UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT EASTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

HAMID HASSAN RAZA; MASJID AL-ANSAR; ASAD DANDIA; MUSLIMS GIVING BACK; MASJID AT-TAQWA; MOHAMMAD ELSHINAWY

Plaintiffs,

-against-

CITY OF NEW YORK; MICHAEL R. BLOOMBERG, in his official capacity as Mayor of the City of New York; RAYMOND W. KELLY, in his official capacity as Police Commissioner for the City of New York; DAVID COHEN, in his official capacity as Deputy Commissioner of Intelligence for the City of New York,

DECLARATION OF ALEXIS L. LEIST IN SUPPORT OF DEFENDANTS' OPPOSITION TO PLAINTIFFS' MOTION FOR EXPEDITED DISCOVERY

Defendants.

X 13-CV-3448 (PKC)(JMA)

ALEXIS L. LEIST, declares pursuant to § 28 U.S.C. 1746, under penalty of perjury, that the following is true and correct:

- 1. I am an Assistant Corporation Counsel in the office of Michael A. Cardozo, Corporation Counsel of the City of New York, representing defendants City of New York, Michael R. Bloomberg, Raymond W. Kelly, and David Cohen. As such, I am familiar with the facts herein, and submit this declaration to place on the record the relevant documents and information in support of defendants' opposition to plaintiffs' motion for expedited discovery.
- 2. Annexed hereto as **Exhibit A** is a true and accurate copy of the transcript from the pre-motion conference before the Honorable Pamela K. Chen dated October 7, 2013.
- 3. Annexed hereto as **Exhibit B** is a true and accurate copy of the transcript from the initial conference before the Honorable Joan M. Azrack dated September 12, 2013.

Dated: New York, New York October 30, 2013

Alexis L. Leist

Assistant Corporation Counsel

Exhibit A

- 2 an anticipated preliminary injunction motion. I want to note
- 3 for the record the brief procedural history insofar as it
- 4 relates to pending discovery requests.
- 5 On September 10, in anticipation of the initial
- 6 conference in this case, the city filed an a letter proposing
- 7 bifurcated discovery and as part of that bifurcated discovery
- 8 what would happen is the first part of discovery would be
- 9 focused on standing and also on constitutional violation
- 10 issues.
- 11 The conference itself happened on September 12 in
- 12 front of Judge Azrack and at the conference my understanding
- 13 is the parties set forth their positions on it. The
- 14 plaintiffs opposed the proposal for a bifurcated discovery,
- 15 but that Judge Azrack reserved decision on that and then the
- 16 plaintiffs filed the pending motion seeking to have expedited
- 17 discovery because of the preliminary injunction that they want
- 18 to file.
- 19 I have read the submissions of both parties
- 20 regarding the expedited discovery request. My understanding
- 21 is -- and it was expressed either at the last conference or
- 22 through the papers, I don't remember which -- but that the
- 23 city is prepared as part of the bifurcated discovery to
- 24 provide to the plaintiffs through all of the discovery
- 25 mechanisms all of the information that the city has on the

- 1 named plaintiffs in this case.
- 2 Is that correct, Mr. Farrell?
- 3 MR. FARRELL: Your Honor, I agree with what you said

- 4 about the position about bifurcated discovery. That
- 5 opposition is to proceed with the underlying constitutional
- 6 violations that are alleged by the six plaintiffs and we are
- 7 prepared to engage in discovery on that topic. There may be
- 8 some law enforcement privilege issues on some of the
- 9 information. We have raised the issue about entering into a
- 10 protective order first before any discovery takes place and we
- 11 raised that in front of Judge Azrack on the date that you had
- 12 referenced and we were in the process of having discussions
- 13 with plaintiffs' counsel over the terms of that protective
- 14 order.
- 15 I can say, based on some of the initial feedback
- 16 that we have exchanged, there may be some terms or
- 17 disagreements over coming to an agreement of what the terms of
- 18 the protective order should be. Too early to say that for
- 19 sure. We are still engaging in conversations. So I would put
- 20 that qualifier on your statement that we are prepared to turn
- 21 over all the information. In that context as I have explained
- 22 it, I think that's accurate.
- THE COURT: I'm aware of the ongoing negotiations
- 24 over the confidentiality order. My question though: I know
- 25 that the city is opposing to some extent the preliminary

MR. FARRELL: Your Honor, defendants had proposed at

- 2 to address or even get to the question of Monell claims,
- 3 Monell claims against the city, plaintiffs first have to prove
- 4 that they suffered individually a constitutional violation and
- 5 that the Second Circuit has articulated that principle, which
- 6 has been around for quite sometime, recently a couple of
- 7 months ago.
- 8 Monell discovery would involve widespread,
- 9 broad-based discovery that involved a lot different
- 10 investigations and confidential materials, investigations that
- 11 involve counter terrorism or terrorism related investigations.
- 12 That type of information is extremely sensitive and
- 13 confidential and certainly is subject to privilege.
- 14 Our position, which we thought was the most
- 15 reasonable way to proceed in light of the claims, was rather
- 16 than putting that cart before the horse and getting into that
- 17 what I would call the broad-brush discovery, that defendants'
- 18 proposal was to engage in discovery with plaintiffs, providing
- 19 the information related to them proving that they
- 20 individually, the six, have in fact suffered a constitutional
- 21 violation. They claim that they have been basically
- 22 surveilled without a legitimate law enforcement purpose.
- 23 Specifically, their claim is that the police department's
- 24 action, if any, towards them, i.e., the surveillance, was
- 25 driven solely by their Muslim faith, their Muslim religion.

- 1 solely because these six plaintiffs are Muslim.
- 2 For the reasons that are set forth in our papers I

- 3 disagree with your Honor's position. I don't believe they
- 4 have made the warranted showing of injunctive relief. The one
- 5 thing that really highlights that, your Honor, is the complete
- 6 lack of urgency on their part. They are coming to court now
- 7 and they are asking you to bring a motion for preliminary
- 8 injunction and what they are asking you to do is to give them
- 9 expedited discovery to support that motion.
- The allegations that are at issue and at the heart
- 11 of this case were reported on by the Associated Press in 2011.
- 12 It's over two years ago. In 2011 those allegations came out
- 13 in a pending matter in the Southern District of New York that
- 14 is called Handschu vs. Special Services. Because the city,
- 15 the police department, is governed by a consent decree when it
- 16 investigates political activity and that's a class action
- 17 certified and that class, in fact, covers these five
- 18 plaintiffs or six plaintiffs, covers them, and in 2011,
- 19 October, the New York Civil Liberties Union who is cocounsel
- 20 not only in this case but is cocounsel in the Handschu case,
- 21 the Southern District case, brought a motion to conduct some
- 22 discovery which they did and then they brought a motion for an
- 23 injunction to enjoin the police department from the same,
- 24 basically what's requested in their injunction, the B, to stop
- 25 investigations based solely upon one's religion.

- 1 to have a motion for a preliminary injunction.
- THE COURT: Let me say this, Mr. Farrell: I don't
- 3 disagree with about 80 percent of what you just said and I
- 4 certainly appreciate the sensitivity of the information that
- 5 could be sought, if I was going to allow wide-ranging
- 6 discovery of the program, of the Muslim surveillance program,
- 7 overall. But what I am suggesting to you and I guess the
- 8 reason I don't see a significant difference between the
- 9 bifurcated discovery you propose and the expedited discovery
- 10 that the plaintiffs propose is because either scope is fairly
- 11 coextensive.
- 12 What I asked you before -- and I'm not sure you and
- 13 I are disagreeing quite honestly -- I was not suggesting that
- 14 you have to turn over all the information about how the
- 15 program has been functioning since the beginning of time as to
- 16 every single person that it's been applied to. But the
- 17 question is if it was ever applied to these plaintiffs they
- 18 are entitled to get that information.
- 19 I understand what you are saying about being able to
- 20 prove perhaps at the end of the day that the surveillance that
- 21 was conducted of these plaintiffs was legitimate because it
- 22 furthered a law enforcement purpose. But that doesn't
- 23 necessarily answer the whole question because it could well be
- 24 -- and the plaintiffs are entitled to find out whether or not
- 25 those criminal investigations were brought about because of

