

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE CENTRAL DISTRICT OF
CALIFORNIA

Donald Rubio v. County of Los Angeles, a municipal entity; and Does
1-10, inclusive.

Rubio v. County of Los Angeles · No. 2:24-cv-04978-AB-PVCx · Decided December 17, 2025

SUMMARY

This document is a stipulated protective order entered in Donald Rubio v. County of Los Angeles in the United States District Court for the Central District of California. It governs the designation, disclosure, use, challenge, filing, and final disposition of confidential discovery materials, including peace officer personnel and disciplinary records.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Central District of California
DECIDED	December 17, 2025
DOCKET	2:24-cv-04978-AB-PVCx
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	The parties stipulated to entry of a protective order governing confidential discovery material, and the court entered the order for good cause shown.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	nonprecedential
PARTIES	Donald Rubio v. County of Los Angeles, a municipal entity; and Does 1-10, inclusive

TOPICS

- discovery dispute
- civil procedure
- sanctions
- evidence
- attorney client privilege

PRACTICE AREAS

- civil procedure
- discovery
- evidence
- municipal law
- civil rights

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

- Whether good cause supported entry of a stipulated protective order governing confidential discovery material.

2. What procedures and limitations should govern designation, disclosure, challenge, use, filing, and final disposition of protected discovery material.

HOLDINGS

1. For good cause shown by the parties' stipulation, the court entered the proposed protective order governing confidential discovery material.
2. Protected material may be used only for prosecuting, defending, or attempting to settle the action and may be disclosed only to specified persons under the conditions stated in the order.
3. A party or nonparty may challenge a confidentiality designation through the applicable discovery-dispute procedures, and the designating party bears the burden of persuasion while the challenge is pending.
4. The protective order does not itself authorize filing confidential material under seal; sealing requires a separate court order under the applicable local rule.
5. When a producing party gives notice that inadvertently produced material is privileged or otherwise protected, the receiving parties must follow Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 26(b)(5)(B); the order also permits an agreement under Federal Rule of Evidence 502(d) and (e).

KEY QUOTATIONS

“FOR GOOD CAUSE SHOWN BY THE PARTIES’ STIPULATION, IT IS SO ORDERED.” (14)

“this Stipulated Protective Order does not entitle them to file confidential information under seal” (1.1)

“A Receiving Party may use Protected Material that is disclosed or produced by another Party or by a Non-Party in connection with this Action only for prosecuting, defending, or attempting to settle this Action.” (7.1)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Discovery in the civil-rights action was expected to involve confidential or private information, including peace-officer personnel files, disciplinary records, and other records claimed to be protected under California's Pitchess doctrine. The parties sought restrictions on disclosure and use of such materials during discovery. The court entered a stipulated protective order limiting use of protected material to prosecuting, defending, or attempting to settle the action.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

The action was pending in the United States District Court for the Central District of California. The parties jointly submitted a proposed stipulated protective order concerning confidential, proprietary, private, and law-enforcement personnel records, and the court approved and entered it on December 17, 2025.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Kamakana v. City & County of Honolulu, 447 F.3d 1172, 1180-81 (9th Cir. 2006)

OPINION

Donald Rubio v. County of Los Angeles, a municipal entity; and Does 1-10, inclusive.

PER CURIAM.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

8

CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

9 10 DONALD RUBIO Case No. 2:24-cv-04978-AB-PVCx 11 Plaintiff,

12 STIPULATED PROTECTIVE

vs. ORDER 13

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES, a

14 municipal entity; and DOES 1-10, inclusive. 15 Defendants. 16 17 18

19 1. INTRODUCTION

20 1.1 PURPOSES AND LIMITATIONS

21 Discovery in this action is likely to involve production of confidential, 22 proprietary, or private information for which special protection from public 23 disclosure and from use for any purpose other than prosecuting this litigation may 24 be warranted. Accordingly, the parties hereby stipulate to and petition the Court to 25 enter the following Stipulated Protective Order. The parties acknowledge that this 26 Order does not confer blanket protections on all disclosures or responses to 27 discovery and that the protection it affords from public disclosure and use extends 1 under the applicable legal principles. The parties further acknowledge, as set forth 2 in Section 12.3, below, that this Stipulated Protective Order does not entitle them to 3 file confidential information under seal; Civil Local Rule 79-5 sets forth the 4 procedures that must be followed and the standards that will be applied when a party 5 seeks permission from the court to file material under seal.

