No. 20-6895

ORIGINAL

IN THE

Supreme Court of the United States

OCTOBER TERM, 2020

RAHEEM JEFFERSON BRENNERMAN,

Petitioner,

v.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

Respondent,

On Petition for a Writ of Certiorari
To the United States Court of Appeals
for the Second Circuit

PETITION FOR A WRIT OF CERTIORARI

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I. QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the abuse of discretion standard imposed by the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit is Constitutionally impermissible - where trial Court which had an obligation to protect the Constitutional rights of a criminal defendant deliberately deprived him of his Constitutional rights and the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit refused to correct the errors of trial Court.

2. Whether trial Court abused its obligation to protect the Constitutional rights of a criminal defendant at trial - where trial Court deliberately caused the deprivation of a criminal defendant`s Constitutional right in an endeavor to unjustly deprive him of liberty.

PARTIES TO THE PROCEEDING

All parties appear in the caption of the case on the cover page

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IV. PETITION FOR WRIT OF CERTIORARI TO THE UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS FOR THE SECOND CIRCUIT

Petitioner Raheem Jefferson Brennerman respectfully petitions this Court for a writ of certiorari to review the judgment and order of the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit entered on June 9, 2020. Mr. Brennerman`s motion for rehearing en banc was denied on September 9, 2020.

V. OPINION BELOW

On June 9, 2020, a panel of the Second Circuit affirmed Petitioner`s conviction. *United States v. Brennerman*, No. 18 1033, 2020 WL 3053867 (2d Cir. June 9, 2020) (Summary Order). Mr. Brennerman`s motion for rehearing en banc was denied by an Order of the Second Circuit dated September 9, 2020. *See* No. 18 1033 Cr., EFC No. 318.

VI. JURISDICTION

The Court of Appeals' judgment affirming Petitioner`s conviction and sentence was entered on June 9, 2020. *See* 18 1033, EFC No. 286. Mr. Brennerman`s motion for rehearing en banc was denied on September 9, 2020. *See* No. 18 1033, EFC No. 314; 318. Following a 150-day period for filing, including the ordinary 90-day filing period plus the 60-day additional time provided by administrative order relating to the COVID-19 pandemic, this Petition for Certiorari would have expired on February 9, 2021. The petition is being filed postmark on or before that date. Sup. Ct. R. 13(1); 13(3); 13(5); 29(2); 30(1). Petitioner invokes this Court`s jurisdiction under 28 U.S.C. § 1254(1).

VII. CONSTITUTIONAL AND STATUTORY PROVISIONS INVOLVED

Title 18 U.S.C § 401(3) provides:

> A court of the United States shall have power to punish by fine or imprisonment, or both, at its discretion, such contempt of its authority, and none other, as—
>
> (3) Disobedience or resistance to its lawful writ, process, order, rule, decree, or command.

The Fifth Amendment provides:

> No person shall be held to answer for a capital, or otherwise infamous crime, unless on a presentment or indictment of a Grand Jury, except in cases arising in the land or naval forces, or in the Militia, when in actual service in time of War or public danger; nor shall any person be subject for the same offense to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limbo; nor shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself, nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation.

The Sixth Amendment provides:

> In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the state and district wherein the crime shall have been committed, which district shall have been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation, to be confronted with the witnesses against him, to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor, and to have the assistance of counsel for his defense.

VIII. STATEMENT OF CASE

This case presents a matter of significant public interest in highlighting the unusual instance where the Courts, that have an obligation to protect the Constitutional rights of a criminal defendant, veers from the permissible to the impermissible with the Courts deliberately violating the Constitutional rights of Petitioner. The attack on Petitioner Raheem J. Brennerman is an attack on the rule of law, civil rights and liberties affecting everyone as well as the very fabric of United States' democracy. The United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit has a Constitutional obligation to review de novo meaning for clear error. *See United States v. Bershchansky*, 755 F.3d 102, 108 (2d Cir. 2015) (internal citation and quotation marks omitted) The Circuit Court exacerbated the Constitutional deprivation already suffered by Petitioner by imposing a Constitutionally impermissible abuse of discretion standard with its review.

