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16 Daniel Ridge

17 SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

18 IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF ALAMEDA

19 UNLIMITED JURISDICTION

20 DANIEL RIDGE,) Case No. RG17847260
21 Plaintiff,) ASSIGNED FOR ALL PURPOSES TO
22 v.) JUDGE JOSCELYN JONES
23 ALAMEDA HEALTH SYSTEM,) DECLARATION OF CHRISTOPHER
24 a California public entity,) BANKS DESCRIBING HIS EFFORTS
25 and DOES 1 through 50, inclusive,) TO LOCATE AND TALK WITH DANIEL
26 Defendants.) RIDGE IN AUGUST 2024 AND
27) JANUARY 2025
28) TRIAL: February 14, 2025
29) TIME: 9:00 a.m.
30) DEPT: 19

31 I, Christopher Banks, declare:

32 1. I am an attorney licensed to practice law in the State of California. I
33 am counsel of record in this case for Plaintiff Daniel Ridge.
34 2. I have personal knowledge of the facts stated in this declaration and
35 could competently testify to them.

36 ///

1 3. During the late morning of August 2, 2024, I went into Oakland and
2 Emeryville to try and find Daniel Ridge since it had been some months since my
3 last contact with him.

4 4. I started by driving and looking in and around each place where I have
5 seen Daniel during the past 2½ years while he has been homeless: I checked all
6 the same neighborhoods, bus stops, bus routes, walking routes, stores, street
7 vendors, and food distribution spots.

8 5. I spoke with a worker at the meal distribution location which Daniel
9 used on a fairly regular basis during late 2023 and early 2024. This worker is
10 someone I've come to know based on my many visits to this food distribution
11 site during the past couple of years. He confirmed he had not seen Daniel pick
12 up meals recently - when I pressed him for a more concrete estimate, he said it
13 had probably been a couple of months since he had seen Daniel picking up
14 meals. I made sure the worker had my cell number and asked him to please call
15 or text me if he sees Daniel.

16 6. I next drove through the Oakland streets near where Daniel used to
17 live in his car, checking the same locations where I observed him walking and
18 hanging out during the summer of 2023. I parked in the lots for some of the big
19 box stores where I've previously seen Daniel pass through. After about 2¼
20 hours with no luck finding Daniel, I gave up and started driving back to the
21 freeway. I took a wrong turn and was driving a new route to the freeway when I
22 glanced towards the sidewalk while passing through an intersection. I was
23 shocked to recognize Daniel standing on the curb in a similar outfit as the last
24 time I had seen him (e.g., distinct hat and guitar bag on his back).

25 7. I immediately pulled over, parked in a nearby lot, and watched Daniel
26 to try and figure out where he might be heading. I always try to follow Daniel for
27 a little while before approaching him so that I can try and piece together Daniel's
28 ///

1 routes, patterns, and ultimately where he might be spending his nights (if he
2 has a tent or something like that in the area).

3 8. I followed Daniel, keeping a distance of about 100-200 feet to avoid
4 being seen, for about 45 minutes while he walked around, took a couple of
5 buses, rested at bus stops, and made his way back into downtown Oakland. I
6 observed multiple times that when Daniel stopped walking and put his stuff
7 down to take a rest, he would then start gesticulating with his hands like he was
8 carrying on a conversation. From what I could see, nobody actually engaged
9 Daniel in conversation - he just appeared to be talking to himself.

10 9. On at least half a dozen separate occasions when I observed Daniel
11 walk through busier sections of the sidewalk, I noticed that people who were
12 walking towards Daniel looked at him and then took at least a few steps out of
13 his way to give Daniel more space.

14 10. After about 45 minutes, I was not confident I would be able to
15 continue following Daniel without losing sight of him, so I approached him on the
16 sidewalk when he turned onto a relatively quiet side street. I approached Daniel
17 from behind and to his side. As I got closer to Daniel, I observed him moving his
18 head and mouth (when I could see it), and I could hear him talking aloud in a
19 continual manner. Although I could not get close enough to hear what he was
20 saying, I could clearly see that nobody else was around and that he was talking
21 to himself in what appeared to be a nonstop manner.