- 1 some application of the program -- some other surveillance
- 2 that was conducted that wasn't criminal necessarily in nature
- 3 at the beginning or even if there was a criminal predication,
- 4 if you will, for the start of the investigation, let's say a
- 5 tip in a reliable informant, there could be simultaneous
- 6 surveillance of these individuals, the plaintiffs, that has
- 7 nothing to do with any criminal activity but rather was
- 8 undertaken as part of an overall program.
- 9 So all I am saying is that my view is that the
- 10 plaintiffs are entitled to get any discovery about the
- 11 application of the Muslim surveillance program, however you
- 12 want to define that, as to them, not overall, but as to them
- 13 and that the mere fact that there might also have been
- 14 criminal suspicion that justified the surveillance of them
- 15 isn't enough to preclude them from getting that other
- 16 information.
- 17 So is it a question that you are and I are
- 18 misunderstanding or is it your position that they are not
- 19 entitled to any way in which this program -- and I'm not
- 20 presuming it was applied to them -- was applied to these
- 21 plaintiffs?
- 22 MR. FARRELL: There is throw Muslim surveillance
- 23 program. So to the extent that that term is being used, I 100
- 24 percent disagree that there was ever a Muslim surveillance
- 25 program. Plaintiffs characterize it that way because part of

- 1 their allegation is that the police department goes out and
- 2 surveils all Muslims just because they are Muslims. That's
- 3 absolutely not the case. The police department follows leads
- 4 and investigates information where they come into information
- 5 that there's a possibility of unlawful activity. And that's
- 6 set out in the Handschu guidelines which is what is at issue
- 7 in the other case. Essentially, it's on the same footing.
- 8 There's a legitimate reason to be doing what the police
- 9 department is doing. I would start out by saying that and I
- 10 would not want to be in any way, shape or form saying that
- 11 there's a Muslim surveillance program.
- To the extent that your Honor is saying that we
- 13 should all start with the information that the police
- 14 department had about these six plaintiffs, if any, we're on
- 15 the exact same footing.
- THE COURT: You're going to turn over everything
- 17 that the city and NYPD has about these plaintiffs, the mosque,
- 18 the organization Giving Back and also the individuals,
- 19 correct?
- MR. FARRELL: The six plaintiffs, if there were
- 21 investigations about those six plaintiffs, that would be
- 22 information that defendants intend to provide in discovery.
- 23 That's the very information upon which we intend to rely upon
- 24 to show that there was a legitimate law enforcement concern
- 25 and not some nefarious only because they are Muslim.

1 In our letter to the Magistrate Judge defendants 2 laid out some of the reasons why there were legitimate 3 concerns about the six plaintiffs. And that would be the type 4 of discovery that we are prepared to produce and we actually 5 want to do that. 6 That's the best approach. 7 THE COURT: Let me ask a more specific question. 8 Again, I won't refer to it as a Muslim surveillance program. 9 There have been newspaper accounts about certain techniques 10 They have been talked about in the complaint and in 11 other cases. They use rakers or crawlers. If there was 12 information -- again I'm not assuming any of this to be true 13 -- if there were information a raker or crawler or somebody 14 like that was used with respect to these mosques or 15 individuals, would that be the information that you would 16 provide to the plaintiffs during discovery in this phase? 17 MR. FARRELL: Your Honor, I think the best I can say 18 -- I think what you are saying is -- information about these 19 six plaintiffs, the defendants are prepared to have that be 20 the first step of discovery that should take place and if 21 there should be a summary judgment motion or as part of their, 22 if you are going to allow them to move for preliminary 23 injunction, we do it at the same time and we would say here is 24 the information. Here is the information the police 25 department had. They were doing it for legitimate concerns.

- 2 over and engage in discovery focused on and that relates to
- 3 these six plaintiffs.
- 4 THE COURT: Would that information explain how it is
- 5 that these plaintiffs were investigated in the first place or
- 6 why the investigation was undertaken in the first place as to
- 7 each of these six plaintiffs?
- 8 MR. FARRELL: I'm not saying that each of these six
- 9 plaintiffs was investigated. I want to be clear about that.
- 10 The answer would be, yes, that would be the information to
- 11 show whatever actions the police department took, if any,
- 12 related to these six plaintiffs. The information that the
- 13 defendants intend to provide would be the information that
- 14 caused those actions to take place.
- 15 THE COURT: Let me turn to you Ms. Shamsi. What is
- 16 it that you are you are seeking in terms of your motion as to
- 17 the preliminary injunction other than what the city is willing
- 18 to provide you?
- MS. SHAMSI: A couple of major things are different.
- 20 If I can just step back. What we are alleging and seeking to
- 21 show in our preliminary injunction motion is three things:
- 22 That the defendants carried out intentionally discriminatory
- 23 classifications on the basis of religion by singling out
- 24 Muslims, including our clients, for a program of adverse law
- 25 enforcement scrutiny.

which goes beyond the limited scope of what the defendants

- THE COURT: I understand the timing will be
- 3 different. I want to understand why the scope should be any
- 4 different than what Mr. Farrell just laid out.
- 5 MS. SHAMSI: As we said in our letter, we came
- 6 prepared to file an order to show cause. It includes a
- 7 memorandum that sets out why we think the discovery should be
- 8 broader. It includes a discovery request, an interrogatory
- 9 that is targeted at obtaining a fuller record than currently
- 10 exists through disclosure of information by the AP that you
- 11 are referring to and that seeks information that the
- 12 defendants have sought to refer to or sought as to justify
- 13 their surveillance of our clients in their September 10
- 14 letter.
- 15 Essentially, our view, and what we have set out here
- 16 in our memorandum to show cause -- and we'll file it and give
- 17 you more time to look at it and be happy to answer any
- 18 questions or come back before you -- is that as part of this
- 19 pattern and practice of surveillance of Muslims, which ranged
- 20 from identifying only Muslim mosques, community organizations
- 21 and individuals, focusing on certain of those as a result of
- 22 the defendants' real or perceived beliefs about the strength
- 23 of their devotion to their faith, individuals and community
- 24 organizations have been singled out across the city. We
- 25 attach documents showing you that how broad that surveillance

- 2 couple of our clients starting at least back in 2006.
- What defendants have done now -- and we've got other
- 4 documents that show you the kinds of information that we are
- 5 looking for, in order to provide a fully-fleshed record to you
- 6 about the inextricably linked nature of our claims, which are
- 7 that there are equal protection and first amendment religious
- 8 clause violations that have taken place as a result of this
- 9 surveillance program from mapping, to the use of informants
- 10 and undercover operators to record perfectly innocent first
- 11 amendment religious speech even if when there was no suspicion
- 12 of wrongdoing.

- 13 In their September 10 letter, the defendants did
- 14 something that troubled our clients greatly, which is why
- 15 we're here before you on a preliminary injunction motion and
- 16 why we are seeking expedited discovery. As a result of the --
- 17 there are allegations in that letter, your Honor, that are out
- 18 and out incorrect as we would seek to show you as a result of
- 19 discovery -- and we highlight some of those issues in our
- 20 order to show cause -- there are allegations in that letter
- 21 that are based on decades old assertions that have no
- 22 substantiation.
- We would show you that, to the contrary, that the
- 24 allegations against our clients, against whom they are made,
- 25 were engaged in open and innocent and lawful activity. There

- 1 are allegations in that letter that are based on our clients'
- 2 attenuated associations, even unwitting associations.
- 3 So, for example, the idea that individuals who might
- 4 not have been known to our clients attended religious lectures
- 5 or passed through the door of a house of worship, that kind of
- 6 information, kind of information I've just talked about,
- 7 cannot be used to justify the kind of intrusive surveillance
- 8 that our clients were subjected to.
- 9 And so what we're saying, through our order to show
- 10 cause and the memo in support of it, is those three things
- 11 that we are providing to you documents that show the invasive
- 12 nature of the surveillance that has been carried out.
- 13 Information has come to light since the filing of our
- 14 complaint that defendants were designating entire mosques as
- 15 terrorism enterprise units.
- 16 It's like saying that, you know, because someone
- 17 that the NYPD suspects of criminal activity goes to St.
- 18 Patrick Cathedral or even joins the board of St. Patrick
- 19 Cathedral can be treated as a criminal enterprise. That's not
- 20 permissible under the equal protection clause or the first
- 21 amendment religion clauses. That is similar or exactly the
- 22 same as what is being argued here.
- 23 And for that reason we are asking for discovery that
- 24 is as targeted as we can make it, but takes into account both
- 25 what defendants have alleged about our clients and the