Petitioner seeks review of this case for clarification on the obligations of the Courts - United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit and the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York particularly where a criminal defendant`s right has been so abridged and abrogated because of his race resulting in a fundamental miscarriage of justice.

The Fifth Amendment of the United States Constitution states, "No person shall be deprived . . .of life, liberty or property without the due process of law." The due process right is enshrined in the bedrock of our democracy by imposing the equal protection of law doctrine. *Abdul-Akbar v. McKelvie*, 239 F.3d 307, 316-17 (3d Cir. 2001) (en banc) (Although the Fifth Amendment contains no Equal Protection Clause . . .[t]he [Supreme] Court has construed the Fifth Amendment to contain an Equal Protection Guarantee [;] . . .Fifth Amendment Equal Protection claims are examined under the same principle that apply to such claims under the Fourteenth Amendment) (internal citations omitted).

The Court had previously promulgated that a criminal defendant has a Sixth Amendment right to present a complete defense. *See Crane v. Ky.*, 476 U.S. 683 (1986) (holding that "It is a federal law that a criminal defendant has a Constitutional right to present a complete defense). The United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit recently adopted such holding in *Scrimo* while creating disparity with Petitioner. *Scrimo v. Lee*, 935 F.3d 103 (2d Cir. 2019).

Review of this case is warranted as a matter of public interest to emphasize conformity and uniformity with the law and Constitution among lower Courts in ensuring adherence with their Constitutional obligations and to avoid attack on the civil rights and liberties of criminal defendants because of their race, sex or religion.

BACKGROUND

The history of this matter began in 2014 when ICBC (London) PLC sued The Blacksands Pacific Group, Inc ("Blacksands") in New York Supreme Court primarily alleging, inter alia that Blacksands had failed to repay approximately $4.4 million dollars extended to Blacksands pursuant to a Bridge Loan Agreement. Significantly, Petitioner Raheem J. Brennerman, the CEO of Blacksands, was not named as a defendant in that action. (Notice of Removal; Cv. Cover Sheet, *ICBC (London) PLC v. The Blacksands Pacific Group, Inc.*, No. 15 Cv. 70 (LAK), EFC No. 1-2).

Blacksands removed the case to the Southern District of New York and the matter was assigned to Hon. Lewis A. Kaplan, under the caption *ICBC (London) PLC v. The Blacksands Pacific Group, Inc.* (Notice of Removal, No. 15 Cv. 70 (LAK), EFC No. 1). Based on the loan documents, Judge Kaplan granted ICBC London's motion for summary judgment against Blacksands. (Mem. Op., No. 15 Cv. 70 (LAK), EFC No. 38).

ICBC London then served Blacksands with extremely broad post-judgment discovery requests. Blacksands counsel, Latham & Watkins LLP ("Latham") interposed objections to those demands and filed a brief in support of those objections. (*See* Def. Interrog., No. 15 Cv. 70 (LAK), EFC No. 84 Ex. 2); (Mem.; Def.'s Decl., No. 15 Cv. 70 (LAK), EFC Nos. 85, 86). The Court conducting no analysis regarding the permissible scope of post-judgment discovery of the actual breadth of plaintiff's demands, instead in

conclusionary fashion declared that the objections were "baseless" and that Blacksands "shall comply fully." (*See* Order, No. 15 Cv. 70 (LAK), EFC No. 87).

Subsequently, ICBC London moved for contempt and coercive sanctions against Blacksands. (Order to Show Cause; Pl.'s Decl.; Mem., No. 15 Cv. 70 (LAK), EFC Nos. 101, 102-103). On October 24, 2016, Judge Kaplan granted ICBC London's motion holding Blacksands in contempt and imposing coercive sanctions. (Order, No. 15 Cv. 70 (LAK), EFC No. 108). Over the course of the next two weeks, on November 4 and November 10, 2016, Mr. Brennerman on behalf of Blacksands provided detailed discovery responses to ICBC London, including approximately 400 pages of documents, in an effort to comply with ICBC London's discovery requests. (*See* Pl.'s Decl., No. 15 Cv. 70 (LAK), EFC. No. 123, ¶¶ 9, 11-12). Mr. Brennerman also made continued efforts without support from other shareholders and partners to settle the matter with ICBC London, including meeting with ICBC London executives in London and providing them with even more information about Blacksands and its pending transaction, which were pertinent to Blacksands settlement efforts. (*See* Pl.'s Decl., No. 15 Cv. 70 (LAK), EFC No. 123, ¶¶ 45, 9, 11-12).