6 1.2 GOOD CAUSE STATEMENT

7 The materials at issue, include but are not limited to, peace officer’s personnel 8 file, discipline records and other confidential records protected by the Pitchess 9 Doctrine. See Penal Code Sections 832.7 and 832.8, and Evidence Code Sections 10 1043 and 1045. Any disclosure of these records requires a protective order 11 considering the sensitive nature of these materials. 12

13 2. DEFINITIONS

14 2.1 Action: Donald Rubio v. County of Los Angeles 15 2.2 Challenging Party: a Party or Non-Party that challenges the 16 designation of information or items under this Order. 17 2.3 “CONFIDENTIAL” Information or Items: information (regardless of 18 how it is generated, stored or maintained) or tangible things that qualify for 19 protection under Federal Rule of Civil

Procedure 26(c), and as specified above in 20 the Good Cause Statement. 21 2.4 Counsel: Outside Counsel of Record and House Counsel (as well as 22 their support staff). 23 2.5 Designating Party: a Party or Non-Party that designates information or 24 items that it produces in disclosures or in responses to discovery as

25 “CONFIDENTIAL.”

26 2.6 Disclosure or Discovery Material: all items or information, regardless 27 of the medium or manner in which it is generated, stored, or maintained (including, 1 among other things, testimony, transcripts, and tangible things), that are produced or 2 generated in disclosures or responses to discovery in this matter. 3 2.7 Expert: a person with specialized knowledge or experience in a matter 4 pertinent to the litigation who has been retained by a Party or its counsel to serve as 5 an expert witness or as a consultant in this Action. 6 2.8 House Counsel: attorneys who are employees of a party to this Action. 7 House Counsel does not include Outside Counsel of Record or any other outside 8 counsel. 9 2.9 Non-Party: any natural person, partnership, corporation, association, or 10 other legal entity not named as a Party to this action. 11 2.10 Outside Counsel of Record: attorneys who are not employees of a 12 party to this Action but are retained to represent or advise a party to this Action and 13 have appeared in this Action on behalf of that party or are affiliated with a law firm 14 which has appeared on behalf of that party, and includes support staff. 15 2.11 Party: any party to this Action, including all of its officers, directors, 16 employees, consultants, retained experts, and Outside Counsel of Record (and their 17 support staffs). 18 2.12 Producing Party: a Party or Non-Party that produces Disclosure or 19 Discovery Material in this Action. 20 2.13 Professional Vendors: persons or entities that provide litigation 21 support services (e.g., photocopying, videotaping, translating, preparing exhibits or 22 demonstrations, and organizing, storing, or retrieving data in any form or medium) 23 and their employees and subcontractors. 24 2.14 Protected Material: any Disclosure or Discovery Material that is 25 designated as “CONFIDENTIAL.” 26 2.15 Receiving Party: a Party that receives Disclosure or Discovery 27 Material from a Producing Party.

1 3. SCOPE

2 The protections conferred by this Stipulation and Order cover not only 3 Protected Material (as defined above), but also (1) any information copied or 4 extracted from Protected Material; (2) all copies, excerpts, summaries, or 5 compilations of Protected Material; and (3) any testimony, conversations, or 6 presentations by Parties or their Counsel that might reveal Protected Material. 7 Any use of Protected Material at trial will be governed by the orders of the 8 trial judge. This Order does not govern the use of Protected Material at trial. 9

10 4. DURATION

11 The parties anticipate that the jury trial on this case will take from 10 to 14 12 days. Once a case proceeds to trial, all of the information that was designated as 13 confidential or maintained pursuant to this protective order becomes public and will 14 be presumptively available to all members of the public, including the press, unless 15 compelling reasons supported by specific

factual findings to proceed otherwise are made to the trial judge in advance of the trial. See *Kamakana v. City and County of Honolulu*, 447 F.3d 1172, 1180-81 (9th Cir. 2006) (distinguishing “good cause” showing for sealing documents produced in discovery from “compelling reasons” standard when merits-related documents are part of court record). Accordingly, the terms of this protective order do not extend beyond the commencement of the trial.