- 1 stigmatizing effects of that continue to this day. That's why
- 2 we are here today, as well as showing how that was part and
- 3 parcel of a broader program.
- 4 Now, we have narrowed down our document request in
- 5 some significant ways. We are seeking information solely from
- 6 the intelligence division, not the NYPD as a whole. We are
- 7 limiting our requests not from the inception of the program
- 8 that we have alleged from 2001 onwards, but from 2004 through
- 9 the present. We think that provides context for what
- 10 allegations might have been made against our clients, even
- 11 assuming that any of them are justified, which we don't
- 12 concede.
- And in order to help the court have a full record in
- 14 order to apply the constitutional standards which are at issue
- 15 here both under the equal protection clause and the religion
- 16 clauses, we are seeking some limited information about the use
- 17 of these invasive techniques against nonMuslim religious
- 18 organizations.
- 19 Finally, we are seeking statistics about the
- 20 criminal charges that might have resulted from the activities
- 21 of the intelligence division and criminal charges that were
- 22 brought against Muslims versus people of other religions or
- 23 other religious institutions. So we've been as targeted as we
- 24 can make this. We're happy to file it with the court, provide
- you and opposing counsel with a copy now. But we don't think

- 1 -- bifurcation would have worked as we argued to Judge Azrack
- 2 before.
- 3 Bifurcation might make sense in a different kind of
- 4 Monell action, for example, one in which a plaintiff alleges a
- 5 wrongful arrest in violation of the Fourth Amendment. Then it
- 6 might make sense, whether there are standing and other issues,
- 7 to see if the Fourth Amendment issue actually occurred before
- 8 moving on to determine whether this was a part of a Monell
- 9 pattern or practice. That is illogical and unnecessary here
- 10 in this context where our claims are so intertwined, where we
- 11 are and have laid out extensively in our complaint a program
- 12 that began with a set of activities going from mapping to the
- 13 use of undercover agents and informants including against our
- 14 clients and that, to permit bifurcation or limit discovery in
- 15 that way, would really cripple not only our arguments but also
- 16 the record before the court.
- 17 THE COURT: Let me ask you a question before you get
- 18 too far along.
- 19 You keep saying including our clients, as well as
- 20 our clients, inextricably intertwined with our clients.
- 21 You're obviously talking about a much broader program as you
- 22 see it. What I can't figure out -- and, obviously, I have not
- 23 had the benefit of looking at your questions -- aren't you
- 24 going to get information that would illuminate that issue if
- 25 the NYPD does give you everything they have on your clients?

- In other words, if they are willing to give you,
- 2 here are all the times that we sent an undercover into the
- 3 At-Taqwa mosque or here is every time we had a conversation
- 4 with Hamid Raza. Aren't you going to get the information that
- 5 you're looking for? I don't understand what more you're
- 6 looking for that is necessary to make all the arguments that
- 7 you want to make about the unlawful nature of the activity
- 8 that the defendants you allege are doing.
- 9 MS. SHAMSI: So there are two answers to that. One
- 10 is to have comparator evidence to put before your Honor.
- 11 THE COURT: That would be the part where you want to
- 12 know how some of these techniques are used against nonMuslims.
- MS. SHAMSI: That's right.
- 14 THE COURT: That's one of the four categories you
- 15 are talking about?
- MS. SHAMSI: That's right.
- 17 THE COURT: Okay.
- MS. SHAMSI: And then also to flesh out the extent
- 19 to which the investigations, assuming that there were
- 20 investigations -- the September 10 letter causes us to believe
- 21 there were. Now defense counsel is admitting there might not
- 22 have been. We need information to show the extent to which
- 23 the scope, potentially limited, reaching decades back in time,
- 24 with respect to specifically our clients and the duration and
- 25 invasiveness that was applied to the Muslim community as

- 1 opposed as to any other community, which is at the heart of
- 2 this equal protection claim and specifically applied, yes, to
- 3 our clients. It is comparator evidence that would flesh out
- 4 this record before the court.
- 5 THE COURT: That's the part I'm having a little
- 6 trouble with, too. How do you get comparator information, if
- 7 it turns out, as the defendants are claiming, all the
- 8 investigative measures that were taken with respect to them
- 9 were predicated on some unique criminal suspicion, unique
- 10 information? When I say unique, unique to those particular
- 11 targets of the investigation.
- 12 Even if I were to say, yes, you can go ahead and ask
- 13 for that information, isn't that going to be a futile gesture?
- 14 In other words, the city is going to come back and say there's
- 15 nothing that compares, because we didn't do this with respect
- 16 to anyone else, because there was specific criminal
- 17 information.
- The problem I am having it's hard to get away from
- 19 what the defendants claim and obviously the proof will be in
- 20 the pudding. It all depends on what they produce during
- 21 discovery, that these six plaintiffs were not like everybody
- 22 else because there was specific information about alleged
- 23 criminality.
- MS. SHAMSI: Sure. I understand, your Honor.
- So, first of all, we have said in our complaint and

- 1 laid out in detail that there actually is a program in which
- 2 Muslims have been singled out for classification and unlawful
- 3 scrutiny. Defendants have just said there is no such program.
- 4 So it would be important to flesh out the record to show that
- 5 that program exists.
- 6 THE COURT: Let me stop you there. That's the part
- 7 I'm having trouble with. Let's accept for purposes of our
- 8 argument that such a program exists, notwithstanding what
- 9 Mr. Farrell said, just for the sake of making your argument.
- 10 Even so, don't you have to show that that program was applied
- 11 to your clients? If the defendants are going to say, here's
- 12 how we investigate your clients, here is why we investigate
- 13 them, here is all the information we have on them, if that
- 14 excludes any connection or doesn't involve any connection to
- 15 this purported program, you have gotten all the information
- 16 you want and you shouldn't be entitled to the bigger picture
- 17 investigation, not that there are individuals out there who
- 18 could legitimately ask those questions. But it may not be
- 19 those plaintiffs. Isn't that the problem?
- 20 MS. SHAMSI: I understand the difficulty you are
- 21 having, your Honor. To make it more concrete, what we are
- 22 looking for is what the documents look like that have been
- 23 disclosed out there about the surveillance program and its
- 24 inclusion of our clients within it. And the kinds of
- 25 documents that we are requesting in our document request flesh

- 1 out just a little bit more to add to the record of what exists
- 2 out there that has been released by the AP.
- 3 THE COURT: Giving you an example of a document that
- 4 includes your client, what does that, mean includes?
- 5 MS. SHAMSI: In October 2006 there was, as you may
- 6 remember, a plane crash in New York. The city's top officials
- 7 went on the record to say this is not a terrorist action,
- 8 right. We have a document -- it's one of the examples of the
- 9 documents that we would like to get more of -- that shows that
- 10 the city sent either an undercover or an informant to
- 11 nevertheless surveil five mosques to gauge their reaction.
- 12 These are only Muslims, obviously.
- 13 THE COURT: Including the two mosques who are
- 14 plaintiffs?
- MS. SHAMSI: One of our clients. And we have
- 16 examples of other documents that apply to some of our other
- 17 clients.
- 18 What we are looking for is to see what other
- 19 documents are in the possession of defendants that include our
- 20 clients as part of this broader program. So this specific
- 21 document, for example, even though there's no terrorism
- 22 threat, indicates that the assistant imam of Masjid At-Taqwa
- 23 was monitored to see what his response was even though his
- 24 response, was according to whoever documented this, that there
- 25 was concern, no interaction. The document indicates that a

- 1 phone dump was going to be conducted of his cell phone.
- THE COURT: Let me stop you there.
- You would get that information. Mr. Farrell, back
- 4 me up on this. She would get that information, right, about
- 5 the visit to At-Tagwa, the plans to do a phone dump on his
- 6 phones, correct?
- 7 MR. FARRELL: Your Honor, in short, I know the
- 8 answer is yes. Because the investigation into Masjid At-Taqwa
- 9 -- a couple of things.
- 10 THE COURT: Just answer that. Would she get it?
- MR. FARRELL: The answer is yes. Defendants would
- 12 produce information about the investigation that was taking
- 13 place within which that information came from, as to the
- 14 extent that it applied to plaintiffs' client.
- 15 THE COURT: If that happened she would get that
- 16 information. What we're talking about, there may be a
- 17 document that contains that information that would be redacted
- 18 so that all of the other individuals or mosques that may have
- 19 also been visited or in some way investigated, that
- 20 information would not go to the plaintiffs, correct?
- MR. FARRELL: That would be correct. The examples
- 22 you are giving, yes.
- THE COURT: That's the information you want?
- MS. SHAMSI: That is right. We're bringing a
- 25 discrimination claim and we're saying that our clients were

