

1 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
2 SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA
3 MIAMI DIVISION
4 Case 07-21221-CIV-ALTONAGA

5 RENEE BLASZKOWSKI,
6 AMY HOLLUB and
7 PATRICIA DAVIS, individually
8 and on behalf of others
9 similarly situated,

10 Plaintiffs,

11 MIAMI, FLORIDA

12 vs.

13 APRIL 4, 2008

14 MARS, INC., et al.,

15 Defendants.

16 -----
17 TRANSCRIPT OF MOTION TO DISMISS
18 BEFORE THE CECILIA M. ALTONAGA,
19 UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE

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2 ADMINISTRATIVE CONVENTIONS:

3 When counsel does not identify themselves each time they
4 address the Court during a telephone conference, the
5 industry-standard speaker identification is indicated by
6 chevrons, i.e., >>>:

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1 THE COURT: Good morning. Please be seated.

2 I believe everyone has signed in the sign-in sheet and
3 my court reporter has everyone's name.

4 In the matter of Renee Blaszkowski versus Safeway,
5 Stop & Shop. This is the defendants' motion to dismiss. I
6 thought, perhaps, I could direct the arguments by asking you to
7 address specific ones first, the ones that I think we can
8 dispose of more readily, and then proceed to the other issues.

9 So I would ask defense counsel -- I'm not sure who's
10 handling which argument for the defendants -- to first address
11 the argument of the Economic Loss Rule.

12 Good morning, Ms. Licko.

13 MS. LICKO: Good morning, Your Honor.

14 Carol Licko, here on behalf of the defendants to
15 address the Economic Loss Rule which we have raised with
16 respect to the negligence claim and also with respect to the
17 strict liability claim.

18 Your Honor is well familiar, as you know, with the
19 Economic Loss Rule. You've cited it several times in several
20 of your recent opinions. We submit, Your Honor, the Economic
21 Loss Rule is an additional ground with respect to both the
22 negligence claim and the strict liability claim.

23 The response that we've gotten from plaintiffs is that
24 "Oh, no. I'm also claiming these personal damages to pets and,
25 therefore, I can escape the Economic Loss Rule."

1 Your Honor, if you look at the Complaint -- and,
2 again, this goes to the fundamental defect in the Complaint --
3 there is no fair notice. It is impossible to tell, when
4 looking at the negligence claim, looking at the strict
5 liability claim, what it is the plaintiffs are alleging against
6 each and every one of the defendants.

7 Why is that critical? It's critical because their
8 only defense -- they acknowledge that the Economic Loss Rule
9 bars economic claims. If they only have an economic claim with
10 respect to damages, that is clearly barred and they lose that
11 claim. What they have to claim then is that somehow they also
12 have this injury to other products, which here they allege
13 would be their other property. It's the pets. And to do that,
14 Your Honor, they rely on a couple of allegations of the
15 Complaint. But because every defendant under Twombly and
16 under Rule 8 is entitled to some fair notice of the claim and
17 the grounds for that claim, then we submit, Your Honor, that's
18 impossible for us to tell whether or not they're alleging
19 purely economic damages, which it certainly seems to be in some
20 situations, or whether, in fact, they're alleging something
21 else.

22 Let me give you some examples. If you look at the
23 negligence claim, Your Honor, in tab B of a notebook which we'd
24 like to submit to you. We have already provided a copy to
25 plaintiffs' counsel.

1 THE COURT: Thank you. And one for my law clerk, I
2 suppose.

3 Tab B?

4 MS. LICKO: Yes, tab B.

5 We prepared this because we wanted to show with
6 respect to the Economic Loss Rule that as an additional ground,
7 they have clearly failed to do what they say they do, which is
8 that they are relying on the damage to their pets.

9 Under tab B, we've got an exact copy of what they have
10 alleged with respect to the negligence claim, and on behalf of
11 the defendants, I've made an effort to try to determine, as we
12 would have an obligation to do if we were responding to this
13 claim, as to how the defendants could fairly respond because
14 under Twombly and Rule 8 which governs here, that would be the
15 requirement, and if you start out, you can see that under Count
16 IV, which is the negligence claim, they styled it as being only
17 against the defendant manufacturers, co-packers and PetSmart.
18 Those are defined terms and would include certain defined
19 defendants.

20 They immediately go on then into the next allegation
21 and they pick up on all the defendants. They reallege
22 paragraphs 1 through 28, which would call into that claim every
23 single one of the defendants that they have identified in the
24 Complaint.

25 They go on then and they add retailers to the group.

1 So there's confusion. Are retailers part of the group up at
2 the top? Should they been listed? Are they really part of the
3 negligence claim? Impossible to determine who should even
4 respond to this claim.

5 Then they go into the next paragraph and make it even
6 more confusing. They say it's certain defendants through
7 association and/or by agreement with the defendant
8 manufacturers, retailers and PetSmart. So, again, you can't
9 even tell who is supposed to respond to the claim, let alone
10 the type of damages that are at issue here.

11 If you go on to allegation 161, again, it's all
12 defendants now. It's the defendants generically. So even if
13 you were not one of the identified groups at the beginning, you
14 would say "Perhaps I have an obligation to respond to this
15 negligence claim."

16 They say there's an unreasonable risk. That's the
17 allegation. Again, it's completely conclusory. They don't say
18 what that unreasonable risk is to any specific plaintiff.

19 And the next allegation, again, they go to all
20 defendants, and then -- and this is the critical one that goes
21 to the Economic Loss Rule -- they talk about damages, and the
22 damages they claim with respect to negligence are damages to
23 the plaintiff class representatives and other class members
24 have suffered loss and damage.

25 Now, that's certainly inconsistent with other

1 allegations in the Complaint. If you look at paragraph 1, they
2 say -- they claim economic damages and then they have an
3 "and/or" damages caused by damages to pets.

4 So there are complete contradictions within the
5 Complaint when they identify the class. The class is defined
6 with respect to no reference whatsoever to any injury to a pet.
7 It's all based on economic damages, people who did not receive
8 the benefit of the bargain.

9 So when we look at the allegation -- and this is why
10 we pled the Economic Loss Rule -- it looks to us, you know --
11 completely as speculation -- that they do have an element here
12 under their negligence claim for purely economic damages, and,
13 clearly, those would be barred, and the plaintiffs don't
14 dispute that well-established Florida law.

15 So we submit, Your Honor, that with respect to the
16 negligence claim that this one should be dismissed.

17 THE COURT: Thank you.

18 I'll hear from plaintiffs' counsel.

19 MS. MacIVOR: Good morning, Your Honor.

20 I submit that this may not be a perfect pleading, but
21 it is legally sufficient. Contrary to what Ms. Licko said, in
22 their motion they only raise the Economic Loss Rule as to
23 strict liability -- excuse me -- as to negligence, and that's
24 on page 48. There is nothing in any regard. It doesn't
25 prevail as to either count because in paragraph 2 of our

1 Complaint, we specifically state "and," that we're seeking
2 benefit of the bargain damages, as they said. The plaintiffs,
3 Ms. Blaszkowski and Ms. Peters, did not get what they thought
4 they were getting with respect to the false advertising counts.
5 Negligence is not a false advertising count. What we're saying
6 in this count is that they put substances in the pet food, that
7 they didn't manufacture it properly, all of which was alleged
8 in detail in the Complaint.

9 The use of the word "and" in the second paragraph
10 makes it clear, as our response certainly did, that we're
11 seeking, unfortunately, what is referred to as property damages
12 in Florida under the negligence count.

13 We're not seeking any type of contract damages for
14 negligence. We're not seeking benefit of the bargain and
15 property damages is all we're seeking.

16 If I could -- as a matter of fact, it's a little
17 difficult to read the copy Ms. Licko gave me. I'm just going
18 to refer to ours.

19 If you look at -- sorry. It says right here in
20 paragraph 162 that the pet foods presented an --

21 THE COURT: 162 of your Complaint?

22 MS. MacIVOR: Of the Third Amended Complaint. I'm
23 sorry.

24 -- presented an unacceptable and unreasonable risk of
25 harm. That is certainly not a benefit of the bargain or

1 disappointed expectations. I think it's disingenuous for the
2 defendants to say it doesn't give them fair notice. I haven't
3 alleged anywhere in here, except for -- and I will concede that
4 I did reallege the prior allegations. That could easily be
5 taken care of if Your Honor thinks it's a problem or easily
6 clarified.

7 With respect to leaving retailers in, you know, it
8 clearly says negligence as to defendant manufacturers,
9 co-packers and PetSmart. It was a clear error that hasn't been
10 brought to my attention until now. If I had gotten a phone
11 call, I would have been happy to do that. I'm not seeking
12 negligence as to retailers.

13 Those are my two cots as to that. If the Court wishes
14 more argument, I think that this is so basic. It's obvious
15 from our response and allegations. We're not seeking anything
16 but property damage for the illness or deaths for the
17 plaintiffs' cats or dogs as to this count.

18 THE COURT: Thank you.

19 Ms. Licko.

20 MS. LICKO: Brief rebuttal.

21 Again, there is no dispute on the law, but let me just
22 focus on the paragraphs that she has alleged to you. 162
23 doesn't say there is an actual unacceptable risk. It says that
24 these are things that would result in foreseeable and
25 reasonably avoidable damages.

1 It is impossible for the defendants -- again, this is
2 her burden to plead her Complaint under Rule 8 to give
3 reasonable notice, as defined by the Twombly Court, to each
4 defendant of the claim and the grounds upon which it's based.

5 We've been through three amendments of this Complaint
6 now, and, frankly, it is impossible, even on the negligence
7 claim, to determine what damages she's claiming.

8 She just went through an explanation that under the
9 clear language of her paragraph makes no sense. The damage she
10 has alleged here on negligence seems to be what she says. The
11 damage is to the plaintiff class. That's what we as a
12 defendant must go by, and under that, under, as Your Honor has
13 acknowledged in the Flamenbaum v. Orient case and Indemnity
14 Insurance Company, under Florida law, those damages are
15 economic damages. They are damages -- she claims her vet
16 bills -- and those are clearly barred under Florida law. That
17 means the negligence claim as an additional ground should be
18 stricken above and beyond the fact it doesn't even provide fair
19 notice of who did what, who breached what duty to a specific
20 plaintiff such that it caused injury to either a plaintiff or a
21 plaintiff's pet.

22 So we submit that that count must be dismissed.

23 THE COURT: Thank you.

24 MS. MacIVOR: If I may very quickly?

25 That goes more towards the defendants' argument and

1 goes beyond the Economic Loss Rule. The plaintiffs have
2 repeatedly alleged in this case -- and this is the first time
3 we've been hearing a motion to dismiss -- that Twombly
4 requires some sort of tightened pleading standard. They even
5 put that in their motion. I clearly set forth in the response
6 that that was actually false as stated specifically in the
7 Twombly opinion.

8 Repeatedly what the defendants have tried to do with
9 respect to jurisdictional discovery, and now, again, here as to
10 substantive claims, is they have repeatedly tried to hold the
11 plaintiffs to a standard of pleading that I have never seen
12 anyone try to hold a plaintiff to.

13 In 17 years of practice, I have not seen such a
14 detailed Complaint from anyone. There's specific allegations
15 here as to the specific harm caused. I've attached testing
16 from one of the plaintiffs whose name is on that -- and she's a
17 named plaintiff -- saying that there's a glycoalkaloids, I
18 believe, perhaps, three, perhaps, five times higher than any
19 human could withstand, much less a cat or dog.

