

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
DISTRICT OF MARYLAND – BALTIMORE DIVISION

ALBERT SNYDER,
Plaintiff,

vs.

Case No. 1:06-cv-1389-RDB

FRED W. PHELPS, SR.;
SHIRLEY L. PHELPS-ROPER;
REBEKAH A. PHELPS-DAVIS; and,
WESTBORO BAPTIST CHURCH, INC.,
Defendants.

ATTACHMENT 19

IN SUPPORT OF
MOTION OF DEFENDANTS
PHELPS-DAVIS & PHELPS-ROPER
TO DISMISS OR FOR SUMMARY JUDGMENT

Excerpts of Deposition
Of Albert Snyder

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
DISTRICT OF MARYLAND

ALBERT SNYDER,

Plaintiff

Vs.

FRED W. PHELPS, SR., Civil Action

JOHN DOES, and No: 06-CV-1389 RDB

WESTBORO BAPTIST

CHURCH, INC.,

Defendants

Friday, April 20th, 2007

Silver Spring, Maryland

The Deposition of:

ALBERT SNYDER,

Taken at the Law Offices of Marks & Katz, LLC,
1400 Spring Street, Suite 410, Silver Spring,
Maryland, scheduled to begin at 12:45 p.m.,
before Chris Fox, Notary Public, when were
present on behalf of the respective parties.

1 A. No, I don't know. I was burying my
2 son.

3 Q. I understand. I -- I can only find
4 out what you know.

5 A. Sir, I don't know.

6 Q. I'm not going to ask you to
7 manufacture or anything.

8 A. No.

9 Q. And what kind of person was it who
10 told you? A friend or a relative or someone
11 working the funeral home?

12 A. I don't remember. I don't remember
13 that.

14 Q. But this was when you were at the
15 funeral home that you were told this?

16 A. Yes, sir. It was either at the
17 funeral home or walking out of the funeral
18 home, somebody said something to me.

19 Q. And that was on the day of the
20 funeral?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. I don't know whether you're an artist

1 or whatever, although I've seen your
2 handwriting, it looks a lot better than mine.
3 Would you please make your best effort to just
4 draw -- draw the path you went from the
5 funeral home, take your time, to the church.

6 I'm not claiming that the funeral home
7 is shown on the map.

8 A. Up this road.

9 Q. Is that working?

10 A. No, not very well.

11 Q. Let's see if this one works. Here's
12 another red pen.

13 A. We came up Monroe Street, and took the
14 first entrance in.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. And they were standing on the church
17 property.

18 Q. Wait, wait, wait. I just want to do
19 the path first. I'll do a different color for
20 the Westboro Baptist people.

21 A. Um-hmm. And we went up to the church.

22 Q. Okay. Please use the red pen to

1 circle the church.

2 A. (Witness complies.)

3 Q. Okay. Now, here's a blue pen. Using
4 a blue pen, please, before you start writing,
5 please, though, wait for the question, so you
6 know what it is. Please, draw an X for where
7 the -- you saw those signs that the Westboro
8 Baptist Church people had.

9 A. (Witness complies.)

10 Q. Is that working?

11 A. Um-hmm.

12 Q. So, now when you were making several
13 Xs, that like represents the several people
14 holding the several signs?

15 A. Well, yeah, they were lined up right
16 along here.

17 Q. All right. Now, what makes you say
18 that that was the church property that they
19 were on?

20 A. Because the priest -- the priest told
21 me that.

22 Q. And what's the priest's name?

1 other relatives of Matt?

2 A. Um-hmm. Yes.

3 Q. Who did you communicate that to?

4 A. I don't remember. I mean you're
5 asking me questions that, you know, was during
6 a time, you know, that I didn't sit -- I
7 didn't sit there and read.

8 Q. I understand. I'm -- I can only know
9 what you know or don't know by asking you a
10 question.

11 A. Right. I don't know.

12 Q. You're not aware of any WBC members
13 being at the -- at the cemetery, are you?

14 A. No, no.

15 Q. What -- what type of TV, radio and
16 newspaper coverage, and Internet coverage, did
17 you see about WBC on the same day as the
18 funeral?

19 A. We got back from the funeral to my
20 parents' house where they had a wake, and a
21 bunch of us went down to the basement. My
22 younger cousins and, you know, and friends of

1 mine went down to the basement, and somebody
2 made the comment, let's turn on the news and
3 see what they say about Matt.

