

Moreover, an attorney hired by a personal representative is an agent of the personal representative and any conflicts of interest or adverse interest of the attorney are imputed to personal representative. Estate of Brugh, 306 So. 2d 599 (Fla. 2d DCA 1975); see also, § 733.6171(5), Fla. Stat. (an interested party has standing to challenge compensation paid to personal representative's agents, including his attorneys). Under § 733.602, Fla. Stat., a personal representative must use his authority "for the best interests of interested parties, including creditors." Id. Indeed, the fundamental responsibilities of a personal representative are to pursue all assets of the estate. Bookman v. Davidson, 136 So. 3d 1276 (Fla. 1st DCA 2014). An "interested party" may seek to remove a personal representative (or its agent) when the personal representative (or its agent) holds or acquires "conflicting or adverse interests against the estate that will or may interfere with the administration of the estate as a whole." See §§ 733.506, 733.504(9), Fla. Stat.

In the present case, Stansbury clearly has standing to challenge the personal representative's hiring of Alan Rose and his law firm because they have an inherent conflict of interest with the Estate which will interfere with the administration of the Estate. These attorneys currently represent Mr. Ted Bernstein, individually, in the Insurance Litigation that is directly opposed to the interests of the Estate and its beneficiaries, creditors and claimants. Specifically, these attorneys are currently seeking to keep assets from the Estate and to instead have the life insurance proceeds paid to their individual client, Ted Bernstein. The existence of this inherent adverse interest of these attorneys to the Estate preclude them from representing the Estate in this litigation. Indeed, Mr. Stansbury has been incurring significant expenses on behalf of the Estate in the Chicago litigation. It would be unconscionable to permit these attorneys,

who are litigating against the Estate in Chicago, to, at the same time, represent the Estate in this matter.

## II. Alan Rose has a Conflict of Interest and Should Be Disqualified.

11. When considering whether disqualification of an attorney is appropriate based on a conflict of interest, courts recognize that the Rules Regulating the Florida Bar govern. *See, Morse v. Clark*, 890 So.2d 496 (Fla. 5<sup>th</sup> DCA 2004).

Rule 4-1.7(a) provides:

**(a) Representing Adverse interests.** Except as provided in subdivision (b), a lawyer must not represent a client if:

- (1) the representation of 1 client will be directly adverse to another client; or
- (2) there is a substantial risk that the representation of 1 or more clients will be materially limited by lawyer's responsibilities to another client, a former client or a third person or by a personal interest of the lawyer.

12. As the court in *Morse* stated:

The existing client rule is based on the ethical-concept requirement that a lawyer should act with undivided loyalty for his client and not place himself or herself in a position where a conflicting interest may affect the obligation of an ongoing professional relationship. It is difficult to imagine how a lawyer could appear in court one day arguing vigorously for a client, and then face the same client the next day and vigorously oppose him in another matter, without seriously damaging their professional relationship. Such unseemly conduct, if permitted, would further erode the public's regard for the legal profession. *Id.* at 498

13. The fact that Alan Rose has a conflict of interest is beyond question. It has recently been discovered, however, that Alan Rose represents Ted Bernstein as personal counsel in the Insurance Litigation filed in Chicago. Rose appeared as counsel for Ted Bernstein in the Chicago Insurance Litigation when Ted Bernstein is an adverse Party to the Simon Bernstein Estate. Rose participated and interposed objections in Ted Bernstein's deposition taken by James Stamos, the attorney hired by the Estate to pursue the life insurance benefits on its behalf. Excerpts from the deposition establishing Rose's representation of Ted Bernstein and showing

Rose's participation in the deposition adverse to the Estate are attached hereto as **Composite Exhibit "2."**

14. Under Rule 4-1.7(a) of Rules Regulating the Florida Bar, the representation of one client, Ted Bernstein, in his action seeking to deprive the Estate of \$1.7 million (the Insurance Litigation), is directly adverse to Rose's representation of the Estate in this lawsuit.

15. Due to the existence of the conflict of interest by Alan Rose, the entire Page, Mrachek firm is similarly disqualified. *See* Rule 4-1.10(a) of Rules Regulating the Florida Bar.

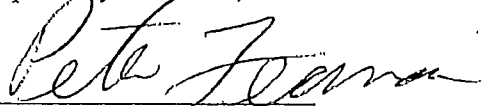
WHEREFORE, William Stansbury requests that this court:

A. Vacate its ruling on September 7, 2016 (or any Order resulting therefrom) that permits the Estate of Simon Bernstein to retain Alan Rose and Page, Mrachek, Fitzgerald, Rose, Konopka, Thomas & Weiss, P.A as legal counsel to represent the Estate of Simon Bernstein in Stansbury's lawsuit;

