

**FILED**

**AUG 26 2025**

**SUPREME COURT OF MISSISSIPPI  
(BEFORE A COMPLAINT TRIBUNAL)**

OFFICE OF THE CLERK  
SUPREME COURT  
COURT OF APPEALS

**THE MISSISSIPPI BAR**

**COMPLAINANT**

**V.**

**CAUSE NO. 2025-B-1028**

**CORY N. FERRAEZ**

**RESPONDENT**

**MOTION FOR INTERIM SUSPENSION FOR THREAT OF HARM**

The Mississippi Bar (“the Bar”) seeks an Interim Suspension of Cory N. Ferraez (“Mr. Ferraez”) in accordance with Rule 8.7 of the Rules of Discipline for the Mississippi State Bar (“MRD”) due to his misappropriation and failure to safekeep funds entrusted to him in at least two matters known to the Bar, as well as other ethical violations as follows:

1. On August 26, 2025, the Bar filed a Formal Complaint seeking Mr. Ferraez’s suspension for a period greater than six months.
2. The Formal complaint is based on two separate informal complaints where Mr. Ferraez received settlement funds on behalf of a client, failed to safekeep those funds entrusted to him, failed to deliver the funds to the client, and by at least one admitted account, converted those funds to another use and was unable to deliver same.
3. Mr. Ferraez has also failed and/or refused to provide any information to the Bar in the investigation of the two informal complaints.

4. The violations of the Rules of Professional Conduct outlined in the Formal Complaint demonstrate a pattern of misconduct, such that the continued practice of law by Mr. Ferraez poses a threat of serious harm to the public and justifies his immediate suspension pending final disposition of the Formal Complaint as anticipated by Rule 8.7(a) and (c).

5. Additionally, Mr. Ferraez's testimony before the Chancery Court of Perry County that he suffers from depression and addiction issues that severely limit his ability to practice law provides additional grounds for his immediate suspension under Rule 8.7(b).

6. Count I of the Formal Complaint is related to Mr. Ferraez's failure to safekeep and deliver settlement funds to Jerome Jason Orloff. Mr. Ferraez received an insurance check in the amount of \$38,784.46 for Mr. Orloff's underinsured motorist claim in March 2023 and a second insurance check in the amount of \$45,000.00 in November 2024. Mr. Ferraez's own settlement disbursement sheet indicates \$39,163.56 should have been disbursed to Mr. Orloff. To date, Mr. Ferraez has not disbursed the full settlement amount of \$39,163.56 to Mr. Orloff. A copy of the February 10, 2025, Settlement Disbursement Sheet and the two Farm Bureau checks are attached as Collective **Exhibit 1**.

7. Count II of the Formal Complaint involves Mr. Ferraez's failure to safekeep and deliver settlement funds to Sylvia Weatherford, a wrongful death beneficiary. Mr. Ferraez received \$450,000.00 in settlement of the wrongful death

claim. After hearing testimony from Mrs. Weatherford, Chancellor Sheila Smallwood removed Mr. Ferraez as attorney for the estate and directed he immediately tender \$450,000.00 to the Perry County Chancery Clerk by 5:00 p.m. on June 18, 2025. A copy of the Hearing Transcript from June 16, 2025, is attached as **Exhibit 2**.

8. Mr. Ferraez tendered only \$214,831.23 and not until June 27, 2025. At a subsequent hearing, Chancellor Smallwood adjusted the total amount due the estate and directed Mr. Ferraez to deposit the remaining \$195,168.77 into the court registry. Mr. Ferraez testified that he was unable to do so. A copy of the Hearing Transcript from July 14, 2025, is attached as **Exhibit 3**, page 20.

9. Mr. Ferraez also testified at the July 14, 2025, hearing that he suffered from depression and addiction issues that severely limit his ability to practice law. *See Exhibit 3*, page 12-13.

10. At the conclusion of the July 14, 2025, hearing, Mr. Ferraez was remanded to custody and later released on house arrest for 30 days or until he tendered the remaining sum of \$48,033.77 to the Perry County Chancery Clerk. A copy of the *Order of Release to House Arrest and Amending Purge Amount* is attached as **Exhibit 4**.

11. The deadline for Mr. Ferraez to deliver the funds or return to the Perry County Jail expired Monday, August 24, 2025, and to date Mr. Ferraez has not deposited the remaining funds owed to Mrs. Weatherford.

12. Mr. Ferraez has engaged in the “cardinal sin” of lawyering. In *Reid v.*

*Mississippi Bar*, the Supreme Court said in relation to stealing client funds:

There can be no more damaging evidence, however, as to a lawyer's fitness to practice law than mishandling a trust account. The personalities of lawyers are as wide and varied as the rest of the human race. They commit follies, they do things for which they later feel ashamed. Such errant conduct may or may not reflect upon an attorney's fitness to practice law.

*Dishonesty does. Brumfield v. Mississippi State Bar Ass'n*, 497 So.2d 800 (Miss. 1986), and dishonest conduct by an attorney with his own client goes to the very core of a lawyer's fitness to practice law, *Mississippi State Bar v. Odom*, 566 So.2d 712, 717 (Miss. 1990) (Sullivan, J., dissenting). There can be no legal profession in the absence of scrupulous honesty by attorneys with other people's money. Public confidence here is vital. There may be worse sins, but the ultimate wrong of a lawyer to his profession is to divert clients' and third parties' funds entrusted to him to an unauthorized use. A lawyer guilty of such conduct exhibits a character trait totally at odds with the purposes, ideals and objectives of our profession.

If creditors are hounding a lawyer, he can take bankruptcy. If he is hungry, he can go to the Salvation Army. But mishandling other peoples' money is a thought he should never entertain.

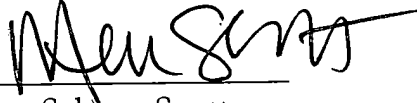
Embezzlement is a felony in any event. Miss. Code Ann. Sec. 97-23-25 (1972). It is the capital crime of a lawyer to his profession. *Odom*, supra; *Mississippi State Bar v. Moyo*, 525 So.2d 1289 (Miss. 1988).

586 So. 2d 786, 788 (Miss. 1991).

13. For these reasons Mr. Ferraez should be immediately suspended from the practice of law pending final disposition of the Formal Complaint as provided by Rule 8.7 of the Rules of Discipline.

WHEREFORE, the Bar requests that the Tribunal enter a judgment immediately suspending Cory N. Ferraez from the practice of law pending final disposition of this disciplinary proceeding and direct Mr. Ferraez to preserve all evidence currently in his possession which may be discoverable in this matter.

THE MISSISSIPPI BAR

By:   
Melissa Selman Scott  
General Counsel

Melissa Selman Scott (MSB No. 100990)  
General Counsel  
The Mississippi Bar  
Post Office Box 2168  
Jackson, MS 39225-2168  
(601) 948-4471

**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

I certify that I have this day sent a copy of the above and foregoing to Respondent via first-class mail, postage prepaid, and electronic mail at the following addresses:

Cory N. Ferraez  
204 W. Front Street  
Hattiesburg, MS 39401  
cory@callcoryms.com

Dated this 26<sup>th</sup> day of August, 2025.

