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**NORTH CAROLINA ASSOCIATION OF OFFICIAL COURT REPORTERS**

**2017 CONFERENCE**

**THURSDAY, JUNE 22, 2017**

**CHEROKEE, NORTH CAROLINA**

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**THE HONORABLE MARION WARREN**

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1 (The Honorable Marion Warren addresses court  
2 reporters commencing at 10:48 a.m.)

3 HONORABLE WARREN: Can you hear me? The last time I  
4 was in this room I was dancing. Have you all heard the Cherokee  
5 language presentation? Has that been delivered to you all yet  
6 by Judge Letts? So at one point in that if you did the long  
7 version of it, you do the snake dance. I did really good going  
8 in and out, working on my phone, like you're doing, like I was  
9 just doing. I had avoided every bit of it, and then I got roped  
10 into the dance. So this room holds no fond memories for me.  
11 There is a video of it, but I actually think the person that  
12 took the video believed me when I said their job was in  
13 jeopardy. I wouldn't have done that. Maybe.

14 So, good morning. On behalf of the Chief Justice, I  
15 appreciate the hard work that you do for the ten million North  
16 Carolinians that call our state home, makes it the ninth largest  
17 state and one of the most, in the shortest of answers, the  
18 shortest of responses, admired and/or respected and/or jealous  
19 of having a unified court system. We do not charge -- and you  
20 see this every day -- we do not charge and make our money on the  
21 backs of the people that come in front of you. We're funded  
22 from the general fund rather than fines, fees and costs. We  
23 don't have the issues that other states have and they're dealing  
24 with it. Sure, we still have money bond, but how many times do  
25 you see cash money bond where you all are when you are in

1 criminal court? Not that often. And when it is, it's an  
2 extraordinary case.

3 So in this particular instance, thanks from everyone  
4 for what you do.

5 I'd like to reflect on a few things we've done  
6 together over the last 25 months. First of all, at this point  
7 there are more court reporters employed in the State of North  
8 Carolina than any time in the last ten years. Now, I was not  
9 able to check this morning, but I believe all slots are  
10 currently filled. Now, somebody may have come or gone. There  
11 may be one or two in the last 48 hours, but as best I know,  
12 every slot is now filled. Not only is every slot filled, you  
13 are now being, after last year's four-and-a-half percent pay  
14 raise, plus the two bonuses, most of you are back to where you  
15 would have been had there not been a financial difficulty or a  
16 recession. We are on track to keep your compensation in line  
17 with where it should be.

18 You continue to provide a valuable, marketable  
19 service, and we appreciate the fact that you stay with us when  
20 you can go to other places. You have a service that can be used  
21 anywhere for more than just courtroom purposes. And we thank  
22 you and we appreciate you.

23 A very quick legislative update. State employees,  
24 \$1,000 raise and three days off; retirees, one percent. Is this  
25 better?

1           You are not supposed to give me a microphone, I start  
2 to do bad things with microphones.

3           So what I was going to do was a budget update very  
4 quickly, talk about what the General Assembly has done thus far.  
5 It is a \$1,000 raise. Anyway, it's a \$1,000 raise and three  
6 days off. For the retired members -- and I know there are none  
7 here -- but there's a one percent cost of living. Is there  
8 someone, perhaps? So if we have anyone here retired, you  
9 actually got a one percent cost-of-living increase, a COLA,  
10 which is pretty amazing.

11           The other things that have happened that you may hear  
12 about, the prosecutorial district and Superior Court districts  
13 in 9A and 17A have been reconfigured. That moves some Superior  
14 Courts and District Courts around. It eliminates the district  
15 attorney's office up there and it rennumbers all the  
16 prosecutorial districts. How does that impact you? You, as  
17 court reporters, are now going to have to deal with the DA being  
18 from one district and the judge being from another district.  
19 Keep your captions straight. It's 1 through 43. They just did  
20 away with anything where there was an A, B, C or D. 1 through  
21 43. Plus, the old 30th is now the 43rd. And the 1st is still  
22 the 1st, but if you go around the state, sort of like this  
23 (indicating), they hit everybody.

24           As far as other things, folks, we have a budget that  
25 is the largest certified budget in the history of the judicial

1 branch once again. Thank you. The reason that's important is  
2 that all of the things that have been -- and Judge Smith, I was  
3 speaking about him just a moment ago in front of him. All of  
4 the things that the previous director had to deal with, I'm not  
5 having to deal with. Now, I may be dealing with some more  
6 inflexible political considerations, but as far as budgetary  
7 considerations, we're in the best condition that we've ever  
8 been. And I anticipate it staying that way until the economy  
9 turns.

