

CITATION: DBCD Spadina Ltd et al v. Norma Walton et al, 2013 ONSC 6833
COURT FILE NO.: CV-13-10280-00CL
DATE: 20131105

**SUPERIOR COURT OF JUSTICE – ONTARIO
COMMERCIAL LIST**

BETWEEN:

DBDC SPADINA LTD. and THOSE CORPORATIONS
LISTED ON SCHEDULE A HERETO,

Applicants

AND:

NORMA WALTON, RONAULD WALTON, THE ROSE & THISTLE GROUP
LTD. and EGLINTON CASTLE INC,

Respondents

AND

THOSE CORPORATIONS LISTED ON SCHEDULE B HERETO, TO BE
BOUND BY THE RESULT

BEFORE: Newbould J.

COUNSEL: *Peter H. Griffin and Shara N. Roy*, for the Applicants

John A. Campion, Emmeline Morse and Guillermo Schible, for the Respondents

Fred Myers and Mark S. Dunn, for the Inspector

HEARD: November 1, 2013

ENDORSEMENT

[1] On October 4, 2013, Schonfeld Inc. was appointed as inspector of all of the companies in schedule B. On October 24, 2013 a motion by the applicants to have Schonfeld Inc. appointed as a manager of those corporations and related corporation was adjourned to November 1, 2013 and

interim relief was granted, including giving the applicants access to and joint control over all bank accounts.

[2] The applicants now move for the appointment of the Inspector as receiver/manager over the schedule B corporations and certain other properties that are mortgaged to Dr. Bernstein under mortgages which have expired. It is resisted by the respondents who maintain that the appointment would be an interim appointment pending a trial of the issues that should be ordered and that the applicants have sufficient protection from the order of October 24, 2013 that the respondents will not attack.

[3] For the reasons that follow, Schonfeld Inc. is appointed as receiver/manager of the 31 schedule B corporations.

Background

[4] Dr. Bernstein is the founder of very successful diet and health clinics. Norma Walton is a lawyer and co-founder with her husband Ronauld Walton of Rose & Thistle. She is a principal of Walton Advocates, an in-house law firm providing legal services to the Rose & Thistle group of companies. Ronauld Walton is also a lawyer and co-founder of Rose & Thistle and a principal of Walton Advocates

[5] Beginning in 2008, Dr. Bernstein acted as the lender/mortgagee of several commercial real estate properties owned by the Waltons either through Rose & Thistle or through other corporations of which they are the beneficial owners.

[6] Following several financings, Dr. Bernstein and the Waltons agreed to invest jointly in 31 various commercial real estate projects. Each is a 50% shareholder of each corporation set up to hold each property.

[7] The known facts and concerns of the applicants giving rise to the appointment of the Inspector are set out in my endorsement of October 7, 2013 and were contained in affidavits of James Reitan, director of accounting and finance at Dr. Bernstein Diet and Health Clinics. Since

then, there has been further affidavit material from both sides and the Inspector has delivered two interim reports and a supplement to the first. The most recent affidavit from the applicants' side is an affidavit of Mr. Reitan sworn October 24, 2013. The most recent from the respondents' side is an affidavit of Norma Walton sworn October 31, 2013 on the day before this motion was heard. There has been no cross-examination on any affidavits. The first interim report of the Inspector is dated October 21, 2013, the supplement to it is dated October 24, 2013 and the second interim report is dated October 31, 2013. I have not permitted any cross-examination of the Inspector but the respondents have been free to make reasonable requests for information from the Inspector and they have availed themselves of that opportunity.

[8] To date, Dr. Bernstein through his corporations has advanced approximately \$105 million into the 31 projects (net of mortgages previously repaid), structured as equity of \$2.57 million, debt of \$78.5 million and mortgages of \$23.34 million`.

[9] According to the ledgers provided to the Inspector, the Waltons have contributed approximately \$6 million. \$352,900 is recorded as equity, which I assume is cash, \$1.78 million is recorded as debt and \$3.9 million is recorded in the intercompany accounts said to be owing to Rose & Thistle and is net of (i) amounts invoiced by Rose & Thistle but not yet paid; (ii) amounts paid by Rose & Thistle on behalf of the companies such as down-payments; and (iii) less amounts paid by DBDC directly to Rose & Thistle on behalf of the companies and (iv) other accounting adjustments.