20 I have set forth multiple paragraphs about the
21 problems in this pet food and the harm that the pet food causes
22 that is substantiated by medical literature.

23 I think it's disingenuous to say there is no way --
24 Twombly requires minimum notice, not a heightened pleading
25 standard. Twombly could not change what the Supreme Court --

1 the Supreme Court can't use Twombly to change the rules, and
2 that's not what happened there.

3 It's a minimum standard. We've met the minimum
4 standard. We've alleged with a great deal of specificity. I
5 don't think the defendants will ever be satisfied unless we
6 have a 1,000-page pleading to discuss exactly what happened to
7 who, where and when, which is not even required under Rule
8 9(b).

9 THE COURT: Thank you. We'll get there. All right.
10 Thank you.

11 Let me turn now to Count VII for injunctive relief.

12 I'll hear the defendants' argument on -- I'm sorry --
13 yes, the defendant's argument on that.

14 MS. LICKO: Your Honor, the injunctive claim also must
15 be dismissed because, again, it doesn't provide fair notice
16 under Rule 8, and I'd like to, because it's going to permeate
17 every single argument that you hear today, to address what the
18 defense -- what plaintiffs' counsel has now said about Twombly
19 because this is something she has repeated over and over again
20 that somehow the defendants are trying to impose what she calls
21 a heightened pleading standard that she is unable to meet and
22 is contrary to both Rule 8 and Twombly.

23 Your Honor, that's incorrect. The problem here -- and
24 I think you heard it with the response -- she's talking about
25 the glycoalkaloids on Exhibit 34, I believe. Her allegations

1 are never connected to a specific plaintiff who did
2 something -- to a specific defendant who did something to a
3 specific plaintiff that caused injury either to that plaintiff
4 or to that plaintiff's pet, and, again, this goes to just the
5 product. She also has got these advertising allegations mixed
6 in there that would go to what ad did that specific plaintiff
7 see? Did they rely on the ad? How did the ad cause them to
8 buy a specific product, which is never identified in the
9 Complaint, and did the product cause a specific injury?

10 Now, what she has done on the injunctive relief claim
11 is to take all the allegations in her Complaint -- and Your
12 Honor knows this well, having done the one with the 1st
13 Amendment issue in the menorah on Miami Beach. An injunctive
14 action is a very, very high standard to meet. The plaintiffs
15 have to show they have a likelihood of success on the merits of
16 the claim. They have to show there's irreparable injury and
17 that there is no adequate remedy at law. They haven't begun to
18 meet the pleading requirements here.

19 First of all, as we've discussed throughout our brief,
20 there is no allegation of any injury to any specific plaintiff
21 or the plaintiffs' pets. She has got these vague, general
22 allegations, but she has nothing that goes to the requirements
23 that set forth in Twombly.

24 Twombly, it clarifies what Rule 8 requires. It
25 says -- and this is -- I'm quoting from Twombly -- "A

1 plaintiff must show enough to give the defendants fair notice
2 of what the claim is and the grounds upon which it rests."

3 The pre-Twombly claims and the old Conley versus
4 Gibson standard has now been retired.

5 So for plaintiffs' counsel to suggest that somehow
6 we're traveling under the old Conley rules that were addressed
7 by the U.S. Supreme Court is simply untrue. The U.S. Supreme
8 Court in Twombly has, in fact, clearly identified and
9 clarified that under Rule 8 the defendant is entitled to fair
10 notice.

11 Now a Complaint must have detailed factual allegations
12 and it has to provide more than labels and conclusions. It
13 can't be a formulaic recitation of just the elements of the
14 claim, and you'll see that in the arguments they make with
15 respect to all the claims, including injunctive relief. They
16 said "Look, we filed the pleading form under rules of
17 procedure. We filed form 1.982. We did exactly what we were
18 required to," and they're saying that that's enough.

19 Your Honor, that may be enough if you're talking about
20 one defendant and one plaintiff and you had a cause of action
21 for a specific injury. You can't take that formulaic
22 recitation and try to sue what they've done here today, the
23 entire pet food industry.

24 The problem with her Complaint is not that she claims
25 we want 1,000 pages. That's not it at all. What the

1 defendants are seeking here is simply fair notice such that
2 they would have an opportunity to respond.

3 THE COURT: Isn't the essence of your argument with
4 respect to Count VII that there is no cause of action for an
5 injunction? That's a form of relief. That's as if one
6 entitled it "Count VII, Rescission" or "Count VII, Compensatory
7 Damages."

8 Isn't that the essence of your argument not that you
9 are not on notice they want an injunction, but that that's not
10 a cause of action. That's relief.

11 MS. LICKO: Underlying it, yes. That's one of the
12 arguments we have made. There's no claim there.

13 What she has done is to reallege all 128 paragraphs of
14 her Complaint, but there is no cause of action, and the 11th
15 Circuit has been clear on that. She says "Well, they never
16 dismiss it," but clearly the language of the 11th Circuit law
17 on injunction says that's not a separate claim. It is a form
18 of relief that could be attached to a viable claim of action,
19 which we don't have here. All it is is seeking an additional
20 form of relief. So it shouldn't be a separate claim to start
21 with.

22 We've cited, Your Honor, the two cases, Alabama versus
23 U.S. Army Corps and Klay versus United Healthgroup, which makes
24 clear you can't just have a separate count simply for
25 injunctive relief.

1 She goes on -- we've also cited American Honda Motor
2 versus Motorcycle for the proposition when you have an adequate
3 remedy at law, then you can't pursue an equitable claim, which
4 is what she's trying to say her injunctive claim is some form
5 of equitable claim, and the 11th Circuit has said "No," that
6 that's not true.

7 Here all she's doing is realleging the same
8 allegations under which she's claiming compensatory and
9 possible punitive consequential damages. She can't use that as
10 a basis for saying "I also want equitable relief in the form of
11 injunction." It just is contrary to the law.

12 THE COURT: I'm not sure that that's the case. Why
13 can't she say "I want damages for past conduct. In the
14 alternative, if I don't prevail on that, I want an injunction
15 prohibiting these defendants from engaging in these practices
16 in the future."

17 Why can't it be pled in the alternative, and/or?

18 She's not claiming damages for future wrongful
19 conduct. She's saying "For any future wrongful conduct, I want
20 the Court to enter into an injunction and I have no adequate
21 remedy to prevent against future wrongful conduct."

22 MS. LICKO: An injunction, Your Honor, is not used as
23 a sanction for past conduct, and that's what she's trying to do
24 here, because what she's asking the Court in her injunctive
25 relief is to do two things. Number one would be to enter a

1 temporary and permanent injunction, enjoining the defendants
2 from continuing their current unlawful false and misleading
3 advertising and marketing and sale of their pet food and
4 ordering them to terminate the continuing ill effects of past
5 advertising.

6 As we discuss in our brief, that's not the purpose of
7 an injunction. It's not an appropriate remedy to use an
8 injunction when what you're trying to do actually is to
9 sanction defendants for alleged past wrongdoing and misconduct.
10 All an injunction is for is to prohibit irreparable harm until
11 such time as there can be decisions on the merits of the case.

12 Here, what she's trying to do is to ask this Court to
13 be a super regulator, to come in and effectively enjoin the
14 defendants from advertising their food, from selling their pet
15 food unless it's approved by Your Honor. That's what they're
16 asking the Court to do, is to be a super regulator and to
17 prevent all the defendants from unlawful false and misleading
18 advertising, marketing, sales of their pet food.

19 That would be a clear violation, number one, of the
20 First Amendment Rights of the defendants. They say -- she goes
21 on to say that what she wants is that no advertising could go
22 on unless, for example, there is -- she calls it competent,
23 valid, scientifically valid studies to support the advertising.

24 That's not an appropriate legal burden under
25 advertising. Under Central Hudson in the commercial speech law

1 by the U.S. Supreme Court, the defendants have a right under
2 the First Amendment to advertise their product so long as it's
3 lawful and not misleading. It's their burden to show that it's
4 not. What they're asking this Court to do is impose a prior
5 restraint, which clearly under U.S. Supreme Court law going all
6 the way back to Nebraska Press, is something this Court cannot
7 do, is to restrain speech in advance.

8 That's why her remedy, what she's seeking, is just
9 totally inappropriate and improper. She can't ask for an
10 injunction stopping the entire pet food industry and that's
11 effectively what she's doing in the claim for relief.

12 I can go on and address why the advertising she's
13 seeking to enjoin, it's --

14 THE COURT: No, I want to get through all of the
15 issues. I was trying to put to the side the ones that I
16 thought I could dispose of more quickly first.

17 Thank you.

18 MS. MacIVOR: Briefly, Your Honor, the count says
19 "continuing" on page -- sorry -- paragraph 174, clearly, as
20 Your Honor described, deals with future conduct and irreparable
21 harm would be the deaths and illness of cats and dogs. So
22 there's nothing that the plaintiffs -- excuse me -- the
23 defendants have cited that said that is inadequate.

24 I have cited two cases that deal with Your Honor's
25 concern about pleading as a separate count in the response.

1 One was City of Marietta v. CXS Transportation and it was Klay
2 v. United Healthgroup -- they're both in the response -- where
3 the 11th Circuit and -- yeah, they're both 11th Circuit
4 cases -- did not dismiss a separate count. Clearly, it would
5 be --

6 THE COURT: Was the question posed as it is here? Was
7 there a challenge and did the Court expressly state it is a
8 cause of action standing on its own?

9 MS. MacIVOR: Well --

10 THE COURT: All I did when I read this is I did a
11 quick Westlaw search and I pulled up a whole bunch of cases,
12 none of which are cited, that stand for the proposition that a
13 claim for injunctive relief is nothing more than a form of
14 possible relief that can be awarded once the party has
15 prevailed on another cause of action. I have several cases for
16 that.

17 MS. MacIVOR: I'm not going to dispute that with Your
18 Honor. All I'm saying is I did cite several cases that state
19 it need not be dismissed.

20 THE COURT: You can add it in your prayer for relief
21 at the end of every count or at the end of the Complaint.

22 MS. MacIVOR: I'm not going to disagree.

23 I would like to say -- a couple of things were said --
24 to clarify, counsel said that I'm not able to meet any pleading
25 standards. I categorically deny that.

1 THE COURT: Oh, we'll be hearing more about that.

2 MS. MacIVOR: Okay.

3 THE COURT: Moving right along in that light, let's
4 address the fraudulent misrepresentation, negligent
5 misrepresentation and deceptive trade practices, pleading fraud
6 with particularity.

7 MS. LEES: Good morning, Your Honor. Gail Lees.

8 THE COURT: Good morning.

9 MS. LEES: I first want to apologize for my voice.
10 When I was asked to do this argument a few weeks ago, we all
11 and my doctor thought I would have my voice back better by
12 today. It comes and goes. If it's a problem, if you would let
13 me know.

14 THE COURT: Just speak into the microphone and try not
15 to strain it.

16 MS. LEES: Thank you.

17 THE COURT: All right.

18 Do you want to take some water up there?

19 MS. LEES: I do have water. Thank you. I actually
20 was able to speak when we started, but it disappears if I don't
21 talk for a while.

