

SUPREME COURT
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SUPREME COURT COPY

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IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA,

Plaintiff and Respondent,

v.

CHARLES EDWARD CASE,

Defendant and Appellant.

(Sacramento County
Superior Court No.
93F05175)

APPELLANT'S REPLY BRIEF

Appeal from the Judgment of the Superior Court
of the State of California for the County of Sacramento

HONORABLE JACK SAPUNOR, JUDGE

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	page
APPELLANT’S REPLY BRIEF	1
INTRODUCTION	1
I APPELLANT’S STATEMENT WAS <i>MIRANDA</i> - VIOLATIVE, INVOLUNTARY, AND OBTAINED BY DELIBERATELY IGNORING APPELLANT’S INVOCATION OF THE RIGHT TO REMAIN SILENT, AND THE ADMISSION INTO EVIDENCE OF THE STATEMENT AND THE EVIDENCE ACQUIRED AS A RESULT OF THE STATEMENT WAS PREJUDICIAL ERROR	3
A. Introduction	3
B. Whether Appellant’s Invocation of the Right to Remain Silent Is Viewed as Complete or Partial, the Officers Failed to Honor It, and Appellant Did Not Implicitly or Expressly Waive His Rights	5
1. No reasonable officer would have understood appellant’s refusal to talk about the crime under investigation as anything other than an unequivocal invocation of the right to remain silent	6
a. Any reasonable officer would have understood appellant’s statement, “No. Not about a robbery murder. Jesus Christ,” as a blanket refusal to talk about anything having to do with that crime	7
b. Even if viewed as a partial invocation, the plain meaning of appellant’s refusal to talk about the robbery-murder included the very topics that the officers continued to probe	8

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	page
c. The cases on which respondent relies do not support its position	11
d. Respondent's reliance on appellant's statements after the invocation is improper	13
2. Appellant neither expressly nor implicitly waived his right to remain silent	15
C. Appellant's Statement Was Involuntary	17
D. The Evidence Obtained As a Result of Appellant's Statement Was Inadmissible	21
1. The evidence derivative of appellant's statement is inadmissible because appellant's statement was involuntary	22
2. The evidence derivative of appellant's statement should have been suppressed because the officers deliberately ignored appellant's invocation of the right to remain silent	23
3. The testimony of Burlingame and the Billingsleys would not inevitably have been discovered	29
E. The Erroneous Admission Into Evidence of Appellant's Unlawfully Obtained Statement Was Prejudicial	31
II. THE TRIAL COURT COMMITTED PREJUDICIAL ERROR BY ADMITTING EVIDENCE OF APPELLANT'S PRIOR CRIMINALITY AND THE DETECTIVES' STATEMENTS TO MARY WEBSTER FOR THE PURPOSE OF BOLSTERING HER CREDIBILITY	38

TABLE OF CONTENTS

page

- A. Respondent Does Not Refute Appellant's Showing that the Evidence of Appellant's Prior Criminality Was Minimally Probative of Any Disputed Fact 39
 - 1. Respondent does not refute appellant's showing that Webster's fear of appellant was not in dispute . 40
 - 2. Respondent does not refute appellant's showing that the altercations with Nivens and Hobson were minimally probative of Webster's fear and cumulative of other evidence 42
 - 3. Respondent does not refute appellant's showing that appellant's statements regarding prior robberies were of scant probative value for any permissible purpose 43
- B. The Prejudicial Effect of the Evidence, Including Its Inflammatory Nature, Outweighed Its Minimal Probative Value 44
- C. The Limiting Instructions Did Not Cure the Prejudicial Effect of the Evidence 46
- III THE TRIAL COURT COMMITTED PREJUDICIAL ERROR WHEN IT ADMITTED EVIDENCE THAT APPELLANT HAD SOLICITED BILLINGSLEY AND GENTRY TO COMMIT OTHER CRIMES 48
 - A. The Solicitations Were Inadmissible as Evidence of Common Design or Plan 49
 - B. Whether the Solicitations Could Have Been Admitted for Another Purpose Is Irrelevant Because the Jury Was Instructed That They Could Be Considered Only on the Issue of Common Design or Plan 52

