

Original

1

1 SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

2 COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES, CENTRAL DISTRICT

3  
4 SAMUEL A. PERRONI, ) CASE NO. 21STCP00108

5 Petitioner, )

6 vs. )

7 ALEX VILLANUEVA, IN HIS )  
8 OFFICIAL CAPACITY AS SHERIFF; )  
9 THE COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES )  
10 SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT; and )  
11 DOES 1 through 50, inclusive, )

12 Respondents. )  
13 \_\_\_\_\_ )

14  
15 REMOTE DEPOSITION OF PERSON MOST KNOWLEDGEABLE

16 SUZANNE ELAINE FINSTAD

17 WEST HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA

18 FRIDAY, APRIL 16, 2021

19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24 COALITION COURT REPORTERS  
25 JOB NO.: 162575  
DORIEN SAITO, CSR 12568, CLR

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES, CENTRAL DISTRICT

SAMUEL A. PERRONI, ) CASE NO. 21STCP00108  
)  
Petitioner, )  
)  
vs. )  
)  
ALEX VILLANUEVA, IN HIS )  
OFFICIAL CAPACITY AS SHERIFF;) )  
THE COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES )  
SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT; and )  
DOES 1 through 50, inclusive,) )  
)  
Respondents. )  
\_\_\_\_\_)

REMOTE DEPOSITION OF PERSON MOST  
KNOWLEDGEABLE SUZANNE ELAINE  
FINSTAD, taken on behalf of  
PETITIONER, in West Hollywood,  
California, commencing at 1:18  
p.m., Friday, April 16, 2021,  
before DORIEN SAITO, CSR 12568,  
CLR.

1           A P P E A R A N C E S :

2           FOR PETITIONER:

3                   QUATTLEBAUM, GROOMS & TULL PLLC  
4                   By: VINCENT O. CHADICK, Attorney at Law  
5                   4100 Corporate Center Drive  
6                   Suite 310  
7                   Springdale, Arkansas 72762  
8                   (479) 444-5200  
9                   vchadick@qgtlaw.com

10          FOR RESPONDENTS:

11                   POLLAK, VIDA & BARER  
12                   By: ANNA L. BIRENBAUM, Attorney at Law  
13                   11500 West Olympic Boulevard  
14                   Suite 400  
15                   Los Angeles, California 90064  
16                   (310) 551-3400  
17                   Anna@PollakVida.com

18          FOR THE DEPONENT:

19                   JASSY VICK CAROLAN, LLP  
20                   By: DUFFY CAROLAN, Attorney at Law  
21                   601 Montgomery Street  
22                   Suite 850  
23                   San Francisco, California 94111  
24                   (415) 539-3399  
25                   dcaerolan@jassyvick.com

          ALSO PRESENT:

                  SAMUEL A. PERRONI

Original

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

I N D E X

W I T N E S S :

SUZANNE ELAINE FINSTAD	PAGE
EXAMINATION BY MR. CHADICK	6
EXAMINATION MS. BIRENBAUM	73

INFORMATION REQUESTED:

(NONE)

UNANSWERED QUESTIONS:

PAGE:LINE
13:05
14:22
29:19
30:10
30:25
31:17
33:20
38:18
39:19
44:05
49:22
50:25
64:12
76:10
76:17
80:10

E X H I B I T S :

NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	PAGE
Exhibit 1	Excerpts from 2020 book entitled Natalie Wood: The Complete Biography	19

Original

5

1 WEST HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA; FRIDAY, APRIL 16, 2021

2 1:18 P.M.

3 -0o0-

4 \*\*\*

5 THE REPORTER: Good afternoon. Because  
6 we are all appearing remotely, I would like to  
7 remind everyone to be more conscious than ever of  
8 not speaking over each other. When there are  
9 simultaneous speakers, I will not be able to hear  
10 any of the words that are being said.

11 Pauses are very important to ensure that I have  
12 time to clarify the record and to ensure all objections  
13 are on the record.

14 Please also be aware that noises around  
15 your microphone cause disruptions in how words come  
16 through on a virtual platform. If you are not speaking,  
17 please mute yourself.

18 I will now swear in the witness.

19 \*\*\*

20 SUZANNE ELAINE FINSTAD,

21 having been duly administered an oath

22 in accordance with CCP 2094, was

23 examined and testified as follows:

24 ///

25 ///

Original

6

EXAMINATION

BY MR. CHADICK:

Q. Will you state your full name for the record, please.

A. Suzanne Elaine Finstad.

Q. Ms. Finstad, what is your day and month of birth, merely for purposes of identification.

A. September 14th.

Q. And I understood from your statement before we went on the record that today, you are in West Hollywood, California; is that correct?

A. Yes.

Q. Ms. Finstad, my name is Vincent Chadick. I represent the petitioner, Mr. Samuel Perroni in an action that is filed against the respondents Alex Villanueva in his official capacity as the sheriff of the count of Los Angeles and the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department.

I'm here to conduct your deposition. The purpose is for me to ask you questions, listen to your answers and report those answers and review those answers with my client so that my client can evaluate his claims and the defenses that are being raised to his claims in this lawsuit.

You, of course, are not a party to the lawsuit.

Original

7

1 You are being deposed as a neutral witness. I am not  
2 here to trick you or trap you or confuse you in any way.  
3 So if I ask you a question that you don't understand or  
4 that you find confusing, if you'd please stop me, tell  
5 me you don't understand the question or you find it  
6 confusing and I'll try to rephrase my question so that  
7 you and I both understand what I am asking; is that  
8 fair?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. If you don't stop me and tell me that you don't  
11 understand the question that I'm asking or that you find  
12 it confusing, I'm going to presume you do, in fact,  
13 understand the question that I'm asking and that you're  
14 answering it truthfully and fully as you've just sworn a  
15 moment ago to do; is that fair?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. If at any point, Ms. Finstad, you need to take  
18 a break, please just tell me. Okay?

19 A. Okay.

20 Q. I will try to, after the first 30 minutes or  
21 so, give you a realistic estimate of how long I think my  
22 questions will take after that; fair?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. Okay. You are here under a subpoena that we  
25 caused to be served. You're not here voluntarily and

Original

8

1 you were, in fact, served with a subpoena; correct,  
2 Ms. Finstad?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. And your lawyer, Ms. Carolan, is here  
5 representing you here today; correct?

6 A. Yes, by Zoom.

7 Q. Correct. And you're aware that we issued a  
8 notice of your deposition and an amended notice  
9 rescheduling the deposition until this afternoon, and  
10 that was given to the respondents and their lawyer in  
11 this case and the respondents' lawyer, Ms. Birenbaum, is  
12 also present by Zoom. You're aware of that; correct?

13 A. As you're telling me. I'm not sure that I had  
14 any prior recollection of Ms. Birenbaum.

15 Q. Okay. Well, I do want to make that  
16 representation to you, then. Ms. Birenbaum, whom you  
17 can see on the screen, is a lawyer for the respondents  
18 in the lawsuit that my client Mr. Perroni has caused to  
19 be filed.

20 What, Ms. Finstad, is your vocation?

21 A. I am a writer.

22 Q. And --

23 MS. BIRENBAUM: Let me go ahead with something  
24 instead of waiting for a break. I noticed that we are  
25 recording this Zoom and I wanted to make an objection



1 for the record. I'm sorry. I did not mean to interrupt  
2 your flow.

3 THE REPORTER: I -- I'm sorry. I didn't hear  
4 what you're saying. You're very faint.

5 MS. BIRENBAUM: Okay. Is this better?

6 THE REPORTER: Yes. Would you state again,  
7 what you just stated.

8 MS. BIRENBAUM: Sure. I wanted to make an  
9 objection for the record. I'm sorry for interrupting,  
10 so I apologize. Instead of waiting for a break and I  
11 notice that this is being recorded via the Zoom  
12 recording function. There's a sign at the top left of  
13 my monitor.

14 Code of Civil Procedure Section 2025.340 sets  
15 forth these procedures for using recorded deposition  
16 testimony. And we reserve the right to object to  
17 evidentiary use of this Zoom to the extent that a Zoom  
18 recording does not comply with the Code section. Thank  
19 you so much.

20 MR. CHADICK: Yeah. And I know Ms. Carolan is  
21 going to join in that, but I want to make one response  
22 to Ms. Birenbaum's statement.

23 When you state that you noticed that it is  
24 being recorded, we, of course, gave you advanced notice  
25 prior to today, and your office has acknowledged that

Original

10

1 notice and previewed that it would be making an  
2 objection. It's not a surprise recording.

3 MS. BIRENBAUM: Not at all. You just hadn't  
4 stated that you're being -- record button status. I  
5 might make the record. But I can see the light status  
6 on that screen, so --

7 MS. CAROLAN: And counsel for the deponent  
8 joins in that objection.

9 MR. CHADICK: Thank you.

10 BY MR. CHADICK:

11 Q. And, Ms. Finstad, you are a published writer;  
12 correct?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. And how many books have you published?

15 A. I have to stop and think. I believe it's  
16 eight.

17 Q. Wonderful. Good for you.

18 Have you written any fiction books that have  
19 been published?

20 A. No.

21 Q. All of the books you have published, eight, you  
22 believe, are non-fiction; correct?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. I know you had written or published two books  
25 regarding the late Natalie Wood. Those are both

Original

11

1 biographies; is that right?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. Have you written, among your other six  
4 published books, biographies?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. What is a biography?

7 A. A biography is a non-fiction account of a  
8 person's life.

9 Q. And in your biographies, are you making a  
10 good-faith effort to present only truth and accuracy  
11 regarding the events, information and people that are  
12 subject to your biography?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. I'm going to ask you questions about, again,  
15 the books that have been published by you regarding  
16 Ms. Natalie Wood.

17 First I want to go to the most recent  
18 publication, the 2000 book, Natalie Wood: The Complete  
19 Biography. Are you aware of any errors of substance in  
20 your book?

21 A. No. But in your question, there's an error.  
22 It's not a 2000 book.

23 Q. I'm sorry. You do this for more than half of  
24 your life, and you lose decades. Thank you for  
25 correcting me.

1                   In your 2020 book, Natalie Wood: The Complete  
2 Biography, are you of any -- aware of any errors in  
3 substance?

4                   MS. CAROLAN: I would interject an objection  
5 based on the California Shield Law that protections  
6 under Article 1, Section 2 of the California  
7 Constitution as well as Evidence Code Section 1070 which  
8 constitute the reporter Shield Law in addition to the  
9 reporters qualified reporters' privilege under the First  
10 Amendment and the common law.

11                   And to the extents that you are asking for  
12 unpublished information, which is asking for errors in  
13 which she did publish, would be unpublished information,  
14 we're going to object.

15                   It's going to be a standing objection, I think,  
16 throughout this deposition. So perhaps we can just call  
17 that the standing objection.

18                   MR. CHADICK: That -- that's fair. And thank  
19 you, Ms. Carolan, for making the objection and lodging  
20 the objection. You understand that our response to the  
21 objection is that that privilege that you've referenced  
22 is not absolute, and it may be waived. And the  
23 questions that we will be asking will be, in our belief  
24 and estimation, subject to the waiver if a privilege  
25 exists and that's because we're asking about published

Original

13

1 materials. So I understand the standing objection. I  
2 appreciate your listening to my summary response to  
3 that.

4 BY MR. CHADICK:

5 Q. Subject to that objection, Ms. Finstad, I will  
6 ask you again: Are you aware of any errors of substance  
7 in your 2020 book that you published, Natalie Wood: The  
8 Complete Biography?

9 MS. CAROLAN: I would interject the same  
10 objection and instruct the witness not to answer unless  
11 she elects to do so.

