IN THE COURT OF CHANCERY OF THE STATE OF DELAWARE

TR INVESTORS, LLC, GLENCLOVA INVESTMENT CO., NEW TR EQUITY I, LLC, NEW TR EQUITY II, LLC, and TRANS-RESOURCES, INC.,	)	
Plaintiffs,	)	
v.	)	
ARIE GENGER,	)	
Defendant.	)	
		C.A. No. 3994-VCS
ARIE GENGER,	)	
Counterclaim Plaintiff,	)	
v.	)	
TR INVESTORS, LLC, GLENCLOVA INVESTMENT CO., NEW TR EQUITY I, LLC, NEW TR EQUITY II, LLC, and TRANS-RESOURCES, INC.,	)	
Counterclaim Defendants.	)	

MEMORANDUM OPINION

Date Submitted: April 26, 2010
Date Decided: July 23, 2010

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STRINE, Vice Chancellor.

I. Introduction

This dispute over the control of Trans-Resources, Inc. ("Trans-Resources") is between the company's founder and former chief executive officer, Arie Genger, and the plaintiffs, who provided capital to Trans-Resources when the company was in financial distress. The plaintiffs are all entities controlled by the Trump family, led by Jules Trump and his brother Eddie Trump (collectively, with the plaintiffs, the "Trump Group"). Jules Trump was a long-time friend of Arie Genger, and he was happy to help Genger when Trans-Resources neared insolvency in 2001.

In return for retiring nearly all of Trans-Resources' outstanding bonds, the Trump Group received a minority stake in the company and a number of protections in a stockholders agreement (the "Stockholders Agreement"). The Stockholders Agreement prohibited either party from transferring their shares in Trans-Resources to anyone other than a limited number of permitted transferees. That prohibition against transfer was particularly important to the Trump Group, which was concerned that Genger might transfer his shares that were held through an entity under his control, TPR Investment Associates, Inc. ("TPR"), to a member of his family. A bitter dispute had arisen between Genger and his son, Sagi Genger, during the time Genger's marriage unraveled in the early 2000s, and the Trump Group wanted no part of the family drama.

In 2004, Genger caused TPR to transfer its shares in Trans-Resources, subject to an irrevocable proxy in his favor, to his children's trusts (the "2004 Transfers"), under a settlement in the contentious divorce between him and his wife. Because those trusts were not permitted transferees, the 2004 Transfers violated the terms of the Stockholders

Agreement. Under the terms of the Stockholders Agreement, that violation rendered the transfers ineffective and gave the Trump Group the right to acquire the shares that were transferred.

But Genger did not notify the Trump Group of the transfers at that time, and thereby deprived the Trump Group of its right to declare the transfers void or exercise its right to acquire the shares in 2004. Genger claims that he mentioned the 2004 Transfers to Jules Trump during a private conversation in 2004, but his testimony did not convince me that this was true. The most convincing reading of the evidence is that the Trump Group did not receive notice of the 2004 Transfers until nearly four years later, when Genger once again asked Jules Trump for help when Trans-Resources was in financial distress. Moreover, informal notice to Jules Trump would not constitute the notice that was required to be given to the Trump Group entities under the Stockholders Agreement.

By 2008, Trans-Resources' bank was unwilling to negotiate with Genger, so Genger asked Jules Trump not only for money but also to negotiate a reduction in Trans-Resources' debt with the bank. The evidence shows that, while Genger and the Trump Group were negotiating the terms of the second round of funding, Genger disclosed for the first time that the 2004 Transfers had occurred.

Although shocked at Genger's failure to notify him of the 2004 Transfers, Jules Trump nevertheless negotiated a reduction in Trans-Resources' debt and agreed to pay that debt in return for voting control of the company. Genger initially agreed to those terms as a compromise for the Transfer violation, but, after securing an alternative source of financing, backed out of the deal. Angered that he had favorably renegotiated Trans-

Resources' debt obligations and that the Trump Group was left without their key part of the bargain, Jules Trump initiated litigation and also contacted Sagi Genger in order to negotiate a deal with both TPR and the trust controlled by Sagi Genger (the "Sagi Trust") whereby the Trump Group would buy all of the shares transferred to the Sagi Trust by TPR in the 2004 Transfers. Having made a bargain with both the wrongful transferor, TPR, and the transferee, the Sagi Trust, the Trump Group viewed itself as having covered all its bases in addressing Genger's violation of the Stockholders Agreement. With the shares wrongfully transferred to the Sagi Trust by TPR, the Trump Group held a majority of Trans-Resources' stock.

The Trump Group then purported to reconstitute the Trans-Resources board of directors and, when Genger challenged the reconstitution, filed this action pursuant to 8 *Del. C.* § 225 to determine who controlled the board. Making that determination largely turns upon interpreting how the Stockholders Agreement applies to both parties' often excessively sharp conduct. As explained fully below, I conclude that the Trump Group controls the Trans-Resources board for the following reasons: (1) the Trump Group never received notice of the 2004 Transfers, which were made in violation of the Stockholders Agreement, until June 2008; and (2) the Trump Group did not ratify those Transfers when it bought the transferred shares from Sagi Genger and TPR. Because it never ratified the wrongful transaction, the Trump Group was free to deal with the relevant transferor, TPR, and its transferee, the Sagi Trust, and settle the matter by acquiring the wrongly transferred shares in an agreed upon negotiation. In doing so, the Trump Group clearly reserved its position that TPR made a void transfer, has proven that its position

was correct, and is entitled, as a result, to be deemed to have taken the shares from TPR as a settlement of the improper Transfers. In the alternative, even if the Trump Group ratified the 2004 Transfers — which it did not — I find that the Trump Group did not purchase the shares from Sagi Genger subject to the proxy in favor of Arie Genger. Therefore, the Trump Group holds a majority equity and voting stake in Trans-Resources, and its ability to vote its shares is unaffected by the proxy.

II. Factual Background

The following are the facts as I find them after trial.

A. The Trump Group Saves Genger's Company, Trans-Resources, From Bankruptcy In 2001

In 1985, Genger formed Trans-Resources, a Delaware corporation that eventually became the parent of three specialty fertilizer and industrial chemical companies.[1] As mentioned before, Genger's majority stake in Trans-Resources was held through TPR, another Delaware corporation. By 2001, Trans-Resources was nearly insolvent as its subsidiaries struggled in the marketplace due to a strong euro, vigorous competition from South American rivals, and miscalculations in a recent decision to expand a key plant.[2] At that time, Trans-Resources' bonds had a notional value of $230 million, but their market value had plummeted.[3]

Because negotiations with the fractious group of investors that had invested in Trans-Resources' bonds were proving futile, Genger was delighted when Jules Trump

[1] Tr. 830 (A. Genger); Stipulated Pretrial Order at 3.
[2] Tr. 837-38 (A. Genger).
[3] *Id*. at 12 (J. Trump).

approached him with an offer to buy Trans-Resources' bonds.[4] Genger and Jules Trump, who both had residences on Williams Island in Miami, Florida, had been friends since at least the late 1990s.[5] From that time until very near the commencement of this litigation, Genger and Jules Trump's families regularly socialized, dined, and vacationed together.[6]

Eventually, two entities controlled by Jules and Eddie Trump, plaintiff TR Investors, LLC ("TR Investors") and plaintiff Glenclova Investment Co. ("Glenclova"), bought all but $100,000 of Trans-Resources' debt.[7] Shortly after buying Trans-Resources' bonds, TR Investors and Glenclova converted their debt into equity.[8] Under an exchange agreement, TR Investors and Glenclova collectively received 2,676.4428 Trans-Resources shares, which amounted to a substantial stake equal to 47.15% of Trans-Resources' equity.[9]

B. Genger And The Trump Group Execute A Stockholders Agreement That Requires Notice To Be Given If Genger Transfers His Shares In Trans-Resources

Jules Trump's offer came with strings. In exchange for bailing out Trans-Resources and agreeing to take a minority interest in Trans-Resources, Trump insisted on the Stockholders Agreement that gave the Trump Group strong representation and veto rights.[10] Importantly in light of the present dispute, the Stockholders Agreement

[4] *Id*. at 938 (A. Genger).
[5] J. Trump Dep. 27, 88; A. Genger Dep. 62-63.
[6] J. Trump Dep. 27-28; E. Trump Dep. 32; *see also* A. Genger Dep. 156-57 (indicating that Genger and Jules Trump also took regular strolls together around the walking path on Williams Island).
[7] Tr. 117 (J. Trump), 837 (A. Genger).
[8] *Id*. at 119 (J. Trump).
[9] JX-100 (Exchange Agreement (March 30, 2001)).
[10] Tr. 843 (A. Genger) ("[P]art of the deal was to reconstitute the board and to enable Trump family — to enable the Trump family to be on the board, to have — we created a balance of —

provided restrictions on, and in some instances prohibitions against, the transfer of stock.[11]

In particular, Section 2.1 of the Stockholders Agreement prevented a party from transferring or pledging Trans-Resources stock to any party other than a party expressly permitted to receive such a transfer (a "Permitted Transferee"). Section 2.1 provides in relevant part:

> From and after the date hereof, no Stockholder shall directly or indirectly, offer, *transfer*, sell, assign, *pledge*, encumber, hypothecate or otherwise dispose of any Shares (including any derivative transaction) (a) until after December 21, 2003, and, thereafter, only as provided in Articles 3, 4, and 5 of this Agreement, or (b) after *written notice* to the Company and the other Stockholders . . . to (i) in the case of either of the Initial Non-TPR Stockholders or their respective Permitted Transferees (A) to [certain Permitted Transferees], or (ii) in the case of TPR or a Permitted Transferee thereof, to (w) Arie Genger, (x) any entity or entities in which TPR or Arie Genger directly owns a majority of the equity interest and directly controls a majority of the voting power . . . (y) the estate o[f] Arie Genger or (z) any immediate family members or lineal descendants of Arie Genger, or trusts of which they are the sole beneficiaries-in-interest, who receive such Shares in consequence of the death of Arie Genger, which transferee(s) become a party to this Agreement. . . .[12]

That is, Permitted Transferees were: (1) in the case of transfers from any of the Trump Group entities, any entity in which either TR Investors or Glenclova had at least a 20% economic interest and a least a 30% voting interest; and (2) in the case of transfers from TPR, any of the following: (i) Arie Genger himself; (ii) any entity in which TPR or Genger directly owned a majority of the equity interest and a majority of the voting

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so that I cannot do anything which is not unanimous. There were all kinds of provisions on that.").

[11] JX-101 (Stockholders Agreement (2001)) (the "Stockholders Agreement") §§ 2.1, 2.4, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3).

