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R. Scotlund Vaile PO Box 727 Kenwood, CA 95452 (707) 833-2350 Petitioner in Proper Person

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF NEVADA

R. SCOTLUND VAILE,

Petitioner,

VS.

THE EIGHTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT OF THE STATE OF NEVADA, IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF CLARK, AND THE HONORABLE CHERYL B. MOSS, DISTRICT JUDGE, FAMILY COURT DIVISION,

Respondents,

and

CISILIE A. PORSBOLL, F/K/A CISILIE A. VAILE

Real Party in Interest.

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Supreme Court Case No: 52244
District Court Case No: 98D230385

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TRACIE K. LINDEMAN CLERK OF SUPREME COURT

REPLY BRIEF IN SUPPORT OF PETITION FOR WRIT OF MANDAMUS



Respondents,

and

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CISILIE A. PORSBOLL, F/K/A CISILIE A. **VAILE**

Real Party in Interest.

Supreme Court Case No: 52244 District Court Case No: 98D230385

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REPLY BRIEF IN SUPPORT OF PETITION FOR WRIT OF MANDAMUS



I. Introduction

Although Defendant's Answer to the Petition for Writ of Mandamus ("Ans.") claims to confine its discussion to the one issue before the court, (Ans. 2), the facts presented therein clearly do not. Most of the facts asserted by Defendant's counsel have nothing to do with the matter before the Court. Previously, Mr. Vaile failed to correct seemingly immaterial mis-statements of fact in this case, which led to regrettable results. As such, Mr. Vaile feels obliged to provide a brief review of the background of this case, and to correct inaccurate statements of fact presented by Defendant's counsel as they arise. These corrections may be especially important to avoid prejudice with regard to the pending appeal in this action. Mr. Vaile's argument in rebuttal follows that clarification.

II. BACKGROUND HISTORY OF THE CASE

After several months of mediation with a third party mediator, the parties in this case filed a joint petition for divorce in Nevada in 1998. The entire objective of the joint petition was to part amicably and to allow both parents an equal hand in raising the parties' children. As such, the parties negotiated a separation agreement which was incorporated into the decree of divorce. In addition to custody and support provisions, the parties' separation agreement also included a clause to provide Defendant Porsboll and the parties' two young children to travel to Norway for one year. Defendant's mother, who lived in Norway, was purported ill. After the one-year visit, Defendant Porsboll and the children were to return to the United States where the children were born and raised. There were provisions in the agreement for each party to live near the other in order to have ongoing contact with the children.

At the end of the one-year visit to Norway, Defendant Porsboll refused to honor the agreement and return with the children to the United States. Porsboll

hoped to successfully launch a collateral attack on the separation agreement and divorce decree from Norway. Her hope was to deny retain the children indefinitely in Norway, and deny access to their father.

Mr. Vaile spent several months attempting every conceivable manner to settle the issues with Defendant, including attending mediation at a private mediator of Defendant's choosing in Norway. When all efforts failed, Mr. Vaile filed a Show Cause action in Nevada in February 2000. Mr. Vaile's filing asked the court to determine why Defendant should not be held in contempt of court for failing to return the children to the United States in accordance with the parties' separation agreement and divorce decree, and requested custody. During the Show Cause hearing, the family court judge asked Mr. Vaile how long the children had lived "here," to which Mr. Vaile answered, "all their lives." Mr. Vaile understood the judge to be asking how long the children lived "here in the US" before the visit to Europe. After hearing the facts regarding Defendant's withholding the children in Norway, the court bestowed custody and issued a pick-up order to Mr. Vaile, which he subsequently exercised.

Upon return of the children to the United States, Defendant claimed that Mr. Vaile had committed fraud in securing the custody and pick-up order, committed kidnapping in the exercise of that order, and also asserted that Mr. Vaile was not a resident of Nevada when the divorce decree was filed. The lower court held an evidentiary hearing on the latter issue surrounding Mr. Vaile's residency, and then held that Mr. Vaile had made all necessary efforts to properly establish his residency in Nevada. Additionally, the lower court decision stated that "the Court does not find that Mr. Vaile has intentionally tried to defraud the Court, as the Court does not find Ms. Vaile intentionally trying to defraud the Court." The court reiterated that the order issued to Mr. Vaile was a "Pick Up" order and that

"the Court issued the Order that Mr. Vaile could retrieve the children." *Vaile v. Vaile*, ¶¶ 3,7, D230385, Nev. 8th J. Dist. Ct., Oct. 25, 2000.