12 THE WITNESS: I'll follow the advice of  
13 counsel.

14 MR. CHADICK: And -- and, Ms. Carolan, you're  
15 going to have to -- I mean we'll certify this. But  
16 you're going to have to explain to me why you believe  
17 that your client has any privilege against testifying  
18 regarding something that she has published and  
19 circulated in mass media?

20 MS. CAROLAN: Because you're asking not about  
21 the published information, but in errors that would come  
22 to her from information that's not necessarily  
23 published. So it is a question that invokes the  
24 protections.

25 MR. CHADICK: Well, we're -- we're going to

1 certify this question and I'm going to come back and ask  
2 for costs on it. I don't mean to be confrontational,  
3 but I don't think that there is anything asking about a  
4 question that is privileged when the question is: In  
5 your published material, are you aware of any errors.

6 And so I'll ask you it one more time. I  
7 understand the objection. I understand the instruction  
8 to the counsel's witness.

9 BY MR. CHADICK:

10 Q. I want to make clear that you're refusing to  
11 answer that question; is that correct, Ms. Finstad?

12 A. I'm following the advice of my counsel.

13 Q. And you're refusing to answer the question  
14 whether you're aware of any errors of substance in your  
15 book published in 2020 called Natalie Wood: The  
16 Complete Biography; is that correct?

17 A. I'm following the advice of my counsel not to  
18 respond to that question for the reasons of the  
19 objections that she raised.

20 Q. Okay. And I understand that -- that you're  
21 following the advice of your counsel.

22 My question is simply: Are you refusing to  
23 answer the question if you are aware of any errors of  
24 substance in your book published in 2020, Natalie Wood:  
25 The Complete Biography? That's a yes or no.

Original

15

1 A. I repeat the answer that I gave earlier, which  
2 is that I am following the advice of counsel.

3 Q. Well, that's a nonresponsive answer and again,  
4 I'll certify that.

5 The first iteration of this book that was  
6 subsequently published in 2020 was called what?

7 A. Natasha: The Biography of Natalie Wood.

8 Q. When was it written?

9 A. It was written over the course of approximately  
10 four years --

11 Q. And --

12 A. -- prior to its publication.

13 Q. And -- and you wrote that book in its entirety;  
14 correct?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. And that book was published in 2001?

17 A. To the best of my knowledge.

18 Q. The second and only other iteration of this  
19 book is the one I referred to earlier published in 2020  
20 called Natalie Wood: The Complete Biography; correct?

21 A. Yes, that's correct.

22 Q. When did you write that book?

23 A. I wrote that book in 2019.

24 Q. What was the purpose of this second iteration?

25 A. It was an elaboration and update of my previous

1 book, Natasha, and an anniversary edition.

2 Q. Did your second iteration of your Natalie Wood  
3 book correct any mistakes in the first book, which I'll  
4 refer to as Natasha?

5 A. As I stated earlier, it was an elaboration, not  
6 a correction.

7 Q. Well, just to be clear, it can be both. It can  
8 both correct and elaborate; correct? It could,  
9 hypothetically; correct?

10 MS. CAROLAN: I'm going to object as vague.

11 MR. CHADICK: Well, if you're objecting to the  
12 form of the question, I would ask that you make the  
13 objection as to the form of the question and not in a  
14 suggestive or argumentative way.

15 MS. CAROLAN: Just use one word, vague.

16 MR. CHADICK: Well, is that an objection to the  
17 form of the question?

18 MS. CAROLAN: It's an objection, yes.

19 BY MR. CHADICK:

20 Q. Is it your testimony, Ms. Finstad, that your  
21 second iteration of the book regarding Natalie Wood did  
22 not correct any errors in the original book that you  
23 published in or around 2001?

24 A. It's -- my representation of it is -- as I  
25 said, it's an elaboration, possibly a clarification and



1 expansion of my original book.

2 Q. And I take it from your answer, because you  
3 didn't refer to correction of any errors, that the  
4 second iteration of the book did not correct any errors  
5 contained in the first iteration of the book; correct?

6 MS. CAROLAN: It misstates her testimony.

7 You can answer, Ms. Finstad, to the extent you  
8 can.

9 THE WITNESS: I agree that it misstates what I  
10 said. I will, once again, repeat the new edition of the  
11 book was to expand on earlier information in Natasha,  
12 and in that process, possibly clarify and be more  
13 expansive and new information that had come to light.

14 BY MR. CHADICK:

15 Q. Did the second iteration of your book correct  
16 any mistakes that were contained in the first iteration  
17 of your book?

18 MS. CAROLAN: Asked and answered.

19 BY MR. CHADICK:

20 Q. The question stands, Ms. Finstad.

21 A. I answered the question several times  
22 previously. I don't know how else to explain it to  
23 elucidate it to you.

24 Q. I don't need you to elucidate it, ma'am, and I  
25 don't want to argue with you or your lawyer. I simply

1 want a yes-or-no answer to a yes-or-no question which  
2 is: Did the second iteration of your book correct any  
3 mistakes in the first iteration of your book regarding  
4 Natalie Wood?

5 A. I don't think it's a question that applies to  
6 the new iteration of the book. It is a book that  
7 expands, clarifies and adds new information. Correction  
8 doesn't come into the equation.

9 Q. Okay. In terms of expanding, your word, can  
10 you explain what the expansion is that's contained in  
11 the second iteration of your book regarding  
12 Natalie Wood?

13 A. It's in the book.

14 Q. What did you expand upon?

15 A. Well, you'd have to read the book in its  
16 entirety to see. It's hard -- you know, it's more than  
17 I can explain. It's in the book.

18 Q. Can you name one thing that you expanded upon  
19 in the second iteration of the book?

20 A. That's just too broad a question to answer.

21 Q. I'm asking you if you can identify one item in  
22 the second iteration of your book regarding Natalie Wood  
23 that you expanded upon from the first iteration of your  
24 book.

25 Can you do that?

Original

19

1 A. Well, it is self-evident in the book.

2 Q. But can you do it under oath in this  
3 deposition, identify one item of expansion?

4 A. What's the purpose of explaining what's in the  
5 book? It's self-evident.

6 Q. Ms. Finstad, can you identify one item of  
7 expansion in your book, the second iteration of which  
8 you published in 2020, from the first iteration of your  
9 book?

10 A. Well, as I say, you'd have to look at the book  
11 and read what I expanded upon. It included the  
12 circumstances of her life and circumstances of her  
13 death, certain aspects of which I had new information  
14 about.

15 MR. CHADICK: I am going to pull up for you  
16 what we're going to mark as Exhibit 1.

17 (The aforementioned document was  
18 marked Exhibit 1 for  
19 identification.)

20 BY MR. CHADICK:

21 Q. This is -- has been shared, Ms. Finstad, with  
22 your lawyer and Ms. Birenbaum. This is the cover page,  
23 I will represent to you, of your 2020 book, and there  
24 are pages of excerpts from the book. Okay?

25 And I first am going to -- and I know we sent

1 you, with the permission of your lawyer, directly a copy  
2 of your book. And I first want to ask you, if you will,  
3 please, to turn your attention what I'm showing on the  
4 screen to Page 452 of your book.

5 A. Just so you know, I can't see anything except  
6 the description of it. There's nothing on the screen  
7 that shows up.

8 Q. Oh, really? Oh, let's see. So you can't see  
9 the book right now, the excerpt from the book?

10 A. No. I see a list of excerpts, declaration,  
11 Louis Danoff, but the actual pages are not visible.

12 Q. Okay. You have the book in front of you;  
13 correct?

14 A. Yes, I do.

15 Q. Okay. If you would please go to Page 452 of  
16 the book. And when I reference "the book" now, I mean  
17 what we're going to designate as Exhibit 1. And this is  
18 excerpts from your 2020 book entitled Natalie Wood: The  
19 Complete Biography.

20 And on Page 452, if you would, please go to the  
21 third full paragraph. And will you please read the  
22 first sentence of that paragraph for the record.

23 A. Are you referring to homicide detectives?

24 Q. Yes, ma'am.

25 A. "Homicide detectives in the L.A. Sheriff's

1 Department keep what they call a 'murder book,' the  
2 official record of a homicide investigation" --

3 THE REPORTER: I need you to read that slowly.  
4 I'm sorry.

5 THE WITNESS: Oh, that's all right. No  
6 worries.

7 "Homicide detectives in the L.A. Sheriff's  
8 Department keep what they call a 'murder book,' the  
9 official record of a homicide" -- got it?

10 "The official record of a homicide  
11 investigation. I was given access to Natalie Wood's  
12 murder book. There I found the buried clues to what  
13 really happened on the last weekend of her life."

14 BY MR. CHADICK:

15 Q. And I'll stop you there. Thank you,  
16 Ms. Finstad. Right now, I really want to focus on --  
17 and I -- I'm grateful that you read those -- the first  
18 two sentences of the three sentences that you read.

19 First, I just want to simply ask you: Those  
20 first two sentences that you read from your book, are  
21 those statements true and accurate?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. Okay. You refer in your book to Lou Danoff;  
24 correct?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. All right. I'm going to -- tell me who -- tell  
2 me how you now Lou Danoff. Who is he?

3 MS. CAROLAN: I'm going to object, same  
4 standing objection, that it calls for unpublished  
5 information.

6 And the deponent can answer to the extent it  
7 doesn't call for -- it calls -- it goes -- you can  
8 answer to the extent it calls for published information.

9 BY MR. CHADICK:

10 Q. So I -- that -- let me rephrase my question,  
11 Ms. Finstad.

12 Based upon what you published in your book,  
13 Natalie Wood -- I'm going to interrupt myself and say  
14 this: When I reference "your book, Natalie Wood," I am  
15 going to reference the 2020 publication. If later in  
16 the deposition I reference "Natasha," I will be  
17 referencing the 2001 publication; is that fair?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. Okay. My question is based upon materials  
20 published in your book, Natalie Wood, can you tell me  
21 who Lou Danoff is?

22 A. As I wrote in the book, he was a retired police  
23 officer to whom I was referred by Duane Rasure.

24 Q. And, Ms. Finstad, Mr. Danoff gave a deposition  
25 in this case on March 26, 2021. And Mr. Danoff on Page

1 9, beginning Line 1, offered this testimony, quote,  
2 "A murder book is a collection of the  
3 investigation reports, photographs, autopsy reports,  
4 supplemental attachments that enhance your  
5 presentation." Period. "Basically, it's a collection  
6 of materials that you would use if you were going to go  
7 forward with a prosecution." Period, unquote.

8 Is there anything in Mr. Danoff's description  
9 that I just read to you from his testimony of a  
10 Los Angeles County Sheriff Department's murder book that  
11 you know is not accurate?

12 A. I'm not sure I understand the question.

13 Q. Okay. Well, the -- the question came after you  
14 had to listen to the testimony. So I am going to ask  
15 you to listen to this testimony once more and tell me if  
16 there is anything in the testimony, Ms. Finstad, that  
17 you know to be not accurate. Okay?

18 And here's Mr. Danoff's testimony, quote,  
19 "A murder book is a collection of the  
20 investigation reports, photographs, autopsy reports,  
21 supplemental attachments that enhance your presentation.  
22 Basically, it's a collection of materials that you would  
23 use if you were going to go forward with the  
24 prosecution."

25 MS. CAROLAN: I'm just going to object. It

1 seems to call for expert testimony, not percipient  
2 witness testimony. Also --

3 BY MR. CHADICK:

4 Q. Well, I'm not ask- -- I'm not asking for expert  
5 testimony. I'm just asking you based upon your  
6 knowledge, Ms. Finstad, is there anything in that  
7 statement that you find inaccurate?

