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7 Attorney for Defendants,  
8 *TERRY A. RONDBERG, D.C. and*  
9 *MICHELLE DEPALMA*

10 **SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

11 **FOR THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO**

12 **NORTH COUNTY DISTRICT**

13 PERI NESS, an individual, SYNERGY  
14 YOGA, a California Corporation )

15 Plaintiff, )

16 vs. )

17 TERRY RONDBERG, an individual; )  
18 MICHELLE DEPALMA, an individual; and )  
19 DOES 1 THROUGH 10. )

20 Defendants. )

Case No: 37-2008-00052535-CU-DF-NC

Assigned  
for All Purposes to: *Hon. Robert P. Dalquist*

**DECLARATION OF MICHELLE DEPALMA  
IN SUPPORT OF DEFENDANTS' MOTION  
FOR SUMMARY JUDGMENT OR, IN THE  
ALTERNATIVE, SUMMARY  
ADJUDICATION**

21 Date: June 18, 2010

22 Time: 1:30 p.m.

23 Dept: 29

24 Trial Date: July 23, 2010

25 I, MICHELLE DEPALMA, declare as follows:

26 1. I am over the age of 18 years and if called upon to testify I could and would testify to  
27 the matters set forth herein based upon my personal knowledge. I am the co-defendant in this matter.

28 2. I am familiar with Plaintiffs Peri Ness, Charles DeFay and the Synergy Yoga Room  
("Yoga Room") as I was the "head mentor" of the Yoga Room for several years and was under the  
emotional influence and dominion of its leader, Peri Ness. I became a certified yoga instructor and

1 joined the Yoga Room teaching staff after completing the teacher training curriculum in 2002. I  
2 worked at Synergy Yoga until January of 2008. As “head mentor,” I basically operated and managed  
3 the Yoga Room. (See, Peri Ness’ Response to Special Interrogatory No. 4, 7:20-22, attached hereto as  
4 DePalma Exhibit 1.)

5         3.       The Yoga Room is, by all definitions, a cult that is controlled by Peri. Its main purpose  
6 is to recruit innocent victims and targets by means of purportedly spiritual teachings, philosophies and  
7 exercise of the Self Realization Fellowship. However, this is just a front and charade.

8         4.       Peri Ness has been using countless individuals and emotionally unstable people to  
9 perform free work and solicit money. I was one of those victims. Up until I left the Yoga Room, Peri  
10 Ness controlled every aspect of my life, including who I could see or talk to.

11        5.       Peri Ness admonished me for spending time with my family and told me that spending  
12 time with them lowered my “energy.”

13        6.       Peri Ness encouraged students and staff at the Yoga Room to share personal experiences  
14 with her. This was done to gain an advantage over them and to be used as leverage to induce people to  
15 do as she wished.

16        7.       Peri Ness evoked shame to control students and staff members. She wrote long letters  
17 to people at the Yoga Room, simultaneously declaring her love for them while berating them in the  
18 same letter.

19        8.       Peri Ness encouraged students and staff to spend an inordinate amount of time and  
20 money at the Yoga Room. She recommended that students attend 9 to 17 hours a week at the Yoga  
21 Room.

22        9.       Peri Ness instructed me to date certain people because she felt these relationships would  
23 benefit her and the Yoga Room financially. Initially, I did not want to have a relationship with Dr.  
24 Rondberg because he was not officially divorced, but Peri Ness told me it was my “duty” to date him  
25 because he was going to be the Yoga Room’s new “money guy.”

26        10.      Peri Ness required Yoga Room students and employees to bow down to her as she  
27 entered a room. One of my duties was to instruct students and staff how to correctly bow down to her.

28        11.      Peri Ness considered herself to be a type of “goddess” and claimed she possessed

1 special healing vibrations/energy and those in her presence would benefit from her healing vibrations.

2 12. I did not initially want to have a relationship with Elia Nikoleav, a former teacher at the  
3 Yoga Room but Peri Ness told me that she needed me to be with him because he was “trainable” and  
4 she needed him for the business.

5 13. I also did not want to have a relationship with Theirry Maurel but Peri Ness told me that  
6 Mr. Maurel was going to help the Yoga Room get on better terms with the Self Realization Fellowship  
7 church because he was the chef for the Self Realization Fellowship Ashram.