[12] *Id*. § 2.1 (emphasis added).

power at the time of the transfer, and Genger agreed to continue to maintain such ownership at all times thereafter; (iii) the estate of Arie Genger; or (iv) any of Genger's immediate family members or lineal descendants, or trusts of which they are the sole beneficiaries-in-interest, who receive the transfer of shares as a result of Genger's death.[13] If a party to the Stockholders Agreement intended to make a transfer to a non-Permitted Transferee, then the other party had a right of first refusal, under Section 3.1, which provides in relevant part:

> [I]f a Stockholder (the "Selling Stockholder") shall desire to sell, assign or transfer any Shares held by it to any person other than a Permitted Transferee (the "Offered Shares") and shall be in receipt of a bona fide written offer to purchase the Offered Shares (the "Offer"), [t]he Selling Stockholders shall give the Company and to each Covered Stockholder who is not the Selling Stockholder (the "Non-Selling Stockholders") written notice containing the terms and conditions of the Offer . . . provided that for purposes of this Section 3.1, if the Selling Stockholder is (x) a TPR Stockholder, then only the Non-TPR Stockholders shall be deemed to be Non-Selling Stockholders; and (y) a Non-TPR Stockholder, then only the TPR Stockholders shall be deemed to be Non-Selling Stockholders. . . .
>
> Until 30 days after receipt of such notice, the Non-Selling Stockholders shall have the right to elect to purchase all of the Offered Shares at the price offered by the prospective purchaser and specified in such notice.[14]

The purpose of expressly limiting transfers to an enumerated list of Permitted Transferees was to ensure that the Trump Group would be dealing only with Genger, or one of the entities he controlled, in the future, and not with anyone else.[15] Jules Trump was particularly concerned about limiting the Trump Group's exposure to the acrimony

[13] *Id*.
[14] *Id*. § 3.1.
[15] Tr. 121 (J. Trump), 842-44, 854, 891-92 (A. Genger).

plaguing Genger's family,[16] but, after much pressure from Genger, reluctantly acceded to including Genger's family members as Permitted Transferees *only* as an estate planning consequence in the event of Genger's death.[17]

If a transfer was made in violation of Section 2.1, then the Stockholders Agreement provided two remedies. First, Section 2.4 provided that "[a]ny attempt by a Stockholder to transfer Shares in violation of this Agreement shall be void and the Company agrees that it will not effect such a transfer or treat any alleged transferee as the holder of such Shares."[18] Second, Section 3.2(a) of the Stockholders Agreement gave the Trump Group the right to purchase TPR's shares in Trans-Resources if Genger: (1) transferred shares to a non-Permitted Transferee; or (2) effected a change of control in TPR. Section 3.2(a) provides in relevant part:

> The Covered Stockholders other than the hereinafter defined Terminating Stockholder (the "Purchasing Stockholders") shall have the right to elect to purchase the Shares held by a Stockholder (the "Terminating Stockholder" . . .) at the Agreement Price (as defined in Section 3.4) and on the Agreement Terms upon the occurrence of any of the following events for a period ending on the later of 60 days after determination of the Agreement Price for the Terminating Shares and 90 days after the Company and the Purchasing Stockholders receive notice from any source of the occurrence of any of the following events (each Stockholder agreeing to give the others and the Company notice of any such event promptly after its knowledge of the occurrence thereof) . . . .
>
> (iv) the Terminating Stockholder sells, *pledges*, encumbers, hypothecates or *otherwise transfers* any interest in (including any derivative transaction), or

[16] *Id*. at 121 (J. Trump) ("I had confidence in Arie and we were willing to go forward with him. But I was not willing to go forward with a bunch of people who would be fighting with each other and ultimately end up greenmailing each other."); *see also id*. at 805-06 (O. Genger) (acknowledging the "nightmar[ish]" relations in the Genger family).
[17] *Id*. at 252 (Hirsch).
[18] Stockholders Agreement § 2.4.

> *purports to* sell, *pledge*, encumber, hypothecate or otherwise transfer any interest in (including any derivative transaction), any of its Shares, except as permitted by and in full compliance with the terms of this Agreement. . . .[19]

Therefore, Section 3.2(a) gave the Trump Group 90 days to elect to purchase TPR's shares after it "receive[d] notice from any source" that a transfer had been made to a non-Permitted Transferee, or that a change of control had occurred.[20]

Section 6.5 outlined the form of notice required under the various provisions of the Stockholders Agreement:

> All notices required to be delivered pursuant to this Agreement shall be delivered in person or by telegraphic or other facsimile transmission or sent by certified mail, return receipt requested, and shall by addressed to the Company at its principal business office, to the attention of its Chief Executive Officer, to a Non-TPR Stockholder, to the Representatives, and any other Stockholders at the address of the Stockholder shown in the Company's stock ledger or to such other address as such other Stockholder may indicate by duly giving written notice to the Company.[21]

Thus, formal notice of an event such as a share transfer was to be given directly to the Trump Group entities, *i.e.* TR Investors and Glenclova, who were parties to the Agreement, and not to Jules Trump personally.[22] The Stockholders Agreement also contained a non-waiver clause, which provided that "[n]o waiver or failure on the part of a Company or a Stockholder in the exercise of any right, power or remedy shall operate as a waiver thereof, nor shall any single or particular exercise by them of any right, power

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[19] *Id*. § 3.2(a) (emphasis added).
[20] *Id*.
[21] *Id*. § 6.5.
[22] As to TR Investors, it appears that notice was to be given through Mark Hirsch at TR Investors' official address, and as to Glenclova, notice was to be given through Robert Smith at Glenclova's official address. *See id*. at 40. Jules Trump was not an officer or director of either TR Investors or Glenclova. Tr. 117 (J. Trump).

or remedy preclude other or further exercise thereof, or the exercise of any other right, power or remedy."[23]

Finally, under Section 1.6 of the Stockholders Agreement, TR Investors and Glenclova were entitled to an addition 1.85% of TPR's shares in Trans-Resources (the "Balance Shares").[24] The Balance Shares refer to shares that Bank Hapoalim had the option to purchase, the exercise of which would reduce TPR's shareholding by 1.85%. Because of that option, the Trump Group allowed TPR to hold 52.85% of Trans-Resources' stock, even though the parties agreed to a 51%/49% split, on the condition that the Balance Shares would revert to TR Investors and Glenclova if the Bank's option should expire unexercised.[25]

C. In 2004, As Part Of The Settlement Of His Acrimonious Divorce, Genger Transfers Trans-Resources Stock From TPR To The Sagi Trust, The Orly Trust, And To Himself

On October 26, 2004, after a drawn-out and contentious divorce proceeding, Genger entered into a final marital settlement agreement with his then-wife, Dalia Genger. Under that settlement agreement, Genger transferred his equity interest in TPR to Dalia Genger on October 29, 2004. On that same day, the Trans-Resources shares that TPR previously held were transferred as follows: approximately 13.9% of the shares were transferred to Genger himself, and separate trusts established for his two children, Orly and Sagi Genger (respectively, the "Orly Trust" and the "Sagi Trust"), were each transferred approximately 19.5% of the shares (collectively, the aforementioned "2004

[23] Stockholders Agreement § 6.8.
[24] *Id*. § 1.6.
[25] *Id*.; *see also* Tr. 255-57 (Hirsh).

Transfers"). According to the transfer agreements, the trustees of each Trust agreed to irrevocable lifetime proxies in favor of Genger (the "Proxies").[26]

At the time the 2004 Transfers were made, Genger did not notify TR Investors or Glenclova of the Transfers as required by the Stockholders Agreement. Genger admits that he never gave the written notice required by the Stockholders Agreement, provided the Trump Group with copies of the Proxies, or passed on a copy of the marital settlement agreement.[27] Nevertheless, Genger argues that TR Investors and Glenclova received notice because he orally told Jules Trump about the 2004 Transfers. In particular, Genger testified that he told Jules Trump about the 2004 Transfers "many times" from the "inception, [when] the idea germinated of how to resolve my divorce, to the execution [of the 2004 Transfers]."[28] Genger testified that he told Jules Trump of the 2004 Transfers during their regular strolls on Williams Island.[29]

For his part, however, Jules Trump categorically denied that Genger ever mentioned the 2004 Transfers.[30] The only other person who testified to hearing any conversations between Genger and Jules Trump relating to the 2004 Transfers was Genger's daughter, Orly. At trial, Orly Genger testified that her father "shared . . . everything" with the Trumps,[31] and that she was present during at least one discussion between Genger and Jules Trump about the 2004 Transfers. In particular, she testified

[26] JX-113 (Letter Agreement and Proxy (Oct. 29, 2004)) (the "Proxy").
[27] Pretrial Stipulation and Order 4; Tr. 936, 940 (A. Genger), 99 (J. Trump), 628 (Dowd).
[28] Tr. 856 (A. Genger).
[29] *Id*.
[30] *Id*. at 159 (J. Trump) ("Q. From the time that you became — TR Investors became a stockholder in 2001 to June 13th, 2008, did anyone give you any notice of the 2004 transfers, or the change in control of TPR? Trump. Never. Never, ever.").
[31] *Id*. at 783 (O. Genger).

about a discussion in "late '04 or early '05" at Jules Trump's residence on Williams Island.[32] But, Orly Genger's testimony regarding that conversation was vague, at best:

> They talked about how TPR and [Trans-Resources] were split, how my — my dad spoke about how he split those two, how he hoped that now that my brother, since was sort of — it was now me, my mother, and my brother, and my brother was supposedly the financial guy supposed to take care of us in a sense, he was hoping that — that he would.[33]

When asked for further details, she only elaborated as follows:

> Q. And were there details? Was your father providing details to Mr. Trump —
>
> O. Genger. Yeah.
>
> Q. — in those discussions?
>
> O. Genger. The fact that my brother was in the middle of it, you know, and just the awful nature of it. Everything was told to Jules.[34]

On cross-examination, Orly Genger clarified that the discussion between her father and Jules Trump some time in late 2004 or early 2005 definitely took place *after* the 2004 Transfers occurred,[35] and that she did not remember her father specifically discussing the transfer of Trans-Resources shares to the Sagi Trust.[36] But she did not provide further

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[32] *Id*. at 787. Orly Genger also briefly mentioned a conversation between Genger and Jules Trump sometime during 2007, when her brother brought a lawsuit against her father. *Id*. at 799. But the only details she provided regarding that discussion was that she remembered "them speaking specifically about th[e] lawsuit and how incredible it was that my father had given my brother TPR [Investment], [and] he was actually against him now." *Id*.

[33] *Id*. at 786.

[34] *Id*. at 789.

