TEXAS FORENSIC SCIENCE COMMISSION

FINAL REPORT ON COMPLAINT NO. 24.45; TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY-HOUSTON (TOXICOLOGY-BLOOD ALCOHOL)

OCTOBER 24, 2025



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I. BACKGROUND

A. History and Mission of the Texas Forensic Science Commission

The Texas Forensic Science Commission (Commission) was created during the 79th Legislative Session in 2005 with the passage of HB-1068. The Act amended the Code of Criminal Procedure to add Article 38.01, which describes the composition and authority of the Commission. During subsequent legislative sessions, the Texas Legislature further amended the Code of Criminal Procedure to clarify and expand the Commission's jurisdictional responsibilities and authority.¹

The Commission has nine members appointed by the Governor of Texas.² Seven of the nine commissioners are scientists or medical doctors and two are attorneys (one prosecutor nominated by the Texas District and County Attorney's Association and one criminal defense attorney nominated by the Texas Criminal Defense Lawyer's Association).³ The Commission's Presiding Officer is Jeffrey Barnard, MD.

B. Commission Jurisdiction

1. Investigations of Complaints Alleging Professional Negligence and Professional Misconduct

Texas law requires the Commission to "investigate in a timely manner, any allegation of professional negligence or professional misconduct that would substantially affect the integrity of the results of a forensic analysis conducted by a crime laboratory." The term "forensic analysis" is defined as a medical, chemical, toxicological, ballistic, or other examination or test performed on physical evidence, including DNA evidence, for the purpose of determining the connection of

 $^{^1}$ See e.g., Acts 2013, 83rd Leg. ch. 782 (S.B. 1238) §§ 1-4 (2013); Acts 2015, 84th Leg. ch. 1276 (S.B. 1287) §§ 1-7 (2015), Acts 2023, 88th Leg. ch. 742 (H.B. 3506) §§ 1-2 (2023), Acts 2023, 88th Leg. ch. 1149 (S.B. 0991) § 1 (2023). 2 Tex. Code Crim. Proc. art. 38.01 § 3.

¹ EX. CODE CRIM. FROC. art. 30.

³ *Id*.

⁴ TEX. CODE CRIM. PROC. art. 38.01 § 4(a)(3)(A).

the evidence to a criminal action.⁵ Crime laboratories must also self-report professional negligence or professional misconduct to the Commission.⁶ The statute does not define the terms "professional negligence" and "professional misconduct." The Commission defines those terms in its administrative rules.⁷

2. Accreditation Jurisdiction

The Commission is charged with accrediting crime laboratories and other entities that conduct forensic analyses of physical evidence.⁸ The term "crime laboratory" includes a public or private laboratory or other entity that conducts a forensic analysis subject to article 38.35 of the Code of Criminal Procedure.⁹ The Commission currently recognizes ISO/IEC 17025:2017 and ISO/IEC 17020: 2012 forensic program accreditation by two accrediting bodies, the ANSI National Accreditation Board (ANAB) and the American Association for Laboratory Accreditation (A2LA).

3. Licensing Jurisdiction

Under Texas law, a person may not act or offer to act as a forensic analyst unless the person holds a license issued by the Commission. ¹⁰ While accreditation is granted to entities that perform forensic analysis, licensing is a credential obtained by individuals who, on behalf of accredited

⁵ TEX. CODE CRIM. PROC. art. 38.35(a)(4).

⁶ Id. at art. 38.01 § 4(a)(1)-(2) (2019); See also, 37 Tex. Admin. Code § 651.219(c)(5) (2020).

⁽Pursuant to the Forensic Analyst Licensing Program Code of Professional Responsibility, members of crime laboratory management shall make timely and full disclosure to the Texas Forensic Science Commission of any non-conformity that may rise to the level of professional negligence or professional misconduct).

⁷ 37 Tex. Admin. Code § 651.302 (7), (8), and (10) (2020). The term "would substantially affect the integrity of the results of a forensic analysis" does not necessarily require that a criminal case be impacted or a report be issued to a customer in error. The term includes acts or omissions that would call into question the integrity of the forensic analysis, the forensic analysts, or the crime laboratory as a whole regardless of the ultimate outcome in the underlying criminal case.

⁸ TEX. CODE CRIM. PROC. art. 38.01 § 4-d(b).

⁹ *Id.* at art. 38.35(a)(1).

¹⁰ *Id.* at art. 38.01 § 4-a(b); 37 Tex. Admin. Code § 651.201(c) (2018). The Texas forensic licensing program took effect on January 1, 2019.

laboratories, technically review or perform forensic analysis or draw conclusions from or interpret forensic analysis for a court or crime laboratory.¹¹

Pursuant to its licensing authority, the Commission may take disciplinary action against a license holder or applicant for a license on a determination by the Commission that a license holder or applicant for a license committed professional negligence or misconduct or violated Texas Code of Criminal Procedure Article 38.01 or an administrative rule or other order issued by the Commission. ¹² If the Commission issues such a finding, the Commission may: (1) revoke or suspend the person's license; (2) refuse to renew the person's license; (3) reprimand the license holder; or (4) deny the person a license. ¹³ The Commission may also place on probation a person whose license is suspended. ¹⁴ A person who is subject to disciplinary action by the Commission may appeal that decision to the Judicial Branch Certification Commission. ¹⁵

4. Jurisdiction Applicable to the Complaint

The individual who is the subject of the complaint, Zachary Augustyn (Analyst), is currently employed at the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) Houston Regional Crime Laboratory. He has been licensed by the Commission as an Interpretative Toxicologist since November 2, 2020. Licensure as an Interpretive Toxicologist is the highest level of licensure an individual may receive in the toxicology discipline, as this license encompasses all activities of a toxicology technician and a toxicology analyst in addition to interpretation, provided the Interpretive Toxicologist maintains proficiency in the activities performed under each license type to the extent required by ANAB, which is the recognized accrediting body for DPS.

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¹¹ *Id.* at art. 38.01 § 4-a(a)(2).

¹² *Id.* at art. 38.01 § 4-c.

¹³ 37 Tex. Admin Code § 651.216(a)(1)-(4) (2024).

¹⁴ *Id.* at (b).

¹⁵ TEX. CODE CRIM. PROC. art. 38.01 § 4-c(e); 37 Tex. Admin. Code § 651.216(d) (2024).

C. Investigative Process

The Commission's administrative rules set forth the process by which it determines whether to accept a complaint for investigation, as well as the process used to conduct the investigation. The Commission's rules also describe the process for appealing final investigative reports by the Commission including possible disciplinary actions against a license holder or applicant. The commission including possible disciplinary actions against a license holder or applicant.

D. Limitations of this Report

The Commission's authority contains important limitations. For example, no finding by the Commission constitutes a comment upon the guilt or innocence of any individual. ¹⁸ The Commission's written reports are not admissible in civil or criminal actions. ¹⁹ The Commission does not have the authority to subpoena documents or testimony. Information received during any investigation is dependent on the willingness of affected parties to submit relevant documents and respond to questions posed. Information gathered in this report was not subjected to standards for the admission of evidence in a courtroom. For example, no individual testified under oath, was limited by either the Texas or Federal Rules of Evidence (*e.g.*, against the admission of hearsay) or was subject to cross-examination under a judge's supervision.

II. SUMMARY OF THE COMPLAINT

On November 6, 2024, defense attorney Mark Thiessen (Thiessen) filed a complaint with the Commission alleging the Analyst committed professional negligence and/or professional

¹⁶ 37 Tex. Admin. Code § 651.304-307 (2019).

¹⁷ 37 Tex. Admin. Code § 651.401 (2024).

 $^{^{18}\,}$ Tex. Code Crim. Proc. art. 38.01 \S 4(g).

¹⁹ *Id.* at § 11.

misconduct and violated the Texas Code of Professional Responsibility for Forensic Analysts and Crime Laboratory Management in connection with his disclosure responsibilities and testimony in three criminal cases in Fort Bend County and Montgomery County between August 29, and October 23, 2024:

- State v. Jawed Momin, Fort Bend (Testimony on August 29, 2024)
- State v. Israel Monroy Montgomery (Testimony on September 17-18, 2024)
- State v. James Soape, Montgomery (Testimony on October 22 and 23, 2024).

The complaint alleges that in these cases, the Analyst withheld information from the defense, exhibited bias against the defense and defense experts, testified beyond the scope of his expertise, relied on data despite having concerns regarding the data, and testified untruthfully leaving a false impression with the jury. (See, Exhibit A – Complaint)

A. Notice and Response by Analyst

On November 22, 2024, the Commission notified the Analyst of the complaint and advised him the complaint would be considered at the January 31, 2025, quarterly meeting. On December 27, 2024, the Analyst submitted a written response to the Commission. (*See, Exhibit B – Response*).

B. Commission's Decision to Accept the Complaint

On January 31, 2025, the Commission voted to accept the complaint for investigation by a panel of Commission members.²⁰ Brazos County District Attorney Jarvis Parsons, Dr. Sarah Kerrigan, and Dr. Jasmine Drake were appointed to the investigative panel.

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²⁰ 37 Tex. Admin. Code Section 651.307(b) (2024).

C. Document Review and Interviews

The Commission reviewed all materials submitted by the Complainant as well as materials submitted by the Analyst. The Commission also obtained the case record in one case (*Soape*) to address a technical issue raised by the complaint. During the investigation, a motion for new trial hearing was held in the *Momin* case in Fort Bend County. The Commission obtained the relevant hearing transcripts and Court orders.

On May 5, 2025, and August 13, 2025, staff interviewed the Analyst. Commissioner Kerrigan participated in the August 13th interview.

On June 25, 2025, staff interviewed the complainant, Atty. Mark Thiessen.

On June 20, 2025, staff and Dr. Kerrigan interviewed toxicology expert, Amanda Culbertson (Culbertson).

III.TIMELINE AND COMPLAINT ALLEGATIONS

A. Failure to Disclose Pending Quality Incidents

A central issue in this complaint concerns the Analyst's failure to disclose two quality incidents (QIs) covering three separate evidence-packaging-and-documentation issues that were pending and being investigated by the DPS quality division in August 2024 when the Analyst testified in Fort Bend County in *State v. Momin*.²¹

QI is the term DPS uses to describe any event where the laboratory's activities or processes fail to conform to its own established procedures, to the requirements of ISO 17025: 2017, or the relevant supplemental standard, in this case AR-3125.²² As discussed in more detail below, QIs

²¹ Per DPS policy, QI's contain observations related to nonconformities, and a nonconformity (or nonconforming work)" occurs when one or more characteristic(s) or condition(s) are observed that do not conform to required specifications in a standard, procedure, or policy. *See*, <u>Texas DPS Crime Laboratory Division Manual</u> terms and definitions at 21-22 (*eff.* 4-7-25).

²² For ease of reference because the subject of this complaint is an analyst at DPS, we refer to quality documentation generally as QIs throughout this report, though other laboratories may use different terminology (e.g., corrective action reports or similar) to refer to the same concept.

range from minor administrative issues to serious systemic breakdowns that may impact the integrity of a forensic result. In 2024, the Analyst made three mistakes that resulted in two QIs. The mistakes were human oversights that can and do occur in any laboratory. First in December 2023, the Analyst failed to reseal evidence properly. This lapse resulted in a QI, which was finalized on October 11, 2024. (Exhibit C: DPS QI-HOU-2024-0104-BA). The second QI included two instances where the Analyst failed to notice swapped (and therefore incorrect) defendant information entered by the submitting law enforcement agency—once in February 2024 and a second time in May 2024. This second QI was finalized on November 7, 2024. (Exhibit D: DPS QI-HOU-SYS-2024-0210-BA).

1. Lack of Disclosure of Pending QIs and MNT in *State v. Momin* (Fort Bend: Aug. 2024)

On August 29, 2024, the Analyst testified in the trial of *State v. Momin* in Fort Bend County. In his response to this complaint, the Analyst asserted, that during discovery, he provided all *completed* discipline-related and analyst-related QIs (45 total), as well as a link to the DPS website which, at the time, included completed QIs but not pending QIs.²³ The Analyst did not disclose the two pending QIs, related to the failure to reseal evidence properly (QI-HOU-2024-0104-BA) and failure to notice swapped (and therefore incorrect) defendant information (QI-HOU-SYS-2024-0210-BA), to either the State or the defense. The defense learned about these QIs after trial and filed a Motion for New Trial.

In late October 2024, a hearing was held in Fort Bend County on the defendant's Motion for New Trial. This hearing continued in early November. Staff obtained a transcript of the Motion

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²³ This group of 45 QIs covered a range of items and analysts; they were not necessarily related to any work performed by the Analyst who is the subject of this investigation. The DPS Quality Incident Search Index can be found on the DPS website at https://www.dps.texas.gov/section/crime-laboratory/crime-laboratory-quality-incidents. DPS Quality Incident Records can also be found in the Texas Forensic Science Commission database at: https://fsc.txcourts.gov/QualityIncidentPublic/Overview.

for New Trial proceedings at which the Analyst and Houston DPS management testified. (Exhibit E: MNT Hearing Transcripts in *State v. Momin*).

On November 12, 2024, the Court granted the defendant's Motion for New Trial, finding that timely disclosure of the pending investigation surrounding the handling of evidence may have been used by the defense as mitigation or exculpation or considered by the Court in respect to the requested suppression of evidence. (Exhibit F: Order on Defendant's MNT: *State v. Momin*).

2. Disclosure of Pending QIs in State v. Monroy (Montgomery County: September 2024)

On September 17-18, 2024, the Analyst testified in a Montgomery County case, *State v. Monroy*. Before trial, the Analyst revealed the existence of the two pending QIs to the assigned Assistant District Attorney.²⁴ The State disclosed the pending QIs to the defense. On September 17, 2024, the Analyst testified at a pretrial hearing concerning the admissibility of the pending QIs.

On September 18, 2024, the court initially declined to admit the pending QIs for impeachment purposes, but at the conclusion of the Analyst's direct examination, the court reviewed the Court of Criminal Appeals decision in *Diamond v. State*²⁵ and ruled the pending QIs were admissible for impeachment purposes. Both the State and the defense questioned the Analyst about the pending QIs. Culbertson also testified for the defense. During jury deliberations, the jury filed a "question to the court" asking for a transcript of the Analyst's testimony and stating they had a disagreement about the credibility of the blood test and the "witness/lab."

3. <u>Disclosure of Pending QIs in State v. Soape (Montgomery County: October 2024)</u>

From October 22-23, 2024, the Analyst testified in another Montgomery County case, *State* v. *Soape*. As in the *Monroy* case, the State disclosed the two pending QIs to the defense before

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²⁴ In his interviews with the Commission, the Analyst stated he asked his immediate supervisor whether he should disclose the pending QIs and was told that it was "up to him." Commission staff contacted the supervisor, and though she did not have a specific recollection of the conversation, she also did not dispute his assertion.

²⁵ Diamond v. State, 613 S.W.3d 536 (Tex. Cr. App 2020).

trial. The defense counsel and defense expert were the same in *Soape* as they were in *Monroy*. In preparation for the *Soape* trial, the defense subpoenaed communications between the Analyst and the prosecutor from the earlier *Monroy* trial. Because in these two Montgomery County cases, the QIs were disclosed by the State, there is no complaint regarding failure to disclose as there was for the *Momin* case in Fort Bend County. Instead, the complaint focuses on the Analyst's pretrial communications with the prosecutor, the Analyst's testimony regarding various technical and ethical issues, and an uncorrected mistake made during the Analyst's testimony in *Monroy*.

IV.COMMISSION FINDINGS AND OBSERVATIONS REGARDING PENDING QUALITY INCIDENT DISCLOSURE OBLIGATIONS

A. Allegation of Professional Negligence/Misconduct re: Failure to Disclose in Momin

It is undisputed that the two QIs pending resolution by the laboratory were not disclosed to the prosecution or defense in the *Momin* case in Fort Bend County but were disclosed subsequently during the two Montgomery County cases (*Monroy* and *Soape*). The complaint alleges the lack of disclosure in *Momin* constituted professional negligence or professional misconduct by the Analyst. The Commission's administrative rules set forth the following definitions of professional negligence and professional misconduct:²⁶

"Professional misconduct" means the forensic analyst or crime laboratory, through a material act or omission, deliberately failed to follow the standard of practice that an ordinary forensic analyst or crime laboratory would have followed, and the deliberate act or omission would substantially affect the integrity of the results of a forensic analysis. An act or omission was deliberate if the forensic analyst or crime laboratory was aware of and consciously disregarded an accepted standard of practice required for a forensic analysis.

"Professional negligence" means the forensic analyst or crime laboratory, through a material act or omission, negligently failed to follow the standard of practice that an ordinary forensic analyst or crime laboratory would have followed, and the negligent act or omission would substantially affect the integrity of the results of a forensic analysis. An act or omission was negligent if the forensic analyst or crime laboratory should have been but was not aware of an accepted standard of practice.

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²⁶ 37 Tex. Admin. Code Section 651.302(8) and (9) (2020).

For the Commission to issue a negligence or misconduct finding, a forensic analyst's actions or omissions must meet one of the above definitions. We evaluate the Analyst's failure to disclose the pending QI's during the *Momin* case in Fort Bend County through this lens.

The complaint references the Commission's Legal Disclosure and Professional Responsibility Course analysts must complete to be licensed. The Commission educates analysts and administers examinations covering topics such as evidence handling, statistics, human factors, courtroom testimony, and root cause analysis. The education and related examination also include concepts under *Brady v. Maryland*, ²⁷ the Michael Morton Act²⁸ and the Texas Code of Professional Responsibility for Forensic Analysts and Crime Laboratory Management²⁹. The excerpts included in the complaint are derived from these training materials.

Analysts are taught suppression by the prosecution of evidence favorable to an accused violates due process under *Brady v. Maryland* and related caselaw. Analysts learn impeachment evidence means evidence or information used to assess the credibility or reliability of the government's witnesses and that impeachment evidence can be quite broad depending upon the facts and circumstances.

The specific training examples referenced by the complaint, however, are distinguishable from the instant case because those examples involved resolved QIs or major pending investigations into suspected misconduct where the conduct was so significant the analyst was reassigned during the pendency of the investigation. The training offered by the Commission does not specifically address the question of in-process, pending QIs in the normal course where the quality issues under investigation have not been fully assessed but there does not appear to be any

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²⁷ Brady v. Maryland, 373 U.S. 83 (1963).

²⁸ Article 39.14 Texas Code of Criminal Procedure (Michael Morton Act).

²⁹ 37 Tex. Admin Code Section 651.219 (2020).

reason to remove the analyst from casework. The Commission uses case-related examples in training materials to convey to analysts and laboratory management disclosure considerations are fact-specific and complex, but courts have generally looked beyond whether the item in question has been finalized when assessing whether failure to disclose was problematic under the law. The Commission is not a court and has no jurisdiction to make determinations about whether a particular failure to disclose violates statutory or constitutional requirements. Rather, the purpose of the Commission's disclosure training is to raise awareness for crime laboratories so they may assess how to evaluate and mitigate risk when it comes to drafting and implementing their disclosure compliance policies.

In his written response to the complaint, the Analyst asserted that "QIs that are in progress are not routinely provided in discovery." In his May 5, 2025, interview with Commission staff, the Analyst explained it was his understanding that "we don't disclose quality incidents that are pending, because they are not finalized, and additional information may be entered" and "it wouldn't be right to disclose an incomplete quality incident." In his view, if any information on the QI is incomplete or inaccurate, "we would be giving out an inaccurate or incomplete QI". His understanding of DPS policy, based on his reading of the DPS Crime Laboratory Division Manual, was that DPS would only disclose a pending QI if it involved the case on trial.

B. Difference Between Self-Disclosures and QIs, and their Respective Reporting Requirements Under TCCP Article 38.01 and Commission Rules

As previously noted, DPS is accredited by ANAB under ISO 17025:2017 and AR-3125. A documented process for the management of quality issues is a basic accreditation requirement. The nature and scope of quality issues in forensic laboratories range from simple documentation errors to catastrophic failures such as intentional misconduct that could impact the reliability of reported results, the fair administration of justice, or both.

DPS documents quality issues—from minor to significant—in the form of QIs. Though not required by law, in the interest of transparency and efficiency, DPS has published all QIs on its website since March 1, 2017. In July 2024, with the Office of Court Administration's technical assistance, the Commission released a new database allowing *any* laboratory subject to the Commission's jurisdiction to publish QIs (or equivalent documentation) in a central location searchable on the Commission's website. DPS now publishes all QIs directly on the Commission's website.³⁰ Though DPS has taken this proactive step, Texas law does not require self-reporting of all QIs to the Commission. Rather, it requires the reporting of a smaller subset of significant nonconformities that may rise to the level of professional negligence or misconduct. This smaller subset of QIs is referred to generally by the Commission as "self-disclosures."³¹

Since January 1, 2019, the Commission has reviewed 477 complaints and laboratory self-disclosures from all laboratories subject to the Commission's jurisdiction. Of this total number, 178 were complaints filed by the public, and 299 were self-disclosed by laboratories. Of the 299 total self-disclosures, 66 (22%) were submitted by DPS.

The 477 complaints and self-disclosures for all forensic laboratories in Texas *do not include* the entire population of QIs and accreditation reports those laboratories have generated but rather reflect the smaller subset of serious incidents or issues requiring disclosure. To provide a sense of relative volume of total QIs for DPS during the same period, since January 1, 2019, DPS posted a total of 2,137 QIs online. Only 66 of those QIs were significant enough to require proactive self-disclosure reporting to the Commission.

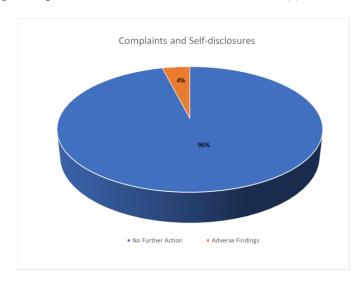
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³⁰ To date, four laboratories—Bexar County, Brazoria County, Houston Forensic Science Center and the DPS laboratory system—have uploaded their QIs to the Commission's database. The Commission expects utilization of the database to increase over time as laboratories become more accustomed to the database for various functions (*e.g.*, accreditation, OSAC Registry of Standards implementation, etc.)

³¹ TEX. CODE CRIM. PROC. art. 38.01(a)(1)-(2).

The Commission evaluates each reported self-disclosure to determine whether the laboratory took sufficient action to rectify the quality issue(s) identified or whether additional investigation or disciplinary action is needed. Where additional investigation is needed, the Commission reviews the facts submitted to assess whether an analyst may have committed professional negligence or misconduct or violated any provision of the Code of Professional Responsibility for Forensic Analysts and Crime Laboratory Management. The Commission then issues a report containing its findings.

As indicated in the following chart, of the 477 total complaints and self-disclosures reviewed by the Commission from January 1, 2019, through July 25, 2025 (the Commission's last quarterly meeting), 4% resulted in an investigation that included a finding of professional negligence, professional misconduct, or violation(s) of the Code of Professional Responsibility.



The Commission provides these data to assist stakeholders in understanding the range of issues that laboratories are required to document pursuant to accreditation requirements, and to make the following observations: (1) most QIs, while focused on continuous quality improvement, do not involve an analyst doing anything "wrong"; (2) significant QIs are submitted to the Commission so the Commission may determine whether the laboratory adequately addressed the

issues identified; and (3) a smaller subset of those serious QIs require investigation by the Commission and may result in adverse findings. We make these observations not to minimize the potential impact of quality issues in forensic laboratories but rather to educate end-users on the wide range and scope of issues that may be covered by QIs.

Of critical note, the statutory requirements pertaining to reporting of certain quality issues to the Commission are separate and distinct from the question of whether a particular QI (pending or completed) should be disclosed in the context of a specific criminal case. Determinations regarding disclosure pursuant to statutory and constitutional obligations in criminal cases (*e.g.*, *Brady v. Maryland*, Michael Morton Act, etc.) fall within the sole province of the court with jurisdiction over the matter, with ultimate authority residing with the Court of Criminal Appeals.

C. Evolution of DPS Forensic Disclosure Policy: Key Events and Legislation

DPS' efforts toward transparency have evolved significantly since the passage of the Michael Morton Act. Laboratory leadership has increasingly emphasized the need for transparency and just culture to exist simultaneously. Unlike other industries where internal investigations, root cause analysis, and identification of corrective actions may proceed in a completely confidential manner until issuance of a final report, there are statutory and constitutional considerations in criminal cases that may require disclosure of information to the parties and the court on a faster timeline. Additionally, in the intervening years since the Michael Morton Act was signed into law, trial and appellate courts have made disclosure decisions regarding forensic laboratories' records that may help inform a laboratory's risk assessment. These decisions necessarily mean a laboratory's disclosure compliance policy should change as needed to reflect the expressed needs of criminal justice end-users.

The following key events led to the current DPS policy on the disclosure of laboratory information, including quality system documentation such as QIs:

- **January 1, 2014:** Effective date of the Michael Morton Act, which amended Texas Code of Criminal Procedure Article 39.14. The Michael Morton Act imposes a continuing duty on the state to disclose to a defendant any exculpatory, impeachment, or mitigating document, item, or information in the possession, custody, or control of the state that tends to negate the guilt of the defendant or would tend to reduce the punishment for the offense charged. This duty exists regardless of whether the defense ever requests discovery from the State. ³²
- January 4, 2016: DPS policy first referenced a "Disciplinary History Form" after recognizing that exculpatory, mitigating or impeachment information in the crime laboratory service context may be fundamentally different than exculpatory, mitigating or impeachment information for commissioned peace officers. The Disciplinary History Form was expected to include all sustained incidents such as violations of discrimination, sexual harassment, and unprofessional conduct policy. However, laboratory Quality Incidents, Quality Action Plans, and Performance Improvement Plans were not included on the form.
- **December 15, 2016**: The DPS Office of Inspector General (OIG) opened an investigation into the testimony of a blood alcohol analyst from the Garland regional laboratory after prosecutors in five North Texas counties (Collin, Dallas, Denton, Rockwall, and Tarrant) communicated significant concerns regarding inconsistent and misleading testimony he had provided under oath with respect to a switched blood sample. In May 2017, DPS self-disclosed the OIG investigative report to the Commission.
- **December 22, 2016**: DPS crime laboratory representatives and the group of North Texas prosecutors met to discuss a process for lawyers to understand and facilitate disclosure of laboratory nonconformities. As a result of extensive discussion with prosecutors during this and subsequent meetings, DPS adopted a disclosure compliance policy and implemented a new "Disclosure Form" across the laboratory system. The form was officially incorporated into DPS policy on June 1, 2017.
- March 1, 2017: DPS uploaded all QIs to its public facing website. While some QIs included references to names of individuals associated with the QI in some form or another, not all names were referenced, and documents were not searchable in a way that would allow an attorney to easily obtain all QIs an individual expert had ever been associated with. DPS added a link in their laboratory reports to Quality Incidents via a public-facing

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³² *See*, *supra*, note 2 at 695.

section of their website and a statement that the laboratory maintains a complete case record which may be discoverable under Article 39.14. https://www.dps.texas.gov/section/crime-laboratory-quality-incidents

- June 1, 2017: DPS Policy was amended to change the Disciplinary History Form to a "Disclosure Form". The Disclosure Form was to include sustained disciplinary actions, sustained complaints against laboratory personnel, sustained allegations of misconduct, or sustained violations of department policy, as well as sustained violations of discrimination, sexual harassment, and unprofessional conduct policy. Additional incidents, specifically if related to the laboratory personnel's technical ability were also included, such as performance improvement plans, unsatisfactory proficiency testing, unsatisfactory competency tests, testing reported and found to be incorrect, switched samples if discovered after reports were issued, and sustained complaints of professional negligence or misconduct investigated by the Commission. Also included on the Disclosure Form were "quality incidents and action plans that are determined to be significant quality events".
- April 20, 2018: The Commission published its report regarding the DPS Garland blood alcohol testimony referenced above. The Commission observed that DPS should be commended for its work in developing and implementing the "Disclosure Form" and that it signified a major step in implementing the Michael Morton Act with respect to forensic laboratory records.
- **December 2018**: DPS added a searchable file of associated individuals to its public website: https://txdpslabs.qualtraxcloud.com/ShowDocument.aspx?ID=61117
- April 15, 2019: DPS implemented the first version of the Crime Laboratory Division Quality Manual including Chapter 34 the "Forensic Disclosure and Compliance Policy," which closely aligns with the current version [now in Chapter 33].
- **September 1, 2021**: The Richard Miles Act took effect, requiring any law enforcement agency that files a case with an attorney representing the State to provide a written statement that all documents, items, and information required to be disclosed under Article 39.14 (Michael Morton Act) have been transmitted to the prosecutor.
- **November 15, 2022**: The Commission published a report describing a case in which neither the State nor the defense obtained or reviewed the portion of the laboratory case record concerning forensic biology screening, which contained information regarding significant issues with the storage of crucial DNA evidence. This case (*Ex Parte Colone*), as well as other cases around the United States concerning undisclosed scientific

information in laboratory records, spurred the passage of SB-991, the Texas crime laboratory portal legislation.

- September 1, 2023: SB-991 took effect requiring DPS to establish and maintain a central computerized portal that facilitates the transfer of crime laboratory records for all accredited laboratories (not just DPS) to authorized prosecutors and defense counsel. The portal, referred to as Crime Lab Records (CLR) Connect, is in the early stages of development.
- **June 12, 2024**: The Court of Criminal Appeals decided *State v. Heath*, ³³ affirming the Michael Morton Act requires prosecutors to disclose all relevant evidence in the possession of the State, regardless of whether the prosecutor had knowledge of the evidence. The Court noted that "the State" includes both prosecutors and law enforcement agencies, as well as third party contractors *such as crime laboratories*, that have a duty to disclose evidence. ³⁴

D. DPS Policy on Pending Quality Incident Disclosure

When the Fort Bend (*Momin*) and Montgomery County (*Monroy* and *Soape*) cases were tried, DPS policy provided a list of categories that should be listed on an employee's disclosure form. The list included sustained disciplinary actions, complaints, allegations of misconduct, violations of department policy, or allegations of falsification of governmental records. The list also contains a category for "quality incidents and corrective actions that are *determined to be significant quality events*" [emphasis added]. Additional disclosure form incidents include performance improvement plans if related to the individual's technical ability, unsatisfactory proficiency tests, unsatisfactory competency tests, testing conclusions found to be in error, sample switch if discovered after results are reported, suspension of work for cause, and sustained complaints of professional negligence or misconduct investigated by the Commission. (Exhibit G: Chapter 33 DPS Crime Laboratory Division Manual: Forensic Disclosure and

³³ State v. Heath, 696 S.W.3d 677 (Tex. Cr. App. 2024).

³⁴ *Id.* at 695.

Compliance Policy Section 33.2 H(1)-(9)(g)). Absent is any specific mention of expectations regarding disclosure of *pending* QIs where the significance of the QI may not yet have been assessed.

E. DPS Management Testimony Regarding the DPS Quality Incident Process

The Houston DPS Quality Manager testified at the Motion for New Trial hearing in *State v. Momin*. She testified that the quality division assigns a risk level to a QI once it has been fully evaluated. Risk level assignment is a factor in determining whether the QI should be included on the analyst's "Disclosure Form" (in case of a significant event or other specified categories) or merely added to the DPS public facing website (where classified as low or medium risk).

In the case of the two QIs that were not disclosed to the parties in *State v. Momin*, after the QI cause analysis and correction, DPS assigned "low" risk to the QI regarding the failure to reseal evidence properly, and "medium" risk to the QI regarding the two cases of swapped defendant information (identified and corrected before report issued). Because the incidents were ultimately determined not to be "significant events", they would not be listed on the analyst's "Disclosure Form". Rather, they would be uploaded to the website alongside the rest of the QIs.

The Quality Manager further testified only the following specific items are required to be disclosed on the DPS Disclosure Form:

- Sustained disciplinary actions
- Complaints against laboratory personnel
- Misconduct
- Alleged falsification of government records
- Breaches of ethical standards
- Sustained complaints of negligence/misconduct by TFSC
- Placement on a PIP (performance improvement plan)
- Unsatisfactory PT (proficiency test)
- Unsatisfactory competency test
- Results incorrect upon further testing
- Sample switch if results reported
- Suspension of work for cause

Because none of the Analyst's actions or omissions fell into these categories and because neither QI was determined to be a "significant event," they were not listed on the Analyst's "Disclosure Form." On the question of whether a QI pending investigation should be disclosed to the parties in a case when they involve cases or incidents outside of the case, the Quality Manager's testimony was somewhat unclear but seemed to indicate her belief that it depended on the severity of the incident and whether the incident would need to be reported to the Commission and ANAB.

F. Observations Re: Current DPS Policy on Disclosure of Pending QIs

As a threshold matter, the observations in this section apply to all forensic laboratories that perform work at the request of the State and are subject to the Commission's jurisdiction. As indicated by the judges' rulings in both the *Momin* and *Monroy* trials, the failure to disclose pending QIs may run afoul of a defendant's due process rights to exculpatory, mitigating, and impeachment information. The trial court in *Monroy* relied on the Court of Criminal Appeals' decision in *Diamond v. State*³⁵ for the proposition that pending QIs should be admitted before the jury. It is not the Commission's role to debate or second-guess the courts' determinations in these cases. Instead, the Commission describes these decisions because they highlight the need for laboratories to be open to policy revisions as needed to mitigate the risk that a court (or courts) will deem the failure to disclose a pending QI as a failure to comply with statutory and constitutional requirements. The Commission's understanding is that DPS recognizes this need and is updating its policy.

In *Diamond*, the testifying analyst was removed from casework because she had mistakenly signed off on a blood alcohol analysis report in an unrelated case involving a mislabeled submission form. The prosecutor, unaware of the issue in the unrelated case, did not disclose the

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³⁵ *Supra* at n. 23.

information before Diamond's trial. The question before the Court of Criminal Appeals was whether this information was material. The intermediate appellate court ruled it was. The Court of Criminal Appeals ultimately determined the undisclosed information was *not* material under the case facts, but it left undisturbed the Court of Appeal's finding the information constituted *Brady* material that should have been disclosed. Similarly, the trial court in *Momin* granted a new trial finding the timely disclosure of the two pending QI investigations may have been used by the defense as mitigation or exculpation or considered by the Court as part of the requested suppression of the evidence. While the QIs were not ultimately deemed significant nonconformities under DPS laboratory policy, the courts in these cases determined the pending QIs should have been disclosed to permit the court to determine admissibility.

As previously stated, the DPS disclosure policy focuses on "significant quality events," the identification of which requires a judgment call by the laboratory assuming, as in this case, that the event does not fall into any of the other named categories. The existing policy carries some risk the court—the ultimate arbiter of what needs to be disclosed to the defense and whether the information is admissible—may have a different perspective on what is "significant" than the laboratory. This dynamic is particularly challenging given the laboratory rarely has the total picture of what facts are important in the criminal case.³⁷ While a completed QI includes a written description that should help to facilitate understanding between the laboratory and the lawyers,

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³⁶ "The undisclosed evidence is relevant because it can be used as impeachment of [the analyst's] qualifications and the reliability of her opinion". "We conclude that the certification of the mislabeled lab report in another case is favorable impeachment evidence." *See, Diamond v. State,* 561 S.W. 3d 288, 295-296 (Tex. App. Houston [14th] 2018), *rev'd. on other grounds, Diamond v. State,* 613 S.W.3d 536, 546 (Tex. Cr. App. 2020) (finding the undisclosed evidence was not material considering the facts of the case. "The undisclosed evidence impeaching [the analyst] would not have impeached the testimony [of the officer] describing [the defendant's] intoxicated state.").

³⁷ For example, a switched sample in an unrelated case may not be deemed admissible by many courts, but that evaluation could change if there were chain of custody concerns raised regarding the handling of the evidence between the crime scene and the laboratory. The court hears a range of information about which the laboratory may have no awareness, and that information could impact the court's admissibility evaluation.

pending QIs are more complex because their scope and potential impact may not yet be fully understood. As the Commission has stated in other reports,³⁸ premature and incomplete disclosure can risk misleading the parties. Thus, in the case of pending QIs, communication between the laboratory and attorneys regarding the existence, subject matter, and investigative status of the suspected nonconformity is essential to ensuring the lawyers can provide timely disclosure and the court is able to perform its role in determining admissibility. Communication is a two-way street; the attorneys who work with forensic laboratories must also be willing to learn enough about the way the quality system works to understand how QIs are developed and processed, and the range of issues that QIs may cover from minor administrative errors to significant nonconformities that may impact results.

G. Commission Finding re: Professional Negligence/Misconduct

The Commission concludes the Analyst's failure to disclose the two pending QIs in the *Momin* case in Fort Bend County does not constitute professional negligence or misconduct. The Houston Quality Manager described her understanding that pending QIs would only need to be disclosed if the subject matter of the disclosure reached a certain level of severity, referred to as a "significant" nonconformity. If DPS intended something other than this policy interpretation, then a revision to the policy would be necessary to clarify the expectation. For the Commission to issue a finding of professional negligence or misconduct, the Analyst would have to either deliberately or negligently fail to follow the standard of practice that an ordinary forensic analyst would have followed, and the act or omission would have to substantially affect the integrity of the results of a forensic analysis, defined as an expert examination or test on physical evidence for the purpose

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³⁸ See, Final Report on Fort Worth Police Department Crime Laboratory No. 22.17 (Proficiency Testing) https://www.txcourts.gov/media/1456474/2217-fwpd-draft-report-033123-1.pdf at pps.21-22.

of connecting the evidence to a criminal action.³⁹ While the Commission does reference examples of failures to disclose pending QIs in its *Brady* training material, the examples provided in those materials (significant ongoing investigations into misconduct) are not analogous to the instant case. Given the DPS policy's plain language and the professional negligence and misconduct definitions, the facts do not support a professional negligence or misconduct finding for failure to disclose pending QIs in the *Momin* case.

H. Opportunity for DPS and Other Texas Laboratories to Evaluate Existing Disclosure Compliance Policies

Notwithstanding the above conclusion regarding professional negligence or misconduct, the Commission believes this complaint presents an important opportunity for DPS and other accredited crime laboratories to revisit their policies regarding disclosure of pending QIs. Further discussion and specific recommendations follow later in this report.

V. ALLEGATIONS REGARDING ANALYST BIAS IN TESTIMONY

The complaint sets forth several additional allegations regarding the Analyst's pretrial communications with the prosecutor in the *Monroy* trial and his testimony in the *Soape* trial. We describe each allegation and the Analyst's responses below. In Section VI, we describe the Commission's findings with respect to each of these allegations.

A. Allegation Regarding Hiding of Information Regarding the QIs

This allegation stems from the Analyst's response to the prosecutor's emailed question sent in preparation for the *Monroy* trial.⁴⁰ The prosecutor asked, "And are there any bad facts you know of that we need to address before [the defense attorney] hits them on cross-examination?" The

⁴⁰ This email exchange was discovered when the defense subpoenaed records and communications in preparation for the *Soape* trial.

³⁹ See, Article 38.35 Section 2(4) Texas Code Crim. Procedure: "Forensic Analysis" means a medical, chemical, toxicologic, ballistic, or other expert examination or test performed on physical evidence, including DNA evidence, for the purposes of determining the connection of the evidence to a criminal action...".

Analyst responded "[the defense attorney] will address QIs that I have under my name...I have other QIs that are currently being processed that occurred in the beginning of 2024, he should not be aware of these as they were not complete and finalized yet, so they shouldn't be brought up yet... Again, these QIs are not finalized so they shouldn't have a record of them yet, but its wise for you to be aware of them"⁴¹ [emphasis added].

After learning of the pending QIs via this email, the prosecutor in the *Monroy* trial disclosed them to the defense. The complaint alleges that this email, coupled with testimony the Analyst gave where he referred to "hiding" information, shows his intent was to keep defense counsel in the dark regarding the pending QIs.

In his response to the Commission regarding this email exchange, the Analyst asserted using the phrase "he should not be aware of them" was poor word choice and he should have clarified (his belief) that the QIs were still pending review so no one would have copies of them yet. The Analyst admitted his poor word choice could lead to a misunderstanding and asserted that he would not intentionally withhold information from either party. During his interviews with the Commission, the Analyst explained the reason he decided to disclose the pending QIs to the prosecutor in the *Monroy* case was because he had prior cases involving the same defense attorney, and he knew the attorney would ask questions about QIs.⁴² During the interview, he claimed he now understands why both parties should be made aware of the existence of the pending QIs.

The complaint also alleges the Analyst was attempting to hide the pending QIs from the defense. During his testimony in the *Soape* trial, the Analyst was asked on cross examination about the email exchange detailed above:

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⁴¹ See, Exhibit H: Email correspondence with prosecutor.

⁴² The Analyst had another previous QI related to a broken blood tube before the cases involved in this complaint and he was questioned about it extensively during a previous trial with the same defense attorney.

Q. So, you talked about, in an email, that there are some things that exist, but I might not know about them so you might not need to tell me about them, do you remember that?

At this point the prosecutor asked to approach the bench and lodged an objection to the line of questioning. In response to the relevance objection, the defense attorney stated:

[Defense Attorney]: It's relevant to his bias. He's been trained on *Brady*. He knows what *Brady* is. If he's hiding stuff from me in another case, how do we know if he's not hiding stuff from us in this case?

The judge overruled the prosecutor's objection, and the bench conference ended. The defense attorney told the Analyst he could answer the question, and the Analyst stated: "*The things I was hiding I believe were the two quality incidents* that I had disclosed to the prosecutor ... The quality incidents that were previously discussed, they were not finalized. They were – they were still pending at this time. I disclosed them to the prosecution, and I believe that is what the defense is referring to" [emphasis added].

During his interviews with Commission staff, the Analyst explained that though the comments made by the defense attorney (alleging he was "hiding" information) were made at the bench and ostensibly out of the jury's hearing, the attorney's voice was easily overheard. The Analyst claimed he had "used the same terminology" the lawyer did in response. The Analyst stated that he could 100% understand why the language he had used was problematic and shared that he remembers thinking, "did I really just say that?" at the time of his testimony.

B. Allegation: The Analyst is Biased Against the Defense, Including Defense Experts, and Engages in Trial Tactics/Strategies with the Prosecution

This allegation stems from an email the Analyst sent to the prosecutor in *Soape* regarding defense expert Culbertson. The Analyst was questioned about the email on cross-examination in the *Soape* trial, viz:

Q. Do you remember telling the State that you will be sending an e-mail about information about Ms. Culbertson?
A. I believe so.
Q. Where is that e-mail discussing Ms. Culbertson?
A. It's in my Microsoft Outlook.
Q. Okay. Please send that to me so I can see the advocacy in which you re
treating—
[Objection]
Q. Will you send me that e-mail?
[Objection]
Q. You can answer.
A. It didn't have any relevance to this case or the subpoena that you had issued me.
Q. Okay. Did you hear my question?
A. Yes.
Q. Okay, So will you?
A. No.
Q. You will not send me the e-mail in which you discuss Ms. Culbertson?
[Objection]
Q. Is it your job to advocate for the state against Ms. Culbertson?
[Objection]
Q. You can answer.
A. No.
Q. So, you are taking it upon yourself to advocate for the State against another witness, another scientist?

A. It would appear that way.

Q. It would appear that way, that you are not unbiased, correct?

A. Yes.

Later in the Analyst's testimony:

Q. It is in any way your job to help the Prosecution with their strategy, is it?

A. Correct.

Q. But you are doing it anyway, correct?

A. Correct.

. . .

Q. What were you trying to achieve by sending emails to the prosecutor with more information about Ms. Culbertson?

A. Mainly tips about her area counts and the graphs she generates.

The complaint contends this testimony raises serious concerns about the Analyst's integrity and independence. During his interviews with the Commission, the Analyst explained the Culbertson email concerned the arguments he anticipated she would make regarding area counts for internal standards the laboratory uses to quantify ethanol and information regarding baseline drift. He is familiar with her testimony in this area from previous trials where he has observed her testify. In the email to the prosecutor, he was attempting to explain why, in his view, her technical arguments are flawed. The Analyst asserted he had sent the email to the prosecutor in the *Soape* trial as part of pretrial preparation.⁴³ At the time he was questioned about it, the Analyst felt the email was "not relevant" to the case (*Soape*)—meaning that it was not responsive to the subpoena—so he did not produce it. The Analyst conceded the email titled "testimony against Amanda" could make him appear biased against the defense and its expert but maintained the

⁴³ To the Commission's knowledge, no work product objection was raised with respect to the email communications.

email's substance was about defending against the assertion that DPS area counts for the internal standard were out of tolerance.

According to the Analyst, when he was answering the questions about bias and strategy with the prosecution, he felt like he was "getting attacked pretty brutally," and his responses were a result of high emotion and frustration. It was the second day of his testimony, late in the afternoon, and he had been at the courthouse most of the day. He was "hungry and ready to go home" and had "plenty of emotions going on." During his interview with the Commission, he conceded that his flat refusal to provide an email to a defense attorney when requested could make him appear biased against the defense.

C. Allegation: The Analyst Failed to Adequately Prepare for His Testimony in the *Monroy* Trial Resulting in an Error He Failed to Correct Upon Discovery

This allegation stems from the Analyst's testimony in the *Monroy* pretrial that a technical reviewer caught the swapped submissions forms in one of his pending QIs. He also made an error regarding the identity of the submitting agency. Later, in the *Soape* trial, he testified that he was the one who caught the error and corrected the name of the submitting agency. The Analyst's respective trial testimony is inconsistent. The complaint asserts that the Analyst "(allegedly) realized he made a mistake in his testimony" at some point between the two trials but neither the Analyst nor his superiors notified defense counsel of the mistake. The complaint asserts the Analyst was responsible for ensuring "through the proper management channels" the stakeholders were aware of his incorrect testimony under the provisions of the Texas Code of Professional Responsibility for Forensic Analysts.

The complaint further alleges the Analyst knew there would be a *Monroy* pretrial hearing regarding pending QI admissibility and he failed to adequately prepare for the hearing, resulting in the error in his *Monroy* pretrial hearing testimony.

During his interviews and written complaint responses, the Analyst maintains he was not aware of his misstatement in the *Monroy* trial until it was brought to his attention during the *Soape* trial. It should be noted the *Monroy* testimony occurred in September 2024, and the *Soape* testimony occurred in October 2024, so the Analyst would not have had the benefit of the *Monroy* transcript to aid him. The Analyst maintains he made every attempt to prepare for testimony. However, at the time he was preparing, the QIs had not yet been finalized so there was limited QI documentation available for his review. For one of the instances of the swapped information QI (the May event), he only had the case numbers and a laboratory submission form. According to the Analyst, the limited available information explains why he made the mistake in his testimony.

VI. COMMISSION FINDINGS REGARDING ALLEGATIONS RELATED TO BIAS

A. The Analyst Violated the Texas Code of Professional Responsibility (Provisions 13 and 6) When He Testified in an Ambiguous, Biased, and Misleading Manner that He Was "Hiding" Materials from the Defense, Was Biased Against the Defense, and Was Engaged in Prosecution "Strategy"

Based on the email to the prosecutor in the *Monroy* trial that the defense "shouldn't be aware" of the pending QI's, the complaint alleges the Analyst was hiding information as further evidenced by his own admission on cross-examination. While the Commission understands trial is an adversarial and stressful environment, the forensic scientist must remain neutral and composed and avoid getting swept into a defensive or argumentative posture regardless of the lawyers' behavior. Attorneys are adversaries and may assume different tactics, strategies, and even personalities depending upon the case and the issue. The Analyst's explanations (being frustrated, feeling attacked, tired or hungry) for his own problematic statements under oath are insufficient to

overcome a finding he violated the scientist's professional obligation to testify in a clear, straightforward and objective manner, and to avoid phrasing testimony in an ambiguous, biased or misleading manner (Code Provision 13). By his own sworn admission, the Analyst conceded the appearance of bias. Whether a result of frustration or defensiveness, the Analyst's impartiality was brought into question by his own testimony. The opinions and attitudes he expressed under oath lacked the objectivity forensic experts are expected to display (Code Provision 6).

B. The Analyst Did Not Violate the Texas Code of Professional Responsibility by Refusing to Immediately Provide Written Communications with the State to the Defense Lawyer, but He Should Have Sought Direction on How to Proceed

In the *Soape* trial, the Analyst refused to provide defense counsel an email he had sent to the prosecutor in the *Monroy* trial. The e-mail pertained to Culbertson's anticipated testimony since she had testified at both trials as an expert for this same attorney. The Texas Code of Professional Responsibility provides that a forensic analyst shall not issue reports *or other records or withhold information* for strategic or tactical litigation advantage (Code Provision 11) and *communicate honestly and fully* with all parties (investigators, prosecutors, defense attorneys, and other witnesses), unless prohibited by law. (Code Provision 15).⁴⁴ The communication requested by defense counsel in the *Soape* trial may not have been responsive to the subpoena issued in the case. The Commission concludes the Analyst did not violate the Code by declining to hand over a copy of the email immediately upon request because there may be circumstances in which doing so would be an inappropriate decision to make unilaterally. However, rather than engaging in argument with the lawyer or making his own determination about what was "relevant," the Analyst's response should have been that he would provide whatever communications or other

⁴⁴ 37 Tex. Admin. Code Section 651.219 (11) and (15) (2020).

information he was permitted to provide by law. Seeking guidance from the court would have been a more prudent and appropriate course for this Analyst (or any analyst similarly situated).

With respect to the allegation the Analyst engaged in inappropriate trial strategy by providing information about the types of technical arguments toxicology expert Culbertson would likely raise, the Commission observes this question is more challenging and nuanced. First, the applicable Code of Professional Responsibility Provision (11) states analysts should refrain from issuing reports or other records or withholding information from reports for strategic or tactical litigation advantage. While it is true forensic analysts should not engage in trial advocacy, they are permitted to educate the lawyers on the scientific principles involved in the forensic discipline (in this case forensic toxicology) as part of trial preparation if they are explaining the science, the analytical methods, and the basis for the methods used in the case. Analysts should present their results to the factfinder in a clear and helpful manner and may discuss with the prosecutor what makes sense in terms of the timing of the information presented given its complexity. The line between education/explanation and advocacy can be difficult and subjective. Defending one's work is appropriate; engaging in trial advocacy is not. The complainant asks the Commission to find the Analyst violated the above-referenced Code Provision because the Analyst recommended the prosecutor not raise proficiency testing results as an indicator of reliability unless it was necessary on rebuttal to refute technical criticism the Analyst believed was unfounded. While decisions regarding order of testimony are typically the lawyer's domain, the Analyst's recommendation to hold off on raising laboratory proficiency testing results unless needed in rebuttal does not constitute a violation of the provision described above. Because a determination of what crosses the line from appropriate trial preparation into advocacy is necessarily factdependent, the Commission re-emphasizes the most prudent course is for analysts to stay well

within the confines of education and explanation, maintaining neutrality and impartiality during all phases of trial (including preparation).

