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17 18	DENNIS MONTGOMERY, an	1	NO.: 3:06-cv-000:	56-PMP-VPC
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18 19	DENNIS MONTGOMERY, an individual; and MONTGOMERY FAMILY TRUST, a California Tr Plaintiff,	CASE	NO.: 3:06-cv-000: and	
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MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT OF MOTION TO INTERVENE AND TO LIFT PROTECTIVE ORDER

Oral Argument Requested

Non-party Michael J. Lindell ("Lindell") hereby seeks to intervene in these actions for the limited purpose of obtaining the lifting of the Court's protective order entered on August 29, 2007 in case no. 06-cv-00056 as Doc. #253 ("Protective Order"). Lindell possesses data ("Data") obtained from party Dennis Montgomery ("Montgomery"), which Lindell seeks to use to defend himself against claims asserted in other litigation, and the Data may be covered by the Protective Order.

I. Factual Background

Lindell is a defendant in US Dominion, Inc. et al. v. My Pillow, Inc. et al., case no. 13 1:21-cv-00445 in the United States District Court for the District of Columbia ("D.C. 14 Litigation"). The plaintiffs' complaint in that action alleges Lindell defamed them by 15 16 making various statements about electronic election equipment used in the 2020 17 presidential election being hacked to manipulate the results of the election. Decl. of 18 Michael Lindell See Exhibit A at ¶ 3 & Ex. A ¶ 165 ("Lindell Decl."). In making these 19 statements, Lindell relied in part upon information that originated with Montgomery. Id. 20 ¶74; Lindell Decl. ¶4. Accordingly, Lindell seeks to use testimony and evidence 21 concerning Montgomery's background and his work for U.S. intelligence agencies, and the 22 information from Montgomery itself, to defend the reasonability and veracity of his 23 24 allegedly defamatory statements in the D.C. Litigation. Id. ¶ 5.

The information that Lindell in part relied upon, the Data, comprises internet
 transmissions sent during the 2020 election that were collected by technology Montgomery
 developed and previously licensed to the US government. Lindell Decl. ¶ 7; Montgomery

1 See Exhibit B at Decl. ¶ 40. Montgomery has gathered extensive data showing that voting 2 machine manufacturers and their employees were hacked several times, and information 3 related to illegal US government surveillance programs that Montgomery worked in. 4 Montgomery Decl. ¶ 38. Lindell agreed to acquire ownership rights to the Data from 5 Montgomery. Lindell Decl. ¶ 6; Montgomery Decl. ¶ 39. The Protective Order entered by 6 this Court prohibits the use or disclosure of information related to Montgomery's work for 7 or relationship with U.S. intelligence agencies. See Doc. #253. Montgomery believes the 8 9 Protective Order remains in place and precludes disclosure of the Data. Montgomery Decl. 10 ¶ 41. Lindell seeks removal of this barrier to him using the Data, and testimony and 11 evidence concerning Montgomery, to defend himself in the D.C. Litigation. Lindell Decl. 12 ¶ 10.

II. Lindell May Intervene in This Action for the Limited Purpose Modifying the Protective Order.

Fed. R. Civ. P. 24(a)(2) grants the right to intervene in an action under specified
circumstances. Rule 24(b)(1)(B) grants the ability to intervene in an action on a permissive
basis. Lindell can intervene in this action for his intended limited purpose, both
permissively under Rule 24(b)(1)(B) and as of right under Rule 24(a)(2).

The "requirements for intervention" are to be "broadly interpreted in favor of
intervention," *Kalbers v. United States DOJ*, 22 F.4th 816, 822 (9th Cir. 2021), and "The
courts have widely recognized that the correct procedure for a nonparty to challenge a
protective order is through intervention for that purpose." *United Nuclear Corp. v. Cranford Ins. Co.*, 905 F.2d 1424, 1427 (10th Cir. 1990) (citing *Public Citizen v. Liggett Group, Inc.*, 858 F.2d 775, 783 (1st Cir. 1988)).

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Lindell May Intervene on a Permissive Basis. A.