[35] *Id*. at 801 ("Q. And I want to make sure I understand. [The conversation between Genger and Jules Trump] — it definitely occurred after the 2004 transfers had occurred; is that right? O. Genger. Yes.").

[36] The precise colloquy was as follows:

> Q. Now, in this conversation the issue that you recall being discussed was the transfer of control of TPR [Investment] to your brother. He would be in charge.

details about the substance of the discussion between her father and Jules Trump other than to say that the "essence" of the discussion was "that [Sagi] was now sort of in charge."[37] The lack of specific details in her testimony undermines her credibility because of her personal interest in the outcome of this case and her obvious desire to protect her father in his feud with her brother,[38] and because Genger himself testified that no one else was present during his alleged conversations with Jules Trump, even his daughter Orly.[39]

> O. Genger. That was the essence, that he was now sort of in charge.
>
> Q. That was the essence of it.
>
> O. Genger. Right.
>
> Q. Yeah. And the question of the transfer of TPR's shares of [Trans-Resources] to your trust and your brother's trust and your father, you don't recall that that was discussed during this conversation?
>
> O. Genger. I'm sorry. Can you say it again?
>
> Q. Yes. The question of the transfer by TPR [Investment] of its [Trans-Resources] shares —
>
> O. Genger. Right.
>
> Q. — to your trust, your brother's trust, and your father, that was not discussed in this conversation?
>
> O. Genger. Not that I remember.

Id. at 803-04.

[37] *Id*.

[38] *Id*. at 813 ("Q. You stand to benefit if your father prevails in this litigation? O. Genger: I hope. Yeah, I think.").

[39] *Id*. at 895 (A. Genger) ("The Court: It was just the two of you? Genger: Just the two of us. The Court: Not your daughter? Genger: Not my daughter.").

Besides his own testimony and the testimony of his daughter, the only other evidence to which Genger points as proof that he told the Trumps about the 2004 Transfers are two after-the-fact events. First, Genger points to a written consent that Trans-Resources' shareholders were required to sign in 2005 (the "2005 Written Consent") in order to resolve a dispute with Bank Hapoalim, with whom Trans-Resources had a long-term relationship, over Trans-Resources' outstanding debt. The signature page of the 2005 Written Consent included signature blocks for not only Arie Genger, but also the Orly Trust and the Sagi Trust, and identified Arie Genger as the proxy for the two Trusts.[40] That is, by including signature lines for the Orly Trust and the Sagi Trust as shareholders, the 2005 Written Consent disclosed that some sort of transfer had taken place. For their part, the Trumps credibly claim that they did not notice the additional signature lines in the 2005 Written Consent when they signed the page.[41]

Second, Genger claims that he mentioned the 2004 Transfers during a Trans-Resources board meeting in November 2007 at which Jules Trump was present (the "November 2007 Board Meeting").[42] For support, Genger points to the minutes of that meeting, which reflect that "Mr. Genger advised the directors that both he and Mr. Dowd had been sued by TPR Investment Associates, Inc. and other related entities with respect to their activities as officers and/or directors of TPR Investment Associates, Inc., *the former parent Company of* [*Trans-Resources*]."[43] Genger avers that this passing

[40] JX-125 (executed written consent (July 26, 2005)) (the "2005 Written Consent").
[41] Tr. 101-05 (J. Trump), 185-92 (Hirsch)
[42] JX-149 (Trans-Resources board meeting minutes (Nov. 19, 2007)).
[43] *Id*.

reference to TPR being the former parent of Trans-Resources should have tipped Trump off that the 2004 Transfers were made. As we will see, that argument is undercut, however, by the reality that Genger's loyal subordinate, Bill Dowd, appears to have manipulated the corporate minutes on other occasions to suit Genger's interests.

D. Genger Finally Tells The Trumps About The 2004 Transfers During Negotiations To Restructure Trans-Resources' Debt

In the spring of 2008, Trans-Resources was once again having financial troubles, now in a dispute with Bank Hapoalim, which was pressuring Trans-Resources to sell its main subsidiary, Haifa Chemical, Inc., in order to avoid foreclosure.[44] Genger turned to the Trumps for help, asking Jules Trump if the Trump Group would provide the capital necessary to retire Trans-Resources' bank debt in exchange for an increased equity position that would give the Trump Group control of Trans-Resources.[45] Genger relied on Jules Trump in particular not only because of their past relationship but also because Bank Hapoalim, which had indicated that it had lost confidence in Genger, was however willing to negotiate with Trump in regard to Trans-Resources' debt.[46] On May 31, 2008, Genger and Jules Trump met to discuss the general contours of an agreement (the "Funding Agreement"), which would provide for a capital infusion into Trans-Resources.[47] After that meeting, Trump negotiated with Bank Hapoalim to reduce Trans-

[44] Tr. 38-39 (J. Trump).
[45] *Id*. at 41-42 (J. Trump).
[46] *Id*. at 124-27, 146 (J. Trump).
[47] *Id*. at 872 (A. Genger); 43-44, 135-36 (J. Trump).

Resources' debt load, and asked Genger to meet with Eddie Trump and Mark Hirsch, the Trumps' lawyer, in New York to work out the details of the Funding Agreement.[48]

1. Genger, Eddie Trump, And Mark Hirsch Meet On June 13, 2008

Genger met with Eddie Trump and Hirsch in New York on June 13, 2008 (the "June 13 Meeting"). Early in the June 13 Meeting, Hirsch gave Genger a draft of the Funding Agreement. That draft listed TPR, Glenclova, and TR Investors as the company's sole shareholders, thereby strongly suggesting that the Trump Group was unaware at that time of the 2004 Transfers.[49] Upon reviewing the draft, Genger commented that TPR was no longer a Trans-Resources stockholder.[50] Both Eddie Trump and Hirsch expressed shock upon hearing that, and Hirsch reminded Genger that he was not permitted to transfer his stake in Trans-Resources without first providing notice and a right of first refusal to the Trump Group.[51]

Upon seeing their surprise, Genger did not stop and say what one would expect to be the first thing out of his mouth if Genger had already given repeated notice to Jules

[48] *Id*. at 868-69 (A. Genger).
[49] JX-170 (email from Mark Hirsch to Jules Trump with draft agreements attached (June 12, 2008)).
[50] Tr. 283 (Hirsch), 498-99 (E. Trump).
[51] *Id*. at 284-85 (Hirsch), 499 (E. Trump). Interestingly, the trial record includes an email from Hirsch to Jules Trump, dated June 11, 2008, in which Hirsch describes the transfer restrictions and the right of first refusal provisions in the Stockholders Agreement. JX-167 (email from Mark Hirsch to Jules Trump (June 11, 2008)). The timing of that email suggests that the Trumps might have known about the 2004 Transfers before the June 13, 2008 meeting. But I do not find this email to be proof that Genger had given the Trumps oral notice because: (1) the Trumps may have simply suspected on their own that something like the 2004 Transfers had taken place; or (2) the Trumps may have heard rumors from sources other than Genger that the 2004 Transfers had occurred. In either event, notice as required under Stockholders Agreement had not been given. Furthermore, even if the email did indicate that notice had been given, it still suggests that the timing of that notice was no earlier than June 2008.

Trump: "Why are you acting so surprised? I told Jules all about these Transfers years ago."[52] Rather, Genger acknowledged that he had not provided notice of the 2004 Transfers, but insisted that he had lived within the spirit of the Stockholders Agreement by maintaining control of the stock through the Proxies.[53] And, Genger spent the better part of that day explaining the 2004 Transfers to Eddie Trump and Hirsch,[54] which would have been unnecessary had they already known about the Transfers.

Finally, at the end of the meeting, Genger offered to arrange a meeting with his lawyer, David Lentz, who was most familiar with the details of the 2004 Transfers.[55] Eddie Trump and Hirsch met with Lentz three days later, on June 16, 2008, to discuss the details of the 2004 Transfers. It is also noteworthy that, before that meeting, Genger never told Lentz that he had given Jules Trump oral notice of the 2004 Transfers.[56] If notice of the 2004 Transfers had indeed been given, one would have expected Arie Genger to have at least mentioned that important detail to his own counsel. During that

[52] Tr. 501 (E. Trump) ("At any time during the meeting did Mr. Genger say, 'Well, I told your brother, Jules. Let's get him on the phone,' or words to that effect? E. Trump: No."). Genger's testimony on this important issue was vague at best. He only recalled telling Eddie Trump and Hirsh something to the effect of "Jules knows about it" at some point during the June 13 Meeting. *Id*. at 900 (A. Genger). But, Genger could give no further details, and he admitted that he never pressed the point or suggested that they get Jules Trump on the phone to clarify the issue. *Id*.

[53] *Id*. at 284 (Hirsch) ("I took out the agreement to show [Genger] specifically why he could not have transferred the shares, that this was not permitted under the agreement. And he said, 'All right. You know, so I didn't tell you about it, but I didn't think I had to. I mean, what's changed? I still – I still vote the shares.'").

[54] *Id*. at 893-94, 899 (A. Genger).

[55] *Id*. at 902-03 (A. Genger).

[56] *Id*. at 7 (Lentz) ("Q: And Mr. Genger didn't tell you [before the June 16th meeting] that he claimed to have given some sort of notice to Jules Trump. That's correct; right? . . . Lentz: I believe your statement is correct.").

meeting, Lentz never suggested that Jules Trump had already known about the 2004 Transfers because Genger had told him about them years ago.[57]

2. Later Communications Between Genger, William Dowd, And David Lentz Admit That Genger Never Gave The Trump Group Notice Of The 2004 Transfers

In a series of emails and memoranda produced over the two weeks following the June 16 meeting, Lentz repeatedly acknowledged Genger's failure to provide any notice of the 2004 Transfers. In a June 17, 2008 email, Lentz wrote that "[t]he Trumps *never consented to* and don't want [the Sagi] Trust or [Orly] Trust . . . as minority partners (shareholders) in [Trans-Resources]."[58] And, in a June 26, 2008 email, Lentz wrote that "no notice was given" to the Trumps about the 2004 Transfers.[59] But, Lentz's most telling admission came in a memorandum he wrote for Genger analyzing the parties' various bargaining positions and how likely machinations by Sagi Genger would affect the outcome of the dispute (the "Lentz Memo"). In that Memo, Lentz wrote:

> *While it is true the Trumps never got notice*, the entire intent of the Shareholder's agreement has been carried out anyway. In other words, *why did AG not give them actual notice?* Because, AG will testify, using the TPR shell was never the intention of the Trumps and AG — the real intention was to keep the ownership of [Trans-Resources] in the Genger family under the voting and operational control of AG and the Stipulation did just that. So, AG becomes SG's best witness. AG will not say I just forgot to tell the Trumps. He will not say I tried to get away with something and thought the Trumps would not find out. He will testify that

[57] *Id*. at 990 (Lentz) ("Q. Nobody said at the meeting, then, that any notice had been given in substance; right? Lentz. Correct."); *see also id*. at 994 (Lentz) ("Q. [Y]ou went through an entire meeting about the absence of notice and people asking what, in fact, occurred. And no one from your side of the discussion spoke a peep refuting that contention; right? Lentz: Nobody refuted it, that's correct.").