  
Melissa Selman Scott



Ferraez & Associates, PLLC  
Call Cory

204 W. Front Street | Hattiesburg MS, 39401  
P: (601) 915-2679 | F: (601) 620-0078  
[cory@callcoryms.com](mailto:cory@callcoryms.com)

February 10, 2025

Jerry Orloff  
15 Carlsbad Drive  
Hattiesburg, MS 39402

*Via Hand Delivery*

**Re: UIM Settlement**  
**Jerome Orloff v. Mississippi Farm Bureau Casualty Insurance**  
**Company; Civil Action No.: 23-cv-00066**

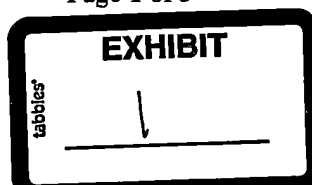
Dear Jerry:

Ferraez & Associates, PLLC ("F&A") and has received one check from Farm Bureau Casualty Insurance Company in the amount of \$45,000.00, made payable to You and F&A as your attorneys for underinsured motorist coverage benefits under your policy in connection with your claim arising from the motor vehicle collision which occurred on November 8, 2021 in Forrest County, Mississippi.

This memorandum confirms the closing of this settlement and gives F&A express directions to distribute the settlement funds as set out below as F&A has explained to you. With your knowledge and consent, the check has been deposited in F&A's attorney trust account and placed for collection. Once collected, you have instructed F&A to distribute the funds as detailed below.

By signing this letter, you agree that the settlement funds should be disbursed as follows:

Two Check issued by Mississippi Farm Bureau Casualty Insurance Company to You and R&A: <b>(Exhibit 1-Check Nos. 001100132</b> <b>And 000895139)</b>	<b>\$83,784.46</b>
Less: Attorney's Fees 40% post-suit contingency contract: Ferraez & Associates, PLLC <b>(Exhibit 2-Contract of Employment)</b>	<b>\$33,513.78</b>
Less: Hard Costs to Date: <b>(Exhibit 3-Current Expense Log)</b>	<b>\$388.36</b>
Less: Elite PT LOP Bill: <b>(\$35% reduction obtained)</b>	<b>\$5,674.78</b>



Less: Hattiesburg Pain & Injury LOP Bill: <b>(30% reduction obtained)</b>	\$3,164.00
Less Optum/United Healthcare Lien: <b>(35% reduction obtained)</b>	\$1,879.98
Net settlement after distribution of Liens, Fees, and Costs:	\$39,163.56
<b>TOTAL FUNDS DISBURSED</b>	<b>\$83,784.46</b>

By signing this memorandum, you warrant to us that you have not filed bankruptcy at anytime on or after the date of the injury. You further warrant that there are no medical liens or liens other than those listed above filed in connection with care or treatment necessitated by the injuries you suffered from the above referenced incident.

**Medical Bills/Liens:** By signing this memorandum, you also agree that there may be outstanding medical bills and/or liens from treatment related to your injuries that you may be responsible for. While there are no statutory rights of recovery for Medicare/Medicaid purposes involved in your case, F&A and Stokes Law cannot guarantee that other medical bills or liens are not owed by you. **You hereby agree that F&A is not responsible for any outstanding medical bills/liens and you agree to indemnify and hold harmless F&A and Stokes Law should you owe any monies for these bills and liens or any recovery is attempted to recoup any bills or liens by any third party or medical provider.**

The law requires that this settlement be reported to state and federal authorities. We do not give tax advice and are not tax attorneys; however, your settlement will not likely be considered by state and federal authorities as taxable income such that you would owe income tax on the settlement, because it is a payment representing payment for bodily injury. Because we do not give tax advice, you should seek competent tax advice regarding any possible income tax consequences of this settlement. We also do not give investment advice, you should seek competent financial advice from a qualified professional.

We will retain your legal files for a period of seven (7) years after we close our file. We reserve the right to retain copies of depositions, research, pleadings, and briefs. At the expiration of the seven (7) year period, we will destroy these files unless you notify us in writing that you wish to take possession of them. We reserve the right to charge administrative fees and costs with researching, retrieving, copying, and delivering such files. Please do not hesitate to contact my office if you have any legal issues in the future. It has been a pleasure representing you both.

Sincerely,

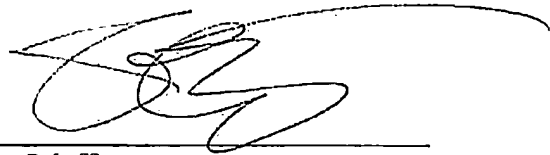
*/s/ Cory Ferraez*

Cory N. Ferraez

CNF/rmv  
Encl.

I have read the above letter and disbursement memorandum. I agree with, approve of and authorize the disbursements as set forth in our disbursement memorandum. I acknowledge that Ferraez & Associates, PLLC and Stokes Law Group, PLLC as my attorneys, performed valuable legal services on my behalf and earned their fees. I authorize Ferraez & Associates, PLLC to disburse fees to Ferraez & Associates, PLLC and Stokes Law Group, PLLC in accordance with the disbursement memorandum set forth above. I am pleased with the results of their efforts on my behalf. I instruct payment to be made as set out above.

THIS the 10<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2025.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jerry Orloff', is written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized and cursive.

Jerry Orloff

DEATON & BERRY, PLLC

ATTORNEYS AT LAW  
229 KATHERINE DRIVE P.O. BOX 220099 FLOWOOD, MS 39232-9999  
TELEPHONE: 601.982.0000 FAX: 601.982.0001  
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R. Jason Canterbury  
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November 21, 2024

VIA FEDEX:

Cory N. Ferraez  
Ferraez & Associates, PLLC  
204 W Front Street  
Hattiesburg, MS 39401

RE: Insured/Claimant: Jerome J. Orloff  
Claim No.: 23A01585464  
Date of Loss: 11/08/2021

Dear David:

This correspondence will update you concerning the above-referenced matter.

Enclosed please find the settlement check number 001100132 for Jerome Orloff in the amount of \$45,000.00.

Once received, please forward to us the executed Release and we will provide you with a copy of same and will close our file.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact our offices.

With kindest personal regards,

Sincerely,

DEATON & BERRY, PLLC

*Chassity D. Sanders*  
CHASSITY D. SANDERS  
Paralegal

MISSISSIPPI FARM BUREAU CASUALTY INSURANCE CO. CHECK NO. 001100132		55-343 633
FARM BUREAU INSURANCE	P.O. BOX 1972 JACKSON, MS 39215-1972 (601) 957-3200	MEMBER BANK
PAY TO THE ORDER OF: JEROME J. ORLOFF AND FERRAEZ & ASSOCIATES PLLC AS HIS REPRESENTING ATTORNEYS		CLAIM NO. 23A01585464 DATE OF LOSS 11/08/2021 DATE ISSUED 11/07/2023
PAY <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FORTY-FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS AND 00 CENTS*****		PAY ONLY 45,000.00
FOR ANY & ALL KNOWN OR UNKNOWN UNINSURED MOTORIST BODILY INJURY COMPENSATION CLAIMS		AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE <i>Angela A. Horan</i>
⑈ 1 400 1 3 2 0 ⑈ ⑆ 0 5 5 3 0 5 4 3 6 ⑆ 0 2 0 4 2 3 0 2 1 3 ⑆		

