

A P P E A R A N C E S

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JACK SHREVE, Office of the Public Counsel, Claude
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Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1400, Telephone No. (904)
488-9330, appearing on behalf of the Citizens of the State of
Florida.

CATHERINE BEDELL, ESQUIRE, Florida Public Service
Commission, 101 East Gaines Street, Tallahassee, Florida
32399-0850, Telephone No. (904) 487-2740, appearing on behalf
of the Commission Staff.

DAVIS JOHNSON, Southern Bell, 301 W. Bay Street,
Jacksonville, Florida 32202, appearing on behalf of Southern
Bell.

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Witness

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MRS. G. C. BLANTON 5

CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER..... 14

P R O C E E D I N G S

(Hearing commenced at 6:00 p.m.)

COMMISSIONER EASLEY: It now being the hour of 6:00 o'clock, the specially called hearing for customers of Southern Bell is convened. We are waiting for the appearance of Mrs. Blanton, who is the customer who has requested this hearing. We will take a recess until Mrs. Blanton arrives or until the hour of 6:15.

(Short recess.)

COMMISSIONER EASLEY: We will now go on the record in the matter of Southern Bell.

Mrs. Blanton, let me swear you in, please.

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MRS. G. C. BLANTON,
having been produced and first duly sworn as a witness,
testified as follows:

COMMISSIONER EASLEY: And would you identify yourself for the record, please, name and address?

THE WITNESS: Mrs. G. C. Blanton, 928 Osceola Street. That's where I get my current telephone bills.

COMMISSIONER EASLEY: And the representative from Southern Bell is here, I believe.

Would you come a little closer so if I have

1 any questions or if you have any questions, they
2 could be answered.

3 Would you tell me your name for the record,
4 please?

5 MR. JOHNSON: My name is Davis Johnson, Southern
6 Bell Telephone, 301 West Bay Street, Jacksonville,
7 Florida.

8 COMMISSIONER EASLEY: Mrs. Blanton, would you
9 feel free to make any statement you wish the Commission
10 to hear, please?

11 THE WITNESS: Yes, I will.

12 DIRECT STATEMENT

13 BY THE WITNESS:

14 My excerpt of my life that this story is going to
15 talk about is between one year ago and today. The reason why
16 I know the dates is because the tenant that occupied the
17 house that I'm going to talk about first is moving out again
18 at the end of their lease, which will be up the last of this
19 month, August 31, 1992.

20 Now, I sold a house at 3500 Hedrick Street and
21 wanted to move into two different places. Now, why do I want
22 to move into two different places? I wanted one year ago to
23 have my telephone on at 2311 Oak Street, which is where it's
24 on now, so that I could work on that apartment and I wanted
25 it to be on at 2311 Oak Street a little later because the

1 work did not progress quickly enough.

2 The telephone company assured me that it would be
3 on so that I could sleep there, but it wasn't.

4 Along this same period of life I was working on
5 another house at 4464 Manchester Road, so I had telephone
6 service there for another home phone.

7 The night that really upset me was about August 15.
8 I was planning to sleep at one of the houses and I had torn
9 up the bathroom at the other one, so I was making sure that
10 Southern Bell said, "Yes, we can have your telephone working
11 at 4464 Manchester; yes, we can have your telephone working
12 at 2311 Oak Street. We will have no problem having that on
13 by sundown. 6:00 o'clock it will be working."

14 5:00 o'clock, I called because it wasn't working
15 yet.

16 "Oh, it will be working by 6:00."

17 At 6:00, it wasn't working.

18 I called and I said, "I have been promised
19 telephone service for tonight."

20 "Well, I'm sorry, everyone has gone home."

21 "Well, I have been promised telephone service.

22 Now, what must I do? Shall I sleep where I have a telephone
23 and no bathroom or shall I sleep where you did not connect it
24 and I have a bathroom? I have a choice, sleep with a
25 bathroom and no phone or sleep where there's no bathroom and

1 a phone."

2 I was really upset with Southern Bell. I asked to
3 speak with a supervisor. After about an hour a supervisor
4 called me back. He said, "Well, sorry, we just can't get to
5 it tonight. We just sent everybody home."