[58] JX-331 (email from David Lentz to Arie Genger, Bill Dowd, and Christopher Gengaro (June 17, 2008)) (emphasis added).

[59] JX-337 (email from David Lentz to Arie Genger, Bill Dowd, and Christopher Gengaro (June 26, 2008)).

> whether the corporate form of TPR or the kids' trusts w[as] used made no difference. The essence of these protections was to make sure the Genger family owned roughly 50% and that AG could vote all of those shares. That's what happened. So, *while there was a technical violation*, the Trumps got what they bargained for.[60]

Later in that same Memo, Lentz added: "AG does not have clean hands because like SG, *AG never told the Trumps*."[61] Thus, Genger's own attorney repeatedly acknowledged that Genger had never given the Trumps *any* type of notice.

3. At The June 25, 2008 Meeting Of Trans-Resources' Board And Stockholders, Genger Himself Indicates That Notice Of The 2004 Transfers Was Not Given To The Trumps

The Trans-Resources board met on June 25, 2008 (the "June 25 Board Meeting") and unanimously approved the Funding Agreement, which provided that the Trumps would invest an additional $57.5 million in the company in exchange for 50% of Trans-Resources' outstanding stock, which would give the Trumps clear voting control and by far the largest equity position in the company.[62] That is, the totality of the Funding Agreement would address the injury to the Trump Group from the 2004 Transfers by giving it voting control of Trans-Resources. Handwritten notes by Bill Dowd, a director and Trans-Resources' chief executive officer, recorded that "AG describe[d] [Trans-Resources] stock transfer *in violation of agreement*" during the meeting.[63] That is, Genger acknowledged that the 2004 Transfers were made without providing notice to the

[60] JX-332 (memorandum from David Lentz to Arie Genger, Bill Dowd, and Chris Gengaro) (the "Lentz Memo") (emphasis added).
[61] *Id*. (emphasis added).
[62] JX-181 (minutes of joint meeting of the board of directors and stockholders of Trans-Resources, Inc. (June 25, 2008)).
[63] JX-179 (handwritten notes of Bill Dowd (June 25, 2008)) (emphasis added).

Trumps. Tellingly, Dowd, who had worked for Genger for years, omitted that important admission from the formal minutes he drafted following the meeting.[64]

E. Negotiations To Restructure Trans-Resources Break Down, And The Parties Eventually Commence This Litigation

Although the Funding Agreement solved the problem with Bank Hapoalim, Genger and the Trumps still had to sort out how to ensure that the Trumps were given control of the Trans-Resources board as required under the Funding Agreement. That was a problem because Genger and the Trumps anticipated that Sagi Genger, who now had a claim to be a Trans-Resources stockholder on account of the 2004 Transfers, would litigate any attempt to transfer control from Genger to the Trumps, if for no other reason than to spite his father.[65] During June and July of 2008, Genger and the Trumps discussed options for dealing with Sagi Genger. One of the options the Trumps suggested was confronting Sagi Genger with the argument that the 2004 Transfers violated the Stockholders Agreement, and that he was therefore not a beneficial owner of the Shares.[66] Importantly, Genger resisted this approach, likely because that would expose him to liability for representing falsely in the divorce settlement that the 2004 Transfers were not made in violation of any agreement.[67]

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[64] *See* JX-179 (draft meeting minutes (June 25, 2008)) (omitting any reference to the 2004 Transfers being made in violation of the Stockholders Agreement).
[65] Tr. 318-19 (Hirsch).
[66] *Id*.
[67] *Id*. at 304 (Hirsch).

1. Genger Reneges On The Funding Agreement, And The Trumps Respond With A Lawsuit

Genger and the Trumps never reached common ground on how to approach Sagi, because Genger began to back-track on the draft terms of the Funding Agreement. Genger could afford to back out of the Funding Agreement because he had devised a way — albeit one of questionable propriety — to upstream funds from the Haifa Chemical, Inc. subsidiary to Trans-Resources, thus allowing Trans-Resources to fulfill its obligations to Bank Hapoalim, which Jules Trump had successfully reduced during his negotiations with the bank on behalf of Trans-Resources.[68] Because Genger had secured an alternative source of capital, the Funding Agreement with the Trumps was no longer the only mechanism for rescuing Trans-Resources. From that position of increased leverage, Genger began to disengage from the Funding Agreement deal. First, despite the fact that Bank Hapoalim required payment by late August, Genger requested that execution of the Funding Agreement be postponed upon the advice of counsel. Wielding a problem of his own creation, Genger asserted that Trans-Resources' Delaware lawyers had advised him that Trans-Resources needed to establish an independent committee to review the fairness of the Funding Agreement because the recipients of the 2004 Transfers might complain. Second, at an August 1, 2008 meeting, Genger's lawyers claimed, for the first time, that Genger had given Jules Trump oral notice of the 2004

[68] Dowd Dep. 281.

Transfers years ago, and threatened litigation if the Trumps chose to challenge the 2004 Transfers.[69]

The Trumps responded on August 8, 2008 with a letter to TPR and Trans-Resources indicating that Glenclova was exercising its right under Section 3.2 of the Stockholders Agreement to purchase all of the shares subject to the 2004 Transfers, and requesting that the Trans-Resources board begin the process of establishing their purchase price.[70] On August 11, 2008, Glenclova filed a suit in the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York seeking to enforce the Funding Agreement and its rights under the Stockholders Agreement.[71] On August 13, 2008, Genger responded through a letter from his attorneys, claiming that Glenclova had no right to purchase the shares because he had kept Jules Trump fully informed of the 2004 Transfers at the time they were made four years prior.[72]

2. The Trump Group Purchases The Sagi Trust's Shares And Reconstitutes Trans-Resources' Board Of Directors, Leading To This Section 225 Action

The lawsuit in federal court in New York was not the only course of action the Trumps took. On August 21, 2008, Jules Trump contacted Sagi Genger to explore the possibility of acquiring the 1,102.8 shares purportedly transferred to the Sagi Trust in 2004 (the "Sagi Shares").[73] And, on August 22, 2008, the Trumps purchased the Sagi Shares pursuant to a stock purchase agreement (the "Purchase Agreement") between the

[69] Tr. 65, 155-56 (J. Trump), 364 (Hirsch).
[70] JX-198 (letter from Glenclova to TPR and Trans-Resources (Aug. 8, 2008)).
[71] JX-204 (Complaint, *New TR Equity, LLC v. Trans-Resources, Inc.* (S.D.N.Y. Aug. 11, 2008)).
[72] JX-350 (letter from Charles Weissman to Barry Adelman (Aug. 13, 2008)).
[73] Tr. 111 (J. Trump).

Sagi Trust, TPR, and the Trumps' entities, TR Investors, Glenclova, New TR Equity I, LLC ("Equity I"), and New TR Equity II, LLC ("Equity II").[74] Importantly, the transaction included not only the Sagi Trust as a party but also the wrongful transferor, TPR. Sagi Genger could act for TPR because, after making the 2004 Transfers, Genger had ceded control of TPR to Dalia Genger, who subsequently sold her interest in TPR to her son, Sagi.[75] The Purchase Agreement contained a specific section addressing the reality that the Trump Group viewed the 2004 Transfers as void and that TPR still owned them and was obliged to sell them to the Trump Group at 2004 values. To wit, the Purchase Agreement provided that it would be considered consummated between the Trump Group and *TPR* if the 2004 Transfers were to be found void:

> If at any time following the Closing Date, it is determined that Seller is not the record and beneficial owner of the Shares as of the date hereof, by virtue of the transfer of the Shares to it by TPR being deemed to have been void or for any other reason, and that all right, title and interest in and to the Shares is held by TPR, subject only to the plaintiff's asserted rights under the Stockholders Agreement asserted in the action styled Glenclova Investment Co. v. Trans-Resources, Inc. and TPR Investment Associates, Inc., Case No. 08-CIV-7140 (JFK), pending the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York, the parties hereby agree that (a) *this Agreement and the transactions contemplated hereby shall be deemed to have been entered into and consummated with TPR, (b) the Purchasers shall retain all right, title and interest in and to the Shares as if purchased from TPR pursuant to this Agreement, (c) TPR shall look only to Seller for any payments made by the Purchasers pursuant to this Agreement, (d) the Purchasers shall have no liability or obligation to TPR in respect of the Shares, and (e) all representations, warranties, covenants and agreements made by Seller herein, shall be deemed to have been made by TPR as of the date hereof.*[76]

[74] JX-225 (the "Purchase Agreement").
[75] Tr. 547 (S. Genger).
[76] Purchase Agreement § 10 (emphasis added).

Thus, by signing an agreement with both the Sagi Trust and TPR, the wrongful transferee, the Trump Group dealt with the Genger-caused problem that Genger exploited in order to derail the Funding Agreement. By dealing directly with both the allegedly innocent transferee — the Sagi Trust — and the wrongdoer — TPR — the Trump Group covered all of its bases.

Having purchased the Sagi Shares, which gave them a majority equity position in Trans-Resources, the Trump Group then executed a written consent on August 25, 2008 that removed Genger from the Trans-Resources board, elected Eddie Trump and Hirsch to the board, and affirmed the election of Jules Trump and Robert Smith to the board. The Trump Group delivered that written consent to Trans-Resources, but Genger rejected it.[77]

In response, the Trump Group filed a single-count complaint pursuant to 8 *Del. C.* § 225 in order to determine the composition of the Trans-Resources board (the "Section 225 Action"). Consistent with their position throughout the summer of 2008, the Trump Group's central claim was that the 2004 Transfers were made in violation of the Stockholders Agreement, and that it therefore had the right to purchase all of TPR's shares pursuant to Section 3 of the Stockholders Agreement.[78] Genger responded with a counterclaim, raising a number of arguments for why the 2004 Transfers were made appropriately — chief among them his assertions that he told Jules Trump of the Transfers at the time they were made, and that, in any event, the Trump Group's purchase

[77] Tr. 403-06 (Hirsch).
[78] Compl. ¶ 10.

of the Sagi Shares in 2008 ratified the 2004 Transfers — and claiming that, therefore, he still controlled Trans-Resources' board. Genger also argues that the Trump Group violated Section 2.1 of the Stockholders Agreement when Equity I and Equity II pledged Trans-Resources shares in return for financing to buy the Sagi Shares.

