th? Look at the document.

A Yeah.
Q Was it filed out of time?
A It was filed out of time.
Q What, if anything, did the Court do relative to the motion for new trial?

A The Court granted it.
Q Even though it was over 30 days?
A Even though it was over 30 days, yes.
Q Did you point that out to the Court?
A I believe so.
Q Do you have any idea why she would do that?
A I believe bias.
Q Now, Judge Pratt has been a family lawyer for how long?

A I have no idea.
Q She's been a judge for how long?

A Probably two years sitting.
Q Can you think of any reason why she would have granted that motion for new trial that was untimely filed against you if she did not have some type of bias against you?

A No reason whatsoever.
Q What do you think the basis of her bias against you is?

A That $I$ appealed her and filed a motion for contempt and that $I$ pointed out some backdating in my objections to her findings of fact that $I$ filed with her court.

Q The backdating in the Reddick case?
A Correct.
Q Is that, to your knowledge, what the other complaints that the other lawyers had filed criminal actions against her or filed complaints against her?

A Numerous, yes, sir.
Q And is that what has - do you know when that was first brought to Judge Pratt's attention that there were complaints about her backdating documents?

A I don't know the month, but $I$ know it was in a news letter.

Q That Enos published?
A Yes, sir.

Q Now, obviously how long have you practiced in Harris County?

A 13 years this year.
Q And our family courts are cramped, are they not?

A They are very cramped, yes, sir.
Q Do they have way more cases pending in them than the civil courts do?

A Absolutely.
Q A lot more work in the family courthouse, correct?

A Correct.
Q Now, is it your complaint that if a court doesn't get around to signing an order for a day or two that that somehow constitutes a wrong on the part of the court that violates the Texas Penal Code?

A I don't think $I$ understood your question.
Q Okay. If at the end of the day the clerk has 50 pages for the Judge to sign and they don't get signed until the next day or if it's a Friday and they don't get signed until Monday, is that what you're complaining of?

A No, sir.
Q Why?
A Because that's customary sometimes.

Q And it makes no difference in a case, correct?
A That's correct.
Q But if a document is backdated 30, 40, 55 days, is there a potential for problems with our clients?

A It completely curtails their right to appeal. There is a problem, yes, sir.

Q Well, now, when you saw you were having this problem with Judge Pratt, did you go up to her and say "Judge, I've got opposing counsel here with me. May we ask you about this" and try to see if you can get her input on it?

A I did not, no, sir.
Q Why not?
A Well, I was dealing with an appeal at the time, and to be frank, $I$ did not really start discovering this backdating until after I started noticing or hearing about other attorneys having it. I did mention it for the first time in my objections to findings of fact, but at that time, because the case was on appeal, that I already had that right exercised for my client, so it wasn't a big deal.

Q Have you ever filed appeals against a judge before in your -- how many years have you been practicing?

A 13 years this year.
Q Appeal any other courts?
A I've never filed an appeal ever.
Q Ever filed a mandamus?
A No, sir.
Q What makes you think that in this particular case Judge Pratt had a bias against you in filing an appeal than any other judge would if you had filed an appeal against them?

A Aside from her rulings, her demeanor in the Abrego calling of the docket, her denial of -- well, actually, her dismissing the Reddick case while it was on appeal, $I$ thought that was fairly extraordinary, and really there would be no other reason than bias.

Q Now, you heard what Mr. Enos testified to earlier?

A Yes, sir.
Q Do you see a pattern?
A Yes, I do.
Q In what way?
A I see a pattern in a few ways.
Q Well, tell us. That's what I asked you.
A The pattern is it seems like a lot of the orders are not only backdated, but backdated on roughly the same days. Like they're done in packs.

Q On more than one occasion?
A Yes.
Q Are you familiar with a case that Mr. Clark was representing someone in the Judge's court?

A Fairly, based on the complaint.
Q Did anything occur in that case that is corroborative of what your complaints are?

A The backdating of the orders.
Q So that's a yes?
A That's a yes.
Q Now, my next question was, if the answer is yes, what part of it is corroborative?

A I would have to read the complaint.
MR. BROWN: I pass the witness.
MR. TRAVERS: May it please the Court?
THE COURT: Sure.