22 11. As I got closer to Daniel, I could see that, compared to when I had
23 last seen Daniel 6-7 months prior, his beard was longer, he had lost weight, and
24 he was moving more slowly. Attached as Exhibit 1 to this declaration are true
25 and correct copies of photos I took of Daniel Ridge on August 2, 2024.

26 12. Once I was within about 20 feet of Daniel and still behind him, I
27 slowed down and mildly said loudly and clearly, "Hi Daniel, it's me, Chris Banks -
28 your lawyer in your lawsuit against Alameda Health System - the hospital."

1 Daniel slowly turned towards me. He didn't look directly at me. I again said, "Hi
2 Daniel, it's me Chris Banks, your lawyer." This appeared to trigger Daniel, who
3 immediately tensed up and started scowling. He clenched his fists and appeared
4 to become angry but didn't say anything.

5 13. I continued to try and engage Daniel in conversation. I had my palms
6 up towards him and mildly said, "I just want to talk with you and give you some
7 updates about your lawsuit against AHS and the upcoming trial." At this point,
8 Daniel looked directly at me and started talking loudly, saying, "get away from
9 me. Get the fuck away from me. You work for the hospital." I stood my ground
10 and mildly said "I don't work for the hospital. I'm your lawyer. We're trying to
11 win your case and get you some money. Get you off the streets. Please let's
12 talk."

13 14. Daniel grew increasingly and visibly angry: his face contorted and
14 looked enraged, and he stepped towards me with fists clenched. Daniels started
15 yelling loudly and aggressively, "get the fuck away from me!" He took two more
16 steps toward me in what I would describe as a threatening manner.

17 15. While I did not think Daniel would actually charge me so long as I
18 gave him some space, I did not want to take that chance. I said, "ok, Daniel, I'm
19 sorry. I'll be around." I then walked away. As I walked away, Daniel kept yelling
20 "fuck you!" and "motherfucker!" very loudly.

21 16. On Thursday, January 23, 2025, I spent approximately 2½ hours
22 searching for Daniel Ridge on the streets of Oakland and Emeryville. I did not
23 find him. My efforts included looking in and around each place where I have
24 seen Daniel during the past 2½ years while he has been homeless: I checked all
25 the same neighborhoods, bus stops, bus routes, walking routes, stores, street
26 vendors, and food distribution spots.

27 17. I showed photos of Daniel to security guards, parking lot attendants,
28 and food distribution workers at these same spots. These photos included

1 closeups of Daniel's face and of him wearing the same outfit (give or take) that
2 I've seen Daniel wear for the past 2½ years. When I showed these photos to
3 people, I asked them if they recognized Daniel, and if so, how recently they had
4 seen him.

5 18. The only affirmative feedback I received was from a store employee
6 in Oakland who told me she vaguely recognized Daniel and was not sure but
7 estimated she had seen Daniel within the past month or so.

8 19. When I spoke with workers at the meal distribution location which
9 Daniel had used on a fairly regular basis during late 2023 and early 2024, the
10 workers confirmed they had not seen Daniel pick meals up there in at least a
11 few months.

12 20. I left my contact information at these locations, explained to people
13 that I'm an attorney representing Daniel in his civil lawsuit and that I was
14 urgently trying to contact Daniel before his trial begins next month (in
15 February), and asked people to please call or text me if they see Daniel.

16 21. On Friday, January 24, 2025, I spent approximately 3 hours searching
17 for Daniel Ridge on the streets of Oakland and Emeryville. I did not find him. My
18 efforts included looking in and around each place where I have seen Daniel
19 during the past 2½ years while he has been homeless. Similar to the day before,
20 I checked all the same neighborhoods, bus stops, bus routes, walking routes,
21 stores, street vendors, and food distribution locations. I spoke with street
22 vendors and store employees, showing them photos of Daniel's face and outfits.

23 22. When I showed people the photos of Daniel Ridge, I asked if they
24 recognized Daniel, but nobody with whom I spoke recognized him. I left my
25 contact information at these locations, explained to people that I'm an attorney
26 representing Daniel Ridge in his civil lawsuit and that I was urgently trying to
27 contact Daniel before his trial begins the following month. I asked people to
28 please call or text me if they see Daniel.

1 23. I then expanded my search radius to additional streets and
2 neighborhoods near the locations and routes where I have seen Daniel
3 previously. I did not find him.