10 So I have spoken to you. Here's my question: Do you  
11 have any questions for me? Because I know that you all keep  
12 hearing -- I don't know who you hear it from -- that I don't  
13 like you all. And, consequently, you all don't like me. No.  
14 No. No. If you knew what I dealt with, you all not liking me  
15 is like you all loving me compared to other people really not  
16 liking me. So it's pretty -- it's all a matter of degrees. And  
17 what can people do. Georgia can actually tell you that, people  
18 liking me is not my highest and best aim in life; is it,  
19 Georgia?

20 COURT REPORTER: I've known you since you were a young  
21 DA.

22 HONORABLE WARREN: Yes, ma'am.

23 Open up the floor. Yes, ma'am.

24 COURT REPORTER: I heard that you may be trying to  
25 take away Buncombe's County Veterans Treatment Court. I had

1 heard that unless every state -- that unless every county in  
2 North Carolina can have a Drug Treatment Court and a Veterans  
3 Court that no one was going to have one. I just want to find  
4 out if that's true.

5 HONORABLE WARREN: What if I just said yes? I do too.  
6 So the answer is no. But let me posit this for you, ma'am. Why  
7 should a veteran receive a conviction that cannot be expunged  
8 just to get assistance? The better place for a Veterans  
9 Treatment Court, and most treatment courts, and the national  
10 model that's most highly recommended are District Court.

11 Buncombe County veterans and the veterans of the other  
12 99 counties should absolutely have access to the VTC. But it  
13 should be on the best possible set of circumstances, not cobbled  
14 together just because there were bad financial times in the past  
15 and this is the best we can do. Superior Court's not the best  
16 place for a Veterans Treatment Court.

17 The nationally recognized model in this state, the  
18 nationally awarded model in this state, and the model that is  
19 considered to be the best model is the District Court model in  
20 Harnett County. So I hope that answers your question.

21 See, I'll answer any question.

22 Yes. This is my real hair.

23 COURT REPORTER: Do you see us getting a transcript  
24 page rate increase?

25 HONORABLE WARREN: No, ma'am. No, ma'am. The salary

1 increases are what I'm able to get for you. The page rate  
2 increase -- it's difficult enough to explain sometimes to  
3 nonlawyers what we do period. And then when I talk about page  
4 rate increases, the question is -- and this is not -- this is  
5 the question that's asked. I'm not telling you that this is a  
6 position of the AOC or me. The question is: Aren't they  
7 already state employees and why are they getting paid twice.

8 COURT REPORTER: Okay. So my answer is: Because we  
9 work at night. And do they talk about that? And on the days  
10 where we're home at night working?

11 HONORABLE WARREN: Yes. Sure. But they don't see it.  
12 I'm just saying it. They don't see it. The only product of  
13 that type of intensive dedication and work is through your  
14 transcript. And, quite frankly, the other piece is -- remember,  
15 these are a body of people that believe that your judges are  
16 leaving on Wednesday. So what are you all doing?

17 COURT REPORTER: We're working on transcripts.

18 HONORABLE WARREN: That's exactly right. Do you  
19 understand what I'm trying to say? I mean, it is a circular  
20 syllogism.

21 COURT REPORTER: What if your judge is not leaving on  
22 Wednesday and you're working all the way through Friday and you  
23 still have 3,000 thousand pages to get done?

24 HONORABLE WARREN: You're working at night and  
25 weekends.

1 I'm sorry. What she said was: What if your judge is  
2 staying Monday through Friday and you are still having to do  
3 your other responsibilities from your previous matters. I said,  
4 you're working on nights and weekends.

5 I mean, you asked me a question, I gave you my  
6 response. It's not my response. I'm just answering the  
7 question. Because when I bring it up, that's what I hear.  
8 That's what I hear. Yes, ma'am.

9 COURT REPORTER: I'm new to the state in the last six  
10 months.

11 HONORABLE WARREN: Welcome to North Carolina. You're  
12 in Cherokee; the town, not the county. I saw you're behind the  
13 Collawash map, which means that you're in a sovereign nation.  
14 This was done after the Trail of Tears in 1835. So from all of  
15 us here from North Carolina, welcome.

16 COURT REPORTER: I'm new as a state employee.

17 HONORABLE WARREN: I'm sorry.

18 COURT REPORTER: I just wanted to know, and this might  
19 be fighting words, I'm not sure, but I was wondering why are we  
20 paid as independent contractors on the page rate? Because then  
21 we're paying more money; like we're paying 15 percent Social  
22 Security tax instead of  $7\frac{1}{2}$ . I'm coming from the freelance  
23 world. I'm just wondering if we're state employees doing all  
24 this on our own time but nobody recognizes that, why we aren't  
25 paid under the employee system on transcripts?



