UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA

CASE NO. 20-CV-81205-RAR

SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION,

Plaintiff,

v.

COMPLETE BUSINESS SOLUTIONS GROUP, INC. d/b/a PAR FUNDING, et al.,

Defend	ants,	
		,

SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION'S REPLY

Plaintiff Securities and Exchange Commission (the "SEC" or the "Commission") respectfully submits this reply to Defendant Lisa McElhone's ("McElhone") response to the Court's December 5, 2023 Order.

BACKGROUND

This matter has over 1,750 docket entries, so a summary of the current procedural posture is useful. On October 6, 2023, McElhone moved to release several previously undisclosed, yet frozen, accounts to pay legal expenses.¹ The SEC then filed a Motion to Hold Lisa McElhone in Contempt for failure to comply with the Court's Final Judgment.² The basis of the Motion was that

¹ Dkt. No. 1721.

² Dkt. No. 1729.

specific assets, though at the time held at an unknown location, were available to pay towards the Final Judgment, but that McElhone had not done so and was instead seeking to use them to pay her attorneys.³ The SEC also requested that the Court Order an accounting to determine Lisa McElhone's ability to pay the Amended Judgment entered against her.⁴ During the hearing on November 27, 2023, the Court noted that with respect to the SEC's contempt motion, "I will reserve on the issue of contempt because I don't believe we have enough here on this record. But I do believe that we need to order an accounting in compliance with Docket Entry 42."⁵

On December 5, 2023, the Court denied the SEC's motion to hold McElhone in contempt because "the funds in question are frozen and therefore beyond Defendant's reach, the Court cannot hold her in contempt for failing to utilize these funds to satisfy the Final Amended Judgment." Simultaneously, the Court recognized that "[a]lthough Defendant will not be held in contempt, the Motion and related briefing have emphasized the need for an accounting of Defendant McElhone's assets." The Court therefore ordered the parties to provide briefing on the effect of McElhone asserting

³ *Id*.

⁴ Dkt. No. 1758 at 7.

⁵ November 27, 2023 Transcript P. 38, L. 9. (A copy of the transcript is attached. ("Transcript")).

⁶ Dkt. No. 1770.

"her Fifth Amendment privilege in response to any Court-ordered accounting."

DISCUSSION

This proceeding, while relatively straightforward, has been muddled by McElhone's positions. On the one hand, McElhone requested the release of frozen funds to pay legal expenses, but still refuses to provide any financial information to show the extent of her ability to pay the Court's duly entered Judgment. Following the hearing in this matter, the Court ordered the parties to brief the effect of McElhone asserting "her Fifth Amendment privilege in response to any Court-ordered accounting."

In her response brief, however, McElhone questions whether the Court has the authority to even order her to provide an accounting.⁹ This position is mistaken. The Court has the inherent authority to Order Lisa McElhone to provide an accounting, which it has, in fact, already done.¹⁰

⁷ *Id*.

⁸ Dkt. No. 1770.

⁹ McElhone Response Brief at 5, Dkt. No. 1784.

¹⁰ On July 28, 2020, the Court ordered the Defendant Lisa McElhone, among others, to provide an accounting of her assets. The Court ordered McElhone to:

⁽a) make a sworn accounting to this Court and the Plaintiff of all funds, whether in the form of compensation, commissions, income (including payments for assets, shares or property of any kind), and other benefits (including the provision of services of a personal or mixed business and personal nature) received, directly or indirectly, by the Defendant making the sworn accounting;

⁽b) make a sworn accounting to this Court and the Plaintiff of all assets, funds, or other properties, whether real or personal, held by the Defendant making the sworn accounting, jointly or individually, or for its direct or indirect beneficial interest,

As the Court stated during the November 27, 2023 hearing, "[t[hen the next step is when I ask for an accounting in compliance with my prior order, and that is not completed to enable the SEC to begin their garnishment proceedings and go after some of these moneys to satisfy the judgment, we're going to get potentially another motion to hold her in contempt." In her response brief, McElhone attempts to obfuscate her responsibility in this regard and misconstrues the SEC's position on this point. As the SEC has already argued, McElhone's assertion of the Fifth Amendment can neither prevent, nor purge, her of a potential finding of contempt. 12

Rather than deal with this issue and as the Court predicted, the parties have again arrived at the question of contempt. This Court ordered McElhone to disgorge over \$150 million in the Final Judgment. Through the instant proceeding, McElhone is attempting to keep financial information away from the Commission to hinder its collection efforts and apparently

or over which it maintains control, wherever situated, stating the location, value, and disposition of each such asset, fund, and other property; and

⁽c) provide to the Court and the Plaintiff a sworn identification of all accounts (including, but not limited to, bank accounts, savings accounts, securities accounts and deposits of any kind and wherever situated) in which the Defendant making the sworn accounting (whether solely or jointly), directly or indirectly (including through a corporation, partnership, relative, friend or nominee), either has an interest or over which he has the power or right to exercise control. (Dkt. No.)

¹¹ Transcript at 31.

¹² See Baxter v. Palmigiano, 425 U.S. 308, 318 (1976); SEC v. Colello, 139 F.3d 674, 677 (9th Cir. 1998); see also, e.g., SEC v. United Monetary Servs., Inc., 1990 WL 91812, at *9 (S.D. Fla. May 18, 1990) (ordering full disgorgement amount sought by Commission after defendant asserted Fifth Amendment privilege thereby failing to carry burden to show basis for reducing amount).

believes that if she invokes the Fifth Amendment, all efforts to obtain satisfaction on the Judgment can be completely stymied. This belief is not supported by the law. McElhone has an obligation to begin paying what she owes, and to provide the accounting for the SEC to determine her ability to pay the Judgment entered against her. Should she elect not to do so, this Court can draw an inference from her failure to provide an accounting that she can, in fact, pay something toward the Judgment. At that point, McElhone should be found in contempt of the Orders of this Court. "To allow [McElhone] to avoid the Court's disgorgement Orders through [her] contumacious conduct would render both the Court's Orders and the SEC's enforcement powers meaningless."¹³

CONCLUSION

For the reasons set forth above, the Commission respectfully urges this Court to require Lisa McElhone to produce records of which the Commission is already aware and corporate records in her possession, custody, or control as they do not affect her rights under the Fifth Amendment. Further, to the extent that McElhone refuses to produce any records regarding her current financial position, the Commission urges the Court to draw an adverse inference against her, finding that she has an ability to pay the Final Judgment.

¹³ SEC v. Bilzerian, 112 F. Supp. 2d 12, 28 (D.D.C. 2000).

Should the Court reach the conclusion that she has the ability to pay something toward the Judgment and she has not, the SEC also requests that the Court grant such other and further relief as this Court deems just and proper to address her contumacy.

Dated: January 12, 2024

Washington, D.C. Respectfully submitted,

s/MICHAEL J. ROESSNER

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1	UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT		
2	SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA WEST PALM BEACH DIVISION		
3	CASE NO. 20	-CV-81205-RAR	
4	SECURITIES & EXCHANGE Commission	on, Miami, Florida	
5	Plaintiff,	November 27, 2023	
6	VS.	10:37 a.m 12:04 p.m.	
7	COMPLETE BUSINESS SOLUTIONS, d/b/a PAR FUNDING, et al.,		
8	Defendants.	Pages 1 to 81	
9			
10			
11	MOTION HEARING BEFORE THE HONORABLE RODOLFO A. RUIZ, II		
12	UNITED STATES	DISTRICT JUDGE	
13	APPEARANCES:		
14	FOR THE PLAINTIFF:	AMIE RIGGLE BERLIN	
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19		EXCHANGE Commission DIVISION OF ENFORCEMENT	
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1	(Appearances continu	ued)	
2			
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11	STENOGRAPHICALLY REPORTED BY:		
12	ILONA LUPOWITZ, RMR, CRR Official Court Reporter to: The Honorable Rodolfo A. Ruiz, II United States District Court Southern District of Florida 400 North Miami Avenue Room 11-2 Miami, Florida 33128		
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16	(305) 523-5737		
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- 1 (Call to the Order of the Court.)
- THE COURT: We are here this morning in Case No.
- 3 20-81205. This is the matter of Securities and Exchange
- 4 Commission versus Complete Business Solutions Group, Inc., et
- 5 al. In particular, we are going to address motions regarding
- 6 Lisa McElhone this morning. So we'll go ahead and begin with
- 7 an appearance by the SEC. Who do I have here today?
- 8 MR. ROESSNER: Mike Roessner for the SEC.
- 9 MS. BERLIN: Good morning, Your Honor. Amy Riggle
- 10 Berlin on behalf of the SEC.
- 11 THE COURT: Okay. And on behalf of Ms. McElhone?
- MR. KAPLAN: Good morning, Your Honor. Jim Kaplan and
- 13 Noah Snyder on behalf of Ms. McElhone. I don't expect the
- 14 other defendants will be here.
- THE COURT: Yeah, no. We do have a Zoom line open,
- 16 Gracie, but I don't believe -- there's one person
- 17 participating, but I'm not sure what that's about. Because we
- 18 have it for Wednesday, I believe. I don't think we should be
- 19 expecting anyone else either. No motions today are set, other
- 20 than those regarding Ms. McElhone anyway.
- 21 And on behalf of the receiver, I do have counsel here,
- 22 as well.
- MR. KOLAYA: Yes. Good morning, Your Honor. Timothy
- 24 Kolaya on behalf of the receiver, Ryan K. Stumphauzer.
- 25 THE COURT: All right. So we have, essentially, you

- could almost term it cross-motions, if you will. This all 1 2 began, as I'm sure everyone is well aware, because we received 3 a motion requesting that some accounts that are currently 4 frozen belonging to Ms. McElhone be unfrozen so that she can 5 specifically use funds to pay her lawyers; not only counsel 6 presumably in this case for work performed and work ongoing, 7 but perhaps also in furtherance of her defense in the ongoing 8 criminal proceedings against her. 9 The amount of money is \$747,000. My understanding is 10 it is currently sitting in two accounts, one Lacquer Lounge 11 account, which is the salon business that Ms. McElhone has 12 operated, and then another one that is Eagle Union Quest 2, 13 LLC. 14 Now, on the heels of that request, the SEC has filed a 15 motion asking that the Court hold Ms. McElhone in contempt. 16 The Court issued a show cause order so that we could address that, as well. I think the main thrust of that is when the SEC 17 18 observed that there was money in an account that has not been 19 disclosed or accounted for, they were concerned that those
- Now, a couple of facts that I think we can all agree to. Number one is, at no point -- and this is my understanding from the papers -- are we not crediting Ms. McElhone what she has given the receivership. I mean, we are giving her this

fees, as opposed to satisfying the outstanding judgment.

funds would be spent in defense of this case and on lawyer's

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- 1 credit. There has been an understanding -- I know you're
- 2 disputing the amount of credit, but there has been an argument
- 3 being made that she has so many assets in the receivership,
- 4 Mr. Kaplan, you're arguing that she has already met her
- 5 obligation under the judgment. Isn't that one of your primary
- 6 arguments?
- 7 MR. KAPLAN: Yes, Your Honor.
- 8 THE COURT: Okay. And my understanding from the SEC
- 9 is, on her best day, she is still in arrears 80 million. That
- 10 is giving her all the benefit of the doubt. We know that her
- 11 outstanding judgment is 154, give or take a couple of thousand,
- 12 million dollar judgment. And the SEC has pointed out that you
- do intend on giving her at some point when we get to
- 14 disbursement, credit for sums that she has willingly turned
- over to the SEC. In particular, Mr. Kaplan has pointed out,
- 16 about 3 million in the properties that she is no longer
- 17 contesting ownership over. But am I correct on the SEC's side
- 18 that there is a plan, at least at some point, maybe once we get
- 19 through all of the disbursements, to figure out what, if
- 20 anything, could be credited to Ms. McElhone? And even if she
- 21 gets that credit, you pointed out that she still would be in a
- 22 shortfall of 80 million.
- Are my numbers right, Ms. Berlin or Mr. Roessner?
- MS. BERLIN: I think the numbers are right. I think
- 25 the issue here is that there's already a stipulation. The SEC

