UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT 1 2 CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA 3 WESTERN DIVISION 4 _ _ _ 5 HONORABLE DEAN D. PREGERSON, DISTRICT JUDGE PRESIDING 6 7 SOFTWARE FREEDOM CONSERVANCY,) INC.,) 8) Plaintiffs,) 9)) 10) No. SACV 21-01943-JLS) vs. 11)) 12) VIZIO, INC., et al.,) 13) Defendants.) 14 15 16 REPORTER'S TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS 17 PLAINTIFF'S MOTION TO REMAND TO ORANGE COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT [14] 18 LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 19 FRIDAY, MAY 13, 2022 20 21 22 MARIA R. BUSTILLOS OFFICIAL COURT REPORTER 23 C.S.R. 12254 UNITED STATES COURTHOUSE 24 350 WEST 1ST STREET **SUITE 4455** 25 LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012 (213) 894-2739

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

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1 LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA; FRIDAY, MAY 13, 2022 2 -000-3 (COURT IN SESSION AT 10:35 A.M.) 4 THE COURTROOM DEPUTY: Calling item number two, 5 SACV 21-01943-JLS: Software Freedom Conservancy, Inc. v. Vizio, Inc., et al. 6 7 Counsel, please state your appearances. 8 MR. SCHLAFF: It's John Schlaff from the 9 Law Offices of Vakili and Leus, and I'm appearing on behalf 10 of Software Freedom Conservancy. 11 MR. WILLIAMS: Good morning, Your Honor. 12 Michael Williams on behalf of Quinn Emanuel on behalf of 13 defendant Vizio. 14 THE COURT: Good morning. All right. We're here 15 on the plaintiff's motion to remand and the defendant's 16 motion to dismiss. Obviously, they are intertwined, but I am going to focus for purposes of oral argument and any 17 18 questions I may have on the motion to remand today. So with 19 that, it's plaintiff's motion, and we'll begin with 20 plaintiff's counsel. And, again, I just may have a few 21 questions, because it is a little bit unusual. There have 22 been an a few decisions -- related decisions, but let me hear 23 more. 24 MR. SCHLAFF: Your Honor, this is John Schlaff. 25 First, I'd like to point out that as we mentioned in our

1	papers, although, it is our motion, it is their burden
2	to establish their right to be here. This is clearly
3	not appropriately brought before the federal court. The
4	rights that are at issue here are rights that are
5	uniquely available through contract rather than
6	copyright. We are seeking specific enforcement of a
7	provision of the agreement. There's no mechanism under
8	the copyright law for such specific enforcement. This
9	is not like any of the cases that they've cited in their
10	favor, and there are a few things in several of the
11	cases that they've cited in their favor, which actually
12	show the error in their argument, particularly, in
13	Jacobsen II, they actually quote language in
14	Jacobsen II at page 17 of their opposition. And they
15	point out that in Jacobsen II, the Court says that the
16	test for whether something is exclusively within the
17	ambit of copyright, that you have to demonstrate
18	that there that that there are not rights or
19	remedies available under the Copyright claims that are
20	not otherwise available under the copyright law.
21	Clearly, we have remedies that we're seeking through the
22	contract action. And all of the remedies that we're
23	seeking through the contract action, in fact, are
24	remedies that really are not available to us under the
25	copyright law.

1	And further, at MDC, the Court I don't know
2	that it's in MDC or MDY. I think I'm
3	THE COURT: It wasn't MDC, was it? I think
4	there's another
5	MR. SCHLAFF: Forgive me I'm just
6	THE COURT: MDY I think.
7	MR. SCHLAFF: MDY, yes. For some reason, I
8	keep wanting to call it MDC
9	THE COURT: That's the Metropolitan Detention
10	Center. I only hear about that in criminal cases.
11	(Laughter.)
12	MR. SCHLAFF: In any event, Your Honor, in MDY
13	there's a hypothetical that's lifted with approval from
14	another case called Storage Tech, Corp. v. Custom
15	Hardware. That's at 421 F.3d 1307. The jump cite is
16	1315 through 16. And there, the Court says, "Consider a
17	license in which the copyright owner grants a person the
18	right to make a make one and only one copy of a book
19	with the caveat that the licensee may not read the last
20	ten pages. Obviously, a licensee who made a hundred
21	copies of the book could be liable for copyright
22	infringement, because copyright copying would violate
23	the Copyright Act's prohibition on reproduction and
24	would exceed the scope of the license. Alternatively,
25	if the licensee made a single copy of the book, but read