4 Q. And then what happened?

5 A. They had not that much to say about
6 Matt. It was Shirley Phelps' mouth running,
7 and Fred Phelps' mouth running.

8 They didn't say that the funeral was
9 15 miles long. And they didn't say that on
10 every corner, there was a policeman saluting
11 Matt. And they didn't say that when they
12 drove by the fire department, that all the
13 firemen had their trucks out and their lights
14 on. And they didn't tell about the little
15 school kids that lined the driveways, holding
16 the flags.

17 All we heard was the cult, the con
18 artist.

19 Q. And what were the WBC members saying
20 and where were they physically when they were
21 saying it?

22 A. They were -- I don't know where they

1 were physically. I mean I was watching it on
2 TV.

3 Q. Were they holding signs?

4 A. No, they weren't holding signs. They
5 were being interviewed by people.

6 Q. Were they outside or inside? Like in
7 a TV studio or outside somewhere?

8 A. I think they were outside, to my best
9 recollection. I mean I don't -- you know, I
10 didn't pay attention to the background. It's
11 kind of shocking, to see this kind of
12 behavior, you know, a half hour after you put
13 your child in the ground. Really shocking.

14 I mean that there's monsters out there
15 that would do something like this, to the very
16 people that gave them most of their rights.

17 Q. And you don't remember what Fred and
18 Shirley Phelps were saying on TV?

19 A. Not exactly, no, you know. It was --
20 I was just in such a shock to see it. That,
21 you know, I just was in shock. I never, in my
22 wildest dreams, imagined that someone could do

1 that to my child. To hold signs that say he's
2 in hell, and to have stickmen drawn in
3 disgusting ways.

4 Q. When did you find out what was on the
5 signs?

6 A. When I saw them on the television.

7 Q. The same day?

8 A. The same day.

9 Q. What do you remember being on those
10 signs aside from --

11 A. Semper Fi flag. You're in hell. Flag
12 troops. Something about the Pope. God knows
13 what they were doing there, in their imaginary
14 state.

15 Q. Was there really a sign that said
16 something about your son being in hell?

17 A. Yes, it said he's in hell. Imagine
18 that at your child's funeral.

19 Q. Well, how long did -- how many -- how
20 many news, pieces of news coverage did you
21 watch on TV on March 10th, about, that covered
22 Westboro Baptist Church?

1 Church since the date of your son's funeral?

2 A. Well, let's see. I would never go on
3 such a filthy website.

4 The way that I found out all this
5 information was because the Baltimore Sun
6 paper had a thing online called a register,
7 where you could go in, and look at the notes
8 that people would send in about Matt, and, you
9 know, how he was a hero and stuff like that.
10 And every morning, I would go on that.

11 And then I would Google Matt's name
12 and see what articles were on there. And then
13 one morning, I saw this one called The Burden
14 of Matthew Snyder, and I got absolutely sick.
15 Absolutely sick, what they had to say.

16 Q. When you talk about this -- when you
17 say The Burden of Matthew Snyder, was this an
18 article?

19 A. Yeah, it was an article written by
20 Shirley.

21 Q. When you say it was an article written
22 by Shirley --

1 A. I don't know how it got on -- all I
2 did was Google Matt's name. I'm not a
3 computer expert. I Googled Matt's name.

4 Q. All right.

5 A. And then all these things come up. It
6 says -- there was one like Matt's death and
7 there was one about Iraq, what he did over in
8 Iraq. And like I said, then they had the
9 register --

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. -- that you could sign into. And then
12 underneath of all that, or like halfway down
13 on -- in the rest of the stuff, was this one
14 that was called the Burden of Matthew Snyder.

15 And I thought, well, I didn't see this
16 one before, what's this one. And I clicked in
17 on it.

18 Q. And where did it take you to?

19 A. It took me to the article.

20 Q. I mean to what website were you taken?

21 A. It was just on the Internet. I wasn't
22 taken to any website. It just came up. When

1 I clicked on the Burden of Matthew Snyder, it
2 appeared before me.

3 Q. Now, I think I heard you talk about
4 the Baltimore Sun earlier. Are we talking
5 about something related to the Baltimore Sun
6 now, when you're talking about Googling, or
7 are you talking about something different now?

