THE COURT: Good afternoon, please be seated. Do I have the papers? These two cases? We have a first order to show cause, motion: Doris Sassower against Commission on judicial Misconduct. I see Miss Sassower.

MR. WILLIAMS: Oliver Williams, Attorney General's office.

THE COURT: Ms. Sassower, there is an affidavit of opposition submitted, notice of. Affirmation.

MS. SASSOWER: I received that affirmation at about 7:35 P.M. Last night.

THE COURT: Fine, so you have it.

MS. SASSOWER: By fax, your Honor.

THE COURT: Madam, you've got a copy. Everybody ready to argue and submit?

MS. SASSOWER: I do want a ruling on that, your Honor, before.

THE COURT: Ms. Sassower.

MS. SASSOWER: -- My objection to this document.

THE COURT: Miss Sassower, answer my question: Ready to argued and submit?

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MS. SASSOWER: Yes, I'm ready to argue and submit, your Honor.

THE COURT: I'll listen to--.

MR. WILLIAMS: If it please the court--.

THE COURT: Yes, Mr. Williams.

MR. WILLIAMS: We haven't received anything in writing in support of their application for a preliminary injunction from Mrs. Sassower.

Secondly, the law in the circuit in this appellate division is that for an application for a preliminary injunction, that a well pled or pleading, it is-- I object to any extraneous documents.

THE COURT: Well, wait a minute. Let me say that the only documents that I have received from the petitioner is an order to show cause which in fact I signed on May 11, 1995 together with, I assume it is an affidavit; that's all I have received, and I presume that's all I will be receiving.

MS. SASSOWER: If your Honor please, in regard to that, may I just note that the

application that was made to you on the 11th by the order to show cause, which you signed was on notice to Oliver Williams, the assistant Attorney General, and he chose not to appear. It was an unopposed application. Your Honor, nonetheless, put the application over to today for argument, although, normally, an unopposed—

THE COURT: Wait a minute, that's not so. Excuse mean, Madam. Let's be correct. Maybe you are not familiar with the procedures here, but that was simply an application to put it on the calendar. other words, it was an order to show cause, an order directing Attorney General to show cause why certain things should not Initially if the state or City is involved, we gave them an opportunity to be heard on that if there is a temporary restraining order sought, but that doesn't, you know, and I think you know, if you don't then let me tell you, that those orders are never granted proforma, on, or at the time they are submitted.

MS. SASSOWER: If your Honor please, I quite agree with you.

THE COURT: Fine. Now, do you want to be heard in support of your application?

MS. SASSOWER: Yes, but I would point out to your Honor that that order to show cause did contain an application for a stay with a TRO.

THE COURT: Miss Sassower, I'm not going to debate you. I have other matters on, including a trial on this afternoon. If you want to be heard in support of your motion, I will briefly listen to you, otherwise, I'll take as I--.

MS. SASSOWER: I would like to first point out to your Honor, there are about 20 people for the courtroom today, many of whom are members of the Center for judicial Accountability of which I am director as stated in the second paragraph of my petition, and deeply concerned with the importance of the case that is being brought before your Honor. Other people who have joined because they have heard

about this case and are here on very short notice in order to express their support for this lawsuit and for the preliminary injunction which is being sought today as I would like to offer up to you this affirmation that arrived by fax from George P. Alicio this morning.

THE COURT: Is Mr. Alicio a party to this action?

MS. SASSOWER: He is not, he is expressing his intention to intervene, as an attorney and former Judge, former public prosecutor, and he has expressed his whole hearted support of the purposes of this lawsuit, and states in conclusion his strong urging of the court to grant the preliminary injunction that is being requested pending the outcome of this litigation so that the commission doesn't continue its unconstitutional summary dismissals of legitimate complaints.

THE COURT: Mr. Williams, do you have an objection?

MR. WILLIAMS: Yes, I do.

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THE COURT: I refuse to accept it. I decline to accept.

MS. SASSOWER: May I have it marked for identification, your Honor?

THE COURT: At the end of the proceeding.

