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NO. 100063-4

SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON

STATE OF WASHINGTON,

Respondent,

v.

SHAMARR D. PARKER,

Petitioner.

Pierce County Superior Court Cause No. 08-1-06144-4 Court of Appeals Cause No. 82049-4-I

ANSWER TO PETITION FOR REVIEW

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I. INTRODUCTION

Applying well-settled decisions of this Court, Division I properly upheld the trial court's admission of excited utterances by a 17 year-old to her mother and to 911 following an abduction, rape, and robbery. The evidence showed she was under the influence of the traumatic events when she spoke with her mother and dispatch shortly after the crimes. Division I rightly concluded that her omission of earlier conduct unrelated to the offenses did not demonstrate conscious deliberation or the dissipation of stress. This holding was consistent with this Court's prior decisions in Woods and Brown. The key inquiry is whether the speaker consciously reflected and decided to fabricate prior to speaking. Absent such deliberation, a failure to relate information does not affect the admissibility of an excited utterance.

There is no conflict in the application of the excited utterance exception to statements with omissions among the Divisions of the Court of Appeals. Division I held in *Parker* that

omissions unrelated to conscious deliberation or the dissipation of stress do not affect the admissibility of statements as excited utterances. Division II consistently held in *Hochhalter* that omissions only preclude the admission of statements under the exception when they are the product of a conscious and intentional decision to deceive. These holdings are congruent and do not conflict.

The Court of Appeals' decision in this case does not conflict with prior decisions of this Court or with a published decision of the Court of Appeals, and does not involve a significant issue of constitutional law or public interest. This Court should deny review under RAP 13.4(b).

II. RESTATEMENT OF THE ISSUES

- A. Should this Court deny review when the Court of Appeals properly applied this Court's precedent in holding that the victim's omission of irrelevant information when describing recent crimes to her mother did not demonstrate conscious deliberation or the dissipation of stress induced by her traumatic experience?
- B. Should this Court deny review when Division I and Division II faithfully applied this Court's precedent in determining that omissions only affect the admissibility of

- excited utterances if they stem from a witness's conscious and intentional decision to mislead?
- C. Should this Court deny review where no significant constitutional issues or matters of substantial public interest are implicated by Division I's application of well-settled precedent to *Parker's* facts?

III. STATEMENT OF THE CASE

A. Facts

On the evening of December 19, 2008, 17 year-old A.W. was waiting for a bus after dark. 8RP 914, 952-54. Parker began circling her in his vehicle and repeatedly offering her a ride. 8RP 957-58, 976. His persistence made her nervous, and she walked away from the stop in an attempt to get away from him. 8RP 958; 9RP 977-79, 982-85. But when she turned down an alleyway, she realized too late that Parker was driving towards her. *Id.* He forced her into his vehicle at knifepoint, secured her hands, and drove to an isolated clearing. 9RP 922, 984-87, 989. There, Parker took her money and raped her, while holding the knife close to her face. 9RP 993-98, 1001-02.

Parker told A.W. he would drive her home and asked for her address. 9RP 1003-05. She gave him a location 15-20 blocks from her home near a Chevron station. Id; 10RP 1142. A.W. wrote his license plate number on her hand and began walking home, focused on getting to her mother. 9RP 1010, 1018; 10RP 1144, 1261, 1265. She asked people she encountered on the way if she could have money for a pay phone or borrow their cell phone. 9RP 1017. They all declined until someone lent her their phone when she was almost home. 9RP 1017; 10RP 1149, 1263. A.W. called her boyfriend, Justin Lyons, and in a flood of emotion, told him she had been raped. 10RP 1146, 1153. She was crying and so hysterical that Lyons was barely able to understand what she was saying. 18RP 2310-12.

Tracy Nephew, A.W.'s mother, was waiting for her daughter to get home. 8RP 867; 9RP 1018. When Nephew opened the door, A.W. was unable to speak. 8RP 867. She began to cry and collapsed at her mother's feet. 8RP 866-69; 9RP 1018. Nephew explained:

She could only get pieces of sentences out, and all she would say is, He raped me. And as I trying to ask her, What are you talking about? Who? And all she would get was, I don't know. I don't know. He raped me. I don't know. And that's about all I could get out of her at that point.