- 1 looked at the assets in the receivership and identified 3
- 2 million.
- 3 THE COURT: Right.
- 4 MS. BERLIN: That on their best day, giving her every
- 5 benefit of the doubt, because she won't give us the sworn
- 6 accounting the Court ordered, we gave her every benefit, and it
- 7 was 3 million. So that's the credit.
- 8 She doesn't have any other personal assets in the
- 9 receivership. And, of course, you know, we litigated that
- 10 every time something was put in the receivership, the Court's
- 11 already ruled.
- 12 THE COURT: Right.
- MS. BERLIN: So we don't plan on giving her any
- 14 additional personal credits towards her judgment.
- 15 THE COURT: Got it.
- 16 MS. BERLIN: The argument that was made was even
- 17 assuming that was what we're doing, but we're not, because
- 18 those are not her personal assets, the Court ruled on that
- 19 already years ago. That's done.
- THE COURT: And this is the problem. I mean, one of
- 21 the issues here is it's the first initial argument that's being
- 22 raised is that somehow she should get access to \$747,000
- 23 because she satisfied her outstanding judgment by what is in
- 24 the receivership. And respectfully, that is -- flies in the
- 25 face of everything that this Court has ruled over the past two

- 2 where we have attributed assets directly to Ms. McElhone's
- 3 judgment against her to the tune of \$150 million.
- 4 MS. BERLIN: It would never occur. And really, this is
- 5 an issue, in my opinion, where it's -- Ms. McElhone just won't
- 6 take no for an answer.
- 7 Remember, it was May 16th of this year. So we're
- 8 talking -- what is it, not even six -- a little more than six
- 9 months ago? Ms. McElhone filed the same motion to lift the
- 10 asset freeze to pay her lawyers, the exact same arguments, the
- 11 exact same thing. The Court denied it the same day. And that
- 12 was Docket Entry 1565, was her most recent motion to lift the
- 13 asset freeze. And you denied it the same day, saying I've
- 14 ruled on this. You cited four orders where you already denied
- 15 the same relief.
- Here we are, I guess this is the sixth time. This
- order has been in effect for a year. She needs to pay her
- 18 judgment. And at some point, like, we shouldn't have to come
- 19 back. This is another motion for reconsideration, and the
- 20 Court has repeatedly denied it. There's no new argument.
- 21 Nothing's happened in the last six months.
- 22 THE COURT: I agree with you. We definitely have gone
- 23 over this ground before. I don't think anyone can dispute
- 24 that. I think the argument that Mr. Kaplan's advancing today
- 25 is the argument the Eleventh Circuit requires for a

- 1 modification of a freeze. Right? And that argument is that
- 2 the funds are running low. And it should come as no surprise.
- 3 Ms. McElhone now faces significant criminal charges against
- 4 her.
- 5 So the argument now is there have been changed
- 6 circumstances which we know, especially in the context of a
- 7 consent, as the one she entered into here. The Eleventh
- 8 Circuit has made it abundantly clear that these circumstances
- 9 truly must change before the Court must consider modifying the
- 10 freeze.
- I think the issue I'm having here is, let's for a
- 12 minute put aside this receivership asset issue, which I would
- 13 agree I have ruled on multiple times. And even in the
- 14 best-case scenario, I think Ms. McElhone will be very
- 15 hard-pressed to ever establish that the receivership assets
- 16 would satisfy the judgment.
- But I want to set that aside for a moment. And maybe
- 18 before I do, maybe I can just hear from receivership's counsel.
- 19 Again, having gone through and still in the process -- and
- 20 we're going to talk about it on Wednesday of this week as we go
- 21 through the disbursement procedures, I would imagine that the
- 22 receivership's counsel is in agreement that Ms. McElhone in no
- 23 way, shape, or form is going to be credited anywhere near what
- 24 her judgment is by virtue of assets in the receivership. I
- 25 would think the receivership's own math would show that.

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             MR. KOLAYA: Without taking a position on whether
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     certain assets should or should not be credited, we are nowhere
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     near the judgment amount in the cash and assets within the
     receivership as of today.
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             THE COURT: Okay. That's what I figured, just
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     mathematically.
 7
             So let's take a step back. Taking that issue aside,
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     the challenge I'm having is twofold. Number one, I think that
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     from the SEC's perspective, you can understand the difficulty
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     of going through a contempt proceeding. Not only do I think
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     that the request arguably to jail Ms. McElhone is excessive,
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     but we have a bit of a challenge here procedurally. Because
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     although I understand the SEC's concern that maybe there is
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     money swirling out here that is unaccounted for that is not in
15
     the receivership estate, and that she's seeking to use for
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     something other than satisfying the judgment, the issue I'm
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     having is those accounts are frozen by my own order. So it is
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     very difficult for the Court to say that she is essentially in
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     contempt of court because she's using those moneys. She came
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     to court to ask me to lift the freeze. But I can't say,
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     looking even at my own judgment, that she is truly in contempt
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    by clear and convincing evidence, as is required, understanding
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     it is a valid order. But the fact is, if I had, for example,
     her spending money that was unaccounted for, perhaps we'd have
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25
     a closer call. She's asking to simply unfreeze these accounts,
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1 which I am going to be discussing with everyone today, as to 2 whether or not that's even appropriate. 3 But can the SEC at least understand where I'm coming from, from a contempt perspective? Because I will tell you the 4 5 way I see this. If they even want -- and I mean Ms. McElhone 6 -- wants to even take a look at the potential or even remotest 7 possibility of using any of these funds, there's no way the 8 Court would ever do it without an accounting. There is just no 9 universe where I'm going to let any of this money get touched. 10 Respectfully, I'm not convinced that Lacquer Lounge or Eagle 11 Union Quest 2 don't have Par Funding moneys in them. I say 12 that because my experience with this case and the money that went around and when it got into that Lacquer Lounge to set it 13 14 up, it looked very much like there was investor proceeds making their way to those two different accounts. 15 16 So I understand, in the certificate of conferral, that 17 the defense does not want to give that accounting and will not 18 do so without Court order. But I can tell you right now that 19 I'm prepared today to order a very thorough accounting and deny 20 the motion to unfreeze, without prejudice, and see if by any --21 I don't know how I would find it, because I think it would be 22 pretty tough. But if there was an accounting that somehow distinguished these two accounts so that they're not 23 intertwined to what happened in Par Funding, then perhaps I can 24

consider a motion to look at this money and whether it can be

1 spent. Now, I will tell you, I agree with the SEC, we still 2 3 have a major problem that these funds should be going to repay investors, period. But we're a little ahead of ourselves with 4 that. I don't even know if the assets in these two accounts 5 6 are not commingled. And so the Court will not entertain any 7 sort of unfreezing of those accounts without a fulsome 8 accounting. It's just not going to happen. And I don't know 9 if the receiver has a position. We've frozen them -- I think 10 the expansion of the receivership that I approved was because 11 I've had this concern for a while that she has other places 12 where Par Funding moneys have been sitting. I mean, that's my recollection of when we expanded it in this fashion. Right? 13 14 Does the receiver remember that? I think receiver's counsel can tell me. That was when we -- that's why they're 15 16 part of the freeze, I quess, is a better way to put it. 17 MR. KOLAYA: My understanding is that these accounts 18 are frozen because it's part of the initial freeze order. 19 have not been unfrozen since the inception when the SEC requested the asset freeze. I don't know if there's a separate 20 21 freeze that brought these assets within the receivership. But 22 because Lisa McElhone is listed as an authorized signor or 23 individual on these accounts, that's why they're subject to the 24 freeze.

Just on another point that you mentioned. I'm not sure

- 1 we've identified any funds from any receivership entities that
- 2 went into Lacquer Lounge, but we certainly do have record of
- 3 receivership moneys specifically from CBSG, as well as Eagle 6
- 4 into Eagle Union Quest 2. So we can trace money into Eagle
- 5 Union Quest 2.
- 6 THE COURT: Okay.
- 7 MS. BERLIN: Your Honor, if I may?
- 8 THE COURT: Yes, Ms. Berlin. Go ahead.
- 9 MS. BERLIN: Your Honor, I'd just like to clarify
- 10 something. Okay.
- 11 Laquer Lounge -- first of all, this Court ordered
- 12 Ms. McElhone at the outset of this case to provide a sworn
- 13 accounting. She refused. Okay. She asserted the Fifth
- 14 Amendment. It's already been ordered. It was ordered three
- 15 years ago. So is everything frozen? We don't know.
- 16 Why is Lacquer Lounge frozen? That's a great question.
- 17 I can tell you how I know.
- There was an agreement, you might remember, where
- 19 Ms. McElhone and Mr. LaForte were to pay rent to live in the
- 20 Haverford house. I requested, because I wanted to see if they
- 21 were violating the asset freeze, and also because they won't
- 22 provide a sworn accounting, creative thinking, maybe I'll find
- 23 an account they didn't disclose. I asked the receiver for a
- 24 copy of the checks. Who's writing the checks? Ms. McElhone.
- 25 From where? Lacquer Lounge. Okay. She was spending from that

- 1 account during our case. You might remember, I filed a motion
- 2 to hold her in contempt then.
- 3 THE COURT: Right.
- 4 MS. BERLIN: We held a hearing. I presented the
- 5 evidence. And Mr. Kaplan argued that I did not confer
- 6 sufficiently. We withdrew our motion, and I was very clear, at
- 7 that time, we view this as being in contempt. You're subject
- 8 to an asset freeze. You've been subject to it since the day
- 9 this Court entered -- I think it's Docket Entry 41, if I
- 10 remember correctly. It is the TRO and asset freeze order.
- 11 Then Ms. McElhone agreed in the preliminary injunction
- order, in August 2020, she agreed again to the asset freeze.
- 13 Then she agreed again. It's been in effect.
- 14 How do I know about Lacquer Lounge? Because I happened
- 15 to ask. Because I'm always just thinking creatively. She
- 16 won't tell us where the money is. She has violated the Court
- 17 order by refusing to give it. It's one of the biggest
- 18 problems.
- Now, another issue. Does it matter if these accounts
- 20 hold money that came from CBSG?
- 21 THE COURT: Your view is no.
- 22 MS. BERLIN: No, it does not. It absolutely doesn't.
- 23 This isn't a criminal case, it's not asset forfeiture, or
- 24 however they do things. This is a civil judgment. Okay. It
- 25 could be any of her belongings. I mean, we can go in, just

- 1 like on any other civil case. That's what Michael Roessner
- 2 does. He goes around the country, he collects on our
- 3 judgments. And he will tell you that it doesn't have to be
- 4 traced. There's no requirement. And that would be adding a
- 5 burden that doesn't exist.
- 6 She's subject to an order. The criminal court, I
- 7 understand their argument there. She filed her last motion.
- 8 She made the argument about needing a criminal defense lawyer
- 9 then, too, Your Honor. This isn't new. This has been argued
- 10 before. We have been around on the same merry-go-round for
- 11 three years, and she has paid absolutely zero. She's not made
- 12 a single payment, Your Honor.
- 13 THE COURT: Mmm-hmm.
- 14 MS. BERLIN: Meanwhile, she has multiple lawyers in
- 15 this case, multiple lawyers in the criminal case. And
- 16 fortunately, in the criminal court system, she's entitled to a
- 17 Public Defender, if she needs one.
- 18 THE COURT: Sure.
- MS. BERLIN: Instead of using investor money that would
- 20 otherwise go back to investors. Every penny that she spends on
- 21 her criminal defense lawyers, in violation of this Court's
- 22 judgment and asset freeze, is a dollar that the investors do
- 23 not receive because the receivership will not make them whole.
- 24 So the investors, in my mind, are paying for her criminal
- 25 defense lawyers. And that is a tragedy. That is wrong. And