"Generally, permissive intervention under Rule 24(b) requires '(1) an independent 3 ground for jurisdiction; (2) a timely motion; and (3) a common question of law and fact 4 between the movant's claim or defense and the main action." Blum v. Merrill Lynch 5 Pierce Fenner & Smith Inc., 712 F.3d 1349, 1353 (9th Cir. 2013) (quoting Beckman 6 Indus., Inc. v. Int'l Ins. Co., 966 F.2d 470, 473 (9th Cir. 1992)). However, "[T]here is 7 ample support for intervenor's argument that courts also recognize Rule 24(b) intervention 8 9 as a proper method to modify a protective order." Beckman, 966 F.2d 470, 472 (9th Cir. 10 1992). Accordingly,

- "No independent jurisdictional basis is needed" when an intervenor seeks to modify a protective order rather than litigate a claim on the merits, *Beckman*, 966 F.2d at 473; Pansy, 23 F.3d at 778, n.3; EEOC, 146 F.3d at 1047; In re "Agent Orange" *Prod. Liab. Litig.*, 821 F.2d 139, 145 (2d Cir. 1987);
- "[M]otions to intervene for the purpose of seeking modification of a protective order in long-concluded litigation are not untimely," Blum, 712 F.3d at 1353 (citing "the growing consensus among the courts of appeals that intervention to challenge confidentiality orders may take place long after a case has been terminated"); United Nuclear Corp., 905 F.2d at 1427 ("Rule 24(b)'s timeliness requirement is to prevent prejudice in the adjudication of the rights of the existing parties, a concern not present when the existing parties have settled their dispute and intervention is for a collateral purpose."); and
- "There is no reason to require such a strong nexus of fact or law when a party seeks to intervene only for the purpose of modifying a protective order." Beckman, 966 F.2d at 474. The requirement that a claim or defense present "common legal or

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factual issues" to the main action is interpreted with "considerable breadth." *EEOC*, 146 F.2d at 1046; *Pansy*, 23 F.3d at 778. *See also Advance Loc. Media*, 918 F.3d at 1173 n.12 (when a party seeks to intervene only for the limited purpose of obtaining access to sealed judicial records, there need not be a "strong nexus of fact or law" to the issues in the original case) (quoting *Flynt*, 782 F.3d at 967); *Jessup v. Luther*, 227 F.3d 993, 997-99 (7th Cir. 2000); *Pansy*, 23 F.3d at 778; *In re Estelle*, 516 F.2d 480, 485 (5th Cir. 1975).

9 Here, all three requirements for permissive intervention are met. Lindell seeks to 10 intervene for the limited purpose of modifying the Court's Protective Order. No 11 independent jurisdictional basis is needed, the motion is not untimely, and there is a 12 common question of law and fact between the grounds that considerations that justified the 13 entry of the Protective Order originally, and whether those grounds still justify any 14 restrictions of the Protective Order upon the Data. Cf. Beckman 966 F.2d at 474 ("The 15 16 issue of interpretation of the policy supplies a sufficiently strong nexus between the district 17 court action and the state actions to satisfy the commonality requirement").

18 An additional consideration for motions to intervene is whether intervention will 19 "unduly delay or prejudice the adjudication of the original parties' rights." Blum, 712 F.3d 20 at 1354. But, again, when the intervention is for the limited purpose of addressing a 21 protective order, this consideration loses force. Where "[t]he existing parties have settled 22 their dispute," intervention has "has little effect on the original parties' underlying rights." 23 24 Id. This action was settled and all claims dismissed in 2009. See Order (Feb. 19, 2009) 25 (doc. 100). 26

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1 All elements for permissive intervention are met, and no part would be prejudiced 2 by Lindell's limited intervention. Lindell should be permitted to intervene under Rule 3 24(b).

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B. Lindell May Intervene as of Right.

Lindell also can intervene for his limited purpose as of right, pursuant to Fed. R. 6 Civ. P. 24(a)(2). Under Rule 24(a)(2), a non-party may exercise the right to intervene if it 7 "claims an interest relating to the property or transaction that is the subject of the action, 8 9 and is so situated that disposing of the action may as a practical matter impair or impede 10 the movant's ability to protect its interest, unless existing parties adequately represent that 11 interest." The Ninth Circuit has interpreted Rule 24(a)(2) as requiring four things of an 12 intervenor: (1) its intervention motion is "timely"; (2) it "has a significantly protectable 13 interest relating to ... the subject of the action"; (3) it "is so situated that the disposition of 14 the action may as a practical matter impair or impede [its] ability to protect that interest"; 15 16 and (4) its "interest is inadequately represented by the parties to the action." Kalbers v. 17 United States DOJ, 22 F.4th 816, 822 (9th Cir. 2021) (quotations omitted). Each of those requirements is met here.