22 THE COURT: All right.

23 MS. LEES: Your Honor, would the Court like to
24 separate the Rule 9 and Rule 8 issues from the substantive
25 elements of the claim because we've treated them together in

1 the brief and we would intend to treat them together --

2 THE COURT: However you prefer and however your voice
3 permits.

4 MS. LEES: Your Honor, I think that Ms. Licko has
5 covered a number of the points that we wished to start with
6 with respect to the impact that the Twombly decision has
7 created on the requirements of Rule 8.

8 I wanted to correct something that Ms. MacIvor said.
9 This Court has made very clear its recognition that Twombly
10 does change the law and has expressly stated in Berry versus
11 Budget, "To survive a motion to dismiss, the Complaint must now
12 contain factual allegations that are enough to raise a right to
13 relief beyond the speculative level."

14 It is defendants' position that a review of the
15 Complaint -- and we would like to do a review of the Complaint
16 with the Court, and that's why we've submitted Exhibit A, which
17 is the entire Complaint, and we've highlighted specific pages
18 and put tabs where we have found an allegation that arguably
19 goes to causation or arguably goes to reliance or arguably goes
20 to injury. But I think it's important that when we do that
21 review, we have in mind the standards that Twombly imposes
22 under Rule 8 and the standards that Rule 9(b) imposes, which I
23 think plaintiffs agree with defendants, Rule 9(b) specificity
24 requirements apply to the cause of action for fraudulent
25 misrepresentation, the cause of action for negligent

1 misrepresentation and also apply to the cause of action for
2 violation of FDUPTA.

3 So with those standards in mind, I think a careful
4 review of the Complaint will highlight the position of the
5 defendants that this Complaint does not provide fair notice to
6 the defendants. It does not frame allegations that permit
7 defendants to craft an Answer that allows the defendants to
8 admit or deny specific allegations, and it does not provide
9 sufficient notice for defendants to respond to discovery, to
10 determine discovery preservation obligations.

11 There have been three prior Complaints. There have
12 been two motions to dismiss that the plaintiffs have seen.
13 There have been the detailed dictates of the Twombly decision
14 and the interpretations of Twombly and further repetitions of
15 the principles of Twombly from the 11th Circuit and from the
16 Courts in this district, and with all of that, the plaintiff
17 has drafted a Complaint that is a model of what is not allowed.

18 The Complaint lumps all defendants together throughout
19 virtually the entire Complaint and the specific allegations of
20 causation, reliance and injury that I'll address reflect that.
21 It fails to specify which plaintiff bought what product from
22 what retailer in response to what advertisement from what
23 manufacturer that said what.

24 It fails to specify what injury any plaintiff suffered
25 and to connect any --

1 THE COURT: Are you speaking of the Complaint in
2 general or just these three counts, because I'm focusing on
3 these three for which a different pleading standard might
4 apply?

5 MS. LEES: I'm speaking the Complaint, both in general
6 and with respect to these three counts.

7 THE COURT: Because I'd rather address the three
8 counts. I'm not all together persuaded as to the remainder,
9 but let's look at these three first, if we could, and then I'll
10 hear whatever arguments you all have about why this 100-page
11 Complaint doesn't provide you notice from which you can respond
12 and issue your denials and engage in discovery.

13 Let's address these three.

14 MS. LEES: With respect to 9(b), Your Honor, the 11th
15 Circuit has established that precise statements and documents
16 and representations made must be alleged and Rule 9(b) does
17 apply to the first three causes of action, that the time, place
18 and the person responsible for making the statements be
19 alleged, as well as what the defendants have gained and the
20 content and manner in which they're alleged.

21 So if we could turn to the specific allegations of the
22 Complaint, in focusing particularly on the allegations of
23 injury, the allegations of causation and the allegations of
24 reliance, and take one specific plaintiff as an example in the
25 interest of time, one specific defendant and one specific

1 defendant's ad, I would start off with named Plaintiff
2 Blaszkowski. That is on page 3 of the Complaint, and on page 3
3 of the Complaint, paragraph 3, the allegations with respect to
4 Plaintiff Blaszkowski appear. First we're told that she had
5 cats/dogs. If you review the allegations with respect to all
6 the remaining plaintiffs, you'll see that each is alleged to
7 have cats/dogs. So the defendants are not put on notice even
8 as to whether the products at issue might be involving cat
9 food, as opposed to dog food.

10 They say they were manufactured and marketed by
11 defendants and list several different defendants here,
12 including Menu Foods, which is a co-packer, as the plaintiffs
13 allege, for a number of other defendants. Again, it's not
14 clear whether these other defendants are involved or not
15 involved in the allegations that Plaintiff Blaszkowski is
16 setting forth. A number of stores are also listed.

17 And then at the end, for causation, it says "which
18 purchases were made based upon the above referenced defendants'
19 marketing." Now, this is paragraph 3, so we don't have a lot
20 above. I went back carefully to see what "above referenced
21 marketing" was alleged. The only reference I could find to
22 marketing above was on page 2, paragraph 1. I'm sorry. It's
23 higher up. In the fifth line of paragraph 1 it says
24 "Plaintiffs purchased pet food and/or treats that were
25 manufactured, produced, distributed, marketed and advertised,"

1 and then it goes on. That's the only reference to the
2 defendants' marketing that I could find.

3 So each of the plaintiffs has this allegation at the
4 end of his or her paragraph which says that the purchases were
5 made based upon the above referenced marketing, but there is no
6 above referenced marketing, except a conclusionary statement
7 that marketing occurred.

8 So, again, there's no notice that tells any defendant
9 what advertising it is that defendant has allegedly engaged in.

10 So then taking Nutro, my client, as an example, we
11 look then at paragraph 42, and the tabs show the causation,
12 injury and reliance allegations, but they do also help us find
13 the particular pages. Page 42, obviously, is right after the
14 tab for page 40. It's on page 43, Your Honor, the allegations
15 with respect to Nutro.

16 It says "Nutro's marketing makes the same and/or
17 similar misleading statements and guaranties as the other
18 defendants'." No specificity whatsoever. Nothing to tell
19 Nutro what it is that Nutro has supposedly said, other than to
20 look back at what all the other defendants have said, whose ads
21 are, in fact, different from Nutro's, and guess at what it is
22 the other defendants have done that Nutro is supposed to have
23 also done.

24 Then one particular ad is selected. It's an ad
25 which talks about adult cat food and has reference to a word,

1 "guaranteed," a word that is protected under AAFCO. It has
2 other generalized language. Plaintiffs appear to complain
3 about references to soy protein, although they don't allege
4 that the inclusion of soy protein or the ingredient list here
5 is inaccurate in all respects, and with just this one ad, the
6 Complaint against Nutro is, I guess, made by the plaintiffs.

7 When you turn to the next page, on page 44, you see
8 that plaintiffs say "Nutra has omitted to advise the plaintiffs
9 and consumers just how it is scientifically formulated for an
10 indoor cat, much less why an indoor cat's needs are any
11 different from one who goes outdoors."

12 Much of what is alleged in is this type of language.
13 You know, they haven't told us this. They haven't told us
14 that. They're not pleading that it's an omission of a fact
15 that's necessary to be stated in order to make it not
16 misleading, in order to make it actionable.

17 They are not pleading that Nutro or, indeed, the other
18 defendants have stated facts that are inaccurate. They are
19 complaining about the way Nutro constructs its advertising
20 because it is not the way that plaintiffs, apparently, would
21 like Nutro to construct its advertising, and in that respect,
22 what they're seeking is to have this Court act as a super
23 regulator, is to have this Court say "You may not say this. We
24 want you to tell them more about that."

25 These are not things consistent with the First

1 Amendment or consistent with the Safe Harbor provision that the
2 FDUPTA statute creates that arises out of the Federal
3 Government's delegation of regulatory authority over pet food
4 to AAFCO, those aspects of the Complaint that cover language
5 that AAFCO has expressly authorized are within the Safe Harbor,
6 and when you remove all of that, all you have is a wish list,
7 and the same is true when you look defendant by defendant by
8 defendant.

9 An advertisement is taken and plaintiffs say "They
10 didn't tell us this. They didn't tell us that." But, again,
11 never was an allegation that says "Telling us this would be
12 necessary in order to prevent it from being misleading. It's
13 actionable because it fails to say. That it includes thus and
14 thus deleterious ingredients." It's nothing like that. It's
15 consistent in the allegations that say -- they didn't tell us
16 additional information that we, as a matter of policy, as a
17 matter of political point of view would like to, you know,
18 would like to see the advertising state.

19 With respect to the causation, reliance and injury
20 allegations, Your Honor, I'm not sure if the Court wants them
21 addressed as part of the separate argument with respect to,
22 with respect to standing or --

23 THE COURT: No. I'm just addressing right now fraud
24 and whether it's pled with sufficient particularity as required
25 by the rule.

1 MS. LEES: Okay.

2 And the particularity requirement of fraud does also
3 include a requirement, an allegation of causation. So would it
4 be appropriate for me to address causation allegations?

5 THE COURT: Certainly.

6 MS. LEES: The causation allegations appear, first of
7 all, on pages 2 to 12, and I've already talked about that a
8 bit.

9 Principally, we have the allegation that appears at
10 the end of each plaintiffs' claim -- I'm sorry -- each
11 plaintiffs' paragraph which says "which purchases were made
12 based upon the above referenced defendants' marketing." So
13 those -- I'm sorry -- those actually are reliance allegations.

14 But they are causation allegations to the extent that
15 causation and reliance are intertwined in that in order for a
16 plaintiff to have relied on an advertisement and made a
17 purchase and that purchase then would be caused by the
18 defendants' advertising.

19 So "which purchases were made based upon the above
20 referenced defendants' marketing" is not a specific allegation
21 that is required under the rules where a plaintiff would come
22 forward and state "I saw such-and-such ad. It said so-and-so.
23 I bought this product in reliance, wouldn't have bought it
24 otherwise. The product caused thus and such damage and that's
25 the injury."

1 That's what's required. That's not pleaded with
2 respect to any plaintiff and it's not even pleaded in a
3 lump-sum way, except by use of these very vague allegations
4 which say "which purchases were made based upon the above
5 referenced defendant's marketing."

6 Additional causation arguments that we --

7 THE COURT: How would you propose the plaintiffs do
8 this? That as to each plaintiff, over the several year time
9 span covered by the allegations, and as to each and every
10 single defendant, each plaintiff identify each and every single
11 advertisement over the span of these several years, identify
12 where they read it, what they did in reliance and what damage
13 was caused thereby?

14 MS. LEES: What the cases require, Your Honor, is --
15 there is some there is some leeway with respect to a
16 long-running advertising campaign where it is not required that
17 a plaintiff say "I saw these 47 advertisements over a period of
18 five years." But it is required that the plaintiff provide the
19 defendant with specificity, as the Court outlined with respect
20 to the other elements. It is required that a named plaintiff
21 step forward and say "I saw advertising that made this and this
22 type of statement. I relied on it. It was inaccurate in the
23 following way. I relied on it."

24 THE COURT: If each plaintiff has to say how it was
25 inaccurate in the following way, it's going to be inaccurate in

1 the following way as to each defendant as to each ad then.

