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Superior Court of the State of California County of San Francisco

People of the State of California,

Plaintiff.

vs.

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Michael Smith,

Defendant.

Court No.: 16013940

Challenge for Cause [Code of Civ. Procedure, § 170.1]

Date: 9-16-16 Time: 9:00 a.m.

Dept: 608

The trial judge, the Honorable Anne-Christine Massullo, has exhibited bias and prejudice toward defense counsel, the defendant, and the defense case. Smith moves for disqualification of Judge Massullo under Code of Civil Procedure section 170.1 to ensure Smith's rights to a fair trial, to present a defense, and to cross examine witnesses against him under the Fifth, Sixth, and Fourteenth Amendments.

Points and Authorities

1. Smith's motion for disqualification is timely.

A party must raise a motion for a judge's disqualification under section 170.1 "at the earliest reasonable opportunity after the party becomes aware of the disqualifying facts." The obligation to raise a disqualification motion "applies . . .

¹ North Beverly Park Homeowners Ass'n v. Bisno (2007) 147 Cal.App.4th 762, 769.

when the facts constituting the disqualification are discovered *before a case is* submitted for decision."²

Here, Smith has discovered evidence of Judge Massullo's bias during the arguments and rulings of *in limine* motions, and before jury selection. No evidence has been presented to the jury. The case has not been submitted for decision. Under section 170.1, Smith's motion for disqualification of Judge Massullo is timely.

2. Disqualification is proper because Judge Massullo has exhibited bias and prejudice toward defense counsel.

The California Judicial Code of Ethics [hereafter "The Code"] — as well as statutory law — compels Judge Massullo's disqualification in this case.

The Code sets forth six core canons, establishes and governs standards for the conduct of judges throughout the state. The Code is based on "the precepts that judges, individually and collectively, must respect and honor the judicial office as a public trust and strive to enhance and maintain confidence in our legal system."³

As a result of Proposition 190, enacted by legislative referendum on November 8, 1994, the provisions of the code are mandatory and binding on all judges in California. Judges can be censured or removed from office for both willful misconduct and prejudicial misconduct. While willful misconduct involves bad faith, prejudicial misconduct is "conduct with a judges undertakes in good faith but which nevertheless would appear to an objective observer to be not only

² Church of Scientology v. Wollersheim (1996) 42 Cal.App.4th 628, 655-56.

³ California Code of Judicial Ethics (2001) (amended by the Supreme Court of California effective December 13, 2000).

⁴ See California Constitution, Art VI, §18(m) stating that "[t]he Supreme Court shall make rules for the conduct of judges."

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unjudicial conduct but conduct prejudicial to the public esteem for the judicial office."5

This Code is reinforced by section 170.1 of the Code of Civil Procedure. It provides that "[b]ias or prejudice toward a lawyer in the proceeding may be grounds for disqualification."6 Section 170.1 further provides that "[a] judge shall be disqualified if . . . [a] person aware of the facts might reasonably entertain a doubt that the judge would be able to be impartial."7

The standard for disqualification is "not limited to actual bias" and includes potential bias or prejudice. Potential bias or prejudice must be "clearly be established by an objective standard."9 Bias or prejudice consists of a "mental attitude or disposition of the judge towards a party to the litigation."10

Here, as shown in the attached Declaration of Counsel, Judge Massullo has violated several canons by showing bias toward the defense and questioning counsel's integrity, while at the same time showing leniency towards the prosecution.11 More than potential bias, the trial court has exhibited actual bias and prejudice against the defense, hallmarks that continuing trial before her

⁵ Broadman v. Commission on Judicial Performance (1988) 18 Cal.4th 1079, 1092 (citations omitted.).

⁶ Code Civ. Proc., § 170.1(6)(B).

⁷ Code Civ. Proc., § 6(A)(iii) [emphasis added].

⁸ Christie v. City of El Centro (2006) 135 Cal. App. 4th 767, 776.