TABLE OF CONTENTS

page

C.	The Solicitations were Inadmissible to Show Intent	53
D.	The Solicitations were Inadmissible on the Issue of Motive	55
E.	Conclusion	58
IV	THE TRIAL COURT ERRED IN ADMITTING APPELLANT'S STATEMENTS AS A GUEST SPEAKER AT THE MEETINGS OF ROBBERY INVESTIGATORS	60
A.	Appellant's Answers to the Investigators' Questions Were Not Admissible as Generic Threats Because They Related to Past, Not Future, Events and to A Hypothetical Class of Victims that Did Not Include the Victims in this Case	62
1.	Appellant's statements were not probative of his mental state at the time of the charged crimes	62
2.	The Victims in this Case Did Not Fall Within the Category of Individuals Which Was the Subject of the Hypothetical Threats	68
3.	Because Appellant's Statements Were Limited to Hypothetical Questions Related to Remote Prior Crimes, They Did Not Establish a Present Mental State	69
B.	The Evidence of Appellant's Statements Was More Prejudicial than Probative	72
C.	The Admission of Appellant's Statements Resulted in a Miscarriage of Justice and Rendered Appellant's Trial Fundamentally Unfair	73

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	page
V THE TRIAL COURT VIOLATED APPELLANT'S RIGHTS TO A FAIR TRIAL AND TO PRESENT A DEFENSE BY EXCLUDING EVIDENCE THAT LAW ENFORCEMENT'S INVESTIGATION WAS INCOMPLETE	75
VI THE TRIAL COURT ABUSED ITS DISCRETION AND VIOLATED DUE PROCESS BY PERMITTING THE PROSECUTION TO PRESENT APPELLANT'S STATEMENT ON REBUTTAL BECAUSE IT WAS NEITHER RESPONSIVE TO, NOR MADE NECESSARY BY, APPELLANT'S DEFENSE	79
A. The Evidence of Appellant's Statement Was Improper Rebuttal	79
1. Appellant's statement that he had seen news coverage of the killings at The Office	80
2. Appellant's statement that he was at The Office on the night of the crime	81
3. Appellant's statement that he was driving Jerri Baker's Ford Probe on the night of the murders ...	84
4. Appellant's statement regarding the clothes and the blood on the clothes	85
B. Reversal Is Required	88
VII THE TRIAL COURT VIOLATED APPELLANT'S RIGHT TO TRIAL BY AN IMPARTIAL JURY BY RESTRICTING DEFENSE COUNSEL'S VOIR DIRE ABOUT SPECIFIC MITIGATING FACTORS	90

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	page
A. The Trial Court Improperly Restricted Defense Counsel's Voir Dire on Mitigation, Resulting in Inadequate Voir Dire and a Potentially Biased Jury	91
1. The trial court mistakenly found that defense counsel's voir dire questions about specific mitigating factors did not reveal hidden bias	91
2. The trial court mistakenly found that defense counsel's voir dire questions about poverty and abuse were misleading and asked prospective jurors to prejudge the facts	95
3. Respondent does not effectively distinguish the cases on which appellant relies or effectively counter his arguments	97
B. The Trial Court's Error in Restricting Voir Dire On Specific Mitigating Factors Requires Reversal	101
X THE RESTITUTION FINE MUST BE SET ASIDE BECAUSE OF INSUFFICIENT EVIDENCE OF APPELLANT'S ABILITY TO PAY	103
A. Appellant's Claim Is Properly Before this Court Because No Trial Objection Is Required for a Claim That the Evidence Was Insufficient to Establish His Ability to Pay	103
B. The Evidence Was Insufficient to Support the Trial Court's Implied Finding of Ability to Pay	110
C. Conclusion	112
CONCLUSION	113
CERTIFICATE OF COUNSEL	114

TABLE OF AUTHORITIES

page(s)

