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OFFICE OF THE CLERK
SUPREME COURT, U.S.

No. 26-643

In the Supreme Court of the United States

CHRISTINE L. MORRISON,

Petitioner,

v.

EDWARD M. HANNAFORD,

Respondent.

ON PETITION FOR WRIT OF CERTIORARI
TO THE SUPREME COURT OF MICHIGAN

PETITION FOR WRIT OF CERTIORARI

Christine L. Morrison

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Pro Se Petitioner

AUGUST MMXXVI

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QUESTION PRESENTED

Whether the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment permits a State to enforce a judgment as a consent judgment when the record contains no affirmative evidence of actual consent and affirmatively demonstrates that the parties did not consent.

PARTIES TO THE PROCEEDINGS

Petitioner, and plaintiff-appellant below is Christine L. Morrison.

Respondent, and defendant-appellee below is Edward M. Hannaford.

RELATED PROCEEDINGS

Circuit Court of Michigan (Macomb Cty.)::

Edward Michael Hannaford v. *Christine Lynn Morrison*, No. 1995–004609–DM (Aug. 11, 2025) (motion for relief from judgment denied)

Michigan Court of Appeals:

In re Morrison, No. 377022 (Sept. 5, 2025) (complaint for superintending control dismissed)

Edward M. Hannaford v. *Christine L. Morrison*, No. 377911 (Apr. 27, 2026) (delayed application for leave to appeal denied)

Michigan Supreme Court:

Edward M. Hannaford v. *Christine L. Morrison*, No. 170104 (Jul. 17, 2026) (application for leave to appeal denied; judgment sought to be reviewed)

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Order [motion to expedite granted, application for leave to appeal the April 27, 2026 order denied], Michigan Supreme Court, *Edward M. Hannaford* v. *Christine L. Morrison*, No. 170104 (July 17, 2026) App–1

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Order [motion for relief denied], State of Michigan, County of Macomb 16th Judicial Circuit Court, *Edward Michael Hannaford* v. *Christine Lynn Morrison*, No. 1995-004609-DM (Aug. 11, 2025) App–5

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Consent Judgment of Annulment, State of Michigan Circuit Court for the County of Macomb, *Edward Michael Hannaford* v. *Christine Lynn Morrison*, No. 1995-004609-DM (Aug. 19, 1997) App–7

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Appendix I

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Transcript of Proceedings, State of Michigan Circuit Court for the County of Oaklan, *Christopher P. Aiello, P.C.* v. *Christine Lynn Morrison* v. *Christopher P. Aiello,*
No. 00-020759-CK (Aug. 20, 2001) App–22

1 [Counsel: "This was not a consent."] App–25

2 [Counsel stipulation: "The clients did not sign either amendment." "Or the original."] ... App–26

TABLE OF AUTHORITIES

Cases

D. H. Overmyer Co. v. *Frick Co.*,
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Fuentes v. *Shevin*,
407 U. S. 67 (1972) 4–5, 7

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Constitutional Provisions, Statutes, and Rules

U. S. Const. Amdt. XIV, §1 ..... 1, 3–5, 7–8

28 U. S. C. §1257(a) 1

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S. Ct. R. 13.1 1

OPINIONS BELOW

The order of the Michigan Supreme Court denying the application for leave to appeal is unreported and reproduced in the Appendix at App. 1–2. The Michigan Court of Appeals order denying the delayed application for leave to appeal is unreported and reproduced in the Appendix at App. 4. The Macomb County Circuit Court order denying relief from judgment is unreported and reproduced in the Appendix at App. 5–6. A related Michigan Court of Appeals order dismissing the complaint for superintending control is unreported and reproduced in the Appendix at App. 3.

JURISDICTION

The Michigan Court of Appeals denied Petitioner's delayed application for leave to appeal on April 27, 2026. App. 4. The Michigan Supreme Court denied discretionary review on July 17, 2026. App. 1–2. This Court has jurisdiction under 28 U. S. C. § 1257(a). This petition is timely under Supreme Court Rule 13.1 because it is filed within 90 days after the Michigan Supreme Court denied discretionary review.

CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISION INVOLVED

U. S. Const., Amdt. 14, § 1, provides in relevant part: "Nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law."

STATEMENT OF THE CASE

On August 19, 1997, the Macomb County Circuit Court entered a document captioned "Consent Judgment of Annulment." App. 7–9. Neither party

signed the judgment. App. 9. Petitioner's counsel signed beneath the notation "Approved as to form only"; counsel for Respondent also signed the judgment. Ibid. Amendments captioned "Amended Consent Judgment of Annulment" and "Second Amended Consent Judgment of Annulment" were entered on September 2 and September 8, 1997. App. 10–13. Neither amendment bears the signature of either party or counsel. App. 11, 13.

On March 8, 1999, Petitioner stated on the record, "I never consented or signed that and neither did my attorney." App. 20. The court responded that her attorney had signed the judgment; Petitioner answered, "He said to form only, not content." Ibid.

On August 20, 2001, during a separate attorney-malpractice proceeding, counsel stated, "This was not a consent." App. 25. Later in the same proceeding, counsel stipulated that the clients did not sign either amendment and agreed that the original judgment likewise lacked the clients' signatures. App. 26.

On August 11, 2025, the Macomb County Circuit Court denied Petitioner's motion for relief from judgment "for the reasons stated on the record." App. 5–6. The Michigan Court of Appeals dismissed Petitioner's complaint for superintending control on September 5, 2025, because an appeal from that order was available. App. 3. Petitioner then filed a delayed application for leave to appeal, which the Court of Appeals denied on April 27, 2026, "for lack of merit in the grounds presented." App. 4. The Michigan Supreme Court denied leave to appeal on July 17, 2026, because it was "not persuaded that the questions presented should be reviewed." App. 1.

Petitioner raised the federal due-process question in her motion for relief from judgment and continued to present that question through the delayed application for leave to appeal and the application for leave to appeal to the Michigan Supreme Court. The orders reproduced in the appendix did not separately analyze the federal question; the Court of Appeals denied the delayed application "for lack of merit in the grounds presented," App. 4, and the Michigan Supreme Court denied discretionary review, App. 1–2. This petition seeks review of that preserved federal question.

REASONS FOR GRANTING THE PETITION

This case presents an important constitutional question concerning whether a State may enforce a purported consent judgment when the record contains no affirmative manifestation of Petitioner's actual consent and contains express statements disputing consent. A consent judgment derives its authority from the parties' agreement rather than adjudication on the merits. When a State enforces a judgment as consent-based without actual consent, it imposes the legal consequences of agreement without the agreement that gives such a judgment its authority.

The question presented is not whether a state court made an ordinary error in interpreting a judgment or applying state law. It is whether the Due Process Clause permits a State to attribute consent to a party when the record affirmatively indicates that consent was not given. This petition therefore presents a federal constitutional question distinct from an ordinary dispute over state contract or domestic-relations law.

S. Ct. R. 10(c) identifies as an appropriate consideration whether a state court has decided an important question of federal law that has not been, but should be, settled by this Court. This petition presents that question in the recurring context of consent judgments used to resolve disputes involving property, family-law interests, and other substantial rights.

This Court has recognized that a court may not enter a "consent" judgment disposing of a party's claims without that party's actual consent. *United States* v. *Ward Baking Co.*, 376 U. S. 327, 334 (1964). More recently, *Texas* v. *New Mexico* explained that a consent decree may not dispose of valid claims of a nonconsenting party and cited *Ward Baking* for the rule that a court may not enter a "consent" judgment without actual consent. 602 U. S. 943, 953–954 (2024).

This Court has also recognized that relinquishment of important procedural rights must be knowing and voluntary. *D. H. Overmyer Co.* v. *Frick Co.*, 405 U. S. 174, 185–186 (1972). Due process likewise requires fundamentally fair procedures before a State may deprive a person of protected interests. *Mullane* v. *Central Hanover Bank & Trust Co.*, 339 U. S. 306, 314 (1950); *Fuentes* v. *Shevin*, 407 U. S. 67, 80–82, 94–95 (1972). The Court has not, however, addressed the minimum constitutional showing required before a State may enforce a judgment specifically as one entered by consent when the record affirmatively disputes consent.

