

SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK

COUNTY OF NEW YORK : CIVIL DIV. : PART 61

-----X

PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK, by :  
LETITIA JAMES, Attorney General of the :  
State of New York, :

Plaintiff, :

- against - : Index No.  
: 452044/18

EXXON MOBIL CORPORATION, :

Defendant. :

-----X MOTION

60 Centre Street  
New York, New York  
June 12, 2019

B E F O R E :

HON. BARRY R. OSTRAGER,  
Justice

(Appearances on the following page.)

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ROBERT PORTAS, R.P.R., C.R.R.  
SENIOR COURT REPORTER

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## A P P E A R A N C E S :

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## PROCEEDINGS

1 COURT OFFICER: Come to order.

2 THE COURT: Good morning.

3 We have two discovery issues -- we have two  
4 discovery issues that were addressed in letters to the  
5 Court and three motions. Why don't we do the two  
6 discovery issues first, keeping in mind that we have an  
7 October 23<sup>rd</sup> trial date in this case.

8 So I think Exxon has raised both of the  
9 discovery issues, so let me hear from them.

10 MR. TOAL: Good morning, Justice Ostrager.

11 The first issue we wanted to discuss was this  
12 issue of the third-party witness list. We have a few  
13 slides we'd hand up.

14 THE COURT: But I should say before you say  
15 anything that this is among the most actively litigated  
16 cases in this courthouse, and the number of depositions and  
17 documents that have taken place in this case may exceed the  
18 number of documents produced in depositions taken in any  
19 other case. So I'm having a hard time understanding why  
20 the Office of the Attorney General can't identify witnesses  
21 who they believe may testify four months from now.

22 MR. TOAL: Your Honor, I think we are having  
23 exactly the same issue. We were here before the Court in  
24 March, we raised this issue with the Court at that time,  
25 because at that time the Attorney General's Office hadn't  
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1 identified any third-party witnesses they intended to call  
2 at trial, they just purported to reserve the right to  
3 identify those witnesses at a future time.

4 We had a discussion with Your Honor, Your Honor  
5 said, "I expect the parties to be transparent," you  
6 thought it was in everybody's interest to be transparent  
7 about the witnesses they intended to call at trial; we  
8 agreed with that. You made clear your expectation at the  
9 time that the Attorney General's Office would not give us  
10 a kitchen sink list of potential third-party witnesses.

11 Mr. Wallace assured the Court that he didn't  
12 intend to give us a huge list, and then when we got the  
13 supplementation of the preliminary witness list, which  
14 was due in February, they provided, in addition to the 45  
15 Exxon mobile witnesses they had notified us of  
16 previously, 25 potential third-party witnesses and seven  
17 entities that collectively employ more than 600,000  
18 employees.

19 So that's not a good faith witness list. We  
20 think that's entirely inconsistent with what Your Honor  
21 had in mind. We think it's entirely inconsistent with  
22 the preliminary conference order and the whole idea of  
23 preliminary witness list. This was supposed to  
24 facilitate the efficient resolution of this case and  
25 efficient discovery. This, as Your Honor noted, follows  
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1 a three-year investigation and production of millions of  
2 pages of documents, and it is inconceivable to us that  
3 this close to trial, we're now four months out from  
4 trial, they don't have a reasonably clear idea of the  
5 witnesses they intend to call which would give us the  
6 ability to pursue appropriate discovery of those  
7 third-parties, including documents and depositions.

8 That's all we're looking for is to avoid trial  
9 by ambush. And whatever third-party witnesses the  
10 New York Attorney General proposes to call in an effort  
11 to prove its case we should know and we should have full  
12 disclosure of the facts in advance of trial. That's what  
13 we're looking for, that's what we think the Attorney  
14 General's Office is denying us here.

15 THE COURT: All right, Mr. Wallace, why isn't that  
16 reasonable?

17 MR. WALLACE: Your Honor, we feel a little bit  
18 like no good deed is going unpunished in this. We told  
19 Exxon Mobil at the outset, they wanted a witness list in  
20 February, they wanted updates on the witness list. All of  
21 that is beyond what's called for in the CPLR, all of that  
22 is beyond what's called for in the Commercial Division, all  
23 of that's beyond what's called for in New York practice  
24 parts.

25 We gave them a preliminary witness list, they  
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1 claim it didn't have third-party witnesses on it. We  
2 were here in March, we gave them a list of 30  
3 individuals, some of them are entities because we don't  
4 have necessarily a witness that we need from there, maybe  
5 we need a document verified. So these are all people  
6 that might come in at trial. It wasn't, I don't think 30  
7 kitchen sink. And some of it we were still parsing down  
8 in discovery.

9 I'll give one examples: One of the entities we  
10 listed was Goldman Sacks. There had been an email from  
11 the former head of investor relations at Exxon saying  
12 they spoke to two people from Goldman Sacks and they  
13 really liked what the company was doing on its climate  
14 change disclosures and that they were getting a good  
15 reaction to the reports they put out.. Well, we deposed  
16 that person; he said he didn't know who the people were  
17 from Goldman Sacks, so we're probably not going to be  
18 calling anyone from there.

19 The issue's just whether we're continually doing  
20 iterative witness lists. And the answer is at this point  
21 we just don't know exactly who we're going to call. A  
22 lot of this is strategic, a lot of this is trying to  
23 figure out how we can cut down the number of witnesses.  
24 There may be three parties to -- three people that are  
25 attending a meeting where Exxon is making

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1 representations, we'd rather only call one. But we don't  
2 know exactly which ones we're calling yet.

3 So that's where we are. We don't have a list  
4 that's narrower than 30 at this stage.

5 THE COURT: You are correct that the normal  
6 procedure in a normal case in which there's probably going  
7 to be no more than six or eight or ten witnesses obligates  
8 the parties to identify potential witnesses a couple of  
9 weeks in advance. This is not a normal case. This is a  
10 case that's been in discovery and investigation for three  
11 years. And it doesn't seem reasonable to me that four  
12 months before trial you can't do a better job of  
13 identifying potential witnesses with great specificity than  
14 you have.

15 Now, I'm not going to play hall monitor where we  
16 have weekly conferences with the lawyers to ascertain the  
17 extent to which you're giving Exxon reasonable notice of  
18 the witnesses you may potentially call at trial. But you  
19 can't give them the name of a company with 600,000  
20 employees and not indicate which of four or five of those  
21 600,000 employees you might call as a witness -- as  
22 witnesses in your case.

23 Now, maybe they can figure it out, but even if  
24 they can figure it out, it's only reasonable for you to  
25 do a better job than you're doing in focusing on the  
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1 identity of the potential witnesses of what bids fair to  
2 be a significant trial raising significant issues  
3 involving a significant public interest.

4 MR. WALLACE: I understand, Your Honor. And,  
5 especially on the entities, without maybe getting out over  
6 my skis, I think for the most part those entities we  
7 identified because they had reports that we would put into  
8 evidence, that what we can do is go back to Exxon on those  
9 and tell them exactly which documents from those entities  
10 we are interested in entering into. And we can potentially  
11 do those through either some form of affidavit, testing as  
12 to whether the report is a business record or something  
13 along those lines and narrow the burden.

14 We're not looking to call 600,000 people, we  
15 weren't looking to play games, and, you know, where we  
16 had the identity of someone at Goldman Sacks in mind and  
17 we were just hiding it from them.

18 So we can give them information, especially on  
19 the entities, to sort of what we're looking for. And we  
20 did identify that in our disclosure to them. We  
21 identified which paragraphs in the complaint which  
22 pertained to those reports. So we can do that,  
23 certainly.

24 MR. TOAL: Your Honor, I want to be clear, this is  
25 not an issue that's limited to the seven entities they've  
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1 identified. They are not going to call 70 plus witnesses  
2 at trial. They have to have a better understanding, they  
3 have to have a present intention at this time of what  
4 witnesses they intend to call. That was the purpose of the  
5 preliminary witness list. When we gave them our  
6 preliminary witness list there were eleven witnesses on it.  
7 Those are the people we intend to call. And when we  
8 recently decided we would were inclined to call another  
9 witness we supplemented our witness list. That's how you  
10 put parties on notice of what the evidence is that they're  
11 going to be confronted with and they need to deal with.  
12 And we need the opportunity to know who those people are so  
13 we can take discovery in advance of trial. That's just a  
14 matter of basic fairness. And, you know, this witness list  
15 is an effort to hide the ball.

