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IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS CENTRE COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

JONATHAN D. GRINE,

F: (717) 657-2060

PLAINTIFF

CIVIL DIVISION

v.

No.: 2015-1080

COUNTY OF CENTRE;

THE MCSHANE FIRM, LLC;

THEODORE C. TANSKI

:

DEFENDANTS

DEFENDANTS THEODORE C. TANSKI AND THE MCSHANE FIRM, LLC'S ANSWER TO PLAINTIFF'S PETITION FOR PRELIMINARY INJUNCTION

AND NOW come Defendants Theodore C. Tanski ("Tanski") and The McShane Firm, LLC (collectively "Defendants") by and through their attorneys of record Richard S. Roberts and Michael Antonio Giaramita Jr. of *The McShane Firm*, *LLC*, in response to

Plaintiff's Petition for Emergency Injunction and Preliminary Injunction, and in opposition to the same state as follows:

INTRODUCTION

In Plaintiff's Motion for Preliminary Injunction, he asks this Court to prohibit "the Defendants from disclosing any information related to Judge Grine's telephone communications" *Plaintiff's Motion for Preliminary Injunction* p. 4-5. Accordingly, Plaintiff seeks an unconstitutional prior restraint in efforts to suppress speech which is protected by the First Amendment.

Prior restraints specifically include "court orders that actually forbid speech activities," which the United States Supreme Court has labeled a "classic example." Alexander v. U.S., 509 U.S. 544, 550 (1993). As per the Supreme Court of the United States, it is "clear that the barriers to prior restraint remain high unless we are to abandon what this Court has said for nearly a quarter of our national existence and implied throughout all of it." Nebraska Press Ass'n v. Stuart, 427 U.S. 539, 561 (1976). The Court has further deemed prior restraints on speech "the most serious and the least tolerable infringement on First Amendment rights." Id. at 559. Consequently, prior restraints bear a heavy presumption against constitutional validity. New York Times Co. v. United States, 403 U.S. 713, 718 (1971).

Throughout the history of the United States, only few have overcome this presumption. Reserved for the most extraordinary cases, the Court has refused this remedy in the face of competing constitutional interests or urgent issues of national security. CBS, Inc. v. Davis, 510 U.S. 1315, 1317 (1994) (citing Nebraska Press Ass'n v.

Stuart, 427 U.S. 539 (1976); New York Times v. United States, 403 U.S. 713 (1971)). President Richard Nixon was denied this remedy to prevent publication of the Pentagon Papers. New York Times Co. v. United States, 403 U.S. 713 (1971). More recently, First Amendment protections prevented President Obama from suppressing Wiki Leaks and Abu Grab.

Specifically, "privacy concerns give way when balanced against the interest in publishing matters of public importance" because "[t]he right of privacy does not prohibit any publication of matter which is of public or general interest." *Bartnicki v. Vopper*, 532 U.S. 514, 534 (2001) (quoting *The Right to Privacy*, 4 Harv. L.Rev. 193, 214 (1890) (internal quotations omitted)). In *Bartnicki*, the Court reasoned that "[o]ne of the costs associated with participation in public affairs is an attendant loss of privacy." *Bartnicki*, 532 U.S. at 534.

Furthermore, the presumption of unconstitutionality prevails over reputational interests of judges, or even the judiciary. In the words of the late Justice Frankfurter, "speech cannot be punished when the purpose is simply to protect the court as a mystical entity or the judges as individuals or as anointed priests set apart from the community and spared the criticism to which in a democracy other public servants are exposed." Landmark Commc'ns, Inc. v. Virginia, 435 U.S. 829, 842 (1978) (quoting Bridges v. California, 314 U.S. 252, 291-92 (1941)).

Finally, the Court has refused to grant prior restraints even when information was unlawfully obtained by a third party, or obtained through "calculated misdeeds." See *Bartnicki*, 532 U.S. at 530; *CBS, Inc. v. Davis*, 510 U.S. 1315, 1317 (1994).

In the matter at hand, Grine seeks an unprecedented remedy which has been consistently denied by the United States Supreme Court. He seeks a remedy denied to sitting Presidents with national security concerns, denied to sitting judges and the judiciary to protect esteem, and denied to public officials in the face of privacy interests.

Although Defendants maintain that the disclosure of records was proper, this has no bearing on this Court's decision. Whether the disclosure itself was proper under the Right-to-Know law is of no significance to Grine's claim against Defendants. Tanski lawfully obtained the records by submitting a Right-to-Know request in accordance with the procedures in place. Any alleged defect in the initial dissemination —however baseless— has no bearing on whether or not the Defendants can lawfully disclose the information lawfully in their possession. Furthermore, The McShane Firm did not obtain the records directly from Centre County, and is even further removed from any allegations of improper dissemination.