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1	the last ten pages, the only cause of action would be
2	for breach of contract, because reading a book does not
3	violate any right protected by copyright law. And
4	before that, the in in quoting that hypothetical,
5	the MDY court says to recover for copyright infringement
6	based on a breach for license agreement, the copying
7	must exceed the scope of the defendant's license, and
8	the copyright owner's complaint must be grounded in the
9	exclusive right of a copyright. So if it goes to the
10	actual copying, then there there's some then that
11	is within the ambit of copyright, but if you're seeking
12	remedies afterwards that involve a state court remedy
13	like specific performance, copyright has no exclusive
14	hold. This is an extra right, and this is a clear extra
15	right case. The the
16	THE COURT: Your papers are very good. And
17	I've read them. And so I mean, if there's something
18	else you'd like to highlight, I'll let you do it,
19	otherwise, I will go ahead and turn to counsel for
20	defendant.
21	MR. SCHLAFF: Well, I'd like to reserve a few
22	minutes to whatever they say, but beyond that
23	THE COURT: Yes, you may do that.
24	MR. SCHLAFF: But I'm here for your questions,
25	Your Honor.

1 THE COURT: All right. So, Mr. Williams, how 2 is this not a -- the sort of extra element? How does 3 this not go beyond copyright law? 4 MR. WILLIAMS: Sure. Thank you, Your Honor. 5 This is, in fact, a textbook case of artful 6 pleading where the plaintiffs are trying to avoid 7 federal jurisdiction under the Copyright Act. The --8 the fact is and the MDY case, I believe, is very 9 significant to this case. It makes clear that if the 10 condition -- if it's a condition that's violated and 11 that condition relates to an exclusive right under the 12 Copyright Act, then there's a claim for copyright 13 infringement. If it's only a covenant which is just a 14 promise, then the claim is for breach of contract. 15 Here, the Court issue is the language in the general 16 public license that talks about the source code 17 provision. That is contained within a section of the 18 license that makes clear that it is a condition. The 19 condition clearly states that if you want to copy, 20 distribute or modify the software, all of which are 21 exclusive rights under the Copyright Act, you must do 22 these things, and namely, provide a copy of the source 23 The license goes on to say that if you don't code. 24 comply, your license is terminated, your rights are 25 gone, and -- and you have no right to copy, distribute

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or otherwise modify the software. That is a -- a typical claim tore copyright infringement. And how do we know this? Well, the creator of the GPLs -- the free software foundation -- makes clear in its frequently asked questions, who has the power to enforce the GPL. THE COURT: Well, isn't -- I mean, but that's -- they're frequently asked questions. The answer isn't really binding on the court. Isn't it their just informal way of saying, we hold the copyright, and we enforce under the copyright law? MR. WILLIAMS: Well, it I think is instructive. It's also -- it makes the license itself, which the Court -- obviously, is a critical piece here -- the license itself makes clear that it only covers activities involving copying, distribution and modification. Each of those activities are exclusive rights under the -- under the Copyright Act. So the question is --THE COURT: So let me -- let me just ask this

question very directly: If there is a third party beneficiary under the contract, how would that third party beneficiary ever enforce the right to receive the source code, if that's provided for in the agreement? MR. WILLIAMS: Well, I don't believe there is a third-party beneficiary under the --

1 THE COURT: Well, that would be for the state 2 court really to decide, right? 3 MR. WILLIAMS: Well, it would, however --THE COURT: I'm asking more abstractly. 4 5 MR. WILLIAMS: Sure. THE COURT: If there's a -- if there is a right 6 7 under the contract that the third-party beneficiary can enforce the right to receive code, if it's framed that 8 9 way, how could they enforce it under the copyright law? 10 MR. WILLIAMS: They can't. And that assumes 11 that they have a right to receive the code, and that 12 sort of puts the cart before the horse, because what 13 we're talking about here is, this is a license that has 14 a clear condition. If you want a copy -- if you want 15 the right to copy, distribute and modify the software, 16 you have to do these things. If you don't do that, you 17 have stepped outside of the license. License 18 terminates, and you're liable for copyrighting. That's 19 distinct --20 THE COURT: But I think you're getting that --21 the idea that this condition means that it's only 22 enforceable via copyright by an overly broad reading of 23 MDY. I -- I tend to agree with the plaintiff that MDY 24 wasn't saying that you may not sue for breach of 25 contract in those circumstances where you may be able to 1 sue for copyright infringement.

