1	COURT OF APPEALS
2	STATE OF NEW YORK
3	
4	MATTER OF
5	DUNN, AN ATTORNEY,
6	Appellant. No. 23
7	
8	20 Eagle Street
9	Albany, New York 12207 January 15, 2015
10	
11	Before: CHIEF JUDGE JONATHAN LIPPMAN
12	ASSOCIATE JUDGE SUSAN PHILLIPS READ ASSOCIATE JUDGE EUGENE F. PIGOTT, JR.
13	ASSOCIATE JUDGE JENNY RIVERA ASSOCIATE JUDGE SHEILA ABDUS-SALAAM
14	Appearances:
15	BENJAMIN ZELERMYER, ESQ.
16	STEINBERG & CAVALIERE, LLP Attorneys for Appellant
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19	MICHAEL G. GAYNOR, ESQ. COMMITTEE ON PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS
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25	Sara Winkeljohn Official Court Transcriber

1	CHIEF JUDGE LIPPMAN: Matter of Dunn.
2	Counsel, you'd like any rebuttal time?
3	MR. ZELERMYER: Please, Your Honor, two
4	minutes.
5	CHIEF JUDGE LIPPMAN: Two minutes. Go
6	ahead.
7	MR. ZELERMYER: Let me begin by suggesting
8	that the Appellate Division's application of
9	collateral estoppel to Judge Homer's decision didn't
10	pass the threshold for collateral estoppel, which is
11	a final order
12	CHIEF JUDGE LIPPMAN: What what's
13	your your basic argument? That that she
14	couldn't appeal until the underlying proceeding was
15	resolved by the federal court? Is that the heart of
16	of why you think that that that can't be
17	collateral estoppel?
18	MR. ZELERMYER: That that's my
19	that's my starting point. I think it ought to be the
20	ending point, but I'm prepared to
21	JUDGE READ: Well, is that true?
22	MR. ZELERMYER: go beyond that.
23	JUDGE READ: Is I mean she can
24	can't she can appeal eventually, right?
25	MR. ZELERMYER: Well, eventually is

1	is, of course, an undefined term that who knows how
2	long it may may carry on.
3	JUDGE READ: What if what if there -
4	
5	MR. ZELERMYER: And what I submit is
6	JUDGE READ: What if there's a consent
7	order? Does that I mean let let's say I
8	said she can appeal I'm assuming that the
9	litigation wraps up at some point. But what if
10	there's a con some kind of consent agreement
11	reached with the SEC in the meantime? Does she have
12	a right to appeal then or does she lose it?
13	MR. ZELERMYER: Well, I think that as long
14	as a final judgment gets entered in the case in the
15	district court, she would be entitled to appeal. I
16	can't I can't argue with it.
17	JUDGE READ: Okay. Yeah, even if that's
18	after trial or it's by consent.
19	MR. ZELERMYER: I think that's I
20	- I think that that's clear that an attorney can
21	appeal once a final judgment has been entered.
22	JUDGE ABDUS-SALAAM: Why isn't this order -
23	
24	CHIEF JUDGE LIPPMAN: So
25	MR. ZELERMYER: But we don't know when

1 that's going to be. These kinds of cases go on for 2 years and years. 3 JUDGE READ: So that's your - - - that's 4 your real argument. It's the fact not that she can't 5 appeal - - - take an appeal ever, but it could be a -6 - - a very long time and unpredictable? 7 MR. ZELERMYER: It would be a long time. It would be unpredictable. And it would be unfair. 8 9 It would be unfair - - -10 CHIEF JUDGE LIPPMAN: Unfair because 11 meanwhile she's been censured? MR. ZELERMYER: She's been censured and - -12 13 - and a censure, even though it's not the - - - the 14 harshest form of discipline, is very serious. A 15 person can lose a job just by being censured. It's -16 - - it's - - - you know, it is a severe form of discipline to have to suffer for an indefinite - - -17 18 CHIEF JUDGE LIPPMAN: So you're ready to go 19 through - - -20 MR. ZELERMYER: - - - period of time. 21 CHIEF JUDGE LIPPMAN: You're ready to go 22 through a disciplinary proceeding now if they still 23 chose, assuming that we said they're not collateral 2.4 estoppel? They could go ahead tomorrow and - - - and 25 pursue the charges, right? And you'd have to defend

