# In The Matter Of: <br> Heafy $v$. <br> Fernandez \& Damout 

Keith Benoff, Ph.D. May 2, 2017

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Q. Doctor, please introduce yourself to the court and jury by giving us your name and professional address.
A. My name is Keith Benoff. I'm a neuropsychologist and my office is at 700 Palisade Avenue in Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey.
Q. Now, Doctor, you are being asked here today to
testify related to your examination of the Plaintiff, do you understand that?
A. Yes, I do.
Q. And you examined her on behalf of our office and supplied us with three reports?
A. That is correct.
Q. And do you understand that you have taken an oath to tell the truth and answer all the questions that are presented by either me or the attorney representing the Plaintiff?
A. Yes, I do.
Q. Now, the first thing I want you to do is tell the jury what is your profession?
A. I'm a neuropsychologist. That means it's my job to evaluate someone in terms of their cognitive functioning, things like intellectual memory, language skills but also to look at their psychological state.
25 Q. So how is that different than, let's say, a

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neurologist?
A. A neurologist is a physician, not a psychologist
and a neurologist would perform a physical examination whereas I do more of a cognitive and emotional evaluation.
Q. Now, Doctor, would you give us the benefit of your educational background, training and professional background?
A. Sure. I have a -- my undergraduate degree is from Yeshiva College, I then entered the Ferkauf Graduate School of Psychology where I first obtained a masters as part of my doctoral degree and I completed my doctoral degree in September of 2000.
Q. After your doctoral degree, did you go into any sort of private practice?
A. Well, before I went into private practice, I
worked as a post doctoral fellow at Montefiore Medical Center in the Bronx in their neuropsychology department.
Q. What happened after that?
A. Upon completing both the doctoral -- post doctoral, excuse me, fellowship and completing all the requirements for licensure, I then entered private practice in New Jersey.
24 Q. And are you currently practicing in New Jersey? 25 A. Yes, I am.

1 Q. Are you licensed in the State of New Jersey?
2 A. Iam.
3 Q. And are you part of a clinical practice?
4 A. Yes, I am.
5 Q. What does that practice consist of?
6 A. There are three neurologists and two neuropsychologists in the practice.
Q. And do you -- in your practice do you
specifically treat patients who have sustained concussions?
A. That is certainly part of the patients that I treat, a large portion.
Q. How often do you treat these type of patients?
A. By treating I mean evaluation. I don't do ongoing therapy with them, that's usually performed by a therapist of sorts like a speech or an occupational therapist but I do evaluation -- neuropsychological evaluations most of the time.
Q. Okay. And in a given week how often are you treating these type of patients or, excuse me, evaluating these type of patients?
A. It varies but typically I will evaluate about four or five people a week.
Q. And how much of your practice encompasses the field of neuropsychology?

1 A. Almost all of it.
2 Q. Do you have any privileges at any hospitals?
A. I'm a clinical assistant professor at the Rutgers

Medical School and I have that clinical appointment through my position as a neuropsychologist at the Kessler Institute For Rehabilitation.
Q. Rutgers Medical School which used to be known as UMDNJ?
A. That's correct.
Q. Have you ever had the honor of teaching
neuropsychology, clinical psychology or abnormal psychology to students?
A. Yes. Over the years of both the undergraduate and graduate level I've taught a variety of psychology and statistics classes.
Q. Doctor, what professional organizations, if any, are you affiliated with?
A. I am members of -- I am a member of the American Psychological Association, the International
Neuropsychological Society, the National Academy of Neuropsychology and the New Jersey Psychological Association.
Q. Doctor, do you take continuing education courses
with respect to your specialty?
25 A. I tend to -- there is no formal requirement in

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| :---: | :---: |
| 1 the State of New Jersey yet for psychologists to obtain | 1 conclusions right now, I was just asking him generally. |
| 2 clinical -- continuing ed courses, that's pending | 2 MR. CORRISTON: Okay. |
| 3 this coming fall according to legislation, that's stil | 3 MR. THAPAR: I wasn't going to go into th |
| 4 ready being prepared. That being the | 4 conclusion |
| 5 attend conferences as often as I can | 5 THE VIDEOGRAPHER: We're back on camera. |
| 6 regularly read professional journals from a variety of | 6 The time is |
| 7 organiz | 7 BY MR. THAPAR |
| 8 Q. | 8 Q. Doctor, have you previously been qualified as an |
|  | 9 expert in the field of neuropsychology |
| 10 A. | 10 New Jersey? |
| 11 Q. | 11 A. Yes, I have. |
| 12 A . | 12 Q. What about |
| 13 injury | 13 A. I have. |
| 14 dementia, multi | 14 MR. THAPAR: You know, at this point I'm |
| 15 Q. Doctor, have you ever authored any publications? | 15 going to offer Dr. Benoff as an expert in the field of |
| 16 A. I've authored -- I've authored publications about | 16 neuropsycholo |
| 17 the assessment of children with visual impairment or | 17 MR. CORRISTON: I'd like this opportunity to |
| 18 | 18 voir dire the doctor brief |
| 19 Q. | 19 VOIR DIRE EXAMINATION |
| 20 orga | 20 BY MR. CORRISTON |
| 21 A. Yes, I've pr | 21 Q. |
| $22 \text { as }$ | 22 required to take any continuing education course; is |
| 23 perspective in terms of visual impairment. I have also | 23 that correct? |
| 24 presented at a professional conference, something of a 25 more basic research nature in terms of visual processing | 24 A. It's my understanding that the law officially 25 comes into effect this coming fall. |
|  | Page 12 |
| 1 in child | 1 Q. You are not board certified, correct? |
| 2 Q. Doctor, you do independent medical examinations | 2 A. I am in the process of obtaining complete boa |
| 3 otherwise known as IMEs, correct? | 3 certification, my credentials are being reviewed. |
| 4 A. | 4 Q . Is that a no? |
| 5 Q. And do you do the | 5 A. Yes. |
| 6 and defendants? | 6 Q. Yes, it's a no, you're not board certified? |
| 7 A. I | 7 A. Not at the moment. |
| 8 Q. And do | 8 Q. And board certification would require you to take |
| 9 parties? | 9 continuing education courses, would it not? |
| 10 A. Yes. | 10 A. I believe it would depend on the board but, yes |
| 11 Q. | 11 it is typically a component of board certifica |
| 12 the Plaintiff and as part of the court rules, | 12 Q. And when did you become board eligible? |
| 13 allowed to have an expert examine the Plaintiff an | 13 A. I became board eligible -- again, it depends a |
| 14 produce a report. We asked you to review the record | 14 little bit on the board, they have different |
| 15 examine the Plaintiff and then provide us with a report, | 15 requirements in terms of when you had accumulated enough |
| 16 did you do that in this case? | 16 post doctoral hours. I didn't really pursue it earlier |
| 17 A. Yes, I did | 17 in my career simply because the overwhelming majority of |
| 18 Q. And were you able to come to a conclusion or come | 18 neuropsychologists did not pursue board certification |
| 19 to an opinion whether Plaintiff actually sustained any | 19 until relatively rece |
| 20 certain injuries from this accident? | 20 Q. So, Doctor, the answer is you don't know when you |
| 21 A. Yes. | 21 became board eligible |
| 22 MR. CORRISTON: Objection | 22 A. That's correct, I didn't |
| 23 THE VIDEOGRAPHER: Going | 23 Q. What board are you applying to? |
| 24 10:26. | 24 A. The American Board of Professional Psychology. |
| 25 MR. THAPAR: I wasn't going into the | 25 Q. And, Doctor, you indicated that you do plaintiffs |

and defense work; is that correct?
A. Yes.
Q. And you've previously testified that almost 99
percent of your work is for defense, correct?
A. That is correct.
Q. When was the last time you did an exam for -- on
behalf of a plaintiff?
A. I don't actually know because I don't keep track
of whether I'm hired by a plaintiff or a defense. To me if I'm coming in as an independent medical evaluation, it doesn't matter who hired me.
Q. So the answer is you don't know.
A. That is correct.
Q. Doctor, if you could please restrain your answers to my questions and not go off on what you want to say. If an answer is yes or no or a simple question, if you can please provide that, thank you.
Doctor, what percentage of your work is medical legal?
A. It's about 50 percent.
Q. And when you say 50 percent, is that time or income?
23 A. Time.
24 Q. And what percentage of it is income?
25 A. I have income that comes from different sources,