8 A. No. I would go in and Google the
9 Baltimore Sun's website. Like you could go on
10 to -- when you Google, it would say Baltimore
11 Sun register.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. And I would click on that every
14 morning just to see the nice things that were
15 coming in from friends and family. I had some
16 family that lived out of state, that, you
17 know, put things on it, you know.

18 I would go to the next article on
19 Google. And it would have some articles about
20 what Matt did in Iraq. You know, I can't
21 remember what every article was. But I do
22 remember the Burden of Matthew Snyder. And it

1 was written by Shirley.

2 And it came up on Google. It did not
3 come on -- off the website. It came in off
4 Google.

5 Q. For me to understand, can you just
6 tell me mechanically what you did to get these
7 articles, because I'm not understanding the
8 relationship between the Baltimore Sun and
9 Google. Unless you're talking about writing
10 in the site: Baltimore Sun or something like
11 that?

12 A. No. When you go on the computer,
13 there's a little section that says, Google. I
14 typed my son's name in it.

15 Q. In Google? Okay.

16 A. In Google.

17 Q. Right.

18 A. All these articles appear.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. On the web.

21 Q. I understand that.

22 So, does the Baltimore Sun have any

1 relationship to you Googling or you're just
2 talking --

3 A. That was how I -- that's how I started
4 Googling Matt's name. I started when somebody
5 told me to go into Google and put in the Sun
6 paper --

7 Q. Right.

8 A. -- or Matt's name.

9 Q. I got it.

10 A. And you can pull that up.

11 Q. I understand.

12 Do you have a copy of this article,
13 Burden of Matthew Snyder?

14 A. Oh, yeah, yeah. I have a copy of it.

15 Q. Is that in our Discovery packet?

16 MR. SUMMERS: We have it. You have
17 it, yeah.

18 Q. Do you remember what it said?

19 A. Oh, yeah, I remember what it said.

20 Q. And it said what?

21 A. It said that I taught Matt -- I don't
22 remember the exact words, but I taught Matt

1 A. Yes, I did. He makes me absolutely
2 sick.

3 Q. How many -- how many TV interviews
4 have you given about Matt, and radio
5 interviews?

6 A. Oh, one, two, I think maybe three,
7 four. Something in that area.

8 Q. They were all on TV?

9 A. One was on the radio, and then two
10 were on television, I think.

11 Q. Were there any newspaper interviews
12 you gave?

13 A. Yes, I did give some interviews about
14 Matt.

15 Q. About how many of those?

16 A. I want to say three or four. I wasn't
17 keeping track of them.

18 Q. When did you start doing these
19 interviews in relation to the date of Matt's
20 funeral?

21 A. Oh, let's see. The paper interviewed
22 me like three or four days after Matt was

1 killed.

2 Q. And is that the one that led to the
3 article that said this is a private funeral?

4 A. No, no, no.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. That was -- that was by the York
7 paper.

8 Q. The -- the interview was by the York
9 paper around three or four days after Matt's
10 death?

11 A. Right. And it was with regards to
12 Matt, what he did over there, how he died.

13 Q. Right.

14 A. You know, stuff like that. It had
15 nothing to do -- it was before the funeral.

16 Q. Do you remember the name of the
17 reporter?

18 A. No, I don't.

19 Q. And that was with the York Daily
20 Record?

21 A. That was with the York Daily Record.

22 And then the other one was the York --

1 there's two of them up there. One is the York
2 Daily Record and one is the York paper. I
3 think it's just called the York paper, one is
4 in the morning and one is in the afternoon.

5 Q. So, you also had an interview with the
6 other York paper?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. That was also before Matt's funeral?

9 A. Yes. That was also before Matt's
10 funeral.

11 Q. What was the focus of that interview?

12 A. Pretty much the same thing. They, you
13 know. They came over and just talked.

14 Q. Were there any other interviews you
15 did before Matt's funeral?

16 A. On television?

17 Q. Anywhere? Right --

18 A. No. I think it was mostly paper, the
19 papers.

20 Q. There was two --

21 A. The two papers.

22 Q. Two newspapers.

1 A. And then the Baltimore -- sorry.

2 I think there was one for the
3 Baltimore paper that I did. The Baltimore
4 Gazette or some paper down in Baltimore, I
5 don't remember the name of it.