VII. ALLEGATIONS RE: TECHNICAL ISSUES

A. Allegation: The Analyst Relied on Data Despite Having Concerns about the Data

During the *Soape* trial, the prosecutor asked the Analyst if there were any "concerns" when he ran the calibration and controls in the case when he was testing the batch (that included the *Soape* sample). The Analyst responded:

The only real concern that I had with some of the quality control data was with the chromatogram — sorry, not chromatogram, the second detector in the second column...The second column has a little bit of baseline drift...this second race is mainly for qualitative purposes...So, again, it's not the prettiest data, but it is data nonetheless.

When asked whether he had any concerns about the results obtained in the case, the Analyst responded that he did not. The Analyst was questioned about this topic on cross-examination:

- Q. And you testified yesterday that the baseline, it's a problem. You found one problem, right?
- A. I testified that—
- Q. Yes or no, sir? That's your testimony. You did find one problem?
- A. It is not a problem.
- Q. Okay. Yesterday you testified that you did find one problem.
- A. I don't think I labeled it as a problem.
- Q. Okay. Sorry. A concern. You called it a concern.
- A. I might have.

The complaint alleges having a valid result is contingent upon having sound, valid, scientific data. The complaint asserts it is "nonsensical" that a scientist would admit to having a concern about the data and then say there is no concern with the result. The complaint alleges the

batch in which the *Soape* sample was analyzed had "baseline drift" throughout. ⁴⁵ In his interview with the Commission, the Analyst explained the baseline drift was limited to the second column of the dual column gas chromatograph. This column is for *qualitative* purposes only (to confirm the presence of the volatile substance or to verify the presence of another contaminant). He stated he had no concern regarding the *quantitative* results because the baseline drift did not impact the blood alcohol calculations.

Staff obtained the technical record in the *Soape* case. Commission staff and Dr. Kerrigan discussed the data and related testimony with both the Analyst and Culbertson⁴⁶. During this process, all experts (including Culbertson) agreed the controls in *Soape* were within range and there was no baseline drift impact observed on retention time. Because the baseline drift was limited to the second column, there was no impact on quantitative results. Thus, while the Analyst may have used the word "concern" while testifying to describe his observations regarding baseline drift in the second column, the data reviewed by the Commission including information provided by the complainant do not support any baseline drift concerns that would impact the reported results.

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⁴⁵ Baseline drift is a natural phenomenon in chromatographic techniques, whereby the "baseline" signal from the detector may change over time. In gas chromatographic methods, this may be observed as an elevated or more "noisy" baseline signal from the detector. The use of appropriate controls, internal standard, integration parameters, and acceptance criteria for chromatographic performance are routinely used to address this.

⁴⁶ The Analyst stated that Culbertson created a chart in the *Soape* trial related to area counts and baseline drift. The Commission requested the chart and Culbertson advised she no longer has it. She did produce some charts from other cases. The Commission declines to extrapolate the information provided from other cases to the *Soape* case but would revisit technical concerns were the complainant to resubmit evidence of the problem in another case with data applicable to that case.

B. Allegation: The Analyst Was Untruthful and Left a False Impression with the Court and Testified Beyond his Area of Expertise Re: Acetone

In *Soape*, in addition to detecting ethanol and n-propanol (the internal standard added by the laboratory), the analysis detected acetone. At trial, the Analyst testified to the detection of acetone and its possible origins on direct examination:

- Q. Was acetone detected in this case?
- A. It was, yes.
- Q. And what does that mean?
- A. So aside from ethanol and N-Propanol, the substance we add to the mixture ourselves, acetone, is probably the next most common volatile that we see in casework. It's a very small molecule and it it can appear from several different reasons. If someone has not eaten in a while, acetone will show up. It will show up in large concentrations in people who are diabetic. It can also come from drugs ingested. It can come from congeners in alcoholic drinks. And if you are wondering what a congener is, raspberry vodka, it's that raspberry flavoring. That's considered a congener. Those are some examples where it can come from.
- O. And does it affect the blood alcohol content or BAC result?
- A. It does not.

. . .

The defense inquired further on this topic on cross examination:

- Q. You were talking about acetone yesterday, acetone being in his blood, correct?
- A. Yes.
- Q. And you said acetone can be in your blood through certain drugs?
- A. It's possible.
- Q. What drugs?
- A. I can't name any off the top of my head. But as I stated yesterday in my testimony, it's a very simple compound and it can originate from a lot of things.
- Q. And you said the most common reason why it would be in blood was if the person was diabetic, correct?

- A. No. What I said was it's the next most common volatile that we see and it's in large concentration in someone who is diabetic.
- Q. Okay, So and also if someone had not eaten, correct?
- A. It would not be as high of a concentration for someone who has not eaten in a couple of hours.
- Q. Has any case that you and I have ever reviewed together ever had acetone in it?

 [Objection]
- Q. You say that it's common for acetone to be in blood, correct?
- A. No.
- Q. No, it's not common?
- A. Correct.
- Q. Okay. Would you expect to see acetone in someone's blood if they're not diabetic, they had not taken any drugs, and they had just eaten chicken wings and tater tots?
- A. It could be possible.
- Q. Would you expect to see it?
- A. I do not know.

. . .

The complaint alleges the Analyst volunteered the statement about acetone possibly originating from consumed drugs, and his inability to name a specific drug that could metabolize to acetone indicated he was being untruthful. The complaint further alleges the Analyst made a distinction between endogenous or natural production of acetone that may "show up" and exogenous acetone through consumption of another substance ("can originate from a lot of things"). By so doing, the complaint asserts, the Analyst left a false impression with the jury the defendant could have been under the influence of a controlled substance other than alcohol.

In his interview with the Commission, the Analyst explained the goal of his testimony was to explain that acetone is the most common volatile seen in blood samples (aside from ethanol). He stated he was attempting to explain that acetone "can come from a lot of things," but the defense concentrated on his statement that it could come from drugs. The Analyst disputed he was trying to imply the defendant had used drugs.

VIII. COMMISSION FINDINGS RELATED TO ALLEGATIONS RE: TECHNICAL ISSUES IN TESTIMONY

A. The Analyst Did Not Violate the Texas Code of Professional Responsibility Regarding his Testimony Concerning Baseline Drift and Acetone

As previously discussed, the small amount of baseline drift observable in the second column is insignificant because the column is used for qualitative purposes and had no impact on the reported results. The Analyst could have provided a more detailed explanation of the data rather than adopting the prosecutor's use of the word "concern," but his actual reliance on the data in reporting the result was scientifically supported. The *Monroy* and *Soape* transcripts highlight the need for examiners to be able to explain clearly chromatographic phenomena such as baseline drift, area counts, absolute versus relative peak areas, and the basis of the quantitative measurement. We note, however, that in *Soape*, the analyst was not called on rebuttal to testify about area counts or baseline drift, so it is difficult to know whether he would have clarified the issue if given the opportunity.

The Commission does not believe there is sufficient information to support the complainant's assertion the Analyst was lying or attempting to imply the defendant had used drugs. During testimony, the Analyst provided possible explanations for the presence of the small quantity of acetone. However, the Analyst was unable to provide a response when asked what type of drug would metabolize into acetone. Additionally, the Analyst's response to the same question

during his Commission interview was incorrect. His inability to answer correctly the question about which drugs or substances may metabolize into acetone does not meet the definition of professional negligence previously described in this report but it does point to two areas for improvement: (1) retraining of the Analyst on this subject; and (2) a more general review of blood alcohol toxicology training materials to ensure the concepts (sources of acetone and metabolism of substances into acetone) are adequately covered.⁴⁷

B. The Analyst Did Not Violate the Code of Professional Responsibility by Failing to Notify Management or Quality Assurance Personnel of an Adverse Event Regarding Incorrect Testimony in the *Monroy* Trial

As noted earlier, the *Soape* trial occurred approximately one month after the *Monroy* trial. The Analyst maintains he did not realize his mistaken explanation in the first trial about who identified the swapped defendant information until he was testifying in the second trial. The Commission believes this explanation is reasonable for why the Analyst did not alert the parties to the inaccurate information about how the error was identified (that he himself—not the technical reviewer—identified the label switch by the submitting law enforcement agency).

IX. DISCIPLINARY ACTION

If the Commission determines a license holder violated a rule or order of the Commission under Article 38.01, Code of Criminal Procedure, the Commission may: (1) revoke or suspend the person's license; (2) refuse to renew the person's license; (3) reprimand the license holder; or (4) deny the person a license.⁴⁸

Factors considered in determining the appropriate disciplinary action against a license holder may include: (1) the seriousness of the violation; (2) the prevalence of misconduct by the

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⁴⁷ The Code of Professional Responsibility requires an analyst to commit to continuous learning, not offer opinions or conclusions that are outside one's expertise, and to guard against making invalid inferences or misleading the judge or jury.

⁴⁸ 37 Tex. Admin. Code § 651.216(a)(1)-(4) (2024).

individual; (3) the person's conduct history, including any investigative history by the Commission; (4) the harm or potential harm to the laboratory or criminal justice system as a whole; (5) attempts to conceal the act by the individual; and (6) any other relevant factors.⁴⁹

The Commission also may decide one or more of the following factors warrants less severe or less restrictive disciplinary action in a particular investigation: (1) candor in addressing the violation, including self-reported and voluntary admissions of the misconduct or violation; (2) acknowledgement of wrongdoing and willingness to cooperate with the Commission; (3) changes made by the individual to ensure compliance and prevent future misconduct; (4) rehabilitative potential; (5) other relevant circumstances reducing the seriousness of the misconduct; or (6) other relevant circumstances lessening responsibility for the misconduct. ⁵⁰ The license holder has the burden to present evidence regarding any mitigating factor that may apply. ⁵¹

The Commission finds the Analyst's testimony regarding "hiding" evidence and appearing biased to be serious. The Analyst does not have an investigative history with the Commission and exhibits rehabilitative potential. The harm or potential harm to the laboratory and criminal justice system is significant as the Analyst will be asked about the above issues in future cases and extensive resources, including on re-training, have been expended during the course of the investigation. The Commission finds that the Analyst exhibited candor in addressing the complaint allegations both in his written response and in Commission interviews. The Analyst has attempted to make changes to ensure future compliance. Specifically, the Analyst has been retrained on the laboratory quality assurance program and training modules regarding ethics, professionalism, and bias. He has attended training to learn about the QI/quality action plan workflow and has taken a

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⁴⁹ *Id.* at § 651.216(c)(1)(A)-(E) (2024).

⁵⁰ *Id.* at § 651.216(c)(2)(A)-(F) (2024).

⁵¹ *Id.* at § 651.216(c)(3) (2024).

written examination prepared by the laboratory's quality assurance personnel. The Analyst has undergone mock court examinations and has had roundtable discussions with his supervisor, laboratory manager, quality assurance manager, and members from a local prosecutor's office. He has also reviewed the Commission's curriculum on ethics, *Brady*, and the Michael Morton Act.

Due to the seriousness of the professional responsibility lapses outlined in this report, the appropriate disciplinary action is an official reprimand for the Analyst's unprofessional demeanor and testimony regarding "hiding" of information and appearing biased in the *Soape* trial. The Commission recommends the Analyst receive additional training and monitoring in the following areas:

- Testimony monitoring and transcript reviews of future testimony.
- Interpretive toxicology concepts focusing on volatiles other than ethanol, explanations of area counts, absolute versus relative peak areas, and the basis of the quantitative measurement.
- Training designed to mitigate the risk of overlooking switched samples or labeling.
- Cognitive bias training.
- Training on the roles of the parties (defense vs. State vs. laboratory personnel).
- Training on impartiality and objectivity in courtroom demeanor while under stress.
- Training on legal disclosure compliance.

To the extent any of these subjects have already been incorporated in DPS training, the Commission will review the training materials to determine whether additional work is needed.⁵²

X. PROCESS FOR APPEAL OF DISCIPLINARY ACTION

Any finding by the Commission that includes disciplinary action against a license holder (revocation, suspension, probation, reprimand, etc.) may be appealed to the Judicial Branch

⁵² Upon publication of this report, the Commission will request a documented plan from DPS regarding the subject matter that has been or will be covered including the estimated number of training hours spent in each area.

Certification Commission (JBCC).⁵³ A written request for a hearing before the JBCC must be received by the Commission or by the JBCC within twenty (20) days after the date the notice of the disciplinary action is received, or the Commission's decision becomes final and is not subject to further review by the JBCC or the Commission.⁵⁴

XI. RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACCREDITATION CHECKLIST ITEM

A. Recommendation Specific to DPS

DPS should revisit and update the blood alcohol training program as needed to ensure analysts are able to convey accurately and clearly the technical concepts discussed in this report around area counts, baseline drift and volatile substances.

B. Recommendations for all Laboratories Subject to Commission Jurisdiction

The following item will be added to the Texas accreditation checklists for accreditation assessments performed by ANAB and A2LA:

Accreditation Checklist Item: All laboratories must have and follow a written forensic disclosure compliance policy for the purposes of facilitating the laboratory's compliance with Texas Code of Criminal Procedure (Michael Morton Act) Article 39.14.

The policy should contain clear instructions for identifying and disclosing any potentially exculpatory, impeachment, or mitigating document, item of information in the possession, custody, or control of the laboratory.⁵⁵

The policy should explicitly address how to inform potentially affected recipients of any non-conformities or breaches of law or ethical standards that may adversely affect either a current case or a previously issued report or testimony.⁵⁶

The policy should include a statement addressing how and when the existence of pending QIs will be communicated to stakeholders.

⁵³ *Id.* at § 651.402(c) (2024).

⁵⁴ Id

⁵⁵ As previously stated, the Commission acknowledges that the ultimate determination of what constitutes exculpatory, impeachment or mitigation information may only be made by a court with jurisdiction, The purpose of a disclosure compliance policy is to provide a framework for helping to facilitate the communication of information to stakeholders.

⁵⁶ *Id.* at 651.219 (c)(7) and (8) (2020).

The Commission will seek input from the Texas Association of Forensic Quality Assurance Managers (TAFQAM), ANAB and A2LA on what specifically will constitute evidence of conformance and work with these bodies to identify a reasonable date for implementation. The Commission will provide notice to laboratories regarding evidence of conformance and a deadline for compliance once they are established.

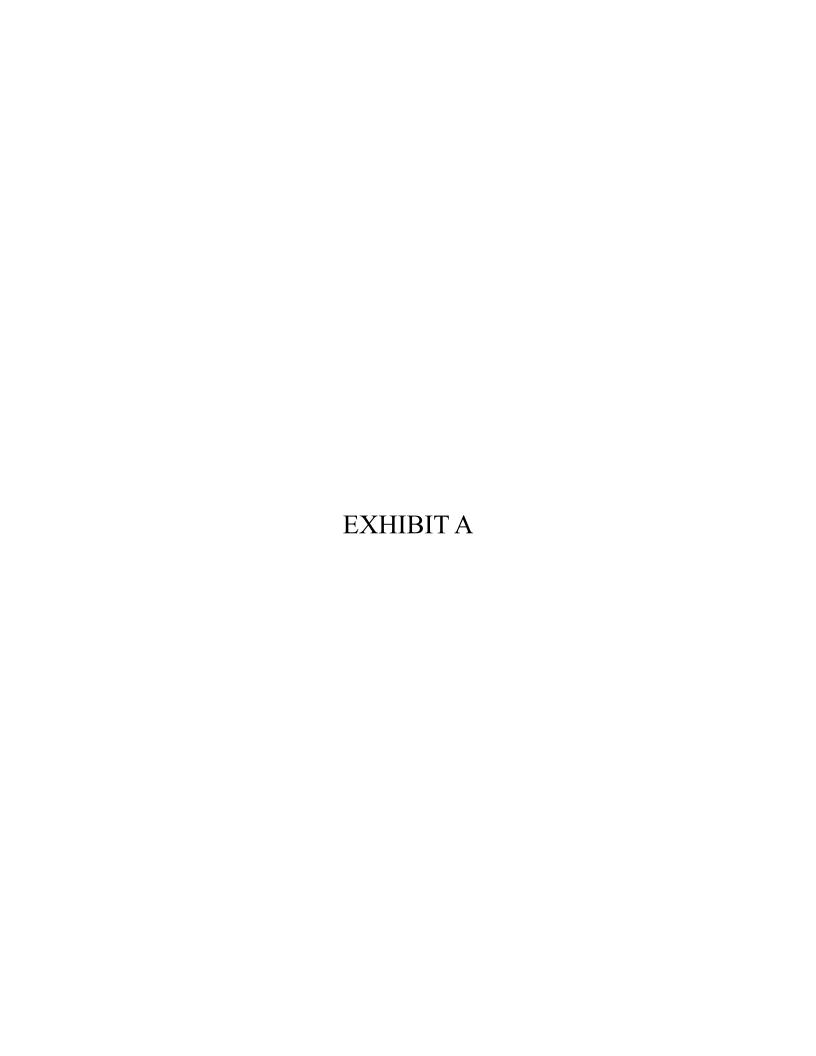
In addition to the universally applicable accreditation checklist item, the Commission makes the following recommendations:

- Laboratories should evaluate their existing disclosure compliance policies to consider how pending QIs might be consistently flagged and communicated to end-users in the criminal justice system in a way that mitigates risk of failure to comply with statutory and constitutional requirements.⁵⁷
- If not already implemented, laboratory management and quality assurance personnel should take the Commission's *Brady*, Michael Morton Act, and Professional Responsibility training, even if they are not licensed as forensic analysts.⁵⁸

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⁵⁷ CLR Connect (the forensic discovery portal currently under development pursuant to SB 991) may provide a technology-based solution for facilitating communication of the existence of pending QIs.

⁵⁸ DPS management and quality assurance personnel already take these trainings biannually.



Summary of the Complaint:

An employee of the Texas DPS Houston Regional Crime Lab, Zachary Augustyn (hereinafter Augustyn; ZA), has committed professional misconduct and professional negligence in his duties as a forensic analyst, violating several provisions of 37 Tex. Admin. Code Chapter 651.219 – Code of Professional Responsibility. Augustyn knowingly and intentionally acted to withhold information from the defense, is biased against defense and defense experts in favor of the prosecution, engages in trial tactics/strategies with the prosecution, testifies beyond his scope of expertise, relies on data despite having concerns, is untruthful and/or left false impressions with the court and jury, and testifies beyond his area of expertise.

Definitions

Professional misconduct--means the forensic analyst or crime laboratory, through a material act or omission, deliberately failed to follow a standard of practice that an ordinary forensic analyst or crime laboratory would have followed, and the deliberate act or omission would substantially affect the integrity of the results of a forensic analysis. An act or omission was deliberate if the forensic analyst or crime laboratory was aware of and consciously disregarded an accepted standard of practice.

Professional negligence--means the forensic analyst or crime laboratory, through a material act or omission, negligently failed to follow the standard of practice that an ordinary forensic analyst or crime laboratory would have followed, and the negligent act or omission would substantially affect the integrity of the results of a forensic analysis. An act or omission was negligent if the forensic analyst or crime laboratory should have been but was not aware of an accepted standard of practice.

Background/Context to understand the complaint

On August 27, 2024, the case of State v. Momin (Cause # 22-CCR-230111) convened in Ft. Bend County Court At Law #2. Mr. Collin Evans was defense counsel, and Augustyn was the State's expert.

On September 16, 2024, the case of State v. Monroy (Cause # 22-365798) convened in Montgomery County Court At Law #4. Mr. Morgan Bourque was defense counsel, Amanda Culbertson was an independent expert called by the defense, and Augustyn was the State's expert.

On October 21, 2024, the case of State v. Soape (Cause # 23-378698) convened in Montgomery County Court At Law #5. Mr. Morgan Bourque was defense counsel, Amanda Culbertson was an independent expert called by the defense, and Augustyn was the State's expert.

In 2024, Augustyn made mistakes that led to the generation of 2 Quality Incidents (QIs). These QIs did not, to the best of my knowledge, involve the above-named cases. However, as the commission knows, QIs can serve as impeachment material. One QI involved failure to reseal evidence in Dec 2023 (discovered in Jan 2024; the "Jan incident"). This QI was finalized Oct 11. The other QI involved 2 separate incidents

where Augustyn failed to notice swapped defendant information on/within blood kits (the February incident involved 2 cases from DFW/Lancaster and the May incident involved 2 cases from Montgomery County). As of this writing, there is no indication this QI has been finalized or if it has been elevated to a Quality Action Plan (QAP).

Zachary Augustyn acted knowingly and intentionally to hide information from defense, consciously disregarding an accepted standard of practice

In preparation for the Monroy trial, assistant district attorney (ADA) Madison Shrock emailed Augustyn on Friday, September 13, 2024 at 11:10 am. In her email she asked, "And are there any bad facts you know of that we need to address before Bourque hits them on cross-examination"?

Augustyn responded at 12:20 pm, "As far as bad questions...He [Morgan Bourque] will address QI's that I have under my name . . . I also have other QI's that are currently being processed that occurred in the beginning of 2024, he should not be aware of these as they are not complete and finalized yet, so they shouldn't be brought up yet . . . Again, these QI's are not finalized so they shouldn't have record of them yet, but its wise for you to be aware of them". [emphasis added]

At 12:50 pm, ADA Schrock responds, "Ok, Thanks for letting me know! I will write up a motion for that those not be brought up." At 3:10 pm, a Brady notice for Augustyn's QIs were issued by the state. On Monday, September 16 at 9:41 am, ADA Schrock emails Augustyn stating, "We did have to disclose your QIs to defense under 39.14."

It was only through the (very vague) Brady notice that the defense became aware of the pending QIs. The court, after much legal arguing, did allow some inquiry into the QIs. The Monroy trial proceeded, and the jury came back hung. At least one of the jurors in the Monroy trial had questions "about the credibility of the blood test + the witness/lab".

The aforementioned email exchange was discovered <u>only</u> after defense counsel served a subpoena duces tecum for the DPS Houston Custodian of Records to produce, among other things, communications with the ADAs involving the QIs. This subpoena duces tecum was served on Oct 14, as part of the defense's preparation for the Soape trial (therefore, the email exchange was unknown for the Monroy trial). On Oct 21, Augustyn did produce some (but not all) of the subpoenaed records.

However, instead of providing the records directly to defense counsel as directed in the subpoena, he turned them over to the prosecutor. Although the prosecution tried to withhold this information, the court forced them to turn over the records. The records were turned over to the defense on Oct 21, and the email exchange was then discovered.

On Oct 23, during the Soape trial, Augustyn was asked about the email exchange:

DC: So you also talked about, in an e-mail, that there are some things that exist, but I might not know about them so you might not need to tell me about them. Do you remember that? (bench conference, on the record)

ZA: The things that I was **hiding** I believe were the two quality incidents that I had disclosed to the prosecutor -- [emphasis added]

It is clear from his emails, testimony, the fact he turned the subpoenaed records over only to the prosecution, instead of defense who issued the subpoena, and did not turn over all the subpoenaed documents, his intent was to keep defense counsel from knowing this information.

Unlike Monroy and Soape, the Momin trial did not have the benefit of knowing about the QIs. Momin was convicted. Weeks after his conviction, Mr. Evans learned of the QIs from Ms. Culbertson, prompting him to file a motion for a new trial. The first part of that hearing took place on Oct 25 and is continued to Nov 7.

Augustyn originally became licensed in 2020 and has now gone through 2 renewal cycles, the most recent being in October 2024. This means that he has taken the TFSC *Mandatory Legal and Professional Responsibility Course* at least twice, with one of those times being recently.

As the commission is aware, this course teaches, in part, by example. Several of the examples parallel Augustyn's actions/inactions. Specifically, "Analyst has a Pending Investigation", "Corrective Actions From Unrelated Cases", "Full and Honest Communication" as well as several of the in-course questions.

Augustyn knew he had to turn over the QIs and the emails discussing the QIs. There should have been no question as to whether or not he had to turn over these documents, even without the defense requesting them. The fact that the QIs were not finalized is of no import. In fact, if finalization of a QI is a bar to disclosure, as Augustyn seems to imply, why did he disclose to the prosecutor? A bar to disclosure would be a bar to disclosure to anyone, not just defense.

Augustyn is biased against the defense, including defense experts, in favor of the prosecution and engages in trial tactics/strategies with/for the prosecution.

In addition to the above example, Augustyn has demonstrated his bias and dereliction of his professional responsibilities in other ways. In his email to ADA Schrock he stated, "I will be sending you another email with more information for Amanda as well as those science articles I had mentioned earlier".

When asked about this portion of the email during cross-examination:

DC: Do you remember telling the State that you will be sending an e-mail about information about Ms. Culbertson?

ZA: Yes.

DC: Did you send an e-mail with information about Ms. Culbertson?

ZA: I believe so.

DC: Will you send me that e-mail?

ADA: Objection, relevance, argumentative

Court: Overruled DC: You can answer

ZA: It didn't have any relevance to this case or the subpoena that you had issued me.

DC: Did you hear my question?

ZA: Yes

DC: Okay. So will you?

ZA: No

. . .

DC: So you are taking it upon yourself to advocate for the State against another witness, another scientist. Would you agree with that statement?

ZA: It would appear that way.

DC: It would appear what way, that you are not -- that you are not unbiased, correct?

ZA: Yes

Further into his testimony:

DC: It is in no way your job to help the Prosecution with their **strategy**, is it?

ZA: Correct.

DC: But you are doing it anyway, correct?

ZA. Correct.

And:

DC: What were you trying to achieve by sending e-mails to the prosecutor with more information about Ms. Culbertson?

ZA: Mainly tips about her area counts and the graph that she generates [emphasis added]

Despite substantial training in ethics and professional responsibility, it is clear Augustyn cannot translate his training into practice. Either that, or his bias is so profound, that he cannot help himself. He appears to see himself as a prosecutor in a lab coat.

Augustyn made inconsistent statements under oath, and both Augustyn and his superiors, failed to notify defense counsel when he discovered mistakes in his testimony

During the Soape trial, Augustyn testified in a manner that was inconsistent with his testimony in Monroy. Defense counsel, aided by his expert, discovered this during the Soape trial.

From Monroy trial, Sept 17 (hearing outside the presence of the jury):

ZA: A similar instance occurred in May of this year involving -- **if I do remember correctly**, it was **Montgomery County Sheriff's Office** where two submissions forms were swapped between blood kits. And a similar scenario occurred where I did not catch the swap and one of the cases was analyzed. ADA: Okay. And so, how did you remedy that particular instance?

ZA: **A peer-reviewer at the lab had caught** that one of the names did not correspond to the blood kit because he had the other case in his possession. And I went to my supervisor as the same sort of scenario, like what happened with the Garland cases, and a plan of action happened after that.

From the Monroy trial, Sept 18 (in front of the jury)

DC: **Then in May**, three months later, the same type of incident happened where two blood -- two blood samples got mixed up with the wrong people, correct?

. .

DC: And somebody else caught it, correct?

ZA: Correct

DC: You did not catch it, correct?

ZA: Correct.

. . .

DC: Three incidents not caught by me, me being you; and if not caught, the wrong results would have been issued. Do you agree with that statement?

ZA. I would agree with that statement.

From Soape trial, under direct examination:

ADA: And has there ever been a time that you had an issue with that?

ZA: There have been two instances where I have had an issue with that in the past.

ADA: And tell the jury a little bit about that

. . .

ZA: The other instance involved **Magnolia PD**, which is here in Montgomery County.

And under cross-examination:

DC: Okay. Now, you have testified yesterday -- and I want to make sure that I got this right -- that in the May incident -- so we got a January, a February, and a May incident that we know about only because somebody else has caught these other problems. But in May, yesterday you testified that it had not gotten to the peer review process, correct?

ZA: Correct.

DC: Okay. Meaning it had not been technically reviewed or administrative reviewed?

ZA: Yes.

DC: Okay. And then you testified that -- that the problem in May was caught by you, correct?

ZA: Yes.

DC: Have you ever made a statement to the contrary?

ZA. I was not -- I didn't --

DC: Yes or no, sir?

ZA: Can you repeat the --

DC: Have you ever --

ZA: -- question?

DC: Have you ever made a statement to the contrary?

ZA: I don't believe I have.

. . .

DC: Okay. You were under oath on -- let me make sure I got the date right -- in Cause Number 22-365798, Israel Monroy, in Montgomery County, Texas, County Court at Law Number 4, correct?

ZA: Correct.

DC: And the dates that you testified there was September 17th and September 18th of 2024, correct?

ZA: Correct.

DC: Fairly recently?

ZA: Yes.

. . .

ZA: I do remember saying that, yes.

At first, he does not believe he made a statement to the contrary, but once he becomes aware that a transcript of the Monroy trial exists, suddenly remembers making contrary statements. This obviously raises concerns about his credibility. In addition, sometime after the Monroy trial (but prior to the Soape trial) Augustyn (allegedly) realized he made this mistake in his testimony. However, neither Augustyn nor any of his superiors, notified defense counsel of the mistake.

From Soape trial:

DC: Why did you insert that if it was not the truth?

ZA: **I did not remember the second instance correctly**. But **after reviewing** the quality incident for the second incidents and reviewing the two cases that were involved, I backtracked and found that it was me who had caught it during the unboxing process during the second case.

DC: Did you -- upon realizing that you had misled a jury or spoken untruth under oath, did you ever contact anybody at the DA's Office to tell them you need to correct your misstatement?

ZA: I did not.

. . .

DC: Did you contact the lawyer who represented the defendant to tell him that you were not truthful under oath?

ZA: I did not.

Augustyn was responsible for ensuring, "through the proper management channels", that the defense and prosecution was aware of his incorrect testimony. The example from the Mandatory Legal and Professional Responsibility course for provision 17, is exactly on par with this issue. Augustyn has taken this course and has read the code. He has also read the National Code of Ethics and Professional

Responsibility for the Forensic Sciences, which has a similar provision. Therefore, he was aware of and consciously disregarded these provisions, which are an accepted standard of practice.

Augustyn did not adequately prepare for the Monroy hearing and trial, which led to his impeachment in the Soape trial

Augustyn knew there was going to be a hearing regarding the admissibility of his QIs in the Monroy trial. In her Sept 16 email, ADA Schrock stated, "Of course they want to bring those in and so there will likely be a hearing tomorrow morning regarding admissibility and you'll have to be here for that. I'll get you more details as I get them". And then later that day, she sent an email stating, "No hearing tomorrow morning but probably afternoon. I'll keep you updated".

Knowing he would be asked about his QIs, he should have refreshed his memory on the underlying facts that resulted in the QIs. The entire purpose of this hearing was to determine the admissibility of the QIs; therefore, he should have known the details that led to these mistakes. He was asked about his QIs on Sept 17 in the hearing outside the presence of the jury. The trial was continued to Sept 18, a fact Augustyn was aware of:

The Court: Absolutely. Although, I am going to put him back on the stand in the morning in case there's anything else. Sorry. I'm going to have to bring you back tomorrow and you know that.

ZA: Yeah.

ADA: He is our next witness.

The Court: I know.

This means Augustyn had not one, but two opportunities to refresh his memory of the events that led to the QIs – before the trial started, and prior to the trial resuming on Sept 18. It is obvious from his testimony that he did not do this. Not only was he wrong about which agency was involved in the swapping of defendant information, he was also wrong about who discovered the mistake and where in the testing process the mistake was discovered.

As this commission stated in the "Final Report on Houston Forensic Science Center Self-Disclosure No 22.18, Forensic Biology/DNA; Trial testimony of Stephen Adam Vinson" published November 15, 2022:

To ensure there is no ambiguity regarding expectations for trial preparation in Texas laboratories going forward, the Commission provides a specific recommendation regarding this issue in Section IX below.

The following recommendations have universal applicability:

5. All analysts should prepare adequately for testimony. Preparation should include, at a minimum, review of relevant case records including analytical data and bench notes associated with the analyses. Expectations regarding other items for pre-trial review should be set in clear terms by laboratory policy.

The facts that underlie the generation of the QIs would, admittedly, be outside the "relevant case records" in the Monroy and Soape trials. However, Augustyn <u>knew</u> the QIs would be discussed, the prosecutor told him as much. There is no way he did not know that the facts relating to the QIs would not be brought up, at least in front of the court, and quite possibly, in front of the jury.

Augustyn does not remember or feigns ignorance of his duties of professional responsibility despite recently renewing his TFSC license

Soape trial, direct:

ZA: I was originally licensed in October of 2020. I was re-licensed in October of 2022. And I will be relicensed again in October of -- or at the end of October of 2024.

Soape trial, cross-examination:

DC: As part of your training, you also read the Code of Professional Responsibility for Forensic Analysts and Crime Laboratory Management Subject to the Jurisdiction of the Texas -- Texas Forensic Science Commission, correct?

ZA: Maybe.

DC: All of three of these documents you read as part of your DPS training contained in this section regarding how you are to communicate honestly and fully with all parties, including defense attorneys, correct?

ZA: I do not remember

DC: Do you feel like you communicate fully with defense attorneys?

ZA: I have before.

As mentioned earlier, as part of renewing his license, Augustyn would have had to <u>recently</u> go through the "Mandatory Legal and Professional Responsibility" course (in addition to going through it in his previous renewal). And yet he cannot remember his professional responsibilities? Or is he trying to avoid being questioned further as to why he has not communicated honestly and fully with defense?

Relies on data despite having concerns about said data

The batch in which Soape sample was analyzed had baseline drift throughout its entirety. From the DPS SOP:

- 7. Examine the chromatograms for all standards to ensure that the baseline is steady and all expected peaks are present.
- 8. Examine the chromatograms for all blanks to ensure that the baseline is steady and there are no unexpected peaks present.

Sample Chromatograms

1. Examine to ensure that the baseline remains steady

When asked about drifting baselines during direct:

ADA: And did you run the calibration and controls in this case when you were testing the batch that this case was tested with?

ZA: I did.

ADA: Were there any concerns during any of that process?

ZA. The only **real concern** that I had with some of the quality control data was with the chromatogram -- sorry, not chromatogram, the second detector for that second column. . . The second column has a little bit of baseline drift. . . this second race is mainly for qualitative purposes. . . So, again, it's not the prettiest data, but it is data nonetheless [emphasis added]

ADA: And were you able to review the BA reports in this case for that concern specifically?

ZA: Yes.

ADA: And after reviewing all of that, did you have any concerns about the results of this case?

ZA: For the results, no

And then on cross-examination:

DC: And you testified yesterday that the baseline, it's a problem. You found one problem, right?

ZA: I testified that --

DC: Yes or no, sir? That's your testimony. You did find one problem?

ZA: It is not a problem.

DC: Okay. Yesterday you testified that you did find one problem.

ZA: I don't think I labeled it as a problem.

DC: Okay. Sorry. A concern. You called it a concern.

ZA: I might have.

I understand that during direct Augustyn is distinguishing his concern for the data, specifically baseline drift, from concerns from the final result. However, having a valid result is contingent upon having sound, valid, scientific data. It is nonsensical that someone purporting to be a scientist could admit to having a real concern about the data and turn around and say there is no concern with the result. But it is clear from his testimony that any data, regardless of quality, is good enough for him.

In addition, during cross-examination, Augustyn states "I might have" after playing a little game of semantics with the defense. There are numerous examples, in this transcript and others, of Augustyn being equivocal in his answers, especially when the answer could subject him to more scrutiny or harm the prosecution's case.

<u>Augustyn was seemingly untruthful on the stand, leaving false impressions with the court and jury, and otherwise, testified beyond his area of expertise</u>

From the Soape trial, direct:

ADA: Was acetone detected in this case?

ZA: It was, yes.

ADA: And what does that mean?

ZA: So aside from ethanol and N-Propanol, the substance that we add to the mixture ourselves, acetone, is probably the next most common volatile that we see in casework. . . If someone has not eaten in a while, acetone will **show up**. It will **show up** in large concentrations in people who are diabetic. It can also **come from** drugs ingested. It can **come from** congeners in alcoholic drinks . . .[emphasis added]

However, on cross-examination:

DC: And you said that acetone can be in your blood through certain drugs?

ZA: It's possible.

DC: What drugs?

ZA: I can't name any off the top of my head. But as I stated yesterday in my testimony, it's a very simple compound and it can originate from a lot of things. [emphasis added]

It is obvious that when he <u>volunteered</u> the statement about acetone coming from ingested drugs, he did not know of any drug that would produce acetone as a metabolite or have acetone as a contaminant. Whether or not acetone can come from ingested drugs is not relevant. It was his knowledge at the time he made the statement that is important. He did not know any drug that could contain/metabolize to, acetone. In other words, he was being untruthful.

Beyond some limited training specific to ethanol, Augustyn does not have documented training in toxicology or pharmacology. Augustyn clearly does not have the requisite knowledge to make such assertions. However, that did not stop him from leaving the false impression, with the court and jury, that the accused in this case could have been on some sort of "drug."

Even if one were to disagree that his initial statement on direct was untruthful, the fact that he does not correct himself when given the opportunity on cross, surely constitutes an untruthful statement in totality. And if nothing else, he has testified well beyond his expertise which could cause substantial harm if he continues to testify in this manner (or, if he has testified this way in the past).

And to point out for any TFSC investigation on this issue, Augustyn is making a clear distinction between endogenous production ("show up") and exogenous acetone through consumption ("come from" "can originate from a lot of things"); the latter clearly not referencing metabolic induction.

There are other things stated by Augustyn that show his lack of knowledge in his purported field of expertise, such as not knowing the difference between pharmacokinetics and pharmacodynamics ("we mainly learned about the pharmacokinetics or in a more simpler term, how a drug travels through and affects a person's body"). While concerning for someone holding himself out as an expert in toxicology,

this is probably less harmful to a defendant than other statements. Still, he has had training regarding testifying within his area of expertise; training which he consciously disregards.

Summary

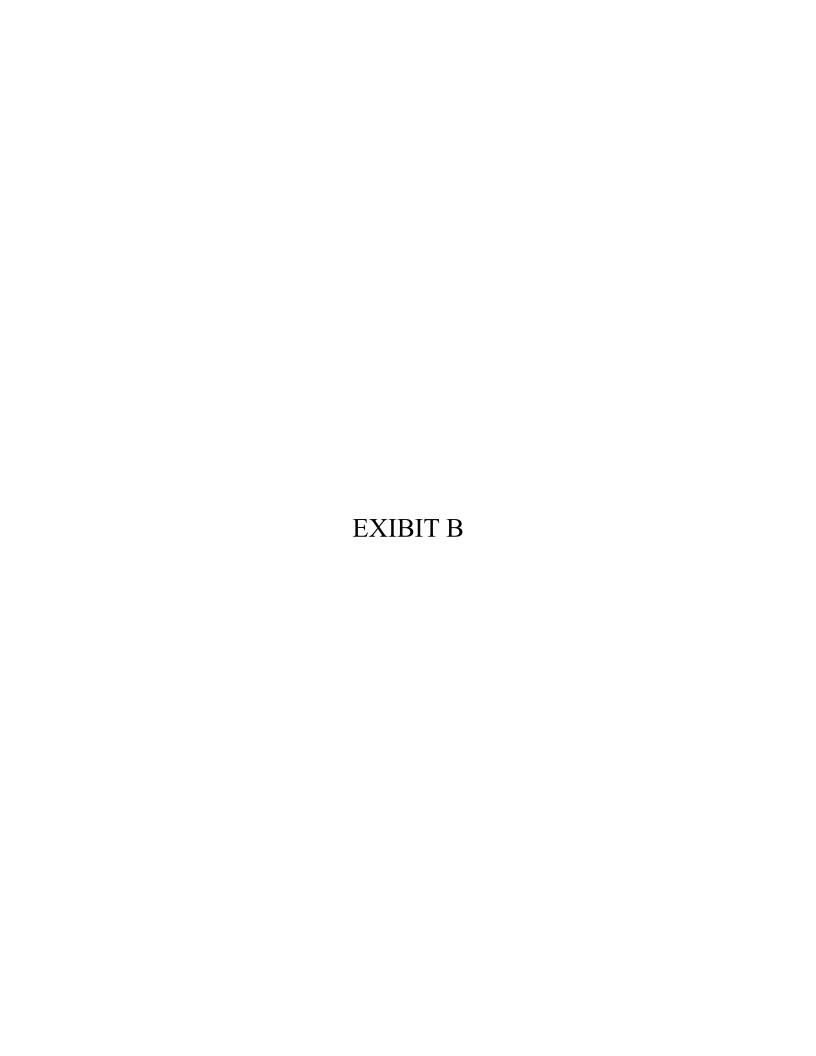
In summary, Augustyn has deliberately and negligently failed to follow a standard of practice that an ordinary forensic analyst would follow. I have very serious concerns about this analyst testing and testifying in future cases, as should the commission and DPS. He either cannot remember his training beyond taking an exam, or rather, has a bias that runs so deep, he consciously, and repeatedly, disregards accepted standards of practice. Either way, it is quite troubling. He testified he hid information from the defense and appears to have instructed a prosecutor not to disclose the information. And this is what we know about. He has been working for DPS for 4 years – what other information has he intentionally kept from defense counsel?

But withholding information is only part of the problem. His testimony is also quite concerning. Augustyn made inconsistent, untruthful, and misleading statements in front of a very experienced independent expert, called by the defense. It makes one wonder how he testifies when he is not monitored by another expert. And to be clear, he has testified appropriately 17 times now. This was not a case of first trial jitters. And even if this were his first trial, that would not make it acceptable to make inconsistent, untruthful, and misleading statements under oath.

Augustyn has demonstrated his potential to seriously jeopardize the rights of the accused. It is my hope in filing this complaint that the Texas Forensic Science Commission will thoroughly investigate this matter.

Sincerely,

Mark R. Thiessen 733 E 12th 1/2 St Houston, TX 77008 713-864-9000



❖ Introduction

My name is Zachary Augustyn and I am currently employed as a forensic scientist at the Texas Department of Public Safety Crime Lab in Houston, Texas. I have been employed in this capacity since September of 2020. This document serves as a response to the complaint submitted to the Texas Forensic Science Commission on 11/6/2024.

Timeline

- 7-11-2023 State v. Momin Discovery Order issued and received. All completed discipline/analyst-related quality incidents (QIs) were included at the time of discovery was provided. 45 QIs were provided in the discovery order as well as a link to the DPS public facing website to access all completed QIs.
- 8-26-2024 Traveled to Stafford P.D in Ft. Bend County with Defense Counsel Evans, and ADA Fesmire to examine blood evidence for *State v. Momin*. I answered defense attorney and prosecutor's questions.
- 8-29-2024 Testified in State v. Momin trial. No one asked me any questions regarding QI's.
- 9-13-2024 Email sent to Montgomery County ("MC") ADA Madison Shrock disclosing pending
 Qis in preparation for *State v. Monroy*. MC ADA issues Notice of Potential
 Favorable evidence which lists the information on the pending Ql's that I emailed to them.
- 9-17-2024 Court hearing outside the jury's presence during *State v. Monroy* regarding pending Ol's.
- 9-18-2024 Testified in *State v. Monroy*. The judge initially ruled that QI's were not admissible but later reversed course. Discovery order was submitted by defense counsel Bourque, and was sent May 10, 2023, via FedEx to DA's office. 49 QIs were provided for this discovery along with the previously stated public facing website link.
- 9-25-2024 Defense Counsel in *State v. Monroy* issued an affidavit regarding trial outcome and *Brady notice*.
- 9-26-2024 Defense Counsel Evans files for motion for new trial in State v. Momin.
- 10-16-2024 Testified in Comal County in *State v. Cameron*. Both pending QIs were disclosed to the prosecution and defense. A hearing was conducted outside the jury's presence. The judge ruled the QIs inadmissible. The defendant was acquitted.
- 10-22/23-2024-Testified in *State v. Soape* in MC. A Discovery Order submitted by defense counsel Bourque, and was uploaded on Jan 25, 2024, to the Montgomery County discovery database. 49 QIs were provided for this discovery along with the

previously stated public facing website link. A subpoena duces tecum was received by the lab on 10/15/24 requesting personnel records, documents related to the QIs, and communications between the DA's office and the laboratory. This information was provided to defense counsel Bourque, the day of testimony 10/23.

- 10-25-2024 A motion for new trial hearing was held in State v. Momin.
- 11-07-2024 After the motion for new trial's hearing completion, the judge granted the motion in *State v. Momin*. The State is currently appealing.
- 11-21-2024 Complaint submitted by Defense Counsel Thiessen to TFSC sent via email to me and DPS Management.

Complaint Response

1. "Zachary Augustyn acted knowingly and intentionally to hide information from defense, consciously disregarding an accepted standard of practice".

Full discovery was provided in all 3 trials including all completed discipline/analyst-related QIs. QIs that are in progress are not routinely provided in discovery. If a QI that is in progress is related to the case or a disclosure event, then it will be prioritized for completion and discussed with prosecution in pretrial. Defense counsel posed questions during trial using the word "hiding". In my response to those questions, I used the same verbiage. It was a very poor choice of words. I should have clarified that I was not trying to hide information.

Mr. Bourque: "It's relevant to his bias. He's been trained on Brady. He knows what Brady is. If he's hiding stuff from me in another case, how do we know if he's not hiding stuff from us in this case?" I clarify what I had meant by "hiding" when I say, "I believe this is what the defense is referring to".

Mr. Bourque's above referenced quotation relates to the following email excerpt I sent the prosecution before *State v. Monroy*.

"I also have other QIs that are currently being processed that occurred in the beginning of 2024, he should not be aware of these as they are not complete and finalized yet, so they should not be brought up yet. Again, these QIs are not finalized so they should not have record of them yet, but it's wise to be aware of them".

Using, "he should not be aware of them" in my email was a poor choice of words, I should have clarified the QIs are still pending review so neither the state nor the defense would be aware of them until finalized. I can see how my word choice could lead to a misunderstanding. I would not intentionally withhold information from either party. Going forward I will be clearer.

2. "Augustyn is biased against the defense, including defense experts, in favor of the prosecution and engages in trial tactics/strategies with/for the prosecution."

The below excerpt is from my *State v. Soape* cross examination:

Q. So you are taking it upon yourself to advocate for the State against another witness, another scientist. Would you agree with that statement?

A. It would appear that way.

Q. It would appear that way, that you are not – that you are not unbiased, correct?

A. Yes. ...

Q. It is in no way your job to help the Prosecution with their strategy, is it?

A. Correct.

Q. But you are doing it anyway, correct?

A. Correct.

I did not answer these questions properly. I misspoke. While I was not helping the prosecution with their strategy, it is encouraged to have pre-trial meetings prior to testimony to provide and understand information better within my scope, limitations and expertise, as well as disclosure requirements. I was not aware of any strategies that the prosecutor would implement in trial. In another instance, for a different case (*State v. Momin*), I met with both defense and prosecution for *State v. Momin* to inspect the blood and answered any questions that were asked by both parties as an example.

Expert Witness Testimony Guidance (11) regarding the Code of Professional Responsibility (Texas Admin Code Rule 651.219 (b)) states "As necessary to fulfill these ethical obligations, forensic analysts may recommend, draft, and amend questions to be asked of the analyst during testimony, if requested to do so by a prosecutor or defense attorney" (p. 82-83 of the Crime Laboratory Division Manual)

Some topics that usually arise during pre-trial meetings include case relevant information, usual scope of my testimony, experiences with defense counsel, experiences with defense experts, etc. It should be noted that I usually am subpoenaed by the state as an expert witness.

It's common to have both state and defense expert witnesses observe testimony and provide counsel feedback. From my previous trial experiences, I was aware the defense expert in *State v. Soape*. I worked with the prosecutor to prepare for this defense expert. I sent an email to ADA Delano regarding the defense expert in order to prepare for *State v. Soape*.

I realize that the above *State v. Soape* excerpt had left a poor impression with the jury. I had gotten mixed up and inadvertently admitted to being biased even though I followed

normal practice regarding pre-trial conferences and preparing for court. If the defense had requested a pre-trial conference prior to trial, I would have afforded defense the same opportunities.

I understand that I am there to explain my testing and results. Having a pre-trial meeting with either the prosecution or the defense will not change my findings in any way. Part of my retraining will be to read, review, and discuss transcripts and to participate in additional mock trials to improve my trial communication.

3. "Augustyn made inconsistent statements under oath, and both Augustyn and his superiors, failed to notify defense counsel when he discovered mistakes in his testimony. Augustyn did not adequately prepare for the Monroy hearing and trial, which led to his impeachment in the Soape trial."

I believe I made every attempt in following Crime Laboratory Division policy with respect to trial preparation in an effort to prepare for both trials. I reviewed information from both of the QIs that were in progress, because they were not yet finalized, I relied on memory when testifying. I was not aware of my misstatement, nor were my superiors aware, in *State v. Monroy* until it was brought to my attention during my testimony in *State v. Soape*.

I acknowledge that using phrases like "I don't remember exactly" and "If I remember correctly" in an attempt to not misspeak can lead to confusion. I should have said "I don't know" and that "I don't remember". This line of questioning will also be used in the mock trials to improve my trial communication.

4. "Augustyn does not remember or feigns ignorance of his duties of professional responsibility despite recently renewing his TFSC license."

The documents that defense counsel could be referring to are the *National Code of Ethics* and *Professional Responsibility for Forensic Science, ANAB Guiding Principles of Professional Responsibility for Forensic Services,* and the *Texas Code of Professional Responsibility for Analysts and Lab Management from the Texas Forensic Science Commission*. I am aware of my professional duties and responsibilities. I read the listed documents every year. However, at the time of testimony, I did not remember the exact names of the trainings.