6 The next day they did come out, they did connect
7 me.

8 A few weeks later I was going to move into 2317 Oak
9 Street, which is next door to 2311 Oak Street, and I asked
10 that the telephone there be connected. I was assured that it
11 would be connected. It wasn't. I asked for a supervisor to
12 look into the matter. The next morning, which was Saturday
13 morning, a Mr. Mosley came out to my property at 2317 Oak
14 Street, apologized profusely, brought his tech manager with
15 him named Mr. Haltiwanger. Mr. Haltiwanger was very nice,
16 gave me his personal beeper number. He said, "Now, if this
17 ever happens to you again," as I explained to him that it had
18 just happened the month previous, Mr. Haltiwanger said,
19 "please do beep me. We will solve the problem."

20 Yes, as life progresses, I did not stay at 2317 Oak
21 Street. One year ago at the end of this month I rented it,
22 so I wanted to move again.

23 I called Southern Bell. I was assured that my
24 telephone would be working. I get distinct commitments from
25 Southern Bell in articulate English each time so that I know

1 who I talk to, what they say they would do and when they say
2 they would do it. Needless to say, it wasn't done. I
3 wouldn't go to the trouble to be here if I had not been done
4 this way four times in one twelve-month period.

5 The next piece of property that I was real upset
6 with was at 4464 Manchester Road. I requested it to be
7 disconnected and a tenant moved in there.

8 I bought another piece of property at 2043 College
9 Street and requested the telephone service be turned on. The
10 telephone number there is 353-2233. The telephone service
11 was not connected as it was supposed to be, so I used my
12 magic beeper number for Mr. Haltiwanger. He was not on duty
13 that evening but he called the person who was and they came
14 out and solved the problem. The magic is in having your own
15 private contact.

16 The public does not have this kind of contact
17 because they have not been through this over and over. You
18 see, most people move about once a year. My tenants move
19 about once a year. They don't do it four times a year. So
20 whenever Southern Bell says, "We're awfully sorry, we just
21 messed up. We didn't get it installed as promised. We will
22 get it tomorrow." They think, well, I guess I can put up
23 with that, only one night without a phone and think that
24 Southern Bell messed up once this year and it was on their
25 phone. I'm here to tell you that they messed up four times

1 last year because they send people home when they aren't
2 through working.

3 Back in the olden days when Ma Bell was the grand
4 monopoly, Ma Bell kept her commitments whether they had to
5 work till 8:00 o'clock or 9:00 o'clock. All I had to do in
6 the last 20 years - this lady has been doing this same thing
7 - all I had to do was call and ask for a supervisor in nice
8 articulate terms, and whoever I talked with would say, "All
9 right, I'll have someone call you back. Where will you be?"
10 And I would be at a neighbor's phone or a relative's phone or
11 a friend's phone and a supervisor would call me back, who
12 would apologize, who would get an employee out and it would
13 get fixed by 8:00 or 9:00 o'clock, so I would sleep with my
14 telephone. Not so in this day and time, not in 1992. You
15 get an answer of, "I'm sorry, all the employees are gone
16 home. We're not going to do it tonight. You'll just have to
17 sleep without your phone.

18 Next subject is the mixing of funds whenever I paid
19 my bill last month. I have two telephones, as I have already
20 said, 387-6968 and 353-2233. I called Southern Bell and
21 said, "Both of those telephone bills were awfully high, I
22 can't find my bill right now, I'm awfully busy, I'm up to my
23 nostrils in work, I haven't got time to audit the bill, I
24 would like to send you a round figure on both of them, so I'm
25 going to send you \$125 on 387-6968 and I'm going to send you

1 \$75 on 353-2233."

2 The representative I spoke with noted all the
3 information, and said, "That's fine, Mrs. Blanton, please
4 send your money."

5 I sent it. I went out of town for a weekend with a
6 few days attached to the front and the end, came back in
7 about six or seven days, didn't bother to go over to College
8 Street and work because I was tired, and didn't notice it.
9 Turns out that my telephone was disconnected at 2043 College
10 Street for nonpayment. I went over there to work with two
11 pickup truck loads of workmen. We got a whole lot done that
12 day. We worked ten hours. I was exhausted, it was getting
13 dark. They backed their pickup trucks out the driveway and
14 departed the premises. I thought I was going to back my car
15 out the driveway and depart the premises, too. However, my
16 car wouldn't start. Too bad your phone doesn't work. I was
17 a little upset, to say the least.

