

1 that view.

2 And, also, because if there was an intent to  
3 initiate a money laundering framework using bank  
4 accounts associated with the Menlo Park Congregation of  
5 Jehovah's Witnesses, Incorporated, I believe that the  
6 individuals involved in the scheme would have already  
7 known that our body of elders would not have  
8 participated in such a criminal act. In view of their  
9 standing intent to implement said laundering ring, we  
10 would have to be removed first.

11 In order to execute any act of deception  
12 against the members of the Menlo Park congregation and  
13 the members of Menlo Park Corporation, we would have to  
14 be taken out of the way, because they knew we would not  
15 do that. I would never get on stage and lie about the  
16 financial condition of the corporation to the members.  
17 You would not do that, Arlen St. Clair would not do  
18 that, George Stock would never do that.

19 Ernest Brede did do that, which as much  
20 accounts for why he's in that position, if anything  
21 else, because of his willingness to respond to a  
22 directive to give a false financial report, which under  
23 the laws of California constitutes a crime.

24 Now in that moment we're no longer talking  
25 about religion. We're talking about a criminal act that

1 was performed and perpetrated by virtue of religious  
2 conviction, and this takes us right back to the very  
3 idea and concern as manifested by the founding fathers  
4 relative to the free exercise clause pursuant to the  
5 first amendment.

6 Yes, religion needs to have freedom and room to  
7 operate, and Congress should not enact any law or  
8 provision that would constitute the creation of a  
9 religion by applying oppressive restraints to establish  
10 religious organizations and beliefs.

11 However, that in no way, shape or form should  
12 be misinterpreted or misused or misapplied, as attempted  
13 by the defense, to create a basis of autonomy, immunity  
14 to perform any and all acts that the perpetrators  
15 themselves feel are motivated by religious convictions.

16 The analogy or point that was used by Justice  
17 Scalia in Department of Administration versus Smith is,  
18 if such freedom was given to religious belief, then  
19 there would be any number of religions that would spring  
20 up where individuals had decided that it was against  
21 their religion to pay taxes.

22 He said, in the effort to provide freedom of  
23 religion, there also is a fundamental need to maintain  
24 concerns that are of public interest. We need to have  
25 taxes paid to care for government, secular activities

1 and to generally address matters of public interest. So  
2 such freedom could not be given to such a religiously  
3 motivated view.

4 And that principle, what he said there  
5 directly, applies to this situation, because there's a  
6 standing effort to legitimize criminal behavior in the  
7 name of religion. And for sake of clarity, that effort  
8 is being made not by the governing body of Jehovah's  
9 Witnesses nor by any of the corporations in use by the  
10 organization known as Jehovah's Witnesses. That view is  
11 being promoted, perpetrated by the individuals who have  
12 been named, the defendants.

13 Q. Okay. I wanted to ask about potential  
14 witnesses. You mentioned earlier in your testimony that  
15 Bill Douglas came to you to ask you questions about the  
16 finances when that announcement was made by defendant  
17 Brede that there was only \$3,500 in the account, when it  
18 was obvious there was much more.

19 Was there anything else that was discussed by  
20 Mr. Douglas either on that occasion or previous occasion  
21 or any occasion thereafter that would help you to  
22 appreciate what had occurred there?

23 A. Well, there were many conversations with  
24 Mr. Douglas in and around July 1st, 2010, and certainly  
25 in the initial weeks and months thereafter. Bill has

1 been a close friend, and so he was endeavoring to reach  
2 out to me as such and offer encouragement. Doing so, he  
3 made different observations.

4           On one occasion he mentioned that he had a  
5 conversation with Ernest Brede and quoted Ernest Brede  
6 as saying that he did not really want to come to Menlo  
7 Park, but he was told to do it, he was directed to do  
8 it. And during this conversation, Ernest Brede stated  
9 that Steve Misterfeld had been specifically sent to  
10 Menlo Park for the express purpose of removing the body  
11 of elders.

12           So he had that mission in hand before he ever  
13 arrived in Menlo Park, which certainly alliance with --  
14 the manner in which he presented himself during the  
15 meeting that began on February 26th, 2010, and carried  
16 over to February 27, 2010, very much presented himself  
17 as a man who had already prejudged the matter, as  
18 nothing that we said in our defense affected his view of  
19 the matter.