MS. SASSOWER: And I have numerous others, and I do have copies, of course, for Mr. Williams. I have a number of other similar affidavits or affirmations, and expressions of intention to seek intervention, and indeed, an order to show cause that has already been indicated, which I have in my possession seeking class action status for this lawsuit.

THE COURT: I have not seen the order to show cause, so, let's continue, now. Do you want to have anything further to say on this?

MS. SASSOWER: Yes, your Honor.

THE COURT: I mentioned to you, I am in the middle of a trial and I have had to break for that. I have broken for the trial. What is that now are bringing up,

Madam?

MS. SASSOWER: In conjunction with my argument may I make reference to these visuals which we have painstakingly prepared so that your Honor understands the profoundly serious nature of this lawsuit, and of the need for the preliminary injunction which I am here seeking today.

MR. WILLIAMS: I object your Honor. I haven't had an opportunity to see it. It is not--

MS. SASSOWER: It is the law of the state of New York.

THE COURT: Wait a minute. Madam, we are not going to have argument in this court. Mr. Williams, sit down. If she wants to use that to assist her in her argument, I don't see anything wrong.

MS. SASSOWER: And as I said to the court--.

THE COURT: Why don't you proceed with your argument.

MS. SASSOWER: Mr. Williams papers, came, as I said, last night, untimely

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served in the extreme, and improperly served in the extreme, since they do not conform with the requirements of the CPLR. I will nonetheless address without waiving my objection to their consideration and with the expectation that I will offer those papers myself in support of my application for sanctions against Mr. Williams, personally, and the Attorney General for what can only be described as an absolutely spurious, deceitful and frivolous affirmation in opposition to my application for a preliminary injunction. And it might be noted that when we spoke earlier in the day, he stated to me, and I so confirm by letter that it was not his intention to put in any papers at all today, and that he was going to orally argue in opposition to this oral application.

At the outset, Mr. Williams states that the conditions for the granting of a preliminary injunction are 3, there are 3 prongs which have to be met: One being

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that the party seeking such an injunction, has to establish a clear right to relief; second, that irreparable injury will result unless relief is granted, and that the balancing of the equities favor the applicant, and that the public interest will not be disserved.

I can meet all of those criteria for the granting of application, without any way, and overwhelming him. In the first, there is a clear right to relief. application is, and this lawsuit is based on, first and foremost, the violation by the Commission, the respondent here, of its constitutional mandate as expressed in article 6 section 22 C-- I'm sorry, 22 A. My paralegal assistant will point out for the court.

THE COURT: If you want to move it closer to your mother, it is all right.

MS. SASSOWER: I appreciate it your Honor. Thank you so much, your Honor. that everyone present here can understand that what we are talking about here is a

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constitutional mandate which reads, specifically, in the mandatory "shall", the commission shall investigate, and I quote the pertinent portion, section 22 A: There shall be a commission on judicial conduct which shall investigate complaints with respect to the conduct, qualifications, fitness to perform, or performance of official duties of any Judge or Justice of the Unified Court System.

This amendment was passed in or about 1978 and represented a promise to the People of this state that they had a watchdog agency for which they were paying the sum of approximately a million and a half dollars a year the last time I looked, so that this watchdog function could be met. Now, nonetheless, the constitution gave the commission the power to establish its own rules and procedures, provided, and I quote "not inconsistent with law" that law being the constitutional mandate that the commission shall investigate complaints of judicial misconduct. Now, over--.

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THE COURT: Wait a minute, let me cut through this in the interest of time. And let me assure you, and incidentally, all of the other people in the back, that I will read all of the documents and cases cited separately in my own chambers after this is submitted. But I want to ask you a question. Let me ask you a question: That's the constitutional mandate which you've quoted?

MS. SASSOWER: Yes, your Honor.

THE COURT: All right. You've quoted it. Is it your claim that the commission is not investigating complaints against judges? Is that your claim?