16 THE COURT: All right, I'm not going to make any  
17 ruling this morning. But we're going to have another  
18 conference two weeks from today, and in between now and  
19 then I'm asking the Office of the Attorney General to be  
20 mindful of the, what I consider to be reasonable objections  
21 that Exxon Mobil is raising to the manner in which the  
22 Office of Attorney General is identifying potential  
23 witnesses.

24 MR. WALLACE: Your Honor, I completely understand  
25 your request and we will -- we will be back in front of you  
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1 in two weeks and we will have thought about it and taken  
2 some steps.

3 I do want to say this is not obfuscation. The  
4 bulk of the witnesses they're complaining about we  
5 identified in February and we told them we still weren't  
6 sure and that we didn't know what our case was going to  
7 look like, and that's why we didn't think a preliminary  
8 witness list at that stage made sense. Most of those  
9 people are internal Exxon employees, and we've been going  
10 through and doing our depositions to try and narrow it  
11 down.

12 So we will understand your suggestion and we  
13 will be back here in two weeks.

14 THE COURT: All right. I appreciate that.

15 And in two weeks you'll be exactly four months  
16 from trial, so for your own purposes you'll need to have  
17 a better handle on who it is that you're likely to call  
18 as witnesses.

19 MR. WALLACE: Understood, Your Honor.

20 And the issue last time was in fact the  
21 third-party witnesses, and we gave them the folks that we  
22 thought that were potential witnesses. But I -- I  
23 understand the comments about where we are, and we will  
24 be back here in two weeks.

25 THE COURT: All right.

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1 The next issue on discovery.

2 MR. ANDERSON: Judge, it would be helpful if we  
3 handed up some materials that we prepared to review, both  
4 in connection with the motions and the requests for the  
5 discovery that's in dispute.

6 THE COURT: Okay. Have you given a copy to the  
7 other side?

8 MR. ANDERSON: We can -- We will distribute them  
9 now.

10 THE COURT: All right.

11 (Brief pause.)

12 THE COURT: We're just dealing with your second  
13 discovery issue at the moment.

14 MR. ANDERSON: Which relates to the custodians,  
15 Judge.

16 Your Honor, we're prepared to address the issue  
17 about the two custodians that the parties don't agree on.  
18 We are pursuing, which is the subject of the motion to  
19 dismiss certain defenses that relate to the misconduct  
20 allegations that we've made against the Attorney  
21 General's Office, the selective enforcement, the official  
22 misconduct and the conflict of interest.

23 There are two custodians that we believe  
24 contain -- whose documents are likely to contain relevant  
25 information, relevant evidence related to those defenses.

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1 One is the former spokesperson for the office who issued  
2 a number of press statements during her tenure, including  
3 one of them which is in this packet accused Exxon of  
4 having made 97 pages worth of false statements. And  
5 that's on Slide 8 of the packet, from her personal  
6 Twitter account she says, allegedly, that "The three-year  
7 investigation that the New York Attorney General  
8 conducted uncovered 97 pages worth of wrongdoing." What  
9 she's referring to is the 97-page complaint that they  
10 filed. At least one of those pages is just the  
11 signatures of all the people who work at the Attorney  
12 General's Office who brought the complaint against this.

13 So it's this type of inflammatory rhetoric that  
14 the Office for the last three years has issued, both  
15 publicly through official channels and also through  
16 numerous press leaks, including to New York Times, about  
17 the existence of the investigation before we even knew  
18 about it, including, we believe, on information and  
19 belief, but we want discovery on this, that they leaked  
20 the existence of the investigation -- the confidential  
21 investigation that the SEC was conducting of the company  
22 to the great detriment of the company's reputation when  
23 that came out in the press.

24 And we believe that this custodian is the most  
25 likely point of contact between members of the Attorney  
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1 General's Office and the press where this campaign of  
2 defamation was conducted against the company. And so we  
3 would...

4 (To Mr. Wallace) Allow me to finish, please.

5 And so we would ask that the Court direct the  
6 Attorney General to conduct a reasonable search of this  
7 former employee's emails pursuant to the search terms  
8 that we've already agreed on that are reasonable.

9 And the only objection that we've heard from the  
10 Attorney General's Office to this request has nothing to  
11 do with burden, they've never told us that this was  
12 burdensome, they've never presented a hit report showing  
13 how many documents they would have to review, all we've  
14 ever heard is that they don't want to do it because they  
15 think it's unreasonable or it's irrelevant. But the  
16 information that is in this custodian's files are  
17 directly relevant to the allegations that we've made  
18 about the official misconduct and about the selective  
19 enforcement.

20 MR. WALLACE: I'm just going to profess, I'm a bit  
21 surprised we're starting here, because this was the issue  
22 Your Honor issued the notice about at the last scheduled  
23 hearing we had and you told the parties that if we came in  
24 you were likely to just grant relief to both sides. They  
25 had asked for three additional witnesses.

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1 We negotiated with them on the issues and issued  
2 a series of requests to narrow down what we were asking  
3 for. We agreed to produce one of the three witnesses  
4 they were looking for and expand our search terms. They  
5 just decided not to -- they'd said they'd take it under  
6 advisement, and so here we are.

7 So we feel we've compromised, we feel that going  
8 after the press office and the other person they  
9 requested, and I don't know what their position is on it  
10 today, is another fellow that works -- that never worked  
11 on the case. So these are two people that didn't manage  
12 the case, they weren't part of the case team.

13 Mr. Montgomery will talk about, I think this is  
14 largely covered by the rest of the discovery disputes and  
15 the motion to dismiss and the other motion practice, so I  
16 don't know that it makes sense to take this as the first  
17 issue.

18 But our point is: We've compromised a lot with  
19 Exxon. We've asked for a lot of things we know and  
20 they've come back and pushed back. And so that's what we  
21 did before the last conference. And we left it a little  
22 bit open, so I'm a bit surprised that it's actually now  
23 the answer is "We're not willing to take a compromise."

24 So that's the context that we see this in. I  
25 think it makes more sense to talk about the motions, and  
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1 this gets covered up within that. Because if the motions  
2 are granted this all becomes a little bit moot. So that  
3 was just the context.

4 MR. ANDERSON: That's not entirely correct, Judge.  
5 If the motion is granted to dismiss the defenses that we  
6 want to raise, there's still likely to be discoverable and  
7 relevant evidence in the spokesperson's custodian files  
8 related to the basis for the claims and related to the way  
9 that the AG's office has communicated its understanding of  
10 those claims to the press and how those statements that  
11 they've made previously are at odds with the current  
12 position that they've taken in the litigation and what we  
13 expect that they're going to present to the Court in  
14 October.

15 So, even if that is the case that some of the  
16 requests are wrapped up in the motion to dismiss, there's  
17 independent relevance outside of the defenses. But we'll  
18 proceed in whatever order the Court prefers. The Court  
19 indicated that discovery was up first and then the motion  
20 to dismiss was second. If the Court prefers to go in the  
21 other direction that's fine, but we think that we're  
22 entitled to this discovery, it's directly relevant to the  
23 misconduct defenses that we intend to raise that we have  
24 good -- that we have pleaded with abundant allegations  
25 that fully support those defenses. And we don't see any

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1 reason to wait longer. The close of fact discovery was  
2 last month. It's high time they did the review which  
3 they hadn't said would be burdensome and produce the  
4 documents.

5 MR. WALLACE: I would just note that I think  
6 there's been active press activity on both sides of the  
7 table, that Exxon Mobil's been communicating to the press,  
8 we've been communicating with the press. I don't think any  
9 of that relates to the merits of this case, which, as Your  
10 Honor said, we're very close to going to trial. And I  
11 don't think we are here to litigate the press strategy of  
12 either side, we certainly haven't been pursuing that as an  
13 area of discovery. But, again, I think that if there is  
14 not--as we believe legally there is not--there is not a  
15 misconduct defense, then there is no even pretense of  
16 needing the discovery of the press officer of the New York  
17 Attorney General's Office.

18 THE COURT: I'm inclined to agree with the Office  
19 of the Attorney General on the discovery of press-related  
20 communications. Let's get to the motions to dismiss.