80010

MISSISSIPPI FARM BUREAU CASUALTY INSURANCE CO.  
P.O. BOX 1972 JACKSON, MS 39215-1972

RT

JEROME ORLOFF

15 CARLSBAD DR  
HATTIESBURG MS 39402-7899

<b>POLICY NO.</b>
230200032376

<b>CLAIM NO.</b>
23A01585464

ISSUED BY: Hal Hodges

<b>PAYEE</b>
JEROME ORLOFF AND PATTY ORLOFF AND FERRAEZ & ASSOCIATES PLLC. THEIR ATTORNEY

<b>INSURED NAME</b>
JEROME ORLOFF
<b>CLAIMANT NAME</b>
JEROME ORLOFF

<b>CHECK NO.</b>	<b>CHECK AMOUNT</b>
000895139	*****\$38,784.46

<b>FOR</b>
THIS CLAIM OF JEROME ORLOFF

DETACH BEFORE DEPOSITING

THE FRONT OF THIS DOCUMENT HAS A COLORED BACKGROUND ON WHITE PAPER.



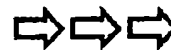
MISSISSIPPI FARM BUREAU CASUALTY INSURANCE CO.  
P.O. BOX 1972  
JACKSON, MS 39215-1972  
(601) 957-3200

REGIONS BANK

CHECK NO. 000895139

95-543  
653

<b>CLAIM NO.</b>	<b>DATE OF LOSS</b>	<b>DATE ISSUED</b>
23A01585464	11/08/2021	03/03/2023



**PAY ONLY 38,784.46**

**PAY** THIRTY-EIGHT THOUSAND SEVEN HUNDRED EIGHTY-FOUR DOLLARS AND 46

**TO THE ORDER OF:** JEROME ORLOFF  
AND PATTY ORLOFF  
AND FERRAEZ & ASSOCIATES PLLC.  
THEIR ATTORNEY

NOT VALID AFTER 180 DAYS  
THE PERSONAL ENDORSEMENT OF EACH AND EVERY PAYEE IS REQUIRED.

**FOR** THIS CLAIM OF JEROME ORLOFF

**AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE**

⑈00895139⑈ ⑆065305436⑆ 0204230213⑈

THE BACK OF THIS DOCUMENT CONTAINS AN ARTIFICIAL WATERMARK. HOLD AT AN ANGLE TO VIEW.

IN THE CHANCERY COURT OF PERRY COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI

IN RE THE ESTATE OF STEPHEN RAY  
"FUZZY" WEATHERFORD, DECEASED

NO.: 22-PR-00021-SM

\*\*\*\*\*

TRANSCRIPT OF THE PROCEEDINGS HAD AND DONE IN THE  
ABOVE-STYLED AND NUMBERED CAUSE BEFORE HONORABLE  
SHEILA H. SMALLWOOD, CHANCELLOR, HELD IN FORREST COUNTY,  
MISSISSIPPI, ON THE 16TH DAY OF JUNE 2025.

\*\*\*\*\*

J. Stacy Head, CSR #1201  
Official Court Reporter  
10th Chancery Court District  
98 Woodstone Drive  
Hattiesburg, Mississippi 39402  
(601) 264-7558/520-2999

**EXHIBIT**

2

tabbles®



1 in the estate, including a third amended petition to  
2 authorize the settlement of the estate, payment of  
3 final expenses and to distribute the estate assets.

4 In November of 2024 counsel for Shelter  
5 Insurance reached out to Mr. Ferraez, the attorney  
6 for the estate and the attorney for the wrongful  
7 death claim of Mr. Weatherford -- the attorney for  
8 Shelter Insurance reached out to schedule a  
9 conference about approving the wrongful death  
10 settlement. After much effort, Attorney Kelly  
11 McLeod, who's the attorney for Shelter, reached out  
12 to the Court indicating her difficulty in getting in  
13 touch with Mr. Ferraez. She shared at that time  
14 wrongful death proceeds in the amount of \$450,000  
15 had been tendered to Mr. Ferraez to hold in his  
16 trust account pending the signing of a release and  
17 the closing of the estate. Ms. McLeod contacted our  
18 office, was unable to get in touch with Mr. Ferraez  
19 and requested that the Court sign a decree  
20 authorizing the settlement.

21 I understand today that that case was mediated  
22 and the amount of \$450,000 was agreed upon. So the  
23 Court did sign a decree authorizing settlement of  
24 wrongful death proceeds.

25 The matter was set in December of 2024 here in

1           Forrest County, December 10th. The day before that  
2           hearing, Mr. Ferraez talked with my staff attorney  
3           and said that these lien issues had been resolved  
4           and that he would send me a proposed order. The  
5           Court never received an order to that effect.

6           My staff attorney again requested an update  
7           from Mr. Ferraez on December 19th with no response.  
8           On March the 19th of 2025, the Court demanded a  
9           settlement conference within two weeks. My court  
10          administrator provided dates to Mr. Ferraez. He did  
11          not respond to those dates presented. So the Court  
12          unilaterally set a settlement conference -- excuse  
13          me, a status conference for April 16th of 2025 here  
14          in Forrest County. Mr. Ferraez had his staff reach  
15          out to my office and indicate that he was stuck in  
16          North Mississippi on an unrelated matter but that he  
17          could appear by Zoom.

18          We sent Mr. Ferraez a Zoom link but Mr. Ferraez  
19          indicated by an email at the scheduled Zoom time  
20          that he could not appear by Zoom because of spotty  
21          cellular service. Mr. Ferraez's staff then  
22          indicated that he was available April 30th, 2025,  
23          for a status conference. On April 30th, 2025,  
24          Mr. Ferraez again did not appear in court.

25          For those reasons the Court issued a show cause

1 order demanding Mr. Ferraez personally appear today,  
2 June 16th, in Hattiesburg and show cause why he  
3 should not be sanctioned by the Court for his  
4 failure to appear at the court dates that I  
5 previously discussed. Mr. Ferraez is not here  
6 today. I did receive an email that indicated that  
7 he was in the hospital for a kidney stone from his  
8 staff. We received no medical records, no motion to  
9 continue, nothing that would indicate that he is in  
10 fact in the hospital, and based on the previous  
11 inability to appear at court proceedings, I just --  
12 I find that excuse to be suspect.

13 We did receive another email indicating whether  
14 his presence would be required today. My staff  
15 attorney received that email, responded indicating  
16 that he needed to be here and follow the show cause  
17 order. Part of the order also required Mr. Ferraez  
18 to appear and show documentation that the wrongful  
19 death proceeds of \$450,000 are being held in his  
20 IOLTA trust account pending disbursement.

21 There's been no proof of that provided today  
22 by email or otherwise. The order also required  
23 Mr. Ferraez to provide documentation reflecting the  
24 validity of any liens against these wrongful death  
25 proceeds, including who applied for the liens and

1 any documentation that was submitted to lenders.  
2 The Court needs to know what the validity of these  
3 liens are to determine whether I'm going to approve  
4 those. No proof of those liens was provided today.

