

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

Before The Honorable Rita F. Lin, Judge

IN RE: LYFT, INC. PASSENGER)
SEXUAL ASSAULT LITIGATION.)
) NO. 3:26-md-03171-RFL
)
_____)

San Francisco, California
Wednesday, August 26, 2026

TRANSCRIPT OF REMOTE ZOOM VIDEOCONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

APPEARANCES:

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Official United States Reporter

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BETH A. STEWART, ATTORNEY AT LAW**

Wednesday - August 26, 2026

1:30 p.m.

P R O C E E D I N G S

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THE COURTROOM DEPUTY: Now calling Civil Matter 26-md-3171, In Re: Lyft, Inc. Passenger Sexual Assault Litigation.

Will counsel please state their appearances for the record, starting with the plaintiff.

MS. ABRAMS: Good afternoon, Your Honor. Rachel Abrams from Peiffer Wolf on behalf of the plaintiffs.

MS. LUHANA: Good afternoon, Your Honor. Roopal Luhana of Chaffin Luhana on behalf of the plaintiffs.

MS. WAGSTAFF: Good afternoon, Your Honor. Aimee Wagstaff on behalf of the plaintiffs.

MS. CUTTER: Good afternoon. Celine Cutter for plaintiffs.

MR. ABRAMSON: Good afternoon, Your Honor. Brian Abramson not technically for the plaintiffs at this point, but prospective PSC member.

MS. RICHER: Good afternoon, Your Honor. Kristen Richer from Barnes & Thornburg on behalf of Lyft.

MS. STEWART: Good afternoon, Your Honor. Beth Stewart from Williams & Connolly on behalf of Lyft.

MR. RISKIN: And, Your Honor, good afternoon. David Riskin for Williams & Connolly on behalf of Lyft, as well.

1 **THE COURT:** Good afternoon to all of you. Thanks for
2 the update in the case management statement.

3 Just to run through a couple of the items that you raised
4 in there, and then I'll turn it over to you to let me know
5 anything else you think is important for me to know or address
6 this afternoon.

7 Thank you for bringing to my attention PTO 17. As you
8 might have guessed, Judge Cisneros and I had a bit of a
9 miscommunication there, which we have now worked out. And she
10 has -- or I think she's in the process of issuing that
11 agreed-upon order, which looked good to me too.

12 I saw the request to appoint Mr. Abramson and looked at
13 his -- at the exhibit that was attached with his experience.
14 And it sounds like a great idea to me. I will appoint him to
15 the plaintiffs' steering committee, and our minute order will
16 reflect that from this hearing.

17 I did see that you all are still working on the ADR
18 protocol, which I understand that Judge Ross is in the process
19 of negotiating with some of those folks who are involved in the
20 JCCP. And I'm hoping that folks in -- who are on the
21 plaintiffs' leadership in the MDL are having some opportunity
22 to understand what's happening there and participate in that.
23 But I will wait to hear from you further on that. I don't
24 think that's an urgent issue from the MDL's perspective right
25 now.

1 I did want to say that I saw Judge Cisneros' discovery
2 order from this morning. And I just wanted to emphasize to the
3 parties that we set a schedule, and I have every intention of
4 sticking to that schedule. It is my general practice in my
5 cases to set a schedule and stick to it, regardless of the fact
6 that you may be discussing resolution, regardless of whatever
7 else may be happening. And I would very much like to stick to
8 the schedule we set.

9 And one of the things that I am concerned about, given the
10 back and forth that I saw about discovery issues, is making
11 sure that we are hitting the January substantial completion
12 deadline that was previously discussed. So I have communicated
13 to Judge Cisneros that I think that if the parties are not
14 moving forward promptly enough to get to that deadline, that
15 she should do whatever she thinks would be helpful to you all
16 in getting the case to move forward. But I want you all to hit
17 that deadline.

18 And I would say, if one side or the other is -- if you
19 feel like the other side is taking too long, dragging their
20 feet -- I don't see that that's what's happening necessarily,
21 but I just want to put this out there. If you have a concern
22 that that is what is happening, you should raise the issue --
23 after meeting and conferring, you should raise it sooner rather
24 than later. Because I want to see that you were diligent in
25 trying to get the issues resolved promptly, in general, in the

1 discovery process.

2 I hope that's helpful, in terms of the general approach
3 that I'm taking to case management, but I'm open to hearing if
4 there's other things going on that I should know about. But I
5 wanted to put that all on your radar screen.

6 So let me give plaintiffs the first opportunity to raise
7 anything else that you think we ought to address this afternoon
8 or any concerns about some of my initial statements about the
9 case management statement.

10 **MS. LUHANA:** Your Honor, Roopal Luhana for the
11 plaintiffs.

12 From the plaintiffs' perspective, there have been certain
13 roadblocks where information has not been disclosed from Lyft;
14 however, the parties are working now towards getting those
15 answers. And the parties met with Judge Cisneros yesterday,
16 who has set some very firm deadlines, which we believe will
17 move us forward and get us there, in terms of meeting the
18 timetable and the deadlines set by Your Honor.

19 **THE COURT:** Great. Thank you.

20 **MS. RICHER:** Your Honor, if I may just add, from
21 Lyft's perspective, you know, we sort of -- it won't surprise
22 Your Honor to hear that we dispute that we've been putting up
23 roadblocks. But I will say, I do think, in the last couple of
24 weeks, we have been working collaboratively with plaintiffs to
25 try to push through some of these issues and to get them the

1 information they've requested.