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I don't really divide up how much I'm deriving from individual types of patients.
Q. So you don't know.
A. No, I don't.
Q. Okay. But it obviously is profitable or you
wouldn't do it.
A. That is correct.
Q. Now, Doctor, when was the last time you authored
a report for defendant that indicated that a plaintiff
suffered a related injury regarding a traumatic brain
injury and had permanent injuries?
A. I can't answer that, I don't know.
Q. Doctor, you've been asked that question on
several previous occasions, correct?
A. Yes.
Q. And you've never -- strike that. Going back at least four years you've been asked that question.
A. It could be.
Q. And you've never -- knowing that you're in the
medical legal and testifying before a judge and a jury today, you've never looked that up to give a judge and a jury an honest opinion of what you find in your patients?
A. I don't think it's relevant so I haven't looked it up.
Q. Okay. Well, you may not think it's relevant but you were, in fact, ordered by a court to present such documents, were you not?
A. I made it clear to the court --
Q. Yes or no, were you or were not ordered by a court to present such documents?
A. There was an order.
Q. And that order you specifically -- well, strike
that. Counsel on your behalf specifically told the court no such reports exist, is that true or untrue? A. He may have said that but I didn't tell him that.
Q. So you're telling this court -- you're telling
this court that another officer of the court, an attorney, purged himself within a court?

MR. THAPAR: Objection.
THE VIDEOGRAPHER: We're going off camera. The time is $10: 32$.

MR. THAPAR: Objection to the fact that it's, number one, hearsay because it's a nontestifying witness. We have to call in that -- whoever that attorney was to come testify as to why he said that and, number two, the relevance of it. We don't know anything about this. We don't know why the expert -- why the attorney said that, we have no knowledge about this so based on that, I'm holding my objection and if you'd

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like to proceed, then that's fine, we can deal with it later on.

MR. CORRISTON: That's fair, thank you.
THE VIDEOGRAPHER: We're back on camera. The time is $10: 33$.

BY MR. CORRISTON:
Q. So, Doctor, you are aware there was a court order and that an attorney on your behalf said that no such reports exist?
A. Yes.
Q. And, Doctor, you've testified in multiple trials and depositions on behalf of defendants; is that correct?
A. Yes.
Q. And, Doctor, would it be true to say that in none of those occasions for the defense have you ever testified that a person suffered permanent injuries as a result of a mild traumatic brain injury?
A. Yes.
Q. Doctor, you indicated that you've authored some authoritative publications and you've made presentations; is that correct?
A. I didn't characterize it as authoritative.
Q. My apologies. You authored literature and made presentations.
A. Yes.
Q. Have you ever made a presentation on mild
traumatic brain injury?
A. No, I haven't.
Q. Have you ever authored anything that was
published on mild traumatic brain injury?
A. No.
Q. Have you ever worked with any professional sports
organizations regarding neuropsychology?
A. No.
Q. Have you ever worked with any youth organizations regarding neuropsychology?
A. No.
Q. Thank you. I have nothing further.

MR. THAPAR: Any objection?
MR. CORRISTON: No objection.

## EXAMINATION

BY MR. THAPAR:
Q. Doctor, I'm going to ask some questions regarding

Plaintiff, Cassandra Heafy, and when I do that, I'm going to ask you a question that calls for an opinion. Do you agree to give your testimony within a reasonable degree of medical certainty?
24 A. Yes.
25 Q. Doctor, you were retained by our office to do a

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neuropsychological evaluation of Plaintiff; is that correct?
A. Yes, I was.
Q. I have three reports in front of me, is that how many reports you authored?
A. Yes.
Q. And do you have those reports in front of you
today?
A. I do.

10 Q. Now, feel free to refer back to them at any point
for any question that either myself or the other attorney may ask. Were you paid for your time to review the records and prepare these reports?
A. Yes.
Q. And are you, in fact, being paid to be here
today?
A. Yes.
Q. How much are you being paid to be here?
A. The fee for half a day of testimony is $\$ 4,500$.
Q. Now, with regard to the Plaintiff, when did you first meet her?
A. September 19th of 2016.

23 Q. And did the Plaintiff fill out a patient
24 information sheet when she presented to you?
25 A. Yes, she did.

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Q. What is the point of that patient information sheet?
A. The patient information sheet is presented
primarily to get consent to do the evaluation.
Q. And, now, after that you were given some
information and you took a history from the Plaintiff?
A. That is correct.
Q. Did she tell you how the accident occurred?
A. She did.
Q. What happened -- well, what did she tell you how the accident occurred?
A. Ms. Heafy reported --

MR. CORRISTON: Excuse me, Doctor, just for the record, could you tell us what report you're referring to if it's by date and if you are referring to a page.

THE WITNESS: Okay.
MR. CORRISTON: Thank you.
THE WITNESS: I am referring to my September 19th, 2016 report and I'm starting at page five. Ms. Heafy told me that she was a front seat passenger riding to school and that upon impact she blacked out and saw stars though she did not lose consciousness. She recalled that she was sitting and waiting for emergency responders who eventually did respond and she was taken

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to Valley Hospital for evaluation.
BY MR. THAPAR:
Q. And so after the accident just briefly what happened?
A. It's my understanding that she was taken to the hospital to follow up on some symptoms that she was experiencing, she was evaluated at the hospital and discharged.
Q. Okay. Now, she told you she experienced severe daily headaches; is that correct?
A. When I asked her about what she was experiencing during the initial period after the accident, the first month or two, she told me that she was experiencing severe daily headaches, she was having some pain in the neck, some sensitivity to light, intermittent confusion, difficulty with reading and comprehension, memory and concentration.
Q. Okay. Now, we are going to come back to some of these complaints she had in a little bit. Did you also take a medical history from the Plaintiff?
A. I did.
Q. Was it positive for anything of note?
A. Her history was positive -- what she reported to me was that she had a history of asthma.
25 Q. Did that come into play for any of your
conclusions?
A. No, it didn't.
Q. Now, did you also take a social history from the

Plaintiff?
A. I did.
Q. And was there anything of significance from that?
A. She told me that upon graduation from high school

8 she was an average student, she told me that she went on
9 to attend Ramapo College though she had plans to transfer, she had not yet transferred to another university. She told me that she sleeps -- she goes to bed by 11, might take sometime to go to sleep, she wakes up by 10:30 in the morning. She told me she drives without any difficulty, she's physically active, and she reported having normal activities around the home and responsibilities and she denied a history of anxiety or depression being consistently present before or after the accident of 12-3-12 though she did have periods of anxiety beforehand.
Q. Okay. Was she experiencing any nightmares or flashbacks?
22 A. No, she denied having nightmares and flashbacks.
23 Q . Was there any significance of that?
24 A. Well, it just means that sleep is not disturbed
25 by any emotional difficulties or when driving that, you

Page 22
1 know, when facing a similar kind of situation to a motor 2 vehicle accident, she's not having an anxious reaction.
3 Q. Okay. Now, did you review records in preparation
of authoring this report?
5 A. Yes, I did.
6 Q. Let's start with the most recent record to the or
7 most proximate as far as time goes record there is to
8 the date of the accident, which would be the hospital
record; is that correct?
10 A. Yes.
11 Q. Now, did the Plaintiff go to the hospital after
12 the accident?
13 A. She was taken to the hospital.
14 Q. What did she complain about at the hospital?
15 A. She reported having a headache.
16 Q. Did she have any other complaints?
17 A. She denied having loss of consciousness or
18 dizziness.
19 Q. So the only complaint at the hospital was
20 headache?
21 A. To my knowledge, yes.
22 Q. And how was she doing as far as her mental status 23 or cognitive exam?
24 A. She was characterized as awake, alert,
25 interactive and speaking normally.