- 1 that is why we are here. Mr. Roessner has come down from D.C.
- 2 because this is that important.
- 3 THE COURT: Sure. Well, let me ask you this, though.
- 4 You would agree with me -- and I'll give you a chance here in
- 5 just a moment to respond.
- 6 You would agree with me, though, I don't think --
- 7 perhaps maybe the way to focus on this is really the lack of
- 8 accounting. Right? Because there, I think, without a doubt we
- 9 have been essentially circumventing or avoiding that
- 10 responsibility and that order from the court for a very long
- 11 time. I think it's a little more challenging for a contempt
- 12 proceeding to take place in this context because the assets
- 13 have been frozen.
- Now, again, to your point, I'm not sure what money's
- 15 paying the criminal defense. Right? It shouldn't be coming
- 16 from these two accounts because these accounts are, indeed, are
- 17 they not, frozen? I mean, that's my question.
- 18 MR. KAPLAN: The accounts are frozen.
- 19 THE COURT: These accounts are frozen. So my point is,
- 20 these accounts -- let's put it another way. There should be no
- 21 money moving from these accounts because to your point,
- 22 Ms. Berlin, from the beginning I have frozen these two
- 23 accounts. If I were to see an accounting -- I think you would
- 24 agree with me here -- and money has been removed from those
- 25 accounts to pay for anything, it would be in direct contempt of

- 1 a court order.
- 2 MS. BERLIN: And that's happened. And we know it
- 3 happened. And we've been here before on the same issue.
- 4 THE COURT: Well, I don't know -- look, I can only tell
- 5 you. Right now, the basis for the motion is she is asking the
- 6 Court to use money that I have frozen for paying her lawyers,
- 7 civil and criminal, as opposed to putting it towards the
- 8 judgment. I don't have in front of me, I don't think anyone
- 9 can argue otherwise, evidence, a piece of evidence that would
- 10 show -- because, again, we don't have an accounting. So I
- 11 don't have anything in front of me that would establish that
- 12 she is violating my freeze order out of the Lacquer Lounge and
- 13 Eagle Union Quest 2, LLC.
- Now, to our earlier point, if we order an accounting,
- which I've ordered multiple times, if they really want to even
- 16 see a dime of this -- and I'm not agreeing that I would even
- 17 grant it. But you can't come to the Court and ask for any of
- 18 this relief without an accounting. I mean, that motion should
- 19 be denied on its face, because they cannot come to me and ask
- 20 me for something when they have circumvented or violated a
- 21 requirement to show me an accounting of all of her assets.
- 22 That's the core problem. Forget the contempt. That's my
- 23 bigger problem with the motion for relief.
- MS. BERLIN: And Your Honor said that exact same thing
- 25 in denying Joe Cole's motion to unfreeze his assets in Docket

- 1 Entry 1580. This Court recently denied Mr. Cole's motion to
- 2 lift the asset freeze and cited the case, SEC v. Schiffer,
- 3 which was out of the Southern District of New York, where the
- 4 Court denied reconsideration of the defendant's request to
- 5 unfreeze assets in an SEC case because his failure to provide
- 6 financial information on Fifth Amendment grounds warranted a
- 7 measure designed to preserve the status quo while the Court
- 8 could obtain an accurate picture of the whereabouts of the
- 9 proceedings of the fraud.
- 10 And so that's the same case, that same reasoning --
- 11 everybody knows that that's the position of the Court --
- 12 THE COURT: Right.
- MS. BERLIN: -- because you recently denied Mr. Cole's
- 14 exact same relief, citing that order, and explaining the
- 15 reasoning I just read. That's a quote from your order --
- 16 THE COURT: Yeah.
- 17 MS. BERLIN: -- where you explained all of this.
- 18 THE COURT: And you would agree with me -- and I'll
- 19 turn it over to defense to argue.
- You would agree with me that there has been no showing,
- 21 I believe, of a changed circumstance, because the only reason
- 22 you can even come into this Court right now and ask me for this
- is showing me a changed circumstance. And what's being
- 24 advanced here is the funds are running low, and she's got
- 25 mounting legal bills or at least the work we've performed over

- 1 the last six months, we're owed money, and we want to go ahead
- 2 and make ourselves whole for the legal fees and costs we've
- 3 incurred. But that's the only argument that I believe is being
- 4 advanced to me today. And I think the only one there that even
- 5 gave me pause, which we've touched on just now, is some sort of
- 6 tangential Sixth Amendment concern. But again, that quite
- 7 frankly, I think, could even be raised in the criminal case if
- 8 it got there. And we have plenty of other opportunities that
- 9 Ms. McElhone can avail herself of that do not require her to go
- 10 forward in that case without a counsel of her choice.
- I don't think that this is the proper vehicle now to
- 12 reconsider my freeze, based upon what's happening in that case.
- 13 But it seems to be the only ground that I have been given that
- 14 is even, I quess, remotely new. I don't know if I would call
- 15 it new. I've seen it in other papers. But everything else
- looks to be pretty much the same. I'm just asking before I
- 17 hear the response. Right?
- MS. BERLIN: That is correct. And I think Mr. Roessner
- 19 -- he's here on the motion for contempt, and I think he wanted
- 20 to just clarify a couple of things.
- 21 THE COURT: Yeah, ask me on the contempt because this
- 22 is your contempt motion. And I've told you guys, I understand
- 23 why you brought it. I don't know legally if it holds water, is
- 24 my concern. My bigger concern is the accounting.
- So what did you want to add there?

- 1 MR. ROESSNER: Thank you, Your Honor. This is Mike 2 Roessner for the SEC.
- 3 The reason the SEC filed a motion for contempt is we
- 4 have an asset, these accounts. We don't know where they're
- 5 located. Otherwise, we would have filed a writ of garnishment
- 6 to have them turned over. And so, motions for contempt -- and
- 7 we cited all the examples -- where there's an asset, we don't
- 8 know where it's at, but the defendant does, and the defendant
- 9 can be compelled by the Court, coerced to turn that asset over
- 10 to satisfy the judgment.
- 11 Yes, the accounts are frozen. There have been other --
- 12 the one other instance in this case, we had the stip where the
- 13 frozen assets are turned over. They should be using all of
- 14 their efforts to find and marshal their assets to pay this
- 15 judgment. We don't need to trace. They filed a motion. They
- 16 said they're her assets. We don't know where they are.
- 17 Disclose where it is, and I'll file a writ of garnishment, and
- 18 then we can determine whether or not the assets should be
- 19 turned over.
- That's why I filed a motion for contempt. There's an
- 21 asset, but there's no relief that we can see. So the contempt
- 22 -- the Court has the equitable power to get to these assets
- 23 through the defendant. The defendant knows where the assets
- 24 are. The defendant can today, in court, agree to a stipulation
- on the record to provide that document. But we'll get a

- 1 turnover order, send it to the financial institution, and that
- 2 will be the end of this contempt motion.
- 3 But we absolutely agree with the Court that an
- 4 accounting must be done, because throughout the papers we're
- 5 seeing terms without any definition, virtually all the assets.
- 6 We don't know. We do know of one asset, which is why the
- 7 Commission filed this contempt motion.
- 8 Happy to take any other questions, Your Honor.
- 9 THE COURT: Okay. Thank you. So, Mr. Kaplan, the
- 10 issue here is, number one, the SEC's obviously requesting that
- 11 your client face fairly serious sanctions in light of
- 12 noncompliance or nonpayment of the judgment. As I've already
- indicated, I don't believe that we have the legal basis to hold
- 14 Ms. McElhone in contempt because, although frozen, and you're
- 15 asking for them, I can't see on the face of the papers a
- 16 clearly established, if you will, as the burden requires it,
- 17 that she is in violation of a court order. If it's not clear
- 18 and convincing, as the case law says, we can't get through that
- 19 first burden that the SEC carries.
- So I'm not necessarily convinced that they're going to
- 21 be able to carry that burden today. But conversely, I also am
- 22 concerned about you asking for relief without any sort of
- 23 accounting. And so perhaps you can tell me not only the
- 24 changed circumstances, but whether or not Ms. McElhone is
- 25 prepared to provide an accounting as it pertains to Lacquer

- 1 Lounge and Eagle Union Quest 2, because I would need that to
- 2 even consider any sort of request.
- 3 So I'll turn it over to you. Go ahead.
- 4 MR. KAPLAN: Thank you.
- 5 Let me begin by correcting a couple of facts on the
- 6 record. I think we made clear in our motion, and I want to be
- 7 crystal clear now, in open court, on the record, that the
- 8 accounts we're seeking relief from are not just Lacquer Lounge
- 9 and Eagle 6 Quest, but there's -- there are other accounts in
- 10 the name of Ms. McElhone. All of that, I thought, was fleshed
- 11 out in our motion. But I want to be clear --
- 12 THE COURT: I'm looking at page 2 of your motion. The
- only two things you mention, the subject bank accounts owned by
- 14 Ms. McElhone and two non-receivership entities she controls,
- 15 Lacquer Lounge, Inc. and Eagle Union Quest 2, LLC.
- I did not appreciate that you're also seeking accounts
- 17 that you don't even identify in this. You didn't have that in
- 18 there.
- MR. KAPLAN: No. When I say owned by Ms. McElhone and
- 20 the two entities.
- 21 THE COURT: Okay. So these are bank accounts, multiple
- 22 bank accounts, some of which are Ms. McElhone's bank accounts
- 23 and bank accounts of the two entities.
- MR. KAPLAN: Yes, Your Honor.
- 25 THE COURT: Okay. All right. So I have even less

- 1 information than I thought I did.
- So, I mean, do we have a sense? How many bank accounts
- 3 are we talking about? Is it three, four?
- 4 MR. KAPLAN: I understand that there are a total of six
- 5 bank accounts, two in the name of Ms. McElhone, two in the name
- 6 of Eagle 6, two in the name of Lacquer Lounge.
- 7 THE COURT: All right. Got it. Go ahead.
- 8 MR. KAPLAN: To the SEC's point about this lack of
- 9 knowledge. The SEC, to my knowledge, has chosen to engage in
- 10 no discovery in aid of execution. To compound the point,
- 11 Ms. Berlin just confessed on the record that she knows about
- 12 Lacquer Lounge accounts, because she's seen the checks. So no
- one's playing hide the ball here. Ms. McElhone has no ability
- 14 to access these accounts, and has not taken a penny from any of
- 15 them for more than three years; September 2, 2020, being the
- 16 date of the asset freeze.
- 17 Now, let's deal with the meat of the motion, what the
- 18 changed circumstance is since September 2, 2020.
- 19 First, chronologically, and foremost, in terms of
- importance, on December 16, 2020, Your Honor entered an order
- 21 granting an expansion of the receivership, cutting off
- 22 Ms. McElhone from access to everything she had in her trust.
- 23 There have been subsequent expansions after that.
- Last year, there was a final judgment entered against
- 25 Ms. McElhone, fixing the amount of the disgorgement. An appeal

- 1 has since been taken. It's pending.
- 2 Ms. McElhone has been evicted from her house. That's a
- 3 changed circumstance.
- 4 THE COURT: I thought she's living in a place now,
- 5 though. She got evicted -- I know that there was a mistake in
- 6 the pleadings about the Haverford home. But isn't it true that
- 7 she now she does have -- she is living, I thought -- it's a
- 8 different situation than before, but I thought she had an
- 9 apartment now, not the Haverford home.
- 10 MR. KAPLAN: Yeah.
- 11 THE COURT: But she does have a roof over her head.
- MR. KAPLAN: She has a roof over her head. She's
- 13 required to pay rent.
- 14 THE COURT: Right.
- 15 MR. KAPLAN: Yes. But her home was taken. She was
- 16 evicted.
- 17 Her husband has been indicted, and has been
- incarcerated now for many months, even before trial, he can't
- 19 make a living. She is indicted, needs a criminal lawyer, has
- 20 to devote time to her case. These are all changed
- 21 circumstances.
- 22 So those are the change in circumstances. What's being
- 23 proffered to the Court, in opposition, is that Ms. McElhone
- 24 somehow trade off, barter, or waive her Fifth Amendment right,
- 25 her Sixth Amendment right, and her Seventh Amendment right

- 1 because the SEC has a civil judgment. The case law says
- 2 otherwise.
- 3 The amount of money we're talking about is less than
- 4 the amount of interest on the judgment calculated from the time
- 5 I filed the motion to the time Your Honor opened court this
- 6 morning. It is a tiny fraction of 1 percent. And while I'm
- 7 not here and I'm not seeking reargument of any prior decisions,
- 8 the fact of the matter is that last week the receiver filed his
- 9 latest quarterly report. That report shows that current
- 10 assets, cash and real estate, attributable to my client and Par
- 11 equal almost exactly the amount of the outstanding judgment of
- 12 disgorgement with interest.
- And without getting caught up in nuances of who gets
- 14 credit for what, and whose asset it is, the fact of the matter
- is that my client owned 100 percent of Par, that any liability
- 16 Par faces is joint and several, and therefore, could not exceed
- 17 the judgment the Court already entered, and that it's time to
- 18 get about the business of paying the investors with the money,
- 19 which we've offered to assist with in terms of waiving and
- 20 relinquishing any right or title, just as long as we had
- 21 credit.
- The money is there. It's in the receiver's accounts.
- 23 And what's being done here is to punish my client and starve
- 24 her out, seek to deny her counsel.
- 25 THE COURT: Your client put herself here, Mr. Kaplan.