- 2 of this discriminatory program that exists in order to be able
- 3 to make our case and to provide you with the fullest record on
- 4 which you can rule we need more than information simply about
- 5 our clients.
- 6 THE COURT: Here is the problem: If you accept the
- 7 premise that bifurcation may be appropriate -- and in that
- 8 regard I tend to think the defendants have a good argument
- 9 here -- you are right. The case is different in that it is
- 10 not single incident of a false arrest or excessive force case.
- 11 It is also different, that makes your argument a little
- 12 harder, the potential to, A, bog down the process with a lot
- 13 of very complicated motions over sensitive information and, B,
- 14 the real potential for releasing information that is
- 15 sensitive, in fact, to law enforcement.
- So, I think bifurcation has some purpose in this
- 17 case because of the nature of it. And so even, in the
- 18 hypothetical that we're talking about, you would get
- 19 discovery, albeit perhaps redacted, for the other names, which
- 20 is the part that you would like. But for purposes of some
- 21 preliminary relief, either you're injunctive relief or their
- 22 moving for summary judgment, that would be the information
- 23 that is needed.
- So the question I have for you is why isn't that
- 25 enough for both sides to be able too seek preliminarily what

- 1 they want, which is not to say you won't get to the second
- 2 stage of it at some point, depending on how those pleadings
- 3 are resolved. Why isn't that enough to pursue your
- 4 preliminary injunction?
- 5 MS. SHAMS1: Because the heart of our claim is that
- 6 there is a discriminatory program that treated Muslims
- 7 differently. In order to show that Muslims and yes, I seep
- 8 saying including, because this is who are clients are.
- 9 THE COURT: I agree.
- 10 MS. SHAMSI: To show that Muslims were treated
- 11 differently, we need more information than simply specific to
- 12 our clients. Your Honor, I'm not going to minimize that there
- 13 might be issues of law enforcement privilege or sensitive
- 14 information. But those are the kinds of issues that this
- 15 court deals with every day and courts are able to determine
- 16 through the use of protective orders which we are negotiating
- 17 through adjudicating privilege, whatever privileged claims
- 18 might be brought, how those issues will arise and be applied.
- 19 So, I think limiting the scope doesn't do away with
- 20 the fact that those issues will arise. I expect they will
- 21 arise anyway. I do think that it is important for the court
- 22 to have information that is not just specific to our clients,
- 23 especially, when we're talking about, A, a broader program,
- 24 and to the extent that defendants are claiming that our
- 25 clients -- investigations that they may have conducted into

- 1 our clients, were legitimate, our response, as we put out in
- 2 our memorandum in support of our order to he show cause is, is
- 3 that those allegations are based on innuendo and unwitting
- 4 associations and we would like to be able to show to you, your
- 5 Honor, the extent to which that is part of a program that
- 6 targeted our clients and singled our clients out and not only
- 7 to limit this to the artificial universe that defendants are
- 8 trying to create. It shouldn't be that the motions that go
- 9 forward either on summary judgment or their response to a
- 10 preliminary injunction, just like their September letter to
- 11 you. We need something broader than that.
- MR. DUNN: Your Honor, to call this a bifurcation is
- 13 a misnomer. We have an equal protection claim. If you
- 14 imagine this being an employment discrimination claim and we
- 15 are challenging promotional practices with respect to Muslims,
- 16 we would look at what happened to promotion of Muslims in the
- 17 workplace and we would look at what happened as to promotions
- 18 of nonMuslims in the workplace. We could determine from that
- 19 whether or not there was discrimination against Muslims
- 20 because similarly-situated people are being treated
- 21 differently. The central point in the complaint is the Muslim
- 22 community in New York City has been treated differently by the
- 23 NYPD and there's no way on summary judgment or a preliminary
- 24 injunction for a court to adjudicate that unless we can look
- 25 at how nonMuslims are treated by the defendants. That's the

- 1 essence of the equal protection law.
- 2 So you are absolutely right. It is going to get us
- 3 into some discovery about the surveillance practices of the
- 4 NYPD. But we're going to go there anyhow. And you cannot
- 5 determine whether or not, for instance, when they say we have
- 6 only done it for some people because of this. Maybe the same
- 7 things applied to other people and they chose not to engage in
- 8 any surveillance of them or the sort of surveillance that took
- 9 place here.
- 10 THE COURT: How do you frame that question in your
- 11 discovery then? How do you ask that in a way that gets around
- 12 the idea that these cases are unique, that these individuals,
- 13 in theory or according to what the defendants say, have a
- 14 unique situation?
- MR. DUNN: They can say they are unique. The only
- 16 way that you and I would know if they are unique, you say
- 17 okay, let's look at the universe and see if there's something
- 18 unique about them that distinguishes them from the rest of the
- 19 relevant universe.
- THE COURT: There's some allegations that the
- 21 defendants have put in their papers there may have been mosque
- 22 security forces that were involved in jihad training. That's
- 23 just the allegation. What question could you ask to say: And
- 24 how do you treat others who are similarly situated? In other
- 25 words, did you use the same level of scrutiny? Again I'm

- 1 struggling with the idea that it's hard to draw a comparison,
- 2 right.
- MR. DUNN: Let's take the St. Patrick's example.
- 4 There are people who allegedly walk into these mosques would
- 5 the department thinks are suspicious and, therefore, they
- 6 treat the entire mosque as a terrorist enterprise. If there
- 7 are people walking into St. Patrick's with the exact same sort
- 8 of characteristics that allegedly made the person going into
- 9 the mosque suspicious, and St. Patrick's doesn't get a moment
- 10 of scrutiny, then you would say to yourself, well, what was it
- 11 about the guy walking into the mosque that made it different
- 12 from the same guy, in essence, walking into St. Patrick's.
- 13 THE COURT: Is your question: Is there anyone who
- 14 similarly was involved in jihad activities who went into some
- 15 other religious institution and wasn't surveilled?
- MS. SHAMSI: Yes. We are asking something similar
- 17 along those lines. We have tried to get at this question the
- 18 best way we can, which is we're defining surveillance to talk
- 19 about the kind of practices that we have alleged in our
- 20 complaint and we're saying documents used in the surveillance
- 21 of Muslim and nonMuslim organizations and nonMuslim
- 22 individuals who are surveilled on the basis of their religious
- 23 beliefs and practices, trying to get at the heart of the both
- 24 what the defendants have claimed they are doing with respect
- 25 to our clients and then use comparator information based on

- 1 others who might be similarly situated.
- THE COURT: I think I know what Mr. Farrell is going

- 3 to say. Unfortunately, you are setting up a false comparison.
- 4 They are going to say that there's nobody that they surveilled
- 5 on the basis of religion or ethnicity or any of the protected
- 6 classes alone. So you are not going to get any information.
- 7 I can almost predict that.
- 8 How can you get this information? In other words, I
- 9 don't think -- putting aside for a moment even the issues I
- 10 have with whether or not you should be allowed to get it. I
- 11 understand at some level what it is you are trying to achieve.
- 12 I don't know if there's something that you can ask that
- 13 justifies getting a lot of other information, other than the
- 14 information about your clients, that would achieve that. I
- 15 don't think that question would.
- MS. SHAMSI: In a sense it does. Because what we're
- 17 talking about here is people who have been singled out for
- 18 surveillance investigation solely or predominantly on the
- 19 basis of their religious beliefs, speech and otherwise
- 20 protected activities. We're saying documents that you have
- 21 that show that with respect to Muslims, right, and with
- 22 respect to nonMuslims. They may come back and say we have
- 23 nothing with respect to nonMuslims that we have done this with
- 24 and that is also information that we would then put forward to
- 25 you in our motion for a preliminary injunction which goes to

- 1 showing the extent to which that classification applied to
- 2 Muslims alone.
- In fact, there was no one, even though there might
- 4 be Catholics out there engaging in criminal activity, St.
- 5 Patrick's Cathedral was not treated in the same kind of was as
- 6 Masjid At-Tagwa or one of our client mosques. Being able to
- 7 seek the kinds of statistics, as well as the intelligence
- 8 division's reports in substance, and this is one of the things
- 9 that we are trying to get at, is where the following, for
- 10 example, are the basis for or factors relevant to the decision
- 11 to engage in surveillance of Muslims, Islam, its adherence,
- 12 its school of thought, nonIslamic religions, their adherence
- 13 or school of thought. That gets to singling people out on the
- 14 basis or solely with religion as a factors which is
- 15 essentially what the equal protection cases are about.
- 16 If you look at what the Second Circuit has said
- 17 about the use of suspect classification like race, for
- 18 example, in the Brown case -- and I can get you the citation.
- 19 I don't have it straight away. -- race may be considered if
- 20 it is a descriptor of an actual suspect in an actual
- 21 investigation. That's very different from what we're talking
- 22 about here which is suspicionless surveillance and invasive
- 23 surveillance based on attenuated categories of suspicion that
- 24 are applied to Muslims alone.
- So, with a document request that is targeted at,