1 Q. How was she doing psychiatrically?
2 A. She was characterized as cooperative and there
3 was no mention of any anxiety or other kinds of symptoms.
5 Q. Was she discharged at this time?
A. Yes, she was.
Q. Who was the next doctor she went to?
A. I believe she went to Dr. Bottiglieri about a week later.
10 Q. What did she complain of?
A. When she was evaluated by Dr. Bottiglieri, she reported experiencing headache and dizziness.
Q. Was the headache mild, moderate, severe?
A. She characterized it as mild and improving.
Q. So it was getting better?
A. That's what she said.
Q. Did she have any complaints of loss of balance or memory disturbance?
A. She denied it.
Q. Was the headache exacerbated by anything?
A. When asked, she said that her studies at school did not worsen the headaches.
Q. Did not worsen the headaches?

4 A. Yes.
25 Q. Was there any significance to that?
A. Yes, in other words, when she was challenging herself cognitively, presumably she was studying with a degree of intensity, that did not produce any increase in headache or other symptoms.
Q. Why is that something of note?
A. Well, often people do experiencing -- who are experiencing headaches, do have worsening of headaches when they are cognitively challenging themselves in the immediate period right after a concussion.
Q. However, she was not experiencing.
A. She said no.
Q. Her record also notes that her mental status
appeared oriented to the three spheres, what does that mean?
A. That she was not confused with respect to person, place and time.
Q. Was she having any memory issue at all at the time?
A. According to Dr. Bottiglieri, memory was intact.
Q. What about her attention or her concentration?
A. He characterized it as normal.
Q. Did she undergo any tests at that point?
A. He did some basic mental -- sort of mental screening type tasks, things like serial sevens and following three-step commands and she was able to do
that without any difficulty.
Q. So how was she doing?
A. He characterized her as performing within normal limits.
5 Q. And this is all administered by her own doctor?
6 A. Yes, I believe that it was the doctor that she
7 sought out about a week after the accident.
8 Q. So when Plaintiff told you that she was having
9 problems with comprehension, reduced memory and
10 concentration following the accident, was that supported
11 by her own doctor's records?
12 A. Well, her doctor's records support headache.
13 Q. Okay. Was it supported --
14 A. Headache and dizziness.
15 Q. All right. So when she was saying problems with
16 comprehension, reduced memory or concentration, was that
17 supported by --
18 A. No, actually it was denied.
19 Q. So essentially she was telling you one thing and 20 the doctor's records are saying something else?
21 A. Yes.
22 Q. Then she presented again one week later to her
23 own doctor?
24 A. On the 18th of December, yes.
25 Q. How was she doing at that point?

1 A. She reported that she was feeling well and had no
2 complaints stating that her symptoms had resolved.
Q. Did the doctor note that she had any restrictions
or limitations at all?
A. He said there are no limitations.
Q. Did the doctor note anything wrong with her at
all during this visit?
A. No.
Q. And how long after the accident is this?
A. About two weeks.
Q. Two weeks after the accident?
A. Roughly.
Q. So now we're two weeks after the accident and the records you have indicate there was -- that she had no more complaints at all?
A. Yes.

17 Q. You then reviewed records by a Dr. Melissa Segal?
18 A. Yes.
19 Q. Who is that?
20 A. I believe she is a primary care provider.
21 Q. And did reviewing these records help you at all?
22 A. Yes, it gave a little bit -- excuse me -- more
23 detail in the way of medical history. Apparently she
24 was found to have a borderline prolonged QT interval,
25 which is a cardiac condition that I'm not able to
Q. Does it help you get some background on the Plaintiff?
A. Certainly.
Q. And help you establish, let's say, a baseline for the Plaintiff?
A. It's certainly a piece of it.
Q. And does it help you with how the Plaintiff is doing over time?
A. It does give me a sense of how she is doing at various points. Q. Did you note any complaints of, let's say, either traumatic brain injury or concussion syndromes to her primary care doctor afterwards?
A. No, actually there is neurological examination
was within normal limits and there was no mention of symptoms.
Q. Now, at Plaintiff's deposition she stated that

12 review any record that contradicted that?
A. It's my understanding that the -- there was a
history of some hypoglycemia, which was associated with some dizziness.
Q. That was before the accident?
A. Yes.
Q. Now, you then performed a variety of tests on Plaintiff; is that correct?
A. Yes.
Q. We don't have to go into detail about each test but generally what were those tests?
A. I evaluated a variety of cognitive demeans. I looked at verbal intellectual and reasoning abilities, nonverbal intellectual and reasoning, visual and verbal

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memory, attention and concentration, language skills and what we call higher executive functions.
Q. Okay. And do you personally administer these tests?
A. Yes, I do.
Q. So from start to finish?
A. I do the whole evaluation.
Q. Any reason you don't have an assistant or someone
else do the test for you?
A. I prefer to administer the test in addition to
performing the interview because that gives me a chance to spend more time with the individual I'm evaluating and get a more complete sense of how they are doing.
Q. Now, how did Plaintiff do on these tests?
A. In general her performance was within the expected range.
Q. Okay. Can you go do -- can you elaborate on that?
A. Sure. On tests that measure preinjury function such as reading ability and general knowledge, her performance was within the lower half to around the average, which would indicate that before the onset of the accident we would expect her abilities to fall primarily within that lower half of the average range. 25 Q. Let me just cut you off for one second. Why do
you say that that gives a pre-accident -- I don't remember the exact word you used but it gives you an idea of how she was doing pre-accident.
A. Oh, it's well established within the literature

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A. So as a result of that, we would expect that most of her scores would fall within that area of the average range. That being said, there is an extensive literature that indicates that we are not -- we don't perform uniformly well on every test we take. In other words, we would expect most of the scores to fall within that range but we also expect some scores to be higher and some scores to be lower.
Q. Okay. So now I see that she was below the
fiftieth percentile for some of these tests, what do you take that to mean?
A. That's where she was expected to perform.
Q. If a person is scoring low on certain tests, does
it mean that they automatically have a traumatic brain injury?
A. No, not at all.

25 Q. And why not?
A. Well, again, as I mentioned a moment ago, it is not uncommon in the normal healthy population, meaning people that have not had a concussion, to have scores that would be characterized as atypically low but also to have scores that would be characterized as atypically high, basically we have strengths and weaknesses.
Q. Was she atypically high in any areas?
A. Actually yes. She had -- particularly on a
couple of executive function tasks such as number sequencing and letter sequencing where you had to connect things in a more complex array as quickly as you could. Her performance was at the highest end of the average range or even above the average range.
Q. What do you take that to mean?
A. I take that to mean that in a cognitive function that is typically affected by concussion in a negative way was actually not affected by it at all.
Q. So those tests would help you establish whether
her cognitive function was depleted or deteriorated? A. Well, we would never make an interpretation based on one or two individual tests but certainly it lends credence to her performing within her expected range. Q. But she happened to actually do well in that?
A. She did exceptionally well, yes.