22 5. DESIGNATING PROTECTED MATERIAL

23 5.1 Exercise of Restraint and Care in Designating Material for Protection. 24 Each Party or Non-Party that designates information or items for protection under 25 this Order must take care to limit any such designation to specific material that 26 qualifies under the appropriate standards. The Designating Party must designate for 27 protection only those parts of material, documents, items, or oral or written 1 items, or communications for which protection is not warranted are not swept 2 unjustifiably within the ambit of this Order. 3 Mass, indiscriminate, or routinized designations are prohibited. Designations 4 that are shown to be clearly unjustified or that have been made for an improper 5 purpose (e.g., to unnecessarily encumber the case development process or to impose 6 unnecessary expenses and burdens on other parties) may expose the Designating 7 Party to sanctions. 8 If it comes to a Designating Party’s attention that information or items that it 9 designated for protection do not qualify for protection, that Designating Party must 10 promptly notify all other Parties that it is withdrawing the inapplicable designation. 11 5.2 Manner and Timing of Designations. Except as otherwise provided in 12 this Order (see, e.g., second paragraph of section 5.2(a) below), or as otherwise 13 stipulated or ordered, Disclosure or Discovery Material that qualifies for protection 14 under this Order must be clearly so designated before the material is disclosed or 15 produced. 16 Designation in conformity with this Order requires: 17 (a) for information in documentary form (e.g., paper or electronic documents, 18 but excluding transcripts of depositions or other pretrial or trial proceedings), that 19 the Producing Party affix at a minimum, the legend “CONFIDENTIAL” (hereinafter 20 “CONFIDENTIAL legend”), to each page that contains protected material. If only a 21 portion or portions of the material on a page qualifies for protection, the Producing 22 Party also must clearly identify the protected portion(s) (e.g., by making appropriate 23 markings in the margins). 24 A Party or Non-Party that makes original documents available for 25 inspection need not designate them for protection until after the inspecting Party has 26 indicated which documents it would like copied and produced. During the 27 inspection and before the designation, all of the material made available for 1 identified the documents it wants copied and produced, the Producing Party must 2 determine which documents, or portions thereof, qualify for protection under this 3 Order. Then, before producing the specified documents, the Producing Party must 4 affix the “CONFIDENTIAL legend” to each page that contains Protected Material. 5 If only a portion or portions of the material on a page qualifies for protection, the 6 Producing Party also must clearly identify the protected portion(s) (e.g., by making 7 appropriate markings in the margins). 8 (b) for

testimony given in depositions that the Designating Party identify the 9 Disclosure or Discovery Material on the record, before the close of the deposition all 10 protected testimony. 11 (c) for information produced in some form other than documentary and for 12 any other tangible items, that the Producing Party affix in a prominent place on the 13 exterior of the container or containers in which the information is stored the legend 14 “CONFIDENTIAL.” If only a portion or portions of the information warrants 15 protection, the Producing Party, to the extent practicable, will identify the protected 16 portion(s). 17 5.3 Inadvertent Failures to Designate. If timely corrected, an inadvertent 18 failure to designate qualified information or items does not, standing alone, waive 19 the Designating Party’s right to secure protection under this Order for such material. 20 Upon timely correction of a designation, the Receiving Party must make reasonable 21 efforts to assure that the material is treated in accordance with the provisions of this 22 Order. 23

24 6. CHALLENGING CONFIDENTIALITY DESIGNATIONS

25 6.1 Timing of Challenges. Any Party or Non-Party may challenge a 26 designation of confidentiality at any time that is consistent with the Court’s 27 Scheduling Order. 1 6.2 Meet and Confer. The Challenging Party will initiate the dispute 2 resolution process (and, if necessary, file a discovery motion) under Local Rule 37.1 3 et seq. 4 6.3 The burden of persuasion in any such challenge proceeding will be on 5 the Designating Party. Frivolous challenges, and those made for an improper 6 purpose (e.g., to harass or impose unnecessary expenses and burdens on other 7 parties) may expose the Challenging Party to sanctions. Unless the Designating 8 Party has waived or withdrawn the confidentiality designation, all parties will 9 continue to afford the material in question the level of protection to which it is 10 entitled under the Producing Party’s designation until the Court rules on the 11 challenge. 12

13 7. ACCESS TO AND USE OF PROTECTED MATERIAL

14 7.1 Basic Principles. A Receiving Party may use Protected Material that is 15 disclosed or produced by another Party or by a Non-Party in connection with this 16 Action only for prosecuting, defending, or attempting to settle this Action. Such 17 Protected Material may be disclosed only to the categories of persons and under the 18 conditions described in this Order. When the Action has been terminated, a 19 Receiving Party must comply with the provisions of section 13 below (FINAL 20 DISPOSITION). 21 Protected Material must be stored and maintained by a Receiving Party at a 22 location and in a secure manner that ensures that access is limited to the persons 23 authorized under this Order. 24 7.2 Disclosure of “CONFIDENTIAL” Information or Items. Unless 25 otherwise ordered by the court or permitted in writing by the Designating Party, a 26 Receiving Party may disclose any information or item designated 27 “CONFIDENTIAL” only to: 1 (a) the Receiving Party’s Outside Counsel of Record in this Action, as 2 well as employees of said Outside Counsel of Record to whom it is reasonably 3 necessary to disclose the information for this Action; 4 (b) the officers, directors, and employees (including House Counsel) of 5 the Receiving Party to whom disclosure is reasonably necessary for this Action; 6 (c) Experts (as defined in this Order) of the Receiving Party to whom 7 disclosure is