B. Set an evidentiary hearing to determine the existence of the conflict of interest;

C. Award Stansbury his costs herein expended, and such other relief as this court deems just and proper.

Respectfully submitted,

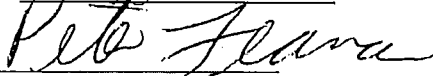
  
Peter M. Feaman

**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

I HEREBY CERTIFY that a true and correct copy of the above and foregoing has been forwarded via e-mail service through the Florida E-portal system to: Alan Rose, Esq., Mrachek, Fitzgerald Rose, 505 So. Flagler Drive, Suite 600, West Palm Beach, FL 33401, [arose@pm-law.com](mailto:arose@pm-law.com) and [mchandler@pm-law.com](mailto:mchandler@pm-law.com); Eliot Bernstein, 2753 NW 34<sup>th</sup> Street, Boca Raton, FL 33434, [tviewit@tviewit.tv](mailto:tviewit@tviewit.tv); Brian O'Connell, Esq., Ciklin Lubitz Martens & O'Connell, 515 North Flagler Drive, 20<sup>th</sup> Floor, West Palm Beach, FL 33401, [boconnell@ciklinlubitz.com](mailto:boconnell@ciklinlubitz.com); John P. Morrissey, Esq., 330 Clematis Street, Suite 213, West Palm Beach, FL 33401, [john@jmorrisseylaw.com](mailto:john@jmorrisseylaw.com); Lisa Friedstein, [lisa@friedsteins.com](mailto:lisa@friedsteins.com), 2142 Churchill Lane, Highland Park, IL 60035; Jill Iantoni, [jilliantoni@gmail.com](mailto:jilliantoni@gmail.com), 2101 Magnolia Lane, Highland Park, IL 60035, on this 7<sup>th</sup> day of October, 2016.

PETER M. FEAMAN, P.A.  
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By: \_\_\_\_\_

  
Peter M. Feaman  
Florida Bar No. 0260347

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS  
EASTERN DIVISION

SIMON BERNSTEIN IRREVOCABLE )  
INSURANCE TRUST DTD 6/21/95, )  
by Ted S. Bernstein, its Trustee, Ted )  
Bernstein, an individual, )  
Pamela B. Simon, an individual, )  
Jill Iantoni, an individual and Lisa S. )  
Friedstein, an individual. )

Plaintiff, )

v. )

HERITAGE UNION LIFE INSURANCE )  
COMPANY, )

Defendant, )

----- )  
HERITAGE UNION LIFE INSURANCE )  
COMPANY )

Counter-Plaintiff )

v. )

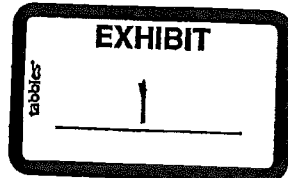
SIMON BERNSTEIN IRREVOCABLE )  
TRUST DTD 6/21/95 )

Counter-Defendant )

and, )

FIRST ARLINGTON NATIONAL BANK )  
as Trustee of S.B. Lexington, Inc. Employee )  
Death Benefit Trust, UNITED BANK OF )  
ILLINOIS, BANK OF AMERICA, )  
Successor in interest to LaSalle National )  
Trust, N.A., SIMON BERNSTEIN TRUST, )  
N.A., TED BERNSTEIN, individually and )  
as purported Trustee of the Simon Bernstein )

Case No. 13 cv 3643  
Honorable Amy J. St. Eve  
Magistrate Mary M. Rowland



Irrevocable Insurance Trust Dtd 6/21/95,  
and ELIOT BERNSTEIN )

Third-Party Defendants. )

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ELIOT IVAN BERNSTEIN, )

Cross-Plaintiff )

v. )

TED BERNSTEIN, individually and )  
as alleged Trustee of the Simon Bernstein )  
Irrevocable Insurance Trust Dtd, 6/21/95 )

Cross-Defendant )

and, )

PAMELA B. SIMON, DAVID B.SIMON, )  
both Professionally and Personally )  
ADAM SIMON, both Professionally and )  
Personally, THE SIMON LAW FIRM, )  
TESCHER & SPALLINA, P.A., )  
DONALD TESCHER, both Professionally )  
and Personally, ROBERT SPALLINA, )  
both Professionally and Personally, )  
LISA FRIEDSTEIN, JILL IANTONI )  
S.B. LEXINGTON, INC. EMPLOYEE )  
DEATH BENEFIT TRUST, S.T.P. )  
ENTERPRISES, INC. S.B. LEXINGTON, )  
INC., NATIONAL SERVICE )  
ASSOCIATION (OF FLORIDA), )  
NATIONAL SERVICE ASSOCIATION )  
(OF ILLINOIS) AND JOHN AND JANE )  
DOES )

Third-Party Defendants. )

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**PLAINTIFFS' FIRST AMENDED COMPLAINT**

**NOW COMES** Plaintiffs, SIMON BERNSTEIN IRREVOCABLE INSURANCE TRUST dtd 6/21/95, and TED BERNSTEIN, as Trustee, (collectively referred to as "BERNSTEIN TRUST"), TED BERNSTEIN, individually, PAMELA B. SIMON, individually, JILL IANTONI, individually, and LISA FRIEDSTEIN, individually, by their attorney, Adam M. Simon, and complaining of Defendant, HERITAGE UNION LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY, ("HERITAGE") states as follows:

**BACKGROUND**

1. At all relevant times, the BERNSTEIN TRUST was a common law irrevocable life insurance trust established in Chicago, Illinois, by the settlor, Simon L. Bernstein, ("Simon Bernstein" or "insured") and was formed pursuant to the laws of the state of Illinois.
2. At all relevant times, the BERNSTEIN TRUST was a beneficiary of a life insurance policy insuring the life of Simon Bernstein, and issued by Capitol Bankers Life Insurance Company as policy number 1009208 (the "Policy").
3. Simon Bernstein's spouse, Shirley Bernstein, was named as the initial Trustee of the BERNSTEIN TRUST. Shirley Bernstein passed away on December 8, 2010, predeceasing Simon Bernstein.
4. The successor trustee, as set forth in the BERNSTEIN TRUST agreement is Ted Bernstein.
5. The beneficiaries of the BERNSTEIN TRUST as named in the BERNSTEIN TRUST Agreement are the children of Simon Bernstein.