8RP 868. Nephew called 911. 9RP 871; Ex. 1. On the redacted call admitted at trial, A.W.'s voice can be heard in the background. 7RP 788, 808; Ex. 1. She cries when the dispatcher tells her not to undress. 8RP 871; 9RP 1019-20. She provides the license plate number and a description of Parker's vehicle. Ex. 1. She is audibly distressed when she repeats the instruction to remain in her clothes. *Id*.

Before paramedics arrived to transport her to the hospital, A.W. told her mother "bits and pieces" about what happened. 8RP 871, 874, 879-86. A.W. said:

When he let her out of the car she pulled a pen out of her purse and wrote the license plate number down on her arm. 8RP 879.

She was waiting for a bus. And she had seen him circle a couple of times where she was waiting for the bus. And he had pulled into the parking lot and asked her if she needed a ride. She told him no. But

he kind of creeped her out because she saw him drive by a couple of times. So she decided to walk down the street to where her friend lived. And she said she didn't see him come up the alley. So she got out of the car, and he put a knife to her and told her to get in the car [sic]. 8RP 880.

She said that he drove her out of town; that she wasn't sure where he had taken her, but she was trying to see where they were going. And I remember her telling me about a wreck they had went through. And then she didn't recognize where they stopped. 8RP 882.

She said he just had her in the car and that he started talking to her like they knew each other. 8RP 883

...[S]he explained how nobody at the Chevron would let her use the phone. And he dropped her off, and she told me about the getting the license plate number, and again, she didn't know him. 8RP 886.

It was mostly about the car and the license plate and her not knowing who he was. 8RP 886

A.W. appeared "broken" and "erratic" and was upset and crying when telling her mother what she experienced. 8RP 871, 874, 879-86. She remained distressed and upset during ambulance transport, questioning why this had happened to her. 8RP 887 The trial court admitted A.W.'s statements to her

mother and to the 911 dispatcher at trial as excited utterances pursuant to ER 803(a)(2). 7RP 808; 8RP 883-84.

A.W.'s anguished statements to her mother did not include any information about her activities before Parker homed in on her at the bus stop. 8RP 871-87. She did not tell her mother she had spent the day with Lyons, a boyfriend Nephew disapproved of because he was older than her. 8RP 920. That morning, A.W. had told her mother she would be spending the day with friends, when she planned to get together with Lyons. 8RP 911, 951. A.W. did not revisit the topic when she struggled to tell her mother about the abduction and rape, sobbed and resisted instructions to keep her clothing on, and answered questions needed for medical and police response. 8RP 871-87; Ex. 1.

Detective Bradley Graham interviewed A.W. the day after the crimes. 19RP 2427. A.W. told him she had been with friends earlier in the day, before Parker found her alone at the bus stop. 8RP 1218-22; 19RP 2533. A.W. accurately reported that Parker took money from her during the robbery; she did not tell

Detective Graham that he also took a small amount of marijuana. 19RP 2535. Detective Graham did not ask A.W. if she had used or possessed marijuana the day of the crimes or if she had recently engaged in consensual sexual intercourse. 19RP 2436-37. After DNA testing of a vaginal swab produced a DNA profile that did not match Parker, A.W. told Detective Graham she and Lyons had consensual vaginal intercourse earlier in the day of her abduction. 19RP 2471.

Police tracked the license plate number A.W. had written on her arm to a vehicle owned by Parker's mother. 17RP 2167, 2170-71; 18RP 2345. A search of the car revealed thin plastic wire cord in the door pocket of the driver's seat, and a knife with a 5-inch blade under the front passenger seat, objects consistent with A.W.'s account of being forced into the car at knifepoint and bound with cord.¹ A latent print on the knife belonged to

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¹ 9RP 922, 984-87, 989; 12RP 1531-32, 1553, 1573, 1582, 1589; Ex. 37-45.

Parker.² A.W. identified Parker in a photo line-up. 19RP 2346, 17RP 2441. She recognized the roadside clearing where the crimes occurred. 18RP 2368. DNA taken from a swab of her breast matched Parker, and was consistent with her account of Parker sucking on her chest during the rape. 9RP 995, 998; 17RP 2238. Parker conceded committing a robbery at trial, consistent with statements he made to girlfriend Dacia Birka that he had robbed a girl for money and was worried because the knife he used was in the vehicle impounded by police.³

B. Procedure

Parker was tried for first-degree kidnapping, first-degree rape, and first-degree robbery in 2010. CP 47-49, 1350-51. He was convicted of first-degree kidnapping and first-degree robbery, both with a deadly weapon enhancement. CP 226, 232, 235-36. The jury did not reach a decision as to the rape. CP 230.