Concerns of the applicants

(i) \$6 million mortgage

[10] This was a matter raised at the outset and was one of the basis for my finding of oppression leading to the appointment of the Inspector. Mr. Reitan learned as a result of a title search on all properties obtained by him that mortgages of \$3 million each were placed on 1450 Don Mills Road and 1500 Don Mills Road on July 31, 2013 and August 1, 2013. Dr. Bernstein had no knowledge of them and did not approve them as required by the agreements for those properties. At a meeting on September 27, 2013, Ms. Walton informed Mr. Reitan and Mr.

Schonfeld that the Waltons were in control of the \$6 million of mortgage proceeds (rather than the money being in the control of the owner companies), but refused to provide evidence of the existence of the \$6 million. Ms. Walton stated that she would only provide further information regarding the two mortgages in a without prejudice mediation process. That statement alone indicates that Ms. Walton knew there was something untoward about these mortgages.

[11] In his first interim report, Mr. Schonfeld reported that the proceeds of the Don Mills mortgages were deposited into the Rose & Thistle account. Rose & Thistle transferred \$3,330,000 to 28 of the 31 companies. The balance of the proceeds of the Don Mills mortgages totalling \$2,161,172, were used for other purposes including the following:

1. \$98,900 was paid to the Receiver General in respect of payroll tax;
2. \$460,000 was deposited into Ms. Walton's personal account;
3. \$353,000 was apparently used to repay a loan owed by Rose & Thistle in relation to Richmond Row Holdings Ltd.; and,
4. \$154,600 was transferred electronically to an entity named Plexor Plastics Corp. and \$181,950 transferred electronically to Rose and Thistle Properties Ltd. Ms. Walton advised the Inspector that she owns these entities with her husband.

[12] In her affidavit of October 31, 2013, Ms. Walton admits that \$2.1 million was "diverted" and used outside the 31 projects. She admits it should not have been done without Dr. Bernstein's consent. She offers excuses that do not justify what she did. What happened here, not to put too fine a point on it, was theft. It is little wonder that when first confronted with this situation, Ms. Walton said she would only talk about it in a without prejudice mediation.

[13] In her affidavit of October 4, 2013, Ms. Walton said she had made arrangements to discharge the \$3 million mortgage on 1500 Don Mills Rd on October 21, 2013 and to wire money obtained from the mortgage on 1450 Don Mills Road into the Global Mills account (one of the 31 companies) by the same date. Why the money would not be put into the 1450 Don

Mills account was not explained. In any event, no repayment of any of the diverted funds has occurred.

(ii) Tisdale Mews

[14] Tisdale Mews is a rezoning for 35 townhomes near Victoria Park Avenue and Eglinton Avenue East. Mr. Reitan states in his affidavit that Dr. Bernstein made his equity contribution to Tisdale Mews December 2011 in the amount of \$1,480,000. The bank statements for December 2011 for Tisdale Mews have not been made available. The forwarded balance on the bank statements available for Tisdale Mews from January 2012 is \$96,989.91, indicating that most if not all of Dr. Bernstein's money went elsewhere. Ms. Walton states in her affidavit that the project "was purchased by Dr. Bernstein on January 11, 2012" and he invested \$1.7 million in equity. How it was that Dr. Bernstein purchased the property is not explained and seems contrary to the affidavit of Mr. Reitan. The bank account statements for the property show no deposits of any consequence in January 2012 or later.

[15] In any event, Mr. Reitan was able to review bank records and other documents. Invoices and cheques written from Tisdale Mews' bank account show that a total of \$268,104.57 from Tisdale Mews has been used for work done at 44 Park Lane Circle, the personal residence of the Waltons in the Bridle Path area of Toronto.

[16] Ms. Walton in her affidavit acknowledges that the money was used to pay renovation costs on her residence. She says, however, that Rose & Thistle funded 100% of the \$268,104.57 purchases before any cheques were sent out of the Tisdale Mews account. How this was funded was not disclosed, although she did say that overall, Rose & Thistle has a positive net transfer to the Tisdale Mews account of \$2,208,964 "as per Exhibit G to the Inspector's first interim report". Exhibit G to that report has nothing to do with Tisdale Mews. Exhibit D to that report, being the property profile report of the Inspector for the 31 properties, contains no information for Tisdale Mews because information had not yet been provided to the Inspector. The Inspector's updated profile prepared after information was obtained from Rose & Thistle shows \$1,274,487 owing from Tisdale Mews to Rose & Thistle, but whether this is legitimate cannot be

determined until back-up documents sought by the Inspector are provided. It is no indication that cash was put into Tisdale Mews by Rose & Thistle.