⁹ People v. Chatman (2006) 38 Cal.4th 344, 363.

Pacific Etc.Conference of United Methodist Church v. Superior Court (1978)
 Cal.App.3d 72, 86, citing Evans v. Superior Court (1930) 107 Cal.App. 372,

¹¹ See Canon 2(A) "A judge shall respect and comply with the law and shall act at all times in a manner that promotes public confidence in the integrity and impartiality of the judiciary; Advisory Committee Commentary to Canon One ("The integrity and independence of judges depend in turn upon their acting without fear or favor."); Canon 3 (B)(2) ("A judge shall be faithful to the law regardless of partisan interests, public clamor, or fear of criticism, and shall maintain professional competence in the law."); Canon 3(b)(5) ("A judge shall perform judicial duties without bias or prejudice.")

would result in a violation of Smith's right to due process and a fair trial. Based on the showing of counsel, Smith has made an objective showing — a person aware of the trial court's conduct would "reasonably entertain a doubt that the judge would be able to be impartial."¹²

Conclusion

The trial court's bias impinges on Smith's right to a fair trial, to present a defense, and to confront the evidence against her under the Fifth, Sixth, and Fourteenth Amendments. Smith therefore moves for the disqualification of Judge Massullo.

Dated: September 15, 2016

Respectfully submitted,

Jeff Adachi San Francisco Public Defender Attorney for Michael Smith

¹² See Code Civ. Proc., § 6(A)(iii).

Declaration of Counsel

- I, Jeffrey G. Adachi, declare:
- 1. I am a member in good standing of the California Bar. I am the Public Defender of the City and County of San Francisco, counsel of record for the defendant in this case. I have been an attorney for 30 years and have served as the elected Public Defender since 2002. Prior to that, I was the office's Chief Attorney and Deputy Public Defender for 15 years. I have handled over 3,000 cases and 150 jury trials. I have tried cases before many different judges. However, I have never had the experience of treated as unfairly as I have in the three days I have appeared before the Hon. Anne-Christine Massullo. I am extremely concerned that Smith will not receive a fair trial due to her bias towards me and my client.
- 2. I am informed and believe that facts exist such that an average person aware of those facts might reasonably entertain a doubt that the Hon. Anne-Christine Massullo would be able to be impartial towards myself and my client. I am informed and believe that Judge Massullo is biased against the defense in this case holding the parties to different standards because of her bias in favor of the prosecution and state's witnesses, BART officers; and has questioned my personal integrity as an officer of the court. As such, Smith is receiving an unfair trial before Judge Massullo.
- 3. I was assigned to Judge Massullo on September 9 for trial. On September 12, the parties appeared before Judge Massullo. In just three court days, Judge Massullo has expressed her bias against the defense on numerous occasions through her statements, actions and rulings.
- 4. Specifically, Judge Massullo:

- a. Questioned the integrity of defense counsel refusing to accept counsel's words as an officer of the court and percipient witness to the recent hospitalization of my client;
- In ruling on evidentiary matters, has held the defense to a higher standard — finding defense motions untimely and in violation of local rules, while entertaining the prosecution's motions without question.
- c. Has denied Michael Smith to right to present a defense. She has excluded a crucial defense expert and two important percipient witnesses, thus restricting his right to rebut the prosecution evidence and to present an affirmative defense. Over defense objection, the prosecution will call a use of force expert (Edward Flosi) to explain the reasonableness of the BART officers' actions (discovered to defense days before trial began). Now Flosi's testimony ruled admissible, the defense expert (Ken Williams) was secured during *in limine* rulings; but without assessing materiality, Judge Massullo excluded the defense expert as untimely. Dr. Laura Gottlieb and Kathleen Saunders, who witnessed the events in the BART train involving Rodriguez which tends to disprove the prosecution's theory and provides context for Mr. Smith's mental state during his encounter with police;
- d. Has arbitrarily denied counsel the right to appear for Smith under Penal Code section 977, despite his consent and identification not being at issue — particularly, in light of Smith's recent hospitalization, this order is capricious;
- e. Judge Massullo's bias is finally evident in her repeated warnings that counsel cannot refer to "Oscar Grant," or make this trial about the Black Lives Matter movement; and
- f. Finally, Judge Massullo's bias is demonstrated by her attitude, her voice, and physical reaction to defense counsel argument. This

demonstrates judicial misconduct, as it is conduct unbecoming of a neutral arbitrator.