- 5. "Relies on data despite having concerns about said data."
- In my *State v.* Soape response, I believe I made it clear that the data is reliable.
- Q. "Were there any concerns during any of that process?
- A. The only real concern that I had with some of the quality control data was with the chromatogram—sorry, not chromatogram, the second detector for the second column. We run cases in duplicate, and with each run there is two columns. There is two races that occur. The second column has a little bit of baseline drift. It's not pretty, but it doesn't

mean that the quantification of ethanol is any different. This column or this – second race is mainly for qualitative purposes. It's a way of identifying and detecting volatiles that are seen in the quantitative column. So again, it's not the prettiest data, but it is data nonetheless.

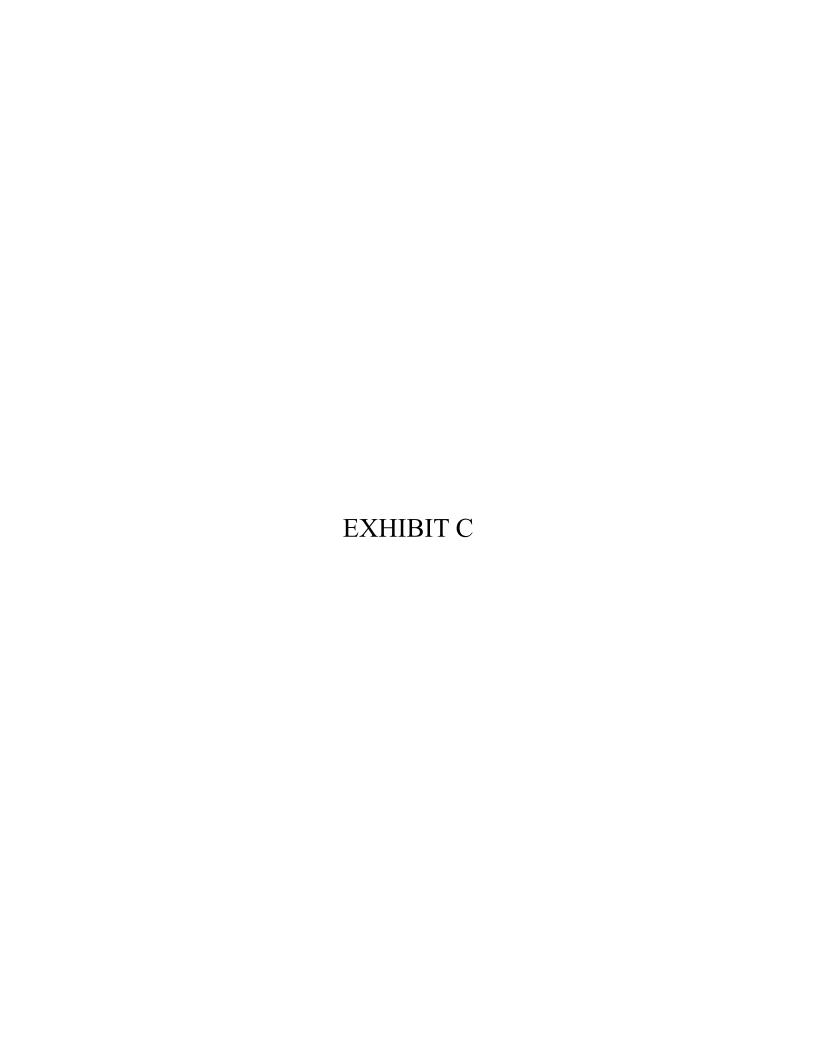
In anticipating a challenge from the defense on baseline drift, I wanted to testify to the validity of my result while acknowledging that it is not picture-perfect data but still reliable and valid. In retrospect, I acknowledge the poor word choice. I should have incorporated that all policies and procedures were followed, all controls passed, and that my data was technically and administratively reviewed by another authorized analyst in this discipline. Again, testifying in this capacity will be covered in my retraining and mock trials.

Summary

I acknowledge that I have difficulties in my testimony as well as in my knowledge on the quality incident process. I did not intend to appear biased, to mislead a jury, not be forthcoming, or engage in pro-prosecution tactics. I am committed to improving my trial communication and better understanding of quality incident processes.

I will receive training in key topics from General Lab Training, including "Ethics, Professionalism, and Bias" and "Quality Assurance". Once this retraining has been completed, I will be required to take a written exam to test my knowledge on the lab's quality assurance program and quality incident process. I will also participate in two rigorous mock courts to evaluate further my ability to testify appropriately and accurately on the topics in question and to be able to convey to the jury in a confident and poised manner the results of my forensic findings.

I am committed to the retraining process, and I hope you will consider these points as you review the complaint.





Quality Incident Report

LAB-510 Rev.01 (04/2023) p.1 Issued by: SQM

Tracking ID

QI-HOU-2024-0104-BA

Lab Houst	on	Discipline		ВА	Date Discovered	(01/04/2024	Page 1 of 2
Date of Incident		1/04/2024		End Date of Incident (if applicable)			02/13/2024	
Related Policy/Procedure/Spe	cification (CLD 43.6.A, CLD 45.2.B, BA-02-01 3.2.E						
Related Work # (case/batch/instrument#)		2311-14072; I 14084; HOU-2 HOU-2311-14 2311-14096; I	HOU-23 2311-14 1090; H HOU-23 2311-14	311-14073; I 4085; HOU-2 IOU-2311-14 311-14098; I	.069; HOU-2311-14 HOU-2311-14082; 2311-14087; HOU- .091; HOU-2311-14 HOU-2311-14099; 2311-14107; HOU-	HOU- 2311- 4092; HOU-	2311-14083; HC 14088; HOU-23 HOU-2311-1400 2311-14100; HC	DU-2311- 11-14089; 93; HOU- DU-2311-

Incident Description:

On 12-19-2023, all 30 blood kits from Batch ZJA 112823 were boxed up and placed into the TO BE FILED Fridge in locations, TO BE FILED DAV FRIDGE and TO BE FILED DAV AUSTIN FRIDGE. All 30 blood kits from this batch did not have proper seals applied to the outside of the blood kits. 27 of the blood kits were either returned back to the submitting agency or forwarded to Austin for further drug toxicology analysis. The other three were still here in the Houston laboratory. On 01-04-2024, Sugarland PD sent an email to Houston Evidence Coordination, advising them that the 5 blood kits with the markings "ZJA 11/28/23" that were returned to them were not sealed. This email was then forwarded to the Evidence Coordination Supervisor, the Toxicology (Alcohol/Volatiles) (BA) Supervisor, and the Quality Manager for the DPS Houston Crime Lab. The BA analyst who worked the cases checked the locations for all 30 blood kits associated with this batch. Three cases from the batch were still in the laboratory's possession and were corrected onsite by applying a proper seal consisting of evidence tape with the analyst's initials and date. Fifteen (15) of the cases had been returned to the original submitting agencies. Those agencies were contacted to let them know that these cases had been returned without seals and were asked to inventory the contents of the bloods kits to determine if anything was missing. The Austin Toxicology section and Austin Evidence Coordination were notified that 7 blood kits were forwarded to the Austin lab without proper seals applied and were asked to inventory the contents of the bloods kits to determine if anything was missing. All blood kits were inventoried, and all items were accounted for.

Cause Analysis:

Evidence for cases that have been reviewed and released are not allowed to be in the analyst's possession for longer than 14 days. In a haste, to ensure that this didn't happen before the analyst went out of town during the holidays, the analyst overlooked sealing the blood kits. Due to the nature of how the blood kits are closed, Evidence Coordination didn't recognize that a proper seal wasn't applied.

Risk Assessment:

Severity is moderate since the BA kits were not sealed, there was a potential risk that the kits could have opened while in transit and potentially spilling the contents of the kits. While the tubes are commonly contained in a plastic outer container, there is still a risk that the blood tubes inside can still break. The likelihood of occurrence is uncommon. This is the first known instance where BA kits were returned without a proper seal on the BA kits. Overall, the risk is low.

Risk Level: Low

Correction(s) to the Original Work (Indicate if not performed at this time):

Corrected Report? NA

Representatives from the various agencies in this batch were notified via email to check the evidence that was returned to them from this batch to ensure that a proper seal was applied to the returned blood kits. If a proper seal was missing, the agencies were asked to inventory the blood kits and ensure that no evidence was missing from the kits themselves. All agencies eventually responded and ensured that all evidence was accounted for and that proper seals were applied to the affected blood kits. As for the 3 remaining blood kits at the lab, they were scanned back into the analyst's possession and proper seals were applied.

Customer Notification (Indicate if not performed at this time or not applicable):

Agency Representatives from: Conroe PD Victoria PD Austin DPS Toxicology Sugarland PD

Corrective Action Necessary? No Significant Disclosure? No Inclusion on Disclosure Form? NA

Approval

Collaborator(s) <u>Augustyn, Zachary (awareness only)</u>

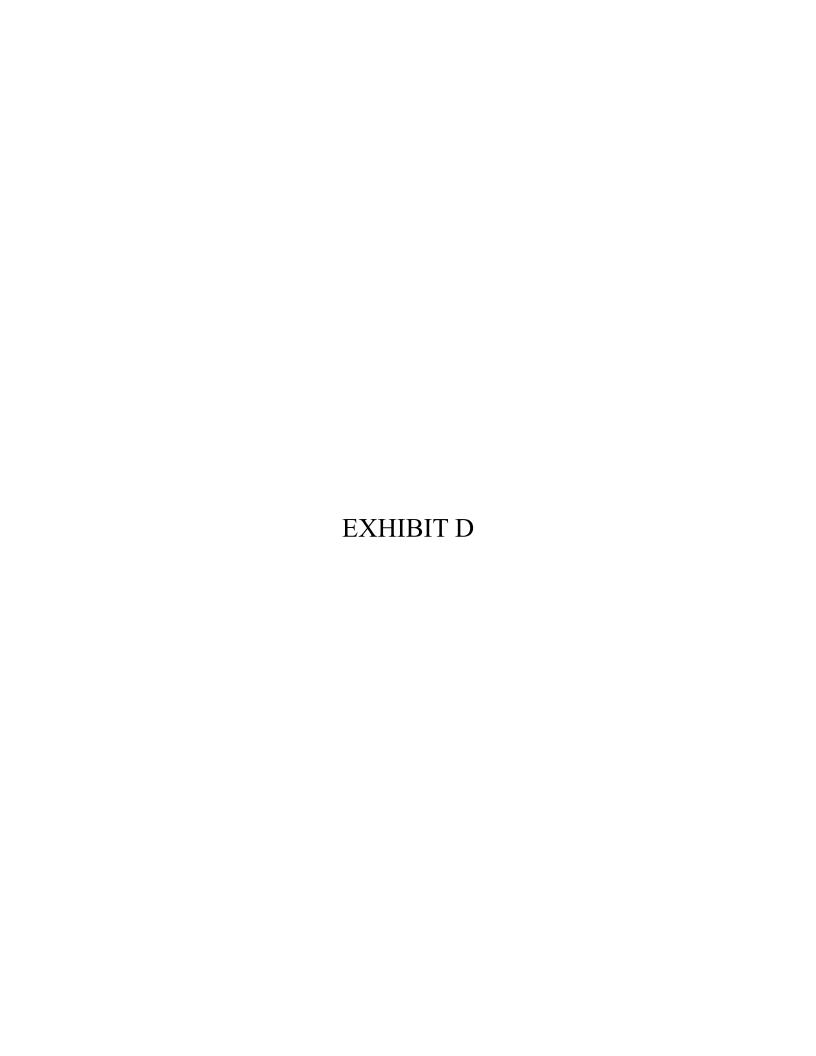


Quality Incident Report LAB-510 Rev.01 (04/2023) p.1 Issued by: SQM

Tracking ID

QI-HOU-2024-0104-BA

Lab	b Houston		ВА	Date Discovered	01/04/2024	Page 2 of 2			
Subject Matter Expert(s) Parker, Tifani (electronically signed)									
Lab QA Zalekian, Somiyeh (electronically signed)									
ManagementGardiner, Andrew, Parker, Tifani (electronically signed)									
System QA Mraz, Jamie (electronically signed)									
Date of Fir	Date of Final Approval <u>10/11/2024</u>								





Quality Incident Report

LAB-510 Rev.01 (04/2023) p.1 Issued by: SQM

Tracking ID

QI-SYS-2024-0210-BA

Lab	System		Discipline		ВА	Date Discovered	0	2/15/2024	Page 1 of 2
Date of Incident		C)2/10/2024		End Date of Incident (if applicable)		ıble)	05/16/2024	
Related Poli	Related Policy/Procedure/Specification			C;					
Related Wo	rk # (case/batch/ins	trument#)	GAR-2401-01	457; C	SAR-2401-01	459, HOU-2404-05	5416, H	HOU-2404-0541	11

Incident Description:

On 2/10/2024, two 30 batches of blood alcohol cases were sampled and analyzed. GAR-2401-01457, belonging to the second batch, at the time of analysis, corresponded to Subject A. The information listed on the blood kit for GAR-2401-01457 matched the information that was provided on the submission form. However, the information on the blood tubes did not match the information on the blood kit or the submission form. This was not noted on the worksheet and a blood tube was selected for analysis. The case was sampled and analyzed on 02/10/2024. On 02/15/2024, an analyst from the Garland lab was assigned the case GAR-2401-01459. That analyst noticed that the information on the blood tubes did not match the information that was provided on the submission form or what was written on the blood kit. The analyst noticed that the name on the blood tubes match the name in JTrax for GAR-2401-01457. The Garland analyst reached out to the analyst in Houston that worked GAR-2401-01457 to let that analyst know that the two cases appeared to be switched. The agency was contacted to determine which agency case number went with each subject. The agency confirmed that their agency case number 24-000281 went with Subject A and 24-000283 went with Subject B. It was determined that the blood tubes had been switched prior to submitting to the lab. The Garland laboratory boxed up GAR-2401-01459 and sent the blood kit to the Houston Laboratory for analysis. After further discussion with the agency, it was decided what would be done to correct this switch. The blood tubes will remain in the original blood kit that they were submitted in. The information that was listed on those blood kits by the agency will be crossed out and corrected by the lab. Information such as: agency case #, and suspect's name. In a separate incident involving the same analyst, HOU-2404-05416 was unboxed and prepared for sampling on 5/14/2024. It was noted during the unboxing process that the name of the suspect on the tubes for HOU-2404-05416 did not match the name of the suspect for the corresponding submission form. The suspect's name that was written on the blood tubes was later searched that day on 05/13/2024 in the LIMS Database to determine if submission forms were possibly switched. The name on the blood tubes matched the name in LIMS for HOU-2404-05411. HOU-2404-05411 had already been sampled and analyzed by the same analyst on 05/09/2024. The analyst checked the blood tubes for HOU-2404-05411 and confirmed that the name on the blood tubes for HOU-2404-05411 matched that submission form for HOU-2404-05416, and vice versa.

Cause Analysis:

Incident occurred on a Saturday, 2/10/24. Analyst was working on overtime hours. Two 30 batches were sampled and analyzed in and on the same day. GAR-2401-01457 belonged to the second batch that was unboxed. Case information on exterior of GAR-2401-01457 matched case information corresponding to information on submission form. Main ceiling lights were off in lab with just the bench light on during unboxing process as well as sunlight from the window. Cases affected originated from Garland lab evidence coordination. Analyst has had less problems working with Garland cases compared to Houston cases as a result the analyst was not as diligent as he should have been. GAR-2401-01459 was not in the workflow on this day, which could have triggered a response to the analyst seeing that information between 2 cases was switched as the analyst has had experience with this such scenario in the past with other agencies. Incident Occurred between 05/09/2024 - 05/13/2024 HOU-2404-05411 was unboxed towards the end of the batch on 5/9/24, analyst could have possibly been not as diligent compared to unboxing at other points of time in the batch. HOU-2404-05411 and HOU-2404-05416 were a part of two different batches, HOU-2404-05416 was not in the workflow on 05/09/2024, this could have triggered a response to the analyst seeing that information between 2 cases was switched

Risk Assessment:

Severity is major, the likelihood of occurrence is uncommon, and the risk level is medium. In both instances, the analyst was able to make appropriate corrections in LIMS as well as on the items of evidence, if necessary. The analyst has, in the past, caught mistakes like this and has made corrections prior to analysis. The laboratory does recognize the elevated risk and impact that an error like this would have a more negative impact had the reports been released prior to resolving the issue. All BA analysts in the Houston lab have been reminded to ensure due diligence when checking the information on the blood tubes, BA kits, and submission forms. If a discrepancy is noted prior to analysis, the evidence will not be processed until the agency is notified and the discrepancy is corrected.

Risk Level: Medium



Quality Incident Report

LAB-510 Rev.01 (04/2023) p.1 Issued by: SQM

Tracking ID

QI-SYS-2024-0210-BA

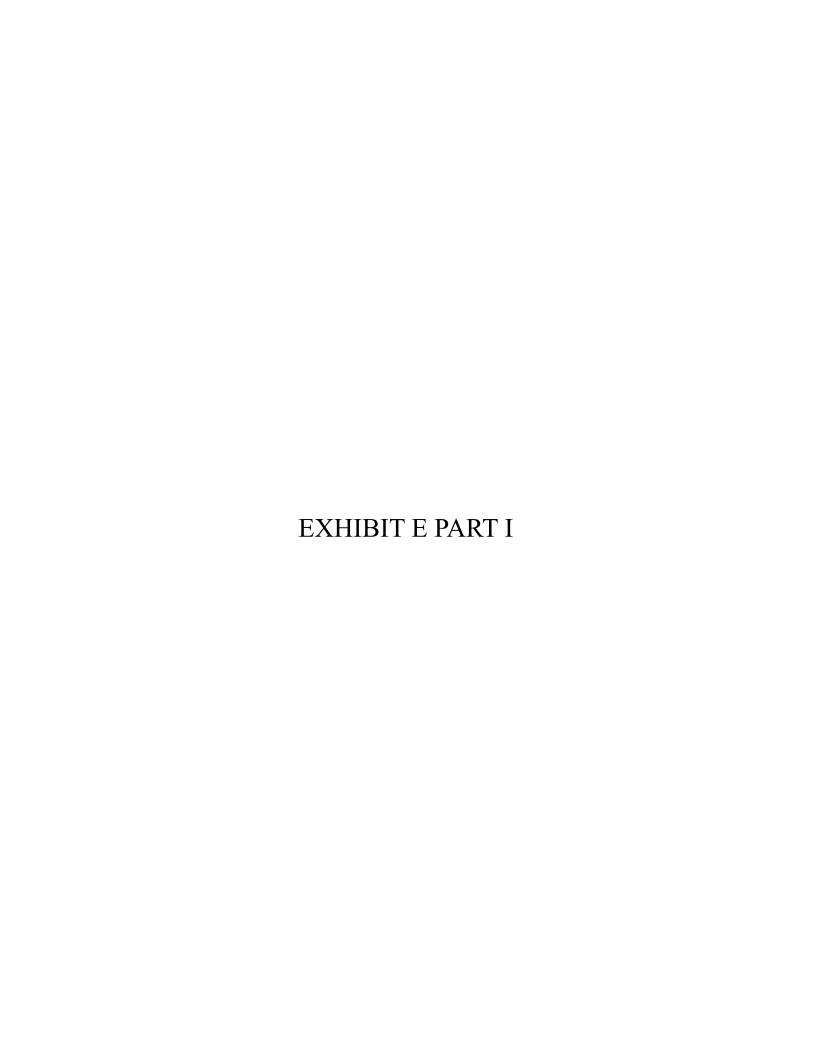
Lab	System	Discipline	ВА	Date Discovered	02/15/2024	Page 2 of 2	
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The blood kits for GAR-2401-01457 and GAR-2401-01459 were corrected by the analyst to reflect the correct agency case number and subject name. A new submission form was provided for both cases and new sticker labels were placed on them and scanned into the case files. The information that was originally put into JTrax was also corrected. GAR-2401-01459 was sampled and analyzed by the Houston laboratory on 02/20/2024. HOU-2404-05411 was taken out of Draft Complete, the submitting agency, Magnolia PD was contacted on 05/13/2024 and notified that a possible switch of submission forms between two of their cases had occurred at some point from when the agency had possession of the blood kits to when the evidence was dropped off at the Houston DPS crime lab, where the case information was entered into the LIMS database. Two new submission forms were requested, and later scanned into the LIMS database corresponding to the correct subjects.

Customer Notification (Indicate if not performed at this time or not applicable):

Lancaster PD was notified via email and phone call in regard to the incident involving the blood evidence that was submitted to the Garland Lab on 02/15/2024 that a switch had occurred prior to evidence being brought to the Garland Lab. Magnolia PD was notified via email, asking for clarification of case information between the two cases, and new submission forms for the two affected cases. Agency was contacted on 05/13/2024

Corrective Act	i on Necessary? No	Significant Disclosure? No	Inclusion on Disclosure Form? NA				
Approval							
Collaborator(s)	<u>Augus</u>	yn, Zachary, Parker, Tifani (awareness only)					
Subject Matter Expert(s) Parker, Tifani (electronically signed)							
Lab QA	Zalekian, Somiyeh (e	lectronically signed)					
Management	Management Parker, Tifani, Gardiner, Andrew (electronically signed)						
System QA <u>Bishop, Carly (electronically signed)</u>							
Date of Final A	Date of Final Approval11/07/2024						



1	REPORTER'S RECORD								
2	VOLUME 8 OF 11 VOLUMES								
3	TRIAL COURT CAUSE NO. 22-CCR-230111								
4	COURT OF APPEALS CAUSE NO. 14-25-00020-CR								
5	THE STATE OF TEXAS) IN THE COUNTY COURT								
6									
7 8	VS.) AT LAW NO. 2								
9 10	JAWED SADRUDDIN MOMIN) FORT BEND COUNTY, TEXAS								
11									
12									
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14	MOTION FOR NEW TRIAL								
15									
16									
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19	On October 25, 2024, the following proceedings came								
20	on to be heard in the above-entitled and numbered cause								
21	before the Honorable Tyra J. McCollum, Judge presiding,								
22	held in Fort Bend County, Texas;								
23	Proceedings reported by Certified Shorthand								
24	Reporter and machine shorthand/computer-aided								
25	transcription.								

1	APPEARANCES
2	FOR THE STATE:
	Denver Fesmire
4	SBOT NO. 24132182 Gavin O'Brien
5	SBOT NO. 24124053 Baldwin Chin
6	SBOT NO. 00783823 Assistant District Attorneys
7	1422 Eugene Heimann Circle Richmond, Texas 77469
8	281 - 341 - 4460
9	
10	FOR THE DEFENDANT:
11	Collin Evans SBOT NO. 24074189
12	Jonathan Landers SBOT 24070101
13	Attorneys at Law 917 Franklin Street, Suite 300
14	Houston, Texas 77002
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1			CHRONOLOGICA	L INDEX		
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9	3	DISCLOSURE		20 20 20	21 21	8 8 8
10	5	SHEET LABORATORY	INFORMATION	20	21	8
11	6	SHEET DISCOVERY O		20	21	8
12	7	STIPULATION	I	19	19	8
13			DEFENDANT'S E	XHIBITS		
14	NO . 1	DESCRIPTION NOTICE OF F	POTENTIAL	OFFERED 7	ADMITTED	Vol. 8
15	2	FAVORABLE E EMAILS	EVIDENCE	9	11	8
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18 19	8	JUROR NOTES QUALITY INC	CIDENT REPORT	15 17	17	8
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PROCEEDINGS October 25, 2024 THE COURT: All right. We

THE COURT: All right. We're on the record in Cause No. 22-CCR-230111, the State of Texas versus Jawed Sadruddin Momin. We are here on the Defendant's motion for new trial after jury trial in which the jury returned a verdict of guilty on August 30, 2024.

10 MR. FESMIRE: Denver Fesmire for the State.

11 | That's D-e-n-v-e-r, F-e-s-m-i-r-e.

MR. O'BRIEN: And Gavin O'Brien for the

13 State as well, G-a-v-i-n, O-'-B-r-i-e-n.

14 THE COURT: Thank you. And on behalf of

15 Defense?

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16 MR. LANDERS: Jonathan Landers here for Mr.

17 Momin. Do I need to spell that for you?

THE REPORTER: No.

MR. EVANS: Collin Evans for the Defense.

THE COURT: Okay. Thank you very much.

21 | All right. We're here on Defendant's motion. I'll ask

if you-all are ready to proceed?

MR. LANDERS: We are, yes.

THE COURT: Okay. Thank you very much.

25 You may be seated.

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MR. LANDERS: Could we take care of some
1
   housekeeping matters?
2
                 THE COURT: Yes.
3
                 MR. LANDERS:
                               Do you need a copy of the
4
   motion?
5
                 THE COURT: I have it.
6
7
                 MR. LANDERS:
                               Okay. Thank you, Judge.
8
   Briefly I would just -- I'm not going to do any argument
         I'm just pointing out the three claims, one is the
   now.
10
   Texas Rules of Appellate Procedure 21.3, specifically
11
   Subsection E which requires the granting of a motion for
12
   new trial when evidence tending to establish the
   defendant's innocence has been intentionally destroyed
13
14
   or withheld, thus preventing its production at trial.
15
                 I'll be upfront with the Judge. I've not
   found a case on that section. It is -- it's a "shall,"
16
   though. I want to point that out to the Court.
17
18
                 THE COURT: I'm sorry.
                                         It's a what?
19
                 MR. LANDERS: It's a "shall." That's one
20
   of the mandatory -- if it's proven, a motion for new
21
   trial must be granted. This is from the statute,
22
   though, Judge. I haven't found a case on it.
23
                 The second is what we commonly refer to as
24
   a Brady claim. I'm sure you're well aware that there's
25
   three prongs of those claims, favorable evidence was not
```

disclosed, essentially the first two prongs. I don't think there's going to be a dispute about that. This will possibly come down to materiality, and we've given the Court briefing on the standard for materiality. We can argue later about that if you would like to hear argument on it; and then third, we've asked for a motion for new trial in the interest of justice.

A number of years ago, and we pointed this out in our briefing, the Court of Criminal Appeals essentially held that grounds of relief is still available. There must be an underlying reason for it. You can't just say "interest of justice," but if the Court wanted to make -- not make a specific finding on one of the other claims and wanted to grant in the interest of justice, you could do that as well as long as we have proven some underlying ground for the motion.

With that being said, I'd like to attempt to at least pre-admit some evidence for the hearing. I think most of them are not going to be objected to, if that's all right with Your Honor.

THE COURT: Yes.

MR. LANDERS: Okay. I've brought courtesy copies for you, Judge, and the State as well.

THE COURT: Have you previously provided those to the State?

MR. LANDERS: I did, Judge. 1 THE COURT: Thank you. 2 And those don't have 3 MR. LANDERS: Defendant's exhibit stickers because I didn't want to 4 mix them up with the actual exhibits, but I did write 5 the exhibit number on the bottom just so that you can 6 7 follow along. The first exhibit is Defendant's Exhibit 8 No. 1, and I've noted "MNT" for motion for new trial on 10 our exhibit stickers. This is a Notice Of Potential 11 Favorable Evidence that came in a case entitled State 12 versus Monroy and this is a case out of Montgomery County. This is also included as an appendix to our 13 14 motion, and it basically points out three incidents that 15 were turned over, a separate trial related to the same analyst, and it's really the basis of the reason we're 16 17 here today. 18 THE COURT: And that being Zachary 19 Austin -- Augustyn? 20 MR. LANDERS: Augustyn, correct. 21 THE COURT: Thank you. 22 MR. O'BRIEN: And the State has no 23 objection to the admittance of that exhibit, Judge. 24 THE COURT: All right. When I look at that 25 Exhibit 1, it looks like it's actually comprised, so

```
that the record is clear, of three documents; one is
1
   entitled Notice Of Potential Favorable Evidence; the
2
3
   second one, which appears to be an email dated
   Wednesday, September --
4
5
                 MR. LANDERS: So that's actually a separate
   exhibit there, Judge. I should have written "2" on
6
7
   there. I might have screwed that up.
8
                 THE COURT:
                             Thank you. All right. So No.
   1 is solely the document that's entitled Notice Of
10
   Potential Favorable Evidence?
11
                 MR. LANDERS: Yes, it's two pages.
12
                 THE COURT: Okay. Thank you.
13
                 MR. CHIN:
                            Excuse me, Judge. I apologize.
14
   Can you give me a few seconds with the prosecutor?
15
                 THE COURT:
                             Okay.
16
                 MR. LANDERS: And for the record, ADA
   Baldwin Chin is conferring with the prosecution.
17
18
                 (Discussion off the record.)
19
                 MR. CHIN:
                           I'm so sorry, Judge. This is
   Baldwin Chin, Fort Bend County District Attorney's
20
21
   Appellate Division, talking to your prosecutor. I
22
   apologize for interrupting.
                 THE COURT: That's okay. Thank you very
23
24
   much.
25
                 MR. O'BRIEN:
                               Judge, if I may amend --
```

```
apologies -- from my conference with ADA Chin.
1
2
   State would actually not agree to the preadmission of
   State's (sic) Exhibit 1.
4
                 THE COURT: All right. So you just want to
   wait until the process of the hearing?
5
6
                 MR. O'BRIEN: Yes, Judge.
7
                 THE COURT: All right. I'll sustain that
8
   objection.
9
                 MR. LANDERS: Just for the record, you
   already know this, Judge, but for record purposes, you
10
11
   can accept evidence by affidavit or other means, and so
12
   we point that out. I'll re-urge it during testimony,
13
   though.
                 THE COURT:
14
                             Thank you. I appreciate that.
15
                 MR. LANDERS:
                               All right.
                                           Defendant's
16
   Exhibit No. 2 is emails directly related to this case.
   It's dealing with the two prosecutors that are here and
17
18
   Mr. Augustyn. We've been told there was no objection to
19
   this. I assume that the State would want this in the
20
   record.
            It does show -- and I'll point out for the
21
   Court -- we don't believe these prosecutors knew about
   this suppressed evidence. It does show they did not
22
23
   know about the suppressed evidence. It gives a little
24
   bit of background about how this all happened, and we
25
   would ask that Defendant's Exhibit No. 2 be admitted
```

into the record.

THE COURT: And I want to make sure that I am clear based upon the Defense motion as well as your representations at this time which is that you are not alleging prosecutorial misconduct in any way or fashion?

MR. LANDERS: That's correct. We're saying that the analyst is part of the State for the purposes of the Brady case. We agree -- I think there will actually be a stipulation that these two prosecutors had no idea about this evidence that will be the basis of today's hearing prior to trial.

THE COURT: And I think I want to make a -- an ask, if that is an extension, too, because while I appreciate the fact that you're not making any allegation of prosecutorial misconduct as to these two particular ADAs, I won't presume that they were the only two ADAs that ever touched this case.

So my inquiry is whether or not, while you are not making allegations of prosecutorial misconduct as to these two, are you making or alluding to prosecutorial misconduct as to any -- anybody potentially that touched -- from the DA's office -- that touched this cause?

MR. LANDERS: I can tell you that we don't have any reason to believe that anybody from the DA's

office was aware of these quality incidents prior to 1 2 trial. THE COURT: 3 Okay. Thank you very much. MR. LANDERS: And we only know about these 4 5 two prosecutors. We're not making any allegation 6 against the DA's office. 7 THE COURT: Okay. Thank you. With that 8 understanding, Mr. O'Brien, what is the State's position 9 on the proffered Defendant's Exhibit 2? 10 No objection, Your Honor. MR. O'BRIEN: 11 THE COURT: All right. Then the Court will 12 consider preadmitted Defendant's Exhibit No. 2. 13 (Defendant's Exhibit No. 2 was offered and 14 admitted into evidence.) Next is Defendant's Exhibit 15 MR. LANDERS: This is the affidavit of Mr. Bourque, the 16 No. 3. criminal defense lawyer in the other case, the Monroy 17 18 case that Defendant's Exhibit No. 1 related to. I think 19 there will be an objection to this. We would note this 20 rule -- I think it's 21.3 of the Rules of Appellate 21 Procedure specifically allow you to take evidence by affidavit. 22 We would ask -- and this is also the case 23 24 that we discovered this underlying quality incidents 25 from. This is where it was first discovered by anybody

```
as far as we know. We ask that this be introduced into
1
   evidence as well.
2
3
                 THE COURT:
                             Thank you. What's the State's
   position?
4
5
                 MR. O'BRIEN: Yes, Judge. While the State
   recognizes that there are rules that allow for
6
7
   pre-authentication of particular affidavits --
8
                 THE COURT:
                             Preadmission.
9
                 MR. O'BRIEN: Yes, preadmission for
10
                The State would object on the basis of
   affidavits.
11
   relevance as there is some content pertaining to the
12
   content of the Quality Incident Reports that is relevant
   for the proceedings here today, but we believe they will
13
14
   be introduced through, you know, more officialized
15
   reports.
16
                 Regarding the other information about the
   proceedings of the case in Montgomery County against an
17
18
   Israel Lee Monroy, those are not relevant at all to the
   proceedings here today.
19
20
                 THE COURT: All right. The State is going
21
   to -- the Court is going to sustain that objection for
22
         You can re-urge it so that I'll have an
   opportunity to determine relevance at a later time.
23
                               That was 3. Defendant's
24
                 MR. LANDERS:
25
   Exhibit No. 4, this was actually --
```

```
THE COURT: I don't think I have that one
1
2
   in front of me. I just have 5, 6, and 8 in front of me.
3
                 (Discussion off the record.)
                 MR. LANDERS: I'll describe it for --
 4
5
                 THE COURT: Thank you.
                 MR. LANDERS:
                               So for the record, these are
6
7
   already in evidence from the trial, but for the purposes
8
   of the hearing, we thought it would be easier so we
   don't mix and match everything.
10
                 THE COURT: Thank you.
                               This is a Stafford Police
11
                 MR. LANDERS:
12
   Department chain of custody form. You might recall it.
   It came up during trial, whether or not it should be
13
14
   admissible, and it was part of whether or not the blood
   itself should be admissible, and then separately, the
15
   Texas Department of Public Safety Crime Laboratory
16
   submission form and chain of custody report. It's three
17
18
   pages from evidence which was already in evidence at the
19
   trial, Defendant's Exhibit No. 4.
                 MR. O'BRIEN: No objection.
20
21
                 THE COURT: All right. Defendant's
   Exhibit 4 will be admitted.
22
23
                 (Defendant's Exhibit No. 4 was offered and
24
   admitted into evidence.)
25
                 THE COURT: Is this a copy or --
```

```
MR. LANDERS: It's your copy, Judge.
1
2
                 THE COURT: Thank you.
3
                 MR. LANDERS: And I believe you said you
   have Exhibit 5, a copy of 5, Judge.
4
                 THE COURT: I do.
5
                               Okay. This is Defendant's
6
                 MR. LANDERS:
7
   Exhibit No. 5, also already in evidence. This is the
8
   laboratory report from Mr. Momin's case.
9
                 MR. O'BRIEN: Similarly, the State's
   understanding is this was already been admitted during
10
               The State has no objection, Judge.
11
   the trial.
12
                 THE COURT:
                             Defendant's Exhibit No. 5 is
13
   admitted.
14
                 (Defendant's Exhibit No. 5 was offered and
15
   admitted into evidence.)
16
                 MR. LANDERS:
                               Do you have 6?
17
                 THE COURT:
                            I do.
18
                 MR. LANDERS:
                               Defendant's Exhibit No. 6 is
19
   one of the Quality Incident Reports related to
20
   Mr. Augustyn that was not previously turned over, and it
21
   has now been turned over pursuant to our subpoena in
   this case.
22
                               No objection, Your Honor.
23
                 MR. O'BRIEN:
24
                 THE COURT: Defendant's Exhibit No. 6 will
25
   be admitted.
```

```
(Defendant's Exhibit No. 6 was offered and
1
   admitted into evidence.)
2
                 MR. LANDERS: I believe there is an
3
   objection to No. 7. Your Honor, do you have 7?
4
                 THE COURT: I don't have 7. I've already
5
   ruled on 7, right?
6
7
                 MR. LANDERS:
                               That was 6, Your Honor.
8
                 THE COURT: That would have been 6?
9
                 MR. LANDERS: That's 4, Judge.
10
                 THE COURT: Thank you.
                                         Now you're showing
11
   me 7?
12
                 MR. LANDERS: Yes, Your Honor. Do you have
13
   a copy of that?
14
                 THE COURT: I don't.
15
                               I'll show you what they are.
                 MR. LANDERS:
16
   These are file-stamped documents from Montgomery County
   in the same case we -- actually -- yes, in the same
17
18
   case, the first case in Montgomery County where this
   issue came up. They are juror notes requesting
19
20
   Augustyn's testimony and also showing that there was a
21
   hung jury as a result of that trial in Montgomery
22
   County.
23
                 THE COURT: All right. Let me pause for a
24
   second, Mr. Landers, because I do think you sort of
25
   mixed up -- either you have or I have. I'm showing that
```

```
this chain of custody was marked as 4.
1
2
                 MR. LANDERS:
                               That's right.
3
                 THE COURT: Did y'all give me the same
                    Is that what that is?
   document twice?
4
5
                 MR. LANDERS: I think we brought you an
   extra copy of that because we thought you didn't have
6
7
   that copy.
                 THE COURT: I'll give you that one back so
8
   I don't have two up here.
10
                 Okay. Go ahead with 7.
11
                 MR. LANDERS: So 7 are jury notes from the
12
   same case out of Montgomery County that we were
   previously discussing showing that the jury wanted to
13
14
   hear this specific type of evidence and also that there
15
   was a mistrial in that case.
16
                 MR. O'BRIEN: Judge, the State would object
   to this exhibit under 606. It's prohibited testimony of
17
18
   a juror.
19
                 MR. LANDERS: Would you like me to respond,
20
   Judge?
21
                 THE COURT:
                             Not yet.
22
                 MR. O'BRIEN: And further, Your Honor, it
23
   is irrelevant. Again, similarly, this pertains to a
24
   different case, not the matter here before us today.
25
                 THE COURT: You don't have to respond at
```

```
I'm going to take it up when I hear
1
   this time.
2
   testimony.
3
                 MR. LANDERS:
                               Okay.
                 THE COURT: So I'll sustain that objection.
4
                 MR. LANDERS: 8 -- and I hope I'm not
5
   messing this up for you again, Judge -- this is
6
   Defendant's Exhibit No. 8. It is another Quality
7
   Incident Report from an incident on December 19 of 2023
8
   that was not provided prior to trial that has since been
   provided with our subpoena to the State in this case,
10
   the DPS records.
11
12
                 THE COURT:
                             Thank you.
13
                 MR. O'BRIEN: No objection, Your Honor.
14
                 THE COURT: All right.
                                         Defendant's Exhibit
   No. 8 is admitted.
15
16
                 (Defendant's Exhibit No. 8 was offered and
   admitted into evidence.)
17
18
                 MR. LANDERS: For preadmission, that's it
19
   for the Defense here.
                               Judge, I believe the State
20
                 MR. O'BRIEN:
21
   plans to pre-admit some exhibits of our own.
22
                 THE COURT: All right. Let me walk through
   our status on these so that I'm not unclear.
23
                 Defendant's Exhibit No. 1 is not admitted
24
25
   at this time. The Court will reserve ruling.
```

```
Defendant's Exhibit No. 2 is admitted. Has there been a
1
   proffer of 3?
2
3
                 MR. LANDERS: It was offered, I believe,
   Judge, and not admitted at this time.
4
                 THE COURT: Tell me what that document was
5
   again because I don't see it.
6
7
                 MR. LANDERS: That was the affidavit from
8
   attorney Morgan Bourque.
9
                 THE COURT: Okay. So that I'm not
10
   confused, I'm going to give these back to you, Mr.
   Landers.
11
12
                 All right. Defendant's Exhibit No. 4 was
   admitted, Defendant's Exhibit No. 5 was admitted,
13
14
   Defendant's Exhibit No. 6 was admitted, Defendant's
   Exhibit No. 7, that one was not admitted.
15
16
                 MR. LANDERS:
                               Correct, Judge.
17
                 THE COURT: I'll give that one back to you,
18
   and Defendant's Exhibit No. 8 was admitted. Is that my
19
   understanding?
20
                 MR. O'BRIEN: That is our understanding,
   Your Honor.
21
22
                 THE COURT: Okay. Thank you. Mr. O'Brien,
   are you indicating that you want to offer some exhibits
23
   for preadmission?
24
25
                 MR. O'BRIEN: Yes.
                                     I'll hand it over to my
```

```
court partner, Mr. Fesmire.
1
                 THE COURT: Thank you, Mr. Fesmire.
2
3
                 MR. FESMIRE: Yes, Your Honor. First, Your
   Honor, if I may approach. We do have a stipulation that
4
   has been previously sent to the Defense counsel to offer
5
   to the Court which is signed by both I, ADA Fesmire, and
6
7
   ADA Gavin O'Brien --
8
                 THE COURT: All right. Do you want to
9
   identify it?
10
                 MR. FESMIRE: Yes, Your Honor. May I
11
   approach?
12
                 THE COURT: Yes. Are you going to mark it
   as something?
13
14
                 MR. FESMIRE: If you would like, Your
   Honor, I can put an exhibit --
15
16
                 THE COURT: Yeah, that way we can keep
   track of it. So what number do you want to mark it as?
17
18
                 MR. FESMIRE: I will mark it as -- if I may
19
   check my list briefly, Your Honor. I apologize. I'll
20
   mark this as State's Exhibit No. 7.
21
                 THE COURT: Does Defense have any objection
   to that?
22
                               No objections, Judge.
23
                 MR. LANDERS:
                 THE COURT: All right. State's Exhibit No.
24
25
   7 will be admitted.
```

```
(State's Exhibit No. 7 was offered and
1
   admitted into evidence.)
2
3
                 MR. FESMIRE: Just one moment, Your Honor.
   I apologize.
4
5
                         (Brief pause.)
6
                 MR. FESMIRE: This is copies of what have
7
   been marked State's Exhibits 2 through 6, Your Honor.
   State's Exhibit No. 1 is a disk, so I do not have an
   extra copy of that for the Court.
10
                 THE COURT:
                             Okay.
11
                 THE REPORTER: Counsel, are you putting
12
   "MNT" on your exhibits because 7 does not have "MNT" on
13
   it.
14
                 MR. FESMIRE: Yes.
                                     And, Your Honor, all
15
   exhibit stickers are marked "State's Exhibit MNT,"
   motion for new trial, 1 through 6.
16
17
                 I will now mark State's Exhibit No. 7
18
   "State's Exhibit No. 7 MNT".
19
                 THE COURT: Counsel, what do you have to
20
   say about the proposed Exhibits 2 through 6 --
21
                 MR. FESMIRE: And I'll go through them,
   Your Honor.
22
23
                 THE COURT: I just need to ask him have you
   seen them?
24
25
                 MR. LANDERS: I think so. I don't think we
```

```
have any objection. Can I see them real briefly?
1
                 THE COURT: Yeah, just to make sure -- the
2
   ones I have aren't marked.
3
4
                 MR. LANDERS: Okay. We'll have no
   objections for the record to 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, Judge.
5
                 THE COURT: All right. State's Exhibit
6
7
   Nos. 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 will be admitted.
8
                 (State's Exhibit Nos. 2 through 6 were
   offered and admitted into evidence.)
                 THE COURT: And, Mr. Fesmire --
10
11
                 MR. FESMIRE: Your Honor, we do have
12
   State's --
13
                 THE COURT: Hold on a second. If you'll
   let me -- because you gave me these courtesy copies, but
14
   they're not marked, so I won't know what you're
15
   referencing.
16
17
                 MR. FESMIRE: Yes, Your Honor. It should
18
   be an accurate reflection of the markings.
19
                 THE COURT: All right. Those are all
20
   admitted. Anything else, Mr. Fesmire?
21
                 MR. FESMIRE: Yes, Your Honor. State's
   exhibit marked MNT 1 --
22
23
                 MR. LANDERS: No objection to State's
   Exhibit No. 1.
24
25
                 THE COURT: And that's the DVD?
```

```
MR. FESMIRE: Correct, Your Honor.
1
2
                 THE COURT: All right. State's Exhibit
3
   No. 1 will be admitted.
                 (State's Exhibit No. 1 was offered and
4
   admitted into evidence.)
5
6
                 MR. FESMIRE:
                               Nothing further at this time,
7
   Your Honor.
8
                 THE COURT:
                             Thank you.
9
                 All right.
                             Mr. Landers, are you ready to
10
             Do you need opening arguments?
   proceed?
11
                 MR. LANDERS:
                               No, Your Honor. We'd also
12
   ask you to take judicial notice of the underlying
   proceedings for the record.
13
14
                 THE COURT: You're referencing the trial
15
   that began on August 27, 2024, with a rendering of
16
   verdict on August 30, 2024?
17
                 MR. LANDERS:
                               Correct.
18
                 THE COURT: Okay. Judicial notice is taken
19
   of that.
20
                 MR. LANDERS:
                               Thank you, Judge.
21
                 THE COURT: Anything else?
                               That's it.
22
                 MR. LANDERS:
                 THE COURT: All right. Would you like to
23
24
   call your first witness?
25
                 MR. LANDERS: We would. We will call DPS
```

```
1
   analyst Mr. Augustyn.
2
                 THE COURT: Thank you. Mr. Augustyn, if
3
   you'll please approach. Mr. Augustyn, would you raise
4
   your right hand?
                        (Witness sworn.)
5
                 THE COURT:
                             Okay. Thank you. You can make
6
7
   yourself comfortable up there.
                 All right. Mr. Landers, you can proceed
8
9
   when you're ready.
                 MR. LANDERS: Thank you, Judge. May I sit
10
   down while I'm asking questions?
11
12
                 THE COURT: Absolutely.
13
                 MR. LANDERS: Okay. Thank you.
14
                       ZACHARY AUGUSTYN,
15
   having been duly sworn, testified as follows:
16
                        CROSS-EXAMINATION
17
18
   BY MR. LANDERS:
19
        Q.
            Would you please introduce yourself for the
   record?
20
21
        Α.
            My name is Zachary Augustyn.
22
        Q.
            And you're the same Mr. Augustyn who testified
23
   in the trial of this case, correct?
24
        Α.
            I am.
25
        Q.
            Okay. If you don't understand any of my
```

```
questions, just please let me know, okay?
1
        Α.
            Will do.
2
3
        Q.
             What is your current job?
             I am a forensic scientist.
        Α.
4
        Q.
             For who?
5
             For the Texas Department of Public Safety.
6
        Α.
7
             Okay. And what was your job when you testified
        Q.
   in this case?
8
            A forensic scientist.
             Okay. And you were the analyst who performed
10
        Q.
   the blood analysis in Mr. Momin's case; is that correct?
11
12
        Α.
             Correct.
             Okay. And clearly your job then was also an
13
        Q.
   analyst for DPS?
14
15
        Α.
             Correct.
16
             Okay. I want to talk briefly about your job as
        Q.
   an analyst for DPS. Who do you perform testing for?
17
18
        Α.
             Could you rephrase your question?
19
        Q.
             Is all of the testing that you perform for the
20
   State of Texas?
21
             The testing that we perform is mainly for law
22
   enforcement agencies. Is that what you're asking?
             That's what I'm asking, correct.
23
        Q.
24
                 And as an expert -- you often testify as an
25
   expert, correct?
```

A. Correct.

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

- Q. Okay. And as an expert working for DPS, are you even allowed to testify for defendants as a defendant's expert?
 - A. Yes.
 - Q. You can testify as a defendant's expert?
 - A. I'm sorry. Can you say that again?
- Q. Can a defendant hire you to testify in their case?
- 10 A. I don't see why not.
- 11 Q. Okay. Have you ever testified as an expert for 12 the Defense?
- A. I have not, but I have been given the opportunity to.
- Q. Okay. Do you -- in your cases do you work closely with the prosecutors on the case?
- 17 A. I do.
- 18 Q. Okay. And specifically in this case who were 19 you performing the blood testing for?
- 20 A. Stafford PD.
- Q. Okay. And was that testing to be used in the trial of Mr. Momin's case?
- 23 A. Yes.
- Q. Okay. Do you receive training as part of your 25 job?

- 1 A. I do.
 - Q. Is that often provided by the State of Texas?
- 3 A. Yes.

4

5

6

7

9

- Q. And in Mr. Momin's case, do you agree that you were part of the investigation team for the case?
 - A. Yes.
- Q. Okay. How many hours of training do you think you received while working at DPS?
 - A. For training --
- Q. And I'm not going to hold you to a number. I mean, are we talking dozens of hours? Hundreds of hours?
- 13 A. Hundreds.
- 14 Q. Okay. And oftentimes your training will 15 include questions of ethics?
- 16 A. Yes.
- Q. Okay. Are you aware personally of a duty you have to reveal favorable evidence -- evidence that's favorable to a defendant?
- 20 A. Yes.
- Q. Okay. You've been trained on that before, correct?
 - A. Correct.
- Q. Okay. And are you aware that that duty applies to you specifically as a member of the prosecution team?

A. Yes.

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- Q. Okay. Related to this, Mr. Momin's case, you discussed this case with the prosecutor prior to testifying in the trial, correct?
 - A. Correct.
- Q. Okay. Did you also have any writings or emails with them?
 - A. I believe so, yes.
- Q. Prior -- after that trial -- after the conviction and before today, have you had conversations with the prosecutors again?
- 12 A. Yes.
- 13 Q. Okay. How many times?
- 14 A. Three to five maybe.
- 15 Q. Okay. What is the format of those 16 conversations?
- A. One was a Zoom call, I think maybe two were two were phone calls.
- 19 Q. Okay.
 - MR. LANDERS: Your Honor, at this time we would request any copies of the emails if we don't already have them. We could take that -- we could look at them later, but I just want to request that for the record at this time.
- THE COURT: Do you have them?