[17] The statement of Ms. Walton that Rose & Thistle funded 100% of the \$268,104.57 purchases on her residence before any cheques were sent out of the Tisdale Mews account makes little sense. There would be no reason for Rose & Thistle to transfer funds into the Tisdale Mews account to pay personal expenses of Ms. Walton for her residence. Again, it has all the appearances of another case of theft.

(iii) Steps to impede a proper inspection

[18] It is quite evident that from the moment the order was made appointing the Inspector, Ms. Walton took various steps to hinder the Inspector. That order was made on October 4, a Friday, and permitted the Inspector to go to the offices of Rose & Thistle during normal business hours and on that evening and throughout the week-end. Mr. Reitan swears in his affidavit that when he arrived at the Rose & Thistle offices at 3:33 p.m. on the direction of the Inspector, which was shortly after the order was made, he saw Ms. Walton locking the door to the premises and she waved to him as she walked away from the doors. He was informed by Angela Romanova that Ms. Walton had told all employees to leave the premises once the order was granted at approximately 3 pm. He observed one employee who left with a server and one or more computers. After a discussion with the employee and Steven Williams, VP of operations at Rose & Thistle, these were taken back into the building. I received an e-mail from Mr. Griffin early in the evening alerting me to the problem and I was asked to be available if necessary. Mr. Reitan states that after several hours, and following Mr. Walton's arrival, Mr. Schonfeld, Mr. Merryweather and he were allowed into the premises.

[19] Ms. Walton in her affidavit states that a laptop "that was about to be removed" from the Rose & Thistle offices was 13 years old and they were disposing of it. One of her occasional workers asked if he could have it and they agreed. She states that the timing was unfortunate. She states that there are eight server towers permanently affixed to the premises. What she does not answer is Mr. Reitan's statement that she locked the doors and told her employees to leave, that whatever was taken from the premises was returned after discussions with the employee and

Mr. Williams, the VP of operations, and that it took several hours before the Inspector and Mr. Reitan were permitted on the premises. The order appointing the Inspector required Ms. Walton to fully co-operate with the Inspector.

[20] The order also permitted the Inspector to appoint persons as considered necessary, including Mr. Reitan. Ms. Walton however took the position that Mr. Reitan should not be on the premises, which was contrary to the order, and that the Inspector should not discuss with the applicants or their lawyers any information he obtained before making his first report to the court. Mr. Reitan was the accounting person for Dr. Bernstein most familiar with the investments and not having him available to the Inspector, either on the Rose & Thistle premises or not, would not be helpful to the Inspector. On October 9, 2013 I made a further order, which should not have been necessary, permitting Mr. Reitan to be on the premises when Mr. Schonfeld or his staff were present. I also ordered that Mr. Schonfeld was entitled, but not required, to discuss his investigation with the parties or their representatives.

[21] Ms. Walton informed the Inspector that the books and record of the companies were last brought current in 2011. Since August or September, 2013, after Mr. Reitan became involved in seeking information, Rose & Thistle employees have been inputting expense information into ledgers relating to the period January 2012 and August 2013. They have also issued a number of invoices for services rendered or expenses incurred by Rose & Thistle during the period January 2012 to August 2013. On October 17, 2013, Mr. Schonfeld convened a meeting with the parties and their counsel to orally present his findings. Prior to that meeting, Ms. Walton would only provide the Inspector with access to general ledgers for individual companies once she and Rose & Thistle had completed their exercise of updating the ledgers and issuing invoices from Rose & Thistle to each company. At the meeting, Ms. Walton agreed to provide the Inspector with access to ledgers for the remaining companies in their current state. These were eventually provided.