21 MR. MONTGOMERY: Good morning, Your Honor.

22 As you noted at the outset, this case has been  
23 litigated far beyond the norm. And the discovery  
24 disputes you're seeing right now are an illustration of  
25 the reason why courts are very cautious about allowing

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1 defendants to proceed with these kinds of defenses.

2 And there's two reasons, two primary reasons why  
3 these defenses do not belong in this case, and the first  
4 is they fail as a matter of law. The Court of Appeals in  
5 this state, the Supreme Court, has made very clear that  
6 there is -- is and needs to be a high bar for a party  
7 making a misconduct claim like this against a law  
8 enforcement agency. And that bar is that there is no  
9 reasonable basis for the government action at issue. In  
10 other words, that the bias or animus was the but for  
11 cause of the challenged government action.

12 Exxon has failed to make that type of  
13 allegation. Given -- taking their allegations as true,  
14 at best we have inferences that there may have been  
15 additional contributing causes, but certainly no evidence  
16 that would -- or no allegation that would support that  
17 the supposed animus or bias on the part of the former  
18 Attorney General was the but for cause.

19 The second reason these claims don't belong in  
20 this case is because Exxon has provided no linkage to  
21 their claims to the litigation at issue. All of their  
22 claims are directed towards the investigation and the  
23 theory that it was brought for an improper purpose,  
24 ignoring the fact that the current litigation was brought  
25 not by former Attorney General, Eric Schneiderman, who is  
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1 the subject of most of the misconduct claims, but by  
2 Barbara Underwood. Exxon has made no allegation to  
3 suggest that she proceeded to bring this case to trial  
4 despite -- without any sort of basis or that the current  
5 Attorney General, Letitia James, continues to support the  
6 Office's action despite the fact that it was sprung from  
7 a baseless investigation.

8 There's two -- excuse me. So there are a number  
9 of reasons why these allegations are insufficient, but  
10 the first question that the Court has to ask is has Exxon  
11 plausibly alleged that there was no reasonable basis for  
12 bringing the investigation. And I submit to the Court  
13 that they have not and cannot. Because, as this Court is  
14 aware, the Office of the Attorney General, as far back as  
15 October of 2016, in this room, set forth the basis for  
16 its investigation when they submitted a motion to compel,  
17 which Exxon did not challenge, did not raise -- did not  
18 challenge the subpoena at that time saying it was  
19 improperly based, despite the fact that they had already  
20 raised these misconduct claims in a federal court in  
21 Texas.

22 They continued to dispute certain aspects about  
23 whether certain documents were subject to an accounting  
24 privilege under the Texas law, but at no time did they  
25 tell this Court or otherwise say "We should not respond  
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1 to this subpoena, we should not produce these documents  
2 because it is based on an investigation that is the  
3 product of animus or bias."

4 If that wasn't enough, at the conclusion of the  
5 investigation the basis was supported and laid out in  
6 painstaking detail in a 90-page complaint, validating the  
7 theories that had been presented earlier in the motion to  
8 compel. In other words, there was a basis for Exxon --  
9 for the Attorney General's belief that Exxon misled its  
10 investors.

11 And, as I said, in the motion to compel the  
12 supporting affidavit laid out those bases. Exxon's  
13 financial disclosures, their 2014 Managing the Risks  
14 report, interviews given by the CEO of Exxon at the time  
15 who said that Exxon did not take write-downs or  
16 impairment costs, the Wall Street Journal article stating  
17 that Exxon was the only major producer that didn't take  
18 these impairment charges or write-downs.

19 In view of that clear basis that's been laid out  
20 under the supervision of the Court, Exxon's allegations  
21 fall short. At best what we have is allegations that the  
22 former Attorney General had a political viewpoint that  
23 was in opposition to certain viewpoints of Exxon, that  
24 there were certain activists who supported the Attorney  
25 General's actions against Exxon and may have offered

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1 encouragement, otherwise provided information. None of  
2 these get close to providing the causal link that these  
3 allegations would require to proceed past the pleadings  
4 stage.

5 And, to give you an example, you may be aware  
6 that yesterday the Attorney General brought an action, an  
7 antitrust action related to Sprint and T-Mobile. And on  
8 the stage announcing that action were a union of workers  
9 in that industry, a nonprofit representing people in the  
10 community, and the World Wireless Association, a trade  
11 association.

12 My point being, Your Honor, is that the  
13 allegations that Exxon's making are commonplace, they're  
14 not extraordinary events. They're trying to use the  
15 typical operations of the Attorney General to cast a wide  
16 net of possible reasons that the investigation in Exxon  
17 was improperly motivated.

18 And, as illustrated this morning, the dangers  
19 associated with allowing that kind of defense are playing  
20 out here, with multiple discovery disputes, extensive --  
21 extensive resources being dedicated to providing the  
22 documents that Exxon thinks will somehow prove that  
23 this -- prove their conspiracy theories, turning over the  
24 files of multiple custodians, scouring through all our  
25 files. As you see, they now want to -- they're

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1 interested in what we were saying to the press. This is  
2 the kind of intrusion into the discretion of the Attorney  
3 General that the Courts in the U.S. v. Armstrong, in  
4 Hartman v. Moore and the Court of Appeals in 303 West  
5 42nd Street v. Klein warned against.

6 And, as Judge Caproni found, after being fully  
7 briefed on this same allegations, "There's no direct  
8 evidence here of an improper motive and the  
9 circumstantial evidence is thin and it would require a  
10 speculative inference to find in Exxon's favor." And  
11 that's why she found, Judge Caproni found, that Exxon had  
12 failed to state a claim.

13 I would further submit that the maturity of the  
14 litigation at this stage where we've provided -- we've  
15 filed our complaint, we've answered their contention  
16 interrogatories, pointed to documents that support our  
17 allegations, we've now provided expert report setting  
18 forth the details of our damage theories that negates any  
19 inference that there was no basis for bringing this  
20 investigation.

21 I would submit that it's simply too late to be  
22 entertaining these kind of claims. The issue before the  
23 Court should be the primary issue, did Exxon mislead its  
24 investors. We have four months to get ready for a trial  
25 to litigate and try that issue. These claims are a

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1 distraction and there should not -- and they are not  
2 supported by any precedent.

3 And I would submit to the Court that Exxon has  
4 provided no case or no precedent for showing how these  
5 claims, even if they were allowed to stay in this case,  
6 would operate to negate a finding by this Court that  
7 Exxon misled its investors and violated the Martin Act.  
8 This Court would be in uncharted waters if it decided  
9 to go down that path.

10 Exxon continually tries to assert that allowing  
11 these kind of defenses is allowed as a matter of course.  
12 "This is commonplace. We're just two civil litigants; we  
13 should be able to bring up any defense we want." I  
14 submit that the case law does not support that. And I  
15 would point to the Court of Appeals opinion in 303 West  
16 42nd Street v. Klein which has been cited numerous  
17 times in this jurisdiction and continues to be cited for  
18 providing the standard that must be pled before this sort  
19 of intrusion -- intrusive -- intrusive claim is allowed  
20 to proceed and for discussing how these kind of claims  
21 can operate when they're allowed.

22 If we look to the Supreme Court precedent, we  
23 can start with Hartman v Moore where the Supreme Court  
24 was looking at this in the criminal context, but a  
25 reading of that opinion makes clear the policy

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1 considerations would apply here saying that "There must  
2 be an allegation, a plausible supported allegation of no  
3 probable cause, otherwise the Court would have to second  
4 guess the discretionary power of the prosecutor, and  
5 Court should not be doing that."

6 And Exxon's attempt to mischaracterize Hartman  
7 to say that it only requires any sort of allegation does  
8 not -- is not consistent with the reading of the case and  
9 was incidentally rejected two weeks ago by the Supreme  
10 Court in a case involving misconduct -- challenges to an  
11 arrest. And that was in Nieves v Bartlett that the  
12 Supreme Court issued on May 28<sup>th</sup>, and they affirmed  
13 that the holding of Hartman requires that the defendant  
14 plead and prove lack of probable cause to proceed with  
15 the selective enforcement defense like Exxon is  
16 attempting to do here.