Soon after the Section 225 Action was filed, the parties promptly settled the matter, which resulted in a stipulated final judgment that declared that the Trump Group's designees constituted a majority of the board.[79] But, like any other moment of agreement between the parties in this case on anything, that settlement was short-lived. On October 10, 2008 — two weeks after the final judgment was entered — the Trump Group moved to re-open the Section 225 Action. They moved to reopen because they alleged that, after taking control of Trans-Resources, they discovered that Genger had destroyed documents relevant to the Section 225 Action in violation of a status quo order.

The issue of whether Genger should be held in contempt for destroying documents in violation of this court's status quo order was decided in 2009 in a separate trial.[80] It is unnecessary to recount here the facts or analysis involved in that trial, which are summarized in the opinion that resulted.[81] What matters for present purposes is the outcome: Genger was found to be in contempt, which raises Genger's evidentiary burden on any issue on which he has the burden of proof by one level and renders his uncorroborated testimony insufficient to establish material facts.[82]

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[79] *See TR Investors, LLC v. Arie Genger*, C.A. No. 3994-VCS (Sept. 26, 2008) (ORDER).
[80] *TR Investors, LLC v. Genger*, 2009 WL 4696062 (Del. Ch. Dec. 9, 2009).
[81] *See id*. at *1-15.
[82] *See id*. at *18-19.

III. Legal Analysis

Genger has proliferated a host of theories — including new ones after trial — as to why he retains voting control over Trans-Resources, and the Trump Group has accurately described its efforts to address Genger's ever-changing arguments as playing a game of "Whack-a-Mole."[83] It is possible, nevertheless, to sift through the heaping stew pot filled with every conceivable exculpatory theory that ever crossed his lawyers' inventive minds that Genger has cooked up and identify the chunkier ingredients. Genger's main theory is that the 2004 Transfers were made appropriately, either because he gave the Trump Group notice or because the Trump Group ratified the Transfers. Genger's primary alternative theory is that, even if the 2004 Transfers were not appropriate, the Trump Group took the Sagi Shares subject to the Proxy in his favor.

In the analysis that follows, I do not address all of the alternative theories Genger concocted, but rather focus on his two fundamental theories. Treating all of his secondary arguments is unnecessary because Genger has failed to bear his evidentiary burden as to those core theories on which the rest of his case depends. That is, Genger has failed to prove that he properly notified the Trump Group of the 2004 Transfers at any time before the June 13 Meeting, or that the Trump Group somehow ratified the 2004 Transfers after the fact. And, even if the Trump Group did ratify the 2004 Transfers —

[83] *See* Trump Post-Trial Ans. Br. 3. For example, Genger's counsel spent a great deal of time at post-trial oral argument in a befuddling exposition of a theory *introduced into the case as a footnote in its post-trial answering brief*. *Compare* Post-Trial Tr. 128-58 *with* Genger Post-Trial Ans. Br. 24, n. 18.

which it did not — Genger has failed to prove that it took the Sagi Shares subject to the Proxy.

A. Standard Of Review

The standard of review I apply in analyzing the aforementioned issues is different in this case than what is typical. The party attempting to gain control of an entity in an action pursuant to 8 *Del. C.* § 225 bears the burden of proof on any issue, the outcome of which would affect the determination of the Trans-Resources' board.[84] Generally speaking, the burden of proof in civil cases is that the party with the burden must prove his position by a preponderance of the evidence.[85] But, because of this court's prior ruling in the contempt trial, Genger's burden is raised a level, meaning that he must prevail on any issue in which he bears the burden of proof by clear and convincing evidence. And, as mentioned before, Genger's own uncorroborated testimony will not be sufficient to establish any material fact.[86]

B. Arie Genger Did Not Notify The Trump Group Of The 2004 Transfers Until June 13, 2008

The first issue I must address is Genger's argument that he gave the Trump Group notice of the 2004 Transfers during his conversations in late 2004 or early 2005 with Jules Trump about his divorce and that the Trump Group is chargeable with laches.[87]

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[84] *See Agranoff v. Miller*, 1999 WL 219650, at *12 (Del. Ch. Apr. 12, 1999), *aff'd*, 737 A.2d 530 (Del. 1999). Genger conceded that he bears the burden of proof. Contempt Trial Tr. 355.
[85] *See SinoMab Bioscience Ltd. v. Immunomedics, Inc.*, 2009 WL 1707891, at *12 (Del. Ch. June 16, 2009).
[86] *See supra* page 25.
[87] Laches operates to bar a claim where "(a) [the] plaintiff knew (or should have known) of its rights or claim; (b) [the] plaintiff failed to assert its rights or claim; and (c) [the] defendant has materially changed its position or otherwise materially relied on plaintiff's failure to assert."

This argument is central to the case because the Stockholders Agreement provides that, upon receiving notice of an improper transfer from any source, the Trump Group has 90 days to elect to purchase the shares held by the stockholder making the transfer, *i.e.* TPR.[88] If the first time the Trumps heard about the 2004 Transfers was at the June 13 Meeting, then the Trump Group acted within the 90-day window provided in the contract because it elected to purchase TPR's shares on August 8, 2008, when it sent TPR a letter indicating that it elected to exercise its rights under Section 3.2 of the Stockholders Agreement.[89] But, if the Trumps received notice some time before May 8, 2008, then their demand to exercise their purchase rights under the Stockholders Agreement on August 8, 2008 would arguably be tardy.

Tellingly, Genger spent only one and a half pages in his post-trial briefing on this argument.[90] That is likely because he knew, as shown below, that he has failed to bear his evidentiary burden on this issue. There is no credible evidence indicating that Genger ever told Jules Trump about the 2004 Transfers in late 2004 or early 2005.

At trial, Genger offered little more than his unbelievable and uncorroborated testimony to support his claim that he notified the Trump Group. As discussed earlier, Genger testified that he told Jules Trump about the 2004 Transfers on a number of occasions in late 2004 or early 2005 while the two discussed developments in Genger's

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Gotham Partners, L.P. v. Hallwood Realty Partners, L.P., 714 A.2d 96, 104 (Del. Ch. 1998); *see also Fed. United Corp. v. Havender*, 11 A.2d 331, 344 (Del. 1940) ("Sitting by inactive and in what amounts to silence, when every consideration for the rights of others demanded prompt and vigorous action, and until affairs had become so complicated that a restoration of former status was difficult, if not impossible, is conduct amounting to laches.").

[88] Stockholders Agreement § 3.2(a).

[89] JX-198 (Letter from Glenclova to Trans-Resources and TPR (Aug. 8, 2008)).

[90] *See* Genger Post-Trial Op. Br. 28-30.

divorce during their strolls on Williams Island.[91] For his part, Jules Trump categorically denied that Genger ever mentioned the 2004 Transfers in late 2004 or early 2005.[92] The only other person who testified to hearing Genger and Trump discuss the matter was Orly Genger. But her testimony gave little detail about what was actually said during those alleged conversations, and it was contradicted by Genger himself, who said that she was not present at the key conversation when he told Jules Trump about the Transfers.[93] Therefore, I do not find her testimony of the alleged conversations between Genger and Jules Trump credible, especially in light of her personal interest in this case.

Moreover, if Genger did in fact tell Jules Trump about the 2004 Transfers in late 2004 or early 2005, then why did he not press that point at the June 13 Meeting when Eddie Trump and Hirsch appeared shocked to hear the news? The natural thing to say in that situation would have been to make the obvious point that he had told Jules about it years ago. But, at trial, Genger only testified vaguely, haltingly, and meekly that he told them something along the lines of "Jules knows about it," and gave no other details of what he said in that regard.[94] Genger also admitted that he never pressed the point any further, even though he became "[v]ery frustrated" with the repeated questions Eddie Trump and Hirsch were asking.[95] For example, Genger never said that they should get Jules Trump on the phone to confirm that Genger had indeed told him about the

[91] *See supra* page 11.
[92] *See supra* page 11.
[93] *See supra* page 11-13.
[94] Tr. 900 (A. Genger).
[95] *Id*.

Transfers.[96] Rather, Genger attempted to justify the Transfers on the grounds that he still had voting control through the Proxies.[97]

Genger also failed to mention his alleged conversations with Jules Trump even when he spoke with his lawyer, David Lentz, after the June 13 Meeting.[98] Such an important detail would, if true, have been one of the first things Genger told his counsel. But, the evidence indicates Lentz believed at the time that Genger had never informed Jules Trump of the 2004 Transfers.[99] That fact is reflected most clearly in the Lentz Memo, which stated repeatedly that notice had never been provided to the Trump Group.[100]

Thus, the overwhelming thrust of the evidence indicates that everyone in Genger's camp knew full well that he had never told the Trump Group about the 2004 Transfers before the June 13 Meeting.[101] Indeed, Bill Dowd's notes of the June 25 Board Meeting indicate that Genger himself admitted that the Transfers were made in violation of the Stockholders Agreement.[102] The inescapable conclusion is that Genger did not provide the Trump Group with any form of notice before the June 13 Meeting, choosing rather to trust in his savvy to manage the Trumps if the issue ever arose.

Nor can Genger rely on the passing references to the possibility of a transfer in the 2005 Written Consents and the minutes of the November 2007 Board Meeting. As noted,

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[96] *Id*.
[97] *See supra* page 17.
[98] *See supra* page 17.
[99] *See supra* page 17-19.
[100] *See supra* page 18-19.
[101] *See* Tr. 631 (Dowd), 1008 (Lentz).
[102] *See supra* page 19.

the accuracy of the minutes of the November 2007 Board Meeting appears to be suspect.[103] Furthermore, the Stockholders Agreement required a specific form of notice to be given to TR Investors and Glenclova.[104] Even if Genger told Jules Trump about the 2004 Transfers in late 2004 or early 2005, which I conclude he did not, that would not constitute notice to TR Investors or Glenclova. But more important is the fact that passing references in the 2005 Written Notices or the minutes of the November 2007 Board Meeting do not constitute proper notice of any kind or even put the Trump Group on effective inquiry notice. Business people can miss things. The idea that the Trump Group had to review every stray reference in the board minutes or to read between the lines on the signature page of the 2005 Written Consents for signs of a possible transfer is wrong. The notice provision in the Stockholders Agreement was specific and designed to ensure that the Trump Group did not have to police the world in this way, as was the Stockholders Agreement's strong anti-waiver provision.[105] Finally, I am persuaded by, among other things, the draft Funding Agreement the Trump Group proposed that indicated that the Trump Group did not know of the 2004 Transfers. Notably, I conclude that the Trump Group would prevail on this issue even if they had the burden to show that they had not been given proper notice. But, because Genger admits he did not give proper notice as required under the contract,[106] it was his burden to show that he should nevertheless be alleviated of his obligations under the Stockholders Agreement because

[103] *See supra* pages 19-20.
[104] *See* Stockholders Agreement § 6.5.
[105] *See id*. at §§ 6.5, 6.8.
[106] *See* Pretrial Stipulation and Order 4.

he gave Jules Trump oral notice and, certainly, it was his burden to prove a laches defense.