Although Tanski and The McShane Firm must prevail under First Amendment analysis, it is suggested that Defendants prevail under separate and distinct state grounds through Article 1 Section 7 of the Pennsylvania Constitution. Article 1 Section 7 predates the First Amendment and provides for stronger protection of speech. *Pap's A.M. v. City of Erie*, 571 Pa. 375 (2002). These protections have been particularly upheld with respect to matters of public concern.

In light of Defendants' protections under the First Amendment, this Court must deny Plaintiff's request for a prior restraint. As a result, Defendants respectfully request that this Court deny Plaintiff's Motion for Preliminary Injunction, and declare that

Defendants have the First Amendment Right to disclose the records in their possession free of any restrictions.

ANSWER

- The allegations set forth in paragraph one are conclusions of law to which no response is required under the Pennsylvania Rules of Civil Procedure, and are therefore denied.
- 2. Defendants admit that Plaintiff has simultaneously filed a Complaint in this Court. Defendants specifically deny any improper disclosure or violation of rights alleged by Plaintiff in this averment and in the Complaint. The right to file responsive pleadings to Plaintiff's Complaint is expressly reserved.
- 3. Defendants admit that Tanski submitted a Right-to-Know request to Centre County, and that Tanski is an attorney with The McShane Firm. Defendants deny that the request was submitted "in his capacity as an attorney with The McShane Firm." Tanski made his request as an individual. Tanski did not, nor was he required to disclose his purpose or motive in requesting access to the records. See 65 Pa.C.S. § 67.1308. Defendants specifically deny the relevance of Tanski's role as an attorney with The McShane Firm. Defendants admit that Tanski provided his office contact information on the Right-to-Know request to Centre County.
- 4. Admitted.
- The allegations set forth in paragraph five are conclusions of law to which no response is required under the Pennsylvania Rules of Civil Procedure, and are therefore denied.

- 6. The allegations set forth in paragraph six are conclusions of law to which no response is required under the Pennsylvania Rules of Civil Procedure, and are therefore denied.
- 7. The allegations set forth in paragraph seven are conclusions of law to which no response is required under the Pennsylvania Rules of Civil Procedure, and are therefore denied.
- 8. The allegations set forth in paragraph eight are conclusions of law to which no response is required under the Pennsylvania Rules of Civil Procedure, and are therefore denied.
- 9. The allegations set forth in paragraph nine are denied as stated. Tanksi's request was limited solely to communications between specific public employees, specific telephone lines funded by the public, and a specific period of time. The records were produced directly to Tanski. Defendants specifically deny that any records were produced separately or directly to The McShane Firm. Defendants admit that the records displayed partial telephone numbers, but specifically deny requesting partial telephone numbers. Defendants specifically deny the relevance of the partial listing of telephone numbers as applied to Plaintiff's cause of action against Tanski or The McShane Firm.
- 10. After reasonable investigation, Defendants are without sufficient knowledge or information to form a belief as to the truth or falsity of the allegations set forth in Paragraph ten, and therefore deny the allegations thereof. Additionally,

- Defendants specifically deny the relevance thereof. Strict proof will be demanded if the same is found to be material.
- 11. The allegations set forth in paragraph eleven are conclusions of law to which no response is required under the Pennsylvania Rules of Civil Procedure, and are therefore denied. The records were produced directly to Tanski. Defendants specifically deny that any records were produced separately or directly to The McShane Firm. Defendants specifically deny that any records received were not subject to the Right to Know Law, and deny the relevance thereof.
- 12. The allegations set forth in paragraph twelve are conclusions of law to which no response is required under the Pennsylvania Rules of Civil Procedure, and are therefore denied. To the extent that a response is required, Defendants specifically deny that any records were produced separately or directly to The McShane Firm. The records were produced directly to Attorney Tanski. Defendants specifically deny that any records received were improperly disclosed, and further deny the relevance thereof.
- 13. The allegations set forth in paragraph thirteen are conclusions of law to which no response is required under the Pennsylvania Rules of Civil Procedure, and are therefore denied. To the extent that a response is required, Defendants specifically deny any improper disclosure or violation of rights alleged by Plaintiff in this averment. Defendants additionally deny the relevance thereof.
- 14. The allegations set forth in paragraph fourteen are a conclusion of law to which no response is required under the Pennsylvania Rules of Civil Procedure, and are

therefore denied. Defendants specifically deny that Plaintiff has a clear right to relief against either of them under the allegations set forth in Plaintiff's Motion or the Complaint. The right to file responsive pleadings to Plaintiff's Complaint is expressly reserved.