2 MR. WILLIAMS: But the problem with that 3 argument, Your Honor, and I believe their reply brief 4 essentially says that a party could elect between 5 copyright infringement or a breach of contract. That is 6 entirely inconsistent with the very concept of 7 preemption, because if a party can elect a -- either 8 based upon the same conduct -- here it's the failure to 9 comply, alleged failure to comply with the source code 10 bridge. If they can either elect a copyright claim or a 11 breach of contract claim, those rights are equivalent. 12 You can't have the breach of contract claim based upon 13 the same underlying misconduct.

14 THE COURT: So let me -- let me ask about the 15 hypothetical that was raised in the case that 16 Mr. Schlaff just identified -- the one about reading the 17 last ten pages. So let's say that -- that the copyright 18 holder says, you may make one copy, but you may not read 19 the last ton pages. If you do, your -- your 20 copyright -- your rights terminate. Are you saying that 21 because -- because they say that's a condition --22 whatever condition they put, that becomes exclusive then 23 at that point?

24 MR. WILLIAMS: No, Your Honor. And MDY makes 25 that point very clear. MDY says that one, it has to be

1 breached of a condition of the license, and that 2 condition must relate to an exclusive right under the 3 Copyright Act. Here, the condition that is being 4 violated, the source code provision, relates 5 specifically to the copying distribution and 6 modification of the software. So it meets the MDY 7 standard that says there has to be a nexus. You 8 can't -- and MDY is a --9 THE COURT: Well, but the hypothetical he gave, 10 it created a nexus. In other words, any condition that 11 the copyright holder places can be tied to, and if you 12 don't do -- if you do X or don't do X, this agreement 13 terminates. Well, that's a condition then. You 14 can't -- you -- you no longer have the right to 15 distribute or copy if you don't do X. 16 MR. WILLIAMS: So, Your Honor, MDY specifically 17 addresses this issue, and it's at 629 F.3d -- let's see, 18 the pin cite appears to be 940, 941. It says, "Here the 19 terms of use, Section 4, contains certain restrictions 20 that are grounded in Blizzard's exclusive rights of 21 copyright and other restrictions that are not. For 22 instance, term of use Section 4(d) forbids creation of 23 derivative works based on World of Warcraft without 24 Blizzard's consent. A player who violates this 25 prohibition would exceed the scope of their license and

1	violate one of Blizzard's exclusive rights under the
2	copyright. In contrast, term of use force 4(C)(ii)
3	prohibits a player's disruption of another player's game
4	experience. A player might violate this prohibition
5	while playing the game by harassing another player with
6	unsolicited instant messages. Although, this conduct
7	may violate the contractual covenant with Blizzard, it
8	would not violate any of Blizzard's exclusive rights of
9	copyright." And it goes on to say, "Were we to hold
10	otherwise, Blizzard or any other software copyright
11	holder could designate any disfavored conduct during
12	software use as copyright infringement, by purporting to
13	condition the license on the player's abstention from
14	the disfavored conduct. The rationale would be that
15	because the conduct occurs while the player's computer
16	is copying the software code into RAM in order for it to
17	run, the violation is copyright infringement. This
18	would allow software copyright owners far greater rates
19	than Congress has generally confirmed under the
20	Copyright Act claim." So, again, it addressed that.
21	It's that the condition has to be tied to the exclusive
22	right. If it is, that's copyright infringement. And
23	here, the condition that if you want you to copy, modify
24	or distribute the software, you must comply with it.
25	You must make the source code available upon request.