8 MS. BIRENBAUM: I'm also going to object it  
9 calls for speculation. The question is overbroad and  
10 vague and ambiguous.

11 BY MR. CHADICK:

12 Q. Okay. Sorry, Ms. Finstad. This is not  
13 directed at you.

14 MR. CHADICK: Ms. Birenbaum, I'm going to ask  
15 you to limit your objections to non-argumentative and  
16 non-suggestive statements. That's improper, and I think  
17 you know that. All right?

18 MS. BIRENBAUM: What in my statement was  
19 argumentative or improper, sir? I said I'm going to  
20 object and raised the objection. That is standard.

21 MR. CHADICK: The -- the objection is to form.  
22 We can look at a number of cases that would say that  
23 argumentative, you can go to CCP Section 2017.010, is  
24 not a proper objection to use in a deposition.

25 MS. BIRENBAUM: I didn't object it was



Original

25

1 argumentative. I gave you specific reasons, sir.

2 MR. CHADICK: Okay. I'm going to ask you to  
3 limit your objection to exactly what it is. And if it's  
4 to the form, to leave it at that and not to argue or  
5 suggest to the witness. Thank you.

6 BY MR. CHADICK:

7 Q. And -- and so, Ms. Finstad, my question is --  
8 and I understand that it may draw objections to the form  
9 and I'm going to ask you to answer it if you can.

10 Are you aware of anything in Mr. Danoff's  
11 description of a murder book that is not accurate?

12 A. I don't think I really have standing to answer  
13 that question since I'm not a homicide detective nor a  
14 retired homicide detective. My sole understanding of it  
15 is what I've been told by others in the homicide  
16 division, and it might not be the same from person to  
17 person.

18 Q. Well, based upon your understanding of murder  
19 book, which you wrote about, Ms. Finstad, on Page 452 of  
20 Natalie Wood and you just wrote, is there anything in  
21 Mr. Danoff's description that you know to be inaccurate?

22 A. I don't know that inaccurate is a word. I  
23 think it's a question of description. I think it -- you  
24 know, one person might describe it differently than  
25 another person.

Original

26

1 Q. That's fair. And -- and I understand that.  
2 And so I'm asking a different question, and you've  
3 answered it. You're not aware of anything that's  
4 inaccurate that you believe is inaccurate in his  
5 statement. Thank you.

6 You wrote and you just read it in the second  
7 sentence, quote, "I was given access to Natalie Wood's  
8 murder book"; correct?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. Is that statement in your book, Ms. Finstad,  
11 true and accurate?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. If you would please, returning to Exhibit 1,  
14 that's an excerpt of Natalie Wood. Go to Page 458. And  
15 I'm going to ask you to read for the record beginning  
16 with Chapter 31 at the bottom of 458. And I'm going to  
17 ask you to read through Line 13 on Page 459, just so you  
18 can queue it, that line ends "meant to be seen."

19 A. Okay. You want all of that read aloud?

20 Q. Yes, ma'am, please.

21 A. I'll try to go slowly for the court reporter.

22 "On a tip from the genial Rasure, I dropped his  
23 name to an LAPD detective, Louis Danoff, with the  
24 nickname "Sweet Lou", and persuaded him to let me see  
25 the murder book for the Wood investigation, which did,

Original

27

1 in fact, exist.

2 "Within a week, I met "Sweet Lou" in his  
3 sheriff's department office on the outskirts of  
4 downtown. My mother, who is in Los Angeles for  
5 Thanksgiving, came along, a camera tucked into her  
6 purse. "Sweet Lou" escorted both of us to a small,  
7 spare room. Inside were a long table and several  
8 chairs. I set up my laptop on the table and "Sweet Lou"  
9 returned with one or two boxes he identified as  
10 Natalie Wood's murder book.

11 "Then he left the room and closed the door.  
12 Uncertain how long I would have what I was permitted to  
13 see or whether I could document it, I began to enter the  
14 contents of the murder book into my laptop as quickly as  
15 I could type. I asked my mother to take photographs.  
16 We both kept an eye on the door anxious that "Sweet Lou"  
17 might return with restrictions. Neither of us said  
18 anything. We both got the sense that we were looking at  
19 something that was not meant to be seen."

20 Q. Thank you, Ms. Finstad.

21 Are all of those statements that you just read  
22 and published in Natalie Wood true and accurate?

23 A. To the best of my knowledge, yes.

24 Q. Was this in November -- I mean, I take -- I  
25 gather that because your mother was in for Thanksgiving.

1 Was this in November?

2 A. It would be -- oh, go ahead.

3 MS. CAROLAN: Are you asking her the date of  
4 when she went?

5 MR. CHADICK: Yes.

6 MS. CAROLAN: Well, I'm just going to raise the  
7 standing objection, unless that information is  
8 published.

9 BY MR. CHADICK:

10 Q. So will you say when you were there?

11 A. It was within a short time period of  
12 Thanksgiving. I can't recall beginning, after. It was,  
13 you know, in that general timeframe.

14 Q. And -- and was it in 1999 or 2000? And again,  
15 putting this in context, Natasha was published in 2001.

16 A. I'm sorry. I don't independently recollect the  
17 year.

18 Q. How did you -- strike that.

19 You referenced that you received a tip from  
20 Mr. Rasure. What was the tip?

21 A. The existence of the murder book.

22 Q. You mentioned that you persuaded Louis Danoff  
23 to let you see the murder book. What was the  
24 persuasion?

25 MS. CAROLAN: Standing objection. And unless

1 the deponent elects to answer the question based on  
2 unpublished information. That's her decision. If it  
3 could be answered based on published information, no  
4 objection.

5 THE WITNESS: I think, as I refer to in my  
6 book, it was a tip from Rasure who, in turn, tipped me  
7 off to telephone Mr. Danoff.

8 BY MR. CHADICK:

9 Q. And how -- where did Mr. Rasure's tip occur?  
10 Was that by phone or was that in person?

11 MS. CAROLAN: The same objection. I would  
12 instruct the witness not to answer unless she elects to  
13 waive the protections or the information is published.

14 BY MR. CHADICK:

15 Q. Are you refusing to answer that question,  
16 Ms. Finstad?

17 A. As it states in the book, it was a conversation  
18 with Mr. Rasure.

19 Q. Okay. Did Mr. Rasure show you anything?

20 MS. CAROLAN: Same objection.

21 MS. BIRENBAUM: I'm going to object as vague  
22 and ambiguous.

23 MS. CAROLAN: So just to be clear, I'm  
24 instructing the witness not to answer unless the answer  
25 can come from published information or she elects to

1 waive the protections of the Shield Law.

2 THE WITNESS: I don't believe that is in the  
3 published information and I don't desire to waive the  
4 protections of the Shield Law.

5 MR. CHADICK: We'll certify that question.

6 BY MR. CHADICK:

7 Q. Where did you view the murder book?

8 A. As it states in my book, it was in a sheriff's  
9 office building on the outskirts of downtown.

10 Q. Was it in something called the Biscailuz  
11 Center, if I'm pronouncing that correctly?

12 MS. CAROLAN: Objection to the extent it calls  
13 for unpublished information.

14 Instruct the witness not to answer unless that,  
15 in answering, come from the published information or she  
16 elects to waive the protections.

17 THE WITNESS: Unpublished information.

18 BY MR. CHADICK:

19 Q. How did you -- you mentioned in your book that  
20 you met with "Sweet Lou" at a Sheriff's Department  
21 office. That was based upon a telephone call  
22 conversation that you arranged the meeting; is that  
23 correct?

24 A. As it infers in the book, yes.

25 Q. It infers in the book that you knew where to

1 go. How did you know where to go?

2 A. As it -- again --

3 MS. CAROLAN: I'm just going to raise the same  
4 standing objection and instruct the witness not to  
5 answer unless she elects to do so waiving the  
6 protections or the information could be gleaned from  
7 published information -- the answer can be gleaned from  
8 published information.

9 THE WITNESS: I elect not to answer for those  
10 reasons.

11 MR. CHADICK: Certify the question.

12 BY MR. CHADICK:

13 Q. Where did you get the information published in  
14 your book that Louis Danoff's nickname is "Sweet Lou"?

15 A. I believe it states in the book that that was  
16 the nickname that he had as per Duane Rasure.

17 Q. Can you describe Louis Danoff's appearance? Do  
18 you remember him?

19 MS. CAROLAN: I'm going to object. Same  
20 standing objection and instruct the witness not to  
21 answer unless she elects to waive the protections or the  
22 descriptions in the published information.

23 MR. CHADICK: All right. And -- and just -- I  
24 don't want to keep doing this, either, but I'm going to  
25 one more time. This is published materials. Any

Original

32

1 privilege has been waived and I'm asking her about  
2 materials that she published. So we'll certify  
3 the question --

4 MS. CAROLAN: Well, you're -- you're asking --

5 MR. CHADICK: Wait, wait. I'm sorry. We'll  
6 certify the question. We'll take it back up. And --  
7 and if we're -- if I'm correct, we will do this again.  
8 I understand that you're making objections. I just want  
9 to make clear you understand, you know, what I'm relying  
10 upon, and I think my law is good.

11 Ayala versus Ayers, for instance, at  
12 668 F. Supp. 2d 1248 for the U.S. District Court in the  
13 Southern District of California. And it explains that  
14 that privilege is not absolute, and it can be waived.  
15 And I think it's waived upon the publish of the material  
16 so --

17 MS. CAROLAN: So the California Supreme Court  
18 discussing the Shield Law protections in the civil  
19 context is different than the qualified reporter's  
20 privilege. You are correct in addressing the qualified  
21 reporter's privilege. But in California, the  
22 protections for unpublished information in a civil case  
23 are absolute.

24 So if you want to ask the question, it would be  
25 helpful to reference specific passages that maybe



1 described Danoff. That's the way to do it that doesn't  
2 invoke unpublished information.

3 MR. CHADICK: Well, again, I think I'm doing  
4 that and I'm just asking the witness if to -- to try to  
5 corroborate her own statements from what she's written  
6 in the book and what she's testified is true and  
7 accurate now, to the best of her knowledge, with the  
8 qualifier. If she can describe Mr. Danoff, whom she  
9 refers to in her published materials. That's the  
10 question.

11 MS. CAROLAN: A description of her sources and  
12 what is contained in the published information are two  
13 different things, so I -- I will stand on that  
14 objection. And again, suggest if you have a specific  
15 passage in the book you want to refer her to, that might  
16 get you what you want.

17 MR. CHADICK: Again, I've refer- -- I've  
18 referred her to it. She's read it. Thank you.

19 BY MR. CHADICK:

20 Q. I gather that you are refusing to answer the  
21 question if you could describe Mr. Danoff, whom you  
22 refer in the book -- to in the book; correct,  
23 Ms. Finstad?

24 A. I'm following my counsel's advice.

25 Q. And you are refusing to answer that question;

1 is that correct?

2 A. I'm following my counsel's advice not to answer  
3 the question so that I don't waive my privileges.

4 Q. Thank you. What is your mother's name that you  
5 refer to in the book?

6 A. Elaine Finstad.

7 Q. Pardon my insensitivity in asking this: Is  
8 your mother living?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. Is your mother a journalist or reporter or  
11 author?

12 MS. CAROLAN: Object as immaterial, irrelevant.

13 BY MR. CHADICK:

14 Q. You can answer.

15 A. Would you repeat that? I'm sorry.

16 Q. Yes, ma'am. Is your mother a journalist or  
17 reporter or author?

18 A. No.

19 Q. Where does your -- what state and city does  
20 your mother live in?

21 A. She lives in Texas, in Conroe.

22 Q. Did your mother give you photographs that she  
23 took of the murder book that was provided to you by  
24 Mr. Danoff?

