

Rec'd D Murray 9:45 AM  
7/20/20

CITATION

JEFF HUGHES

Versus

CAPITAL CITY PRESS, LLC, ET AL



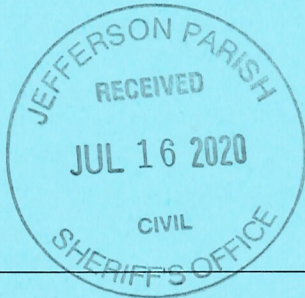
Case: 079978  
Division: A  
18<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Court  
Parish of Iberville  
State of Louisiana

PAUPER CASE

The State of Louisiana and said Court to  
CAPITAL CITY PRESS, LLC  
D/B/A THE ADVOCATE  
BRAD PRENDERGAST  
701 EDWARDS AVE  
ELMWOOD, LA 70123

You are hereby summoned either to comply with the demand contained in the SUIT FOR DAMAGES PETITION, VERIFICATION, MOTION PURSUANT TO LOUISIANA CODE OF CIVIL PROCEDURE ARTICLE 971, MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT AND EXHIBITS of the said PLAINTIFF: JEFF HUGHES a copy of which accompanies the citation, or deliver your answer to the said petition in the office of the Clerk of said Court, held at the Court House at Plaquemine, in said Parish, within 15 days after the service hereof, under penalty of default.

WITNESS THE HONORABLE J. KEVIN KIMBALL, JUDGE OF SAID COURT, this 13TH day of JULY, 2020.



*Kristen Clowson*  
Deputy Clerk of Court

Service Information

Received on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_ and on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_ served the above named party as follows:

Personal Service on the party herein named \_\_\_\_\_.

Domiciliary Service on the party herein named by leaving the same at his/her domicile in the parish in the hands of \_\_\_\_\_, a person apparently over the age of seventeen years, living and residing in said domicile and whose name and other facts connected with this service, I learned by interrogating the said person, said party herein being absent from his/her residence at the time of said service.

Returned:  
Parish of \_\_\_\_\_ this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_.

Service \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Mileage \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy Sheriff

JEFF HUGHES

NO. 19,978

DIV. A

VERSUS

18TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT

PARISH OF IBERVILLE

CAPITAL CITY PRESS, L.L.C. STATE OF LOUISIANA  
D/B/A THE ADVOCATE

PETITION

The Petition of Jeff Hughes, a resident of the Parish of Livingston, with respect represents that:

1.

Named defendant is Capital City Press, L.L.C. d/b/a The Advocate (hereinafter "The Advocate"), a Louisiana corporation domiciled in the Parish of East Baton Rouge.

2.

Beginning in 2019, The Advocate published a series of articles designed to cast plaintiff Jeff Hughes, a state court judge, in a negative light.

3.

On June 25, 2019 The Advocate published that an Advocate investigation "brought to light" that in 1999, Judge Jeff Hughes refused to recuse himself and ruled in favor of the mother in a custody case while romantically involved with the mother's attorney. This statement was false and made with knowledge that it was false, or with reckless disregard of whether it was false or not, thereby defaming plaintiff. In fact, at the time of publication, The Advocate had knowledge that the attorney in question had withdrawn from the case over seven months earlier, in August 1998, and did not represent the mother when Judge Hughes ruled on the custody case in 1999. As shown by the results of its own investigation, by the time of the custody hearing the attorney in question "had officially left the case in August 1998, court documents show," as published by the Advocate on June 23, 2019. The Advocate thus not only defamed plaintiff, but falsified the actual results of its own investigation to do so.

4.

The defamatory statement – that Judge Hughes ruled on a case while his girlfriend represented one of the litigants – made when The Advocate had written

documentary evidence showing otherwise, was thus made with knowledge that it was false and/or with reckless disregard for the truth, hence with actual malice whether “opinion” or otherwise, in accordance with the decision of the United States Supreme Court in **Milkovich v. Lorain Journal Co.**

5.

Plaintiff met with the editors and reporters for The Advocate and requested a correction. The Advocate refused, and instead ran several more stories, suggesting that Judge Hughes was guilty of unspecified misbehavior, failures, and ethical lapses. Given that the premise upon which the entire series rested was knowingly false, and/or made with reckless disregard for the truth, the repeated publishing of related innuendo, insinuation, half-truths, and time shifting, all of which resulted in casting plaintiff in a negative light, is further indication of actual malice on the part of The Advocate.

6.

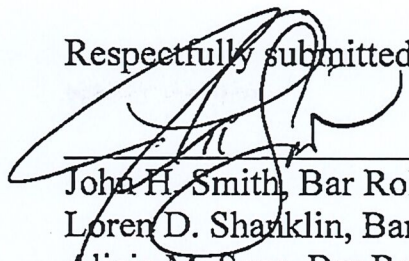
Plaintiff, a public official, is now the elected supreme court justice for the following Louisiana parishes: Livingston, Ascension, Iberville, East and West Baton Rouge, Pointe Coupee, and East and West Feliciana. In each of these parishes the Advocate is delivered to subscribers, sold to the public, and available on-line. The Advocate defamed plaintiff causing him embarrassment and damage to his reputation in these parishes, among others.