## CROSS-EXAMINATION

Q (BY MR. TRAVERS) Mr. Waldrop, I believe you identified my firm and me in particular as being your opposing counsel in the Reddick, R-e-d-d-i-c-k, case; is that correct?

A That is correct.
Q Neither I nor my firm were on the appeal; is that right?

A That's also right.

Q And the last function in the trial court that I or my firm was involved in was the hearing on your motion for new trial; is that right?

A Yes, sir, that's correct.
Q And neither $I$ nor my firm had any involvement in the Reddick case after that?

A Right. But for a clean record, $I$ think $I$ did send you my appellate brief, at which time you told me you did not represent her.

Q That's correct, and then you gave notices out of professional courtesy?

A That's correct.
Q And during the trial of the case did you represent Mr. Troy, T-r-o-y, Reddick, either pro bono or at a greatly reduced fee?

A I represented him for free, pro bono.
MR. TRAVERS: Pass the witness, Your
Honor.
MR. BROWN: Nothing further.
THE COURT: Anybody else? Anything else?
You may step down, sir.
MR. WALDROP: Thank you, Judge.
MR. BROWN: Call Robert Clark.
Approach the bench?
THE COURT: Sure.

MR. BROWN: Well, you told me not to ask you anymore, didn't you? I'm sorry. We're not going to be long with Mr. Clark. This will be my last witness.

THE COURT: Let me get you to take the oath while everybody is here.

ROBERT S. CLARK,
having been first duly sworn, testified as follows:
DIRECT EXAMINATION
Q (BY MR. WALDROP) Would you please state your name for the Court?

A My name is Robert S. Clark.
Q And do you practice law in Harris County?
A I do.
Q For how long have you practiced?
A 21, 22 years.
Q And family law is your primary area of practice?

A It is.
Q You heard Mr. Enos and myself testify?
A I have.
Q And you yourself are listed in that particular complaint; is that correct?

A Yes, that is correct.
Q Would you give us that case?
A The case that is in Mr. Enos' complaint to the

District Attorney's Office that $I$ was involved in is the Hernandez and Rivera case.

Q So he misspoke earlier when he said it was the DuPont case?

A I think you asked him DuPont and I think it has similar facts because it involves the same backdating of documents. But, yes, that was a misstatement.

Q Do you believe that Judge Pratt backdated documents in this case?

A I do.
Q And why do you believe that?
A The Hernandez case that $I$ was involved in was tried before Judge Pratt on January the 30 th of 2013. We did not finish and we came back and we concluded our trial on January the 31st of 2013.

Q Did that case originate from the 311th?
A No. It actually originated from the 310th District Court, Judge Millard's Court, but it was referred to Judge Pratt because Judge Millard was sick and the opposing counsel $I$ had on the case kept objecting to the associate judge over there.

Q Give me the dates again, please, sir.
A January 30th through January 31st, 2013.
Q Was there an order entered shortly after that trial?

A There was not.
Q How do you know that?
A I know that because at the conclusion of our trial on January 31st, 2013, Judge Pratt stated on the record -- and I have ordered the transcript and I have it and $I$ verified what she stated in court that day -that she would take the matter under advisement and she would make her ruling and she would fax it to us in the next few days.

Q So you're telling me if $I$ paid you an extra dollar and put a duces tecum in there, I would have that record today?

A Sure.
Q Do you believe that Judge Pratt has a bias against you?

A I do.
Q Tell the Court why.
A Because on the Hernandez case, it was a very clear-cut case. It was nothing that needed to be taken under advisement. We had the mother who had felony drug convictions, felony theft convictions, misdemeanor theft convictions, moved around and lived in five or six different places in ten months. The amicus was very pro dad, who was my client in that case, and at the
conclusion of the case nobody in that courtroom saw any other possible result other than my client walking out with custody of that case, and she took it under advisement.

Q Did the amicus make a recommendation in that case?

A The amicus was not allowed to make a recommendation in that case. She asked the Court and the Court refused. But at the conclusion of the case when she said she was going to issue her ruling in the next few days, $I$ waited about $a$ week and $I$ went by the Court to check to see if Judge Pratt had made a rendition.

Q And had she made a rendition a week later?
A She had not. I was told it was sitting in her office with a bunch of other cases that she had not ruled on.