- 1 Don't insult my intelligence. Do not insult my intelligence.
- 2 Your client has put herself in this situation. She started
- 3 with a civil proceeding, and is now indicted in Philadelphia
- 4 for criminal proceedings. To come to this Court and have her
- 5 framed as someone who has been starved by conduct other than
- 6 what she did to herself, is a misrepresentation of the record.
- 7 She has agreed and understands that she committed fraud, civil
- 8 fraud, on many, many investors, used that money to enrich
- 9 herself, bought properties, bought art, bought all sorts of
- 10 things that I've had to claw back for the benefit of the
- 11 investors.
- Do not give me a woe is me story about Ms. McElhone,
- 13 because it is not what the facts bear out. She's not being
- 14 starved. We know that she needs to get a lawyer. She has the
- 15 ability that the government will provide one for her, if she
- 16 really needs to go that route. But you cannot come here with a
- 17 straight face and tell this Court that this is starving her.
- 18 The ones that are starved are the investors who are bankrupt.
- 19 Many of them have lost every dime they have. They email me
- 20 daily. They're waiting for their disbursements. Some of them
- 21 lost life savings while she enriched herself to the tune of
- 22 millions of dollars.
- It is not appropriate to characterize Ms. McElhone as
- 24 being starved of her ability to provide -- get counsel, provide
- 25 good-faith arguments. You have litigated guite a bit on her

- 1 behalf, and you have not been inhibited from doing so. Now, it
- 2 seems that your bills have gotten quite high, and she's not
- 3 paying them. And now, you want to come back and try to get
- 4 some of these funds. I understand how much work you put into
- 5 this. You have an appeal pending, you continuously file
- 6 motions. I know why you're coming to the Court to unfreeze
- 7 this. But to make this sound like she is on the street, she is
- 8 not on the street. She's been able to fulsomely defend herself
- 9 for years.
- 10 So I have a major problem with you characterizing her
- 11 position as one where she's essentially destitute, when we know
- 12 that's not the case. In fact, now I'm being told we have six
- 13 accounts that are unaccounted for. We don't have the numbers
- 14 on them. We don't know what's in them. You're telling me
- 15 747,000. I'd like to take you at face value. I don't know if
- 16 that's true. There could be more money in those accounts. I
- 17 don't know what's in there.
- 18 MR. KAPLAN: I was the one who corrected the record at
- 19 the start of my remarks to point out that some of these
- 20 accounts are hers. I'm not concealing information from the
- 21 Court.
- 22 THE COURT: I'm not saying you're concealing
- 23 information. But I'm saying the way you're describing her
- 24 financial situation as a basis for changed circumstances, I
- 25 think, overstates the purported financial straits that she is

- 1 currently facing. It does not appear at this point that we
- 2 have gotten to a situation where I am comfortable enough to
- 3 look at six accounts where I don't see a single balance sheet
- 4 and unfreeze these accounts so that she can begin to spend them
- 5 on lawyers in civil and criminal proceedings.
- 6 Why don't you answer to me why you haven't gotten me an
- 7 accounting? Why don't we start -- if you want good faith, why
- 8 don't I have an accounting that I've ordered multiple times?
- 9 You refuse to provide it to the SEC. So you got to understand.
- 10 You're talking about being transparent. Transparency is give
- 11 me an accounting. And you won't give the Court one. You have
- 12 it. You've never complied with it. Why don't I have an
- accounting? Why don't you answer me that question?
- MR. KAPLAN: I will.
- 15 THE COURT: Yeah.
- MR. KAPLAN: To start with, a lot, and I think all of
- 17 the SEC's remarks in that regard predate my entry into the
- 18 case.
- 19 THE COURT: Okay. That's fair.
- 20 MR. KAPLAN: But let's keep digging down because it's a
- 21 bigger question.
- 22 Your Honor ordered, somewhere around the inception of
- 23 the case, an accounting.
- THE COURT: Yeah.
- 25 MR. KAPLAN: And it was not contumaciously dismissed,

- 1 it was not provided because Ms. McElhone invoked her Fifth
- 2 Amendment privilege.
- 3 THE COURT: Didn't I rule on that? Didn't I have --
- 4 well, maybe not on her Fifth Amendment privilege. My
- 5 apologies. I've written an order on another co-defendant, that
- 6 Ms. Schein defended, that also went up to the Court of appeal.
- 7 I don't know if that ultimately fizzled out. But I actually
- 8 did an order on the Fifth Amendment privilege already for --
- 9 did I not, Ms. Berlin, write an order on this?
- 10 MS. BERLIN: You did on -- but with respect to a
- 11 different defendant, not Ms. McElhone.
- 12 THE COURT: A similar -- but my point is similar
- 13 arguments have been advanced to this Court on the Fifth
- 14 Amendment privilege and whether or not it would incriminate her
- 15 by virtue of turning over an accounting.
- I don't know that in your case I have seen -- again, I
- 17 don't know. You're telling me now we have a docket with more
- docket entries than perhaps any case in this district, if not
- 19 the country. So I forget, because I've been doing this since
- 20 pre pandemic.
- 21 But my question to you is, was there ever an indication
- 22 formally where you have refused to present them because of the
- 23 Fifth Amendment? You may have said that to the SEC, but I
- 24 don't have in front of me right now, I don't think, any sort of
- 25 motion or request on that front. Right?

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1
             MR. KAPLAN: I don't know. It was --
 2
             THE COURT: So let me ask you this. If I walk out of
 3
     this court today denying the SEC's motion of contempt and
     denying your motion without prejudice, and I order you to get
 4
     me an accounting within 30 days of all six bank accounts, what
 5
 6
     answer am I going to get from you; a Fifth Amendment
 7
     indication?
 8
             MR. KAPLAN: Subject to my client's instructions --
 9
             THE COURT: Right.
             MR. KAPLAN: -- what I know I can deliver, if I'm
10
11
     permitted, is a fulsome listing of the account owners and the
12
     institution in which it's held, the account number and the
13
     amount or approximate amount in each account. I know that's
14
     information that I could locate and provide, probably under
15
     seal, but provide to the SEC and to the Court, subject to my
16
     client's permission.
17
             Now, if what's being requested by way of a quote,
18
     unquote accounting is show me every dollar that's ever come
19
     into that account and every dollar that's ever left, I don't
20
     have that ability. And not for nothing, I don't know where I
21
     would find money to pay an accountant to create that
22
     construction.
23
             THE COURT: Well, I think that we don't have to get
24
     that complicated. I would imagine that what we would want is
25
     from the moment that the receivership came into play, whatever
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1 that may be, three or four years, bank statements that would indicate funds coming in and coming out for starters. Not the 2 3 principal sum. But I would like to see at least money coming in and money coming out. We may need more than that. But as a 4 5 starting point, I don't know if she's willing and able to 6 provide that, but certainly historical information three or 7 four years back could be obtained as to all six bank accounts 8 so that I can see what money made its way in and what money 9 made its way out, at least from the time maybe shortly before 10 the receivership came into play. 11 Now, I believe that my orders, before you got involved 12 in this case, asked for quite more than that. They're pretty 13 expansive. And they asked for a much more thorough accounting. 14 But my point is, we're not even there yet. We don't even have a sense of what the balances are. We don't even have the 15 16 basics, let's put it that way. But it sounds to me like you 17 are not in a position, and I know you have to consult with your 18 client, of providing the Court with more than the mere basics 19 of what is in these accounts. So certainly, it probably will 20 fall short of what the accounting would require in my prior 21 orders. The reason why I'm saying this is because you need to 22 23 understand where this is headed. If I tell the SEC today they have not established by clear and convincing evidence of a 24

violation of my final judgment, my amended final judgment as to

- 1 Ms. McElhone, which you pointed out is probably frustrated by
- 2 the fact that these accounts are frozen, so it is a bit
- 3 challenging to say on the face of this motion, and with what's
- 4 on the record, that she should be held in contempt.
- 5 Then the next step is when I ask for an accounting in
- 6 compliance with my prior order, and that is not completed to
- 7 enable the SEC to begin their garnishment proceedings and go
- 8 after some of these moneys to satisfy the judgment, we're going
- 9 to get potentially another motion to hold her in contempt. And
- 10 then we're going to have a bigger problem. Because if I had a
- 11 valid order that says give me everything you had, and you can't
- 12 show me it is impossible for her to do so -- and you know the
- 13 case law. Reasonable efforts aren't going to suffice. We
- 14 really need impossibility. If you can't establish that, it's
- 15 going to walk me -- the SEC is going to walk me into a
- 16 situation where I'm going to have to readdress contempt. And I
- 17 want to avoid holding your client in contempt. She's got
- 18 enough problems to deal with. That's my concern in the next
- 19 month or two, because that's where they're headed. You see it
- 20 and I see it.
- 21 MR. KAPLAN: So let me make a practical suggestion.
- THE COURT: Okay.
- MR. KAPLAN: It so happens the day after tomorrow
- 24 you're having a status conference.
- THE COURT: I know.

