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Real Estate Forensics Report / Fraud Analysis: Shirley Bernstein Condo Sale

Real Estate Warranty Deed Transaction Date: April 18th 2013

Prepared by: Gregory S. Gefen, PA

File Number U13-412

Recorded: 05/06/2013

Palm Beach County, Florida

AMT 1,600,000

Doc Stamp 11,200

Pages 1029 - 1031;

The Following report is my Professional Opinion and advice based on 13 years as a Real Estate Broker Owner, and Currently owning a Real Estate Consulting and Real Estate Forensics Firm. This report is written upon the knowledge and information of Crystal L. Cox, Broker.

Notes on Trustee Affidavit

Regarding Warranty Deed prepared by Gregory S. Gefes, PA, File Number: U13-412

This recorded document now seems to be the only recorded documents regarding Ted Bernstein having Seller or Grantor rights in this matter. Before this closing, there appears to be no legal record, as a matter of law in which proves Ted Bernstein of having legal rights to sell subject property.

It appears to me that this real estate transaction is fraudulent, and that All Regency Title dba US Title of Florida and Old Republic National Title Insurance Company have a liability to the buyer in this transaction and to the true and correct heirs of the Shirley Bernstein Estate.

I would tell the Title Company to show you the legal documentation they have that gave them the legal right to allow Ted Bernstein to sell this Condo, to sign as the Seller, Grantor of said Property?

It is my understanding that the Shirley Bernstein Trust Agreement does not state that Ted Bernstein is the executor. Or at least I see no proof provided in the closing documents in which

the title company filed in the closing of this 1.6 Million dollar sale, that would give Ted Bernstein a legal right to be the "Grantor" of said property.

What documentation did the title company have that gave them the legal right to let Ted Bernstein sell this real estate? What documentation did the title company have that justified providing a title insurance policy on a 1.6 Million dollar real estate sale, that insured to the buyer, that Ted Bernstein was the legal Grantor / Seller in this sale?

Ted Bernstein swore that the trust had not been revoked or terminated And that the the vesting Deed was recorded that provides the trustee with the full power of sale and that the subject transaction will not violate the trust. Yet there is no court documents, no judicial ruling that provides legal proof that Ted Bernstein is the person that gets to speak on behalf of the Shirley Bernstein estate. There seems to have been no probate nor judicial order appointing Ted Bernstein as executor, successor of the Shirley Bernstein estate. So why would this title company guarantee title with no legal documents proving such and allow a \$1.6 million dollar real estate transaction and provide title policy on said property?

As a real estate broker, I would not let Ted Bernstein sign a listing on this property, as there is no documentation that he has Sellers rights and this would be a violation of law.

Ted Bernstein Had no legal right to act as Seller in this deed transfer. This title company provided title insurance in this matter and is liable to the Shirley Bernstein estate, as well as no liable to the buyer in this matter and the cost of this property being deed back to the rightful owner, as far as I see this case.

This seems to be a matter of property theft. All Regency Title dba US Title of Florida and Old Republic National Title Insurance Company guaranteed clear title in this real estate transaction via title insurance policy, and I would demand to see the settlement statement and all related documents, especially any document that was used as legal proof that Ted Bernstein was the SELLER, legally in this transaction. I do not see such a legal document in the recorded documentations for the sale of the subject property.

Ted Bernstein, under penalty and perjury swore the document to be true. The fact is that is simply a "pinky swear", that is one man swearing that he owns a 1.6 million dollar property. There is no court document, no estate documents and no proof, of any kind that Ted Bernstein in fact has a legal right to convey title to this property, as far as I can see.

The Notary ONLY verified that it was indeed Ted Bernstein and that he showed proper ID, a Notary is not a lawyer, nor a court clerk. The title company needs to prove via a court recorded document that Ted Bernstein had a legal right to sell said property. This is the reason to use a title company to close a LEGAL real estate transaction. The title company insures the title, researches recorded documents and PROVES who has rights to convey property.