25 Q. So would it -- so you just kind of mentioned this
but let me ask it this way: Would it be appropriate to ever take any individual score and come to a diagnostic conclusion?
A. No. When we do a neuropsychological evaluation, we administer a battery of tests from which we get a large collection of scores and we look at the overall profile of scores.
Q. Is it common to have an individual scoring within
the average percentile and it happens to be low in a couple specific areas?
A. Oh, absolutely.
Q. Why is that?
A. Because as I mentioned before, it's normal to
have strengths and weaknesses, some things that we excel at, some things that we're not quite as good at but the majority of things fall right around what we're expected to be able to do.
Q. And when I ask if it's common, I mean amongst people who do not have a traumatic brain injury or post concussion syndrome.
A. Yes, it is common in the population as a whole.
Q. And so you're just saying that the one area could just be a weakness.
A. It could well have been a weakness that was present before the accident.

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Q. Now, Doctor, I see in your note that you state that she was putting forth inconsistent effort during the exams, what does that mean?
A. Well, it means that on a stand alone objective measure of performance that her scores consistently fell below the cutoff and that could be as a result of a number of reasons but what it means that we do not have objective evidence that adequate effort was put forth throughout the evaluation.
Q. And does this go into your analysis?
A. Sure, that also can account for some low test scores.
Q. Now, besides the tests you performed, were you
able to come to conclusions or form an opinion based on your observations of the Plaintiff?
A. Well, during the evaluation, during the clinical interview and the testing session, she evidenced no difficulties with speech, she was fluent, she was articulate, she was able to answer questions without any difficulty. She did not struggle for information in any particular fashion, she had no difficulty understanding tasks and completing them when presented.
Q. Was she having any difficulty finding the right word or putting a sentence together, anything like that? A. Not at all.

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Q. Would those be characteristics of someone with post concussion syndrome?
A. It's definitely one of the symptoms that can be associated with it.
Q. Were you able to make any notes of Plaintiff's demeanor based on her social media or anything else about her?

MR. CORRISTON: Objection.
THE VIDEOGRAPHER: Going off camera. The time is $10: 53$.

MR. CORRISTON: I'm going to object to anything with regard to social media. The report was -and with regard to social media was rendered well after discovery cutoff date and in addition it was information that was readily available and the doctor has failed to indicate any source of where he got that information.

MR. THAPAR: Okay. The social media was provided with a Certificate of Due Diligence. I don't believe -- I believe there was a letter objecting to it but I don't believe any motion was ever filed to bar it. With that said, I'm going to continue with this -- I'm not going to very specifics of the social media, just going into generally how it helped his opinion.

MR. CORRISTON: I understand that. I want to know although you indicated there was an amendment

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with a certification, there was nothing attached to the certification outlining who obtained that information and how it was obtained. Without that, that certification is irrelevant. In addition, the social media has no relevance in this matter because it didn't change the doctor's opinion and it's not -- nothing contained in the social media is any claim that the Plaintiff has made. There is no relevance to it because she claims she couldn't go away, she didn't claim she could do various activities, that's not her complaint.

MR. THAPAR: Okay. We can go back on the record.

THE VIDEOGRAPHER: We're back on camera. The time is $10: 55$.

BY MR. THAPAR:
Q. So, Doctor, were you able to make any note of

Plaintiff's demeanor based on her social media?
A. Her social media content is typical for what you would expect of someone her age.
Q. So did that help you in your analysis at all?
A. Well, it just -- it was corroborative evidence
that there wasn't any meaningful change to what would be expected for a young adult.
Q. So a question most people have is how do you know if she's doing better, worse or the same as she was

1 doing before the accident? There is a term called 2 baseline, what does that mean?
3 A. Baseline refers to what was the person's overall
functioning like prior to the occurrence of some event.
Q. So why is it important to have a baseline when
evaluating whether an accident actually caused any cognitive issues?
A. Because the neuropsychological evaluation
measures someone's ability at one point in time but in order to know how well a person is functioning relative to what they were beforehand, you need to have some understanding as to what their functioning was like beforehand.
Q. And were you able to establish a baseline for the Plaintiff?
A. Yes.
Q. How did you do that?
A. Again, as I mentioned, it's with measures such as reading ability and general knowledge.
Q. Was there anything else that helped you?
A. Well, her school records as well.
Q. So were you able to review her school records?
A. Yes, I was.
Q. Why was it important to review that?

25 A. School records also give an indication as to what

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someone's academic -- you know, sort of general achievement is like.
Q. Okay. And in this case you were able to compare
her -- the Plaintiff's pre-accident condition to her post accident condition?
A. Yes.
Q. And you were able to compare her pre-accident
school records to her post accident school records.
A. That is correct.
Q. Okay. Was there anything of note in her school records that stood out to you?
A. Yes, there was. Particularly when you look at -when you look at her tenth grade records, that would be, if I'm not mistaken, that's the year of the actual accident. If you look at the first marking period of the year, which is prior to the accident in December, her grades ranged from a 73 in chemistry or actually looks like -- yes, a 73 in chemistry to -- among the academic subjects, to an 82 in English. When you look at marking period three, there is significant improvement in English, in Spanish, U.S. history and a smaller degree of improvement in geometry. When you look at marking period four, by the end of year there is improvement in English, Spanish, U.S. history, geometry and chemistry.

1 Q. So from the first marking period, which predated this accident, to the fourth marking period, which was a couple months or a few months after this accident, was she doing better, worse or the same?
5 A. Well, the fourth marking period I assume would be the end of the academic year so it's probably, if I had to guess, closer to about five months after the accident in question. That being the case, there was clear improvement from before the accident to after the accident.
Q. So she was actually doing better?
A. Yes.
Q. And what do you take away from this analysis?
A. Well, what that demonstrates to me is even as early as the third marking period but corroborated by the fourth marking period, there was no significant impact that the injury sustained had on her academic abilities.
Q. So let's go to your conclusions that you have. Your first conclusion is that you found that Plaintiff at worse sustained a mild traumatic brain injury or concussion from this accident; is that correct?
A. Yes, it is.
Q. How did you come to that conclusion?

5 A. Well, the diagnostic criteria for a concussion

Page 40
would be either a brief loss or alteration of consciousness, you need not have a loss of consciousness to be diagnosed with a concussion. And also there is no abnormal imaging of the brain and neurological examination is within normal limits.
Q. Okay. So how did you come to a conclusion that there was some sort of concussion?
A. She reported feeling dizziness and headache,
which are typical post concussive symptoms that one would often experience right after an accident, a head injury.
Q. So is it based solely on what she's saying or is there some sort of other objective test that you are using to diagnose that?
A. There is no clinically used diagnostic test that a hospital or some other individual would administer on a consistent basis immediately after this kind of incident so it's based on symptom report.
Q. Okay. So it's based solely on what she's saying?
A. Yes.
Q. Okay. And so in giving the Plaintiff the benefit of the doubt, you said that your opinion was that she at worse sustained a concussion.
A. Yes.

25 Q. Did she -- did it appear that she ever recovered
from this?
A. Well, her performance on cognitive functioning
when I tested her was overwhelmingly within the expected range and if we look back at the medical records, as early as two weeks after the accident, she stated that she had made a recovery from the symptoms she was experiencing.
Q. So is it possible -- is it not just possible, is
it probable that she recovered within two weeks?
A. It's entirely possible.
Q. Possible or probable?

