VENTURA SUPERIOR COURT

APR 1 8 2016

MICHAEL D. PLANET
Executive Officer and Olerk
BY: Deputy

SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF VENTURA

9 10 11 COUNTY LINE HOLDINGS, LLC, a Delaware limited liability company, 12 13 Plaintiff, 14 VS. 15 JAIME DeJESUS GONZALEZ, an 16 individual, et al. 17 Defendant : 18 Jaime DeJesus Gonzales, as Trustee of the Mansdorf Family Trust, 19 Intervnor 20 JANICE McCLANAHAN, 21 **Cross-Complainant** 22 VS. 23 COUNTY LINE HOLDINGS, LLC et al 24 **Cross-Defendants** 25 KEVIN MACNAMARA, 26 Intervenor 27

1

2

3

4

6

7

8

28

DECISION
ON THE SECOND MOTION
FOR DISQUALIFICATION
OF JUDGE HENRY J. WALSH

Assignment of Case From Ventura County Assignment #1044757-16

Ventura County Case No. 56-2013-00444799 CU-OR-VT

VENCI00444799

This Court was assigned to hear and determine the issue of the second motion for disqualification of Judge Henry J. Walsh (hereafter "Walsh") filed by Jaime DeJesus Gonzalez on March 18, 2016, and who is self-represented (hereafter "Gonzalez")¹ in a case before the Ventura County Superior Court.

1.5

Decision

This second disqualification motion is DENIED. The question of disqualification is not an appealable order and it can be reviewed only by a petition for writ of mandate filed within 10 days of notice to the parties of the decision. *Christie v. City of El Centro (2006)* 135 Cal.App.4th 767, 774.

Previous Disqualification Request

This Court has reviewed its decision in the first request for disqualification by Gonzalez regarding Walsh dated 2/10/16. Except for the campaign contribution issue and the public reproval letter, all of Gonzalez's contentions have previously been addressed and analyzed. But the Court will do so again for purposes of thoroughness.

Disqualification Request

On 3/18/15 Gonzalez filed his Verified Statement; contends he does so pursuant to Code of Civil Procedure sections 170.3(c)(1), 170.4(c)(3), and Rules 2009 [Procedures for Obtaining Default Judgment], 2015.5 [Certification or declaration under penalty of perjury] and 3.1800 [Default Judgments]. He sets forth "the facts constituting the grounds for disqualification of Judge Walsh, being presented again, after the receipt of additional material on March 1, 2016." (Emphasis the Court's.) [i.e. The campaign contribution and public reproval information.]

Gonzalez testifies that disqualification is required if an objective observer would entertain reasonable questions about the judge's impartiality. "Under this standard, avoiding the appearance of impartiality and impropriety by Judge Walsh, given the facts and two separate late disclosures." (Emphasis the Court's.)² This Court's analysis of these two "new" issues can be found below at page 10.

¹ No disrespect is intended in using last names; it is done for ease in writing.

² The ONLY NEW issue raised is that he just recently received the Minute Order dated February 19, 2016, that disclosed Timothy Sottile's campaign contribution to Judge Walsh's campaign that exceeded \$100. (Ex. 60, Minute Order Disclosing Sottile's Donation over \$100.) That he recently received documentation dated

1,7

The Court has carefully read the 29 page declaration, with exhibits, filed by Gonzalez and rather than set forth each "contention" made at this point in the Decision, the Court turns to (1) the guiding legal authorities, and then to (2) Walsh's response, and then (3) the reader will find that this Court has addressed and made findings of fact on each of the "contentions" raised by Gonzalez in his Verified Statement.

Guiding Legal Authorities

This kind of a matter is very serious and deserves careful review. Both the allegations made in the Gonzalez Declaration and the contentions made in the Judge's Response need to be studied. All Points and Authorities need to be considered, irrespective of who might have filed them. The spirit of the law as well as the letter of the law must be followed.