A. By questioning the integrity of counsel, Judge Massullo has demonstrated actual bias against the defense.

Defense counsel filed a written Penal Code § 977(a) waiving defendant's appearance at trial. On September 12, 2016, counsel informed the court that Smith did not appear on the first day of *in limine* hearings because he had been hospitalized for several days after suffering a seizure. Even after Smith appeared in court the following day after being released from the hospital, the court demanded that defense counsel produce proof that Smith was hospitalized.

On September 14, 2016, during a hearing set by the court that Smith was not required to attend, the Court again insisted that defense counsel provide a letter proving that Smith was hospitalized. Despite being both as an officer-of-the-court and a percipient witness to the hospitalization — I provided the transportation, and directly spoke with the care providers — Judge Massullo refused to accept my sworn testimony regarding Smith's medical status.

This needless demand caused defense counsel *several hours* of distraction from preparing this case, to obtain a letter to satisfy Judge Massullo and provided the letter to her that afternoon.

B. Holding the defense to a higher standard demonstrates Judge Massullo's bias against defense counsel.

By contrast, Judge Massullo routinely has accepted the word of the prosecution, without questioning his integrity. For example, when the prosecutor said that a witness was suddenly unavailable to testify because he was on vacation, Judge Massullo did not request a declaration from the officer and instead simply took the prosecutor's word for it. She ruled on the motion based on the prosecution's late-notice of the officer's unavailability — not questioning whether this eleventh-hour request for a conditional exam was timely.

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But, when Smith's counsel attached a declaration submitted on penalty of perjury, that declaration was deemed insufficient by the Judge. Counsel prepared a supplemental Pitchess motion, explaining the need for discovery of the actual complaints as the percipient witnesses' either did not recall the events, or refused to speak with the defense investigator. In denying the motion for discovery, Judge Massullo remarked that the motion was based on defense attorney's hearsay conversations with his investigator and therefore insufficient. Thus, Judge Massullo is biased against defense counsel, as evidenced by her disparate treatment in analogous situations.

C. Judge Massullo's bias has denied Smith the right to present a defense.

Judge Massullo allowed the testimony of a prosecution expert on use of force, Edward Flosi, even though his report was offered one week after the date the case was originally set for trial in violation of Penal Code section 1054.1. However, when the prosecution complained that they had insufficient notice of the defense expert, Ken Williams, who had just been retained and provided a report after another expert bowed out of the case, the court excluded the defense expert without exhausting the other sanctions available to it. Notwithstanding that this is clear legal error under Penal Code section 1054.5(c),13 Judge Massullo refused even look at the defense expert's report at all, saying "defense counsel did not offer it earlier."

This disparate treatment and cavalier attitude towards excluding key defense evidence is reflective of her bias against Smith. By contrast, Judge Massullo carefully read and reviewed the report of the prosecution expert, and admitted many of his opinions, but refused to weigh the materiality of the defense

¹³ People v. Superior Court (Mitchell) (2010) 184 Cal.App.4th 451, 459 (court acts in excess of jurisdiction if sanction of exclusion is ordered without exhausting other remedies).

witness's opinions.¹⁴ Far from being an objective jurist, Judge Massullo has denied Smith the right to present a defense by excluding a key defense expert Williams, and eviscerating the defendant's case. There can be no other reason for her failure to follow the mandates of section 1054.5(c) other than her hostility to counsel and Smith.