Q Who told you that?
A It was Lawrence Jeffcoat, who at the time was the court coordinator for that court.

Q And he said specifically that your file was in the back?

A He said my file was in the Judge's office along with other cases that she had not yet made rulings on.

Q And for a clean record, this is a week after trial?

A This is about a week after trial, so it would have been the first week of February, somewhere around there.

Q And how often did you continue to appear in that courtroom and ask about your ruling?

A Family practice is a courthouse practice and I'm down here almost every other day and I'm definitely down here every week, so $I$ continued to go by the 311th District Court every single week and inquire of either the court coordinator or the head clerk with the exception of spring break week, which $I$ was out of town, between January 31st and probably May the 20th.

Q And the clerk would have been Marilyn at that time, Marilyn Epps?

A Marilyn Epps was in there at some point.
Kerry Forney, who is the gentleman who is now the court coordinator, he was a clerk in there at some point. Mr. Jeffcoat was the court coordinator, but I understand that he resigned at one point and Mr. Forney was appointed to replace him as the coordinator. But I made inquiries of all of the court staff, all of those people. I consulted JIMS. I asked them to pull the court file so $I$ could look to see if anything had been
put in there. Nothing.
Q And your testimony, this is weekly you did this?

A This was weekly, absolutely.
Q When did you find or finally learn that there was an order signed?

A I got a call from the amicus attorney on May 24 th of 2013 , in which she asked me if $I$ had seen Judge Pratt's ruling.

Q That was Melanie Flowers that was the amicus?
A No. It was Michelle Leblanc Folger.
Q And she told you what exactly?
A She told me that day she had gotten one of the emails those of us who are signed up with the District Clerk's Office receive whenever there is periodic activity on our cases, and she had received an email from the clerk's office that said basically a document had been filed in our case. She forwarded me the email. She went to JIMS and pulled it up and I went to JIMS and pulled it up and we found a one-page rendition by Judge Pratt that was just imaged, you know, within the past couple of days, so sometime in the middle of May of 2013, that was backdated to January the 30th, 2013, which was the rendition on our trial.

Q And this email, is this one of those auto
notifications that comes from the District Clerk?
A It was.
Q And it went to Michelle Folger but not you?
A Correct.
Q Have you ever had other cases in the 311th where orders have been entered but you have not received a notification email?

A Yes.
Q Do you recall how many approximately?
A Counsel, I can't give you an exact number. I can specifically think of two cases or three cases where orders had been entered that we knew nothing about them and then we found out about them a couple of months later.

Q Have you ever had that experience in any other court in Harris County family practice?

A I don't believe so.
Q So you get an email from Ms. Folger and you go check the order on JIMS?

A I did.
Q And what did the order say?
A Well, the order gave her rendition as to custody and all sorts of matters that weren't even pled for in the case. But what $I$ found very suspicious was Judge Pratt's handwritten date at the bottom of her
rendition stated January 30th, 2013, and the file stamp from the District Clerk's Office in the upper right corner also said January 30 th of 2013, which was smack dab in the middle of our trial. It was not at the conclusion of our trial.

Q And your testimony earlier was the trial was the 30th and the 31st?

A We started the 30th. We concluded the 31st.
Q And your testimony now is that the file stamp was on January 30 th of $2013 ?$

A The file stamp on the document is January the 30th, 2013.

Q When the Judge signed it at the bottom and puts a date, what was the date next to her signature?

A The date she handwrote on the rendition is January 30th, 2013.

Q Also January 30th?
A Yes.
Q The day before your trial ended?
A The day before our trial ended, when we were still right in the middle of the party's testimony.

Q And after that notification email, then there was a line item on the JIMS website that the order had been signed; is that correct?

A Well, not an order. It was not an order in my
case -- in this case. It was a rendition.
Q A rendition. Was that rendition on a docket sheet like we showed in my testimony?

A I don't know. It was a one-page form that she had handwritten her entire rendition on, signed it and dated it at the bottom.

Q And file stamped it?
A And file stamped at the corner of the top right corner without initials.

Q When you went by the Court to ask about the status of your order, what did they tell you, Lawrence, Kerry or Marilyn? What did they say when you asked about your order?

A They said just be patient. The Judge has not made a ruling yet.