7.

Plaintiff is entitled to damages and to be made whole in accordance with the principles of the Louisiana Civil Code. Plaintiff suggests that The Advocate run a correction, acceptable to him, on the front page of the Sunday Advocate for four consecutive Sundays or, should the matter proceed to trial, pay plaintiff reasonable damages.

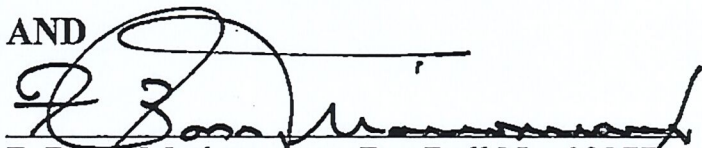
WHEREFORE, the premises considered, plaintiff prays for trial by jury as the claim exceeds the requisite amount and that after due process there be judgment herein in his favor and against The Advocate as set forth above for reasonable damages and for all other general and equitable relief, including judicial interest if applicable, and all costs of these proceedings.

Respectfully submitted,



John H. Smith, Bar Roll No.23308  
Loren D. Shanklin, Bar Roll No. 33366  
Alicia M. Sosa, Bar Roll No.34101  
**SMITH SHANKLIN SOSA, L.L.C.**  
16851 Jefferson Highway, Suite 7C  
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70817  
Telephone: 225-223-6333  
Facsimile: 888-413-8345  
[john@smithshanklin.com](mailto:john@smithshanklin.com)  
[loren@smithshanklin.com](mailto:loren@smithshanklin.com)

AND

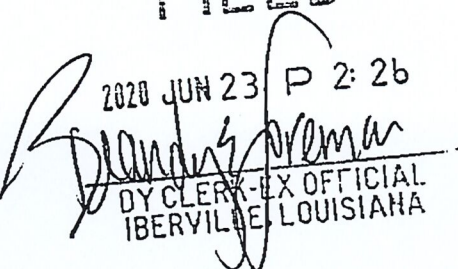


F. Barry Marionneaux, Bar Roll No. 09277  
Elizabeth M. Mayeaux, Bar Roll No. 22523  
**F. BARRY MARIONNEAUX, APLC**  
23615 Railroad Avenue  
Plaquemine, Louisiana 70764  
Telephone: 225-687-6884  
Facsimile: 225-687-6886  
[barrymx@marionneauxlaw.com](mailto:barrymx@marionneauxlaw.com)  
[lisa@marionneauxlaw.com](mailto:lisa@marionneauxlaw.com)

Please hold for service information.

**A TRUE COPY**  
DATE 7/13/2020  
  
Deputy Clerk, Ex-Officio, Recorder, Iberville Parish, Louisiana

**FILED**

2020 JUN 23 P 2: 26  
  
DEPUTY CLERK-EX OFFICIAL  
IBERVILLE, LOUISIANA

JEFF HUGHES

NO. 19,978

DIV. A

VERSUS

18TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT

PARISH OF IBERVILLE

CAPITAL CITY PRESS, L.L.C.  
D/B/A THE ADVOCATE

STATE OF LOUISIANA

VERIFICATION

Before me, the undersigned notary, came and appeared plaintiff, Jeff Hughes, who did swear and attest that the factual allegations of the accompanying Petition are true and correct to the best of his knowledge and belief.

*Jeff Hughes*  
JEFF HUGHES

This 23<sup>rd</sup> day of June, 2020, at Plaquemine, Louisiana.

*F. Barry Marionneau*  
F. BARRY MARIONNEAUX  
La. Bar Roll #09277  
My Commission Expires at Death

A TRUE COPY  
DATE 7/13/2020  
*Kristine Dawson*  
Deputy Clerk, Ex-Officio, Recorder, Iberville Parish, Louisiana

FILED  
2020 JUN 23 P 2:28  
*Dorothy Williams*  
BY CLERK, EX OFFICIAL  
IBERVILLE, LOUISIANA

JEFF HUGHES

NO.79978 DIV. A

18TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT

VERSUS

PARISH OF IBERVILLE

CAPITAL CITY PRESS, L.L.C.  
D/B/A THE ADVOCATE

STATE OF LOUISIANA

---

**PLAINTIFF’S MOTION PURSUANT TO  
LOUISIANA CODE OF CIVIL PROCEDURE ARTICLE 971**

---

Comes now plaintiff, Jeff Hughes, through undersigned counsel, with Plaintiff’s Motion Pursuant to Louisiana Code of Civil Procedure Article 971, and moves the court for a determination, upon consideration of the verified petition and the supporting affidavits attached hereto, that the cause of action herein is not subject to a special motion to strike because plaintiff has established a probability of success on the claim.

1.