In addition to excluding Smith's use of force expert, Judge Massullo ruled inadmissible the testimony of several percipient defense witnesses and the testimony of Michael Smith and Andrea Appleton. This case involves an incident that began on a BART Train where a passenger, Gilberto Rodriguez, approached Michael Smith and Andrea Appleton and said "You smell." Appleton said, "No I don't smell," and asked Rodriguez not to talk to her that way. Rodriguez persisted and told them to move. Michael Smith told Rodriguez not to speak to Appleton so rudely and then Smith and Appleton moved to the other side of the train. At this point, Rodriguez called 9-1-1 and falsely reported that Smith had tried to rob him and may have been armed with a weapon. This 9-1-1 call led to Smith's encounter with the police.

Dr. Laura Gottlieb, a UCSF physician was seated in the BART train next to Smith and Appleton and saw Rodriguez say derogatory things to Smith and Appleton. She gave a statement that there was no attempt to rob Rodriguez and that Smith was very well-mannered and non-threatening.

Kathleen Saunders, a retired chemist, was at the other side of the train and provided a statement that she saw Smith and Appleton walk towards the back of the train and that Smith was calm and did not threaten Rodriguez.

Even though defense counsel provided Judge Massullo with a trial brief showing that this evidence was relevant to show the defendant's state of mind, the facts and circumstances known to him for purposes of judging self-defense

 $^{^{14}}$ Judge Massullo did eventually review Mr. Williams' report before excluding his testimony, but only after defense counsel repeatedly asked her to.

and his belief in the need to use reasonable force, Judge Massullo ignored the law and ordered that there should be no mention or evidence of what occurred in the BART Train immediately prior to Mr. Smith's encounter with the BART police. But Judge Massullo admitted the 9-1-1 call by Rodriguez saying he had been threatened with robbery by a person who was armed.

Smith has the "the constitutional right to the determination of every material issue," ¹⁵ but Judge Massullo's demonstrated bias shows her attempt to direct a verdict for conviction. The testimony of the excluded defense witnesses is imperative to the defense theory of self-defense and relevant to jury instructions, specifically: (i) CALCRIM No. 2672—Resisting unlawful arrest with force, (ii) CALCRIM No. 2656—Resisting peace officer, and (iii) CALCRIM No. 945—Battery against peace officer. Thus, in precluding Smith and Appleton from testifying as to the events that occurred on the BART Train, this denies Smith the ability to present his defense and explain the events of July 29, 2016 because the witnesses support the defense of self-defense and shows the officers' excessive application of force. ¹⁶

By so ruling, Judge Massullo has decided to limit the evidence to only that which is favorable to the prosecution. Rather than allowing the jury to be the fact-finder, the Judge is directing a verdict — to adopt solely the interpretation of the evidence to suggest wrongdoing by Smith, without impeachment or the opportunity to rebut.

D. Judge Massullo's arbitrary rulings has demonstrated her bias against defense counsel.

Judge Massullo has also denied counsel's request to appear on behalf of Smith under section 977. Section 977 is a statutory right that cannot be arbitrarily

¹⁵ See *People v. White* (1980) 101 Cal.App.3d 161, 169 (error to prohibit defense introduction of the attitude and jeering of a crowd in trial of assault of a police officer).

¹⁶ See CALCRIM No. 2670.

 denied. Here, there is a signed waiver; documented medical issues; and no contested issue of identification. Thus, the arbitrary denial of the right to appear under section 977 is a demonstrated bias against the defense.

E. Judge Massullo's order restricting defense counsel's voir dire on racism in the criminal justice system and implied bias demonstrates her lack of sensitivity on these issues.

Defense counsel submitted an *in limine* motion Judge Massullo to question jurors on the issue of race. Defense counsel relied on a long line of cases by the United States Supreme Court that held that race was proper subject of voir dire in cases where the racial background of the defendant was different from witnesses or the complaining witness.

