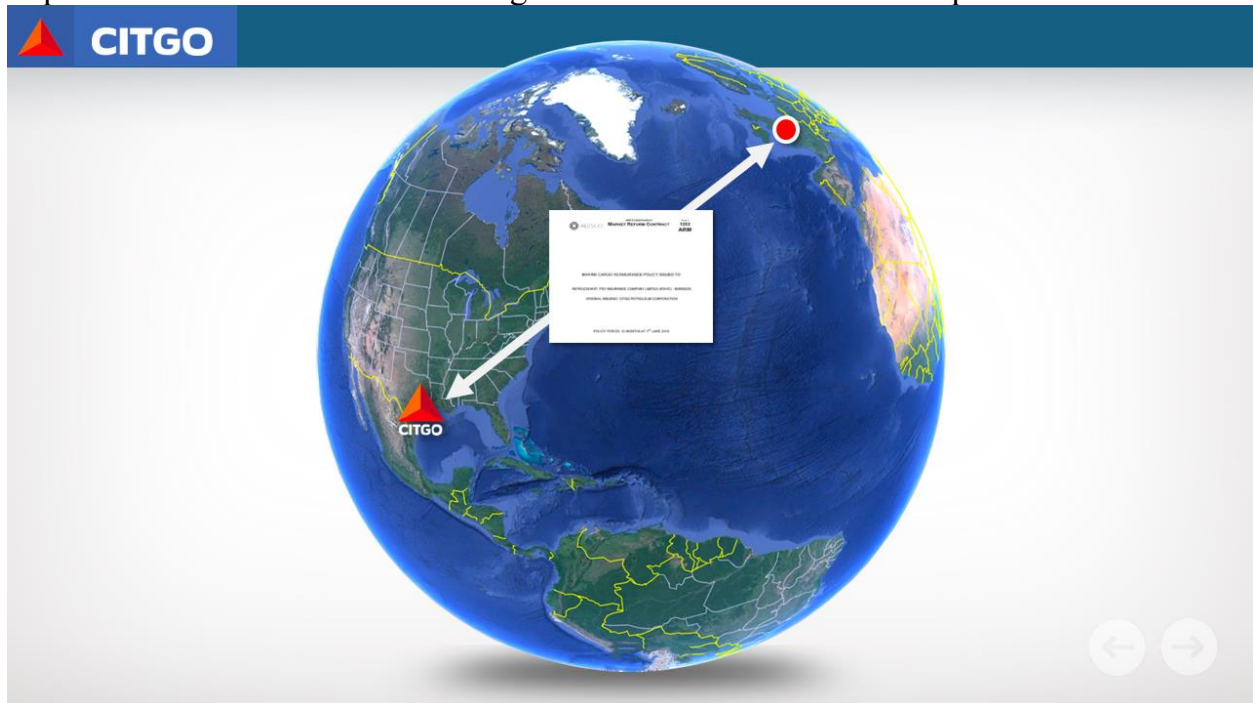


Effective Use of Demonstrative Exhibits in Citgo Insurance Litigation

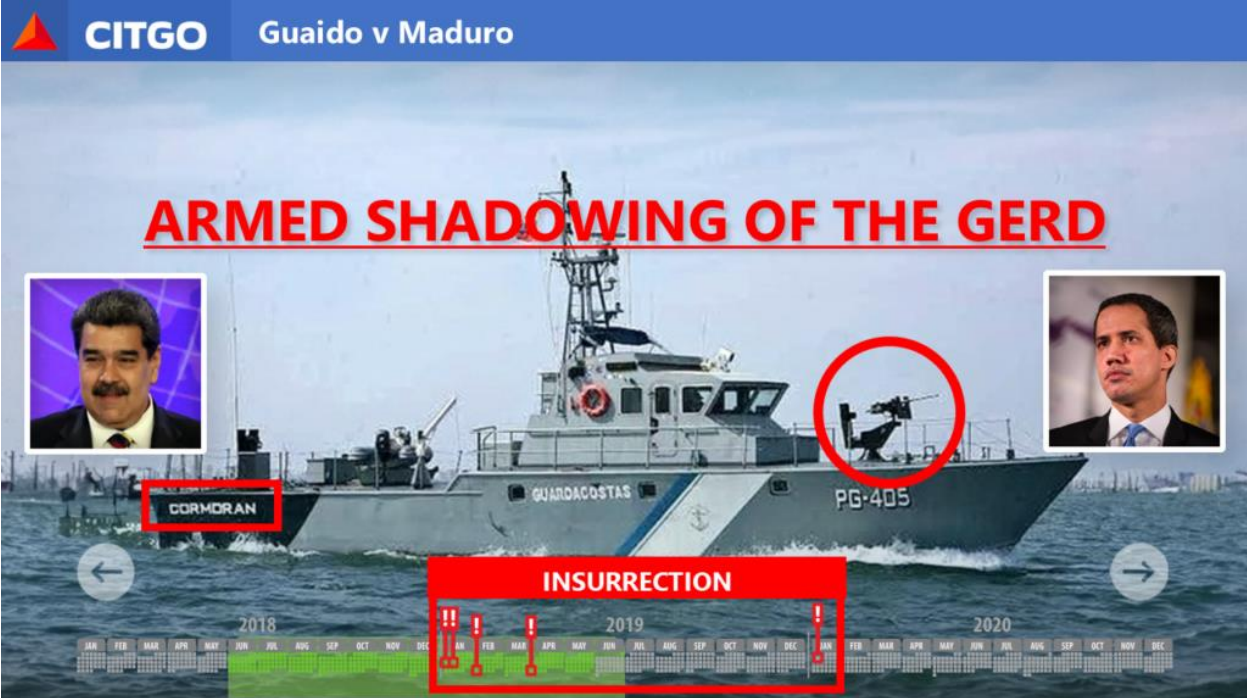
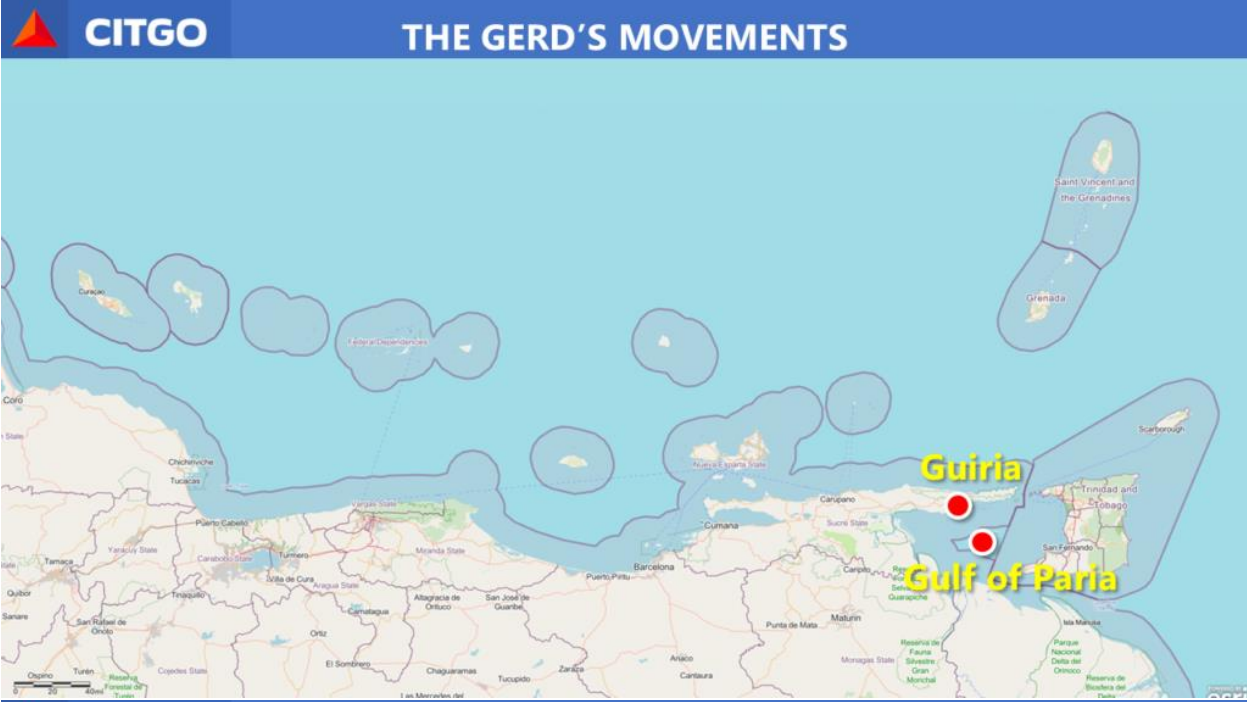
Linda Weber – November 8, 2024

Visual demonstrative aids can play a key role in assisting a jury grappling with difficult, unfamiliar issues that cannot be easily conveyed by verbal description alone. Such was the issue in a complex insurance case called CITGO Petroleum Corp. v. Ascot Underwriting Limited, 1:21-cv-00389. ProFile Discovery was engaged by the Citgo trial team to create compelling demonstrative exhibits for the case.

Last December, a jury awarded US-based Citgo \$54M on a claim against certain Lloyd's underwriters in a case stemming from the seizure of an oil tanker – the Gerd Knutsen – by the regime of Venezuelan strongman and outgoing President Nicolas Maduro. Maduro had refused to recognize the victory of President Juan Guaido in Venezuela's 2019 Presidential election. The U.S. government recognized the legitimacy of Guaido's election, and imposed sanctions on the Maduro regime for its refusal to turn over power.



In response, the Maduro government held hostage a Citgo-chartered tanker that had just picked up nearly a million gallons of crude oil. The Maduro regime eventually released the tanker more than a year later, but only after boarding it and offloading its cargo of crude in a Venezuelan port. Citgo filed a claim with its insurers under a provision that covered losses “arising from” an insurrection. The insurers refused to pay, claiming that the seizure was due to a mere commercial dispute because Citgo allegedly had not paid for the crude oil in question, and that the seizure did not “arise from” an insurrection.



Demonstrative exhibits are powerful tools in litigation that can significantly enhance the effectiveness of communication in the courtroom. By presenting information visually, attorneys can improve comprehension, retention, and engagement among jurors. When used strategically and thoughtfully, demonstrative exhibits not only support a case but also allow for a more persuasive narrative.

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