ADVERSE SPOUSAL PRIVILEGE:
DEAD OR ALIVE?

The adverse spousal privilege\(^1\) developed at common law to enable a
defendant to prevent his spouse from testifying against him in a criminal
trial. In *Trammel v. United States*,\(^2\) the Supreme Court apparently abol-
ished this privilege by vesting the privilege solely in the witness spouse.

Commentators interpret *Trammel* to allow only a witness spouse to
invoke the adverse spousal privilege. If the witness spouse is willing to
testify, the defendant spouse cannot prevent such testimony.\(^3\) This Note
asserts that *Trammel* does not extend that far. Instead, courts should
grant the defendant spouse the right to challenge the voluntariness of
adverse spousal testimony, thereby restoring some semblance of the
spousal privilege.

Part I of this Note provides the historical basis for the adverse spousal
privilege.\(^4\) Part II raises questions that *Trammel* did not resolve. Part

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1. The adverse spousal privilege is commonly referred to as the "marital privilege." This Note uses the two terms interchangeably. For a detailed history of this privilege, see generally 8 J. Wig-
more, Wigmore on Evidence § 2227 (1961).
3. *See, e.g.*, Note, Evidence—The Marital Privilege, 4 AM. J. TRIAL ADVOC. 455, 456 ("[T]he
Supreme Court in *Trammel* held that the witness spouse alone could make the decision whether or
not to testify."); *Note, Evidence—Privilege Regarding Non-Confidential Marital Testimony is Vested

Commentators criticized *Trammel*, claiming the decision facilitates prosecutorial abuse and pro-
motes fundamental unfairness. *See, e.g.*, Lempert, A Right to Every Woman's Evidence, 66 IOWA L.
REV. 725, 730, 737 (1981) (*Trammel* will result in prosecutorial abuse and fundamental unfairness); *see also* Note, Evidence—Privilege Against Adverse Spousal Testimony, 55 TUL. L. REV. 961, 969
("One potential outcome of this decision is the possibility of government abuse by the overzealous
prosecutor.").
4. This Note addresses the marital privilege in the context of criminal litigation. Use of the
privilege in civil cases is not within the scope of this Note. *See* Ryan v. Commissioner, 568 F.2d 531,
544 (7th Cir. 1977) (the rehabilitation rationale underlying the privilege in criminal cases is not
applicable in civil cases). In addition, use of other family privileges and use of the privilege against
confidential marital communications are not within the scope of this Note. For a discussion of
various family privileges, see *In re Mathews*, 714 F.2d 223 (2nd Cir. 1983) (grand jury witness may
not invoke family privilege to avoid incriminating in-laws); United States v. Jones, 633 F.2d 817 (4th
Cir. 1982) (adult grand jury witness may not invoke family privilege to avoid answering certain
questions about father); *In re Agosto*, 553 F. Supp. 1298 (D. Nev. 1983) (parent-child privilege
prohibits forcing child to testify against father).

For a discussion of the privilege against confidential marital communications, see, e.g., United
States v. Cameron, 556 F.2d 752, 755 (5th Cir. 1977) (distinguishing between adverse spousal privi-
lege and privilege against confidential marital communications); *see also* R. CARLSON, E. IM-
III traces the common-law development of a defendant's right to object to coerced confessions and testimony. Finally, Part IV concludes that even after Trammel, a defendant spouse should have the right to challenge the voluntariness of a witness spouse's testimony.

I. MARITAL PRIVILEGES: HISTORY, TYPES, AND EXCEPTIONS

A. Historical Development

The marital privilege originated at early English common law. In Bent v. Allot,\(^5\) decided over four centuries ago, an English court first recognized a defendant's right to prevent his wife from testifying against him. Shortly after Bent, another English court held that a prosecutor could not elicit testimony from a defendant's wife in a bankruptcy proceeding.\(^6\) Later, Lord Coke recognized this privilege in one of his commentaries,\(^7\) noting that a wife can not testify for or against her husband.\(^8\)

History provides a variety of rationales for the marital privilege. The traditional rationale was the notion that husband and wife are a single legal entity, and therefore, one cannot testify against the other.\(^9\) The modern explanation for the privilege rests on the policy argument that society desires to preserve marriage,\(^10\) foster family peace,\(^11\) and avoid

