In 1794, fifteen enslaved descendants of an Angolan woman named Paula collectively sued for their freedom in Rio de Janeiro. In their freedom suit, which lasted sixteen-years and generated over six-hundred pages of court record, Paula’s descendants claimed that she was living in Luanda, Angola as a free woman when she was kidnapped, enslaved, and transported across the Atlantic to Brazil in 1753. This talk focuses on one particularly unique aspect of the trial record: the collection of witness testimony from Paula’s former kin and community in Angola. This remarkable testimony—collected fifty years after Paula’s enslavement, across the Atlantic Ocean, and some of which required translation from Kimbundu to Portuguese—spurred a debate about what constituted evidence of legal freedom in a colonial society shaped by illegitimate enslavement, deathbed promises of freedom, and ambiguous baptism registers. The talk argues that the memory and testimony of witnesses in Angola formed a powerful counterarchive of Paula’s freedom for her descendants engaged in litigation in Rio de Janeiro.