- 1 MR. KAPLAN: Perhaps I could come back and report back of what I'm able to provide. 2 3 THE COURT: That would be great. At least give us a 4 sense. 5 MR. KAPLAN: Yes. 6 THE COURT: Talk to her. Because what I don't want to 7 happen is, I can say with quite strong certainly today that 8 this record wouldn't support contempt. And I can tell you that 9 I don't believe that I have the changed circumstances that make 10 me comfortable to unfreeze anything at a minimum without seeing 11 a fulsome accounting. I need to see where, in terms of what we 12 can disclose, where we are at with Ms. McElhone before I even 13 consider this. 14 But taking a step back from that, you know, the problem I'm having here -- and I think the receiver's counsel can at 15 16 least weight in -- you know, you're telling me that she satisfied the judgment by way of the last report because of 17 joint and several liabilities. That is a blatant -- and again, 18 19 I understand your position on this. We've been dealing with
- this problem from the beginning of the case. And I think I've gotten it under control. But we've been dealing with different versions of accounting for a long time. I don't see anything in this record or in the last report that would remotely suggest that Ms. McElhone is going to get all of this credit by virtue of what's in the receivership. I mean, can we get a

- 1 response from the receiver on that?
- 2 You just heard Mr. Kaplan believe that Ms. McElhone's
- 3 obligation on the amended judgment is resolved by way of the
- 4 total sum in the receivership, and that is -- my understanding
- 5 is that is not the case.
- 6 MR. KOLAYA: Your Honor, I would just reiterate that
- 7 what gets credited and what does not get credited, I don't
- 8 think that's the receiver's responsibility. That's the SEC's
- 9 responsibility. But I can go certainly speak as to what's in
- 10 the receivership estate.
- 11 And yes, we have \$131 million of cash. That number is
- 12 higher as of today, but that was as of the quarter end. But
- 13 not all of that's attributable to CBSG, and it's not -- you
- 14 know, whether it's attributable to Lisa McElhone individually
- or not, again, that's not something for the receiver to opine
- 16 on. But of the 131 million, only 111 million of that was
- 17 attributable to CBSG.
- 18 THE COURT: Right.
- 19 MR. KOLAYA: So there's another 20 million that's
- 20 associated with other defendants or other entities within the
- 21 receivership unrelated to CBSG.
- 22 THE COURT: Well, and let me ask you this: The bigger
- 23 problem I'm having is -- this is -- and I've said this before,
- 24 this is completely premature for us to be crediting and doing
- 25 any of this at this stage. We've got to get through

- disbursement before we even settle up with any of these
- 2 defendants. I'm not going to sit here and do setoffs before
- 3 we've done payouts. It doesn't make any sense.
- 4 You're asking me to basically find a changed
- 5 circumstance because the sum happens to match what your client
- 6 owes without any connection that every penny can be attributed
- 7 in the receivership to Ms. McElhone's judgment. That's not
- 8 supported by the evidence.
- 9 MR. KAPLAN: I am not looking to argue with the Court.
- 10 I'd simply like to pinpoint a cite so that the Court
- 11 understands what I'm trying to say, and where my information's
- 12 coming from.
- And what I'm talking about is page 4 of the exhibit,
- 14 the ECF 1739, which is the receiver's most recent report. That
- 15 report contains a new section, not --
- 16 MS. BERLIN: Is there a copy that can be provided to us
- if he's going to discuss documents or exhibits?
- 18 THE COURT: I'd have to pull that off the docket
- 19 itself.
- 20 MR. KAPLAN: I'm not looking to argue it. Let me not
- 21 discuss it further, and simply point everyone to that page.
- It's a new section, and it attributes amounts within
- 23 the receivership to different groups of origin. And all I'm
- 24 saying is on that page, the receiver, not the defendant, says
- 25 that Par and its associated companies, including Ms. McElhone,

- 1 has \$153.9 million attributable to it in real estate and in
- 2 cash. So --
- 3 MS. BERLIN: Your Honor --
- 4 MR. KAPLAN: Excuse me.
- 5 THE COURT: Go ahead and finish.
- 6 MR. KAPLAN: I'm not here to argue the point, only to
- 7 tell the Court where the information came from. And that
- 8 point, on its best day for my client, or on its worst, is not
- 9 dispositive of this motion. It's simply one potential changed
- 10 circumstance.
- 11 THE COURT: Okay.
- MR. KAPLAN: That's all I wanted to say.
- 13 THE COURT: Okay. Go ahead, Ms. Berlin. You wanted to
- 14 respond?
- MS. BERLIN: Thank you so much.
- So I love that Mr. Kaplan -- that's not an argument.
- But I just want to point out, fortunately, Mr. Kolaya
- 18 pulled it up for us to look at. And this is nothing new. It's
- 19 the same chart we've seen over and over, Ms. McElhone is not
- 20 mentioned. There's the chart, and it lists the CBSG assets
- 21 that are held by CBSG. And she's not mentioned at all. And
- 22 it's the same thing they've been filing as a status report for
- 23 as long as I can remember. Maybe not in that exact same
- 24 format, but that's the information.
- 25 And the thing here is, Your Honor, we have to remember

- 1 -- and we've been around and around, every time I say the same
- 2 thing, and the Court orders the same thing, and they argue the
- 3 same thing. They argue these CBSG assets should be credited.
- 4 This is the fifth or sixth time we have litigated this, at
- 5 least.
- 6 THE COURT: Correct.
- 7 MS. BERLIN: Because they argued this -- when every
- 8 asset was put in the receivership, they strenuously objected.
- 9 We briefed it extensively. We had hearings on it. It's not
- 10 hers.
- But moreover, Your Honor, as everyone here knows, we
- 12 have not sought our judgment against CBSG. And that judgment,
- 13 we -- I will be directed by the five commissioners at the SEC
- 14 how much to seek. And we have asked for a penalty and
- 15 disgorgement. And a penalty is not joint and several. It is
- 16 possible -- and I cannot speak for the commissioners because
- 17 it's -- nothing has been -- I'm not authorized to speak -- but
- imagine the possibility that the money there is deemed as a
- 19 penalty, and it goes to the investors so they get made whole.
- 20 That can happen.
- 21 The bottom line here -- and they know that. We've
- 22 argued this for three years. Your Honor, they've never once,
- 23 not once, filed a motion asking to credit any of the CBSG
- 24 funds. So that argument is absurd.
- I want to respond to a few things Mr. Kaplan said.

- 1 THE COURT: Yeah.
- MS. BERLIN: He said we haven't done discovery.
- 3 Patently false. We are conducting discovery. He would not be
- 4 privy to it. Out collections unit has their methods of
- 5 conducting discovery through banks. And I'm sure the Court
- 6 understands that Ms. McElhone would not know what's happening.
- 7 Second, he mentioned an appeal. There's no stay
- 8 pending that appeal, period.
- 9 THE COURT: No.
- 10 MS. BERLIN: Number three, she is living, and quite
- 11 well, in a penthouse. It's \$9,000 a month.
- 12 Number four, she was evicted before the last order
- denying her last motion to lift the asset freeze. Okay? The
- 14 same argument. She needs the money for her lawyers. She needs
- 15 it to survive. Ms. McElhone seems to think she is special.
- 16 She is not. Every defendant in every SEC case has the same
- 17 rights. Ms. McElhone doesn't get special treatment. She
- doesn't get to keep investor money. Why? Because there's no
- 19 basis in the law for that. We litigated for three years. We
- 20 finally got a final judgment to give the investors their money
- 21 back. And this has to end with Ms. McElhone trying to get her
- 22 special circumstances not provided for by the law.
- Finally --
- 24 THE COURT: Well, look -- go ahead. Finish your last
- 25 point. Go ahead.

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             MS. BERLIN: The status report, like I said, it doesn't
 2
     mention her, and she's never asked for it to be credited.
 3
     her Rule 16 of the complaint, which Ms. McElhone consented to
     for purposes of the judgment, in her consent, paragraph 16, she
 4
     received at least 11.6 million. That's what we knew at the
 5
 6
     time of the complaint. Now, we know it's much, much higher.
 7
             So the issue -- and that's why we seek the broad sworn
 8
     accounting at the outset of the case. I said 41. It's
9
     actually Docket Entry 42. Docket Entry 42 has the sworn
10
     accounting. It has those three paragraphs. She's three years
11
     in contempt. She never once filed anything asking to be
12
     excused from that, not once. Okay? I didn't burden the Court
     with the litigation at the time because they asserted their
13
14
     Fifth Amendment, and they didn't necessarily have the same
     circumstances Mr. Cole had. Mr. Cole had not asserted the
15
16
     Fifth throughout the case.
17
             THE COURT: Right.
             MS. BERLIN: Ms. McElhone had asserted the Fifth
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19
     throughout on her assets. So there was a distinction there.
20
             The reason that we ask for that broad sworn accounting,
21
     and not just, oh, these six accounts, is because oftentimes
22
     defendants, they get their money -- we know she is at least
23
     11.3. It's much higher. They buy things. Okay. There's
     jewelry. Oftentimes we find jewelry, we find bank notes, we
24
25
     find investments, we find vehicles, cars sometimes they gifted
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- 1 to a family member. Virtually, we have found it under a
- 2 mattress. Okay? Like, no exaggeration.
- 3 So that's when accounting doesn't just list the six
- 4 accounts Mr. Kaplan might tell us exist. We ask for all of the
- 5 assets for a reason. Rarely do defendants in our cases keep it
- 6 liquid. They're usually putting it into something. Most
- 7 recently -- I have a lot of cases, fancy colored diamonds, it's
- 8 jewelry. It's other things we liquidate to return. And, in
- 9 fact, often that's where a huge portion of the money returned
- 10 to investors comes from.
- 11 So we ask for that for a reason. We didn't get it.
- 12 That same exact language in all SEC cases, it's not special for
- 13 Ms. McElhone. We require that because then we know not only
- 14 where she spent the money, but also every asset that she
- 15 currently has. Not just the six bank accounts -- we don't have
- 16 to trace -- but everything she has, and it's above a certain
- 17 value. Because as soon as we find out about them, we will
- 18 attach them, and she's obligated to tell us.
- And, Your Honor, I have a feeling because she's on
- 20 bond, she's disclosed this in the criminal authorities behind
- 21 the scenes, it's not public. So this shouldn't be a burden,
- 22 especially because she's coming to you, Your Honor, asking you
- 23 to lift this and give her the money. Not the criminal court --
- 24 THE COURT: Yes. I'm aware of that --
- MS. BERLIN: Right?

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1 THE COURT: -- which I find --
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- 2 MS. BERLIN: Highly interesting.
- 3 THE COURT: -- a little troubling.
- 4 MS. BERLIN: And very troubling. And we are not privy
- 5 to that, because it's not public, but we do understand how the
- 6 criminal course is -- the criminal courts act.
- 7 What we would ask is that on our motion for contempt,
- 8 because remember we didn't just seek the motion for contempt --
- 9 THE COURT: You also asked for an accounting in there.
- 10 I saw it.
- 11 MS. BERLIN: We asked for the accounting.
- 12 THE COURT: Correct.
- MS. BERLIN: And we also asked, Your Honor, for the
- 14 contempt on the fact she hasn't paid. When defendants have
- 15 their assets -- all of her assets should be frozen. They then
- 16 come to us, they want to pay them, and we issue an order or we
- 17 tell the bank, yes, transfer the money to the receiver. She
- 18 hasn't made any effort to pay anything. Being frozen is for
- 19 purposes of her being able to pay it. She's under -- the
- 20 judgment explicitly directs her to do that, and it was entered
- 21 more than a year ago.
- 22 So the contempt is not just the asset freeze, it's that
- 23 she's ignored the judgment. She's admitting she has assets.
- 24 We didn't know. But she's admitting she has them, and she
- 25 didn't pay them. If the Court isn't inclined to grant the

- 1 contempt motion today, and I heard the Court loud and clear on
- 2 that, we would ask that the Court defer a ruling on the motion
- 3 for contempt pending a sworn accounting, and then at that time
- 4 we can review it. Your Honor, if there's no basis, we're not
- 5 going to file -- we're not going to litigate unnecessarily. We
- 6 would withdraw it. But if there is a basis, we would then just
- 7 return to the Court for a hearing. We wouldn't have to refile.
- 8 And that would give us the ability to do that while sort of
- 9 maintaining this and keeping a little bit of momentum to start
- 10 maybe getting a sworn accounting.
- 11 And Mr. Roessner wanted to add something.
- 12 THE COURT: Go ahead, Mr. Roessner.
- MR. ROESSNER: Your Honor -- and I just want to
- 14 clarify: Once we get the accounting, the procedure the
- 15 Commission would use, which will be a simple motion to turn
- 16 over the asset because -- we usually order garnishment when the
- 17 asset is not frozen. We don't -- and here, once we determine
- 18 where the account is, we're going to do a turnover -- since
- 19 this -- these accounts are apparently under the Court's
- 20 jurisdictions already. And so once we learn of that account,
- 21 that motion will be filed probably that same day.
- 22 THE COURT: But you would say that, essentially -- and
- 23 look, I am disinclined -- there's been a bit of an argument,
- and maybe the SEC wants to touch on this, that she has quote,
- 25 unquote, surrendered \$3 million in assets -- this is in

- 1 Mr. Kaplan's motion -- in property and assets to help satisfy
- 2 her final judgment.
- 3 What's the SEC's position on this? I say that because
- 4 intent matters. Right? And if I have someone who's
- 5 stonewalling me, it's a little bit different for a record.
- 6 There has been an argument made here that the defense is saying
- 7 she's not fully stonewalling, she has walked away from claims
- 8 to certain property and assets in order to help satisfy some of
- 9 the final judgment.
- 10 What's the SEC's view on that, because it is in the
- 11 pleadings?
- MR. ROESSNER: Yes. Your Honor, the Commission
- 13 identified assets that were personal, and the parties agreed,
- 14 and I think -- in the defendant's papers, said the SEC came
- 15 forward to them. She agreed to turn over this asset.
- MS. BERLIN: These assets -- wait just a second.
- These assets were already in the receivership. We had
- 18 already litigated during the case to put them in the
- 19 receivership. She lost that battle. She fought hard. She
- 20 lost that battle. They were put in the receivership. When we
- 21 were going through in the collections unit to decide is there
- 22 anything in the receivership that could be credited to
- 23 Ms. McElhone --
- 24 THE COURT: Right.
- 25 MS. BERLIN: -- we went through every single asset.