On December 7, 2016, ICBC London moved for civil contempt against Mr. Brennerman personally, even though he was not a named defendant in the matter and was not personally named in any discovery orders. (Order; Mem.; Pl.'s Decl., No. 15 Cv. 70 (LAK), EFC Nos. 121-23). A contempt hearing

was scheduled for December 13, 2016, less than a week later. (Corrected Order, No. 15 Cv. 70 (LAK), EFC No. 125).

Mr. Brennerman, however, did not have counsel. In fact, Latham repeatedly and consistently communicated to the Court, and to Mr. Brennerman that they did not represent Mr. Brennerman personally. (*See* e.g. Letter, No. 15 Cv. 70 (LAK), EFC No. 124). Although Mr. Brennerman was out of the country at the time he learned of the pending contempt hearing against him, he immediately sought to retain counsel to represent him in the contempt proceeding and wrote the Court requesting a reasonable adjournment because he was currently outside the United States and needed more time to retain counsel. (Email; Letter, No. 15 Cv. 70 (LAK), EFC Nos. 127-28) (Judge Kaplan was previously a partner at Paul Weiss LLP which represented Mr. Brennerman at the time thus the law firm could not appear before Judge Kaplan hence why Mr. Brennerman had to retain another law firm to represent him for the contempt proceedings). Judge Kaplan denied Mr. Brennerman's request on December 12, 2016 (Order, No. 15 Cv. 70 (LAK), EFC No. 134), and found Mr. Brennerman personally in contempt on December 13, 2016. (Orders, No. 15 Cv. 70 (LAK), EFC Nos. 139-40). While Mr. Brennerman had provided a substantial document production in November, after Blacksands was found in contempt, the Court made no mention of it and appeared not to have reviewed or considered that

production in its determination that Mr. Brennerman was himself in contempt. (Orders, 15 Cv. 70 (LAK), EFC. Nos. 139-40).

On December 13, 2016 when Judge Kaplan held Mr. Brennerman personally in contempt, he [Judge Kaplan] ignored the law from the Second Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals in *OSRecovery,* where the Appeals Court stated directly to Judge Kaplan in relevant parts: ("[T]he District Court abused its discretion by issuing a contempt order to a non-party for failing to respond to discovery request propounded to him as a party without providing sufficient legal authority or explanation for treating him as a party solely for the purpose of discovery)) and held Mr. Brennerman in contempt (even though there were no court order[s] directed at him personally. No subpoena or motion-to-compel were directed at him). *OSRecovery, Inc., v. One Groupe Int`l, Inc.*, 462 F.3d 87, 90 (2d Cir. 2006).

Judge Kaplan also ignored the federal rule to conduct extra-judicial research into Mr. Brennerman by Googling him. (*See* Bail Hr.'g Tr., *United States v. Brennerman*, No. 17 Cr. 155 (LAK), EFC No. 12 Ex. 1 at 28). Then following the erroneous contempt propounded against Mr. Brennerman, Judge Kaplan referred him to the Manhattan federal prosecutors (United States Attorney Office for the Southern District of New York "USAO, SDNY") and persuaded the prosecutors to arrest Mr. Brennerman and prosecute him criminally. (*See* Trial Tr., No. 17 Cr. 155 (LAK), EFC No. 12 Ex. 2).

THE CRIMINAL REFERRAL, THE PETITION AND EX PARTE CONFERENCE BETWEEN JUDGE KAPLAN AND THE GOVERNMENT

In late 2016 or early 2017, Judge Kaplan referred Blacksands and Mr. Brennerman personally to the United States Attorney`s Office for criminal prosecution.

