



Verification Prompt Pack: Citations and Facts

From: John A. Kelly

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Re: Verification prompt pack: legal citations and factual assertions (backs Quick Reference items 8, 9, 12, 13)

Companion to items 8 through 13 of the Staff Quick Reference and Section 5 of the policy. Every prompt below runs in an ordinary chat interface: the Claude add-in in Word, Anthropic Cowork, Codex for Work, or the chat window of any tool on the Approved Tool List. Attach documents; paste the prompt; no code, ever.

AI failure comes in two flavors and this pack covers both. **Legal hallucination:** the fabricated case, the misquoted opinion, the mischaracterized holding. **Factual hallucination:** the deposition quote that does not appear in the transcript, the contract clause the contract does not contain, the date the exhibit does not support. The sanctions cases are all in the first category; the second is more common in daily practice and nobody is watching for it.

Three habits make every prompt here work better: one task per session; attach the actual source documents rather than describing them; and treat "the tool says it checked" as worthless. The output of these prompts is a list of quotes and locations a human can confirm in seconds, not a grade.

Part A: Legal citations

A1. The four-step ladder, run by the tool against sources you supply. Attach the opinions (or the closed corpus) with the draft:

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For each case or statute cited in the attached draft:

1. Confirm it exists; give the full citation.
2. Confirm each quoted phrase appears in it; quote the surrounding

sentence with its page or paragraph.

1. State whether the cited passage supports the proposition the draft cites it for. If not, say why not.

1. Flag anything needing citator review (KeyCite or Shepard's) for continued validity on the specific point.

Use only the sources I provide. If you cannot verify an item from the provided sources, mark it UNVERIFIED. Never guess.

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Steps 1 and 4 are completed by a human on Westlaw or Lexis; the tool's output tells you where to look, it does not substitute for the lookup. The existence check is free: the result list shows caption, citation, court, and date without opening the document.

A2. The closed corpus. When the research starts from a treatise instead of downloaded opinions:

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I am giving you [the relevant practice guide or treatise chapter].

Answer my question citing only authorities that appear in this source.

Anything not in this source is out of bounds. If the source does not answer the question, say so. Do not supply citations from memory.

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Anything the tool cites that is not in the source is, by definition, fabricated. That single instruction converts an open-ended research chat into something checkable.

A3. Statutes and rules. Ground in the actual text (the Grounding Sources appendix, document 09, lists where to get it) and verify against official text at leginfo.ca.gov or courts.ca.gov, never the model's memory.

Part B: Factual assertions (your own documents)

Run this before any brief, declaration, or letter that characterizes documents leaves the office. Two prompts, two different sessions.

B1. Build the claim inventory. Attach only the draft:

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List every factual assertion in the attached draft in a table, one row per claim: the assertion, any quoted language copied verbatim, every number, date, and name it contains, and the source document or exhibit it is attributed to. Include claims implied by the document descriptions (an exhibit described as "the unsigned 2021 notice" makes three claims: unsigned, 2021, notice). Do not evaluate anything yet.

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B2. Verify the inventory against the sources. In a fresh session, attach the sources and the inventory from B1:

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For each row of the attached inventory, check the attached source documents. Quote verbatim the language that supports the claim, with its page or section. Mark each row VERIFIED, NOT FOUND, or DIFFERS (and if it differs, quote both versions). Do not fix, soften, or explain away anything; report it.

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Two sessions matter: the session that wrote or summarized a draft grades its own work too kindly. The fresh session can only agree with the first one through quoted text on the page, which is the whole idea.

B3. The human pass. The responsible attorney personally checks every NOT FOUND and DIFFERS row, and for anything filed with a court, checks the quotes against the final assembled PDF as it will actually be submitted (text

extraction misses stamps, handwriting, signatures, and scan defects; eyes do not). Two standing rules: never quietly weaken an assertion to match a deficient source, and never let the tool resolve an ambiguity a lawyer should decide. Both go to the responsible attorney as decision points.

Part C: The stress test (before filing)

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Here is our draft brief. Argue the other side: what is weakest, what contrary authority or counterargument is missing, which factual characterizations are most vulnerable, and what would you attack first? Be specific and cite the draft's own language.

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Assume opposing counsel runs the same prompt the day your brief arrives, because they will.