- 1 Mike and I went through every single one. We looked at a lot
- 2 of information about each one. And all they identified in that
- 3 huge receivership was about \$3 million of, like, property, was,
- 4 like, jet skis and stuff. It was things like --
- 5 MR. KOLAYA: It was the cash.
- 6 MS. BERLIN: It was the cash. It was the cash that was
- 7 seized.
- 8 MR. KAPLAN: So --
- 9 MS. BERLIN: So wait, wait, Mr. Kaplan, please.
- 10 THE COURT: One at a time. One at a time. Go ahead
- and finish your point on the 3 million.
- MS. BERLIN: Yes. Thank you so much.
- So at that point, we went to the defense lawyers and
- 14 said we have already in the receivership litigated in one and
- 15 had it turned over from the other court, these assets. We
- 16 already have them. We would like to give credit to
- 17 Ms. McElhone for these assets, rather than strictly CBSG. So
- 18 we offered that to them. And so that we didn't have to
- 19 litigate, we entered -- we had them sign a stipulation that we
- 20 asked to have so that we could file it. We filed that with the
- 21 Court. But they're making it sound like Ms. McElhone came to
- 22 us and was, like, here's \$3 million. No, no, no, no. It was
- 23 in the receivership.
- We, of course, do everything under the law. So when we
- 25 look at it, if there's any way to give her credit, then we

- 1 will. We could have just kept it in the receivership like all
- 2 the other assets and argued it doesn't belong to her. But it
- 3 does. We thought it could be given credit. And so that's all
- 4 it was. She didn't turn over or give us any -- or transfer or
- 5 even go out of her way or lift a finger.
- 6 THE COURT: So, Mr. Kaplan, your point on -- do you
- 7 want to be heard on that?
- 8 MR. KAPLAN: Let's be crystal clear. Immediately after
- 9 the judgment, the SEC came to us and said, we think these
- 10 assets should rightfully be turned over, they're in the
- 11 receivership. Do you agree? We said yes, and signed the
- 12 stipulation. It was quick. It may have taken less time than
- 13 Ms. Berlin's most recent remarks.
- 14 The other point about how generous and far reaching
- 15 they are. I seem to recall a couple of houses that were in the
- 16 receivership, one of which she was evicted from, the other of
- 17 which is under a contract of sale for \$12 million. So it's not
- 18 like they've hastened to give us credit for every penny that
- 19 Ms. McElhone is entitled to.
- The point is this: There is no money to hire an
- 21 accountant to deliver the level of an accounting that
- 22 Ms. McElhone would want -- that the Court would want
- 23 Ms. McElhone to provide. Beyond that, she's certainly not
- 24 going to engage in any kind of a fulsome waiver of her Fifth
- 25 Amendment privilege. And if that's the price of having to be

- 1 able to pay her lawyers, then I think she's just going to have
- 2 to bite her lip. It's unfortunate. It's also, I think --
- 3 THE COURT: But here's the problem. I understand that,
- 4 but the problem is this: We're pretty clear.
- 5 Sierra case from the Eleventh Circuit. I only modify a
- 6 consent decree if you can show me there's been a significant
- 7 change in either factual conditions or in the law, and the
- 8 modification is suitably tailored to the changed circumstances.
- 9 To your point, I don't believe that at this point we
- 10 have a factual condition that has changed from the last time
- 11 I've entertained similar requests. And I, quite frankly, think
- 12 that if there does become a concern on the Sixth Amendment
- issue on the criminal pleading, it is better left for the
- 14 criminal judge to handle it. The judge in the Philadelphia may
- 15 be able to address that. It could be something discussed in
- 16 bond conditions.
- 17 So what I am prepared to do, however, though, is at the
- 18 SEC's suggestion -- and I said it when I came out here. I was
- 19 not prepared to hold your client in contempt. But at some
- 20 point, we have to comply with a longstanding court order on
- 21 accounting.
- Now, this issue you're telling me about her being
- 23 unable to afford an accounting. Well, that is the type of
- 24 thing that you're going to want to frame for me when it comes
- 25 to contempt. Because if she has a true inability to provide an

- 1 accounting because she's financially incapable of doing so,
- 2 then I cannot hold her in contempt.
- Now, that requires more than just bald assertions. We
- 4 would need to see enough of an accounting for the Court to make
- 5 some sort of educated determination as to noncompliance being
- 6 willful, and whether or not all reasonable efforts were
- 7 undertaken, and it's truly a case of impossibility for her to
- 8 provide that accounting.
- 9 But there is no dispute that Docket Entry 42 is that
- 10 order. It's clear on its face. It explains how the accounting
- 11 has to take place. And the Court is going to require that
- 12 accounting.
- Now, you may want to give me an update on Wednesday,
- 14 because if the accounting will run into a Fifth Amendment
- 15 problem, that's a separate issue. That's already been
- 16 addressed by the Court. I've dealt with it once. And if that
- 17 becomes an issue, then I'm sure the SEC will agree with me,
- 18 we'd have to litigate that like we've done in the past. But
- 19 that could be what happens. She's got an ongoing criminal
- 20 proceeding. And that would also forestall contempt proceedings
- 21 if you can establish there's a Fifth Amendment right to
- 22 self-incrimination by the turnover of an accounting, which is
- 23 exactly the analysis I did with the other defendant.
- 24 So I think that -- I can give you some time. I mean,
- 25 it's been three years. I'm happy to give you some time to try

- 1 and figure out if an accounting can be provided. And I
- 2 apologize because the problem is the response to the show cause
- 3 talks about the two entities, but the motion to modify is
- 4 correct, that it actually talks about six entities, but then
- 5 later on it mentioned only four. So I wasn't really sure. But
- 6 it is in page 2. It's the two personal checking accounts, the
- 7 two business checking accounts by Eagle Union, and the two
- 8 business checking accounts by Lacquer Lounge.
- 9 So the Court would enter an order today asking for an
- 10 accounting in compliance with ECF 42 as to those accounts, and
- 11 denying the motion without prejudice because I'm not saying
- 12 there couldn't be a change in circumstances, I'm just saying
- 13 there cannot be one under this fact pattern. And you would
- 14 have to let me know, maybe even by the day after tomorrow, what
- 15 I'm to expect. Maybe the answer is, Judge, by the end of this
- 16 window, we're probably going to file another motion asking for
- 17 relief because we're worried about a Fifth Amendment privilege.
- 18 And if that's what it is, that's what it is. But I'm not in a
- 19 position here on this record to unfreeze it. I just don't see
- 20 the change in circumstances.
- 21 And my concern is what we're talking about here with
- 22 Mr. Roessner, which is when we get this accounting, at some
- 23 point, Mr. Roessner, I'm assuming a turnover order is going to
- 24 be issued or requested. Right? You're going to ask for these
- 25 funds, aren't you?

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1 MR. ROESSNER: Yes, Your Honor.
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- 2 And if I can just add one other thing. When the
- 3 Commission is seeking an accounting, we're not seeking
- 4 accounting of these six accounts, we're seeking --
- 5 THE COURT: You're seeking a full accounting.
- 6 MR. ROESSNER: Exactly, Your Honor. Because -- and I
- 7 have accounting forms I can submit, which the Commission uses
- 8 in post-judgment. We need to know when someone's asking and
- 9 saying that this is their sole universe of their finances, what
- 10 else is out there. And the papers keep saying virtually all
- 11 assets. So I'm happy to provide our accounting form for her to
- 12 complete.
- MS. BERLIN: She doesn't need an accountant --
- 14 THE COURT: The bottom line is --
- 15 MS. BERLIN: She doesn't need -- Your Honor, she does
- 16 not need an accountant to do this. In fact, no defendant --
- MR. KAPLAN: Your Honor, can I --
- 18 THE COURT: Hold on one second.
- MS. BERLIN: -- gave me an accounting by an accountant,
- 20 so she could do it herself. But if it's limited to six
- 21 entities, based on what was in a motion, then if that's all she
- 22 has, that's all she'll list. So we would ask that you not
- 23 limit it to six, but have her say, under oath, if it's only six
- 24 -- if she only lists six things, that's it. And if we find
- 25 more, we'll go after it.

1 THE COURT: I can't get a full sense of her finances without a broader accounting. And if it does end up being 2 3 those six accounts, so be it. I don't have a problem with that. 4 5 Look, you got there a little bit before I did. My 6 recollection of looking at some of these forms, and what has 7 been turned over, it does not need the services of an 8 accountant. I will say it's probably not dissimilar, as we 9 mentioned earlier, of her financial condition as provided to 10 the criminal judge, the criminal case before the judge in 11 Philadelphia who I am certain has been also provided with a 12 sense -- you know, that proceeding also has its own -- I know it's kind of playing second fiddle to us, but it has its own 13 14 forfeiture considerations. 15 And so I would imagine that there has been something, an accounting provided there, sufficient to satisfy the Court 16 in Philadelphia for bond purposes. But again, it's on the 17 18 It's ECF 42. The SEC's never moved to compel or ever 19 really ask for contempt on that accounting. But I understand 20 now, they're well within their right to do so. They have 21 decided not to. But now that we are asking and seeing that 22 money's out there -- and I understand that in the view of 23 Ms. McElhone, it may not be a lot, but it's certainly close to 24 a million dollars that could considerably help investors and 25 making them whole.