```
1
                 MR. LANDERS: I don't think we have those
   emails.
2
3
                               I just want to clarify.
                 MR. FESMIRE:
   you requesting all emails throughout the trial and after
4
   the trial?
5
                 MR. LANDERS:
                                I'm requesting the two emails
6
7
   in between trial and now.
8
                 MR. FESMIRE:
                               May I take a moment to
   confirm?
9
10
                 THE COURT: You may.
11
                 MR. LANDERS: Can I continue with
12
   questioning?
13
                 THE COURT: You can -- well, wait. Let me
14
   just give him a second.
15
                 MR. LANDERS:
                                Okay.
16
                 THE COURT: Do you need those in front of
   you for purposes of --
17
18
                 MR. LANDERS: I don't but I would just like
19
   to review them at some point before he is released.
20
                 THE COURT: All right. We'll have a break
21
   here at some point, and you'll have an opportunity to
   retrieve those.
22
23
                 MR. LANDERS:
                                Okay.
24
                 THE COURT: You can continue.
25
                                Thank you, Judge.
                 MR. LANDERS:
```

1 THE COURT: Thank you. (BY MR. LANDERS) Prior to the trial, did you 2 Q. 3 ever disclose any quality incidents to the prosecutors in this case? 4 I might have disclosed the broken blood tube. 5 I don't remember, but I do know that I did not disclose 6 7 the QIs that are -- that were currently pending at the time. Q. Okay. 10 Hang on one second. THE COURT: 11 I'm sorry. Mr. Augustyn, you said those 12 were pending at the time of the trial? 13 THE WITNESS: Yes. 14 (BY MR. LANDERS) At the time of the trial --Q. and let's just talk -- what is a quality incident? 15 16 A quality incident is an incident at the lab where SOP is broken sort of --17 18 THE REPORTER: I'm sorry. Would you repeat 19 that? 20 A quality incident is an incident at the lab 21 where SOP is either broken or violated. 22 Q. (BY MR. LANDERS) What is SOP? Standard operating procedures. 23 Α. 24 Q. And we agree that as a scientist it's important

to follow all standard operating procedures, right?

1 A. Yes.

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- Q. You said you don't recall if you had disclosed a prior SOP. Do you dispute that you did not?
 - A. A prior SOP or QI?
 - Q. QI.
 - A. Can you repeat your question again?
- Q. Okay. It's been represented that the prosecutors were never told about this. Do you dispute that fact and just not remember it?
- A. I don't know.
- 11 Q. Okay. So you --
- 12 THE REPORTER: Your answer was "I don't
- 13 | know"?
- 14 THE WITNESS: Yes.
- 15 MR. LANDERS: Judge, can I grab our
- 16 evidence off the bench here?
- Q. (BY MR. LANDERS) I'm going to show you

 18 Defendant's Exhibit No. 5 for the hearing. What is

 19 this? It's already preadmitted. Just tell us what that
- 20 is.
- 21 A. It's a toxicology final report.
- Q. Okay. And on these reports, is there a section that essentially discloses Brady information?
- A. I wouldn't say Brady information, but there is a section in this final report that's called a

```
1
   disclosure form, and that form is specifically for
   anything that needs to be disclosed.
2
             Okay. And specifically would need to be
3
        Q.
   disclosed because it might be favorable to the defense?
4
        Α.
             Yes.
5
             Okay. And would you look at I think the last
6
        Q.
7
   page here on the report. So that would be the third
   page of that document. Do you agree?
        Α.
             Yes.
10
                   Is that the page you're talking about
        Q.
             Okav.
   there?
11
12
        Α.
             Yes.
13
             Okay. Are there any disclosures at all on this
        Q.
14
   page?
15
        Α.
             No.
16
             Okay. And then I'm just curious at this point
        Q.
   in time, like, today, have you been removed from
17
18
   casework?
19
        Α.
             No.
```

- Q. Okay. I want to discuss the September 22, 21 2022, quality incident.
 - A. Yeah.

- Q. You're probably familiar with what I'm talking about?
- 25 A. The broken blood tube one.

- Q. Correct. So tell the Court just generally what that was all about.
- So a batch had to be resampled and reanalyzed, and as I was placing the blood tubes for this case onto the test tube rocker, I noticed that blood was leaking from one of the blood tubes. I picked it up and I had noticed that the blood tube was broken. So for that case when it came to resampling and reanalyzing, I had to sample from the second blood tube for that case.
- 10 Q. Do you remember the date of that incident off the top of your head?
- 12 Α. Not off the top of my head.
- 13 I'm going to show you Defendant's Exhibit No. Q.
 - Do you recognize that exhibit as the Quality
- 15 Incident Report for this incident we're talking about?
- 16 Α. I do.

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- Okay. Does it tell us the date of the 17 Q. 18 incident?
- 19 Α. September 8, 2022.
- 20 Q. Okay. And if you need to see this at all, let 21 me know. okav?
- 22 Α. Will do.
- Was that date, September 8, 2022, before or 23 Q. 24 after your testing in Mr. Momin's case?
- 25 Α. I hope you don't mind, but I'm going to review

my notes.

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- Q. Sure. And just so you know, you still have the --
- A. Perfect. Thanks. The date of analysis for this case was November 9, 2022.
- Q. Okay. So it was after the incident with the broken blood vial?
 - A. Sorry. Say that again.
- Q. Mr. Momin's test was after the incident with the broken blood vial?
- 11 A. Yes.
- 12 Q. And I left that report up there for you in case 13 you need it.
 - The report discussed that this was a retest of the samples in September of 2022. I'm talking about the broken blood vial.
- Do you know why it was being retested -
 18 the blood in that case was being retested?
 - A. Off the top of my head, I don't remember.
 - Q. Okay. And the report that you have from September -- I think it's the September 8, 2022, incident, it lists the possible causes for the broken blood vial, correct?
 - A. Yes.
- Q. And it lists, like, a severity range. It says

```
moderate severity. Do you agree with that?
1
        Α.
             Yes.
2
            Was that incident, not the Quality Incident
3
        Q.
   Report, but the incident from September 8, 2022, was
4
   that disclosed to the prosecution for that case?
5
6
        Α.
             This case, I don't know. I never went to trial
7
   for it.
8
        Q.
             I'm going to direct you to, I think, to the
9
   bottom of Page 1.
10
                 THE COURT: Can you tell me what you're
11
   referencing?
12
                 MR. LANDERS: This is Defendant's Exhibit
   No. 6, Judge.
13
14
                 THE COURT:
                              Thank you.
15
             (BY MR. LANDERS) Read that -- the last full
        Q.
16
   sentence to yourself.
17
             (Witness complies.)
        Α.
18
        Q.
             Does that refresh your memory that the
19
   September of 2022 incident was disclosed to the Brazoria
20
   County District Attorney's Office?
21
        Α.
             It says -- it just says that they were notified
22
   when the report was released on September 23, 2022.
   result note was added to the report stating that the
23
```

Q. So in -- does it say -- is there an easy way to

tube had been broken during reanalysis.

reference this date? The September incident, is that a good way?

- A. Fine by me.
- Q. In the case -- there's a defendant involved in that case, right, the September incident?
 - A. Yes.

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- Q. That information would have been disclosed in the report for that defendant?
 - A. For that report -- the final report like this?
- Q. Correct.
- A. I don't think it would. The way that it is disclosed there's like a folder of QIs that's public accessed. It would not show up on this disclosure form right here, if that's what you're asking.
- Q. So the defendant in that case, if they were to have gotten discovery -- you're aware of what the standard blood testing discovery is, correct?
 - A. Yes.
- Q. Okay. They would not have known about this incident?
- A. Depending on when they filed for discovery, they would know.
- Q. Okay. Explain that.
- A. So, for example, it takes time for QIs to be written and finalized, which is exactly what happened in

- the Montgomery incident. Depending on when the
 defendant and the defendant's attorney had filed for
 discovery, the QI could have been completed and that is
 when they would have -- that's when it would have been
 disclosed.
 - Q. Okay. The QIs once they're completed should be given to defense counsel, correct?
 - A. Can you repeat your question?

- Q. A defense counsel should have notice of a quality incident on their client's case. Do you agree with that?
 - A. Yeah, I would agree with that.
- Q. Okay. But if they happen to get discovery before the report is finalized, they don't necessarily get notice?
- MR. FESMIRE: Objection. That lacks personal knowledge.
- THE COURT: I'm going to overrule that objection.
 - A. Can you repeat your question?
 - Q. (BY MR. LANDERS) If a defense attorney obtains discovery prior to the QI being finalized, they don't necessarily get notice?
- A. So if something like that does happen and there's a QI on that case, I would -- I have disclosed

```
1
   QIs before to the prosecution, like, hey, this case has
   a QI on it, and then I would say what the QIs is and
2
   then...
4
        Q.
             So you would have given that information to the
   prosecution, correct?
5
             Correct.
6
        Α.
7
        Q.
             Who then should probably turn it over to
   defense. Do you agree?
        Α.
9
             Yes.
10
             Okay. And just so I'm clear, I'm talking about
        Q.
   the September incident again which relates to
11
12
   Defendant's Exhibit No. 6, right?
        Α.
13
             Yes.
14
             Okav.
                    In this case the Brazoria County DA's
        Q.
15
   office was notified when the report was released,
16
   correct?
17
        Α.
             Uh-huh.
18
        Q.
             Okay. That's what we're talking about there.
19
        Α.
             Okay.
20
        Q.
             Now, you would agree that they have received
21
   notice of this report?
22
        Α.
             Yes.
23
             Okay. I want to talk about more recent
        Q.
```

incidents now from the end of December 2023 and the

24

25

beginning of this year.

```
1
        Α.
             Okay.
             You're familiar with what I'm talking about,
2
        Q.
3
   correct?
        Α.
            Yes.
4
             At this point I believe you testified in two
5
        Q.
   cases about these incidents; is that correct?
6
7
        Α.
             Correct.
8
        Q.
             Okay. Both in Montgomery County?
             Correct.
9
        Α.
10
             Okay. And in one of those incidents you
        Q.
11
   brought -- in one of those cases -- do you remember the
12
   Monroy case?
13
        Α.
             I do, yes.
14
             It took place after Mr. Momin's case, correct?
        Q.
15
        Α.
             Correct.
16
                 THE COURT: What's the name of the case
   again?
17
18
                 MR. LANDERS:
                                Monroy, M-o-n-r-o-y.
                 THE COURT: Okay.
19
20
        Q.
             (BY MR. LANDERS) And that's one of the two
21
   cases you've testified about these more recent
   incidents, correct?
22
23
             Correct.
        Α.
24
        Q.
             In that case you did give notice to the
25
   prosecutors about some quality incidents, correct?
```

A. Correct. 1 MR. FESMIRE: Objection, Your Honor, to 2 3 relevance. THE COURT: Overruled. 4 5 Q. (BY MR. LANDERS) And are you aware that the prosecutors let the defense attorney know about those 6 7 quality incidents? Α. 8 Yes. Okay. I'm going to show you what's been marked 9 Q. as Defendant's Exhibit No. 1. It's entitled Notice of 10 Potential Favorable Evidence in the Monroy case. Would 11 12 you review that? Have you seen this before? Α. 13 I have, yes. 14 Q. Okay. 15 At least I think I have. 16 Is that -- is Defendant's Exhibit No. 1 Q. Okav. the notice that was given to defense counsel related to 17 18 these newer incidents? 19 MR. FESMIRE: Your Honor, I'm going to 20 object to relevance again. The exhibit hasn't been 21 admitted. There's no relevance in what happened in this 22 case to the case that's currently before the Court. 23 THE COURT: I disagree. Overruled. 24 Have you offered it? 25 MR. LANDERS: I'm about to offer it, Judge.

```
1
        Q.
             (BY MR. LANDERS) Okay. So I think the last
                   Does Defendant's Exhibit No. 1 that you
2
   question was:
   have up there, is it discussing these three incidents
   that took place more recently?
4
        Α.
            Yes.
5
            Okay. And it's giving notice to the defense in
6
        Q.
7
   that Monroy case about those incidents, correct?
        Α.
8
            Correct.
9
        Q.
            Okay. And you've seen that before you're
   pretty sure, right?
10
11
        Α.
            Yes.
12
        Q.
            Okay.
13
                 MR. LANDERS: Your Honor, at this point, we
   would introduce Defendant's Exhibit No. 1 into evidence.
14
15
                 MR. FESMIRE: We renew our objection to
16
   relevance, Your Honor.
17
                 THE COURT: Overruled.
18
                 MR. FESMIRE: At this time we'd request a
19
   running objection to relevance --
20
                 THE COURT:
                             Okay. And the record will
21
   note --
22
                 MR. FESMIRE: -- to this case.
23
                 THE COURT: And the record will note.
24
   Defendant's Exhibit No. 1 is admitted.
25
```

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1
                  (Defendant's Exhibit No. 1 was offered and
   admitted into evidence.)
2
3
                 MR. LANDERS: Thank you, Judge.
        Q.
             (BY MR. LANDERS) Do you need -- if you need to
4
5
   see this again, Defendant's Exhibit No. 1, will you just
   let me know?
6
7
        Α.
             Yes.
8
        Q.
             Okay. It lists three incidents, correct?
             Correct.
9
        Α.
10
             But it really relates to two Quality Incident
        Q.
   Reports?
11
12
        Α.
             Yes.
             And that's because two of the incidents --
13
        Q.
14
   we're going to get into them. Two of them are kind of
15
   related: is that correct?
16
             Correct.
        Α.
             Okay. I'm going to talk about the two related
17
        Q.
18
   ones first, all right?
19
        Α.
             Okay.
20
        Q.
             And just for the record, this would be related
21
   to No. 1 and No. 2 listed in Defendant's Exhibit No. 1?
22
        Α.
             Yes.
                    Both of these relate to cases where you
23
        Q.
             Okay.
24
   failed to catch either missed label or -- well, you
25
   failed to catch problems with the blood test kits,
```

correct?

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- A. Yes.
- Q. Okay. There was one that involved the Garland lab, right?
 - A. Yes.
 - Q. And as part of -- Garland has a DPS lab?
- A. Yes.
- Q. And why were you testing things from the Garland lab?
- A. We were helping the Garland lab, working cases from their backlog.
- 12 Q. And is this the February 10, 2024, incident?
- 13 A. Yes.
- 14 Q. Okay. I'm going to refer to that as the 15 February incident.
- 16 A. Okay.
- 17 Q. What was the problem in that case?
 - A. The problem with that case involved two blood tubes -- I'm sorry -- two pairs of blood tubes from two different cases had been swapped prior to submission to the Garland lab; one case was sent over to the Houston lab. I worked that case; I failed to catch that the name on the blood tubes did not match the name on the blood kit as well as the name on the submission form for that corresponding evidence.

```
So --
1
        Q.
                 THE COURT: I'm sorry. That was February
2
   of 2022?
3
                 MR. LANDERS:
                                2024.
4
                 THE COURT: '24. I'm sorry.
5
6
        Q.
             (BY MR. LANDERS) And that happened prior to
7
   your testimony in Mr. Momin's case, correct?
        Α.
             Yes.
8
9
        Q.
             Is there a Quality Incident Report for this
   incident?
10
11
             I believe it's still pending.
        Α.
12
        Q.
             Okay. Does one exist, though?
13
        Α.
            Yes.
14
             Okay. And you guys -- you guys, meaning DPS,
        Q.
15
   you just don't turn them over until they're finalized?
16
        Α.
             Yeah.
             Okay. Is that in your policy?
17
        Q.
18
                 MR. FESMIRE: Objection. Lacks personal
19
   knowledge.
20
                 THE COURT: Overruled. He can answer the
21
   question if he knows the answer.
22
        Α.
             I don't know.
23
             (BY MR. LANDERS) Okay. You're the custodian
        Q.
24
   of records for DPS as well, right?
25
             Yes.
        Α.
```

```
1
        Q.
             Okay. But you're unaware of the policy of
   when, I'm going to call it QIs, QIs are turned over, you
2
   don't know?
3
                 MR. FESMIRE:
                                Same objection.
4
                  THE COURT:
                              Overruled.
5
6
        Α.
             No.
7
        Q.
             (BY MR. LANDERS) But there is a Quality
8
   Incident Report for this, just not finalized, correct?
        Α.
9
             Yes.
10
                   Were you involved in the subpoena that
        Q.
             Okav.
11
   we recently issued in this case, Mr. Momin's case, for
12
   this hearing?
13
        Α.
             I believe so, yes.
14
             Was the Quality Incident Report for the
        Q.
15
   February incident turned over to us as part of that
16
   subpoena?
             I don't think it's been finalized yet.
17
        Α.
18
        Q.
             So, no, you don't believe it's been turned
19
   over?
20
             I don't think so.
21
        Q.
             Okay. And just to clarify, the problem in this
22
   case from February 10th, the blood vials in the box --
   blood vials come to you in a box, right?
23
        Α.
24
             Yes.
```

Okay. And the box has a name and information,

25

Q.

1 correct? So the box -- it really depends on the agency 2 that submits it. Sometimes they write the agency case number on it. Sometimes they write the suspect's name 4 Sometimes they write the officer's name on it. on it. It really depends on who submits the box. 6 7 Q. Okay. To make sure I'm clear, though, the blood tubes inside of the box were not for the correct case? 10 Correct. Α. They were from some other case? 11 Q. 12 Α. Yes. 13 And you did not catch that mistake? Q. 14 Α. Correct. 15 You would agree that that's a violation of lab Q. protocol, correct? 16 17 Α. Yes. 18 Q. Okav. This was actually discovered when an 19 analyst in Garland opened another box, correct? 20 Α. Yes.

Q. For another case?

A. Yes.

21

22

23

24

25

Q. And in that box there was also the wrong blood tubes, correct?

A. Correct.

- Q. And he noticed those blood tubes corresponded to the box that you had tested?
 - A. Correct.
 - Q. And you actually tested the blood in that case?
- 5 A. Yes.

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- Q. All right. And if the analyst in Garland had not caught that mistake, you would agree an incorrect result would have been issued?
 - A. Yes.
- Q. Specifically the blood testing wouldn't have been for the case everyone thought it was for?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Was that disclosed in the underlying criminal case for the box that you had in your possession?
 - A. Repeat that question again.
- Q. Was that disclosed to the defendant, the proper defendants in the February 10th incident?
- A. So as far as disclosure for that case and the case affected as well?
 - Q. Correct.
- A. The cases have a QI number associated with it, so when those cases ever do go to trial, they will be disclosed. Does that make sense?
- Q. Yes. But has anyone disclosed to the prosecutors in those cases now that there was a problem?

- A. I don't know.
- Q. Okay. Did you do that?
- A. Do what?

- Q. Contact the prosecutors in that case and let them know the problem?
- A. No prosecutors have reached out to me for those cases yet.
- Q. Have you ever reached out to them, is the question?
 - A. No.
- Q. Okay. Do you know if any -- I'm asking if you know. Do you know if anyone from your lab has reached out to them?
 - A. I don't know.
 - Q. How did you fix that problem?
- A. The analyst from the Garland lab had contacted me to let me know that he had the other blood tubes for my case and vice versa, contacted the agency that submitted the blood tubes to let them know, like, there is a switch that occurred under your possession, and if they had any suggestions or any options that they wanted to go through as far as remedying the problem.
- It was decided that the blood kit that was still in the Garland lab be sent over to the Houston lab to be tested by me since it was my problem.

The case information was switched between the two cases, new laboratory case numbers were placed onto the blood kits, the blood tubes did stay with the correct blood kits to maintain a chain of custody for those pieces of evidence. As I had stated, the case information was switched so that the correct results were with the correct suspect.

Q. So I want to ask you about that chain of custody issue, okay?

This protocol failure in that February incident, it created a chain of custody problem, right?

MR. FESMIRE: Objection as to counsel testifying as to chain of custody issue.

THE COURT: I think it was a question.

Overruled.

- A. Repeat your question, please.
- Q. (BY MR. LANDERS) The issue in February of this year caused a chain of custody problem; is that correct?
- A. I would consider it a chain of custody problem for the submitting agency.
- Q. You agree the chain of custody goes from the agency to DPS, it goes all the way through the case?
 - A. Yes.

Q. And the fix was to simply make new labels for the boxes, right?

- A. New laboratory case numbers.
- Q. Okay.

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- A. That was one of the ways that we remedied it.
- Q. Did y'all also print out new labels and make sure the box had all the correct information on it?
 - A. Yes.
- Q. Okay. Was the fix disclosed in those underlying cases?
- A. When it comes to disclosure, as I have stated, it hasn't been finalized yet for these cases. A QI number is associated with the cases, but I do not know if that has been disclosed yet.
- Q. Okay. You haven't disclosed it yourself, right?
 - A. Correct.
 - Q. And I just want to be clear, the mistake in the February incident was not caught as part of the standard review process. Would you agree with that?
- 19 A. Not from the standard review process, no.
 - Q. It was caught because another analyst, another lab figured out he had the wrong blood in his case?
 - A. Yes.
- Q. Okay. And you've previously testified about this incident, right?
- 25 A. I have, yes.

- Q. In different cases, correct?
- A. Yes.

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- Q. And did you give a reason for your mistake in that case?
 - A. For why it happened?
- Q. Correct.
- A. The incident occurred on a Saturday, so I was working overtime in hours. I was also doing two batches in one day, and I was probably tired and exhausted, and it occurred in the second batch as well.
- 11 Q. Okay.
- 12 A. Yeah.
- Q. So overworked and exhausted is probably the reason for that mistake. Would you agree?
- 15 A. I would agree, yeah.
 - Q. Okay. And are there more analysts in your lab in 2024, so now, than there were in 2022?
- 18 A. For -- for the BA section?
- 19 Q. Correct.
 - A. Same number.
- 21 Q. So you would agree that in 2022 when Mr.
- 22 Momin's case took place, you had a lot of volume you 23 were dealing with as far as testing as well?
- A. We weren't insourcing for the Garland lab at that time. I think we were only insourcing for the

Austin lab. 1 Okay. But would you agree that you have a high 2 Q. 3 volume of cases you're expected to work on each month? Α. Yes. 4 Okay. And that started -- that was true in 5 Q. 2022 as well, correct? 6 7 Α. I do not remember the specifics of 2022. 8 Q. Okay. Do you think there's been a huge 9 increase in the volume of cases that you're required to 10 work on since 2022? Yes, I would agree with that. 11 Α. 12 Q. You think there has been? I personally think there has been, yeah. 13 Α. I think I've asked this but I'm not sure. 14 Q. Ιf Garland would not have caught that mistake, a wrong 15 16 result would issue; is that correct? 17 Α. Correct. 18 Q. Okay. I think the second notice on that 19 Defendant's Exhibit No. -- help me out. 20 Α. 1. 21 Q. -- No. 1 relates to a May of 2024 incident; is that correct? 22 23 Yes. Α. 24

And that was a similar-type problem. Do you

Q.

agree?

- Α. Similar, yes.
- What was the problem in that case? Q.
- So the problem with this case was that two Α. submission forms between two blood kits were swapped at some point between possession from the submitting agency to when the submission forms were scanned into our Laboratory Information Management System, LIMS for short.
- Q. And LIMS is basically how you keep up with evidence in your case, right?
- Α. Yes.

2

3

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23

- What exactly is the -- I want to make sure I Q. understand the mistake. The mistake was the submission form was wrong?
 - Α. Yes.
 - Okay. What does that mean exactly? Q.
- 17 So the submission form has all the case Α. 18 information on a printed document, suspect, offense, 19 submitting agency, date and time of collection, the 20 nurse -- you know, the specimen collector, stuff like that.
 - Now, I'm going to show you the submission form Q. for Mr. Momin's case. I just want to make sure we're talking about the same kind of thing, okay?
- 25 MR. LANDERS: I'm showing the witness

```
1
   Defendant's Exhibit No. 4, the second page.
             (BY MR. LANDERS) Is that the same type of form
2
        Q.
3
   you're talking about?
        Α.
            Yes.
4
5
        Q.
             Okay. These are important for the chain of
6
   custody, correct?
7
        Α.
             They can be, yes.
8
        Q.
             It's one of your tools to make sure that your
   lab is tracking where blood is going throughout the
10
   process; is that correct?
             I wouldn't say it's a tool for that. It's a
11
        Α.
12
   tool to maintain information. When it comes to chain of
13
   custody, that isn't as important.
14
             It is part of the chain of custody, you would
        Q.
15
   agree, correct?
16
             It's part of the case file. I don't know if I
        Α.
   would consider it a part of the chain of custody,
17
18
   though.
19
                 MR. LANDERS: Could I have just one second,
20
   Judge?
21
                 THE COURT:
                             Uh-huh.
22
        Q.
             (BY MR. LANDERS) So the submission form you're
   talking about, it's the actual document that the
23
```

submitting agency gives to DPS; is that correct?

24

25

Yes.

Α.

- Q. So it kind of starts the chain of custody for 1 DPS? 2 3 In a sense. Q. You would agree that this was caught 4 5 during peer review because another analyst had the other 6 submission in his possession? 7 Are we talking about the second bullet point? Α. 8 Q. Yes. 9 So when it came to this instance, when I had 10 originally testified for that Montgomery case, I 11 misremembered the second incident because --12 MR. FESMIRE: Objection, Your Honor. is a specific incident of bad conduct that counsel is 13 14 looking to get into. It's inadmissible; it's not any opinion or any type of credibility analysis. 15 being used to show that he acted -- it's still a 16 specific instance of bad conduct that shouldn't be 17 18 entered into the record in this hearing, Your Honor. Ιt 19 has no relevance. 20 THE COURT: Do you have a response? 21 MR. LANDERS: I do, Judge. We're trying to 22 show that there's other incidents that were not given to
 - THE COURT: As in a -- I'm trying to $\label{eq:court} \mbox{understand -- as in a pattern?}$

us prior to trial that questions this analyst's work.

23

24

```
MR. LANDERS: It's a pattern and it started
1
   before this test and it's continued after this test and
2
3
   this analyst was not catching his own mistakes.
4
                 MR. FESMIRE: Your Honor, may I be heard?
                 THE COURT:
5
                             I'm thinking.
                 Go ahead.
6
7
                 MR. FESMIRE:
                               This is improper impeachment
8
   as well, Your Honor. The defendant (sic) does not have
9
   the record in front of him; therefore, he can't be
10
   refreshed with his previous statement.
                 THE COURT: Overruled.
11
12
                 MR. LANDERS: Can I say something just so
   everyone knows?
13
14
             (BY MR. LANDERS) I've got your prior
        Q.
   testimony. If you want it, let me know, but I think you
15
16
   were already explaining why you might have had a
   different prior testimony; is that correct?
17
18
        Α.
             Yes.
19
        Q.
             Okay. So my initial question was that you
20
   didn't catch this error from the May 2024 incident?
21
        Α.
             So --
             So answer that question first.
22
        Q.
23
        Α.
             Yes.
                   The May incident I did catch. I was the
24
   analyst who had caught it.
25
        Q.
             Now, you would agree with me that on
```

```
September 17 of this year in the Monroy case you
1
   testified differently, correct?
2
                               Objection, Your Honor.
3
                 MR. O'BRIEN:
   may, it's improper impeachment. He's -- under 608 he's
4
   improperly eliciting specific instances of conduct as
5
   opposed to reputation or character evidence.
6
7
   to 613, if he is going to use a prior inconsistent
   statement, he needs to give him the opportunity to
   review those statements to be able to clarify and
10
   explain. At this point --
11
                 THE COURT: All right. He just said he had
12
   it.
13
                 MR. LANDERS: I'm let him review it, Judge.
14
             (BY MR. LANDERS) I'll show you -- first off,
        Q.
15
   you're familiar with the statement that I'm talking
16
   about, right?
            I am familiar, yes.
17
        Α.
18
        Q.
            Okay. Because you just had another trial where
19
   this all came up recently?
20
        Α.
            Yes.
21
                 THE COURT: Excuse me. I can't -- I
22
   can't hear.
                We can take a break if y'all want. We can
   take a break because I just can't --
23
24
                 MS. BENNETT: I'm sorry, Judge. I didn't
25
   realize I was --
```

THE COURT: No, that's okay because the 1 court reporter can't hear it either. We can take a 2 3 Do you want to take a break for a minute? MS. BENNETT: I understand that the Court 4 5 is going to take a break --THE COURT: Well, I'm checking to see if we 6 7 We can go until, you know, we need to stop, need to. but we can take a break if y'all want an opportunity to chat because I just want to make sure that the court 10 reporter can hear also, but I don't mind pausing so that y'all can chat for a minute. 11 12 MR. LANDERS: Permission to use the 13 restroom while they're conferring, Judge? 14 THE COURT: Yes, absolutely. 15 (Short recess.) 16 MR. O'BRIEN: Your Honor, the State objects to this line of questioning in regards to utilizing 17 18 specific instances of conduct to attack the credibility 19 of Mr. Augustyn. Under 608 the proper form or method 20 for attacking his credibility would be reputation or 21 opinion testimony. If he's trying to elicit impeachment under 22 prior inconsistent statements, there's been no statement 23

that he can inflate or utilize prior testimony for in

this instance. So as such, he's just using an improper

24

```
means or method of proving character for
1
   untrustworthiness in this instance.
2
3
                 MR. LANDERS: Do you want me to respond
   briefly, Judge?
4
5
                 THE COURT: Give me just a second. Please
   respond.
6
7
                 MR. LANDERS: I'm not attacking this
   witness' character for truthfulness or untruthfulness
   with an opinion here. I'm asking -- first off, there
10
   has been a statement, let me say that, so 608 doesn't
   apply. I've asked the witness if he's the one that
11
12
   caught the mistake in this May incident, and he just
   said he was, and now I've let him review his testimony
13
14
   from a previous case where it was the opposite.
   he did not catch it, he's familiar with it, and I want
15
16
   to impeach him with his prior inconsistent statement.
   It's a different rule. It's Rule 613, Judge.
17
18
                 THE COURT: I see that. All right. Are
19
   you presenting the witness with the opportunity to
   refresh his recollection?
20
21
                 MR. LANDERS: I've already done that,
22
   Judge.
23
                 THE COURT: And he has that in front of
   him?
24
25
                 MR. LANDERS: I brought it back.
```

```
1
        Q.
             (BY MR. LANDERS) Do you need it again, sir?
             No.
2
        Α.
                 THE COURT: All right. The objection is
3
4
   overruled.
5
                 MR. O'BRIEN: Yes, Judge.
             (BY MR. LANDERS) So did you previously testify
6
        Q.
7
   that you were not the one that caught this mistake?
        Α.
8
             Correct.
        Q.
             Okay. Do you agree that if this mistake had
10
   not been caught, once again, a wrong result could have
   issued?
11
12
        Α.
            Yes.
13
                 THE COURT: Wait. I'm sorry. Ask that
14
   question again.
             (BY MR. LANDERS) Had this mistake not been
15
        Q.
16
   caught, a wrong result could have issued?
17
        Α.
            Yes.
18
        Q.
             Okay. So we've just discussed the two similar
19
   incidents that are going on, one the QI?
20
        Α.
             Correct.
            And QI is a Quality Incident Report?
21
        Q.
            Yes.
22
        Α.
23
             To your knowledge, has that Quality Incident
        Q.
   Report issued yet?
24
25
        A. For the two incidents?
```

1 Q. Correct.

4

5

6

7

- A. I don't think so.
- 3 Q. Okay. Will one issue?
 - A. Eventually, yes.
 - Q. And once they issue, those QIs will be disclosed to future defense counsel?
 - A. When they are asked about, yes. They will be put into that portal that I had mentioned earlier. The cases do have QI numbers associated with them.
 - Q. So any defense counsel could look it up?
- 11 A. Yes.
- 12 Q. But that's not the case right now?
- 13 A. Correct.
- 14 Q. Okay. The prosecutor could also look that up, 15 correct?
- 16 A. Yes.
- Q. (BY MR. LANDERS) Okay. And if asked by a prosecutor if you had any QIs, you would disclose that, correct?
- 20 A. Yes.
- Q. Okay. Were you asked by the prosecutors in this case if there were any QIs they should know about?
- 23 A. I do not remember.
- Q. Okay. How was the problem fixed in the 25 May 2024 incident?

A. So with the May 2024 incident, I was unboxing another batch, and I had noticed that the name did not match the submission form or any information on the blood kit.

With the nature of the incident from February, it was still fresh in my mind, and I went and looked into the LIMS database to see if the name on the submission form or on the blood tubes was already in our system and it was, and I had seen that I was the one who had worked the case, the first case, contacted the agency to let them know, hey, at some point there was a swap of submission forms either in your possession or when the submission forms got scanned into the database.

Blood tubes stayed with the blood kits and case information had to be switched to make sure that the correct results were with the correct suspect, new submission forms were requested from the submitting agency, and that is how that incident got remedied.

THE COURT: And when was this that you were doing these?

THE WITNESS: The first one was in February.

THE COURT: Right.

THE WITNESS: And the second one was in

25 May.

- Q. (BY MR. LANDERS) So those submission forms are scanned in the system?
 - A. Yes.

- Q. So basically y'all did a similar fix, which is, take the previously scanned forms and get them to the correct box?
 - A. Yes.
- Q. Is there a notation made in the chain of custody system, the LIMS system, about this switch?
- A. The chain of custody wasn't affected because the blood tube stayed with the blood kits. There was no moving around of evidence. All pieces of evidence were under my possession. The chain of custody for this incident did not need to be changed, from what I remember.
- Q. Okay. So there was no change notation made in the LIMS system about this?
 - A. When it comes to the chain of custody?
 - Q. Right.
 - A. Yes.
- Q. There's no notation. There's no notation made; is that correct?
- A. So there's documentation that there was a QI associated with this. There's documentation that new submission forms were required. There's documentation

```
for what the name was originally before case information
1
   had to be switched. There is documentation for that
2
   but --
        Q.
4
            Let me stop you there.
5
                 THE COURT: Actually, let me stop
   everybody, which is, we need to take a break for a
6
7
   couple of reasons. I don't think -- the court reporter
   has not had lunch and we've got some other things that
   are going on. I want to -- let me stand us in recess,
10
   and so we're off the record just so, Sherri -- we're
11
   just going to do some housekeeping, so you can head out.
12
                 (Discussion off the record.)
13
                 THE COURT:
                             Raise your right hands, please.
14
                       (Witnesses sworn.)
15
                 THE COURT: You will return to court as
   ordered on November 7, 2024, at 9:00 a.m. Thank you so
16
   much. We'll see you then. If you'll give your names to
17
18
   the court reporter.
19
          (Proceedings recessed to November 7, 2024.)
20
21
22
23
24
25
```

REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

THE STATE OF TEXAS) COUNTY OF FORT BEND)

I, Sherri Johnson, Official Court Reporter in and for County Court at Law No. 2 of Fort Bend County, Texas, do hereby certify that the foregoing contains a true and correct transcription of all portions of evidence and other proceedings requested in writing by counsel for the parties to be included in this volume of the Reporter's Record, in the above-styled and numbered cause, all of which occurred in open court or in chambers and were reported by me.

I further certify that this Reporter's Record of the proceedings truly and correctly reflects the exhibits, if any, tendered in an offer of proof or offered into evidence.

I further certify that the total cost for the preparation of this Reporter's Record is \$5,609.00 and was paid by Fort Bend County District Attorney's Office.

WITNESS MY OFFICIAL HAND this the 28th of February, 2025.

/s/ Sherri Johnson Sherri Johnson, Texas CSR 2938 Expiration Date: 1/31/2026 Official Court Reporter County Court at Law No. 2 301 Jackson

Richmond, Texas 77469

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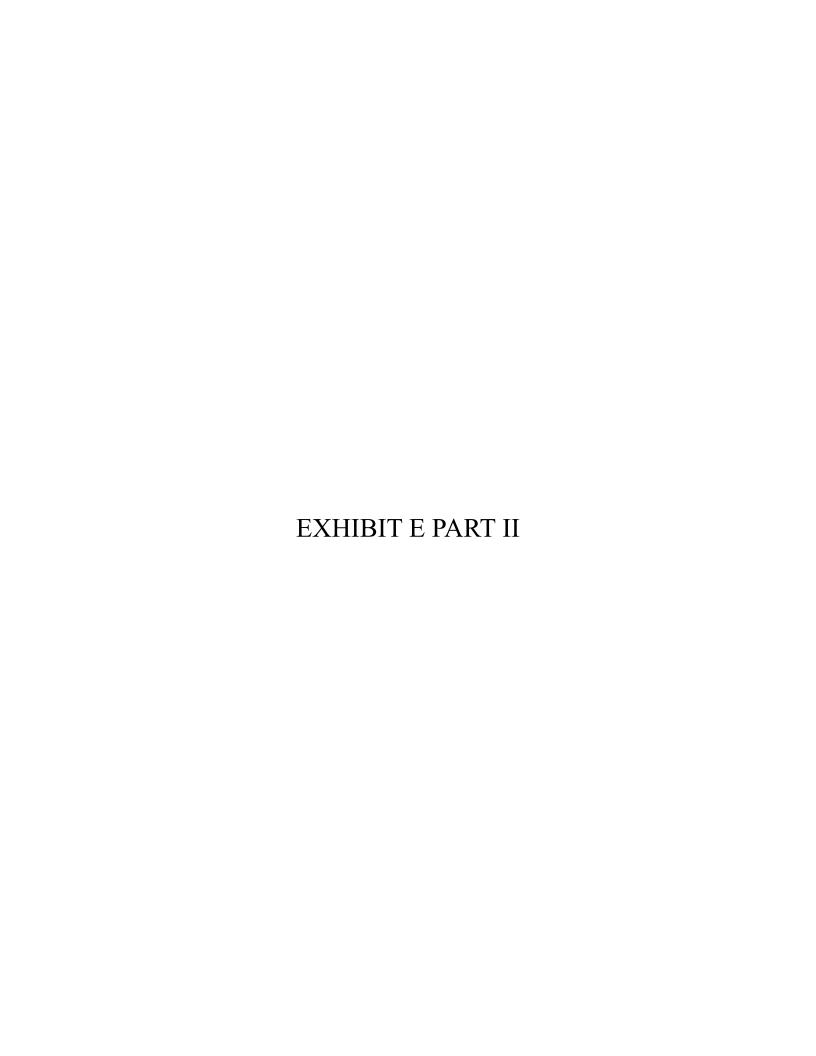
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REPORTER'S RECORD 1 VOLUME 9 OF 11 VOLUMES 2 TRIAL COURT CAUSE NO. 22-CCR-230111 3 COURT OF APPEALS CAUSE NO. 14-25-00020-CR 4 5 THE STATE OF TEXAS IN THE COUNTY COURT 6 7 VS. AT LAW NO. 2 8 9 JAWED SADRUDDIN MOMIN FORT BEND COUNTY, TEXAS 10 11 12 13 MOTION FOR NEW TRIAL 14 15 16 17 18 On November 7, 2024, the following proceedings came 19 on to be heard in the above-entitled and numbered cause 20 21 before the Honorable Tyra J. McCollum, Judge presiding, 22 held in Fort Bend County, Texas; 23 Proceedings reported by Certified Shorthand 24 Reporter and machine shorthand/computer-aided 25 transcription.

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Honor.

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November 7, 2024

THE COURT: We're back on the record in Cause No. 22-CCR-230111, the State of Texas versus Jawed Sadruddin Momin. We are here in the continuation of the Defense's motion for new trial, and at this time I'll call for announcements on behalf of Defense.

MR. LANDERS: Jonathan Landers and Collin Evans are here for Mr. Momin, and we're ready to proceed.

THE COURT: Thank you very much.

On behalf of the State?

MR. FESMIRE: Denver Fesmire and Gavin O'Brien for the State. We're ready to proceed, Your

THE COURT: Thank you. My recollection of where we are is that the witness that is on the stand was still under the examination or at least back under the examination of the Defense. Is that your recollection?

MR. LANDERS: That's correct, Judge.

THE COURT: Do you have any additional questions for this witness? Would you like to proceed?

MR. LANDERS: I do, Judge. Could we have just a moment for a couple of pretrial -- I guess

```
mid-trial issues briefly?
1
                 THE COURT: Yes, go ahead.
2
                 MR. LANDERS:
                               I don't think the last time
3
   we were here there were any witnesses in the courtroom,
4
   so we did not invoke the rule. Could we invoke the rule
5
   at this time?
6
7
                 THE COURT: You can.
                                       All witnesses -- I do
8
   believe that I got their names for the benefit of just
   that.
9
10
                 But if there are any witnesses that are
11
   present in the courtroom, would you please come forward?
12
                 All right. Ma'am, would you please say
   your name?
13
                 MS. ZALEKIAN:
14
                                Somiyeh Zalekian.
                 THE COURT:
15
                            Ma'am?
                 MS. ZALEKIAN:
16
                                Somiyeh Zalekian.
17
                 THE COURT: Zalekian. Thank you,
   Ms. Zalekian.
18
19
                 And you are?
20
                 MS. PARKER: Tifani Parker.
21
                 THE COURT:
                             Hi, Ms. Parker. Good morning.
22
   If I can ask both of you to please raise your right
23
   hands.
24
                       (Witnesses sworn.)
25
                 THE COURT: Thank you very much. You are
```

both, in addition to having been sworn, you both now are under the rule. What that means for the purposes of this hearing is that you will be removed from the courtroom while there are other witnesses that are testifying. You are to remain either outside of the courtroom directly so that the bailiff can reach you when such time has arrived for your testimony to be elicited or you can go downstairs but it means don't take vacation off campus.

As you are outside and outside of the courtroom itself, you're not to have any discussion with anyone about this matter at all. What that means is that, not only do you not speak to one another, it means that you don't reach out to anyone in your offices that are remote or Satellight, by telephone or by any other method. You may however talk to the attorneys if they so desire to have conversations with you about this, but even if at that time you engage in conversations with the attorneys in this matter, you are to do so outside of the earshot of any other witnesses who are present and intend to testify in these proceedings.

If you have any questions about what your expectations are from this Court, then please address them immediately or alert the bailiff so that he can alert me and we can clarify what your questions may be.

```
There's lots to talk about in the world right now, just
1
2
   not this matter, okay?
3
                 Do you have any questions about anything
   that I've said to you?
4
                 THE WITNESSES:
5
                                  No.
                 THE COURT: Thank you. So then the both of
6
7
   you may wait outside the courtroom, and we'll hear from
   you once you've been called by one of the attorneys.
   Thank you so much.
10
                 Any other housekeeping matters,
   Mr. Landers?
11
12
                 MR. LANDERS:
                               The other matter is this
   morning a Quality Incident Report has been finalized by
13
14
   DPS, literally this morning, related to the -- I'll call
   it switched information incidents that we were
15
16
   discussing last week.
17
                 THE COURT: It's specifically one that was
18
   referenced in the course of this hearing.
19
                 MR. LANDERS: It's the last two incidents
20
   we discussed actually and so that is now issued. We'd
21
   like to introduce that Quality Incident Report as
22
   Defendant's Exhibit No. 9, and I don't think there's an
23
   objection.
24
                 MR. FESMIRE: No objection from the State,
25
   Your Honor.
```

```
THE COURT: Is that a collective
1
   introduction or --
2
                 MR. LANDERS: Well --
3
                 THE COURT: -- is it one document?
4
                 MR. LANDERS: It's one document. It's two
5
6
   pages.
7
                 THE COURT: All right. And do you have a
8
   courtesy copy of that as well?
9
                 MR. LANDERS: That I don't because we only
10
   have two copies, and I wrote on my other one.
11
                 MR. FESMIRE: I have a courtesy copy, Your
12
   Honor.
13
                 THE COURT: Thank you. I appreciate it.
14
   All right. Without objection Defendant's Exhibit No. 9
   will be admitted.
15
16
                 (Defendant's Exhibit No. 9 was offered and
   admitted into evidence.)
17
18
                 MR. FESMIRE: Defendant's 9. Your Honor?
19
                 THE COURT: Yes. It's entitled Quality
20
   Incident Report and dated 2-10-2024. Thank you. That's
21
   been admitted.
22
                 MR. LANDERS: And I don't know if the State
   needed to introduce -- do you need to introduce an
23
   exhibit or --
24
25
                 MR. FESMIRE: Yes. I did intend to
```

```
introduce an exhibit. So, Your Honor, we had a chance
1
   to speak to Defense prior to the hearing today, and they
2
   have stipulated to the admissibility of State's Exhibit
   No. 4 in the original trial, which is the Defendant's
4
   blood kit.
               This would be State's Exhibit MNT 8 for the
   purposes of this hearing.
6
7
                 THE COURT: What did you just say again?
   State's Exhibit --
8
9
                 MR. FESMIRE:
                               MNT 8.
10
                 THE COURT: Does that work for your number
11
   system, Ms. Johnson?
12
                 THE REPORTER:
                                Yes.
13
                 THE COURT: What's the Defense's position
14
   on that?
15
                 MR. LANDERS:
                               No objection to this, Judge.
16
                 THE COURT: All right. That will be
   admitted.
17
18
                 (State's Exhibit No. 8 was offered and
   admitted into evidence.)
19
20
                 THE COURT: All right. Any other matters?
21
                 MR. LANDERS:
                               No, Your Honor.
22
                 THE COURT: Any other matters?
23
                 MR. FESMIRE: Yes, if we could see the
24
   exhibits? We plan on using the exhibits for direct.
                                                          Dο
25
   vou have them?
```

```
THE COURT: I have them right here, and I'm
1
2
   happy to give them back to you.
3
                 MR. FESMIRE:
                               Okay. Understood.
                                                    Thank
   vou, Your Honor.
4
5
                 THE COURT: With that, are you ready to
   proceed, Mr. Landers?
6
7
                 MR. LANDERS:
                               I am, Judge.
8
                 THE COURT: Please go ahead -- I'm sorry.
9
   Hold on one second.
10
                 So you recall that you remain under oath.
11
   You also heard me address the other witnesses, that
12
   previously when you were testifying the rule had not
   been invoked. The rule is also invoked for you as well.
13
14
   What that means is that those same instruction are
15
   applicable to you, and that while you may talk to the
16
   attorneys about any matter that is occurring, you're to
   do so outside the earshot of any other intended witness,
17
18
   and, likewise, you're not to engage in any conversations
19
   or discussions with anyone about any of the matters
20
   concerning this proceeding, okay?
21
                 THE WITNESS:
                               Understood.
22
                 THE COURT: You understand those
23
   instructions?
                 THE WITNESS: Yes.
24
25
                             Okay. Thank you very much.
                 THE COURT:
```

You may proceed, Mr. Landers. 1 MR. LANDERS: Thank you, Judge. 2 3 ZACHARY AUGUSTYN, 4 having been duly sworn, testified as follows: 5 CROSS-EXAMINATION CONTINUED BY MR. LANDERS: 6 7 Q. Mr. Augustyn, how are you today? 8 Α. I'm doing all right. 9 Q. I want to get us back to where we were. 10 THE COURT: If you could utilize the 11 microphone, Mr. Landers, that would be helpful. 12 Q. (BY MR. LANDERS) I want to get us back to where we were. I think it was two weeks ago now. 13 14 Yes. Α. 15 We kind of discussed your training a little Q. 16 bit, correct? 17 Α. Correct. 18 Q. And we discussed a 2022 quality incident that 19 involved a broken blood vial? 20 Α. Yes. 21 Okay. We discussed two 2024 incidents that Q. 22 involved what I call switching -- switched information in blood testing kits? 23 Α. 24 Yes. 25 Okay. And that's about where we left off. Q.

Would you agree with that?

A. Yes.

1

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4

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6

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8

10

- Q. Okay. During our conversation a couple of Fridays ago, I'd asked you if you thought you were as busy in 2022 as you were in the beginning of 2024. Do you remember that?
 - A. I do remember that question, yes.
- Q. And do I remember correctly that you mentioned you were doing testing for the Garland lab in 2024?
- A. Yes.
- 11 Q. Okay. Now, I want to ask you about 2022, okay?
- 12 A. Okay.
- Q. Are you aware that your lab was doing outside testing for the Austin lab in 2022?
- 15 A. Yes.
- Q. Okay. And, full disclosure, you and I kind of reviewed your, what do they call it, your evaluations; 18 is that correct?
- 19 A. Partially, yes.
- Q. Okay. Your yearly evaluations before your testimony today?
 - A. Yes.
- Q. All right. And those include a number of cases you review in a year; is that correct?
- 25 A. Yes.

- Q. Okay. Would you agree with me that in 2022 you tested a similar number of cases as you did in 2023?
 - A. Yes.

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

21

- Q. Okay. We have Defendant's Exhibit No. 9 which has just been introduced. It's a Quality Incident Report issued today. Are you familiar with that report?
 - A. I am, yes.
- Q. Do you need a copy of it because I'm going to ask you questions?
- A. No, I don't think so.
- 11 Q. If you do would you just let me know?
- 12 A. Yes.
- Q. Okay. Where we left off a couple of Fridays
 ago, we discussed that in the May switched information
 incident, it's your belief that you caught that
 yourself, right?
- 17 A. The May incident, yes.
- Q. Okay. That's where the submission forms were switched and did not match the blood evidence inside the blood evidence box?
 - A. Yes.
- Q. Okay. And we'd also discussed that previously you testified otherwise?
 - A. Yes.
- Q. All right. And in your previous testimony it

was that someone else had caught that error? 1 2 Α. Yes. 3 Q. Okay. You also mentioned that you --MR. FESMIRE: Your Honor, if I may? I just 4 5 wanted to confirm that our running objection to 6 relevance is still present. 7 THE COURT: All right. That's overruled. 8 MR. FESMIRE: Yes, Your Honor. 9 Q. (BY MR. LANDERS) How did you catch the mistake from the May incident? 10 11 For the May incident, the second -- I'm 12 sorry -- the second incident, the May incident, I was unboxing another batch on 5-13-2024, and I had noticed 13 14 that the blood tubes for a specific case did not match the name on the submission form, and I had checked later 15 that day on 5-15 to see if the name was already inside 16 our LIMS database and it was. 17 18 Q. Okay. And who had tested the evidence in the 19 first case? 20 Α. I did. 21 Q. Okay. You would agree you didn't catch the switch in the first case? 22 23 Α. Correct. 24 Okay. And we now know that these incidents --Q. 25 and when I say "these incidents," I'm talking about -- I

```
think it's February 2024 where blood vials were in the
1
   wrong box, right?
2
        Α.
             Yes.
3
        Q.
             And also the May 2024 incident we just
4
   discussed, those are the subject of one QI?
5
6
        Α.
             Yes.
7
        Q.
             Okay. That's a -- a QI is a Quality Incident
   Report?
        Α.
9
             Yes.
             And today a Quality Incident Report issued for
10
   both of those; is that correct?
11
12
        Α.
             Yes.
13
             What was the -- so as part of those, you're
        Q.
14
   aware there's a risk assessment that's done, correct?
15
             I believe so, yes.
             Do you know what the risk assessment said the
16
        Q.
   severity of these errors were?
17
18
        Α.
             I didn't glance over the risk assessment, but I
19
   think I remember the severity saying "medium."
20
        Q.
             Gotcha.
                                Judge, can I see Defendant's
21
                 MR. LANDERS:
   Exhibit No. 9?
22
             (BY MR. LANDERS) And to be fair, these just
23
        Q.
24
   issued today, correct?
25
             I believe so.
        Α.
```

- Q. Just have a look at the first sentence of the risk assessment portion.
 - A. How far do you want me to go?
 - Q. What is the severity listed as?
 - A. The severity is listed as "major."
- Q. Okay. As a major incident, is that something that will now be on your -- the back of all of your lab cases?
- 9 MR. FESMIRE: Objection. Lacks personal 10 knowledge.
- THE COURT: Ask that question again, 12 please.
- Q. (BY MR. LANDERS) As this has been labeled a major incident, would that now be disclosed on your disclosure forms?
- 16 MR. FESMIRE: Same objection.
- 17 THE COURT: I'll overrule that objection.
- 18 A. I do not know.