1	against them.
2	MR. ZELERMYER: I I don't think
3	double jeopardy applies. I think that I I
4	could not object on procedural grounds if the
5	Committee chose
6	CHIEF JUDGE LIPPMAN: Right. You
7	MR. ZELERMYER: to try to actually
8	prove a case.
9	CHIEF JUDGE LIPPMAN: You would defend it,
10	right?
11	MR. ZELERMYER: Absolutely. And there is
12	another alternative which which, you know, I
13	don't want to suggest how the Committee should do its
14	job. But in other departments, the the notion
15	of reciprocal discipline is is pursued when
16	cases arises in federal courts.
17	JUDGE PIGOTT: They don't have reciprocal
18	disc discipline in this here? Isn't there a
19	rule for reciprocal discipline?
20	MR. ZELERMYER: There is a a rule in
21	the Third Department that authorizes reciprocal
22	discipline. Yes.
23	JUDGE PIGOTT: Okay.
24	JUDGE ABDUS-SALAAM: And isn't that what
25	you have?

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MR. ZELERMYER: Yes, but the - - - the
Third Department doesn't seem to use it in cases
arising in the federal court in New York. They only
use it for out-of-state cases. Other departments do
use it for cases arising in federal courts in New
York. There was just one a couple of months ago in
the First Department.

JUDGE PIGOTT: I think we've done it before, too, is my recollection.

MR. ZELERMYER: I haven't - - - I haven't found any, Judge Pigott. But the important distinction, of course, between reciprocal discipline and collateral estoppel is that there are some defenses that can be used in reciprocal discipline matters, including an infirmity of proof in the proceedings below.

And of course we would argue that there is a severe infirmity of proof in - - in the proceedings below. And I think that's part of what underlies our - - our position here. The - - - the - - - you - - - you've said many times that fairness is really important in analyzing collateral estoppel. It's not one size fits all. You meet criteria X, criteria Y, and criteria Z; collateral estoppel, boom, end of discussion.

1 CHIEF JUDGE LIPPMAN: So you - - -2 MR. ZELERMYER: That's - - -3 CHIEF JUDGE LIPPMAN: You feel you haven't 4 had a real chance to contest these charges. 5 MR. ZELERMYER: We have not. And - - - and 6 the - - - the most central finding that underlies 7 this case, Judge Homer's finding that - - - that Ms. 8 Dunn received the annuity agreement - - -9 CHIEF JUDGE LIPPMAN: Right. 10 MR. ZELERMYER: - - - on July 21, 2010, has 11 never been the subject of - - - of litigation as 12 such. When the SEC moved for sanctions, they didn't 13 even argue that that happened. They argued that she 14 got an e-mail containing some of the terms of an 15 annuity agreement, but they didn't argue that she got 16 the annuity agreement. 17 The only way that crept into this is in Judge Homer's actual alteration of Ms. Dunn's 18 19 declaration. If you compare pages 97 and 207 - - -20 97, the declaration, 207 from Judge Homer's opinion 21 where he - - - he sounds like he's quoting paragraphs 3 and 4 of her declaration. He actually changes the 22 23 language. We know this because he puts brackets

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around the changes.

JUDGE ABDUS-SALAAM: Counsel, does it - - -

does it matter that she didn't actually have the annuity agreement? Or was it that she said she didn't know about it at the time that she made her - - or she submitted her affidavit and then later changed her - - her testimony and said well, I had an e-mail so I was aware of it. I didn't know exactly what was in it, but I did know about it, essentially.

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MR. ZELERMYER: It was - - - it was very important to Judge Homer in reaching - - - reaching his conclusions. It was so important that he characterized the annuity agreement as a smoking gun. It was so important that he found that her prior declaration was false because in fact, he concluded, she received the annuity agreement on July 21. It was so important that he wrote that she could not have read the annuity agreement without appreciating its significance.

JUDGE ABDUS-SALAAM: Are you saying that she didn't have the annuity agreement by the time that she changed her - - her testimony, essentially, that I didn't - - I wasn't aware of it? Are you saying she didn't have it and couldn't have read it by then?

MR. ZELERMYER: Oh, by then, yes.

JUDGE ABDUS-SALAAM: Yeah.