I. This Case Presents an Important and Recurring Federal Question

Review is warranted because the petition presents an important question of federal constitutional law

that has not been resolved by this Court and that arises in a procedural context frequently employed by state courts.

Consent judgments are used in state courts, particularly in family-law, property, and commercial disputes, as a substitute for adjudication. Because a consent judgment derives its distinctive authority from agreement, the constitutional question is what showing of consent is required before the State may impose the consequences of such a judgment. See *D. H. Overmyer Co.* v. *Frick Co.*, 405 U. S. 174, 185–186 (1972); *Fuentes* v. *Shevin*, 407 U. S. 67, 94–95 (1972).

The question is especially important where, as here, the record contains affirmative statements disputing consent rather than merely a silent or incomplete record. Clarification would provide a uniform constitutional standard for determining when a State may enforce a judgment as consent-based rather than adjudicated.

II. The Record Does Not Demonstrate Actual Consent

This case presents the question whether due process requires an affirmative manifestation of actual consent before a judgment may be enforced as a consent judgment. See *D. H. Overmyer Co.* v. *Frick Co.*, 405 U. S. 174, 185–186 (1972); *Fuentes* v. *Shevin*, 407 U. S. 67, 94–95 (1972). The Court has likewise emphasized that meaningful procedural safeguards are required before protected interests are deprived. See *Mullane* v. *Central Hanover Bank & Trust Co.*, 339 U. S. 306, 314 (1950).

Here, the original judgment bears no party signature. App. 9. Petitioner's counsel signed only

beneath the notation "Approved as to form only." Ibid. The two amendments bear no signatures of either party or counsel. App. 11, 13.

The record also contains express statements disputing consent. On March 8, 1999, Petitioner stated: "I never consented or signed that and neither did my attorney." App. 20.

On August 20, 2001, counsel stated, "This was not a consent." App. 25. Later, counsel stipulated that the clients had not signed either amendment and agreed that the original judgment also lacked their signatures. App. 26.

The constitutional defect asserted here is therefore not merely the absence of a written agreement. It is the enforcement of the judgment specifically as consent-based despite the absence of a party signature or express in-court assent by Petitioner and despite affirmative record statements disputing consent. Approval "as to form," without evidence of the client's actual assent to the judgment, does not itself demonstrate the knowing and voluntary consent on which the State relies. See *D. H. Overmyer Co.* v. *Frick Co.*, 405 U. S. 174, 185–186 (1972).

The amended judgments recite that proofs were taken in open court. App. 11, 13. But the issue presented here is narrower: whether the State may enforce these instruments as consent judgments without a constitutionally sufficient record demonstrating Petitioner's actual consent to that form of judgment.

III. This Case Is an Appropriate Vehicle for Review

This case cleanly presents the constitutional question on a documentary record. The relevant

materials include the original judgment and amendments, App. 7–13; the docket sheet, App. 14–18; Petitioner's 1999 on-the-record denial of consent, App. 20; and the 2001 statements and stipulation, reflecting the absence of consent and signatures App. 25–26.

Resolution does not require this Court to decide whether Michigan contract or domestic-relations law independently invalidates the judgment. The federal question is whether due process permits the State to enforce the judgment as consent-based on this record.

The question was preserved through the state proceedings and expressly presented to the Michigan Supreme Court. The Court of Appeals denied the delayed application "for lack of merit in the grounds presented," App. 4, and the Michigan Supreme Court denied discretionary review, App. 1–2. The case therefore provides a vehicle for resolving the federal question without further factual development.

IV. Review Is Warranted to Clarify Constitutional Standards Governing Consent Judgments

This Court's precedents recognize that important procedural rights may not be relinquished unless waiver is knowing and voluntary. *D. H. Overmyer Co.* v. *Frick Co.*, 405 U.S. 174, 185–186 (1972). They also require fundamentally fair procedures before protected interests are deprived. *Mullane* v. *Central Hanover Bank & Trust Co.*, 339 U.S. 306, 314 (1950); *Fuentes* v. *Shevin*, 407 U.S. 67, 80–82, 94–95 (1972).