Q Did they tell you how it would affect her emotionally if you kept asking?

A Well, at several points during the first couple of months $I$ said "Do $I$ need to approach Judge Pratt and ask her about this or what?" And I was told "Oh, no, don't approach her. If you ask her, it'll just make it longer. You'll probably get her upset."

Q But you filed a request for a status conference anyway?

A Since the case was out of the 310 th , I was
also calling the $310 t h$ and saying, you know, "Judge Pratt heard this two, three months ago. We have no ruling." And so with the clerk in the 310th, I made a decision to file a motion to set this matter for a status conference, and we set it for a status conference back in the 310th.

Q Would you say that this Hernandez case was the first time you started complaining about Judge Pratt's practice?

A Complaining in what way?
Q That she was either backdating orders or waiting too long to rule or just, frankly, not doing her job?

A I've had concerns about what she has done in her court for quite some time. I don't know if I actually expressed a complaint to anyone else about that prior to this, but there were other cases of orders being entered and us not finding out about it, things being delayed. Just bizarre activities out of that court.

Q You have been asked to give information to the District Attorney, have you not?

A The District Attorney called me, requested that $I$ come in, give them an interview, which I gave them a very lengthy interview. They asked me to get
documents for them on their behalf, which I did, and I furnished those to the District Attorney.

Q Did you give testimony as well?
A I haven't given testimony at any proceeding other than this one concerning that matter, no.

Q I apologize. Have you given statements to the District Attorney?

A Yes. I gave an interview statement to Brad Means with the Public Integrity Unit and two of his investigators, and it's my understanding that they usually take the testimony of people in cases like this. They don't call them as witnesses in grand jury proceedings or anything like that.

Q How many times were you interviewed?
A I've been over there twice.
Q And would you say that this would be the first instance of you complaining of Judge Pratt, your statements to the District Attorney?

A Oh, no. No.
Q What would you say the first time was?
A The first time I probably became very vocal about it was probably May 24 th of 2013 when $I$ saw her rendition, and my first complaint was to the associate judge of that court, Robert Newey.

Q And did her demeanor towards you change after
that complaint to Judge Newey?
A I don't think it changed after making the complaint to Judge Newey. I think it changed after a series of events: Us setting this back over in the 310th; me formally going over there and having to request them to release the file to the 310th because it was out of their court; me talking to Judge Newey; me raising a number of questions with the court staff, which I'm sure got back to the Judge.

Q How has she demonstrated this demeanor, that you just now identified, to you?

A I had a case that was in that court where I was representing the father. She appointed Doug York, Douglas Ray York, who is an attorney in Harris County, as the amicus attorney on the case. She appointed him back in 2011.

Q What's the style of that case?
A Copenhaver, C-o-p-e-n-h-a-v-e-r, vs. Martinez.
Q What was the nature of the case?
A Mrs. Martinez, the mother, had filed a very nebulous motion to modify, asking for custody or something of that nature.

Q And then Doug York was appointed?
A Doug York was appointed without any knowledge of us and we only found out of his appointment as we
were just kind of perusing through the listings on JIMS one day.

Q So you were not given notice of that?
A Was not.
Q Tell the Court how she also demonstrated bias in that case, if anything.

A Well, in that case Mr. York was the amicus appointed to represent a 16-, 17-year-old boy. Mr. York fulfilled his duties. When we found the order appointing Mr. York, it said that each party was to give the amicus attorney a deposit. My client made arrangements with Mr. York and gave him a deposit. The mother never paid him a cent, the other party. Mr. York met with my client. He reviewed a stack of documents that I gave him. He met with the child. He met with the child's sibling. He reviewed school records. My client, $I$ know, at one occasion or two occasions went to Mr. York's office. And the mother had never contacted Mr. York one single time.

Q What did Judge Pratt do to show bias?
A When we were set for trial like the fourth or fifth time in that case, we go down there on a Monday, there's about 150 other cases on the docket that day. This was -- this would have been about two or three months ago. We approached the court coordinator, Kerry

Forney. He says there's no way you all are going to get reached. We'll just reset you. And so we left that day. I then get a call on Wednesday of that week from Kerry Forney, the court coordinator, stating Judge Pratt is going to hear your case next week. She is setting you for a pretrial conference this Friday at 4:30 p.m.