FEDERAL CASES

<i>Anderson v. Smith</i> (1984) 751 F.2d at p. 105	10
<i>Anderson v. Terhune</i> (9 th Cir. 2008) 516 F.3d 781	10
<i>Arnold v. Runnels</i> (9 th Cir. 2005) 421 F.3d 859	14
<i>Berghuis v. Thompkins</i> (2010) 560 U.S. 370	5, 15, 16
<i>Bram v. United States</i> (1987) 168 U.S. 532	21
<i>Brown v. Mississippi</i> (1936) 297 U.S. 278	18
<i>California Attorneys for Criminal Justice v. Butts</i> (9 th Cir. 1999) 195 F.3d 1039	27
<i>Chapman v. California</i> (1967) 367 U.S. 18	31, 37, 101
<i>Connecticut v. Barrett</i> (1987) 479 U.S. 523	9
<i>Cooper v. Dupnik</i> (9 th Cir. 1992) 963 F.2d 1220	27
<i>Davis v. United States</i> (1994) 512 U.S. 452	7, 9
<i>Dickerson v. United States</i> (2000) 530 U.S. 428	18

TABLE OF AUTHORITIES

	page(s)
<i>Eddings v. Oklahoma</i> (1982) 455 U.S. 104	94
<i>Fahy v. Connecticut</i> (1963) 375 U.S. 85	35, 36
<i>Henry v. Kernan</i> (9 th Cir. 1999) 197 F.3d 1021	27
<i>Michigan v. Harvey</i> (1990) 494 U.S. 344	17
<i>Michigan v. Mosley</i> (1975) 423 U.S. 96	6, 15, 17
<i>Michigan v. Tucker</i> (1974) 417 U.S. 433	27, 29
<i>Miranda v. Arizona</i> (1966) 384 U.S. 436	passim
<i>Missouri v. Seibert</i> (2004) 542 U.S. 600	18, 27, 28, 29
<i>Moran v. Burbine</i> (1986) 475 U.S. 412	16
<i>Nix v. Williams</i> (1984) 467 U.S. 431	31
<i>North Carolina v. Butler</i> (1979) 441 U.S. 369	15, 17
<i>Oregon v. Elstad</i> (1985) 470 U.S. 298	29

TABLE OF AUTHORITIES

	page(s)
<i>Schneckloth v. Bustamante</i> (1973) 412 U.S. 218	18
<i>Smith v. Illinois</i> (1984) 469 U.S. 91	6, 13, 14
<i>Sullivan v. Louisiana</i> (1993) 508 U.S. 275	37, 43
<i>Terrovona v. Kincheloe</i> (9 th Cir. 1990) 912 F.2d 1176	14
<i>United States v. Lopez-Diaz</i> (9 th Cir. 1980) 630 F.2d 661	10, 16
<i>United States v. Patane</i> (2004) 542 U.S. 630	19, 29
<i>United States v. Ramirez-Sandoval</i> (9 th Cir. 1989) 872 F.2d 1392	31
<i>Whren v. United States</i> (1996) 517 U.S. 806	27

STATE CASES

<i>Auto Equity Sales, Inc. v. Superior Court</i> (1962) 57 Cal.2d 450	107
<i>Creutz v. Superior Court</i> (1996) 49 Cal.App.4th 822	61
<i>In re Cox</i> (2003) 30 Cal.4th 974	83-84
<i>In re Gregory A.</i> (2005) 126 Cal.App.4th 1554	107

TABLE OF AUTHORITIES

	page(s)
<i>In re K.F.</i>	
(2009) 173 Cal.App.4th 655	107
<i>In re Lucas</i>	
(2004) 33 Cal.4th 682	94
<i>In re Sassounian</i>	
(1995) 9 Cal.4th 535	84
<i>People v. Ashmus</i>	
(1991) 54 Cal.3d 932	11
<i>People v. Balcom</i>	
(1994) 7 Cal.4th 414	passim
<i>People v. Barnett</i>	
(1998) 17 Cal.4th 1044	109
<i>People v. Bean</i>	
(1988) 46 Cal.3d 919	45
<i>People v. Bey</i>	
(1993) 21 Cal.App.4th 1623	19
<i>People v. Bigelow</i>	
(1984) 37 Cal.3d 731	56
<i>People v. Bradford</i>	
(2008) 169 Cal.App.4th 843	84
<i>People v. Butler</i>	
(2003) 31 Cal.4th 1119	104, 106, 107
<i>People v. Butler</i>	
(2009) 46 Cal.4th 847	97