- 1 yes, our plaintiffs, but also how are you applying this to
- 2 Muslims and how are you applying it to people who are not
- 3 Muslim, that we think on a limited basis can get you the kind
- 4 of information that we would seek to put before you which is
- 5 not as broad as what might be sought in a case were we not
- 6 seeking to limit discovery in this way.
- 7 THE COURT: I think the fundamental problem though
- 8 is one of causation. Ultimately, everything you are saying
- 9 about some disparate treatment or unequal treatment has to
- 10 have caused the injury that your clients suffered, because
- 11 this is not a class action.
- 12 So my concern is that opening up broad discovery,
- 13 broader discovery -- and I appreciate the fact that you are
- 14 trying to fine tune it to some extent -- is not really going
- 15 to address that issue because it's going to require an
- 16 inferential link for which there is not going to be evidence.
- 17 Even if you could show statistically or some other
- 18 way that Muslims were more likely to be surveilled or
- 19 subjected to scrutiny by authorities, you still have to prove
- 20 causation with respect to your clients. I think that's where
- 21 getting the information that you are going to get is really
- 22 more critical than everything else and I ultimately think is
- 23 the only information that is going to show that.
- I appreciate what you are saying about the
- 25 comparison because I understand that part of your argument is

- 1 going to be that they, these six individuals, not all Muslims,
- 2 but these six individuals were treated differently. For that
- 3 I think you are going to have a question that doesn't simply
- 4 ask how many nonMuslims have you surveilled based solely on
- 5 religion. That is not going to be a fair comparison. You can
- 6 ask that question, obviously. I don't think that's going to
- 7 prove your point.
- 8 What I think you can't get away from is certain
- 9 facts, whether you think they are wholly inaccurate or not.
- 10 The police are going to claim what motivated the
- 11 investigation. That's why I think not focusing on the
- 12 causation or at this stage not requiring to you focus on
- 13 causation is not appropriate because I think you're going to
- 14 get the information that you need to make the arguments that
- 15 you want to make and I also think there's a legitimate concern
- 16 of opening it up too broadly to let in extraneous information
- 17 that is not going to prove this causation that I'm talking
- 18 about that you need in order to get the relief that you want
- 19 for your clients.
- Let me ask you to hold your thought for a second. I
- 21 want to ask Mr. Farrell: With respect to the information that
- 22 you would provide, the organizational defendants, the two
- 23 mosques and then the charity, would you be giving information
- 24 that relates to any kind of investigation conducted at those
- 25 locations as well as about individuals associated with those

- 1 organizations?
- Because what I envision, for example, potential
- 3 dispute being you have obviously as Ms. Shamsi said a lot of
- 4 individuals who go to the mosque, who may not be the
- 5 individuals that you are investigating or you have criminal
- 6 suspicion about. A mosque is a large place where people
- 7 congregate. It may be the informants talked to a number of
- 8 individuals in that mosque. If you are providing discovery,
- 9 are you producing reports about all contacts or information
- 10 gathered at the mosque about the mosque, about individuals who
- 11 go to the mosque? How far reaching would that discovery be?
- MR. FARRELL: Your Honor, I have a couple of points
- 13 I want to address. But with respect to that point I would
- 14 need to consult with my client specifically to respond. I can
- 15 tell you that to the extent that their six plaintiffs, if
- 16 there were investigations -- and I was not backing away from
- 17 anything we said in our letter -- there's substantial
- 18 discovery. We're not talking about a couple of documents.
- 19 There's substantial discovery related to the six plaintiffs,
- 20 whether it's all or some. It includes substantial discovery.
- 21 We're not backing away from anything we said. It does involve
- 22 a fair amount of material.
- Your question is a little more difficult to answer.
- 24 I would have to know every investigation within the New York
- 25 City Police Department to figure out whether the New York City

- 1 Police Department was investigating somebody who happened to
- 2 walk into one of the particular mosques. I can't do that. I
- 3 don't think what's at issue. What's at issue, their six
- 4 clients have claimed you have surveilled me unlawfully without
- 5 any reason.
- 6 THE COURT: Bear in mind some of these are
- 7 organizations. How do you construe the surveillance of the
- 8 mosque, if not the people who go to it? I think part of the
- 9 plaintiffs' claim is the overbreadth. You may have criminal
- 10 predication for a particular individual who goes to that
- 11 mosque. But then I think the argument the plaintiffs would
- 12 make is that with respect to the mosque's interest and the
- 13 mosque actually can represent the interest of their
- 14 congregants, it was overly broad in terms of the surveillance
- 15 of everybody there. And the question becomes: Did the NYPD
- 16 undertake active investigations or collecting of data about
- 17 people who went to the mosque?
- 18 MR. FARRELL: | understand the question. | can tell
- 19 your Honor it's the intent of the defendants to produce
- 20 information about investigations that involve let's say the
- 21 plaintiff Masjid At-Taqwa. I can't say whether every
- 22 investigation that may have tangentially touched on somebody
- 23 who may have been a congregant or who had walked in or walked
- 24 by that place is something that's in the purview. As a matter
- 25 of fact I think it would be impossible. What plaintiffs

- 1 offered and is interesting it is clear from what plaintiffs'
- 2 counsel says, they say see the problem. What they said is we
- 3 have this policy claim. We're going to narrow it down as to
- 4 intelligence division. Their claim is against the New York
- 5 City Police Department and you're making a Monell claim
- 6 against the New York City Police Department and the City of
- 7 New York you have to show it's a policy of the entire police
- 8 department. They would have to get discovery related to every
- 9 gang investigation, may have led somebody into a particular --
- 10 THE COURT: There I think you are confusing two
- 11 things. At least this is my take on it. It may be the NYPD
- 12 has a policy that relates -- that they implement through the
- 13 intelligence division and not the entire police force. It
- 14 could still be a policy of the organization as a whole. But
- 15 the information is going to reside with one particular
- 16 division whose obligation and duty is to carry out that
- 17 policy. I don't think that they are necessarily conceding
- 18 that it's not still a policy-based Monell claim. Do you see
- 19 what I am saying?
- MR. FARRELL: I see what you are saying.
- I would respectfully disagree with the court. The
- 22 intelligence division does particular types of information
- 23 gathering. There are many other divisions and bureaus within
- 24 the police department that may have investigations that
- 25 involve Muslims. Their point is you are investigating Muslims

- 2 it to the intelligence division. They are claiming it's a
- 3 policy of the NYPD. The complaint isn't about a policy within
- 4 the intelligence division. The complaint is there's a policy
- 5 by the City of New York. That's who is in the caption of the
- 6 complaint. There are thousands. I can't even tell you how
- 7 many investigations there may or may not be that somehow touch
- 8 on somebody who happens to be Muslim that is not within the
- 9 intelligence division.
- 10 THE COURT: I'm not sure this is an argument you
- 11 want to be making. I think you are trying to say it is not a
- 12 policy. That I don't agree with. I'm not saying there is a
- 13 policy. Their point is the policy may be confined to a
- 14 particular division. It may not be a broad-based policy.
- 15 Nonetheless, if it is endorsed at the highest divisions of the
- 16 NYPD -- not that every single officer is tasked with -- how is
- 17 not a policy?
- MR. FARRELL: The predicate they are trying to say
- 19 is this, that the police department is conducting
- 20 investigations solely upon one's religion is a false
- 21 presumption and it doesn't work as a practical matter in
- 22 trying to address what type of discovery. As your Honor said,
- 23 the position of the police department is with respect to the
- 24 information they collect there is a legitimate reason. Their
- 25 proposed injunctive relief is unworkable. It requires you to

- 1 look on a document by document basis. Okay, is this document
- 2 the result of a legitimate law enforcement concern? Or is
- 3 this document done solely on the basis of investigating
- 4 someone's religion? That requires subjective judgments.
- 5 That's what this fight is about. That's why we are here.
- 6 It's our position we do it, the defendants do it,
- 7 for legitimate law enforcement reasons. Their position is,
- 8 New York City, you do it only because they are Muslims. The
- 9 types of discovery that would be involved, if it was as broad
- 10 based as they want, certainly would exceed the intelligence
- 11 division. It would create a host of issues about law
- 12 enforcement privilege and confidentiality and in fact this was
- 13 an issue that I recently litigated with the New York Civil
- 14 Liberties Union in the litigation in the Southern District
- 15 where they sought the very type of field intelligence reports
- 16 that are at issue.
- 17 We are prepared in this case to provide that type of
- 18 information, with the requisite protective order, to them
- 19 about their six clients. But those types of reports, as the
- 20 Southern District had initially ordered us to disclose in a
- 21 litigation arising out of the Republican National Convention,
- 22 initially the district court said yes, the New York Civil
- 23 Liberties Union, you are entitled to get that discovery.
- We took it up on a sort of writ of mandamus and the
- 25 Second Circuit granted that request. The name of the case is