[22] Ms. Walton instituted a procedure under which no information could be provided by Rose & Thistle employees to the Inspector only after Ms. Walton had vetted it, which was causing considerable difficulties for the Inspector. On October 18, counsel for the Inspector wrote to counsel to the respondents and asked that the respondents provide immediate unfettered access to the books and records and end the insistence that all information be provided through

Ms. Walton. During the week of October 21, Ms. Walton said she could not meet because she was involved in preparing responding material in the litigation and that her staff was unavailable. By October 24, 2013 no substantive response to the Inspector's request was made, and on that date I made an order requiring Ms. Walton not to interfere with Rose & Thistle employees providing information to the Inspector. This should not have been necessary in light of the terms of the original order of October 4, 2013 appointing the Inspector.

(iv) Improper use of bank accounts

[23] The agreements for each project require that each project has a separate bank account. The Inspector reports, however, that there has been extensive co-mingling of bank accounts and that funds were routinely transferred between the company accounts and the Rose & Thistle account. From the date of each agreement to September 30, 2013, approximately \$77 million was transferred from the companies' accounts to Rose & Thistle and Rose & Thistle transferred approximately \$53 million to the various company accounts meaning that Rose & Thistle had retained approximately \$24 million transferred to it from the various companies.

[24] Ms. Walton confirmed to the Inspector that equity contributions to, and income received by, the companies were centralized and co-mingled in the Rose & Thistle account, which she described as a "clearing house". This practice continued in September 2013 and the Inspector reported it was difficult to trace how transfers from the companies were used because the funds were also co-mingled with funds transferred to the Rose & Thistle account by other Walton companies not making up the 31 companies in which Dr. Bernstein has his 50% interest. It is clear that the Waltons did not treat each company separately as was required in the agreements for each company.

[25] To alleviate the problem of the co-mingling of funds and the payments out to Rose & Thistle, the order of October 25 provided for the payment of deposits to be made to the bank accounts of the 31 companies and that no payment out could be made without the written consent of the applicants or someone they may nominate.

(v) Receivables of Rose & Thistle from the 31 companies

[26] The agreements for the 31 properties state that Dr. Bernstein and the Waltons are to provide 50% of the equity required. They do not provide that the Walton's equity is to be provided in services. They state that each of Dr. Bernstein and the Waltons will put in amounts of money. In her lengthy affidavit of October 31, 2013, Ms. Walton went to the trouble of describing each of the 31 projects, including stating how much equity Dr. Bernstein had put into each property. Tellingly, however, she made no statement at all of how much equity she or her husband had put into any of the properties, and gave no explanation for not doing so. This may be an indication that Ms. Walton is not able to say what equity has been put into each property, hardly surprising as the books and records were two years out of date at the time the Inspector was appointed.

[27] In his first interim report, Mr. Schonfeld reported that based on invoices and general ledger entries provided to October 18, 2013, Rose & Thistle appeared to have charged the companies approximately \$27 million for various fees and HST on the fees. On October 17, the date of his meeting with the parties, he had circulated a version of his chart regarding this which identified \$2.68 million that had been transferred to Rose & Thistle that could not be reconciled to any invoice issued by Rose & Thistle. On the following day on October 18, Rose & Thistle provided additional invoices to the companies for \$5.6 million so that the total amount invoiced exceeded the amounts transferred by Rose & Thistle to the companies by \$2.9 million. In his supplement to his first report, Mr. Schonfeld reported that the respondents had produced further invoices from Rose & Thistle dated between January 2012 and September 2013 to the companies for a total of \$34.6 million, being \$10.6 million more than it had received from the companies. Mr. Schonfeld identified approximately \$3.9 million recorded on the ledgers of Rose & Thistle as owing from the companies to Rose & Thistle. This amount is part of the \$6 million recorded in the books as being the contribution by the Waltons to the companies.

(vi) Documentation to support Rose & Thistle invoices

[28] The Inspector has sought unsuccessfully so far to obtain documentation underlying Rose & Thistle's invoices of some \$34.6 million to the companies, including construction budgets for

the various projects. This is of considerable importance in understanding the claim for equity put into the properties by the Waltons, because by far the largest amount of equity now claimed to have been put in by the Waltons are the fees for services said to have been provided by the Waltons to the various companies.

[29] The information that has been obtained regarding the invoices issued to some of the companies by Rose & Thistle is troubling and gives little confidence in what Ms. Walton and Rose & Thistle have done.