2 Right?

3 MS. LEES: As to each defendant, as to each
4 defendant's separate conduct.

5 THE COURT: Right.

6 MS. LEES: Conduct of defendants, obviously, is
7 different from one to another.

8 THE COURT: Correct.

9 MS. LEES: And, yes. I mean, it was not defendants'
10 choice to have 23 defendants lumped together in one lawsuit.
11 Nor was it defendants' choice that plaintiff put forth 30 -- I
12 sorry -- plaintiffs' counsel put forth 30 different plaintiffs.
13 But if a plaintiff is going to be a named plaintiff in a class
14 action, we do submit, Your Honor, that it is required that that
15 named plaintiff show that that plaintiff has standing -- and I
16 know you don't want to get into that just yet -- but that
17 plaintiff have shown that that plaintiff has suffered an injury
18 and has done so as a result of an advertisement or a label that
19 has some type of misrepresentation or actionable omission and
20 that that caused a purchase and that that caused damages.

21 THE COURT: All right.

22 MS. LEES: Without that type of specificity, there's
23 no way the defendant can determine what documents it needs to
24 preserve. It doesn't know what advertising campaigns are at
25 issue, what advertising campaigns are not. It --

1 THE COURT: Actually, it can. It propounds the first
2 interrogatory and asks the first question at a deposition and,
3 you know, quite frankly, I'm sure you're all preserving all
4 your documents, be they in electronic form or otherwise, that
5 relate to this case. So you actually could.

6 The question is is it required in this pleading and
7 does the pleading suffice?

8 MS. LEES: The pleading also must provide sufficient
9 specificity to make it clear whether if proved, the allegations
10 would give rise to a viable cause of action. That's one of the
11 changes that Twombly brought, and what is lacking here is a
12 sufficient level of specificity to let anybody determine, the
13 Court or any defendant determine whether if what the plaintiff
14 says is true there would be a cause of action here.

15 As currently pleaded, there isn't anything which all
16 ties together into a cause of action, and what we would submit
17 is in order for a Complaint to pass muster, in order for the
18 defendants to be held to answer, the plaintiff does have to
19 have that tie that I was outlining from an advertisement to a
20 purchase to a product to an injury.

21 THE COURT: Thank you, Ms. Lees. Let me cut you off,
22 if I could, and give your voice a break and hear from the
23 plaintiffs and then we'll hear from you again. I'm trying to
24 get through all of the issues. There are quite a number of
25 them this morning.

1 Ms. MacIvor.

2 MS. MacIVOR: Let's take FDUPTA first. That's
3 addressed in our response at pages 60 through 63. We have
4 cited a number of cases that say that FDUPTA is not pled as a
5 Rule 9(b) claim.

6 THE COURT: The plaintiffs say "Where FDUPTA is
7 premised upon acts of fraud, however, that the rule would then
8 apply."

9 MS. MacIVOR: No, we're saying 9(b) --

10 THE COURT: I'm sorry. The defendants. I misspoke.
11 The defendants are saying that.

12 MS. MacIVOR: Yes. We are saying that it is not a
13 fraud-based claim and there is a plethora of cases from Florida
14 and this court that says fraud need not be pled because it's a
15 different type of cause of action.

16 In this case, we have set forth FDUPTA because it
17 would subvert the legislative intent behind FDUPTA to require
18 plaintiffs to, as the Court noted in prior decisions, to
19 require a plaintiff to do that because it's supposed to be a
20 broad-based statute to allow consumers to do exactly what
21 they're trying to do here, to go in and correct advertising
22 that is false, and that was the legislative intent behind that.

23 The cases that we referenced from Garcia versus Santa
24 Maria -- I mean, I could go through them, but Your Honor has
25 seen them in the response.

1 As far as some of the allegations regarding the fraud
2 counts, which are really fraudulent and negligent
3 misrepresentation, we've also cited cases in the response, Your
4 Honor, that say that when there's a long-standing fraudulent
5 situation where there have been a number of fraudulent
6 misrepresentations made over a period of time, that there are
7 other ways in which to meet the rule 9(b) burden.

8 Getting back to exactly what Ms. Lees was talking
9 about a few moments ago, in paragraph 1 she said that "the
10 above referenced advertising," she didn't know what that was
11 talking about.

12 In paragraph 1, it discusses that they relied upon
13 representations and omissions in purchasing pet food that they
14 would not have purchased it had they known the truth and they
15 didn't get the benefit and that was all based upon the
16 advertising.

17 Paragraph 2, false and deceptive advertising,
18 misrepresentations and omissions. Certainly, while it doesn't
19 say "above," and probably should have said "below," there's
20 certainly a number of allegations very specific within the
21 Complaint. Paragraph 69 is only one example, although there's
22 many, many more.

23 Prior to that, there's a long list of representations
24 that show exactly how the defendants have misled the people
25 like the plaintiffs, like Ms. Blaszkowski and Ms. Peters.

1 They're representing, for instance -- Natura is a good
2 example, their advertising. You know, "We only put in the food
3 what you would eat." That's not unlike what most of them do,
4 whether it's through pictures -- and pictures are actionable
5 and I have certainly pled that, and, you know, Natura -- I
6 mean, in any other concept, as far as, you know, anything I
7 have ever seen, the saying that this is the same as you'd eat,
8 when the regulations that they're talking about say it's
9 supposed to be food that's inedible and not fit for human
10 consumption.

11 What we're not saying is that we're trying to compel
12 AAFCO to be used, the AAFCO definition, which is what they're
13 trying in a convoluted way to say what this lawsuit is about,
14 but that's not what it's about. We're agreeing that the AAFCO
15 definition is what it is, but that has nothing to do with the
16 lawsuit.

17 The fact that they're leading these people to believe
18 that they are paying for human grade quality food and taking
19 their good hard earned money and making them think that they're
20 giving them this great good glorious wonderful human grade food
21 and it's not, that's the deception.

22 It is a lie under -- or a fraud -- under any way I've
23 ever seen it when you have a defendant who is making something
24 and says "We only put in the food exactly what you would eat,"
25 but the AAFCO definition on the back of the label completely

1 contradicts that, only most consumers won't go and order the
2 AAFCO book that explains what these are in exceedingly fine
3 print that took me at least two months of research to try to
4 figure out.

5 I know Ms. Blaszkowski never did that. She didn't
6 know what that meant. I know Ms. Peters never did that. She
7 didn't know that they weren't getting human grade quality food.
8 That's one example.

9 Paragraph 69 goes through -- there's a number of
10 bullet points that takes several pages that give the
11 defendants specifics.

12 THE COURT: Isn't one of the defendants' complaints
13 here, that they, in fact, do not know whether Ms. Blaszkowski
14 and Ms. Peters actually purchased the Natura food based upon
15 that representation that it was human grade quality because no
16 where is it identified what plaintiff bought what in reliance
17 upon what.

18 So what plaintiff has a grievance against which of
19 these various defendants, or is it that each plaintiff is
20 aggrieved by the actions of all of these defendants and
21 actually read the advertising that each defendant had,
22 purchased each defendant's products and suffered damage as to
23 each one?

24 MS. MacIVOR: Taken as true, which is what we are
25 doing today, and using the example that the defendants just

1 used, paragraph 3, not every defendant is mentioned in
2 paragraph 3, and if you look at the subsequent paragraphs for
3 Patricia Davis and Susan Peters, who is also here with us
4 today, not every defendant is mentioned.

5 What is mentioned is that Ms. Blaszkowski purchased
6 Mars, Mars PetCare -- and let me explain one other thing before
7 I get to that. There has been some criticism of including Menu
8 Foods in here and there has been some criticism of using Mars
9 and Mars PetCare. Without any discovery in terms of the nature
10 of this industry, I have no way of knowing without a crystal
11 ball who actually manufactured some of the food, and they know
12 that.

13 It's a little disingenuous given the fact in 2007 when
14 we had the massive Menu Foods recall, when people found out
15 that the food that they thought they were buying from trusted
16 manufacturers was actually manufactured by Menu Foods. That is
17 secret. If you call Menu Foods or if you call any one of these
18 defendants and say "Who actually manufactures your food?" they
19 won't tell you.

20 It's impossible for Ms. Blaszkowski and Ms. Peters to
21 sit here and say -- and they know it or they should -- who
22 manufactured what. We've done the best that we can because we
23 know whose name is on it, but we don't know if Menu Foods
24 manufactures it. It could be Diamonds. God knows who's
25 manufacturing it. It could be manufactured in China, for all

1 we know. That's what we found out last year.

2 So what is alleged here is the people they think
3 they're buying it from anyway, which is all we can do at this
4 point without discovery.

5 Also, the retail stores, each one, which are different
6 for each plaintiff. Then if you go in with the specific
7 allegations, each one of these, especially in the FDUPTA count,
8 which is not held to the fraud standard, each one of these
9 people and it's based upon their -- I mean it's cited cases
10 that say Florida Courts have said they don't even necessarily
11 have to buy the product, but these people have alleged they
12 bought it. They have alleged they looked at the advertising.
13 It comes down to a reasonable consumer standard.

14 With respect to the fraudulent misrepresentation and
15 negligent misrepresentation, -- the specific paragraphs in
16 paragraph 69, they relate. This industry is so homogenous and
17 what they're not letting the Court know is that the food is,
18 basically, made all the same way. You can never tell who makes
19 it. It's all made through extruders and the wet food is made
20 the same way. There's very little differentiation between it
21 from everything that I've been able to know and if you look at
22 the backs of the cans.

23 So the fact the advertising is very similar, it's just
24 like any other competitive industry, when one defendant does
25 something, another one will follow. One says "Oh, we're

1 putting glucosamine in it now because this is wonderful for
2 your cat." Even though it's not supported by any competent
3 research or the National Research Council saying it is actually
4 good, they'll all follow.

5 So what we're saying in this Complaint is that they
6 have looked at the advertising. We have given the defendants
7 whose advertising they looked at. We've summarized, which I've
8 given Your Honor the cases saying I can provide a list
9 summarizing the representations, which is what we've done. We
10 have given a time period. The class period is through a
11 particular time. Barring that, there's very little else we can
12 do at this particular period of time without giving Your Honor
13 a 10,000 page pleading.

14 It certainly is enough to know that we put them on
15 notice that we think through their pictures and drawings they
16 show human grade ingredients, but it doesn't have human grade
17 ingredients. That puts them on notice. Every one of them do
18 that in their advertising and they do it for a reason. They're
19 trying to sell pet food and they're selling something they're
20 not selling.

21 THE COURT: Thank you.

22 MS. LEES: Your Honor --

23 THE COURT: Ms. Lees.

24 MS. LEES: Your Honor, I'm very appreciative that
25 Ms. MacIvor made the reference to human grade ingredients

1 because I think it illustrates one of the central flaws in the
2 Complaint.

3 Human grade ingredients is something that the
4 Complaint alleges one of the 23 defendants represented and it's
5 an allegation that appears in one exhibit to the Complaint.
6 That allegation is with respect to Defendant Natura. It is not
7 with respect to any other defendant and, yet, the Court just
8 heard Ms. MacIvor say "them," I think -- I lost count --
9 something like twelve times.

10 That is what is the matter with this Complaint, that
11 plaintiffs will say "defendants did such-and-such" when what
12 plaintiffs really mean is a defendant on a particular day did
13 such-and-such.

14 It's a very different situation. None of the other
15 defendants should be held to answer with respect to
16 representations of human grade if only one defendant has made a
17 representation of human grade, and if only five of the
18 plaintiffs saw advertisements and purchased products in
19 reliance on a representation that the plaintiffs are
20 challenging such as that, only those defendants who are
21 involved in that representation should be defending and only
22 with respect to those particular named plaintiffs.