- 1 In Re: City of New York, 2010 circuit decision. It lays out
- 2 all the issues. The importance of New York City Police
- 3 Department intelligence division. It goes through the balance
- 4 of need, the types of sources and confidential informants and
- 5 undercovers that could be revealed.
- 6 What I hear them saying is they want open,
- 7 broad-based discovery about every type of investigation
- 8 regardless of whether it's related to their clients. That is
- 9 going to trigger all the very concerns that the Second Circuit
- 10 said on balance you are not entitled to that type of
- 11 information here.
- 12 So, again, as a practical matter, to avoid that type
- 13 of fighting which in that case turned out to be about five
- 14 years. The reasonable way is let's get down to whether their
- 15 six clients have suffered a constitutional violation. As we
- 16 have said all along, we said let's put forward discovery on
- 17 their six clients and we can proceed with that and address the
- 18 merits of those claims.
- 19 THE COURT: We obviously have two proposals here.
- 20 One is for bifurcated discovery and the other is for discovery
- 21 more geared towards the plaintiffs filing a preliminary
- 22 injunction motion. When I came in here I said the needs are
- 23 coextensive.
- 24 I'm interested in what you would say to this,
- 25 Mr. Farrell. Let's take that hypothetical document we were

- 2 done after the plane crash in 2006 I think it was. So let's
- 3 assume for the moment there were like six different mosques
- 4 visited or imams spoken to.
- And your proposal would be you would turn over the
- 6 discovery that relates directly to the plaintiffs, whether it
- 7 was the mosque or the individual that were spoken to, you
- 8 would redact everything else. At least you would say that
- 9 preliminarily without knowing more.
- 10 Would that be a correct statement?
- MR. FARRELL: Yes.
- 12 THE COURT: Obviously, for plaintiffs to make the
- 13 best argument they can for their preliminary injunction they
- 14 want to be able to argue that the reason that this particular
- 15 imam was spoken to was not just that the imam had some
- 16 criminal suspicion before, so, therefore, the police thought a
- 17 that this might be somebody who could be involved in this,
- 18 again, hypothetically.
- 19 Also because the people they decided to look at were
- 20 all Muslim and really that was a factor. Obviously, it's the
- 21 not going to be on the document. It's perhaps a legitimate
- 22 inquiry they can make of somebody who wrote the document or
- 23 somebody who is going to be deposed on this.
- 24 Isn't that an appropriate piece of information that
- 25 the plaintiff should get in order to discuss, fully brief it

- 1 and fully argue the issue that it is criminal suspicion plus,
- 2 plus a biased against Muslims or an assumption that Muslims
- 3 may be more involved in acts like flying a plane into a
- 4 building.
- 5 MR. FARRELL: I would not necessarily agree with
- 6 that. The deity with their equal protection claim, the
- 7 comparison group, we didn't take an investigation into
- 8 somebody for the very same reason, which you did with respect
- 9 to the group that you were investigating. It turns out with
- 10 that plane crash example that plaintiffs used, there were
- 11 investigations that were already in place and something
- 12 happened and you wanted to find out, hey, was there a cause
- 13 behind this that you could task and find out what has been
- 14 heard and what has been said about that plane crash. So
- 15 that's one difficulty.
- 16 It's recognized that since 2001 the terrorist threat
- 17 against New York City has been caused by Islamists who have
- 18 been radicalized to violence. That is the threat that the
- 19 city has faced as evidenced on September 11 and since then.
- We, in fact, in the Handschu litigation submitted a
- 21 lengthy declaration laying out the various threats that the
- 22 city has faced by Islamists who have been radicalized for
- 23 violence. Working in this vacuum, it fails to recognize that.
- 24 You can't have the apples to apples comparison they are
- 25 seeking for the reasons that I had articulated and I think

While I have it, the case of In Re: City of New York

- 3 about the law enforcement privilege, we had cited in the
- 4 attachment to the letter to the court. The cite is 607 F.3d,
- 5 923. That's a 2010 Second Circuit case. I think, if nothing
- 6 else, to proceed the way plaintiffs are proceeding would
- 7 ground this litigation to a halt and we would be in a fight
- 8 over law enforcement privilege and discovery battles. It
- 9 would take many times longer than if we proceeded the way
- 10 defendants had suggested and that was the reason behind our
- 11 proposal with those two combination of factors.
- MS. SHAMSI: If I can respond to that?
- 13 THE COURT: Yes.
- MS. SHAMSI: In In Re: City of New York the Second
- 15 Circuit sets out the process by which and the standard by
- 16 which law enforcement privileges would be adjudicated. It's a
- 17 qualified privilege. Defendants would have a burden of
- 18 asserting it. If we chose to contest, if we chose to raise
- 19 issues, we would be able to respond and it would be for this
- 20 court to adjudicate. I doubt limiting discovery in the way
- 21 defendants propose is going to do away with the need to deal
- 22 with the law enforcement privilege as this might come up.
- More broadly, your Honor, we have alleged in our
- 24 complaint that the surveillance program, and we have alleged
- 25 that it is a program, has been carried out by the intelligence

2 appropriate for us to be able to limit our discovery requests

- 3 to get at where we think the documents most likely would lie.
- 4 That's one of the ways we're trying to limit what we are
- 5 seeking to do at this preliminary injunction stage.
- 6 It's not the case that it is unworkable. It is very
- 7 much the case that a particular division can carry out a
- 8 policy and pattern that is subject to a Monell claim.
- 9 What we have alleged very much contests one of the
- 10 premises of what defendants have said in terms of the
- 11 radicalization theory. As we have alleged in our complaint,
- 12 this is a theory that is represented in publication put out by
- 13 the intelligence division. It provides certain indicators,
- 14 categories and the broad indicators and categories that it
- 15 uses are indicia of first amendment protected activity that
- 16 millions of innocent people pass through without engaging in
- 17 any kind of violence and that Muslims do without engaging in
- 18 any kind of violence as well.
- But at the heart of this lawsuit is this view that
- 20 because admittedly, you know, some Muslims committed some
- 21 terrible wrongs and heinous crimes that other Muslims might be
- 22 subject to, in the view of the NYPD, pervasive discriminatory
- 23 surveillance for their propensity to commit that crime.
- That's exactly the sort of reasoning the courts have
- 25 rejected when applied, for example to African Americans. Just

- 2 including heinous crimes, does that mean that the law and the
- 3 constitution of the courts allow African Americans to be
- 4 subjected to a pervasive program of adverse law enforcement
- 5 scrutiny.
- 6 That is at the heart of what our case is about. And
- 7 what we're seeking to do through our discovery request is to
- 8 make out our equal protection claim.
- 9 If I can return to the law a little bit here, your
- 10 Honor. When a plaintiff has shown that race, for example, in
- 11 the African American context, or religion here, is a
- 12 substantially motivating factor, that's when the burden shifts
- 13 to the defendant to say, no, what we were doing is legitimate
- 14 and that it satisfies strict scrutiny standard as required
- 15 when you are defending a policy in which the allegation is
- 16 classification based on the suspect category.
- 17 It's at that point where defendants can say,
- 18 actually, this was a legitimate investigation carried out for
- 19 legitimate law enforcement purposes and it meets the strict
- 20 scrutiny, compelling need, narrowly-tailored standard. For
- 21 discovery to go forward with a bifurcated narrowly viewed
- 22 point would hamper our ability to meet our burden of making
- 23 that equal protection claim, as well as the religion claims,
- 24 while solely bolsters defendants' ability to respond and say
- 25 it meets strict scrutiny. I don't think that's fair or