6. Simon Bernstein passed away on September 13, 2012, and is survived by five adult children whose names are Ted Bernstein, Pamela Simon, Eliot Bernstein, Jill Iantoni, and Lisa Friedstein. By this amendment, Ted Bernstein, Pamela Simon, Jill Iantoni and Lisa Friedstein are being added as co-Plaintiffs in their individual capacities.

7. Four out five of the adult children of Simon Bernstein, whom hold eighty percent of the beneficial interest of the BERNSTEIN TRUST have consented to having Ted Bernstein, as Trustee of the BERNSTEIN TRUST, prosecute the claims of the BERNSTEIN TRUST as to the Policy proceeds at issue.

8. Eliot Bernstein, the sole non-consenting adult child of Simon Bernstein, holds the remaining twenty percent of the beneficial interest in the BERNSTEIN TRUST, and is representing his own interests and has chosen to pursue his own purported claims, pro se, in this matter.

9. The Policy was originally purchased by the S.B. Lexington, Inc. 501(c)(9) VEBA Trust (the "VEBA") from Capitol Bankers Life Insurance Company ("CBLIC") and was delivered to the original owner in Chicago, Illinois on or about December 27, 1982.

10. At the time of the purchase of the Policy, S.B. Lexington, Inc., was an Illinois corporation owned, in whole or part, and controlled by Simon Bernstein.

11. At the time of purchase of the Policy, S.B. Lexington, Inc. was an insurance brokerage licensed in the state of Illinois, and Simon Bernstein was both a principal and an employee of S.B. Lexington, Inc.

12. At the time of issuance and delivery of the Policy, CBLIC was an insurance company licensed and doing business in the State of Illinois.



13. HERITAGE subsequently assumed the Policy from CBLIC and thus became the successor to CBLIC as "Insurer" under the Policy and remained the insurer including at the time of Simon Bernstein's death.

14. In 1995, the VEBA, by and through LaSalle National Trust, N.A., as Trustee of the VEBA, executed a beneficiary change form naming LaSalle National Trust, N.A., as Trustee, as primary beneficiary of the Policy, and the BERNSTEIN TRUST as the contingent beneficiary.

15. On or about August 26, 1995, Simon Bernstein, in his capacity as member or auxiliary member of the VEBA, signed a VEBA Plan and Trust Beneficiary Designation form designating the BERNSTEIN TRUST as the "person(s) to receive at my death the Death Benefit stipulated in the S.B. Lexington, Inc. Employee Death Benefit and Trust and the Adoption Form adopted by the Employer".

16. The August 26, 1995 VEBA Plan and Trust Beneficiary Designation form signed by Simon Bernstein evidenced Simon Bernstein's intent that the beneficiary of the Policy proceeds was to be the BERNSTEIN TRUST.

17. S.B. Lexington, Inc. and the VEBA were voluntarily dissolved on or about April 3, 1998.

18. On or about the time of the dissolution of the VEBA in 1998, the Policy ownership was assigned and transferred from the VEBA to Simon Bernstein, individually.

19. From the time of Simon Bernstein's designation of the BERNSTEIN TRUST as the intended beneficiary of the Policy proceeds on August 26, 1995, no document was submitted by Simon Bernstein (or any other Policy owner) to the Insurer which evidenced any change in his intent that the BERNSTEIN TRUST was to receive the Policy proceeds upon his death.

20. At the time of his death, Simon Bernstein was the owner of the Policy, and the BERNSTEIN TRUST was the sole surviving beneficiary of the Policy.

21. The insured under the Policy, Simon Bernstein, passed away on September 13, 2012, and on that date the Policy remained in force.

22. Following Simon Bernstein's death, the BERNSTEIN TRUST, by and through its counsel in Palm Beach County, FL, submitted a death claim to HERITAGE under the Policy including the insured's death certificate and other documentation.

### COUNT I

#### **BREACH OF CONTRACT**

23. Plaintiff, the BERNSTEIN TRUST, restates and realleges the allegations contained in ¶1-¶22 as if fully set forth as ¶23 of Count I.

24. The Policy, by its terms, obligates HERITAGE to pay the death benefits to the beneficiary of the Policy upon HERITAGE'S receipt of due proof of the insured's death.

25. HERITAGE breached its obligations under the Policy by refusing and failing to pay the Policy proceeds to the BERNSTEIN TRUST as beneficiary of the Policy despite HERITAGE'S receipt of due proof of the insured's death.

26. Despite the BERNSTEIN TRUST'S repeated demands and its initiation of a breach of contract claim, HERITAGE did not pay out the death benefits on the Policy to the BERNSTEIN TRUST instead it filed an action in interpleader and deposited the Policy proceeds with the Registry of the Court.

27. As a direct result of HERITAGE's refusal and failure to pay the Policy proceeds to the BERNSTEIN TRUST pursuant to the Policy, Plaintiff has been damaged in an amount equal to the death benefits of the Policy plus interest, an amount which exceeds \$1,000,000.00.

WHEREFORE, PLAINTIFF, the BERNSTEIN TRUST prays for a judgment to be entered in its favor and against Defendant, HERITAGE, for the amount of the Policy proceeds on deposit with the Registry of the Court (an amount in excess of \$1,000,000.00) plus costs and reasonable attorneys' fees together with such further relief as this court may deem just and proper.