MS. SASSOWER: It is my claim, and it is the proven indisputable documented fact, and it is not only the fact, in the cases, that I had presented in the form of the complaints that I have presented to the commission over the years since 1989 for -- 1994 alone. It is the fact as shown by the annual report on the Commission of judicial Misconduct, itself, for which the People

pay as well. And what it says, I point, my assistant is pointing, now, to the blowup paragraph of this annual report, '94. That show in 1993, 1457 new complaints were received, compared with 1452 the year before, of these 1275, 87 and a half percent were dismissed by the Commission upon initial review, and that is without investigation.

THE COURT: Wait a second. When you said "without investigation", does that quote come from their report, or where does the report stop? Where does the quote stop for the report?

MS. SASSOWER: My assistant, will furnish that to you.

THE COURT: No, just read it.

MS. SASSOWER: The initial review under the save Commission on judicial Conduct rule which is expressed in 22 NYCRR part 7,000, on your definition section, initial review, under subparagraph I is defined as the preliminary analysis, and clarification of the matter set forth in a complaint, and

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the preliminary fact-finding activities of commission staff intended to aid the commission in determining whether or not to authorize and investigate with respect to such complaint.

THE COURT: My question to you is this, and this may be the heart of this issue. My question to you is this: they do the things which you have just described and no more, right, no more than what you just described, isn't that an investigation?

MS. SASSOWER: No, that is not the investigation that is contemplated under the constitution.

THE COURT: Why not?

MS. SASSOWER: That, because --.

THE COURT: That's what I want you to arque.

MS. SASSOWER: Because, what is evident, even from the statute, the section 44 of the judiciary law which I was going to point out to your Honor so that your Honor understands what has taken place here

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in terms of the steady erosion of the people's rights to an investigation of their complaints of judicial misconduct. We started out with the constitution, in 1987, a constitutional amendment that required a mandatory investigation of complaints of judicial misconduct. The legislature without any a statute. showing of authorization or authority for this provision, then cut it down a notch, and provided that the commission shall conduct an investigation of the complaint, so it preserved the mandatory "shall" or, it included an "or the commission may dismiss the complaint if it determines that the complaint on its face lacks merit.

Now, that provision does not show where the authority for that diminution of the power of the commission came from, however, it is very clear that the legislative intent was that the only way a complaint could be dismissed was after a determination. A "determination" means a finding, an adjudication that the complaint

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on its face lacks merit. As I said, there is no authority shown for that provision and whether that provision is constitutional in and of itself is for the court to rule upon at the appropriate But then, from there, we got the time. ultimate erosion, where the mandatory "shall" that appeared in the constitution of our state and the statute as promulgated by the legislature of our state became in rule section 7000.3, referring to investigations and disposition, an option so that the investigation is dispensed with at the option of the commission without any specification of the standards that are being followed that would govern the discretion of the commission in dismissing.

Now, this is what it says: "When a complaint is received, or when the complaint is filed an initial review and inquiry may be undertaken. " That's A. Then in B, upon receipt of a complaint or after an initial review an inquiry the

complaint may be dismissed by the commission" -- doesn't say: After any finding.

THE COURT: Read the rest of it.

MS. SASSOWER: "Or when authorized by the commission, an investigation may be undertaken."

So, we have the ultimate 180 degree erosion of the people's right to investigation, from the constitution to the rule, where you not only don't have it mandated any more, you have it optional, and you don't have to have even a finding made, and you don't state the standards on which it is being -- it is not being undertaken.

THE COURT: You made your point, so--.

MS. SASSOWER: Concomitant to that, of
course, is the increasing number of
complaints resulting so that in 1993 by the
annual report of the commission itself,
published in 1994, the 1457 complaints that
were received by the commission represent
the largest number in commission history,

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and it continues to grow, and the effect on the people who are aggrieved by the judicial misconduct continues unabated.

THE COURT: Mr. Williams, do you want--.

MS. SASSOWER: He doesn't address that at all in his papers.

THE COURT: Let me hear. I have no idea.

MS. SASSOWER: How does he reconcile the discrepancy?

THE COURT: Let me hear him.