1 equitability. 2 I would suggest to your Honor -- it seems to me we can keep going -- let us serve our order to show cause. Let 3 4 us serve our discovery request and the one interrogatory that 5 we have. And let defendants respond and if you need to hear 6 more from us we're happy to come back to you. But I think 7 having something more concrete to respond to in this way, 8 including the arguments that we make in our memo to show 9 cause, will aid the court in resolving this issue. 10 THE COURT: I am fine with that suggestion. 11 Let me ask one question before I let you both go. I 12 want to make sure that I understand what your argument would 13 be. If the defense is able to produce a fair amount of 14 information suggesting that the investigation into each of 15 these plaintiffs had some criminal component, some grounds for 16 investigating, how would this other information that you want 17 to bring in at this point in discovery factor in? You talk about substantially motivating factor. Is it your contention 18 19 that all of this other discovery that you want to do -- and 20 it's hard to say sitting here today how broad that is -- both 21 sides say it's narrow, you say it's narrow and you say it's 22 extremely broad -- how does that factor into the mix if, in 23 fact, the police do have some criminal suspicion information? 24 MS. SHAMSI: So we don't think that they have

legitimate information. But for the sake of argument let's

2 doesn't mean that we don't have a claim. Our claim is that to

- 3 the extent that there might have been some legitimate
- 4 suspicion, the investigations that were carried out went far
- 5 beyond the scope, duration and intensity that the NYPD would
- 6 apply to other groups. So taking that example of St.
- 7 Patrick's Cathedral --
- 8 THE COURT: That's the exact part of it, the
- 9 overextension of religious profiling that you are talking
- 10 about.
- 11 MS. SHAMSI: That's right.
- 12 THE COURT: The way you would prove that is how?
- MS. SHAMSI: The way to prove that is not to be able
- 14 to just have the information that I think your Honor is
- 15 agreeing that we should have, which is what is the basis for
- 16 the investigation of our clients, but also to be able to have
- 17 some of the comparator information that we are asking for to
- 18 show that investigations are not so broadly brought against
- 19 people of other religions and we're trying to limit it to
- 20 religions so we're not going to be getting a huge amount of
- 21 information. Solely the intelligence division.
- 22 It's the intelligence division that is carrying this
- 23 program out against Muslims. Did the intelligence division
- 24 carry this program out against nonMuslim religions? That is
- 25 the prima facie evidence to put before the court.

1 THE COURT: Go ahead, Mr. Farrell. 2 MR. FARRELL: Your Honor, first, there is no 3 surveillance of all Muslims. I hear plaintiffs say that. To 4 the extent they are saying that, somehow that's been said by 5 the defendants or otherwise, the police department follows 6 The threshold to investigate to surveil is you have a 7 legitimate interest. This is a supreme court precedent of 8 Laird v. Tatum and this has gone on for the past 40 something 9 years. The circuit has followed it. There is no prohibition 10 against a police department for legitimate reasons going out 11 and collecting information that takes place in a public forum. 12 Two things. The police department defendants are 13 not surveilling every Muslim. That's not true. And, two, 14 they put this sinister take on the fact that you go out and 15 collect information where you have leads. But the supreme 16 court has found you're able to do that. You're able to go 17 out, take surveillance, collect the information and keep it. 18 That's legal. It's been legal for the past 40 some odd years. 19 I think the key admission that just came out of 20 plaintiffs' counsel was they said in response to your 21 question, your Honor, "Plaintiffs don't think defendants have 22 legitimate information to support our position." 23 That's why we should start there. Let's look at the 24 information that the police department has and that the city 25 Let's get the answer to that question. Their whole

- 1 argument is built upon this foundation block. Was there a
- 2 legitimate reason for doing what you did? They are assuming
- 3 it's not. Let's start here. Address that question.
- 4 Finally, there's no prejudice to the plaintiffs in
- 5 this case. What we're offering is a reasonable approach. We
- 6 conduct this discovery as we've suggested. We do the briefing
- 7 and if at that point they are successful they can go on and
- 8 get the additional discovery. If we're successful, it shows
- 9 they don't need the discovery. If there is a question of some
- 10 discovery they need, it can be addressed. That's the most
- 11 practical way. Rather than having them serve this order to
- 12 show cause and get into a whole mountain of issues and
- 13 fighting. There's simply no prejudice and I would urge the
- 14 court to adopt defendants' proposal.
- 15 THE COURT: I anticipate what you are going to say.
- 16 The two points that you make I'm not sure are quite what the
- 17 plaintiffs are arguing. I understand the plaintiffs'
- 18 argument. It's something beyond the criminal investigation
- 19 you are talking about. It's the overextension of that. I'm
- 20 not endorsing it. I'm saying it's their argument. The
- 21 question is whether or not that's an argument that's worthy of
- 22 having discovery about now versus later and obviously it's
- 23 important for the plaintiffs to obtain a preliminary
- 24 injunction.
- MR. FARRELL: Their statement in front of Magistrate

- 1 Judge Azrack, their complaint was the police department's
- 2 motivations were based solely on religion. I'm hearing a
- 3 twist from that now based on some continuing investigation.
- 4 If the investigation has shown when it was commenced and
- 5 taking place that there was a legitimate reason to do that, I
- 6 think that resolves the question. As plaintiffs' counsel has
- 7 said, the issue is was the action taken for the sole purpose
- 8 because of plaintiffs' religion. That's the issue that's on
- 9 the table that plaintiffs' counsel said the other day at the
- 10 conference in front of Magistrate Judge Azrack. That's what a
- 11 fair reading of their complaint says.
- 12 THE COURT: I read the transcript. There was a hint
- 13 of this or a preview of this argument about the overextension,
- 14 which is part of the reason I was curious on what the exact
- 15 argument is. I understand it better now. I think it was only
- 16 referenced in passing or more briefly there. I understand the
- 17 argument.
- What I want to do is this: I think it makes sense
- 19 to take a look at what the plaintiffs are offering because we
- 20 have some time in which the plaintiffs still need to work out
- 21 the terms of the confidentiality agreement. I don't feel that
- 22 we're going to lose any time in particular, except for the
- 23 fact that I would like to get the defense to respond to the
- 24 proposal that they are making about questions as to why you
- 25 think they are inappropriate. You don't have to do a lengthy

- 1 submission. You can do it in letter form. I'm going to take
- 2 a look at the questions they are going to ask and figure out
- 3 how we move forward from there. I'll do it quickly.
- 4 I appreciate the parties want to get on with
- 5 discovery. I assume you are going to keep Magistrate Judge
- 6 Azrack apprised of the status of the confidentiality
- 7 agreement. So it will hopefully be within that same time
- 8 frame that we can resolve this issue, so at the point that you
- 9 are starting discovery you will know what the parameters are.
- MS. SHAMSI: Your Honor, so what we propose then to
- 11 do is to file by ECF our order to show cause which attaches
- 12 our discovery requests and it sets out a schedule because we
- 13 kept trying to figure out and set a schedule to follow in
- 14 this.
- 15 I was prepared to file it this afternoon. But I
- 16 would like to consult with my cocounsel to see whether we
- 17 might be able to tailor the discovery request a little bit
- 18 more in light of the conversation we have now had with you and
- 19 if we can file it by tomorrow.
- THE COURT: That's fine with me. How much time do
- 21 you want to respond, Mr. Farrell?
- MR. FARRELL: I would like to have the ability to
- 23 review it. I don't know how much time it would take.
- To file an order to show cause is improper
- 25 procedurally for a discovery issue. I think we cited to the

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Exhibit B

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT EASTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

HAMID RAZA, et al., * Case No. 13-CV-03448(PKC)

Plaintiffs, * Brooklyn, New York * September 12, 2013

* September 12,

CITY OF NEW YORK, et al., *

Defendants.

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

TRANSCRIPT OF CIVIL CAUSE FOR INITIAL CONFERENCE
BEFORE THE HONORABLE JOAN M. AZRACK
UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE

APPEARANCES:

For the Plaintiffs: HINA SHAMSI, ESQ.

American Civil Liberties Union

125 Broad Street

19th floor

New York, NY 10004

For the Defendants: PETER G. FARRELL, ESQ.

ALEXIS L. LEIST, ESQ.

New York City Law Department Special Federal Litigation

Division

100 Church Street New York, NY 10007

Proceedings recorded by electronic sound recording, transcript produced by transcription service.

Fiore Reporting and Transcription Service, Inc. 4 Research Drive, Suite 402 Shelton, Connecticut 06484 (203)929-9992 (Proceedings commenced at 1:40 p.m.)

1.8

THE COURT: Good afternoon. Please be seated.

THE CLERK: Civil cause for initial conference in 13-CV-3448, Raza vs. City of New York.

Counsel, would you please state your appearances for the record.

MS. SHAMSI: Good afternoon, Your Honor. Hina
Shamsi of the ACLU for plaintiffs. I'm here with my cocounsel from the American Civil Liberties Union, the New York
Civil Liberties Union and the CLEAR Project of CUNY Law
School.

We also have some of our clients who were able to take time off work in the courtroom today.

THE COURT: Great. Thank you for coming.

MR. FARRELL: Your Honor, Peter Farrell from the New York City Law Department, representing defendants. I'm joined by my co-counsel, Alexis Leist.

THE COURT: Great. Thank you. All right.