In general the guidelines are as follows: The Legislature may adopt reasonable rules and regulations regarding disqualification of judges, and prejudice on the part of a judge may properly be made ground for disqualification. <u>Johnson v Superior Court (1958) 50 C2d 693.</u> However, a wrong ruling on the evidence or the law does not disqualify a judge, nor does it show bias or prejudice; <u>Ryan v Welte (1948) 87 CA2d 888.</u> The burden of proving bias or prejudice is upon the complaining party. (<u>Golish v Feinstein</u>, (1932) 123 Cal App 547 at 549; and <u>Ryan v Welte</u>, <u>supra</u>, at 892.

The standard for disqualification established in CCP 170.1(a)(6)(C), which provides for disqualification for bias or prejudice where a person aware of the facts might reasonably entertain a doubt that the judge is able to be impartial, is fundamentally an objective one. It represents a legislative judgment that, due to the sensitivity of the question and inherent difficulties of proof, as well as the importance of public confidence in the judicial system, the issue is not limited to the existence of an actual bias. Rather, if a reasonable person would entertain doubts concerning the Judge's impartiality, disqualification is mandated.

To ensure that proceedings appear to the public to be impartial and hence worthy of their confidence, the situation must be viewed through the eyes of the objective person. This standard indicates that the decision is not based on the Judge's personal view of his own impartiality, and also suggests that the litigant's necessarily partisan views do not provide the applicable frame of reference. Rather, the Judge ought to consider how his

February 10, 2016, that was issued by the Commission on Judicial Performance regarding the same type of failure to disclose campaign contributions of more than \$100 dollars by an appearing attorney.

participation in a given case looks to the average person on the street. United Farm Workers of America v Superior Court (1985) 170 Cal App 3d 97 [fact that judge's wife had worked for employer for two days during strike did not warrant disqualification of judge, where judge had forgotten about his wife's work until nearly two months into trial and judge's conduct during trial did not support inference of partiality].

The terms "bias" and "prejudice" as used in recusal statutes connote a favorable or unfavorable disposition or opinion that is somehow wrongful or inappropriate, either because it is undeserved or because it rests upon knowledge that the subject ought not to possess or because it is excessive in degree; impartiality is not gullibility and disinterestedness does not mean child-like innocence; if judge did not form judgments of actors in courthouse dramas called trials, he could never render decisions; expressions of impatience, dissatisfaction, annoyance, and even anger, that are within the bounds of what imperfect men and women sometimes display, do not establish bias or partiality; judge's ordinary efforts at courtroom administration, even a stern and short-tempered judge's ordinary efforts at courtroom administration, are immune from disqualifications motions. Liteky v. U.S. (1994) 114 S.Ct.1147 [disqualification denied].

If a judge who should disqualify himself or herself refuses or fails to do so, any party may file with the clerk a written verified statement objecting to the hearing or trial before the judge and setting forth the facts constituting the grounds for disqualification of the judge. The statement shall be presented at the earliest practicable opportunity after discovery of the facts constituting the ground for disqualification. Copies of the statement shall be served on each party or his or her attorney who has appeared and shall be personally served on the judge alleged to be disqualified, or on his or her clerk, provided that the judge is present in the courthouse or in chambers. Code Civil Procedure § 170.3(c)(1)

A party may file no more than one statement of disqualification against a judge unless facts suggesting new grounds for disqualification are first learned of or arise after the first statement of disqualification was filed. Repetitive statements of disqualification not alleging facts suggesting new grounds for disqualification shall be stricken by the judge against whom they are filed. Code Civil Procedure § 170.4(c)(3).

Walsh's Declaration

On 3/25/16 Walsh filed his declaration and testifies the allegations in this present challenge are largely repetitive of the previous challenge filed by Gonzalez, and may be susceptible to being stricken pursuant to CCP § 170.4 (c)(3); that would invite a further motion for recusal and/or writ application; better course is to respond to Gonzalez' motion; in his capacity as a trustee, Gonzalez has been represented by an attorney, Mr. Fobi; shortly after taking the matter under submission, Gonzalez' initial CCP § 170.1 challenge was filed; stopped everything; time delay between the filing of that first challenge, and the ruling; he set the case for re-argument; further argument was set for March 21; on March 18 Gonzalez filed his second CCP § 170.1 challenge; matters are presently at another standstill until this challenge is ruled upon.