4 24. On Monday, January 27, 2025, I began my search for Daniel Ridge by
5 driving around Oakland and Emeryville again, driving by and around all the same
6 spots and routes as the prior Friday, including all the places I've seen Daniel
7 during the past 2½ years.

8 25. I stopped back in the store where an employee had told me the prior
9 week that she thought she recalled seeing Daniel at some point during the past
10 month. She confirmed she had not seen Daniel during the past few days. I again
11 left my contact information and asked her (and any other employees working) to
12 call or text me if they saw Daniel.

13 26. I again expanded my search radius to include additional streets,
14 commercial areas, and neighborhoods near the locations and routes where I
15 have seen Daniel previously.

16 27. After searching for about 3 hours without seeing Daniel, I was driving
17 back along one of the main roads (which I had driven multiple times earlier that
18 day) when I spotted someone who, based on their outfit and hat, appeared to be
19 Daniel Ridge. He was standing in a small parking lot near a busy intersection.

20 28. I quickly parked on a nearby street, texted Daniel's court-approved
21 guardian ad litem (Marlea Dell'Anno) to alert her, and then tried to get close
22 enough to confirm it was Daniel without him seeing me yet.

23 29. I was able to get within about 100 feet of him while staying out of his
24 sight and then visually confirmed it was indeed Daniel Ridge: he was dressed in
25 the same outfit and hat as I observed him wearing during the previous 2½
26 years. He also had a small push cart (approximately the size of a shopping cart)
27 filled with belongings, including his guitars cases. This appeared to be the same
28 push cart he had with him in August 2024. Attached as Exhibit 2 to this

1 declaration are true and correct copies of photos I took of Daniel Ridge on
2 January 27, 2025.

3 30. I called Ms. Dell'Anno to let her know I visually confirmed it was
4 Daniel, that I would get her on FaceTime video once I was in close enough in
5 position to approach Daniel, and that I would try my best to get Daniel to speak
6 with her. Ms. Dell'Anno confirmed she would be waiting and ready.

7 31. I followed Daniel for a little while as he pushed his cart through the
8 streets and sidewalks. When he stopped or turned his body, I could see his head
9 and mouth moving, and he occasionally made hand movements as if he was
10 talking to someone. From what I observed, he appeared to be talking or
11 mumbling to himself nonstop: there was nobody else talking with him. I was not
12 close enough to hear what he was saying. This was similar behavior to what I
13 have previously observed of Daniel during my interactions with him during the
14 prior 2½ years, including most recently on August 2, 2024.

15 32. Once he turned onto a relatively quiet street, I approached Daniel.
16 There was no traffic at all, and nobody else was around - ambient noise was
17 minimal. I called Ms. Dell'Anno on FaceTime video, checked to make sure her
18 video and audio feed were working, and then put her on speaker and turned the
19 volume on my cell phone all the way up. I held the phone at about my waist
20 level in the middle of my torso so that Daniel would not think I was video
21 recording him and get paranoid or angry at me, and I had the camera pointed at
22 Daniel so that Ms. Dell'Anno could observe him and listen as I approached.

23 33. I approached Daniel from behind as he was walking. Once I was
24 within about 20 feet of Daniel, who was not facing me, I said loudly and politely,
25 "Hi Daniel. Hi Daniel, it's me, Chris Banks - your lawyer." Daniel kept walking,
26 didn't look back and didn't answer me, but I was close enough to observe him
27 shaking his head slightly - it looked like he heard me.

28 ///

1 34. I continued walking after Daniel and got closer - to within about 10
2 feet. I said loudly but politely, "Daniel, your trial is coming up next month versus
3 Alameda Health System. It really is going to happen this time. Trial starts on
4 February 14th in Department 19 in Oakland at 9 am." He did not respond, so I
5 repeated that information again, telling him, "your trial begins next month on
6 February 14th at 9 am and will be in Department 19 in Oakland. Can I please
7 talk to you for one minute - it's very important." At this point, I was still within
8 about 10 feet of Daniel and I was sure he heard me- he turned his head to the
9 side and appeared to be listening.