[30] Riverdale Mansion Inc. is one of the 31 projects. It is the owner of a historic mansion on Pape Avenue. Riverdale transferred \$1,759,800 to Rose & Thistle and received from Rose & Thistle \$785,250. Thus Rose & Thistle retained \$974,550 transferred to it by Riverdale.

[31] Rose & Thistle provided the Inspector with invoices addressed to Riverdale for construction management fees totaling \$1,183,981 plus HST and maintenance fees of \$60,000, including \$275,000 for "deposits for materials", \$103,863 for "project management services", \$295,000 for "site plan deposits and application" and \$67,890 for "steel bar ordered and installed". At the October 17 meeting, the Inspector asked for documentation, including third party invoices, to support the amounts invoiced to Riverdale. Ms. Walton said that Rose & Thistle did not have third party invoices for many of the invoiced expenses because Rose & Thistle performed much of the work itself (it has a construction company) and that some of the expenses had not yet been incurred. In response, the Inspector requested documents such as material invoices and payroll records to validate the cost of work done by Rose & Thistle and invoiced to Riverdale. None were provided.

[32] On the following day, October 18, the Inspector received a credit note from Rose & Thistle which showed that the invoice from Rose & Thistle to Riverdale had been reversed except for \$257,065.62 for work performed in 2011. The credit note is dated December 31, 2011.

[33] In her affidavit of October 31, 2013, Ms. Walton gave an explanation for the Riverdale reversal, an explanation that has problems. She said that considerable work was done to prepare the site for construction of townhouses and condominiums. As the work was proceeding, the

project changed and the mansion will be rebuilt and become used for a woman's shelter. Rose & Thistle was owed "certain monies" for its work and the invoice for \$1,291,025 inclusive of HST was rendered by Rose & Thistle to Riverdale. She states that "the Inspector thought the amount claimed was too high" and so she issued a credit note and submitted a lower invoice for \$257,065.62 "that reflected the value of the work done by Rose & Thistle". She says she merely forgot to re-do the invoice after the plans changed.

[34] The applicants have had no chance to cross-examine Ms. Walton on her affidavit. I have considerable doubts that the Inspector told Ms. Walton that the invoice was too high, as he has had no back-up documentation to consider the validity of the invoice and was asking for it to be produced. However, even assuming that the Inspector told her the invoice was too high, which is not what the Inspector reported, one may ask why, if the new invoice of some \$257,000 reflected the work that was done, an earlier invoice had been sent for some \$1.2 million. That earlier invoice appears to have been highly improper.

[35] Dupont Developments Ltd. is one of the 31 projects. It is a contaminated industrial building and the plan according to Ms. Walton is to "gut renovate" the building and remediate the contaminated site. The Inspector requested the construction budget for it and it was provided by Mr. Goldberg, who said he was responsible for the construction project. Mr. Goldberg told Mr. Schonfeld that the budget documents were out of date. They indicate that Dupont spent \$385,000 on construction and \$20,000 on environmental renovation. The Inspector had previously been provided with an invoice issued by Rose & Thistle to Dupont for \$565,339.34 which includes an entry for construction management services of \$175,300.30, said in the invoice to be "10% of hard costs", implying that Rose & Thistle had supervised construction that cost approximately \$1.75 million. The updated general ledger for Dupont received by the Inspector on October 24 showed capitalized expenses of approximately \$248,000, construction in progress of \$36,000 and various consulting fees of approximately \$563,000. All of these documents show different construction expenditures, none nowhere near the implied cost of \$1.75 million.

[36] This Dupont budget was the only budget for any of the projects provided to the Inspector by the time of his last report dated October 31, 2013, one day before this motion was heard. The

Inspector concludes that it appears that Rose & Thistle is not maintaining project budgets on an ongoing basis to track expenses and measure construction costs against the pro forma statement prepared when the property was purchased.