25 A. Don't know how to answer that question. We

1 both had the camera, and I don't recall today whether I  
2 took all the photographs.

3 Q. I understand from your writing -- and maybe I'm  
4 incorrect -- that your mother had, quote, "a camera  
5 tucked into her purse."

6 Did you also, Ms. Finstad, have a camera?

7 A. It was my camera.

8 Q. Okay. Was it a digital camera?

9 A. Too early for that.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. No.

12 Q. Okay. Was your mother or you able to  
13 photographically record everything in the one or two  
14 boxes of murder book that was provided to you?

15 A. Photographically?

16 Q. Yes, ma'am?

17 A. Is that what you asked?

18 Q. Yes.

19 A. I believe as it states in the book, no.

20 Q. How long did you have access to the murder  
21 book?

22 A. To the best of my recollection, several hours.

23 Q. Your -- the passage that you read references  
24 Mr. Danoff as an LAPD detective. Now, there's a  
25 difference between substantive errors and typographical

1 errors. Is that accurate that he was a LAPD detective?

2 A. I think that was an editorial mistake. It  
3 should have been L.A.S.D.

4 Q. Okay. Thank you.

5 You write that Mr. Danoff returned with one or  
6 two boxes he identified as Natalie Wood's murder book.  
7 Was it one or two?

8 A. I -- the reason I wrote one -- oh, excuse me.  
9 I wrote one or two because I was not certain in the  
10 years that had passed whether it was one or two.

11 Q. How much of the contents were your mother and  
12 you able to get through?

13 MS. CAROLAN: I'm going to object, standing  
14 objection.

15 BY MR. CHADICK:

16 Q. So your mother went through it -- the -- the  
17 murder book boxes; correct?

18 A. As I wrote in the book, she reviewed what I  
19 took out and laid aside.

20 Q. Was she able to review everything?

21 A. I could not speak for her.

22 MS. CAROLAN: Objection; calls for speculation.

23 BY MR. CHADICK:

24 Q. Well, I'm not asking you to speculate. I'm  
25 just asking you to tell me what you saw her do in the

1 room with you, Ms. Finstad.

2 Did you see her go through everything in the  
3 murder book?

4 A. I was more concerned with try to look at the  
5 materials myself than what my mother was doing, so I  
6 really can't answer that fully.

7 Q. You think, based upon your testimony from a  
8 moment ago, recalling a couple of decades ago, that you  
9 may have been in the room several hours with the murder  
10 book. Was that continuous -- however long the duration  
11 was, was it continuous or did you take breaks and leave  
12 the room?

13 A. It was continuous.

14 Q. Did your laptop have a plug-in?

15 A. It had a plug-in, yes.

16 Q. Were you plugged in at the time you were going  
17 through the murder book?

18 A. I can't be sure.

19 Q. Do you recall ever not having your computer  
20 open and entering materials, as you've described, in  
21 your book while accessing the murder book?

22 A. I'm sorry. Do you mind re- -- repeating that?

23 Q. No, I don't. That was an inartful [sic]  
24 question. Thank you.

25 You referenced that you were entering

1 information into your computer; correct?

2 A. Correct.

3 Q. And did that information wind up in your book,  
4 what you entered?

5 A. I don't know if it did directly.

6 Q. Do you know if any of the information that you  
7 entered into your computer wound up in your book  
8 Natalie Wood?

9 A. You know, I don't think it did per se. It  
10 would have been with my subsequent research and  
11 extrapolation.

12 Q. And so my inartful question, which I'll try to  
13 make more understandable: Did you have your computer  
14 open the entire time that you were going through the  
15 murder book?

16 A. I believe I did. I can't be 100 percent  
17 positive.

18 Q. Did you take any handwritten notes while you  
19 were reviewing the murder book?

20 MS. CAROLAN: Well, object, standing objection  
21 and instruct the witness not to answer unless that  
22 information can be gleaned from the published  
23 information or she elects to waive the protections of  
24 the Shield Law.

25 THE WITNESS: I'm going to choose not to answer

Original

39

1 that because it's not published.

2 BY MR. CHADICK:

3 Q. In your book, is there any reference to your  
4 taking handwritten notes of the contents of the murder  
5 book?

6 A. I don't believe there is.

7 Q. Your book writes, quote, "I began to enter the  
8 contents of the murder book into my laptop as quickly as  
9 I could type," unquote.

10 What contents were you entering that you  
11 referred to in your book, Natalie Wood?

12 MS. CAROLAN: Standing objection.

13 BY MR. CHADICK:

14 Q. Go ahead.

15 A. I would just going to say we'd have to read  
16 from my book. As -- what I think I just read to you  
17 earlier what I wrote in the book, that I typed furiously  
18 into my laptop.

19 Q. And so when you used the -- the word "contents"  
20 in your book, you write the phrase "contents of the  
21 murder book" you entered into your computer, what did  
22 you mean by "contents of the murder book"?

23 MS. CAROLAN: Same objection. And I would  
24 instruct the witness not to answer unless the  
25 information can be gleaned from published information or

1 she elects to waive the protections under the Shield  
2 Law.

3 BY MR. CHADICK:

4 Q. Okay. Ms. Finstad, can I glean from the  
5 published information what the contents of the murder  
6 book that you typed into your laptop are?

7 A. As best I described it in my book.

8 Q. You don't describe in your book everything that  
9 was in the murder book, do you?

10 A. I don't recall.

11 Q. Do you describe in your book in the published  
12 information, Ms. Finstad, how much of the contents of  
13 the murder book you reviewed?

14 A. I can't recall offhand. I -- I think it states  
15 that I -- I believe it states that I copied down as much  
16 as I was able to before we left.

17 Q. Do you state in the published material,  
18 Ms. Finstad, why you were required to leave or what  
19 precipitated your leaving?

20 A. No, that's not published in the book.

21 Q. Will you say why you left or why you were  
22 required to leave the room where you were given access  
23 to the murder book?

24 A. I think that is information that's not  
25 published.



1 Q. Okay. And I just need to get you to say if --  
2 if you will not say that. Will you not tell me why you  
3 were required to leave the room where you were reviewing  
4 the murder book?

5 MS. CAROLAN: I'll just also object it assumes  
6 facts.

7 BY MR. CHADICK:

8 Q. Ms. Finstad, did you refuse to testify why you  
9 left the room or what precipitated your leaving the room  
10 where the murder books had been provided to you or  
11 accessed to you?

12 A. I don't remember the exact circumstances.

13 Q. Did your mother leave -- are you okay? Is that  
14 hammering?

15 A. It's not from -- it's not coming from me. I  
16 don't know where it's coming from.

17 Q. Did your mother leave with the camera or did  
18 you?

19 A. I did.

20 Q. Do you recall where the film was developed?

21 MS. CAROLAN: Standing objection.

22 BY MR. CHADICK:

23 Q. Did you take it to a commercial film developer  
24 to develop the --

25 MS. CAROLAN: Same --

Original

42

1 BY MR. CHADICK:

2 Q. -- film?

3 MS. CAROLAN: The same objection.

4 THE WITNESS: It's material outside the scope  
5 of my book.

6 BY MR. CHADICK:

7 Q. Back to Exhibit 1. And let me just say this:  
8 We've been going 60 minutes. I'm good to keep going.  
9 So I don't want to slow it down, but if the witness  
10 wants to take a break or anybody else wants to take a  
11 break, you just let me know whenever; okay?

12 A. Okay. I'm -- I'm good to go.

13 Q. Thank you.

14 Back to Exhibit 1, Page 481. I would like for  
15 you please to read excerpts from this page, Ms. Finstad,  
16 and I'm going to describe the excerpts I would like for  
17 you to read.

18 I would like for you to read the first two  
19 sentences of the fourth paragraph which begins  
20 "recently." And then after those first two sentences of  
21 that paragraph, I would like for you, please, to read  
22 the first -- I think it's four sentences of the next  
23 paragraph ending with the word "troubling."

24 A. Okay.

25 Q. Thank you.

1           A.    "Recently I found three new witnesses.  One is  
2           a confidential source that I put in touch with Ralph  
3           Hernandez.  The source had information that Christopher  
4           Walken said he heard the fight between RJ and Natalie  
5           and that he told a friend not long after Natalie  
6           drowned, that Wag had pushed her."

7                     And then this is for next one?

8           Q.    Yes, if you'll go to the next paragraph  
9           beginning with --

10          A.    Yes.

11          Q.    -- that's the beginning and ending in  
12          "troubling."

13          A.    Okay.

14                    "The other two new witnesses were present at  
15          Natalie Wood's autopsy, Vidal Herrera whom I learned  
16          about from a documentary producer, took photographs of  
17          Natalie's body for the coroner's office.  Herrera told  
18          us he observed significant wounds to Natalie's head.  
19          Ralph Hernandez, who took his sworn statement, has seen  
20          the original photos and concurs that Natalie's head  
21          wounds are troubling."

22          Q.    And -- and who -- first, let me just ask you:  
23          Those two passages that you read, Ms. Finstad, are those  
24          true and accurate?

25          A.    Yes, to my knowledge.

1 Q. Who is Ralph Hernandez that you referred to in  
2 your book?

3 A. Ralph Hernandez is the lead detective and  
4 reopened the investigation of Natalie Wood's death.

5 Q. And did Ralph Hernandez tell you, as reported  
6 in your book, that he had seen original photos showing  
7 wounds to the late Ms. Natalie Wood's head?

8 MS. BIRENBAUM: Oh, I object that it misstates  
9 that passage read.

10 MS. CAROLAN: So can you repeat the question  
11 back?

12 (Whereupon the record was read as  
13 follows:

14 "And did Ralph Hernandez tell you,  
15 as reported in your book, that he  
16 had seen original photos showing  
17 wounds to the late  
18 Ms. Natalie Wood's head?")

19 MS. CAROLAN: I'm going to object to the  
20 question with a standing objection and instruct the  
21 witness not to answer unless she can do so based on  
22 published information or she elects to waive the  
23 protections under the Shield Law.

24 THE WITNESS: I can't recall beyond what's in  
25 the book.

1 BY MR. CHADICK:

2 Q. And -- and that's what I'm attempting to ask  
3 you. Ralph Hernandez told you, it's your testimony,  
4 correct, that he had seen the original photos; correct?

5 MS. CAROLAN: Objection; misstates her  
6 testimony.

7 THE WITNESS: Yes, I don't remember that. I  
8 remember him saying "the head wounds are troubling."

9 BY MR. CHADICK:

10 Q. Ms. Finstad, will you read the last sentence of  
11 that paragraph in its entirety of the second passage  
12 that I asked you to read beginning with "Ralph  
13 Hernandez."

14 A. "Ralph Hernandez, who took his sworn statement,  
15 has seen the original photos and concurs that  
16 Natalie Wood's head wounds are troubling."

17 Q. So did you report truthfully and accurately  
18 that Ralph Hernandez had seen the original photos?

19 A. I don't recall if he told me that.

20 Q. So what did Ralph Hernandez tell you as  
21 published in your book?

22 MS. CAROLAN: Objection; it assumes facts not  
23 in evidence. The passage doesn't necessarily suggest  
24 that Ralph Hernandez told her the head wounds were  
25 troubling.

Original

46

1 BY MR. CHADICK:

2 Q. So, Ms. Finstad, whom are you quoting when you  
3 quote the word "troubling"? This is published material  
4 in your book Natalie Wood?

