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Katherine M. Keefe
Clerk of the Circuit Court
    STATE OF ILLINOIS
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                          SS:
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    COUNTY OF MCHENRY
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              IN THE TWENTY-SECOND JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
                      MCHENRY COUNTY, ILLINOIS
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     PAUL DULBERG,
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              Plaintiff,
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        VS.
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                                         No. 17 LA 377
     THE LAW OFFICES OF THOMAS
     J. POPOVICH, P.C., and
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     HANS MAST,
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             Defendants.
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                   ELECTRONICALLY RECORDED Report of
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    Proceedings had in the above-entitled cause before
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    The Honorable Thomas A. Meyer, Judge of the Circuit
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    Court of McHenry County, Illinois, on the 10th day of
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    February, 202 €, in the Michel J. Sullivan Judicial
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    Center, Woodstock, Illinois.
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        APPEARANCES:
              LAW OFFICE OF ALPHONSE A. TALARICO, by:
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              MR. ALPHONSE A. TALARICO,
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              Appearing via videoconference,
                   on behalf of the Plaintiff,
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              KARBAL COHEN ECONOMOU SILK & DUNNE, LLC, by:
              MR. GEORGE K. FLYNN,
              Appearing via videoconference,
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                   on behalf of the Defendants.
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- 1 THE COURT: Do we have everybody on Dulberg?
- A VOICE: (Inaudible), Your Honor.
- 3 MR. FLYNN: I think we do, Your Honor. George Flynn
- 4 for the defendants, moving.
- 5 THE COURT: Okay. And for the plaintiff?
- 6 MR. TALARICO: Alphonse Talarico, Your Honor. Good
- 7 | morning. Good morning, Mr. Flynn.
- 8 MR. FLYNN: Good morning, counsel.
- 9 THE COURT: And here in court we've got --
- 10 MR. DULBERG: Mr. Dulberg.
- 11 THE COURT: Mr. Dulberg's here.
- 12 And we're here on defendants' motion; am I
- 13 | correct?
- 14 MR. FLYNN: That's correct, Your Honor.
- 15 THE COURT: All right. In a nutshell, defense
- 16 | counsel, can you explain your position.
- 17 MR. FLYNN: Sure. Thank you, Your Honor.
- 18 Mr. Dulberg has placed his communications with
- 19 his prior lawyer, Thomas Gooch, at issue in this case.
- 20 | Plaintiff has admitted that it filed its complaint --
- 21 I'm sorry, plaintiff has filed its complaint more than
- 22 | two years after my clients, his former lawyers, the
- 23 | Popovich firm, withdrew or were terminated from his
- 24 representation. That's not at issue.

He has placed the discovery rule at issue in his complaint and his amended complaints. However, he has failed to answer initial discovery, he has failed to respond -- or answer properly questions at his deposition regarding discovery of his malpractice and his understanding of damages related to the Popovich's alleged malpractice. We served supplemental discovery, which is somewhat duplicative of what was previously served, and that was on July 2nd after his deposition. He hasn't even answered it.

The response does nothing to address those issues or object to the discovery that's been propounded, so I would request that he be forced at a minimum to answer this discovery, that any objection be overruled, and essentially that the communications between Dulberg and Mr. Gooch be produced in whatever form. And to the extent that a subpoena to The Gooch Firm would be necessary at a later date, I would rather take it one step at a time and analyze whatever it is that Mr. Dulberg produce. So, in a nutshell, that's the motion.

I didn't know that we'd have to have a hearing.

I thought that these would be responded to or at least objected to, but here we are.