Defendant filed a Petition for Writ of Mandamus with this Court, which eventually concluded that Mr. Vaile did not properly establish residency prior to filing for divorce. Although not subject to any evidentiary hearing or even briefing by the parties below, this Court also held that Mr. Vaile wrongfully removed the children from Norway. Mr. Vaile believes that this holding was the result of false assertions of fact by Defendant's counsel on appeal. Although the opinion repeated most of Defendant's version of facts in its opinion, this Court did not overturn the lower court's finding that Mr. Vaile did not commit a fraud upon the court in securing custody of the children.

This Court ultimately held that the Nevada court lacked personal jurisdiction of both parties, and subject matter jurisdiction of the case. In keeping with this holding, this Court rejected Defendant's request for attorney's fees made via petition for rehearing. Remarkably, Defendant's counsel returned to the lower court where he successfully convinced a newly assigned judge that jurisdiction continued despite this Court's pronouncement to the contrary, and that she was obligated to reopen the case and assess the same fees against Mr. Vaile that this Court had previously denied.

All was quiet in the state court proceedings for several years while Defendant turned to the federal court in Nevada in an unsuccessful attempt to convince that court that Mr. Vaile's previous attorneys, 15 members of his family, and one friend conspired to commit fraud on the Nevada state court by hiring Las Vegas counsel to effect the return of the children back from Norway in accordance with the parties' agreement.\(^1\) During Defendant Porsboll's deposition

¹ Interestingly, Defendant's counsel suggests that Mr. Vaile has actually initiated actions in multiple jurisdictions, (Ans. 4), while it has been Defendant who took action in Nevada federal court, California, Virginia, Idaho and Norway.

in that litigation, she testified that this Court had thrown out the parties separation agreement, including the child support provisions, based on its 2002 decision.

All parties were eventually dismissed from that suit except Mr. Vaile.

In 2006, during the serious illness of Mr. Vaile's child, Defendant procured what her counsel claims is a default judgment² against Mr. Vaile in the federal court litigation. Subsequently, the federal court denied Defendant's counsel's request for attorney's fees and costs in that litigation.³ On appeal, the Ninth Circuit threw out a portion of the relief granted in the "default judgment," which relief was surreptitiously inserted into the default judgment by Defendant's counsel. Despite Defendant's testimony and this Court's jurisdictional holdings to the contrary, the default judgment authored by Defendant's counsel held that the separation agreement and child support provisions survived this Court's 2002 decision and that a child support arrearage should be assessed against Mr. Vaile. The Ninth Circuit rejected this relief which was without basis and had not been claimed by Porsboll in the complaint or any subsequent pleading.

After Mr. Vaile sued and won partial summary judgment against
Defendant's counsel for libel in Virginia, Defendant's counsel returned to the
Nevada court in November 2007 to ask the same family court judge to reopen this
case yet again. This time, Defendant's object was to convince the judge to award
Defendant a child support arrearage based on the same theory rejected by the
Ninth Circuit. The theory presented by Defendant's counsel was that somehow,
this Court was not really serious when it held that the court did not have personal
jurisdiction of the parties or subject matter jurisdiction of the case,⁴ that the child
support provisions in the separation agreement remained binding, and that an

² Mr. Willick authored the findings and conclusions of law in that judgment. It is currently still the subject of appeal.

It is confusing that Defendant's counsel refers to these fees on pages 4 and 7 of the Answer, laments them, and even implies that they are still owed him by Mr. Vaile, ("unpaid"), despite the fact that they have been denied by the federal court with finality.

arrearage should be assessed against Mr. Vaile. Defendant's counsel further asserted that the arrearage should be calculated using the MLAW program, which is the commercial software of his own making. This is where the background facts intersect those surrounding the current petition.

III. MISSTATEMENTS OF FACTS BY DEFENDANT'S COUNSEL

The statement of facts in the Answer provided by Defendant's attorney here typifies the inflammatory rhetoric that has formed his contribution to the case since it began. Mr. Willick's object has ever been to convince this Court, and the lower court as well, that it should ignore the relevant rules and statutes based on his assertions that Mr. Vaile is an all-around bad guy. Mr. Willick has demonstrated a willingness to manufacture facts to support his false assertions, both inside and outside of the courtroom.