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² 12RP 1557, 1572; 13RP 1649, 1654.

³ 18RP 1231, 2346-47, 2356-57; 22RP 2934-35.

Parker's convictions were affirmed on direct appeal. *State v. Parker*, No. 40793-1-II, 2012 WL 295425 (Wash. Crt. App. Jan 31, 2012) (unpublished). In July 2015, his convictions were reversed following a personal restraint petition. *In re Pers. Restraint of Parker*, No. 45163-8-II, 2015 WL 4459185 (Wash. Crt. App. July 21, 2015) (unpublished). Parker was re-tried in 2018. CP 695-97. He was found guilty of first-degree kidnapping and first-degree robbery, both while armed with a deadly weapon. CP 1106, 1109, 1115, 1117. The jury found the State had not proven the rape beyond a reasonable doubt. CP 1108, 1111.

Parker appealed. Division I of the Court of Appeals remanded the case for an evidentiary hearing on the witness-statement attenuation issue and otherwise affirmed his convictions. *State v. Parker*, No. 82049-4-I, 2021 WL 2072791 (Wash. Crt. App. May 24, 2021) (unpublished). Parker petitions this Court for review.

IV. ARGUMENT

A. Division I Applied This Court's Well-Settled Precedent When It Properly Determined That the Omission of Teenage Conduct Unrelated to the Crimes Did Not Alter the Spontaneous Nature of the Victim's Statements While Under The Influence of the Robbery, Kidnapping, and Rape.

Division I properly concluded the trial court acted within its discretion in admitting A.W.'s statements to her mother and the 911 operator as excited utterances. That A.W. did not tell her mother irrelevant and unrelated information about seeing her boyfriend and using marijuana before she was victimized by a stranger did not change the character or reliability of statements she made while still experiencing the traumatic stress of having just been kidnapped, robbed, and raped. That A.W. later made inconsistent statements during the investigation related to consensual sexual activity with her boyfriend, her possession of marijuana, and what she had been doing earlier that day, does not retroactively render her excited utterances inadmissible.

1. Omission of irrelevant information unconnected to the crimes does not render a statement inadmissible as an excited utterance.

A.W., who immediately went home following the abduction, rape, and robbery, was under the stress of the events when she collapsed at her mother's feet and struggled to tell her what happened. Evidence Rule (ER) 803(a)(2) defines an excited utterance as "[a] statement relating to a startling event or condition made while the declarant was under the stress of excitement caused by the event or condition." ER 803(a)(2). A statement is admissible as an excited utterance when: (1) a startling event or condition occurred; (2) a statement was made while the declarant was under the stress of excitement caused by the event or condition; and (3) the statement relates to the startling event or condition. State v. Chapin, 118 Wn.2d 681, 686, 826 P.2d 194 (1992). Fulfillment of these requirements ensures the statement is based on the declarant's reaction to the event rather than conscious reflection. *Id.* Determining whether the three requirements are fulfilled requires analysis of the

statement itself, the declarant's emotional state, the nature of the event, and the surrounding context. *State v. Young*, 160 Wn.2d 799, 810, 161 P.3d 967 (2007).

A.W.'s behavior, appearance, and condition, the appraisals of her by Lyons and her mother, and the circumstances under which her statements were made, strongly illustrate she was emotionally reacting to the events she related to her mother and to dispatch. *See, Young*, 160 Wn.2d at 810. The nature of the offenses, her mother's description of her broken and disjointed account, and her audible sobbing and moaning on the 911 call, demonstrate that A.W. was spontaneously reacting to the crimes and not speaking from conscious deliberation. *See Chapin*, 118 Wn.2d at 686.

What Parker now characterizes as critical omissions is information unrelated to the rape, robbery, and kidnapping. Br. of Appellant at 6. That A.W. had been with her boyfriend rather than friends earlier that day, and that she had possessed and used marijuana, were facts irrelevant to the crimes subsequently

committed. That A.W. left out unrelated details of her day while struggling to tell her mother in "bits and pieces" what Parker did is further evidence her statements were reliable—A.W. was completely focused on the trauma she had so recently experienced.