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- Q. (BY MR. LANDERS) Okay. At DPS there is training about when and how Brady information should be disclosed, correct?
 - A. Correct.
- Q. Who is it that is supposed to make the judgment of when disclosure is necessary?
- A. I think it's up to everyone involved. So the

scientist and anyone involved in the case.

Q. Would you agree with me that the employee at

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issue is required to disclose any Brady information?

MR. FESMIRE: Objection. Leading.

THE COURT: Overruled.

- A. Could you repeat the question for this case?
- Q. (BY MR. LANDERS) Sure. Do you agree that it's the person at issue who's made the mistake who has the duty to report the Brady information?
 - A. For the specific case, yes.
- Q. What about in cases moving forward?
- A. Cases moving forward, it's already public access depending on when it's finalized. I think it would be wise to disclose it.
- Q. So you'll be disclosing this new QI moving forward?
 - A. Possibly. I don't know yet.
- Q. Okay. There's one more quality incident that we haven't discussed.
- 20 MR. LANDERS: Could I see Defendant's 21 Exhibit No. 1?
- Q. (BY MR. LANDERS) I'm going to show you

 Defendant's Exhibit No. 1 again. This is the Notice of

 Potential Favorable Evidence from a different Montgomery

 County case.

So No. 3 on there deals with what? 1 2 No. 3 involves failing to properly seal a batch 3 of cases after analysis and reports were sent out. 4 Q. And how many cases were not properly sealed? 30. 5 Α. How many? I'm sorry. THE COURT: 6 7 THE WITNESS: 30. 8 Q. (BY MR. LANDERS) Where were those sent? 9 Some were sent back to the agencies that Some were still in the lab and some 10 submitted them. 11 were sent to Austin toxicology for drug analysis. 12 Q. And was it Austin that discovered and first 13 notified you about boxes not being sealed? 14 Α. No. 15 Who was it? Q. 16 Sugar Land PD. Α. 17 Q. Okay. So an outside agency notified DPS about the failure to seal these boxes? 18 19 Α. Yes. Okay. What was done about this? 20 Q. 21 Α. So after Sugar Land PD notified the lab, I was 22 notified that possible evidence was not sealed properly. I went to check the work list for that batch, so all the 23 24 cases in that batch, to see if any were still at the

If I remember correctly, I think three were still

25

lab.

at the lab. I went to check all of the cases and determined that the other cases that were still at the lab were not sealed.

So at that point I determined that it's a high likelihood that all of those cases were not sealed. So after that, I went back to that work list that had all of the cases in it, made determinations of how many cases went to the Austin lab for drug tox, and all of the other cases that were sent out. I had spoken with my supervisor to determine what to do next. It was decided that --

- Q. Let me ask you real quick. Who is that supervisor?
 - A. Tifani Parker.

- Q. Go ahead. What happened next?
- A. It was decided that I needed to reach out to the agencies that had received their blood evidence back, make sure that if there was a seal, and if not, make sure that all of the contents of the blood kits were accounted for.
- Q. Did you make sure that all of the contents were accounted for?
- A. I did, yes.
- Q. So basically what you were doing was reestablishing the chain of custody; is that correct?

- A. In a sense, yes.
- Q. You would agree that an error like this can affect the chain of custody?
 - A. Yes.

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- Q. Do you agree that that error that we're talking about is something that should be disclosed?
 - A. When it comes to specific cases, yes.
 - Q. What do you mean by that?
 - A. Any case that was involved in the QI.
- 10 Q. Okay. This failure to properly seal boxes is a 11 violation of protocol; is that correct?
- 12 A. Yes.
 - Q. Do you believe it's favorable to other defendants in other cases to know that you violated protocol in separate cases?
- 16 MR. FESMIRE: Objection. Speculation.
- 17 THE COURT: Sustained.
- 18 Q. (BY MR. LANDERS) And you've had training on 19 Brady versus Maryland, correct?
- 20 A. Yes.
- Q. And you've had training on the Michael Morton Act, correct?
- 23 A. Yes.
- Q. What is your understanding of what a state agency needs to disclose to a defendant?

```
1
                 MR. FESMIRE: Objection. Calls for a legal
   opinion.
2
3
                 MR. LANDERS:
                                I'm asking about his
   training.
4
                 THE COURT: I understand the objection.
5
                 MR. LANDERS:
                                I'm sorry.
6
7
                 THE COURT: Overruled.
8
        Α.
             Can you repeat?
9
        Q.
             (BY MR. LANDERS) Yes. What is your
10
   understanding of when favorable evidence needs to be
   disclosed to a defendant?
11
12
        Α.
             From what I know about Brady, any evidence
   that's favorable to the defense must be disclosed when
13
14
   it comes to Michael Morton, favorable evidence that
   exonerates the defendant, if I remember correctly.
15
16
        Q.
             Okay.
17
             Or proves innocence -- sorry -- something like
18
   that.
19
        Q.
             Is it favorable to a defendant, in your mind,
20
   if the analyst in this case has made multiple errors
21
   over multiple years?
22
                 MR. FESMIRE: Objection. Calls for
23
   speculation.
24
                 THE COURT:
                             I'm overruling that objection.
25
                 Answer the question as it was asked.
```

- Α. I think it can be, yes.
- (BY MR. LANDERS) Have you disclosed -- so I'm Q. going to talk about the last two quality incidents.

These are the ones on Defendant's Exhibit No. 1 that we 4 talked about. 5

Α. Okay.

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- Q. It's really three incidents but two quality incidents; is that correct?
 - Α. Yes.
- Okay. Have you disclosed those to other 10 Q. 11 prosecutors recently before trial?
- 12 Α. Recently before trial, yes, I have.
- 13 And that was after Mr. Momin's case, correct? Q.
 - Α. Yes.
 - As a matter of fact, was the first time in that Q. case related to Defendant's Exhibit No. 1?
- 17 Α. Yes.
 - Q. Okay. Why did you disclose it to those prosecutors?
- 20 So with the first incidents or incident of the Montgomery County case, I'm familiar with the defense 22 attorney, and he has asked me about QIs in the past, and the reason why I had disclosed the pending QIs was 23 because in previous testimony, he had asked me if there 24 25 were any pending QIs that I have, if I remember

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correctly, and I wasn't -- it's not my intention to lie in testimony, so I felt like it would be necessary to disclose pending QIs to the prosecutor to inform them for this case.
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- Q. In that case the prosecutors then disclosed the pending QIs to defense counsel, correct?
 - A. Correct.

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- Q. Have you reviewed the email where you disclosed these pending QIs?
 - A. Not recently.
- Q. Okay. Do you recall telling the prosecutors that defense counsel wouldn't know about them at that time?
 - A. Yes, I do remember that.
- THE COURT: I'm sorry. Ask that question again.
- 17 Q. (BY MR. LANDERS) Do you recall telling the 18 prosecutors -- what's the name of that case?
- 19 A. State v. Israel Monroy, Jr.
- 20 Q. Monroy --
 - A. Israel Lee Monroy, Jr.
- Q. In the Monroy case, did you tell the prosecutors that defense counsel should not know about the pending QIs?
- 25 A. Instead of saying "should," I think I said they

wouldn't know about them. 1 Okay. Why did you tell the prosecutors that? 2 3 Α. Because the QIs were pending at the time and they were not in the public access. 4 Were you attempting to hide that information 5 Q. from defense counsel? 6 7 Α. No. 8 Q. Do you remember testifying in the James Brady 9 Soape trial on October 23, 2024? 10 Yes. Α. THE REPORTER: Counsel, would you spell the 11 12 last name, please? 13 MR. LANDERS: S-o-a-p-e. 14 Q. (BY MR. LANDERS) Do you recall testifying 15 that, "There were things that I was hiding relating to 16 these incidents"? 17 MR. FESMIRE: Objection. Relevance. 18 THE COURT: Overruled. 19 Α. I do remember saying that statement, yes. 20 Q. (BY MR. LANDERS) Okay. Are there any new 21 quality incidents that you're aware of today that we haven't discussed? 22 23

Α. No.

24

25

Q. All right. You would agree that it's possible there's been mistakes in other cases that haven't been

```
caught, correct?
1
2
                  MR. FESMIRE:
                                Objection.
                                             Speculation.
                 THE COURT: Ask it the way you asked it
3
   exactly again.
4
5
                 MR. LANDERS:
                                Okay.
             (BY MR. LANDERS) You would agree that there's
6
        Q.
7
   been mistakes in other people's cases that haven't been
8
   caught, correct?
                 THE COURT: Sustained.
9
10
             (BY MR. LANDERS) So we've discussed this case
        Q.
11
   -- three pretty recent quality incidents, correct?
12
        Α.
             Yes.
13
             One of them involved 30 cases that were
        Q.
14
   unboxed -- I'm sorry -- were not properly sealed?
15
        Α.
            Yes.
16
        Q.
             You did not catch that error?
17
        Α.
             Correct.
18
        Q.
             One of them involved blood vials that were in
19
   the wrong blood boxes, correct?
20
        Α.
             Yes.
21
        Q.
             Did you catch that error?
             No.
22
        Α.
             The third involved switched laboratory
23
        Q.
   submission forms; is that correct?
24
25
        Α.
             Yes.
```

```
1
        Q.
             Did you catch that error?
             I did catch that error.
2
        Α.
3
        Q.
             But did you catch it on the first box of
4
   evidence that you tested?
        Α.
             I did not.
5
             Okay. You would agree that there has been a
6
        Q.
7
   pattern of mistakes that have not been caught by you
8
   personally in the lab?
9
                 MR. FESMIRE: Objection.
                                            Relevance and
10
   vague.
11
                 THE COURT: So I'm overruling as to
12
   relevance.
               What was your second part?
13
                 MR. FESMIRE: Vague, a pattern.
14
                 THE COURT: So I'm going to sustain it.
   Rephrase the form of your question.
15
16
                 MR. LANDERS:
                                Sure.
17
        Q.
             (BY MR. LANDERS) We are aware, everyone in
18
   here, of three mistakes that you didn't personally catch
19
   yourself at least initially, correct?
20
        Α.
             Correct.
21
        Q.
             All right. It's possible that other mistakes
22
   have been made that you have not caught?
                 MR. FESMIRE: Objection again to
23
24
   speculation.
25
                 THE COURT: Overruled.
```

- A. It's possible, but I would not know.
- Q. (BY MR. LANDERS) Okay. I want to talk about Mr. Momin's case.
 - A. Okay.

4

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- Q. But before I get there, I want to talk about the two Montgomery County cases you had testified to after his case.
- A. Okay.
- 9 Q. It's the Monroy case and the Soape case; is 10 that correct?
- 11 A. Yes.
- Q. Are you aware of the results of those cases, the outcomes?
- MR. FESMIRE: Objection, Your Honor, to relevance.
- 16 THE COURT: Sustained as to that.
- Q. (BY MR. LANDERS) Now, we'll get on to
- 18 Mr. Momin's case.
- 19 A. Okay.
 - Q. Did you speak with Mr. Evans prior to that trial?
- A. I had a phone call with him, and I had met with him at the Stafford PD. I don't know if I would call it a headquarters but an office.
- Q. Okay. And just to be clear, you didn't turn

```
over any quality incidents to Mr. Evans prior to trial?
1
        Α.
             I did not.
2
3
        Q.
             Do you recall Mr. Evans asking for a copy of
4
   your resume?
             I do, yes.
5
        Α.
             Was was your answer to that?
6
        Q.
7
            We don't usually give out resumes as far as
        Α.
8
   like -- I don't remember, but I remember I didn't give
9
   him my resume.
10
             Okay. Are you aware that your personnel file
        Q.
   does have a list of all of your prior employment?
11
12
                 THE COURT: Your prior what?
13
                                Employment.
                 MR. LANDERS:
14
                 MR. FESMIRE:
                                Objection.
                                            Leading.
                 THE COURT:
15
                              Overruled.
16
             I believe so.
        Α.
17
        Q.
             (BY MR. LANDERS) Okay. And what was your job
18
   just prior to being a DPS analyst?
19
             I was a lifeguard at the Lockport YMCA.
                                Judge, may I see our exhibits
20
                 MR. LANDERS:
21
   real quick?
22
        Q.
             (BY MR. LANDERS) I'm going to show you
   Defendant's Exhibit No. 4 for the motion for new trial.
23
24
   Do you recognize what this is?
25
             It looks like the lab submission form and the
        Α.
```

- chain of custody, but I don't recognize that.
- Q. Okay. So Defendant's Exhibit No. 4 starts with a chain of custody form. Do you agree?
 - A. It appears so, yes.
- Q. Okay. And that appears to be from the Stafford Police Department; is that correct?
 - A. Yes.

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18

- Q. Okay. The second page we get on to the toxicology request and submission form?
- A. Yes.
- 11 Q. Who fills out the information on this form?
- 12 A. A representative from the submitting agency.
- 13 Q. And when is that form filled out?
- 14 A. I do not know.
- Q. Is it before, during or after the submission of evidence?
- 17 A. Before.
 - Q. Okay. Do you know who filled this form out?
- 19 A. I do not.
- Q. And most of the information on this form is typed in. Would you agree with that?
 - A. Yes.
- Q. Okay. And included on this form is a printed name of individual blank; is that correct?
- 25 A. Yes.

1 Q. And what individual prints their name there? It appears to be A. Mitchell. 2 Α. 3 Q. Okay. And there's also a date blank, is that correct? 4 Α. Yes. 5 Okay. But who fills that out? I know it says 6 Q. 7 A. Mitchell. Is the person submitting the evidence fills that out? 8 9 MR. FESMIRE: Objection. Lacks personal 10 knowledge. 11 THE COURT: Sustained. 12 Q. (BY MR. LANDERS) Do you know who fills this out? 13 14 I do not. When it comes to other agencies, some people write this, but it really depends on how 15 16 they submit it --17 THE REPORTER: I'm sorry? 18 Α. It depends on how they submit the evidence. 19 Q. (BY MR. LANDERS) What is the purpose of this form? What's the purpose of that form? 20 21 Α. The purpose of this form it's essentially a 22 contract submitted to the lab for us to perform a 23 request that an agency would like us to do. 24 Q. So an outside agency provides y'all with

25

evidence, correct?

A. Yes.

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- Q. And this form is included for what reason?
- A. This form is included to give information to the case as well as what is included.
- Q. Okay. Does the agency fill this form out or does DPS fill this form out?
 - A. The agency fills it out.
- Q. Is this toxicology request submission form, is that what was swapped in the May 2024 incident -- quality incident?
- 11 A. Yes.
- 12 Q. Okay. And that happened prior to Mr. Momin's 13 case, correct?
- 14 A. For --
- 15 Q. May 2024 is before Mr. Momin's case?
- 16 A. For trial, yes.
 - Q. Okay. That's what I meant. Now, in the two blanks we discussed, printed name of submitting individual, do you see both a typed and a handwritten name?
 - A. Yes.
 - Q. Okay. Can you read what the typed name says?
- 23 A. The typed name appears to be Andrea Stout.
 - Q. Is that crossed out?
- 25 A. Yes.

- Q. And then what's written in?
- A. Mitchell. 2 Α.
- 3 Q. What is the date that is typed on the form?
- 10-14-2022. 4 Α.
 - Q. Is that crossed out?
- 6 Α. Yes.

5

- 7 Q. Okay. What is the date that's written in?
- 8 Α. 10-17-2022.
- 9 Q. Okay. Would you flip over to the front page of 10 Defendant's Exhibit No. 4?
- 11 Α. (Witness complies.)
- 12 Q. You would agree this is a Stafford Police Department chain of custody form? 13
- 14 It appears that way, yes. Α.
- 15 If you read, there's a blank over there that 16 says, "Item moved to this location." Do you see that?
- 17 Α. Yes.

18

- Q. There's a column for that, right?
- 19 Α. Yes.
- 20 Q. What is the date that, according to Stafford, this evidence was left at the DPS lab?
- 22 Α. According to this document 10-14-2022.
- Okay. And that matches with the typed-in 23 Q. information on Page 1, the DPS information. Do you 24 25 agree with that?

```
1
        Α.
            Yes.
             Okay. Who is the person that allegedly dropped
2
        Q.
   -- looking on the first page -- provided this blood
3
   evidence to DPS?
4
             Amir Mitchell.
5
        Α.
             And that matches with the handwritten
6
        Q.
7
   information on Page 2, the DPS submission form, correct?
        Α.
8
             Yes.
9
        Q.
             Okay. Who made the correction on Page 2, the
   DPS request submission form?
10
11
                 MR. FESMIRE: Objection. Calls for
12
   speculation.
13
                 MR. LANDERS:
                                I'd like to ask it a
   different way, Judge.
14
15
                 THE COURT: Please do.
             (BY MR. LANDERS) Do you know who made the
16
        Q.
   corrections on the DPS request submission form?
17
18
        Α.
             I do not.
19
        Q.
             Do you know when they were made?
20
        Α.
             I do not.
21
        Q.
             Does the signature in that square on Page 2
22
   look like a star or signature? Do you recognize that?
23
                 THE COURT:
                              Where are you referencing,
24
   Counsel? Are you referencing this corner right here
25
   (indicating)?
```

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1
                 MR. LANDERS: Right. There's like a
   signature or initials.
2
3
             (BY MR. LANDERS) Do you see what I'm talking
        Q.
   about there?
4
             You're talking about, like, right here
5
6
   (indicating)?
7
        Q.
             No. I'm talking about in the upper right next
   to the barcode.
9
        Α.
             This right here (indicating)?
10
        Q.
             Right.
11
        Α.
             I do know whose initials those are, yes.
12
        Q.
             Whose are they?
13
        Α.
             Those are initials for the evidence tech.
             Do you know the name of that person?
14
        Q.
15
        Α.
             Yes.
16
        Q.
             What is that person's name?
17
        Α.
             Sara --
18
                  THE REPORTER: Sara --
19
                  THE WITNESS: It's Saravith Vonne,
20
   S-a-r-a-v-i-t-h V-o-n-n-e.
21
        Q.
             (BY MR. LANDERS) And flip over to the last
22
   page, the chain of custody report. Do you see that?
23
             Yes.
        Α.
             Do we see Saravith Vonne's name on there
24
        Q.
25
   sometimes?
```

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1
        Α.
            Yes.
             So we think she's the person that made this
2
        Q.
   correction?
3
                                Objection. Calls for
4
                 MR. FESMIRE:
   speculation.
5
                 THE COURT: Sustained.
6
7
             (BY MR. LANDERS) Is there a policy in the lab
        Q.
8
   to fix errors in the chain of custody if they're noticed
   by employees of DPS?
9
10
             I do not know.
11
             And you would agree with me that even with the
12
   handwritten information on the DPS request submission
   form, we still have a contradicting date between that
13
14
   and the Stafford Police Department form?
15
                 MR. FESMIRE:
                                Objection. Attorney
   testifying.
16
17
                 THE COURT: Counsel, ask it in the form of
18
   a question.
                 MR. LANDERS:
19
                                Okay.
             (BY MR. LANDERS) What is -- look at Page 1.
20
        Q.
21
   What date does the Stafford Police Department say the
22
   blood test for Mr. Momin's case was dropped off at the
23
   DPS lab?
24
                 MR. FESMIRE:
                                Objection. Asked and
25
   answered.
```

THE COURT: Overruled. 1 10-14-2022. 2 Α. 3 Q. (BY MR. LANDERS) And then flip to Page 2. Α. (Witness complies.) 4 What date does Page 2 say the in-person 5 Q. submission took place, the handwritten one? 6 7 Α. The handwritten one says 10-17-2022. 8 Q. So even with the handwritten information there was a discrepancy on this form? 10 MR. FESMIRE: Objection. Attorney 11 testifying. THE COURT: 12 Overruled. 13 Α. It appears that way, yes. 14 (BY MR. LANDERS) Do you recall if whenever you Q. tested the evidence in this case the handwritten 15 information was on the submission form? 16 17 Α. I do not recall. 18 Q. And if you look on Page 3, did Ms. Vonne -- did 19 she handle the blood evidence in this case before or 20 after you tested it or both? 21 Both. Α. 22 Q. So we don't know when that was done, do we? 23 For when she handled it? Α. 24 We don't know when the submission form was Ω. 25 altered in this case?

A. No.

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- Q. If you would have noticed the discrepancy in dates, would you have noted that somewhere in the case file?
 - A. I don't know if I would have.
- Q. Is a discrepancy in the chain of custody something that you should catch as far as your job?
 - A. Yes.
- Q. You didn't note anything on the laboratory report about a discrepancy, did you?
- 11 A. No.
- 12 Q. In Mr. Momin's case, do you recall when you 13 learned the case was set for trial?
- 14 A. I'm sorry. Could you repeat?
- Q. Do you recall when you learned Mr. Momin's case was set for trial?
 - A. I know -- I'm pretty sure it got reset a couple of times. I do not remember the initial day that I was notified for it.
 - Q. I think you've already told us a couple of Fridays ago that you had some sort of meeting with the prosecutors before this case?
- 23 A. Yes.
- Q. Okay. And just to refresh our memory, emails, Zoom calls, how did that happen?

```
Α.
             Yes.
                   I had a couple of phone calls and a
1
   couple of Zoom video calls for this case.
2
             Did the chain of custody issues come up?
3
        Q.
             I do not remember.
        Α.
4
5
        Q.
             Do you remember if the handwritten changes on
6
   those forms came up?
7
                 MR. FESMIRE:
                                Objection to relevance.
8
                  THE COURT: Overruled.
             I do not remember.
9
        Α.
10
             (BY MR. LANDERS) What is that Defense exhibit
        Q.
11
   you have in front of you?
12
        Α.
             4.
             Have you seen Page 1 of that prior to trial?
13
        Q.
             I have not.
14
        Α.
15
                  MR. LANDERS: Can I have one second, Judge?
16
                 THE COURT: Yes.
17
                 MR. LANDERS: I'm going to grab these
18
   exhibits, if it's okay, Judge.
19
                 THE COURT: Yes.
20
        Q.
             (BY MR. LANDERS) So Defendant's Exhibit No. 1,
21
   it's the first Brady disclosure given in any of your
   cases, correct?
22
23
        Α.
             Yes.
24
             And that notice was given because you notified
        Q.
```

the prosecutors in that case about these pending Quality

```
1
   Incident Reports?
        Α.
2
             Yes.
3
        Q.
             And did those pending reports become a large
   part of the defense counsel's case in that case?
4
                               Objection.
5
                 MR. FESMIRE:
                                            Relevance.
6
                 MR. LANDERS: And, Judge, I'll just say
7
   where I'm going. I think it goes to materiality, the
   effect that this type of evidence can have on a jury.
   That's where I'm going.
10
                               Relevance, Your Honor.
                 MR. FESMIRE:
11
   happened in that case isn't relevant to what's happening
12
   in our present case.
13
                 THE COURT: As to that form, sustained.
14
        Q.
             (BY MR. LANDERS) Are you aware of the internal
15
   policies that your DPS lab has?
16
             I'm familiar with some of them, yes.
        Α.
             Do you have, like, a handbook you can review as
17
        Q.
18
   part of your employment?
19
        Α.
             I do not remember.
20
        Q.
             I'm going to show you -- well, I'm going to
21
   give you a document. Can you tell us what this is?
22
        Α.
             It's a portion of the crime lab division
23
   manual.
24
        Q. Are you --
25
                 THE COURT:
                             Have you marked this, Counsel?
```

MR. LANDERS: I haven't. I just want to 1 have him refresh his memory if that's okay. 2 3 THE COURT: You can but for purposes of the record, can you identify it as something? 4 MR. LANDERS: Sure. 5 Q. (BY MR. LANDERS) What do you call it? 6 7 Α. It's a portion of the crime lab division 8 manual. Q. And what chapter is it? 10 Α. Forensic disclosure and compliance policy. 11 MR. LANDERS: Judge, I think the State 12 might put this into evidence. I don't know if they just want to do it right now. 13 14 THE COURT: I want to make sure that the record clearly indicates if he's going to ultimately 15 testify about something, then I need to know what that 16 is, and so I don't really care how you-all mechanically 17 18 do it other than it reflects appropriately. 19 Q. (BY MR. LANDERS) Are you familiar with this 20 document? I'm familiar with the crime lab division 21 22 manual, but when it comes to this chapter, I might have seen it during my training. 23 24 Q. Okay. You don't specifically remember going

25

over this?

1 Α. Not off the top of my head. Q. 2 Okay. Judge, we'll not introduce it 3 MR. LANDERS: 4 at this time, and no further questions right now. 5 THE COURT: All right. I don't recall 6 which of you had this witness. 7 MR. FESMIRE: Yes, Your Honor. 8 THE COURT: Mr. Fesmire. Okay. Go ahead. DIRECT EXAMINATION 9 BY MR. FESMIRE: 10 11 Q. Zach, I want to ask you -- first of all, 12 Defense counsel went over some perceived issues with the chain of custody form from Stafford PD and the lab 13 14 submission form. 15 That had no effect on the reliability of your results in your testing, correct? 16 17 Α. No. 18 Q. I want to go through the cases with you on the 19 specific quality incidents. Starting with the quality 20 incident entitled Defendant's Exhibit No. 6, 21 QI-HOU-2022-0908-BA. 22 Α. Okay. 23 MR. FESMIRE: Your Honor, if I may, may I 24 approach the witness? 25 THE COURT: You can.

- Q. (BY MR. FESMIRE) I'm showing you what has been marked as Defendant's Exhibit No. 6. Now, in this QI you were -- and "QI" stands for quality incident, right?
 - A. Yes.

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- Q. Okay. In this QI you were notified by Sugar Land that there were unsealed blood kits that they received?
 - A. Not through this QI.
- Q. Oh, I apologize. Now, the crack in the blood tube, Defense counsel asked you if this incident was disclosed to the defendant whose specimen was involved in that QI, right?
 - A. I believe so, yes.
- Q. Okay. Now, if a QI is developed, is that your responsibility to disclose that quality incident?
- A. If it's set for trial and I'm having a pre-trial with the prosecutor, I would disclose it then.
 - Q. Or is it DPS's responsibility?
- 19 A. I would consider it more of DPS's 20 responsibility.
- Q. Now, in the case in which a blood tube was cracked, were you still able to test the specimen for that case?
- A. I was, yes.
- 25 Q. And when the Quality Incident Report was

```
issued, are you aware if that is -- when a Quality
1
   Incident Report is issued, are you aware if that is made
2
   available to the public?
        Α.
            Yes.
4
                   There's an open-facing website that
5
        Q.
             Okav.
6
   anyone can see, right?
7
        Α.
             I believe so, yes.
8
        Q.
             In which all finalized quality incidents are
   listed?
9
10
            Yes.
        Α.
            Was that available at the time of Mr. Momin's
11
        Q.
12
   trial?
13
        A. At the time of the trial, yes.
14
             Okay. And is that information, to your
        Q.
15
   knowledge, is that available on the lab report that the
16
   defendant would receive on where to find the issued
   quality incidents?
17
18
        Α.
             I believe so, yes.
                 MR. FESMIRE: Your Honor, may I approach
19
   the witness?
20
21
                 THE COURT: You can.
22
                 MR. FESMIRE: Excuse me.
                                            May I approach
23
   the bench?
24
                 THE COURT: Give me one second.
25
                 MR. FESMIRE:
                                May I see Defendant's Exhibit
```

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No. 5?
1
                 THE COURT: I don't have that one. I just
2
3
   have No. 4.
4
                 MR. FESMIRE: Your Honor, may I approach
   the witness?
5
                 THE COURT: Yes.
6
7
        Q.
             (BY MR. FESMIRE) I'm showing you what is
8
   marked as Defendant's Exhibit No. 5 on Page 2. The last
   paragraph on Page 2, could you read that?
10
                   In addition to this report, the lab
            Yes.
11
   maintains a complete case record which may be
12
   discoverable under Article 39.14 of the Texas Code of
   Criminal Procedure. A list of quality incidents
13
14
   involving the laboratory is available online at a
15
   website.
             Okay. And that is the DPS website, correct?
16
        Q.
            Yes.
17
        Α.
18
        Q.
             Okay. Now, if you still have Exhibit No. 6 in
   front of you, you can read your name under
19
   "collaborators." What's next to your name?
20
21
             Tifani Parker.
        Α.
22
        Q.
            And next to that?
             "Electronically signed."
23
        Α.
24
        Q.
             Okay.
25
                 THE COURT: Are you referencing No. 6?
```

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MR. FESMIRE: Referencing No. 6, Your
1
2
   Honor.
3
                 THE COURT: Hang on, please.
4
                 Okay. I'm sorry. Where were you
                Mr. Fesmire?
5
   referencing,
                 MR. FESMIRE: If it's easier, I can go to
6
7
   the Elmo to show the exhibits.
8
                 THE COURT: That would be very helpful.
9
   Thank you.
10
                               Judge, I apologize. I didn't
                 MR. LANDERS:
   see it. I didn't see the Elmo, otherwise, I would have
11
12
   done that.
13
                 THE COURT: That's okay.
14
                 MR. FESMIRE: While that's being loaded,
15
   Your Honor, could I also see State's Exhibit No. 4 and
   5?
16
17
                 THE COURT: They should be right there.
18
   That's all I have.
19
                 I was just verifying that what y'all were
20
   referencing was what I had in my own courtesy copies.
21
        Q.
             (BY MR. FESMIRE) Can you see that all right?
22
        Α.
            Yes.
            Okay. And just to verify, the last question I
23
        Q.
   asked you "collaborator," that's in the last section of
24
25
   the Defendant's Exhibit No. 6, correct?
```

A. Yes.

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- Q. Next to your name, there's Tifani Parker's name, next to that it says "electronically signed"?
 - A. Correct.
- Q. Okay. Now, are you the one responsible for issuing documents pursuant to a blood discovery order signed by a judge?
- A. No.
 - Q. That's someone else's job at DPS, correct?
- 10 A. Yes.
- Q. And were you personally aware of whether this document was included in Mr. Momin's blood discovery documents?
 - A. No.
- Q. Okay. You are aware, however, that this was issued at the time of Mr. Momin's trial? This was finalized?
 - A. This was finalized at the time of his trial?
- 19 Q. Correct.
- 20 A. This is the broken blood tube one?
- Q. No. The date of this incident is 09-08-2022 or September 8, 2022.
- A. Okay. What was your question again?
- Q. Are you aware if this was finalized at the time
 of Mr. Momin's trial in September of -- in August of

2024?

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- A. It was finalized before.
- Q. Okay. Now, I want to move on to State's

 Exhibit No. -- excuse me -- Defendant's Exhibit No. 8.

 Can you see that all right?
 - A. Yes.
 - Q. Now, you were notified by Sugar Land PD that there were unsealed blood kits in this Quality Incident Report, correct?
 - A. Yes.
- 11 Q. Your supervisor, Ms. Parker, was also notified?
- 12 A. Yes.
- 13 Q. By Sugar Land?
- 14 A. Yes.
 - Q. Now, what corrective action did you take whenever you learned about this incident?
 - A. As I stated earlier, I went to check any other cases that could still be at the lab that were a part of this batch. I had checked all the cases that were a part of this batch that were still at the lab and determined that the proper seal was not applied. After that I went back to the work list, as I had stated previously, to reach out to the other agencies that had evidence that was a part of this batch as well as Austin drug toxicology.

1 Are you aware if there was any damage done to Q. the tubes in this case? 2 No. All evidence was accounted for. 3 4 Q. Now, this Quality Incident Report wasn't finalized at the time of Mr. Momin's trial, correct? 5 6 Α. Correct. 7 Q. So it was not publicly available as we spoke about with the other Quality Incident Report? Α. Correct. 10 Now, this quality incident had no impact on Mr. Momin's specimen or the direct results of your 11 12 analysis in his case, correct? Α. 13 Correct. 14 Nor did it affect the accuracy of your results Ω. in his case? 15 16 Α. Correct. 17 Okay. Now, I'm going to move on to Defendant's Q. 18 Exhibit No. 9, and as was mentioned on direct, this 19 Quality Incident Report was just finalized today --Α. 20 Yes. 21 Q. -- correct? 22 However, it involves two incidents? 23 Α. Yes. 24 Q. Now, whenever an incident occurs do you write a

Lab 403?

A. Yes.

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- Q. Can you explain to us what a Lab 403 is?
- A. A Lab 403 is a laboratory information sheet.

 It documents and details something that happened in the lab.
 - Q. Okay. So it's a fairly general document. If something happens in the lab, that's your way to provide documentation for any other future cases or --
 - A. Yes.
- Q. Okay. Now, I'm showing you what has been marked as State's Exhibit No. 4. Can you read that?
- 12 A. The whole thing?
- Q. No. I'm just asking if you can read it from where you are?
- 15 A. Yes.
 - Q. Okay. And now this Lab 403 is for the Garland cases, correct?
- 18 A. Correct.
- Q. And you were working overflow for Garland whenever this occurred?
- 21 A. Yes.
- Q. Can you explain what it means to work overflow cases?
- 24 A. Working overflow --
- THE COURT: Counsel -- pardon me -- what

number is that? 1 MR. FESMIRE: That is No. 4, Your Honor. 2 Ι 3 can zoom out if you'd like. THE COURT: No, I can see it. Hang on a 4 second. 5 6 (Brief pause.) 7 THE COURT: Okay. Thank you. (BY MR. FESMIRE) Now, can you explain what 8 Q. 9 working overflow cases mean? So the Garland lab was receiving more cases per 10 11 month than they could release, so the Houston lab 12 insourced cases from the Garland lab to work to help with their backlog that was developing. 13 14 Does Houston ever have to send overflow cases Ω. to another lab within DPS? 15 16 Α. We have before, yes. 17 Q. Okay. Now, you had already tested a batch of 18 cases for the Garland lab when you were notified by the 19 Garland analyst that there was mismatched blood tubes to 20 a kit that he was working, correct? 21 Α. Correct. 22 And in a situation like this, what are you 23 supposed to do? What's your next step? 24 Α. In a situation like this -- as an example, what 25 I did, I immediately went to the refrigerator that the

- blood kit that was in question was stored in, I examined the tubes myself to make sure that he was telling the truth essentially, determined that he was telling the truth and that he was correct. I immediately took the case out of the review process, and I discussed further steps with my supervisor.
- Q. Okay. Now, after discussing further steps, you got the information for the agency that was involved, correct?
- 10 A. Yes.
- 11 Q. So the Lancaster PD?
- 12 A. Yes.
- Q. Now, is Lancaster PD an agency that you normally test cases for?
- 15 A. No.
- 16 Q. And you knew this was important because the 17 chain of custody may be affected in this case, right?
 - A. Yes.

- 19 Q. So you wanted to get --
- 20 A. Yes.
- Q. Now, had the results been issued in the case that you had tested?
- 23 A. Results for the --
- 24 Q. Had a lab report been issued for that case?
- 25 A. A lab report was not released.

- Q. Okay. It wasn't released to an agency, right?
- A. It was not, correct.
- Q. Were you able to remedy the situation and confirm the correct results before a lab report went out for the involved cases?
 - A. Could you repeat that?
- Q. Of course. Were you able to remedy the situation here and give out a correct lab report to the agencies for the involved cases?
 - A. Yes.

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- Q. Okay. So the individuals whose cases were associated with this quality incident still received accurate results?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Okay. To your knowledge, were those tubes switched prior to coming to the Houston crime lab?
- 17 A. The Garland case?
- 18 Q. Correct.
- 19 A. Or the Garland incident?
- 20 Q. Yes.
 - A. Yes, they were switched prior to lab submission.
- Q. Now, did this particular incident have any impact on Mr. Momin's specimen or the accuracy of your results in his case?

- A. It did not.
- Q. Now, I'm showing you what has been admitted as State's Exhibit No. 5 for the purposes of this hearing. Can you read that all right?
 - A. Yes.

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- Q. Now, this incident began when you were testing a specimen and you realized that the submission form for the case did not match the name of the blood kit and tubes, correct?
 - A. For the second case, yes.
- Q. Right. Now, before you tested this specimen, had the submission form already been scanned in to the case by the evidence-receiving department at DPS?
 - A. Yes.
- Q. So you, yourself, are not usually scanning in the submission form?
- 17 A. Correct.
 - Q. What system does it get scanned into?
- 19 A. It gets scanned into our LIMS database.
- 20 Q. And what does LIMS stand for?
 - A. Laboratory Information Management System.
- Q. Okay. And correct me if I'm wrong, another phrase you use for that is the JTrax system?
 - A. Yes, JTrax is short for JusticeTrax.
- Q. Okay. And JusticeTrax is your Laboratory

- 1 Information Management System? Α. 2 Yes. 3 Q. Now, when the case is scanned in by evidence receiving, this is how it receives its unique case 4 5 number? Α. Yes. 6 7 Q. I'm showing you what has been marked Defendant's Exhibit No. 4 on the second page. 9 Now, the label that states "Alcohol 10 Content" that's at the top right of this document, is that put on there by evidence receiving at the DPS lab, 11 12 to your knowledge? 13 Α. The "X" mark in the request box, is that what --14 15 I apologize. The label -- the label with Q. No. the title "Alcohol Content." 16 17 Α. Oh, yes. 18 Q. Okay. And that signature that is on this, was 19 it Saravith Vonne? 20 Saravith Vonne. Α. 21 Q. Okay. Could you say it again? Saravith Vonne. 22 Α.
- Q. And she's the evidence tech at the lab?
 - A. Yes, she is an evidence tech.

Q. Okay. Now, I'm showing you again what's been

marked as State's Exhibit No. 5 for the purposes of this 1 hearing. 2 Now, that physical submission form, I 3 guess, does not stay with you when you're analyzing a 4 batch, correct? 5 6 Α. Correct. 7 Q. Okay. But it's up to you to check the submission form to make sure it matches the blood kit 9 that you're testing? 10 Α. Yes. And to do that, you look it up in the JTrax 11 Q. 12 system or your Laboratory Information Management System, 13 right? 14 Α. Yes. 15 Q. Okay. And when doing this, you realized that 16 the case you were testifying did not match? 17 Α. Yes, for the second instance. 18 Q. For the second instance within this 403, right?

Okay. Now, at that point did you tell your

case number for the kit in your Laboratory Information

And Ms. Parker then told you to look up the lab

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

Α.

Q.

supervisor?

Α.

Q.

Yes.

Yes.

Management System?

1 A. Yes.

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- Q. Okay. And that case has already been tested?
- 3 A. The first case, yes.
 - Q. Okay. Now, had the lab report went out to an agency for that first test case?
 - A. No.
 - Q. So the review process for that was not complete?
 - A. Correct.
 - Q. Now, does the process of testing a blood tube end after you've completed your analysis or are there different phases to testing?
 - A. Could you repeat the question?
 - Q. Are there different phases to testing or does it end after the results are generated after your testing?
 - A. There are different phases.
- 18 Q. Okay. Could you go through the phases with us 19 briefly?
- A. Yes. The first phase is unassigned. So this is when evidence is being created -- or not created -- but this is when evidence is entered into the LIMS database. It's given the unique case number, information from the case is entered into the database.
- 25 Chain of custody is generated for it at the lab.

The next phase is assigned. So an analyst will assign casework depending on the discipline -- depending on the discipline. An analyst will assign casework to themselves, and this is the next stage of the testing process.

After that, it goes to findings entered.

At this stage the evidence will be in the analyst's custody, and at this stage information from the evidence is matched up to information on the submission form.

Any irregularities will be noted in the analyst's worksheet for that case. This is where the actual testing process occurs and this is also where the first part of the review process begins within the case's testing process.

- Q. Okay. And after findings entered, what would be the next step in the process?
- A. So after findings entered, after the analyst is done reviewing, making sure that all information is complete and accurate for the case, it will then enter draft complete.

At this stage of the process, the analyst believes that a -- the report is finalized and accurate for release, and it is at this part where another analyst peer reviews the case to make sure that all the information is accurate.

- Q. And after that step, the lab report is issued to the agency?A. No.Q. Okay. What's next?
- A. So after that step depending on if any corrections are needed, the peer review analyst will notify the analyst who worked the case and prepared it of the corrections that need to be done.

If the peer review analyst determines that this case is ready for release, it will enter the next phase which is technical review -- technical reviewed, sorry. At this point the next stage is where the final part is finalized and released and that last step is administrative reviewed.

- Q. So at this point on the 403 that we're currently looking at marked as State's Exhibit No. 5, you were in the draft complete stage?
 - A. Yes, the first case was in draft complete.
 - Q. Okay. And the second was in findings entered?
- A. Yes.

THE COURT: Was what?

MR. FESMIRE: The second was in findings entered.

Q. (BY MR. FESMIRE) Now, you reached out to the agency when you learned to submit new submission forms

for these two cases, right?

- A. Could you repeat that?
- Q. Yes. When you learned of this mistake, you reached out to the agency to get new submission forms for these cases?
 - A. Yes.

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- Q. Okay. Now, after that you were able to issue the correct lab reports?
 - A. Yes.
- Q. Okay. And it had no effect on the accuracy of the testing that you did; is that correct?
- 12 A. Correct.
 - Q. Okay. So these individuals whose cases were associated with a different specimen didn't receive the results for the other specimen. They received their results?
- 17 A. Yes.
- Q. Okay. Now, did this particular incident have any impact on Mr. Momin's specimen or the direct reliability of the testing that you did in your case?
 - A. No.
 - Q. Okay. Now, why did you choose not to share this information with the State prior to Mr. Momin's trial?
 - A. I didn't find it to be relevant to the case

that was going to trial. And during the pretrial meetings that we had, to my recollection, we did not discuss any QIs.

Q. Now, Defense counsel mentioned something on his direct, and I want to give you an opportunity to explain, during the James Brady Soape trial.

Would you care to explain your testimony in that trial?

- A. Yes. What part of the testimony?
- Q. I guess regarding the hidden element of the quality incidents.
- A. The hidden element of the quality incidents, he had really good wording. I will give him that.

THE COURT: He who?

THE WITNESS: The defense attorney.

- A. I should have used my words a little bit more properly instead of using the word "hidden." When it comes to the QIs, I didn't hide them because I had disclosed them to the prosecution.
- Q. Had you been aware that this was information that should have been disclosed, would you have disclosed it?
- A. If it had to have been disclosed, yes, I would have disclosed it.
 - Q. Okay. Now, I want to talk about working up a

case in actual blood kits to get results.

Now, whenever you are collecting a batch of specimens for testing, can you explain a bit about how that works?

A. Yes, so for the blood alcohol discipline at the Houston lab, the analysts assign cases to themselves.

Different disciplines have team leads that will assign cases to analysts, but for purposes of the blood alcohol section, we assign cases to ourselves.

We usually do it in tens, so every now and then on special occasions if a certain request is needed, we'll do a 10 batch, 20 batch. The most common that we do are batches of 30, and in the past we have worked batches of 40.

- Q. Okay. Now, whenever you're working up a particular case, do you keep notes while you are going through your testing process?
 - A. Yes.

- Q. What document do you keep that on?
- A. It's on the worksheet for that case.
- Q. I'm now showing you what has been marked as State's Exhibit No. 2 for the purposes of this trial. Can you see that?
 - A. Yes.
- 25 Q. Okay. On this document on the left column it

```
says, "Innermost Location of Subject Name." Can you
1
   read what it says to the right?
2
             "Specimen Container."
3
        Α.
        Q.
             And what does that indicate to you?
4
             That indicates the blood tube.
5
        Α.
                    Does that indicate that you were able to
6
        Q.
7
   locate the subject's name on that blood tube?
        Α.
8
             Yes.
9
        Q.
             Okay. Now, where it says the "Location of
10
   Innermost Seal," can you read what it says to the right?
11
             "Specimen Container."
        Α.
12
        Q.
            And what does that indicate to you?
13
        Α.
             The seal is on the blood tube.
14
        Q.
             Okay. Now, at what point in testing are you
15
   preparing this document?
16
             The point where --
        Α.
17
                 THE REPORTER: I'm sorry?
18
        Α.
             Were you asking what --
19
        Q.
             (BY MR. FESMIRE) Is it throughout testing?
20
        Α.
             Yes.
21
             Okay. Or is it when you're finished with
        Q.
22
   testing?
23
             It's both actually.
        Α.
24
        Q.
             Okay. So you're actively taking notes as
25
   you're working the case?
```

A. Yes.

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- Q. Okay. Now, on direct examination, again, a few weeks ago, you had mentioned that the lab submission form is not part of the chain of custody at the DPS lab; is that correct?
 - A. I'm sorry. Can you repeat?
 - Q. Of course. A few weeks ago you had mentioned that the lab submission form is not part of the DPS chain of custody; is that right?
 - A. I do not remember.
- 11 Q. Okay.
- THE COURT: Can you hang on a second? Are
 you referencing --
- MR. FESMIRE: I'm referencing his testimony. It's regarding --
- THE COURT: No, I understand.
- MR. FESMIRE: -- Defendant's Exhibit No. 4,

 18 Your Honor, the second page. I'll display it on the
- 19 screen.
- THE COURT: Okay. Thank you.
- Q. (BY MR. FESMIRE) Now, is the DPS lab submission form directly part of the chain of custody of a case?
- A. Not necessarily.
- Q. Okay. Because you have a separate chain of

custody; isn't that right? 1 Yes, a separate chain of custody compared to 2 3 the chain of custody for the police department. 4 Q. And now I'm showing you what is marked as Defendant's Exhibit No. 4, Page 3. This is the chain of 5 custody document provided by DPS, correct, to your 6 7 knowledge? Α. 8 Yes. 9 Q. Now --10 MR. FESMIRE: I'm sorry, Your Honor. Just one moment to pull up the --11 12 (Technical difficulties.) 13 (Discussion off the record.) 14 (Short recess.) 15 THE COURT: All right. We are back on the record in Cause No. 22-CCR-230111. Mr. Fesmire, you can 16 continue with your examination. 17 18 MR. FESMIRE: Thank you, Your Honor. 19 Q. (BY MR. FESMIRE) Now, Mr. Augustyn, before the 20 trial of Mr. Momin, Mr. Evans, you and an investigator 21 from the DA's office and myself went to view the blood 22 evidence stored at Stafford PD; is that correct? 23 Α. Yes. 24 Q. Okay. Now, are you aware that that was 25 videotaped by an investigator on his body cam?

1 Α. Yes. Okay. And when the blood evidence was brought, 2 Q. 3 you had an opportunity to open the kit at that time, correct? 4 Α. Yes. 5 6 Q. Okay. 7 MR. FESMIRE: Now playing what has been 8 previously admitted as State's Exhibit No. 1 -- excuse me -- State's Exhibit No. 1 for the purposes of this hearing. Playing from minute four second 32. 10 11 (Video played.) 12 Q. (BY MR. FESMIRE) Now, Zach, we were able to partially hear, but the seal that's on the blood kit at 13 14 that time that, that is the seal that you placed on the 15 kit after testing, correct? 16 Yes. Α. Okay. Had anything been altered at that time 17 Q. 18 to your seal? 19 Α. No. 20 MR. FESMIRE: Now playing from minute four 21 second 54. 22 (Video played.) 23 (BY MR. FESMIRE) And after reviewing the Q. 24 contents of the blood kit, you boxed the kit back up, 25 correct?