Q Did you attend that?
A I told Mr. Forney I had plans to go out of town. I was going deer hunting. I am not going to be in trial -- I mean, in court on that Friday afternoon. I also said that Mr. York, I knew, was going to be out of town as well.

Q And what was her response to you telling the Court that Mr. York, the amicus of the case, was going to be out of town?

A Well, nothing at first, but then Kerry called us back and said, "Okay, we're going to move you then to Thursday at 2:30." And so that Thursday at 2:30 I showed up, my opposing counsel Brad Tilton showed up, Mr. York was available by telephone, and Mr. Forney called us back from the court and said "The Judge wants to know what, if anything, Mr. York has even done on this case. She is probably going to proceed to trial without him being involved."

Q Is that common practice with an amicus
appointed on a case?
A It has never happened one single time in my 20 something years of practice.

Q Do you know if that's allowed by law?
A I don't think it's allowed by law. My position is that he is a necessary party and attorney to the case. He represents the child in a court-appointed fashion. He had performed his duties and he had actually been paid by my client.

Q One of the ways we have to show is beyond rulings, has she shown bias. And I want to ask you, has she shown any bias with her actions or words to you outside of your cases or the courtroom?

A That case I'm talking about when we went down there that Thursday at 2:30 for the pretrial conference, we sat there for an hour and 15 minutes to an hour-and-a-half without her ever coming back. My opposing counsel leaned over and said "Can you believe this?" And he shows me his phone where he's on Facebook, and apparently Judge Pratt is sitting in the back in her chambers posting things on Facebook while we had been sitting outside waiting for her for over an hour and 15 minutes.

Q And you had announced ready prior to that?
A Absolutely. We both showed up at 2:30 and
told them we were ready.
Q I want to talk about the incident with your car or incidents with your car involving Denise Pratt.

A There's been several.
Q Can you tell the Court the first of those incidents?

A The first incident that $I$ found to be very odd was, God, it had to be March of 2011, I walked into the 311th one day just to take care of ordinary business and Mr. Jeffcoat, the coordinator, said "The Judge needs to talk to you." I said, "Okay. What does the Judge need to talk to me about?" And he said "She needs to talk to you about the wreck." And I looked at Mr. Jeffcoat and I said "What are you talking about?" He said "The Judge said you all were involved in a wreck and she needs to talk to you about it." And I said "Ahh, get out of here. You're kidding me." And I sat down at counsel table and he came back up to me and he said "I'm not kidding you. The Judge wants to talk to you about the wreck with your car and hers." So I waited until the Judge was in between hearings, I approached her on the bench, and I asked her, I said "Judge, I was told you needed to speak to me. Do you need to talk to me? 'Oh, yes, Mr. Clark. You drive a blue truck.' Yes, Judge, I do. 'You hit my car.'" And I'm just absolutely
shocked. I'm just trying to figure out what's going on. And the Judge just goes on to tell me that she parks next to me in the parking garage across Franklin Street from the courthouse. I've had the same reserved spot there for 15 -something years. I never knew Judge Pratt parked next to me, because when $I$ would get there in the morning, she was never there.

But she proceeds to tell me that $I$ have a trailer ball sticking out of the back bumper of my truck and I have hit her car. I examined my truck, her car, everything, there's no damage, no scratch, no dents, no damage whatsoever, and I go back into her courtroom the next day and $I$ approach her and said "Judge, I looked at your car, I looked at the height of my bumper of the trailer ball, there's not a scratch, dent, indentation, nothing on your car," and she says "Oh, you hit it with the front bumper of your car." I said "Well, Judge, there's no damage." She said "Oh, you can't see the damage. It's hidden under my bumper."

Q Did she file a claim against you?
A Well, not immediately. Then she had a person named George Clevenger call me two or three weeks later and tell me that $I$ needed to send her a check for the damage to her car because she's a judge and I'm a lawyer and that's just the way it works, and I told him that I
found his call to be offensive. I hung up the phone on Mr. Clevenger. And I remember when I was driving back from spring break 2011 from my ranch and I walked into Judge Pratt's office on Monday morning and I gave her a copy of my insurance card and I said "Judge, there's no damage to your car. If you think $I$ caused an accident or caused any damage to your car, here's my insurance card. File a claim." And she did, and the adjuster for her insurance company called me and said "There's no damage to the car" and said "I don't understand why she's claiming there's a wreck." But I had to go through all of that.