5 I think it's also important to note that  
6 there's been no orders entered that would approve  
7 encumbering any wrongful death proceeds located in  
8 the estate. The show cause order also required  
9 Mr. Ferraez to provide documents of a deed of  
10 conveyance as directed in my order approving  
11 transfer of real property. Document No. 37 requires  
12 that the ownership of the real property located at  
13 829 Buck Creek Road in Richton be conveyed to  
14 Ms. Sylvia Weatherford as the sole heir of Mr. Fuzzy  
15 Weatherford. That was not provided today.

16 The show cause order also required Ms. Sylvia  
17 Weatherford to be present today at today's hearing.  
18 She is here. I had an opportunity to conference  
19 with her earlier today. Some of that conference  
20 required testimony to be put on the record today.

21 Ms. Weatherford, Patrick, and, Ms. Clifton, if  
22 you'll raise your right hands.

23 (ALL THREE WITNESSES SWORN AT THIS TIME)

24  
25 **SYLVIA WEATHERFORD,**

1 AFTER HAVING BEEN CALLED AS A WITNESS AND AFTER HAVING  
2 BEEN FIRST DULY SWORN, TESTIFIED UNDER OATH AS FOLLOWS:

3 **EXAMINATION BY THE COURT:**

4 Q. Ms. Weatherford, I have a couple of questions  
5 for you. Can you share with me your difficulty in  
6 getting in touch with Mr. Ferraez?

7 A. Judge Smallwood, I have called him I don't know  
8 how many times. He eventually blocked my calls. His  
9 office blocked my calls. I have text him. He will not  
10 text me back. I have text Rebecca Voytek trying to find  
11 out anything about my estate matter with my husband, and  
12 they just keep giving me the runaround. I don't -- I  
13 don't know what else to do.

14 Q. Okay. How has the delay in the estate affected  
15 you financially and emotionally?

16 A. I've had to borrow money from four different  
17 loan companies. I've had to put my car up on a loan with  
18 the bank. I can't pay my bills now. All my bills are  
19 due, and I ain't got the money to pay my bills. I've  
20 been going to the doctor because I have back trouble.  
21 They've been giving me shots in my back. I can't -- I  
22 can't get out and find work because of my back.

23 Q. Okay. And when Mr. Weatherford was alive, he  
24 paid all of --

25 A. Yes, ma'am.

1 Q. -- the bills; is that right?

2 A. Yes, ma'am.

3 Q. Okay. There are some liens that have been  
4 mentioned in some of the filings in the court file. What  
5 do you know about those liens against the wrongful death  
6 proceeds in your husband's estate?

7 A. Are you talking about where he went and  
8 borrowed money for me or --

9 Q. Yes, ma'am.

10 A. He went and -- he went to three different  
11 companies and borrowed money for me, and as far as that,  
12 until now -- about a year ago or when he said he was  
13 going to come before you and settle it all, he said that  
14 you would -- he was going before you to -- for you to get  
15 the debts lowered, and I haven't -- he hasn't told me  
16 anything else about that. He -- like I said, he's quit  
17 taking my calls. He's quit taking my texts. He won't  
18 see me in his office. I have to go through Rebecca  
19 Voytek for anything, and I finally told her one day, I  
20 said, I'm not paying you. I'm paying Cory to settle my  
21 -- and she said, I can't tell you what to do. So I've  
22 got a -- we had a -- with my husband's funeral bill, they  
23 -- he charged \$8,000 onto it, and I didn't owe the 8,000.  
24 I owed like a thousand four hundred and something on the  
25 funeral bill, but they put the 8,000 in it, and then he

1 gave me a \$25,000 check, and I had to -- the bank -- you  
2 seen the check yourself. It was -- how do you say it?

3 MR. PRINE: I don't know.

4 Q. It bounced at the bank --

5 A. It bounced.

6 Q. -- for insufficient funds?

7 A. And then I had to pay \$1,530 to get all that --  
8 or to settle all that with the bank, and then he gave me  
9 a \$15,000 check, and that one was good. So I had -- was  
10 paying all my bills and all that with it.

11 Q. Okay. So looking at the court file,  
12 Mr. Ferraez on May the 30th filed an adversary complaint  
13 against several people that have filed claims against  
14 these wrongful death proceeds, including Momentum  
15 Funding, Cartagena Consumer Funding, Capital Now Funding,  
16 HMR Servicing, LLC.

17 A. Who is that?

18 Q. Were you aware of that?

19 A. What was the last one you said?

20 Q. HMR Servicing, LLC.

21 A. What is that?

22 Q. It's a lending company.

23 A. A what?

24 Q. A lending company.

25 A. Well see, he borrowed money for me; I thought

1 it was three different times.

2 Q. You have those documents -- that documented you  
3 shared with me earlier?

4 A. I've got it on my phone where Rebecca sent me  
5 -- sent me things on my phone.

6 Q. I'm going to have you make a list of every  
7 check you've received from Mr. Ferraez and just make it  
8 -- we call that an accounting, but if you'll list the  
9 amount of money you got, when you got it, okay, and if  
10 you have a copy of the check, I'd like to have that too.

11 A. I've got pictures of where -- I took pictures  
12 of the checks before I cashed them. Something told me to  
13 take pictures of them.

14 Q. Okay. So this claims that in February of this  
15 year Cartagena is asserting a lien amount of \$37,000 when  
16 the original borrowed amount was \$17,000. That's over  
17 twice the amount borrowed. Capital is claiming a lien of  
18 14,500 when you borrowed 10,000. HMR is asserting a lien  
19 of \$59,000 when the original amount borrowed was 15,000.  
20 They're requesting \$60,000.

21 A. Oh, my God. Oh, my God.

22 Q. That's what this paperwork says. I think it's  
23 important to note that the --

24 (PAUSE)

25 A. I'm fine. I'm fine.

1           Q.     And so the documentation provided with this  
2 adversary claim is beyond what you expected?

3           A.     Is what, Babe?

4           Q.     It's way beyond what you expected. I'm going  
5 to provide you with a copy of this before you leave today  
6 so that you'll see it. The court file does not reflect  
7 any service of process having been issued toward any of  
8 these lien amounts, and so I'm not sure that these  
9 lenders even have notice that this has been filed.

10          A.     He did at one time tell me, he said,  
11 Ms. Sylvia, he said, we both borrowed this money. He  
12 said, I had to -- I had to put -- sign my signature to  
13 borrow this money too. So I do know that much on all the  
14 liens that he -- the loans he took out for me. He told  
15 me that.

16          Q.     Well, the delay in the resolution of the estate  
17 has caused these amounts to continue to increase what's  
18 owed, and I think it's also important to note that the  
19 Court never got notice of any -- or approval to encumber  
20 these proceeds. That's something we're going to address  
21 down the road.

22          A.     See, he told me he was coming before you to get  
23 it all took care of, and I believed him.

24          Q.     Well, as I stated earlier when we first came on  
25 the record, the Court has made several attempts to get

1 him to appear, and that has not been successful. So for  
2 today's purposes, the Court is going to hold Mr. Ferraez  
3 in contempt for failure to appear today, along with the  
4 prior court appearances that he failed to appear,  
5 including the April 30th date, the March 16th date. So  
6 that's three court appearances and seven attempts that  
7 the Court has made to try to get some resolution of this  
8 estate.