1 That's tied to the exclusive rights of the copyright 2 owner to copy, distribute or modify the software. 3 THE COURT: All right. MR. WILLIAMS: If -- if there was some other --4 5 and that's the -- the concern here is that there are no cases -- and I would have gone through them -- and I can 6 7 distinguish them that -- that say -- that address the 8 issue that say a copyright holder could simply choose, 9 based upon the same conduct, whether to pursue copyright 10 infringement or breach of contract. There are cases 11 that say you have a copyright infringement claim for 12 exceeding the scope of the license, and you have a 13 breach of contract claim for violation of some other 14 covenant, and there are cases that plaintiff cites 15 that -- that deal with that. The *Effects* case from the 16 Ninth Circuit -- the case that Judge Kozinski offered, 17 that didn't hold that the parties can simply elect. Ιt 18 said there was -- in that case there was no written 19 license agreement. So the question was, is there an 20 implied license. If there's no implied license to use, 21 the -- the copyrighted material, then there's copyright 22 infringement. If there is an implied license, then your 23 remedy is left to breach of contract. So all of the 24 cases fall under the same rubric of whether the issue 25 involved is a condition that's tied to an exclusive

1 right under the contract -- under the license. And if so, your remedy is copyright. Otherwise, to allow them 2 3 to convert to a breach of contract claim would violate 4 the very purpose behind preemption, is to not allow 5 state law claims to interfere with what Congress has decided to be the exclusive rights. And, again, because 6 7 this is a case of artful pleading, the court can 8 properly look at extrinsic evidence. And in their --9 you know, I do want to address, they claim that -- you 10 know, our reference to the correspondence with them is 11 somehow inadmissible settlement discussions, but they 12 referenced their demand letter to us in their complaint, 13 none of which says it's for settlement purposes.

14 THE COURT: Regardless of inadmissibility, I'm 15 not sure of relevance though. I mean, I don't decide 16 what the Copyright Act means and whether it falls within 17 an exclusive copyright provision based on pre-litigation 18 arguments of one side or the other.

MR. WILLIAMS: Understood, Your Honor, but it demonstrates, we believe, the disingenuous nature of their position, and so they -- leading up to this, they -- they've agreed with all of our positions. I mean, Exhibit 2, the Williams' declaration -- which is their demand letter -- is entirely consistent with the arguments we've laid out as to why these claims are in

1	effect. It's Vizio has failed to comply with this
2	particular source code provision; they instantly
3	terminated all our rights, which then leads to give rise
4	to a claim for copyright infringement. That is their
5	position. That shows that what they've now put in to
6	state court is an artful pleading way to try to avoid
7	federal preemption, because they recognize they don't
8	have the ability to bring a copyright claim, because
9	they're not the copyright holders. They're trying to
10	greatly expand the law here and and basically do away
11	with the preemption argument, because they're staying
12	the same conduct. It's not just an essential element.
13	It has to be an essential element that transforms the
14	nature of the claim, but the conduct here is identical.
15	They're saying we failed to comply with the source code
16	provision, and, therefore, we're liable for breach of
17	contract, but if that's the condition to the license
18	that relates to the copying and modification of
19	distribution of the software
20	THE COUPT. But but what is your limitation

THE COURT: But -- but what is your limitation on what relates to the copying right or distribution of the software? In other words, what you're saying is a copyright holder could enter into a licensing agreement that conditions anything on, if you violate -- if you violate this term of the contract, you -- you are going

1	outside the scope of the of your license. They could
2	say that about anything, correct? You you are not
3	entitled to modify or distribute, unless you comply with
4	all of these different terms, and they could be along
5	the lines of the ones identified in MDY. What how is
6	it that other than by by proclamation, you know,
7	the this is tied to distribution? I mean, the as
8	the plaintiffs as the plaintiff points out, the right
9	they are seeking is greater it's greater
10	distribution. In other words, it's essentially the
11	opposite of what is typically protected under copyright
12	law. And it's in their view, whether correctly or
13	incorrectly to benefit them as third parties to a
14	contract. And so they can't bring it as a copyright
15	claim. The nature of the claim is one that is contrary
16	to exclusive rights under the copyright. So you're
17	saying simply by the fact that the copyright holder has
18	linked it to distribution, means that that that's it;
19	that you can't meet the standard of an extra element
20	that changes the nature of the action.
21	MR. WILLIAMS: Your Honor, it's no different
22	than the example you just gave, which is, if the
23	copyright holder said, you could make one copy of this,
24	and no more. That's tied that condition is tied to