17 If we look at the Supreme Court's decision ten  
18 years earlier in U.S. v. Armstrong, they lay out a clear  
19 policy basis for setting a high bar for -- a high  
20 pleading standard for misconduct defenses, that "Allowing  
21 defendants on any sort of allegation to proceed poses  
22 serious threats to the discretionary power of prosecutors  
23 who are vested by statute with carrying out their  
24 mandates, and it has the potential to impair the  
25 effectiveness of law enforcement." And I would suggest

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1 we're seeing that play out right here.

2 The Court -- the Court of Appeals in 303 West  
3 42<sup>nd</sup> Street v. Klein makes clear that the government  
4 action at issue has to be the product -- again, "It has  
5 to be the cause of an evil eye" is the term that they  
6 used. And they further stated that "It should be treated  
7 on a standard similar to a preliminary injunction," that  
8 Exxon needs to show that they would be more likely than  
9 not to prevail on the merits to allow them to proceed to  
10 present evidence and have a fact finder make a  
11 determination about whether a government official such as  
12 the Attorney General abused his discretion. And I would  
13 submit that Exxon has not met that burden.

14 I think it's worth pointing out that in the  
15 cases where this type of defense has been allowed has  
16 been directed to a very focused theory -- and I would  
17 direct the Court to the 303 West 42nd case -- not an  
18 instance as we have here, where Exxon has tossed out a  
19 scattershot series of allegations, some completely  
20 unrelated to the other, all in an attempt to somehow say  
21 there were other factors for this array of reasons that  
22 the Attorney General decided to pursue Exxon.

23 In truth, any defendant would be able to make  
24 some type of similar allegation, and in fact has. I  
25 recently litigated a case against Charter Communications  
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1 formerly Time Warner Cable, made similar allegations  
2 under the guise of an unclean hands defense, which was --  
3 Judge Sherwood found did not -- did not sound plausible,  
4 and Charter Communications voluntarily withdrew those  
5 defenses.

6 THE COURT: Okay. There are four counterclaims  
7 that you want dismissed. One of the things that Exxon is  
8 seeking are emails from former Attorney General  
9 Schneiderman that allegedly were received and transmitted  
10 from his personal phone even though they related  
11 exclusively to this case. What's your position with  
12 respect to the production of those emails?

13 MR. MONTGOMERY: Your Honor, I think those emails  
14 speak for themselves. I would encourage Your Honor to  
15 review them. In short, they do not show Mr. Schneiderman  
16 conducting Attorney General business from his personal  
17 email account. The bulk of them are articles that were  
18 forwarded to him that he somehow thought might be useful to  
19 distribute to other people at the AG's office so he  
20 forwarded them to his work account.

21 To the extent they are pointing to the emails  
22 from an attorney that Exxon labels an activist, there's  
23 no communication from Mr. Schneiderman evidenced in  
24 those. A full reading of that email thread shows that it  
25 was an unsolicited communication from that attorney, for  
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1           whatever reason, maybe attempting to secure business as a  
2           representative for the Attorney General, but the point  
3           being is that in each email that Exxon has identified,  
4           Mr. Schneiderman forwarded the thread to his work account  
5           within 24 hours.

6                       And if you look at the line of cases they're  
7           pointing to, there is federal law that talks about what  
8           would give rise to an inference that emails were not  
9           being properly preserved or were being -- business being  
10          conducted outside the official email channels.   And I  
11          believe the standard's twenty days.

12                      So, if we were going to follow this federal line  
13          of cases, Eric Schneiderman was well within that.   And I  
14          would suggest that the emails simply don't support the  
15          characterization that Exxon is trying to make about them.  
16          If anything, they just show a diligent practice where any  
17          time Eric Schneiderman got something that even  
18          tangentially might be related to the Exxon case he  
19          promptly forwarded it to his work email where it was  
20          properly preserved and available for dissemination if  
21          need be.

22                      THE COURT:   All right.

23                      MR. ANDERSON:   Your Honor, why don't we begin with  
24          the Eric Schneiderman emails.

25                      So, one of the innocuous emails that  
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1 Mr. Montgomery was just referring to is on Slide 12. And  
2 I use "Innocuous" with quotes around it.

3 In this email Mat Pawa, who has openly advocated  
4 using the coercive power of state officials like the  
5 Attorney General, to compel, intimidate Exxon Mobil to  
6 change its position on climate change and climate policy,  
7 wrote a substantive email to Mr. Schneiderman's Gmail  
8 account on February 5, 2016 where he said that -- and  
9 this is in the upper right hand side of the slide, Judge,  
10 that "We spent a fair amount of time thinking about  
11 consumer fraud remedies and believe that a Court could  
12 require Exxon to make available in electronic format its  
13 decades of documents on what it knew and when it knew it,  
14 make corrective statements admitting that its products  
15 contribute to global warming and that global warming  
16 poses a threat of extraordinary harm to humanity and that  
17 fossil fuel usage must be significantly reduced and admit  
18 they've deceived the public. These kinds of remedies  
19 would be a game changer."

20 And what he's talking about there, Judge, is the  
21 improper use of official coercive power to make Exxon  
22 Mobil change the way it speaks about climate policy and  
23 about climate change.

24 Mr. Pawa laid out that agenda years earlier at a  
25 conference in La Jolla, California--that's also  
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1 reproduced in the slide deck--where he encouraged the use  
2 of state power. He describes it on Page 3 of our deck,  
3 Judge. He says that, "If we can recruit a single  
4 sympathetic state attorney he might have substantial  
5 success bringing key internal documents to light."

6 Now, why do they want key internal documents to  
7 be brought to light? Pawa explains. He says, "We want  
8 to maintain pressure on the industry that could  
9 eventually lead to its support for legislative and  
10 regulatory responses to global warming."

11 He also writes in this report of what happened  
12 at La Jolla, Pawa argued that other defendants distorted  
13 the truth, he said that, "Litigation serves as a," quote,  
14 "potentially powerful means to change corporate  
15 behavior."

16 The agenda that Pawa is laying out here is one  
17 about misusing government power to coerce a political  
18 opponent to change its position on a contested public  
19 issue and to change the way it discusses climate change  
20 and climate policy. That is the issue that we are --  
21 that we have been pursuing through our affirmative  
22 defenses. And it's laid out in even more detail, as  
23 this -- as this well organized and intentionally  
24 concealed from the public conspiracy has evolved.

25 On Page 4 of the deck where Mat Pawa attends a  
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1 meeting at the Rockefeller Foundation where they  
2 expressly say in a written document that, "The goal is to  
3 establish in the public's mind that Exxon's a corrupt  
4 institution, to delegitimize them as a political actor,  
5 to drive investment from Exxon." And, in terms of the  
6 tools they're going to use to accomplish the goals, they  
7 cite "AG," reference to Mr. Schneiderman and others, "and  
8 tort suits." And how are they going to get there?  
9 They're going to get there by getting discovery, creating  
10 scandal.

11 And then we see on Slide 5, Judge, that  
12 Mr. Schneiderman picks up on exactly these themes. He  
13 picks up on the belief that there's no dispute about  
14 climate policy, there should be no dispute, there's just  
15 confusion caused by special interests who profit from  
16 that confusion. It's referring to Exxon Mobil. And he  
17 says, "That's why we served a subpoena on Exxon Mobil."  
18 A subpoena on Exxon Mobil, that's literally what Pawa was  
19 hoping a sympathetic state attorney would do. And he  
20 says, "We're doing this because in the face of gridlock  
21 in Washington, we're prepared to step into this breach."

22 Gridlock in Washington. Congress doesn't  
23 investigate misleading statements to investors, not that  
24 that's actually what he said he was looking at in 2015.  
25 What congress does in Washington is legislate. They

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1 resolve contested public issues. And that's what  
2 Schneiderman is saying he is going to do, that his office is  
3 going to do, and it's what Pawa said he wanted to recruit  
4 a sympathetic state Attorney General to do.

5 And he then goes on to say that, "We're going to  
6 block -- we're going to attack the morally vacant forces  
7 and step into this battle with an unprecedented..."

8 And this addresses Mr. Montgomery's point.

9 "...unprecedented level of commitment and  
10 coordination."