## COUNT II

### DECLARATORY JUDGMENT

28. Plaintiff, the BERNSTEIN TRUST, restates and realleges the allegations contained in ¶1-¶27 above as ¶28 of Count II and pleads in the alternative for a Declaratory Judgment.
29. On or about June 21, 1995, David Simon, an attorney and Simon Bernstein's son-in-law, met with Simon Bernstein before Simon Bernstein went to the law offices of Hopkins and Sutter in Chicago, Illinois to finalize and execute the BERNSTEIN TRUST Agreement.
30. After the meeting at Hopkins and Sutter, David B. Simon reviewed the final version of the BERNSTEIN TRUST Agreement and personally saw the final version of the BERNSTEIN TRUST Agreement containing Simon Bernstein's signature.
31. The final version of the BERNSTEIN TRUST Agreement named the children of Simon Bernstein as beneficiaries of the BERNSTEIN TRUST, and unsigned drafts of the BERNSTEIN TRUST Agreement confirm the same.
32. The final version of the BERNSTEIN TRUST Agreement named Shirley Bernstein, as Trustee, and named Ted Bernstein as, successor Trustee.
33. As set forth above, at the time of death of Simon Bernstein, the BERNSTEIN TRUST was the sole surviving beneficiary of the Policy.

34. Following the death of Simon Bernstein, neither an executed original of the BERNSTEIN TRUST Agreement nor an executed copy could be located by Simon Bernstein's family members.

35. Neither an executed original nor an executed copy of the BERNSTEIN TRUST Agreement has been located after diligent searches conducted as follows:

- i) Ted Bernstein and other Bernstein family members of Simon Bernstein's home and business office;
- ii) the law offices of Tescher and Spallina, Simon Bernstein's counsel in Palm Beach County, Florida,
- iii) the offices of Foley and Lardner (successor to Hopkins and Sutter) in Chicago, IL; and
- iv) the offices of The Simon Law Firm.

36. As set forth above, Plaintiffs have provided HERITAGE with due proof of the death of Simon Bernstein which occurred on September 13, 2012.

WHEREFORE, PLAINTIFF, the BERNSTEIN TRUST prays for an Order entering a declaratory judgment as follows:

- a) declaring that the original BERNSTEIN TRUST was lost and after a diligent search cannot be located;
- b) declaring that the BERNSTEIN TRUST Agreement was executed and established by Simon Bernstein on or about June 21, 1995;
- c) declaring that the beneficiaries of the BERNSTEIN TRUST are the five children of Simon Bernstein;

- d) declaring that Ted Bernstein, is authorized to act as Trustee of the BERNSTEIN TRUST because the initial trustee, Shirley Bernstein, predeceased Simon Bernstein;
- e) declaring that the BERNSTEIN TRUST is the sole surviving beneficiary of the Policy;
- f) declaring that the BERNSTEIN TRUST is entitled to the proceeds placed on deposit by HERITAGE with the Registry of the Court;
- g) ordering the Registry of the Court to release all of the proceeds on deposit to the BERNSTEIN TRUST; and
- h) for such other relief as this court may deem just and proper.

### COUNT III

#### RESULTING TRUST

37. Plaintiffs restate and reallege the allegations contained in ¶1-¶36 of Count II as ¶37 of Count III and plead, in the alternative, for imposition of a Resulting Trust.

38. Pleading in the alternative, the executed original of the BERNSTEIN TRUST Agreement has been lost and after a diligent search as detailed above by the executors, trustee and attorneys of Simon Bernstein's estate and by Ted Bernstein, and others, its whereabouts remain unknown.

39. Plaintiffs have presented HERITAGE with due proof of Simon Bernstein's death, and Plaintiff has provided unexecuted drafts of the BERNSTEIN TRUST Agreement to HERITAGE.

40. Plaintiffs have also provided HERITAGE with other evidence of the BERNSTEIN TRUST'S existence including a document signed by Simon Bernstein that designated the BERNSTEIN TRUST as the ultimate beneficiary of the Policy proceeds upon his death.

41. At all relevant times and beginning on or about June 21, 1995, Simon Bernstein expressed his intent that (i) the BERNSTEIN TRUST was to be the ultimate beneficiary of the life insurance proceeds; and (ii) the beneficiaries of the BERNSTEIN TRUST were to be the children of Simon Bernstein.

42. Upon the death of Simon Bernstein, the right to the Policy proceeds immediately vested in the beneficiary of the Policy.

43. At the time of Simon Bernstein's death, the beneficiary of the Policy was the BERNSTEIN TRUST.

44. If an express trust cannot be established, then this court must enforce Simon Bernstein's intent that the BERNSTEIN TRUST be the beneficiary of the Policy; and therefore upon the death of Simon Bernstein the rights to the Policy proceeds immediately vested in a resulting trust in favor of the five children of Simon Bernstein.

45. Upon information and belief, Bank of America, N.A., as successor Trustee of the VEBA to LaSalle National Trust, N.A., has disclaimed any interest in the Policy.

46. In any case, the VEBA terminated in 1998 simultaneously with the dissolution of S.B. Lexington, Inc.

47. The primary beneficiary of the Policy named at the time of Simon Bernstein's death was LaSalle National Trust, N.A. as "Trustee" of the VEBA.

48. LaSalle National Trust, N.A., was the last acting Trustee of the VEBA and was named beneficiary of the Policy in its capacity as Trustee of the VEBA.

49. As set forth above, the VEBA no longer exists, and the ex-Trustee of the dissolved trust, and upon information and belief, Bank Of America, N.A., as successor to LaSalle National Trust, N.A. has disclaimed any interest in the Policy.

50. As set forth herein, Plaintiff has established that it is immediately entitled to the life insurance proceeds HERITAGE deposited with the Registry of the Court.

51. Alternatively, by virtue of the facts alleged herein, HERITAGE held the Policy proceeds in a resulting trust for the benefit of the children of Simon Bernstein and since HERITAGE deposited the Policy proceeds the Registry, the Registry now holds the Policy proceeds in a resulting trust for the benefit of the children of Simon Bernstein.