Q So after the Hernandez case, have you had any other instances of backdating orders?

A Yes. In the Copenhaver case that I told you about, opposing counsel filed a motion, requesting my client to take a drug test, and he wanted to take it up at one of our trial settings that he handed it to me at, and I told him "You need to give me proper notice of it." And so he said "I'll set it for a hearing and I'll give you notice and we'll handle it."

Well, about two weeks later -- he never set it for notice, he never set it for a hearing. About two weeks later $I$ get a fax from his office saying they're about to file a motion to compel my client to
take a drug test. I said "What are you talking about?" He said "Judge Pratt granted my motion for your client to take a drug test without a hearing, and here's a copy of the order."

We had never had a hearing, we had never been in front of the Court, we had never had it set for a hearing, and she signed it very shortly after he filed it that Monday morning at the trial setting, unbeknownst to me, unbeknownst to my client. Never got faxed to my office. And here he is threatening to file a motion for contempt against my client and get him in trouble with the Court for not complying with an order that we never even knew about.

Q Do you think Judge Pratt can be impartial to you or your parties?

A I do not.
Q Do you think that she displays bias to you or the parties you represent?

A I think she has on occasions since all this mess has started, absolutely.

Q And do you think with respect to Mr. Enos and his criminal complaint, that she displays or can be impartial to him?

A No, I don't think so, because I was actually in court on one -- on a different case when Mr. Enos'
associate was trying a case in front of Judge Pratt when she called the attorneys up to the bench after she found out that Mr. Enos had delivered the criminal complaint and she voluntarily recused herself off of that case, saying "In light of what's going on, I think I'm going to probably recuse myself in this case."

Q And having heard my testimony, do you think that she can be impartial to me or any party that I represent in her court?

A I think she can be, but $I$ think in my opinion she's probably not going to be.

Q Do you think she would display bias or antagonism towards me or any party I represent?

A If her pattern and course of conduct that she's demonstrated recently holds true, probably so.

Q Thank you for your testimony, but I want to ask, is there any source that you know of where we can find out about the inner workings or the datings of orders in the 311 th?

A Is there any source $I$ know of for the inner workings of that court?

Q To find out how they date their documents, when they do it, their practice of stamping and signing orders, is there anyone, other that the people we've subpoenaed today, that you know of that we can talk to
to find out what's going on in that court?
A The only people $I$ can think of that would have firsthand knowledge of that would be members of the District Clerk's staff assigned to her court or the Judge herself.

MR. WALDROP: Pass the witness, Your
Honor.
THE COURT: Anything?
MR. TRAVERS: No questions.
THE COURT: Thank you, Mr. Clark.
MR. CLARK: Thank you, Judge.
THE COURT: I don't have any need for this anymore.

Is there anything else?
MR. BROWN: Yes, please.
THE COURT: Can I have about a ten-minute break then?

MR. BROWN: If you'll give me about three minutes to argue when you get back.
(Recess taken)
MR. BROWN: When we came in here when we first started, the Court said, you know, so you recuse somebody because a couple lawyers say something. Well, we know that's not the case and $I$ know that was not the test that you put on this case. You were district judge
for eight years?
THE COURT: Eight full years.
MR. BROWN: And you ruled for people and you ruled against people. Never saw this Court or any of the other courts $I$ 've been in front of over there act in a manner such as this. Now, you asked me to tie these actions into 18(b), (b)(1) and (2). Well, 1 requires the judge to be impartial. Impartial means, I think, that a judge receives evidence, listens to the evidence, receives -- peruses the pleadings and then makes a decision that governs the people that are in front of that judge. If you don't make a decision until some point in time where you forgot about it and you go back and backdate an order, that's not impartial. That's guessing.

Now, there is no question in my mind that in the number of cases, the volume of cases that our family courts have, that every now and then, "Oh, my goodness, where did this case come from?" And courts have to go and reconstruct or figure out what happened. But you don't see it happening over and over and over and over again. You don't see grand jury investigations about it and you don't see Mr. Enos filing a criminal complaint that is parallel to the complaints of this gentleman's clients, Mr. Clark's clients and the other
folks.
THE COURT: Let me interrupt you for a minute.