MR. CORRISTON: Objection.
THE VIDEOGRAPHER: We're going off camera.
The time is 11 a.m.
MR. CORRISTON: Asked and answered.
MR. THAPAR: Okay.
THE VIDEOGRAPHER: We're back on camera. The time is 11:01.

BY MR. THAPAR:
Q. Doctor, I know it's possible, would you say it's also probable?
A. Yes.
Q. And, Doctor, what did you conclude overall from all the tests that you performed?
25 A. That she has in a general sense made an excellent

Page 42
1 recovery from any cognitive difficulties that might have
2 been present.
Q. And now from your review of all the records, did
the Plaintiff's life change in any fashion as a result
of this accident?
A. Not meaningful, no.
Q. What about driving?
A. She reported to me when I evaluated her, that
she's driving without difficulty.
10 Q. Was she -- are you aware when she obtained her
driver's license?
A. I believe according to the social media records,
that it was about a week or so afterward.
Q. After this accident?
A. After the accident.
Q. As far as high school, did that change as a
result of this accident?
A. Well, certainly academically as discussed before,
her performance improved in that year afterward, it didn't decline.
Q. Sports wise, did that change?
A. She reported being physically active when I interviewed her.
24 Q. What about playing on any organized teams?
25 A. She, I believe, does participate on team sports.

1 Q. At least she did in high school.
2 A. Yes.
3 Q. What about social life, did that change?
A. There is no evidence of it from the social media reviewed.
Q. So did you find any way that her life has changed because of this accident?
A. No.
Q. So within a reasonable degree of
neuropsychological certainty, did the Plaintiff suffer from any cognitive issues as a direct result of this accident?
A. No.
Q. Thank you, Doctor.

EXAMINATION
BY MR. CORRISTON:
Q. Doctor, what do you usually charge or what's the
reimbursement rate you receive when you do a neuropsyche examination for a private patient?
A. It will vary. I actually don't keep track of what the rate of reimbursement is, it varies from company to company. When I see patients at Kessler and in the office, I only see Medicare and I'm not certain as to what the current Medicare rate is.
Q. Would it be fair to say that the rate in which

Page 44
you received in this case for an examination of Ms. Heafy and a report was substantially greater than your reimbursement rate for private patients?
A. Yes, it is.
Q. And, Doctor, how many times have you testified
either in a deposition or in court on behalf of defendants in the last 24 months?
A. I don't keep a record of exactly how many times
but I can estimate.
Q. Please do.
A. Including both deposition and courtroom testimony?
Q. Yes, please.
A. I believe it's been about seven or eight times.
Q. In the last two years?
A. Yeah.
Q. Now, Doctor, you would agree with me that when you're rendering your reports, the three reports that you authored, the wording and the language you use is important because people are going to read these and rely on these.
A. I assume that about all reports that I write.
Q. And you use specific words and specific terms at 4 specific times to give specific opinions.
25 A. For all reports no matter what the source.
Q. And you use those words carefully?
A. Yes.
Q. And they are chosen carefully.
A. Yes.
Q. And they are chosen with a purpose.
A. Yes.
Q. And would you agree that you found that Ms. Heafy
suffered a mild traumatic brain injury as a result of this accident?
A. Yes, she meets the criteria.
Q. And are you aware of the severity of the impact?
A. I don't have any specifics of the impact, I only
had the hospital records and what she reported to me in the clinical interview.
Q. Do you know if anybody else was injured in the accident?

MR. THAPAR: Objection.
THE VIDEOGRAPHER: We're going off camera. The time is 11:05.

MR. THAPAR: My objection is to the
relevance of anyone else being injured in this. I don't believe it's relevant to this case at all.

MR. CORRISTON: And my response would that just be in certain documents and whether or not you're going to intend to introduce certain documents it would

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cover some relevance.
MR. THAPAR: Do you know --
MR. CORRISTON: Trial strategy.
MR. THAPAR: Okay. I wasn't sure if you --
all right, we can go back on.
THE VIDEOGRAPHER: We're back on camera. Time is 11:06.

THE WITNESS: I don't know if anyone else was injured.

BY MR. CORRISTON:
Q. Thank you. Doctor, did you review Ms. Heafy's deposition?
A. No, I did not.
Q. Did you review her Answers to Interrogatories?
A. I scanned it, yes.
Q. Doctor, the test that you performed, how long
from beginning to end does it take?
A. It varies differently person to person simply
because different people require different amounts or different breaks of different lengths. Some people prefer to go straight through without any breaks. I offer the option as to whatever people prefer, typically would be about half a day.
24 Q. So it requires great effort.
25 A. No, I wouldn't say it requires great effort, it
requires effort for blocks of time with the understanding that you will ask for breaks as needed.
Q. And in your report you didn't report anywhere where Ms. Heafy was in any way uncooperative.
A. Right.
Q. She fulfilled all your requirements as you requested them.
A. She cooperated with the evaluation.
Q. And you said she -- there was an issue of effort, correct?
A. Correct.
Q. How old was she at the time?
A. When I evaluated her, she was 19.
Q. And, Doctor, isn't it true that many people undergoing this test as the day wears on, there is some fatigue that sets in?
A. Yes.
Q. And that can affect effort?
A. It could.
Q. In fact, Doctor, you've authored multiple reports to multiple defense exams where you cited effort as something that was lacking at some point during your examination.
A. Yes.

25 Q. So it's not uncommon.

1 A. Not uncommon only because I'm interpreting the standardized test according to the guidelines.
Q. I understand but it's not an uncommon finding.
A. Correct.
Q. And did that in any way affect your ability to come to a conclusion?
A. Well, if there is evidence of inadequate effort --
Q. In this case.
A. Yes. In this case if there is evidence of inadequate effort, one has to consider that the low scores are the consequence of effort rather than as a consequence of true ability.
Q. But doesn't the test take that into consideration
that's why there is multiple things that you do to compensate for that?
A. Well, but her scores were below the cutoff on all of the measures of that test.
Q. What do you mean by that?
A. Her scores, there were multiple scores on that word memory test that were below the cut for adequate effort.
Q. And you wouldn't expect a 19-year-old college student to fully understand and appreciate the type of test you're doing considering you have a Ph.D. and
you've had multiple years of education, correct?
A. I'm not sure --
Q. Let me rephrase it. She's not an expert in these tests, is she?
A. The assumption is that no layperson is.
Q. And that this is not something that somebody
undergoes on a routine basis.
A. That is correct.
Q. And, Doctor, there is a percentage of people who
suffer permanent injuries as a result of mild traumatic
brain injuries based on literature; is that correct?
A. Yes.
Q. And, Doctor, some studies indicate that's up to 15 percent of people.
A. Some of the older studies do indicate that, yes.
Q. By the way, Doctor, in those studies do you know
how many people in any of those studies were 14 years of age when they suffered the injury?
A. Typically those studies are done on adults but there definitely is literature on children but it's typically -- most research studies are done on adults. Q. So it would be fair to say most of that research is done on people not Cassandra Heafy's age?
A. Yes.
Q. And, Doctor, would you agree with me that in the

Page 50
last five years, seven years there has been more focus
on mild traumatic brain injuries?
A. Yes, that's true there has been a greater focus.
Q. Especially in children.
A. I would characterize it for both children and adults.
Q. Were you -- are you -- strike that. You said
you're a member of the New Jersey Neuropsychic
Association; is that correct?
A. Yes.
Q. Do you know if that organization takes any
position with regard to youth sports and head injuries?
A. I believe like most neuropsychologically or
psychologically oriented organizations we've become increasingly -- by "we" I mean the membership are increasingly concerned about the possibility of difficulties after head injury.
Q. Doctor, do you have anybody in your family that plays soccer?