WHEREFORE, PLAINTIFFS pray for an Order as follows:

- a) finding that the Registry of the Court holds the Policy Proceeds in a Resulting Trust for the benefit of the five children of Simon Bernstein, Ted Bernstein, Pamela Simon, Eliot Ivan Bernstein, Jill Iantoni and Lisa Friedstein; and
- b) ordering the Registry of the Court to release all the proceeds on deposit to the Bernstein Trust or alternatively as follows: 1) twenty percent to Ted Bernstein; 2) twenty percent to Pam Simon; 3) twenty percent to Eliot Ivan Bernstein; 4) twenty percent to Jill Iantoni; 5) twenty percent to Lisa Friedstein
- c) and for such other relief as this court may deem just and proper.

By: s/Adam M. Simon

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303 E. Wacker Drive, Suite 210  
Chicago, IL 60601

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Fax: 312-819-0773

E-Mail: [asimon@chicagolaw.com](mailto:asimon@chicagolaw.com)

Attorneys for Plaintiffs and Third-Party  
Defendants

*Simon L. Bernstein Irrevocable Insurance Trust  
Dtd 6/21/95; Ted Bernstein as Trustee, and  
individually, Pamela Simon, Lisa Friedstein  
and Jill Iantoni*

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS  
EASTERN DIVISION

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SIMON BERNSTEIN IRREVOCABLE  
INSURANCE TRUST DTD 6/21/95,

Plaintiff,

v. Case No. 13 cv 3643

HERITAGE UNION LIFE INSURANCE  
COMPANY,

Defendant,

HERITAGE UNION LIFE INSURANCE  
COMPANY,

Counter-Plaintiff

v.

SIMON BERNSTEIN IRREVOCABLE  
INSURANCE TRUST DTD 6/21/95

Counter-Defendant

and,

FIRST ARLINGTON NATIONAL BANK  
as Trustee of S.B. Lexington, Inc.

Employee Death Benefit Trust,  
UNITED BANK OF ILLINOIS, BANK OF

AMERICA, Successor in interest to  
LaSalle National Trust, N.A., SIMON

BERNSTEIN TRUST, N.A., TED BERNSTEIN,  
individually and as purported Trustee

of the Simon Bernstein Irrevocable  
Insurance Trust Dtd 6/21/95, and

ELIOT BERNSTEIN

Third-Party Defendants.

ELIOT IVAN BERNSTEIN,

Cross-Plaintiff

v.





4 TED BERNSTEIN, individually and as  
alleged Trustee of the Simon Bernstein  
Irrevocable Insurance Trust Dtd  
5 6/21/95,  
Cross-Defendant

6

and,

7

PAMELA B. SIMON, DAVID B. SIMON, both  
8 Professionally and Personally, ADAM  
SIMON, both Professionally and Personally,  
9 THE SIMON LAW FIRM, TESCHER & SPALLINA,  
P.A., DONALD TESCHER, both Professionally  
10 and Personally, ROBERT SPALLINA, both  
Professionally and Personally, LISA  
11 FRIEDSTEIN, JILL IANTONI, S.B. LEXINGTON,  
INC. EMPLOYEE DEATH BENEFIT TRUST, S.T.P.  
12 ENTERPRISES, INC., S.B. LEXINGTON, INC,  
NATIONAL SERVICE ASSOCIATION (OF FLORIDA),  
13 NATIONAL SERVICE ASSOCIATION (OF ILLINOIS),  
AND JOHN AND JANE DOES

14

Third-Party Defendants.

15

16

DEPOSITION OF

17

TED BERNSTEIN

18

Taken on behalf of the Estate of Simon Bernstein

19

20

DATE TAKEN: May 6, 2015

TIME: 5:06 p.m. - 8:15 p.m.

21

PLACE: 2385 N.W. Executive Center Drive

Boca Raton, Florida

22

23

24

Stenographically Reported by:

25

Lisa Gropper, R.P.R., F.P.R.

0003

1

APPEARANCES

2

ON BEHALF OF TED BERNSTEIN:

3

ADAM M. SIMON, ESQ.

4

THE SIMON LAW FIRM

303 East Wacker Drive

5 Suite 2725  
Chicago, Illinois 60601

6

ALAN B. ROSE, ESQ.

7 MRACHEK, FITZGERALD, ROSE, KONOPKA,  
THOMAS & WEISS, P.A.

8 505 South Flagler Drive  
Suite 600

9 West Palm Beach, Florida 33401

10

ON BEHALF OF THE ESTATE OF SIMON BERNSTEIN:

11

JAMES J. STAMOS, ESQ.

12 KEVIN P. HORAN, ESQ.  
STAMOS & TRUCCO, LLP

13 One East Wacker Drive  
Suite 300

14 Chicago

12 that's what you're asking. I didn't object.

13 MR. STAMOS: Well, our position, for the  
14 record, is that you may not selectively employ the  
15 privilege.

16 Q So my question is, was this an attorney-client  
17 communication, as far as you were concerned?

18 A In every communication I had with Robert  
19 Spallina, I would expect that that privilege was there.

20 MR. ROSE: This is Alan Rose, just for the  
21 record, since I'm Mr. Bernstein's personal counsel.  
22 He's not asserting the privilege as to  
23 communications of this nature as responded in your  
24 email. He's asserting privilege to private  
25 communications he had one-on-one with Robert

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1 Spallina, who he considered to be his counsel.