TABLE OF AUTHORITIES

	page(s)
<i>People v. Carter</i> (1957) 48 Cal.2d 737	passim
<i>People v. Cash</i> (2002) 28 Cal.4th 703	passim
<i>People v. Catlin</i> (2001) 26 Cal.4th 81	35
<i>People v. Christiana</i> (2010) 190 Cal.App.4th 1040	107
<i>People v. Clark</i> (1992) 3 Cal.4th 41	11, 12
<i>People v. Coffman</i> (2004) 34 Cal.4th 1	20, 80, 88
<i>People v. Crew</i> (2003) 31 Cal.4th 822	88
<i>People v. Crittle</i> (2007) 154 Cal.App.4th 368	108
<i>People v. Cruz</i> (2008) 44 Cal.4th 636	64, 65
<i>People v. Cunningham</i> (2001) 25 Cal.4th 926	101, 102
<i>People v. Daniels</i> (1991) 52 Cal.3d 815	55, 81
<i>People v. Davis</i> (1981) 29 Cal.3d 814	11

TABLE OF AUTHORITIES

	page(s)
<i>People v. Davis</i> (2009) 46 Cal.4th 539	71
<i>People v. De La Plane</i> (1979) 88 Cal.App.3d 223	55
<i>People v. Ervin</i> (2000) 22 Cal.4th 48	99
<i>People v. Ewoldt</i> (1994) 7 Cal.4th 380	passim
<i>People v. Frye</i> (1994) 21 Cal.App.4th 1483	103
<i>People v. Gamache</i> (2009) 46 Cal.4th 680	108
<i>People v. Gibson</i> (1994) 27 Cal.App.4th 1466	105, 106, 108
<i>People v. Guerra</i> (2006) 37 Cal.4th 1067	19, 20
<i>People v. Hennessey</i> (1995) 37 Cal.App.4th 1830	108
<i>People v. Hill</i> (1992) 3 Cal.4th 959	1
<i>People v. Jablonski</i> (2006) 37 Cal.4th 774	20
<i>People v. Karis</i> (1988) 46 Cal.3d 612	passim

TABLE OF AUTHORITIES

page(s)

People v. Lang
 (1989) 49 Cal.3d 991 61, 65, 66, 67

People v. Lee
 (2011) 51 Cal.4th 620 35

People v. Lew
 (1968) 68 Cal.2d 774 68

People v. Livaditis
 (1992) 2 Cal.4th 759 99

People v. Lopez
 (2005) 129 Cal.App.4th 1508 107

People v. Martinez
 47 Cal.4th 911 8, 12

People v. Maury
 (2003) 30 Cal.4th 342 35

People v. McCullough
 (2013) 56 Cal.4th 589 104, 105

People v. McGhee
 (1988) 197 Cal.App.3d 710 109

People v. Montano
 (1991) 226 Cal.App.3d 914 19

People v. Morrison
 (2004) 34 Cal.4th 698 62

People v. Mosher
 (1969) 1 Cal.3d 379 81

TABLE OF AUTHORITIES

	page(s)
<i>People v. Neal</i> (2003) 31 Cal.4th 63	19, 27
<i>People v. Nelson</i> (2011) 51 Cal.4th 198	109
<i>People v. Nelson</i> (2012) 53 Cal.4th 367	7
<i>People v. Noguera</i> (1992) 4 Cal.4th 599	97, 98
<i>People v. Page</i> (2008) 44 Cal.4th 1	33
<i>People v. Peracchi</i> (2001) 86 Cal.App.4th 353	8, 10, 12
<i>People v. Pinholster</i> (1992) 1 Cal.4th 865	99
<i>People v. Robinson</i> (1960) 179 Cal.App.2d 624	83
<i>People v. Rodriguez</i> (1986) 42 Cal.3d 730	passim
<i>People v. Scheer</i> (1998) 58 Cal.App.4th 1009	55
<i>People v. Scott</i> (1978) 21 Cal.3d 284	107, 108
<i>People v. Silva</i> (1988) 45 Cal.3d 604	11