5 A. Yes, as I said just a moment ago, I recall  
6 Ralph Hernandez telling me the head wounds were  
7 troubling. I don't recall whether it was he who told me  
8 that he had seen the original photographs. I cannot  
9 recall that as I'm sitting here today.

10 Q. When you reference in your published materials  
11 "original photos," what is that a reference to?

12 A. It refers back to what is stated in the book  
13 earlier about the person who took the original photos.

14 Q. And the original photos of what, Ms. Finstad,  
15 are you referring?

16 A. The original photos of Natalie Wood.

17 Q. And -- and are these original photos that  
18 you're referring to in your book postmortem photos of  
19 Natalie Wood's body?

20 A. I don't know beyond what I wrote and was told.

21 Q. And -- and I'm asking you what you wrote --

22 A. It's right there.

23 Q. -- based on what --

24 And -- and so is it your testimony that your  
25 published material is not necessarily talking about

1 photographs of Natalie Wood's body postmortem?

2 A. It's just as I wrote. He took photographs of  
3 Natalie's body for the coroner's office. That's what I  
4 was told by him as is written in the book.

5 Q. And so you are not attempting to represent in  
6 the book that the photographs that are referenced on  
7 Page 481 were postmortem photographs of Natalie Wood; is  
8 that correct?

9 A. Well, they were postmortem because they were  
10 for the coroner's office. I think that's a logical  
11 deduction.

12 Q. On Page 462 of your book, which is an excerpt  
13 in the Exhibit 1 to the deposition, if you would,  
14 please, go to the second full paragraph and read,  
15 please, the first sentence.

16 A. That before I left?

17 Q. Yes. Yes.

18 A. Read the first sentence, did you say or the  
19 full paragraph?

20 Q. No, the first sentence. And let me -- let me  
21 just -- I want to make an aside. I have been impolite  
22 in saying yes, ma'am to you. I don't feel like that is  
23 anything other than my attempt to be respectful. We're  
24 peers. If there was a better way for me to say yes,  
25 that didn't sound offensive, I would so --

1 A. No worry.

2 Q. Okay. Well, I'm -- there are plenty of  
3 worries, but I -- I apologize for doing that to you.  
4 I'm not -- and I don't mean that in a disrespectful way.

5 So yes, just the first sentence, please --

6 A. Okay.

7 Q. -- that begins before and ends "Splendour."

8 A. "Before I left the sheriff's office, I typed  
9 notes in my laptop for every scrap of paper in the  
10 murder book, even the scribblings on pages torn from  
11 vintage pink While You Were Out telephone notepad where  
12 I found a return number and a brief message for  
13 investigators from Marilyn Wayne, who I recalled had  
14 been on the boat near the Splendour."

15 Q. Okay. Is that statement true and accurate,  
16 Ms. Finstad?

17 A. Yes, to the best of my knowledge.

18 Q. Okay. Just as an aside, my client Mr. Perroni  
19 simply wants access to what others have been given  
20 access to.

21 And I want to ask you this: When you reference  
22 in your published material "vintage pink While You Were  
23 Out telephone notepad," are you actually referring to  
24 something that was the color pink?

25 A. Yes, I believe they were pink. That's my



1 recollection.

2 Q. And, in fact, I mean, I'm just gathering this  
3 from the published material, the vintage pink is even a  
4 more pronounced description of that observation;  
5 correct?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. Okay. Thank you.

8 Mr. Hernandez has given a sworn statement in  
9 related litigation describing what you told him in terms  
10 of what you were given access to by Mr. Danoff.

11 Have you read that declaration or any parts of  
12 Mr. Hernandez's declaration?

13 A. If that's what you sent to Duffy a day or two  
14 ago, I -- I personally reviewed it.

15 Q. Okay. And so Mr. Hernandez declared this -- or  
16 gave this statement, quote, "I was able to determine  
17 that the persons who were provided access to the  
18 Sheriff's Department's 1981 files were provided access  
19 to the following items: The first complaint report from  
20 the 1981 investigation by the Sheriff's Department,  
21 Officer Kroll."

22 Ms. Finstad, did you tell Mr. Hernandez that  
23 you were provided access to the Sheriff's Department  
24 1981 files that included the first complaint report from  
25 the 1981 investigation?

1 MS. CAROLAN: I'm going to object, standing  
2 objection, and instruct the witness not to answer unless  
3 it calls for published information or she elects to  
4 waive the protections of the Shield Law.

5 THE WITNESS: Yeah, that's not published  
6 information.

7 BY MR. CHADICK:

8 Q. Did you tell Ms. Finstad that -- to  
9 Mr. Hernandez you saw the supplementary report from the  
10 1981 investigation by the Sheriff's Department?

11 MS. CAROLAN: The same objection.

12 THE WITNESS: Same response.

13 BY MR. CHADICK:

14 Q. Did you, Ms. Finstad, tell Mr. Hernandez that  
15 you were provided access to photographs of the Splendour  
16 without photographs of Natalie Wood Wagner remains,  
17 telephone messages and investigator notebooks?

18 MS. CAROLAN: The same objection.

19 THE WITNESS: Same response.

20 BY MR. CHADICK:

21 Q. And the response is you're not going to answer  
22 that question; correct?

23 A. I'm going to defer to my counsel's advice to  
24 not respond due to the privileges.

25 Q. Did you talk to Mr. Hernandez about what you

1 saw in the L.A. County Sheriff Department's  
2 investigation file or murder file?

3 MS. CAROLAN: The same objection. Unless the  
4 answer can be gleaned from published information or the  
5 deponent elects to waive the protections, I would  
6 instruct her not to answer.

7 THE WITNESS: It's not published and I don't  
8 cares to waive them.

9 BY MR. CHADICK:

10 Q. Did you tell Mr. Hernandez, Ms. Finstad, what  
11 your mother saw in the L.A. County Sheriff's Department  
12 investigation file or murder book?

13 MS. CAROLAN: The same objection.

14 THE WITNESS: Same response.

15 BY MR. CHADICK:

16 Q. And just -- I need you, for the record, please,  
17 to say you're not going to answer the question. You can  
18 say it on advice of your counsel, but is that...

19 A. Yeah, on advice of counsel, I elect not to  
20 answer that question.

21 Q. This will be a compound question, anticipating  
22 that will -- it will draw a similar objection and  
23 response from you.

24 Did you, Ms. Finstad, tell Mr. Hernandez what  
25 your mother was given access to at the L.A. County

Original

52

1 Sheriff's Department as it related to Natalie Wood's  
2 murder book or what Sam Kashner was given or provided  
3 access to by the L.A. County Sheriff's Department with  
4 regard to the Natalie Wood murder book?

5 MS. CAROLAN: The same objection.

6 THE WITNESS: And I will not answer on advice  
7 of counsel, not published.

8 BY MR. CHADICK:

9 Q. And I'm going to refer you to and not going to  
10 ask you for a second time to read from Page 452 of  
11 Exhibit 1, which is an excerpt from your 2020 book,  
12 Natalie Wood, but there is a statement that you  
13 confirmed as true and accurate that you were, quote, "I  
14 was given access to Natalie Wood's murder book."

15 You recall that statement in your book;  
16 correct?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. Mr. Danoff, on March 26, 2021, Page 48 of the  
19 deposition transcript beginning at Line 1 testified as  
20 follows:

21 "Question: Did you ever provide any kind of  
22 document or documents to Ms. Finstad?

23 "Answer: No.

24 "Question: Did you ever provide Ms. Finstad  
25 with access to any documents?

1 "Question -- answer: No.

2 "Question: Did you ever provide any kind of  
3 opportunity for Ms. Finstad to have access to any  
4 documents?

5 "Answer: No."

6 Do you agree, Ms. Finstad, that this testimony  
7 of Mr. Danoff directly contradicted the representations  
8 you have made in your published book Natalie Wood?

9 A. I stand by what I wrote in my book as to how I  
10 was given access to the murder book.

11 Q. And again, not to belabor, but Mr. Danoff  
12 testified as follows:

13 "Question: Did you ever provide any kind of  
14 document or documents to Ms. Finstad?

15 "Answer: No.

16 "Question: Did you ever provide Ms. Finstad  
17 with access to any documents?

18 "Answer: No.

19 "Question: Did you ever provide any kind of  
20 opportunity for Ms. Finstad to have access to any  
21 documents?

22 "Answer by Mr. Danoff: No."

23 Those statements, that testimony directly  
24 contradicts the published representations you've made in  
25 your 2020 book Natalie Wood; correct?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. Is Mr. Danoff wrong or are you?

3 MS. CAROLAN: Objection; argumentative. She's  
4 already answered as to the accuracy of her published  
5 statements.

6 MS. BIRENBAUM: It calls for speculation.

7 BY MR. CHADICK:

8 Q. You can answer.

9 A. As I said earlier, I stand by what I wrote in  
10 my book as to how I attained access to -- obtained  
11 access to the murder book through Mr. Danoff.

12 Q. And based upon what you had published,  
13 Mr. Danoff's testimony that I just represented to you is  
14 wrong; correct?

15 MS. CAROLAN: The same objection.

16 MS. BIRENBAUM: The same objection.

17 THE WITNESS: I can only speak to what I wrote,  
18 and I wrote that that's how I attained access to the  
19 murder book.

20 BY MR. CHADICK:

21 Q. Thank you. And I don't want to miss anything  
22 here.

23 That's what you wrote and it's also your  
24 testimony that what you wrote about how you gained  
25 access to the murder book is true and accurate; correct?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. Okay. Is it your opinion, based upon your  
3 published representations, Ms. Finstad, that the  
4 testimony of Mr. Danoff that I just read to you is  
5 wrong?

6 MS. CAROLAN: The same objection. Calls for  
7 speculation.

8 MS. BIRENBAUM: Vague.

9 BY MR. CHADICK:

10 Q. And you can answer.

11 A. I can't cast dispersions on Mr. Danoff or his  
12 memory. I can only speak to what I wrote and what I  
13 experienced. And I stand by the accuracy of what I  
14 wrote as to how I attained access to the murder book.

15 Q. And you stand by that accuracy as to what you  
16 wrote regarding the murder book and your access to it,  
17 Ms. Finstad, even if it directly contradicts the  
18 testimony of Mr. Danoff; correct?

19 A. Yes, to the best of my knowledge.

20 Q. What do you mean to the best of your knowledge?

21 A. That's my memory.

22 Q. Are you suggesting that your memory may be  
23 inaccurate about how you gained access to the murder  
24 book and what you published in your writing?

25 MS. CAROLAN: It misstates --

1 THE WITNESS: No.

2 MS. CAROLAN: -- her testimony.

3 MR. CHADICK: Just making sure that Ms. Court  
4 Reporter got the answer to the question, too.

5 THE REPORTER: I didn't have an answer. I had  
6 your question.

7 MR. CHADICK: I'm going to make the  
8 representation, and I can be corrected, that the witness  
9 answered "no."

10 BY MR. CHADICK:

11 Q. Did -- did you answer no, Ms. Finstad?

12 A. Can you repeat what your question was?

13 Q. Unfortunately, I cannot, but I will ask  
14 Ms. Saito to reread the question.

15 A. All right.

16 (Whereupon the record was read as  
17 follows:

18 "Are you suggesting that your  
19 memory may be inaccurate about how  
20 you gained access to the murder  
21 book and what you published in your  
22 writing?")

23 BY MR. CHADICK:

24 Q. Did you answer no?

25 A. I answered "no," and I would answer no again.



1 Q. Thank you.

2 You had access, according to the statements in  
3 your book that you've represented today under oath are  
4 true and accurate to the murder book prior to publishing  
5 the 2001 book Natasha; correct?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. Did you make mention in the 2001 murder book  
8 Natasha of your having access to the murder book?