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             I need to see what that looks like. I'm not going to
     be terribly surprised if I'm met with another Fifth Amendment
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 3
     challenge. And we can litigate that. If that's the way it
     goes, that's the way it goes. I've done it once before, I'll
 4
     do it again. And you have to check with her because I don't
 5
     know the universe of accounts, I don't.
 6
 7
             MR. KAPLAN:
                          I understand. I understand all Your
 8
     Honor's points. And I understand the amount of complex,
9
     fact-intensive litigation before us if everybody pushes all
10
     their rights. The only thing I don't understand is where the
11
     money is supposed to come from for me to get paid to do it all.
12
     And that, I guess, is a chapter that we leave for another day.
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             THE COURT: That, to me, was very apparent by the
14
     motion practice, that that's what we have, unfortunately, we've
     gotten to. And you have come in and done a lot of work and
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16
     some cleanup, quite frankly, from predecessors that has been
     appreciated by the Court. So let me not misstate that.
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18
             I know you're doing the best for your client. But,
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     unfortunately, you do have a client here that, at least before
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     the criminal case, maybe was only litigating on one front, but
21
     now with two. I know that the funds for a vociferous and
22
     dedicated defense are not what they were six, eight, ten months
23
     ago. I think at this point you're going to have a take a hard
     look at what she's willing to provide the Court. I will tell
24
25
     you, I would much rather avoid walking down a path of contempt.
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- 1 I don't want to do it. I don't want to do it. I've done it,
- 2 and it's never a pleasant experience. And certainly, not one
- 3 here where I think, unless there is a valid Fifth Amendment
- 4 privilege here, we're going to have a problem because she's got
- 5 to show me where these assets are. Give it to the SEC, and
- 6 let's see if we can get some sense of her financial picture.
- 7 But at this point, I think that the way to do this is to -- I
- 8 will -- just to streamline it -- I will deny the motion simply
- 9 because I do not believe that there has been enough changed
- 10 circumstances to show a financial issue, quite frankly,
- 11 especially without the accounting, that would justify an
- 12 argument that she's somehow out of funds or unable to provide
- 13 for her defense. Certainly, I don't think there's enough
- 14 changed circumstances simply by what has been brought in by the
- 15 receiver, because it cannot be credited to her in the way
- 16 that's been advanced.
- 17 So I will deny the motion to unfreeze or lift the asset
- 18 freeze order to permit or to use limited funds that are not
- 19 purportedly within the receivership's estate to pay attorneys'
- 20 fees.
- Now, as for the contempt. I will reserve on the issue
- of contempt because I don't believe we have enough here on this
- 23 record. But I do believe that we need to order an accounting
- in compliance with Docket Entry 42. And I can ask you now,
- 25 Mr. Kaplan, how long -- I mean we've waited long enough. If

- 1 it's another 30, 45 days, we're at the end of the year. The
- 2 beginning of the year, if you want to do it that way. Or by
- 3 the end of the month. What do you think you can get the Court
- 4 in terms of an accounting? And, quite frankly, you may be able
- 5 to get me an update in two days' time as to whether I should
- 6 even expect one. But I'm just curious.
- 7 MR. KAPLAN: And I think that's the point. I'll come
- 8 to the Wednesday hearing.
- 9 THE COURT: Okay.
- 10 MR. KAPLAN: I'll give you a report.
- 11 THE COURT: Okay.
- MR. KAPLAN: And just by way of brief clarification,
- 13 the denial of my client's motion was without prejudice.
- 14 THE COURT: It is without.
- MR. KAPLAN: Yes, Your Honor.
- 16 THE COURT: Because at the end of the day,
- 17 circumstances can't change. You just can't do it with -- it
- 18 would be inappropriate under the case law. I'm going to do it
- 19 without.
- But I think what I'll do is I'll hold off then on
- 21 issuing an order until I get an update from you on Wednesday.
- MR. KAPLAN: Thank you, Your Honor.
- 23 THE COURT: It's in two days. It makes sense. Let me
- 24 just wait. Because I'm not going to set a deadline if all I'm
- 25 going to get is a Fifth Amendment challenge to this, which I'm

- 1 going to go out on a limb and guess that's probably what's
- 2 going to happen.
- 3 So if that happens, then I think, I guess, Ms. Berlin,
- 4 my issue is, if that happens, if you -- I know you'll probably
- 5 be here on Wednesday, as well.
- 6 MS. BERLIN: Yes.
- 7 THE COURT: If you would please be prepared to let me
- 8 know what the SEC and Mr. Roessner --
- 9 MS. BERLIN: We will file a motion. If that happens,
- 10 we will file a motion to compel.
- 11 THE COURT: And we'll go through the same -- similar
- 12 argument --
- MS. BERLIN: We'll do the same thing again.
- 14 THE COURT: -- we did before? Okay.
- 15 MS. BERLIN: Yes. So if she's asserting the Fifth, and
- 16 we find out about it on Wednesday, it might be helpful to set,
- 17 like, a briefing, like, give us a certain number of days to
- 18 file that so we can keep things moving, and we don't hold up
- 19 the receivership distribution.
- I want to just point out something to the Court. And
- 21 we will be updating the Court more. But just to go back to the
- 22 CBSG issue.
- THE COURT: Yes.
- 24 MS. BERLIN: Everyone here needs to keep in mind CBSG
- 25 has been indicted, okay, and they are seeking restitution in

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1 the criminal case.
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- 2 THE COURT: Right.
- 3 MS. BERLIN: Number one. Number two, I'm sure
- 4 everyone's saw a couple of weeks ago the Gambino crime family
- 5 indictment. Jimmy LaForte --
- 6 MR. KAPLAN: Your Honor --
- 7 MS. BERLIN: -- indicted. And in that indictment --
- 8 THE COURT: I'll let you respond.
- 9 MR. KAPLAN: Come on.
- 10 MS. BERLIN: Let me -- it's relevant.
- 11 THE COURT: Go ahead.
- MS. BERLIN: In that indictment, which everyone can
- 13 read, and I'm sure they're aware, that it specifically mentions
- 14 CBSG and Par Funding because they were kicking money -- the
- 15 money they were raising for Par Funding up to the Gambino crime
- 16 family is in that indictment.
- 17 So we know that I -- I know of two cases, one in
- 18 Pennsylvania and one in New York, right now, where there is
- 19 restitution being sought, and Par Funding is either a defendant
- 20 or it's in there. And so, you know, I just want to flag that
- 21 now. When the Commission comes to the Court to seek the relief
- 22 that we want to seek against Par Funding, that -- we will be in
- 23 a position to update the Court on sort of what we're going to
- 24 impose for that.
- 25 But I will say it again to everyone here and

- 1 Ms. McElhone's lawyers, they should not -- if they want
- 2 anything to be credited that has not been credited to
- 3 Ms. McElhone, they would have a file a motion and seek that
- 4 relief. Otherwise, there's no money in that receivership
- 5 that's being credited to Ms. McElhone other than the 3 million
- 6 we found. And there is no money in there that has any basis to
- 7 be credited to her. So we will oppose that.
- 8 But they shouldn't -- that would be affirmative relief
- 9 they would have to seek, only because we've now litigated this
- 10 -- I think this is, like, my fifth time saying this same
- 11 argument. And so we don't do it a seventh time, and have SEC
- 12 resources flying Mr. Roessner down, and the investors paying
- 13 Mr. Kolaya to be here and prepared, let's not have to litigate
- 14 that issue again about the crediting.
- 15 THE COURT: Well, I'll say this: Obviously this is
- 16 CBSG issues, so I'm not repeating all of these issues to Ms.
- 17 McElhone.
- But I think, look, the crediting issue has been thrown
- 19 around for years. And as I've said in the beginning,
- 20 especially now, as we start to march towards distribution, we
- 21 are going to start trying to settle up and get a sense of who
- 22 gets credited what, and if there is a crediting argument to be
- 23 made, all the defendants need to be filing motions seeking that
- 24 relief and checking in with the SEC. Because right now, by
- 25 stipulation, all I have is the 3 million. It's the only thing

- 1 that I can actually attribute to Ms. McElhone and her judgment,
- 2 nothing more, nothing less. It doesn't mean agreements
- 3 couldn't be reached, but certainly there's nothing like that in
- 4 front of the Court right now where I would be able to credit
- 5 anybody what has already been clawed back in the receivership.
- 6 Okay? So just -- if there's a motion to be filed, I know
- 7 you'll file it.
- 8 MR. KAPLAN: Let's not go down that rabbit hole today.
- 9 THE COURT: Yes, I agree.
- 10 Let's just do this, though. While we are checking in
- 11 with the client, and Ms. Berlin mentioned a briefing schedule,
- 12 if there is going to be a Fifth Amendment indication on a
- 13 fulsome accounting in compliance with my order, then I would
- 14 ask that we meet and confer coming into the hearing on
- 15 Wednesday so that you guys may already have a briefing
- 16 scheduled proposed for me, just so I can -- I know the holidays
- 17 are coming. Let's try to get a sense of what that looks like
- 18 so that I give myself a chance to plan ahead. So if you get an
- 19 answer on that, and you want to go ahead and provide
- 20 information, Mr. Kaplan, to Ms. Berlin, let's come up with kind
- 21 of some deadlines on what that motion and the response might
- look like for you, because you're going to need some time on
- 23 that. Okay.
- 24 MR. KAPLAN: Yeah. And I prefer not to work for free
- 25 over the holidays.

- 1 THE COURT: I know. I prefer you don't get put into
- 2 that position either.
- 3 MR. KAPLAN: Thank you, Your Honor.
- 4 THE COURT: Understood. So we'll wait until Wednesday.
- 5 I will enter a very brief order on the motion to modify, for
- 6 the reasons stated on the record, and simply citing to the
- 7 Sierra case from the Eleventh. I will wait, however, on the
- 8 contempt, although I get a sense of the accounting. And what
- 9 I'd like to do, it makes no sense for me to do that until the
- 10 Court gets a sense of the Fifth Amendment issue.
- And then the one thing I would just ask is, if the SEC
- 12 finds out, like I do, that it's a Fifth Amendment issue, then
- 13 at that point I think we would be able to deny that motion
- 14 simply because there's an indication of the Fifth, or maybe you
- even decide to withdraw it, depending what you want to do when
- 16 you hear. Right?
- MS. BERLIN: Exactly.
- 18 THE COURT: I'll wait.
- MS. BERLIN: Once we know that, it will all flow from
- 20 there. So hopefully, we'll confer in advance, and we'll be
- 21 able to just on Wednesday give you sort of a game plan and a
- 22 roadmap for getting this briefed and bringing this to a
- 23 conclusion.
- 24 And I just wanted to point out, in addition to that
- 25 case, it's -- the SEC v. Schiffer case that the Court cited in

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1
     Docket Entry 1580 --
 2
             THE COURT: Yes.
 3
             MS. BERLIN: -- I think is directly on point because
     there --
 4
 5
             THE COURT: That's the other one --
 6
             MS. BERLIN: -- the Court denied the motion to lift the
 7
     asset freeze where they didn't provide a sworn accounting on
8
     Fifth Amendment grounds. And so I just wanted to point that
9
     out, as well.
10
             THE COURT: Yeah, it's another basis. And look, you
11
     have to understand -- and I understand where Mr. Kaplan's
12
     coming from. I understand what's happening behind the scenes
     by looking at the motion practice, and he is in a difficult
13
     position. Understanding he's doing the best for Ms. McElhone,
14
     given what has been happening over the last, let's say, four to
15
16
     six months.
             Even though I know that there's an argument made that
17
18
     these things are being retread or readdressed, it's only right
19
     that even if that is the SEC's position, I want the SEC to
20
     understand that for purposes of transparency and giving access
21
     to the Court, even if it's a little bit repetitive, I have to
22
     give Mr. Kaplan an opportunity to advance these arguments for
23
     his client and for his firm. And that's why I set this.
             And because it's easier in my view, we get into a lot
24
25
     of motion practice, that's why we have so many docket entries,
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- 1 it's sometimes easier to talk through the current financial
- 2 situation of the receiver than attempting to do this all
- 3 through briefing. And that's why I've set it, and that's why
- 4 we have it set on Wednesday, so we can get an update on the
- 5 receiver's end, as well.
- And I take it, I guess, Mr. Roessner is sticking
- around, so you'll probably be here, I guess, on Wednesday, as
- 8 well?
- 9 MR. ROESSNER: Your Honor, I'm flying back to D.C.
- 10 today. But I'll --
- 11 THE COURT: Oh, okay.
- MR. ROESSNER: -- I'll appear by telephone, if that's
- 13 okay with the Court.
- 14 THE COURT: Yes. We have a Zoom. I think that we've
- 15 set it up, and for the benefit, also, of the clients, if they
- 16 want, we are creating, after having a temporary concern for
- 17 security, the Court has opted that in this instance it has been
- 18 long enough that I haven't had some method by which investors
- 19 can participate. And so they will be permitted. I believe I'm
- 20 going to have a Zoom feed set up for investors to listen in and
- 21 for clients to keep the costs low and not fly in. So I'm going
- 22 to do that on Wednesday. So if you don't have the link -- it
- 23 should be on the docket, but if you need it, contact my CRD.
- 24 She'll get it for you.
- MR. ROESSNER: Thank you, Your Honor.