This cause arises out of Defendant’s publication of false and defamatory information all of which the Defendant knew or should have known was false prior to publication.

2.

In order to prevail on a claim for defamation, a plaintiff must prove: “(1) a false and defamatory statement concerning another; (2) an unprivileged publication to a third party; (3) fault (negligence or greater) on the part of the publisher; and (4) resulting injury.” *Trentecosta v. Beck*, 1996-2388, P. 10 (La. 10/21/97), 703 So.2d 552, 559.

3.

On June 25, 2019, The Advocate published that in 1999, Judge Jeff Hughes refused to recuse himself and ruled in favor of the mother in a custody case while romantically involved with the mother’s attorney. This statement was false and made with knowledge that it was false, or with reckless disregard of whether it was false or not, the legal equivalent of actual malice. In fact, at the time of the publication, The Advocate had knowledge that the attorney in question had withdrawn from the case over seven months earlier, in August 1998, and did not represent the mother when Judge Hughes ruled on the custody case in 1999.

4.

Plaintiff submits the following exhibits in support of his allegations:

- Exhibit A Excerpt of article published by The Advocate on June 25, 2019.
- Exhibit B Excerpt of article published by The Advocate on June 23, 2019.
- Exhibit C Certified copy of “Motion to Substitute Counsel of Record” filed on August 14, 1998.

- Exhibit D Certified copy of Civil Court Minutes dated March 24, 1999.
- Exhibit E Excerpt from The Gambit published on March 17, 2020.
- Exhibit F Affidavit of Livingston Parish Clerk of Court attesting to Exhibits C & D.
- Exhibit G Affidavit of Edward R. Erwin attesting to delivery of The Advocate in Iberville Parish.
- Exhibit H Affidavit of plaintiff Jeff Hughes attesting to the receipt of Exhibits A, B, and E.

5.

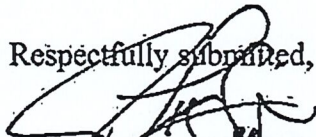
The verified Petition for Damages and authenticated exhibits clearly establish all elements of Plaintiff's defamation cause of action against Defendant.

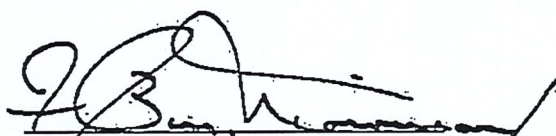
6.

Plaintiff further moves that all discovery be stayed pending the court's determination, that the matter be noticed for hearing within 30 days, and that the prevailing party be awarded reasonable attorney fees and costs, all pursuant to Louisiana Code of Civil Procedure Article 971.

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff prays that after due proceedings had, the Court will stay all discovery pending the Court's determination, granting Plaintiff's motion, and award reasonable attorney fees and costs associated with these proceedings, all pursuant to Louisiana Code of Civil Procedure Article 971.

Respectfully submitted,

  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 John H. Smith, Bar Roll No. 23308  
 Loren D. Shanklin, Bar Roll No. 33366  
 Alicia M. Sosa, Bar Roll No. 34101  
**SMITH SHANKLIN SOSA, L.L.C.**  
 16851 Jefferson Highway, Suite 7C  
 Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70817  
 Telephone: 225-223-6333  
 Facsimile: 888-413-8345  
[John@smithshanklin.com](mailto:John@smithshanklin.com)

  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 F. Barry Marionneaux (#09277)  
 Elizabeth M. Mayeaux (#22523)  
**F. BARRY MARIONNEAUX, APLC**  
 23615 Railroad Avenue  
 Plaquemine, Louisiana 70764  
 Telephone: (225) 687-6884  
 Facsimile: (225) 687-6886  
[barrvmx@marionneauxlaw.com](mailto:barrvmx@marionneauxlaw.com)  
[lisa@marionneauxlaw.com](mailto:lisa@marionneauxlaw.com)

**Please serve:**  
 Capital City Press, L.L.C. d/b/a The Advocate  
 Through its Registered Agent  
 Brad Prendergast  
 701 Edwards Ave  
 Elmwood, LA 70123

**A TRUE COPY**  
 DATE 7/13/2020  
  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Deputy Clerk, Ex-Officio, Recorder, Iberville Parish, Louisiana

79978  
 FILED ON 7/9/2020 3:02PM  
 IBERVILLE PARISH, LA

JEFF HUGHES

NO.79978 DIV. A

18TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT

VERSUS

PARISH OF IBERVILLE

CAPITAL CITY PRESS, L.L.C.  
D/B/A THE ADVOCATE

STATE OF LOUISIANA

---

PLAINTIFF'S MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT OF MOTION PURSUANT TO  
LOUISIANA CODE OF CIVIL PROCEDURE ARTICLE 971

---

Comes now plaintiff, Jeff Hughes, through undersigned counsel, with Plaintiff's Motion Pursuant to Louisiana Code of Civil Procedure Article 971, and moves the court for a determination, upon consideration of the verified petition and the supporting affidavits attached hereto, that the cause of action herein is not subject to a special motion to strike because plaintiff has established a probability of success on the claim.