MR. WILLIAMS: Since the court is going to take the matter in submission I'll be very brief.

THE COURT: Excuse me, in the back, I already asked him to speak up. There is no point in yelling.

MR. WILLIAMS: Your Honor, legally, to issue an injunction, a preliminary injunction here, very few people will doubt or disagree that the petitioner has to show first the likelihood of ultimate success.

THE COURT: Well, I would rather,

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instead of that, addressing that, I would rather, if you would address Ms. Sassower's point, that the constitution said "shall" and indeed, under the rules of the commission, apparently, that has been a change to may-- the "shall" has become a "may", and it should have remained a shall.

MR. WILLIAMS: Mrs. Sassower premises her position on a legal provision. constitutional article that she has alluded to, and section 44.1 of the judicial, she said these are the 2 laws that the rule as promulgated by the commission on judicial conduct violated. She is correct when she says there shall be an investigation. However, she is a little short because she didn't go a step further, that shall be an investigation of judicial misconduct. its face, the committee is a bound to make a decision, whether or not based upon the contents of the complaint or on the face of the complaint. Their allegations of judicial misconduct, if there are

allegations of judicial misconduct as alleged on the face of the complaint or petition, whatever is submitted, then there will be an investigation. There is no doubt about that. The provision that she is referring to that violated that, which is NYCRR 22, section 7000.3, is identical to that. It is identical also to section 44.1 of the judiciary act, which makes if even more abundantly clear that upon the receipt of a complaint, the commission has They may investigate it, or they a choice. may dismiss it based upon the face of that particular complaint and the allegations as are asserted therein.

There is no dispute. But what the commission did here is consistent with the law in making a determination, are there allegations of judicial misconduct? If there are, we are going to investigate it. If there are not, nobody is disagreeing, that there is nothing to investigate. I call the court's attention to one document and I'll conclude, and that is Exhibit K,

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as affidavit to the complaint of the petition by the petitioner.

THE COURT: I don't have the petition in front of me. We'll talk about that in a minute.

MR. WILLIAMS: What I'm alluding to is there are 8 responses to her 8 complaints, which said: We have looked into your complaint. Insofar as there are no allegations of judicial misconduct, we have nothing to investigate. It is consistent with all the laws and rules.

THE COURT: Thank you.

MS. SASSOWER: May I be heard, your Honor? That's a totally false.

THE COURT: Excuse me, Mrs. Sassower, I have heard everybody on this. The next issue that I just want to bring to both of you, I understand there is the underlying petition which is on for June 12, am I right?

MS. SASSOWER: Your Honor, there is more than that. There is an application for default judgment because the Attorney

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General is in default and has not responded to it.

THE COURT: That's on for June 12.

MS. SASSOWER: No, your Honor, that's on for today.

THE COURT: That's this procedure? Fine.

MS. SASSOWER: This is on for today.

MR. WILLIAMS: This is not in the proceeding.

THE COURT: What I want to know is, what is -- Pause.) (Brief recess taken).

(Resuming in open court).

THE COURT: June 12, Mr. Williams, tell me.

MR. WILLIAMS: Yes, your Honor, there is a decision on the merits of her claim pertaining to unconstitutionality of the administrative: -- The merits of her claim pertaining to unconstitutionality.

THE COURT: That's on June 12.

MR. WILLIAMS: Yes, your Honor, that's right.

THE COURT: Fine, so that the 2 of you

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can submit if you are ready to submit it on June 12.

MS. SASSOWER: If your Honor pleases.

THE COURT: Excuse me, Miss Sassower.

That in room 130. I understand your

argument about default. I will consider

your argument.

MS. SASSOWER: You haven't heard the argument, your Honor.

A VOICE: I would like to make an application.

THE COURT: Not right now.

MS. SASSOWER: I haven't finished the argument about the injunction.

THE COURT: You have finished the argument.

MS. SASSOWER: I have to respond to the totally false statement made by Mr. Williams.

THE COURT: You have finished the argument on the injunction. I really read the paper -- excuse me -- Ms. Sassower, as I read the Attorney General's papers.