MR. THAPAR: Objection.
THE VIDEOGRAPHER: We're going off camera. The time is $11: 11$.

MR. THAPAR: Going into his personal life, I mean, if you want to ask generally if he knows about soccer injuries or something like that that's fine but I
mean.
MR. CORRISTON: I'll continue and you can make that objection.

THE VIDEOGRAPHER: We're back on camera. The time is 11:12.

THE WITNESS: I have nephews that play soccer.

BY MR. CORRISTON:
Q. And are they -- are you aware of whether or not they've been advised that heading is no longer permitted in youth soccer?
A. I don't know, I haven't spoken with him.
Q. Are you aware of that?
A. No, I do not keep up to date on regulations of individual leagues.
Q. Were you aware of whether or not that recommendation came from any medical organization? A. I believe it is recommended by either the

American Academy of Pediatrics or the American Congress of Rehabilitation Medicine. There are some organizations that definitely recommend not heading balls.
Q. Would it be fair to say that the literature also supports the younger you are, the more susceptible you are to mild traumatic brain injury?

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1 A. There is that idea in the literature.
2 Q. And you would -- Cassandra you are aware was 14 at the time of the accident.
A. Yes.
Q. Do you know what you were paid for your exam and all your reports in this case?
A. I can --
Q. The total amount?
A. I can look at the records. The bill for the
initial evaluation and review of records came to $\$ 5,195$.
For the first review of additional records, which was the school records, there was a fee of $\$ 315$ and I'm not sure about the most recent one, I'd have to look through here. For the last one it was $\$ 126$.
Q. So, Doctor, by my abbreviated math, you've been paid almost $\$ 10,000$ for this case including your testimony today.
A. In that vicinity, yes.
Q. And, Doctor, you know you're not an advocate for anybody, correct, you are supposed to be giving an independent medical opinion.
A. I do. Can I clarify my answer just to be certain --
Q. Yes.

25 A. -- that I'm clear? What I meant before is my
practice gets paid that amount, I personally do not get paid that amount.
Q. But you share in that amount.
A. Yes.
Q. How much is your share of that?
A. I earned a percentage of what I generate after
expenses.
Q. And how much approximately would that be in this
case?
A. Approximately 35 percent.
Q. So approximately $\$ 3500$ ?
A. Yeah.
Q. To you personally?
A. Yes.

15 Q. And the remainder to the practice?
16 A. That is correct.
17 Q. And that would go to pay for the overhead so you wouldn't have to pay for overhead as well in your regular practice.
A. That is correct.
Q. Thank you. Now, Doctor, you noted all these grades with regards to Ms. Heafy and her condition going into the second after Sophomore year, junior year and senior year, correct?
A. Yes.

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Q. You would agree that the grades in her freshman year are actually higher?
A. Yes.
Q. And you would agree that she's struggled in college as well.
A. Her grades were -- yes, they were somewhat lower
in college than they were in high school.
Q. In fact, her grade point average freshman year
was almost an 85.
A. Yes.
Q. Did she ever obtain an 85 average again all
through high school?
A. I'd have to check. Let's see, she obtained for tenth grade it looks like it was 79.17 and for 11th grade it appears -- my copy isn't very perfect but it looks like 77.9 and it looks like 76.67 for 12th grade. Q. So, in fact, from before the accident till after the accident her grades went down.
A. Well, I don't --
Q. Yes or no?

21 A. It depends on what window you look at.
22 Q. I'm looking at freshman year through senior year, 23 she went from an 85 to a 76.67 .
24 A. She went from 84.99 to 76.67 , yes.
25 Q. That's down is it not, yes or no?

1 A. If you compare those --
2 Q. Doctor, yes or no, is it down?
3 A. For those two points in time.
Q. Thank you. Doctor, are you aware of whether or
not Ms. Heafy ever complained that as a result of this accident she couldn't drive?
A. No.
Q. Did she ever complain she couldn't go on vacation?
A. Not to my knowledge.
Q. Did she ever complain of not being able to engage in social activities?
A. Not to my knowledge.
Q. By the way, Doctor, how many of your private patients do you go on their Facebook page and review?
A. I don't review anyone's Facebook pages online.
Q. How many of your private patients have you asked
for them to supply you with their Facebook pages or any social media page?
A. I don't ask anyone for their Facebook pages.
Q. Doctor, you indicated before that neuropsychology purpose with regard to incidents like this is to give some type of diagnosis with regard to mild traumatic brain injury; is that correct?
25 A. No, not necessarily a diagnosis. The goal was to
get a sense for -- the ultimate goal that matters most of all is what is a person's functioning like.
Q. And, Doctor, you don't use CAT scans or MRIs as you indicated before, would it be fair to say that they are not always effective in a mild traumatic brain injury case?
A. I would only use imaging studies as a way of trying to classify the type of injury.
Q. And it's true to say that many times mild traumatic brain injuries don't appear on diagnostic testing?
A. No, by definition a mild traumatic brain injury is not going to have abnormal imaging.
Q. You are aware of the recent studies in the NFL?
A. I've seen some recent studies relating to the NFL.
Q. And, in fact, they have to do autopsies on these
players who have brain injuries, do they not, to determine the extent and severity of their condition?
A. The standard of practice if you are doing research that is authoritative is regardless of the source of a problem, you would look at autopsy. Q. And you had no baseline test for Ms. Heafy, did you, to compare to her current status?
25 A. I had no actual test administered before the
accident.
Q. And, in fact, she didn't have any tests nor an extensive neuropsychic exam after the accident either, did she?
A. Not until much later.
Q. And you indicated before with regard to Dr.

Bottiglieri's examination, that was only for
approximately three weeks after the accident, correct? A. Yes.

10 Q. Doctor, would it be fair to say that Ms. Heafy
11 going into the test that you administered, it would be
12 extremely difficult for her to manipulate her responses
13 to come up to a conclusion that would be false?
14 A. I'm not sure I understand the question.
15 Q. Sure. What part didn't you understand just so we 16 can be clear?
17 A. I'm just not sure precisely what you are asking and I don't want to mislead.
Q. The average person would not be able to manipulate the results in the test you performed.
A. Not easily, no.
Q. Especially someone 19 years of age.
A. I would say any adult.
Q. When we reclassify Ms. Heafy as an adult.

25 A. She's about 18.

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Q. That's your classification.
A. Well, when I tested her, yes, so she's an adult.

She would sign herself and her parents wouldn't sign her in.
Q. I understand but being an adult in the eyes of
the law and being an adult in the real world are two
different things, correct, you would agree with that?
A. To a degree, yes.
Q. Some people can be geniuses at 14 and some people at 21 could have deficiencies.
A. Life experience has as much to do with it as ability.
Q. Do you know what Ms. Heafy's complaints were at the time she gave her deposition, her major complaint was?
A. I didn't review the deposition transcript so I can't say.
Q. Doctor, if you could turn to your report, the
first report, as long as I can find it, and page 11.
A. Yes.
Q. Starting with the word "reduced," could you read that to the jury, please?
A. "Reduced performance was found in general on
tasks measuring memory and those particularly sensitive to visual attention/concentration."
Q. What does that mean?
A. What it meant was that not on tasks on the
overwhelming majority of tasks measuring executive function which would look at abstract reasoning, it would look visual and verbal, it would look at phonemic fluency, semantic fluency, shifting between verbal sets, shifting been visual and mental sets, hypothesis generation and testing, on those tasks her performance was within the expected range. It was just on these specific relatively small number of tasks that she obtained reduced scores.
Q. And what are those tasks that we're talking about?
A. We're talking about tasks that measure visual attention and concentration such as the computerized test of vigilance that I administered where you are supposed to focus in and do a specific task for 15 minutes and on tasks of -- also on some tasks of memory.
Q. Doctor, could you turn to page nine of your report?
A. Uh-huh.
Q. Last paragraph.
A. Yes.
Q. Could you read that sentence?