20           Q. Okay. Were there any other expressions that  
21 you either heard personally or you heard of that would  
22 testify or would corroborate the idea that  
23 Mr. Misterfeld came for one express purpose of removing  
24 the elder body and officers of Menlo Park, the Menlo  
25 Park Corporation?

1           A. Right. And just for clarity, Steve Misterfeld  
2 doesn't have the authority to remove directors or  
3 officers of a corporation. He is not a representative  
4 of the State of California. He has the authority to  
5 recommend the removal of elders or individuals from  
6 positions of spiritual oversight, and that was his scope  
7 during that meeting.

8           Obviously an effort was made to execute a  
9 transference of oversight and, by extension, power, if  
10 you will, which would appear a goal and objective.

11           As far as additional comments, Bill made  
12 reference to that statement that Brede made regarding  
13 Steve Misterfeld.

14           Also Brede made a comment about Paul Koehler to  
15 the same effect, that in essence he had come there with  
16 an objective of doing what he did, and that there was an  
17 objective relative to the Kingdom Hall.

18           What should be noted in this moment is that,  
19 prior to the judicial meeting or judicial hearing with  
20 Steve Misterfeld and Koehler, Ernest Brede, again at  
21 that time the South Redwood City congregation, and Josh  
22 Grey of the Japanese Menlo Park congregation were  
23 participants in what was being called a land search  
24 committee. And they were participating in discussions  
25 evaluating the current meeting places and potential new

1 meeting places and/or properties that would be needed.

2           And in talking with Paul Yamaguchi, who told me  
3 that Brede and Grey were participating in those  
4 discussions, it seems as if the Menlo Park Kingdom Hall  
5 was a recurring object of those discussions. So here  
6 again, no matter what angle we use, the idea of the  
7 property being a focal point of any and all activities  
8 and efforts around this situation comes to the fore, and  
9 the corporation being a focal point, too.

10           Q. Let me ask you a question about -- just kind of  
11 a change of subject.

12           Did you feel that there were -- was a concerted  
13 effort to get you to leave your attending the Kingdom  
14 Hall there at 811 Bay Road after July the 1st when they  
15 read the letter about your deletion as an elder?

16           A. Yes. It was very confusing at the time,  
17 because being removed as an elder and under those  
18 circumstances was disturbing enough, and one would think  
19 that that would be sufficient punishment. But in a way  
20 that only seemed to mark the beginning of a phase in the  
21 overall situation.

22           After being removed as an elder, there was an  
23 effort to push out the elders that had been removed.  
24 There was an effort to be discouraging in small ways,  
25 but that were part of an overall systematic push out

1 effort, and I couldn't understand why at the time.

2 I wasn't the only person who encountered it.

3 But at this point, it appears as if that treatment was  
4 strategic. It appears as if that treatment was  
5 specifically designed and intended to cause the previous  
6 elders, three of which were also directors of the  
7 corporation and officers, to leave the congregation.

8 Upon leaving the congregation, said  
9 individual -- said individuals would in actuality have  
10 abandoned the corporation, which would have effected  
11 essentially their resignation from their appointed  
12 positions as directors and officers of the corporation.  
13 And I feel strongly that the systematic mistreatment was  
14 specifically intended to bring that about.

15 Q. Can you mention or describe some of the things  
16 that were done in an effort to push you out, as well as  
17 other members there? Let's say of the original Menlo  
18 Park group.

19 A. Well, any time there's a transition of  
20 oversight, there will be some changes. It's natural.  
21 However, there seemed to be a conscious effort to change  
22 things in order to destroy any comfort zone or any sense  
23 of familiarity or any sense of home, to make it easier  
24 for longtime members and persons to leave.

25 It felt like an invasion. They changed the

1 locks to the building without any communication or  
2 authorization. They changed the locks to the  
3 contribution boxes. They added a lock to the entrance  
4 to the second floor meeting room. They arbitrarily  
5 threw things away just for the sake of doing it, as if  
6 to assert their authority, their dominance, and things  
7 were disposed of apparently just to make that point.  
8 We're doing it because we can, and there's nothing that  
9 you can do about it.

10 And it was intended to be disrespectful. It  
11 was intended to engender disgust. It was intended to  
12 repulse. It was intended to make it as painful and  
13 humiliating of an experience as possible, so that the  
14 natural reaction would be to stop attending there. That  
15 was the initial wave of the attack.