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Plaintiff's counsel?
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        THE COURT:
                    Okay.
                       Let's see, Your Honor,
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        MR. TALARICO:
    (indiscernible) to start with, I think this is a
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                        I hope the court sees it the same
   two-step analysis.
          I think it should be looked upon as a 2-619 motion
   and at the same time a -- the question of whether there
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   was a waiver of the attorney-dient privilege under Rule
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   of Evidence 502.
             I believe that if the 2-619 is decided -- I'm
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   sorry. Yeah, the 2-619 motion is dismissed and decided
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   against the defendants, then the matter -- the second
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   step would be the waiver of attorney-client privilege
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   which I think my client did not do under either 502(a)
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14
   or 502(b).
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                    When you -- are you saying that their
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   statute of limitations motion, if I deny that, only in
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   that instance do we get to the issue of the -- of the
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   letter?
        MR. TALARICO: No.
                            I think what we're -- what I'm
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    saying is that that clarifies part of the 502(a) section
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   of the argument, what I perceive as 502(a).
                    Okay. Defense counsel?
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        THE COURT:
                       If I might --
        MR. TALARICO:
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        THE COURT: Go ahead, plaintiff.
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MR. TALARICO: -- expound a little bit. I wasn't aware that a 2-619 motion had been up. It was denied by this court, but denied with the ability to get -- to bring it again. All I've seen when I came into the case was a decision saying, you know, denied, so at that point in time I did not, let's say, approach the issues of the statute of limitations or the statute of repose.

I think those two issues help clarify the 502 argument.

The 502 argument is what -- what information

The 502 argument is what -- what information can be gathered, and I think my responses to that would simply be 502(b) and 502(a) have been complied with.

THE COURT: Defense counsel?

MR. FLYNN: I'm a little confused, Judge. There is no pending 619 motion. That was ruled upon years ago. This is simply a motion to compel and, you know, again, looking back, I didn't attach every discovery answer that Mr. Dulberg provided because there were many and there were issues with signature pages throughout written discovery. But here, the overarching supplemental request, Exhibit E, I believe it is, that was served on July 2 has not been answered. It's not been objected to. It's untimely at this point, and, again, it's clear that the discovery of the malpractice and damages has been placed at issue. So we're entitled

to explore that discovery.

The testimony of Mr. Dulberg at his deposition makes it clear that the only basis to toll any statute of limitations was the December 2016 communications with Tom Gooch and if he's not going to produce those, he has no other basis to toll the statute and, as such, the case should be dismissed. We'll bring the appropriate motion. But you can't have it both ways using the privilege as a sword and a shield.

THE COURT: Plaintiff's counsel, with respect to the latter, your comment?

MR. TALARICO: I guess I'm not clear on what counsel was saying. I respectfully say that we have complied with the -- the 502(b) was inadvertent within the deposition and the attorney at the time, who was -- I think her name was Williams, Julia Williams, objected and objected on a continuing basis for any of the questions regarding that information. Counsel has not brought a motion to have this court decide whether or not that was appropriate, but he had answered under the continuing objection by Miss Williams that this was a protected attorney-client discussion.

As to the 502(a), the intentional disclosure, that was, in my estimation -- and I hope the court

agrees -- that was done in the pleadings, in the complaint, but it was done in the -- I wouldn't say in the alternative. I would say it's additional information.

THE COURT: What specifically are you referring to when you say it's additional information? What was additional information?

MR. TALARICO: The continued comments about when -when he was aware of -- and when the statute would begin to run, the two-year statute of limitations, as to the filing of a complaint for malpractice. Within that section, I have each one numbered, but at first the comments -- the situation was when the arbitration, the binding arbitration, matter was decided, and it was decided in such a way that my client lost close to over \$200,000 because the only other person that was in the lawsuit had a maximum insurance policy of \$300,000. that point in time -- And he alleged that in the complaint, in the first amended complaint, and the second amended complaint, all of which I wasn't party to, but the words are in there, the allegations are in I believe that's when the statute of limitations Further -begins to run.