Even when this extraneous information is analyzed as an "omission," it does not render A.W.'s statements unreliable. Division I properly applied this Court's well-settled decision in *State v. Woods* in determining that any omissions in A.W.'s statement were not evidence of conscious deliberation or the dissipation of stress. *Parker*, 2021 WL 2072791 at *11 (citing *State v. Woods*, 143 Wn.2d 561, 600, 23 P.3d 1046 (2001)). The omission of unrelated details did not show she intended to mislead.

In *Woods*, the victim described a rape, robbery, and assault to her father hours after the events. *Woods*, 143 Wn.2d at 569-71. The defendant argued the court erred in admitting her statement as an excited utterance because she did not tell her

father she used alcohol that night, intended to buy marijuana from the defendant, and lied about going to bed early when she was partying with friends until 3am. *Id.* at 599-601. This Court characterized these facts as omissions and found that even if consciously made, they did not change the character of her statements as excited utterances "after being brutalized in such an egregious manner." *Id.* at 600. Importantly, the victim's omission of details about the night's events was not related to an attempt to decieve or bolster her own credibility. *Id.* at 599-600.

Applying this reasoning, Division I correctly determined that the character of A.W.'s statements as spontaneous reactions to the crimes, while in a state of anguish, was not affected by omissions about using marijuana or being with her boyfriend earlier in the day. *Parker*, 2021 WL 2072791 at *11. These omissions are strikingly similarly to those deemed incapable of affecting admissibility in *Woods*. Arguably, A.W.'s omissions were less serious than those in *Woods*, as they had nothing to do with Parker's crimes, while the victim in *Woods* omitted facts

relevant to her interaction with the defendant and events during the timeframe of the assault. Division I properly found that the omission of information unrelated to the crimes A.W. had experienced or any desire to deceive did not affect the admissibility of her excited utterances.

2. Division I accurately concluded that A.W.'s excited utterances did not contain falsehoods.

Parker wrongly contends that A.W.'s statements to her mother and to 911 contained lies. Br. of appellant at 14-15. But Division I correctly noted that A.W.'s statement to her mother that no one would let her use a phone at the Chevron, where Parker dropped her off, did not conflict with her call to Lyons later on when she was closer to home. 8RP 886; 10RP 1142, 1149, 1263; *Parker*, 2021 WL 2072791 at *11. A young person's panic at not being able to reach her mother immediately after escaping from her rapist would make an emotional impression, whether or not she was able to borrow a phone and make a call to her boyfriend later on and in a different place. There is no

evidence A.W. fabricated the statement that no one would let her use their phone at the Chevron.

Division I likewise correctly applied this Court's decision in Magers in affirming the admission of A.W.'s excited utterances. State v. Magers, 164 Wn.2d 174, 178, 188, 189 P.3d 126 (2008). For it remained within the trial court's discretion to admit A.W.'s statements about Parker's crimes even if her unrelated description about being denied a phone by strangers was a fabrication, as Parker claims. In *Magers*, though the victim initially lied to police about the defendant's presence at the home, her subsequent statements about the assault were properly admitted as excited utterances. Id. at 178, 188. This Court affirmed, finding the reliability and spontaneity of her statements remained intact despite the initial falsehood based on the totality of the circumstances giving rise to her statements. *Id.* at 188. In the context of *Parker's* case, the alleged lie about being denied a phone after the crimes, when coupled with a witness's description of her as incoherent and flooded with emotion during a call she was able to make later on, does not render her emotional account of the crimes to her mother unreliable.

Parker wrongly asserts A.W. decided to lie prior to speaking to her mother. Br. of appellant at 9. He cites no evidence of this from the record. There are no falsehoods in the statements admitted as excited utterances. That A.W. was not truthful with her mother about plans to see her boyfriend before she left home the day she was abducted, robbed, and raped, does not affect her later spontaneous description of these crimes. That in statements made after the stress of the crimes dissipated she left out her marijuana use, Parker's theft of her marijuana, and that she spent the day with her boyfriend, does not retroactively render her spontaneous statements unreliable. Division I properly concluded the trial court did not abuse its discretion in admitting A.W.'s excited utterances.

