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Alsup Singles Out Oakland Solo for 'Abe Lincoln' Approach

by Ginny LaRoel

William Alsup, the exacting San Francisco judge probably known as much for delivering dressing downs as for his legal acumen, recently offered a piece of advice for lawyers who appear before him.

"Do what Abe Lincoln did when he was a lawyer," the judge said last week in an interview with *The Recorder*. By that he means: limit yourself to arguing a couple of winning issues.

Is it possible to live up to that standard? Well, meet Randy Sue Pollock.

The Oakland criminal defense solo spent the better part of the last six months before Alsup representing one of seven MS-13 gang members in a gruelings_acketeering trial. She had the "courage," Alsup offered when talking in general about tips for litigators, to take the "less is more" approach.

"Randy Sue Pollock got an acquittal in that case," Alsup said, "and she had the fewest number of questions, the shortest opening statement, the shortest closing argument, and there were many witnesses she didn't even examine."

The judge didn't stop there.

"She had a very clear-cut agenda to zero in on one or two key issues. She did that very effectively, and at the end of the day, the jury gave her a complete acquittal of her client."

Yes, there's more.

"And I'm not taking anything away from any of the other lawyers ... I think the lawyers were excellent." (He didn't name any other names.) "Her approach of less-is-more was completely vindicated at the end.

Said Pollock when told of the exaltation:

"That's Amazing"