Thereafter, on March 3, 2017, the government filed a Petition seeking to initiate criminal contempt proceedings against Blacksands and Mr. Brennerman personally, including an Order to Show Cause for them to appear in Court to answer the charges. On March 7, 2017, Judge Kaplan summoned AUSAs Robert Benjamin Sobelman and Nicolas Tyler Landsman-Roos to his robing room to advise that an arrest warrant should be issued for Mr. Brennerman. (*See* Trial Tr., No. 17 Cr. 155 (LAK), EFC No. 12 Ex. 2). The prosecution, consistent with Fed. R. Crim. P. 42, had prepared an Order to Show Cause that would have directed Blacksands and Mr. Brennerman to appear before the Court on a date in the future. The Court made clear, however that it did not agree with the government`s approach and advised the prosecutors that the Court should issue an arrest warrant instead as to Mr. Brennerman, stating his assumption that "the United States can`t find him." The prosecutors repeatedly expressed their view that execution of an arrest warrant was not necessary under the circumstances. (*See* Trial Tr., No. 17 Cr. 155 (LAK), EFC No. 12 Ex. 2). The prosecutors advised, first, that Mr. Brennerman had actually called them on Friday, March 3, 2017, the same day that the Petition was filed to talk to them about that Petition. *Id.* The

prosecutors informed Mr. Brennerman that he could not speak with him, and Mr. Brennerman then provided his phone number so that "there may be a way for the government to be in touch with him via that telephone number." The prosecutors then proposed that the Order to Show Cause previously prepared and filed by the government, could be entered to require Mr. Brennerman to attend the conference and "should he not appear, [] a summons or arrest warrant be issued to secure his appearance." *Id.*

The Court continued to press the issue of an arrest warrant, asking '[w]hy shouldn`t I, given the history in this case issue a warrant?" (*See* Trial Tr., No. 17 Cr. 155 (LAK), EFC No. 12 Ex. 2 At 5). The Prosecutors responded with a number of reasons, stating:

> Mr. Brennerman did try to contact the government on Friday, and we don`t know that he has absconded or seeks to abscond. He`s already knowledgeable about the petition. His email address is included on the ECF notification that went out when the petition was publicly filed. He appears to have the resources to have fled had he intended to, and the government thinks it`s prudent to provide him an opportunity to appear at the conference voluntarily.

Id. The prosecution went on to say that, even if the Court issued an arrest warrant, "the government would likely provide Mr. Brennerman an opportunity to surrender rather than dispatching law enforcement to apprehend him without providing that opportunity." *Id.*

The Court pressed on, stating "I`m inclined to issue an arrest warrant" and pushed back against the prospect that Mr. Brennerman should be allowed to surrender: "Now, if the government is going to give him an

opportunity to surrender; there`s a substantial question as to whether I`m wasting my time because I think the odds are not unreasonable that he will abscond". *Id.* at 6.

Eventually the prosecutors deferred to the Court and confirmed that if an arrest warrant was issued, they would discuss in their office how best to proceed. *Id.* at 7. Thus, as of March 7, 2017, when the government entered the robing room, there was no pending investigation of fraud as to Mr. Brennerman with the prosecutors in the Southern District of New York, and the government was prepared to proceed with a contempt proceeding by Order to Show Cause and had no concern that Mr. Brennerman would seek to abscond.

Thus pursuant to the arrest warrant prepared and signed by Judge Kaplan, Mr. Brennerman was arrested on April 19, 2017 at his home in Las Vegas. As of the date of the arrest warrant and because the Court had declined to sign the order to show cause presented by the government, there was no actual contempt charge pending against Mr. Brennerman. The Court omitted Mr. Brennerman from the signed Order to Show Cause but then failed to otherwise rule or grant the government`s Petition as it related to Mr. Brennerman. There was, therefore, no proper basis for the arrest warrant. The Court`s decision to alter the warrant to reference the Petition was inadequate to support the warrant. (The arrest warrant included an option for a Probation Violation Petition; those instruments, unlike a Petition

in a contempt proceeding, actually do charge an offense). (*See* Arrest Warrant, No. 17 Cr. 155 (LAK), EFC No. 12 Ex. 3).