6 Q. And that was before the funeral?

7 A. Yes. I think they called me to see,
8 you know, to get my -- just to see how I was
9 doing and stuff like that.

10 Q. Are there any other interviews you
11 remember having with journalists or reporters
12 before the day of Matt's funeral?

13 A. Just those. I think that's, I think
14 that's it.

15 Q. Okay. And what types of interviews,
16 and with whom did you have them after Matt's
17 funeral and when?

18 A. After Matt's funeral, I was on CNN.

19 Q. When?

20 A. I don't remember. It was after Matt's
21 funeral. I can't remember dates on that.

22 Q. I understand. But I mean

1 approximately? Same month? The following
2 month?

3 A. No, it was probably in April -- it was
4 probably in May sometime, I'm not sure. And
5 then I had --

6 Q. Well, I'm going one at a time.

7 What was that interview with CNN
8 about?

9 A. It was about Matt and about -- I'm
10 trying to think -- and about the lawsuit.

11 Q. Okay. So, the CNN interview was after
12 the lawsuit had already been filed?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. So we wouldn't be talking about any
15 earlier than June then?

16 A. The CNN report was done the day that I
17 did file, I do remember that.

18 Q. Right.

19 A. Um-hmm.

20 Q. And what did that CNN report cover?

21 A. It covered some of Matt, and it
22 covered some of the -- some of the lawsuit.

1 Q. Who was the interviewer?

2 A. Oh, God, I can't remember his name.

3 Q. Is that the first time you'd ever been
4 on TV in your life?

5 A. No. I was on television the day after
6 Matt's funeral, on -- yeah, it was the day
7 after Matt's funeral, I was on a television
8 show, too.

9 Q. Which station?

10 A. It was York Fox station, I think it
11 was.

12 Q. Was it the TV news?

13 A. Yes, it was the news.

14 Q. And you were talking about the same
15 kinds of things you were talking to Newspapers
16 about before the funeral?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. Was that the first time you were ever
19 on TV in your whole life?

20 A. In my whole life?

21 Q. Yes.

22 A. No, I was on bowling shows when I was

1 a kid.

2 Q. Got it.

3 Was that the first time you spoke on
4 TV, your whole life, though, after Matt died?

5 A. Yeah, I think that's the first time
6 that I spoke on television.

7 Q. And it was the first time you'd ever
8 been interviewed by a reporter? That was --
9 that only took place after Matt's death?

10 A. Yes, yes.

11 Q. And the only time you ever spoke to a
12 reporter at all, or newspaper or anything, was
13 after Matt's death?

14 A. Yeah, I believe so.

15 Q. When you had that first TV interview
16 after Matt's death, was it -- where did that
17 take place? Where were you?

18 A. At the news station in York, on Queen
19 Street.

20 Q. Were you inside one of the TV studios
21 or somewhere else?

22 A. No, they did the interview outside.

1 It was a -- it was a nice day. They did
2 interview outside.

3 Q. Now, where did you go to do the CNN
4 interview after the lawsuit was filed?

5 A. They came to my house.

6 Q. You don't remember the name of the
7 reporter?

8 A. I've got his card at home but I am not
9 -- I don't watch TV, as you know, as a -- all
10 the time to know reporters, who they are.

11 I mean he gave me his name but I can't
12 remember. I have his card at home.

13 Q. How many people came from the CNN
14 station to your home?

15 A. I think there was like three.

16 Q. One was the reporter, right?

17 A. And one was a photographer.

18 Q. Right. And --

19 A. And then one was like a set-up person.

20 Q. The person who did the lights?

21 A. Lights and stuff, yeah.

22 Q. Were they really bright lights?

1 A. Yeah, at times. Yeah, they were. It
2 depended on how they had me sitting.

3 Q. How did your eyes feel, looking
4 towards those lights?

5 A. Fine.

6 Q. What other TV appearances have you
7 had, after Matt's funeral?

8 A. I did a thing with Julie Banderas on
9 Fox News, yeah. That was the one that Shirley
10 called the reporter a bimbo on TV.