This cause arises out of Defendant's publication of false and defamatory information all of which the Defendant knew or should have known was false prior to publication.

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On June 25, 2019, The Advocate published that in 1999, Judge Jeff Hughes refused to recuse himself and ruled in favor of the mother in a custody case while romantically involved with the mother's attorney. This statement was false and made with knowledge that it was false, or with reckless disregard of whether it was false or not, the legal equivalent of actual malice. In fact, at the time of the publication, The Advocate had knowledge that the attorney in question had withdrawn from the case over seven months earlier, in August 1998, and did not represent the mother when Judge Hughes ruled on the custody case in 1999.

Plaintiff submits the following exhibits in support of his allegations:

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- Exhibit H Affidavit of plaintiff Jeff Hughes attesting to the receipt of Exhibits A, B, and E.



The verified Petition for Damages and authenticated exhibits clearly establish all elements of Plaintiff's defamation cause of action against Defendant.

The full text of Louisiana Code of Civil Procedure Art. 971. Special motion to strike is as follows:

A.(1) A cause of action against a person arising from any act of that person in furtherance of the person's right of petition or free speech under the United States or Louisiana Constitution in connection with a public issue shall be subject to a special motion to strike, unless the court determines that the plaintiff has established a probability of success on the claim.

(2) In making its determination, the court shall consider the pleadings and supporting and opposing affidavits stating the facts upon which the liability or defense is based.

(3) If the court determines that the plaintiff has established a probability of success on the claim, that determination shall be admissible in evidence at any later stage of the proceeding.

B. In any action subject to Paragraph A of this Article, a prevailing party on a special motion to strike shall be awarded reasonable attorney fees and costs.

C. The special motion may be filed within sixty days of service of the petition, or in the court's discretion, at any later time upon terms the court deems proper. The motion shall be noticed for hearing not more than thirty days after service unless the docket conditions of the court require a later hearing.

D. All discovery proceedings in the action shall be stayed upon the filing of a notice of motion made pursuant to this Article. The stay of discovery shall remain in effect until notice of entry of the order ruling on the motion. Notwithstanding the provisions of this Paragraph, the court, on noticed motion and for good cause shown, may order that specified discovery be conducted.

E. This Article shall not apply to any enforcement action brought on behalf of the state of Louisiana by the attorney general, district attorney, or city attorney acting as a public prosecutor.

F. As used in this Article, the following terms shall have the meanings ascribed to them below, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

(1) "Act in furtherance of a person's right of petition or free speech under the United States or Louisiana Constitution in connection with a public issue" includes but is not limited to:

(a) Any written or oral statement or writing made before a legislative, executive, or judicial proceeding, or any other official proceeding authorized by law.

(b) Any written or oral statement or writing made in connection with an issue under consideration or review by a legislative, executive, or judicial body, or any other official body authorized by law.

(c) Any written or oral statement or writing made in a place open to the public or a public forum in connection with an issue of public interest.

(d) Any other conduct in furtherance of the exercise of the constitutional right of petition or the constitutional right of free speech in connection with a public issue or an issue of public interest.

(2) "Petition" includes either a petition or a reconventional demand.

(3) "Plaintiff" includes either a plaintiff or petitioner in a principal action or a plaintiff or petitioner in reconvention.

(4) "Defendant" includes either a defendant or respondent in a principal action or a defendant or respondent in reconvention.

Acts 1999, No. 734, §1; Acts 2004, No. 232, §1.

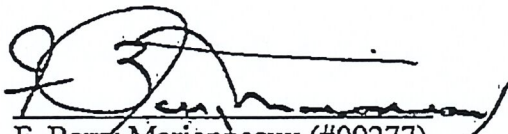
There is no prohibition within the Article that precludes the Plaintiff from seeking the determination of probability of success pursuant to pre-trial motion. Article 971 simply states that the Court may strike allegations of defamation 'unless the court determines that the plaintiff has established a probability of success on the claim.' Plaintiff moves the Court to make the determination that he has in fact "established a probability of success on the claim."

Plaintiff further moves that all discovery be stayed pending the court's determination, that the matter be noticed for hearing within 30 days, and that the prevailing party be awarded reasonable attorney fees and costs, all pursuant to Louisiana Code of Civil Procedure Article 971.

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff prays that after due proceedings had, the Court will stay all discovery pending the Court's determination, granting Plaintiff's motion, and award reasonable attorney fees and costs associated with these proceedings, all pursuant to Louisiana Code of Civil Procedure Article 971.