[37] Fraser Properties owns property at 30 Fraser Avenue and Fraser Lands owns abutting property purchased in October 2012. Dr. Bernstein made an equity contribution of approximately \$16 million. Fraser Properties transferred \$10,281,050 to Rose & Thistle and received back \$1,215,100. Thus Rose & Thistle retained \$9,065,950. In his first report, Mr. Schonfeld said he had inspected the property and saw no construction work or evidence of recent construction work. In his supplement to his first report, after he had received the general ledger and invoices from Rose & Thistle to Fraser Properties, he reported that the invoices to Fraser Properties were approximately \$1.6 million. Assuming the invoices can be supported, that would mean that Rose & Thistle has received approximately \$7.4 million more from Fraser Properties than it invoiced to Fraser Properties. It is to be noted that at the time of the Inspector's first report, the books and records showed an intercompany receivable due to Rose & Thistle from the companies of approximately \$9.9 million. By the time of the first supplement to the Inspector's report three days later, after the invoices and general ledger had been received and reviewed, this amount was reduced to approximately \$3.9 million, due to a new debit showing as being owed by Rose & Thistle to Fraser Properties of approximately \$6.45 million.

[38] On October 31, 2013 Mr. Campion on behalf of the respondents wrote to counsel to the applicants and to the Inspector and referred to the Inspector asking which filing cabinet he could review to obtain the documents requested, such as third party invoices, contracts, payroll records or other contemporaneous documents. Mr. Campion said that the information sought can only be obtained through discussion with the staff as all documentation is on computer and not in a filing cabinet. This is troubling to the Inspector. It would mean that there is no paper of any kind in existence for \$35 million of costs said to have been incurred, or that it has all been scanned and thrown out. It would be unusual to scan it and throw it out, and questionable that it was all scanned when Rose & Thistle was two years late in their bookkeeping and according to Ms. Walton had an outdated software system.

[39] Since the Inspector was appointed, Rose & Thistle has been preparing invoices for work done going back to January 2012, and one may question where the information is coming from to do that. Mr. Campion was undoubtedly passing on what he was told by Ms. Walton, but what he was told raises concerns.

(vii) Other equity investors

[40] The agreements provided that the only shares to be issued were to Dr. Bernstein's corporations or to the Walton's corporations and neither could transfer shares to another party without the consent of the other party. However, in his prior affidavit, Mr. Reitan provided documentary evidence that disclosed that the Waltons have taken on new equity investors in at least one project, without the agreement of Dr. Bernstein. This issue was not answered by Ms. Walton in her affidavit of October 31, 2013, the failure of which is compounded in that Ms. Walton did not disclose, as previously discussed, what equity contributions have been made by the Waltons for any of the properties.

Legal principles and analysis

[41] Section 101 of the *Courts of Justice Act* provides for the appointment of a receiver/manager where it appears to a judge to be just and convenient to do so. In *Royal Bank of Canada v. Chongsim Investment Ltd.* (1997), 32 O.R. (3d) 565, Epstein J. (as she then was) discussed what should be considered in deciding whether to make such an order. She stated:

The jurisdiction to order a receiver is found in s. 101 of the *Courts of Justice Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c. C.43. This section provides that a receiver may be appointed where it appears to be just and convenient. The appointment of a receiver is particularly intrusive. It is therefore relief that should only be granted sparingly. The law is clear that in the exercise of its discretion, the court should consider the effect of such an order on the parties. As well, since it is an equitable remedy, the conduct of the parties is a relevant factor.

[42] Section 248 of the OBCA also provides for the appointment of a receiver manager if there has been oppression as contained in section 248(2). Under section 248(2) a court may make an order to rectify the matters complained of and section 248(3) provides:

(3) In connection with an application under this section, the court may make any interim or final order it thinks fit including, without limiting the generality of the foregoing,

[...]

(b) an order appointing a receiver or receiver-manager;

[43] Various cases other than the *Chongsim Investment* case have discussed the principles to be taken into account. See *Anderson v. Hunking*, [2010] O.J. No. 3042 and *Bank of Montreal v. Carnival Leasing Limited* (2011), 74 C.B.R. (5th) 300 and the authorities referred to in those cases.

[44] In my view this is not a case in which the applicants are seeking an interim order appointing a receiver/manager. They do not seek an interim order. They seek the appointment on the basis of evidence that is largely uncontested by Ms. Walton. I would agree with the respondents that if the evidence relied on by the applicants for the order sought was largely contested, the relief should be considered on the basis that it is interim relief. However, that is not the case. In any event, even if the *RJR MacDonald* tri-part test were applicable, that would not be materially different in this case from the test articulated by Epstein J. in *Chongsim Investment* that requires a consideration of the effect of the order sought on the parties and their conduct.