Mr. Brennerman's arrest on April 19, 2017 (when government seized his electronic devices and documents (which was adduced as evidence (e-mails between Mr. Brennerman (on behalf of Blacksands) and Madgett (ICBC London) at trial of the contempt and fraud case (where the government actually never obtained or reviewed any pertinent ICBC transaction files from ICBC (London) plc) was in violation of both Mr. Brennerman's Fourth and Fifth Amendment rights.

THE INDICTMENT AND ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE

On May 31, 2017, weeks after Mr. Brennerman was released on bail in the criminal contempt of court case, he was re-arrested by the U.S. Attorney's Office pursuant to an indictment alleging fraud in connection with the transaction that was at issue in the underlying civil action, No. 15 Cv. 70 (LAK) between ICBC (London) PLC and The Blacksands Pacific Group, Inc (even though the civil action had been ongoing for two and half years at that point) Mr. Brennerman was charged with Conspiracy to commit bank and wire fraud, bank fraud and wire fraud. *Id.* The case was assigned to Hon. Richard J. Sullivan, under the caption, *United States v. Brennerman*, No. 17 Cr. 337 (RJS).

In August 2017, because Judge Kaplan had failed to sign the Order to Show Cause as it related to Mr. Brennerman in the criminal contempt of

court case at No. 17 Cr. 155 (LAK) (even though Mr. Brennerman had been arrested at the behest of Judge Kaplan) he had revoked the bail granted to Mr. Brennerman even without any violations of the bail conditions. The government realizing their error filed a new two count Order to Show Cause Petition formally charging Mr. Brennerman in the criminal contempt of court case. (*See* Order to Show Cause, *Brennerman* No. 17 Cr. 155, EFC No. 59).

THE DISTRICT COURT'S DECISION

In August 2017, prior to trial for the criminal contempt of court case, Mr. Brennerman sought to obtain the complete ICBC records (including the underwriting file and negotiations between agents of Blacksands and ICBC London) to demonstrate his innocence and to present a complete defense. However Mr. Brennerman's request to the Manhattan federal prosecutors was denied. The [Manhattan federal prosecutors] refused to obtain or review the complete ICBC records including the underwriting files, arguing that they were not obligated to collect any additional evidence from ICBC London beyond what the bank had selectively provided to them. Judge Kaplan also denied Mr. Brennerman's request seeking to compel the complete ICBC record. *See* 17-cr-155 (LAK), Dkt. No. 76

THE TRIAL AND POST-TRIAL PROCEEDINGS

During trial, District Court (Judge Kaplan) rejected defendant argument regarding presentment of the civil contempt order to the jury, ruling that the government could present evidence that both the company

and Mr. Brennerman had been found in contempt of Court (*See* Trial Tr., No. 17 Cr. 155 (LAK), at 3-7). A juror named Gordon later told the media - Law 360 that the civil contempt orders swayed the jury to find Mr. Brennerman guilty of criminal contempt (*See* Law 360 Article, No. 17 Cr. 337 (RJS), EFC No. 236, Ex. 3 at 17).

Mr. Brennerman was deprived of the very evidence he required to defend himself. Although such evidence (agents of ICBC London requesting settlement discussion) plainly was relevant to the issue of Mr. Brennerman`s willfulness in failing to comply with the Court`s discovery orders, the District Court refused repeatedly to allow counsel to elicit such evidence on the issue and so the record was devoid of the precise evidence that would have demonstrated the defendant`s lack of intent (*See* Trial Tr., No. 17 Cr. 155 (LAK), at 269-277; 236-249).

The District Court went a step further and proposed an instruction to the jury that settlement discussions in a civil case did not excuse a defendant`s failure to comply with the court's discovery order absent an order suspending or modifying the requirement to comply (*See* Trial Tr., No. 17 Cr. 155 (LAK), at 509-510). Defense counsel objected arguing that even if that were technically true, if the parties specifically engaged in settlement discussion with the understanding that discovery would not be pursued, such evidence was certainly relevant to defendant`s intent in not complying with the Court`s order and should have been considered by the jury. The District

Court (Judge Kaplan) overruled counsel's objection and instructed the jury as indicated. (*See* Trial Tr., No. 17 Cr. 155 (LAK), at 538-544).