Respectfully submitted,

  
John H. Smith, Bar Roll No. 23308  
Loren D. Shanklin, Bar Roll No. 33366  
Alicia M. Sosa, Bar Roll No. 34101  
**SMITH SHANKLIN SOSA, L.L.C.**  
16851 Jefferson Highway, Suite 7C  
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Elizabeth M. Mayeaux (#22523)  
**F. BARRY MARIONNEAUX, APLC**  
23615 Railroad Avenue  
Plaquemine, Louisiana 70764  
Telephone: (225) 687-6884  
Facsimile: (225) 687-6886  
[barrymx@marionneauxlaw.com](mailto:barrymx@marionneauxlaw.com)  
[lisa@marionneauxlaw.com](mailto:lisa@marionneauxlaw.com)

79978

FILED 7/9/2020 3:02PM

IBERVILLE PARISH, LA

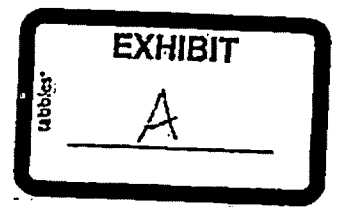
Case Number: 079978 Transaction Date: 7/9/2020 Seq: 5 Page Sequence: 5

A TRUE COPY  
DATE 7/13/2020  
  
Deputy Clerk, Ex-Officio, Recorder, Iberville Parish, Louisiana

## EXHIBITS

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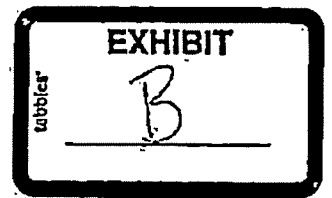


The facts that have made it into the light of day read like a horror story. In 1999, while on the state bench in Livingston, Hughes was romantically involved with lawyer [REDACTED] [REDACTED], according to several people familiar with the situation. Even so, he didn't recuse himself from a custody case and related legal matters involving a five-year-old boy named Austin Nicholson. [REDACTED] represented Austin's mother, who was fighting for custody even though her boyfriend, who would become her husband, had been accused of scalding Austin in a tub of hot water.

RELATED

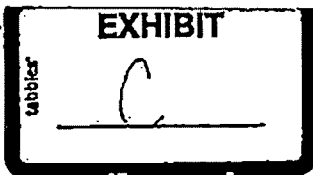
**What was the outcome of your Judiciary Commission complaint?**

Hughes refused to recuse himself and ruled in favor of Austin's mother, though child welfare officials strenuously



---

By the time of the custody hearing, overseen by Hughes, ~~XXXXXX~~ was no longer the lawyer of record. She'd officially left the case in August 1998, court documents show.



mc  
333

E

KRISTIN M. NICHOLSON

NUMBER 82,099 DIVISION "E"

21ST JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT

VERSUS

PARISH OF LIVINGSTON

RODNEY W. NICHOLSON

STATE OF LOUISIANA

MICROFILMED

335

MOTION TO SUBSTITUTE COUNSEL OF RECORD

ON MOTION, of W. Robert Gill, attorney for Petitioner, KRISTIN M. NICHOLSON, and on suggesting to the Court that the current Counsel of Record, Berkley R. Durbin desires to withdraw as counsel of record in the above captioned matter and that W. Robert Gill wishes to enroll as counsel of record.

Petitioner prays that counsel of record be substituted in the above matter.

SUBMITTED BY:

W. ROBERT GILL

Bar Roll Number 20557  
604 St. Ferdinand Street  
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70802  
Telephone: (504) 383-9704

BERKLEY R. DURBIN

Bar Roll Number 21418  
112 Hummell Avenue  
Denham Springs, Louisiana 70726  
Telephone: (504) 664-4820

ORDER

Considering the foregoing motion:

IT IS ORDERED that W. Robert Gill, is hereby permitted to substitute as counsel of record for Berkley R. Durbin, on behalf of Petitioner, Kristin M. Nicholson.

Livingston, Louisiana, this 27<sup>th</sup> day of August, 1998.

  
JUDGE, 21ST JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT

FILED  
CLERK OF COURT  
VALID ONLY IF SIGNED  
98 AUG 14 PM 12:51  
  
DEPUTY CLERK

21st JUDICIAL DISTRICT  
PARISH OF LIVINGSTON, LA  
A true copy of the original  
this 27. 6. 20 76  
  
Deputy Clerk of Court



Extract of Civil Court Minutes

Twenty First Judicial District Court

MARCH 24TH, 1999

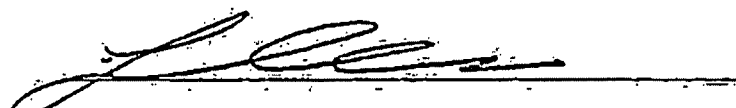
COURT CONVENED AT THE USUAL HOUR OF NINE THIRTY A.M. BEFORE THE HONORABLE JEFFERSON D. HUGHES, III, DISTRICT JUDGE, DIVISION " F ". LUCIUS PATTERSON, CLERK OF COURT; WILLIE GRAVES, SHERIFF; SCOTT PERRILLOUX, DISTRICT ATTORNEY; CHRISTINA CARTER, COURT REPORTER, AND SHARON FOLKS, MINUTE CLERK.