9           So the Court is finding misconduct and other  
10 possible misappropriation of funds by Attorney Cory  
11 Ferraez. I'll be immediately reporting these actions to  
12 the Mississippi Bar for violations of Rules 1(c) of the  
13 Mississippi Rules of Discipline and Rules 1.15 and Rule  
14 8.4 of the Mississippi Rules of Professional Conduct.  
15 I'll be providing a copy of the transcript today, my show  
16 cause order and today's order to the bar.

17           I am going to approve a partial distribution of  
18 the wrongful death proceeds in the amount of \$25,000.  
19 Ms. Weatherford provided me a copy of the check that she  
20 received, an advance on the settlement funds in the  
21 amount of \$25,000, that bounced. I'm going to direct her  
22 to make an attempt to redeposit that check today to see  
23 if the funds are there in which to get some relief today.

24           I'm also going to remove Mr. Ferraez as the  
25 administrator of this estate and appoint the Perry County

1 probate administrator, who is Mr. David Walley. I will  
2 do an order today that substitutes Mr. Walley as the  
3 administrator of the estate. I'm going to -- well,  
4 actually he would be the attorney for the estate.  
5 Ms. Weatherford will continue to be the administrator of  
6 the estate.

7           So I've made some rulings today against  
8 Mr. Ferraez. Ms. Weatherford, you're going to get me  
9 copies of checks of dates and amounts if you can and  
10 provide that to my staff attorney, Ms. Sasha Payne, and  
11 I'm going to do an order today, which appoints Mr. David  
12 -- Attorney David Walley as the attorney for the estate,  
13 allowing you to remain on in your role as administrator,  
14 and I'll just tell you from a Court standpoint, I'm  
15 sorry, not only for the loss of your husband but for the  
16 treatment you received as part of the legal system. You  
17 know, the legal system is supposed to protect people,  
18 particularly those who are vulnerable, like you are from  
19 the loss of your husband. Your economic status is  
20 challenging because of your physical limitations and the  
21 sudden loss of your husband. This is not how it's  
22 supposed to work, and I want to apologize to you for  
23 that.

24           That will conclude today's hearing. Thank you.  
25 (EXHIBIT NO. 1 -- MARKED AND ADMITTED INTO EVIDENCE)

1 STATE OF MISSISSIPPI

2 COUNTY OF LAMAR

3  
4 C E R T I F I C A T E

5  
6 I, J. Stacy Head, Official Court Reporter for  
7 the 10th Chancery Court District of the State of  
8 Mississippi, do hereby certify that the foregoing pages  
9 contain a full, true and accurate transcription of my  
10 stenographic notes taken IN RE THE ESTATE OF STEPHEN RAY  
11 "FUZZY" WEATHERFORD, Cause Number 22-PR-21-SM, in the  
12 Chancery Court of Perry County, Mississippi, on the 16th  
13 day of June 2025, before Honorable Sheila H. Smallwood,  
14 Chancellor.

15 WITNESS MY SIGNATURE on this the 19th day of  
16 June, A.D., 2025.

17  
18  
19  
20 \_\_\_\_\_  
21 J. STACY HEAD  
22 OFFICIAL COURT REPORTER  
23 10TH CHANCERY COURT DISTRICT  
24 STATE OF MISSISSIPPI  
25 CSR #1201

IN THE CHANCERY COURT OF PERRY COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI

IN RE THE ESTATE OF STEPHEN RAY  
"FUZZY" WEATHERFORD, DECEASED

NO.: 22-PR-00021-SM

\*\*\*\*\*

TRANSCRIPT OF THE PROCEEDINGS HAD AND DONE IN THE  
ABOVE-STYLED AND NUMBERED CAUSE BEFORE HONORABLE  
SHEILA H. SMALLWOOD, CHANCELLOR, HELD IN FORREST COUNTY,  
MISSISSIPPI, ON THE 14TH DAY OF JULY 2025.

\*\*\*\*\*

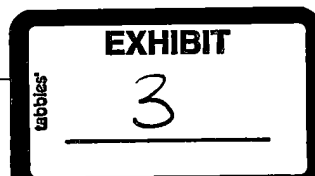
**REPRESENTING THE ESTATE:**

P. DAVID WALLEY, JR., ESQUIRE  
102 WEST SECOND STREET  
NEW AUGUSTA, MISSISSIPPI 39462

**FORMERLY REPRESENTING THE ESTATE:**

CORY FERRAEZ, ESQUIRE  
204 WEST FRONT STREET  
HATTIESBURG, MISSISSIPPI 39401

J. Stacy Head, CSR #1201  
Official Court Reporter  
10th Chancery Court District  
98 Woodstone Drive  
Hattiesburg, Mississippi 39402  
(601) 264-7558/520-2999







1 payments made or received by Ms. Weatherford. Can  
2 you go over that briefly for me?

3 MR. WALLEY: Yes, Your Honor. Briefly there  
4 are some litigation liens and some liens that  
5 Ms. Weatherford did see some funds throughout the  
6 course of this litigation. As Mr. Ferraez filed his  
7 adversary complaint, I just kind of picked it up  
8 from there and kind of touched base with all those  
9 lienholders, and I was able to confirm that those  
10 liens were in place.

11 There are three liens currently. One was to  
12 Cartiga; one was to HMR, and one was to Capital Now  
13 Funding. Cartiga, the initial lien, the amount  
14 borrowed, was \$17,910. I got a payoff request, and  
15 they have -- willing to -- it was in the 40s or 50s.  
16 They're willing as of July 2nd to accept \$39,625 as  
17 a payoff on that one.

18 THE COURT: Okay.

19 MR. WALLEY: And this is all on Page 2 of that  
20 inventory and status report. HMR Funding, the  
21 initial amount borrowed from them was 15,000. As of  
22 July 3rd we got a payoff from them for 45,000, and  
23 then Capital Now Funding, I've not heard back from  
24 them. That was the smallest of all of them. The  
25 initial amount borrowed was 10,000, and I believe

1 per Mr. Ferraez's complaint, the last known payoff  
2 was 14,500.

3 THE COURT: So total borrowed was about 42,000?

4 MR. WALLEY: Yes, ma'am.

5 THE COURT: Is that right?

6 MR. WALLEY: Yes, ma'am.

7 THE COURT: And now what's owed is about  
8 100,000?

9 MR. WALLEY: Yes, ma'am.

10 THE COURT: Wow.

11 MR. WALLEY: And I've confirmed with  
12 Ms. Weatherford -- again, it's in that inventory,  
13 and I've got -- we did file under seal a copy of her  
14 bank accounts and statements where she did receive  
15 those funds, and HMR actually did also send me the  
16 wires where they did wire those monies directly to  
17 either Mr. -- Ms. Weatherford. She received 15,000  
18 on December 19th. She received 2,750 on -- from  
19 Farm Bureau. That was a check made payable for --  
20 in the amount of \$5,000. Mr. Ferraez took his fee  
21 out of that total 5,000 and gave Ms. Weatherford the  
22 difference of 2,750.

23 On March 12th as a partial advancement she  
24 received 10,000. On February 27th of 2024, another  
25 10,000 and on November 7th of 2024, 5,000.