<u>Timeliness</u>. Timeliness of a motion to intervene "hinges on three primary factors: (1) the stage of the proceeding at which an applicant seeks to intervene; (2) the prejudice to other parties; and (3) the reason for and length of the delay." Kalbers, 22 F.4th at 822 (quotation omitted). As discussed above, considerations of timeliness have a different meaning in the context of an intervention for the purpose of addressing a protective order, than in the context of affecting the substantive or procedural resolution of the parties' claims and defenses. The core consideration underlying the timeliness requirement is "to prevent prejudice in the adjudication of the rights of the existing parties," a factor that is 28

1 "not present when the existing parties have settled their dispute and intervention is for a 2 collateral purpose." United Nuclear Corp., 905 F.2d at 1427 (citing Public Citizen v. 3 Liggett Group, Inc., 858 F.2d 775, 786-87 (1st Cir. 1988) and Meyer Goldberg, Inc. v. 4 Fisher Foods, Inc., 823 F.2d 159, 161-62 (6th Cir. 1987)). "While it is true that an 5 application for intervention must be timely, 'timeliness is to be determined from all the 6 circumstances,' and 'the point to which the suit has progressed ... is not solely 7 dispositive." United Nuclear Corp., 905 F.2d at 1427 (quoting NAACP v. New York, 413 8 9 U.S. 345, 365-66 (1973)); Kalbers, 22 F.4th at 826 ("stage of proceeding" factor uses a 10 "nuanced, pragmatic approach" and "substance prevails over form" such that "[n]either the 11 formal "stage" of the litigation" nor the "length of time that has passed since a suit was 12 filed" is dispositive).

In this case, there is no possibility that any of the parties could be prejudiced in the 14 adjudication of their rights, for that adjudication has been completed. "[P]rejudice must be 15 16 connected in some way to the timing of the intervention motion." Kalbers, 22 F.4th at 825. 17 Lindell has brought his motion to intervene at an appropriate time, seasonably after he 18 became a defendant in the D.C. Litigation, decided to use the Data in his defense in that 19 action, and realized that the Protective Order might lead to the imposition of penalties or 20 harms if he did. This motion satisfies the timeliness requirement because no possibility of 21 prejudice to any party as a result of the timing of the motion exists. 22

Significantly Protectable Interest. The significantly protectable interest factor is
met because a non-party may intervene in an action for the purpose of litigating the
substance of a protective order. *In re Alexander Grant & Co. Litig.*, 820 F.2d 352, 354
(11th Cir. 1987) ("[A]ppellants have standing to intervene in this action and challenge the
propriety of the district court's protective order."). *See also In re Midland Nat. Life Ins.*

1 Co. Annuity Sales Pracs. Litig., 686 F.3d 1115, 1120 (9th Cir. 2012) (limited purpose 2 intervenor successfully appealed district court order ruling concerning sealing order). 3 Lindell also meets this factor by application of the ordinary test governing application of 4 the factor. A "significantly protectable interest" must be an interest "protectable under 5 some law" and there must be a "relationship between the legally protected interest and the 6 claims at issue." Kalbers, 22 F.4th at 827; Nw. Forest Res. Council v. Glickman, 82 F.3d 7 825, 837 (9th Cir. 1996). Here, Lindell has a strong interest in using the Data to defend 8 9 himself against defamation claims, and a First Amendment interest in being free from prior 10 restraint concerning the publication and use of the Data. There is an obvious relationship 11 between Lindell's interests and the Protective Order which may forbid him from using or 12 publishing the Data.

14 <u>Impair or Impede the Interest</u>. The third factor is met because the Protective
15 Order may impair or impede Lindell's ability to publish or use the Data without incurring
16 liability for contempt of court.