THE COURT: He references -- he references in his

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- 1 complaint -- I assume we're talking about the
- 2 allegations in the complaint.
- 3 MR. TALARICO: Yes.
- 4 THE COURT: And he references in the complaint
- 5 | learning information from the expert, if I've read this
- 6 | correctly. Is that a fair statement?
- 7 MR. TALARICO: That is one of the allegations, yes.
- 8 THE COURT: So why can't -- why isn't that report or
- 9 | communication going to be turned over?
- 10 MR. DULBERG: It is. It already is.
- MR. TALARICO: Judge, it's my position that that is
- 12 not relevant to the question. The question is, when did
- 13 | -- when did he become aware, when does the statute start
- 14 | running. And the answer I believe under Illinois law is
- 15 | it begins running when he knows of his injury, and the
- 16 injury took place with the binding arbitration award;
- 17 | not before, not after. So I'm saying --
- 18 THE COURT: And I guess I -- you're losing me
- 19 | because I -- I don't understand how a binding
- 20 arbitration award is going to disclose to anybody
- 21 | whether or not malpractice had been -- had taken place.
- 22 The -- your client -- I don't know if you can
- 23 | see him. He keeps raising his hand. I'm ignoring him
- 24 | because he has an attorney. I'm going to -- I'm going

to focus on you.

But whether or not there was an award for X dollars or no dollars, that doesn't tell me anything about whether -- whether he knew or should have known at that point. That just told him what those people --

MR. DULBERG: May I clarify on the record.

THE COURT: Mr. Dulberg, you have an attorney. You've elected to have your attorney speak for you.

9 MR. DULBERG: He's not not lead attorney
10 (indiscernible).

THE COURT: I'm going to limit it to it. I recommend that you limit your conversation or comments to him out of fear that you may say something that could be harmful to your case.

MR. DULBERG: I understand.

THE COURT: In any event, the complaint identified something the expert said as establishing knowledge on behalf of Mr. Dulberg for the first time of the alleged malpractice. So the complaint by its very language tells me that that communication is relevant to the issue of the discovery rule. I don't have a problem with doing an in camera inspection of that particular communication, but I don't see how we avoid it being relevant.

MR. TALARICO: Judge, I think in all three -- the original complaint, the first amended complaint and the second amended complaint, all three plead the injury happening with the -- I can't think of the word -- but with the binding arbitration statement.

each time the drafter of that complaint, the first -I'm sorry, the original, the first and the second, adds
in different aspects which I believe are really
irrelevant. I think the focus is on when the injury
occurred. The injury I believe occurred when the
binding arbitration award was granted and I think that's
when the statute of limitations should run.

THE COURT: But he's entitled to discovery on that.

If you're claiming a particular communication

established knowledge for the first time, he gets to -
defense gets to see that, because you've linked it to a

unique event and he gets to challenge whether that's

plausible, so you don't get -- you don't get to make

that decision for him.

MR. DULBERG: If I may, I'm going -- I'm going to clarify here.

THE COURT: Mr. Dulberg, you have an attorney.

24 MR. DULBERG: Yes, I do. And I'm going to clarify.

1 THE COURT: I'm not asking you to clarify. 2 MR. DULBERG: The event -- the event, okay, was a series of events --3 THE COURT: Counsel, --Judge, I'm going to object to this as 5 MR. FLYNN: 6 well. 7 MR. DULBERG: -- (continuing) prior to meeting Mr. Gooch. 8 I'm ignoring what's being said. 9 THE COURT: 10 Mr. Talarico, do you have a comment? 11 MR. TALARICO: Yes, we -- Mr. Dulberg, I believe, and our position is, the statute of limitations begins 12 13 to run on the date of the arbitration -- the binding 14 arbitration, award. And you could be right, but the 15 THE COURT: 16 discovery rule involves facts and the issue becomes 17 whether you knew or should have known. You, by the 18 complaint you've inherited, established that knowledge 19 came as a result of a particular event and I think it --