reasonably necessary for this Action and who have signed the 8 “Acknowledgment and Agreement to Be Bound” (Exhibit A); 9 (d) the Court and its personnel; 10 (e) court reporters and their staff; 11 (f) professional jury or trial consultants, mock jurors, and Professional 12 Vendors to whom disclosure is reasonably necessary for this Action and who have 13 signed the “Acknowledgment and Agreement to Be Bound” (Exhibit A); 14 (g) the author or recipient of a document containing the information or a 15 custodian or other person who otherwise possessed or knew the information; 16 (h) during their depositions, witnesses ,and attorneys for witnesses, in the 17 Action to whom disclosure is reasonably necessary provided: (1) the deposing party 18 requests that the witness sign the form attached as Exhibit A hereto; and (2) they 19 will not be permitted to keep any confidential information unless they sign the 20 “Acknowledgment and Agreement to Be Bound” (Exhibit A), unless otherwise 21 agreed by the Designating Party or ordered by the court. Pages of transcribed 22 deposition testimony or exhibits to depositions that reveal Protected Material may 23 be separately bound by the court reporter and may not be disclosed to anyone except 24 as permitted under this Stipulated Protective Order; and 25 (i) any mediator or settlement officer, and their supporting personnel, 26 mutually agreed upon by any of the parties engaged in settlement discussions. 27

1 8. PROTECTED MATERIAL SUBPOENAED OR ORDERED PRODUCED 2 IN OTHER LITIGATION

3 If a Party is served with a subpoena or a court order issued in other litigation 4 that compels disclosure of any information or items designated in this Action as 5 “CONFIDENTIAL,” that Party must: 6 (a) promptly notify in writing the Designating Party. Such notification 7 will include a copy of the subpoena or court order; 8 (b) promptly notify in writing the party who caused the subpoena or order 9 to issue in the other litigation that some or all of the material covered by the 10 subpoena or order is subject to this Protective Order. Such notification will include 11 a copy of this Stipulated Protective Order; and 12 (c) cooperate with respect to all reasonable procedures sought to be 13 pursued by the Designating Party whose Protected Material may be affected. 14 If the Designating Party timely seeks a protective order, the Party served with 15 the subpoena or court order will not produce any information designated in this 16 action as “CONFIDENTIAL” before a determination by the court from which the 17 subpoena or order issued, unless the Party has obtained the Designating Party’s 18 permission. The Designating Party will bear the burden and expense of seeking 19 protection in that court of its confidential material and nothing in these provisions 20 should be construed as authorizing or encouraging a Receiving Party in this Action 21 to disobey a lawful directive from another court. 22

23 9. A NON-PARTY’S PROTECTED MATERIAL SOUGHT TO BE 24 PRODUCED IN THIS LITIGATION

25 (a) The terms of this Order are applicable to information produced by a 26 Non-Party in this Action and designated as “CONFIDENTIAL.” Such information 27 produced by Non-Parties in connection with this litigation is protected by the 1 remedies and relief provided by this Order.

Nothing in these provisions should be construed as prohibiting a Non-Party from seeking additional protections. (b) In the event that a Party is required, by a valid discovery request, to produce a Non-Party's confidential information in its possession, and the Party is subject to an agreement with the Non-Party not to produce the Non-Party's confidential information, then the Party will: (1) promptly notify in writing the Requesting Party and the Non-Party that some or all of the information requested is subject to a confidentiality agreement with a Non-Party; (2) promptly provide the Non-Party with a copy of the Stipulated Protective Order in this Action, the relevant discovery request(s), and a reasonably specific description of the information requested; and (3) make the information requested available for inspection by the Non-Party, if requested. (c) If the Non-Party fails to seek a protective order from this court within 14 days of receiving the notice and accompanying information, the Receiving Party may produce the Non-Party's confidential information responsive to the discovery request. If the Non-Party timely seeks a protective order, the Receiving Party will not produce any information in its possession or control that is subject to the confidentiality agreement with the Non-Party before a determination by the court. Absent a court order to the contrary, the Non-Party will bear the burden and expense of seeking protection in this court of its Protected Material.

10. UNAUTHORIZED DISCLOSURE OF PROTECTED MATERIAL

If a Receiving Party learns that, by inadvertence or otherwise, it has disclosed Protected Material to any person or in any circumstance not authorized under this Stipulated Protective Order, the Receiving Party must immediately (a) notify in writing to retrieve all unauthorized copies of the Protected Material, (c) inform the person or persons to whom unauthorized disclosures were made of all the terms of this Order, and (d) request such person or persons to execute the "Acknowledgment and Agreement to Be Bound" that is attached hereto as Exhibit A.