TABLE OF AUTHORITIES

page(s)

People v. Smith
 (1987) 188 Cal.App.3d 1495 33

People v. Spector
 (2011) 194 Cal.App.4th 1335 70

People v. Tate
 (2010) 49 Cal. 4th 635 96, 98

People v. Thompson
 (1980) 27 Cal.3d 303 45, 54

People v. Thompson
 (1988) 45 Cal.3d 109 47, 61, 65, 66

People v. Valtakis
 (2003) 105 Cal.App.4th 1066 108

People v. Viray
 (2005) 134 Cal.App.4th 1186 107

People v. Williams
 (2010) 49 Cal.4th 405 12, 15-16, 20

People v. Woodell
 (1998) 17 Cal.4th 448 62

People v. Young
 (2005) 34 Cal.4th 1149 87, 88

CONSTITUTIONS

U.S. Const., amends. 6 90
 14 90

Cal. Const., art. I, §§ 15 90
 16 90

TABLE OF AUTHORITIES

page(s)

STATUTES

Evid. Code §§	1101	59
	1101, subd. (b)	71, 72
	1108	71
	1220	61, 62
	1250	61, 62, 71
Gov. Code §§	13967	103, 105
	68662	107
Pen. Code §§	2933.2	111
	1202.1	104
	1202.4	105, 109
	190.3, factor (a)	97
	190.3, factor (k)	90, 94

JURY INSTRUCTIONS

CALJIC Nos.	8.20	53
	8.88	93, 94

TEXT AND OTHER AUTHORITIES

O'Neill, <i>California Confessions Law</i> 2012-2013, § 1.43, p. 60	18
Stats. 1994, c. 1106 (A.B. 3169) § 3, eff. Sept. 29, 1994	109
Weisselberg, <i>Saving Miranda</i> 84 Cornell L. Rev. 109	27
Weisselberg, <i>In the Stationhouse After Dickerson</i> (2001) 99 Mich. L.Rev. 1121	27

TABLE OF AUTHORITIES

page(s)

TEXT AND OTHER AUTHORITIES CONT'D

1A Wigmore, Evidence (Tillers rev. ed. 1983)
§ 102, p. 1666 49

2 Wigmore, Evidence (Chadbourn rev. ed. 1979)
§ 302, p. 241 53

<http://sojo.net/magazine/2012/09/ending-death-penalty>
[“Death row prisoners are generally not allowed to work”] 111

<http://www.californiapeopleoffaith.org/woodford-interview.html>
[“death row inmates are not allowed to work in prison”] 111

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APPELLANT'S REPLY BRIEF

INTRODUCTION

In this reply to respondent's brief on direct appeal, appellant replies to contentions by respondent that necessitate an answer in order to present the issues fully to this Court. Appellant does not reply to arguments that are adequately addressed in his opening brief. In particular, appellant does not present a reply to Arguments VIII and IX. The absence of a reply to any particular argument, sub-argument or allegation made by respondent, or of a reassertion of any particular point made in the opening brief, does not constitute a concession, abandonment or waiver of the point by appellant (see *People v. Hill* (1992) 3 Cal.4th 959, 995, fn. 3), but reflects his view that the issue has been adequately presented and the positions of the parties fully joined.