8 14. If the three individuals I was forced to have a relationship with in the three preceding  
9 paragraphs did not comply with Peri Ness’ expectations, she instructed me to end the relationships  
10 until they complied.

11 15. I was Peri Ness’ “right hand” and main disciple for years. She made me perform  
12 unspeakable things in order that she gain power and wealth.

13 16. If I ever questioned Peri Ness or disagreed with her “recommendations,” she would  
14 condemn me as being “out of integrity” and in need of “karmic retribution.”

15 17. Peri Ness made me obtain a restraining order against Dr. Rondberg and attempt to  
16 obtain money from him. She also insisted that I make false statements in declarations and carry out  
17 court process so that she could gain advantage over Dr. Rondberg.

18 18. I am aware that Peri Ness had an automobile accident several years ago and her back  
19 injuries, if any, were the result of this accident, not as a result of any treatment by Dr. Rondberg.

20 19. Peri Ness made me beg Dr. Rondberg to write a letter to her stating that he caused her  
21 back injury. Dr. Rondberg and I delivered an envelope to Peri Ness with the letter and \$1,000.00. Peri  
22 Ness’ back injury was caused by an automobile accident.

23 20. Several months ago, I and several other disciples of Peri Ness’ realized that something  
24 bad and illegal was going on at the Yoga Room. On or about January, 2008, we decided to resign and  
25 seek psychological therapy and even de-programming. After months of therapy, I was able to have a  
26 breakthrough and realize that I had been involved in a cult.

27 21. Dr. Rondberg has not threatened me in the past and I have known him for years. He is a  
28 very gentle and spiritual person. The prior statements made in declarations concerning threats by Dr.

1 Rondberg were made at the demand of Peri Ness so that she could force him to settle.

2 22. Peri Ness was infuriated with our escape from the Yoga Room and vowed revenge. I  
3 believe that this lawsuit is an example of such a plan.

4 23. Since my departure, it is Peri Ness, not Dr. Rondberg, that has engaged in a campaign of  
5 defamation and maligning me and several other former members of the cult.

6 24. **I do not own, control, operate or maintain any website, including**  
7 **[www.truthaboutsenergyyoga.com](http://www.truthaboutsenergyyoga.com)** . I have not made the statements, either by writing or verbally, as  
8 attributed to me in the First Amended Complaint.

9 25. I have not removed any documents from the Yoga Room that contained any trade  
10 secrets or confidential information that I was not entitled to.

11 26. I have not contacted Peri Ness' landlord in an attempt to persuade him to terminate the  
12 Yoga Room's lease or to inquire into a lease.

13 27. I have not intimidated, harassed or threatened any employee of the Yoga Room.

14 28. I have not injured or harmed Peri Ness or the Yoga Room in any manner that I am  
15 aware.

16 29. Quite the contrary, Peri Ness, along with her husband, Charles Defay, have caused me a  
17 great deal of emotional injury and harm. Peri Ness used me for her own selfish gains and  
18 advancement.

19 30. Peri Ness has called me a whore, white trash, a drug addict, dumb and countless other  
20 disparaging remarks all to humiliate and control me.

21 31. There has been no harassment of Peri Ness and many of the former members have  
22 passed out information about the truth of the Yoga Room as we believe that it is our right of free  
23 speech.

24 32. At no time have I, or anyone else I know, trespassed on the property of the Plaintiffs.

25 33. At this time, I, and several other victims of this cult, are committed to making the public  
26 aware of the dangers of these people and what they can do to harm.

27 34. There was an investigation by the California State Labor Board concerning the illegal  
28 activities of the Yoga Room and Peri Ness. Synergy Yoga has lost in their challenges to the

1 Unemployment Department “EDD” cases.

2 35. I have been critical of the Yoga Room and Peri Ness within the context of my First  
3 Amendment Rights. I, and others, believe that our religious and spiritual beliefs have been misused  
4 and perverted by Peri Ness so that she can profit. I, and most other former staff members, have come  
5 to this realization and are willing to come forward with our criticisms of Peri Ness and Synergy Yoga.

6  
7 I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that the foregoing is  
8 true and correct and that this declaration was executed on the 7<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2010 in \_\_\_\_\_,  
9 California.

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13 Michelle DePalma  
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