Case #: 00000082099 NICHOLSON, KRISTIN M., ET AL  
VERSUS  
NICHOLSON, RODNEY W.

This matter appearing before the Court this date for the purpose of a trial. Present in open court was Kristen Nicholson, with her attorney of record W. Robert Gill. Rodney Nicholson appeared in open court in proper person at 10:20 a.m. The Court stated that this matter had been set for trial this date at 9:00 a.m. during pre-trial conference which was held on Monday, March 22nd, 1999 at 1:00 p.m. Mr. Smith attorney for the defendant made no appearance during the pre-trial conference. Mr. Gill stated to the Court that he had spoken with Mr. Smith on March 22, 1999, and that Mr. Smith was aware that the Court would be setting this matter for trial later on during the week. After pre-trial conference with the Court, Mr. Gill stated that he notified Mr. Smith of the trial being set for Wednesday, March 24th, 1999 at 9:00 a.m. Mr. Gill showed the Court a faxed copy of a Motion to Recuse sent to him by Mr. Smith on Tuesday, March 23, 1999. The Court spoke with Judge Chutz about hearing the Motion to Recuse. Due to the fact that Mr. Smith made no appearance to argue the Motion to Recuse and due to no complying with the Civil Code Procedure article 154 and oral reasons stated on the record the Court denied the Motion to Recuse. Mr. Gill called Marc Fuselier who was duly sworn and testified. Mr. Gill called Kristen Fuselier, who was duly sworn and testified. Mr. Gill offered and introduced plaintiff exhibit one-emergency room report concerning the minor child Austin Nicholson. Mr. Gill offered and introduced plaintiff exhibit two-summary of important facts by interview with Dr. Abide with the minor child Austin Nicholson. Mr. Gill offered and introduced plaintiff exhibit three-childrens drawing. Mr. Gill offered and introduced plaintiff exhibit four-childrens coloring of a bear. Mr. Gill called Leonard Barrio, who was duly sworn and testified. The Plaintiff rest. Mr. Gill offered introduced plaintiff exhibit five-tape of several conversations with the Nicholson family. The Court after hearing the testimony and reviewing the evidence, ordered primary domicile of the minor child, Austin Nicholson to Kristen Fuselier. The Court further ordered that the relationship between the step-father is to be gradually worked into. The Court ordered the previous placed restrictions on Marc Fuselier removed. The Court further ordered that joint custody is to remain in effect. The Court further ordered the father's visitation rights reserved.

Court adjourned until next regular session.

A true extract from the minutes of court of Division F, Twenty First Judicial District Court, Parish of Livingston, State of Louisiana, dated 7.6.2020 and recorded in minute book \_\_\_\_\_ page \_\_\_\_\_

  
Deputy Clerk of Court

**EXHIBIT**

E

**CLANCY DUBOS**

@clancygambit

# Remembering Ed Renwick — pollster and mentor extraordinaire

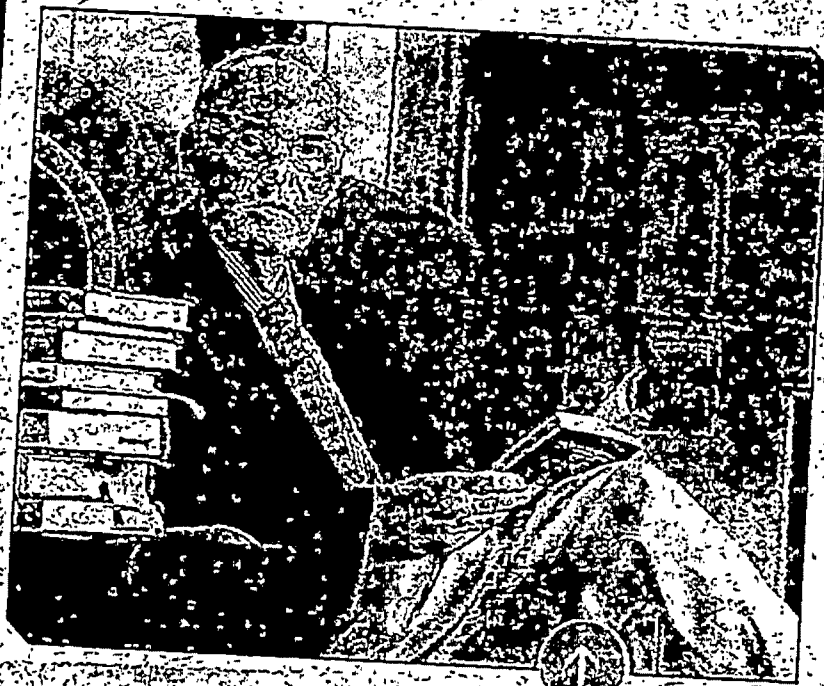


PHOTO BY TED JACKSON/  
THE TIMES-PICAYUNE  
New Orleans political analyst Ed Renwick in his favorite chair in his home. Renwick died March 6 at age 81.