3. Excited utterances are not rendered inadmissible by subsequent inconsistencies.

Parker improperly conflates A.W.'s excited utterances with other statements to her mother, police, and the SANE

nurse.⁴ But the only statements at issue here are those made in the short time frame between A.W.'s arrival home and her transportation by ambulance to the hospital. The inconsistent statements made later in time were used by Parker during the trial to attack her credibility.⁵ But her later immature decision to hide her consensual sexual activity and underage marijuana use does not render her earlier excited utterances inadmissible. Nor does any later inconsistency about her ability to make a phone call.

Parker essentially argues that no excited utterance can be admitted where a witness later misrepresents or makes inconsistent statements about unrelated topics during an investigation. There is no authority supporting Parker's position.

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⁴ Only A.W.'s statements to her mother, Lyons, and 911 were admitted as excited utterances. Statements to the SANE were admitted as statements for the purposes of medical diagnosis or treatment. 145RP 1870. Statements to police were not admitted as substantive evidence. A.W. made inconsistent statements about the date she last had consensual intercourse to the SANE, which was admitted at trial. 15RP 1945. At the hospital, she did not tell responding officers or her mother that she had been with Lyons earlier and had used marijuana. 9RP 1067-68.

⁵ 22RP 2898-2915, 1917, 1919-20, 2924, 2926, 2932-33.

To the contrary, excited utterances may be credited as reliable even when recanted by the declarant's subsequent statements. *See Magers*, 164 Wn.2d at 179-80, 188. Parker is incorrect that subsequent inconsistences, especially those unrelated to the subject of the statements admitted as excited utterances, renders earlier statements inadmissible.

4. A.W. did not consciously decide to fabricate or omit information prior to speaking with her mother and 911.

Division I's decision in this case does not conflict with this Court's decision in *Brown* because A.W. did not consciously decide to fabricate or omit events prior to speaking with her mother and 911. *See State v. Brown*, 127 Wn.2d 749, 52-53, 903 P.2d 459 (1995). In *Brown*, the victim was concerned the police would not believe she was raped if they knew she voluntarily entered the defendant's apartment to engage in a consensual sex act. *Id.* at 52-53. Consequently, before calling 911, she decided to say she had been abducted. *Id.* This Court determined the trial court erred in admitting her statements on the 911 call as excited

utterances because her ability to reflect and decide to fabricate revealed she was no longer under the stress of the events when she spoke to the dispatcher. *Id.* at 58.

In stark contrast to the victim in *Brown*, A.W. did not consciously deliberate and decide to lie, or devise a plan to increase the probability she would be believed prior to arriving home. Rather, the evidence reflects a victim incapable of such conscious deliberation, as demonstrated by her difficulty in coherently telling her mother what occurred. These circumstances show that A.W.'s statements were the reliable product of stressful events.

5. The *Parker* decision does not expand the excited utterance exception.

The Court of Appeals' decision in *Parker* does not conflict with this Court's precedent or expand upon the principles applied in those cases. Rather, the appellate court simply applied the rules expressed in *Woods*, *Magers*, and *Brown* to *Parker's* facts. *Parker*, 2021 WL 2072791 at *11-12. A.W. arrived home and gave her mother the most basic and salient facts about her

abduction and rape. Focused on the events that caused her trauma, she did not tell her mother about her earlier marijuana use, or spending the day with her boyfriend instead of her sameage friends. Like a naïve teenager, when she later spoke with police, she did not own up to conduct involving consensual sex with her boyfriend, or her use and possession of marijuana. But these later decisions did not alter the nature of her excited utterances to her mother and to 911, the product of a traumatized 17 year-old who was emotionally struggling to convey what had happened to her.

Division I rightly determined that the application of this Court's precedent to *Parker's* facts supported the trial court's decision to admit A.W.'s statements as excited utterances. The opinion did not expand the scope of evidence that can be admitted under the excited utterance exception; rather, the decision did not change the rules at all. The *Parker* holding maintains the requirement that only statements ensured as trustworthy and free of fabrication by the continued influence of

the startling event may be admissible as excited utterances. *See State v. Thomas*, 150 Wn.2d 821, 853, 83 P.3d 970 (2004), abrogated on other grounds by Crawford v. Washington, 541 U.S. 36, 124 S.Ct. 1354, 158 L. Ed. 2d. 177 (2004). Division I's holding does not result in constitutional due process issues related to the admission of unreliable evidence. Nor does the simple application of well-settled rules to the facts in *Parker* constitute a matter of substantial public importance.