\(^5\) Winkler, R. & E. Konka, Materials for the Study of Evidence 116 (1983) (referring to "two separate and distinct doctrines applicable to spousal testimony").
\(^6\) 21 Eng. Rep. 50 (1580). See also 8 J. Wigmore, supra note 1, § 2227, at 211 (referring to Bent as "the earliest explicit ruling" on the privilege).
\(^7\) See 1 Brown & Gold 47, 123 Eng. Rep. 656 (1613) (common law provides that the prosecution may not examine the wife of the bankrupt against her husband). Several decades later, an English court recognized one exception to the marital privilege recognized in The Lord Audley's Case, 123 Eng. Rep. 1140, 1141 (1631) ("[I]n a case of a common person, between party and party she could not [be a witness against her husband]. . .but between the king and the party. . .she may [be a witness against her husband].") See also 8 Wigmore, supra note 1, § 2228, at 213 n.9 (discussing The Lord Audley's Case).
\(^8\) See Coke, A Commentarie Upon Littleton 6b (1628).
\(^9\) Application of the adverse spousal privilege has arisen almost exclusively in situations involving a defendant husband preventing a witness wife from testifying. See Lempert, supra note 3, at 727 ("Spousal immunity has almost always been used to bar the testimony of wives against their husbands. Of the hundreds of cases I have seen. . .only a handful involve men in a position to incriminate their wives."). But see Paul v. United States, 79 F.2d 561 (3d Cir. 1935) (husband testified against wife charged with check forgery).
\(^10\) See Davis v. Dinwoody, 100 Eng. Rep. 1241 (1792); Winham v. Chetwynd, 1 Burrows 414 (K.B. 1757). See also J. Wigmore, supra note 1, § 2228, at 215 (when the common law binds a man and his wife together as one, no individual shall part them).
\(^11\) See, e.g., Trammel v. United States, 445 U.S. 40, 44 (1980) ("The modern justification for this privilege against adverse spousal testimony is its perceived role in fostering the harmony and sanctity of the marriage relationship.").
the repugnance associated with one spouse contributing to the other's imprisonment. 12

The United States Supreme Court first acknowledged the marital privilege in Stein v. Bowman. 13 In Stein, the prosecution introduced as evidence a widow's deposition that her husband had accepted a bribe. 14 While recognizing various exceptions to the marital privilege, 15 the Court noted that the privilege against adverse spousal testimony protected domestic relations from public exposure and preserved family peace. 16 The Court concluded that the privilege applied even though the witness' husband was deceased and there was no marriage to preserve. 17

The Supreme Court's initial treatment of the marital privilege precluded a spouse from testifying either for or against a defendant spouse. 18 In the 1930s, the Court abandoned its position that a witness spouse was incompetent to testify in favor of a defendant spouse. 19 The privilege against adverse spousal testimony, however, remained intact. 20

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11. See, e.g., Hawkins v. United States, 358 U.S. 74, 77 (1958) ("The basic reason the law has refused to pit wife against husband or husband against wife in a trial where life or liberty is at stake was a belief that such a policy was necessary to foster family peace.").

12. See J. Wigmore, supra note 1, § 2228, at 217 (There exists "a natural repugnance in every fair-minded person [regarding] compelling a wife or husband to be the means of the other's condemnation.").


14. Id. at 211, 223.

15. The Court recognized the following exceptions to the marital privilege: treason, violence by one spouse against the other, and confidential communications. Id. at 222.

16. "The rule...protects the domestic relations from exposure, [and] rests upon considerations connected with the peace of families." Id. at 222-23.

17. Id. at 223.

18. Graves v. United States, 150 U.S. 118, 121 (1893) ("In this case the wife was not a competent witness either in behalf of, or against her husband; if he had brought her into court, neither he nor the government could have put her upon the stand.").

19. Funk v. United States, 290 U.S. 371, 380 (1933) ("Whatever was the danger that an interested witness would not speak the truth...its effect has been minimized almost to the vanishing point by the test of cross-examination, the increased intelligence of jurors, and perhaps other circumstances.").