IT HAS NEVER BEEN EASY TO UNDERSTAND LOUISIANA POLITICS, but veteran pollster and political scientist Ed Renwick made our politics far less Byzantine — and lots of fun. Ed, who co-founded the Loyola Institute of Politics (IOP) nearly half a century ago and left his mark on generations of politicians and political reporters, died after a lengthy illness on March 6 at the age of 81.

With a generous mix of insight and humor, Ed unraveled the mysteries of polling, campaigning, messaging and governing for students, politicians, journalists and television viewers. For decades, he was the pollster and election night analyst for WWL-TV in addition to serving as IOP's executive director and a professor of political science at Loyola University. He also served as pollster for a slew of local politicians, including New Orleans' first African American mayor, Ernest N. "Dutch" Morial.

A native of Joliet, Illinois, Ed came to Louisiana in the 1960s to conduct research for his doctoral dissertation. He never left. In an interview years later, he described Louisiana as "heaven for a political junkie."

Ed was a kind and gentle soul, a voracious reader and a lover of good food, fine wine and his wife of 45 years, Polly Renwick. He had a wonderful sense of humor, which he

used to flavor his political analysis at every turn.

Ed's longtime friend Harry Blumenthal recalled an election night when then-news anchor Angela Hill had to fill some airtime ("tap dance," as they say in TV Land) with Ed during a lull in the returns. She asked Ed how he came up with the "profile precincts" that enabled him to project winners long before all the returns came in. As he burst into his hallmark giggle, Ed replied, "The same way porcupines make love — very carefully!"

Blumenthal also recounted the time he and Renwick were dining out with their wives at Mosca's Restaurant in Westwego. As they were leaving, a woman who was sitting with several other ladies nearby stopped Ed and asked, "Aren't you on TV?" Ed answered that he was, indeed, on Channel 4. "I told you," the woman said to her friends. "He's the weatherman!"

Ed and Harry shared many laughs about that one.

Then there was the time Ed had to deliver some bad news to a client who was running for office. "Even if

the five other candidates in the race drop out, I still don't think you would win," Ed said, followed by the laugh.

How I miss that laugh now.

Politicians tend to take themselves and their campaigns very seriously, of course. What made Ed so valuable to candidates was the incredible accuracy of his polls. Unlike so many "good news" pollsters today, who magically provide candidates with rosy numbers and projections, Ed never let his own political leanings or candidates' potential reactions influence his analysis. That level of professionalism and intellectual honesty was Ed's stock in trade.

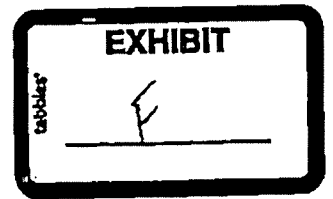
Ed was also incredibly generous with his insights. He never stopped teaching those of us who were privileged to have attended his IOP lectures. I can't count the times I called on him to get his take on local politics. He never failed to give me more than I asked for. Other reporters who knew Ed tell similar stories. In 1999, Ed was inducted into the Louisiana Political Hall of Fame. He retired in 2008, and the IOP has established an annual lecture series bearing his name.

Decades ago, when newsrooms weren't so budget-conscious, Ed and I were part of a small but devoted group of political junkies who used to meet for long (and liquid) lunches — seasoned with gossip and insights — at Ruth's, Chris' Steakhouse the day before Election Day. The initial group included Ed's friend, fellow pollster and one-time business partner Joe Walker, media consultant Jim Carvin and columnist Iris Kelso. They were my early mentors in the dark arts of Louisiana politics, and they're all gone now. I choose to believe they're back together again — enjoying more gossip and laughs.

Among the great privileges of my life were calling Ed a friend, sharing the Eyewitness News election night desk with him before his retirement, and then trying to follow in his footsteps. Ed Renwick will never be replaced, only followed ... and now, greatly missed.

**CORRECTION** — In my column last week on proposed legislation regarding the Louisiana Judiciary Commission, I wrote that state Supreme Court Justice Jeff Hughes had been investigated by the FBI over a conflict of interest in that he failed to disclose he was dating the lawyer for a litigant appearing before him in a child custody case in March 1999. I have since been provided with court documents showing the attorney in question did not represent that litigant during the custody trial, but rather had withdrawn from the case more than seven months earlier, in August 1998. I apologize for the error. ☐





JEFF HUGHES

NO.79,978 DIV. A

VERSUS

18TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT

PARISH OF IBERVILLE

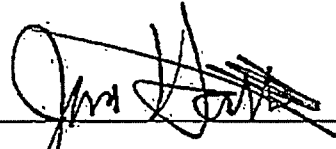
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D/B/A THE ADVOCATE