- 15. Paragraph fifteen requires neither an admission nor a denial. To the extent that a response is required, Defendants re-allege all previous denials as if stated in full.
- 16. The allegations set forth in paragraph sixteen are a conclusion of law to which no response is required under the Pennsylvania Rules of Civil Procedure, and are therefore denied. Additionally, the relief requested constitutes a prior restraint in violation of the First Amendment of the United States Constitution and Article 1 Section 7 of the Pennsylvania Constitution. See CBS, Inc. v. Davis, 510 U.S. 1315; Nebraska Press Ass'n v. Stuart, 427 U.S. 539; Lawson v. Murray, 515 U.S. 1110, 1113 (1995) (Scalia, J, Concurring); Willing v. Mazzocone, 482 Pa. 377 (1978).
- 17. The allegations set forth in paragraph seventeen are a conclusion of law to which no response is required under the Pennsylvania Rules of Civil Procedure, and are therefore denied. Additionally, the relief requested constitutes a prior restraint in violation of the First Amendment of the United States Constitution and Article 1 Section 7 of the Pennsylvania Constitution. See CBS, Inc. v. Davis, 510 U.S. 1315; Nebraska Press Ass'n v. Stuart, 427 U.S. 539; Lawson v. Murray, 515 U.S. 1110, 1113 (1995) (Scalia, J, Concurring); Willing v. Mazzocone, 482 Pa. 377 (1978).

- 18. The allegations set forth in paragraph eighteen are a conclusion of law to which no response is required under the Pennsylvania Rules of Civil Procedure, and are therefore denied. To the extent that a response is required, Plaintiff's allegations are purely speculative, and are specifically denied. Defendants specifically deny any improper disclosure, or any relevance thereof. Additionally, the relief requested by Plaintiff constitutes a prior restraint in violation of the First Amendment of the United States Constitution and Article 1 Section 7 of the Pennsylvania Constitution. See CBS, Inc. v. Davis, 510 U.S. 1315; Nebraska Press Ass'n v. Stuart, 427 U.S. 539; Lawson v. Murray, 515 U.S. 1110, 1113 (1995) (Scalia, J, Concurring); Willing v. Mazzocone, 482 Pa. 377 (1978).
- 19. The allegations set forth in paragraph nineteen are a conclusion of law to which no response is required under the Pennsylvania Rules of Civil Procedure, and are therefore denied. To the extent that a response is required, Plaintiff's allegations are purely speculative, and are specifically denied. Defendants specifically deny any improper disclosure, or any relevance thereof. Additionally, the relief requested by Plaintiff constitutes a prior restraint in violation of the First Amendment of the United States Constitution and Article 1 Section 7 of the Pennsylvania Constitution. See CBS, Inc. v. Davis, 510 U.S. 1315; Nebraska Press Ass'n v. Stuart, 427 U.S. 539; Lawson v. Murray, 515 U.S. 1110, 1113 (1995) (Scalia, J. Concurring); Willing v. Mazzocone, 482 Pa. 377 (1978).
- 20. The allegations set forth in paragraph twenty are a conclusion of law to which no response is required under the Pennsylvania Rules of Civil Procedure, and are

therefore denied. To the extent that a response is required, Plaintiff's allegations are purely speculative, and are specifically denied. Defendants specifically deny any improper disclosure, or any relevance thereof. Additionally, the relief requested by Plaintiff constitutes a prior restraint in violation of the First Amendment of the United States Constitution and Article 1 Section 7 of the Pennsylvania Constitution. See CBS, Inc. v. Davis, 510 U.S. 1315; Nebraska Press Ass'n v. Stuart, 427 U.S. 539; Lawson v. Murray, 515 U.S. 1110, 1113 (1995) (Scalia, J, Concurring); Willing v. Mazzocone, 482 Pa. 377 (1978).

- 21. Paragraph twenty-one requires neither an admission nor a denial. To the extent that a response is required, Defendants re-allege all previous denials as if stated in full.
- 22. Paragraph twenty-two requires neither an admission nor a denial. Plaintiff's Emergency Injunction was filed on March 16, 2015 at 1:31 PM, and was granted by a signed Order filed at 1:33 PM on March 16, 2015. Defendants further stipulated to abide by the terms of the Emergency Injunction through an Order filed on March 20, 2015. To the extent that a response is required, Defendants reallege all previous denials as if stated in full.
- 23. Paragraph twenty-three requires neither an admission nor a denial. Plaintiff's Emergency Injunction was granted by a signed Order filed on March 16, 2015. Defendants further stipulated to abide by the terms of the Emergency Injunction through an Order filed on March 20, 2015. To the extent that a response is required, Defendants re-allege all previous denials as if stated in full.