20. In Wolfe v. United States, 291 U.S. 7 (1934), the Court recognized that federal courts are free to interpret witness competency rules based upon evolving common-law principles. Id. at 12. Wolfe enabled federal courts to reevaluate periodically the validity of the marital privilege. Wolfe formed the basis of Rule 26 of the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure. Wolfe and the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure opened the door for a split to develop between the circuits over a defendant spouse's ability to bar a witness spouse's adverse testimony. At least three circuit courts recognized a defendant spouse's privilege. See, e.g., United States v. Walker, 176 F.2d 564 (2nd Cir. 1949) (wife not competent witness against husband charged with illegally transporting stolen money), Brunner v. United States, 168 F.2d 281 (6th Cir. 1948) (wife not competent witness against husband charged with improperly obtaining another's mail); Paul v. United States, 79 F.2d 561 (3rd
By the 1950s, federal and state courts and legislatures had crafted varying exceptions to the marital privilege, resulting in its inconsistent application. In 1958, the Supreme Court reconsidered a defendant’s right to bar adverse spousal testimony in an effort to standardize application of the privilege. In *Hawkins v. United States*, the defendant was accused of violating the Mann Act. The trial court allowed the defendant’s wife, a self-professed prostitute, to testify against her husband. On appeal, the Supreme Court reversed, holding that a court may not admit voluntary spousal testimony if the defendant spouse objects. The Court thus rejected the Government’s attempt to vest this privilege solely in the witness spouse.

After *Hawkins*, the Supreme Court sent Congress the Proposed Federal Rules of Evidence, including Rule 5-05. Rule 5-05 would have codified *Hawkins*, enabling a federal criminal defendant to prevent his spouse from testifying against him. Congress, however, rejected the Court’s

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Cir. 1935) (husband not competent witness against wife charged with forging checks). The Tenth Circuit, however, adopted the view that a wife may testify against her husband in his criminal trial. See, e.g., *Hawkins v. United States*, 249 F.2d 735, 736 (10th Cir. 1957) (wife competent witness against defendant husband), *aff’d*, 445 U.S. 40 (1980); *Yoder v. United States*, 80 F.2d 665 (10th Cir. 1935) (wife competent witness against husband in his criminal prosecution occurring after divorce).


22. By 1952, thirteen states had adopted the marital privilege. Twenty-five states had recognized the competency of spouses to testify against one another with respect to nonconfidential marital communications, but had granted either spouse an optional privilege. Ten states had entirely eliminated the privilege. See Note, supra note 21, at 362-67.


24. *Id.* at 74.

25. Although the husband objected to his wife’s testimony, the trial court allowed the prosecution to introduce the wife’s testimony into evidence. *Id.* at 74-75. On appeal, the Tenth Circuit held that a witness spouse may testify over a defendant spouse’s objections in a criminal case. *Id.* at 75. The court alternatively argued that even if the witness spouse were not a competent witness, her testimony was harmless to defendant. *Id.* at 79.

26. *Id.* at 75-79. The Court rejected the Tenth Circuit’s alternative argument of harmless error, stating that the witness spouse’s testimony that she was a prostitute both before and after her marriage might influence the jury’s determination of the defendant’s intent. *Id.* at 80.

27. Rule 5-05 of the Proposed Federal Rules of Evidence read in full:

**Husband-Wife Privilege:**

(a) General Rule of Privilege. An accused in a criminal proceeding has a privilege to prevent his spouse from testifying against him.

(b) Exceptions. There is no privilege under this rule (1) in proceedings in which one spouse is charged with a crime against the person or property of the other or of a child of either, or with a crime against the person or property of a third person committed in the course of committing a crime against the other, or (2) as to matters occurring prior to the
attempt to federalize privilege law. Instead, Congress adopted Rule 501, which grants federal courts authority to determine evidentiary rules on a case-by-case basis guided by common-law principles. Subsequently, state judicial and legislative action gradually continued to erode the marital privilege. The Supreme Court again moved to clarify the scope of the privilege.