The arguments in this reply are numbered to correspond to the argument numbers in Appellant's Opening Brief.¹

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¹ All statutory references are to the Penal Code unless stated otherwise. The following abbreviations are used herein: "AOB" refers to appellant's opening brief; "RB" refers to respondent's brief. As in the opening brief, citations to the record are abbreviated as follows: "CT" is used to refer to the clerk's transcript on appeal, "Aug CT" is used to refer to the augmented clerk's transcript and "RT" is used to refer to the reporter's transcript. "Exh." is used to refer to exhibits introduced at trial. For each citation, the volume number precedes, and the page number follows, the transcript designation, e.g. 1 CT 1-3, is the first volume to the clerk's transcript at pages 1-3.

I

APPELLANT'S STATEMENT WAS *MIRANDA*-VIOLATIVE, INVOLUNTARY, AND OBTAINED BY DELIBERATELY IGNORING APPELLANT'S INVOCATION OF THE RIGHT TO REMAIN SILENT, AND THE ADMISSION INTO EVIDENCE OF THE STATEMENT AND THE EVIDENCE ACQUIRED AS A RESULT OF THE STATEMENT WAS PREJUDICIAL ERROR

A. Introduction

Appellant had just been arrested and transported to the police station when he was interrogated by homicide detectives Reed and Edwards. The essential facts of the interrogation are these: detective Reed told appellant that he and Edwards were investigating the double robbery-murder that had occurred the previous night, that a lady had given them some bloody clothes and told them where she had gotten them, and that as a result, they had come to talk to appellant. Reed advised appellant of his rights pursuant to *Miranda v. Arizona* (1966) 384 U.S. 436 and then asked, "having those rights in mind, will you talk to me now?" Appellant responded, "No, not about a robbery-murder. Jesus Christ." (Exh. 5 [videotape of interrogation]; Aug CT of 11/10/09 Appendix A, pp. 1-2 [transcription of videotape].²) Nevertheless, the officers continued with the interrogation, initially asking several pretextual questions regarding appellant's living situation, but quickly turning to questions concerning appellant's whereabouts and actions on the night of the robbery murder. As a result of

² As stated in the opening brief, the transcription in the record indicates that appellant's answer was "(Unintelligible) robbery-murder. Jesus Christ" (Aug CT of 11/10/09 Appendix A, pp. 1-2), but on the videotape of the interrogation (Exh. 5), appellant's answer is easily heard, and Detective Reed, the trial court and the prosecutor all recognized that it was as stated here. (1 RT 1155 [prosecutor], 1226-1227 [Detective Reed], 1232 [prosecutor]; 11 RT 4067 [trial court]; see AOB 56-57, fn. 15.)

Reed's persistent questioning after appellant clearly stated he did not want to talk about a robbery-murder, appellant made admissions that were introduced against him as alleged rebuttal evidence, and police discovered Sue Burlingame, Stacey Billingsley and Greg Billingsley, who testified against appellant at trial.

As set forth in the opening brief, appellant's statement was inadmissible because it was obtained in violation of *Miranda* (AOB 66-79) and was the product of psychological coercion and thus involuntary (AOB 79-83); the testimony of Burlingame and the Billingsleys should have been suppressed because it was derived from a police strategy of deliberately ignoring appellant's invocation of his right to remain silent in order to circumvent *Miranda* (AOB 68-70, 84-92) and would not have inevitably been discovered (AOB 92-96); and the unconstitutional admission of appellant's statement was not harmless beyond a reasonable doubt (AOB 96-120).

Respondent agrees that appellant invoked his right to remain silent under *Miranda*, but contends that the continued police questioning was outside the scope of appellant's invocation. (RB 59-63.) Respondent also implies, but does not directly argue, that appellant waived his right to remain silent (RB 62), and asserts that appellant's statement was voluntary (RB 64-67). In addition, while disputing that the testimony of Burlingame and the Billingsleys should have been suppressed, respondent contends that the officers did not deliberately violate appellant's invocation of his right to remain silent (RB 68-71), and that the evidence would have been inevitably discovered (RB 71-73). Notably, other than asserting there was no deliberate *Miranda* violation, respondent offers no answer to appellant's claim that this Court should craft a remedy excluding from a suspect's trial

evidence that is derived from a calculated and deliberate police strategy of ignoring the suspect's invocation of his *Miranda* rights. (See RB 71, fn. 60.) Finally, respondent contends that admission of appellant's statement was not prejudicial. (RB 73-78.) As shown below, none of respondent's contentions has merit, and they all should be rejected.