When defense counsel's motion was heard, Judge Massullo immediately told defense counsel, "I don't want any mention of Oscar Grant," referring to the 2009 shooting by BART police of a 22-year old African American man from Hayward. When defense counsel said that he planned to ask the jurors if they were familiar with the incident, Judge Massullo immediately said he could not. When defense counsel also said he would ask about "Black Lives Matter," and issues of police brutality, Judge Massullo told defense counsel he could not mention it. Defense counsel also said he intended to ask the jurors whether any had seen the film "Fruitvale Station" a film about the Oscar Grant incident, Judge Massullo said he could not. Judge Massullo warned counsel, "I don't want you to psychoanalyze the jury." When counsel informed the court, as it had requested in the motion, that it would seek to question the jurors on implicit bias, Judge Massullo replied, "Are you saying that everyone has biases? Do you really believe that?"

Judge Massullo's statements to counsel and prohibitions of defense counsel's questioning of jurors on explicit and implicit demonstrate her lack of knowledge about or sensitivity to the issue of race relations and excessive force by police in

 our society. This case involves a young African American man who was falsely accused of a crime, and because of that accusation, was confronted by police officers at gun point, thrown to the ground and forcibly restrained. The officers never even explained why they were stopping him or even that they had a report of a man with a weapon in violation of CALCRIM 2670: Lawful Performance: Officer's Duty. Three of the four officers and Mr. Rodriguez were of different ethnic backgrounds from Mr. Smith and Ms. Appleton, and consequently, attitudes towards police and race relations are a proper subject for voir dire.

Since 1998, every California Judge is required to undergo implicit bias training. Since 2005, new judges are required to attend a one-week orientation that includes implicit bias. (Judge Massullo was appointed in 2006, so it can be assumed that she had such training.)

Judge Massullo's rulings are inconsistent with the Judicial Council's training that judges should and must take the subject of implicit bias seriously and allow attorneys opportunities to explore racial bias among jurors. As Chief Justice Tani G. Cantil-Sakauye said in her State of the Judiciary speech in March of 2016, "[c]ertainly, implicit bias is a factor in the national discussion about race and justice. Scientists tell us that unconscious stereotypes affect beliefs, attitudes, and actions and that implicit bias has been found in children as young as 6 years of age."¹⁷

Judge Massullo's statements demonstrate that she has prejudged the case, and her a lack of sensitivity to racial justice issues makes her inappropriate to sit on this case.¹⁸

¹⁷ Chief Justice Tani G. Cantil-Sakauye's State of the Judicial Speech, http://www.courts.ca.gov/34477.htm.

¹⁸ See *e.g., People v. Enriquez* (2008) 160 Cal.App.4th 230, 244 (held, recusal required where judge's commented about the failures of Proposition 36 treatment on a motion to revoke probation).

F. Judge Massullo is impatient and discourteous to defense counsel only.

Finally, Judge Massullo has demonstrated that Smith cannot receive a fair trial before a neutral arbitrator. Her impatience with defense counsel has been discourteous, while exhibiting differential treatment to the prosecutor. Judge Massullo repeatedly smiles snidely, laughs and looks at the clock whenever defense counsel is speaking or arguing a point. Judge Massullo imposes time requirements on defense counsel, but rarely does so with the prosecution. She bends over backwards whenever the prosecution makes a request, while rarely doing so when defense counsel makes a similar request.

For example, defense counsel asked the judge to sign a declaration for a Supplemental *Pitchess* motion. Counsel delivered the motion shortening time to her clerk's office at 11:45am on September 14, 2016. Counsel had informed her the previous day the motion would be filed, which required her signature. Counsel returned to her court at 1:30pm, where Judge Massullo had just taken the bench, and was told by her clerk that the judge had not had time to review it and to call back later. Counsel called at 4pm and 5pm and finally the Clerk indicated that the judge would review it and sign it the next morning. Rather than to calendar the motion for 1:30pm on September 14, 2016, as requested, Judge Massullo set it the following day.