B. Trammel v. United States

In Trammel v. United States, the Court modified Hawkins, vesting the marital privilege in the witness spouse. In Trammel, Otis and Elizabeth Trammel allegedly brought heroin into the United States. Elizabeth later obtained additional heroin overseas. When she returned to the United States, customs agents discovered the heroin and arrested her. The Government indicted Otis and two others for importing heroin. Drug Enforcement Administration agents persuaded Elizabeth to cooperate with the Government, granting her immunity in return for her testimony at trial.

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28. See R. Carlson, E. Imwinkelried, & E. Kionka, supra note 4, at 116 (even though rejected by Congress, "the proposed rules are instructive and have persuasive authority"). But see Trammel v. United States, 445 U.S. at 47 ("In rejecting the proposed Rules and enacting Rule 501, Congress manifested an affirmative intention not to freeze the law of privilege").

29. Rule 501 reads in full: Except as otherwise required by the Constitution of the United States or provided by Act of Congress or in rules prescribed by the Supreme Court pursuant to statutory authority, the privilege of a witness, person, government, State, or political subdivision thereof shall be governed by the principles of the common law as they may be interpreted by the courts of the United States in the light of reason and experience. However, in civil actions and proceedings, with respect to an element of a claim or defense as to which State law supplies the rule of decision, the privilege of a witness, person, government, State, or political subdivision thereof shall be determined in accordance with State Law.

FED. R. EVID. 501.


32. Id. at 42.

33. Id.

34. Id. at 42-43.
Prior to his trial, Otis attempted to prevent Elizabeth from appearing as a witness by asserting the Hawkins privilege against adverse spousal testimony.\textsuperscript{35} The district court, however, permitted Elizabeth to testify against Otis, and her testimony proved central to the Government's case. The district court ultimately found Otis guilty.\textsuperscript{36} The court of appeals affirmed the conviction.\textsuperscript{37}

The Supreme Court affirmed the lower court decisions,\textsuperscript{38} unanimously holding that only a witness spouse may invoke the adverse spousal privilege.\textsuperscript{39} If the witness spouse is willing to testify, "whatever the motivation," the defendant spouse can not prevent the testimony.\textsuperscript{40} The Court reached its conclusion for five principal reasons. First, commentators had widely criticized the Hawkins rule.\textsuperscript{41} Second, Rule 501 evidenced congressional intent to continue the evolutionary development of testimonial privileges.\textsuperscript{42} Third, recent state law trends had eroded the marital privilege.\textsuperscript{43} Fourth, courts should strictly construe privileges because society is entitled to "every man's evidence."\textsuperscript{44} Finally, if one spouse willingly testifies against the other, there is probably little marital harmony to preserve.\textsuperscript{45}

\textsuperscript{35} Id. at 43.
\textsuperscript{36} Id.
\textsuperscript{37} 583 F.2d 1166 (10th Cir. 1978).
\textsuperscript{38} Justice Burger delivered the Court's opinion, and Justice Stewart wrote a concurring opinion.
\textsuperscript{39} The Trammel Court observed that the Hawkins rule, which excludes testimony related to criminal acts and communications by the defendant in the presence of third persons, sweeps more broadly than other testimonial privileges, which exclude only confidential communications. 445 U.S. at 52. The Court then considered the trade-off between fostering family peace and fostering justice. The Court balanced those competing interests, concluding that "[w]hen one spouse is willing to testify against the other in a criminal proceeding—whatever the motivation—their relationship is almost certainly in disrepair; there is probably little in the way of marital harmony for the privilege to preserve." Id. Finally, apparently in response to the question whether Elizabeth willingly testified, the Court stated that her testimony was not involuntary simply because she testified under immunity and a promise of lenient treatment. Id. at 53.
\textsuperscript{40} Id. at 52. Trammel did not directly affect the privilege against confidential marital communications. Id. at 52 (the Court referred to the independent rule protecting confidential marital communications).
\textsuperscript{41} 445 U.S. at 50 n.11. The criticisms include direct authoritative commentary and implied legislative disfavor, evidenced by Congress' rejection of Proposed Rule 5-05 and acceptance of Rule 501. See supra notes 27 & 29.
\textsuperscript{42} 445 U.S. at 47.
\textsuperscript{43} Id. at 49 n.9.
\textsuperscript{44} Id. at 50 (citing United States v. Nixon, 418 U.S. 683, 709-10 (1974), for the proposition that testimonial privileges should be strictly construed).
\textsuperscript{45} Id. at 52.
C. Post—Trammel: Commentary and Judicial Responses