1           HONORABLE WARREN: Because you are doing it on your  
2 own hour. I'll answer it just like this, it's a circular  
3 syllogism. You're doing this on your own time, therefore, you  
4 are doing this on your own.

5           Have you ever gotten to a point where they're not  
6 being ugly, they're not being mean, they're not being not nice.  
7 It's just when the answer to the question becomes the question  
8 of the next answer, I mean it's (hitting microphone). See, I  
9 told you not to give me a microphone. I'm having too much fun.  
10 I start telling jokes.

11           Yes, ma'am.

12           COURT REPORTER: So to continue along with the  
13 syllogism, what is it that we, as court reporters, can do to  
14 help assist the lawmakers understand what we do? Do we need a  
15 Day in a Life of a Court Reporter video to be played?

16           HONORABLE WARREN: Actually, that's not a -- well,  
17 they won't watch the whole thing maybe, but the staff might.  
18 No. No. Wait a second. But staff might. And that might not  
19 be a bad idea. Talk to David. Pick somebody that has -- well,  
20 I'll tell you, if you really want to do that, and we do this at  
21 no cost, because we don't want to do it during down time or we  
22 don't want to do it where it interferes with your real work,  
23 because, again, they are real picky about that.

24           COURT REPORTER: Well, I'm a per diem reporter. I  
25 don't work for the State.

1 HONORABLE WARREN: Doesn't matter. You are talking  
2 about a solution. I'm talking about what you do. Here's part  
3 of your solution. You go to -- I don't know. Who here is from  
4 Moore County? Who here is from Randolph County? We have  
5 anybody from Randolph?

6 COURT REPORTER: She's in trial.

7 HONORABLE WARREN: See, she's working. That's  
8 awesome. Tell her that this was the worst conference ever. She  
9 didn't miss anything. Don't have your little wristband on when  
10 you tell her.

11 Anyone here from Wilkes? Anyone here from Burke or  
12 Caldwell? Does anyone here see the pattern of what I'm talking  
13 about? Do those of you from those counties know what I'm asking  
14 about? What are the legislators from your counties? They're  
15 JPS chairs. They control our budget. So I would get a  
16 multimedia display, A Day in a Life of a Court Reporter for  
17 these folks.

18 Who's from Charlotte? Sorry. You all really probably  
19 need to be a part of it too, because you're the place where I  
20 keep telling, and I'm getting traction, you all need another  
21 Superior Court judge. You don't think so?

22 COURT REPORTER: We'll need another court reporter.

23 HONORABLE WARREN: You'll get a court reporter. You  
24 don't think so?

25 COURT REPORTER: If we can get another court reporter.

1 HONORABLE WARREN: I just said yes to that. Well,  
2 they got -- I mean, I can ask. I'll ask.

3 You know, the court's no good if you don't have a  
4 court reporter in Superior Court.

5 Next question? Yes, ma'am. Ms. McDiarmid.

6 COURT REPORTER: Can I get you to say that again?

7 HONORABLE WARREN: The court is no good if you don't  
8 have a court reporter in it in Superior Court.

9 COURT REPORTER: Because my question is: You have  
10 told us that Chief Justice Martin has endorsed the use of the  
11 live court reporter in Superior Court for as long as we want a  
12 job. And I would like to know if you will tell this room that  
13 if it is true that you share that opinion, and if you do not,  
14 what is it that we still need to do to convince you of that?

15 HONORABLE WARREN: I've never said anything different.  
16 Yes, what I told you earlier.

17 This is what I think, and I think this is where the  
18 wheels came off the wagon and I'm still dragging it with all the  
19 axles. The day is coming that technologically -- that the  
20 digital recording system will be able to do instantaneous  
21 recordation and transcription.

22 COURT REPORTER: Yes, I heard that in court reporting  
23 school back in the '80s.

24 HONORABLE WARREN: Let me put it to you this way. You  
25 heard it in the '60s and you also heard about -- you saw the

1 telephone in the 1964 World's Fair that had a screen on it. Now  
2 it's 2017 and your kids don't know of a world where they can't  
3 talk and look at somebody on a telephone. I know that's the  
4 Chief Justice's position. That's my position.