9 A. I can't recall.

10 Q. Would there be a reason that you would not have  
11 published in your 2001 book Natasha your having been  
12 provided access to the L.A. County Sheriff's  
13 Department's murder book on Natalie Wood?

14 A. No.

15 Q. In your 2001 book Natasha, did you promote or  
16 pronounce your determination or conclusion that  
17 Natalie Wood's death was an accident?

18 MS. CAROLAN: Can you read that question again?

19 BY MR. CHADICK:

20 Q. Sure. In your 2001 book Natasha, Ms. Finstad,  
21 did give your opinion, publish your opinion that  
22 Natalie Wood's death was an accident?

23 MS. CAROLAN: I'm just going to object as -- on  
24 relevance grounds and materiality.

25 ///

1 BY MR. CHADICK:

2 Q. And you can answer.

3 A. I think the book speaks for itself and I  
4 presented the facts and left it to the reader to  
5 determine the cause of her death.

6 Q. Did you, in your 2020 book Natalie Wood, give  
7 your opinion that Ms. Wood's death was a homicide?

8 A. I don't recall if I stated that specifically.

9 Q. Do you believe that between your 2001 book  
10 Natasha and your 2020 book Natalie Wood that you  
11 published differences regarding the cause of her death,  
12 and in particular, that in 2001, you published that the  
13 death was accidental, and in 2020, you published that  
14 the death was homicide?

15 A. I don't think that's an accurate reflection of  
16 what I wrote or said.

17 Q. I'm going to take a quick break and ask you  
18 this: That Exhibit 1 that you had -- let me back up.

19 I'm going to take a quick break after this  
20 question, review my notes while we're on break. And  
21 then I will tell you when we come back on about how much  
22 longer we have.

23 Before we go to break, the excerpts from your  
24 book that are contained in the Exhibit 1, I want to ask  
25 you to look at those, including that front cover and

Original

59

1 inner pages that are contained in Exhibit 1.

2 Did those excerpts fairly and accurately  
3 represent the book, Ms. Finstad, that you wrote and  
4 published, Natalie Wood: The Complete Biography?

5 MS. CAROLAN: I'm sorry. I'm -- I'm confused  
6 by the question.

7 THE WITNESS: Me too.

8 BY MR. CHADICK:

9 Q. It is an evidentiary foundational question.  
10 I'm trying to lay the foundation or authenticate that  
11 exhibit that's in front of you, that that is a fair and  
12 accurate copy of your book, those excerpts. And so  
13 that's the question.

14 A. Which excerpts?

15 Q. The ones that are Exhibit 1 in front of you  
16 that we've been referring to.

17 A. I can't see those, so I'd just be going by the  
18 pages that you've asked me to read.

19 Q. Okay. I'm sorry. I thought you had those. Do  
20 you have the entire book in front of you --

21 A. Yes, I do.

22 Q. -- that was FedEx'd to you?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. Okay.

25 MR. CHADICK: So -- all right. Let's take a

Original

60

1 quick break. And I have it's 2:41 Pacific Daylight  
2 Savings Time. Let's come back at 2:50 your time.

3 That's nine minutes. Okay?

4 THE WITNESS: Okay.

5 MR. CHADICK: Okay. Thank you.

6 (A recess was taken.)

7 BY MR. CHADICK:

8 Q. So, Ms. Finstad, we're back on the record.

9 Actually, it took ten minutes longer than I had  
10 expected. Thanks for your patience.

11 As I said to you and your lawyer and  
12 Ms. Birenbaum when we were off the record, I have what I  
13 believe are 20 minutes' worth of questions before I'm  
14 able to wrap up.

15 First, I would like to point you to the notes  
16 from Chapter 35. And specifically, if you'll take your  
17 book and go to the notes of -- that's Pages 478 and 480.  
18 And so that is referencing back to --

19 MS. CAROLAN: Counsel, I don't have access to  
20 those. Can you get -- are those in the excerpts?

21 MR. CHADICK: They are not and you don't have  
22 the book?

23 MS. CAROLAN: No, you FedEx'd the book directly  
24 to the deponent.

25 ///

Original

61

1 BY MR. CHADICK:

2 Q. Okay. Okay. Let me ask you this question:  
3 Ms. Finstad, did Mr. Hernandez show you any witness  
4 statements?

5 MS. CAROLAN: I'll have the standing objection  
6 unless it's clear from the published information or  
7 Ms. Finstad elects to waive her protections.

8 BY MR. CHADICK:

9 Q. And so, Ms. Finstad, I'm going to refer to your  
10 book, Chapter 35 and then the notes from Page 478 and  
11 480 at the end of the book where you state, quote,

12 "Quotes attributed to both investigators" --  
13 that's Lowe and Hernandez -- "from SS," that's your  
14 private conversation with Hernandez, "in recurrent  
15 discussions of the case between 2011 and 2019." That's  
16 your note excerpted.

17 And so my question is: Did Mr. Hernandez,  
18 based upon what you published -- well, strike that.

19 Did Mr. Hernandez show you any witness  
20 statements?

21 MS. CAROLAN: I'm going to have the same  
22 objection. I'm -- I'm not sure how the note, since I  
23 don't have it in front of me, converts your question  
24 into one that's asking for published information. But  
25 the deponent may understand a little bit better.

Original

62

1 THE WITNESS: Yeah, it does not. It's beyond  
2 the scope of what is published.

3 BY MR. CHADICK:

4 Q. And so, Ms. Finstad, are you refusing to answer  
5 based upon the advice of your counsel and asserting a  
6 privilege whether Mr. Hernandez showed you any witness  
7 statements?

8 A. Yes, it's beyond the scope of what's been  
9 published.

10 Q. Before you published Natasha in 2001, what  
11 criminal law experience did you have?

12 A. Well, I won the criminal law award in law  
13 school, and I did not practice criminal law.

14 Q. And --

15 A. I practiced -- to take it.

16 Q. Okay. And just to make sure that I understand,  
17 the criminal law award in law school, is that because  
18 you got the top paper --

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. -- in criminal law? Okay.

21 And so you didn't have any criminal law  
22 experience in your practice; correct, prior to the  
23 time --

24 A. Correct.

25 Q. Okay. When you, in writing and then publishing

1 your two books on Ms. Wood, spoke with Mr. Rasure, was  
2 he a detective?

3 A. He was retired.

4 Q. Do you know Josh Parrish?

5 MS. CAROLAN: Objection; standing objection.

6 THE WITNESS: I'm not going to answer. It  
7 doesn't relate to anything published in the book.

8 BY MR. CHADICK:

9 Q. Okay. And so I'm just asking you the question  
10 if you know Josh Parrish. Is that a question that  
11 you're refusing to answer?

12 MS. CAROLAN: To the extent it's a source of  
13 hers in obtaining information for dissemination to the  
14 public, the objection stands. It's somebody that is a  
15 friend of hers, that she met on the street outside of  
16 her news-gathering activities or co-author activities.

17 MR. CHADICK: Well, Ms. Carolan, I can't  
18 answer -- I mean, I can't follow up unless I get an  
19 answer to the first question does she know Josh Parrish.  
20 So I'll just ask that question again and if there's an  
21 objection or refusal to answer, I just need it for the  
22 record.

23 BY MR. CHADICK:

24 Q. So, Ms. Finstad, my question is: Do you know  
25 Josh Parrish?

Original

64

1 A. I don't know. I -- it doesn't ring a bell.

2 MR. CHADICK: Did you want to make an objection  
3 on that, Ms. Carolan?

4 MS. CAROLAN: Nope. Objection withdrawn.

5 BY MR. CHADICK:

6 Q. Ms. Finstad, in your book you wrote that the  
7 murder book, that is the murder book of Natalie Wood  
8 that you had been given access to you and reported in  
9 your book having been given access to had gone missing;  
10 correct?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. Who told you that?

13 MS. CAROLAN: Objection; standing objection.  
14 Unless the information is published or the deponent  
15 wishes to waive the protections, I instruct her not to  
16 answer.

17 THE WITNESS: I'm going to decline to answer on  
18 advice of counsel.

19 BY MR. CHADICK:

20 Q. Ms. Finstad, did you tell Mr. Hernandez or  
21 Lieutenant Corina that Mr. Danoff gave you a murder book  
22 of Natalie Wood's consisting of one or two boxes?

23 MS. CAROLAN: The same objection.

24 THE WITNESS: Its outside the scope of what is  
25 published.



1 BY MR. CHADICK:

2 Q. And so again, I'm just asking what you said.  
3 And the question is: Did you tell Mr. Hernandez or  
4 Mr. Corina that Mr. Danoff gave you a murder book  
5 regarding Natalie Wood of one or two boxes?

6 MS. CAROLAN: The same objection.

7 BY MR. CHADICK:

8 Q. Is that a question that you are refusing to  
9 answer, Ms. Finstad?

10 A. I'm following my counsel's advice that it is  
11 outside the scope of what's published.

12 Q. And are you declining or refusing to answer  
13 that question, Ms. Finstad?

14 A. I'm declining on the advice of counsel for the  
15 reasons I just stated.

16 Q. What is your mother's address?

17 A. 791 Angelina Lane, Conroe, Texas 77302.

18 Q. Thank you. These are questions that are  
19 similar to ones early in the deposition that your lawyer  
20 imposed an objection to and that you declined on your  
21 lawyer's recommendation not to answer.

22 I am not attempting here to be impertinent. I  
23 need to make a record. I understand that the objection  
24 may be similarly raised and your response may be the  
25 same. I'm not doing this to provoke you.

1                   And so here are my questions: Will you answer,  
2                   Ms. Finstad, if Mr. Danoff told you exactly where to go  
3                   and how to meet him in order to get access to the  
4                   Natalie Wood murder books?

5                   MR. CHADICK: Ms. Carolan, you're on mute.

6                   MS. CAROLAN: Thank you. Standing objection.

7                   THE WITNESS: And I will answer as previously,  
8                   following advice of my counsel to not answer.

9                   BY MR. CHADICK:

10                  Q. Ms. Finstad, first, do you remember the  
11                  circumstances of your leaving the premises where you had  
12                  been given access to the murder book? I'm not asking  
13                  you to describe those circumstances. I'm asking you if  
14                  you remember those circumstances?

15                  A. I think I answered previously that I don't  
16                  really remember the circumstances.

17                  Q. Do you recall, Ms. Finstad, if you were told to  
18                  leave or voluntarily left the premises of the L.A.  
19                  County Sheriff's Department where you had been provided  
20                  access to the Natalie Wood murder book?

21                  MS. CAROLAN: Can you -- I'm sorry. Can you  
22                  read that over again?

23                  BY MR. CHADICK:

24                  Q. Uh-huh. Do you --

25                  MS. CAROLAN: Would you have --

Original

67

1 BY MR. CHADICK:

2 Q. Do you recall if you were told to leave or if  
3 you voluntarily left the premises of the L.A. County  
4 Sheriff's Department where you had been given access to  
5 the Natalie Wood murder book?

6 MS. CAROLAN: Sir, are you just asking if she  
7 remembers?

8 MR. CHADICK: Yeah. Yes.

9 BY MR. CHADICK:

10 Q. So I know you just said you have not -- that  
11 testified that you can't really be sure about the  
12 circumstances of leaving, but now I'm just trying to pin  
13 it down.

14 Do you recall if you were told to leave or  
15 voluntarily left?

16 A. I honestly don't recall, as I'm sitting here  
17 right now, the circumstances.

18 Q. Okay. I want to make sure I get this. Are you  
19 declining to answer based upon the objection and  
20 recommendation of your client [sic] exactly where you  
21 were when Mr. Danoff gave you access to the Natalie Wood  
22 murder book?