C. The Trump Group Did Not Ratify The 2004 Transfers

Genger next argues that the Trump Group nevertheless ratified the 2004 Transfers. The defense of ratification is perhaps best understood by reference to its closest cousin, the doctrine of acquiescence.[107] Acquiescence occurs when a party "has knowledge of an improper act by another, yet stands by without objection and allows the other party to act in a manner inconsistent with the claimant's property rights."[108] Ratification differs primarily in timing: "[a]quiescence properly speaks of assent by words or conduct *during the progress* of a transaction, while ratification suggests an assent *after the fact*."[109] Thus, to find that a party ratified a prior act, it is first necessary to find that the ratifying party had "[k]knowledge, actual or imputed, of all material facts."[110] Second, ratification requires an affirmative act by the ratifying party. Assent can be "implied from conduct,

[107] *See Frank v. Wilson & Co.*, 32 A.2d 277, 283 (Del. 1943) ("Acquiescence and ratification are closely related.").
[108] *Brandywine Dev. Group, L.L.C. v. Alpha Trust*, 2003 WL 241727, at *4 (Del. Ch. Jan. 30, 2003).
[109] *Frank*, 32 A.2d at 283 (emphasis added); *see also* 1 DONALD J. WOLFE, JR. & MICHAEL A. PITTENGER, CORPORATE AND COMMERCIAL PRACTICE IN THE DELAWARE COURT OF CHANCERY, § 11.03[a], at 11-20 (2009) ("Acquiescence involves assent during the progress of a transaction, while ratification suggests assent after the fact.").
[110] *Frank*, 32 A.2d at 283; *see also Papaioanu v. Comm'rs of Rehoboth*, 186 A.2d 745, 749-50 (Del. Ch. 1962).

as well as expressed by words" but is always a "voluntary and positive act."[111] Accepting the benefits of a transaction can be an indication of that assent.[112]

1. Genger Has Not Met His Burden Of Proof As To His Ratification Claim

Realizing that he had a very weak argument that he gave effective notice of the 2004 Transfers to the Trump Group, Genger spent most of his briefing attempting to argue that the Trump Group ratified the 2004 Transfers. Because of his prior acts of spoliation, Genger bears the burden to prove ratification by clear and convincing evidence. He has not done so.

Genger argues that the Trump Group ratified the 2004 Transfers on two occasions: (1) when it accepted shareholder approval of the Funding Agreement at the June 25 Board Meeting; and (2) when it purchased the Sagi Shares on August 22, 2008.[113] As to

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[111] *Frank*, 32 A.2d at 283; *see also* WOLFE & PITTENGER, § 11.03[a] at 11-19 to 11-20 (stating that ratification requires proof of a relinquishment of existing, known rights, and the "acceptance of new replacement rights or benefits").

[112] *See Kahn v. Household Acquisition Corp.*, 591 A.2d 166, 177 (Del. 1991) (stating that accepting the benefits of a transaction, even though the conduct in question is a breach of some duty owed to the shareholder, may bar the shareholder from obtaining equitable relief); *Frank*, 32 A.2d at 282 (finding that a shareholder "could not accept the benefit offered by the [transaction] and at the same time deny its validity"); *Giammalvo v. Sunshine Mining Co.*, 1994 WL 30547, at *10 (Del. Ch. Jan. 31, 1994), *aff'd*, 651 A.2d 787 (Del. 1994) ("The equitable defenses of ratification and acquiescence are closely related. Under the proper circumstances, both doctrine prevent one who accepts the benefits of a transaction from thereafter attacking it."); *Dannley v. Murray*, 1980 WL 268061, at *4 (Del. Ch. July 3, 1980) ("The 'affirmance' required to create ratification . . . may arise by the retention of benefits with knowledge of the unauthorized acts.") (citations omitted); *Trounstine v. Remington Rand*, 194 A. 95, 99 (Del. Ch. 1937) ("[E]quity will not hear a complainant stultify himself by complaining against acts in which he participated or of which he has demonstrated his approval by sharing in their benefits.").

[113] Later in the briefing process, Genger recast his argument about the 2005 Written Consents and the minutes of the November 2007 Board Meeting in ratification terms. That is, Genger argued that the 2005 Written Consents and the minutes of the November 2007 Board Meeting indicate that the Trump Group ratified the 2004 Transfers. The argument fares no better presented within a ratification analysis. As explained above, I find this argument unconvincing

the June 25 Board Meeting, Genger's theory is that the Trump Group accepted Genger's vote on behalf of the Sagi and Orly Trusts at the June 25 Board Meeting when the Trans-Resources stockholders approved the Funding Agreement. Genger argues that the Trump Group benefited when Genger purportedly voted the Proxies at the June 25 Board Meeting because approval of the Funding Agreement was a step towards giving them control of the company. As to the second theory, Genger argues that the Trump Group acknowledged the Sagi Trust as the transferee of the Sagi Shares, and benefited from purchasing the Sagi Shares because buying directly from Sagi Genger allowed the Trump Group to avoid the uncertainty and cost of enforcing their rights under Section 3.2 of the Stockholders Agreement.

Genger's ratification argument fails for two primary reasons. First, Genger's argument that the Trump Group ratified the 2004 Transfers is belied by the fact that the Trump Group repeatedly stated that the Transfers were made in violation of the Stockholders Agreement. Eddie Trump and Hirsch made that point at the June 13 Meeting.[114] The fact that the Transfers were made in violation of the Agreement was

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because, although representatives of the Trump Group received the 2005 Written Consent and signed its signature pages, and approved the minutes of the November 2007 Board Meeting, neither document involved the communication of a material amount of information about the 2004 Transfers to properly notify the Trump Group of the Transfers. Before a party can ratify something, it must first have "sufficient notice or means of knowledge" of the transaction or act in question. *Papaioanu*, 186 A.2d at 749-50. The 2005 Written Consent and the 2007 Board Minutes made, at best, an oblique suggestion that some event might have changed the shareholdings of Trans-Resources' stock. But neither the 2005 Written Consent nor the minutes of the November 2007 Board Meeting indicate any particular information about the 2004 Transfers, and neither event even occurred in a context where the Trump Group would have been alerted that something like the Transfers may have taken place. Therefore, Genger's ratification argument based on those pieces of evidence fails.

[114] *See supra* page 16.

repeated at the June 25 Board Meeting.[115] The letter the Trump Group sent to Trans-Resources on August 8, 2008, whereby it expressed its intention to exercise its rights to buy the 2004 Transfer shares, indicated that the 2004 Transfers were made in violation of the Stockholders Agreement.[116] And, the Trump Group's complaint in this matter claimed that the 2004 Transfers violated the Stockholders Agreement.[117] Thus, the clear and consistent message from the Trump Group to Genger at all relevant times was that the Stockholders Agreement had been violated. At no point did the Trump Group tell Genger that it accepted the 2004 Transfers.

Second, Genger has also failed to show that the Trump Group benefited in any way that suggests ratification. That is, Genger's argument that the Trump Group ratified the 2004 Transfers at the June 25 Board Meeting must be rejected because Genger reneged on the Funding Agreement. Because the Agreement was never executed, the Trump Group never received the benefit that was the condition upon which it might actually not challenge the 2004 Transfers. Without the Trump Group having received the benefit that was to be given for relinquishing its claim that the 2004 Transfers were void, there is no basis to conclude that the Trump Group assented to the 2004 Transfers by accepting Genger's vote on behalf of the Sagi and Orly Trust in favor of the Funding Agreement.[118]

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[115] *See supra* page 19.
[116] *See supra* page 22.
[117] *See* Compl. ¶ 8.
[118] Genger argues that it was enough that the Trump Group "accepted for themselves as shareholders the pecuniary benefits" of the Funding Agreement, even though they never actually received those benefits because that deal was never consummated. Genger's Post-Trial Op. Br.

Indeed, the Funding Agreement proves the point. The Trump Group was willing to consider a resolution of the violation of the Stockholders Agreement that remedied that violation by giving them voting control of Trans-Resources. In so doing, they were willing to accept some risk, based on Arie Genger's assurances that he did not face a problem from Sagi Genger if he voted the disputed shares. If that was so, and if the Trump Group was able to reach an accord that gave them voting control, all the parties affected by the 2004 Transfers would have been on board. But the lynchpin of the deal was the Genger would rectify the violation of the Stockholders Agreement by ensuring that the Trump Group had voting control. He then reneged on his assurances that the Transfers were a problem by claiming that Funding Agreement could not be

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21. In other words, according to Genger's theory, not only is receiving a benefit an indication of ratification, but a step taken during a negotiation to receive a benefit is also. Tellingly, Genger cites no case law supporting his position.

I reject this argument for the following reason: acceptance of the benefit of a voidable transaction is an *alternative* basis upon which to ground a conclusion that a party ratified the transaction. It is a suitable alternative to an express affirmation of the transaction because acceptance of a benefit is a relatively concrete factual occurrence that inspires confidence in a conclusion that, even though the ratifying party did not expressly enunciate her assent to the voidable transaction, she has nonetheless done some "voluntary and positive act" to indicate that assent. *Frank*, 32 A.2d at 283. Negotiations relating to a potential benefit arising from a contractual breach are a less sure foundation upon which to base a finding of a ratification because, as sophisticated commercial parties know, discussions often range across a number of different options, many of which never come to pass. In other words, negotiations about the potential benefit arising from a voidable transaction are unreliable. For that reason they cannot reasonably be considered to induce the other party's reliance, and therefore there is no basis to conclude that the party who suffered the breach is estopped from enforcing the contract. *See Romer v. Porcelain Products, Inc.*, 2 A.2d 75, 76 (Del. Ch. July 28, 1938) (finding that a complaining stockholder was barred by "the estoppel of his acquiescence"); *see generally Frank*, 32 A.2d at 283 ("The defenses of laches, acquiescence, ratification and estoppel all have some element in common."). That is, until the ratifying party actually takes the benefit, there is no basis for the estoppel. For that additional reason, I reject Genger's claim that the Trump Group ratified the 2004 Transfers at the June 25 Board Meeting.

accomplished because Sagi Genger might challenge the substantive fairness of the required stock issuance to the Trump Group.