11 So, to the extent that there's anything  
12 unprecedented here, it's the use of government power in  
13 this express way to limit the other side of the political  
14 debate. This is literally what Justice Jackson warned  
15 about in his celebrated essay on the prosecutor where he  
16 said, "The greatest danger of a prosecutor is that he  
17 identify someone who is disfavored by the majority,  
18 either because of political positions or something else,  
19 target that person and then try to find the offense, try  
20 to find the offense that you could stick on him." And  
21 that is literally what's happened here over the last  
22 three years.

23 When this investigation began it didn't have to  
24 do -- What did Mr. Montgomery say? He said something  
25 about impairments and write-downs. You will not find a  
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1 reference to impairments and write-downs in 2015, you  
2 will not find impairment and write-downs in this press  
3 conference. This had nothing to do with impairment and  
4 write-downs, what it had to do with was misleading the  
5 public about climate policy.

6 What they did was exactly what Justice Jackson  
7 warned about. They then did this three-year  
8 investigation, obtained more discovery, as the Court  
9 pointed out, than any other case in this courthouse and  
10 they found something that they could then piece together  
11 into a complaint.

12 But this goes beyond Attorney General  
13 Schneiderman. He might have been the spokesperson at the  
14 time for this, but what you'll see, Judge, on Page 7 for  
15 example, is that Mr. Srolovic is all over this, too.  
16 He's a current employee of the Attorney General's Office,  
17 he's a supervisor in the environmental division, one of  
18 the officials who signed the complaint against Exxon.  
19 Okay? So not former. And what he -- when he was  
20 communicating with Mr. Pawa he had a request on Page 7:  
21 He said, "My ask is that you speak to the reporter about  
22 having met with the Attorney General, that you don't  
23 confirm that you attended or otherwise discussed the  
24 event."

25 So, if Mr. Montgomery's right, that this is just  
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1 like the press conference they had yesterday where union  
2 people were up on the stage and everyone's out there  
3 speaking openly about how they support the attempt to  
4 block the merger between Sprint and T-Mobile, well, why  
5 is Mr. Srolovic saying this to Mr. Pawa? And why are  
6 they having conversations later on on this other  
7 document, by the way, which is one of the ones that the  
8 Attorney General is trying to seal from the public and  
9 conceal from the public?

10 Mr. Srolovic is having a conversation through an  
11 intermediary, a private law firm, with the Rockefeller  
12 Fund. And what they're saying here is that because there  
13 was an investigation in congress at the time about this  
14 apparent improper use of government power, the  
15 Rockefeller representative says, "This will require us to  
16 get on the same page soon re going forward."

17 Again, this is not something that's being set  
18 out on a stage in front of cameras, this is being  
19 concealed. And it's still trying to be concealed today.

20 Judge, that is the -- that is the basis for why  
21 we want access to Mr. Schneiderman's Gmail account. We  
22 can see that he was communicating with Mr. Pawa through  
23 that account and that Mr. Pawa has expressly stated that  
24 what he has been trying to do is advocate and encourage  
25 State Attorneys General to misuse their powers to limit  
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1 First Amendment rights.

2 All that we've heard so far is that for some of  
3 the emails that they have produced to us Mr. Schneiderman  
4 forwarded them to his official account. And we have  
5 them. We have those emails because they were forwarded  
6 to his official account. But we don't -- but we don't  
7 know what emails weren't sent to his official account and  
8 we don't know what emails he actually sent.

9 THE COURT: I have an officer of the court here  
10 who's representing that all of these emails were forwarded  
11 to his official account.

12 MR. ANDERSON: Well, that's a representation  
13 that's not supported by the declaration that  
14 Mr. Schneiderman provided. He very carefully wrote that it  
15 has been his practice to forward emails. He did not say  
16 that he conducted a review and he did not say that he  
17 always sent them and he didn't really address the question  
18 of when he sent emails. Did he then go into his sent items  
19 and forward those to his account?

20 THE COURT: Well, I'm not going to order a  
21 forensic examination of former Attorney General  
22 Schneiderman's emails. I will order the Attorney General  
23 to provide you with a less carefully worded statement that  
24 gives you confidence that anything that was official  
25 business or related to this investigation was made  
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1 available to you via communications sent by  
2 Mr. Schneiderman to his official account.

3 MR. ANDERSON: Or through a search of the Gmail  
4 account. Either forward it or he'll do a search to find --  
5 the Attorney General's office will do a search to find  
6 whatever wasn't forwarded.

7 THE COURT: The Attorney General is going to make  
8 a representation to you that anything that referred or  
9 related to this investigation that was on  
10 Mr. Schneiderman's personal email account has been made  
11 available to you.

12 MR. ANDERSON: That's what we're seeking, Judge.  
13 We want confidence that if there's evidence that we have  
14 it --

15 THE COURT: That's what you're entitled to and  
16 that's what you're going to get.

17 MR. MONTGOMERY: May I respond, Your Honor?

18 THE COURT: Yes.

19 MR. MONTGOMERY: We are right back where we were  
20 in this other district. These are the exact same claims  
21 that Exxon made in front of Judge Caproni. And what  
22 they're trying to do is use this press conference as the  
23 link between a third-party and say, "This third-party's  
24 agenda, these communications which may have been  
25 unsolicited, we have no evidence that that they were --

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1 there was outgoing communication between these  
2 third-parties, but somehow this press conference provides  
3 the link." And they give you a slide, as they've done in  
4 the past, that takes certain snippets from the press  
5 conference.

6 I would urge this Court to review the entirety  
7 of that press conference, and I think you will reach the  
8 same conclusion that Judge Caproni did, that read in its  
9 entirety, in context, it does not support that link, and  
10 it actually shows that Eric Schneiderman expressed a  
11 legitimate concern that Exxon may have misled investors.  
12 In other words, that he had a basis for investigating  
13 Exxon for the very activity that forms the basis of this  
14 litigation.

15 THE COURT: What is the concern here? I said I'm  
16 not ordering a forensic review of former Attorney General  
17 Schneiderman's emails.

18 MR. MONTGOMERY: I'm sorry, I was speaking to the  
19 merits of the -- the email -- the evidentiary value of the  
20 emails and the press conference that that they discussed.

21 THE COURT: All of these counterclaims with  
22 respect to First Amendment, chilling of speech, et cetera,  
23 I'm dismissing all of those. The only one that I'm keeping  
24 open for the time being is the selective enforcement  
25 counterclaim.

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1 MR. MONTGOMERY: Respectfully, Your Honor, the  
2 selective enforcement claim is based on this allegation of  
3 an attempt to chill speech.

4 THE COURT: It's not a catchall for everything,  
5 it's a separate counterclaim that may go by the wayside.  
6 It's not a counterclaim, it's an affirmative defense. But  
7 it may go by the wayside once you provide them with the  
8 certification with respect to the Schneiderman emails. I  
9 think there's just an open issue there that has to be  
10 closed.

11 MR. MONTGOMERY: Understood, Your Honor.

12 MR. ANDERSON: Judge, with respect to the  
13 selective enforcement defense that we wish to raise here:  
14 The Court's ruling is that we can proceed on than defense,  
15 but you're inclined to dismiss the conflict of interest and  
16 official misconduct?

17 THE COURT: I'm not just inclined to dismiss them;  
18 I am dismissing them.

19 MR. ANDERSON: May I be heard on --

20 THE COURT: Make your record as you wish.

21 MR. ANDERSON: -- those two claims?

22 Judge, first of all, the standard that has been  
23 identified by the Attorney General, this idea that we  
24 need to negate all bases for their conduct other than the  
25 nefarious bases, is not supported by any precedent that  
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1 they've identified or that actually exists.

2 The cases that they reference are taken well out  
3 of their context. Like, for instance, Mr. Montgomery  
4 kept referring to Hartman against Moore. That's a Bivens  
5 suit that was brought against postal inspectors for --  
6 for selective prosecution. The reason the Supreme Court  
7 said that there couldn't be -- that there had to be an  
8 absence of probable cause is because the agents didn't  
9 make the decision to bring the case, the prosecutor did.  
10 But the prosecutor has absolute immunity. None of that  
11 is relevant here. So Justice Suiter wrote in his  
12 decision, that's why, because you don't have the person  
13 who made the decision is the defendant in the case. So  
14 the idea that that would be the standard that would apply  
15 in a civil case where there is no absolute immunity and  
16 the people who made the decision are currently employed  
17 by the office and were the most senior members of the  
18 office, is simply inapplicable, and that decision should  
19 be set aside, it's not relevant here.