23 MS. CAROLAN: Counsel, I -- I would suggest you  
24 ask her if she remembers first.

25 MR. CHADICK: Okay.

Original

68

1 MS. CAROLAN: So we don't go down an  
2 unnecessary path.

3 BY MR. CHADICK:

4 Q. Do you remember where in the outskirts of Los  
5 Angeles, as reported in your book, you were,  
6 Ms. Finstad, when you were provided access by  
7 Mr. Danoff, according to your testimony, to the  
8 Natalie Wood murder book?

9 A. Only vaguely.

10 Q. And -- and, Ms. Finstad, do you recall if you  
11 were at something called the Biscailuz Center?

12 MS. CAROLAN: I'm going to object as asked and  
13 answered and standing objection.

14 BY MR. CHADICK:

15 Q. Okay. So the asked and answered was only after  
16 she disclosed that she only vaguely remembered, which  
17 she had not disclosed before.

18 But now I'm going to ask the question,  
19 Ms. Finstad, are you declining or refusing to answer the  
20 question of whether you met Mr. Danoff to be provided  
21 access to the Natalie Wood murder book at the Biscailuz  
22 Center upon the recommendation of your lawyer, based  
23 upon the objection that she has raised?

24 A. I don't recall that.

25 Q. So you don't -- I mean, your testimony is you

Original

69

1 don't recall if you were at the Biscailuz Center when  
2 you were provided access to the Natalie Wood murder book  
3 by Mr. Danoff; correct?

4 A. I don't recall that name.

5 Q. Okay. Just in case because, obviously, I'm  
6 from Arkansas and don't -- am not edified in this way,  
7 but it's spelled B-i-s-c-a-i-l-u-z. Is that --

8 A. It doesn't help.

9 Q. Okay. That makes me feel better, actually.

10 Do you recall if when you were provided access  
11 to the Natalie Wood murder book, you were in an old  
12 gymnasium?

13 MS. CAROLAN: I'm -- I'm going to object to the  
14 extent that it calls for information not published in  
15 her book. A standing objection. Maybe it is published.  
16 I don't know.

17 THE WITNESS: It's not published in the book.  
18 It's described as a building on the outskirts of  
19 downtown.

20 BY MR. CHADICK:

21 Q. So, Ms. Finstad, just for my record, are you  
22 declining to answer whether you were in an old gymnasium  
23 when you were provided access to the Natalie Wood murder  
24 book by Mr. Danoff?

25 A. Well, I would stand by what I wrote in my book,

1 that it was in an office, L.A. Sheriff's-related office  
2 on the outskirts of downtown.

3 Q. Okay. And we've been going at this a while.  
4 Give this clarification. I'm trying to determine the  
5 accuracy of your statements in your book vis-à-vis the  
6 statements and testimony made by Mr. Danoff.

7 And so I -- I'm going to ask these questions.  
8 I understand, again, if you decline to answer. But my  
9 question is: The L.A. County Sheriff's Department  
10 office on the outskirts of L.A. where you were provided  
11 access to the Natalie Wood murder book by Mr. Danoff,  
12 was that in an old gymnasium?

13 A. I don't know. I don't know.

14 Q. Okay. Will you -- did Mr. Rasure provide you  
15 the telephone number for Mr. Danoff when he gave you the  
16 tip to call Mr. Danoff?

17 MS. CAROLAN: Sorry. Standing objection.

18 THE WITNESS: Yeah, that's outside what's  
19 published.

20 BY MR. CHADICK:

21 Q. And so just again, to make clear for my record,  
22 are you declining, Ms. Finstad, to answer the question  
23 of whether Mr. Rasure provided you to, when he gave you  
24 the tip, Mr. Danoff's telephone number based upon the  
25 objection and instruction of your lawyer?

Original

71

1 A. Yes.

2 MR. CHADICK: Let me take two minutes. Put you  
3 on mute and I'll be right back in; okay? So we're off  
4 the record.

5 (A recess was taken.)

6 BY MR. CHADICK:

7 Q. Okay. Ms. Finstad, we're back on the record.

8 A. Okay.

9 Q. And I'll still keep to my -- my time estimate.  
10 And thank you for that accommodation.

11 Could you find your way to the location as you  
12 described on the outskirts of Los Angeles which was the  
13 building that you appeared or presented to when you were  
14 given access to the Natalie Wood murder file by  
15 Mr. Danoff?

16 A. Not as a --

17 MS. CAROLAN: It's a standing objection.

18 THE REPORTER: I didn't get your answer.

19 THE WITNESS: Yeah, I -- I am following the  
20 advice of my counsel.

21 BY MR. CHADICK:

22 Q. And are -- are you declining or refusing to  
23 answer on the advice of your counsel, Ms. Finstad, the  
24 question of whether you could find your way or travel to  
25 the location where you were given access to the

1 Natalie Wood murder book?

2 A. Yes, I'm following my counsel's advice to  
3 decline to answer.

4 Q. Ms. Finstad, are you declining to answer, based  
5 upon the instruction of your counsel and the objection  
6 she raised, questions regarding how you were provided  
7 details and instruction or direction on where to go and  
8 where to meet Mr. Danoff in order to get access to the  
9 Natalie Wood murder files?

10 MS. CAROLAN: Oh, I just want to clarify that  
11 the objection is to the extent that that question  
12 elicits information that is not already published. And  
13 with the caveat that the proponent can elect to waive  
14 those protections if she -- if she decides to.

15 THE WITNESS: I choose to follow the advice of  
16 my counsel and decline for the reasons that she has  
17 said.

18 MR. CHADICK: Okay. Those are all the  
19 questions I have for you today, Ms. Finstad.

20 THE WITNESS: Thank you.

21 MS. BIRENBAUM: Okay. Mr. Chadick, I've got a  
22 few questions, if you don't mind me asking. And Court  
23 Reporter can you hear me clearly?

24 ///

25 ///



EXAMINATION

BY MS. BIRENBAUM:

Q. Okay. So first as a background question, I don't believe we got to. Did you review any documents in preparation for today's deposition?

A. Only the ones sent by Mr. Perroni's counsel.

Q. Okay. I believe it was about four attachments; is that correct?

A. That sounds right.

Q. An excerpt from the book, I believe your subpoena, a picture of somebody --

A. Yes.

Q. -- this excerpt and the declaration of Mr. Hernandez. Does that sound about what you reviewed?

A. That sounds right.

Q. Okay. Great. Okay. As to the writing of your book, I'm going to go with the current 2020 version, the Natalie Wood, did you write the book on your own?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay. Did you have any assistance with it? Let me rephrase that before you give that out.

A. Editorial.

Q. Okay.

A. Editorial and legal vetting.

Q. Okay. So you didn't have a co-author or a

1 ghost writer or anything of the like?

2 A. No.

3 Q. Thank you. Understand- -- I'm going to ask  
4 this question understanding that your counsel may  
5 object, but I would like to get it on the record.

6 Do you recall the address of the building you  
7 went to on the outskirts of downtown Los Angeles?

8 MS. CAROLAN: So the question is just do you  
9 recall, yes or no?

10 THE WITNESS: Not at the moment, not while I'm  
11 sitting here.

12 BY MS. BIRENBAUM:

13 Q. Okay. Can you describe the building for me,  
14 the exterior?

15 MS. CAROLAN: So I'm going to object; standing  
16 objection.

17 BY MS. BIRENBAUM:

18 Q. And do you choose to take your counsel's  
19 advice?

20 A. Yeah, I'm going to take my counsel's advice.

21 Q. Okay. Do -- did you drive there to the  
22 building?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. Do you recall the route you took driving there?

25 MS. CAROLAN: Same objection.

1 THE WITNESS: Yeah, I'll follow my counsel's  
2 advice.

3 BY MS. BIRENBAUM:

4 Q. Okay. Did you take the freeways to drive to  
5 that building on the outskirts of downtown Los Angeles?

6 A. I don't remember, but I tend to avoid freeways  
7 as much as I can.

8 Q. Fair question about downtown Los Angeles.  
9 Thank you.

10 Do you recall where you parked your car?

11 Oh, I think we've lost her.

12 A. No.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. No, I -- I'm thinking. I don't -- I don't  
15 recall offhand.

16 Q. Do you recall passing any landmarks on the way  
17 to this building?

18 A. No, just a fairly long drive, but no specific  
19 landmarks.

20 Q. Okay. Do you recall what the surrounding area  
21 looked like?

22 A. Commercial.

23 Q. Okay. So --

24 A. It was --

25 MS. CAROLAN: Yes or no?

1 BY MS. BIRENBAUM:

2 Q. Yeah. Were there a lot of warehouse type  
3 buildings since you were saying "commercial" or was it  
4 more like strip malls, office buildings?

5 A. Combination.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. But again, I -- I -- it's just to the best of  
8 my recollection today.

9 Q. I understand completely.

10 Is there anything else you recall about the  
11 location surrounding this Los Angeles sheriff's building  
12 that you went to that we haven't already discussed?

13 MS. CAROLAN: Standing objection.

14 THE WITNESS: Yeah, I'm going to follow my  
15 counsel's advice on that.

16 BY MS. BIRENBAUM:

17 Q. Okay. Do you recall after you parked your car,  
18 the next thing that happened on that day you went into  
19 this L.A. sheriff's office building?

20 MS. CAROLAN: Standing objection to the extent  
21 that it is calling for unpublished information obtained  
22 in the course of gathering information for dissemination  
23 to the public and unless the deponent wants to waive  
24 those protections or it calls for published information.

25 THE WITNESS: Yeah, that's unpublished and I --

Original

77

1 I'll follow my counsel's advice on that.

2 BY MS. BIRENBAUM:

3 Q. Can you describe the office where you sat  
4 within the Sheriff's Department?

5 MS. CAROLAN: Okay. Same objection.

6 MS. BIRENBAUM: Same objection.

7 MS. CAROLAN: Well, I'm sorry. Do you recall  
8 is what she asked you, yes or no?

9 THE WITNESS: I can recall what is -- as  
10 published in my book, I recalled a long conference table  
11 and a couple of chairs. And that's what I was focused  
12 on at the time that I was there. So that's what my  
13 recollection is of.

14 BY MS. BIRENBAUM:

15 Q. Okay. And a long conference table, do you have  
16 any recollection currently as to the length of that  
17 table? And I'm asking for your best recollection,  
18 knowing that you didn't have a ruler with you or a tape  
19 measure.

20 A. I'd -- I'd liken it sort of to a picnic table  
21 length.

22 Q. Six feet perhaps?

23 A. Maybe. And again, don't hold me to this.

24 Q. No. It's not a test. This is not a memory  
25 test --

Original

78

1 A. Yeah.

2 Q. -- we often tell deponents that.

3 A. Yeah.

4 Q. We just want to know the best of your  
5 recollection.

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. So by "a picnic table," I would think that's  
8 like a table in a park or those folding tables that we  
9 kind of all have in our garage these days --

10 A. Yeah.

11 Q. -- about six feet. Does that seem about --

12 A. It does. And again, it was a thought --

13 Q. Yes.

14 A. -- going a long time ago. And I was really  
15 focused on the task at hand rather than assessing my  
16 surroundings.

17 Q. Thank you so much for the infor- -- for the  
18 answer.

19 Did you see anyone else in the office area  
20 where this conference room was?

21 MS. CAROLAN: Standing objection.

22 THE WITNESS: Yeah, I'm going to abide by my  
23 counsel's...

24 BY MS. BIRENBAUM:

25 Q. Understood. Your book states that you took

1 notes on your laptop for every scrap of paper. You  
2 reviewed that testimon- -- that statement earlier. Do  
3 you recall?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. Do you still have those notes?