After Trammel, commentators expressed concern that the decision would allow prosecutorial abuse and would unfairly treat the defendant spouse.46

Federal courts, however, quickly adopted the Trammel holding,47 citing it as authority to erode other testimonial privileges48 and to justify exceptions to the marital privilege.49 State courts adopted Trammel more slowly. Several state courts rejected Trammel, finding their state statutory provisions inconsistent with the holding.50 Most state courts, however, eventually adopted Trammel and cited the holding to govern other testimonial privilege cases51 and to create exceptions to the marital

46. See supra note 3.
49. The circuit courts are divided as to whether the adverse spousal privilege is subject to an exception when the witness and the defendant are alleged substantial joint participants in the crime. Compare United States v. Koecher, 755 F.2d 1022 (7th Cir. 1985) (the joint participant exception does not apply to the adverse spousal privilege in a grand jury proceeding), cert. granted, 54 U.S.L.W. 3190 (U.S. Oct. 7, 1985) (No. 84-1922) and Appeal of Malfitano, 633 F.2d 276 (3d Cir. 1980) (same) with United States v. Clark, 712 F.2d 299 (7th Cir. 1983) (contra); Trammel v. United States, 583 F.2d 1166 (10th Cir. 1978) (same), aff'd on other grounds, 445 U.S. 40 (1980); United States v. Van Drunen, 501 F.2d 1393, 1396 (7th Cir.) (same), cert. denied, 419 U.S. 1091 (1974).
privilege.52 Neither federal nor state courts, however, have adequately addressed several questions that Trammel failed to resolve.

II. Trammel’s Unanswered Questions

The Trammel Court stated that if a witness spouse is willing to testify, the defendant spouse can not prevent the testimony.53 The Court, however, failed to specify whether the defendant spouse may challenge the willingness of the witness spouse to testify. If the defendant spouse can pose such a challenge, the Court also failed to define what the defendant spouse must show in order to prove the witness spouse’s lack of willingness to testify.

In order to answer these questions, it is helpful to review an analogous line of cases concerning coerced confessions and testimony. In certain circumstances, a defendant has the right to object to the voluntariness of another individual's statement on the ground that the statement violates


53. See supra note 40 and accompanying text.
III. COERCED CONFESSIONS AND TESTIMONY

A defendant's right to object to the evidentiary use of an involuntary confession evolved from constitutional considerations. In Brown v. Mississippi, the Supreme Court held that a conviction based solely upon a confession extracted by physical torture violates a defendant's due process rights under the fourteenth amendment. In Chambers v. Florida, the Court extended Brown by recognizing that a confession extracted by mental torture also violates due process rights.

Courts note several justifications for excluding coerced confessions, including the inherent lack of trust in the confession and the desire to discourage law enforcement officials from coercing confessions. In Rogers v. Richmond, the Supreme Court noted that this exclusionary rule serves the important function of protecting a defendant's exercise of his free will.

In Jackson v. Denno, the Supreme Court established a procedural mechanism, referred to as a "Jackson v. Denno voluntariness hearing," to ensure that involuntary confessions do not affect jury determinations of guilt or innocence. By claiming that his confession was involuntary, a defendant can require a separate hearing to determine the truth of his claim. The voluntariness determination may not be made by the same jury ultimately charged with determining the defendant's guilt or innocence.

In addition to a criminal defendant's ability to challenge the voluntariness of his confession, the defendant's fourteenth amendment due process rights.