23 So I think that really brings, I think, a very sharp
24 focus to what we are saying is the biggest problem of the many
25 problems with this Complaint.

1 And then the second thing is just looking at this long
2 list of allegations in paragraph 69, which is on page 30 of the
3 Complaint, many of them are very much like the fifth one. "The
4 defendants' marketing makes numerous deceptive and/or false
5 claims relating to . . ." and they list a whole series of
6 things, quality, contents, health, et cetera. Much of this is
7 language that is, in fact, protected under FDUPTA under the
8 Safe Harbor, under the AAFCO regulations, and all of it is
9 general, vague, unspecific and impossible to frame an Answer
10 to.

11 THE COURT: All right. Thank you.

12 MS. MacIVOR: Well, looking at the one to show that's
13 not true, under paragraph 69, if you look at the first bullet
14 point, it says -- and prior to that -- it says "The defendants'
15 marketing has misled, deceived and failed to disclose to the
16 plaintiffs on an ongoing and continuous basis through the class
17 period material information." The very first bullet point
18 shows "The defendants' pet food containers deceptively include
19 pictures and drawings of human grade ingredients, but the pet
20 food does not have human quality food " -- I'm sorry. I hope
21 that wasn't me. So that's not true.

22 There are other allegations I can go through and I can
23 specifically state -- I've mentioned many, many times in the
24 previous paragraph where I talk about in the Complaint that the
25 defendants' pet food is made wholly or partially of inedible

1 garbage unfit for human consumption. Elsewhere in the
2 Complaint as well.

3 If you go to the second bullet point, "The defendants'
4 marketing deceptively makes the plaintiffs believe that they
5 are purchasing wholesome pet food when the defendants use a
6 food pyramid similar to those used by nutritionists in human
7 food nutrition, particularly where the pictures and drawings of
8 human grade ingredients are used. We gave an example of that
9 and attached pictures in the Complaint as exhibits.

10 The defendants' -- another bullet point: "The
11 defendants' cat and dog food is deceptively marketed as having
12 health, medical and hygienic and other benefits."

13 Those are just three examples of specifics. It goes
14 on for several pages what they specifically are.

15 Then if you go down -- excuse me for a moment -- there
16 are other allegations of what those are. For examples -- here
17 we go. I'm sorry. It's on paragraph 70. I'll refer to page
18 33. They market their pet food with alleged health, medical
19 and other benefits in much the same way that medical or other
20 benefits are marketed to the plaintiffs.

21 For example, glucosamine and chondroitin are marketed
22 as providing a benefit to human joints. They're also marketed
23 in pet food without any competent or reliable scientific
24 evidence to demonstrate the benefits to a cat or dog. The same
25 with Omega 3 fatty acids.

1 So I have given them specifics. It's on their bags
2 and containers. It's in their advertising. I don't know
3 how -- I know I've been a defense attorney for 17 years
4 primarily. I know I could answer this Complaint. I know I
5 have answered Complaints based on frauds that have been far
6 less specific than this.

7 There's a time period. There's specific allegations
8 summarizing the fraud. There's plaintiffs who say they looked
9 at the advertising. It's impossible, as I said to Your Honor,
10 to tell exactly who it was, and they know that, and they're
11 here disingenuously saying why haven't we said exactly who
12 their marketing represents but we don't know who made the food.

13 We have done everything we can in the Complaint. It's
14 still not enough. At some point, enough has got to be enough
15 with these defendants. It's as specific as any plaintiff could
16 get.

17 Paragraph 72 talks about a commercial showing the good
18 life, talking about showing pictures of wonderful fresh
19 vegetables and real meat. We're saying that that's
20 deceptive --

21 THE COURT: I understand.

22 MS. MacIVOR: -- and misleading. We have given them
23 numerous specifics in this Complaint. It's the most detailed
24 Complaint I've seen in 17 years.

25 THE COURT: Thank you, Ms. MacIvor.

1 I will ask defendants to address the arguments with
2 respect to injury and standing. {}

3 MS. LEES: Thank you, Your Honor.

4 With respect to injury and standing, the requirements
5 arise not only from the elements of the cause of action, but
6 also, as the Court is aware, from the decision of the United
7 States Supreme Court in Lujan, which has been consistently
8 applied by the 11th Circuit and by the Courts in this district.

9 The requirements are very specific that injury, in
10 fact, and a causal connection between the injury and the
11 conduct complained of must be pleaded. That language is
12 directly from Lujan and is endorsed and quoted by the Courts, as
13 I said, within the 11th Circuit.

14 The injury must be concrete and particularized.
15 Concrete and particularized, that's from London versus
16 Wal-Mart, 340 F.3d at 1251. It also arises from Lujan.
17 "Concrete" and "particularized" are not words that can be
18 applied to the injury allegations that are in this Complaint.

19 The injury allegations are on page 2, and injury
20 allegations are highlighted in blue, "Did not receive a benefit
21 from the purchase of pet food and/or treats that were
22 materially different from what was advertised," "and/or," "The
23 plaintiffs' cats and/or dogs have suffered illness and/or
24 death."

25 First of all, we don't know whether they're alleging

1 that they didn't receive a benefit from the purchase of the pet
2 food or whether they're alleging that pets died, and we don't
3 know which type of injury, if there is one, occurred with
4 respect to which type of plaintiff, which named plaintiff.

5 Injury allegations also appear on page 32, and the
6 even numbered pages, of course, have to be flipped, "And/or
7 their cats and/or dogs became ill and/or died from ingesting
8 the pet food."

9 We have no idea whose plaintiff's cat and/or dog
10 became ill and/or died from ingesting pet food.

11 I think, by the way, Your Honor, the very fact that
12 the Complaint says each plaintiff had cats and/or dogs reflects
13 a lack of investigation. It reflects a failure by the
14 plaintiffs' counsel to sit down with the plaintiffs and find
15 out what the circumstances were of the particular plaintiffs to
16 set that forth and meet the requirements of pleading that, such
17 that the defendants would then be in a position to have notice
18 of what the claims were and be in a position to frame Answers.

19 Moving beyond the injury allegations, there are also
20 requirements of causation allegations springing from the Lujan
21 decision and also applicable under FDUPTA. As this Court noted
22 in the O'Neill case, FDUPTA does require causation allegations.
23 So It's worth looking not only at the injury allegations, but
24 also at the causation allegations. We talked earlier about
25 some of them, but there are other causation allegations at

1 pages 71 to 73. "As the direct and approximate result of the
2 defendants' misrepresentations and/or omissions and concealment
3 of material facts, the plaintiffs' class representatives and
4 the plaintiff class have suffered damages."

5 Again, there is no specificity. There is no direct
6 link, no plaintiffs' injury or conduct is tied to any
7 defendants' advertisement or product or any retailer
8 defendants' sale of any product.

9 The absence of those nexus, of the nexus between each
10 of those links is fatal to this Complaint surviving analysis
11 under Lujan and, therefore, deprives the case of Federal
12 subject matter jurisdiction because it does not create an
13 Article III case or controversy. It's not something that this
14 Court can adjudicate when there is not a showing that each of
15 the named plaintiffs has standing.

16 Plaintiffs cannot rely on allegations that class
17 members other than the named plaintiffs have standing. It's
18 required, as I think -- as I'm sure the Court is aware -- that
19 each named plaintiff himself or herself satisfy the Court
20 that -- with specific allegations -- that it has, in fact,
21 suffered an injury and that that injury was caused by the
22 conduct of a particular defendant. So that's the standing
23 aspect of it.

24 The Rule 8 aspects of it, I think, we've already
25 discussed pretty extensively, the Twombly requirements of the

1 necessity to plead sufficient facts to give rise to a plausible
2 inference of entitlement to relief.

3 With respect to 9(b), as applicable here, the greater
4 specificity requires not only what all of the causes of action
5 are lacking here in order to satisfy the standing causation and
6 injury requirements, but also requires a higher level of
7 specificity in order to sustain the fraud claims.

8 THE COURT: All right. Thank you.

9 Ms. MacIvor.

10 MS. MacIVOR: We've cited cases in our response that
11 talk about Lujan that was just mentioned, that general --
12 excuse me -- general factual allegations of injury resulting
13 from the defendants' conduct suffice because on a motion to
14 dismiss Courts presume that general allegations embrace those
15 specific facts that are necessary to support the claim.

16 Again, we hear some disingenuous allegations here this
17 morning. In some of the prior Complaints, I've set forth the
18 specific cats and dogs, numbers of them. I don't think the
19 fact that in the Third Amended Complaint it says "cats/dogs" --
20 if Your Honor requires it, I think that under Lujan, it meets
21 it because clearly they have standing.

22 I've alleged it before, the specific number. In a
23 desire to be a little more brief this time, I condensed that
24 down. So it's not a question of not having done my homework.
25 If anyone took a look at the last two Complaints -- and I'm

1 sure the defense has -- they'll see it. That's there. If Your
2 Honor orders I need to do that, I'll be happy to do it again.

3 As to the remainder of what was said this morning, the
4 plaintiffs have alleged, first, that they incurred property
5 damage when their cats and dogs ingested the defendants' pet
6 food and treats and became ill or died. They've alleged they
7 would not have purchased pet food if they had been aware of the
8 actual contents and the effect it would have on their cats and
9 dogs. They've alleged they would not have purchased premium
10 pet food if they had known it would be more expensive. What I
11 told Your Honor before about Menu Foods, right after the 2007
12 massive recall, that the same stuff that was purchased at the
13 grocery store that, you know, people buy because they can't
14 afford the expensive stuff, it's all made by Menu Foods.

15 Plaintiffs wouldn't have done that. They wouldn't have
16 given their precious cats and dogs that kind of thing if they
17 had known that. Fourth, they have also incurred out-of-pocket
18 veterinary expenses. Each one of those -- and I have cited it
19 extensively in the response. There's two tracks in the
20 Complaint. There's the ones that relate to false advertising
21 and those that relate to property damage. I have said with
22 respect to the false advertising -- I've cited a number of
23 cases which I would be happy to cite to Your Honor again today
24 that talk about economic injury is injury under Lujan and
25 suffices to provide standing. That has been alleged in this

1 Complaint.

2 If you look at the paragraph that they referred to --
3 for Ms. Blaszkowski, paragraphs 1 and 2 -- it specifically
4 alleges -- and I don't want to read it again -- but the latter
5 half of the paragraph exactly what -- excuse me. I'm going to
6 go back to the first paragraph. "Each and every plaintiff
7 purchased pet food and/or treats that was manufactured" -- then
8 it goes on. It says that they relied upon them, wouldn't have
9 purchased it. They did not receive a benefit and they were
10 materially different from what was advertised.

11 Then it says "and/or," which it probably should have
12 said "and," as it does in the next paragraph, but, anyway, "The
13 plaintiffs's cats or dogs have suffered illness and/or death as
14 a result of ingesting it."

15 In the second paragraph it says that The marketing and
16 advertising, sale of commercial pet foods, they've been injured
17 by that, and then it says "and," and then we have "for the
18 illness" -- they're also suing for the illness and deaths of
19 plaintiffs' cats and dogs from ingesting the defendants'
20 commercial pet food.

21 Taking the allegations as true for the purpose of the
22 motion to dismiss and because there's supposed to be general
23 allegations the Court is supposed to presume, the plaintiffs
24 have properly alleged standing here and they've gone over and
25 above what they need to do so.