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MR. ZELERMYER: But he was referring to the earlier period of time. He was referring - - - when he said she couldn't have read it and failed to appreciate its significance, he was talking about July 21 and July 22, 2010. He wasn't talking about September, he wasn't talking about November. He was talking about July.

JUDGE READ: Well, we're - - -

MR. ZELERMYER: July 21 and 22, 2010.

TUDGE READ: We're talking about the - -
the merits now, but to get back to - - - to - - - to

the - - - the question about unappealability or

appealability, what's the rule that you're asking for

us? Because if - - - if it is appealable eventually,

it's not non-appealable. So what kind of a rule are

you asking us to - - - to - - - what are you asking

us to say in our opinion about what the rule should

be and why, in this case, there should - - it - -
there wasn't a full and fair opportunity?

MR. ZELERMYER: I'm - - - I'm going to answer that in - - - in a couple of different ways,

Judge Read. First, I'm -- I'm - - I believe that the

- - - the rule ought to be that collateral estoppel has to follow reviewability. That there cannot be

collateral estoppel effect given to a decision that 1 is not reviewable at the time collateral estoppel 2 3 effect is sought. 4 JUDGE READ: Okay. 5 MR. ZELERMYER: If I - - - I think that's a 6 clear, clear statement. But I also think that just 7 as this court has distinguished among standards for 8 evaluating whether it's fair to apply collateral 9 estoppel, the court has looked both at the nature of 10 the proceeding in which collateral estoppel is 11 requested and the nature and - - - and conduct of the 12 proceeding, the prior proceeding. And this - - -13 there's not one inflexible standard here. 14 anything, we give a harder look, clearly, to criminal 15 cases where it's more - - - the standard for applying 16 collateral estoppel is more rigorous. And I submit 17 that the - - - that a higher standard ought to be 18 applied in attorney discipline cases as opposed to, 19 say, civil cases - - -20 CHIEF JUDGE LIPPMAN: Okay, counsel. 21 MR. ZELERMYER: - - - because the stakes 22 are so much higher. 23 CHIEF JUDGE LIPPMAN: Okay, counsel.

25 MR. ZELERMYER: Thank you.

You'll have your rebuttal.

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CHIEF JUDGE LIPPMAN: Let's hear from your adversary.

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MR. GAYNOR: Good afternoon, Your Honors.

May it please the court, my name's Michael Gaynor for the Committee on Professional Standards.

CHIEF JUDGE LIPPMAN: Counsel, what would be the big deal if you had to go and bring charges?

If that's what you want to do, why don't you do it, when she cannot appeal this - - - this ruling right now? Why is that unfair? If you want to bring her up, bring her up and - - - and - - - and what's the big deal? You have a little delay but you can do it.

MR. GAYNOR: Judge Lippman, this court in 1988, in the Staatsburg Fire District case, mentioned and it specifically stated that the fundamental inquiry as to whether re-litigation should be permitted - - and any proceeding involves competing policy interests. And this court specifically said that the - - one of the cons - - three considerations: fairness to the parties, conservation of the resources of the court, and the societal interest in consistent and accurate results.

CHIEF JUDGE LIPPMAN: Yeah, but - - - but here - - - let's take the first issue, which really seems to me is the most relevant when you have an

1	attorney who's been censured. It's a pretty serious
2	thing.
3	MR. GAYNOR: Absolutely, Your Honor.
4	CHIEF JUDGE LIPPMAN: Why wouldn't, just a
5	basic matter of fairness, you want to conduct a
6	proceeding, go ahead. Why when when,
7	again, your your adversary contends that they
8	haven't had a fair change chance to rebut these
9	these charges.
10	MR. GAYNOR: Two-fold, Your Honors. Number
11	one, the underlying litigation in this SEC matter in
12	which Ms. Dunn was a party
13	CHIEF JUDGE LIPPMAN: Yeah.
14	MR. GAYNOR: in which it was
15	litigated for months, Judge Homer determined by clear
16	and convincing evidence
17	JUDGE PIGOTT: We know all that. But
18	but
19	MR. GAYNOR: But but as far as what's
20	at
21	JUDGE PIGOTT: it's a civil
22	it's a civil case.
23	MR. GAYNOR: Correct.
24	JUDGE PIGOTT: This isn't a criminal case.
25	This is like this is like we were we were

talking about Allstate and a homeowner.