B. Whether Appellant's Invocation of the Right to Remain Silent Is Viewed as Complete or Partial, the Officers Failed to Honor It, and Appellant Did Not Implicitly or Expressly Waive His Rights

The basic legal principles governing appellant's *Miranda* claim are set forth in the opening brief. (AOB 66-68.) It bears repeating, however, that a fundamental aspect of *Miranda*'s protections against coercive interrogations is the right to cut off questioning. (*Miranda v. Arizona*, *supra*, 384 U.S. at p. 474.) A suspect who has been advised of his *Miranda* rights need only make a "simple, unambiguous statement[]" that he wants to remain silent or does not want to talk with the police to invoke his right to remain silent and the ""right to cut off questioning."" (*Berghuis v. Thompkins* (2010) 560 U.S. 370, 130 S.Ct. 2250, 2260, citations omitted.) When the suspect invokes the right to remain silent, "further interrogation must cease." (*Id.* at pp. 2263-2264.)

Even in the absence of an effective invocation of rights, "the accused's statement during a custodial interrogation is inadmissible at trial unless the prosecution can establish that the accused 'in fact knowingly and voluntarily waived [*Miranda*] rights' when making the statement." (*Berghuis v. Thompkins*, *supra*, 130 S.Ct. at p. 2260, citation omitted.) The government bears the "heavy burden" of demonstrating waiver. (*Id.* at p. 2261, citation omitted.)

Respondent discusses whether a suspect has invoked his *Miranda*

rights and whether he has waived them as if they were one question. (See RB 57-62.) “Invocation and waiver are entirely distinct inquiries, and the two must not be blurred by merging them together.” (*Smith v. Illinois* (1984) 469 U.S. 91, 98.) Appellant will examine the two issues separately. Appellant’s emphatic refusal to answer the interrogating officers’ questions was an unambiguous, unequivocal and unconditioned invocation of the right to remain silent, and no reasonable officer would have understood it to permit continued questioning, particularly on the subject of appellant’s actions on the night of the charged crime. In interrogating appellant, the officers failed to “scrupulously honor” appellant’s invocation, and his statement is therefore inadmissible. (*Michigan v. Mosley* (1975) 423 U.S. 96, 104.) Further, the evidence shows that appellant neither expressly nor implicitly waived his rights. His statement was obtained in violation of *Miranda* and was inadmissible.

- 1. No reasonable officer would have understood appellant’s refusal to talk about the crime under investigation as anything other than an unequivocal invocation of the right to remain silent**

When advised of his rights and asked if he would waive them, appellant’s answer, “No, not about a robbery-murder. Jesus Christ,” was a clear invocation of his right not to speak with the interrogating officers. Respondent concedes that appellant unambiguously and unequivocally invoked his right to remain silent. (RB 59.) The point of contention is the scope of his invocation. In appellant’s view, whether considered a complete or partial invocation, at the very outset of the interrogation, he asserted his right to remain silent as to the sole subject of the interrogation – the robbery-murder of the previous night. (AOB 68-73.) In respondent’s

view, appellant's refusal to discuss the robbery-murders "amounted to a limited invocation of his right to remain silent as to the details of the crime" (RB 59) which, when considered with his statements after his invocation, did not preclude continued questioning of appellant about his whereabouts and actions on the night of that crime (RB 62-63). Respondent's position is untenable.

