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10 **SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA**
11 **FOR THE COUNTY OF ALAMEDA**

12 DOWNEASTDEM, an individual,

13 Petitioner,

14 vs.

15 ROBERT F. KENNEDY, JR.,

16 an individual,

17 Respondent.

CASE NO. RG21102647

**DECLARATION OF JOEL SCHALIT
IN SUPPORT OF PETITIONER'S
MOTION TO QUASH SUBPOENA.**

**Hearing Date: August 16, 2021
Hearing Time: 9:30 am
Dept. No. 511**

18 *In the Matter of the Subpoena Issued to*
19 *Kos Media, LLC, in:*

20 ROBERT F. KENNEDY, JR.,
Petitioner,

v.

21 KOS MEDIA, LLC, d/b/a, DAILY KOS,
Respondent.

22 In the Supreme Court of the State of
New York, County of Westchester
23 Index No. 65319/2020

24 Hon. Mary H. Smith
Order granting pre-action disclosure,
April 16, 2021

25 Appeal pending
26 Nos. 2021-03700 and 2021-04476
27 (N.Y. App. Div. Dept. 2)

1 1. My name is Joel Schalit. I make this affidavit to offer my professional opinions about the
2 nature of the Querdenken 711 movement as it bears on Robert Kennedy’s defamation claim.

3 2. I am an Israeli-American journalist based in Berlin. I was formerly the managing editor
4 of Berkeley’s Tikkun magazine, and I have written such critically acclaimed books as *Jerusalem*
5 *Calling* and *Israel vs Utopia (Akashic)*. For the past twelve years, I have covered far-right
6 extremism in Europe for a variety of platforms including the UK’s Jewish Quarterly, France24 and
7 Israel’s i24News.

8 3. I was the news editor at Brussels’ Euractiv, and, more recently, a political analyst for
9 Beijing’s China Global Television Network. Currently, I heading up my own media organization,
10 *The Battleground*. My team and I have been covering the pressures Germany’s Jewish community
11 faces from both the centre and extreme right, on matters ranging from Israel’s role in German
12 politics to racist violence.

13 4. Starting with Germany’s neofascist opposition party Alternative für Deutschland, under
14 my direction, *The Battleground* has mapped the radicalisation of the country’s far-right, from being
15 an archetypal nationalist party led by what the German press call “pinstripe Nazis” to a more
16 threatening mix of far-right terrorists, conspiracy theorists and QAnon followers.

17 5. Though this evolution may not sound out of place in the United States, in the background
18 of the German version is the Third Reich and continuing frustrations over the collapse of the
19 Communist DDR. Though Nazi-identified nationalism is common throughout today’s Europe,
20 Germans often forget how ruinous it was to their country, in both flesh and blood, their cities and
21 towns, and their culture.

22 6. The Querdenken 711 movement isn’t so much a separate movement within this greater
23 right, but more of an umbrella of extreme-right politics, in which the varieties of German extremism
24 have found shelter. While it claims closeness to a number of conspiracy theories, Querdenken 711
25 is less ideological than it is a forum for reconciling German far-right groups, in terms of street
26 politics and protests.

27 7. Indeed, it would be hard to imagine 2020’s anti-lockdown and so-called hygiene demos,
28 the storming of the Bundestag in August, and the adoption of Jewish yellow stars by anti-vaccination

1 | activists, without the Querdenken. Though hippies and some minorities have been featured in these
2 | events, the ‘movement’ is still complicit with white nationalists.

3 | 8. The fact some Americans have been drawn to these groups is no surprise. Even though
4 | they are European events, Querdenken protestors are openly admiring of US nationalist and
5 | Evangelical politics. During the 2020 protests, far-right demonstrators often carried banners and
6 | signs emblazoned with Trump’s image, along with that of Vladimir Putin, and German imperial
7 | flags. Those German imperial flags—the “Reichsflagge” mentioned in several news stories,
8 | including the Der Tagesspiegel article of August 29—are carried by Neo-Nazis as a coded signal
9 | of support for Nazism, evading German laws that forbid the display of overt Nazi symbols.

10 | 10. Germans who participate in Querdenken circles are aligned with one of these streams.
11 | Those who claim they aren’t are lower and middle class Germans getting introduced to the far-right,
12 | trying to figure out which orientation within it fits them best. Foreign activists addressing the
13 | Querdenken, if not politically related, at the very least help support this environment and give it
14 | legitimacy.

15 | I declare under penalty of perjury, under the laws of the State of
16 | California, that the foregoing is true and correct. Executed on
17 | June 29, 2021.

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19 | Joel Schalit

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