5           What's happening is I'm making what I believe to be an  
6 accurate observation of what the future is. Just to follow up  
7 why I believe that's an accurate observation, there are places  
8 all over the world where that's the way it's done now.

9           COURT REPORTER: They are doing it in North Carolina  
10 for probation violations. That's all they are doing.

11           HONORABLE WARREN: We're doing it here for District  
12 Court.

13           Who here is doing any side work for District Court  
14 juvenile transcripts? How awful are those. How many got a  
15 nastigram from the Court of Appeals that you haven't gotten them  
16 here on time? And the real reason is you couldn't understand  
17 anything and can't make up words out of whole cloth and solids.  
18 I mean, I'm aware. That's why that digital recording has to go  
19 in there.

20           You all don't have to remember, but Georgia remembers  
21 though. When I first got on the bench, I had that golden era  
22 where I had a court reporter as a District Court judge. I had  
23 Debra. You all remember Debra? Debra Godwin. She was my court  
24 reporter before she became to be a rover. She was my District  
25 Court court reporter. I never had a transcript problem. So,

1 no.

2 But the day is coming. From 1964 to today, you know,  
3 53 years. It might be two years. The technology is improving  
4 at such a quantum rate. It would be disingenuous and dishonest  
5 for me not to say that. But for the Chief and I, you have a  
6 home. You have a home.

7 I wouldn't be doing what I'm doing. I'd be cutting  
8 positions instead of letting you all fill them. Think about  
9 it. I would be cutting positions. There's no one to stop me  
10 from cutting positions. Seriously. So I think that was an  
11 important question. Thank you.

12 Hold on. She actually had a question first. I'll  
13 come back.

14 COURT REPORTER: Hi. You know why I like you?

15 HONORABLE WARREN: Because I'm devilishly handsome,  
16 charming, with good looks?

17 COURT REPORTER: My name is Marion.

18 HONORABLE WARREN: That's awesome.

19 COURT REPORTER: Isn't that awesome?

20 HONORABLE WARREN: It is.

21 Her middle name is Marion and we have a bond that  
22 transcends anything you all can imagine because she knows what  
23 Marion means.

24 COURT REPORTER: Well, actually, I don't.

25 HONORABLE WARREN: It means of Mary.

1 COURT REPORTER: Thank you.

2 HONORABLE WARREN: You're welcome.

3 COURT REPORTER: So I didn't plan this. So please  
4 excuse me if this isn't organized thinking. But my first name  
5 is Rachelle.

6 HONORABLE WARREN: Hi, Rachelle.

7 COURT REPORTER: Hi. So I work in Forsyth County,  
8 Winston-Salem.

9 HONORABLE WARREN: Wonderful place to work, awful  
10 courthouse.

11 COURT REPORTER: Yes. The people are just beautiful.

12 I'm just speaking as a human being and also a court  
13 reporter. In a comment to it's inevitable that we'll be  
14 replaced. I've been a court reporter for 37 years, RPR and  
15 Certificate of Merit, working on my realtime. I've worked with  
16 three steno brand machines. I've worked in -- this is my third  
17 state. So when you say we'll inevitably be replaced, I think  
18 that human element may be needed somewhere in there. I don't  
19 know what we would do, but perhaps we would be able to do  
20 something.

21 HONORABLE WARREN: Did you all hear that? So, no,  
22 there's going to be more than something, and I'm not talking  
23 about the person that pushes the button and does the sound  
24 check. That person will kind of almost disappear too.

25 In Australia, every courtroom in Australia is hooked

1 up to a digital recording system. At 6:30 in the morning they  
2 hit a button and they do a white noise test tone throughout the  
3 entire continent at one time. If they do not get a feedback  
4 because of a microphone or something other, you know, the loop  
5 doesn't close with the white noise, and they -- because they can  
6 identify each segment of the system, whatever it is. A work  
7 order goes out immediately before court starts at 9:00, that  
8 microphone is replaced or that piece is repaired. Now, what  
9 will be the most immediately --

10 (Cell phone call from Attorney Robert Davis.)

11 HONORABLE WARREN: You all want to say hello to a  
12 lawyer from Elizabethtown? You want to say hey to all the court  
13 reporters across the state? It's Rob Davis. Say hey.

14 MR. DAVIS: Thanks for all your hard work. We  
15 appreciate it. We could not do our business without you. Thank  
16 you.

17 (Applause.)