Responds to Gonzalez' Verified Statement and testifies; Paragraphs 1-6 are introductory in nature; agrees with the holding in *Litikey v, United States*, 510 U.S. 540; Paragraphs 7-27 deal with court proceedings in the Los Angeles Superior Court; had no participation in any of those cases; has no personal knowledge of any of the allegations Gonzalez is making against judicial officers in Los Angeles; Paragraphs 28-42 present arguments regarding the result which Gonzalez seeks in the Ventura case; are improper to be part of a disqualification motion; is an effort to inject adverse rulings into a disqualification motion.

Walsh testifies that Paragraphs 43-48 argue his conduct of pre-trial discovery proceedings; rulings which were within the discretion of the trial judge; exercised that discretion in a manner to keep the case moving; Paragraphs 49-53 are argumentative and address matters beyond his control; Gonzalez testified on his own behalf, and was given considerable latitude by myself to say pretty much whatever he wished to say; Paragraphs 54-62 concern the conduct of proceedings in Ventura and Los Angeles; has no personal knowledge of what happened in the Los Angeles proceedings; Paragraphs 63-70 address Gonzalez' position relative to the fact that Mr. Sotille and Walsh are participants in the local chapter of the American Inns of Court; was specifically raised by Gonzalez in his previous recusal motion, and was decided not to be a disqualifying factor; should not be given new life in this motion.

Gonzalez erroneously contends that the assignment to Judge Anderle was made by the Presiding Judge of the Ventura Courts, Judge Donald Coleman; assignment was made by

the Administrative Office of the Courts, as they do in all CCP § 170.1 motions; Judge Coleman had nothing to do with it except noting that the assignment had been made.

Walsh turns to the only new issue raised by Gonzalez; Paragraphs 71-80 address his setting the case for further argument, and the election contribution made by Mr. Sotille in 2012; set the case for further argument because there had been a delay due to Gonzalez' earlier filing; had no hidden agenda in doing that; asked counsel and Gonzalez to see if they could agree on a date in a minute order dated February 17, 2016; they could not; set it for March 21, 2016; Gonzalez is correct that he received an admonishment from the Commission on Judicial Performance; it was for not making disclosure of attorney contributors after the election in June of 2012; had argued to the CJP that the requirement that he make such post-election disclosures was not enacted until 2013 (the year after his election); they were not impressed; received a public reproval; due to the pendency of that matter, however, he undertook to disclose election contributions in any case that was filed before June 5, 2014 (two years after the 2012 election); the amount of Mr. Sotille's contribution was \$200; it is not an amount that requires a disqualification; only when the contribution gets to \$1,500 that CCP § 170.1 (9)(A)³ requires a recusal; Sotille's contribution was about .0017 of his total campaign contributions; did not believe that it required a disqualification either then or now; Gonzalez chooses to ignore that his attorney, Mr. Emmanuel Fobi, made a campaign contribution of \$300.

18 19

20

21

22

23

24

25

2.6

27

1,

2

4

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

³A judge shall be disqualified if any one or more of the following are true: ...

^{(9) (}A) The Judge has received a contribution in excess of one thousand five hundred collars (\$1500) from a party or lawyer in the proceeding, and either of the following applies:

⁽i) The contribution was received in support of the judge's last election, if the last election was within the last six years.

⁽ii) The contribution was received in anticipation of an upcoming election.

⁽B) Notwithstanding subparagraph (A), the judge shall be disqualified based on a contribution of a lesser amount if subparagraph (A) of paragraph (6) applies.*

⁽C) The judge shall disclose any contribution from a party or lawyer in a matter that is before the court that is required to be reported under subdivision (f) of Section 84211 of the Government Code, even if the amount would not require disqualification under this paragraph. The manner of disclosure shall be the same as that provided in Canon 3E of the Code of Judicial Ethics.

^{*(6)(}A) For any reason: (i) The judge believes his or her recusal would further the interests of justice. (ii) The judge believes there is a substantial doubt as to his or her capacity to be impartial. (iii) A person aware of the facts might reasonably entertain a doubt that the judge would be able to be impartial.