2 That's the position for the record and that's why  
3 the privilege is being asserted.

4 Continue.

5 MR. STAMOS: No, I understand that. It's just  
6 that our position is that, if one has an  
7 attorney-client relationship, in particular with  
8 regard to discussions concerning a particular  
9 topic, the privilege is waived when you do not  
10 maintain the privilege with respect to certain  
11 communications and you do with others, and that's  
12 our position. So --

13 MR. ROSE: Okay. But for the record, since  
14 you're going to argue this in Illinois potentially,  
15 in every piece of litigation, certain things that  
16 you communicate with your lawyer eventually find  
17 their way into pleadings or communication with the  
18 other side. That does not mean that private  
19 communication you have one-on-one with your lawyer  
20 about various things when you're seeking legal  
21 advice on a confidential basis are not privileged.  
22 That's the sole basis upon which the privilege is  
23 being asserted and it's going to continue to be  
24 asserted.

25 MR. STAMOS: Can we proceed?

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1 MR. ROSE: Absolutely. Thanks.

2 MR. STAMOS: Got it.

3 Q (By Mr. Stamos) In any event, looking at  
4 Exhibit 11, this was a -- whatever it says, this was an

17 owner of this policy and that I think he was learning  
18 about the -- the chain of -- of ownership of the policy  
19 from the very beginning and its iterations over time  
20 when -- after speaking with the insurance company.

21 Q Did you understand this to be that  
22 Mr. Spallina was told by the insurance company that  
23 there was a break in title and beneficiary designation?

24 A Well, I -- I'm -- only because I'm reading  
25 what he said. I don't know what he assumed that meant,  
0069

1 but I'm assuming from what I'm reading that he is saying  
2 that there was some break there.

3 Q And this was in response to your email from --  
4 it looks like --

5 Well, it looks like the times are a little bit  
6 odd there. I'm not sure why that is.

7 A Right.

8 Q I wonder if one is eastern time and one is  
9 central time?

10 A Between me and Robert?

11 Q Yeah. Could that have been possible?

12 A Anything's possible, but unlikely, I think.

13 Q Well, in any event, when you received that,  
14 did you understand what he was talking about?

15 A At the time, I probably did not.

16 Q Now, looking at Exhibit 16, please.

17 (Exhibit 16 was marked for identification.)

18 Q Do you know who Mr. Welling is, before I ask  
19 you any questions about the document?

20 A I believe that he was someone connected to the  
21 insurance company.

22 Q I'd like you, if you will, to take a moment  
23 and read Exhibit Number 12 -- I'm sorry, Exhibit  
24 Number 16, back to front, and then I want to ask you  
25 some questions about it. It's not all that long.

0070

1 A So you'd like me to read all the pages in the  
2 email?

3 Q Yeah.

4 A Okay.

5 Q Just take a moment to read it. The messages  
6 are actually pretty brief.

7 MR. ROSE: While he's looking at that, I'd  
8 just state for the record that TS5253, at the  
9 bottom, clearly supports the assertion of the

10 privilege.

11 MR. STAMOS: In as much as it includes Scott  
12 Welling on it, I'd have a hard time understanding  
13 how that supports the existence of a privilege,  
14 but --

15 MR. ROSE: Okay.

16 Q (By Mr. Stamos) Have you had a chance to read  
17 that yet, Mr. Bernstein?

18 A Yes. I'm -- yes, I have.

19 Q I bet you recall this email string, correct?

20 A Yes.

21 Q It ends with a message from Mr. Spallina to  
22 you which would have included all the rest of it,  
23 correct?

24 A Yes.

25 Q What's this about? What's the genesis of this  
0071

1 dispute that results in Mr. Spallina saying, "Ted, I'm  
2 done with this matter"? What did you understand was  
3 going to happen?

4 A The change in who was going to be handling the  
5 life insurance policy at -- at around this time.

6 Q It was changed from whom to whom?

7 A From the Tescher & Spallina firm to Adam  
8 Simon.

9 Q Were there any discussions with the insurance  
10 company about that prior to the lawsuit being filed in  
11 Chicago?

12 MR. SIMON: Objection; speculation.

13 A I've -- I simply don't know.

14 Q You don't?

15 A I do not.

16 Q Now, when you then look at --

17 I'm sorry, we'll go to the next exhibit, which  
18 is -- it looks like Exhibit 17.

19 (Exhibit 17 was marked for identification.)

20 Q Now, looking at Exhibit Number 17, where  
21 Mr. Tescher writes, "I feel that we have serious  
22 conflicts in continuing to represent you as trustee to  
23 the life insurance trust and need to withdraw from  
24 further representation," do you see that?

25 A I do.

0072

1 Q Now, first, this document is an email string  
2 that ends with Mr. Tescher sending an email to

3 Mr. Welling, Mr. Spallina and also to yourself, as well  
4 as the Simons, correct?

5 A Yes.

6 Q You recall receiving this, do you?

7 A Now that I see it, I recall.

8 Q Now, where Mr. Tescher says that, "There's a  
9 serious conflict continuing to represent you as trustee  
10 of the life insurance trust," is he referring to the  
11 1995 trust?

12 MR. SIMON: Objection; speculation.

13 A I believe that that's what he's referring to  
14 here.

15 Q I take it that he withdraw from representing  
16 you in that capacity as of this email?

17 A I -- I believe that to be the case.

18 Q Did they continue to represent you in any  
19 other capacity after that date?

20 A Yes.

21 Q In what capacities did they continue to  
22 represent you?

23 A As the -- counsel for the Shirley Bernstein  
24 Trust.

25 Q Do they continue to be your attorney in that  
0073

1 capacity?