18 HONORABLE WARREN: You have other people boasting for  
19 you, see?

20 To answer your question, though. In this post  
21 apocalyptic world where machines have taken over, you know, the  
22 rise of machines, and they've taken over your business, what is  
23 there for you left to do? Transcriptions. And there are going  
24 to be people that are going to want -- and I'm not talking about  
25 North Carolina. I'm talking about the system. Remember what I

1 said earlier -- you've asked me a question. I'm answering the  
2 question; okay? This is not what I'm doing. Did you all hear  
3 that part before I finish? This is not what I'm doing. But she  
4 asked me a question, I'm going to answer it. I'm not going to  
5 lie. I'm not going to go, well, I don't know. I do know. I  
6 know what happens everywhere else in the world.  
7 Transcriptionist. And then folks actually on high stakes,  
8 private cases, they will still bring court reporters in, like  
9 med-mals. They don't have capital punishment in most of the  
10 other places that we're talking about. So like med-mals and  
11 high-end tort cases and maritime cases.

12           Anybody done a maritime case here? Oh, my goodness.  
13 It's the worst thing in the world. But let me tell you  
14 something, they weren't afraid to pay you; were they?

15           COURT REPORTER: It was a fine time at the end.

16           HONORABLE WARREN: It was a fine time when you got  
17 your check at Christmas.

18           It was miserable. "Could you please restate that,  
19 sir?" And then maritime cases are done like this (making noise  
20 with microphone). I'm talking like that because everyone is  
21 like 180 years old. All these experts, they literally wheel  
22 them in and they put them up there. "And during the Civil War  
23 where I was serving." Am I joking at all?

24           Those are the worst government witnesses that come in,  
25 because they've never been out of their little office and they



1 are like the color of sheets. They are like: "It's so bright  
2 in here, can you turn off the lights?"

3 But that's what I see. There's things to do.

4 Anyone else?

5 COURT REPORTER: Yes, sir. You took the microphone  
6 from me. Thank you for answering that question. And you know  
7 what? Talking about the transcription side of things and  
8 helping others to understand why court reporters want the page  
9 rate to go up, it is because we incur expenses, a lot of us,  
10 with a scopist, proofreader to get it produced faster and more  
11 accurately. So if we could show dollars and cents, a breakdown,  
12 an itemization of the cost of transcription might help people  
13 understand.

14 HONORABLE WARREN: I think the A Day and the Life  
15 would do better. They see numbers all the time and their eyes  
16 glaze over. We're talking about people that deal with -- I'm  
17 from a place -- Georgia drives by my house sometimes. I'm from  
18 a place that is in the center of the universe. They finally got  
19 it right with the U.S. sailor commercial in the middle of  
20 everything. I live in the middle of everything and nowhere is  
21 far from me. But there ain't nothing near me.

22 The reason I'm telling you that is -- I mean, I grew  
23 up on a tobacco farm. I'm dealing with people now -- and I  
24 counted pennies. Okay? I'm dealing with people where \$2 or 3  
25 Million is a rounding error. So numbers, they are numbers.

1 They are just numbers.

2           Look, you all sit in court all day. You know what's  
3 effective. You know what moves people. Do numbers move people?  
4 No. The only number that matters is the number at the end,  
5 which is the number that the jury awards. But why did the jury  
6 award it? It's because of how the case was presented. And did  
7 you stir something deep in their soul? Did you touch their  
8 psyche? Did you move them? And numbers, it doesn't move any of  
9 them, unless it's children or your budget they want to cut, and  
10 then the numbers move them tremendously.

11           COURT REPORTER: One last thing. This will be real  
12 short.

13           HONORABLE WARREN: We're going to start an access  
14 channel show, it's the Marion & Marion Show.

15           COURT REPORTER: That would be fun.

16           I don't know if I'm the only court reporter who feels  
17 like this, but I feel like I am in court so much that I reach  
18 the point of burnout often. And I would just like to know is  
19 there some way, somehow that we can be given time to do data  
20 management, just practice to get our skills that we need for the  
21 future for realtime, backup our work, paperwork, recover,  
22 prepare for the next court session, just protect our fingers and  
23 wrists? I mean, I get burned out frequently, and I just -- if I  
24 could just be out of court one week a month, I would be a better  
25 court reporter and a better human being.

1 HONORABLE WARREN: You can all applaud that.

2 Let me take a quick poll. And I'm being dead serious.  
3 Who here would want to be decoupled from an independent hiring  
4 authority and be a part of a statewide court reporting corps?  
5 I'll turn my back so you can vote.

6 COURT REPORTER: Say that again.

7 HONORABLE WARREN: I'm being nice is why I'm saying it  
8 in this way and because you are taking a realtime transcript of  
9 this. This is why I don't have to prepare notes. Nobody has a  
10 transcript except you all. And I'm going to talk to you all on  
11 a break next time. I'm joking.