Paragraphs 81-100 are mostly argumentative with respect to the merits of the case; do not bear on any circumstance of disqualification. Testifies that he is not prejudiced against Gonzalez; there is no credible evidence that he is prejudiced against Gonzalez; Gonzalez received many accommodations regarding the trial date; rulings adverse to Gonzalez are not a basis for a disqualification, and were made based on the facts and law existing at the time those rulings were made; case he has contains a genuine legal issue of the conflict between the Probate Code and the Code of Civil Procedure (Enforcement of Judgments Act) regarding notice requirement to a judgment debtor before certain collection efforts may be maintained and enforced.

Findings of Fact On The Gonzalez Verified Statement

On 3/18/16 Gonzalez filed a verified statement; testifies that Walsh is disqualified to render verdict or judgment upon trial in this action; he is disqualified to enter all orders, rulings, findings and determinations in this matter; he sets out his grounds that he claims mandate disqualification. It includes the following claims:

A. Judicial impropriety infected the McClanahan judgment - LASC BC 363659; specifically that the McClanahan judgment itself is the product of judicial collusion, contravention of rules and binding precedent, and actual bias, by at least two separate judicial officers in LASC BC363659, both favoring McClanahan, Attorneys Sottile, Thomas Cacciatore and David Marcus in LASC BC363659. (Paragraphs 7-21 of Verified Statement).

Finding: All this was addressed and considered in this Court's 2/10/15 decision [See Paragraphs "(2)" through "(6)" of this Court's findings in that decision.] In any event, if Gonzalez has embellished that argument here, this Court finds that the material was available and should have been presented in his first recusal request, and is res judicata. This Court has not ignored Gonzalez' claim that "Walsh's actions cannot be viewed in a 'vacuum,' and must be viewed as a whole, to include the facts and circumstances of the cases leading up to this case." But recusal motions cannot be reinvented by recasting old arguments into a new recusal motion.

B. Judicial Impropriety of Judge Mary Strobel and Attorneys Sottile and Cacciatore, and Marcus. Specifically claims there was a conspiracy and impropriety among them and potentially McClanahan. (*Paragraphs 22-25 of Verified Complaint.*)

, ". 1	Finding: Same as in A above.
2 2	C. Judicial Impropriety Judge Elizabeth White in LASC BC 425880, entered Judgment
3	against Mr. Mansdorf without any trial de novo or answer to the Complaint, because
4	default was entered against Mr. Mansdorf. (Paragraphs 26-30 of Verified Statement).
5	Findings: Many of the facts recited in this case by Gonzalez refer back to the Los Angeles
6	litigation with rhythmic regularity; it is res judicata; it is very clear that Walsh had no
4 .	reason to review or consider those facts. Moreover, a wrong ruling on the evidence or the
7	law does not disqualify a judge, nor does it show bias or prejudice. Suspicion, innuendo
8	and insinuation does not substitute for credible evidence of facts.
9	D. Unlawful Collection Process Later Implicitly Endorsed by Judge Walsh. (Paragraphs 26-
10	29 of Verified Statement).
11	Finding: This is attacking the rulings of the Court on the law and the evidence indirectly; a
12	wrong ruling on the evidence or the law does not disqualify a judge, nor does it show bias
13	or prejudice.
14	E. Rulings grossly exceeding the discretionary bounds of Walsh. (Paragraphs 31-42 of
15	Verified Statement).
	Finding: A wrong ruling on the evidence or the law does not disqualify a judge, nor does it
16	show bias or prejudice.
17	F. Though trial was continued from June to December 2, 2015, this was done in bits and
18	pieces, and each time, Judge Walsh prevented any more discovery, specifically, no
19	deposition of Ms. McClanahan. (Paragraphs 43-48 of Verified Statement).
20	Finding: This is attacking the rulings of the Court on the law indirectly; a wrong ruling on
21	the law does not disqualify a judge, nor does it show bias or prejudice.
22	G. Facts were provided under oath at deposition and at trial by the purchaser's agent and
23	the judgment creditor, but initial lodgment of the depositions was impossible because the
24	clerk mistakenly rejected a substitution of counsel form by Counsel Emmanuel F. Fobi,
	and this prevented Emmanuel from entering the case in representation of Intervenor,
25	Lodging the Deposition Transcripts at the start of trial, and generally defending and
26	litigating. (Paragraphs 49-53 of Verified Statement).
27	Finding. A wrong ruling on the law does not disqualify a judge, nor does it show bias or
28	prejudice.