The trial commenced on September 6, 2017 and concluded on September 12, 2017 with the jury returning a guilty verdict on both counts of criminal contempt.

THE COURT OF APPEAL DECISION

The Second Circuit found that the District Court did not err in its failure to compel ICBC's production of its entire file because Brennerman did not comply with the rules governing subpoenas under Rule 17(d) of the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure when he served ICBC's New York-based attorney, not the ICBC's London branch. *United States v. Brennerman,* No. 18 1033(L), WL 3053867 at *1 (2d Cir. June 9, 2020). The Court further concluded that, "the prosecution was under no obligation to make efforts to obtain information beyond what it previously collected and turned over to Brennerman." *Id.*

As to the evidence concerning settlement discussions, the Second Circuit found that the district court had allowed Brennerman "to introduce evidence concerning settlement discussions on the condition that he establish his knowledge of the substance of the exhibits and their relationship to the relevant time period..." and that "through cross-examination, Brennerman was able to introduce evidence about the parties' settlement discussions. *Id.* at *2. The Second Circuit found that "the district court did not abuse its

discretion in admitting some but not all of this evidence, and Brennerman had failed to point to any specific evidence that would have helped his case had it been submitted." *Id.*

In regard to the admission of the civil contempt order against Brennerman, the Second Circuit found that "the district court correctly determined, the civil contempt orders were relevant to Brennerman`s willfulness. To minimize any potential prejudicial effect, the district court redacted portions of the orders and instructed the jury on the limited purposes for which it could consider the civil contempt orders in the context of a trial about criminal contempt." *Id.*

The panel denied a motion for rehearing by order dated September 9, 2020. (*See* Order, No. 18 1033, EFC No 318).

IX. REASON FOR GRANTING CERTIORARI

ARGUMENT

This Petition presents an opportunity for the Court to clarify (a) whether the abuse of discretion standard imposed by United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit is Constitutionally permissible - where the Circuit Court refused to correct errors which substantively abridges and abrogates the rights of criminal defendant which are protected by the United States Constitution and (b) where trial Court deliberately deprived the criminal defendant of his Constitutional rights thus violating his Fifth and Sixth Amendment rights of the U.S. Constitution.

This case will clarify the obligations of lower Courts as a matter of public interest to emphasize conformity and uniformity with the law and Constitution among lower Courts in ensuring adherence with their Constitutional obligations and avoid attack on the civil rights and liberty of criminal defendants because of their race, sex or religion.

I. THE SECOND CIRCUIT ERRED IN AFFIRMING THE DISTRICT COURT`S 1) ADMISSION OF THE CIVIL CONTEMPT ORDER AGAINST PETITIONER; 2) FAILURE TO COMPEL PRODUCTION OF CERTAIN EXCULPATORY MATERIALS; AND 3) PRECLUSION OF THE ADMISSION OF EVIDENCE PERTAINING TO SETTLEMENT NEGOTIATIONS, BECAUSE THE ISSUES RAISED ARE QUESTION OF EXCEPTIONAL IMPORTANCE. THIS CASE RAISE ISSUES OF IMPORTANT SYSTEMIC CONSEQUENCES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE LAW AND ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

A. ADMISSION OF THE CIVIL CONTEMPT ORDER VIOLATED PETITIONER'S CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS WHERE THE COURT FAILED TO AFFORD HIM THE EQUAL PROTECTION GUARANTEE AND THE PROSECUTION VIOLATED HIS RIGHT TO DUE PROCESS OF LAW

In *OSRecovery*, the Second Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals vacated civil contempt adjudicated by Judge Lewis A. Kaplan ("Judge Kaplan") against a party who was not part of the civil case. *OSRecovery, Inc., v. One Groupe Int'l, Inc.*, 462 F.3d 87, 90 (2d Cir. 2006). In vacating the contempt order the Court of Appeals stated directly to Judge Kaplan that the Court abused its discretion by holding a non-party in civil contempt propounded against him solely for the purpose of discovery without providing any legal authority or clear explanation for doing so. In 2016, Judge Kaplan ignored the law and held Petitioner, a non-party who was not involved in the underlying case, *ICBC (London) PLC v. The Blacksands Pacific Group, Inc.*, in contempt without providing any legal authority or clear explanation. (*See* Order; Mem. & Order, No. 15 Cv. 70 EFC. Nos. 139-40). This time, Judge Kaplan went a step further and referred Petitioner to Manhattan prosecutors to be prosecuted criminally. The prosecution undertook no diligence or investigation prior to initiating criminal contempt charges against Petitioner.