Anyone can sign any document and swear that what the document says is true. The Notary swears that it is that person and not that the person is telling the truth, or has a legal document of FACT. Nor does the notary provide any kind of legal recorded proof that this person is entitled to swear to this information as a matter of law. A Notary simply verifies the identity of the person who signs the document.

All Regency Title dba US Title of Florida and Old Republic National Title Insurance Company sold an insurance policy with this real estate transaction insuring that the title was clear to sell to said buyer, when in fact Ted Bernstein did not have a legal right to sell this property, as far as the documentation provide shows.

Ted Bernstein is NOT the true and correct, proper "Grantor" named in the warranty documents.

Ted Bernstein could have just as easily signed an affidavit swearing that he was the seller of the White House, and a Notary would have verified the document, only to the extent that it was indeed a man named Ted Bernstein, whom had the proper identification to prove his identity. And this has NOTHING to do with proof of title rights.

A signed affidavit from someone claiming rights to sell the White House, as in this example, would not give the person the legal right to do so, nor does it in the case of this real estate transaction. This is a fraudulent real estate transaction, in my expert opinion. The question then becomes did the title company get kick back on this deal? Was the title company promised future deals with these powerful men Ted Bernstein and George Wesley Thomas Voorheis?

It is a title companies job, BEFORE issuing a title insurance policy, to make sure that the title is clear and is able to be Sold. Said property seems to be in major legal dispute and is part of an estate in litigation, of which Ted Bernstein is NOT the Trustee, as appointed by a court of law. This title company took a man's word that he owned a 1.6 Million dollar property, and let said man sell this property, without legal ownership. Upon my knowledge and belief, this title company has massive liability over this issue.

**Notes on the Shirley Bernstein Trust Agreement pages provided in
the closing documents of said property.**

This document has no clear sign of being true and correct. As a real estate Broker, I would not take this as proof that Ted Bernstein had a right to be a SELLER aKa Grantor of this property. This is simply a document that may or may not have been actually signed by Shirley Bernstein. The correct and lawful procedure in these matters, in my expert opinion is the subject property to have gone through probate, and have a court appointed executor or trustee of the estate.

The legal process is not simply for someone who wants to be an heir to swear they are and then a Title Company allows this person to sell millions of dollars of real estate they CLEARLY have no proof of owning.

In order for me to prove title and allow a person to act as Seller, I would have to see the probate documents, and the court rulings that granted Ted Bernstein the power to be the executor or the estate, have legal rights to the deed, and execute the sale of the subject property. There seems to be no court document that gives Ted Bernstein the LEGAL right to sell subject property, there is only a man saying he has the right and a title company issuing title insurance on a multi-million dollar property insuring the title on said property.

In my experience, professional title companies go to the courthouse records for proof of liens, judgements, deed rights, estate issues and they do NOT simply take a sworn statement from a man who swears he is the legal Seller and give this man the absolute rights to millions of dollars of property of which he clearly has no probate, court stamped, judicial documents to prove this is true.

Notes on the warranty deed dated the 18th day of April, 2013

This appears to be fraudulent as there is no court document in which appoints Ted Bernstein as Successor of the Shirley Bernstein Trust. There does not seem to be any LEGAL documents that prove that Ted Bernstein has rights to the subject property as Successor, Executor, Trustee, Seller or Grantor.

Here we see a Ted Bernstein who himself claims to be a "Successor Trustee", acting as Grantor selling subject property to Grantee G. Wesley Veorheis, a Canadian Resident, and there seems to be something amiss in this transaction.

There appears to be fraud in this transaction and I advise the true and correct heirs of the Shirley Bernstein estate to file legal action against All Regency Title dba US Title of Florida and Old Republic National Title Insurance Company, against the Corporate Company and the individuals involved in the sale, who may have been involved in kickback schemes or other anti-trust and civil conspiracy violations in this real estate transaction.

From what I can determine, and in my expert opinion, Ted Bernstein is not the legal "Grantor" and therefore has no legal right to convey title to said property. All Regency Title dba US Title of Florida and Old Republic National Title Insurance Company have no legal right to have provide an insurance policy that guaranteed this title.