The New Disclosures

J [subpart]. Irreconcilably, right in the midst of the claims made in Paragraph J above, Gonzalez digresses and testifies that he just recently received the Minute Order dated February 19, 2016, that disclosed Timothy Sottile's campaign contribution to Judge Walsh's campaign that exceeded \$100. (Ex. 60, Minute Order Disclosing Sottile's Donation over \$100.) That he recently received documentation dated February 10, 2016, that was issued by the Commission on Judicial Performance regarding the same type of failure to disclose campaign contributions of more than \$100 dollars by an appearing attorney. Walsh said the he knew nothing about "whatever Gonzalez was talking about" and that the contributions had to be over \$1,500 for him to be obligated to report. Walsh told Gonzalez that he would not be stepping down; Gonzalez asked Walsh why did the Judicial Counsel publicly admonished him. (See Paragraphs 77-80 of Verified Statement.) Findings. At the outset, Gonzalez says nothing about Walsh's testimony that Mr. Fobi. Gonzalez' attorney, made a \$300 contribution to his campaign as well. This Court finds that any objective observer would conclude that that fact effectively neutralizes any claim of bias. Furthermore, unaccountably, Gonzalez does not address or attempt to provide any analysis of how CCP § 170.1 (9)(A) is significant in his case. Nor does he tell the Court how the fact that there is an outstanding public reproval makes any difference. Moreover, this Court cannot, on its own initiative, formulate any reason that those facts would justify recusal. Thus we find that any average objective and informed observer on the street, knowing all the facts, would NOT consider either "disclosure," or both together, the basis for recusal.

Turning to the Balance of the Verified Statement

K. All of the facts leading up to this case demonstrate judicial impropriety. (Paragraphs 81-100 of Verified Statement.)

Findings. This Court has already ruled on all of these claims which are simply recast using, sometimes, different word-smithing.

L Disqualification of a judge occurs when the facts creating disqualification arise, not when disqualification is established. (*Christie v. City of El Centro, supra*, 135 Ca1.App.4th at 780, review denied.) This would mean that Judge Walsh was disqualified before he took the case because the facts creating the disqualification (trusteeship - *Gavilan*) already had arisen

28

20

21

22

23

24

2.5

26

SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTY OF VENTURA

SHORT TITLE:

COUNTY LINE HOLDINGS VS JAIME GONZALEZ

CASE NUMBER:

56-2013-00444799-CU-OR-VTA

CLERK'S CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE BY MAIL

I certify that I am not a party to this cause. I certify that a true copy of <u>Decision on the Second Motion for</u> <u>Disqualification</u> was mailed following standard court practices in a sealed envelope with postage fully prepaid, addressed as indicated below. The mailing and this certification occurred at Ventura, California, on 04/18/2016.

Clerk of the Court,

By: TatliFnormalOcoldow

Patti Morua-Widdows, Clerk

HENRY H DEARING 515 S FIGUEROA STREET # 2060 LOS ANGELES, CA 90071 DAVID M MARCUS 1901 AVENUE OF THE STARS # 300 LOS ANGELES, CA 90067-6005

JOHN ANTONI 11836 W PICO BOULEVARD LOS ANGELES, CA 90064 JAIME D GONZALEZ 811 N ALTA DRIVE BEVERLY HILLS, CA 90210

THE LAW OFFICES OF THOMAS P CACCIATORE FIRM 99 S LAKE STREET # 501 PASADENA, CA 91101 JOSEPH F NOWICKI 2315 E 7TH STREET LONG BEACH, CA 90804

JOHN C FREELY 2315 E 7TH STREET LONG BEACH, CA 90804 KEVIN MACNAMARA 723 W CHAPMAN AVENUE ORANGE, CA 92868