This is our initial conference and at the initial conference we normally discuss a discovery schedule. And normally at the initial conference counsel has conferred with each other and come up with a plan.

I guess my question to both of you is have you conferred and does the plan really depend on my ruling on the bifurcation? So the first question. Did you confer?

4 get to this, is to reject the bifurcation motion, for reasons 1 2 that I'd be happy to discuss on the merits, and to hold these 3 proceedings in abeyance, pending the outcome of the proceeding 4 before Judge Chen. THE COURT: Okay. Well, are you asking me as a 5 procedural matter not to get to the bifurcation motion pending 6 7 your application to Judge Chen? 8 MS. SHAMSI: Well, actually, we're asking him to reject the bifurcation motion and hold anything else in 9 10 abeyance pending Judge Chen's decision, because I think we'll 11 probably be coming back to you on discovery issues, but we 12 will be before Judge Chen on that order to show cause, I 13 expect. 14 THE COURT: Okay. Mr. Farrell. Yes. 15 MR. FARRELL: Your Honor --16 THE COURT: You don't like to confer? 17 MR. FARRELL: I'm sorry? THE COURT: You don't like to confer? 18 19 MR. FARRELL: No, I like to confer, Your Honor. 20 Our answer -- defendant's answer was due Monday, 21 which is when we filed it, and plaintiff's counsel had called 22 me on the dates that I believe that she said in August. 23 And at that time we hadn't filed our answer yet. 24 hadn't put our position in, and I knew we were going to be 25 articulating that in its entirety on the 9th, and also putting our position forward on what discovery should be.

So what I said to counsel was that once defendants had submitted that they should look at that. That would explain our position in full and then we could have a discussion about what we would -- how we would want to proceed with discovery.

And then once we did that, the next thing that I got back from counsel was their letter to Judge Chen, with this knee jerk reaction of trying to request preliminary injunction for the first time. That wasn't stated in the complaint, which was filed several months ago and now seeking application for expedited discovery.

THE COURT: All right. Well, let me ask you this.

Irrespective of what Judge Chen does with your application, aren't you going to have to come up with a confidentiality stipulation?

MR. FARRELL: Yes, Your Honor.

MS. SHAMSI: I expect so, yes.

THE COURT: So you could at least confer on that.

And that -- you're going to have to do that no matter where you go from here, correct?

MS. SHAMSI: Yes, we're happy to do that, Your Honor.

THE COURT: So I'm going to expect that you're going to do that. How long do you think it will take you to come up

with one? Two weeks?

MS. SHAMSI: I think that would be fair, but hopefully before then, Your Honor, because we wanted to, obviously, move forward expeditiously.

THE COURT: Right. So in terms of your application for the bifurcation of discovery, do you want to add anything to your letter?

MR. FARRELL: Your Honor, I would -- in addition to what the -- without reiterating everything that's in the letter, I'd be happy to address any of those points if Your Honor would like me to expand on it further.

But in addition to that, plaintiff's application or letter to Judge Chen seeking to bring a motion for a preliminary injunction and for expedited discovery, essentially, the discovery that they're asking for before Judge Chen is the same discovery we're saying should proceed as a matter of course before Your Honor with the bifurcation.

What they're asking for before Judge Chen, pursuant to the letter that they just submitted today, is for -- to segregate records, essentially, related to the plaintiffs and then part two is to seek to enjoin the City from conducting unlawful surveillance.

Obviously, point two is a matter of law. I don't know why you would need an injunction for that.

But point one is they want to proceed with this --

MS. SHAMSI: Your Honor, I just want to clarify what the scope of the bifurcation request is as opposed to what we are seeking and would be seeking in a preliminary injunction.

So as I understand it, what defendants are seeking might work in the ordinary context, where you seek to resolve issues of standing and liability before moving onto the *Monell* issues.

That's not this case. Here there is no question of standing, giving the expungement claim that plaintiffs have with respect to the records and Second Circuit has explicitly said in *Toba* vs. *Chertoff* (ph) that standing exists when there is an expungement claim. We've independently met all of the other standing requirements.

I think what's at the heart of this is the -- this is a lawsuit that challenges the NYPD's discriminatory and suspiscionist surveillance of Muslims based on religion and not based on any evidence of wrongdoing.

What our liability claims are are inextricably linked to the *Monell* claims. Discovery would be unworkable if you seek to segregate one from the other. Not only would it be unworkable, it would be unfair.

That's because the plaintiff's constitutional claims are that the NYPD's policy and practice was motivated by discriminatory purpose and intent in violation of the Equal Protection clause and excessive engagement and other tests in

violation of the religion clauses. It's simply not necessary, workable, practical or logical to bifurcate in that way.

THE COURT: But if you want to respond to the specific information that the defendant cited in their letter with respect to the plaintiffs, I mean, it's fairly particularized, and I mean, just hypothetically, even assuming the police department had an unlawful program of suspicion with surveillance of Muslims, isn't that irrelevant if the City has reasonable suspicion to investigate these particular plaintiffs, based on what is in this letter?

MS. SHAMSI: Not at all, Your Honor, and there are a couple of reasons why.

First of all, that letter is filled with inflammatory and stigmatizing innuendo and guilt by the most attenuated and even unwitting association. It just further confirms the experiences and fears of our clients.

That's why we're seeking a preliminary injunction that the police force is singling them out by using their religious speech, practices, unwitting associations as a proxy for criminal suspicion. Most important --

THE COURT: Is it your position that none of the facts recounted -- I guess you would just argue they're not facts -- recounted, could constitution reasonable suspicion to investigate these plaintiffs, or legitimate investigative purpose?

MS. SHAMSI: Your Honor, I think two responses to that.

One is that even if we were to take some of those facts as true, the defendants went far beyond what might be permissible in a genuine law enforcement investigation by subjecting our client's mosques to wholesale scrutiny of innocent congregants, innocent religious speech and treating them as terrorism enterprises in and of themselves.

Whatever legitimate purpose might have been is not shown by defendant's September 10th inflammatory letter and it merely reconfirms what is at the heart of our lawsuit, which is that this was a program that singled out our clients not on the basis of actual wrongdoing on their part at all. Far from it. But on their religious beliefs, innuendo and suspicion.

THE COURT: Okay. Thank you.

MR. FARRELL: Your Honor, you hit the part right on the head. They're making claims of suspicionless surveillance for their six clients.

The defendants took time to put before the court and to tell plaintiffs what the information was -- some of the information was that would support a legitimate law enforcement purpose of any of the activities that the police department did with respect to these six plaintiffs.

And their claim that there's a policy of suspicionless surveillance doesn't hold up. You have to start

with their six plaintiffs.

And when we're all prepared to move forward on the facts related to those plaintiffs and if it turns out, as we believe it will, that there is an adequate basis, a legitimate law enforcement purpose for what the police department activities are with respect to these six plaintiffs, then that's it. The case is over.

And that's what we're proposing. We think it's the reasonable way to go. We'd be prepared to make a summary judgment motion once that discovery is completed and address the issues.

And there's no prejudice to plaintiffs in this instance. If it turns out that they are successful and show that with respect to these six plaintiffs there wasn't a legitimate law enforcement purpose for being looked at, they can continue and then move onto their *Monell* discovery and their policy claim.

THE COURT: What is the prejudice of what -- if we bifurcate?

MS. SHAMSI: Your Honor, the prejudice is one that goes to the very heart of our case. We would be crippled in our ability to show that the actions of defendants had a discriminatory purpose, an intent in violation of the Equal Protection Clause, which is one of our three constitutional claims.

And Your Honor, I would just point out to you there is a great deal of public information now that shows the extent to which this was a suspicionless surveillance program, based on using religion as a proxy for criminal suspicion, and to artificially permit the defendants to use discovery as a sword and at the same time as a shield from the very basis and elements of the constitutional violations that we have alleged would be improper and it is unnecessary at this stage.

THE COURT: But is it your position that any law enforcement focus on your individual plaintiffs came simply as a result of their religious affiliation?

MS. SHAMSI: It is, Your Honor. And our complaint extensively lays out the reasons why.

THE COURT: No, I read your complaint, but I -- so you say it's purely because of their religious affiliation that New York City Police Department focused on them. The locations and the people.

MS. SHAMSI: Yes. And Your Honor if I may try and make this a little bit concrete without sort of adjudicating some of the defendant's claims in a very prejudicial environment right now.

You know, so if you take the idea that, for example, a suspected criminal regularly goes to or is part of the administration of St. Patrick's Cathedral.

That doesn't mean that St. Patrick's Cathedral can

September 15, 2013

Christine Fiore, CERT

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