by virtue of that allegation, you've made the facts

surrounding that event relevant to the investigation of

your claim of the discovery rule, its application, that

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- 1 then the defendant gets to explore that.
- 2 MR. DULBERG: That's not what it said.
- THE COURT: Your subjective interpretations aren't going to be controlling.
- 5 MR. TALARICO: Judge, I'm not relying on that. All
- 6 | I'm saying is that, with all due respect, that is when
- 7 | he had the knowledge, that is when the statute of
- 8 limitations begins to run, and that information has been
- 9 part of the court file long before it became part of
- 10 | this matter.
- 11 THE COURT: My reading of the complaint referenced
- 12 something regarding an expert report and perhaps a
- 13 letter from former counsel.
- 14 MR. FLYNN: Judge, may I clarify that.
- 15 THE COURT: Go ahead. Yeah.
- 16 MR. FLYNN: Thank you.
- 17 You know, the plaintiff has attempted I think
- 18 to use both, a report that he received from a chainsaw
- 19 | -- so-called chainsaw expert, so a liability expert,
- 20 relative to the underlying case. There's been some
- 21 | confusion with respect to his pleading and reliance on
- 22 | that report. However, what I clarified at his
- 23 deposition is that he relied on a legal opinion to toll
- 24 | the statute of limitations in this case. It's that

legal opinion in December of 2016 which informed him of the malpractice.

Again, he wasn't very specific. I tried to question him about each and every violation of the standard of care, breach of the standard of care, and when he found out about it; and you can read the whole deposition, but his answers are evasive. They've been evasive in his original interrogatory answers. We've covered the waterfront with every possible question and interrogatory and production request we could, but it's clear that he is relying on a legal opinion.

Now, he's not very specific about what that legal opinion is, and maybe there isn't anything in Gooch's records or in the emails and whatnot to and from Gooch and Dulberg, but, in any event, that's what he testified to, and so it's our position we should be entitled to those legal opinions, whatever they are.

THE COURT: I thought -- and obviously I didn't read the entire deposition. I thought there was one letter that really covered it, based on what I read. Is that a fair statement?

MR. FLYNN: I'm not sure if that's accurate, Judge.

I think that -- I think he's pinpointed the time period to December of 2016, but I think he also testified that

there was regular email communication between Dulberg and Gooch, you know, --

THE COURT: In any event, I am going to direct production of all those communications on which the plaintiff is basing his claim of the applicability of the discovery rule; and that's a little broader than I first intended, but given the nature of this discussion, it sounds like it's more than just a couple of documents. It might be several of them.

I will also have those items produced to me for an in camera inspection so that I can determine to what extent that they are disclosing information relevant to our investigation into the discovery rule, because while I agree the defendant should be allowed to investigate that issue, that doesn't mean he gets the benefit of prior counsel's work product outside of the discovery rule issue.

Does that make sense?

MR. FLYNN: So I do understand your ruling. I would just ask that it be specified also, though, to the communications with Mr. Gooch because in anticipation of how this may be produced to Your Honor, if all they produce is this chainsaw expert report, then we haven't made any progress.

- THE COURT: There is definitely something from
- 2 Mr. Gooch, and if I'm not given something from
- $3 \mid Mr$. Gooch, that will be a red flag.
- 4 MR. TALARICO: Judge, if I might.
- 5 THE COURT: I'm sorry?
- 6 MR. TALARICO: If I might speak.
- 7 THE COURT: Yeah.
- 8 MR. TALARICO: Judge, my position is that the
- 9 | binding arbitration award document which has been part
- 10 of the court file, we believe long before I was in this
- 11 case, is the day that my client knew that he had an
- 12 action and, before that, it was premature by Illinois
- 13 law. At the time when the award was given, and the --
- 14 THE COURT: I'm not buying that. The arbitrator's
- 15 award gave you insight as to the value. Where you lose
- 16 | me is -- Well, let me rephrase that. It gave you their
- 17 | insight as to what they perceived the value of the case
- 18 | to be. It did not tell you whether or not you could
- 19 have known that there was a viable cause of action
- 20 against another defendant --
- 21 MR. DULBERG: (Indiscernible) that.
- 22 THE COURT: -- because, again, it's you knew or
- 23 | should have known whether --
- 24 MR. TALARICO: Of the injury, --

THE COURT: -- there was another cause of action against that --

MR. TALARICO: -- a financial injury.

THE COURT: And I fail to understand how an arbitrator's award would explain that because I can't imagine -- I certainly don't -- I'm not an arbitrator, I don't know what they put in their decisions, but I would be surprised if they spend a lot of time telling you about people you could have sued but for malpractice, so the issue for me is knew or should have known, and I am going to direct production of those documents.

MR. TALARICO: Judge, my one comment?