20 The same thing with Armstrong. Armstrong is a  
21 criminal case about what you have to do to get additional  
22 discovery beyond what the federal rules of criminal  
23 procedure provide for in a case. That could not be  
24 further removed. Discovery of the prosecutor in a  
25 criminal case is cabined, it's narrow and it's limited to  
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1 certain categories of information that are identified in  
2 the rule. That is totally opposite of what happens in a  
3 civil case where there is discovery on both sides of any  
4 information that's material and relevant. Those  
5 standards don't apply.

6 The other case they cited in their brief was  
7 Gaynor, which I don't think Mr. Montgomery referenced  
8 here, but in that case, that was a suit in the '60s where  
9 the -- where African Americans challenged the state's  
10 hiring practices because they kept giving -- the state  
11 kept giving work to unions that excluded African  
12 Americans. And the Court of Appeals denied that claim  
13 because they said, "Well, the entity that's doing the  
14 discrimination is the unions, not the state, so the state  
15 can't be held responsible here."

16 These are the cases they're relying on.

17 We cited to you this case, Kramer, from 2012,  
18 which is very similar to the case we have here. It's a  
19 civil suit where the state took an action related to  
20 issuing a permit and it denied the request for a permit.  
21 The applicant for the permit said in his allegation that  
22 that was selective enforcement, it was discriminatory,  
23 because they were retaliating against him for speech that  
24 he had made.

25 The Court in that case said there are basically  
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1 two elements of this, disparate impact, disparate  
2 treatment and an improper motive, including a motive to  
3 suppress speech. Those are the two elements. There was  
4 nothing about you need to show the absence of probable  
5 cause or there can't be any other -- any other factor  
6 that might have gone into that decision. If that were  
7 the requirement there would never be a selective  
8 enforcement defense because after three years of  
9 investigation you find something --

10 THE COURT: Hold on. We haven't stricken your  
11 selective enforcement defense. What we are striking is the  
12 assertion that the Attorney General can't bring a  
13 Martin Act claim when it particularizes in ninety  
14 paragraphs claims against Exxon Mobil, that in the  
15 aggregate, they claim, constitute a Martin Act violation.

16 MR. ANDERSON: Well, Judge, it is in your power to  
17 fashion an appropriate remedy. You -- you are the  
18 supervisor of this case, you have the authority -- the  
19 inherent authority to address improper conduct by officials  
20 with the state.

21 THE COURT: I haven't seen any yet.

22 MR. ANDERSON: Let me address the conflict of  
23 interest, Judge.

24 There are two employees of private parties who  
25 are currently working in the Attorney General's Office.

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1 They were selected and paid for by private interests who  
2 were pursuing an agenda of clean energy, environmental  
3 policies, anti carbon, anti conventional energy. Under  
4 the terms of the agreement they're compensated entirely  
5 by this third-party, by the State -- the State Impact  
6 Center that's funded by Michael Bloomberg's philanthropy.  
7 They are then in bed with the Attorney General's office.  
8 They can work only on clean energy, climate change and  
9 environmental issues. They have an obligation to report  
10 back to the state, to the State Impact Center, on what  
11 they're doing. The State Impact Center can then withdraw  
12 the funding on seven days' notice if they aren't happy  
13 with what is being done by those fellows at the Attorney  
14 General's Office.

15 Judge, this is entirely counter to the advisory  
16 opinions that have been issued by the state addressing  
17 when an agency can accept gifts. They have made it very  
18 clear, and this is the New York State Ethics Commission  
19 in at least three separate published advisory opinions,  
20 that state agencies can accept gifts from private  
21 parties, but only if there are no strings attached. In  
22 one of those decisions it had to do with people who were  
23 living around Lake George, they wanted to make a  
24 contribution to the environmental department and the  
25 panel said, "Yeah, you can take that contribution, but

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1 you can't just use that equipment at Lake George, you  
2 have to use it wherever -- wherever the agency wants.  
3 The donor cannot cabin the discretion of the agency."

4 The same thing with some computer equipment that  
5 was donated to the Tax Appeals Department, the same  
6 ruling. You can take the computer equipment, but the  
7 donor can't put any preconditions on how it's used.

8 And a similar issue arose in connection with the  
9 Consumer Protection Board when there was a request to  
10 subsidize an event that it wanted to put on. The same  
11 idea: You can take a contribution that allows you to  
12 have a table at the lunch, but the donor can't decide who  
13 sits at the table.

14 That -- those are the rules. The Attorney  
15 General is directly violating those rules by allowing a  
16 private actor to be embedded within the Attorney  
17 General's Office, a private actor who's receiving  
18 direction from an organization that is hostile to Exxon  
19 Mobil, and then to place that person on the case that the  
20 Attorney General has brought knowing full well that we  
21 have alleged all of these improprieties, but then to put  
22 that person on the case and have him appear in court,  
23 have him appear at depositions, raises all the red flags  
24 that the State Commission identified in its advisory  
25 opinions about why accepting exists from private  
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1 interests cannot be accepted with those conditions. It  
2 creates all the appearance of impropriety.

3 Judge, can you imagine if Exxon Mobil were  
4 embedding fellows, privately paid individuals in Attorney  
5 General's offices, in other parts of the country whose  
6 job it was to bring cases against other energy companies,  
7 maybe energy companies that do solar or wind, how I am  
8 prop their would appear if that -- if Exxon Mobil was  
9 doing something like that? This is no different. This  
10 is an interested party who's against conventional energy,  
11 who's against Exxon Mobil and other companies that have  
12 produced oil and gas, and he's embedding his associates  
13 in the Attorney General's Office to bring cases against  
14 the company. That is a conflict of interest. It  
15 creates -- it's a direct conflict of interest, it creates  
16 the appearance of impropriety and it suggests strongly  
17 that the administration of justice of this case is not  
18 being done fairly.

19 MR. WALLACE: Your Honor, I don't know if you need  
20 to hear anymore. I think you've indicated which way you're  
21 going to rule. I had some follow-up questions, but I did  
22 want -- I am interrupting Mark, but I just wanted to say, I  
23 think our papers -- we disagree with the characterization  
24 that you've just heard from Exxon Mobil. I think the one  
25 thing we just would like to say on the record is -- is that  
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1 all of this, all this *mishegas* about the fellows, they're  
2 essentially naming and shaming and picking on an  
3 individual, a young lawyer who chose this route to go into  
4 public service. This is someone who is just serving the  
5 state and is now being named in Wall Street Journal  
6 editorials, and this is being driven by the same agenda  
7 that Exxon Mobil following in this case. We agree with  
8 your decision that this is not an appropriate venue for  
9 hearing these kinds of complaints.

10 Putting that aside, I think we had a practical  
11 question, if it makes sense to address it now, about how  
12 to proceed and what you were looking for on the  
13 Schneiderman email. I just want to make sure we  
14 understand clearly.

15 THE COURT: Just so we're clear, at the end of the  
16 day you're either going to prove a Martin Act violation or  
17 you're not. And these affirmative defenses or defenses are  
18 irrelevant to the merits of that case.

19 Now, you need clarification with respect to the  
20 Schneiderman emails.

21 MR. WALLACE: And I'm just wondering if you're  
22 looking for some kind of affirmation from our office or  
23 should we go back and get additional clarification from  
24 Mr. Schneiderman? Only we --

25 THE COURT: Whatever means are sufficient to  
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1 satisfy the Court and Exxon Mobil that anything that refers  
2 or relate to Exxon Mobil that's on Mr. Schneiderman's  
3 private email server has been forwarded, as it should have  
4 been, to his business address and turned over to Exxon  
5 Mobil in the course of the discovery of this case.

6 MR. WALLACE: Understood.

7 THE COURT: All right.

8 Now, there's a motion to seal.

9 MR. MONTGOMERY: Your Honor, this is very closely  
10 related to the motion to dismiss. As you know, we filed a  
11 motion to dismiss, and, in the alternative, for a  
12 protective order, because we didn't believe these were  
13 valid defenses, we did not believe we should have to be  
14 producing the types of emails and communications that were  
15 relayed to them.