A. Yes.

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

10

11

- Q. After that the investigator from the Fort Bend County District Attorney's Office took custody of the blood kit, to your knowledge, correct?
 - A. Yes.
- Q. And you didn't touch the blood kit at any time until trial after that?
 - A. Correct.
- Q. And you noticed the Defendant's name on the blood tubes, correct, during your analysis at the Stafford Police Department?
- 12 A. Yes.
- 13 Q. Did it match the kit that you saw in this case?
- 14 A. Yes.
- MR. FESMIRE: Your Honor, may I approach the witness?
- 17 THE COURT: You may.
- Q. (BY MR. FESMIRE) I'm showing you what has been marked as State's Exhibit No. 8 for the purposes of this trial. Is that the blood kit of Mr. Momin?
- 21 A. It is, yes.
 - Q. How do you recognize it?
- A. I recognize it by the unique lab case number,
 my initials on the day I opened it and the initials and
 date when I sealed it.

```
1
        Q.
             Okay. And is that the same seal that you had
   at the time when you opened it at the Stafford Police
2
3
   Department?
        Α.
             Yes.
4
             Okay. Now, is Mr. Momin's name on the top of
5
        Q.
   that box?
6
7
        Α.
             It is, yes.
8
        Q.
             Okay.
9
                 MR. FESMIRE: At this time, Your Honor,
10
   I'll pass the witness.
11
                 THE COURT: Do you have any additional
12
   questions, Mr. Landers?
13
                 MR. LANDERS: Just a few follow-ups, Judge.
                 THE COURT: Yes. Go ahead.
14
15
                       RECROSS-EXAMINATION
   BY MR. LANDERS:
16
17
            Are you licensed by the Texas Forensic Science
        Q.
   Commission?
18
19
        Α.
             Yes.
20
        Q.
             Is that what allows you to testify as an expert
   for the State?
21
        Α.
22
            Yes.
23
             Okay. Is there also training and ethics as
        Q.
   part of you getting that license?
24
25
             Yes.
        Α.
```

```
1
        Q.
             Does that also include training on things like
   Brady versus Maryland?
2
        Α.
             Yes.
3
4
        Q.
             You discussed the Soape trial with the
   prosecution, correct?
5
6
        Α.
             Vaguely. I think I did.
7
                 THE COURT: When you say "prosecution,"
8
   Mr. Landers, you mean from Fort Bend County?
9
                 MR. LANDERS:
                               Correct.
10
             (BY MR. LANDERS) Earlier they asked you a
        Q.
11
   question about -- lying about hiding evidence from the
12
   Soape trial. Do you remember that?
        Α.
13
            Yes.
14
             Okay. And do you want to see your answer --
        Q.
15
   the question before --
16
                 MR. LANDERS: Do you mind if I approach the
   witness to show him his testimony?
17
18
                 THE COURT: Go ahead.
                 MR. FESMIRE: Your Honor, may I approach as
19
20
   well?
21
                 THE COURT: Yes.
22
        Q.
             (BY MR. LANDERS) Do you agree with me that it
   was your answer that suggested that you were hiding two
23
   quality incidents?
24
25
                                Objection, Your Honor, to
                 MR. FESMIRE:
```

```
1
   relevance.
2
                 MR. LANDERS: This is in response to their
3
   questioning.
4
                 THE COURT: So I'm going to overrule your
   objection, but I am going to instruct the witness not to
5
   answer that question as argumentative.
6
7
                 MR. FESMIRE:
                               If I may be heard briefly,
8
   Your Honor?
                Counsel is attempting to bring in evidence
   that he misstated --
10
                 THE COURT: I sustained the objection.
11
                 MR. FESMIRE: Yes, Your Honor. Understood.
12
                 THE COURT:
                             Thank you.
                                         Well, not your
   objection, but I told the witness not to answer the
13
14
   question.
                 MR. FESMIRE: Yes, Your Honor.
15
16
        Q.
             (BY MR. LANDERS) Do you agree that on
   October 23, 2024, in Montgomery County, Texas in a court
17
18
   of law you answered the question in this way, "The
19
   things that I was hiding I believe were the two quality
   incidents that I had disclosed to the prosecutor --"
20
21
                 MR. FESMIRE:
                               Objection, Your Honor --
22
                 THE COURT: Can you let him finish the
   question, and I'll entertain your objection?
23
24
                 MR. FESMIRE: Yes, Judge.
25
             (BY MR. LANDERS) Did you state that on the
        Q.
```

1 record on that date? 2 Α. Yes. Objection, Your Honor. 3 MR. FESMIRE: Hearsay. Counsel -- the attorney is testifying. 4 He's reading from a document not in evidence. 5 6 THE COURT: Do you want to respond, 7 Counsel? 8 MR. LANDERS: I'm asking if he made a specific statement that is different than what was just 10 discussed on cross-examination. The witness said he was 11 asked a question, but I just read his answer, and he 12 agrees that those were his words. 13 THE COURT: I'm going to overrule your 14 objection. 15 Repeat your answer, sir. 16 Α. Yes. 17 (BY MR. LANDERS) Okay. The Soape trial was Q. 18 with the same lawyer as the Monroy trial, correct? 19 Α. Yes. 20 Q. Okay. So the quality incidents from the end of 21 2023 and the beginning of 2024 were turned over prior to that trial, correct? 22 23 Α. Yes. 24 And do you agree that by not -- by not Q. 25 disclosing evidence in a timely manner showed bias?

```
1
                 MR. FESMIRE: Objection. Argumentative and
2
   relevance.
                 THE COURT:
3
                              Sustained as to argumentative.
        Q.
4
             (BY MR. LANDERS) You would agree that -- well,
   you're a scientist, correct?
5
        Α.
             Yes.
6
7
        Q.
             And what is the job of a scientist?
8
        Α.
             When it comes to forensics, the job of a
9
   scientist is to work in the realm of criminal justice
   through physical science background.
10
             Is it important to be unbiased?
11
        Q.
12
        Α.
             Yes.
13
             Is it important to follow protocol?
        Q.
14
        Α.
             Yes.
15
             And for your testimony to be admissible, do you
        Q.
16
   believe you need to follow the protocol?
17
                 MR. FESMIRE:
                                Objection. Calls for a legal
18
   opinion.
19
                  THE COURT: Sustained.
20
        Q.
             (BY MR. LANDERS) In these various QIs we've
21
   discussed, you would agree there was violations of lab
   protocol?
22
23
             Yes.
        Α.
24
        Q.
             As part of being unbiased, you shouldn't favor
25
   one party or the other?
```

1 MR. FESMIRE: Objection. Argumentative. THE COURT: Overruled. 2 3 Α. Could you repeat your question? (BY MR. LANDERS) Being unbiased means not 4 Q. favoring one party or another? 5 6 Α. Correct. 7 Q. Are there actions you've taken in your career that suggest you're biased in favor of the State? 9 Α. The State asks for my help more than the 10 Defense does. I would consider that possibly biased. 11 THE COURT: I'm sorry. You said, "I would 12 consider that"? 13 THE WITNESS: Biased. 14 Q. (BY MR. LANDERS) We've discussed the chain of 15 custody a lot in this hearing, correct? 16 Α. Yes. Okay. What is the reason for the LIMS system? 17 Q. 18 Α. The reason for the LIMS system in general? 19 Q. Right. 20 Α. It's a database that we use to keep track of 21 all the cases that flow in throughout the whole state. 22 Q. Does that system create a chain of custody report? 23 24 Α. It does, yes. 25 Why do we want to document the chain of Q.

custody?

- A. To be transparent with everything that happens with evidence in our possession.
- Q. And when you were discussing the February 2024 swap vials incident with the prosecutor -- do you remember that?
 - A. Yes.
- Q. And you mentioned that it's important to maintain the chain of custody?
 - A. Yes.
- Q. And that because of what had happened in that case, you had to remedy that situation?
- 13 A. Correct.
 - Q. Okay. And that was to sure up the chain of custody, correct?
 - A. Could you rephrase your question?
 - Q. Well, the remedy was to get the boxes together and to make sure the blood matched the boxes; is that right?
 - A. The remedy for the Garland incident, since one case had already been analyzed with a specific lab number, that result is associated with that lab number, so the chain of custody had to be corrected for that case.
 - The blood tubes did stay with the blood

```
kits that they were to make sure that there was no swap
1
   of chain of custody while they were in our possession.
2
3
                 Is that what you're asking?
4
        Q.
                     So the remedy was to basically fix the
   chain of custody, correct?
5
                 MR. FESMIRE:
6
                                Objection. Vague.
7
                 THE COURT: Overruled.
8
        Α.
             The fix for that was to make sure that case
9
   information between the two cases was swapped.
10
             (BY MR. LANDERS) To maintain the chain of
        Q.
   custody?
11
12
        Α.
             In a sense, yes.
13
             Related to the May incident, that involved
        Q.
14
   swapped submission forms, right?
15
        Α.
             Yes.
16
                   The first case that was tested, what
        Q.
             Okav.
   stage was that review process in when that error was
17
18
   caught?
19
        Α.
             It was in draft complete.
20
        Q.
             Okay.
                    So everything had been completed, it
21
   just hadn't been finalized?
22
                 MR. FESMIRE:
                                Objection. Mischaracterizes
23
   the witness's testimony.
                 MR. LANDERS: I'll ask a different
24
25
   question.
```

THE COURT: The witness can answer the question if you understand the format in which it was asked.

THE WITNESS: Yes.

A. So it didn't get to the technical review process. It was not yet retrieved by an analyst yet for review, but a final report was prepared for that case, the worksheet was finalized, but it had not gotten to technical review yet.

- Q. (BY MR. LANDERS) Okay. So had it been peer reviewed yet?
- 12 A. No.

- Q. Okay. Did you testify earlier peer review is different than technical review?
- A. No. I think I had testified that during the draft complete phase, a peer review analyst ensures that all of the information is accurate and true for that case.
 - Q. And when does that happen?
- A. That happens between draft complete and technical review.
- Q. So for the first case from the May incident, had the case been technical reviewed?
 - A. It was not.
- Q. Was it peer reviewed?

A. It was not.

- Q. Okay. For the second case, I'm talking about the same incident, you testified that it was findings entered?
- A. I had put it back in findings entered after I had seen the names didn't match.
- Q. Did you catch the mistake after your findings were entered in the second case as well?
 - A. Could you repeat the question?
- Q. When did you catch your mistake on the second vial?
 - A. So for the second vial, the unboxing process for that second batch, for that second case, was on 5-13-2024. That's when I had caught that during the unboxing process, so the stage of findings entered.
 - Q. Findings entered happened before any testing had been done?
- A. Findings entered consists of opening up the blood kit, comparing information between the evidence and the submission form. It also includes the testing, and it also includes my review.
- Q. Okay. Once again, the violation of protocol in May affects the chain of custody, correct?
- A. I don't know. It affects the submission forms, but I don't know if it affects the chain of custody.

- Q. I want to talk about the submission forms.
- Α. Okay.

2

3

5

- I'll try and use the Elmo if it's available. Q.
- Can you see that? 4
 - Α. Yes.
- This is Defendant's Exhibit No. 4 for this 6 Q. 7 hearing. Do you know what form I'm talking about?
- Α. 8 Yes.
 - Q. Okay. There's a barcode on this form, right?
- 10 Yes. Α.
- 11 Is this scanned -- this barcode scanned in the Q. 12 LIMS system?
- 13 Α. Yes, that barcode is scanned into the LIMS 14 system.
- 15 And that barcode, does it create an event in Q. 16 the chain of custody log?
- 17 So that barcode will take you to the case file Α. 18 in our system, from that case file you can then access 19 the chain of custody either through the evidence tab or the case info tab. 20
- Q. So do you agree then that the submission form is relevant to the chain of custody? 22
- 23 Α. It can be, yes.
- 24 Okay. And we've discussed problems with or Q. 25 issues with the submission form in this case, correct?

1 Α. Yes. Okay. As the State pointed out --2 Q. MR. LANDERS: I'm just going to show it to 3 him, Judge. 4 THE COURT: Okay. If you'll just make sure 5 you're referencing for me, please. 6 7 MR. LANDERS: Sure. 8 THE COURT: Are you still on Defendant's 4? MR. LANDERS: I'm still on Defendant's 4. 9 (BY MR. LANDERS) On the submission form which 10 Q. is Page 2, we've got a date of submission of what? 11 12 Α. 10-17-2022. 13 Okay. And that matches with the chain of Q. 14 custody report on the following page; is that correct? Α. 15 Yes. 16 What date does the Stafford Police Department Q. say they delivered it to the DPS lab? 17 18 MR. FESMIRE: Objection. Asked and 19 answered. 20 THE COURT: Overruled. 21 Α. 10-14-2022. 22 (BY MR. LANDERS) Okay. How many days of gap Q. 23 do we have there? Three. 24 Α. 25 Do we have any way of knowing in Mr. Momin's Q.

```
case where the blood vials were for those days?
1
            I do not know.
2
        Α.
                 THE COURT: May I ask for a clarification
3
   on the witness's answer? Is your answer, "I do not
4
   know," meaning, "I do not know the answer to your
5
   question, " or, "I do not know where they are"?
6
7
                 THE WITNESS: I do not know where they were
8
   before they had gotten to the lab.
9
        Q.
             (BY MR. LANDERS) Whenever Mr. Momin's case
   went to trial, how many Quality Incident Reports
10
   involving you had been issued?
11
12
        Α.
            Had been issued?
13
        Q.
            Yes.
14
            Only one.
        Α.
        Q. And that's the one from 2022?
15
            Yes.
16
        Α.
            Apparently we're being told that was available
17
        Q.
18
   on a DPS website?
19
                 MR. FESMIRE:
                               Objection. Argumentative.
20
                 THE COURT: Sustained.
21
        Q.
             (BY MR. LANDERS) Is it your understanding
   that's available on a DPS website?
22
23
        Α.
            Yes.
24
        Q.
            Okay. There was a litigation packet produced
25
   in this case. Are you aware of that?
```

- A. I believe so, yes.
- Q. Okay. Do you have part of it here with you today?
 - A. I do have part of it, yes.
- Q. Okay. Was the rest of it introduced at trial by Mr. Evans?
 - A. Yes.

4

7

10

14

20

21

22

- Q. Okay. The part you have today with you, any Quality Incident Reports in there?
 - A. No.
- 11 Q. Do you know if there were any Quality Incident
 12 Reports in the part introduced at trial?
- 13 A. No.
 - Q. You don't know or there were none?
- A. The only piece of the litigation packet that
 was brought into evidence was the worksheet and that
 doesn't have any QIs on it.
- 18 Q. Okay. So there was no -- in the litigation 19 packet there was no Quality Incident Reports?
 - A. No.
 - Q. Okay. And that litigation packet is what would have been given to Mr. Evans whenever he requested it through discovery?
- A. The discovery order is different than the litigation packet.

```
1
        Q.
             Okay.
             So the litigation packet is everything within
2
   the electronic case file along with my statement of
3
4
   qualifications and disclosure form of myself and the
   reviewer of this case.
5
             Your disclosure form at the time of Mr. Momin's
6
        Q.
7
   trial did not have any QIs listed, correct?
8
        Α.
             Correct.
             The two pending QIs, they weren't finalized at
9
        Q.
10
   the time of Mr. Momin's trial?
11
        Α.
             Correct.
12
        Q.
             Those wouldn't have been in any discovery
   provided to Defense; is that correct?
13
14
        Α.
             Correct.
15
             Are you aware of the outcome of the Soape case?
        Q.
16
                                Objection.
                                            Relevance.
                 MR. FESMIRE:
17
                 THE COURT: Can you reask that question,
18
   please?
19
        Q.
             (BY MR. LANDERS) Are you aware of the
   relevance of the Soape case -- of the outcome?
20
21
                 THE COURT: I'm sustaining that objection.
22
                 MR. LANDERS: Okay. No further questions,
23
   Your Honor.
24
                 THE COURT: I'm reading something. Just a
25
   minute.
```

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(Brief pause.)
1
                 THE COURT: Okay. Mr. Fesmire?
2
3
                 MR. FESMIRE:
                               No further questions from the
   State, Your Honor.
4
5
                 THE COURT:
                             Okay. Thank you.
                 MR. O'BRIEN:
                               To clarify, Your Honor, is
6
7
   the witness excused? Does the Defense have anything
   further?
9
                 MR. LANDERS: If we could hold on to him,
10
   Your Honor.
                Hopefully we won't be here much longer.
11
                 THE COURT: So, Mr. Augustyn, if you will
12
   just make sure that each of the parties have your phone
   number. It's the lunch hour, so if you want to not go
13
   so far away and have some lunch, if you'll just make
14
15
   sure they can access you pretty quickly.
16
                 THE WITNESS: I have my lab number
   forwarded to my phone, so they can just call me.
17
                                                      Ιs
18
   that okay?
19
                 MR. O'BRIEN: We have his number, Judge.
20
                 THE COURT: Thank you. All right.
   Mr. Landers?
21
22
                               Judge, that will be our only
                 MR. LANDERS:
             I'd like to re-urge a couple of exhibits
23
   witness.
24
   before we rest, if that's okay.
25
                 THE COURT: You sure can. Let me get a
```

little organization up here. 1 2 (Brief pause.) 3 THE COURT: Where are all of the admitted exhibits? While I thank you-all for the courtesy 4 5 copies, one of the things you did not do was mark -while you marked them with numbers, you didn't mark 6 7 which ones were Defense versus State, and so I'm looking at, for example, two No. 6's, two No. 4's. (Discussion off the record.) 10 THE COURT: Mr. Landers, you can -- you 11 indicated you needed to re-urge some matters. 12 MR. LANDERS: Right. Before our hearing started, we had attempted to introduce Defendant's 13 14 Exhibit No. 3 for this motion for new trial. That's the 15 affidavit of Morgan Bourque. I'm going to give you a copy, but it's -- paraphrasing, it's -- Mr. Bourque was 16 17 the -- and I've given a copy to the State --18 paraphrasing, this was the lawyer in Mr. Monroy's case, 19 and it explains how he received notice -- well, also in 20 Soape's, but he was the lawyer in the first case these 21 issues came up, and he explains some of the testimony 22 we've already gone over today. THE COURT: Can you pause for a second? 23 24 MR. LANDERS: Yes. 25 THE COURT: Was that the same attorney that Mr. Augustyn, in his previous testimony, said that he knew, that he had had some relationship with him?

MR. LANDERS: That's correct. He's the attorney in the Monroy -- after our case, the Monroy case happened, and then that Soape case happened. Both of those were in Montgomery County. They're both with Mr. Bourque. This affidavit, it is included as part of our motion for new trial. It's one of the attachments.

It discusses the circumstances of this being disclosed to Mr. Bourque right before his trial in Montgomery County, and it discusses -- it does discuss the outcome in a hung jury out there, and it discusses the importance of the evidence to Defense in that case, and I would note that -- I think we discussed this two Fridays ago -- the code does allow you to accept affidavits, if you wish, in lieu of testimony. So we would urge our Defendant's Exhibit No. 3 be entered into the record.

THE COURT: Thank you. Do you have a response?

MR. O'BRIEN: Yes, Your Honor. The State objects to relevance. While some portions of this affidavit may have some relevance, mainly the incidents or the actual disclosure mentioned on that lower part of the first page of Exhibit 3.

THE COURT: Are you talking about the first 1 2 paragraph? MR. O'BRIEN: Your Honor, the last three 3 paragraphs. 4 That's what I mean --5 THE COURT: MR. O'BRIEN: Yes. 6 7 THE COURT: But are you talking about the 8 first paragraph of those last three paragraphs? 9 MR. O'BRIEN: Just each of those 10 paragraphs. Your Honor, those -- while that's relevant 11 to understanding what was disclosed -- what Brady 12 disclosure was previously given and has high relevance to why we're here today, that is completely encapsulated 13 14 by Defense's Exhibit 1, and at this point would be 15 cumulative. 16 Regarding the rest of the affidavit, as it pertains to the Defense counsel of the case of Israel 17 18 Lee Monroy, opposing counsel has had the opportunity to 19 get into some questions and elicit testimony pertaining 20 to that, and the Judge gave them some leeway, however, 21 your previous rulings in regards to sustaining relevance 22 objections about the outcome of those cases, I think still applies at this point now, Your Honor. 23 24 Ultimately, while this attorney may testify 25 or given an affidavit about how that proceeding went, it

does ultimately come to a full outcome and conclusion as 1 to what happened, and so similarly I would object to 2 relevance on that basis, Your Honor. 4 THE COURT: Okay. Thank you. So with respect to Defendant's Exhibit No. 3, I do recognize 5 that it necessarily seems to contain that which would be 6 7 that I previously indicated as relevant as well as the mixture of that which I determined to be not relevant. Because I sit in this circumstance as the trier of fact 10 and of law, I believe that I can sufficiently fare it 11 out that -- clearly, I can't unsee what I've seen, 12 right, that's not a thing. However, I do believe that I can sufficiently not consider that which I have 13 14 determined to be not relevant. I've ruled that it's not relevant, and so my consideration of that is consistent 15 with that, that it's not relevant, and this Court will 16 consider consistently that which I have determined to be 17 18 relevant since redacting it out would make no sense 19 since you can't redact it out of my eyeballs. 20 MR. O'BRIEN: Understood, Your Honor. 21 THE COURT: So with that said, I'm going to admit Defendant's Exhibit No. 3. 22 23 (Defendant's Exhibit No. 3 was offered and 24 admitted into evidence.) 25 MR. O'BRIEN: And so, Your Honor, just in

```
regards to an official ruling on --
1
                 THE COURT: I just ruled.
2
3
                 MR. O'BRIEN:
                               The objection, Your Honor?
                 THE COURT: I'm overruling it.
4
                 MR. O'BRIEN:
                               Understood, Your Honor.
5
6
                 MR. LANDERS:
                               The next exhibit is one that
7
   we had previously attempted to admit. I'll give you a
   copy -- a courtesy copy.
                 THE COURT: Hang on. I'm making myself a
9
          Do y'all have a courtesy copy of 3?
10
   note.
11
                 MR. O'BRIEN: Yes, Your Honor.
12
                 THE COURT: May I have -- before we move
   forward, may I have a courtesy copy of Defendant's
13
   Fxhibit 3?
14
15
                 MR. O'BRIEN: I just have what was
   previously given to me.
16
17
                 THE COURT:
                             Thank you.
18
                 MR. LANDERS: Yes, ma'am.
                 THE COURT: Hang on one second.
19
20
                         (Brief pause.)
21
                 THE COURT: All right.
                                         Counsel --
   Mr. Landers?
22
23
                 MR. LANDERS: Judge, the next thing we have
   is Defendant's Exhibit No. 7 for the motion for new
24
25
   trial. Here's a courtesy copy for Your Honor.
```

```
THE COURT: And Defendant's Exhibit No. 7
1
2
   was also one that I previously did not admit.
3
                 MR. LANDERS:
                               That's correct. And briefly
   summarizing, these are jury questions from that same
4
5
   Monroy trial, and I'll tell you right now the reason we
   think it's relevant is we think it goes to materiality,
6
7
   whether or not this type of evidence that wasn't
   disclosed would affect the outcome of Mr. Momin's trial.
   We realize it's different trials, but what's interesting
10
   is the jury questions specifically --
11
                 THE COURT: Well, Counsel, I don't
12
   know that I need you to go into the content of it
   because that would defeat the purpose.
13
14
                 MR. LANDERS:
                               Sure.
                               If I may, Your Honor?
15
                 MR. O'BRIEN:
16
                 THE COURT: Hang on.
17
                         (Brief pause.)
18
                 THE COURT: Specifically, Counsel,
19
   articulate for me what the materiality is with respect
20
   to the issue of law, not that which the finder of fact
   would have made a determination.
21
22
                 MR. LANDERS: Well, I have to agree with
23
   you that materiality in this case is a question for you
24
   to make based on the legal standards. You know, you sat
25
   over the trial, you sat over this hearing, you got a
```

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taste -- although it might not have been as theatric as
1
2
   it might have been with the jury here -- we just wanted
   you to have the evidence, but the fact that the jury in
   this Monroy case are specifically asking about the
4
   analyst's testimony and these very issues and that it
   ends in a mistrial, we think adds credibility to our
6
7
   argument that this is material -- material
8
   misrepresentation -- material Brady evidence that was
   withheld in our case which Mr. Evans was deprived of and
10
   forced to trial.
11
                 THE COURT: So I don't believe the jury
12
   ever sits as the finder of law on issues of law.
13
   that reason, I'm going to continue to disregard and not
14
   admit Defendant's Exhibit No. 7.
15
                 MR. LANDERS: Could we keep that separate
   as an offer of proof?
16
17
                 THE COURT:
                             Absolutely.
18
                 MR. LANDERS: Okay. And do you want me to
19
   somehow note that?
20
                 THE COURT: That's between you and the
21
   court reporter.
22
                 MR. LANDERS:
                               Okay.
23
                 THE REPORTER: It's in the record.
24
                 MR. LANDERS: Okay. I'll keep them
25
   separate from the other -- I'll take this back and let
```

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me give you 4.
1
2
                 THE COURT: She'll still need it, though.
3
                 MR. LANDERS:
                               Okay. This is 7. My
   apologies.
4
5
                 And since we were here the last time, we
   have -- I don't know what exhibit I'm on. Am I on 10?
6
7
                 THE REPORTER:
                                Yes.
8
                 MR. LANDERS: We don't have a courtesy copy
   of this, Judge, but we have from the Soape case, which
   is the second case that's been discussed post
10
11
   Mr. Momin's case, it's entitled -- it's a file-stamped
12
   document from Montgomery County -- it's entitled "Motion
   to Dismiss," but it explains found not guilty by the
13
14
   jury. It's the exact same relevance as the last
   issue --
15
16
                 THE COURT: All right.
17
                 MR. LANDERS: So we think it goes to
18
   materiality that the jury in that case found the
19
   defendant not guilty.
20
                 THE COURT: Okay. I am not going to
21
   admit -- do you want to argue?
22
                 MR. O'BRIEN: I mean, I was going to object
23
   on the same basis of relevance. He's already just said
24
   the content of what it was without bringing it to you,
25
   but I'm sure Your Honor can decipher between the
```

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relevance of what it would be.
1
2
                 THE COURT: Thank you. I'm going to
   sustain that objection. Defendant's Exhibit No. 10 will
3
   not be admitted.
4
                 MR. LANDERS: And we'll just make an offer
5
6
   of proof on that --
7
                 THE COURT: Absolutely.
8
                 MR. LANDERS: -- if that's okay, Your
9
   Honor. And with that, we'll rest, Judge.
10
                 THE COURT: Thank you, Mr. Landers.
11
                 Mr. O'Brien, am I to assume that you're
12
   taking over now?
13
                 MR. O'BRIEN: Yes. I'll start with our
14
   first witness, Judge, whenever you're ready.
15
                 THE COURT:
                             Absolutely. I'm ready now.
16
   Thank you.
17
                 MR. O'BRIEN: The State calls Somiyeh
18
   Zalekian.
19
                 THE COURT: You may proceed, Mr. O'Brien.
                 MR. O'BRIEN: Thank you, Your Honor.
20
21
22
23
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1 SOMIYEH ZALEKIAN, having been duly sworn, testified as follows: 2 DIRECT EXAMINATION 3 BY MR. O'BRIEN: 4 Good afternoon, Ms. Zalekian. 5 Q. 6 Α. Good afternoon. 7 Could you please introduce yourself and spell Q. your name, please? My name is Somiyeh, S-o-m-i-y-e-h, Zalekian, 9 Z-a-l-e-k-i-a-n, and I'm the quality manager at the 10 Texas Department of Public Safety Houston laboratory. 11 12 Q. Okay. And you said you're the quality manager of DPS? 13 14 Yes, sir, the Houston laboratory. Α. 15 Q. DPS Houston. So how long have you been working 16 in that role? 17 Since November of 2020. Α. 18 Q. And could you a give brief description of what 19 your job would be as a quality manager? 20 Essentially I'm the quality assurance person 21 who basically runs the quality assurance program to 22 ensure that everybody is proficiency tested to ensure 23 that they're following policies and procedures, if there

are anything that -- any, like, quality incidents that

need to be written up, I'm basically over that,

24

basically any kind of quality.

- Q. So anything having to do with quality pertaining to the DPS crime lab?
 - A. Correct.

Q. Okay. You mentioned that -- I guess, first, one of your job duties was ensuring proficiency was clear across the scope.

Are you familiar with an analyst that works at DPS crime lab Houston named Zachary Augustyn?

- A. Yes.
- Q. Are you familiar with his proficiencies and whether he's up to date on them?
 - A. He is.
- Q. And in general what kind of proficiencies does that entail?
- A. So I have a DNA, so DNA has two proficiencies a year. There's firearms, they have some depending on what they're authorized in, trace evidence also has several, seized drugs has some, blood alcohol, basically every section.
- Q. Is it fair to say it varies based off the analyst or what role they have at the DPS crime lab?
 - A. It bases off of what their job is.
- Q. Okay. And are you familiar with what Mr. Augustyn's job is?

- A. Correct. Yes.
- Q. What is his job?
- A. He's a blood alcohol analyst.
- Q. Okay. So all of the proficiencies required for that position, he's competent and he's passed?
 - A. Yes.

- Q. Okay. Now, specifically you also mentioned one of your job duties was pertaining to quality incidents?
 - A. Correct.
- Q. Can you generally, I guess, describe for the Court what quality incident is?
- A. So a quality incident can be a nonconformance which is basically something that is where there's a potential policy violation or it could be an incident that occurred and we need a means of documenting what happened and that we've evaluated risk and so basically what we do is when something happens, typically the analyst will let their supervisor know, and then also let myself know and then depending on the situation, we would initiate a quality incident.

So basically the quality incident, the analyst at that point was pretty much responsible for adding the information into the quality incident because they have the first -- most of the firsthand knowledge, so that's in the documentation step and so once that's

done, then really their role is not as -- they're not really as involved. We need to edit something or correct something because at that point now we're looking at risk and that's more of a conversation between the supervisors, me and, like, the subject matter experts.

- Q. Okay. So I want to break that down just a little bit more simply. So in regards to, I guess, the purpose of quality incidents -- and correct me if I'm wrong -- it seems like it could have multiple purposes or benefits for DPS; is that correct?
 - A. Yes, it does.

Q. Okay. So does one of those benefits or purposes of the Quality Incident Reports just have to do with helping DPS run the labs as efficiently as possible? And I can rephrase that if it doesn't make sense.

What benefit do quality incidents provide DPS in regards to how things are done?

A. So the quality incidents help us track trends so we can -- so we can see if, like, there's a specific incident that keeps occurring. There may be -- at that point we may need to look at policy or may need to look at the practice either of the individual or of the section, but it also -- I mean, we also document --

like, if there is a nonconformance, we would document on that, but -- and then sometimes you might see a trend in, like, the specific nonconformance. It might not be an individual but just a specific nonconformance, and so at that time we might need to evaluate, like, that policy.

Q. Okay. Understood. I want to talk with you now more so about the different phases or stages of a quality incident and the generation of that report.

So can you generally describe, I guess, if it does have stages, what those might be?

A. So it has different stages. It starts off as initiation, so whoever starts the quality incident basically fills out a certain portion of it, they initiated the quality incident, and then it goes into the documentation step, and then the documentation step is where whoever is listed on it as a collaborator or as the quality manager or as the lab manager, whoever, we can all go in at that time and basically add any information that we need to, add any kind of documentation we need to and then once that is done, I will then send the -- I will then send it to a system quality analyst-- or a system quality assurance person who's -- most of ours are in Austin, they're not all in Austin, but basically they will take -- it's just --

- they're a set of eyes to look over and make sure we're
 not -- make sure we're not missing something, make sure
 we haven't gotten, like, you know, tunnel vision, and
 we're actually seeing the big picture. So once they
 look at it and they approve it, then it goes into the
 final review and approval step.
 - Q. And so, I guess, are you in charge of coordinating and running all of those stages of quality incidents?
 - A. Yes.
 - Q. Okay. And so is it fair to say each one of those stages are phases you would have some role in it?
 - A. Yes.

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- Q. Are you the one that ultimately finalizes and discloses the finalized Quality Incident Report?
- A. No.
- 17 Q. Okay. Who does that?
- A. That's another quality assurance specialist in

 Austin who actually reconciles the report and puts it on

 the public-facing website.
 - Q. But before that happens, are you the one that sends them that Quality Incident Report?
 - A. Yes. I try to be the final approver.
 - Q. Okay. So is it fair to say you're the final approval within DPS Houston?

A. Yes.

- Q. And then at that point you send it off to someone else to finalize and publish on the DPS website?
 - A. That's correct.
- Q. Okay. Now, previously you discussed risk level associated with Quality Incident Reports. Can you kind of generally explain what a risk level of a Quality Incident Report is?
- A. So we look at risk in the sense of whether it's a low risk, whether it's a medium risk or a high risk or catastrophic, and it's essentially -- it's -- there's not a hard true, like, this is the definition of, you know, as far as, like, this is what will always be a medium risk or this will always be a catastrophic risk. It's very subjective.

A lot of times it's based off of what was impacted. You know, if it's impacting a lot of cases, that's going to increase the risk. If it's something that, you know, it didn't happen -- impact on casework at all, but, like, it's an instrument -- the instrument, you know, malfunctioned or something like that, that risk may be lower. So it really just depends on the situation -- the totality of the situation.

Q. Okay. And when you say it's subjective, do you mean that you're the one that ultimately decides on your

own whim what risk level it's assigned?

- A. The risk level is typically a conversation between me and either the supervisor or the technical leader or the person who has the most subject matter expert (sic) essentially.
 - Q. Okay.

- A. So it's something that's collaborated on.

 Sometimes it is just me. Sometimes I'll assign risk.

 Sometimes I will ask -- I will ask for additional help
 from, like, my DNA TL or something like that.
- Q. Okay. Although a number of people collaborate, to your knowledge, do any of them or do y'all utilize any criteria that are assigned to you in determining what that risk level is?
- A. So there is, like, on our QIs workflow, there's, like, basically a chart, and so we look at it as far as the severity, and we look at as far as -- hold on. Let me think about it.
- Q. If you don't remember something exactly off the top of your head --
- A. I have it in -- I believe it's in the paperwork, and I did print off that chapter.
 - Q. Would it help you to refresh your memory if --
 - A. If that's okay.
- Q. Yes. Just don't read from the document. Just

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look it over and let us know whenever you're refreshed.
1
2
             If it's in here. So basically we're looking at
3
   the likelihood of occurrence, so how often it happens.
   We're taking that into consideration. We're taking into
4
5
   consideration any kind of adverse impacts that it might
   have, and so that chart is kind of how we -- what guides
6
7
   us to determine, like, what we say is an acceptable
   risk, or if it's medium risk or if it's something that's
   not acceptable, and, typically, if something is not
10
   acceptable, those are going to be our more -- those are
11
   going to be essentially what we consider significant,
12
   and so those are most likely going to be the ones that
   we have to disclose.
13
14
                 THE COURT: Which ones?
15
                 THE WITNESS:
                               The ones that are not
   acceptable at all.
16
17
                 MR. O'BRIEN: Are the exhibits up there,
18
   Judge?
19
                 THE COURT:
                             They are.
20
                 MR. O'BRIEN:
                               May I approach?
21
                 THE COURT:
                            You may.
22
                 MR. O'BRIEN: May I approach the witness,
23
   Judge?
24
                 THE COURT: Yes.
25
                 MR. O'BRIEN:
                               Thank you.
```

- Q. (BY MR. O'BRIEN) Ms. Zalekian, I'm handing you what's been previously admitted as Defendant's Exhibits 6, 8 and 9. Take a brief glance at those and tell me if you recognize them.
 - A. Yes.

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7

8

- Q. In a general sense what are they?
- A. They're quality incidents.
- Q. Okay. And who do they pertain to? Is there a specific analyst, I guess, that they pertain to?
- 10 A. Zach.
- 11 Q. Zach Augustyn?
- 12 A. Yes.
- Q. Looking first at the Defendant's Exhibit No. 6,
 take the defendant No. 6,
 take th
- 16 A. May I take time to look at it?
- 17 Q. You may. Yes, please.
- A. So this was a quality incident where we documented the instance where a blood tube was cracked that Zach was analyzing.
- Q. Okay. And then regarding Defendant's Exhibit
 No. 8, can you similarly briefly look at it and tell us
 what it concerns?
- A. So this was a quality incident where Zach inadvertently forgot to seal his blood kits after boxing

them back up. 1 2 Q. Okay. And was it a batch of about 30? 3 Α. Yes. Okay. And then similarly with Defendant's 4 Q. Exhibit No. 9, can you briefly tell us what it's about? 5 6 So this is the one that we just finalized. 7 This one is about -- where Zach was -- didn't recognize that the names on the blood tubes in two cases -- well, in one set of cases, and then it happened again a couple of months later that the name on the blood tube at that 10 point did not match what was on the submission form or 11 12 on the blood kit itself. Q. 13 Understood. Can I take those from you? 14 MR. O'BRIEN: Judge, may I publish these on the Elmo? 15 16 THE COURT: Please do. Thank you. Yes. 17 Q. (BY MR. O'BRIEN) So, Ms. Zalekian, you 18 mentioned that this most recent report, Defendant's 19 Exhibit No. 9, was just recently finalized, right? That's correct. 20 Α. 21 When was it finalized? Q. 22 Α. I approved it this morning.

Approved it this morning. Generally you

explained to us the different phases or stages of

Quality Incident Reports, how it gets generated.

23

24

25

Q.

long is that time frame?

- A. It's really dependant on what my availability is just because I have -- I'm the one who has to move it to the next step, but I'm also the one that is most likely going to get with the other personnel in the lab to actually sit down and start working on it, so it really just depends on what my availability is.
- Q. Okay. And specifically in regards to this most recent report that was finalized this morning, do you know about how long it took you to generate the report?
- A. I believe the first incident happened in February, so it was still open when the second incident happened. So we added the second incident on to the first, and it was finalized today.
- Q. Understood. Now, when you say "it's finalized," you previously mentioned that once you're done with it, you send it off to someone in Austin to officially finalize it and add it to the DPS website, right?
- A. It's a workflow, so it's an electronic send. I mean, we don't have to send anything. It just -- basically the documentation just goes into a reconciliation step.
 - Q. Okay.
- 25 A. And then the SQA individual can go to that

workflow and basically they just electronically move it onto the public-facing website.

Q. Have they done that yet?

- A. I don't think so. It normally takes a couple of days.
- Q. Okay. A couple of days. And when you're talking about the public-facing website where would, I guess, me as a prosecutor or a defense attorney be able to know about that website or be able to access it?
- A. So it's recently changed. So currently what you have on the reports is where it says where the public -- like, basically where the quality incidents are.
- Q. Wait a minute. So just to be clear, are you referring to the lab report?
 - A. The lab report, yes.
- Q. So the toxicology report that DPS sends back to, I guess, the prosecutor or the law enforcement agency for a particular case?
- A. Yes, that's correct.
 - Q. Okay.
- A. That was being placed on to the DPS

 public-facing website. We are basically migrating over

 to the Texas Forensic Science Commission website. So

 all of our quality incidents will now be on their

portal.

- Q. Okay. But so even with how it's used to being even with the new change, are all finalized Quality Incident Reports accessible to the public?
 - A. Yes.
- Q. Okay. Now, for the reason I came over here, I want to draw your attention back to Defendant's Exhibit No. 6. I believe you previously stated you looked over this, and this had to do with broken blood vials. Does that sound right?
 - A. Yes. Yes, sir.
- Q. Okay. Now, you've previously talked to us about the designation of risk levels. I want to draw your attention to the risk level associated with this report. Do you see it there?
 - A. Yes, sir.
- Q. And what is that risk level?
- 18 A. It says "low."
- Q. Okay. Looking over the risk assessment to
 yourself to help refresh your memory, if need be, can
 you explain to the Court why a low risk level was
 associated with this incident?
 - A. So the severity was listed as moderate, and the likelihood of occurrence was remote since that was an incident that hadn't happened for Zach.

So in that case that's why I determined that the risk level was low.

- Q. And as a risk level is low, is that something that you would ultimately put on a disclosure form?
 - A. No.

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- Q. And why is that?
- A. Because our disclosure forms have very specific buckets that something has to follow into before we put anything on the disclosure form.
- Q. Okay. And I think we'll get into those buckets, as you put it, in a moment, but before we do, I want to finish up with these exhibits.

I'm now showing you on the Elmo what we previously discussed, Defendant's Exhibit No. 8, and so similarly here, we talked about this one just now.

Does this appear to be the one that pertains to the unsealed blood kits?

- A. Yes, sir.
- Q. Specifically here there is also a risk level associated with this incident report. Do you see that?
 - A. Yes, sir.
 - Q. What is that risk level?
- A. It's also low.
- Q. Okay. And looking over the risk assessment there if you need to refresh your memory. Can you

please instruct the Court why a low risk level was associated with this incident?

- A. In the same instance where the -- since the severity was moderate and the likelihood of occurrence was uncommon, it kind of puts it in that acceptable range, so that's like the low risk.
- Q. And so given that it's a low risk, would it be something that you would put on a disclosure form?
 - A. No, sir.

- Q. And then finally I want to bring your attention to Defendant's Exhibit No. 9. If you recall, this is the one that has to do with the swapped blood tubes in blood kits that Zach dealt with?
 - A. Yes, sir.
- Q. So similarly I want to draw your attention to the bottom here. Do you see the risk level associated with this incident?
 - A. Yes.
- Q. Okay. What is that risk level?
- A. It says it's medium.
- Q. Okay. And if you need to, can you look over the risk assessment and instruct the Court as to why medium was associated with this case?
- A. So in this instance we considered the severity as a whole. So the severity was what was considered

- major, but the likelihood of occurrence was uncommon. 2 It has only happened twice, which in the grand scheme of things, it's not a lot. They see a lot of blood kits, they see a lot of blood tubes, and so because of that, 4 that kind of put it into the next level which I would 5 determine was -- which is actually a medium risk. 6
 - Q. Okay. And specifically for severity of major, why did it get major?
 - So the severity was listed as major because I looked at -- we look at -- well, I look at it from the stance of what happened versus essentially what could have happened.
 - Q. Okay.

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- So in this instance what happened was that the blood tubes did not match the submission form or the blood kits but that was caught in our review process. Had it not been caught in the review process and we issued a report, that at that point would have elevated the risk.
- Q. Is it fair to say the risk is ultimately elevated if it could potentially have an impact on the final results of a blood analysis?
 - Α. That's one thing, yes.
- Q. Okay. That's one of the, I guess, potential things that affects it.

```
Okay.
                         But, however, you mentioned that
1
   that was paired with the likelihood of occurrence being
2
3
   uncommon --
        Α.
             Uncommon.
4
5
        Q.
             -- right?
6
                 And I believe you stated that it's only
7
   happened twice for Zach; is that right?
        Α.
8
             That's correct.
        Q.
             And would those two incidents or the two times
10
   that it's happened be the two instances that are
   reflected in this incident report?
11
12
        Α.
             That's correct.
13
        Q.
             Okay. Has, to your knowledge, there been any
14
   other incidents or instances, rather, where police
   agencies have swapped blood tubes within blood kits?
15
16
        Α.
             That happens quite frequently.
             Okay. And so given that it's only uncommon for
17
        Q.
18
   Zach, has he caught every other instance in which they
19
   have been swapped?
                 MR. EVANS:
20
                              Objection.
                                          Speculation.
21
                 THE COURT:
                              Overruled.
22
        Q.
             (BY MR. O'BRIEN) You can answer.
23
        Α.
             To my knowledge, yes.
24
        Q.
             Okay. Now, we talked a little bit --
25
                 MR. O'BRIEN:
                                May I approach and put these
```

back, Judge?

2 THE COURT: Yes.

- Q. (BY MR. O'BRIEN) We talked a little bit earlier about disclosure forms. Can you briefly describe what a disclosure form is for the Judge?
- A. So a disclosure form is essentially what the department uses to communicate anything that might be exculpatory as well as, like, Brady material for the analyst -- involving the analyst.
- Q. Okay. And so when you say "exculpatory and Brady material," have y'all undergone certain training or certain lessons to understand what that is?
 - A. Yes, sir.
- Q. Okay. And to be clear, is it just random people within DPS that are setting criteria for what constitutes exculpatory or Brady evidence?
- A. No. This was all decided at levels higher than myself, involving the chief as well as our OGC, our Office of General Counsel.
 - Q. Okay.
 - A. So they vet that stuff as well.
- Q. And do you have any other personal knowledge of who else may be involved in that process?
- A. I think from what I remember being -- when it was explained was that they were also -- the time that

disclosure forms, when they started, there was an incident that happened in the Garland area, and so they also included some of the attorneys from the Garland area when they were basically first creating the disclosure forms and what those buckets were going to be.

- Q. Okay. And so when you were referring to these buckets, can you kind of in general describe what those buckets are?
- A. So there's very specific criteria. Basically if there is -- if there is an incident that involves EEO, so if there is a sustained complaint involving EEO, that is something that's going to go on a disclosure form.
- Q. And to clarify -- I don't mean to interrupt you -- what is EEO?
- A. That's our Equal Employment Office basically.

 So if it's a discrimination -- if it's a discrimination complaint, if we have a sustained complaint, basically a complaint of --
- Q. I think -- to cut you off there, perhaps this will help you: Do y'all have, I guess, a crime lab division manual that ultimately has certain selective criteria for disclosure of any incidents?
- 25 A. Yes, sir.

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1
        Q.
             Okay.
                 MR. O'BRIEN: Your Honor, may I approach
2
3
   the witness?
                 THE COURT: You may.
4
        Q.
             (BY MR. O'BRIEN) I'm showing you what's been
5
   remarked as State's Exhibit No. 11 MNT (sic).
6
7
   recognize this?
        Α.
8
             Yes.
9
        Q.
             Okay. Could you look through it briefly and
10
   then tell us in general what it is?
11
        Α.
             This was the chapter that I provided to you
12
   guys that discusses the disclosure form.
13
        Q.
             But what did you say it describes?
14
        Α.
             It describes the policy about the disclosure
15
   forms.
16
             Okay. And so in your capacity as a quality
        Q.
   manager at the DPS Houston crime lab, are you familiar
17
18
   with this portion of the manual?
19
        Α.
             Yes.
20
        Q.
             And do you use it regularly?
21
             Yes.
        Α.
22
             Okay. Would you say it's in the same or
        Q.
   substantially similar condition as the policies you've
23
   briefly reviewed within this manual?
24
25
        Α.
             Yes.
```

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MR. O'BRIEN: State offers to opposing
1
   counsel -- and I believe we're at State's Exhibit No. 9.
2
3
                 Sherri, is that right?
                 THE COURT: You said "11."
4
                 MR. O'BRIEN: I said "11" previously but
5
   Denver -- Mr. Fesmire corrected me that we may be at 9.
6
7
                 THE REPORTER: It would be 9.
8
                 MR. O'BRIEN: It would be 9, so apologies.
   At this point State offers State's Exhibit No. 9 MNT
10
   into evidence.
11
                 MR. EVANS:
                             No objection, Judge.
                             State's Exhibit No. 9 will be
12
                 THE COURT:
   admitted.
13
14
                 (State's Exhibit No. 9 was offered and
15
   admitted into evidence.)
                 (Discussion off the record.)
16
17
                               What's the policy number
                 MR. LANDERS:
18
   again?
19
                 THE WITNESS: The policy itself is under
   Chapter 33, and the specific policy that talks about
20
21
   what events would be included on a disclosure form is
   33.2 H.
22
             (BY MR. O'BRIEN) And just for clarity sake,
23
        Q.
24
   Ms. Zalekian, I'm going to have you use the exhibit
25
   we've just entered into evidence.
```

So if you could -- I believe you were just describing that there's certain selective criteria within that portion of the division manual. What are

- A. Those are the criteria to place something on an individual's disclosure form.
- Q. And are those the same things that you've previously referred to as "buckets"?
 - A. Yes.

those selective criteria for?

- Q. Okay. So now that you have that in front of you, if you need to refresh your recollection, look it over, and just in general could you kind of describe some of the instances that would dictate putting an incident on an analyst's disclosure form?
- A. So it would be sustained or founded by disciplinary actions, complaints against laboratory personnel, misconduct, allegations of falsification of government records, breaches of ethical standards, founded complaints of negligence or misconduct from the Texas Forensic Science Commission.

And then there are additional incidents which is if you're placed on a performance improvement plan, that goes on your disclosure form. If you have an unsatisfactory proficiency test, that would go on your disclosure form; unsatisfactory completion of a

competency test by a qualified employee; if the testing conclusion reported to the customer was found to be incorrect upon subsequent testing or mandatory retesting; a sample switch, if discovered after the results are reported to the customer; and then if we do a suspension for work -- a suspension of work for cause, that would also go onto your disclosure form.

- Q. Okay. And so I want to dial in on one of those that you mentioned there, 9 (e). I believe you stated, "A sample switch, if discovered after results are reported to the customer"?
 - A. That's correct.

- Q. And what is the reason for that one, I guess, as opposed to a sample switch that was discovered before results were sent to the customer?
- A. So essentially we have built into our practices reviews. That's basically levels of reviews, so you have a self-review, you have a technical review. A lot of times -- some labs have separate admin reviews where a different person looks at it.

So essentially -- you know, we're all human, and so we all make mistakes, so this is kind of like our catch. It's basically your safety net essentially to have somebody else review your work or you review your work, and at that time you can -- you

know, you might find that you made a mistake but you still have the ability to make the correction because we haven't published any results. We haven't sent results to the customer yet.

Q. Okay.

- A. So that's why -- that's not as significant as once we've already published it to the customer.
- Q. Okay. And so more specifically here as it pertains to Mr. Augustyn's disclosure, are you familiar with whether he has any disclosures on his disclosure form?
 - A. I believe he does not.
- Q. Okay. And is it fair to say that's because none of his conduct has fallen within these buckets or selective criteria that you've listed for us?
 - A. That's correct.
- Q. And so is it fair to say that he hasn't necessarily done anything within this criteria that would affect or reduce the reliability or accuracy of samples that he's tested?
 - A. That's correct.
- Q. Now, in regards to disclosure forms and quality incidents, now we know what may make a quality incident on that disclosure form, but if an instance where a quality incident is pending, even if it does maintain

this criteria, I guess would y'all disclose that?

Was that a clear -- did you understand that question?

- A. Are you asking me if it contained a situation that would have gone on a disclosure form but the quality incident was still pending?
- Q. I'll rephrase. So if a quality incident is pending, will it be disclosed either generally on the website or through a disclosure form?
- A. It will not be disclosed on the website because it's not a record yet.
 - Q. Okay.

- A. Depending on the severity, typically if we have a situation where there is an instance where we do have to put the event on the disclosure form, those quality incidents are prioritized so that we can get them done within a very short amount of time so we can disclose that information.
- Q. Okay. And you say if it has a higher risk level, you'll ultimately put it to the top of the cue, so to speak, to kind of turn it out quicker; is that fair?
- A. Not necessarily risk. If it's something that's actually where we have to -- we have to advise, like, our accrediting bodies.

```
1
        Q.
             Okay. And to be clear, did you have to do that
   in any of the three incident reports that we just
2
   discussed concerning Mr. Augustyn?
3
        Α.
             No.
4
             And to be clear -- I know you've previously
5
        Q.
6
   stated there was a Quality Incident Report finalized,
7
   well, finished this morning by you, right?
             Yes, sir.
8
        Α.
9
        Q.
             Okay. So even with the completion of that
   report, will Mr. Augustyn have any disclosures on his
10
   disclosures form?
11
12
        Α.
            As of right now, no.
13
                 MR. O'BRIEN: We'll pass the witness,
14
   Judge.
                              It will be you, Mr. Evans?
15
                 THE COURT:
16
                 MR. EVANS: Yes, Your Honor. Thank you.
   If I may have a minute, Judge?
17
18
                 THE COURT: Yes.
19
                 MR. EVANS:
                              Thank you.
20
                 MR. O'BRIEN: Your Honor, may I approach to
21
   put the exhibit back?
22
                 THE COURT: Yes.
23
                 MR. EVANS:
                              May I proceed, Your Honor?
24
                 THE COURT:
                              You may.
25
                 MR. EVANS:
                              Thank you.
```

RECROSS-EXAMINATION

BY MR. EVANS:

- Q. All right, ma'am. So you discussed your job duties with the prosecution. One of those is -- you said was following policies and procedures, right?
- A. Basically, yes. I have to ensure that policies and procedures are followed.
- Q. And how are you able to ensure that all of the analysts at the DPS are following the procedures at all times?
- A. So, I mean, essentially it's the honor system in the sense that the expectation is that if a mistake is made or a policy is not being followed, that that is told to a supervisor, and then it comes -- and then it will come to me.
- Q. Okay. So an analyst has to own up to it, right?
 - A. Yes, sir.
- 19 Q. They have to disclose it to someone else?
- 20 A. Yes, sir.
 - Q. So that someone else can make the decision about how severe that is, right?
- A. In some instances it's very clear if a quality incident will be done because there is a policy violation, and other instances it may just be -- it may

not necessitate a quality incident, but it just really depends on the situation. Every situation for our quality incidents are different.