- 24. Paragraph twenty-four requires neither an admission nor a denial. Plaintiff's Emergency Injunction was granted by a signed Order filed on March 16, 2015. Defendants further stipulated to abide by the terms of the Emergency Injunction through an Order filed on March 20, 2015. To the extent that a response is required, Defendants re-allege all previous denials as if stated in full.
- 25. Paragraph twenty-five requires neither an admission nor a denial. Plaintiff's Emergency Injunction was granted by a signed Order filed on March 16, 2015. Defendants further stipulated to abide by the terms of the Emergency Injunction through an Order filed on March 20, 2015. To the extent that a response is required, Defendants re-allege all previous denials as if stated in full.
- 26. Paragraph twenty-six requires neither an admission nor a denial. Plaintiff's Emergency Injunction was granted by a signed Order filed on March 16, 2015. Defendants further stipulated to abide by the terms of the Emergency Injunction through an Order filed on March 20, 2015. To the extent that a response is required, Defendants re-allege all previous denials as if stated in full.

NEW MATTER

- 27. Plaintiff's claims are barred by privileges afforded under the United States

 Constitution and the Pennsylvania Constitution.
- 28. Plaintiff's claims are barred by equitable estoppel.
- 29. Plaintiff's claims are barred by unclean hands.

- 30. The relief requested by Plaintiff is a prior restraint which violates the First

 Amendment of the United States Constitution and Article 1 Section 7 of the

 Pennsylvania Constitution. See CBS, Inc. v. Davis, 510 U.S. 1315 (1994);

 Nebraska Press Ass'n v. Stuart, 427 U.S. 539 (1976); Lawson v. Murray, 515 U.S.

 1110, 1113 (1995) (Scalia, J, Concurring); Willing v. Mazzocone, 482 Pa. 377

 (1978).
- 31. The records constitute a matter of public concern, dissemination and publication of which is protected by the First Amendment of the United States Constitution and Article 1 Section 7 of the Pennsylvania Constitution. See *Landmark Commc'ns*, *Inc. v. Virginia*, 435 U.S. 829 (1978); *Smith v. Daily Mail Publishing Co.*, 443 U.S. 97 (1979); *Bartnicki v. Vopper*, 532 U.S. 514 (2001).
- 32. Defendants obtained the records lawfully, regardless of the status of disclosure. See *Bartnicki v. Vopper*, 532 U.S. 514 (2001).
- 33. Plaintiff cannot prevent publication or dissemination of the records, even if obtained through "calculated misdeeds." See *CBS*, *Inc. v. Davis*, 510 U.S. 1315 (1994).
- 34. Publication or dissemination of the records constitutes protected speech of the First Amendment of the United States Constitution and Article 1 Section 7 of the Pennsylvania Constitution.
- 35. The relief Plaintiff seeks violates Defendants' freedom of expression under the First Amendment of the United States Constitution and Article 1 Section 7 of the Pennsylvania Constitution.

- 36. Separate and distinct from federal protections, publication or dissemination of the records is protected under Article 1 Section 7 of the Pennsylvania Constitution.
- 37. The relief Plaintiff seeks constitutes a prior restraint forbidden under Article I § 7 of the Pennsylvania Constitution. See William Goldman Theatres, Inc. v. Dana, 405 Pa. 83 (1961); Willing v. Mazzocone, 482 Pa. 377 (1978).

WHEREFORE, for the reasons set forth above, Defendants Theodore C. Tanski and The McShane Firm, LLC, respectfully request that this Court deny Plaintiff's Petition for Preliminary Injunction in total.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: 4/1/2015

Date: 4///2015

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VERIFICATION

Theodore C. Tanski deposes and states that the facts set forth in the foregoing Answer to Plaintiff's Motion for Preliminary Injunction are true and correct to the best of his knowledge, information and belief. This Verification is made subject to the penalties of 18 Pa.C.S.A. § 4904 relating to unsworn falsification to authorities.

Date: 4-1-15

Theodore C. Tanski

VERIFICATION

Attorney Richard S. Roberts deposes and states that he is an attorney of record for The McShane Firm, LLC, and in that capacity is authorized on behalf of The McShane Firm, LLC to make this Verification. The contents of the foregoing instrument have been reviewed by Justin J, McShane, Esq., CEO of The McShane Firm, LLC, and the facts set forth in the foregoing Answer to Plaintiff's Motion for Preliminary Injunction are true and correct to the best of his knowledge, information and belief. This Verification is made subject to the penalties of 18 Pa.C.S.A. § 4904 relating to unsworn falsification to authorities.

Date: 4/1/2015

Richard S. Roberts for The McShane Firm, LLC

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

The undersigned hereby certifies that on the day of April, 2015 a true and correct copy of the above instrument was sent by electronic mail United States mail, postage prepaid, addressed to all known counsel of record, listed below.

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