54. See infra notes 55-71 and accompanying text.
55. 297 U.S. 278 (1936).
56. Id. at 287.
57. 309 U.S. 227 (1940).
58. Id. at 235-41.
62. Id. at 544.
64. Id. at 377-96. See Lego v. Twomey, 404 U.S. 477, 485 (1972) (Jackson procedure "designed to safeguard the right of an individual, entirely apart from his guilt or innocence, not to be compelled to condemn himself by his own utterances").
65. 378 U.S. at 391.
66. Id. at 391 n.19 (voluntariness to be determined by trial judge, another judge, or another jury, but not by convicting jury).
ness of his own confession, a defendant may challenge the voluntariness of another witness' testimony. In LaFrance v. Bohlinger, the defendant claimed that a witness' out-of-court statement was involuntary and therefore inadmissible to impeach the witness' favorable in-court testimony. The First Circuit Court of Appeals adopted the defendant's argument, holding that when a Jackson v. Denno voluntariness hearing produces substantial evidence that threats and duress evoked a statement or confession, courts must exclude the statement or confession. In addressing the issue of the defendant's standing to challenge the voluntariness of the witness' statement, the court explained that the defendant was asserting his own, and not the witness', constitutional rights. The use of any individual's involuntary testimony against a defendant violates the defendant's due process rights to a fair trial.

68. The witness to the alleged crime claimed at trial that he had made earlier adverse statements to the police "because he was strung out on drugs, frightened, and willing to say anything to get back to his cell." Id. at 31.
69. "It is unthinkable that a statement obtained by torture or by other conduct belonging in a police state should be admitted at the government's behest in order to bolster its case." Id. at 34. See also Vargas v. Brown, 512 F. Supp. 271, 275 (D. R.I. 1981) (stating fundamental premise of LaFrance as "refusal to permit Government to utilize in any way an involuntary statement" stemming from "abhorrence of the official lawlessness").
70. 499 F.2d at 32-36. See Vargas v. Brown, 512 F. Supp. at 275 (LaFrance "emphasized that the defendant's own due process rights were implicated by use of a witness' involuntary statement"); see also United States ex rel. Cunningham v. DeRobertis, 719 F.2d 892, 896 (7th Cir. 1983) ("violation of another's fifth amendment rights may rise to the level of a violation of his own right to a fair trial").
71. 499 F.2d at 35. The Supreme Court denied certiorari to LaFrance and has not considered the issue whether a defendant may challenge the voluntariness of witness statements. 419 U.S. 1080 (1974). In addition to the First Circuit, the Fifth and Seventh Circuits arguably have approved LaFrance. See, e.g., United States ex rel. Cunningham v. DeRobertis, 719 F.2d 892 (7th Cir. 1983); Blackwell v. Franzen, 688 F.2d 496 (7th Cir. 1982), cert. denied, 460 U.S. 1072 (1983); United States v. Fredericks, 586 F.2d 470, 481 n.14 (5th Cir. 1978), cert. denied, 440 U.S. 962 (1979).

Other federal courts have cited LaFrance approvingly in the context of coerced confession cases. See, e.g., United States v. Kearney, 682 F.2d 214 (D. C. Cir. 1982); United States v. Scott, 592 F.2d 1139 (10th Cir. 1979); United States v. Powe, 591 F.2d 833 (D.C. Cir. 1978); Rivera v. Warden, Attica Correctional Facility, 431 F. Supp. 1201 (E.D. N.Y. 1977).

Seven state jurisdictions have considered LaFrance. See, e.g., Chapman v. State, 302 So.2d 136, 138 n.1 (Fla. Ct. App. 1974) (no voluntariness determination required because issue not raised at trial or on appeal); People v. Bates, 25 Ind. App. 3d 748, 324 N.E.2d 88 (1975) (limiting LaFrance to voluntariness of testimony at trial only); Commonwealth v. Harris, 371 Mass. 462, 358 N.W.2d 982 (1976) (LaFrance requires jury consideration of voluntariness); Franklin v. State, 33 Md. App. 690, 336 A.2d 111 (dealing with the level of proof required for voluntariness determination), rev'd on other grounds, 281 Md. 51, 375 A.2d 1116 (1977), cert. denied, 434 U.S. 1018 (1978); State v. Langley, 25 N.C. App. 298, 212 S.E.2d 687 (citing LaFrance approvingly in context of coerced confession case), cert. denied, 287 N.C. 467, 215 S.E.2d 627 (1975); State v. Wolery, 46 Ohio St. 2d 316, 348
IV. THE ANSWERS TO TRAMMEL'S UNANSWERED QUESTIONS

A. The Defendant's Right to Challenge Voluntariness

LaFrance enabled a criminal defendant to challenge the voluntariness of a witness' statement on due process grounds. Trammel held that a defendant spouse can not prevent the testimony of a witness spouse who is willing to testify, "whatever the motivation." At first glance, Trammel's holding seems to foreclose any inquiry into what motivates a spouse to testify adversely. A closer look reveals this is not the case. The Trammel Court stated its holding in the context of a witness motivated by a grant of immunity and a promise of lenient treatment. It is unlikely that the Trammel Court intended its "whatever the motivation" language to encompass situations involving physical or mental abuse.