MS. SASSOWER: If your Honor please--.

THE COURT: Excuse me, Ms. Sassower.

MS. SASSOWER: May I have a ruling? Is your Honor saying that he is accepting the Attorney General's papers in view of the objections?

THE COURT: Excuse me, the papers that were submitted this afternoon, yes, I'm accepting those.

MS. SASSOWER: The papers that were served last night by fax?

THE COURT: The papers that were submitted in, yes, I am accepting those and I will consider those; that is my ruling, so that now you know very clearly, I will consider it, I am accepting it. You will have a decision on your application in write writing. Now, Ms. Sassower--

MS. SASSOWER: May I have an opportunity to--

THE COURT: Now I'm going to go to another area. I had received several applications for the right to use, I think cameras, of one sort or another. Those were in my robing room, I guess. The clerk

when I got in here. I have not had the chance to consider those. I will consider those. I will rule on those, whatever the ruling is, if the people who made those applications, the person that made the particular application, that ruling, if I have that person's address on the application, we will send you a copy of the ruling. The ruling will be made.

Please sit down, sir. Please sit down. Excuse me, sir.

Next, I just want to let the people in the back row please, so that you have some idea, this application that was made this afternoon and that has been made this afternoon is not an unusual type of application. The parties may be different, but it is not an unusual type of application; that is, one party in this case, the petitioner, is asking that I restrain the respondent from doing something before the case has been decided. That's not unusual. We call it a

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temporary restraining order. On those most of the time those are submitted purely on papers, that is, the petitioner puts her arguments in the form of documents, in the form of affidavits, possibly, in the form of a legal brief; the respondent answers in the same kind of documents. The court then takes it back to chambers, and reads the papers and does research and writes its Sometimes, although not always, decision. I wouldn't say in the majority of the times there is argument, the kind of argument that you had here, that you have heard here this afternoon, where the petitioner gives her view as to whether it should be granted, and the respondent gives their view as to why if should not be granted, either way, once the arguments have been had, and they are not usually lengthy If I decide and I'm not leaning arguments. towards that I must tell you, that I require a formal hearing, then I would order a formal hearing. At a formal hearing the petitioner has a chance to call

witnesses, respondent has a chance to call witnesses, and so on. It seems to me that I, I just heard this afternoon, I haven't done research, it seems to me this is not the kind of application which requires a full formal hearing at this time. So, what we've heard this afternoon is not an unusual kind of application. At the end of the application, and these applications are not lengthy, this one this afternoon is longer than, much longer than the average application has been, I'll take it back to my chambers and I will make a ruling. Thank you, one and all.

MS. SASSOWER: May I have--.

THE COURT: No, Ma'am. You are finished.

Is anyone here on the case of Bloom against-- (interruption).

THE COURT: Miss Sassower, excuse me, Miss Sassower--.

MS. SASSOWER: Please take the benefit of the research that I have.

THE COURT: Miss Sassower, I am now --

Officer, remove her from the courtroom. Please.

COURT OFFICER: Step out, Ma'am.

MS. SASSOWER: You refuse to allow her? This is--.

THE COURT: Miss Sassower, I'm going to have you removed from the courtroom. I cannot conduct my legal business.

MS. SASSOWER: This shameful and scandalous. It is unheard of that a party in the default should be allowed to speak, and the party who is complaining--

THE COURT: Madam, one more word and I will not only remove you from the courtroom, I will find you guilty of contempt because I cannot continue my legal business. Now, if that's what I want, I'll do it. You'll get everything.

MS. SASSOWER: That's not what I want, your Honor.

THE COURT: You'll get every courtesy, that you have the right to.

A VOICE: We want what the lawyers are entitled to; that's all we want.

MS. SASSOWER: If you hear me you would understand that the Attorney General's papers are contemptuous, and they could hurt the People of the state of New York. The Attorney General should be disqualified from representing the commission. He is being paid to defend the constitution.

THE COURT: Gentlemen, you can remove her.