25 A. "Current test results demonstrated mostly intact

Page 60
cognitive --"
Q. Stop there. You used the word "mostly".
A. Yes.
Q. Your word, correct?
A. Yes.
Q. Continue.
A. "Ms. Heafy produced scores in the lower half of the average range on tasks measuring general knowledge and single word reading, which given her educational achievements was consistent with premorbid cognitive abilities falling within the average range. In this setting in task performance was obtained on tasks measuring verbal abstract categorization, expressive vocabulary --"
Q. I want to end there, I wanted you to read the sentence. You know what a period is, right?
A. You asked me to read one sentence but then you said continue with the next one so I continued with the next one.
Q. I didn't ask you to continue with anything, I
said continue. So, Doctor, you used the word "mostly" there, correct?
A. Yes.
Q. You didn't say completely.

25 A. Correct.
Q. Doctor, again, turn to page 11 of your report.
A. Yes.
Q. The final paragraph "in conclusion."
A. "In conclusion --"
Q. Just wait, I'm just directing you to the
paragraph, not asking you to do anything yet.
A. I'm there.
Q. After the word -- two words "mental processing"
and the sixth or seventh line down starting with "as
10 well," could you read that to the jury, please?
11 A. "As well as efficiency of verbal expression and
12 visual mental processing, which is consistent with a 13 good overall recovery from the accident of 12-3-12."
14 Q. Now, you used the word "good," correct?
15 A. Yes.
16 Q. You could have used a myriad of words there,
17 correct?
18 A. Right.
19 Q. You didn't use "full," did you?
20 A. No, I didn't.
21 Q. Now, have you rendered reports where you've used
22 different descriptive words to indicate what her
23 recovery is?
24 A. Yes.
25 Q. Just give me a moment. Doctor, you yourself in
Page 62
this testimony use the word "overwhelmingly," correct?
A. Yes.
Q. You did not use that word in your report.
A. Okay.
Q. You do render reports where you have used the
word "overwhelmingly."
A. Okay.
Q. Is that true?
A. Sure.

10 Q. And there is a difference between the word
"overwhelmingly" and "good."
A. That doesn't mean that I'm implying anything for
any given or specific case.
Q. Well, you're rendering a report that says a
person had a good recovery, not a full, not
overwhelmingly, not an exceptional, not an excellent, good, correct?
18 A. Yes.
19 Q. And you know people are relying on these reports.
20 A. Yes.
21 Q. That you may not even have the opportunity to
22 testify in a case and somebody may rely on that report.
23 A. Yes.
24 Q. So those words need to be accurate and they need
25 to be correct, especially when you are drawing your

1 conclusions.
2 A. Okay.
Q. So when you report with regard to Ms. Heafy, you used the words "mostly" and "good." In your testimony here today you used "overwhelmingly" and "excellent," do you recall using those words today?
A. Yes, I do.
Q. Why did you change the words?
A. It's just the word that I thought of, the
adjective I thought of at that moment. I do not mean anything by it.
Q. Well, this is a medical legal document, do you understand that?
A. Yes.
Q. And when you say something, people take that as something they are going to rely upon.
A. As you said twice.
Q. And if you said in your report made a fair
recovery, that would mean something better than good, overwhelmingly or excellent, would it not?
A. There are different shades of gray, yes.
Q. And that's really what we're dealing with here are different shades of gray, are we not, that Ms. Heafy claims that she's had a permanent injury as a result of a mild traumatic brain injury and you claim she did not.

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A. I am commenting that based upon the preponderance of evidence, some of which is the test data, that there is no conclusive evidence of permanent cognitive impairments.
Q. And you admit in reports previously to this in other cases you used the word "overwhelmingly" to describe a person's condition as a result of you examining them, overwhelmingly intact.
A. I may have.
Q. As opposed to you don't -- do you agree with me the word "mostly" and "overwhelmingly" are two different words that have two different meanings?
A. They could but not necessarily.
Q. Well, if I said -- strike that. You don't
believe if someone is mostly sure versus overwhelmingly sure, there is a difference in that of their opinion?
A. I would treat it the same way. If someone is not certain, then they are not certain. If mostly implies the majority of something, overwhelmingly implies the majority of something, I can't parse out, nothing is that precise.
Q. But that's the purpose of these -- your testimony is to parse out, is it not?
A. The purpose of my testimony is to comment on someone's overall abilities with a reasonable degree of
certainty, not an absolute degree of certainty. It's impossible to exactly quantify things in the manner in which that you are classifying them.
Q. When you say "exactly," do you mean mostly, exactly or somewhat?
A. I mean exactly.
Q. And you would agree that a good outcome is a
different conclusion than an excellent outcome?
A. At most minimally.
Q. So if someone is saying I'm an excellent student
versus a good student, you would find that to be minimally different?
A. Yes.
Q. So in your report you didn't choose those words
"mostly" and "good" on purpose, they are just adjectives you happen to use at the moment?
A. That is correct.
Q. And you could have used excellent or
overwhelmingly?
A. Yes.
Q. And you chose not to?
A. I did not consciously choose one way or the other.
Q. Knowing that people are going to rely and this jury is going to rely on what you wrote.

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A. Yes.
Q. Could you tell me what other words in your three reports you didn't consciously choose to make a difference?

MR. THAPAR: Objection.
THE VIDEOGRAPHER: We're going off camera. Time is 11:32.

MR. THAPAR: That's just argumentative at this point. You want him to read the whole report and then start going through each word that he said?

MR. CORRISTON: Sure.
MR. THAPAR: I mean, this is going to take an hour to just go through each report and then -- I mean, do you have a specific question of any word that you don't --

MR. CORRISTON: I'll rephrase the question. MR. THAPAR: Okay.
(Benoff 1, neuropsychological evaluation, was marked for identification.)
THE VIDEOGRAPHER: We're back on camera. The time is $11: 34$.

BY MR. CORRISTON:
Q. Doctor, let me rephrase the question. Are there any other words in any of the other three reports you'd like to change or amend at this time?

1 A. Nothing specific that I could think of offhand.
2 Q. So the only two words that you would use
3 interchangeably in your report at this point in time are "good" and "mostly" and you'd say that's tantamount to overwhelmingly and excellent?
A. Again, not having spent hours analyzing every individual word, yes, I would have to say that.
Q. Okay. Doctor, I'm going to show you what's been
marked Benoff 1.
A. Okay. I don't know what I'm looking at here.
Q. Look at the form, do you recognize the form of the report?
A. It's a neuropsychological report.
Q. And the last page, is that your signature?
A. Yes, it is.
Q. The name has been redacted.
A. Okay.
Q. Go to page nine, please. Your conclusion?
A. Yes.
Q. Could you read the first line?
A. "In conclusion to a reasonable degree of neuropsychological."
Q. Comma.

24 A. No, that's not what I said, "neuropsychological 25 probability comma." Do you want me to continue beyond

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the first line?
Q. Yes.
A. "Based upon overwhelmingly intact performance on
task measuring --"
Q. Stop there. "Overwhelmingly intact," correct?
A. Yes.
Q. You used the word "mostly" with Ms. Heafy.
A. Okay.
Q. Skip down and where the blackout is of the
person's name.
A. Yes.
Q. Could you read after that?
A. "Has made an excellent overall recovery from the motor vehicle accident of 9-13-12."
Q. Stop there. You used the word "excellent" not "good," correct?
A. Yes, I did.
Q. Thank you, Doctor. That's it.