MR. GAYNOR: Sure.

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JUDGE PIGOTT: SEC should be risen to the - you know, to the level of being, you know, the
U.S. Attorney or involved in a criminal case here.
We're fighting over money. She's - - - she's
involved in this thing in the way that we all seem to
know. I don't think, you know, what goes on in a
civil case ought to be treated the way something that
goes on in a - - - in a criminal case in which - I don't know what's right or wrong about her - her testimony there.

But all I could think of is all of my time as practicing law, how many judges who would really want to get upset with - - - with me or something decides that they're going to sanction me and the Appellate Division Fourth Department's going to collaterally estop me from saying the judge was wrong, the facts are wrong, the circumstances were wrong, and I want a hearing and be told that I can't.

MR. GAYNOR: Your Honors, I - - - I think - - - or, Judge Pigott, I think with respect to the hearing issue, I think it would be unburdensome to have the Committee on Professional Standards appear at a disciplinary hearing, obtain a certified copy of

1 the underlying record - - - but, you know, we 2 wouldn't stop there because that may be prima facie 3 evidence, but, in fact, is it conclusive? Would it be reasonable for the Committee on Professional 4 5 Standards to bring in Judge Homer as a witness? don't think so. 6 7 JUDGE PIGOTT: No. Of course not. It's a civil case. What - - - what - - - what struck me was 8 9 you were willing to wait, what, almost a year? 10 MR. GAYNOR: We did that, Your Honor. 11 don't - - - I - - -12 JUDGE PIGOTT: I know. I know. My - - -13 my question about that is then it must have been 14 important to you that you wanted to know what - - -15 what was going to happen at that appeal. And for 16 some reason, at the end of a year or thirteen months, 17 whatever it was, it didn't become important anymore. And it - - - and it just seems odd that - - - that it 18 19 was important enough for you to delay it for this 20 long and then you decide it's no longer important and 21 we're going to go forward. And we're going to use 22 collateral estoppel. 23 MR. GAYNOR: Well - - -2.4 JUDGE PIGOTT: It sounds like you were

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taking a shortcut.

MR. GAYNOR: Well, Your Honors, I'm reading the - - - the Appellate Division decision which granted our motion for collateral estoppel. In my reading of the Appellate Division decision, the Appellate Division said that the mere pendency of an appeal should not matter for purposes of collateral estoppel. My reading of the Appellate Division's decision in the context - - - that this had been pending for sixteen months.

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And you're right, Your Honors, we consented to that being adjourned, but we also, in a few of our letters, which are - - are in our appendix, we noted the fact that the mere pendency of an appeal would not have precluded us from bringing a collateral estoppel motion even while this matter's up to the Second Circuit.

CHIEF JUDGE LIPPMAN: Yeah, but what I don't understand is this is what you do.

MR. GAYNOR: And - - -

CHIEF JUDGE LIPPMAN: You bring

proceedings. What - - - is it so burdensome to do

your job and to making the case if you - - - if you

want to try and censure them and take whatever

evidence, you conduct it however you want. Why isn't

this - - - what - - - what strikes me about it is why

1	isn't is just unfair?
2	MR. GAYNOR: You're you're
3	Judge Lippman, you're right. This this is a
4	fairness issue.
5	CHIEF JUDGE LIPPMAN: I'm I'm
6	MR. GAYNOR: It is a fairness issue.
7	CHIEF JUDGE LIPPMAN: So explain to me why
8	it's fair that you don't give the attorney an
9	opportunity to defend herself? If you're right,
10	you're right and then you go and censure her, do
11	whatever you want to do.
12	MR. GAYNOR: Agreed. But I think under the
13	circumstances of this case, what we actually would be
14	doing is re-litigating basically the same operative
15	facts which was previously litigated in federal
16	court.
17	JUDGE PIGOTT: Well, then you shouldn't
18	-
19	JUDGE READ: Yeah, but she had she
20	had no it has it hasn't it's not
21	reviewable in federal court
22	MR. GAYNOR: I understand that, Your Honor.
23	JUDGE READ: at this point. And we
24	don't know when it will be, right? It's it's
25	still