14 THE COURT: Yeah.

MR. TALARICO:

and a very recent case talked about specifically when the statute begins to run, but I will -- It's called Suburban Real Estate Services, Inc., versus Barus -- I'm sorry, and Barus versus William Carlson. The cite --

So it's Illinois law on that matter

THE COURT: But that's a different argument. That's a rule -- that's an argument related to the applicability of -- or, in my analysis, of how the rule applies to the circumstances that we have. It doesn't address the issue of whether you should have known of

- 1 | the existence of the cause of action, and the
- 2 | information I have is that you did not and could not
- 3 have known about the cause of action until the
- 4 disclosure from the expert or from Mr. Gooch, and if
- 5 | we're going to explore that issue, you've got to produce
- 6 that. You've put those items into evidence or at issue,
- 7 so defense has a right to see them.
- 8 MR. DULBERG: May I.
- 9 THE COURT: Anything else?
- 10 MR. DULBERG: Yeah, yeah. I'd like to comment.
- 11 | You're not going to let me comment?
- 12 THE COURT: Mr. Dulberg is attempting to speak. I'm
- 13 | not -- I'm neither listening nor inviting him to speak.
- 14 MR. DULBERG: I will speak on the record.
- 15 THE COURT: So I will --
- 16 MR. DULBERG: It's not about when we knew or should
- 17 | have known of the cause of action.
- 18 THE COURT: Sir, --
- 19 MR. DULBERG: We certainly knew or should have
- 20 known --
- 21 THE COURT: Sir, --
- MR. DULBERG: -- of the injury.
- THE COURT: Mr. Dulberg, do not presume to tell me
- 24 | what the law is. All right? You understand your place.

MR. DULBERG: Yes.

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THE COURT: Do not tell me what the law is. I will 2 I've instructed you numerous times make that decision. not to talk, and yet you feel the need to express 5 yourself. You have an attorney. Your attorney has ably represented you, but I get to make a decision regardless of what your personal thoughts are. So we will go back 7 to my discussion. Forgive the outburst, but I have invited him not to speak and that wasn't acceptable to 9 him. 10

So, in any event, how long, Mr. Talarico, do you need to produce this information?

MR. TALARICO: Judge, I'm not absolutely sure.

Whatever the court says I produce I'll produce within 28 days.

16 THE COURT: Okay. Twenty-eight days is fine with me.

Mr. Flynn?

MR. FLYNN: Twenty-eight days is fine, Your Honor.

I would also request that, in addition to the documents being produced, that the actual discovery request be responded to and any interrogatories be amended -
THE COURT: You need a privilege log certainly as to the documents, and so I'm going to direct that you be

- 1 | given a privilege log because they are claiming
- 2 | privilege as to these items. I assume there hasn't
- 3 previously been one. Is that true?
- 4 MR. FLYNN: That is true.
- 5 THE COURT: All right. So you're entitled to the
- 6 privilege log.
- 7 As far as the other interrogatories are
- 8 | concerned, Mr. Talarico -- How many interrogatories do
- 9 | we have outstanding?
- 10 MR. FLYNN: The -- I think what we have is some
- 11 interrogatories that weren't completely answered in the
- 12 | first place. It's probably a handful, Judge, but then
- 13 there are seven or eight requests for production that
- 14 | simply weren't responded to. Those are the subject of
- 15 this motion.
- 16 THE COURT: And are they covered by the privilege
- 17 log, do you think?
- 18 MR. FLYNN: Well, I think that first we need to know
- 19 whether there are responsive documents. They haven't
- 20 | even answered that, and then if they are withholding any
- 21 and submitting them to the court, then the privilege log
- 22 | comes next, I guess, would be my request.
- 23 THE COURT: Okay. Mr. Talarico, can you provide a
- 24 response in 28 days?

1 MR. TALARICO: Yes, Your Honor. I will respond.

THE COURT: All right. And if you don't have documents, you don't have documents. Just tell him. If you're claiming a privilege, identify -- provide some sort of an identification of the document and the privilege you're claiming.

With respect to the interrogatories, which ones?