2 A Currently?

3 Q Yes.

4 A They are not.

5 Q When did they cease being your attorney in  
6 that capacity?

7 A Early 2014 is my recollection.

8 Q What led to that?

9 A What led to that was --

10 MR. ROSE: Well, let me -- to the extent he's  
11 discussing communications he had with his former  
12 counsel, they would be privileged, and I would  
13 instruct him not to answer based upon any  
14 communications with his counsel.

15 MR. STAMOS: Okay.

16 Q I don't agree with that, but I assume you're  
17 going to follow your attorney's instruction not to  
18 answer that?

19 A Yes.

20 Q All right. We don't need to say anymore, but  
21 we'll certify that.

22 Leaving aside conversations then with  
23 Mr. Spallina or Mr. Tescher, what led to their ceasing  
24 to be your attorneys?

25 A My recollection is that they withdrew.

0074

1 Q Okay.

2 A Again, we're going back quite a while, but I  
3 believe what led to them not being my attorneys is that  
4 they withdrew.

5 MR. ROSE: And just for the record, there are  
6 aspects of that that are not privileged, but you  
7 asked him about his -- I just advised him not to  
8 disclose his private, confidential communication  
9 with them while they were still his lawyers. That  
10 does not foreclose your questioning.

11 MR. STAMOS: No, what I asked him was what  
12 other circumstances led to that other than --  
13 without reference to such conversations, and he  
14 said they withdrew.

15 Q Do you know why they withdrew?

16 A I -- I do know why they withdrew. There were  
17 some questions within their firm about documents and  
18 irregular -- irregularity around documents, and they  
19 withdrew because I felt it was best for them to  
20 withdraw.

21 Q What documents were there -- with regard to  
22 what documents were there irregularities, as far as you  
23 knew?

24 A There was an amendment to a trust document.

25 Q Which trust?

0075

1 A Shirley Bernstein Trust.

2 Q And finally Exhibit Number 18.  
3 (Exhibit 18 was marked for identification.)

4 Q Are you ready?

5 A Yes.

6 Q Let me just back up a second. The document  
7 that you were talking about that there was a problem  
8 with was a document which it appeared that the Tescher &  
9 Spallina firm had participated in backdating a signature  
10 by your father, correct? Is that your understanding of  
11 it?

12 A Something along those lines. I'm not quite  
13 sure that it's backdating or creation of a document.  
14 I'm not sure that backdating would be the right way to

25 A I can't answer that question without reading  
0086

1 the whole document.

2 MR. SIMON: Go ahead.

3 Q Well, it speaks for itself.

4 Let me ask you this: Are you aware of whether  
5 it does without reading it? Are you aware of whether it  
6 references any 1995 trust or any other trust?

7 MR. SIMON: Objection; speculation. Not  
8 allowing him to read it.

9 MR. STAMOS: No, no. I'm just asking if he's  
10 aware of it without reading it. It says what it  
11 says. His reading is not going to change what it  
12 says. I'm asking his state of mind.

13 Q Are you aware of whether or not that document  
14 references the 1995 trust without having read it?

15 MR. SIMON: Objection; relevance.

16 Go ahead.

17 Q Do you know?

18 A I'm not -- I'm not aware.

19 Q Do you think that if this document did  
20 reference the 1995 trust, that Mr. Spallina would have  
21 commented on that?

22 MR. SIMON: Objection; speculation.

23 Q Would you have expected him to tell you that  
24 it did?

25 A Can you ask me that question again?

0087

1 Q Yeah. If this document said, for example,  
2 "I'm replacing the '95 trust with this 2000 trust,"  
3 would you have expected that Mr. Spallina would have  
4 given you advice with regard to that fact, if it were a  
5 fact?

6 MR. ROSE: I'm going to object, instruct him  
7 not to answer based on communications he had with  
8 Mr. Spallina, but you can ask the question with  
9 regard to information that Spallina disseminated to  
10 third parties or --

11 Q Well, other than conversations that just  
12 involved you and Mr. Spallina, but not excluding  
13 communications that involved your siblings, like so many  
14 of these emails did, would you have expected in such  
15 communications when you and he were talking about  
16 whether we're going to use the 2000 trust and so forth,  
17 if the 2000 trust had referenced the existence of a



11 Q Okay. That's what 2012 talks about, correct?

12 A Correct.

13 Q Not only are you not a beneficiary, none of  
14 your siblings are beneficiaries, correct?

15 A You are correct.

16 Q Was there a dispute in the family when you all  
17 learned that your father was going to, in effect,  
18 disinherit his singling? I'm sorry, the siblings?

19 MR. ROSE: What time was that? Did you --

20 MR. STAMOS: Let me start again.

21 Q Prior to his death, you became aware that it  
22 was his plan that he was not going to leave money to his  
23 children, correct?

24 A I did -- I'm aware of that.

25 Q And that lead to some discord in the family,

0090

1 correct?

2 A It did.

3 Q Was there a call in which he participated, as  
4 did the siblings, in which you attempted to get him to  
5 change his mind or explain why his plan was not  
6 appropriate?

7 A No.

8 Q There was no such call?

9 A There was no such call based on what you just  
10 said that call was about.

11 Q Was there a call prior to his death that  
12 involved inheritance, that involved the siblings and  
13 your father?

14 A Yes.

15 Q Who said what to whom in that conference?

16 A Robert Spallina explained that my father was  
17 going to leave the -- his assets to ten grandchildren  
18 equally.

19 Q When -- I ask you to -- if you could pick up  
20 Exhibit Number 26, please.

21 (Exhibit 26 was marked for identification.)