	MR. GAYNOR: That that's
2	another this is a very unique case, very
3	unique. And and I think that
4	JUDGE READ: I mean, it doesn't sound like
5	it would be very burdensome for you to to have
6	another because it's not going to come up that
7	often.
8	MR. GAYNOR: Agreed, Your Honor. But
9	but I think in terms of the
10	JUDGE RIVERA: The point of of not
11	applying collateral estoppel is exactly right. That
12	that she's going to have an opportunity to
13	present whatever facts or defenses that she wants to
14	present. That's that's the point.
15	MR. GAYNOR: The the the
16	countervailing argument once again that I just would
17	bring up to the court is is she is you know,
18	she has had her day previously before the litigation
19	
20	CHIEF JUDGE LIPPMAN: But she hasn't
21	finished her day.
22	JUDGE PIGOTT: So so you
23	MR. GAYNOR: Well
24	JUDGE PIGOTT: You could you could
25	put in the record and say we now rest, and then she

1 can get up and say whatever she wants to say, and you 2 should object if it's been asked and answered and 3 whatever. 4 MR. GAYNOR: Theoretically, that can 5 happen, Your Honors, but in terms of the process, in 6 terms of granting her a hearing, the possibility 7 exists that an independent fact finder appointed by 8 the Appellate Division could come in and review the 9 record, review her testimony, review her story now in 10 terms of this annuity agreement and in terms of, 11 like, when she had it, when she discovered it, and 12 whatever else. But the possibility exists that an 13 independent fact finder could come in and - - - and 14 could find that Judge Homer was wrong. 15 JUDGE READ: So what? 16 JUDGE RIVERA: So what? 17 MR. GAYNOR: Well, I - - - I - - - I think 18 19 JUDGE RIVERA: But that - - - that's not a 20 factor in the collateral - - -21 MR. GAYNOR: Well - - -22 JUDGE RIVERA: - - - in - - - in this 23 particular decision. You're asking - - - your point 2.4 is, we might lose.

MR. GAYNOR: We - - -

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1 JUDGE RIVERA: Which is her point, too, by 2 the way, because she thinks that - - - that the 3 decision was wrong initially and she thinks she can 4 show that to you. 5 MR. GAYNOR: We may lose, but this is - - this is - - - this is the brunt of the argument. We 6 7 may lose, but you would - - - what you would have would be two inconsistent decisions. 8 9 JUDGE PIGOTT: Sure. 10 MR. GAYNOR: And - - - and - - - and that -- - I think the societal interest - - -11 JUDGE PIGOTT: Well, let me give you an 12 13 example. There was a judge on the JCC who was sanctioned. She wanted to - - - she wanted to appeal 14 15 to this court. We weren't here. So she - - - she 16 appealed her censure and they removed her from the 17 office. So I mean, this has a downside for - - - for 18 Ms. Dunn here too. But what you're looking for is fairness, it seems, and - - - and let's see where the 19 20 chips fall. 21 JUDGE RIVERA: Well, what - - - what if - -22 - let's - - - let's go the other way. 23 MR. GAYNOR: Sure. 2.4 JUDGE RIVERA: So let's say you - - - you -25 - - you apply collateral estoppel. Again, you've

1	already found her in violation. You censure her.
2	She eventually gets to appeal, she actually finally
3	gets to challenge this in federal court and she wins.
4	MR. GAYNOR: I think at that point
5	JUDGE RIVERA: What relief, if any, does
6	she have at that time? To come back to you and say
7	you were wrong?
8	MR. GAYNOR: I think I think the
9	inquiry is, how do you unring the bell at that point.
10	JUDGE PIGOTT: Um-hum.
11	MR. GAYNOR: And I and I think that -
12	
13	JUDGE RIVERA: So isn't it more fair to at
14	least give her the opportunity now, before the
15	censure, to to present some defense or present
16	whatever argument she wants to present?
17	MR. GAYNOR: Our argument is, Your Honor,
18	simply is that for for purposes of imposing and
19	reviewing attorney discipline
20	JUDGE RIVERA: Um-hum.
21	MR. GAYNOR: and her credibility,
22	which was central to the issue in this case, that the
23	Appellate Division had before it enough information.
24	Judge Homer, again, concluded by clear and convincing
25	evidence after months of litigation as to her