In April of 2002, this Court made a determination that was largely unfavorable to Mr. Vaile based on at least two false factual assertions by Defendant's counsel. The first false assertion was that Mr. Vaile was given a pick-up order to retrieve his children from Norway solely because he represented to the lower court that the children had lived in Nevada all their lives. Defendant testified during deposition in the federal court proceedings that followed that Mr. Vaile was *never asked* how long the children had lived in Nevada. In fact, when Defendant herself was asked during her deposition in Las Vegas the exact same question that Mr. Vaile had been asked by the family court judge years prior, she answered in precisely the same manner.⁵ In effect, Defendant testified that her counsel made misrepresentations to this Court previously.

Since the jurisdictional questions are threshold issues, this Court may, of course, address them as a part of this petition. Otherwise, Mr. Vaile will fully brief those issues on full appeal.

Q. How many years did you live *here*? A. Seven years. (Or all the children's lives at that point.)

The second false assertion that Defendant's counsel presented to this Court, which this Court repeated in the factual history of its decision, was that the Norwegian proceedings began *before* Mr. Vaile initiated proceedings in the Nevada family court below. This fact appeared to be part of the basis for this Court to send the children to Norway for custody proceedings. This material assertion was demonstrated to be false almost a year later. In February 2003, 6 almost a year after the parties' children were sent to Norway by this Court, the Norwegian court formally gave Defendant full custody of the children. In that decision, to which Defendant's counsel refers in the Answer in footnote 1, the Norwegian court corrected the false assertion previously presented by Defendant's counsel to this honorable Court. The Norwegian court stated unequivocally that the Norwegian action began with a complaint dated March 24, 2000. This was more than a month after Mr. Vaile's Show Cause action was filed in the family court in Nevada. The Norwegian court brought to light the second false assertion made by Defendant's counsel to this Court.

There were several additional false assertions of fact made by Defendant's counsel to this Court in those proceedings. Furthermore, Mr. Willick's propensity for falsity has not been limited to statements made within the protection of court proceedings. When Defendant's counsel made false statements concerning Mr. Vaile outside the courtroom, a federal district court in Virginia held that Defendant's counsel's malicious letters to Mr. Vaile's law school in Virginia and to the American Bar Association were not only false, but defamatory *per se*. It is unsurprising that one of the issues this Court will consider on appeal is, Defendant's counsel's continued misrepresentations of fact in the lower court proceedings.

⁶ In actuality, Mr. Vaile was not served with this decision by the Norwegian courts until November 2003.

Steeped in hypocrisy, Mr. Willick denigrates Mr. Vaile for allegations of his own creation. Mr. Vaile has not lied, kidnapped or worse. In actual fact, he is the only party who has upheld his agreement, kept his word, and represented the truth in the course of this litigation.

IV. ARGUMENT

A. MATERIAL FACTS ARE IN DISPUTE

Factual history aside, one cannot get past the Answer's argument to see continuing evidence of Defendant's counsel's aversion for the truth.

Unbelievably, Defendant's counsel asserts here that "there are no material issues of fact in dispute" in this case. (Ans. 4, 10). Surely, counsel could not have missed the controversy surrounding the **fact** that his commercial software calculates child support penalties differently from the method set out in Nevada statute and employed by the state. It is inconceivable that counsel could simply misapprehend the *materiality* of that fact in dispute. Not only is the \$40,000 difference that the faulty methods programmed into the MLAW commercial software material in this case, it is also similarly material to the thousands of custodial and non-custodial parents in Nevada whose penalty calculations may have been calculated incorrectly by the MLAW program. The court's determination of this fact is not just material, it is central to the issue in dispute.

B. DEFENDANT'S COUNSEL IS WITNESS AND ADVOCATE

Although it is clear that Defendant's counsel is fulfilling the role of both witness and advocate, he appears to have trouble deciding which role to adopt. As such, he argues both ways, presenting himself as both the Expert Witness and the Advocate. Counsel claims that he was actually "responsible for the existence of the statutory provisions in question," (Ans. 8), but at the same time, that he has "no personal knowledge of any relevance to the question," (Ans. 7). He claims that he shared "expertise" in the area, (Ans. 5) but that he was just arguing, not

 testifying, (Ans. 6, 10). He claims that he demonstrated his knowledge of "the legal history of the statutory provisions and the mechanics of the necessary calculations" with the court (Ans. 5), but that he was just explaining the math, (Ans. 9). He both referenced and included as an exhibit to the Answer what he appears to believe are the controlling secondary authorities on the topic, authored by him, (Ans. 6), but implies that he could not have been a witness because his argument was compelled, (Ans. 10). While Defendant's counsel battles his own straw man, the issues here are simple.