B. There is No Conflict Between Divisions as to the Admissibility of Excited Utterances Where a Witness Has Not Consciously and Intentionally Decided to Mislead Prior to the Statement.

Division I's decision in *Parker* does not create conflict between the Divisions as to the admissibility of excited utterances. Its holding in *Parker* is consistent with Divisions II's holding in *Hochhalter*. Both courts applied the same rules and principles, yet reached different results due to the significant differences in the facts of the respective cases. Parker ignores these differences in arguing that there is a conflict in how each

Division has applied this court's precedent regarding an omission's effect on the admissibility of excited utterances.

Division I held in *Parker* that omissions do not preclude the admission of a statement as an excited utterance where they do not show conscious deliberation or the dissipation of stress following a traumatic event. *Parker*, 2021 WL 2072791 at *11. In this circumstance, uncommunicated facts do not alter the character or reliability of the statements. This holding was consistent with those of this Court in *Woods* and *Magers*.

Division II's holding in *State v. Hochhalter* does not conflict with the holding in *Parker*. In *Hochhalter*, the court concluded that when witnesses "consciously and intentionally omit[] part of what they ... observed," their statements cannot be excited utterances. *State v. Hochhalter*, 131 Wn. App. 506, 516, 128 P.3d 104 (2006). The court applied this Court's holding in *Brown* regarding the inadmissibility of a statement containing a deliberate fabrication to a statement with a deliberate omission with the intent to mislead. *Brown*, 127 Wn.2d at 757-58. In this

circumstance, the conscious deliberation and decision to mislead by omission shows the speaker is not genuinely reacting to a traumatic event. This is consistent with the rule applied in *Parker*. In fact, *Hochhalter* applies the same rule but does so in a case where the facts show an omission derived from a conscious decision to mislead, rather than an unintentional failure to relate information. There is no conflict between these holdings; the courts applied the same rules to significantly different facts, resulting in the exclusion of evidence in one scenario, and its admission in another.

Parker creates the appearance of conflict by erroneously claiming that similar facts produced different results in both cases. But the facts of the two cases are incomparable. In *Hochhalter*, the defendant went to his ex-girlfriend's home in violation of a protection order and fired a gun in the direction of her motorhome. *Hochhalter*, 131 Wn. App. at 509-10. The exgirlfriend, her new boyfriend, and their mutual female friend fled the scene. *Id.* at 510. The two women delayed calling the police

because the male victim had outstanding warrants. *Id.* at 510, 516. The three individuals drove to a friend's house while deliberating on how to report the incident to police without revealing the male's presence. *Id.* After dropping him off, the women went to a store to get a drink, called the police after a significant period of time had elapsed, and provided an edited version of events which did not include the male party. *Id.* In sum, the statements were produced by two witnesses who deliberated as to how to dishonestly report a crime.

In contrast, A.W.'s omissions about marijuana use and being with her boyfriend, and the alleged lie about being denied access to a phone, did not show she deliberated after the attack and consciously decided to mislead her mother and the 911 dispatcher. *Parker*, 2021 WL 2072791 at *11. This conclusion is consistent with this Court's analysis in *Woods* regarding a failure to relate information unconnected to an attempt to deceive or bolster credibility. *Woods*, 143 Wn.2d at 599. The omissions in *Hochhalter*, in contrast, were the product of intentional

misrepresentation, for the purpose of deceiving the police. The facts are incomparable; application of the rule expressed in *Hochhalter* would not lead to the exclusion of A.W.'s statements. There is no conflict between the Divisions of the appellate courts on the admissibility of excited utterances.

V. CONCLUSION

Division I's opinion in *Parker* does not conflict with this Court's precedent, nor does it conflict with any decision from Division II. Furthermore, the application of well-settled rules to *Parker's* facts does not create a significant constitutional issue or matter of substantial public interest. None of the RAP 13.4(b) factors are satisfied. This Court should deny review.

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RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED this 30th day of September, 2021.

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9-30-21 s/Therese Kahn
Date Signature

PIERCE COUNTY PROSECUTING ATTORNEY

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