Just because there is a Notary and witnesses who signed the Warranty Deed, does not in any way legally prove that All Regency Title dba US Title of Florida had a LEGAL right to allow Ted Bernstein to act as Grantor or Seller of Subject Property.

I see no proof, whatsoever that Ted Bernstein is the rightful Grantor, and therefore this transactions appears to be fraudulent.

Just because there is a Notary and witnesses who signed the Warranty Deed, does not in any way legally give this title company right to provide title insurance through their title insurance provider Old Republic National Title Insurance Company, with corporate offices in Minneapolis, MN.

Again, a Notary stamp is not a COURT STAMP, nor a Judicial Ruling.

Regarding the “Certificate of Approval”

This document appears to be directly from the Condo Association. I have not read the bylaws of the Aragon Condominium Association, however, in my professional opinion, there may be some fraud between Ted Bernstein and the Aragon Condominium Association president James McGee.

The association in most cases can approve membership, and may be able to exclude certain people, however the association seems to be providing certification to further DUPE the title company, by claiming they have the power to give Ted Bernstein approval to convey title for Wesley George T. Voorheis to acquire. Did the association have court documents that proved that Ted Bernstein had a right to convey title? If not then it is my opinion that the Aragon Condominium Association and that James McGee personally are also liable for what looks to be a real estate heist to me.

Regarding Non Identity Affidavit

This documented is suspected to be a fraudulent tax document. As Ted Bernstein has no proof that he is the court appointed Trustee in this matter and has no legal right to certify that he owes no estate tax in this matter. Ted Bernstein may be committing fraud against the U.S. government in possibly illegally conveying title to a property he has no legal right to and at the same time claiming himself tax exempt for this millions of dollars in alleged inheritance.

I recommend that the true and correct heirs notify the Florida and U.S. Tax Authorities on this issue. As there may be a great deal of estate tax due on this matter, and Ted Bernstein has no legal proof that he can speak on behalf of the Shirley Bernstein estate.

Based on my experience it is a standard of practice in real estate regarding estate issues, for the property to go through probate, have a court appointed trustee and proceed through the courts and NOT through a sworn affidavit by a dreamy eyed family member wishing to receive millions of tax free dollars.

If any potential heir or for that matter any person off the street can sign a document to swear they have rights to property, with no recorded deed or court order, well then this is a serious matter that the Department of Justice and Attorney General need to look into, as this title company may have done this before and thereby created many victims in this scheme. It is not lawful to let anyone claiming they have title right to sell other people's property. It is the PURPOSE of purchasing the Title Insurance Policy, which I assume the Shirley Bernstein Estate paid for, that this policy guarantees to the buyer that Ted Bernstein has the right to sell the property and that all liens, judgments, tax issues on said property have been taken care of and cleared by a court of law.

If not then the Title Insurance company and policy provided has a serious liability not only to the buyer but to the actually true and correct heirs of the Shirley Bernstein estate, whomever the courts deem that to legally be.

As a professional real estate service provider, be it a title company or a real estate brokerage, we are taught to make absolute SURE that a Seller has a legal right to sell a property. This is mostly done by a true and correct, court filed warranty deed in the name of the SELLER aKa Grantor, with the names of the people who will be signing a listing agreement with a real estate brokerage or closing documents with a local title company.

It is not standard of practice, ethical nor lawful to use the closing process and title insurance policy of a local title company in place of a legal, court documented estate and probate proceedings, as a matter of law.

In my experience Sellers aKa Grantors do not sell properties by swearing to an affidavit that they have a right to sell. This would make it so that anyone who wanted to be an heir, or anyone of the street for that matter, could simply go to a notary and sign a document swearing they have a right to sell, and without title in their name sell millions of dollars in property.

It is my professional opinion that this title company is liable to the true heirs of the Shirley Bernstein estate and possibly even interest, punitive damage, and criminal charges.

It is my experience that in an Estate settlement, the Estate is settled in full before property is Sold, another words there would be probate and estate process as a matter of law. And if Ted Bernstein has proper legal documentation then he would have a deed in his name, and from that deed he would then be the Grantor.