2 And, you know, we hear you, Your Honor. We're digging in.
3 We're trying to move things forward in as reasonable a manner
4 as possible and I think, from our perspective, helpful to hear
5 Judge Cisneros say yesterday that, you know, she thinks some
6 guidance on scope of discovery was helpful. And I think the
7 parties -- having heard that and having marching orders going
8 into next week -- we're hopeful that we can reach agreement on
9 some of these issues and move things forward. Because as
10 plaintiffs are, and as I know Your Honor is, we are eager to
11 move things forward in this litigation, and we're ready to do
12 it. So...

13 **MS. WAGSTAFF:** Aimee Wagstaff, Your Honor.

14 Speaking on the ADR topic and the -- after either the last
15 hearing or the hearing before -- I can't remember when we first
16 discussed this -- I reached out to get the protocol that was
17 exchanged with Judge Ross and the parties over there. After a
18 few requests, I did get it. I had an in-person meeting with
19 someone from Lyft. We have -- it has fallen on the vine
20 though. We have not been involved in any further communication
21 in terms of negotiating it.

22 I agree with you that it's not necessarily ripe or a
23 pressing matter. But I didn't want to leave you with the
24 illusion that we were involved in whatever the JCCP is
25 negotiating with Lyft. Because we have not been involved in

1 that. If Your Honor would like us to get involved, then I
2 would renew my request that we get looped in -- me
3 personally -- on whatever communication they're having over in
4 the JCCP. But other than that, I just -- I just wanted to
5 clear the record for Your Honor.

6 **MS. STEWART:** And, Your Honor, Beth Stewart. I'm
7 happy to address that briefly.

8 First of all, I think, as I had indicated last time, we
9 were seeking the plaintiffs' permission in the JCCP to share
10 the proposals with Ms. Wagstaff. And I'm delighted to hear
11 that that has now been shared with her.

12 There are two firms on this call who are participating
13 directly in the small group discussions with Judge Ross,
14 including a session that we had I believe it was last Thursday.
15 That Mr. Abramson's firm and the firm of Ms. Abrams and her
16 colleagues. And so I would hope that that would provide all
17 the visibility that is necessary. That said, I want to make
18 sure Ms. Wagstaff is getting whatever she needs and other
19 leadership on this call are getting what they need. So I'll
20 take this as a suggestion that I reach out to her separately,
21 and I definitely will do that.

22 **MS. WAGSTAFF:** Yeah. And I appreciate that. And I
23 would just request that I be the MDL Federal liaison with
24 respect to negotiating on behalf of the Federal Court. So any
25 sort of looping in of the Federal group, I would appreciate me

1 being looped in. So thank you.

2 **MS. STEWART:** Understood. And obviously, needless to
3 say, I can't control who Judge Ross invites to his own
4 sessions. But -- but certainly want to make sure you have
5 visibility into whatever you need to.

6 **THE COURT:** Great. And I think having Mr. Abramson on
7 board, as plaintiffs suggested, is a great first step towards
8 all of that.

9 And I do want to be clear, I would like the MDL plaintiffs
10 to have visibility into what's happening, in terms of the ADR
11 protocol, so you can sound the alarm if there's some issue that
12 you think Judge Ross ought to be considering that will be
13 affecting the Federal MDL. We are trying to be aligned in the
14 ADR protocol so you don't have two totally different ones. And
15 I think the easiest way to do that is to make sure that
16 whatever the MDL plaintiffs' concerns are, that those are also
17 communicated in the small group discussions with Judge Ross.

18 So I will leave that in your capable hands in terms of how
19 to get it done. And, of course, you know, Judge Ross has a
20 mind of his own, as do I, so we may not get totally aligned on
21 this. But it is my hope that at least your concerns will have
22 been considered by him, and that, you know, he and I can
23 coordinate on trying to get something that is pretty aligned
24 into the two litigations, which will make your lives easier in
25 the long run.

1 **MS. WAGSTAFF:** Yeah. And I appreciate that, Your
2 Honor. And we're not trying to be difficult with saying that
3 they are two firms that are in the JCCP. Our cohort has
4 elected me to do this, because I don't have any cases in the
5 JCCP. So I can fully advocate for the Federal plaintiffs. And
6 so that is why I am sort of the person to talk to on behalf of
7 the MDL for that.

8 **THE COURT:** Great. Let's just make sure Ms. Wagstaff
9 is looped in. I think everybody is on the same page here now.
10 Thanks for raising this topic. I appreciate it.

11 **MS. WAGSTAFF:** Yeah.

12 **THE COURT:** Anything else we should discuss before we
13 conclude for plaintiffs?

14 **MS. LUHANA:** Nothing for the plaintiffs, Your Honor.

15 **THE COURT:** Okay. And --

16 **MS. WAGSTAFF:** Your Honor, I just have one tiny
17 update. We had 77 cases in your JCCP. Mr. Abramson, I think,
18 has filed 25 or 30 cases over the last couple days. And so I
19 think we're now up over 100 cases just sort of as a docket
20 control measure.

21 **THE COURT:** Thanks for the update.

22 Anything else from Lyft's end?

23 **MS. STEWART:** No, Your Honor. Thank you very much for
24 your time.

25 **THE COURT:** Thank you.

1 I think we already scheduled the next calling, although I
2 don't have it at my fingertips. But I will see you all then.

3 **ALL:** Thank you, Your Honor.

4 **THE COURT:** Be well.

5 **THE COURTROOM DEPUTY:** Court is now adjourned.

6 (Proceedings adjourned at 1:41 p.m.)

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3 CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

4 I certify that the foregoing is a correct transcript
5 from the record of proceedings in the above-entitled matter.
6

7 DATE: Thursday, August 27, 2026
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9 *Kendra Stepler*
10 _____

11 Kendra A. Stepler, RPR, CRR

12 Official Reporter, U.S. District Court
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