- Q. So there's really not some hard definition of what rises to that level, correct?
 - A. That's correct.

- Q. All right. And ultimately you make that call; is that right?
- A. I make that call, but that call is also made in conjunction with discussion with, like, our -- the technical leaders or the supervisors or even, like, my supervisor depending on what the situation is, so it's not always just me.
- Q. Okay. If an analyst is making multiple mistakes, does that increase the risk when you're doing your analysis?
- A. It can but it doesn't always. It just really depends on what's being -- what mistakes are being made. Sometimes, you know, if you're making the same mistake over and over again repeatedly, that's a cause for concern, but, again, we all make mistakes. I mean -- and so our quality incidents are not punitive. They're not there to punish. They're there just to be as transparent as possible.
 - Q. But you would agree that with the form that

you-all are working with dealing with evidence in a criminal case, that mistakes are very important, right?

A. Mistakes are important, yes, sir.

- Q. And even though people can make mistakes, those mistakes in this situation can greatly affect someone's life, right?
 - A. It could have if it was reported, yes, sir.
- Q. If it was reported. So if it's not -- so if a mistake happens and it's not reported, then the Defense doesn't get a chance to bring it up in front of a jury; is that right?
- A. That's not true because a quality incident would still be done, and you would still have access to the quality incident.
 - Q. So I would have to go look and find that then?
- A. Unless you're just -- unless you send us a discovery -- a motion for discovery. If it says -- determining -- determined on what it says, then that's essentially what we will provide.
- Q. Okay. So on the agreed order -- there is a discovery order that's used in most cases around the Houston area, right?
 - A. I believe so.
- Q. One that's got the same language throughout -- that's used by the Defense and the prosecution, right?

- A. I don't really deal with the discovery orders, but I believe there's something pretty similar to each other that's being used.
- Q. Okay. And quality incidents would be included in that kind of discovery order, right?
 - A. It depends on how it's asked.
 - Q. Okay.

A. Typically we give you quality incidents that are involved in the case regardless. If it's part of the case and that case is involved in a quality incident, when you get the litigation packet, we will also provide that information. If the quality incident is completed at that time, then you will also get the quality incident.

If you ask specifically for quality incidents involving an analyst, then we will give you the quality incidents specifically involving the analyst. If you ask for quality incidents involving the discipline, then that's going to be a different set, so it really just depends on what you're asking for.

- Q. Okay. If a prosecutor asks about quality incidents, is the analyst suppose to turn those over?
- A. It depends on what the prosecutor is asking for. If they're asking for a quality incident involving the case, then, yes.

Q. Okay. But if they're just generically asking for any quality incidents, should an analyst turn that over, whether or not they're on the disclosure form or not?

- A. I can't definitively say yes or no because sometimes when you're talking to the prosecutor, they're asking of quality incidents, but through the conversation you know that they're asking for what pertains to that specific case. So the analyst may only say, no, there was not a quality incident because there's not a quality incident with that case.
- Q. So if the prosecutor doesn't ask the right question the right way, then the analyst doesn't turn it over?
- A. I mean, basically, yeah. The quality incidents are on the public-facing website, so they are attainable. So, really, as far as discovery orders go, I mean, the analyst might ask, you know, do you want all of our quality incidents, do you want all of the ones I've been involved in, they can ask those questions as well, but if they're just asked if this case was involved in a quality incident and if it wasn't, then they would say, no.
- Q. The quality incidents that are online on the DPS website, do those -- the ones that are not included

on a disclosure form, okay, do those contain the name of 1 the analyst? 2 Α. No. 3 Q. No. So how is a defense attorney suppose to 4 determine whether or not an analyst has a quality 5 6 incident that they were involved in --7 MR. O'BRIEN: Objection --8 Q. (BY MR. EVANS) -- without having a name to 9 connect it to an analyst? 10 I'm sorry. I thought he was MR. O'BRIEN: 11 done. Objection. Speculation. 12 THE COURT: Overruled. I can't answer that. As far as by our policy, 13 Α. 14 we don't associate names on the -- like, on the actual record and when we put them on the portal. That might 15 change because now we're putting it on the Forensic 16 Science Commission's portal, but I don't know yet. I 17 18 mean, all that is new, but currently the way we do it in 19 DPS for the DPS public-facing website, we don't include 20 names. 21 Q. (BY MR. EVANS) Okay. So you've just discussed the Texas Forensic Science Commission website. You're 22 familiar with that website? 23 24 Α. Yes, somewhat. I'm pretty familiar with it,

but I'm not going to be able to tell you anything

```
specifically unless I'm really looking at it.
1
             Okay. Are you familiar with the training and
2
3
   testing that has to go on for an analyst to get licensed
   with the Texas Forensic Science Commission?
4
        Α.
             Yes.
5
6
        Q.
             Okay. Are you aware that an analyst has to
7
   take a legal and professional responsibility course --
        Α.
             Yes.
8
        Q.
             -- before being licensed?
10
             Yes.
        Α.
11
                 MR. EVANS: Your Honor, may I approach the
12
   witness?
                 THE COURT: You may.
13
14
        Q.
             (BY MR. EVANS)
                             I'm handing you what's been
15
   marked as Defendant's Exhibit No. 11. Does this appear
16
   to be a document from the Texas Forensic Science
17
   Commission website?
18
        Α.
             Yes, sir.
19
        Q.
             And do you see that there is a URL there for
   the Texas Forensic Science Commission website?
20
21
        Α.
             Yes, sir.
22
             Okay. And does this appear to be a page where
        Q.
   you can begin taking the Texas Forensic Science
23
```

Commission legal and professional responsibility course?

I don't know because I don't have to do this,

24

25

Α.

```
so I don't typically get on the website for this
1
2
   specific thing, and it's been a long time since I've
   been licensed, so unless I can pull up the website, I
   can't confirm that this is exactly what's on there.
4
5
        Q.
            Okay. Have you been -- have you taken the
6
   licensing test?
7
        Α.
            When I first started, yes, sir.
8
        Q.
            Okay. So you took a course for legal and
9
   professional responsibility?
10
            Yes, sir, when I tested.
11
        Q.
            All right. Does it appear that anything on
12
   this document has been altered or deleted?
13
        Α.
            Not that I can tell.
14
                 MR. EVANS: Tendering to opposing counsel
   Defendant's Exhibit No. 11.
15
                 MR. O'BRIEN:
16
                               No objection, Judge.
17
                 THE COURT: Defendant's Exhibit No. 11 will
18
   be admitted.
19
                 MR. EVANS:
                             Thank you, Judge.
                 (Defendant's Exhibit No. 11 was offered and
20
21
   admitted into evidence.)
22
                 MR. EVANS:
                             Okay. May I publish, Judge?
                 THE COURT: You may.
23
24
        Q.
             (BY MR. EVANS) Okay. Can you see that okay
25
   where you're at?
```

A. Yes.

1

2

4

5

6

7

9

14

18

- Q. All right. So looking at the Defendant's Exhibit No. 11, we see that this is a mandatory course for -- to obtain your license as a forensic analyst or technician, correct?
 - A. Yes, sir.
- Q. And part of that -- part of that testing covers topics such as Brady and the Michael Morton Act, correct?
- 10 A. Yes, sir.
- Q. Ethical responsibilities as outlined in the
 Texas Code of Professional Responsibility for Forensic
 Analysts?
 - A. Yes, sir.
- Q. And all analysts are required to take this
 course once each license cycle for the renewal of their
 license, right?
 - A. Yes, sir.
- Q. Okay. And then we see there is an access link under "Course Registration" where they can take the test; is that right?
 - A. I don't see the link.
- Q. Under "Course Registration," it says, "TopClass Account Registration" --
- 25 A. Yes, sir, I see the link now.

```
Q.
             Okay. So this would be where an analyst would
1
   go to take this test, correct?
2
             Yes, sir.
3
        Α.
        Q.
             Okay.
4
5
                 MR. EVANS: May I approach the witness?
                 THE COURT: Yes.
6
7
        Q.
             (BY MR. EVANS) All right, ma'am. I'm handing
   you what's been marked as Defendant's Exhibit No. 12.
   Now, do you see on this document that it's got the Texas
10
   Forensic Science Commission seal?
            Yes, sir.
11
        Α.
12
             Okay. And at the top here can you see that
        Q.
   this is the Legal Disclosure and Professional
13
14
   Responsibility test?
15
             I see that it says, "Legal Disclosure and
   Professional Responsibility," but I --
16
17
                 THE COURT: And if I can ask the both of
18
   you if you'll please keep your voices up just a little
19
   bit.
20
                 THE WITNESS:
                                Sorry.
                 MR. EVANS: Yes, Your Honor.
21
22
                 THE COURT:
                             Thank you.
23
             I see that it says, "Legal Disclosure and
24
   Professional Responsibility," but I don't know that
25
   that's what the test looks like.
```

- Q. (BY MR. EVANS) Does it appear that this is a screenshot of the Legal Disclosure and Professional Responsibility course from the Texas Forensic Science Commission?
- A. Again, I don't deal with the actual licensing as far as what the Forensic Science Commission is doing, so I don't actually take part in what this looks like, so unless I could log in and look, I can't confirm that, yes, that is exactly what it looks like. I haven't seen that in a very long time.
- Q. When was the last time you renewed your license?
- 13 A. I don't -- I'm not licensed currently.
- 14 Q. Okay. But you're familiar with the licensing 15 process, right?
- 16 A. I am, but this has changed since I've taken the 17 test.
- 18 Q. Now, you're the quality assurance manager at 19 DPS Houston, correct?
 - A. The licensing by the Forensic Science
 Commission is different.
 - Q. I'm asking if you're the --
- 23 A. Yes.

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

10

11

12

20

21

22

- Q. -- quality assurance manager, correct?
- 25 A. Yes.

```
Q.
            Okay. And you have been trained on Brady and
1
   the Michael Morton Act and all those other laws that
2
   were listed on Defendant's Exhibit No. 11, correct?
        Α.
            Yes.
4
5
        Q.
            And so are you saying that you're not familiar
   with the licensing requirements with the Texas Forensic
6
7
   Science Commission?
8
        Α.
            No, sir. I am familiar with the licensing
   requirements. I'm not familiar with what the website
10
   looks like as far as when you get into the test.
11
        Q.
            Okav.
12
                 MR. EVANS: Just a moment, Judge.
        Q.
             (BY MR. EVANS)
                             Do you recall --
13
14
                 THE COURT: Hold on one second.
15
                         (Brief pause.)
16
                 THE COURT: We're going to take about a
   15-, 20-minute break unless you have -- unless you're
17
18
   winding up with this witness. We've been going about an
19
   hour and 20 minutes.
20
                 MR. EVANS:
                             I've --
21
                 THE COURT:
                             No. We've been collectively
22
   going for about an hour and 20 minutes, and I want to be
   courteous to the court reporter.
23
24
                 MR. EVANS:
                             Sure. Absolutely, Judge.
25
                 THE COURT:
                             So I'm saying if you just have,
```

```
you know, 10 or 15 more minutes, we may be okay, but I'm
1
2
   not rushing you. I'm saying if you're going to be
   longer, that's okay. Let's just take a little break.
3
4
                 MR. LANDERS: Whatever you want to do,
   Judge. I don't think we have much longer --
5
6
                 MR. EVANS: -- with this witness.
7
                 THE COURT: Why don't we go ahead and just
8
   take a break so that you-all can have an accurate
9
   record.
10
                        (Short recess.)
                 THE COURT: We're back on the record in
11
12
   Cause No. 22-CCR-230111. Mr. Evans, you may continue
   with your examination of the witness.
13
14
                 MR. EVANS: Thank you, Your Honor.
15
             (BY MR. EVANS) Earlier on direct you were
        Q.
16
   discussing --
17
                 THE COURT:
                             And, Mr. Evans, if you will
18
   make sure to turn on your microphone.
19
                 MR. EVANS:
                             Is that better, Judge?
                 THE COURT: Much better.
20
21
        Q.
             (BY MR. EVANS) Earlier in your testimony you
22
   discussed disclosures and who is required to report any
   sort of disclosures; is that right?
23
24
        Α.
            Yes. We talked about what requirements go on
25
   or what instances would go on a disclosure form.
```

```
1
        Q.
            Okay. On a disclosure form. And it's the
   employee's responsibility to disclose any items that
2
   relate to their credibility as a witness; is that right?
3
        Α.
4
            Yes.
                    So if there had been instances where
5
        Q.
6
   they testified one way and testified differently in
7
   another proceeding, that could call their credibility
   into question, right?
9
                 MR. O'BRIEN: Objection. Calls for
10
   speculation.
11
                 THE COURT: I'm going to sustain that
12
   objection.
13
        Q.
             (BY MR. EVANS) If a witness testifies
14
   differently under oath in two different proceedings, in
15
   your opinion, would that call their credibility into
16
   question?
17
                               Objection. Calls for
                 MR. O'BRIEN:
18
   speculation.
19
                 THE COURT: I'm going to overrule that
20
   objection, but it's not relevant and so don't answer
21
   that question.
22
                 THE WITNESS: Yes, ma'am.
23
                 THE COURT:
                             Thank you.
24
        Q.
             (BY MR. EVANS) All right. Going back to the
25
   QI for the two incidents this year, the swapping
```

incidents, you first learned about that in the first incident in February; is that right?

A. Yes, sir.

- Q. And then an investigation began at that point into determining whether or not there was a quality incident?
- A. Yes, sir. It was pretty -- it's kind of almost instantaneous. When I find out what happened, I make the decision at that point essentially if we're going to do a quality incident, and so once I found out -- once they told me what happened, I told them to go ahead and initiate a quality incident.
- Q. Okay. So it wasn't a question of whether or not there was going to be a quality incident, it was when you were going to finish that report?
- A. Correct. The finishing and the completeness of the quality incident is really based off of my availability.
- Q. Gotcha. And so during your investigation of this incident, of the swapping incident, another incident occurred just a couple of months later; is that right?
 - A. That's correct.
- Q. And that -- so you decided to just add that into the same quality incident that you were already

investigating, right?

- A. Correct, because they were very similar.
- Q. Okay. And it wasn't until eight months later that you concluded that investigation and finalized your report; is that right?
 - A. Yes, sir. We just finished it.
- Q. And you said that you can essentially move up quality incidents in the order that you're taking them if they seem more significant than others, right?
- A. Yes, especially if they are significant in the sense that we have to disclose it to the accrediting bodies. So we do try to get those done as soon as possible because those are discussed during the commission meetings.
- Q. All right. And the determination of the level or what bucket it falls into is just a subjective opinion of yours, right?
- A. So when I was -- when I was talking about the buckets, that's more for like the disclosure form, so that is pretty -- it's set, but as far as the severity level, that's typically -- that's my decision along with the supervisors or my supervisors, depending on if I need additional help with that.
- Q. Okay. But the severity level on this last QI with the swapping vials, you determined that was severe,

```
right, or major?
1
        Α.
             Yes.
2
             And during the last eight or nine months while
        Q.
3
   this investigation was going on, Mr. Augustyn has been
4
   testifying in trials; is that correct?
5
             That's correct.
6
        Α.
7
        Q.
             Multiple trials, right?
8
        Α.
             I'm not sure how many trials he's been in.
9
        Q.
             Has he left the office to testify?
10
             I have seen him leave the office at least a
11
   couple of times to testify but that's just because my
12
   office is right there, but I don't know what their
   schedules are.
13
14
             All right. And how many analysts are there
        Q.
   right now that testify for DPS?
15
16
             We have over 70 personnel in the lab.
        Α.
             Specific to alcohol?
17
        Q.
18
        Α.
             Oh, to alcohol?
19
        Q.
             Right.
20
        Α.
             There are four if you include the supervisor.
21
        Q.
                    So three really that are on the line
22
   that are doing the analyses day in and day out?
```

And those are the three that go to testify in

That's correct.

court if there's a trial?

23

24

25

Α.

Q.

```
1
        Α.
            That's correct, and we have one in training.
        Q.
2
            Okay.
                 MR. EVANS: Your Honor, may I approach the
3
   witness?
4
                 THE COURT: You may.
5
                 MR. EVANS:
                             Your Honor, may I approach?
6
7
                 THE COURT: Yes.
8
        Q.
             (BY MR. EVANS) Ma'am, I'm handing you what's
   been marked as Defendant's Exhibit No. 13. Do you
9
10
   recognize this?
        A. Yes, sir.
11
12
        Q.
            What is it?
            It's the chapter for Nonconforming Work out of
13
        Α.
   the crime lab.
14
15
                 THE COURT: I can't hear you. The chapter
16
   for what?
17
                 THE WITNESS: I'm sorry. It's the chapter
18
   for Nonconforming Work out of our crime lab division
19
   manual.
20
        Q.
             (BY MR. EVANS) Okay. And I'm also handing you
   what's been previously marked as Defendant's
21
   Exhibit No. 14. Do you recognize that?
22
            Yes, sir.
23
        Α.
            And what is it?
24
        Ο.
25
            It's the chapter for Risks, Opportunities, and
        Α.
```

```
1
   Improvements.
2
        Q.
             Is that part of the crime laboratory division
   manual as well?
3
4
        Α.
            Yes, sir.
5
        Q.
             And is this something that you rely on in your
   job?
6
7
            Yes, sir.
        Α.
             You're familiar with these?
8
        Q.
             Yes, sir.
9
        Α.
10
             Okay. Is there -- as far as you can tell, is
        Q.
11
   there anything that's been altered or deleted off these?
12
        Α.
             No, sir.
             Okay.
13
        Q.
14
                 MR. FVANS:
                              Defense moves to enter
15
   Defendant's Exhibit Nos. 13 and 14 and opposing counsel
16
   has already reviewed them.
17
                                No objection, Judge.
                 MR. O'BRIEN:
18
                 THE COURT: Defendant's Exhibit Nos. 13 and
19
   14 will be admitted.
20
                  (Defendant's Exhibit Nos. 13 and 14 were
21
   offered and admitted into evidence.)
22
                 THE COURT: Are you going to ask about
23
   those, Mr. Evans?
24
                 MR. EVANS: No, Your Honor. I just wanted
25
   to make those part of the record.
```

```
Q.
             (BY MR. EVANS) Okay. I want to go back to the
1
   Chapter 33, the Forensic Disclosure and Compliance
2
            Do you have a copy of that with you?
3
   Policy.
        Α.
            Yes.
4
             Okay. So I'm referring to State's Exhibit
5
        Q.
   No. 9 and are you familiar with Section 33.3, Notice of
6
7
   Third-Party Action?
8
        Α.
             Yes, sir.
             And as part of your policy there, isn't it true
   that a judge or an attorney may take action that
10
11
   requires subsequent disclosure even though the event
12
   falls outside the personnel-specific disclosure
   requirements?
13
14
             Yes, sir.
        Α.
15
             Okay.
                    But a judge or an attorney can only make
16
   those disclosures if they know about the information,
17
   right?
18
        Α.
             I would assume so, yes.
19
                 MR. EVANS:
                              I'll pass the witness, Judge.
20
                 THE COURT:
                             Do you have any additional
21
   questions?
22
                 MR. O'BRIEN:
                                Nothing further. We'd ask
23
   that this witness be excused.
24
                 THE COURT:
                             Thank you.
25
                 MR. EVANS:
                             No objection from Defense.
```

```
THE COURT: Thank you. You may be excused,
1
   but you remain under the rule until these proceedings
2
   have ended.
                 THE WITNESS: Yes, ma'am.
4
                 THE COURT: Thank you so much. Are y'all
5
   letting her go?
6
7
                 MR. O'BRIEN: Yes, Judge.
                 MR. EVANS: Yes.
8
9
                 THE COURT: You may call your next witness.
10
                 MR. FESMIRE: At this time, Your Honor, the
   State calls Tifani Parker.
11
12
                 MR. O'BRIEN: I can go grab her real quick.
13
                 THE COURT: The bailiff can do it.
14
                 Hi, Ms. Parker.
                 THE WITNESS:
15
                               Ηi.
                 MR. FESMIRE: May I proceed?
16
                 THE COURT: Yes.
17
18
                 MR. FESMIRE: Thank you, Your Honor.
19
                         TIFANI PARKER,
20
   having been duly sworn, testified as follows:
21
                       DIRECT EXAMINATION
   BY MR. FESMIRE:
22
            Could you please introduce yourself to the
23
        Q.
   Court?
24
25
                  My name is Tifani Parker, T-i-f-a-n-i,
        Α.
            Yes.
```

```
P-a-r-k-e-r.
1
            And, Ms. Parker, what are your -- what is your
2
   -- first of all, where do you work?
3
             I work for the Texas Department of Public
4
        Α.
   Safety crime lab in Houston.
5
             Okay. And what's your position there?
6
        Q.
7
        Α.
             I am the toxicology section supervisor.
8
        Q.
             And what are your duties as the section
9
   supervisor for toxicology?
10
            As a supervisor I can still review cases.
11
   continue to work cases. I conduct section meetings.
                                                            Ι
12
   review discovery orders. I maintain, like, case
13
   assignments and make sure cases are getting out in a
   timely manner.
14
15
             And how long have you been in that position?
        Q.
16
             Over four and a half years.
        Α.
17
             And did you work with the crime lab prior to
        Q.
18
   that?
19
        Α.
             Yes.
20
        Q.
             And what was your position then?
21
             I was a forensic scientist.
        Α.
22
        Q.
             Okay. And that's what Mr. Augustyn is
   currently, right?
23
        Α.
             That is correct.
24
```

Okay. And are you Mr. Augustyn's direct

25

Q.

supervisor?

- A. Yes, I am.
- Q. Okay. Now, in your position as a section supervisor over toxicology, do you also handle the intake of blood kits into the lab?
 - A. No.
 - Q. Okay. Now, who handles that?
 - A. That would be our evidence coordination team.
- Q. Okay. And are you still familiar with the process for the intake of cases in the lab?
- 11 A. Yes.
 - Q. Can you explain that a little for us from inception to when it gets handed over to the toxicology section?
 - A. Yes. So when a case is brought into the crime laboratory, it's also brought in with a submission form that has the case information that can include the agency case number, what the evidence is, the offense information, and all of that information is inputted into -- or input into our laboratory information management system known as LIMS, and then that's going to create a unique laboratory case number and a barcode for that piece of evidence.

For blood alcohol cases, once it's received into the laboratory, it's going to be placed into a

Do

```
refrigerator that's inside of a secure vault until
1
   analysis.
2
             Now, that barcode that's created, that's
3
        Ο.
   created in evidence receiving, right?
4
        Α.
             That is correct.
5
             Where does that barcode -- is that barcode
6
        Q.
7
   placed on the kit and the submission form?
8
        Α.
             Yes.
                   There's usually two of the barcodes
   placed on the blood kit itself, and then one placed on
10
   the submission form.
11
                 MR. FESMIRE: Your Honor, permission to
12
   display what has been admitted as State's Exhibit No. 8
   and Defendant's Exhibit No. 4 on the Elmo?
13
14
                 THE COURT: Yes.
15
        Q.
             (BY MR. FESMIRE) Ms. Parker, can you see that
16
   all right?
17
        Α.
             Yes.
18
        Q.
             So this would be the lab specific case number
19
   and the barcode beneath it, correct?
             That is correct.
20
        Α.
21
        Q.
             Okay. And that barcode is placed on the blood
22
   kit by evidence receiving?
23
             Yes.
        Α.
```

Okay. Now, I'm showing you what has been

previously admitted as Defendant's Exhibit No. 4.

24

25

Q.

you recognize this? 1 Α. 2 Yes. This is a submission form, correct? 3 Q. Okav. That is correct. Α. 4 Okay. And the barcode that's placed there on 5 Q. 6 the top right, that's placed on the document by evidence 7 receiving? Α. 8 Yes. Okay. And that is the lab specific case number Q. 10 and barcode associated with it? 11 Α. Yes. 12 Q. Now, there's two names underneath that barcode. Can you read those? One is crossed out. 13 14 Like, under whose -- under the submission --Α. 15 Under, "Complete the following for in-person 16 submissions only." 17 "Andrea Stout and A. Mitchell." Α. 18 Q. Okay. Now, it looks like there was physical, I 19 guess, edits done on this case. Is that abnormal? 20 Α. No. 21 Q. Okay. Can you explain why it's not abnormal? 22 If a case is brought in person, then the person Α. that brought it in would be the person that signed that 23 submission form. 24

Okay. So is it possible that someone generated

25

Q.

```
the lab submission form and then another person turned
1
   it in to the actual lab?
2
             Yes.
3
        Α.
4
        Q.
             Okay. And, again, that is not unusual,
5
   correct?
        Α.
6
             No.
7
        Q.
             Ms. Parker, I'm showing you what's been
8
   previously admitted as State's (sic) Exhibit No. 9 via
9
   the Elmo. Can you see that all right?
10
        Α.
             Yes.
11
        Q.
             Okay. Now, are you aware of what this document
12
   is?
13
        Α.
            Yes.
             What is it?
14
        Q.
15
             It's a Quality Incident Report.
        Α.
16
             Okay. Are you aware of what incident this
        Q.
   Quality Incident Report is describing?
17
        Α.
18
             Yes.
19
        Q.
             Okay. Which incident is it describing briefly?
20
        Α.
             This is the incident where there were two
   separate incidents where submission forms and blood kits
21
22
   were switched prior to submission.
23
                    Now, I'm going to turn to Page 2 of this
        Q.
             Okay.
24
   document. Now, under the section entitled, "Approval,"
25
   can you read the names under "Collaborators"?
```

- A. Zachary Augustyn, Tifani Parker.
- Q. Okay. And then next to it it says "awareness only." What does that mean?
- A. That means when this final document has been completed and is sent for final approval, that the collaborators are not going to be a part of that approval process.
- Q. Okay. Now, underneath "Collaborators," it says, "Subject Matter Experts," and then it lists your name, correct?
 - A. That is correct.

- Q. Okay. Now, what does it mean to be a subject matter expert for the purposes of Quality Incident Reports?
- A. So because this is a blood alcohol-related incident and I am the toxicology section supervisor, I would be considered the subject matter expert for this.
- Q. And in being the subject matter expert, is it your duty then to write the Cause Analysis for this Quality Incident Report?
- A. Yes, but I will collaborate with any individuals that are involved in that quality incident as well as my quality manager.
- Q. And for this quality incident in particular, are you aware of what role you had in drafting this?

A. Yes.

- Q. What role was that?
- A. So, again, with the quality incident, once it's opened in our -- like, our qual (sp.ph.) track system which is where we keep our quality incidents that are pending, anybody that's a part of the collaboration can go in and work on it.

So I can gather information from any analyst that's involved, I can also speak to my quality manager, and I can either meet with her and we will work on it together or I can go in and type up stuff on my own.

- Q. Now, I wanted to point out a few lines in this Cause Analysis, and if you're familiar, you can answer. If not, just let me know.
 - A. Okay.
- Q. On Line No. 5 of the Cause Analysis starting with, "Analyst has had less problems," would you mind reading that sentence.
- A. "Analyst has had less problems working with Garland cases compared to Houston cases as a result the analyst was not as diligent as he should have been."
- Q. Can you tell us what that portion of the Cause Analysis means? Can you give us more information?
- 25 A. Yes. So we have seen in the past with our

Houston cases, more incidents where submission forms and blood kits have been switched prior to submission during our analysis process, we have noticed that, and we had not had that occur with any of the Garland cases that we had worked, so that is where I think it was not expected that we would see it with the Garland cases.

- Q. Had you had any previous Garland cases in which the blood tubes were switched between boxes?
 - A. Not that I'm aware of.

- Q. Okay. Now, I want to go back to the intake process. Is it normal that the lab submission forms are not included in the sealed boxes?
 - A. After the blood has been drawn?
- Q. No. I apologize. Upon receipt of the blood kits by the agencies, is it normal that the lab submission forms are not included in the kits, that they're separate?
- A. It depends on how the blood kit is submitted into the laboratory.
 - Q. Okay. Can you expand on that?
- A. Yes. Because these blood kits are mailing kits, so they can be mailed directly to our laboratory, so the submission form could be in the blood kits in that situation, and then sometimes there's an outside, like, white envelope that's stuck to the back of our

blood kits, and so the submission form can be in there as well, and then if it's submitted in person, then that submitting officer could be the one bringing it in in person so then the blood kit doesn't have to be opened.

- Q. Thank you. Now, I want to go on to the following sentence starting with, "GAR-2401-01459 was not in the workflow," would you mind reading that sentence?
- A. Yes. "GAR-2401-01459 was not in the workflow on this day, which could have triggered a response to the analyst seeing that information between 2 cases was switched as the analyst has had experience with this such scenario in the past with other agencies."
- Q. Can you explain what that sentence in the Cause Analysis means?
- A. Yes. So we work cases in batches, so that means we could have between 10 and 40 cases in a batch, and these two cases were not worked in the same batch, so if this case was worked in the same batch and that analyst go to it and noticed that name was wrong, it would have triggered him to look to see if he had that name in another case that he had been working because in the past when we have seen this situation, those cases are in the same batch.
 - Q. Could you read the last sentence in the Cause

Analysis paragraph?

- A. "HOU-2404-05411 and HOU-2404-05416 were a part of two different batches, HOU-2404-05416 was not in the workflow on 05/09/2024, this could have triggered a response to the analyst seeing that information between 2 cases was switched."
- Q. Okay. Now, is this a similar scenario that you have just talked about in the previous sentence you read?
 - A. Yes.
- Q. Now, a defendant can have an order signed by a judge to get additional discovery materials from the DPS crime lab, correct?
 - A. Correct.
- Q. Okay. And whenever that is filed, it's DPS's responsibility to compile those documents and send them to the defense attorney, correct?
- A. We compile the information. We're in the -- we are in the practice of providing it to the prosecutor, and then the prosecutor providing it to the defense.
- Q. Now, who at the DPS Houston crime lab manages compliance with blood discovery orders?
- A. My -- I had a toxicology technician that helped with discovery orders. She's no longer my technician, and then I was the one that would review all the

documents before the discovery order was -- got sent out.

- Q. So you're familiar with the process of compiling documents to be produced pursuant to a blood discovery order?
 - A. Yes.

Q. Okay. Now, where do you draw from when you're gathering the documents to respond to a blood discovery order?

Is that from your lab information management system?

- A. That is part of it because that has the case record information, but we also just have, like, a laboratory drive folder on our computer that houses, like, the maintenance logs, refrigerator logs or anything like that that's requested on a discovery order.
- Q. The case-specific documents that you're talking about, would that include the lab submission form?
 - A. Yes.
- Q. So the submission form would be drawn from the LIMS system to be produced in the response to a blood discovery order?
 - A. Correct.
- 25 MR. FESMIRE: Pass the witness, Your Honor.

Mr. Evans? 1 THE COURT: MR. EVANS: 2 Thank you, Judge. CROSS-EXAMINATION 3 BY MR. EVANS: 4 5 Q. Ms. Parker, are you currently licensed as a forensic analyst? 6 7 Α. Yes. 8 Q. Okay. And did you do your testing to become 9 licensed through the Forensic Science Commission? Yes. 10 Α. Okay. The Texas Forensic Science Commission? 11 Q. 12 Α. Yes, I did. All right. When was the last time that you 13 Q. 14 renewed your license? 15 It was actually very recent because my expiration is November 30th, so it has now been renewed. 16 17 Q. Okay. And so did you -- as part of your 18 renewal, did you have to take a course entitled, "Legal 19 Disclosure and Professional Responsibility"? 20 Α. Yes. 21 Q. And did you take that course online? 22 Α. Yes. 23 And were there, I guess, slides that you would Q. 24 have to go through as you're taking the course? 25 Α. Yes.

And this course goes over things like Brady and 1 Q. Michael Morton Act and things like that, right? 2 3 That is correct. Q. Okay. And then at the end of the course, you 4 have to take a test to be able to renew that license; is 5 that correct? 6 7 Α. There are questions at the end of the 8 presentations, yes. 9 Q. Okay. 10 MR. EVANS: Your Honor, may I approach the witness? 11 12 THE COURT: You may. 13 Q. (BY MR. EVANS) Ms. Parker, I'm showing you 14 what's been previously marked as Defendant's 15 Exhibit No. 11. Does this appear to be the page on the 16 Forensic Science Commission website where you would begin that course? 17 18 I don't remember if this is what the page 19 looked like, but it does look like it came from their 20 website. 21 Q. Okay. I'm showing you what's been previously marked as Defendant's Exhibit No. 12. Do you recognize 22 23 this? 24 This looks like part of the presentation from

25

that course.

```
Q.
             Okay. So you recognize this slide from that
1
   course?
2
3
        Α.
             There was numerous slides, so it appears to be
   one from that course. I don't remember every single
4
   slide on it.
5
             Sure.
6
        Q.
7
                 THE COURT: You what? I'm sorry. I didn't
8
   hear what you said. You said, "There was numerous
   slides.
            This appears to be" -- I didn't hear what you
10
   said.
11
                 THE WITNESS: This appears to be one from
12
   that course.
                 THE COURT: Thank you.
13
14
             (BY MR. EVANS) And we see here that Texas
        Q.
   Forensic Science Commission seal?
15
            Yes.
16
        Α.
            And Legal Disclosure and Professional
17
        Q.
18
   Responsibility at the top?
19
        Α.
             Correct.
20
        Q.
             Okay. Does it appear as though, from what you
21
   remember of the slide, if anything has been changed or
   altered on it?
22
             It does not appear to be altered.
23
        Α.
24
                 MR. EVANS: At this time, Your Honor, I'll
```

tender to opposing counsel for objection to Defendant's

```
Exhibit No. 12.
1
                 MR. FESMIRE: Objection. Lack of
2
   foundation and relevance. She stated she doesn't recall
3
4
   this specific slide from her training...
5
                 THE COURT:
                             Was your testimony that it
   appeared to be one that came from the training?
6
7
                 THE WITNESS:
                                It appears to look like it.
8
   I just don't remember every single slide.
9
                 THE COURT:
                             Okay. That objection is
10
   overruled.
               Defendant's Exhibit No. 12 is admitted.
11
                 (Defendant's Exhibit No. 12 was offered and
12
   admitted into evidence.)
                             Okay. Your Honor, may I
13
                 MR. EVANS:
14
   publish it?
                 Here's a courtesy copy for you.
15
                 THE COURT:
                             Yes.
                                    Thank you.
16
        Q.
             (BY MR. EVANS) Ms. Parker, can you see
   Defendant's Exhibit No. 12 there up on the screen?
17
18
        Α.
             Yes.
19
        Q.
             All right. And this particular slide, as a
   part of that course, at the top there it says, "Analyst
20
21
   has a pending investigation"; is that right?
22
        Α.
             That is correct.
             And the next sentence, does it say, "Pending
23
        Q.
24
   investigative materials are Brady"?
25
        Α.
             That is correct.
```

```
Q.
        And it doesn't say that when a report is
finalized, that it becomes Brady; is that right?
```

- I'm sorry. I'm reading through the whole slide.
 - Q. Sure. Take your time.
- Correct, it does not say anything about Α. completed.
- Okay. And this slide, it's discussing a case. 8 Q. Do you see down at the bottom there, "United States v. 01sen"?
 - Α. Correct.

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

- All right. And this was a case out of a Q. federal court, the 9th Circuit, was the court for this opinion; is that correct?
 - It says, "9th circuit," yes. Α.
- Q. All right. And here it says that, "The court held that the materials contained in the pending, unresolved internal investigation were 'clearly favorable' to the defense." Did I read that correct?
 - Α. You did.
- 21 Q. And on the second bullet here, it says, "The 22 materials contained allegations of sloppy work, unexplained contaminants, and prior testimony 23 'indicating a proclivity to shade testimony in favor of 24 25 the government's case.'" Did I read that correctly?

1 A. Yes.

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

- Q. And the final bullet," All materials could have been used as impeachment evidence when the analyst testified." Did I read that correct as well?
 - A. Yes.
- Q. So according to this slide, the Texas Forensic Science Commission, it's saying that a pending investigation for an analyst should be disclosed, right?
 - A. That's what that says, yes.
- Q. All right. In the QI that you were discussing with Mr. Fesmire, y'all went over some specific lines in that QI, and one of them had to do with Mr. Augustyn having less problems with Garland cases, right?
 - A. That is correct.
- Q. So it's fair to say that he's had problems with Houston cases, then, right?
- A. In the sense of samples, like, submission forms and blood kits being switched prior to submission, yes.
- Q. That's a very -- that sort of -- submission forms and blood kits being switched, that's a significant event, right?
 - MR. FESMIRE: Objection. Argumentative.
- THE COURT: Give me a second to think about
- 24 that.
- 25 Why don't you rephrase your question.

```
1
        Q.
             (BY MR. EVANS) As part of your policy in the
   crime lab division manual, there's definitions of
2
   significant events, right?
3
        Α.
            Yes.
4
             And sample switching would be a significant
5
        Q.
6
   event, right?
7
        Α.
             Blood kits and submission forms are not sample
   switches.
        Q.
             I understand that. That's not what I'm asking.
   I'm saying sample switching is a significant event,
10
11
   right?
12
        Α.
             I believe so. I don't have that -- the CLD in
   front of me.
13
14
             Okav.
                   Would you like to review that?
        Q.
15
             Sure.
        Α.
16
             Okay. I'm handing you what's been marked or
        Q.
   what's been admitted as State's Exhibit No. 9, and I
17
18
   believe under 33.2 H, Subsection 9, Subsection E.
19
                 Would you take a moment and read that?
             Out loud?
20
        Α.
21
                  Does that refresh your recollection?
        Q.
22
                   So this is saying the following list --
        Α.
             Yes.
   "The following is listed on an employee's disclosure
23
   form, and thereby disclosed, regardless of the time
24
```

25

frame of the event."

```
1
                 And under it there's, "Additional incidents
   as listed below," and E says, "Sample switch, if
2
3
   discovered after results are reported to the customer."
4
        Q.
                    So that would be a significant event
             Okav.
   then?
5
6
        Α.
             Yes.
7
        Q.
                   And part of that QI with the switching
             Okav.
8
   incidents, one of those was Magnolia PD; is that right?
9
        Α.
             Can I use my notes and refer to them?
10
        Q.
             Yes.
11
        Α.
             Okav.
                    Thank you. Yes, one of them was
12
   Magnolia PD.
             Okay. And Magnolia PD would be a Houston area
13
        Q.
14
   law enforcement agency?
15
        Α.
             That is correct.
16
        Q.
             All right. On direct you testified that the
   DPS Houston lab is currently in the practice of
17
18
   providing discovery to prosecutors, right?
19
        Α.
             That is correct.
20
        Q.
             It's being given directly to the DA's office,
21
   and then from there you don't know what happens with it,
22
   right?
             That's correct.
23
        Α.
24
        Q.
                    So it's important for the DPS lab to
             Okay.
```

give everything that they have on a case to the

prosecutor so they have the opportunity to review it and 1 2 determine what should and maybe should not be disclosed, right? Α. I agree with that. 4 All right. It used to be the practice for DPS 5 Q. lab to provide that discovery directly to the defense; 6 7 isn't that right? 8 Yes, we have provided directly to the defense before, yes. 10 For years that was the practice of the DPS 11 Houston crime lab, right, to have a disk sitting at the front desk for attorneys or their representative to go 12 pick that up; isn't that right? 13 14 When I got there I believe the disks were mailed directly, so I don't know about picking up. 15 16 think there is the option to pick up directly. 17 But the practice of the lab was to give Q. Okay. 18 the discovery that was ordered by a judge to be given to 19 the defense directly to the defense, correct? 20 Α. That is correct. 21 Q. And that's not the case anymore, is it? 22 That is not the case. Α. 23 MR. EVANS: I'll pass the witness, Judge.

MR. FESMIRE: Just a few questions, Your

24

25

Honor.

THE COURT: Go ahead. 1 REDIRECT EXAMINATION 2 3 BY (BY MR. FESMIRE) 4 Q. Now, first, Ms. Parker, whenever Zach discovered the issues with the quality incident that was 5 6 issued today, did he report those to you? 7 Α. Yes. 8 Q. And he reported them to his direct supervisor, 9 correct? 10 That is correct. Α. 11 Q. Is that what your policy is whenever there is 12 an --13 THE REPORTER: I'm sorry. Can you repeat 14 the question? 15 THE COURT: Can you reask that question. MR. FESMIRE: I apologize. 16 17 (BY MR. FESMIRE) Is that your policy whenever Q. 18 there is a nonconformance, to report that to your 19 supervisor? 20 Α. Yes. 21 Q. Now, I'm showing you what has been marked as Defendant's Exhibit No. 12. Now, this slide says, 22 23 "Analyst has a pending investigation." 24 Is there a difference at the DPS crime lab 25 between a pending investigation and a pending quality

incident?

- A. Yes.
- Q. Can you explain the difference?
- A. Yes. A quality incident is something that we create when something out of the ordinary course of business happens in casework.

So in this instance where submission forms and blood kits were switched and one of them was not caught by the analyst, that was a quality incident that we documented.

An investigation would be involved -- like, investigating that analyst and determining if there needs to be some sort of, like, pending, like, repercussions or punishment. There was no investigation done on Zachary when these incidents were brought up.

- Q. Are you aware if there will be an investigation into Zachary after this quality incident?
- A. No, there is no pending -- there is no investigation for these quality incidents.
- Q. Thank you. I wanted to show you on Page 2 of what has been marked as State's Exhibit No. 9 -- previously admitted as State's Exhibit No. 9.

On direct, Defense counsel was showing you under Section H, Subsection 9, "Additional incidents as listed below." Can you see that all right?

A. Yes.

- Q. Specifically Subsection E of Subsection 9, it states, "Sample switch, if discovered after results are reported to the customer," is a substantial event, correct?
 - A. Yes.
- Q. Can you differentiate that from what happened in the quality incidents involving Zach?
- A. Yes. So what the crime laboratory division manual is saying is that if that sample switch happens, the analyst didn't catch it, the technical reviewer didn't catch it, and that report is released and it is determined later on that it was reported incorrectly, then that would be a significant event.

In these situations -- in this quality incident, none of the cases that were involved, the reports had not been released yet, and the corrections were able to be made before the reports went out.

Q. Thank you.

MR. FESMIRE: Pass the witness, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Mr. Evans?

MR. EVANS: Yes, Your Honor. Thank you.

RECROSS-EXAMINATION

- 24 BY MR. EVANS:
- Q. You were just discussing with the prosecutor

Defendant's Exhibit No. 12, and it seemed like there was 1 some distinction being made between a quality incident 2 versus an investigation. Am I understanding that right? Α. Yes. 4 So does a quality incident not require any sort 5 Q. 6 of investigation? 7 Α. I would not think, like, an investigation, like, on the analyst. There's some discussion on, like, Cause Analysis and root cause, but there's no, like, 10 formal investigation that's done for this incident. 11 Q. Is it a root cause analysis where a supervisor 12 questions what's happened? Α. 13 Yes. 14 Is it -- are employees questioned to determine Q. 15 what the root cause is? 16 Α. The analyst involved, yes. 17 And so are you telling the Judge that a quality Q. 18 incident doesn't fall under an investigation like this 19 slide talks about under Texas Forensic Science Commission? 20 21 I personally didn't think it did, no. 22 Q. Would an investigation by the Texas Okay. 23 Forensic Science Commission, would that be an

A. I would think --

investigation?

24

THE COURT: What did you ask? 1 (BY MR. EVANS) If the Texas Forensic Science 2 Q. 3 Commission was conducting an investigation, do you think 4 that is an investigation into an analyst? 5 Α. I would think so, yes. Q. Okay. Are you aware that there is a pending 6 7 complaint against Mr. Zachary Augustyn with the Texas Forensic Science Commission? 8 Α. I don't think I was aware of that, no. Q. 10 Okay. 11 MR. EVANS: I'll pass the witness. 12 MR. FESMIRE: No further questions, Your Honor. May this witness be excused? 13 14 THE COURT: No, not yet. I have a couple of questions, and I'll give you both the opportunity to 15 16 readdress her. 17 Ms. Parker, is there such thing as a 18 particular conduct, incidents, events, right, all of the 19 above, that are, per se, results in an investigation? 20 THE WITNESS: There could be, yes. I think 21 there could be events that take place that might --22 THE COURT: Let me just -- Per se -- if 23 this happens, per se, this results in an investigation? 24 If this happens, per se, results in an 25 investigation?

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THE WITNESS: Yes. I just don't know --
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                 THE COURT: What they are?
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                 THE WITNESS: Off the top of my head, yes.
                 THE COURT:
                             Okay. So thank you.
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                                                    I wasn't
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   asking that part of it, and then my second question then
   is -- well, let me ask you: Is there such a list that
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   exists somewhere, and it's just that you don't know what
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   particular events, occurrences, et cetera, are on that
   list?
                 THE WITNESS: I'm not sure if there's,
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   like, a formal list that says if this happens, it must
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   be investigated.
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                 THE COURT: But they're the kind of events
   or occurrences that, while it might not be named, if you
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   saw it, you go, "That needs to be investigated"?
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                 THE WITNESS:
                               Yes.
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                 THE COURT: Okay. With respect to
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   everything else that does not fall into what might be
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   identified on its face as sort of a, per se,
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   investigation, is everything else completely subjective
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   as determined -- well, let me ask that question.
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   just -- is it completely subjective?
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                 THE WITNESS:
                               Is what completely
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   subjective?
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                 THE COURT: Whether or not a particular
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event, occurrence, et cetera, can become an
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   investigation or should be the subject of an
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   investigation?
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                 THE WITNESS: It could be subjective, yes.
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   I think after discussion with, like, the supervisor,
   quality manager, lab manager, if there's discussion of
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   that event, then -- if there's concerns or anything,
8
   then it might be, like, okay, we need to investigate
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   further, yes.
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                 THE COURT: And that is determined by who?
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                 THE WITNESS: I think it could be
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   determined by anybody that's involved in the situation
   that's being told about it. So that could be the
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   quality manager, lab manager, somebody higher than that
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   within DPS.
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                 THE COURT: So do I correctly understand
   that DPS serves as its own decision-maker as to what
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   becomes an investigation and what doesn't?
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                 THE WITNESS: I think they could make that
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   decision, yes.
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                 THE COURT: Well, that's not quite my
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   question, which is, DPS -- is it accurate that DPS and
   DPS alone decides -- unless the Texas Forensic -- DPS
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   and DPS alone decides what becomes the subject of an
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   investigation or not, whether that is per se or whether
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that is subjectively decided?
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                 THE WITNESS:
                               I'm not sure if it's DPS
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           I don't know if somebody else could also make
   that decision.
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                 THE COURT:
                             Okay. Thank you.
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                 I believe this is your witness -- Parker is
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   your witness, and so if you have additional questions as
   a result of the Court's inquiries, you certainly may ask
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   them.
                 MR. FESMIRE: Your Honor, may I have a
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11
   minute to consult with co-counsel?
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                 THE COURT: Yes.
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                 MR. FESMIRE: Judge, it's not necessary to
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   approach, but we do have the lab manager for the DPS
   Houston crime lab whose been here reviewing the
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   analyst's testimony today. So he's reported to me that
   he would be the person who would be over on the
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   personnel side for handling investigations into the lab,
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   if that's your line of questioning, but, again, the rule
20
   has been invoked.
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                 THE COURT: It has been, and if this is not
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   a witness that you've indicated that should be under the
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   rule --
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                 MR. FESMIRE: That's correct, Your Honor.
25
                 THE COURT: -- and that response would be
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directly triggered by testimony that has already been
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   heard by another witness, I'm not going to allow that
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   testimony.
                 MR. FESMIRE:
                               Understood. Yes, Your Honor.
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                 THE COURT: Thank you. But you may ask the
   witness additional questions if you'd like to.
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                 MR. FESMIRE: No further questions, Your
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   Honor.
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                 THE COURT: Thank you.
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                 Mr. Evans, do you have additional questions
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   as a result of the Court's inquiries?
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                 MR. EVANS:
                             No, Your Honor.
                 THE COURT:
13
                             Okay. Thank you. Am I to --
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                 MR. FESMIRE: May this witness be excused?
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                 THE COURT: Yes, she may. Thank you.
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                 MR. FESMIRE: And does Defense plan on
   calling Zachary Augustyn back or may he be excused as
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18
   well?
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                 MR. EVANS: He can be excused.
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                 MR. FESMIRE: May I have a moment to go
   outside and tell --
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22
                 THE COURT: Oh, yes. I'm sorry. Go ahead.
                 MR. O'BRIEN: To be clear, the State has no
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24
   further witnesses at this point.
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                 THE COURT:
                             Okay. Thank you very much.
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Mr. Evans, do you have any additional witnesses?
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                 MR. EVANS:
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                             No, Judge.
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                 THE COURT:
                             Thank you. I will entertain
              Mr. Evans, it's your motion.
4
   argument.
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                 MR. EVANS: Yes, Your Honor. Thank you.
   May I have a brief moment?
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7
                 THE COURT: Yes.
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                 MR. O'BRIEN: Can we take five moments, I
9
   guess, to --
                 THE COURT: Yes, go ahead.
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11
                        (Short recess.)
12
                 THE COURT: Are you ready, Mr. Evans?
                 MR. EVANS: Yes, Your Honor.
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                 THE COURT: Mr. Evans, you may proceed with
   your closing remarks.
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                 MR. EVANS: Thank you, Your Honor.
   we've got three different claims that we're going under
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   for this motion for new trial.
19
                 THE COURT: And are you referencing me to
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   -- you're going to tell me which --
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                 MR. EVANS: I was just going to tell you
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   which ones --
                 THE COURT: What rule are you --
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24
                 MR. EVANS: Trap 21.3, Subsection E, that a
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   defendant must be granted a new trial for any of the
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following reasons, "When evidence tending to establish the defendant's innocence has been intentionally destroyed or withheld, thus preventing its production at trial."