Defendant's Counsel is a necessary witness in this case in at least two respects. Firstly, Mr. Willick is his client's own expert witness because he claims to have first-hand experience as to the *intent* of the legislation because he was "responsible ... for the statutory provisions." (Ans. 8). While any attorney could argue how a court should interpret legislation, testifying as to the intent and meaning of that legislation because he was a creator of it moves one into the realm of witness. In short, he has held himself out as the only authoritative expert on this history, and therefore, necessary witness.

Secondly, Mr. Willick is a witness because he is the creator, vendor and beneficiary of the commercial software at issue here. This is not simply a matter of how he calculated penalties against Mr. Vaile in the back office, but how his commercial software did so in this case and does so across the state. Although counsel avoids discussion of his role as salesman and developer in the Answer, he does admit he "created the program in common use to automate the interest and penalty calculations." (Ans. 5). Of course, he deemphasizes that this is commercial software whose very viability is now at issue. Only he as the creator can answer questions as to why certain calculations contrary to the statute were

implemented into the software. Additionally, he and his firm⁷ bear the liability when evidence reveals that Mr. Willick, as commercial product vendor, intentionally strayed from the statutory formula simply because he believes his methods are superior to those in the statute.

Neither the role of expert witness nor the role of the software vendor whose product is being challenged belongs to the role of the advocate. Not only is Mr. Willick *a* witness, he is the *only* witness for Defendant, demonstrating his necessity. Mr. Vaile is significantly prejudiced because Defendant's sole witness of material facts in dispute is not subject to cross-examination or direct questioning. Defendant's counsel was allowed to ramble incessantly on his theories without the checks that the proper working of adversarial process puts in place. This is precisely the reason that the ethical rule should be enforced.

C. THE CONFLICT BETWEEN DEFENDANT AND HER COUNSEL IS EVIDENT

In order to protect his conflicted role, Defendant's counsel goes so far as to claim that no evidence was heard on the matter because no evidentiary hearing was held, (Ans. 5), no testifying took place (Ans. 10), and that there was no trial (Ans. 11). This argument is especially vacuous when one considers that the Clark County District Attorney also appeared at the July 11, 2008 hearing to provide testimony on the matter. Surely the DA was not appearing to offer a "compelled argument" to the court as well. Defendant's counsel's efforts to protect his ability to advocate for his software and to preserve his reputation as expert on these matters could not be more transparent.

In asserting that no evidence was presented by Defendant on the matter, counsel's conflict of interest with his client becomes readily evident. No attorney ethically advocating for a client would fail to present a single shred of evidence in

Although Defendant's counsel suggests that any conflict of interest could be avoided by disqualifying him but leaving his firm in place as counsel of record, the firm, as liable product vendor is equally conflicted and certainly similarly interested in protecting the boss.

favor of his client's position, especially when opposed by overwhelming evidence, such as that offered by the Nevada Attorney General's office here. Certainly Mr. Willick recognizes that his mere argument is not sufficient to fulfill his client's evidentiary burden of **proof**. No cite to authority is necessary for the proposition that argument is not proof. Mr. Willick's claim that he has presented no evidence to support his client's position is an admission that he has committed legal malpractice and disserved his client. Only an attorney who faces significant liability as the vendor of defective software as well as serious reputational injury would favor such a position. This conflict supports not only why Mr. Willick should be disqualified under the ethical rule in question, but also stands as an independent basis for disqualification.

If the conflict of interest is not evident based on this point alone, one might consider how much effort and what amount of fees Defendant may incur as a result of her counsel's defense of his software's calculation. When Mr. Vaile's counsel⁸ discovered that Mr. Willick also miscalculated the principal amount⁹ on the same order of magnitude as the current arrearage amount in controversy, Defendant's counsel simply fixed the error and moved on. Defendant's counsel dismissed the error as an input error, not a programmatic error. Once Mr. Vaile's counsel discovered a systematic error in the software itself, Defendant's counsel refused to correct the errors, and has defended the program like a lioness defends her cubs. Despite the fact that Mr. Willick appears to complain repeatedly about the time and fees¹⁰ incurred on working for his client, he is more than willing to incur fees even *in excess* of the amount in controversy because his software, his

Defendant's counsel continues to complain about the appearance of Greta Muirhead on Mr. Vaile's behalf as "sanctionable," (Ans. 4-5), despite the bar ethics' committee conclusion to the contrary. Clearly, he continues to resent the fact that Ms. Muirhead discovered nearly \$80,000 in miscalculations and the MLAW program flaws.