1	misconduct, and I think the Appellate Division was
2	right in reviewing the record and in terms of
3	assessing her conduct as it applies to the New York
4	Rules of Professional Conduct.
5	JUDGE RIVERA: Well, let me ask you
6	something. What just as a
7	hypothetical, what if he had not made these findings
8	and found that she had been in violation and
9	and you, however, thought she was, that she should be
10	censured? Would you be barred from proceeding simply
11	because a judge in the federal court, which they have
12	no one has appealed yet, there's no review yet
13	found otherwise?
14	MR. GAYNOR: I don't think so.
15	JUDGE RIVERA: If you really thought you
16	had the proof?
17	MR. GAYNOR: I I I think that
18	would be arguably not bar us, Judge Rivera.
19	JUDGE RIVERA: So so you don't get
20	barred, but she does?
21	MR. GAYNOR: Well, I I don't think -
22	I think she's been barred. But she's been barred
23	
24	JUDGE RIVERA: Well, by you, but that's
25	- that's

MR. GAYNOR: Right, right. Your - - - Your Honors, listen, at the end of the day, this court and courts throughout the state - - - this - - - this case is about fairness. And there's a tension between the unfairness to Ms. Dunn in terms of the fact that, you know what, we have this appeal out there. We have no idea when it's going to be decided. And that puts her in a tough position. the countervailing argument, Your Honors, is is that there is this tension and there's a public interest in terms of - - -

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CHIEF JUDGE LIPPMAN: Yeah. But you could carry out that public interest without having a collateral estoppel ruling. You can go and bring your proceeding. That's what you - - you exist for. And win or lose, at least the person has their day in court. We all want our day in court.

MR. GAYNOR: I - - - I get back to the

Staatsburg case, Your Honor, Fire District case where

the - - - the - - - the case mentioned the

conservation of resources of the court.

JUDGE PIGOTT: I can't - - - I can't find - - I know your light's on but I - - - I can't find
what I thought I had here. But the - - - the judge
said that - - - gave the SEC the right to refer her

1 to - - - to your committee, right? 2 MR. GAYNOR: Judge Homer in his - - - his 3 opinion directly referred the matter to the Committee on Professional Standards. 4 5 JUDGE PIGOTT: Okay. Did the SEC? 6 MR. GAYNOR: No. 7 JUDGE PIGOTT: Okay. 8 CHIEF JUDGE LIPPMAN: Okay. Thanks, 9 counsel. 10 MR. GAYNOR: Thank you. Thank you. 11 CHIEF JUDGE LIPPMAN: Counselor, rebuttal. 12 MR. ZELERMYER: Only two brief points, Your 13 Honor. First of all, Judge Rivera's question, I 14 think, really highlights something. I'd like to just 15 read a sentence or a part - - - part of a sentence 16 from the court's opinion in the - - - the Haly - - -17 Hal - - - Halyalkar case. "The fact that the doctrine is sought to be 18 19 employed offensively by a nonparty to the prior 20 litigation may, in some situations, raise legitimate 21 concerns about the fairness of its application." 22 That's at page 90, I believe, of the opinion, the - -23 - the a - - - 532 N.Y.Supp.2d at page 90. 2.4 So second, and really last, is the notion

that Mr. Gaynor has suggested several times that

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1 Judge Homer reached his conclusion after months of 2 litigation. Well, Ms. Dunn wasn't a party to the 3 underlying litigation. She wasn't a party to months of litigation. She got to submit a brief after the 4 5 SEC moved for - - - for sanctions against her. 6 submitted a brief. There was no hearing. She didn't 7 get to call any witnesses. She didn't get to cross-8 examine any witnesses. The hearing that was held in 9 November, she wasn't a party. She testified. 10 was a witness. She wasn't allowed to examine or 11 cross-examine or call any witnesses. She didn't engage in months of litigation. 12 13 She had an opportunity to submit one brief. That was 14 it. That's all the hearing she's had. It's unfair. 15 CHIEF JUDGE LIPPMAN: Okay, counsel. 16 you. 17 MR. ZELERMYER: Thank you. 18 CHIEF JUDGE LIPPMAN: Thank you both. 19 (Court is adjourned) 20 21

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CERTIFICATION

I, Sara Winkeljohn, certify that the foregoing transcript of proceedings in the Court of Appeals of Matter of Dunn, an Attorney, No. 23 was prepared using the required transcription equipment and is a true and accurate record of the proceedings.

Considerich and

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