Those decisions do not define the minimum constitutional record required before a State may enforce a judgment specifically as consent-based when consent

itself is disputed. The unresolved question is whether a State may rely on inference from procedural history or attorney conduct, or whether due process requires an affirmative, record-based manifestation of the party's actual consent.

This case presents that question in a clear posture. The record contains no signature by Petitioner on the original judgment or amendments, App. 9, 11, 13; Petitioner expressly denied consenting, App. 20; and the later transcript contains both the statement "This was not a consent" and a stipulation concerning the absence of client signatures, App. 25–26.

Clarification from this Court would provide a uniform federal standard while leaving ordinary questions of state contract formation and domestic-relations law to the state courts. It would address only the constitutional minimum required before a State attributes consent to a party and enforces a judgment on that basis.

V. The Court Can Provide Effective Relief

If the Court concludes that due process does not permit enforcement of the judgment as consent-based on this record, Petitioner respectfully requests that the Court vacate the August 19, 1997 "Consent Judgment of Annulment," the September 2, 1997 "Amended Consent Judgment of Annulment," and the September 8, 1997 "Second Amended Consent Judgment of Annulment," together with all subsequent orders to the extent their legal force or validity derives from those purported consent judgments, and remand for further proceedings consistent with its opinion.

On remand, the state courts shall give effect to that vacatur and shall not enforce or treat as operative the

vacated judgments or any derivative orders covered by the Court's vacatur. The state courts may address only matters that remain after that vacatur.

That disposition would remedy the asserted federal defect without requiring this Court to resolve state-law questions in the first instance. It would provide effective relief from the asserted constitutional defect while leaving the state courts to address only those matters that remain after the Court's vacatur.

CONCLUSION

This petition presents an important federal question concerning the constitutional showing required before a State may enforce a judgment as consent-based. Review is warranted because the record contains no party signature by Petitioner and includes express statements disputing consent.

The petition for a writ of certiorari should be granted.

Respectfully submitted.

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AUGUST 2026

Pro Se Petitioner

Appendix A

Order

Michigan Supreme Court
Lansing, Michigan

July 17, 2026

SC: 170104 & (15)
COA: 377911
Macomb CC: 1995-004609-DM

Megan K. Cavanagh,
Chief Justice

Brian K. Zahra
Richard H. Bernstein
Elizabeth M. Welch
Kyra H. Bolden
Kimberly A. Thomas
Noah P. Hood,
Justices

EDWARD M. HANNAFORD,
Plaintiff-Appellee,

v

CHRISTINE L. MORRISON,
Defendant-Appellant.

On order of the Court, the motion to expedite is GRANTED. The application for leave to appeal the April 27, 2026 order of the Court of Appeals is considered, and it is DENIED, because we are not persuaded that the questions presented should be reviewed by this Court.

ZAHRA, J., did not participate because he was on the Court of Appeals panel at an earlier stage of the proceedings.

I, Elizabeth Kingston-Miller, Clerk of the Michigan Supreme Court, certify that the foregoing is a true and complete copy of the order entered at the direction of the Court.

July 17, 2026 /s/ Elizabeth Kingston-Miller
Clerk

Appendix B

Court of Appeals, State of Michigan
ORDER

IN RE MORRISON
Docket No. **377022**
LC No. **1995-004609-DM**

Michael F. Gadola, Chief Judge, acting under MCR 7.203(F)(1), orders:

The complaint for superintending control is DISMISSED for lack of jurisdiction because an appeal from the August 11, 2025 order is available. MCR 3.302(D)(2). As a result, plaintiff may challenge the order in question by filing a delayed application for leave to appeal under MCR 7.205. See MCR 7.203(B)(1).