(The plaintiff was escorted from the courtroom by the court officers at this time).

(The judge left the bench at this time).

(The judge resumed the bench at this time).

THE COURT: Back on the record. Did I hear someone scream here? Who--.

THE CLERK: The assistant.

THE COURT: Is the assistant still in the courtroom.

If I hear any more screaming, let me make something else quite clear, including the person with the hat on over here. I am

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in the court, now, on judicial business. am hearing other cases and other matters. If I am prevented from continuing that in my courtroom, by reason of -- excuse me --, sir, by reason of people screaming at me, or screaming at other people, or otherwise making lots of noise, I have the power, and indeed, I have the duty, if I have to, of fining people in contempt, in summary contempt of court. Summary contempt of court gives me the right to fine, and/or to jail. I tell you now, I am a patient person, but I will not tolerate bullying, and people attempting to bully me, or to bully the court by screaming at me after I have made a ruling. There are ways of imposing my ruling.

Everyone is entitled to object, to appeal to my ruling or do anything else they want within the law to fellow, or take it up, or get around it, but I will not be bullied on this. I think I have made myself clear. Thank you.

Sir, what is the problem?

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A VOICE: Eric Schmoldt from Americans
For a Better America.

THE COURT: Yes?

MR. SCHMOLDT: All I want to do is, your Honor, to see that justice is available in the court house, as opposed to what it currently is, the least likely place to get justice is in the court house, the fact that a double standard exists.

THE COURT: Mr. Schmoldt, let me say,
I don't agree with you, that Justice is not
available, and I am not going to debate it
with everybody here. Wait. I believe that
Justice is available, but, let me assure
you, since you raised it, that the
arguments that Miss Sassower made in her
papers will be very, very carefully
considered. However, think about it,
yourself for a moment, if every litigant
who comes in can continue to go on as along
and yell and scream and thereby gets their
way, then we will have anarchy.

MR. SCHMOLDT: I grant you that, but I still feel that Justice is not available at

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the court house.

THE COURT: Obviously I disagree with I'm sorry you feel that way. that as a result of this case, at least, you will feel, whether you agree with the decision or not, you'll feel that the decision was fair and fairly arrived at. If you don't, I'm sorry about that, but let me assure you, if Miss Sassower disagrees with my decision, she has absolute right to appeal.

SCHMOLDT: Why is the Attorney General opposing Justice? He is opposing--

THE COURT: Because he doesn't see Justice the same as you do on this case. Let's not get into that.

A VOICE: May it please the court, I would like to make an application to be heard as an intervenor as well as a exponent of a class action.

THE COURT: Sir, I don't know your name.

JUROR: Jean -- Buleti (phonetic).

MS. SASSOWER: If you want to make that

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kind of an application, you'll have to do it on papers.

A VOICE: We did it already.

THE COURT: There are ways of doing it. You bring on a motion to intervene and the Attorney General is given the opportunity to oppose it or not oppose it. I will not make a ruling -- excuse me --sir, I will not make a decision on or rule on something like this orally.

A VOICE: May I instructions to get papers from the Attorney General, please, because I have tried to reach these people and it has been--.

THE COURT: I don't understand what how mean.

A VOICE: Well, I would like to have copies of any papers that they've already put into this.

THE COURT: No. I'm not going to give them a directive to that. After you intervene, if I give you the right to intervene, then of course you are entitled to it. Before that, I'm not

going do that. But you know, I don't know what your relationship is to Miss Sassower, if you are friendly with Miss Sassower, presumably she'll give you the papers. If you made it in writing, it hasn't reached me yet.

A VOICE: I want discovery proceedings against the Attorney General's office to disqualify because of conflict of interest.

THE COURT: Why don't we wait and see--

A VOICE: -- and the misuse of the word "conduct" and "misconduct" according according to a paradigm --

THE COURT: Way don't we wait until we are finished with step 1.

(The matter was concluded at this time).

Certified to be a true and accurate transcript of the stenographic minutes taken within.

Allen McGill, CSR