MR. BROWN: Yes, sir.
THE COURT: Is Mr. Clark involved in any of these?

MR. BROWN: No, not the ones that are before you. He has a parallel case that is before the District Attorney's Office right now.

THE COURT: Is it going to be a different judge?

MR. BROWN: Yes, sir. And the reason I offered that testimony was under 406, the Rules of Evidence, to show course of conduct.

THE COURT: Okay.
MR. BROWN: It may very well seem like all these lawyers in Harris County are ganging up on Judge Pratt. Well, all -- many of the lawyers are indeed signing petitions and the like. We come with you with evidence of what has occurred. I assume at this point in time the evidence has been compelling to show that Judge Pratt has, in a manner that is inconsistent with being impartial, has backdated orders. Has changed orders. Has gone back and said, okay, a case has started. We're going to put an order into effect; no,
we're not going to put an order in effect, and six weeks later some lawyer finds out that indeed the case was decided and allegedly signed six weeks ago. It just doesn't work like that.

I have had and I have seen cases where courts have called us back in, a case got heard, got put off for a while, and "Gentlemen, take a little more testimony. Catch me up." Things like that happen, we understand that, but not in this pattern. Now, nobody, I'm told by a judge $I$ know very well, likes to be appealed and nobody likes to be appealed and certainly have an order come down saying that they're wrong, but that's what happens, that's what appellate courts do, but we don't complain about that here.

There have been two orders from the court of Appeals that directly affect the way she handles her court on cases that this young man had in front of her, and the most egregious of which was where the Court says, okay -- the appellate court says you have to file your findings of fact and conclusions of law, and then he goes in there two, three weeks later and can't get justice, can't get a hearing, can't get anything for his client. That's just wrong, sir. And that there, there is no impartiality if you don't have hearings.

You know, $I$ don't know if it was you. It
was possibly Judge York who said really a judge needs to do three things: Have hearings, listen to testimony and rule. And that's the right thing. And we do it in a timely manner because these stupid rules, they have these time limits that we have to tend to. We have to know whether or not mom's going to get her child support, whether dad's going to be paying 600 or $\$ 750$ in child support. We have to know when the appellate timetable runs. It's not been happening in that court in his cases and it's not been happening in that court on other cases that show the course of conduct.

She is obviously -- you know, people hold a grudge. I couldn't be a judge. You know, my skin's too thin. But even if you step beyond the bias and just look at the impartiality, how can you be impartial if you don't rule on the case until it's too late and you have to go and guess? It's just wrong. I'm sorry. We don't take filing of recusals on judges as any type of sport. It is not good for any of us. We are all officers of the court, each and every one of us, and if we don't act like officers of the court, we expect to be punished for that.

No one is trying to punish her. No one is trying to hurt her. None of this hurts or helps the problems she has with the Harris County District

Attorney's Office. What it does is protect the clients that this young man represents in front of. Thank you, sir.

THE COURT: Okay. Let's say I find by a preponderance of the evidence or even maybe by compelling evidence that she has backdated all those orders, has done all those things and probably in violation of the rules.

MR. BROWN: Penal Code.
THE COURT: The Rules of --
MR. BROWN: Judicial Conduct.
THE COURT: -- Judicial Conduct. And then I've got to go back and see if any of those have anything to do with Rule 18(a). Now, he gets on the witness stand, and $I$ can understand -- I'm not finished. Don't interrupt me until $I$ get done.

MR. BROWN: Yes, sir.
THE COURT: He gets on the witness stand and testifies as to the things that happened to him after he filed his appeals and all the things that she did after he filed his appeals that showed that she might be bias. Kind of recap those for me and let me see what actually happened outside of her conduct that might be either criminal or against the Rules of Judicial Conduct. What did she do that showed bias
against him specifically in each of these cases?
MR. BROWN: May I correct the Court on one thing?

THE COURT: Okay.
MR. BROWN: It's 18(b).
THE COURT: Okay, 18(b). 18(a) has probably got to do with recusals or, I mean, objections to the judges.