/s/ Michael F. Gadola

A true copy entered and certified by Jerome W. Zimmer Jr., Chief Clerk, on

September 5, 2025 /s/ Jerome W. Zimmer Jr.
Date Clerk

Appendix C

Court of Appeals, State of Michigan
ORDER

EDWARD M HANNAFORD V
CHRISTINE L MORRISON

Docket No. 377911

LC No. 1995-004609-DM

Michael F. Gadola
Presiding Judge

Christopher M. Trebilcock

Daniel S. Korobkin
Judges

The delayed application for leave to appeal is DENIED for lack of merit in the grounds presented.

/s/ Michael F. Gadola
Presiding Judge

A true copy entered and certified by Jerome W. Zimmer Jr., Chief Clerk, on

April 27, 2026
Date

/s/ Jerome W. Zimmer Jr.
Clerk

Appendix D
[Filed: Aug. 11, 2025]

STATE OF MICHIGAN COUNTY OF MACOMB 16th JUDICIAL CIR-CUIT COURT	**ORDER**	Case No. 1995-004609-DM HON. TRACEY A. YOKICH

EDWARD MICHAEL HANNAFORD
Plaintiff(s)

Attorney: Pro Se/FTA P#
EMAIL:

vs

CHRISTINE LYNN MORRISON
Defendant(s)

Attorney: Pro Se/FTA P#
EMAIL:

At a session of the Court, held on August 11, 2025

Denying Defendant's Motion for Relief From Judgment Pursuant to MCR
ORDER OF 2.612(1)(d)
Title of Order

IT IS ORDERED:

For the reasons stated on the record, defendant's motion for relief from judgment is denied.

[Seal of County of Macomb State of Michigan]
/S/ TRACEY A. YOKICH
CIRCUIT COURT
JUDGE P38377

Approved as to form and substance by:
[Seal of County of Macomb State of Michigan]

_____
Signature of attorney for defendant

_____
Signature of attorney for plaintiff

Appendix E
[Filed: Aug. 19, 1997]

STATE OF MICHIGAN
IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR THE COUNTY OF MACOMB

EDWARD MICHAEL HANNAFORD,
Plaintiff,

vs.

CHRISTINE LYNN MORRISON,
Defendant.
_____/

Case No. 95-4609-DM
HON: DEBORAH A. SERVITTO

CAPUTO BROSNAN P.C.
By: HAROLD A. PERAKIS (P-35921)
Attorneys for Plaintiff
29199 Ryan Road
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(810) 573-8900

CHRISTOPHER P. AIELLO (P-48091)
Attorney for Defendant
26393 Dequindre
Madison Heights, Michigan 48071
(810) 546-2211
_____/

CONSENT JUDGMENT OF ANNULMENT

At a session of said Court held
in the City of Mt. Clemens,
County of Macomb, State of Michigan,

ON: Aug 19 1997
PRESENT: DEBORAH A. SERVITTO
CIRCUIT COURT JUDGE

This cause having been brought on to be heard on the Plaintiff's Complaint filed herein, taken as confessed by the Defendant, and upon reading the

---

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

IT FURTHER ORDERED AND ADJUDGED that the parties have acknowledged that they have had a right to compulsory process to assist in discovery or verification of facts relevant to their respective rights and obligations in this litigation. They further acknowledge by virtue of consenting to entry of this Judgment that they are waiving such rights to the extent not heretofore exercised.

ATTORNEY FEES

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED AND ADJUDGED that each party shall pay his or her own attorney fees, except as otherwise provided, but if any monies are due and owing as of this date, they are specifically preserved herein and are the respective responsibility of each party. Further, if any attorney fees have not been paid in full prior to the date of entry of this Judgment of Divorce, each of the attorneys shall have lien rights on any asset of their respective client and garnishment rights against the respective client's income.

/s/
CIRCUIT COURT JUDGE

APPROVED AS TO FORM AND SUBSTANCE:
CAPUTO BROSNAN P.C.

	Approved as to form only
By: /s/ Harold A. Perakis	/s/ Christopher P. Aiello
HAROLD A. PERAKIS (P-35921)	CHRISTOPHER P. AIELLO (P-48091)
Attorneys for Plaintiff	Attorneys for Defendant
(810) 573-8900	(810) 548-2211
EDWARD MICHAEL HANNAFORD, Plaintiff	CHRISTINE LYNN MORRISON, Defendant.