25 copying which is the copyright holder's exclusive right

1	to control. If this is not about the terms of use.
2	The GPLs do not say you can you can't use this
3	software to do A, B, C and D and that's a condition of
4	the of the license. Here, it's saying, if you want
5	to make a copy or you want to distribute it, you have to
6	do this. They're intertwined with the exclusive rights
7	under the Copyright Act. So if, for example, you know,
8	there's some other provision in the contract that says,
9	you know, you agree and that's why the cases they
10	cite, the Altera case from the Ninth Circuit is readily
11	distinguishable, because there it dealt with the right
12	to use the software which is not an exclusive right
13	under the Copyright Act. And it distinguished that from
14	the right to reproduce.

15 THE COURT: What if the copyright holder were 16 to tie use of the software to distribution? In other 17 words, if you use it in the following prohibited ways, 18 your distribution rights end. You can't distribute it 19 to the extent you have distribution rights. You can't 20 copy it. What if they tie it to use? If you use it in 21 the way that we don't authorize, you can't distribute.

22 MR. WILLIAMS: Your Honor, I would have to know 23 what the actual language, because it comes down to the 24 contract interpretation, but if -- again, as the 25 Ninth Circuit has said, if it is -- if there's a nexus Γ

1	between the an exclusive right and a condition, then
2	it's copyright infringement. So if you know, I'd
3	have to see I mean, because again, Altera and MDY
4	dealt with terms of use that were violations of the
5	of the agreement, but because they were used and not the
6	right to copy or distribute which are exclusive
7	rights the court found that they were only covenants.
8	So, again, I mean, it comes down to a question of how is
9	this I mean, it would it would essentially undo
10	any, you know, the MDY decision to say, that, well, I
11	mean, if you put any limitation on the ability to copy
12	or distribute or modify, then that is that meets the
13	standard then. And that's exactly what the court in
14	Jacobsen II I mean, again, think about it in a sense
15	that there is no that what there is no extra
16	element. I mean, here, the elements are identical.
17	They haven't identified what the how this element
18	transforms the nature of the claim. I mean, that's a
19	significant issue here, because
20	THE COURT: I'll give you one more minute, and
21	then I'll give plaintiff a couple of minutes in
22	response, and then we need to move on to the next one.
23	MR. WILLIAMS: Okay. So, Your Honor, I think
24	that again, looking at the cases that they have cited
25	in their reply we have, for example, the Crispin case

1	that talks about, you know, there, the breach of
2	contract claim was based on a different term than the
3	copyright infringement claim. Vizio's position is not
4	that you can never have a case which a breach of
5	contract claim and a copyright claim coexist, but you
6	can't have a case where the breach of contract claim and
7	the copyright infringement claim are based on the
8	identical conduct, because at that point, they're
9	equivalent and under Section 301, the state law claim is
10	preempted. And we and, again, I believe that the
11	the language of this license agreement makes it clear
12	that you terminate, you go outside, you exceed the
13	scope, that gives rise to the claim for copyright
14	infringement. That's how you determine if this is a
15	copyright case or a contract case. We believe it
16	clearly is a a copyright case, and they have artfully
17	pled around it. And their positions in prior
18	litigation and even with us previously is is
19	indicative of the fact that this is an artful pled
20	complaint.
21	THE COURT: All right. Thank you.
22	Mr. Schlaff, I'll just give you another minute or so.
23	MR. SCHLAFF: Your Honor, first of all, this
24	whole condition covenant thing that they're putting
25	before Your Honor, they're importing from a series of