Doctor, how many times in the last two years have you given an opinion in a medical legal setting for a defendant that a plaintiff has suffered a permanent injury as a result of a mild traumatic brain injury?
A. As I said in the past, I don't keep track of this and I don't know.
25 Q. Doctor, knowing that you are going to be asked

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A. As I've said, I have found sequelae, I just do not keep track of individual names.
Q. And would it be fair to say you have not rendered a report on behalf of a plaintiff in any case in at least the last five years?
A. I don't know exactly when I have rendered a
report about a plaintiff, on behalf of a plaintiff.
Q. Thank you, Doctor, I have nothing further.

EXAMINATION
BY MR. THAPAR:
Q. Doctor, once again, what does it mean that Plaintiff met the criteria that she had a concussion? A. The commonly assumed criteria about concussion, and there are different levels of concussion, grades one, two and three, one being the mildest, three being the most severe. A grade one concussion would be a situation where there is a fleeting less than 15 minute roughly period of confusion, there is no loss of consciousness and the symptoms resolve as I said within 15 minutes. A grade two would be where it may take longer than 15 minutes for the symptoms to resolve but, again, there is no abnormal imaging, there is no loss of consciousness. With a grade three concussion, there may be some degree of loss of consciousness but it's not a protracted period of loss of consciousness.

1 Q. So which grade did she meet?
A. Based on there being no documented loss of consciousness, it would be a grade one or two depending on how quickly the symptoms resolved.
Q. So this is completely self-reporting.
A. That is the nature of the diagnosis at the moment.
Q. So you were concluding that she had met the criteria for a conclusion based on what she's saying?
A. That is the way we diagnose concussion.
Q. How common is it to sustain a concussion?
A. Many people have sustained even a brief period of altered -- and may not be loss but it could be altered consciousness. Many people have. I have, I know many others have over their life span.
Q. Now, in the Plaintiff's freshman year let's assume that her grade was 85 , which we stated during cross-examination, how was her first marking period of sophomore year, though, before the accident?

MR. CORRISTON: Objection.
THE VIDEOGRAPHER: We're going off camera. The time is $11: 40$.

MR. CORRISTON: Asked and answered. He went through this extensively in direct examination.

MR. THAPAR: I'm just laying the foundation

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for what I'm going to ask next.
MR. CORRISTON: Okay. I'm still going to object obviously.

MR. THAPAR: That's fine.
THE VIDEOGRAPHER: We're back on camera. Time is 11:41.

BY MR. THAPAR:
Q. Now, Doctor, what was brought out during crossexamination is the Plaintiff may have had an 85 grade in her freshman year but how was she doing in the first marking period of her sophomore year?
A. In the first marking period, she among the more academic subjects, meaning things not including physical education, she -- there was only one grade above a 79 and that was English, which was an 82.
Q. So she was struggling before the accident.
A. Clearly.
Q. And so what is a more accurate depiction of how she was doing as a sophomore -- how she was doing after the accident? Is it what she was doing her freshman year or her first marking period of her sophomore year? A. As mentioned before, the large majority of people who suffer a concussion experience a recovery and a return to baseline within the months right after. So if I'm looking at the most precise measure before and
after, it would be just prior to the accident to the months after the accident.
Q. Now, Doctor, have you experienced students who have come in and do well one year and then another grade it's just harder for them?
A. Certainly, that's not uncommon at all and what actually is uncommon is over time after a concussion for things to progressively worsen, that's unusual for concussion.
Q. Okay. But is it also possible that maybe
sophomore year was just harder than freshman year for the Plaintiff?
A. It's entirely possible and it's also possible --

MR. CORRISTON: Objection.
THE VIDEOGRAPHER: We're going off camera. The time is $11: 43$.

MR. CORRISTON: The word "possible" is not legally or foundational in this opinion, it has to be probable. Anything is possible, I could be president, not probable. I used to drive a truck --

THE WITNESS: We might be. We might prefer that even.

MR. CORRISTON: Possibilities are not a relevant term in this setting.

MR. THAPAR: Okay, I'll rephrase it.

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Q. Maybe chemistry is just harder.
A. That's also true.
Q. You were going to say something before you were cut off on whether her grades went down, do you recall? A. Yes.
Q. What were you going to say?
A. Well, what I was commenting is that when there are cognitive effects from a concussion, the typical pattern is to recover but if there is no recovery, the typical pattern is to stay level. Concussion does not result in a progressive worsening over time.
Q. Now, Doctor, is it common for a person to have
done well in high school and then struggle in college?

1 A. I can't say to what degree it is common but I've certainly heard it happen.
Q. Could it be factors besides a post concussion syndrome that caused a person not to do well in college?
A. Certainly.
Q. Generally speaking, if a person puts less effort
into the test that you administered and gets -- and
purposefully gets answers wrong, would that have an
affect on the results?
A. It definitely can.
Q. Will it reduce the results?
A. Usually not in whole but it's not unusual for it to happen in part.
Q. Now, what did you mean when you -- there was a big discussion of the semantics of good versus excellent. When you wrote the word "good", what did you -- good recovery, what did you mean by that?
A. What I meant that there was no clear cut evidence
of her having any long-term difficulties as a result of the accident.
Q. Okay. And what did you -- so what was your understanding of using the term "good"?
A. That it reflects a -- if not perfect, then a virtually perfect recovery.
Q. And did you intend for there to be a difference

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by using the word "good" instead of "excellent"?
A. No, I did not intend it.
Q. And when you said "mostly" instead of
"overwhelmingly," did you intend for there to be a
difference when you wrote it?
A. There was nothing intended.
Q. So it was just your choice of words?
A. It was just the choice of words at that moment.
Q. But your report stays the same, your report means the same thing.
A. Yes, it does.

MR. THAPAR: I have no further questions.

## EXAMINATION

BY MR. CORRISTON:
Q. Just briefly, Doctor. You have no evidence and
nothing in the report that indicates that Ms. Heafy at any point in time tried to manipulate the results, do you?
A. No, no, I wouldn't say that.
Q. That she wasn't being honest, she wasn't
cooperative, she wasn't giving some effort although there were points in time where her effort diminished?
A. No, there was no evidence of that.
Q. And, Doctor, you would agree that people with issues that may have residual effects from a mild
traumatic brain injury may be required to put forth more effort to get the same or better grades?
A. Yes.
Q. So -- and you don't know as you sit here today
whether or not Ms. Heafy was required in school to give more effort and take longer time to comprehend what was going on from a school perspective than she was required to do so before the accident?
A. No, I can't comment on that.

10 Q. Thank you.
MR. THAPAR: Thank you, Doctor.
THE VIDEOGRAPHER: The time is $11: 47$, that concludes this deposition.
(Whereupon, an adjournment was taken at 11:47 a.m.)

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CERTIFICATION

I, LORI JONES, a Certified Court Reporter of New Jersey, do hereby certify that prior to the commencement of the examination, the witness was duly sworn by me to testify the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

I DO FURTHER CERTIFY that the foregoing is a true and accurate transcript of the testimony as taken stenographically by and before me at the time, place and on the date hereinbefore set forth, to the best of my ability.

I DO FURTHER CERTIFY that I am neither a relative nor employee nor attorney nor counsel of any of the parties to the action; and that $I$ am neither a relative nor employee of such attorney or counsel; and that I am not financially interested in the action.

LORI JONES, CCR
LICENSE NO. 30XI00161900

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