[45] In my reasons when the Inspector was appointed on October 4, 2013, I found oppression had occurred as follows:

[27] In my view, on the record before me Dr. Bernstein has met the test required for an investigation to be ordered. To put on two mortgages for \$6 million without the required agreement of Dr. Bernstein and then refuse to disclose what happened to the money except in a without prejudice mediation meets the higher test of oppression, let alone the lesser test of unfairly disregarding the interests of Dr. Bernstein. The other examples of the evidence I have referred, as well as the failure to provide monthly reports on the projects to Dr. Bernstein, are clearly instances of the Waltons unfairly being prejudicial to and unfairly disregarding the interests of Dr. Bernstein, a 50% shareholder of each of the owner corporations.

[46] I do not see the picture as now being less clear. To the contrary, it seems much clearer. I have referred to the concerns above in some detail. They include the following:

1. \$2.1 million was improperly taken from the proceeds of the \$6 million mortgages that never had Dr. Bernstein's approval, \$400,000 of which was taken by Ms. Walton into her personal bank account. Ms. Walton was well aware that this was wrong. She is a lawyer and the agreements were drawn in her office. Her initial reaction when confronted about the mortgages by Mr. Reitan, who at the time did not know what had happened to the mortgage proceeds, that she would only discuss it in a without prejudice mediation is a clear indication she knew what she did was wrong and contrary to Dr. Bernstein's interests.
2. \$268,104.57 was improperly paid from the Tisdale Mews account to pay for renovations to the Waltons' residence. No reasonable explanation has been provided.
3. The co-mingling of accounts and the cash sweep into the Rose & Thistle accounts was a breach of agreement and unfairly prejudicial to Dr. Bernstein and a disregard of his interests. This is particularly the case in light of the lack of current books and records that should have been prepared and available rather than requiring an Inspector to try to get to the bottom of what has occurred. A lack of records is in itself unfairly disregarding the interests of Dr. Bernstein, particularly taken the size of his investment. Blaming it on outdated computer software is hardly an answer. That should have been taken care of long ago.
4. The frenzied attempts in the past month since the Inspector was appointed to update ledgers and manufacture invoices should never have been necessary and in light of the evidence, obviously casts doubt on what is now being done to update the records. Dr. Bernstein should never have had to face this prejudicial situation.
5. The Waltons have not provided equal payments of money into any of the 31 properties. The claim that their equity was provided by way of set-off for fees and

work, even if that were permissible under the agreements, is unsupported by any available documents to the Inspector. What little has been provided raises serious issues, as discussed above. As well, taking in new equity partners is not at all what Dr. Bernstein signed up for, and indicative of a lack of ability of the Waltons to fund their equity in accordance with the agreements.

6. Dr. Bernstein was entitled to monthly reports. It is now quite evident why that has not occurred.

[47] Mr. Campion contended that a receiver/manager could not be ordered over any particular property without a finding of oppressive conduct regarding that property. I am not at all sure that such a proposition in this case is correct, but in any event there has been oppressive conduct regarding each property. The co-mingling of funds and the sweep of cash from each property's account into Rose & Thistle was oppressive in these circumstances in which there were no contemporaneous books and records kept that would permit Dr. Bernstein, or now the Inspector, to fully understand what occurred to the money from each property. The setting up of alleged fees owing to Rose & Thistle for the properties to substantiate the Waltons' equity contributions, even if permissible, without readily available documentation to substantiate the validity of the fees, was oppressive. The lack of records and reports for each property was oppressive.

[48] It is contended on behalf of the respondents that they have the contractual right to manage the projects and thus no receiver/manager should be appointed. The difficulty with this argument is that the contracts have been breached and the Waltons have certainly not shown themselves to be capable managers. A basic lack of record keeping, compounded by co-mingling of funds and transferring them to Rose & Thistle, belies any notion of proper professional management. Ms. Walton acknowledges that accounting and other issues "have plainly caused him [Dr. Bernstein] to lose confidence in my management". That is a fundamental change to the relationship.

[49] It is contended that the business will be harmed if a receiver/manager is appointed. Ms. Walton states in her affidavit that she believes that the dynamic nature of this portfolio will suffer and in the end suffer unnecessary losses. What is meant by the dynamic nature is not clear.