If Trammel forecloses a defendant's inquiry into the voluntariness of a witness spouse's adverse testimony, then Trammel should also foreclose a defendant's inquiry into the voluntariness of a nonspoolus witness' adverse testimony. This result would overrule LaFrance in all situations, even though Trammel did not consider LaFrance or the due process issues LaFrance raised. Obviously, the Trammel Court did not intend such a broad result. Even after Trammel, a defendant spouse retains the right to challenge the voluntariness of a witness spouse's testimony.

Granting the defendant spouse the right to challenge the voluntariness of adverse spousal testimony is consistent with Trammel's vesting the spousal privilege solely in the witness spouse. If a separate Jackson v. Denno voluntariness hearing determines that the witness spouse's testimony is voluntary, the defendant spouse may not prevent the witness spouse from testifying.

B. The Meaning of Voluntariness in the Trammel Context

A LaFrance voluntariness inquiry seeks to ensure witness credibility,
reliability, and trustworthiness.²⁶ A defendant can show that a statement was involuntary by proving that brutality, torture, or subtle police techniques induced the statement.²⁷ The question arises whether this LaFrance voluntariness standard should also apply in the Trammel context. This Note asserts that a more lenient standard should apply.

In addition to seeking to ensure witness credibility, reliability, and trustworthiness, the Trammel Court sought to balance society's interest in preserving marital harmony and family peace.²⁸ The different purposes behind the voluntariness inquiries in LaFrance and Trammel suggest that the same voluntariness standard is not appropriate for both settings.

The Trammel Court found that the witness spouse's testimony was voluntary because there was probably no marital harmony and family peace left to preserve.²⁹ Therefore, the voluntariness standard in the Trammel context should turn upon an inquiry into the level of marital harmony and family peace remaining in the defendant and witness spouses' marriage. If a sufficient degree of marital harmony and family peace exists, the witness spouse's statement should be deemed involuntary, and the defendant spouse should have the right to exclude the testimony on due process grounds. Of course, a witness spouse's statement induced by brutality, torture, or subtle police techniques should also be deemed involuntary in accordance with LaFrance.

V. CONCLUSION

Permitting a defendant spouse to challenge the voluntariness of adverse spousal testimony will satisfy concerns of fundamental unfairness and risk of prosecutorial abuse.³⁰ A Jackson v. Denno voluntariness

³⁰. Granting defendants the right to challenge the voluntariness of spousal testimony would not hinder a witness spouse's opportunity for immunity or lenient treatment. If a prosecutor offers a witness spouse leniency in return for testimony, the witness would fulfill her part of the bargain by refraining from invoking her privilege. The defendant spouse could then request a voluntariness

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²⁶. See State v. Wolery, 46 Ohio St. 2d 316, 348 N.E.2d 351 (promise of immunity not enough to render testimony coerced and thus inadmissible; only "violence, torture, or other forms of inhumane coercion" make testimony inherently untrustworthy and violative of due process), cert. denied, 429 U.S. 932 (1976).


²⁸. See supra notes 38-44 and accompanying text.

²⁹. Id.

³⁰. Id.

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hearing provides an appropriate procedural mechanism to settle spousal challenges. Challenges to spousal voluntariness will continue to vest the spousal privilege solely in the witness spouse, consistent with *Trammel*. At the same time, these challenges will preserve a degree of the spousal privilege commensurate with the balance of societal interests struck by the *Trammel* Court.

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hearing. If the hearing showed insufficient voluntariness to invoke the *Trammel* rule, the court would bar the testimony. The witness spouse, however, would still be entitled to lenient treatment because of her offer to testify. The proposed voluntariness challenge would therefore reduce the risk of prosecutorial abuse by encouraging prosecutors to offer leniency to a witness spouse only if her testimony were likely to meet voluntariness standards.