Of course, the Trump Group received a benefit when it purchased the Sagi Shares from the Sagi Trust and TPR, but that benefit is not an indication of the Trump Group's ratification of the 2004 Transfers. Rather it is consideration of a settlement that resolved the very problem Genger had created. In other words, Genger's argument confuses the benefits that come from compromising claims away in return for a settlement with taking a benefit from a voidable transaction that indicates ratification. A benefit that indicates ratification is one where the ratifying party would be getting something for nothing if she were allowed to enforce the contract.[119] Here, the Trump Group was not attempting to take advantage of the 2004 Transfers in a way that would have allowed it to obtain more than it was entitled to under the Stockholders Agreement.

By entering into the Purchase Agreement, the Trump Group dealt with the problem that Genger's misconduct had caused it. Genger had just reneged on the compromise Funding Agreement that would have rectified his wrongful behavior, in large measure by claiming that Sagi Genger, as an arguably innocent purchaser for value, would cause trouble and upset any deal. The Trumps reasonably suspected that Genger's resistance was also inspired by his desire to retain control. To address this problem, the Trump Group dealt with both the wrongful transferor, TPR, and the purported transferee, the Sagi Trust, so that it could cover all its bases. In doing so, the Trump Group never

[119] *See, e.g.*, *id.* at 278-83 (finding that a stockholder who had benefitted for years from a recapitalization plan "could not accept the benefit offered by the plan and at the same time deny its validity").

accepted the legitimacy of the 2004 Transfers; indeed, its consistent position was that the Transfers were void.[120] But by binding both TPR and the Sagi Trust, it could resolve the issue of ownership and control over the bloc definitively. That is, under the deal with TPR and the Sagi Trust, the Trump Group extinguished any claims it had against either TPR or the Sagi Trust as to the Sagi Shares in return for a majority stake in the company.[121] Thus, the Trump Group was only attempting to recapture from TPR what it was owed under the Stockholders Agreement: control over Trans-Resources. Indeed, the Trump Group was giving up its right to purchase the shares from TPR at 2004 prices, which likely would have allowed the Trump Group to obtain the Shares for much less than the approximately $26 million it paid to purchase the Sagi Shares.

The only difference between enforcing its rights under Section 3.2 of the Stockholders Agreement against TPR and acquiring control directly through the purchase of the Sagi Shares was speed. That is, negotiating directly with both TPR and the Sagi Trust had the advantage of providing a quick and certain resolution to the problem, while enforcing Section 3.2 would likely have involved lengthy litigation. Of course, a speedy solution has value, but that value is the benefit of any settlement, and is one of the primary reasons parties settle their disputes. Undermining that incentive cuts against the public's well-established interest in promoting settlement.[122] At all times, the Trump

[120] *See supra* pages 16-25.
[121] *See supra* pages 22-24.
[122] *See Marie Raymond Revocable Trust v. MAT Five LLC*, 980 A.2d 388, 402 (Del. Ch. 2008) ("It is well established that Delaware law favors the voluntary settlement of contested issues. Settlements are encouraged because they promote judicial economy and because the litigants are generally in the best position to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of their case." (internal

Group took the position that the 2004 Transfers were void, and mentioned that position to Genger and in litigation. All the Trump did by entering into the Purchase Agreement was ensure that, if the Trump Group were proven wrong in litigation about the 2004 Transfers, it had acquired whatever interests Sagi Genger held and, therefore, he was not a further obstacle. By making a deal directly with the wrongdoer whose shares it was entitled to receive under the Stockholders Agreement, the Trump Group settled TPR's violation of that Agreement by accepting the shares on the terms negotiated, rather than under the price setting process of Section 3.2. In this regard, it is also important to note that the Trump Group was entitled to control of Trans-Resources *as of 2004*, when Genger breached the Stockholders Agreement. Genger's secret transfers had deprived the Trump Group of the benefits of the Stockholders Agreement for four years, and it comes with little grace for Genger now to argue that the Trump Group had to wait even longer or else it would relinquish its rights to those benefits.

Finally, I note that finding that the Trump Group did not ratify the 2004 Transfers leads to, in my view, an equitable result, despite Genger's protestations to the contrary. The problem Genger created by his serious, secretive contractual breach — the insertion of Genger's dysfunctional family into the management of Trans-Resources — was precisely what the Stockholders Agreement was designed to avoid.[123] The Trump Group could only rectify that problem outside of litigation by negotiating with TPR and the Sagi Trust because, by effecting the Transfers, Genger made it impossible to deal with TPR

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citations omitted)), *aff'd sub nom. Whitson v. Marie Raymond Revocable Trust*, 976 A.2d 172 (Del. 2009).

[123] *See supra* pages 5-8.

alone. Genger's argument that the Trump Group ratified the 2004 Transfers because it dealt with Sagi Genger rather than telling him that the Transfers were void is particularly cynical because Genger himself insisted that the Trump Group not challenge the Sagi Trust's ownership of its Trans-Resources shares.[124] Genger was the source of all of these problems, and to find that the Trump Group ratified Genger's behavior would only reward him for his own perfidy.[125] In that regard, Genger's argument that a finding that the Trump Group did not ratify the 2004 Transfers would work an inequity because it would require the unwinding of his divorce settlement is baseless. Genger only has himself to blame for whatever mess his decision to make the 2004 Transfers has caused for his divorce settlement. If Arie Genger's violation of the Stockholders Agreement has deepened the Genger family's internecine feud, that is unfortunate. But it is not the Trump Group's problem, nor is it a basis for an appeal to this court's sense of equity.

2. The Trump Group Holds A Majority Of Trans-Resources' Stock But Is Not Entitled To The Shares Transferred To Arie Genger Personally Or To The Orly Trust

That the purchase of the Sagi Shares was a bargain with TPR and the Sagi Trust that resolved Genger's violation of the Stockholders Agreement also has ramifications for the Trump Group's claims, which include a theory that it has a right to purchase all of the shares TPR transferred in the 2004 Transfers — including the shares transferred to Arie Genger personally and the Orly Trust — under the terms of the Stockholders Agreement. In the Purchase Agreement whereby the Trump Group bought the Sagi Shares, the parties

[124] *See supra* page 20.
[125] *See* 3 FARNSWORTH ON CONTRACTS § 12.20 (3d ed. 2004) ("A person is not permitted to profit by his own wrong at the expense of another.").

included a provision that ensured that, if the 2004 Transfers were found to be improper, the Agreement would be deemed to have been consummated with TPR, not the Sagi Trust.[126] Thus, the Purchase Agreement was a broad settlement that gave the Trump Group the assurance that it had all its bases covered in regard to the Sagi Shares, and that it would retain control over Trans-Resources. The Purchase Agreement also provided in relation to the shares transferred to Arie Genger personally and the Orly Trust that:

> If at any time following the Closing Date, it is determined that Arie Genger is not the record and beneficial owner of the 794.40 shares of Common Stock of the Company purportedly transferred to him by TPR in October, 2004 and/or that the Orly Genger 1993 Trust is not the record and beneficial owner of the 1,102.80 shares of Common Stock of the Company purportedly transferred to such Trust by TPR in October, 2004, and that TPR is determined to be the record or beneficial owner of any such shares, in either or both cases by virtue of the transfer of such shares being deemed to have been void or for any other reason (the shares being so affected being referred to herein as the "Affected Shares") *then TPR shall promptly transfer 64% of the Balance Shares* (as such term is defined in the Stockholders Agreement dated March 30, 2001, among TPR, TR Investors, Glenclova and the Company (the "Stockholders Agreement")) to TR Investors and Glenclova in accordance with the terms of Section 1.6 of the Stockholders Agreement whether or not such agreement is then still in effect.[127]

Thus, the Purchase Agreement provided that, if the transfer of TPR shares to Arie Genger and the Orly Trust was found to be improper, then 64% of the Balance Shares[128] would be transferred from TPR to the Trump Group.

Although the 2004 Transfers violated the terms of the Stockholders Agreement, which in Section 3.2 provides that the Trump Group can purchase all of TPR's shares, the

[126] *See supra* pages 23-24.
[127] Purchase Agreement § 11 (emphasis added).
[128] *See supra* page 10.

Trump Group cannot purchase the shares transferred to Arie Genger or the Orly Trust because the Trump Group must abide by the settlement terms to which it agreed in the Purchase Agreement. Because the 2004 Transfers violated the Stockholders Agreement, Arie Genger and the Orly Trust have been found to not be the record or beneficial owners of the shares transferred to them. Per Section 11 of the Purchase Agreement, that entitles the Trump Group to 64% of the Balance Shares, and nothing more beyond the Sagi Shares that it has already bought. As to the Transfer from TPR to Arie Genger himself, the major problem was the lack of notice. Under the Stockholders Agreement, Genger could receive shares from TPR so long as he: (1) gave proper notice to the Trump Group entities; and (2) signed on to the Stockholders Agreement.[129] He did neither and, as a result, cannot exercise any rights under the Stockholders Agreement. Although the Trump Group believes that Genger's violation should require him to transfer all of his Trans-Resources shares to the Trump Group, that remedy is disproportionate. That sort of relief is unnecessary to this control dispute and therefore this § 225 action. Nevertheless, Trans-Resources appears entitled, in any event, to deny Genger the right to vote his shares until he gives formal notice and signs on to the Stockholders Agreement. As to the Orly Trust, it is not before the court, and the shares it was wrongly transferred are also not necessary for the Trump Group to exercise control. Therefore, I do not issue any ruling as to those shares, because that is unnecessary in this § 225 action.[130]

[129] Stockholders Agreement § 2.1.

[130] *See Arbitrium (Cayman Islands) Handels AG v. Johnston*, 1997 WL 589030, at *3 (Del. Ch. Sept. 17, 1997) (discussing that a § 225 proceeding should generally only resolve issues affecting

Obviously, my finding that the shares were wrongly transferred creates problems for Arie Genger, but that exposure is a result of his own secretive contract breach.

D. The Trump Group Did Not Take The Sagi Shares Subject To The Proxy

Even if the Trump Group ratified the 2004 Transfers — which it did not — it would still have voting control over Trans-Resources because it did not take the Sagi Shares subject to the Proxy. That conclusion is required for two reasons.