1 THE COURT: Okay. And so those funds came  
2 directly from Mr. Ferraez to her as an advancement  
3 on any wrongful death proceeds she may have  
4 received?

5 MR. WALLEY: Yes, ma'am.

6 THE COURT: Okay. All right. And you are  
7 currently working with these companies, Cartiga, HMR  
8 and Capital Now Funding to reduce those funds?

9 MR. WALLEY: I am, Your Honor. I will be in  
10 contact with your office about how we want to  
11 negotiate with those. I admittedly have not had an  
12 extensive practice of personal injury in the past,  
13 much less dealing with these usurious interest rates  
14 and things like that, so from what I understand,  
15 they are pretty flexible and pretty amenable. Worst  
16 case scenario, we just tell them to come down to  
17 Perry County and see what they say.

18 THE COURT: Okay.

19 MR. WALLEY: And try to negotiate downward from  
20 there.

21 THE COURT: Well, I don't want the amounts to  
22 increase either. We're kind of in a bad position as  
23 a result of the delay in getting this concluded, and  
24 so the longer the litigation or the estate is open,  
25 the more these funds seem to increase and what's

1 due --

2 MR. WALLEY: Yes, ma'am. I would note that the  
3 two payoffs we've got I believe are good through  
4 about middle August, maybe first of August, so we  
5 have a couple of weeks on those. I'm going to  
6 continue to try to negotiate downward and see how  
7 much more money we can save on behalf of  
8 Ms. Weatherford.

9 THE COURT: So other than these liens, are  
10 there any other issues in the estate that would  
11 prohibit it from closing? All the -- as I reviewed  
12 it, all of the statutory requirements have been met.

13 MR. WALLEY: Yes, ma'am. Heirship has been  
14 determined. I believe the creditor period has run.  
15 I have, with the Court's approval, obviously filed  
16 an administratrix's deed to Ms. Weatherford --

17 THE COURT: Right.

18 MR. WALLEY: -- so she is the fee simple title  
19 record holder of her property now. No, ma'am, and I  
20 will review the MEC filings, but again, I believe  
21 this one would be ripe to close, obviously pending  
22 any other orders or rulings from Your Honor.

23 THE COURT: Okay.

24 MR. FERRAEZ: Your Honor, if I may.

25 THE COURT: Okay.

1 MR. FERRAEZ: Just one note because I'm  
2 familiar with Capital One Now Funding. That 10,000  
3 and payoff fourteen-five is a flat amount, so it  
4 does not increase. They just charge one flat amount  
5 for repayment. I know he hasn't heard back from  
6 them, but that's in the actual Capital Now  
7 agreement.

8 THE COURT: Okay. So they wouldn't reduce  
9 that? Are you aware of them coming down off of that  
10 amount?

11 MR. FERRAEZ: We've been in communication with  
12 them in the past about that, but I'm not sure what  
13 their present state is on that, and I don't have  
14 anything in front of me to review about that.

15 THE COURT: Okay. Anything else, Mr. Walley?

16 MR. WALLEY: Nothing further at this time,  
17 Judge.

18 THE COURT: Okay. All right. The next motion  
19 set for today, Mr. Ferraez, is your emergency motion  
20 to vacate order for incarceration for substantial  
21 compliance and purging contempt. That's document  
22 No. 42 filed back on June the 25th, so if you're  
23 ready, I'll hear from you now.

24 MR. FERRAEZ: Do you mind if I approach and --

25 THE COURT: Well, I'd prefer you sit there

1 because if you'll use the microphone, my court  
2 reporter can hear you and take down your testimony.  
3 Are you comfortable sitting?

4 MR. FERRAEZ: Yes, Your Honor. Your Honor,  
5 just before I begin because I know we're on the  
6 record, but also just because of the media scrutiny  
7 in this case, I just wanted to relay to the Court  
8 that I'll be provided sensitive or will be providing  
9 sensitive information and potentially  
10 attorney/client privileged issues, so I would at  
11 least like to make a request -- it can be on the  
12 record either in your chambers or at least exclude  
13 the media so I'm able to communicate freely with the  
14 Court in this regard.

15 THE COURT: When you say attorney/client  
16 privilege, you mean between you and Ms. Weatherford?

17 MR. FERRAEZ: Well, since communication  
18 potentially was at issue in one of the previous  
19 hearings and that she testified to, I think the  
20 privilege may have been already waived given there  
21 has been interviews in the media by Ms. Weatherford,  
22 but if the Court had any questions for me that I'm  
23 required to answer, including I think that you had  
24 posed to my paralegal Rebecca when she testified  
25 under oath, I just want to be able to communicate

1           that without potential waiver of privilege on that  
2           front, but if there is any questions or answers that  
3           I need to give on that front, but that's not just  
4           the reason for the request. It's that the media be  
5           excluded from the courtroom while I present my  
6           testimony. Obviously I still want it to be on the  
7           record.

8           THE COURT: What is the basis for requesting  
9           that?

10          MR. FERRAEZ: There's been such intense media  
11          scrutiny already, and there are private matters that  
12          I need to convey that include my defenses that I've  
13          raised in my emergency motion, including HIPAA  
14          things which I provided to you I believe by Rebecca  
15          when -- the day she testified, and I would prefer to  
16          keep those matters within the Court and within the  
17          record without full public knowledge, which has been  
18          streaming for --

19          THE COURT: I have those documents. I have  
20          viewed them in camera. I don't intend to make them  
21          an exhibit to today's testimony. If you want to  
22          refer to them through the course of your motion  
23          today, you can. If you want to raise that issue as  
24          the hearing develops, I'll allow you to do that, but  
25          at this time I'm going to deny your request.

1 MR. FERRAEZ: Yes, Your Honor. May I proceed?

2 THE COURT: You may.

3 MR. FERRAEZ: First, Your Honor, obviously I  
4 need to apologize to the Court that -- this  
5 microphone -- that we're having to go through this  
6 entire issue or matter. Obviously it's been very  
7 difficult, as I say, with the media scrutiny and  
8 with the decisions that this Court had to make, and  
9 I do not take those lightly. Obviously I have not  
10 -- and I believe I have not been willful or  
11 otherwise to this Court's deference and obviously  
12 the gravity and sensitivity to this Court and the  
13 judicial proceedings, and so for that, I apologize  
14 that we have to be here today, but as an officer of  
15 the court, from one attorney to a judge, and as I've  
16 placed in my motion, I'm a sole practitioner with  
17 very little staff.

18 As I provided the Court, I haven't had a place  
19 of domicile residence in Hattiesburg almost since  
20 October, so I only have an office present here, and  
21 that's because as a solo practitioner I've been  
22 attempting to wind down most of my practice and  
23 pursue other employment opportunities, and I've also  
24 had other businesses in this community and  
25 otherwise, but I also have not done anything in my

1 11 years of practice, including being sanctioned by  
2 a Court, and I certainly don't mean to intend  
3 willfully or otherwise to not pay deference to this  
4 Court, and that's why I wanted to ensure that my  
5 motion was set for today and that I can appear  
6 before you today.