Appendix F
[Filed: Sep. 2, 1997]

STATE OF MICHIGAN
IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR THE COUNTY OF MACOMB

EDWARD MICHAEL HANNAFORD,
Plaintiff,

V

CHRISTINE LYNN MORRISON,
Defendant.
_____/

Case No. 95-4609-DM
Hon: SERVITTO

HAROLD A. PERAKIS (P 35921)
Attorneys for Plaintiff
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CHRISTOPHER P. AIELLO, P.C.
BY: CHRISTOPHER P. AIELLO (P 48091)
Attorney for Defendant
26393 Dequindre
Madison Heights, Michigan 48071
(248) 546-2211
_____/

AMENDED CONSENT JUDGMENT OF ANNULMENT

At a session of said Court, held in the Circuit Court, County of Macomb, State of Michigan

ON: Sep 2 1997
PRESENT: Hon: DEBORAH A. SERVITTO
CIRCUIT COURT JUDGE

This cause having been brought on to be heard on the Plaintiff's Complaint filed herein, taken as confessed by the Defendant, and upon reading the Complaint and hearing proofs taken in open Court, this Court finds sufficient facts, from Plaintiff's testimony, to support Plaintiff's request for Annulment;

ATTORNEY FEES

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED AND ADJUDGED that each party shall pay his or her own attorney fees, except as otherwise provided, but if any monies are due and owing as of this date, they are specifically preserved herein and are the respective responsibility of each party. Further, if any attorney fees have not been paid in full prior to the date of entry of this Judgment of Annulment, each attorney shall have lien rights on any asset of their respective client and garnishment rights against the respective client's income.

DEBORAH A. SERVITTO
CIRCUIT COURT JUDGE

APPROVED AS TO FORM AND SUBSTANCE:

HAROLD A. PERAKIS (P 35921) Attorneys for Plaintiff	CHRISTOPHER P. AIELLO (P 48091) Attorneys for Defendant
EDWARD MICHAEL HANNAFORD, Plaintiff	CHRISTINE LYNN MORRISON, Defendant.

Appendix G
[Filed: Sep. 8, 1997]

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR THE COUNTY OF MACOMB

EDWARD MICHAEL HANNAFORD,
Plaintiff,

V

CHRISTINE LYNN MORRISON,
Defendant.
_____/

Case No. 95-4609-DM
Hon: SERVITTO

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(248) 546-2211
_____/

SECOND AMENDED CONSENT JUDGMENT OF ANNULMENT

At a session of said Court, held in the Circuit Court, County of Macomb, State of Michigan

ON: Sep 8 1997
PRESENT: Hon: DEBORAH A. SERVITTO
CIRCUIT COURT JUDGE

This cause having been brought on to be heard on the Plaintiff's Complaint filed herein, taken as confessed by the Defendant, and upon reading the Complaint and hearing proofs taken in open Court, this Court finds sufficient facts, from Plaintiff's testimony, to support Plaintiff's request for Annulment;

ATTORNEY FEES

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED AND ADJUDGED that each party shall pay his or her own attorney fees, except as otherwise provided, but if any monies are due and owing as of this date, they are specifically preserved herein and are the respective responsibility of each party. Further, if any attorney fees have not been paid in full prior to the date of entry of this Judgment of Annulment, each attorney shall have lien rights on any asset of their respective client and garnishment rights against the respective client's income.

DEBORAH A. SERVITTO
CIRCUIT COURT JUDGE

APPROVED AS TO FORM AND SUBSTANCE:

HAROLD A. PERAKIS (P 35921) Attorneys for Plaintiff	CHRISTOPHER P. AIELLO (P 48091) Attorneys for Defendant
EDWARD MICHAEL HANNAFORD, Plaintiff	CHRISTINE LYNN MORRISON, Defendant.

Additional material from this filing is available in the Clerk's Office.