17 Interest Not Adequately Protected. The fourth factor is met because no other
18 party to this action has any interest in the Data or in vindicating Lindell's ability to publish
19 or use the data. This factor imposes a "minimal" burden, and is met if the intervenor shows
20 that "representation of his interest *may* be inadequate." *Kalbers*, 22 F.4th at 828.

Lindell satisfies all four requirements for intervention as of right under Rule
23 24(a)(2).

III. The Court Should Lift the Protective Order

26 After permitting Lindell to intervene in this action, the Court should lift the 27 Protective Order, for three reasons.

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A. Lindell Needs to Use the Data to Defend Himself.

Lindell will use the Data to defend the reasonability and veracity of his statements regarding the 2020 election at issue in the D.C. Litigation. Lindell Decl. ¶ 5. The statements were based on information received from Montgomery. *Id.* ¶ 4. The substance of the Data will show Lindell's reliance upon it to be reasonable and that the statements were truthful, both points which are defenses to a defamation claim.

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B. The Protective Order Is Stale.

9 The Protective Order was entered on August 29, 2007, fifteen years ago. It was 10 based on an assertion that secrecy was needed to protect "national security interests" of the 11 United States. Protective Order at 1-2. The affidavit on which the Protective Order was 12 based stated that disclosure of "particular intelligence sources and methods" or the 13 "classified contracting process" could harm U.S. national security. Decl. of John D. 14 Negroponte ¶ 12 (Doc. 83-2). Those sources, methods, and contracts are now at least 15 16 fifteen years out of date. Computer capabilities and software - the substance of 17 Montgomery's work for eTreppid at issue in this action, see case no. 06-cv-00056 doc. 1 18 ¶¶ 1,7, 15-19 – that in 2007 were cutting-edge are now obsolete. Any need for secrecy to 19 protect these matters has faded, and the Protective Order is no longer necessary. When the 20 government invokes the state secrets privilege, it is the courts' "obligation to review the 21 [government's claims] with a very careful, indeed a skeptical, eye, and not to accept at face 22 value the government's claim or justification of privilege." Abilt v. CIA, 848 F.3d 305, 312 23 24 (4th Cir. 2017) (quoting Al-Haramain Islamic Found., Inc. v. Bush, 507 F.3d 1190, 1203 25 (9th Cir. 2007)). At this time, after such a long period of time has passed, any initial 26 justification for the Protective Order no longer justifies its restrictions on Montgomery or 27 his Data. 28

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C. The Governnment's State Secrets Claim Should Be Viewed with a Critical Eye, Where, as Here, It Conceals Constitutional Violations.

Montgomery has reported to the FBI illegal domestic surveillance of Americans by 3 the government in government programs that Montgomery worked in. Montgomery Decl. 4 5 ¶¶ 30, 34, 38. The Data that Lindell seeks to use is related to Montgomery's work.¹ Id. 6 ¶ 40. The government cannot be allowed to conceal its deprivations of constitutional rights 7 through domestic surveillance by invoking the state secrets doctrine. The Court should 8 review the government's professed need for the Protective Order critically to determine 9 whether it is asserting state secrets for on a legitimate basis or whether it is attempting to 10 cover up unconstitutional activities. 11

IV. CONCLUSION

Lindell should be granted leave to intervene in this action for the limited purpose of
obtaining the lifting or modification of the Protective Order, and the Protective Order
should be lifted.

17 || DATED: August <u>20th</u>, 2022

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¹ Members of Congress have stated that the CIA ran a bulk surveillance program that raises serious concerns about "warrantless backdoor searches of Americans." Senator Ron Wyden Press Release, February 10, 2022, *available at* <u>https://www.wyden.senate.gov/news/press-releases/wyden-and-heinrich-newly-declassified-documents-reveal-previously-secret-cia-</u>

26 https://www.wyden.senate.gov/news/press-releases/wyden-and-neurich-newly-declassified-documents-reveal-previously-secret-ciabulk-collection-problems-with-cia-handling-of-americans-information. See also Dustin Volz, Secret CIA Bulk Surveillance Program Includes Some Americans' Records, Senators Say, Wall St. J. (Feb. 10, 2022), available at https://www.wsj.com/articles/secret-cia-bulk-

27 surveillance-program-includes-some-americans-records-senators-say-11644549582.

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