16 So we filed for a motion to dismiss, and, in the  
17 alternative, for a protective order and noted in our  
18 papers that we were cognizant of the automatic stay of  
19 our obligations that would accompany that filing of the  
20 protective order. However, as we correctly anticipated,  
21 there might have -- there would have been significant  
22 time lag between our filing that motion and an actual  
23 decision on the motion, so we elected, despite that  
24 automatic stay, to produce documents that have no  
25 relevance to the claims in the complaint that -- as are  
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1 evidenced by the communications at issue, in order to  
2 make sure that in the event the Court decided against us  
3 we weren't now not going to have a backlog that could  
4 impair this October 19 trial date.

5 So, to the extent that the Court ultimately  
6 agrees with us that they have not stated valid defenses,  
7 we do not think it's fair to be penalized for the actions  
8 we took to try to be cooperative and ensure that we  
9 reached a trial date and not exercising our right to  
10 stand behind the automatic stay accompanying the  
11 protective order.

12 THE COURT: Okay.

13 Well, I did direct that during the pendency of  
14 these motions discovery would continue because we didn't  
15 want to jeopardize the trial date. So now that motions  
16 to dismiss three of the defenses have been granted,  
17 there's no need for there to be public disclosure of the  
18 material relating to those three defenses.

19 With respect to the one defense that has yet to  
20 be dismissed, we will just continue the protective order  
21 until that issue gets finally resolved.

22 MR. MONTGOMERY: Thank you, Your Honor.

23 THE COURT: Okay.

24 MR. ANDERSON: Your Honor, the standard is heavy  
25 for the Attorney General to seal documents that we've  
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1 argued support our claim. We've argued, and these emails  
2 are pretty powerful support for the allegations we made  
3 about selective enforcement and the other defenses. They  
4 appear on -- some of them appear on Page 12 of the  
5 document. One of them in particular is from Mr. Pawa to  
6 Mr. Srolovic saying, "You should drop a subpoena on the  
7 George Marshall Institute, Think Tank, before it closes  
8 down so you can get all their documents about climate  
9 change advocacy."

10 There's powerful evidence in here about the  
11 misuse of government power to target one side of a  
12 political debate. The idea that there's any basis for  
13 sealing is absurd. The arguments that they've put  
14 forward is that Mat Pawa's a whistle-blower who needs  
15 protection from Exxon. Whistles-blowers are employees or  
16 other people with access to information who then raise a  
17 red flag and want to be -- it's nothing like that. He is  
18 out there publicly. He attends conferences where he goes  
19 on the rampage against Exxon Mobil. He's filed multiple  
20 cases for over a decade against Exxon Mobil. He's not an  
21 insider with any particular knowledge, he is -- he is an  
22 opponent of the company who's enlisted the Attorney  
23 General's office to use its coercive state power against  
24 the company to change the way it talks about climate  
25 change.

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1           So these emails are -- these emails are not only  
2 relevant to the claims that -- the defenses that we've  
3 raised, whether or not they're dismissed they would be  
4 relevant because they form the basis of whether we've  
5 adequately stated claims. So they would be relevant for  
6 the judicial purpose of determining whether our  
7 allegations are sufficient to withstand a motion to  
8 dismiss.

9           But independent of that there is a strong public  
10 interest in knowing how the Attorney General exercises  
11 the power that's entrusted to it by the people. And that  
12 strong public interest is what needs to be balanced  
13 against the purported bases for sealing. And that's what  
14 I meant when I referred to absurd, is that in their  
15 briefs they've identified two grounds, one is that he's a  
16 whistle-blower, that is absurd, and the second ground is  
17 that he would be intimidated and chilled if this all came  
18 to light.

19           This has already come to light. We've argued  
20 that Mat Pawa is one of the driving forces behind this  
21 conspiracy to discredit Exxon for two years, maybe three  
22 years. And it's just -- it is part of this desire to  
23 conceal, this motion to seal these emails is part of this  
24 concealment. When we're in federal court they tell Judge  
25 Caproni and they told the Second Circuit in their briefs,  
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1 "You don't need to hear these arguments, you don't need  
2 to worry about whether there was any misconduct, because  
3 we're in front of Justice Ostrager and he's going to get  
4 to the bottom of whether there was any misconduct."

5 Then we walk into this courtroom and they're  
6 saying, "Well, this is not the venue to talk about  
7 whether there's been any misconduct. Judge Caproni  
8 already took care of this."

9 This is classic bootstrapping. They're trying  
10 to prevent any type of forum from getting to the bottom  
11 of whether this conduct was appropriate. They're trying  
12 to conceal it, they're trying to minimize it, they're  
13 trying to act like it all went out the window when  
14 Mr. Schneiderman left. But this is an email not with  
15 Mr. Schneiderman, this is one with Mr. Srolovic who is  
16 still at the office, who's still a supervisor, who's one  
17 of the most senior people who signed a complaint against  
18 Exxon. And this is -- the public has a strong interest  
19 in knowing these facts and making judgments about how the  
20 Office is exercising its power. But, even if it didn't,  
21 and it does, but even if it didn't this would still be  
22 directly relevant to whether or not we had adequately  
23 stated these defenses and it should be part of the record  
24 that is available to the public when it reviews the  
25 Court's decision.

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1 THE COURT: Well, it's certainly part of the  
2 record for appellate purposes. And there are fifty people  
3 in the courtroom listening to your argument, so it's  
4 certainly been made public to those fifty people who in  
5 turn will transmit it to a much larger number of people.

6 And I haven't dismissed your selective  
7 enforcement claim. And, for present purposes, we're  
8 going to keep things in abeyance until we resolve the  
9 selective enforcement claim.

10 Anything else?

11 MR. WALLACE: No, Your Honor. That's it from our  
12 end.

13 MR. TOAL: Your Honor, there's the issue of the  
14 11-f deposition which the New York Attorney General moved  
15 to quash. The argument on the Rule 11-f deposition is the  
16 state is not entitled to any special treatment.

17 The First Department's decision in Katz makes  
18 clear that the state, for purposes of litigation, is to  
19 be treated as a private party, particularly, whereas  
20 here, the state brought the litigation. That's a well  
21 understood precept, it's reflected in the CPLR under  
22 3102.

23 THE COURT: I don't understand. You want to take  
24 a deposition of the Attorney General?

25 MR. TOAL: Not of the Attorney General. They will  
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1 get to designate somebody who will provide binding  
2 testimony on behalf of the Attorney General's Office --

3 THE COURT: I thought we dealt with this before.

4 MR. TOAL: But, Your Honor, this is --

5 THE COURT: You've had sixteen different discovery  
6 vehicles to find the information that you want to find.  
7 You do not need to depose people who are prosecuting this  
8 case.

9 MR. TOAL: But, Your Honor, this has nothing to do  
10 with deposing people who are prosecuting the case. They  
11 can designate and educate whoever they want. It doesn't  
12 have to be an attorney. We're absolutely indifferent. The  
13 point is to get binding testimony. And this argument that  
14 the Attorney General's Office advances that there's  
15 substitute methods for taking discovery has not been  
16 accepted. When you look at cases like SEC versus Merkin,  
17 each of these arguments that the Attorney General advances  
18 were expressly rejected. There's a summary in the case  
19 where the Court concluded, "Litigants usually can't  
20 prohibit a 30(b)(6) deposition, which is a federal  
21 analogue, by arguing in advance that each and every  
22 question would trigger the disclosure of attorney-client  
23 and work product information. Litigants and their counsel  
24 decide -- served with a 30(b)(6) notice decide which  
25 witnesses to designate and those witnesses need not be,  
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1 generally are not attorneys. The mere fact that attorneys  
2 were involved in the preparation of the 30(b)(6) witness  
3 does not foreclose all questions of the 30(b)(6) witness.  
4 Litigants --"

5 THE COURT: Give me a for instance of what it is  
6 that you would ask this equivalent of a 30(b)(6) witness.

7 MR. TOAL: So we want to pin the attorney general  
8 down on the factual bases underlying the allegations.

9 THE COURT: You don't know what the factual bases  
10 are after all these interrogatories and document  
11 productions and contention interrogatories?