7 But there are serious medical and health issues  
8 that I have had, including being diagnosed with  
9 depression, that has severely limited my ability to  
10 practice law especially on a routine and regular  
11 basis. It's partially the reason why I had  
12 scheduling issues and being able to continue to run  
13 a practice from a remote location, and some of those  
14 issues were, as Your Honor noted received in camera,  
15 but they also deal with addiction issues with drug  
16 and alcohol, and so one of the largest bases for my  
17 request that this Court set aside the incarceration  
18 is because I've been exploring as the medical  
19 documents note back in the spring of this year  
20 treatment options for me, and one of those -- I've  
21 already checked with Oxford and Columbus to be  
22 admitted into a rehabilitation facility so I can  
23 address all of these concerns, but I would not be  
24 able to do that certainly under this scrutiny of  
25 still being incarcerated. I don't believe that I

1 would be able to receive the treatment that I need  
2 to do that.

3 But these are serious issues, and I take them  
4 very seriously, but because of these mental issues  
5 that I've had, it's been extremely difficult to be  
6 able to practice and even coming to hearings. As  
7 anyone who's gone through that before, it's  
8 something that I've never experienced, but it's been  
9 going on for at least the better part of a year, and  
10 I've tried to take steps to address that. As I said  
11 in my motion in the title, one of the issues is  
12 substantial compliance, and some of the defenses to  
13 contempt are the inability to comply with the order  
14 and showing the lack of willfulness.

15 I believe in my initial request for the show  
16 cause hearing, I attempted to go down to New Orleans  
17 to comply with my CLE requirements for the  
18 Mississippi Association of Justice conference. I  
19 was just recovering from kidney stones that were  
20 still present when I went down, and I wasn't even  
21 able to make it through the whole conference, but  
22 two of the guests were also there for mediation and  
23 bankruptcy, which I can provide the Court, that  
24 noted on Sunday that they also -- two of my guests  
25 had been diagnosed with Covid, and then on early

1 Sunday morning or Monday morning I was also  
2 diagnosed with Covid, which almost left me in bed  
3 for a week. I've now had it three times.

4 Right or wrongly the lack of willfulness --  
5 I've attempted the best I'm able to do to provide  
6 the Court a breakdown of the expenses, attorney's  
7 fees and the client funds which now have been  
8 deposited into court, as Mr. Walley noted  
9 previously, which means that the client is able to  
10 obtain the disbursements like the Court granted  
11 today. I believe that shows not a willfulness to  
12 deny this Court, but also it showed my -- at least  
13 ability to try to get the funds to the client  
14 regardless of whether this Court would approve any  
15 disbursements.

16 I also would note that even though the Court  
17 approved my contract for the 50 percent of the fees,  
18 I agreed with my client to reduce that 10 percent or  
19 almost somewhere in the total of almost \$50,000,  
20 plus my expenses, and I do sympathize with  
21 Ms. Weatherford. I had worked hard on this case for  
22 over two years to bring about a settlement, and I  
23 was with Ms. Weatherford every step of the way  
24 through all the emotional turmoil because we were  
25 extremely close, and she was very close with my

1 firm, but right or wrong, the disbursements I made  
2 were an attempt to help her in her situation, which  
3 is why I obtained those liens and obtained those  
4 funding for the case.

5 As you know, wrongful death cases are not  
6 quick. They take years to litigate. This estate  
7 was opened at the initial onset of this litigation,  
8 and I've received -- and I tried to receive almost  
9 now \$80,000 to Ms. Weatherford through those funds  
10 and my personal funds. Now that can be an issue  
11 later for the bar, but I believe that I try to act  
12 in the best interest of Ms. Sylvia as much as I can.

13 Now if the issue is with the rest of the  
14 remaining funds, if this Court determines whatever  
15 the result is of those liens, I'm -- then I'm happy  
16 to have the hearing on potential issues with  
17 attorney's fees and costs that have been approved by  
18 this Court via the contract at a later date to  
19 determine if -- whether Ms. Weatherford may be  
20 entitled to more of those funds to offset the liens,  
21 but the reason why I filed the adversary complaint  
22 was because I felt that these companies have been  
23 usurious in their practice, and this Court has  
24 jurisdiction to severely limit the amount of  
25 interest rate under Mississippi statute, and in

1 fact, I've had a previous issue -- the reason why I  
2 know this so well is I stopped using those funding  
3 companies is because one of them actually sued me  
4 and a former client who was trying to resolve these  
5 liens because I provided the entirety of the  
6 settlement funds and allowed my client to negotiate  
7 the liens on his behalf, and we had just gotten over  
8 that lawsuit that we negotiated to settle, so I know  
9 how these companies operate, but I'm definitely  
10 willing to obviously entertain any further motions  
11 before the estate is closed on exactly those nature  
12 of those fees, but that again goes to me to show my  
13 best interest for Ms. Weatherford, who I've known  
14 now for a long while throughout this grieving  
15 process.

16 So just in summation, I wouldn't be before the  
17 Court today if I didn't believe sincerely that the  
18 contempt wasn't due to serious and severe medical  
19 issues and my mental health, and I certainly have  
20 not acted willful in trying to demean this Court.  
21 I've never had a track record of this until I began  
22 experiencing these issues, and I'm vehemently sorry  
23 as an officer of this court that we have to be here  
24 today, but I do not think it's in the best interest  
25 based on my defenses to place me in incarceration

1           when, as the Court is aware, due to this media  
2           scrutiny, it's not only defamed me but my entire  
3           family in the State of Mississippi, and it has sent  
4           me in an even worse spiral having to deal with these  
5           issues than not, which is why I need to seek  
6           additional treatment because I -- these problems  
7           have been made worse due to this very issue, and I'm  
8           sincere in that. I would not be telling the Court  
9           otherwise, and this Court has my diagnoses in that  
10          regard.

11                 So I just want to be able to have this cloud  
12          over me, so I'm attempting to wind down the rest of  
13          my practice because I can't communicate with  
14          clients, and obviously this scrutiny has caused my  
15          entire practice to be disrupted, and it's only  
16          Rebecca trying to handle that, and I can't do that  
17          from a jail cell, and for those reasons and the  
18          defenses, I would request the Court release the  
19          order for incarceration.

20                 THE COURT: Mr. Ferraez, back in November I  
21          reached out to you after Shelter Insurance reached  
22          out to the Court because they couldn't get you to  
23          converse with them about approving the wrongful  
24          death proceeds. Eventually I signed an order. It  
25          was document No. 43, and what that says is that you

1 would hold these settlement funds in your trust  
2 account until I ruled on your request for payment,  
3 not only for the liens, the pre-litigation liens,  
4 but also on your attorney's fees and expenses. I  
5 signed that order back in November.

6 MR. FERRAEZ: Yes, ma'am.

7 THE COURT: In December you indicated to me  
8 after we reached out to you that these claims on the  
9 liens had been resolved, and that was inaccurate.  
10 Those liens are still continuing to accumulate  
11 interest, and the tragedy in that is that the amount  
12 of interest is unbelievable so that this delay has  
13 cost a lot of money toward these funds that  
14 Ms. Weatherford was to receive.