11 Q. That was the same time?

12 A. Yeah.

13 Q. All right. Now, where were you during
14 that -- you say her name is Banderas?

15 A. Julie Banderas.

16 Q. Where were you when you were being
17 interviewed by Julie Banderas?

18 A. I was in a studio in Harrisburg,
19 Pennsylvania.

20 Q. Were you like sitting on one of those
21 bar stool kind of set-ups?

22 A. No, it was like behind a desk. My

1 lawyer was here and I was here.

2 Q. Was your lawyer being interviewed,
3 too?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. And Which one was that?

6 A. Craig Trebilcock.

7 Q. And Ms. Banderas was in some other
8 studio?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. And then Shirley Phelps was wherever
11 she was, right?

12 A. In another studio somewhere.

13 Q. You had one of those little mics they
14 put -- whatever you call it, ear pieces?

15 A. Um-hmm. Yes.

16 Q. Now, was -- were questions being asked
17 of you and Shirley at the same time, or did
18 one of you go first and then finish, and then
19 the other went? How did this go?

20 A. No, they interviewed me, and then they
21 interviewed Craig, and then they went over to
22 Shirley.

1 Q. Okay. So, when the interviewers
2 started interviewing Shirley, were you still
3 in the --

4 A. In the Harrisburg office, yes. They
5 let us watch.

6 Q. All right. So, once you finished
7 talking to the interviewer, Ms. Banderas,
8 Shirley Phelps hadn't started speaking, right?

9 A. I think she went directly from us --

10 Q. Right.

11 A. -- to Shirley. I think, if I remember
12 right that.

13 Q. When Shirley started speaking, where
14 were you when you heard Shirley speaking?

15 A. Sitting in the Harrisburg studio,
16 watching her.

17 Q. You were still in the same studio
18 room?

19 A. Yeah. They let us stay there and
20 watch her. And I think they gave us a
21 recording, a videotape of it.

22 Q. What made you want to watch her?

1 A. Comic relief.

2 Q. You got comic relief?

3 A. I sure did.

4 Q. Especially when she said bimbo?

5 A. Oh, I did. I did. I found it so
6 funny. That's so ladylike.

7 Q. Was there another reason why you
8 watched Shirley Roper being interviewed by Ms.
9 Banderas?

10 A. Not really. I was on the show and I
11 just figured I'd see what they had to say.

12 Q. So during -- that's all you were
13 feeling while hearing Ms. Roper speak with Ms.
14 Banderas was comic relief?

15 A. Yeah. We kind of laughed through the
16 whole interview.

17 Q. That was all?

18 A. Yeah, um-hmm.

19 Q. Mr. Trebilcock was laughing, too?

20 A. Yeah, we both were. She was quite an
21 idiot.

22 Q. Were there any other TV interviews you

1

2

3

CONTENT OF THE FIRST FOUR LINES IS REDACTED
BECAUSE IT IS POSSIBLY CONFIDENTIAL
AND IS NOT ON THE TOPIC FOR WHICH THE PAGE IS INCLUDED

4

5

Q. Did you ever tell a reporter you felt

6

the Patriot Guard was serving as a human

7

shield at Matt's funeral?

8

A. Yes, I did.

9

Q. Does this quote, March 17, 2006 York

10

Daily Record sound correct -- well, it's

11

actually not a quote. It's just a passage

12

from the article that: Albert Snyder said the

13

human shield worked. His family didn't know

14

protesters attended until they saw and read

15

news reports.

16

Is that accurate?

17

A. I said that to protect my daughters.

18

Q. You said something that wasn't true to

19

York Daily Record?

20

A. To protect my daughters, I did. They

21

had been through enough. The last thing they

22

needed was for me to say that they saw them

1 and have reporters after them. I just buried
2 one child, I was protecting the other two.

3 Q. Were there any other lies that you
4 told any reporters?

5 A. No.

6 Q. This was the only lie?

7 A. It was not a lie -- it was a lie but I
8 did it to protect my daughters and I would do
9 it again.

10 Q. To protect your children?

11 A. Yes, I would. My children are all
12 very close and my daughters were devastated,
13 absolutely devastated.

14 Q. And what have they gone through up to
15 today, with them working through this
16 devastation?

17 A. They've talked to different people.
18 Who they are I don't know, you know. I
19 don't -- you know. They've talked to me about
20 it.

21 Q. Are they experiencing the same depth
22 of upset that you've been experiencing