MR. FLYNN: These were the interrogatories propounded by Hans Mast, my other client, and that was Exhibit D, I believe, to the motion. I did not attach his answers, but Hans Mast's interrogatories which were propounded back on March 22 of 2019 -- one, two, three -- just four interrogatories.

I do believe that we have a response, but it's incomplete. It doesn't -- it doesn't identify these communications with Mr. Gooch or the legal opinion that has been alleged in the complaint and placed at issue.

THE COURT: Yeah, and I -- my concern is -- and the answer, direct answer, to those is going to require my review of the documents, so I'm going to enter and continue that part of the motion until I make a decision with respect to the documents.

Is there anything else?

1 MR. FLYNN: I think that covers it, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Okay. All right. So, Mr. Flynn, I'm going to direct you to send me an order -- Do you have our email address? You can take a picture if you like.

MR. FLYNN: I believe so. Okay.

THE COURT: Okay? And the order -- we'll pick a new date in a moment. The order will provide that the plaintiff will provide you with a privilege log for those -- provide you answers to the production request as well as a privilege log with respect to any documents that are withheld, and I'm entering and continuing your motion with respect to the interrogatories.

Plaintiff will provide me with the documents withheld and identified in the privilege log within 28 days and then we'll come back perhaps two weeks after that. Twenty-eight days is March 10th; two weeks after that would be around March 24th, and I can provide you with my ruling then. So how's March 24th at 1:30?

MR. FLYNN: Judge, I actually have a deposition at 1:00 o'clock that day.

THE COURT: How about the 25th? Thursday.

MR. FLYNN: 25th works. 25th at 1:00 o'clock?

THE COURT: Yeah.

24 Mr. Talarico?

- 1 MR. TALARICO: One second, Your Honor.
- 2 THE COURT: Okay.
- 3 MR. TALARICO: Fine.
- 4 THE COURT: Do we have agreement on the date or are
- 5 | we waiting?
- 6 MR. TALARICO: I said it was fine, Your Honor.
- 7 THE COURT: Oh, okay. I'm sorry, I missed that. So
- 8 1:30. Is there anything else we need covered in the
- 9 order?
- 10 MR. FLYNN: Just may I be clear that the motion is
- 11 granted in part as stated on the record.
- 12 THE COURT: Yes.
- 13 MR. FLYNN: And I would like to just include
- 14 Mr. Gooch's name in the written order, that those be
- 15 | included in the production if they exist.
- 16 THE COURT: Yeah, I don't -- I don't want -- What I
- 17 | want to -- I quess -- And thank you for bringing that
- 18 | up.
- 19 My impression from reading the motion was it
- 20 | boiled down to -- I got the idea that it was a single
- 21 document or a single communication that conveyed the
- 22 | information at issue. And you're indicating that it was
- 23 more, it was a number of emails. Are you able to put a
- 24 | timeframe on it?

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                   Well, I think again, the allegations in
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       MR. FLYNN:
   the various complaints, complaint and amended
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   complaints, and the testimony, (indiscernible) to
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   December of 2016, so --
        THE COURT: Yeah. Say the communications of
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   December of 2016, because I don't want it read as
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   requiring that all communications from Mr. Gooch be
   produced.
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       MR. FLYNN:
                    Okay.
       THE COURT: Mr. Talarico, any questions or comments
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   about that?
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        MR. TALARICO: No, Your Honor. I'll follow the
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   court's order.
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                  All right. Anything else then?
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        THE COURT:
       MR. FLYNN: No, Your Honor. I will send a draft of
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    that order to Mr. Talarico for his review and then we
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   will send it to your email address, Your Honor.
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                   Okay.
                           I'll wait to see that. I'll sign
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       THE COURT:
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    it as soon as it's in. Thank you.
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       MR. FLYNN:
                    Thank you.
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THE COURT: See you in March.

Thank you, counsel. MR. FLYNN:

THE COURT: All right. Bye.

> MR. TALARICO: Thank you, Judge. Thank you,

23 counsel.

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(Which was and is all of the evidence 24 offered at the hearing of said cause this date.)