15 I again reached out to your office in March  
16 requesting you meet with me. Let's have a status  
17 conference. What can we do to help bring this to a  
18 conclusion? We gave you dates without any response.  
19 Finally I just set it on the -- on April 16th. You  
20 didn't appear at that hearing. Your staff indicated  
21 that you were stuck in North Mississippi for an  
22 unrelated matter. We have emails to that effect.

23 MR. FERRAEZ: Yes, Your Honor.

24 THE COURT: I set it again for April the 30th.  
25 Your staff said you weren't available, so I sent you

1 a Zoom link. At the time that the Zoom was supposed  
2 to take place, I got a message from you that you had  
3 spotty cell service. At that point I became very  
4 concerned about these funds. I entered a show cause  
5 order saying that you had to show up in court on  
6 June the 16th here in Forrest County because I was  
7 concerned about these monies, and I said in that  
8 order you've got to show me proof that this \$450,000  
9 is being held in your IOLTA trust account.

10 You didn't appear at that hearing, so I issued  
11 an order for you to be incarcerated, and then that  
12 order of incarceration was entered on June the 19th,  
13 and you have been evading arrest since that time  
14 period. You have disrespected not only the court  
15 system itself but have required law enforcement to  
16 expend additional time and monies in an effort to  
17 locate you.

18 You also tendered an amount that you deemed was  
19 appropriate for both your attorney's fees and didn't  
20 take into account any of these liens that as a  
21 result of your delay has cost this estate additional  
22 monies. So I hear what you're saying today. I'm  
23 sorry if you're having some personal problems, and I  
24 would hope that you would address those, but it's  
25 the obligation of the Court to enforce its own

1 orders. You took an oath as a lawyer to represent  
2 your clients zealously, and you have failed to do  
3 that in this case, a result of which has caused a  
4 widow who has no other source of income other than  
5 social security to live without air conditioning and  
6 to almost lose her home because these funds were  
7 there. You received this \$450,000 on February the  
8 19th of 2024. At that time these funds could have  
9 been presented to me, and we could have disbursed  
10 these funds, and that has not happened.

11 I can't allow my court orders not to be  
12 followed. As a result of that, I'm denying your  
13 motion to vacate the incarceration order. There is  
14 proof that you have submitted or directly advanced  
15 about \$40,000 to Ms. Weatherford. You have paid  
16 into the court registry \$214,831.23. That leaves a  
17 balance of \$195 -- I'm sorry, \$195,168.77. That  
18 amount needs to be tendered to the Perry County  
19 Chancery Clerk's office.

20 Are you going to be able to do that today?

21 MR. FERRAEZ: No, Your Honor, not today, and  
22 one of the largest reasons is one of the media  
23 outlets posted my entire account information, which  
24 has now been completely excluded from me. I don't  
25 even have access to my accounts as we sit here

1           today. I couldn't even get on or log on, and I  
2           haven't been able to go to any physical branch or  
3           bank to be able to do that, but I wouldn't be able  
4           to do that today, Your Honor.

5           THE COURT: So I'm not understanding why you  
6           don't have access to your own accounts?

7           MR. FERRAEZ: I do not know, Your Honor. I've  
8           attempted to contact the bank. It's been reported  
9           that all of my accounts have been shut down. I do  
10          not know exactly why that is. I have not been able  
11          to get a straight answer as to why that is.

12          THE COURT: Are you telling me you've talked to  
13          bank officials who have told you you can't access  
14          your own accounts?

15          MR. FERRAEZ: I have spoken with Cadence Bank,  
16          which is my actual bank for one of my entities, yes.

17          THE COURT: Okay.

18          MR. FERRAEZ: I -- all I can say is I can  
19          attempt to remedy that beforehand, but I don't have  
20          any justification at the moment, Your Honor.

21          THE COURT: Okay. All right. Mr. Garner, are  
22          you in the courtroom today?

23          SHERIFF GARNER: Yes, ma'am.

24          THE COURT: If you'll step forward and take  
25          Mr. Ferraez into custody. I'll be amending my order

1 to indicate that upon the payment of 195,168.77  
2 you'll be released from custody. Anything else?

3 Okay. That will conclude today's hearing.

4 Thank you.

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6 (CONCLUSION)

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1 STATE OF MISSISSIPPI

2 COUNTY OF LAMAR

3  
4 C E R T I F I C A T E

5  
6 I, J. Stacy Head, Official Court Reporter for  
7 the 10th Chancery Court District of the State of  
8 Mississippi, do hereby certify that the foregoing pages  
9 contain a full, true and accurate transcription of my  
10 stenographic notes taken IN RE THE ESTATE OF STEPHEN RAY  
11 "FUZZY" WEATHERFORD, Cause Number 22-PR-21-SM, in the  
12 Chancery Court of Perry County, Mississippi, on the 14th  
13 day of July 2025, before Honorable Sheila H. Smallwood,  
14 Chancellor.

15 WITNESS MY SIGNATURE on this the 4th day of  
16 August, A.D., 2025.

17  
18  
19  
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21 J. STACY HEAD  
22 OFFICIAL COURT REPORTER  
23 10TH CHANCERY COURT DISTRICT  
24 STATE OF MISSISSIPPI  
25 CSR #1201

IN THE CHANCERY COURT OF PERRY COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF STEPHEN  
RAY "FUZZY" WEATHERFORD, DECEASED

CAUSE NO. 2022-pr-0021-SM

**ORDER OF RELEASE TO HOUSE ARREST  
AND AMENDING PURGE AMOUNT AND OTHER RELIEF**

The statutory requirements of the estate have now been accomplished and an *Order Approving First and Final Accounting* [MEC # 72] was entered on July 23, 2025. The Court conducted a Zoom hearing with Mr. Ferraez on July 24, 2025, based on that hearing and the conclusion of the estate, the Court finds as follows:

[1] Attorney Cory Ferraez, the former attorney for the estate, was found in civil contempt and was incarcerated on July 14, 2025 for his failure to tender wrongful death proceeds into the registry of the Court.

[2] Although Mr. Ferraez initially tendered the sum of \$214,831.23 [MEC #54], the final estate accounting determined the amount owed to the estate by Mr. Ferraez to be an additional \$48,033.77 based on the reduction of his attorney fees and expenses. Mr. Ferraez acknowledged the reduction of his fees and expenses and agreed to the payment of \$48,033.77 within the 30 day period. This payment must be paid to the registry of the Perry County Chancery Court.

[3] Mr. Ferraez will be released from incarceration in the Perry County Jail to house arrest through Court Programs for a period of 30 days or until he tenders the sum of \$48,033.77 by cashier's check to the registry of the Perry County Chancery Clerk. If he is unable to deliver payment of these funds within a 30 day period, he will again return to the Perry County Jail.



[5] The geographical restrictions for house arrest will require Mr. Ferraez to remain in the State of Mississippi during his period of house arrest. Mr. Ferraez will be responsible for all costs associated with his house arrest.

[6] Within 30 days, Mr. Ferraez will tender the sum of \$350 to Perry County General Fund for the cost of his incarceration (10 days at the cost of \$35 per day). Payment will be made to the Perry County Chancery Clerk.

SO ORDERED AND ADJUDGED, this the 24th day of July, 2025.

*Sheila H. Smallwood*  
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CHANCELLOR  
SHEILA H. SMALLWOOD