22 Q Exhibit Number 26 was one of the documents  
23 produced by the Tescher & Spallina firm. Have you seen  
24 it before?

25 A Yes.

0091

1 Q The third page is a transcription so that we  
2 could read what it actually said. Do you see that?

3 A Do I see what the third page is?

23 Q Ultimately, he left the estate plan in place  
24 so that upon his death none of his estate passed to the  
25 siblings, correct?

0093

1 MR. ROSE: Object to the form.

2 Oh, that's your objection.

3 A He left the -- he left it in place.

4 Q Meaning that each of you and your siblings was  
5 deemed to have been predeceased for the purpose of his  
6 estate planning?

7 MR. SIMON: Objection; form.

8 Q Is that your understanding? If it's not, tell  
9 me. I mean, I don't -- I'm not going to --

10 MR. SIMON: Well, the first time you said  
11 "estate" and the second time you said "estate  
12 planning", which is much more general.

13 MR. STAMOS: I didn't mean a distinction.

14 Q I just want to establish, upon his death, no  
15 money as a consequence of his death passed or will have  
16 passed to you and your siblings if the '95 trust is  
17 never enforced and receives money through the insurance  
18 policy, right?

19 A Correct.

20 Q But the money will otherwise pass to all of  
21 your children, correct?

22 A To all of his grandchildren.

23 Q All of Simon's grandchildren, including your  
24 children as well, correct?

25 A Correct.

0094

1 MR. STAMOS: Give me just one second.

2 THE WITNESS: Sure.

3 Q This is my final question, or just about:  
4 When you learned that Mr. Spallina had filed a claim  
5 identifying himself as trustee of the '95 trust, did you  
6 ever report to anyone in the insurance company or any  
7 authority that he, in fact, was never the trustee of the  
8 '95 trust?

9 A I did not.

10 Q Did you ever instruct him to take steps to  
11 correct any misimpression he might have caused others to  
12 form as a result of him having made that claim?

13 A I'm not sure he caused misimpressions in  
14 anybody, so I don't know, and I didn't have any  
15 conversations with insurance companies.

19 asking me questions about things.

20 Q Like?

21 A Medication, what -- what amounts of  
22 medication, if I knew what kind of medication he took or  
23 was taking or things like that.

24 Q Why were they there?

25 MR. SIMON: Objection; speculation.

0098

1 Q Well, you met with the sheriff. Didn't you  
2 wonder why he was at your father's house on the day he  
3 died and you were giving statements to him?

4 MR. SIMON: Same objection.

5 A You -- did you ask me why were they there?

6 Q Yeah.

7 A I don't know. I can't remember why they were  
8 there.

9 Q And you had no involvement in the call. Did  
10 your attorney have any involvement in the call to the  
11 sheriff that you're aware of?

12 A I don't -- I can't -- I don't think so. I  
13 don't think so.

14 Q So you, to the best of your recollection, you  
15 don't know who called the sheriff or contacted them?

16 MR. SIMON: Objection; form.

17 Q Are you aware the night your father died that  
18 a call had been made to the hospital claiming that he  
19 had been poisoned?

20 A I'm not -- I'm not aware of a call that was  
21 made where -- where it was claimed that he was poisoned.

22 Q You weren't aware of that?

23 A (Nonverbal response.)

24 Q Okay.

25 MR. ROSE: Can you hear this okay in Chicago?

0099

1 I can't tell if you're acting like you're not able  
2 to hear.

3 MR. STAMOS: No, we can hear. We got it.

4 MR. ROSE: Okay.

5 MR. STAMOS: Thank you.

6 MR. ROSE: You're welcome. I just saw your  
7 face, so...

8 MR. STAMOS: Thanks.

9 Q (By Mr. Eliot Bernstein) So you became aware  
10 at some point that there was a coroner's inquiry and you  
11 were aware that there was claims about his medication,

3 answer. Compound questions.

4 Q Were you requested by any parties to turn  
5 those documents over to them?

6 A I don't believe so.

7 MR. ELIOT BERNSTEIN: I'd like to submit this  
8 as an exhibit. Can we get a copy of that real  
9 quick.

10 (Recess taken.)

11 (Exhibit A was marked for identification.)

12 MR. STAMOS: Can you describe that for us? We  
13 don't have a copy.

14 Q (By Mr. Eliot Bernstein) Ted, could you  
15 describe that document.

16 MR. ROSE: (Indicating.)

17 MR. STAMOS: Is that the police report  
18 document?

19 MR. ELIOT BERNSTEIN: Yes.

20 MR. STAMOS: Yeah, we have that. I think we  
21 have that.

22 MR. ROSE: I'm just trying to be helpful.

23 MR. STAMOS: Thank you.

24 Is that topped by the February 11, 2014 fax  
25 number -- fax legend?

0109

1 MR. ROSE: This one says January 31, '13.

2 MR. STAMOS: Oh.

3 MR. ROSE: The report entry though is --  
4 starts with the words "On 9/13/12 at 12:11 hours."

5 MR. STAMOS: Oh, okay. We don't have that  
6 one. All right.

7 THE WITNESS: Okay.

8 Q (By Mr. Eliot Bernstein) You were talking to  
9 the sheriff's department on this day, correct?

10 A Yes, I was.

11 Q And that's the day your father died, right?

12 A Yes.

13 Q Did you advise the sheriff's department that  
14 your father might have been overdosed or the likes by  
15 his girlfriend?

16 A No.

17 Q No?

18 A No.

19 Q Okay. Were you advised by anybody that your  
20 father could have been overdosed?

21 A Yes.