10 35. Daniel Ridge then brought his push cart to a stop and turned slowly
11 around to face me, but he was turned slightly and would not make eye contact
12 with me. He appeared even more haggard than the last time I saw him in
13 August 2024: Daniel now has a longer beard and I immediately noticed that he
14 is missing at least a couple of his top front teeth. He looked like he's aged 10
15 years since I last saw him.

16 36. When Daniel spoke, he sounded like an old man. His cadence was
17 slower than it used to be. His missing front teeth affected the way he talked.
18 Daniel said to me, "Don't interrupt me or I will walk away. I have severe brain
19 damage. I've had it for years. I was exposed to formaldehyde. I've had to potty
20 train myself again. I had to learn how to walk again. I have brain damage. Leave
21 me alone."

22 37. I then told Daniel, "the court appointed a guardian ad litem for you -
23 someone to help with your lawsuit. Your guardian would like to talk with you.
24 She's a woman. She's on the phone - can you please talk with her?" I held the
25 phone up towards Daniel, who was standing within about 8 feet from me. He
26 could see Ms. Dell'Anno on the phone screen and she spoke up, saying, "Hi
27 Daniel. My name is Marlea. Can I talk to you?"

28 ///

1 38. At this point, Daniel started to get visibly angry. He turned and faced
2 me directly for the first time, making eye contact. He started yelling at me
3 aggressively and loudly and somewhat incoherently. He was angrily yelling
4 something to the effect of, "I'm not talking to either of you, leave me alone!"

5 39. I was concerned that his anger was escalating quickly, as it had
6 during each of my prior interactions with him during the past 2½ years. Like
7 those prior encounters with Daniel, his face contorted with anger and his body
8 became tense and stiff. He clenched his fists. I was still standing within about 8
9 feet of him when I said one more time, "Daniel, please just talk with your
10 guardian. She's here to help you."

11 40. Daniel then turned his back to me and leaned forward towards his
12 cart. It appeared he was reaching into his cart to get something but my vision of
13 what he was doing was obstructed by his back. Daniel then spun around quickly
14 and took a couple steps aggressively toward me while angrily shouting at me. I
15 was still within about 10 feet of Daniel. Based on Daniel's anger and body
16 language, I felt sufficiently threatened to back off.

17 41. I immediately said loudly, "Ok Daniel, I'm sorry. I'm sorry" and held
18 my hands up placatingly as I quickly walked away from him. He did not follow
19 me. After a couple minutes he continued to walk down the street away from me.

20 42. I spoke with Ms. Dell'Anno briefly via the FaceTime feed which was
21 still running, and she agreed it was not safe to try and approach Daniel with the
22 phone again. I told her that I would wait a few minutes to let Daniel cool off
23 before approaching him again to serve him with a copy of defendant's Notice to
24 Plaintiff to Attend Trial. I had brought a hard copy of this Notice to Attend with
25 me but decided to wait to serve it until after we tried to get Daniel to talk with
26 Ms. Dell'Anno first.

27 43. I followed Daniel from a distance for about 10 minutes, hoping that
28 would be enough time for him to calm down. When he reached an intersection, I

1 approached him again and got within about 10 feet before I said loudly but
2 politely, "Daniel, it's me Chris Banks again. Your lawyer. I need to give you
3 these papers about your trial next month. Trial starts on February 14th at 9 am
4 in Department 19 in Oakland." I held the Notice to Attend out towards him.
5 Daniel turned towards me directly and immediately became very
6 angry. He took a couple of quick aggressive steps towards me. Daniel started
7 screaming at me, "Yes I know who you are. I remember you. You work for the
8 hospital. I'm sick. Leave me the fuck alone!"

9 45. I raised my hands placatingly and said, "Ok, ok. I'm leaving this here
10 for you. Please take it." I quickly placed the Notice to Attend on the sidewalk
11 about 10 feet in front of Daniel and in plain sight. I walked away slowly. Once I
12 was about 100 feet away from Daniel, I watched him pick up the Notice to
13 Attend Trial. He glanced at it and then angrily tore it into pieces. Daniel then
14 turned and began pushing his cart down the street away from me.

15 I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California
16 that the facts stated in this declaration are true and correct.

17 Dated: February 11, 2025

18 *Christopher Banks*
19 _____
20 Christopher Banks

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Exhibit 1



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Exhibit 2

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Crop



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