12 Is there any desire -- to do what you're talking  
13 about, you have to have someone, such as David Jester, whose  
14 title says manager, but he's more like coordinator of chaos.  
15 And so it would require for there to be interchangeability  
16 greater than coordinating between David Hoke and Dawn Turnley  
17 and David Jester. So what that would require is for you to be  
18 something of not a one off or unique, you know, a snowflake.  
19 That's not a majority in this room. Just saying, it's the only  
20 way. You can't just be unique. You'd have to be part of  
21 something greater. And in being a part of something greater, it  
22 would allow you to have a unified, uniformed method of HR and  
23 personnel enrichment. That's the only way I know you can do it.  
24 I mean, we can do it.

25 But, remember, the emergency -- here's what they don't

1 understand, and when I mean "they", I mean lots of people. If  
2 you do away with the emergencies, are you doing away with many  
3 days of court? Not really. You are going to have your regulars  
4 do that other court. They're going to pick it up. It gives you  
5 no relief. It builds in no relief for you all.

6           There's 105 right now, David? And all 105 are in the  
7 field?

8           MR. JESTER: 104 in the field and then me.

9           HONORABLE WARREN: We're fully staffed. But to do  
10 what Rachelle Marion is talking about is being a part of a  
11 greater -- your sum will be greater than your --

12           COURT REPORTER: Parts.

13           HONORABLE WARREN: Parts. Thank you. The sum will be  
14 greater than your parts. Because I'm thinking and talking at  
15 the same time. That doesn't work, because you can tell the way  
16 I talk, normally my brain's not engaged.

17           So to do that, you would have to be greater than some  
18 of your parts and you have to be together as a unit that can  
19 support one another. Do you really want that? I'm telling you  
20 as much as you think that you're treated well, that's part of  
21 your problem. There's 104 of you.

22           Clerks get treated so well. You know why clerks get  
23 treated so well? They stand together. There's 100 of them and  
24 they work together. They are uniformly the one set of electeds  
25 that consistently are the easiest folks to deal with. Even when

1 they disagree with me, they are the easiest set of folks,  
2 because, you know, they've already agreed. One body, one unit.

3 So to answer your question, maybe. But the way to  
4 actually do it is what I was talking about. And don't --  
5 because of like this taking two years for her to ask me the  
6 question what my position is on you all, don't go running to  
7 your hiring authorities and go, Judge Warren wants to take me  
8 away from you. That's not what I said. I was answering the  
9 question. And that's what it would take.

10 Yes, ma'am.

11 COURT REPORTER: I'm a little confused. So do you see  
12 this room as ununified?

13 HONORABLE WARREN: Yes.

14 COURT REPORTER: In what way?

15 HONORABLE WARREN: When you leave this body today, you  
16 are a unified group. It's the one time where I can ask you  
17 something. It's the one time -- for those of you that are not  
18 AOC court reporters, it's the one time where I can come together  
19 and talk to you and you feel free to talk to me as a group. Is  
20 that the way you feel when you are sitting in a courtroom? Do  
21 you feel completely free to express your opinion when you are  
22 sitting in a courtroom?

23 COURT REPORTER: No.

24 HONORABLE WARREN: That's why you are not unified.

25 COURT REPORTER: Because I don't feel that I can speak

1 up in my courtroom, I'm not sure that I don't feel unified with  
2 the 30 women who are sitting next to me and the group of court  
3 reporters.

4 HONORABLE WARREN: Yes, you're unified by job title  
5 and work and this conference. You see that I am trying to  
6 promote you being able to work together by having these  
7 conferences again in places where you can actually have  
8 conferences. I'm trying to build unit integrity. I'm trying to  
9 build a cohesiveness. I'm trying to do what you want to do  
10 without you having to pay the price to do it. And the price is  
11 being decoupled from your hiring authority. Because if you  
12 really feel like you can stand up to your hiring authority, wow.  
13 It's tough. It's tough to speak truth to power. It's just  
14 tough. That's why I have to come in here and sort of cut the  
15 fool for you all to be comfortable enough to start asking me  
16 these questions when you -- some of you may have had  
17 preconceived notions of my position and my opinion about what  
18 you do.

19 There's one over here. Anyway, you've gotten the  
20 welcome to the North Carolina, call it home thing.

21 COURT REPORTER: Thank you, Judge Warren, for being  
22 honest and 100 percent real, keeping it real, and I love it.

23 You mentioned the word home and talking about salary  
24 and talking about Australia and everything. In your opinion and  
25 where you stand in your position and who you are, in terms of

1 our salary, can you give us an estimation? Are we talking ten  
2 years?