1 There's extensive injury allegations regarding false
2 advertising in the Complaint, property damage in the form of
3 illness and injury to cats and dogs. We have attached an
4 exhibit that shows Susan Thomas had her pet food tested by the
5 New York Department of Agriculture and that it could kill a
6 human being, much less a cat or a dog.

7 We've also alleged the plaintiffs have paid a higher
8 price for premium pet food when it has the same ingredients as
9 non-premium. That's a classic FDUPTA case.

10 They've alleged they've incurred pet bills from having
11 ingested the defendants' pet food. Nonetheless, the defendants
12 claim this is a no injury case. None of the cases they've
13 cited support that because this is not a case where there's no
14 injury.

15 They've cited repeatedly cases from Florida, the
16 Rivera versus Wyeth-Ayerst that has been so heavily relied upon
17 by the defendants, it has been rejected in this district, and
18 Prohias.

19 You know, they're saying that we don't allege physical
20 injury. We have alleged property damage, which Your Honor
21 noticed in the negligence claim. That absolutely fits injury
22 into this for that prong of this Complaint.

23 Like I said, false advertising has to do with the
24 economic benefit, and then, of course, property damage would
25 meet it.

1 That's injury at the pleading stage. That's all we
2 need to provide at this time, and I've cited a number of cases
3 throughout our response that provide that.

4 One is Gritzke where they say, you know, contrary to
5 the heightened pleadings that the defendants want us to use
6 here, the Gritzke case from the Northern District of Florida
7 says no Court is required, not even the purchase of the product
8 is required under FDUPTA. Yet, we've alleged that. That's
9 alleged in the same paragraph that Ms. Lees referred to with
10 respect to Ms. Blaszkowski.

11 Also, in Fort Lauderdale Lincoln, "FDUPTA entitles a
12 consumer to recover damages attributable to the diminished
13 value of the goods or services." We've also alleged -- I'm not
14 going to go into all of them. On page 52 of our response,
15 we've also gone into the fraud and other allegations as well.
16 Nonetheless, they're still trying to say we haven't pled
17 enough.

18 Well, at the motion to dismiss stage, it's unclear,
19 after having looked at each and every one of their cases -- and
20 I've certainly to streamline this case before, I've been happy
21 to say I'll go forward. I'll allege it, but, frankly, they
22 haven't met their burden to show we have not met standing in
23 this case.

24 Except for alleging a Chinese menu, which is really
25 what they're getting down to, their entire boils down to "You

1 haven't told us the brands." But we have done in detail, we've
2 linked each plaintiff to a defendant, whether it's a
3 manufacturer, a co-packer, if we have a reasonable basis to
4 believe there could be a co-packer involved, a pet specialty
5 retailer or retailer.

6 They know what their brands are. If Your Honor rules
7 we have to give them the brands, the Chinese menu which some
8 people have up to 17 dogs, it could be quite a bit of brands.
9 I am quite certain that they know what their brands are. The
10 fact of the matter is we have done the important thing here.
11 We have linked the defendants so they know how to respond.
12 They have to know -- and I find it hard to believe any of them
13 will say "You know what? We do. We agree with them because on
14 this particular brand we falsely advertised." So I think
15 they'll be able to answer the Complaint.

16 I have also given the Court a couple of cases.
17 Collins versus Daimler Chrysler, where they rejected the
18 Firestone case, which is the alleged no-injury case. Gonzalez
19 versus Pepsico, which is a case out of the District of Kansas.
20 It says "Economic injury is a paradigmatic form of injury in
21 fact." I'm sure Your Honor, has read them. I've cited at
22 least, from my count here, at least 15 other cases that support
23 that.

24 As far as the individual and collective allegations
25 that we've heard about from time to time this morning, there

1 are some individual allegations. There are some collective
2 allegations. Like I said before, because this is a homogenous
3 industry and because when people go in, they typically have --
4 people like Ms. Blaszkowski and Ms. Peters -- have relied on
5 representations, which we've alleged.

6 I have mentioned reliance with respect to each of
7 them, but on other occasions I've made general allegations
8 because where it fits with each plaintiff, I've made a general
9 allegation. To say that specifically for each person would
10 make this Complaint probably 10,000 pages.

11 They've said that they have purchased the food based
12 upon the marketing. Cases such as FEC versus Akins show that
13 there's no basis to dismiss this case based on, the Complaint
14 based on standing, because there are some collective and some
15 individual allegations. FEC versus Akins says "Ruling that
16 widely shared injury constitutes an injury in fact for Article
17 III," and gives an obvious example of a widespread standing,
18 "Where large numbers of individual suffer the same common law
19 injury, a widespread mass tort counts as an injury in fact."

20 And Levine versus American Bison is another one.
21 "Meat Consumers do not lack standing simply because the injury
22 was shared by all other meat consumers." Baur is another case.
23 We have clearly alleged standing in this case, Your Honor.

24 While Your Honor might want us to go back and list the
25 cats and dogs, I've done it in two other Complaints. I'll be

1 happy to do it again. The fact is I wouldn't have included a
2 plaintiff in the case if they wouldn't have had at least one
3 cat or dog. I find it hard to believe that they wouldn't be
4 able to answer the Complaint if they don't know who has a cat
5 or dog, but if Your Honor rules that, I'll be happy to put it
6 back in.

7 Thanks you.

8 THE COURT: Thank you.

9 Ms. Lees.

10 MS. LEES: Your Honor, plaintiffs cannot solve the
11 problem with this Complaint by simply alleging that this is a
12 homogenous industry. First of all, it's not. It's a highly
13 competitive industry.

14 THE COURT: Well, I accept it as true. Right? Their
15 allegations, their allegations that it is a homogenous industry
16 and they are all doing this is accepted as true at this stage.

17 MS. LEES: There's an allegation that it's a
18 homogenous industry. There's also an allegation with respect
19 to each individual defendants and how each defendant is
20 advertising its product, so some things just defy reason and I
21 think, perhaps, don't deserve the level of acceptance as
22 others.

23 But the problem is that the plaintiff is trying to say
24 that everybody in the industry is acting similarly and,
25 therefore, all defendants can be held to answer for the conduct

1 of any defendant. That is not the law.

2 THE COURT: I don't think -- where do they allege
3 that? There's no vicarious joint and several liability here.

4 MS. LEES: I'm not saying that they're alleging that.
5 What I'm saying is that's what it boils down to. By saying
6 that it's a homogenous industry and by saying a defendant is
7 saying X. Therefore, all defendants should be held accountable
8 for the statement X, that is, in essence, attributing the
9 conduct of one defendant to all defendants.

10 To the contrary, the law is very clear in two respects
11 that collective allegations are not sufficient. The
12 decision -- excuse me -- of the 11th Circuit in *Wooden versus*
13 *board of Regents* specifically states that each named plaintiff
14 must show he -- quote -- "individually satisfies the
15 Constitutional requirements of standing." That's something
16 that needs to be done by each named plaintiff.

17 The *Brooks* decision also by the 11th Circuit -- and
18 these were both pre-*Twombly* decisions, both cited in our
19 papers. *Brooks* is at 116 F.3d at 1380. It says that the
20 plaintiff cannot lump all defendants together.

21 So the 11th Circuit has expressly held -- this was
22 under 9(b) -- that under 9(b), and also that with respect to
23 standing, defendants cannot be treated in this lump-sum fashion
24 that the plaintiff is doing here.

25 What the plaintiffs have given the Court is a shotgun

1 pleading. It's a shotgun pleading of the exact type that this
2 circuit condemned in the Davis versus Coca-Cola decision, the
3 race discrimination case. In that case, the Court pointed out
4 a number of evils of shotgun pleadings. Two are particularly
5 applicable here. The Court describes systemic harm that
6 occurs, first, inexorably broadening the scope of discovery,
7 much of which may be unnecessary, by failing to give the
8 defendant specific notice of what a specific defendant has
9 done, but, instead, holding all defendants to answer for the
10 conduct of one defendant. The scope of discovery is broadened
11 in a way that is extremely burdensome and not only to the
12 parties, but also to the Court.

13 The Court also points out that shotgun pleadings
14 lessen the time and resources available to reach and dispose of
15 cases --

16 THE COURT: I'm sorry. Where does this pleading seek
17 to hold all defendants responsible for the conduct of one?

18 MS. LEES: Well, I think an example is the pleading
19 with respect to the statement of Ms. MacIvor earlier with
20 respect to human grade ingredients.

21 THE COURT: I'm saying the pleading, where in the
22 pleading is there an allegation that all defendants are
23 responsible for the action of one?

24 MS. LEES: The entire Complaint is replete with
25 references to "defendants." References to Defendant Nutro, as

1 we pointed out, appear in the two paragraphs I talked about
2 earlier. Everything else is "defendants." Every time it says
3 "defendants," each one of the 23 defendants has to address
4 whether it has done what is claimed in that particular
5 paragraph.

6 All of those paragraphs are very broad and
7 conclusionary, and, so, it's hard to understand exactly what's
8 being said. But even if you did know what was being said, it
9 needs to be said with respect to particular defendants to whom
10 it's applicable and not with respect to all defendants at once
11 in order to have a Complaint that can frame the litigation for
12 purposes of going forward.

13 Thank you, Your Honor.

14 THE COURT: Thank you.

15 MS. MacIVOR: Just briefly.

16 I also cited cases that contradict what Ms. Lees has
17 just said. The Belaire case, I'm not sure I cited that one.
18 I'm going to mention that one to the Court right now. It's
19 Belaire versus Boca at 2007 U.S. District Lexis 45415 and it's
20 at headnote 10. That's a decision last year by Judge Ryskamp.
21 It denied defendants' motion to dismiss based on grouping
22 defendants together as carrier defendants and agent defendants,
23 and there's others.

24 THE COURT: I believe you did cite that one. I do see
25 it.

1 MS. MacIVOR: And there are others that do that as
2 well.

3 We have not always grouped all defendants together.
4 Where it has been applicable for all defendants to be
5 mentioned, we've done it. But we have also repeatedly talked
6 about individual defendants. We've grouped retailers together.
7 We've shown pictures that show retailers act in an almost
8 identical manner.

9 We believe we've alleged standing, Your Honor.

10 THE COURT: Thank you.

11 Let's go on then, if we could, to consumer protection,
12 Count III.

13 MS. LEES: Excuse me, Your Honor.

14 I addressed consumer protection, Count III, when I was
15 addressing the arguments with respect to standing and
16 causation. What I would say in addition -- and it has already
17 been touched on -- is that the extensive regulation under AAFCO
18 pursuant to a delegation of authority from the Food and Drug
19 Administration which would congressionally mandate it, that
20 the AAFCO regulations govern almost all of the language that
21 the plaintiffs complain of here, and that that falls within the
22 Safe Harbor under FDUPA and, therefore, cannot be the basis of
23 plaintiffs' Complaint.

24 That's the additional argument. The FDUPA claim is
25 also subject to the deficiencies that we spoke of earlier with

1 respect to the overbroad allegations lumping together all
2 plaintiffs and all defendants and failing to create the nexus
3 that's necessary between the conduct of a defendant and the
4 activity of a plaintiff in reliance and the resulting injury.

5 THE COURT: Thank you.

6 Ms. MacIvor, why does not the extensive regulation in
7 this industry prohibit Count III?

8 MS. MacIVOR: This is AAFCO's official publication.
9 I'm an alternate advisor on AAFCO, so I'm very familiar with
10 AAFCO.