I recognize that a receiver/manager can in certain circumstances have negative implications in the marketplace, particularly if it means that unsold properties will have to be put up for sale at less than market prices or be sold quickly. There is no indication that is the plan here at all and there is no court ordered sale being requested.

[50] It is also to be recognized that a receiver/manager can bring stability to a situation, which in this case appears to be a requirement to protect the interests of Dr. Bernstein.

[51] Dr. Bernstein with his \$100 million plus investment has a huge financial interest in this portfolio of properties. It is hardly in his interest to have the properties dealt with in less than a sound commercial way. He suffers the same risk as the Waltons, and depending on what real equity the Waltons have put in, perhaps far more. The Waltons contend that they have huge financial risk in that they have guaranteed mortgages to the tune of some \$206 million. They have not offered any evidence that there is any likelihood of being called upon on their guarantees, and to the contrary Ms. Walton says that all of the projects except perhaps one or two of them are or expected to be profitable. There is no reason why an experienced receiver/manager with capable property managers cannot continue with the success of the ventures.

[52] The respondents contend that with the controls over the bank accounts and the other provisions of the two orders made to date, there is plenty of protection for Dr. Bernstein. There may be something in this argument, but it ignores one of the basic problems caused by the way the business has been run. There is no clear evidence yet what exactly has been put into the properties by the Waltons, and that is crucial to understanding what both Dr. Bernstein and the Waltons are entitled to. In the month since the Inspector was appointed, Ms. Walton has caused back dated invoices to be prepared for past work said to have been done. What they have been prepared from is not at all clear. With some of the troubling things about changing records that have become apparent as a result of digging by Mr. Reitan and the Inspector, discussed above, and the diversion of money that has taken place, there is reason to be concerned exactly what Ms. Walton is doing to shore up her position. The Inspector is not in a position to know what is being prepared on an *ex post facto* basis or from what, and Dr. Bernstein should not have to rely

on a hope that something untoward will no longer be done. The present situation is causing considerable harm to Dr. Bernstein.

Conclusion

[53] Schonfeld Inc. is appointed as manager/receiver of all of the properties in schedule B, effective immediately. I was provided with a draft order that is based on the model order in use in our Court and approved by the Users' Committee. It appears satisfactory but there were no submissions as to its terms. If the respondents have any submissions with respect to the draft order, they are to be made in writing within three days and the applicants or Schonfeld Inc. shall have until Wednesday of next week to respond. In the meantime, the appointment of Schonfeld Inc. as manager/receiver is not to be delayed and Schonfeld Inc. shall immediately have the powers contained in the draft order pending any objection to it by the respondents.

[54] The applicants have applied to have Schonfeld Inc. appointed as receiver over four properties mortgaged to Dr. Bernstein with expired mortgages that are not schedule B corporations. Ms. Walton has stated in her affidavit that funds are being raised that will see these mortgages paid in full by the end of November, 2013. In light of that statement, this application is adjourned *sine die*. It can be brought on after the end of November in the event that the mortgages have not been paid in full.

[55] The applicants have also requested a certificate of pending litigation over 44 Park Lane Circle, the residence of the Waltons in light of the evidence that money from one of the 31 schedule Dr. Bernstein corporations was used to pay for renovations to the residence. I was advised by counsel for Ms. Walton during the hearing of the motion that the money would be repaid that day. Based on that statement, the request for a certificate of pending litigation is adjourned *sine die* and can be brought back on in the event that evidence of the payment is not provided to the applicants and Schonfeld Inc.

[56] The Inspector moved for approval of his interim reports and the actions taken as disclosed in the reports, and approval for his fees and disbursements and those of his counsel. No one opposed the request although Mr. Champion said that the respondents were not consenting to

them. In my view, the actions taken by the Inspector have been entirely proper in difficult circumstances and in her affidavit Ms. Walton acknowledges that the Inspector was necessary because of her issues. The fees and disbursements also appear reasonable. At the conclusion of the hearing I granted the order sought.

[57] The applicants are entitled to their costs from the respondents. If costs cannot be agreed, brief written submissions along with a proper cost outline may be made within 10 days and brief written reply submissions may be made within a further 10 days.



Newbould J.

Date: November 5, 2013