MR. BROWN: No, 18(b) are the reasons you can recuse someone. $18(\mathrm{a})$ is how it's done.

THE COURT: Okay. So tell me what those --

MR. BROWN: Explain it to him.
MR. WALDROP: Absolutely. The most recent of which is while this recusal was pending, she backdated an order. Aside from the Criminal Penal Code 37.10, that is direct bias. That is direct bias towards me and my client to backdate it during a recusal. You're supposed to do nothing during a recusal when it's pending. Nothing at all. Twice --

THE COURT: Well, I know that. I know that.

MR. WALDROP: She's done it twice since this has been filed on November 6th. She's backdated an order and then signed a QDRO but not a decree. But the
most specific of which is the way she treated the foreclosure in the Abrego case. That is extrajudicial. That goes beyond it, to actually show animosity. Hostile attitude is not enough. We know that, Judge. But to show actual animosity, and that's exactly what she did in the Abrego case, showed animosity, and that is a continuing course not just with me, but with the witnesses you heard today. It is not bias in the sense that, oh, maybe the rulings aren't fair. It is animosity that she demonstrates with either the rulings or the lack thereof or the lack thereof and then backdating the rulings.

MR. BROWN: By setting the trial the day after the date she knew the house would be foreclosed.

THE COURT: Is that specifically against you, you think, and not other lawyers or --

MR. WALDROP: I think there's a group of lawyers that she shows direct animosity towards. And I didn't want to bore you with the car story, I didn't want to do that, but that's just ridiculous, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Well, I agree that it is, but I don't know it has anything to do with --

MR. WALDROP: Well, it's extrajudicial and it shows animosity, it shows animus. But to answer your question, it's the animosity that we're complaining
of.
MR. BROWN: And that occurred a very short period of time after she got the first unpleasant correspondence from the Court of Appeals.

THE COURT: Okay.
MR. BROWN: But to me, my recollection from practicing in front of you, that's your way of saying "Hush, David."

THE COURT: I'm sorry?
MR. BROWN: My recollection from practicing in front of you, that's your way of saying "Hush, David."

THE COURT: Okay. Let me take a few minutes. You all can have a break. Come back in about ten minutes and I'll be able to look at it and see which way I'm going to go. Okay?

MR. BROWN: You do recall my argument on 18(b) (1)?

THE COURT: I know you said $18(\mathrm{~b})$ and not 18(a).

MR. BROWN: Thank you, Judge.
(Recess taken)
THE COURT: I'm going to read where it's entered on the docket sheet. Okay. A hearing was held on motions for recusal. All eight motions heard
simultaneously by agreement; is that right?
MR. WALDROP: Yes, sir.
THE COURT: The record was by Gina Bench. Motions to quash subpoenas of Judge Pratt granted. Other motions to quash subpoenas of Mr. Enos and the District Clerk compromised and not ruled on. Actually the motion for the District Attorney's Office was granted to quash, right?

MR. WALDROP: Yes, sir.
THE COURT: The Court grants all eight motions for recusal of Judge Pratt on the basis of Rule 18(b)(2)(a), i.e., the evidence supports a finding that the Judge's impartiality against the attorney in these cases might reasonably be prejudiced. That's it.

MR. BROWN: May I ask a question?
THE COURT: Sure.
MR. BROWN: We're done with this hearing, right?

THE COURT: We're done with this hearing.

STATE OF TEXAS
COUNTY OF HARRIS

I, Gina Bench, Deputy Court Reporter in and for the 311th District Court of Harris County, State of Texas, do hereby certify that the above and foregoing contains a true and correct transcription of all portions of evidence and other proceedings requested in writing by counsel for the parties to be included in this volume of the Reporter's Record in the above-styled and numbered cause, all of which occurred in open court or in chambers and were reported by me.

I further certify that this Reporter's Record of the proceedings truly and correctly reflects the exhibits, if any, offered by the respective parties.

I further certify that the total cost for the preparation of this Reporter's Record is \$ $\qquad$ and was paid/will be paid by $\qquad$ .
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Gina Bench, CSR, RPR, RMR Texas CSR 221 Deputy Court Reporter 311th District Court Harris County, Texas 1201 Franklin, 20th flr. Houston, Texas 77002
Telephone: 281.455.5613 Expiration: 12/31/2014

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