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The second claim we have is Brady versus Maryland, and -- well, let me just back up. I'll start with 21.3, the evidence that we've been fighting over in this case is QIs that were not disclosed. withheld, and it could have been used by me at trial. The standard -- the chain of custody was a serious issue that we fought a lot about. We had a hearing outside the presence of the jury to determine whether or not certain documents were going to come in after we had a Michael Morton Act violation, 29.13. You excluded one of those documents. I would have used that document if I had known more about what Mr. Augustyn's problems I had not been made aware of the fact that he had were. any QIs at all, and I anticipate that the State is going to argue that I could have found these by going to -could have found one at least by going onto the DPS website, but there's no name that's associated with the QIs on that DPS website. So how am I supposed to find that?

The other two QIs, they're impossible to find online because they didn't finalize them. It took

over eight months to finalize it. When the quality assurance manager testified that she makes the decision pretty much right away that it's going to be a quality incident, and then it's just a matter of when she gets around to it. So this internal policy within DPS that's delaying the disclosure of this and then their own internal policy where they've got subjective levels of measuring what the risk is and whether or not to put it in a certain bucket or not so that the Defense finds out about it instead of just trying to sweep it under the rug and not let us know about it, and the idea that I have to go out and find this kind of information lies in the face of due process.

And Banks versus Dretke, Judge, that's going to be 124 S. Ct. 1256. This is a supreme court case, Your Honor, from 2004. In it on Page 1275, it states, "A rule that's declaring that the prosecutor may hide and defendant must seek is not tenable in a system constitutionally bound to accord defendant's due process. Ordinarily we presume the public officials have properly discharged their official duties."

And what that basically means is, Judge, I don't have to seek out favorable evidence. The State, the government, has a duty to turn that over to a defendant, and that -- the State is the team. It's not

just the prosecutors. It is everyone involved in the law enforcement process and DPS -- Mr. Augustyn testified that he works for DPS, that they're a part of the prosecution team, and he's had training on Brady and Giglio and the Morton Act. He knows about what's required of him, Judge, and the idea that I have to go out and seek this out is ridiculous.

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Going into Brady versus Maryland, the second claim that we have, basically what we have to show is that the State failed to disclose evidence, that it's favorable to the accused, and that that evidence is Those first two prongs are -- I don't think material. there's any question about those. This is clearly favorable evidence -- excuse me -- it clearly was not disclosed to me prior to trial. Mr. Augustyn did not discuss this at all with the trial prosecutors, and I'm sure if they had known about it, they would have disclosed it right away, just like how when they learned more things about what's been going on recently with Mr. Augustyn, they disclosed it to me right away, and -but in this situation, it didn't happen. It was not turned over. I didn't get a final report on this QI until this morning, right, eight months before the first incident was discovered, and that's the other issue as well, is how many other instances are there out there

for Mr. Augustyn, right? These are the ones that were caught, not by him, but by other people in the system. It got out of his hands and how many times has that happened since then? That's something that a jury should have heard about, that they should have had the opportunity to decide whether or not they believe his credibility.

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I would have pushed much harder on my cross-examination with him. I would have asked for a 702 hearing to determine whether or not his credibility is an issue and whether or not his testing in this case was reliable under the third prong of Kelly, and I would have had a lot more to work with if I had had this information. I could have questioned him much differently about the chain of custody issues, and the fact that he's had problems with that in the past, and that kind of goes also to what I anticipate part of what the State is going to argue, that whether or not this -these other quality incidents affected the reliability of this test. It doesn't matter. It doesn't matter whether those affected the reliability. They go to his credibility, and I should have been able to cross-examine him on these issues to question his credibility and put that in front of a jury, and the fact that they're unrelated to this case does not

matter, Judge.

I have two cases for you. One is Carroll versus State. That's 916 S.W.2d 494. That's a 1996 case out of the Court of Criminal Appeals, and then I also have Sherman versus State. That is going to be 20 S.W.3d 96. That's a 2000 case out of Texarkana, and, Judge, both of these cases stand for the proposition that they both had issues where there was investigations that occurred with witnesses that had nothing to do with the underlying case, but the defense counsel was either not made aware of them or was not given the opportunity to cross-examine the witnesses about that and the courts found that that was wrong, and that the defense counsel should have been able to go into that and question the witnesses' credibility.

The question about materiality is whether or not there's a reasonable probability that had the evidence been disclosed the outcome of the trial would have been different. I think it's based on what we had with the officer's testimony, that there was no probable cause during the stop, there was no probable cause during his personal contact with Mr. Momin, he looked and sounded just fine on video, and then when they get over to doing the field sobriety tests, the officer admitted all sorts of problems with that, right? So the

blood test was a pivotal part of the State's case. They didn't have someone who had wrecked and was clearly intoxicated to the point where they don't even need the blood, right?

There's a case Diamond versus State, Your That is the Court of Criminal Appeals and that Honor. is 613 S.W.3d 536, and that is a case where the defendant was clearly intoxicated and there was a lot of facts that were against her as far as intoxication is concerned. This was a case where Andrea Gooden, who was a lab technician, I believe, at DPS in Houston, if I remember correctly, had violated quality control and documentation protocols in another unrelated case, and the Court ultimately held that that wasn't -- it shouldn't have been admissible, but it was because there was overwhelming evidence of intoxication, and we have a much different scenario in this case, right? There wasn't overwhelming -- he wasn't stumbling, falling all over himself and having balance issues and, you know, getting into a wreck. That did not happen in this case.

THE COURT: Mr. Evans, are you purporting that -- and I don't know -- what's the style of that case? I heard the cite. I didn't hear the style.

MR. EVANS: Diamond versus State.

THE COURT: Are you purporting that Diamond

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v. State says that the solely relevant variable is
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   whether or not there was overwhelming evidence, and
   that's what made it admissible or not?
                             No.
                                  The Court did not allow
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                 MR. EVANS:
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   the defense to get into the unrelated investigation on
   the analyst in that case. What the Court held is that
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   it was not harmful, right, because there was so much
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   overwhelming evidence of intoxication. Basically the
   blood didn't matter and --
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                 THE COURT: So the --
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                 MR. EVANS: So any sort of -- excuse me,
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   Judge.
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                 THE COURT: So am I to understand that the
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   Court didn't pass upon it because they did a harm
   analysis and determined that it didn't -- it wasn't
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   relevant under a harm analysis?
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                             Basically, but at the end of
                 MR. EVANS:
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   the day, Judge, I think materiality is what we're --
19
   what we're arguing about, and this is something that
   would have been useful, and he had a duty to report
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21
   this, right? He hid this from me and from the
   prosecution in this case. He didn't tell them anything
22
   about it. He admitted that he hid it from the defense
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   attorney in Montgomery County. He had inconsistent
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statements under oath, and he's admitted to being --

that he was not unbiased. So we've got an analyst here with a lot of credibility problems, right?

proceed?

Actively hiding impeachment evidence from defense attorneys and telling prosecutors, "Hey, you might not know about it. Let's hope that it doesn't get out there," and they recognized it right away and issued this Brady notice, which is how I found out about this.

This is the kind of evidence that is vital to cross-examination and cross-examination is vital to due process, Judge, but at the end of the day, even if you find that it's not material, you still have the interest of justice from -- or claim that we've raised in the motion for new trial, and you can decide that in the interest of justice because of what's gone on here, that Mr. Momin is entitled to a new trial, and that's what we're asking, Judge.

THE COURT: All right. Mr. O'Brien?

MR. O'BRIEN: Yes, Your Honor. May I

THE COURT: Yes.

MR. O'BRIEN: Judge, people make mistakes, but the reason we're here today is because opposing counsel has claimed that the mistakes made by Mr. Augustyn in three completely unrelated incidents give rise to a basis for new trial under 21.3 (e) as

well as a Brady claim and, further, in the interest of justice.

Now, the Court should ultimately deny this motion for three reasons. First and foremost, Your Honor, any of the specific incidents that are discussed within these pending quality incidents that we've discussed here today would be inadmissible as improper character evidence under 404 (b), however, the only basis for impeachment -- or for admissibility that they may have is for impeachment purposes, and on that basis, Your Honor, it would be inadmissible under 608 (b) as specific instances of conduct would not be admissible for impeachment purposes.

To help portray this argument, Your Honor,
I have some case law here. It is the case of Rodney
Scott Smith versus State of Texas, a copy for the
reporter and a copy for Your Honor --

THE COURT: Thank you.

MR. O'BRIEN: -- as well as opposing counsel. Your Honor, in full candor, this case is an unreported case out of the First District of Houston, however, it utilizes case law that has been published and it's very enlightening in regards to the analysis of 404 (b) as well as 608 (b).

If I may turn the Court's attention to the

8th (sic) page under "Standard of Review and Applicable Law," if we look at the third paragraph, if you will, starting with Hampton v. State, it says, "Additionally, we require that the evidence central to the Brady claim be admissible in court."

Right before we even look at the Brady claim, before this Court even looks at the basis under 21.3, the Court must first determine if the evidence purported here today would be admissible because if it is not admissible, then it can't tend to prove any innocence. If it's not admissible, it cannot be material, Your Honor.

In this case ultimately the Court distinguishes and discusses an instance with the defendant in this case, and ultimately they conclude that there's no Brady violation because the appellant did not show evidence which pertained to an investigation of a detective in this case by DPS. So similar instances, there was a pending instance, whether it was an investigation or the QIC of someone who had a material part in the case, however, the Court reasoned that because those specific instances of conduct discussed or concerning that investigation or improper character evidence, they would be used for potential propensity (indiscernible) than one instance of bad

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conduct he's likely to act similar in this case here,
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   that it would be inadmissible.
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                 If you were to consider it for impeachment
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   or credibility purposes, which opposing counsel has
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   clearly laid out would be the main intent of his use for
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   this evidence or for these quality incidents, we then
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   turn to the next page where it states, "With regard to
   witness' credibility, specific instances of the conduct
   of a witness, for the purpose of attacking or supporting
   the witness' credibility, other than conviction of crime
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   as provided in Rule 609, may not be inquired into on
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   cross-examination" --
                 THE COURT: Hold on, Mr. O'Brien.
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                 MR. O'BRIEN: Yes, Your Honor.
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                 THE COURT: Where are you referencing?
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                 MR. O'BRIEN:
                               I'm at the top of Page 9,
   Your Honor, first paragraph where it's citing 608 --
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                 THE COURT:
                             I don't think my pages are
19
   numbered in the same way that yours are.
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                 MR. O'BRIEN:
                               May I approach, Your Honor?
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                 THE COURT: You can. This is my Page 9.
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                 MR. O'BRIEN: Oh, apologies.
                                                It is a
   different format. Can I look at it real quick?
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24
                 THE COURT:
                             If you can just tell me what
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   footnote or headnote or whatever it is.
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MR. O'BRIEN: I don't have footnotes.
                                                         If I
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   may just briefly look at it. The last paragraph on this
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   Page 7, Your Honor.
                 THE COURT:
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                             Thank you.
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                 MR. O'BRIEN:
                               Starting with, "With regard
   to a witness' credibility" --
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                 THE COURT: All right. Mr. Evans, I
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   think -- as a courtesy -- I think the format with which
   you and I were given is Page 7.
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                 MR. EVANS: Yes, Your Honor.
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                 MR. O'BRIEN:
                               Apologies --
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                 THE COURT: That's okay.
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                 MR. O'BRIEN: People make mistakes as seen
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   just now.
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                         (Brief pause.)
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                               Oh, yes, Your Honor.
                 MR. O'BRIEN:
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   Apologies.
               I thought you were giving him an
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   opportunity to find it.
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                 So in regards to that point, Your Honor, it
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   clearly lays out the standard under 608 (b) to show that
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   even if the evidence -- the Quality Incident Reports
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   were allowed for the limited purposes of impeachment,
   they wouldn't be allowed to be utilized as using
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   specific instances of conduct as opposed to opinion or
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   reputation testimony, which is the only basis that
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you're allowed to use to challenge the credibility of the witness. You would have to have another witness up here to testify to his opinion or reputation testimony. He would purely be intending to use it to cross-examine him for his credibility utilizing these Quality Incident Reports.

Moving on, though, Your Honor, even if the Court were to determine that this would be admissible for other purposes, it does not survive the materiality analysis. First under 21.3 (e), Your Honor, it would not survive because it does not have a tendency to prove the defendant's innocence in the same vein under the Brady claim. It is not material as it does not have a reasonable probability to change the outcome of the case, and the reason for that, Judge, is because none of the testimony, none of the evidence that was offered here today actually goes to show that it would have any effect on the accuracy of the results that were done by Mr. Augustyn.

The incidents that have been brought before this Court pertain to three quality incidents that were done years after Mr. Augustyn's analysis of the blood in this case. Not only that, Judge, the content, the concern of those quality incidents pertain to forgetting to seal evidence, the breaking of blood tubes and the

swapping of blood tubes within blood kits. If there was one thing that opposing counsel was very thorough on and elicited in front of the jury, it was the Toxicology Request Submission Form, right, it was the names that were involved and the importance of them as he claims it affected the chain of custody, but if we look at that evidence, Judge, if we listen to the testimony here today, the blood kit, the Toxicology Request Submission Form, you'll see that the Defendant's name, Jawed Momin, was on the blood tube. The Defendant's name was on the kit. The Defendant's name was on the Toxicology Request Submission Form and it all matched. There was no concern and the case here today of the Quality Incident Reports, they have no bearing on the effect or the ultimate analysis, and, Judge, that is a heavy distinction that other courts have looked at in regards to whether there's a material basis.

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So I will refer this Court to two cases.

First, Olsen v. the State of Texas, which I'm confirming
I have a similar copy here. I'll tender to opposing
counsel, the court reporter as well as Your Honor.

THE COURT: Thank you.

MR. O'BRIEN: Okay. In this case, Your Honor, there's similar facts. There was an analyst in this case, who ultimately -- in the case for which there

was a Brady claim or a new trial -- used the wrong pipette which ultimately affected the calibration of the instrument she was using to test the blood. As a result, there ultimately was a separate analyst who ultimately retested the blood. Now, that separate analyst's results were not allowed to be brought in or were not admitted, and, ultimately, the appellant in the case, the defendant, claimed that because of that analyst's improper use of the pipette and the effect that it could have on potential blood results as well as the disclosure of the new information after the trial that another separate analyst had tested it, that they deserved a new trial on a basis of a Brady claim as well as potentially, I think, Your Honor, a habeas claim.

Now, I would like to turn the Court's attention to Page 6 of this document. It is entitled, "Motion for New Trial," and that first paragraph basically summarizes the facts. A defective pipette was used in analyzing the defendant's blood sample and was not disclosed to the defendant until after the trial. That's the basis of the new evidence that pertained to the actual case at hand.

Now, in this case the Court did not use 21.3 (e) as the basis for their analysis. They used the standard under 40.001 of the Code of Criminal Procedure,

and while I know Mr. Evans's co-counsel did distinguish that there was no case law that he could find on 21.3 (e), a majority of case law does utilize the standard for a motion for new trial under 40.001, and in analyzing that standard, it's very similar to that of a Brady claim, and I would argue to that of the 21.3 (e) claim, that specifically, "A new trial shall be granted an accused where material evidence favorable to the accused has been discovered since trial."

In analyzing whether the standard has been met, the Court looks at four prongs. They listed out there in the second column, Your Honor. First, "The newly discovered evidence was unknown or unavailable to the defendant at the time of trial." The State would not object to that here.

Second, that, "The defendant's failure to discover or obtain new evidence was not due to the defendant's lack of due diligence." Again, the State does not contest that.

It's in regards to the third and fourth prongs that the State would argue that the Defendant does not have a basis for new trial here, and that is, "The new evidence is admissible and not merely cumulative, corroborative, collateral, or impeaching"; and, "The new evidence is probably true and will

probably bring about a different result in a new trial.

Thus, the failure to establish one of these prongs would support the trial court's denial of the motion for new trial."

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So revisiting the notion of admissibility, even if the Court were to determine that it's admissible, opposing counsel himself has claimed in person here and in his motion that his main intent for that evidence would be for impeachment purposes of Mr. Augustyn. As that, it clearly violates that third prong of the standard for a motion for new trial under 40.001. On that basis alone, a Court could find that there is no basis for a motion for new trial, but we move on, Your Honor, and we look at how the Court did an analysis and their ultimate conclusion, even beyond the fact that it could be impeachment evidence, was that in the case the defendant failed to show how providing information of the analyst's newly discovered error or mistake would have resulted in a different verdict given that the difference in the testing of the defective pipette did not change the results of her blood alcohol concentration of 0.135.

The similar -- the same thing is applying here, Judge. Despite these quality incidents or the new evidence that opposing counsel discovered after the

trial, whether we brought them in, whether they were allowed for impeachment purposes or not, they don't change the overall result. They had nothing to do with how Mr. Augustyn operated the instrument, how he did the testing, how anything came in to actually challenge the accuracy of the blood results. You didn't hear anything It all had to do with the process and the today. standard by which he either swapped blood or whether he cracked blood or whether he missealed blood. didn't argue that the -- that blood could have been improperly tested. They argued that it could have been improperly swapped. That has heavy bearing on this Court here today in the consideration of the basis as to whether these quality incidents are material or not. It's the State's position that they are not, Your Honor, because they have no effect on the overall accuracy of the results that Mr. Augustyn came to.

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Further, Your Honor, another case law -- I won't be exhaustive on it. I'll just give it for the Court's consideration, but it's that of Ex Parte Kristopher Joseph Lalonde, Applicant, and it's out of the Court of Criminal Appeals in Texas and I'm tendering to opposing counsel, the court reporter, as well as Your Honor.

THE COURT: Thank you.

MR. O'BRIEN: Your Honor, this case is a similar instance in which an actual investigator at hand was subject to a perjury investigation, and obviously the Court said that that is favorable evidence to the defendant, but, ultimately, it didn't have -- it didn't satisfy the basis for a Brady claim because there was other corroborative evidence that would lead them to a decision -- to the same decision that the jury made.

It's the State's position that these accurate blood results, that the failure to produce any testimony here today or any new evidence about how those test results were improper or inaccurate, it's corroborative evidence of Mr. Augustyn and his credibility and what he ultimately testified to on the stand, Your Honor.

This Court states, "The mere possibility that the undisclosed information might have helped the defense or affected the trial's outcome does not establish materiality." The State is not arguing the fact that this may not have -- that this was favorable to the Defendant. We recognize that it could have clearly been favorable had it been admissible, right, had he had the opportunity to cross-examine him, but the point is it's not material. It doesn't change the end fact. It doesn't change the end result of the officer's

investigation as well as the actual results of that blood.

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What it really comes down to, Your Honor, is materiality and opposing counsel wanted to utilize instances of the case of Olsen and on Exhibit 12 that he ultimately admitted. He cross-examined Ms. Tifani Parker on that and brought up that case to ultimately try to get her to state that the mere investigation of someone is Brady evidence that has to be submitted, but I pulled up the case of Olsen, Your Honor, and, ultimately, if you do as well, you'll see that the Court in that case was analyzing an analyst who had a wide track of improperly contaminating crime scenes, and in the case at hand, the case of U.S. v. Olsen, that analyst improperly cross-contaminated evidence that they were seizing from the defendant with ricin. They were investigating him for potential murders and potential planned murders with ricin and the analyst there cross-contaminated it.

Now, they discovered that there was an investigation and there were views of this analyst, and the Court at hand found, yeah, that would have been favorable to the defendant, but it's not material because of the other corroborating evidence that existed, that they did not think that there would have

been -- there was no reasonable possibility that a jury would have thought differently or came to a different outcome. So even though opposing counsel tries to claim that the mere presence of an investigation of an analyst, according to that slide on Exhibit 12, is a Brady violation, that is not what the case law says that he was citing. It says that while it can be favorable, you still have to look at the whole context of the evidence to determine if it's material.

Further, Your Honor, opposing counsel utilized the case of Diamond v. State, and he ultimately said that in that, the Court looked at the whole picture of things and that because she was so drunk apparently by the video in which she was doing, that it determined that things were fine, that there was no basis for it, but, ultimately, in that case they state that, "Given the habeas court's findings of fact and determinations of credibility, we agree with the State that the undisclosed evidence would not have been material impeachment evidence against Gooden sufficient to undermine her testimony regarding the accuracy of Appellant's blood results. Appellant's blood sample and subsequent report contained no labelling errors."

Similarly here in this instance,

Mr. Augustyn's work here in this case contained no

errors. "And Gooden's temporary removal from casework at the time of Appellant's trial does not overcome the fact that there was no evidence of any error in Gooden's analysis of Appellant's blood." There was no evidence proffered here today that would challenge Mr. Augustyn's analysis of the Appellant's blood or of the Defendant's blood.

"Whatever impeachment value this new information had to undermine Gooden's testimony, it was nevertheless not material." It's the State's position here today that it's the same instance, Your Honor, whether it had impeachment value or not, it's not material because it all comes down to the fact that it did not challenge the accuracy and the credibility of Mr. Augustyn's blood results. It had no bearing on the case here today, Your Honor. It only served to potentially attack him on a basis of improper character evidence for bad acts.

If I were to sit here and ask Mr. Evans if I can bring up another DWI investigation that happened after the fact of his Defendant, if he thinks that would be relevant for me to bring up, he would object on 404 (b,) Your Honor. It's not admissible, and more than that, it's not material.

Lastly, Your Honor, it is not in the

interest of justice to grant this. Opposing Counsel has 1 claimed in his motion that his basis for a due process 2 3 violation for interest of justice is that of the Brady If this Court ultimately finds that there 4 violation. was no materiality and there was no Brady violation, then they find that it's not in the interest of justice 6 7 to grant this motion. For these reasons, the State asks the Court to deny the motion for new trial. THE COURT: I think it's your motion. Go ahead, Mr. Evans. 10 11 MR. EVANS: Thank you, Your Honor. First,

MR. EVANS: Thank you, Your Honor. First, as far as Brady is concerned, I don't see why there's any argument at all about whether or not this is Brady. It is Brady. It was disclosed in the Montgomery County case as Brady evidence. They filed the motion. That motion was provided to me by the prosecution. It's Brady. They determined that it was. Now, whether or not they filed the specific motion in this case, it's not relevant. They understood that other prosecutors saw what the evidence was, and they needed to disclose it prior to trial and that --

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THE COURT: Just so I'm clear, Mr. Evans, when you say "they," you're talking about "they" being the Montgomery County prosecutors?

MR. EVANS: Right. Montgomery County

prosecutors determined that it was Brady after

Mr. Augustyn tried to hide it, and that in and of itself
is a problem, right?

THE COURT: I'm sorry. I'm just trying to understand -- I want to make sure I'm understanding your argument. Are you saying either -- that just the disclosure of it alone was what characterized it as Brady or are you saying that the disclosure of Mr. -- allegedly Mr. Augustyn's effort to conceal it is what made it Brady?

MR. EVANS: Both.

THE COURT: Okay. Go ahead.

MR. EVANS: And to address the argument that we didn't bring up any sort of evidence that this was a switched vial or that this wasn't Mr. Momin's blood, I never made that argument at any point, and that's why you haven't heard that.

Our focus on our defense was fermentation. We had an expert here to talk about that, how it can happen, what problems need to happen in the process to get it to the point where fermentation could potentially occur, and that is something that can happen without being able to visually recognize that. Even if he is looking through it and making sure that the name is correct on the submission form and the blood kit, he

still -- there's still the possibility that fermentation occurred, and he didn't see that, right, and that's why the chain of custody was important. There's three days in there where we don't know where that blood was. The blood -- the nurse that I had cross-examined admitted about problems with the draw where he touched the door, he didn't wash his hands before putting the gloves on, he didn't -- we didn't see at all the disinfecting process because we had no video of that, right? So -and we also had testimony about the vial itself not being fully filled. It was only three quarters of a That's in the worksheet that Mr. Augustyn filled tube. out. That could have been a problem with the seal and that could have allowed candida albicans to enter into the tube and create a situation where if we're lacking refrigeration -- so there's heat and there is time for the process to occur, then fermentation can happen within a vial. That's what my expert testified to.

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So the issue isn't whether or not I showed that the vials were swapped. It's that there was a problem with the chain of custody and that flows -- that follows that he had other issues with chain of custody during his analysis and his handling of the evidence. My defense was there were problems in every step of the process, and I didn't get to cross-examine him about the

problems that he's had in his past that would have called his testimony into question in front of the jury. They didn't get to hear any of that, so they didn't get to make a determination whether or not, well, maybe he doesn't -- maybe he does sloppy work, maybe -- you know, maybe he didn't catch the fact that there is -- there could have been fermentation or maybe we shouldn't believe the things that he's telling us to try and counter the expert that I brought here that has a PhD and has an impeccable background and doesn't have any QIs or investigations going on into him and doesn't have other cases where he's testified inconsistently. Judge, that's not the case, and this isn't -- we're not bringing this claim under Article 40.001, so the argument that the analysis should be under that, it's just wrong. This is a claim under 21.3, but, you know, at the end of the day, Judge, we didn't get this, and it was material, and we should have been able to put this in front of a jury or at the very least been able to argue to you why we should be able to use it, and we didn't get that opportunity because he hid it, not the prosecutors, but he hid it, and he's a part of their So we deserve a new trial because of that, Judge, and I'm asking you to grant our motion.

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Judge, I do have courtesy copies of the

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   cases.
                             I appreciate that.
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                 THE COURT:
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                 What is day 75?
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                 MR. EVANS:
                             I'd have to go back and look,
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   Judge.
                 THE COURT: Can y'all look at your
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   calendar, please?
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                 MR. O'BRIEN: It appears to be November 13,
   Judge.
           Of course, I want Defense to verify that.
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                 MR. EVANS:
                             It's November 13, Your Honor.
   That's what I have.
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                 THE COURT: So y'all agree that it's
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   November 13?
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                 MR. EVANS: 75 days from -- although, if I
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   remember now --
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                 THE COURT: Well, let me just say this:
                                                           Ιt
   is not my intention to allow this to overrule by
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   operation of law. I'm going to make a ruling.
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                 MR. EVANS:
                             Okay.
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                 THE COURT: That's why I was asking, so I
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   don't want to inadvertently allow it to overrule by
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   operation of law. I'm going to make a ruling.
                 MR. EVANS: We will double check, and I can
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   get with Mandy on that. If there's anything
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   different --
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THE COURT: If there's nothing else, I will
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   take this under advisement, and you can anticipate that
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   I will make a ruling prior to November 13.
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                 MR. O'BRIEN:
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                                Thank you, Your Honor.
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                 MR. FESMIRE: Thank you, Your Honor.
                                                         May
   we be excused?
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                 THE COURT: You may. Thank you so much.
                  (Proceedings concluded.)
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REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE 1 2 THE STATE OF TEXAS COUNTY OF FORT BEND) 3 4 I, Sherri Johnson, Official Court Reporter in and 5 for County Court at Law No. 2 of Fort Bend County, Texas, do hereby certify that the foregoing contains a 6 7 true and correct transcription of all portions of 8 evidence and other proceedings requested in writing by counsel for the parties to be included in this volume of the Reporter's Record, in the above-styled and numbered 10 11 cause, all of which occurred in open court or in 12 chambers and were reported by me. 13 I further certify that this Reporter's Record of 14 the proceedings truly and correctly reflects the exhibits, if any, tendered in an offer of proof or 15 offered into evidence. 16 17 I further certify that the total cost for the 18 preparation of this Reporter's Record is \$5,609.00 and 19 was paid by Fort Bend County District Attorney's Office. WITNESS MY OFFICIAL HAND this the 28th of 20 21 February, 2025. 22 /s/ Sherri Johnson 23 Sherri Johnson, Texas CSR 2938 Expiration Date: 1/31/2026 24 Official Court Reporter County Court at Law No. 2 25 301 Jackson Richmond, Texas 77469

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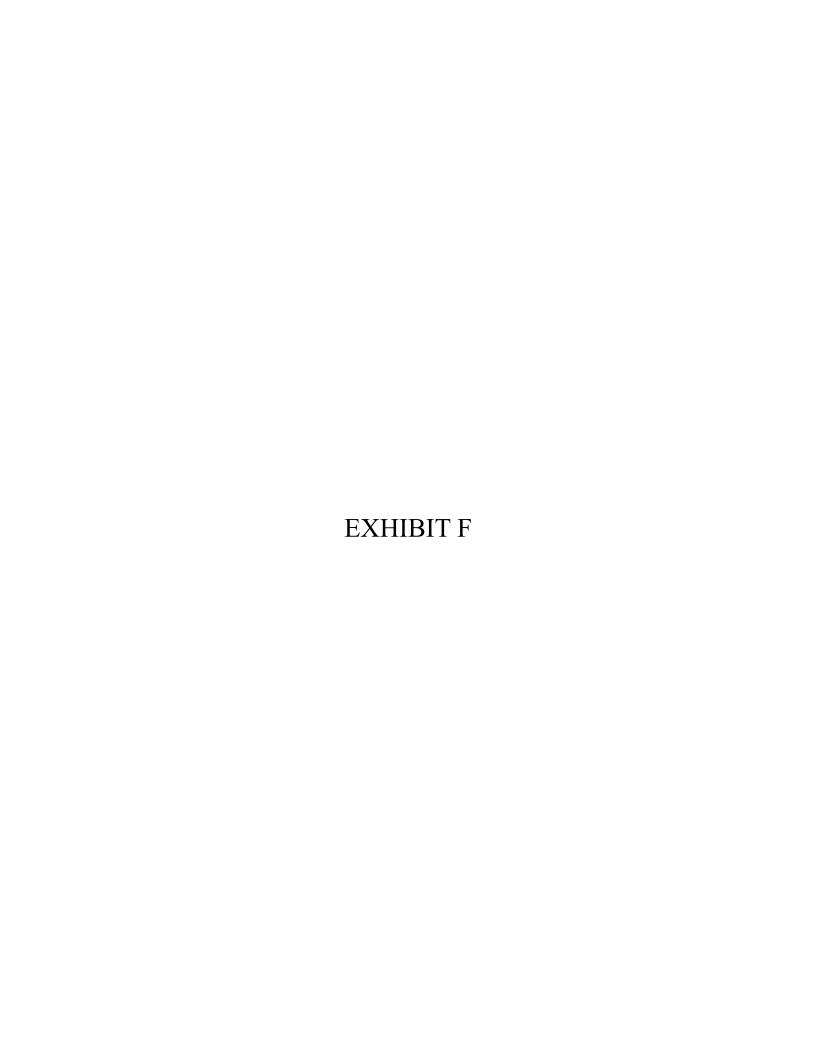
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CAUSE NO. 22-CCR-230111

STATE TEXAS	§	IN THE COUNTY COURT
v.	§ §	AT LAW NUMBER TWO (2) OF
JAWED SADRUDDIN MOMIN	§ §	FORT BEND COUNTY, TEXAS

ORDER ON DEFENDANT'S MOTION FOR NEW TRIAL

ON THIS DAY, the Court considered Defendant JAWED SADRUDDIN MOMIN's *Motion for New Trial* filed in the above-styled and numbered cause. The motion was timely filed and presented to this Court. Further, after the Court's consideration of evidence in a hearing conducted on October 25, 2024, and thereafter recessed and continued November 7, 2024, and consideration of argument by both parties, the Court makes the following findings:

- 1. There is no evidence or accusation of prosecutorial misconduct in the State's failure to disclose, prior to trial of this cause, evidence regarding the Texas Department of Public Safety's investigation into issues surrounding the handling of evidence under the control of the lab.
- 2. The timely disclosure of the Texas Department of Public Safety's investigation surrounding the handling of evidence under the control of the lab may have been used by Defendant JAWED SADRUDDIN MOMIN in trial as mitigation or exculpation.
- 3. The now known existence of investigation into issues surrounding the handling of evidence under the control of the Texas Department of Public Safety's lab may have been considered by the Court acting as the finder of fact and law in the consideration of the requested suppression of evidence under the control of the lab.

4. The Defendant JAWED SADRUDDIN MOMIN's inability to proffer evidence of the Texas Department of Public Safety's investigation surrounding the handling of evidence under the control of the lab may have resulted in a violation of the Defendant JAWED SADRUDDIN MOMIN's rights under due process of law under the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, and due course of law under the Texas Constitution.

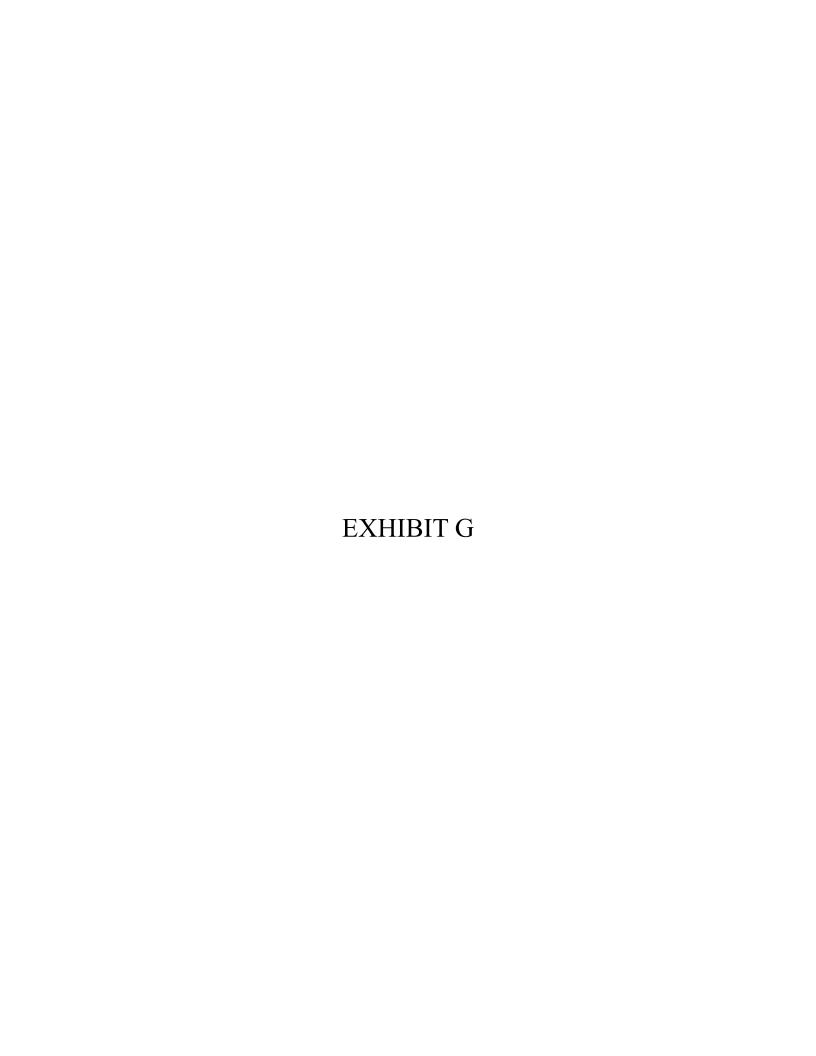
IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED, ADJUDGED, AND DECREED that the Defendant JAWED SADRUDDIN MOMIN's Motion for New Trial is **GRANTED** in the interest of justice based in law as indicated above.

SIGNED THIS THE 12th OF Movember, 2024

Tyra Jores McCollum, Presiding Judge

County Court at Law No. 2 Fort Bend County, Texas

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Forensic Disclosure and Compliance Policy (33.1)

33 Forensic Disclosure and Compliance Policy

33.1 General Requirements

- A. Laboratory personnel comply with General Manual Chapter 5 section *Documentation*, *Preservation and Disclosure of Evidence*, General Manual Chapter 7A *Complaint Investigation and Review Procedures*, related legal cases, and state laws including the Michael Morton Act (Texas Code of Criminal Procedure Article 39.14).
- B. The information disclosed is provided in accordance with Brady, Giglio, and Michael Morton requirements and is intended for prosecutor evaluation.

33.2 Personnel-Specific Disclosure

- A. Personnel-specific disclosure reporting responsibility falls entirely on the employee. The employee discloses items concerning the employee that relate to the employee's credibility as a witness in the proceeding.
- B. In accordance with General Manual Chapter 5, Laboratory personnel distribute the Statement of Qualifications (SOQ) and Disclosure Form (DF) in lieu of the Biographical Datasheet maintained by Human Resources.
- C. Because the majority of work performed by the Crime Laboratory Division occurs without Laboratory interaction with a prosecutor's office, the SOQ and DF are disseminated to the law enforcement representative as follows:
 - 1. For forensic testing services:
 - a) Analyst SOQs are located on the DPS website.
 - b) The DF for the reporting scientist is automatically attached to each testing report.
 - 2. For active Breath Alcohol technical supervisors, the SOQ and DF are posted on the DPS Breath Alcohol website.
 - 3. In addition, the employee discloses copies of the SOQ and DF to prosecutors during pretestimony conference meetings and during court appearances, when possible.
- D. A Statement of Qualifications is completed by all Laboratory personnel, including contract employees, regardless of position.
 - For current Laboratory personnel, the SOQ is reviewed and updated by the employee at least on an annual basis or if there is a significant change in job duties, education, or training.
 - 2. The SOQ is reviewed and updated by the employee prior to separation from the Laboratory.
- E. A Disclosure Form (formerly Disciplinary History Form) is completed for all Laboratory personnel by the employee, including contract employees, regardless of position.
 - 1. The DF is reviewed and updated by the employee prior to separation from the Laboratory.
- F. The main purpose of the DF is to communicate potential impeachment material including but not limited to significant nonconformances, breaches of law, or ethical standards as these may adversely affect a current case or a previously issued report or testimony.
- G. Employees are required to disclose any qualifying incident that occurred while working for a previous employer.

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System
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Forensic Disclosure and Compliance Policy (33.2)

- H. The following is listed on an employee's DF, and thereby disclosed, regardless of the timeframe of the event:
 - 1. Sustained/Founded disciplinary actions while employed with the Department to include the date of the disciplinary action and a brief description of the incident;
 - a) Examples of disciplinary actions may include:
 - i. Formal written reprimand
 - ii. Time off without pay
 - iii. Demotion
 - iv. Discharge from employment
 - Sustained complaints against Laboratory personnel, sustained allegations of misconduct, or sustained violations of Department policy (General Manual Chapter 7A);
 - Violations of the Discrimination, Sexual Harassment and Unprofessional Conduct Policy (General Manual Chapter 18.25.00);
 - 4. Founded allegations of falsification of government records;
 - Breaches of ethical standards:
 - 6. Crimes involving lack of integrity or truthfulness including misdemeanor offenses whether or not they led to conviction if the incident occurred within the last 10 years;
 - 7. Other crimes, including those older than 10 years, which may affect witness credibility and thus require disclosure;
 - a) Such incidents are communicated by the employee to the supervisor for review and interpretation by the Office of the Director and Office of General Counsel.
 - 8. Quality incidents and corrective actions that are determined to be significant quality events if the incident occurred following implementation of the Quality Action Plan process in 2005 and while employed with the Department; and
 - Additional incidents as listed below:
 - a) Performance improvement plans, if related to the individual's technical ability;
 - b) Unsatisfactory proficiency test, interlaboratory comparison, or intralaboratory comparison with a Class I or II error inconsistency (refer to Chapter 36):
 - c) Unsatisfactory completion of a competency test by a qualified employee following an extended absence or in an effort to remain authorized to conduct work:
 - d) Testing conclusion reported to the customer found to be incorrect upon subsequent testing or mandatory retesting;
 - e) Sample switch, if discovered after results are reported to the customer;
 - f) Suspension of work for cause; and
 - Founded complaints of negligence or misconduct investigated by the Texas Forensic Science Commission.
- If an expunction order has been granted, the DF is updated accordingly.
 - 1. The DF is updated to remove wording associated with the arrest, charges, details of the charges, or other related legal information. However, the associated sustained

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Part III: Personnel

Forensic Disclosure and Compliance Policy (33.3)

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- disciplinary action listed on the form remains with revision to align with the letter of reprimand, while meeting the terms of the expunction order.
- 2. A person who acquires knowledge of an arrest while an officer or employee of the state or of any agency or other entity of the state or any political subdivision of the state and who knows of an order expunging the records and files relating to that arrest commits an offense if they knowingly release, disseminate, or otherwise use the records or files (Texas Code of Criminal Procedure Article 55.04).
- 3. The person arrested or any other person, when questioned under oath in a criminal proceeding about an arrest for which the records have been expunged, may state only that the matter in question has been expunged (Texas Code of Criminal Procedure Article 55.03).
- J. If there are no incidents to disclose, the employee will indicate "None" on the DF.
- K. The employee ensures the DF contains current and accurate information.
- L. The DF is reviewed by the Laboratory Manager or above, as appropriate, and is maintained electronically.
- M. If an employee has separated service, a form may be prepared or updated utilizing information available to the Laboratory on a case-by-case basis. The DF is updated and reviewed by the Laboratory Manager, approved by the respective Assistant Laboratory Director, and retained electronically.
 - As a courtesy, the Department attempts to notify former employees of updates made to the DF on their behalf using the last known email or mailing address maintained by Human Resources.
 - 2. Documentation of the notification attempt to the former employee is noted on the employee's DF prior to archival.
- N. If an event is added to the DF, a good faith effort is employed to disseminate the updated document to all relevant District and County Attorneys' Offices accomplished by:
 - 1. Reviewing the counties of offense in the LIMS record for all reports released by the individual for casework;
 - 2. Reviewing investigating agencies in the CODIS LIMS; and
 - 3. Identifying the counties which are assigned to the technical supervisor in Breath Alcohol.
 - 4. It is the Laboratory Manager's responsibility to disseminate the information.
 - 5. If the DF is associated with a Laboratory Manager, it is handled by the office of the Laboratory Director.
 - 6. The notification letter and associated notification emails, as applicable, are archived.

33.3 Notice of Third-Party Action

- A. At times, a judge or attorney may take action that requires subsequent disclosure, but the event falls outside of the personnel-specific disclosure requirements.
 - 1. Examples of an action include:
 - Notification by a prosecutor's office that an individual has a Code of Criminal Procedure Article 39.14(h) disclosure issued by the prosecutor's office;
 - b) Exclusion of an individual's testimony by a judge (based on the work performed); and

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- c) Other actions following consultation with the Office of General Counsel.
- B. It is the responsibility of the employee to notify the Laboratory Manager when an action is taken.
- C. Third-party actions are not listed on the DF; instead, an Explanatory Notice of Third-Party Action containing details of the event is drafted and disseminated by the Laboratory Manager.
 - 1. The notice is reviewed by the relevant Assistant Laboratory Director prior to dissemination.
 - 2. The Office of General Counsel is consulted as needed.

33.4 Disclosure Required by Code of Criminal Procedure Article 39.14

- A. The purpose of discovery is to release and disclose all records related to a criminal action which includes relevant Laboratory case records, CODIS records, and/or calibration records.
 - 1. Examples include:
 - a) Contents of applicable Laboratory record, including images;
 - b) All case-related communications;
 - c) Chain of custody information, if applicable;
 - d) Batch records, if applicable;
 - e) QI/QAPs; and
 - f) Deviations.
- B. Discovery includes any exculpatory information in the possession, custody, or control of the Laboratory.
- C. Due to the potential of attorney work product being captured in records of communication, discovery materials are only released to the office of the prosecuting attorney (refer to Chapter 55).

33.5 Disclosure of Laboratory Nonconformances

- A. Nonconformances associated with the quality system are captured through the QI/QAP process and those records are posted publicly on the Texas Forensic Science Commission website.
- B. Notification to the accrediting bodies occurs within 30 days when the expected result is not attained during any examiner assessment activity (refer to Chapter 36).
- C. Nonconformances associated directly with a case are disclosed through the discovery process.

33.6 Disclosure of Significant Events and Nonconformances to Accrediting Bodies

- A. According to the Texas Forensic Science Commission, a significant irregularity involves "facts that if true, would indicate the existence of negligence or misconduct such that the integrity of the forensic examination, the individual forensic examiner, or the laboratory as a whole would be called into question."
- B. Examples of significant events requiring disclosure to the accrediting bodies include:
 - 1. Sustained allegations of misconduct that would substantially affect the integrity of the results of laboratory work activities;
 - 2. Missing submitted or recovered test items (examples include, but are not limited to, submitted evidence, any trace evidence recovered, and retained stains):
 - a) Items submitted for destruction only are not considered test items.

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Forensic Disclosure and Compliance Policy (33.6)

- Missing individual characteristic database samples that were not able to be recollected and/or entered into CODIS;
- 4. Evidence or individual characteristic database samples destroyed without authorization which impacted the CODIS entry or adjudication process;
- 5. Incorrect results reported to the customer which impacted the adjudication process;
- 6. Unsatisfactory proficiency test, interlaboratory comparison, or intralaboratory comparison;
- 7. Complaint received by an accrediting body (must notify the other accrediting bodies) that results in establishment of an investigative panel; and
- 8. Other items at the discretion of the Laboratory Director.
- C. A significant event is disclosed to the relevant accrediting body within 30 calendar days of occurrence or immediately upon becoming aware of the issue if discovered more than 30 calendar days after the occurrence. Disclosure occurs through direct communication to accrediting bodies from the office of the Laboratory Director.
- D. The System Quality Manager, or designee, drafts a letter which includes:
 - 1. A summary with relevant details about the quality incident and date when the incident was identified as significant;
 - 2. Cause Analysis;
 - Customer communication/affected stakeholders:
 - 4. Immediate correction(s) taken and corrective actions performed or planned to prevent recurrence; and
 - 5. If associated with a criminal case, known details such as case/cause number, court, and adjudication status.
 - a) If the disclosure involves a pending criminal matter(s), certain Public Information Act exceptions may apply.
- E. All of the above listed elements may not be available or completed at the time of the initial disclosure; ongoing disclosure may be necessary as information becomes available.
- F. The Laboratory Director or designee reviews and approves the letters for release to the accrediting bodies.
- G. The distribution of disclosure letters and/or records is made by the Laboratory Director, or designee, to the following parties:
 - 1. ANAB;
 - 2. Texas Forensic Science Commission;
 - 3. Deputy Laboratory Director;
 - System Quality Manager;
 - Quality Manager;
 - 6. Laboratory Manager; and
 - 7. Assistant Laboratory Director(s).
- H. If follow-up communication is necessary, it is provided by the Laboratory Director or designee.
- I. System QA reconciles appropriate attached documentation with the QI/QAP workflow and archives the records.

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Augustyn, Zachary

From: Schrock, Madison

Sent: Friday, September 13, 2024 1:06 PM

To: Augustyn, Zachary **Subject:** RE: Question about DX

CAUTION: This email was received from an EXTERNAL source, use caution when clicking links or opening attachments.

If you believe this to be a malicious and/or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to SPAM@dps.texas.gov.

For a QI (quality incident?) to be finalized, is there an internal investigation? Or what is that process?

From: Augustyn, Zachary

Sent: Friday, September 13, 2024 12:52 PM

To: Schrock, Madison

Subject: [External] RE: Question about DX

Neither

It should be in the discovery order

From: Schrock, Madison <

Sent: Friday, September 13, 2024 12:50 PM

To: Augustyn, Zachary <

Subject: RE: Question about DX

CAUTION: This email was received from an EXTERNAL source, use caution when clicking links or opening attachments.

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Ok, Thanks for letting me know! I will write up a motion for that those not be brought up. For the breaking of the blood tube, that's a QI that is already in your proficiency exams? Or disclosures?

//MS

From: Augustyn, Zachary

Sent: Friday, September 13, 2024 12:20 PM

To: Schrock, Madison

Subject: [External] RE: Question about DX

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of Montgomery County, Texas! Do not click links, open attachments or reply, unless you recognize the sender's email address and know the content is safe!

So,

For retrograde extrapolation, the only information I need to estimate is:

Time of last drink

Time of stop

Resulting BAC from my analysis

Your second dark bullet point question is fine with how you worded it. (you don't need to include the Moscow mules, because that irrelevant)

As far as bad questions...

He will address QI's that I have under my name

One of which, a blood tube was broken under my possession, and I had to use the second tube for my analysis.

I also have other QI's that are currently being processed that occurred in the beginning of 2024, he should not be aware of these as they are not complete and finalized yet, so they shouldn't be brought up yet.

But one involves blood tubes being switched prior to submission to the lab.

One instance occurred with an agency form the DFW area, the other occurred with an agency from Montgomery Co. I failed to catch that the names on the blood tubes did not correspond to the name on the submission form since all other information matched.

(this was an external and internal problem) Agency mixed up the blood kits and blood tubes, and myself (the analyst didn't catch it)

The other QI in process was that I forgot to properly seal a batch of 30 cases after reports were released. So essentially, 30 cases that were complete were not sealed back up properly and returned to their respective agency.

Again, these QI's are not finalized so they shouldn't have record of them yet, but its wise for you to be aware of them.

Other Questions I can see him asking for this case.

The baseline for the case specific chromatograms isn't completely flat

- This is not a problem because this does not affect the area under the peaks (measuring sticks) for the compounds of interest (ethanol and n-propanol), it just looks ugly is all.

They have focused on ghost peaks before in the past, there seems to be one or two, They call this contamination

- Its not contamination, even if it was, it does not influence the peak of ethanol or n-propanol.
 - o If it did influence either, we would see a difference in the 2nd column chromatograms, which it was not observed in this case

Theres more, but I just cant remember off the top of my head.

I will be sending you another email with more information for Amanda as well as those science articles I had mentioned earlier.

From: Schrock, Madison

Sent: Friday, September 13, 2024 11:10 AM

To: Augustyn, Zachary

Subject: Question about DX

CAUTION: This email was received from an EXTERNAL source, use caution when clicking links or opening attachments.

If you believe this to be a malicious and/or phishing email, please send this email as an attachment to SPAM@dps.texas.gov.

If I ask you this on direct examination, is this correct?

- What information do you need to calculate retrograde extrapolation?
 - o Time of last drink
 - When blood draw performed
 - o Food
 - o Amount of alcohol consumed over what time period.
 - o Time of driving
- If the defendant had last eaten at 2pm, started drinking at 6pm, stopped drinking at 10 pm, and the blood draw was at 12:15am resulting in a BAC of .182, what would the defendant's BAC concentration be at the time he was pulled over by the police at 11:15 pm?
 - o BAC estimated to be 0.192-.212

Also, Do I need to include the 4-5 moscow mules in the factors in the second question or is that irrelevant? And are there any bad facts you know of that we need to address before Bourque hits them on cross-examination?

//MS