- a. **Any reasonable officer would have understood appellant's statement, "No. Not about a robbery murder. Jesus Christ," as a blanket refusal to talk about anything having to do with that crime**

Respondent offers no reasonable, credible explanation of how detective Reed misunderstood the plain meaning of appellant's statement to his invitation to waive his *Miranda* rights. The standard for judging a suspect's invocation of his *Miranda* rights is an objective one, which looks to what "a reasonable officer in light of the circumstances would have understood." (*Davis v. United States* (1994) 512 U.S. 452, 458-459 [discussing the standard for an invocation of the right to counsel]; *People v. Nelson* (2012) 53 Cal.4th 367, 379 [applying the *Davis* standard to an invocation of the right to remain silent].) Appellant's adamant declaration was made at the very beginning of the interrogation, before the officers had begun asking questions. It was his answer to detective Reed's question, asked immediately after reciting the *Miranda* admonitions, "having those rights in mind, will you talk to me now?" (1 RT 1226-1227; Exh. 5.) Appellant had never previously agreed to talk, and therefore his answer could not be construed as a refusal to discuss a subset of the possible topics of interrogation. Nor did his answer itself imply any willingness to waive his right to remain silent on subjects other than the robbery-murder or to

discuss his whereabouts and actions on the night of the crime. Rather, the officers' continued questioning was a failure to heed appellant's unequivocal and unambiguous refusal to waive his right to silence. (See *People v. Martinez* 47 Cal.4th 911, 952 [finding that in *People v. Peracchi* (2001) 86 Cal.App.4th 353, officers failed to heed suspect's "clear refusal to waive his right to silence" by continuing to interrogate after suspect said "I don't want to discuss it right now" immediately after a *Miranda* advisement].) No reasonable officer would have viewed appellant's statement as anything other than a clear refusal to waive the right to remain silent and a full invocation of that right. Detective Reed's admitted general practice of ignoring *Miranda* invocations in order to obtain incriminating statements (see 2 RT 1254) further undercuts any suggestion that it was objectively reasonable for him to believe that appellant's statement nevertheless permitted him to continue with the interrogation.

b. Even if viewed as a partial invocation, the plain meaning of appellant's refusal to talk about the robbery-murder included the very topics that the officers continued to probe

As shown in the opening brief, even if appellant's refusal to waive his rights is viewed as a selective invocation of his right to remain silent, the interrogation was unlawful because the officers' questions concerned the very subject that appellant had refused to discuss, namely, the robbery-murders. (AOB 71-73.) Respondent contends that appellant construes the term "robbery-murder" too broadly. (RB 63.) According to respondent, asking appellant about his whereabouts on the night of the robbery-murder "is not the same as discussing the actual details of the crimes," and, because an alibi consists of evidence that the defendant was not at the scene of the

crime, asking about alibi is not asking about the crime itself. (RB 63.) Respondent's argument defies common sense.

Appellant's words are to be "understood as ordinary people would understand them." (*Connecticut v. Barrett* (1987) 479 U.S. 523, 529.) Ordinary people do not parse words in the fashion that respondent proposes. Ordinary people would understand a suspect's refusal to discuss a particular crime as a refusal to discuss anything related to that crime, including whether or not the suspect had any defenses to that crime such as alibi. Respondent's approach would require an exceedingly precise and multifaceted invocation in order to effectively cut off questioning regarding all subjects related to a particular crime. Respondent points to no support for such an approach, and in fact, the high court has made clear that no such precision is required, stating that a suspect need not "speak with the discrimination of an Oxford Don" to invoke his rights. (*Davis v. United States, supra*, 512 U.S. at p. 459.)

Detective Reed asked appellant not only where he had been on the night of the robbery-murder, but also numerous other questions about appellant's actions that night, including whom he was with, whether he was aware that the crime had occurred, what time he arrived at The Office, what time he left, who else was there, whether the bartender had rung out the till, whether he knew the bartender, which door he went through when he left, where he was parked, what kind of car he was driving, whether appellant's fingerprints would be on the cash register or in the women's bathroom, how much he had to drink, whether he would remember if he killed someone, where he went after leaving The Office, whether he went to Mary Webster's house, whether he could explain the bloody clothes and boots that Webster had turned in and whether the gun at Webster's house was his.