11 I find it interesting the defendants have only talked
12 with a very broad brush about these -- quote/unquote --
13 extensive regulations. We're not bringing a lawsuit on AAFCO.
14 What these ingredient definitions are, the ones on the back of
15 a can that talk about in a rather convoluted way, they'll talk
16 about chicken by-products, you have to go through, like I said
17 earlier, and read in this exceedingly fine print what chicken
18 by-products are.

19 I'm not saying that I want this Court to tell AAFCO or
20 issue a, you know, a writ to get rid of AAFCO. That's not what
21 the suit is about. The suit is about false advertising and I
22 have complained about that to AAFCO, but AAFCO is not going to
23 do anything about it. AAFCO, they're a nonregulatory body. I
24 find interesting they keep saying "acting as if AAFCO really is
25 a regulatory body." It's not. They're a nonprofit corporation

1 whose preamble states that they're there as much for the
2 protection of the pet food industry as they are for the
3 consumers. So we're not talking about the AAFCO regulations.

4 What we're really talking about -- and the defendants
5 go back and forth, whether they talk about preemption or not,
6 sometimes they act like they do and sometimes they act like
7 they don't. In our response, we've gone through and we've
8 described in the Prohias case, you know, there's nothing in
9 AAFCO that says you can falsely advertise. They've described
10 what a chicken by-product is, but we're not saying that, you
11 know, they shouldn't be describing using "chicken by-products"
12 in the back of the label. That's not what the suit is about.
13 They're trying to confuse the issues, confuse the Court, but
14 I've confidence the Court is not going to be confused on that
15 issue at all.

16 There's absolutely no basis for a Safe Harbor in this
17 case. There's nothing in the FDUPTA or there's nothing that
18 the defendants have pointed to that says the defendants are
19 authorized to deceive the public, and to deceive
20 Ms. Blaszkowski and Ms. Peters about what's in the pet food.

21 When you show on a can and in your commercials and
22 come out and say, like I have quoted with Natura earlier, that
23 "We put in this pet food the same thing that you would eat,"
24 when you have to go and do your research and order this book,
25 because it's only available from AAFCO, and you look in, wow,

1 chicken by-products, that's not human food. So that's
2 deceptive and that has nothing to do with regulations.

3 The regulations in effect here -- they have not
4 pointed to any specific regulation that says, you know, this is
5 authorized. My entire Complaint, it's just not there. They
6 just keep saying that we're extensively regulated because of
7 AAFCO. There is a small regulation that says Florida adopts
8 the definitions of AAFCO. The suit is not about those
9 definitions.

10 We've gone into that in detail in our response. Judge
11 Jordan, in Prohias, upon which the defendants heavily rely,
12 specifically came out and said that false advertising is a
13 sanction. It's not required and it's not allowed. Safe Harbor
14 does not apply.

15 Zapka (ph.) versus Coca-Cola is a another case that
16 says when you talk about the FDA's labeling and notification
17 requirements does not exempt defendants from liability for
18 deceptive marketing practices, where the FDCA does not
19 specifically authorize the marketing practices. They never
20 addressed that because they can't because there's nothing in
21 the AAFCO publication that says "You know, it's okay for you to
22 falsely advertise," and I really doubt AAFCO would actually say
23 that.

24 So it's disingenuous, to say the least, that they
25 think it is, and we've cited cases that show the Safe Harbor

1 provision is interpreted very narrowly. Even with the narrow
2 interpretation, it has no application here.

3 Furthermore, we also went into quite a bit of depth at
4 page 20. There is no pre-approval. As a matter of fact, their
5 own motion talked about how there is no pre-approval for pet
6 food here.

7 They don't look at the advertising. They don't say
8 "What you say is okay." They don't even really look what's in
9 the pet food except for what the defendants submit to AAFCO.
10 AAFCO doesn't do any independent testing. They don't do any of
11 that, and I went into depth in the response as well.

12 If there's anything I haven't addressed, I'll be happy
13 to address that at this time.

14 THE COURT: Thank you.

15 Ms. Lees.

16 MS. LEES: Your Honor, once again, Ms. MacIvor has
17 given us quite a bit of news about what the Complaint is
18 alleging and it illustrates, again, the problem with the
19 Complaint.

20 The argument was premised in very large part on
21 statements that plaintiffs aren't challenging this and they're
22 not challenging that and they're not challenging the other, but
23 we wouldn't know that from the Complaint. The Complaint, in
24 fact, sets forth various advertisements, generally one per
25 defendant, and sets for a series of generalized allegations in

1 paragraph 69 that we looked at earlier.

2 It goes on for pages saying "Defendants have said
3 this. Defendants have said that." The language that is
4 approved under AAFCO with the definitions that are approved
5 are, in fact, referenced in the Complaint.

6 Now, maybe plaintiffs don't mean to say "and you
7 shouldn't have said that and that was false and we can sue
8 you," so as to give rise to the arguments we're making that, in
9 fact, they cannot sue us because the conduct, in fact, is
10 within the Safe Harbor. If plaintiffs don't mean to say that,
11 they need to draft a Complaint that doesn't contain those
12 allegations.

13 If the Complaint says "You have advertised in the
14 following way," and then says very generally "you" -- and,
15 again, it's all of you together, lumped together, but it then
16 goes on to say "and your advertising is false and people relied
17 on it and suffered damages," we're entitled to assume that the
18 false advertising is the false advertising that was laid out in
19 the Complaint and alleged by the plaintiff to be false. But,
20 in fact, plaintiffs' counsel is now telling us what we thought
21 maybe was the case, which is much of what's in the Complaint
22 isn't, in fact, the basis for the allegations of causation and
23 the allegations of injury, and plaintiffs, apparently, as we've
24 learned now is not saying that "You violated AAFCO, that you
25 made a false representation when you set forth an advertisement

1 that the" --

2 THE COURT: The plaintiffs never alleged you violated
3 AAFCO.

4 MS. LEES: And, in fact, that's our point. Without an
5 allegation that "You violated AAFCO," conduct that is permitted
6 under AAFCO, it is, in fact, not actionable.

7 What I am saying -- and Ms. MacIvor stood up and said
8 "We're not challenging all of that," and yet we didn't know
9 that before because the Complaint --

10 THE COURT: The Complaint, the main claim of the
11 Complaint is false advertising, misleading advertising, and
12 AAFCO doesn't speak to that. AAFCO doesn't give the industry
13 carte blanche to engage in false advertising.

14 MS. LEES: Absolutely, it does not. That's right.

15 THE COURT: Plaintiffs don't allege a violation of
16 AAFCO. Plaintiffs don't interject it into their pleading.
17 You've interjected it as a defense.

18 MS. LEES: We've interjected it as a defense because
19 the Complaint, as drafted, recites numerous allegations with
20 respect to representations that have been made which, in fact,
21 would fall within the AAFCO Safe Harbor.

22 THE COURT: Right, but that's not it. There's more to
23 it than that. They don't simply allege "Chicken by-products,"
24 using the term, "is illegal." You have to read everything
25 together, and then know I know from reading it that it's not an

1 allegation that these defendants engaged in false advertising
2 by utilizing terminology approved by AAFCO. That's not the
3 allegation. That's not the essence of the false advertising
4 claim because if it were, I think plaintiffs would concede
5 that's not it. There's more to it than that and it's all laid
6 out here.

7 MS. LEES: That's, I think, where defendants would
8 disagree with the Court and the plaintiffs. We don't believe
9 it's laid out. We don't believe that the plaintiffs have
10 connected the dots, that any plaintiff has connected the dots
11 between any particular ad, the viewing of that ad and
12 allegations with respect to what is false in that ad with the
13 sufficiency that Rule 9(b) requires or with the sufficiency
14 that's necessary to satisfy the causal links that need to be
15 alleged.

16 THE COURT: Thank you.

17 Strict liability, strict products liability.

18 MS. LICKO: The strict liability count needs to be
19 dismissed for a lot of the reasons you just heard. There is no
20 identification of a product.

21 Under the 11th Circuit well-established precedent,
22 including the case that we cited of Blackston, strict liability
23 is imposed for injuries which are the proximate cause of
24 product defects, not for the manufacture of defective products.
25 "Unless the manufacturer's defective product can be shown to be

1 the proximate cause of the injury, there can be no recovery. A
2 manufacturer has the absolute right to have strict liability
3 for injuries adjudged on the basis of his own marketed product
4 and not that of someone else.

5 This whole notion of you can take an allegation here
6 about one plaintiff who purchased pet food and another
7 plaintiff whose pet may have gotten ill and link all of these
8 things together from different parts just doesn't work under
9 well-established 11th Circuit precedent on strict liability and
10 including under Twombly. It requires connecting the dots of
11 Mrs. Blaszkowski, who has been the poster child for this
12 lawsuit, about a specific pet, dog or cat, whatever, who
13 purchased one or more specific products, and then with respect
14 to strict liability, it's not enough because we also cite the
15 Fulton case in which the Middle District of Florida said it can
16 be a generic industry. It can't be all wood products. It
17 can't be, you know, that you've looked at all wood --

18 THE COURT: Why isn't that an issue of proof? Why
19 isn't that an issue for summary judgment?

20 MS. LICKO: It's an issue of the allegation. It
21 violates the defendants' due process to say you are going to
22 sue them as part of an industry.

23 It comes usually -- you can look at the established
24 precedents for the Florida Supreme Court. There is no market
25 share liability concept within the State of Florida. The only

1 time that it ever comes up -- and the Florida Supreme Court has
2 allowed two exceptions -- for DS and for blood transfusions
3 where it is impossible to identify a specific product because
4 it so interwoven with something else.

5 Here we have Mrs. Blaszkowski who knows what she
6 purchased for pet food. She has like 17 different brands of
7 pet food. Presumably if she purchased all 17, she still has
8 to, for purposes of strict liability, say which one of those
9 products had a defect that caused an injury to her pet.

10 THE COURT: What case stands for the proposition at
11 the pleading stage where the claims are against multiple
12 defendants that each plaintiff must identify the particular
13 product at the pleading stage, because I think the case you
14 read from didn't deal with a pleading defect, did it?

15 MS. LICKO: Well, on Pulte and on Blackston v. Shook,
16 they were on summary judgment. But it goes to an issue of due
17 process and fair notice under Rule 8. If that's the standard
18 of proof and all they're able to do -- it's funny --

19 THE COURT: Well, Rule 8 governs notice. Every
20 defendant here is on notice if it marketed pet food products
21 and has pet food that might have caused, might be defective, to
22 ask the questions in discovery and learn which product --

23 MS. LICKO: That's totally insufficient notice to any
24 defendant.

25 These defendants manufacture all sorts of brands.

1 Mrs. Blaszkowski has not alleged that her dog or cat or slash
2 or both ever suffered any injury because of any one specific
3 product.

4 What happens is you've got plaintiffs who said they
5 purchased pet food from specific manufacturers, all of them or
6 several. That's not enough. It's not enough to indict an
7 industry on a showing of a strict liability claim. It's
8 fundamental that there has to be product ID to give fair notice
9 and to survive a 12(b)(6) motion even at the pleading stage
10 because, otherwise, the defendant has absolutely no way of
11 knowing what product is at issue, what defect is at issue, what
12 injury even occurs because an injury has to relate in some way
13 to the defect. It's not enough to say "Oh, my cat is not as
14 healthy as it should be," which is one of the allegations you
15 see in the Complaint. How is that a product defect under the
16 strict liability claim?