18 I got my gun out of my car, put it in my pocket,
19 got my keys and my purse and trudged six blocks to my house
20 and called the handyman to come back. He drove back, started
21 my car, and I was on my way.

22 The next day I called Southern Bell and I said, "I
23 am real unhappy with you, and I explained to the lady what I
24 had had to do, that I didn't like being in that neighborhood
25 after dark by myself walking for six blocks.

1 She said, "Well, I'm sorry it happened." She said,
2 "They just did one little bookkeeping error. They put it all
3 on 387-6968. You have a credit on that account."

4 I said, "I don't need a credit on my account. What
5 I need is for my telephone at 353-2233 to have been working
6 for the last ten days."

7 She told me that it had been cut off ten days
8 before that. I believe the date for the cutoff was July the
9 1st; however, I'm not real sure.

10 So she said, "Well, we will see what we can do to
11 get it transferred back."

12 I said, "Well, I would like to have a credit for
13 one month of service for my being upset and for my having to
14 go through this."

15 She said, "Oh, no, I'll give you a credit for ten
16 days worth of service."

17 I said, "That is no reprimand for you. That is
18 nothing out of your income. You had my telephone turned off
19 for ten days. You're not giving me a thing. I want 30 days
20 worth of service taken off of my bill."

21 She said, "No, I can't do that."

22 I said, "Fine."

23 And I called the Bureau of Appeals in the little
24 rectangle on the front page of the phone book. The lady was
25 very nice.

1 She said, "Why, yes, I'm quite sure I can arrange
2 for a credit for one month of service and I am quite sure I
3 can have your telephone turned right back on. Would one hour
4 be good?"

5 I said, "Yes, one hour will be real good."

6 She called me back in less than an hour, and said,
7 "Your telephone service has been restored. The \$75 credit
8 has been put on 353-2233, and I'm so sorry."

9 I said, "Well, what I really thought was
10 inexcusable was the supervisor's reply: "Well, all we did
11 was make one mistake."

12 COMMISSIONER EASLEY: I'm sorry, who is the Bureau
13 of Appeals? I don't remember that. Is that a Southern
14 Bell number?

15 THE WITNESS: Yes. It is Southern Bell's attempt
16 to placate mad customers like me. She did a good job.
17 She did take care of this mad customer.

18 But my point is, supervisors should know better
19 than say things like, "All we did was make one mistake."

20 The reason why I'm here is because I want Southern
21 Bell to start sending their employees home when they're
22 through working and start training their employees to
23 listen to what a customer has to say. If a customer
24 is upset, there's probably a good reason, and I want
25 them to start listening again like they used to.

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Thank you.

COMMISSIONER EASLEY: Thank you, Mrs. Blanton.

I appreciate your being here.

Southern Bell, do you have any questions?

MR. JOHNSON: No questions.

COMMISSIONER EASLEY: This special hearing is recessed.)

(Witness excused.)

(Whereupon, at 6:20 o'clock p.m., the hearing was adjourned.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

1
2 STATE OF FLORIDA)
3 COUNTY OF CLAY)

4 I, Marie C. Gentry, Court Reporter and Notary Public
5 in and for the State of Florida at Large, hereby certify that
6 I reported in shorthand the foregoing hearing at the time and
7 place indicated herein, and that the preceding pages are a
8 true and correct transcription of my stenotype notes of said
9 hearing.

10 I further certify that I am neither of counsel nor
11 attorney to either of the parties in said cause, nor
12 interested in the event of said cause.

13 I further certify that I have delivered the original
14 of said transcript by mail to the Florida Public Service
15 Commission, Tallahassee, Florida.

16 WITNESS my hand and official seal in the Town of
17 Orange Park, Florida, this 4th day of September, A.D., 1992.

18
19
20 Marie C. Gentry
21 Notary Public, State of Florida
22 at Large. My commission expires
23 January 21, 1993.
24
25