Defendant's counsel failed to mention these errors in the principal calculation, and instead falsely claimed in the Answer that the challenges to principal were simply abandoned or recanted (Ans. 5, fn18). Mr. Vaile's claims of error were, of course, not abandoned until they were *corrected* by Defendant's counsel.

liability, and his reputation as self-appointed expert in this area is at stake.

Defendant's counsel's position is clearly at odds with his client's best interest. 11

Zurich Ins. Co. v. Knotts, ¹² is irrelevant to this case. Even if Kentucky law applied in Nevada, the facts are inapposite. Neither Mr. Vaile nor his counsel asked Mr. Willick to testify or present expert evidence. Mr. Vaile did not even know what software was employed to make the penalty calculations submitted to the court until Mr. Willick asserted the commercial predominance of his product, and the correctness of the methods he employs, which are contrary to the state's. Unlike *Knotts*, where the opposing party attempted to force an attorney into the role of witness, Mr. Willick propelled himself into the witness roles that he is now defending. Mr. Willick could have called other knowledgable witnesses or simply admitted his error. Instead, he insisted that only his first-hand expertise should be heard on the matter. In the same manner that he cannot resist attempting to educate this Court on how the state has it wrong and he has it right, Mr. Willick chose to present himself as the only witness with knowledge enough to educate the court below. In so doing, he is advocating for himself, not his client.

D. No HARDSHIP ON THE CLIENT EXISTS

Defendant's counsel suggested that this was a simple child support issue when he complained about Greta Muirhead's representation of Mr. Vaile to the bar committee by stating that there is "no special ability or knowledge or expertise that [is] required . . . to take this child support arrears case...." and that this issue requires qualifications that "a thousand other attorneys in this state"

Another example of Defendant's counsel's conflict of interest and ethical violation is the large amount his firm stands to gain by overcharging Mr. Vaile, and by taking his contingency percentage of fees collected.

Mr. Vaile believes that this is one of the reasons that Defendant's counsel has prohibited her from taking part in settlement discussions with Mr. Vaile. If Defendant's current counsel is dismissed, Mr. Vaile would entertain mandatory mediation in this case.

¹² 52 S.W.3d 555 (Ky. 2001).

could provide.¹³ When it no longer suits his purpose, counsel reverses course and frames this matter as a complex case based on the number of banker's boxes he has collected, (Ans. 7), the amount of fees that courts have denied him, (Ans. 7), and the limited pool of attorneys available (Ans. 4). All non-support issues were decided in other courts, in other cases (such as those against him personally) or are now finally decided. Not only can the support issues that remain in this case be litigated with simplicity, they could very probably be settled out of court entirely if Defendant's counsel's self interest was no longer a factor.

In the event that Defendant must seek counsel, given that her household income and assets far exceed¹⁴ that of Mr. Vaile's, her ability to secure counsel to litigate any remaining issues will not be a hardship. Although her new counsel may not be interested in protecting the integrity of the MLAW software program, the substantive issues in this case can certainly be solved simply.

V. Conclusion

Based upon the facts and argument presented above, Petitioner respectfully requests that the Writ of Mandamus be Issued and that this Honorable Court issue an order directing the Honorable Cheryl B. Moss to enter orders disqualifying Marshal Willick and the Willick Law Group from representation of Defendant Porsboll below and vacating the order awarding \$2,000.00 in attorney's fees and costs to the Willick Law Group.

Defendant's counsel would have this Court overlook his own claims on this issue by dismissing the documents (attached as exhibit C-3 to the original petition) where he made these very assertions by claiming that "[t]hose documents have nothing to do with Scotlund's request to disqualify me or this firm." (Ans. 3).

Given that both parties recently submitted financial disclosure forms in this case,
Defendant's counsel knows of his client's favorable resources. Once again, counsel shows a disregard for the truth by claiming that his client is impecunious (Ans. 4, 7).

Respectfully submitted this 29th day of October, 2008.

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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that service of the foregoing was made on the 29th day of October, 2008 by U.S. Mail addressed as follows:

Honorable Cheryl B. Moss Eighth Judicial District Court Dept. I 601 North Pecos Road Las Vegas, NV 89101-2408

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There is regular communication between the place of mailing and the places so addressed.

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