3 HONORABLE WARREN: You talking about when it actually  
4 happens?

5 COURT REPORTER: When it actually happens.

6 HONORABLE WARREN: I can. But let me turn the  
7 question on the body as a whole real quick. When do you think  
8 the big firms will trust -- the big firms. You know what I'm  
9 talking about now. I'm not talking about going to Superior  
10 Court to do a probation calendar. No one really, really cares;  
11 right? I mean, it's the day where you can punch the record  
12 button and do a half dozen things at one time. Yes, you can.  
13 I've seen how you all do it. You all have ADHD or ADD or  
14 whatever, because you do a million things at one time. It's  
15 amazing.

16 But this will be driven -- the change will be driven  
17 when the law firms true up their technology, when the big firms  
18 do. The ones doing those med-mals, those doing the 2.1 cases.  
19 I don't see criminal litigation being a part of the issue. I  
20 think people that will not trust a capital case or a B1 or even  
21 a B2 felony to a machine. I mean, do you see? Right. Because  
22 they fail.

23 The other side of that is, you know, we've got to be  
24 diligent among ourselves, because we, as people, sometime have  
25 problems, and this comes back to your issue and your issue. You

1 know, there's no checks and balances until I find out that the  
2 court reporter, you know, has fallen on hard times and she's  
3 self-medicating or he's self-medicating himself and they are not  
4 getting their work done. And it takes months and months and  
5 months. But when that realization finally hits, who knows how  
6 many lives that court reporter has actually touched by not doing  
7 their job because they were not emotionally, physically,  
8 mentally able to do it anyway.

9           That's why I'm concerned about that, Martha Marion  
10 Rachelle. That's why I'm concerned about it, because when you  
11 walk -- and you know this. You all take this as your solemn  
12 obligation and duty. When you walk into a courtroom and sit  
13 down there, you are the only person that can say for certain  
14 what actually happened. Because the living words in that room  
15 become the record that you create. And when you can't do it on  
16 a daily basis, you harm people, just like a self-medicating  
17 physician.

18           So to answer your question, people will trust the  
19 technology in their offices, and I'm going to prove to you that  
20 it's pretty close. Who here actually dictates stuff with their  
21 phone? Texts and stuff like that. We're close.

22           COURT REPORTER: Like auto correct.

23           HONORABLE WARREN: Correct. Auto correct. Let me  
24 tell you something, I said some pretty embarrassing stuff to the  
25 Chief Justice.



1           So I have two questions. I'm being called time. I  
2 will talk to you all all day. I promise you I would. I have  
3 nothing to hide. Just because you're ten miles away in a  
4 courtroom in Wake County or you're 150 miles or 340 miles, this  
5 is the only chance we get to talk, and I don't want you to feel  
6 like that you are being persecuted.

7           So what was your question?

8           COURT REPORTER: Actually, I didn't have a question.  
9 More along the lines of the automatic transcription from voice.

10          HONORABLE WARREN: Yes.

11          COURT REPORTER: My thing is there are so many accents  
12 and so many --

13          HONORABLE WARREN: Agreed.

14          COURT REPORTER: It's a mess. They don't speak up.

15          HONORABLE WARREN: Katie, I think -- because we work  
16 together too. Katie, I think that's why with Rachelle's  
17 observation, and whoever else asked it, I think that's why the  
18 greatest opportunity for a court reporter in a post-digital  
19 world is fixing the machine's mistakes. I think the only way  
20 that people will come to trust what the machines do is for human  
21 transcriptionists to actually create. That's the end. That's  
22 the fix. That's the check. I think that's where the human  
23 element will be until they finally move away from it. I'm  
24 telling you, I think within 20 years it's going to be  
25 problematic for this as a career. I really believe that.

1 Yes, ma'am.

2 COURT REPORTER: The problem I see is that a lot of  
3 lawyers don't talk in the courtroom as if they are actually  
4 making a record. They are so un-record conscious that -- it's  
5 hard enough being a human being trying to decipher what they are  
6 saying because they ramble, they go off in tangents, they  
7 interrupt themselves 50,000 times in the middle of a sentence,  
8 they don't follow proper courtroom etiquette, and then to say  
9 that a digital can replace that, I don't -- I just don't see why  
10 that wouldn't be a problem.

11 HONORABLE WARREN: Agreed. Agreed. I think that's  
12 kind of what we've been saying. But let me ask you something.  
13 How old are the people doing that?