See In Barnhart v. Hovde, 490 So.2d 1271 (Fla. 5th DCA) for reference on this matter., review denied 510 So.2d 543 (Fla. 1986), Hovde was named trustee for the beneficiaries, who were her stepchildren. Hovde sold a trust asset (an apartment complex) without obtaining a court order to do so in violation of Fla. Stat. 737.403(2). Hovde had conflicting interests with the beneficiaries of the trust, and the sale of asset resulted in benefit to the trustee and a detriment to the beneficiaries. Id. The Trustee had interests which definitely conflicted with those of the other beneficiaries, which resulted in a benefit to the trustee and a detriment to the other beneficiaries, and the Court found that Hovde violated the terms of the trust and applicable state statutes. Id.

Again an affidavit is not a legal document proving title rights. This affidavit is a man claiming under penalty and perjury that he has legal rights to be the Grantor of said property, however this is not a legally binding document in which I, as a Real Estate Broker would accept as proof of entitlement to act as Seller or Grantor.

It is not a Power of Attorney, it is not a legally filed Warranty Deed in Ted Bernstein's name, nor is it a court order ruling that Ted Bernstein is the true and correct, LEGAL Seller, Owner, Grantor of said property.

This document appears to be a Ted Bernstein claiming that he has the rights to be the Seller, Grantor and is the Successor Trustee, Executor of the Shirley Bernstein estate and that with this claim he promises to NOT hold All Regency Title dba US Title of Florida and Old Republic National Title Insurance Company liable for any legal actions, legal fees in the future, or any other future liability.

Ted Bernstein does not seem to be the LEGAL Seller / Grantor of said property and therefore cannot be in a legal agreement releasing All Regency Title dba US Title of Florida and Old Republic National Title Insurance Company of liability regarding the matters of the Shirley Bernstein estate.

Conclusion

In my expert opinion, the title company in this case, All Regency Title dba US Title of Florida, has made a grave error in allowing Ted Bernstein to sell the subject property with the documents provided to them. And it is my professional opinion that All Regency Title dba US Title of Florida and Old Republic National Title Insurance Company, needs to file notice of insurance claim, fraud and massive liability in this matter as soon as possible.

As a Real Estate Broker owning my own firm, I would not let Ted Bernstein have listed this property for sale, nor would I have allowed any agent working for me to do so. As there is no court documented proof that Ted Bernstein has a legal right to sell said property and I would not put my liability insurance provider nor my company at that risk.

A title company has even a greater risk in guaranteeing title, and is therefore liable to the heirs of the Shirley Bernstein Trust.

No reputable real estate company SHOULD take this property as a listing, due to the inability to prove who has property authority and rights of Grantor / Seller.

It is my opinion that Ted Bernstein has used All Regency Title dba US Title of Florida to circumvent the legal process and thereby gaining title to Shirley Bernstein's property. Ted Bernstein went straight for the paycheck, and skipped the step of gaining legal title to the property first. Therefore avoiding estate tax, capital gains, and the process of fighting the legal heirs of the Shirley Bernstein Trust in order to obtain money from the sale of the subject property.

It is my opinion that the true and proper legal heirs of the Shirley Bernstein estate should use all legal means necessary regarding All Regency Title dba US Title of Florida and Old Republic National Title Insurance Company, in order to make this right.

Florida Laws: FL Statutes - Title XLII Estates and Trusts Section 736.0101 Short title. seem to have been violated in this transaction.

As a Real Estate Broker owner experienced in all manner of real estate for over 13 years, including estate, trust tax issues, and all related matters, I strongly advise the true legal heirs of the Shirley Bernstein estate to contact a Florida lawyer and sue All Regency Title dba US Title of Florida and Old Republic National Title Insurance Company of Minneapolis.

Corporate Headquarters:
Old Republic National Title Insurance Company
400 Second Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55401
(612) 371-1111

I, Crystal L. Cox am fully qualified to give this real estate opinion and forensics analysis. I am not a lawyer. I am a fully qualified real estate advisor and forensics expert. I am FULLY qualified to provide expert witness and expert opinion in the Shirley Bernstein estate on all related matters discussed herein, real estate matters.

Written By

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