6 A. I do.

7 Q. Did you review them in preparing for today's  
8 deposition?

9 A. I did not.

10 Q. Do you still have the pictures that you or your  
11 mother took on the date that you stated you reviewed the  
12 files at the sheriff's office?

13 A. I do. And again, these are not in my immediate  
14 possession, but I still possess them.

15 Q. I'm going to have to break that down a little  
16 bit. They're not in your immediate possession. What  
17 does that mean?

18 A. I mean they're not around me. They're not in  
19 my physical space.

20 Q. Are they in an area you have access to?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. Okay. Detective Rasure suggested that you  
23 contact "Sweet Lou"; is that correct, as --

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. And I should qualify that; correct?

1 A. Correct.

2 Q. When did you have that conversation with  
3 Detective Rasure?

4 MS. CAROLAN: Standing objection unless it's  
5 published information.

6 THE WITNESS: I believe the date is published  
7 in the book, but I don't remember it offhand off the top  
8 of my head.

9 BY MS. BIRENBAUM:

10 Q. Were you provided with a phone number for  
11 "Sweet Lou"?

12 A. I think that --

13 MS. CAROLAN: Objection.

14 THE WITNESS: Yeah, falls within that earlier  
15 objection.

16 BY MS. BIRENBAUM:

17 Q. Understood.

18 Going to your book, there are some photographs  
19 included in the book. I'm trying to get to the page  
20 number for you. Page -- I believe it is 460 and 461.

21 A. Uh-huh.

22 Q. It looks like 460. Yeah, is that it?

23 A. It is.

24 Q. Okay. Where are these photographs that are  
25 depicted on Page 460 and 461 currently?



Original

81

1 A. Well, they're -- I have the photographs.

2 Q. And are these in the same location where you  
3 said that they're not in the physical space, but you  
4 have access to them?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. Are these all the photographs that you have  
7 from the review that you undertook?

8 A. You know, I think so. I'm not certain of that.  
9 I'd have to really -- I just don't know, as I'm sitting  
10 here.

11 Q. Okay. Is it your best recollection that the  
12 photographs at Page 460 and 461 are all of the  
13 photographs that you have?

14 A. To the best of my recollection today, yes.

15 Q. Let's just turn to Page 459, please. You  
16 previously read a sentence that states that "Sweet Lou"  
17 returned with one or two books -- boxes. Sorry. He  
18 identified as Natalie Wood's murder book.

19 Were those "Sweet Lou's" words?

20 MS. CAROLAN: Can you direct me to the exhibit  
21 -- paragraph?

22 MS. BIRENBAUM: I'm sorry. It is the first  
23 full paragraph on Page 459.

24 MS. CAROLAN: Okay. Thank you.

25 MS. BIRENBAUM: It was part of the second

1 sentence.

2 BY MS. BIRENBAUM:

3 Q. Were those "Sweet Lou's" words or were those  
4 words that you used to describe the conversation?

5 MS. CAROLAN: Standing objection.

6 THE WITNESS: Yeah, I would defer to her  
7 objection.

8 BY MS. BIRENBAUM:

9 Q. Did "Sweet Lou" tell you if he had removed any  
10 items from the book?

11 MS. CAROLAN: Standing objection.

12 THE WITNESS: And I'll abide by that.

13 BY MS. BIRENBAUM:

14 Q. Okay. Is it possible that items were removed  
15 before the boxes were handed to you?

16 MS. CAROLAN: It calls for speculation. The  
17 same objection.

18 THE WITNESS: I don't know. That's outside the  
19 scope of my knowledge.

20 BY MS. BIRENBAUM:

21 Q. I have about two more questions. I just need  
22 to find the quote and the answer, if you don't mind.

23 MS. CAROLAN: Okay.

24 MS. BIRENBAUM: And then we're almost done.

25 THE WITNESS: Yay.

1 BY MS. BIRENBAUM:

2 Q. Page -- and I can't read this page number. I  
3 do apologize. I'm doing my best. I think it's 462, but  
4 it could be 482.

5 A. Okay.

6 Q. I'm so sorry.

7 A. What's the context?

8 Q. It is about the While You Were Out telephone  
9 notepads.

10 A. That's 462.

11 Q. Okay. Good. You previously read the paragraph  
12 that starts "before I left the sheriff's office." I'm  
13 going to refer back to that paragraph on Page 462.

14 You write the words "where I found a return  
15 number and a brief message for investigators from  
16 Marilyn Wayne."

17 Do you see where it said that?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. Do you have that item?

20 MS. CAROLAN: So I'm going to object.

21 BY MS. BIRENBAUM:

22 Q. Do you have any notes on that item?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. Do you -- I'm sorry.

25 How did you determine that there was a message

1 from Marilyn Wayne?

2 A. It was written on the note.

3 Q. Did it state the name Marilyn Wayne on the  
4 note?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. Did you -- I'm sorry.

7 Do you know if Marilyn Wayne is still alive?

8 A. The last I heard, she was. That may be a year  
9 or two ago, but it's a Covid year, so I hope she is.

10 Q. Understood.

11 MS. BIRENBAUM: I do not have any questions. I  
12 appreciate your time.

13 EXAMINATION

14 BY MR. CHADICK:

15 Q. Ms. Finstad, before we end, I have just a  
16 couple of follow-up from those questions.

17 First, in the information that my office sent  
18 to you, Ms. Birenbaum referenced the photograph.

19 Do you know the individual? Do you recognize  
20 the individual in the photograph?

21 A. It's honestly hard to tell. It's kind of a  
22 blurry photograph and many, many years since I saw  
23 Lou Danoff. So I can't say with certainty. You know,  
24 it's just too long ago and the photograph's just not  
25 distinctive.

Original

85

1 Q. And again, just from a question that provoked a  
2 follow-up, you did not remove any items from the murder  
3 book of Natalie Wood that you were given access to, did  
4 you, and -- and leave the premises with them?

5 MS. CAROLAN: Standing objection.

6 THE WITNESS: I'll defer to my counsel.

7 BY MR. CHADICK:

8 Q. And just for my record, are you refusing to  
9 answer whether you removed from the Natalie Wood murder  
10 box -- book that you were provided access to by  
11 Mr. Danoff and left the premises with that item?

12 A. I'm going to follow the advice of my counsel to  
13 decline to answer.

14 Q. And -- and then as referenced in your book, you  
15 talk about the postmortem photographs of Natalie Wood.

16 How do you know postmortem photographs of  
17 Natalie Wood exist?

18 MS. CAROLAN: Same --

19 THE WITNESS: Well, if it were the -- as stated  
20 in the book, it was Vidal Herrera. He took the  
21 photographs.

22 BY MR. CHADICK:

23 Q. Okay. And -- and how do you know those exist?

24 A. Through -- Vidal Herrera told me and he is the  
25 who took the photographs.

Original

86

1 Q. And Mr. Herrera was working in what capacity?

2 A. I believe I stated in the book that he was  
3 assigned to take those for the coroner's office.

4 Q. And the coroner's office is the Los Angeles  
5 County coroner's office; is that correct?

6 A. Yes, as far as I know that's what he was  
7 referring to.

8 Q. Okay. Okay.

9 MR. CHADICK: Thank you. I don't have any  
10 other questions for you.

11 THE WITNESS: Great. Thank you.

12 MS. CAROLAN: Ms. Saito, am I going to -- can  
13 you provide a copy of the deposition transcript via  
14 email?

15 THE REPORTER: Oh, so sorry. I'm on mute.  
16 Yes. Everything can go through the email. Are you  
17 ordering a copy of the transcript?

18 MS. CAROLAN: I'm assuming you want us to  
19 review it.

20 MR. CHADICK: So you're going to have  
21 Ms. Finstad, Ms. Carolan will explain this to you as  
22 will the court reporter. You're going to have the right  
23 to read and review the deposition transcript as  
24 transcribed by the court reporter. And you review it  
25 for errata mistakes. Your lawyer will explain all of

Original

87

1 that to you. And so your lawyer, right now, is just  
2 asking how that process will go.

3 And, Ms. Saito, if you will just explain that  
4 you would, what, email the transcript to Ms. Carolan for  
5 her to give it to her client or directly to the client,  
6 who is the deponent witness. However you all want to do  
7 that.

8 THE REPORTER: I wasn't sure if I was on mute.  
9 I'm sorry. We are per Code. And per Code is we hold  
10 the transcript. She does have the right to read and  
11 review. The office will contact you, Ms. Carolan, I  
12 guess, and then give you probably a locked PDF to read  
13 and review and then you can make your changes, and then  
14 --

15 THE WITNESS: Thank you.

16 THE REPORTER: -- and that's basically what it  
17 is. And you have 30 days per the Code.

18 THE WITNESS: Thank you.

19 THE REPORTER: Okay. And so did anyone else  
20 need a copy of the transcript?

21 MS. BIRENBAUM: Yes, I would like a copy.  
22 Thank you.

23 THE REPORTER: Okay. And then so Ms. Carolan,  
24 you don't want a transcript; right? You just --

25 MS. CAROLAN: No.

1 THE REPORTER: Okay. Got it. Okay. And I  
2 just need a couple of spellings. It's not a lot, but if  
3 someone can just hold on for a minute or do you want to  
4 turn off your video, Mr. Chadick? I'm not sure. Do you  
5 have the video still going?

6 MR. CHADICK: Oh, yeah. We're off the record.  
7 I'm sorry. Yeah. I see what you're saying. Go ahead.  
8 Yeah.

9 (The deposition proceedings were  
10 concluded at 3:44 p.m.)

11 -0o0-

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25



Original

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

STATE OF CALIFORNIA     )  
  )     ss.  
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES )  
  )

I, SUZANNE ELAINE FINSTAD, having appeared for my deposition on April 16, 2021, do this date state that I have read the foregoing deposition and that I have made any corrections, additions, or deletions that I was desirous of making in order to render the within transcript true and correct.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto subscribed my name this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2021.

\_\_\_\_\_  
SUZANNE ELAINE FINSTAD

Original

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

DEPONENT'S CHANGES OR CORRECTIONS

Note: If you are adding to your testimony, print the exact words you want to add. If you are deleting from your testimony, print the exact words you want to delete. Specify with "Add" or "Delete" and sign this form.

DEPOSITION OF: SUZANNE ELAINE FINSTAD  
CASE: SAMUEL A. PERRONI VS. ALEX  
VILLANUEVA, ET AL.  
DATE OF DEPOSITION: FRIDAY, APRIL 16, 2021

PAGE	LINE	CHANGE/ADD/DELETE
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Deponent's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date

Original

1 STATE OF CALIFORNIA )  
2 ) ss.  
3 COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES )  
4 \_\_\_\_\_ )

5 I, DORIEN SAITO, CSR 12568, CLR, a Certified  
6 Shorthand Reporter in and for the State of California,  
7 County of Los Angeles, do hereby certify;

8 That SUZANNE ELAINE FINSTAD, the witness named  
9 in the foregoing deposition, was, before the  
10 commencement of the deposition, duly administered an  
11 oath in accordance with CCP 2094;

12 That said deposition was taken down in  
13 stenograph writing by me and thereafter transcribed  
14 into typewriting under my direction.

15 I further certify that I am neither counsel  
16 for nor related to any party to said action, nor in  
17 any way interested in the outcome thereof.

18 Dated this 26th day of April, 2021.  
19  
20  
21



22 \_\_\_\_\_  
23 CERTIFIED SHORTHAND REPORTER  
24 IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF  
25 LOS ANGELES, STATE OF CALIFORNIA