14 COURT REPORTER: The young ones.

15 HONORABLE WARREN: Do you remember O.K. Pridgen?

16 COURT REPORTER: Yes.

17 HONORABLE WARREN: Did he ever act that way? Well,  
18 I'm not talking about the way he acted towards you. I'm sorry.  
19 Did he ever -- I mean, he acted like the world was his stage.  
20 He was creating a film or record every time he walked in;  
21 correct? A jubbly, courtly lawyer. When he walked into the  
22 room, you absolutely knew that he was talking to you to preserve  
23 the record, and he just wanted to make sure that you understood  
24 that he was O.K. Pridgen and that you had his information and  
25 this is how you spelled his name and I hope you have a lovely

1 day, ma'am. Can I get a cup of coffee, madam court reporter?  
2 You don't see that anymore. I'm wondering what's happening.  
3 That's indicative of something else, and I don't know if you all  
4 can help me right now with it. But it's becoming a problem so  
5 many ways.

6 COURT REPORTER: We can help you, Judge.

7 HONORABLE WARREN: I don't know how to do what I --

8 COURT REPORTER: Because we have presentations that we  
9 give to attorneys telling them top ten tips for an accurate  
10 record. Slow down --

11 COURT REPORTER: They are in a hurry. They gotta get  
12 back.

13 HONORABLE WARREN: They are trying to make a living  
14 and make a student loan payment. They don't care about what  
15 you're --

16 COURT REPORTER: So my question is: If you are doing  
17 all of this work, you're spending all of this money, but you get  
18 there to the one thing that matters most, which is winning in  
19 court and winning in the Supreme Court or the Court of Appeals,  
20 why don't you want your record to be good?

21 HONORABLE WARREN: Because they are thinking about \$65  
22 an hour.

23 COURT REPORTER: So that's the rob?

24 HONORABLE WARREN: I'm telling you, I agree with her.  
25 Because what it comes down to for them, it's the other side of

1 numbers. Well, and I think they are not being trained.

2 COURT REPORTER: That's what I see.

3 HONORABLE WARREN: Once they get the law license, they  
4 are not going to -- they can't afford to. They are going to  
5 tell you that they can't afford to sit there through that unless  
6 you are going to give me a ton of CLEs on it.

7 COURT REPORTER: Okay. Which we are planning to do  
8 that.

9 HONORABLE WARREN: Well, I'll tell you where we need  
10 to start first. You all need to give the presentation to the  
11 Superior Court judges and say, guys --

12 COURT REPORTER: We did, in October.

13 HONORABLE WARREN: Okay. And what did they say?

14 COURT REPORTER: They loved it.

15 COURT REPORTER: They want us to come to their  
16 district.

17 HONORABLE WARREN: So what they said was -- you all  
18 said to them, guys, this is a problem, meaning judge, not guys.  
19 And they said, we see it too; right? They agreed with you. And  
20 then they said, come down and we're going to make them go. I'm  
21 asking you.

22 COURT REPORTER: No, they did not say that, but may I  
23 say something?

24 HONORABLE WARREN: Sure.

25 COURT REPORTER: I was hoping that we can talk to like

1 the School of Government or something when we get the guys that  
2 have just passed the bar, that it is mandatory for you to go  
3 take the court reporter workshop on how to make a record.

4 HONORABLE WARREN: The School of Government doesn't  
5 need to do that. We do that. We're doing the training. That's  
6 us. I write the check. So what we do is, we get the Chief  
7 Justice -- the Superior Court bench tells this to the Supreme  
8 Court, the Chief Justice, you get someone like Joe Cheshire on  
9 board, and you say, look, this is now going to be a mandatory  
10 part of after your license, you are going to come sit down and  
11 know how to act in court; not just Superior Court for the  
12 record, but in District Court so you don't stand up and  
13 interrupt somebody while they are trying to make their record.  
14 That's not a bad idea. I like that.

15 (Applause.)

16 HONORABLE WARREN: Just like -- you know, David Jester  
17 is taking me from the stage. I think we have one other thing we  
18 need to do.

19 MR. JESTER: That's true. That's true.

20 (Oaths administered to court reporters.)

21 MR. JESTER: Thank you, Judge Warren. While you are  
22 here in this safe space with so many witnesses, I'd like to tell  
23 you, in case you don't know, the worst thing about working with  
24 you, which is that you only have 24 hours of your day, the same  
25 as the rest of us. But we appreciate you giving us an hour and

1 a half.

2 (Applause.)

3 (Concluded at 11:34 a.m.)

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