16 Thereafter it began to manifest itself in more  
17 subtle and insidious ways. I was not able to  
18 participate in the meetings. I wasn't being called on.  
19 No reason was given. Members of my family were being  
20 overlooked. My children were being overlooked.

21 Q. Do you feel that was kind of as a byproduct, or  
22 was there something deliberate in relation to that? For  
23 example, your children.

24 A. I believe there was a specific intent to  
25 mistreat me and my family, including my children, and



1 part of it is born from a certain point of view that is  
2 held in our faith. Earlier I mentioned that the  
3 governing body has gone on record in writing, in print,  
4 saying that where a family attends is a decision for the  
5 family head, so our family, that would be me.

6 In having that discussion, the governing body  
7 acknowledged that the family head would take into  
8 consideration what is in the best interests of his wife  
9 and his children spiritually, which is to say the family  
10 head would evaluate what environment would be most  
11 beneficial, most encouraging, most helpful, most  
12 enriching spiritually, so that his family would prosper  
13 spiritually, mentally, emotionally, in all respects.

14 So I believe that these individuals had that in  
15 mind as they endeavored to exert pressure on myself and  
16 on my family with the expectation that pursuing --  
17 pursuant to the discussion from the governing body based  
18 on the scriptures, I would naturally arrive at the  
19 conclusion this environment was not encouraging, was not  
20 uplifting, was not good for myself, my wife or my  
21 children.

22 And so the natural decision would be to go  
23 somewhere else, which is unfortunate, because here again  
24 a statement by the governing body as based on the  
25 scriptures is now being twisted or leveraged in an

1 effort that is strategically vile.

2 Q. Did you get any indication from anyone, any  
3 admissions that they were engaging in this type of  
4 activity, pushing you out?

5 A. There was only one. At one point I felt the  
6 need to approach Aaron Lucas, because at that time he  
7 was conducting the Watchtower study which follows the  
8 public meeting on Sundays, study of the Bible using the  
9 Watchtower. It's conducted by means of question and  
10 answer session, and it had been a recurring theme that  
11 he wasn't calling on myself or members of the family.

12 And on this occasion, my wife raised her hand  
13 anywhere from six to eight times. He looked directly at  
14 her multiple times, then looked away and called on  
15 someone else.

16 So I approached him after the meeting, and I  
17 said to him, "My wife raised her hand several times, and  
18 you did not call on her. It seemed as if you were doing  
19 that intentionally." And I asked the question, "Is that  
20 my imagination? Am I imagining things?" I wanted to  
21 allow for the possibility that it was just a random  
22 event.

23 But interestingly, when I asked the question,  
24 "Is this my imagination," he looked me right in the eye  
25 and said, "It's not your imagination," which shocked me.

1           And so I said, "Well, can you help me to  
2 understand this? My wife would have a basis to comment  
3 like anyone else."

4           And he restated, "It's not your imagination,  
5 and that's all I'm going to say," and he walked away.

6           Q. So you feel like your suspicions were founded  
7 by the fact he made that admission that they were  
8 treating your family unkindly, trying to in a sense  
9 drive you out? Is that the way you felt?

10          A. That is the way I felt.

11          Q. Okay. Well, we're getting close to time to get  
12 out of this room, so if we can stop.

13                   (Discussion off the record.)

14                   (Whereupon, the October 27, 2011, the  
15 examination of JASON E. COBB ended at 1:53 p.m.)

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JASON E. COBB

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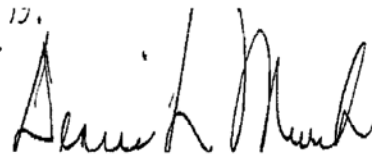
CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

I, Denise L. Murata, duly authorized to administer oaths pursuant to Section 2093(b) of the California Code of Civil Procedure, do hereby certify: That the witness in the foregoing examination was administered an oath to testify to the whole truth in the within-entitled cause; that said examination was taken at the time and place therein cited; that the testimony of the said witness was reported by me and was thereafter transcribed under my direction into typewriting; that the foregoing is a complete and accurate record of said testimony; and that the witness was given an opportunity to read and correct said examination and to subscribe the same.

Should the signature of the witness not be affixed to the examination, the witness shall not have availed himself/herself of the opportunity to sign or the signature has been waived.

I further certify that I am not of counsel nor attorney for any of the parties in the foregoing examination and caption named nor in any way interested in the outcome of the cause named in said caption.

DATED: October 31, 2011.



DENISE L. MURATA, CSR #6097