During trial of the criminal contempt of court case, Judge Kaplan permitted the prosecution to present to the jury the civil contempt order erroneously adjudged against Petitioner which was in tension with the law. (*See* Trial Tr., No. 17 Cr. 155 (LAK), at 3-7). Such presentment significantly prejudiced Petitioner, because the judge allowed the presentment of an

erroneously adjudged civil contempt order as evidence to the jury (that concluded that Petitioner must be guilty of criminal contempt), without allowing Petitioner to present the background to the adjudication of the civil contempt order. (*See* Law 360 Article, No. 17 Cr. 337 (RJS), EFC No. 236, Ex. 3 at 17).

The question of whether the civil contempt order was properly admitted against Petitioner goes beyond a simple analysis of Rules 403 and 404(b) of the Federal Rules of Evidence. Petitioner was a non-party in the civil lawsuit at the time of the order. Because the order was erroneously adjudged against him, its erroneous admission had more serious legal implication above and beyond an abuse of discretion analysis.

The Second Circuit had previously held that "because the power of a district court to impose contempt liability is carefully limited, our review of a contempt order for abuse of discretion is more rigorous than would be the case in other situations in which abuse-of-discretion review is conducted." *Hester Indus., Inc. v. Tyson Foods, Inc.*, 160 F.3d 911, 916 (2d Cir. 1998). "Moreover, we think it is fundamentally unfair to hold [a non-party] in contempt as if he were a party without legal support for treating him, a non-party, as a party but only for the purpose of discovery." *OSRecovery, Inc.*, 462 F.3d at 90. In *OSRecovery*, the Second Circuit court had found that the district court abused its discretion by holding a person "in contempt as a party without sufficient explanation or citation to legal authority supporting

the basis upon which the court relied in treating [him] as a party—for discovery purposes only—despite the fact that [he] was not actually a party." *Id.* at 93.

Here Judge Lewis A. Kaplan (the same district judge whose contempt order the Second Circuit court found inappropriate in *OSRecovery*) held Petitioner in civil contempt as a non-party and failed to provide any legal authority or present any particular theory for treating him as a party solely for the purpose of discovery. (*See* Order; Mem. & Order, No. 15 Cv. 70 (LAK), EFC. Nos. 139-40). No court orders, subpoenas, or motion to compel were ever directed at Petitioner personally nor was he present during the civil case`s various proceedings.

The erroneous admission of the civil contempt order was more than an evidentiary error. It violated the Second Circuit court`s instructions concerning contempt order against non-parties. On appeal, the Second Circuit affirmed district court`s rulings creating disparity with the Second Circuit`s treatment and review of such order`s and deprived Petitioner of his Constitutional right to an equal protection guarantee.

B. FAILURE TO COMPEL PRODUCTION OF CERTAIN EXCULPATORY MATERIALS VIOLATED PETITIONER`S SIXTH AMENDMENT RIGHT, WHERE HE WAS DEPRIVED OF THE EVIDENCE HE REQUIRED TO PRESENT A COMPLETE DEFENSE

Petitioner`s central argument concerning the ICBC production requests is that there existed exculpatory evidence materials that were not provided to him and could not otherwise be compelled due to Rule 17

limitations regarding foreign entities. (*See* Trial Tr., No. 17 Cr. 337 (RJS), at 551-554). The Second Circuit did not address Petitioner's argument that, if the government claimed that it had produced all documents in its possession but the omission of the entire file was glaringly obvious, then it follows that the government was aware that relevant information existed and was therefore, withholding material that it could (and should) have obtained, in violation of *Brady*. *See Brady v. Maryland*, 373 U.S. 83 (1963).