STATE OF LOUISIANA

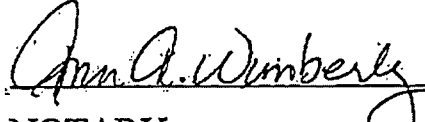
**AFFIDAVIT**

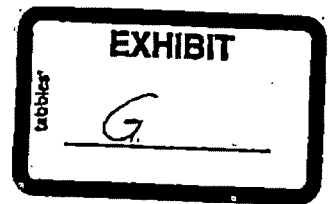
Before me, notary, personally came and appeared Jason Harris, Livingston Parish Clerk of Court, who being duly sworn did depose and state that:

1. Annexed to this affidavit labeled as Exhibit C, is a true and correct copy of a "Motion to Substitute Counsel of Record," filed on August 14, 1998 in docket #82,099 of the Livingston Parish civil suit records, duly certified as such in my presence.
2. Annexed also to this affidavit, labeled as Exhibit D, is a true and correct copy of the Civil Court minutes in docket #82,099 for the date of March 24, 1999, also duly certified as such in my presence.
3. This affidavit, labeled as Exhibit F, is my personal verification of the accuracy and veracity of Exhibits C and D above mentioned.
4. Further deponent sayeth not.

  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Jason Harris

Sworn to and subscribed before me, Notary, this 8<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2020, in Livingston, Louisiana

  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 NOTARY  
 ANN A. WIMBERLY  
 ID # 54335  
 Commission expires w/life



AFFIDAVIT OF EDWARD R. ERWIN

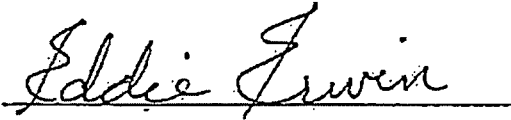
PARISH OF IBERVILLE  
STATE OF LOUISIANA

BEFORE ME, the undersigned Notary, personally came and appeared  
EDWARD R. ERWIN,

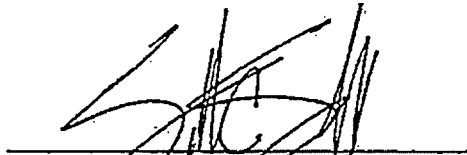
who did depose and state the following:

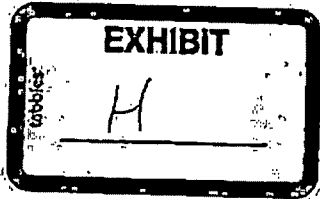
1. My date of birth is February 7, 1939. My address is 27620 Intracoastal Rd., Plaquemine, LA 70764.
2. I am a lifelong resident of Iberville Parish, Louisiana.
3. I have been subscribed to The Advocate for as long as I can remember, well over forty (40) years.
4. When I built my home on Intracoastal Road forty-two (42) years ago, there was no newspaper delivery route to that area for a very short time. Prior to building there, I lived on New Erwin Drive in Plaquemine and had The Advocate delivered daily.
5. As soon as delivery of The Advocate to my new home on Intracoastal Road was provided, I immediately subscribed again. That subscription continues until this date.
6. I read The Advocate daily from cover to cover.

FURTHER AFFIANT SAYETH NOT.

  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 EDDIE ERWIN

SWORN TO AND SUBSCRIBED BEFORE ME, this 3<sup>rd</sup> day of July, 2020.

  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 SCOTT C. STASSI  
 Louisiana Bar #20625  
 My Commission Expires At Death



JEFF HUGHES

NO. 79,978 DIV. A

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VERSUS

PARISH OF IBERVILLE

CAPITAL CITY PRESS, L.L.C. STATE OF LOUISIANA  
D/B/A THE ADVOCATE

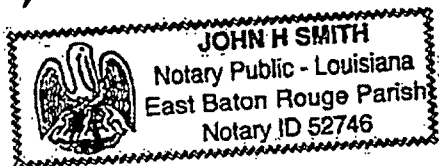
AFFIDAVIT

Before me, notary, personally came and appeared Jeff Hughes, plaintiff herein, who being duly sworn did depose and state that:

1. Labeled as Exhibit A in this matter is an excerpt from an article styled "Our Views" published by The Advocate on June 25, 1998 and received by me as a yearly subscriber at my residence in Walker, Louisiana on that same date, as well as a printed copy of the same published by The Advocate the same date on the internet.
2. Labeled as Exhibit B in this matter is an excerpt from an article published by The Advocate on June 23, 1998 and received by me as a yearly subscriber at my residence in Walker, Louisiana on that same date, as well as a printed copy of the same published by The Advocate the same date on the internet.
3. Labeled as Exhibit E in this matter is an excerpt from The Gambit, personally received in my office in New Orleans, Louisiana, dated March 17, 2020. The Gambit originally published the facts stated in Exhibit A, but after I presented Exhibits B, C, and D to its editorial staff, the Correction labeled Exhibit E was published by The Gambit.
4. Further deponent sayeth not.

Jeff Hughes  
Jeff Hughes

Sworn to and subscribed before me, Notary, this 8th day of July, 2020, in Baton Rouge, Louisiana



[Signature]  
NOTARY