12 MR. TOAL: No, Your Honor. Because the contention  
13 interrogatories, first of all, we're limited in number. We  
14 had 25 interrogatories overall. I think we got to depose  
15 something like nine contention interrogatories. We have  
16 serious problems with the answers to those, which are  
17 vague, I think evasive. And, obviously --

18 THE COURT: That's a different issue.

19 MR. TOAL: But, Your Honor, a contention  
20 interrogatory is not a substitute for a 11-f deposition. ?  
21 That's a proposition the New York Attorney General's Office  
22 advanced itself when seeking to take an 11-f deposition of  
23 Exxon Mobil. Even though they had three years of  
24 investigation and millions of pages of documents they felt  
25 it was essential to take 11-f deposition because it  
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1 provides binding testimony that binds the entire entity.

2 Rule 11-f expressly contemplates that government  
3 entities are subject to these sorts of depositions. And  
4 this is a uniquely appropriate vehicle, in a seven-hour  
5 deposition I'll have the opportunity to ask hundreds of  
6 questions to pin the Attorney General down on the factual  
7 basis for their claims, which have been shifting over  
8 time, as Your Honor knows.

9 MR. MONTGOMERY: May I respond, Your Honor?

10 THE COURT: Yes.

11 MR. MONTGOMERY: I would direct Your Honor to the  
12 case cited by Exxon, People v. Katz, which was very  
13 factually similar, First Department, the defendant in a  
14 suit brought by the AG made the same claim, they needed a  
15 deposition to learn more about the complaint, the  
16 allegations. And they did not get it.

17 The question that the Court asked is, "Is this  
18 necessary," noting the dangers of deposing attorneys,  
19 particularly on the legal theories brought in the case.  
20 And in that case what the Court said is, "We will go with  
21 the bill of particulars. If you can later show some  
22 deficiency in this written discovery vehicle --" and, as  
23 noted by Your Honor, there are multiple discovery  
24 vehicles -- "I would consider it as a last resort." But  
25 it is certainly not a matter of course. And, as we've

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1 pointed out in Liberty Petroleum, this is getting  
2 dangerously close to work product and is the reason why  
3 attorney depositions like this are disfavored.

4 Absolute --

5 THE COURT: He's saying he'd be satisfied with a  
6 witness who's not an attorney.

7 MR. MONTGOMERY: I submit that that's just an  
8 illusory step. How would that work, other than having the  
9 attorneys who've drafted the complaint -- it's just  
10 providing a straw person who's going to echo the -- the  
11 words of an attorney.

12 THE COURT: Look, I'll take a three-page letter  
13 from each of you on that issue and reserve on it today.

14 Anything else before the Court this morning?

15 MR. TOAL: No, Your Honor.

16 MR. WALLACE: Just to clarify, I guess: Are we  
17 still talking about an 11-f on the affirmative defenses  
18 issues? Because there was -- the 11-f included both  
19 requests for affirmative defense issues and issues  
20 regarding the support for allegations in the complaint. So  
21 should we only draft a letter on the --

22 THE COURT: I thought we were talking about  
23 support for allegations in the complaint. Am I missing the  
24 point?

25 MR. TOAL: There were three areas. One is  
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1 document preservation, two is the factual bases for the  
2 allegations in the complaint and three was communications  
3 that the Attorney Generals had with third-parties, which  
4 relates to this issue of needing to get notice of what the  
5 AG's case is actually going to look like and what evidence  
6 we would need to confront.

7 MR. WALLACE: Well, the complaint, I believe,  
8 disclosed too much information on the third-parties and I  
9 think we made full disclosure on that. But we're happy to  
10 address in the letter whatever issues Your Honor would like  
11 us to address.

12 THE COURT: Okay.

13 You'll tell me -- you'll each tell me whatever  
14 you want to tell me in three pages and I'll rule.

15 MR. WALLACE: Understood, Your Honor.

16 THE COURT: All right? Have a nice day.

17 MR. WALLACE: Thank you.

18 MR. ANDERSON: I'm sorry, Judge, there was one  
19 unresolved issue we just wanted -- want a ruling from the  
20 Court on: There's -- one of the discovery requests related  
21 to the reports that have been provided by the fellows back  
22 to the State Impact Center and apparently to Bloomberg  
23 philanthropists. We would like to have access to those  
24 reports. It's minimally burdensome and it speaks directly  
25 to the defenses that we would like to raise.

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1 MR. MONTGOMERY: Your Honor, I believe you made it  
2 clear that you're dismissing the conflict of interest  
3 defense rendering this fellowship issue moot. This goes  
4 directly against the statement Your Honor made earlier.

5 MR. ANDERSON: We suspect those reports would bear  
6 directly on the selective enforcement, because it -- the  
7 way they describe what the action is against Exxon Mobil,  
8 the significance of the action against Exxon Mobil and what  
9 steps the AG is taking to accomplish those goals.

10 THE COURT: Why does the AG oppose this?

11 MR. MONTGOMERY: Well, just to be clear, this  
12 issue of the fellowship is not mentioned in their selective  
13 enforcement sections of their briefs, in their first -- in  
14 their proposed amended complaint. That issue of the  
15 fellowship is used by Exxon exclusively up until today as a  
16 supporting factor for their conflict of interest defense,  
17 which Your Honor's now saying is being dismissed.

18 So I don't think it's fair to allow them at the  
19 last minute to shift that theory over and say it's  
20 somehow evidence of a selective enforcement.

21 I'd also point out, Your Honor, that the  
22 selective enforcement is based on the investigation,  
23 saying it was brought for an improper purpose. The  
24 fellowship was not in existence at that time, it didn't  
25 start till the -- the investigation was at least a year,  
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1 possibly two years old. And the fellows in question did  
2 not arrive at the AG until early 2018. So to suggest  
3 somehow that these fellows who were three years later --  
4 who came to the AG's office three years after the  
5 investigation was started are somehow going to provide  
6 evidence that the investigation was started for an  
7 improper purpose borders on absurd.

8 MR. ANDERSON: Judge, first of all, our selective  
9 enforcement defense incorporates by reference all of the  
10 allegations with respect to the embedding of these special  
11 attorneys general within the office. It's laid out in the  
12 amended -- all the facts are first and then the claims that  
13 flow from those facts come afterwards. So that's just not  
14 correct, and the way it's laid out in the answer.

15 Second, this isn't about the conflict of  
16 interest, this is about the way this investigation and  
17 the complaint and the decision to file the complaint last  
18 fall, why that decision was made and to what extent those  
19 facts bear on the bad faith that we've alleged  
20 throughout. Which is a continuing -- continuing event.

21 Judge, we'd be happy for the AG to provide these  
22 records to you in the first instance for review before  
23 them being produced to us.

24 THE COURT: Okay. That seems like a fair  
25 compromise. I'll look at it in camera.

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1 MR. MONTGOMERY: We have no objection to that.

2 THE COURT: Now, I think in this large pile there  
3 was a cross motion by Exxon Mobil to amend (indicating).

4 MR. ANDERSON: That's right, Judge.

5 THE COURT: But if I've dismissed the three claims  
6 and reserved on the selective enforcement, do we need to do  
7 anything with respect to the cross motion to amend?

8 MR. ANDERSON: Judge, I think as a formal matter  
9 you might -- you might need to grant the motion, the cross  
10 motion to amend, dismiss the three defenses that you have  
11 decided should be dismissed, but then have the other left  
12 open. So I think we would need an operative answer that  
13 includes the selective enforcement defense.

14 THE COURT: Is there any objection to that?

15 (No response.)

16 (Continued on the following page.)

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1 THE COURT: Okay, so that's how we will proceed.

2 MR. ANDERSON: Thank you, Judge.

3 MR. TOAL: Your Honor, as to the three-page  
4 letter, when would you like to have that submitted?

5 THE COURT: Take a week.

6 MR. TOAL: Thank you, Your Honor.

7 (Whereupon, the above-captioned proceedings  
8 were concluded.)

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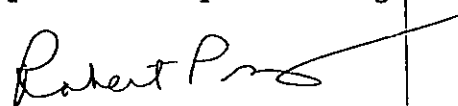
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ROBERT PORTAS, RPR, CRR  
Senior Court Reporter

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SO ORDERED

  
BARRY R. OSTRAGER, J.S.C.

Robert Portas, RPR, CRR

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