Because Petitioner was effectively barred from obtaining relevant evidence, such as the entirety of his communications with ICBC representatives, due to subpoena constraints, he was denied the opportunity to put forth a complete defense.

Because no meaningful inquiry was conducted, either at the district court or before the Second Circuit, concerning the discrepancies between the government's representations that the production was complete and the obviously incomplete materials produced, the issue of whether *Brady* obligations were flouted by the government remains open. *See Brady v. Maryland*, 373 U.S. 83 (1963). The sanctity of *Brady* obligations cannot be interpreted as anything less than a question of exceptional importance warranting further reconsideration on this point. *See Id.*

C. PRECLUSION OF THE ADMISSION OF EVIDENCE PERTAINING TO SETTLEMENT NEGOTIATIONS (DUE TO FAILURE TO PERMIT FULL SETTLEMENT NEGOTIATION EVIDENCE) VIOLATED PETITIONER'S CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT WHERE HE WAS DEPRIVED OF EVIDENCE HE REQUIRED TO PRESENT A COMPLETE DEFENSE

Without the entire ICBC file, Petitioner was precluded from presenting evidence regarding settlement negotiations between Blacksands and ICBC. Petitioner avers that evidence of these negotiations would have convinced the jury that he had not willfully disobeyed any court orders.

Although Petitioner was permitted certain lines of questioning concerning settlement negotiations, the admitted evidence was woefully inadequate to set forth his complete defense. Petitioner was attempting to elicit evidence of settlement discussions with agents of ICBC that, he argued, would have demonstrated that he was not willfully disobeying the district court's discovery orders but was instead prioritizing settlement with ICBC over Blacksands' discovery obligations. This evidence was not permitted, could not be elicited through cross-examination of witnesses, and was not part of the jury instruction. (*See* Trial Tr., No. 17 Cr. 155 (LAK), at 236-277). Although such evidence was plainly relevant to the issue of Petitioner's willfulness in failing to comply with the court's discovery orders, the record was devoid of the precise evidence that would have demonstrated the Petitioner's lack and intent. The district court exacerbated the harm by instructing the jury that settlement discussions in a civil case did not excuse a defendant's failure to comply with the court's discovery order absent an

order suspending or modifying the requirements to comply. (*See* Trial Tr., No. 17 Cr. at 509-510; 538-544).

The limitation on evidence of settlement negotiations was not merely an evidentiary issues, but rather, a constitutional one which violated Petitioner's right to present a defense. The violation was compounded by the fact that the district court essentially eviscerated the element of intent in determining whether Petitioner was guilty of criminal contempt. The Second Circuit's decision failed to address the manner in which the district court's evidentiary rulings precluded Petitioner's right to present a complete defense.

The danger of the Second Circuit rule is amply demonstrated by the consequences of erosion of public trust in the United States Justice system and other institutions. As the Fourth Circuit recently promulgated "what gives people confidence in our justice system is not that we merely get things right rather, it is that we live in a system that upholds the rule of law even when it is inconvenient to do so". The lower Court - United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit and United States District Court for the Southern District of New York veered from the rule of law in this case. Interests of comity - in addition to fairness and substantial justice as embodied in the Due Process Clause and the U.S. Constitution - warrant reversal of the Second Circuit decision.

X. CONCLUSION

The petition for certiorari should be granted.

Dated: White Deer, Pennsylvania
December 28, 2020

Respectfully submitted,
/s/ Raheem J. Brennerman

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Petitioner Pro Se

XI. APPENDIX TABLE OF CONTENTS

CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE

No. 20-

RAHEEM JEFFERSON BRENNERMAN,

Petitioner,

v.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

Respondent,

As required by Supreme Court Rule 33.1(h), I certify that the petition for a writ of certiorari contains 6,479 words, excluding the parts of the petition that are exempted by Supreme Court Rule 33.1(d).

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed on December 28, 2020

/s/ Raheem J. Brennerman

RAHEEM JEFFERSON BRENNERMAN
Petitioner