On September 14, 2016, two days before trial was to begin, the prosecution sent an email to Judge Massullo's clerk, stating that his key prosecution witness, Officer Velasquez, had vacation plans and could not be in court for the trial, and requested a conditional examination be held. The prosecutor had never mentioned the officer's vacation plans before, even though he was made aware of the Officer's vacation plans on August 27, 2016. Within two and a half hours of the prosecutor's requesting a conditional examination, Judge Massulo directed the prosecutor to provide her with an order shortening time, which she signed

immediately. The court then ordered defense counsel to respond and the prosecution filed its motion at 2:16pm. Defense counsel then sent the court clerk an email, stating that he would file a response by 9:00am the next morning, which he filed prior to 9am. When defense counsel asked the court whether she had read his opposition, the court said it had not and that defense counsel had not filed it in a timely manner.

When defense counsel told Judge Massullo that he had sent an email to her clerk informing her that he would file the motion at 9:00am, Judge Massullo refused to believe the defense attorney and instead asked her clerk to see if such an email had been sent. This example again shows how Judge Massullo unfairly scrutinizes defense counsel, but allows the prosecutor to do whatever he wishes and in fact, goes out of her way to help the prosecutor.

Judge Massullo has demonstrated, by her rulings, actions, and attitude towards defense counsel and Mr. Smith, that she is biased against him and favors the prosecution. Defense counsel requests that she agree to recuse herself from any subsequent proceedings pursuant to section 170.1.

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that the foregoing is true and correct, except as to those facts stated on information and belief, and as to those facts, I believe them to be true.

Executed on September 15, 2016 at San Francisco, California.

Dated: September 15, 2016

Respectfully Submitted

Jeff Adachi

San Francisco Public Defender Attorney for Michael Smith

Declaration of Valery Nechay

- I, Valery Nechay, declare as follows:
- I am a certified, law school graduate from the University of San Francisco School of Law, awaiting California bar results.
- 2. I have worked in a public defender's officer and for private criminal defense attorneys during law school and after I took the bar exam. I have had the opportunity to observe judges presiding over criminal and civil trials.
- 4. I decided to take some time after taking the bar to watch trials. I asked Mr. Adachi if I could watch his upcoming trial and he agreed. I sat in the audience in courtroom Department 608, during the *in limine* hearings.
- 5. I was shocked by the conduct and rulings of Judge Massullo that I witnessed in the Michael Smith case. As I watched the proceedings, it became clear to me that Judge Massullo had a bias against Mr. Adachi.
- 6. Judge Massullo's bias against Mr. Adachi first became evident through her body language, facial expressions, tone, and verbal hostility towards him. I was surprised to see a judge lack neutrality and express such blatant contempt and disdain towards defense counsel.
 - 7. Throughout the proceedings, I witnessed the following:
- (a) Judge Massullo often gazed at the clock for long periods of time while Mr. Adachi spoke and made legal arguments, while she listened attentively to the prosecutor;

- (b) Judge Massullo consistently scoffed and smirked during the majority of Mr. Adachi's arguments, and appeared not to take his arguments seriously but did not act this way when the prosecutor was speaking;
- (c) Judge Massullo verbally chastised Mr. Adachi for seemingly minute issues while never questioning significant errors and delays by the prosecution.
- (d) Judge Massullo also showed bias in the manner in which she responded to Mr. Adachi's objections, by simply refusing to address them or ignoring him.

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that the foregoing is true and correct, except as to those facts stated on information and belief, and as to those facts, I believe them to be true.

Executed on September 15, 2016 at San Francisco, California.

Valery Nechay

Proof of Service I say: I am over eighteen years of age and not a party to the above action. My business address is 555 Seventh Street, San Francisco, California 94lo3. I personally served copies of the attached on the following: San Francisco District Attorney, 3rd Floor 850 Bryant Street San Francisco, CA 94103 Attn: Dane Reinstedt, ADA I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct. Executed on 9 16 16 in San Francisco, California.