1	cases that are about a litigant trying to open the door
2	to copyright, to enforce a right through copyright as
3	opposed to breach of contract. In the Sun Microsystems
4	case, for example, there's an attempt to go through
5	copyright, because there's a at that time, there was
6	presumption of irreparable harm, and they wanted that
7	presumption. The cases that we've cited are under the
8	Ninth Circuit about copyright and contract cases being
9	able to coexist, are myriad. The MDY case talks
10	specifically says, contractual rights are much broader
11	than the right under a copyright. Copyrights now
12	contract rights are broader. Their whole analysis
13	ignores the extra element test, and it ignores the
14	language that they, themselves quote that say an extra
15	element is not only an extra element giving rise to
16	the the cause of action, but an extra remedy.
17	There's a remedy that you can't get through copyright.
18	You can get it through state law cases. And
19	there's simply nothing that supports their position.
20	They've taken
21	THE COURT: So are you so is the plaintiff
22	conceding that this is a that there is a covenant
23	condition distinction and that this is a condition?
24	MR. SCHLAFF: I don't think that there is a
25	covenant condition distinction for whether or not you

1 can assert a contract cause of action. They're taking a 2 distinction that that was -- that was written out in a 3 series of cases that were about whether the plaintiff 4 got to use the presumption of irreparable harm under --5 under copyright. And it might be -- that analysis might 6 be pertinent to that kind of case, but it's irrelevant 7 to this case.

8 THE COURT: All right. All right. I think I 9 have enough information. And I appreciate the 10 arguments, both in the papers and here today. I think 11 that your papers were very good. So I appreciate that. 12 And the matter will be taken under submission, and the 13 Court's ruling will be posted on the docket.

14 MR. WILLIAMS: Your Honor, just as a 15 housekeeping matter, you had mentioned the motion to 16 dismiss. If the Court may recall, the parties that 17 originally agreed to have the motion to dismiss and the 18 remand motion set for, I believe it was June 3rd, and 19 then the Court advanced the remand motion hearing to 20 today. So our -- we have a reply brief that is due on 21 the motion to dismiss next Friday, the 20th which is two 22 weeks before that scheduled hearing. So I just wanted 23 to clarify that that was on a separate track, based upon 24 the stipulated court order?

25

THE COURT: Oh, I wasn't sure that we had done

1 it that way. So that was my fault, I suppose in 2 introducing the case, because I thought that both were 3 in front of me, but I focused on remand first for obvious reasons. One does not decide a motion to 4 5 dismiss until one has decided remand. So when is your 6 reply brief due? 7 MR. WILLIAMS: A week from today, the 20th. 8 THE COURT: All right. If I think that I need 9 more time, I will -- I will let you know, and we'll move 10 that; but for right now, I don't think anything else 11 needs to take place on that. 12 MR. WILLIAMS: Okay. Thank you, Your Honor. 13 THE COURT: I mean, I don't have to change 14 anything just yet. All right. Okay. Thank you, both. 15 MR. SCHLAFF: Thank you, Your Honor. 16 MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you, Your Honor. 17 (Whereupon, proceeding adjourned.) 18 _ _ _ 19 20 21 22 23 24 25

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1	CERTIFICATE
2	
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5	SOFTWARE FREEDOM CONSERVANCY, :
6	INC. : No. SACV 21-01943-JLS
7	vs. :
8	VIZIO, INC., et al.
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10	
11	I, MARIA BUSTILLOS, OFFICIAL COURT REPORTER, IN AND FOR THE
12	UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE CENTRAL DISTRICT OF
13	CALIFORNIA, DO HEREBY CERTIFY THAT PURSUANT TO SECTION 753,
14	TITLE 28, UNITED STATES CODE, THE FOREGOING IS A TRUE AND
15	CORRECT TRANSCRIPT OF THE STENOGRAPHICALLY REPORTED
16	PROCEEDINGS HELD IN THE ABOVE-ENTITLED MATTER AND THAT THE
17	TRANSCRIPT PAGE FORMAT IS IN CONFORMANCE WITH THE REGULATIONS
18	OF THE JUDICIAL CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED STATES.
19	FEES CHARGED FOR THIS TRANSCRIPT, LESS ANY CIRCUIT FEE
20	REDUCTION AND/OR DEPOSIT, ARE IN CONFORMANCE WITH THE
21	REGULATIONS OF THE JUDICIAL CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED STATES.
22	
23	/s/07/02/2022_
24	MARIA R. BUSTILLOS DATE
25	OFFICIAL REPORTER

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