11. INADVERTENT PRODUCTION OF PRIVILEGED OR OTHERWISE PROTECTED MATERIAL

When a Producing Party gives notice to Receiving Parties that certain inadvertently produced material is subject to a claim of privilege or other protection, the obligations of the Receiving Parties are those set forth in Federal Rule of Civil

Procedure 26(b)(5)(B). This provision is not intended to modify whatever

procedure may be established in an e-discovery order that provides for production without prior privilege review. Pursuant to Federal Rule of Evidence 502(d) and (e), insofar as the parties reach an agreement on the effect of disclosure of a communication or information covered by the attorney-client privilege or work product protection, the parties may incorporate their agreement in the stipulated protective order submitted to the court.

12. MISCELLANEOUS

12.1 Right to Further Relief. Nothing in this Order abridges the right of any person to seek its modification by the Court in the future. 12.2 Right to Assert Other Objections. By

stipulating to the entry of this Protective Order no Party waives any right it otherwise would have to object to disclosing or producing any information or item on any ground not addressed in this Stipulated Protective Order. Similarly, no Party waives any right to object on any ground to use in evidence of any of the material covered by this Protective Order. 12.3 Filing Protected Material. A Party that seeks to file under seal any 1 only be filed under seal pursuant to a court order authorizing the sealing of the 2 specific Protected Material at issue. If a Party's request to file Protected Material 3 under seal is denied by the court, then the Receiving Party may file the information 4 in the public record unless otherwise instructed by the court. 5

6 13. FINAL DISPOSITION

7 After the final disposition of this Action, as defined in paragraph 4, within 60 8 days of a written request by the Designating Party, each Receiving Party must return 9 all Protected Material to the Producing Party or destroy such material. As used in 10 this subdivision, "all Protected Material" includes all copies, abstracts, compilations, 11 summaries, and any other format reproducing or capturing any of the Protected 12 Material. Whether the Protected Material is returned or destroyed, the Receiving 13 Party must submit a written certification to the Producing Party (and, if not the same 14 person or entity, to the Designating Party) by the 60 day deadline that (1) identifies 15 (by category, where appropriate) all the Protected Material that was returned or 16 destroyed and (2) affirms that the Receiving Party has not retained any copies, 17 abstracts, compilations, summaries or any other format reproducing or capturing any 18 of the Protected Material. Notwithstanding this provision, Counsel are entitled to 19 retain an archival copy of all pleadings, motion papers, trial, deposition, and hearing 20 transcripts, legal memoranda, correspondence, deposition and trial exhibits, expert 21 reports, attorney work product, and consultant and expert work product, even if such 22 materials contain Protected Material. Any such archival copies that contain or 23 constitute Protected Material remain subject to this Protective Order as set forth in

24 Section 4 (DURATION).

25 26 27 1 || 14. Any willful violation of this Order may be punished by civil or criminal 2 || contempt proceedings, financial or evidentiary sanctions, reference to disciplinary 3 || authorities, or other appropriate action at the discretion of the Court. 4

5 || FOR GOOD CAUSE SHOWN BY THE PARTIES' STIPULATION, IT IS SO

6 || ORDERED. 7

9 || DATED: December 17, 2025 United States Magistrate Judge 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28

1 EXHIBIT A

2 ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND AGREEMENT TO BE BOUND

3 4 I, _____ [full name], of _____ 5 [full address], declare under penalty of perjury that I have read in its entirety and 6 understand the Stipulated Protective Order that was issued by the United States 7 District Court for the Central District of

California on [date] in the case of 8 _____ [insert case name and number]. I agree to comply with and to be 9 bound by all the terms of this Stipulated Protective Order and I understand and 10 acknowledge that failure to so comply could expose me to sanctions and punishment 11 in the nature of contempt. I solemnly promise that I will not disclose in any manner 12 any information or item that is subject to this Stipulated Protective Order to any 13 person or entity except in strict compliance with the provisions of this Order. 14 I further agree to submit to the jurisdiction of the United States District Court 15 for the Central District of California for the purpose of enforcing the terms of this 16 Stipulated Protective Order, even if such enforcement proceedings occur after 17 termination of this action. I hereby appoint _____ [full 18 name] of _____ [full address and 19 telephone number] as my California agent for service of process in connection with 20 this action or any proceedings related to enforcement of this Stipulated Protective 21 Order. 22 Date: _____ 23 City and State where signed: _____ 24 25 Printed name: _____ 26 27 Signature: _____