First, the language of the Proxy itself does not plainly indicate that the Proxy was to run with the Shares if they are sold. The explicit terms of the Proxy establish that it only applies so long as the Sagi Trust owns the Shares. For example, the Proxy states that the Sagi Trust appoints Genger "to vote as *its* proxy, all shares of common stock of TRI which are not or hereafter *owned by the Trust*."[131] Also, it permits Genger to vote only "in the same manner and to the same extent as *the Trust* might, were *the Trust* present at said meeting."[132] In this regard, the Proxy is different, for example, from the proxy at issue in *Haft v. Dart Group. Corp.*, which gave the proxy holder the "right to exercise all rights to vote *the Shares* on all matter on which *they* are entitled to vote."[133] Here, the Proxy does not give Genger the right to vote on all matters in which the Sagi Shares are entitled to vote; rather, the Proxy gives Genger the right to vote on all matters in which the Sagi *Trust* is entitled to vote, suggesting that the Proxy does not extend to subsequent owners of the Shares.

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voting control of the corporation); *Bossier v. Connell*, 1986 WL 11534, at *2 (Del. Ch. Oct. 7, 1986) (same).

[131] Proxy at 1 (emphasis added).

[132] *Id*. (emphasis added).

[133] 1997 WL 154049, at *2 n.5 (Del. Ch. Mar. 14, 1997) (emphasis added).

Most importantly, the Proxy does not provide in any way for the reservation of voting powers to Genger after such a sale. The only language Genger points to as evidence that the Proxy is meant to run with the Sagi Shares is the phrase that the Proxy "shall continue for the duration of Arie Genger's life."[134] But, in the context of the entire document, that language only means that the Sagi Trust would be bound by the Proxy until Genger died, not that the Proxy would continue to bind later owners if the Shares were transferred. If Genger wanted to keep the Proxy after a transfer, he could have easily inserted clear language — such as "this Proxy shall bind any subsequent transferees" — into the Proxy to that effect. He did not, and thus there is no reason found in the text of the Proxy to indicate that it is binding upon the Trump Group.

Even if the language of the Proxy was ambiguous — which it is not — public policy concerns require that the Proxy be strictly construed. Historically, proxies have been interpreted narrowly and when there is an ambiguity, read as not restricting the right to vote the shares.[135] Recent market developments have only reinforced the utility of the presumption that irrevocable proxies should be narrowly construed. Separating voting control from stock ownership — which can result in "empty voting," where an investor votes stock without having an accompanying economic interest — raises important

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[134] Proxy at 1.

[135] *See Eliason v. Englehart*, 733 A.2d 944 (Del. 1999) (finding a proxy to be revocable where the words expressly stating that it was an "Irrevocable Proxy" were only found in the authentication to the document, not in the language of the proxy itself); *Freeman v. Fabiniak*, 1985 WL 11583 (Del. Ch. Aug. 15, 1985) (narrowly interpreting the grant of authority made in a proxy instrument and holding that the instrument, which conveyed the right to vote at shareholder meetings, did not authorize other action by consent); *State ex rel. McKaig v. Bd. of Directors of H.F. Dangberg Land & Live Stock Co.*, 110 P.2d 212, 214 (Nev. 1941) ("The instrument granting the vote by proxy will be strictly construed.").

public policy concerns.[136] For example, the decoupling of shareholder voting rights and economic interest, which is increasingly common and only loosely regulated by the securities laws,[137] is of concern because empty voting can theoretically allow investors with voting power but with an economic interest adverse to the firm to vote in ways that reduce the company's share price.[138]

Our Supreme Court's recent decision in *Crown EMAK Partners, LLC v. Kurz* underscores the importance of those public policy concerns.[139] There, the Supreme Court affirmed this court's decision that third-party vote buying merits judicial review when it disenfranchises shareholders by affecting the outcome of a vote, and confirmed this court's conclusion that the voting arrangement at issue was proper.[140] Its reason for so concluding is important: "[w]e hold that the Court of Chancery correctly concluded that there was no improper vote buying, *because the economic interests and the voting interests of the shares remained aligned* since both sets of interests were transferred from Boutros to Kurz by the Purchase Agreement."[141] In other instances, the temptations for self-dealing that arise when persons with a relatively small economic interest in a

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[136] *See* Henry T.C. Hu & Bernard Black, *Empty Voting and Hidden (Morphable) Ownership: Taxonomy, Implications, and Reforms*, 61 BUS. LAW. 1011, 1014 (2006) ("*Empty Voting*"); *see also* Shaun Martin & Frank Partnoy, *Encumbered Shares*, 2005 U. ILL. L. REV. 775.
[137] *See* Henry T.C. Hu & Bernard Black, *Equity and Debt Decoupling and Empty Voting II: Importance and Extensions*, 156 U. PA. L. REV. 625 (2008)
[138] *See Empty Voting* at 1014.
[139] 992 A.2d 377, 388 (Del. 2010) ("For many years, Delaware decisions have expressed consistent concerns about transactions that create a misalignment between the voting interest and the economic interest of shares.") (citations omitted).
[140] *Id*. at 388-90.
[141] *Id*. at 390 (emphasis added).

corporation has voting control have resulted in serious harm to the corporation and its other investors.[142]

In light of those concerns, a proxy purporting to irrevocably decouple voting rights from economic interest should be strictly construed. Because there is no such clear intent manifested in the Proxy here, prudent public policy requires the conclusion that the Proxy does not survive the sale of the Sagi Shares to the Trump Group.

Second, the Proxy is not irrevocable because it does not satisfy § 609 of the New York Business Corporation Law, which I conclude governs the Letter Agreement and the Proxy attached thereto in view of the lack of any policy conflict between it and the DGCL.[143] Section 609 provides that:

> A proxy which is entitled "irrevocable proxy" and which states that it is irrevocable, is irrevocable when it is held by any of the following or a nominee of any of the following: (1) A pledgee; (2) A person who has purchased or agreed to purchase the shares; (3) A creditor or creditors of the corporation who extend or continue credit to the corporation in consideration of the proxy if the proxy states that it was given in

[142] *See, e.g.*, *Hollinger Intern., Inc. v. Black*, 844 A.2d 1022 (Del. Ch. 2004).

[143] Letter Agreement at 2 ("This Letter Agreement shall be governed by the laws of the State of New York without regard to conflicts of law principles."). Given Delaware's respect for contractual freedom, *see Abry Partners V, L.P. v. H&W Acquisition LLC*, 891 A.2d 1032, 1061 (Del. Ch. 2006) (noting that "there is also a strong American tradition of freedom of contract, and that tradition is especially strong in our State" and citing authorities), it respects choice of law agreements. *See J.S. Alberici Const. Co., Inc. v. Mid-W. Conveyor Co., Inc.*, 750 A.2d 518, 520 (Del. 2000) ("Delaware courts will generally honor a contractually-designated choice of law provision so long as the jurisdiction selected bears some material relationship to the transaction."). Although our law relating to the voting of corporate shares is of paramount interest to Delaware, there is no offense to Delaware of allowing parties to subject agreements about irrevocable proxies to a law that places different strictures on such proxies than does Delaware law, absent some reason that those strictures offend a fundamental protection by the DGCL. Section 609 of the N.Y. Bus. Corp. Law does not conflict with any fundamental Delaware corporate law policies or doctrines. Therefore, I find no reason to apply Delaware law in a situation where the parties have made a clear choice of law in favor of a sister state.

> consideration of such extension or continuation of credit, the amount thereof, and the name of the person extending or continuing credit; (4) A person who has contracted to perform services as an officer of the corporation, if a proxy is required by the contract of employment, if the proxy states that it was given in consideration of such contract of employment, the name of the employee and the period of employment contracted for; (5) A person designated by or under paragraph (a) of section 620.[144]

Genger obviously does not qualify under sub-sections (1), (2), (3), or (4) — that is, he is not a pledgee, creditor, contract officer, or purchaser of the Shares sold to the Sagi Trust. And, he does not qualify under sub-section (5), because § 620 of the New York Business Corporation Law applies to an agreement "between two or more shareholders," and neither Genger nor the Sagi Trust were shareholders of Trans-Resources when the Letter Agreement and the Proxy were executed.[145] Thus, the Proxy is not irrevocable under New York Law, and was revoked by the sale of the Sagi Shares to the Trump Group.[146]

IV. Conclusion

Genger violated the Stockholders Agreement when he made the 2004 Transfers, and the Trump Group did not ratify those Transfers after the fact. Furthermore, the

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[144] *N.Y. Bus. Corp. Law* § 609; *cf.* 8 *Del. C.* § 212(e) (providing that a duly executed proxy will be deemed irrevocable where it: (1) states that it is irrevocable; and (2) is coupled with an interest sufficient in law to support an irrevocable power, regardless of whether the interest is in the stock itself or the corporation generally).

[145] *N.Y. Bus. Corp. Law* § 620.

[146] *See Tompers v. Bank of Am.*, 217 N.Y.S. 67, 75 (N.Y. App. Div. 1926) (holding that a revocable proxy terminated "through sale of . . . stock"). Even if the Proxy were irrevocable, Genger would still be bound to vote his shares for a majority of the Trump Group's directors because the Stockholders Agreement provides that "the group owning the greater number of shares as between the TPR Stockholders and the Non-TPR Stockholders shall designate four directors." Stockholders Agreement § 1.2. That is, Genger would have to vote the Proxy for the Trump Group's directors, because the Trump Group is indisputably the owner of a majority of Trans-Resources' shares. Economic ownership trumps, so to speak, any interest Genger has as an owner of the Proxy.

Trump Group did not take the Sagi Shares subject to the irrevocable Proxy. Therefore, the Trump Group retains the Sagi Shares,[147] is entitled to 64% of the Balance Shares, and can vote all of the Trans-Resources shares it holds as it wishes. The parties shall submit an implementing order by Wednesday, July 28, 2010.

[147] Genger's claim that he is entitled to purchase the Sagi Shares under § 3.2 of the Stockholders Agreement because the Trump Group pledged (a disputed amount of) those Shares to a party from which they obtained purchase financing fails because Genger never signed on to the Stockholders Agreement. Tr. 950 (A. Genger). Until he accepts the burdens of that contract, Genger cannot expect to enjoy its benefits. *See, e.g.*, *Red Clay Educ. Ass'n v. Bd. of Educ. of Red Clay Consol. School Dist.*, 1992 WL 14965, at *10 (Del. Ch. Jan. 16, 1992) (holding that plaintiff could not "accept the benefits of a contract without also bearing the corresponding burdens"). Furthermore, Genger cannot now claim entitlements under a contract that he intentionally flaunted. *See PAMI-LEMB I Inc. v. EMB-NHC, L.L.C.*, 857 A.2d 998, 1014-15 (Del. Ch. 2004) (holding that a party that repudiates or breaches a contract cannot then claim the benefits of that contract).