- 1 MS. BERLIN: It's on the docket.
- 2 MR. ROESSNER: I'm always happy to fly to Miami.
- 3 THE COURT: Okay. So anything else for purposes of
- 4 today?
- 5 Mr. Kaplan, did we cover your concerns?
- 6 MR. KAPLAN: Yes, Your Honor.
- 7 THE COURT: All right. Okay. And I know you'll give
- 8 me an update on Wednesday.
- 9 Yes, Mr. Kolaya. Go ahead.
- 10 MR. KOLAYA: Your Honor, I just wanted to note that the
- 11 receiver did file a status report this morning regarding the
- 12 claims process. Obviously, I don't plan to discuss that today.
- 13 I just wanted to highlight that for you.
- 14 THE COURT: Thank you. I had the last update that I
- 15 have read, but obviously not the one this morning. So I hadn't
- 16 seen that yet.
- 17 MR. KOLAYA: This morning is focused exclusively on the
- 18 claims process. We've issued notices of determination to all
- 19 claimants, or the majority of claimants. There's a handful of
- 20 exceptions.
- 21 THE COURT: Okay.
- 22 MR. KOLAYA: I expect that's going to be the primary
- 23 focus for Wednesday, and we'll be prepared to discuss
- 24 everything else that we typically address at the status
- 25 conferences.

- 1 If there's anything in particular Your Honor would like
- 2 us to present on, we're happy to do so.
- 3 THE COURT: Okay. Thank you for that. I'll take a
- 4 look at that now that it's been docketed.
- 5 All right. And on the SEC, anything else, Ms. Berlin,
- 6 that I may have missed?
- 7 MS. BERLIN: No. In the same vein, we -- I'll be
- 8 filing today -- we have our final judgment against all of the
- 9 ABFP entities in the receivership. We filed a separate case
- 10 against them.
- I did note, of course, in my cover sheet that this is a
- 12 related case. But we immediately resolved it, and have a final
- 13 judgment. So we're filing that so that just the Court can see
- 14 it, because it will become relevant later on when we do
- 15 distributions. And I think I have right now two other cases,
- 16 and like ten other defendants all related to Par Funding. And
- 17 so I'm just filing a status update before Wednesday to let the
- 18 Court know what those are.
- 19 THE COURT: Do I want to transfer that? You don't want
- 20 to transfer that to this division?
- 21 MS. BERLIN: I would love to transfer that.
- 22 THE COURT: That doesn't make any sense to have that --
- 23 because that's directly related to mine.
- MS. BERLIN: Yes.
- 25 THE COURT: Do you know the case number? Can you email

- 1 it to me today?
- 2 MS. BERLIN: Yes, I can. I have two cases in the
- 3 Southern District of Florida that were filed within the last
- 4 month. One of them is, like, six defendants or -- five, six,
- 5 seven defendants. They're all agent fund managers and agent
- 6 funds like Furman and Gissas and Vagnozzi.
- 7 THE COURT: Okay.
- 8 MS. BERLIN: And then the other -- that's litigating.
- 9 And the other case is the ABFP entities in the receivership,
- 10 and that's all settled with the disgorgement of penalties
- 11 entered.
- 12 THE COURT: Okay.
- MS. BERLIN: So that is one of the things, as we go
- 14 through, you know, at the end and distributing, like, that
- judgment will be helpful for the court to have, because those
- 16 funds can then be distributed. They're being held as payment
- 17 for the disgorgement. So we're going to ask that those funds
- 18 be turned over to credit the judgment.
- 19 THE COURT: Okay.
- MS. BERLIN: And then, yes, on the other case that's
- 21 pending here, I don't know the number off the top of my head
- 22 unlike this one, because we filed so many times.
- 23 THE COURT: Right. You know them by memory.
- MS. BERLIN: Yes. And actually, I am preparing to head
- 25 into another trial right now, so I have that number in my head.

- 1 But I can definitely send it today. But I just wanted to give
- 2 the Court that update.
- 3 THE COURT: Yes.
- 4 MS. BERLIN: We can talk more about that at the status
- 5 because I think some of the investors who, when they got their
- 6 claims denied, but they invested in other agent funds found in
- 7 the receivership, I think Wednesday will be helpful for them to
- 8 sort of understand, like, the other cases out there, and how
- 9 we're trying to harness the funds; and ultimately, everyone who
- invested, whether it's through an agent fund in the
- 11 receivership or an agent fund that's not in the receivership,
- 12 the way we're going to propose the ultimate distribution would
- 13 trickle down to all of the individuals. So some of those
- 14 mechanics might be helpful for investors to hear because I
- 15 think there's a lot of anxiety.
- 16 THE COURT: Yes.
- 17 MS. BERLIN: Because some of their claims were denied
- 18 because they didn't invest in an agent fund that's in the
- 19 receivership.
- So I've been talking to many of them, and sending
- 21 emails that they can just share. But I think that on
- 22 Wednesday, I anticipate, like, that would be -- is something
- 23 that they will all be very interested in hearing. And if the
- 24 Court would like, we can discuss it a little bit so the
- 25 investors all kind of have a sense --

- 1 THE COURT: I think it would be a great. Yes, I think
- 2 it would be a great idea because I've sensed an uptick in
- 3 investor communication. Obviously, nothing I can engage with
- 4 directly. But it doesn't matter. They still contact the Court
- 5 routinely directly, despite me trying to explain in hearings
- 6 that they should go through the receiver.
- 7 But I think it would be helpful with some of those
- 8 denials to try to give them a sense of why that happened. So I
- 9 will absolutely be happy to kind of turn it over to you, if you
- 10 want to give a little context, since my hope is we'll have a
- 11 big turnout, and maybe people will get a little bit more of a
- 12 sense of what's going on.
- MS. BERLIN: Yes.
- 14 THE COURT: So I don't know, obviously -- my colleagues
- 15 maybe have not connected those related cases to me yet, because
- 16 I haven't had any outreach. I only had it in one matter, which
- 17 will not be transferred, but it is totally distinct. That's a
- 18 legal malpractice claim that, in my view, has nothing to do
- 19 with my work on Par Funding. And Judge Altonaga is handling
- 20 that.
- 21 The other two, obviously, seem -- well, one of them
- 22 seems to be directly intertwined on the final judgment, so that
- one seems like it should be here because it would be very
- 24 cumbersome not to have it here.
- 25 The other one -- I don't know want to say it's

- 1 completely new, but it sounds new. I guess it's agent funds
- 2 that never really fell into this case. Is that -- and I
- 3 haven't seen it, so I don't know.
- 4 MS. BERLIN: There are more than 40 agent funds. So
- 5 the initial case that we filed here was against -- I don't
- 6 remember how many it was, like, ten or something --
- 7 THE COURT: Yeah.
- 8 MS. BERLIN: -- between all of the variations of the
- 9 ABFP.
- 10 And then we have another one that I filed in the
- 11 Eastern District of New York on behalf of the SEC against the
- 12 A.G. Morgan agent funds and their managers. And that's been
- 13 pending for a while. We're in summary judgment on that. But
- 14 that's in another jurisdiction.
- And then down here, we have the ABFP cases that just
- 16 resolved. And then this other case, which Mr. Kolaya was nice
- 17 enough to pull up the case number so I can give it to you.
- 18 THE COURT: Sure.
- MS. BERLIN: It's 23, civil, 23 -- oh, wait. Yeah,
- 20 23749.
- 21 THE COURT: Okay.
- MS. BERLIN: And that's in front of Judge Altman. And
- 23 that's against Alec Vagnozzi, Shannon Westhead, Albert
- 24 Vagnozzi, and Michael Tierney, who were four alleged agent fund
- 25 managers, and their three agent funds. But most, if you look

- 1 at the complaint, it's all the same, part of the same sort of
- 2 matter. And then the ABFP case that's now completely resolved
- 3 with a final judgment is 23, civil, 23721.
- 4 So I'm going to file sort of an update for the Court
- 5 today attaching all those things. I'm attaching the indictment
- 6 in the recent Jimmy LaForte, Gambino case, because it
- 7 references Par Funding. And I anticipate we'll be hearing from
- 8 them about possibly, you know, Par Funding or some of the
- 9 funds. And an update of what's going on in the criminal case,
- just so the Court has all of that before Wednesday, you know,
- in case any of that might be helpful to share with the
- 12 investors or keep them apprised. And also, everything we filed
- 13 they see on their receiver's website.
- 14 THE COURT: Okay.
- MS. BERLIN: Which has really been a tremendous
- 16 benefit. And I know they watch it because, typically, after I
- 17 file, I will field many, many calls from investors because they
- 18 see things as soon as they're filed, and contact us. So we're
- 19 hopeful that will all help for Wednesday's status conference to
- 20 file those today.
- 21 THE COURT: Okay. I appreciate that. I'll keep an eye
- 22 on those when they come in so that I can review them in advance
- of Wednesday. And I'll take a look at these two cases and see
- 24 if there's ultimately a need to transfer.
- 25 And then on Wednesday, we'll give you guys some air

- 1 time, which I think will be very helpful, to kind of explain a
- 2 little more nuanced review of the claims process, and given
- 3 that there's ancillary matters that have been filed, that'll
- 4 help, I think, some of the receivers. Because I have been
- 5 getting communications about different agent funds and things
- 6 like that, so.
- 7 MS. BERLIN: Yeah, I'm trying to -- I might, you know,
- 8 I make, like, PowerPoints and I might just make, like, an
- 9 illustration that, you know, maybe we could show on the screen
- 10 to explain. Because I find even when I'm talking to, you know,
- 11 other people involved in the case, you know, how it goes from
- 12 Par Funding to all of the agent funds.
- 13 THE COURT: Right.
- 14 MS. BERLIN: So everyone holds a note. And then some
- of those 40 agent funds in that row are in the receivership.
- 16 So they stand in the shoes of an agent fund manager. So a way
- 17 to think of it is, like, every agent fund manager, if their
- 18 agent fund will distribute to those investors that hold a note,
- 19 some of it is the receiver because he stands in the agent fund
- 20 manager's shoes. But they're all kind of on that same line.
- 21 So some people will get their wire from their agent fund
- 22 manager, and others will get their wire or check from the
- 23 receiver. And that's why some claims were denied. Because,
- 24 for example, Capricorn is one. That's a pretty big one.
- 25 They're not in the receivership. We don't have their bank

- 1 accounts. We don't have -- their assets are not in the
- 2 receivership. And there are 40 of them spread out all across
- 3 the country, so.
- 4 THE COURT: If you want to do that, I mean, if you have
- 5 it, I can always give you access. Or if you put it up just so
- 6 that it can be seen on the Zoom, we could try that, too.
- 7 MS. BERLIN: Yes. I was going to try that. I thought
- 8 that could be helpful to show them, like, a picture of what it
- 9 looks like.
- 10 THE COURT: Yeah.
- 11 MS. BERLIN: And give them some assurance, especially
- 12 heading into the holidays. I think there's a lot of anxiety
- 13 about their money.
- 14 THE COURT: I agree. Yes. And if you have that queued
- up, we'll definitely look at that on Wednesday. I'll take a
- 16 look at the filing when it comes through. And so we'll see
- 17 each other in a few days, and we'll continue to kind of get a
- 18 more fulsome update of where we are. I'll handle only one of
- 19 the two motions today, and hold off on the contempt one until I
- 20 get an update from you all on Wednesday.
- 21 MS. BERLIN: Thank you, Your Honor. It was nice to see
- 22 you. Thank you.
- THE COURT: Thank you all. See you guys on Wednesday.
- (Court recessed at 12:04 p.m.)

CERTIFICATE I hereby certify that the foregoing is an accurate transcription of the proceedings in the above-entitled matter. DATE: December 11, 2023 /s/Ilona Lupowitz ILONA LUPOWITZ, RMR, CRR Official Court Reporter United States District Court Southern District of Florida 400 North Miami Avenue Room 11-2 Miami, Florida 33128 (305) 523-5737

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