17 There has been no specificity with respect to this
18 claim that links up a plaintiff who purchased a product, a
19 specific product, claiming it had a defect that then caused an
20 injury.

21 That is fair notice under Rule 8 and under Twombly,
22 and until the plaintiffs can connect those dots, showing that a
23 specific product -- one, not 17 -- but that one caused this
24 injury, they can't survive even at the pleading stage on this.

25 THE COURT: All right. Thank you.

1 I'll hear from --

2 MS. LICKO: If I could just add, they don't really
3 dispute that. They cite to Florida law and they cite an
4 interesting case, Louie's Oyster versus Villagio, for this
5 whole notion that somehow Federal law is more liberal than the
6 Florida law and that Florida law only requires, you know, a
7 fact pleading and that somehow is strict because it can't
8 distinguish the law on this. What they do is say Federal law
9 is somehow looser than the Florida State law.

10 This is a Florida-based claim. What they need to do
11 is satisfy the elements of that claim under Florida law. Under
12 Florida law, they've got to show that specific linkage between
13 a plaintiff, a defect and a specific product and an injury
14 which is caused by that product.

15 Again, the Villagio case isn't even a strict liability
16 case. They're unable to distinguish the Pulte case or the 11th
17 Circuit case of Blackston versus Shook and Fletcher. They
18 don't even try.

19 What they do is try to say there's an inference, and
20 the case they cite is interesting. It's an abortion case of
21 Rowe versus An Abortion Clinic. It comes under the free access
22 to clinic entrances, where the Court said "Okay. Plaintiff
23 there in an abortion case was allowed to proceed anonymously."
24 It has nothing to do with strict liability. It's a totally
25 separate claim, but the Court goes on to say "And we will

1 allow, since motive of the defendant is a required element, we
2 will allow that to be inferred based on the circumstances of
3 what happened to that plaintiff when she tried to enter the
4 abortion clinic."

5 It has nothing to do with this the requirements of a
6 strict liability claim. The only inference under strict
7 liability is one which is referred to in some of the cases we
8 cite, which is called the Cassini inference, and that one
9 doesn't apply here. The only inference which is allowed there
10 is the inference that a product which is defective and somehow
11 destroyed like the catheter, that you are allowed an inference
12 that that defect also existed at the time of manufacture.

13 Again, they haven't pled that, they haven't alleged
14 that, they haven't addressed that issue. The only inference
15 they rely on is the one of the abortion case.

16 So we submit, Your Honor, they've submitted no case
17 that allows them to go forward at the pleading stage and we
18 cite an 11th Circuit case which is controlling here.

19 Thank you.

20 THE COURT: Thank you.

21 Ms. MacIvor.

22 MS. MacIVOR: That sounded similar to where the burden
23 is thrust on me when they haven't met their burden in a motion
24 to dismiss, as Your Honor noted, because almost every case they
25 cited, it wasn't a small distinction that they have cited

1 Florida cases because that is a fact pleading, which is why
2 that didn't have anything to do with the abortion. It was
3 showing there was a notice pleading standard in Federal Court
4 and fact pleading, which Your Honor is well aware of, and
5 that's what that had to do with.

6 As Your Honor noted, and we pointed out in the
7 response, Blackston is a summary judgment case, and they relied
8 on it. They said we needed to prove -- they talked about
9 ultimate facts, all of which has to do with Florida, fact
10 pleading standard, which is different than notice pleading, as
11 Your Honor has noted.

12 I'll give Your Honor an example. They say -- they all
13 make pet food. They all make dry pet food. Here's a good
14 example: Ms. Blaszkowski and Ms. Peters, they both have cats.
15 They both purchased dry cat food. In the Complaint, which has
16 to be taken as true if you use the proper standard, they have
17 purchased and we have alleged that that is highly detrimental
18 to cats. There's not one of these defendants who can say "We
19 don't make pet food. We don't make dry pet food."

20 As a matter of fact, after this Complaint came out,
21 Mars is going out and saying "You know what? Dry cat food is
22 not good for cats. Now we're encouraging you to use wet pet
23 food."

24 So they know the allegations are true. The
25 allegations taken as true show that there is strict liability

1 as far as the pleading stage and ultimately we'll prevail on
2 that because they've already acknowledged it. That's why it's
3 so disingenuous today because at the pleading stage we have
4 more than made a case for strict liability. Glycoalkaloids
5 alone -- Susan Thomas is on the top of that exhibit. The
6 glycoalkaloids in the pet food could have killed a human being.
7 How they could actually stand up here and say we haven't pled
8 strict liability is beyond my comprehension.

9 The plaintiffs have alleged sufficient cause of action
10 for strict liability.

11 Thank you.

12 THE COURT: Thank you.

13 The warranty claims, Counts VII and VIII.

14 MS. LICKO: I'll be happy to address those.

15 If I could just clarify one point with respect to
16 strict liability. The plaintiffs' counsel refers to an exhibit
17 which she claims links, establishes this link. Exhibit 24 does
18 no such thing. There is no name of anybody, of any plaintiff
19 by the name of Susan Thompson that's there at all. There is no
20 mention of the words glycoalkaloid. There's some words that
21 may be a piece of that, an ingredient. There is nothing in
22 Exhibit 28.

23 When you look at the allegation of Exhibit 28, it
24 doesn't say that Susan Thompson or any other plaintiff got sick
25 as a result of eating this particular batch of pet food. What

1 it says is that exposure to ingredients or to elements of this
2 would be toxic to humans. It doesn't say anybody got sick.

3 Now, if that's true, if that's a basis of her
4 Complaint, why hasn't she alleges that? That's the fundamental
5 prerequisite of a strict liability claim, is to establish that
6 link. She has gone way beyond the Complaint now in trying to
7 defend a Complaint that can't be defended.

8 What she would have needed to do in the Complaint, or
9 in the previous three times, is to try to set out what she has
10 tried to tell the Court orally now, that someone named Susan
11 Thompson bought food that was tainted that that particular
12 product, if it got an inspection report, or was somehow so
13 tainted that it caused her pet to die. Then maybe she would
14 start to show some sort of a claim for strict liability, but
15 she never draws that link, and when you go back to the
16 allegation in the Complaint that reference Exhibit 24, there's
17 no link. All it says is that exposure would be toxic to
18 humans.

19 And with that, I would like to go to the warranty
20 claims.

21 THE COURT: Correct.

22 MS. MacIVOR: Could I respond to that briefly?

23 THE COURT: Yes.

24 MS. MacIVOR: On Exhibit 24 -- it's on the docket
25 entry -- page 43, it says right there Yvonne Thomas, a named

1 plaintiff, and there are allegations -- I can't find the page,
2 but I will be happy to provide it to the Court -- where I talk
3 about glycoalkaloids and having been found way in excess of
4 human tolerance. I can't find the page right now.

5 That has been alleged. The owner's name is right
6 there, and anyone who brought Natura pet food at this time
7 would have been exposed to glycoalkaloids, and testings
8 there -- it was report to do Natura, and they know that.

9 How -- I will repeat again -- how the defendants can
10 stand up here and say there's no plaintiffs named, that they
11 don't know what glycoalkaloids are -- I looked this up. If you
12 Google it -- I've alleged glycoalkaloids. If you talk about --
13 and I'm not very good at pronouncing these things -- chaconine
14 and solanine -- if you Google it, it turns up as
15 glycoalkaloids.

16 THE COURT: Thank you.

17 MS. LICKO: With respect to the warranty claims,
18 again, we submit, Your Honor, that there is no fair notice
19 because there is nothing that connects the dots between a
20 specific plaintiff who bought a specific product from a
21 manufacturer or retailer and then suffered injury as a result
22 of that.

23 Because of that, they haven't established any privity
24 and that's the basis of the warranty claims, that you need to
25 show privity to show that there's a relationship.

1 We've gone through the cases here. There is a
2 distinction between an implied and express warranty. The
3 implied warranty, you have to say you're a foreseeable user,
4 that the product was being used in the intended way, that the
5 product was somehow defective when it was transferred and that
6 the defect caused the injury. Again, they don't do this in any
7 way that puts any individual defendant on notice as to a claim
8 by an individual plaintiff.

9 What they have done, I think, is to try -- they've
10 tried to avoid the Rules of Civil Procedure here because if you
11 had one plaintiff and one defendant, this would be easy. There
12 would be a connection. They would have to allege it. Somehow
13 they think because they have many plaintiffs on this side and
14 at least 23 defendants on this side that they don't have to tie
15 anything together, that everybody is responsible for everything
16 and as long as Mrs. Blaszkowski had a pet and as long as Susan
17 Thompson had a pet that was injured, that somehow this all
18 links up.

19 That doesn't suffice as notice under Twombly or under
20 Rule 8. They have to establish the link. Because they can't
21 establish that link, they can't establish privity, which is an
22 essential element of either implied or express warranty. They
23 can't even establish causation. They can't show an injury,
24 both of which are fundamental elements of these claims.

25 Let me show you what the implied warranty, if I could,

1 because that's one of the examples that we used in the book.
2 You can't show privity when you can't show whether or not a
3 defendant even has an obligation to respond.

4 If you look at tab B at the last few pages there, they
5 have Count VII, which is a breach of implied warranty, and they
6 start out -- the heading there says it's against retailers and
7 pet specialty retailers. If they could show that connection,
8 that privity, then they start to be able to say they have a
9 claim.

10 Let's go on and look at the allegations because we're
11 dealing with 23 defendants here, each one of whom needs to know
12 whether or not this is a claim to which they need to respond.

13 So you go down and 176, again, they incorporate all
14 the allegations as to all the defendants. So, again, there's
15 confusion. Is this all defendants or is this just the
16 retailers and pet specialty retailers?

17 For some reason, in allegation 177, the plaintiffs add
18 in now manufacturers and co-packers, who clearly are not in
19 privity, and clearly under the law, do not belong as part of
20 this claim. But they've added in manufacturers and co-packers
21 and for some reason, they've now singled out PetSmart as being
22 a part of this allegation. Does PetSmart suddenly need to
23 respond to this particular claim because of the allegation that
24 they packaged and distributed this food?

25 The confusion with this claim, again, which goes to

1 the fundamental issue of privity and whether there's fair
2 notice continues because when you get to paragraph 178, again,
3 now they're only making allegations against the defendant
4 retailers and the pet specialty retailers only. They've
5 dropped out the other references to co-packers and
6 manufacturers. But, again, 179, it goes back to saying it's
7 all defendants have engaged in this behavior, that all
8 defendants knew of the purposes for which the defendant food
9 was purchased and so forth.

10 Then the defendants knew of the purpose for the pet
11 foods and they impliedly warrant that the pet foods were of
12 merchantable quality. This sort of suggests it's all
13 defendants, not just the ones referenced at the very top of the
14 claim.

15 Then they go on to say defendants breached implied
16 warranties. Who is it? Just the ones they have identified at
17 the beginning? Is it PetSmart? There is no way any defendant
18 has fair notice of who this claim actually applies to.

19 Then when they come down, they ask for a judgment
20 against defendants. Presumably because this is boilerplate
21 language they use on every claim, they're now seeking a
22 judgment against all defendants for implied warranty.

23 There is no fair notice so they can't get to the issue
24 of privity. The claim on the face never connects the dot
25 between a specific plaintiff having purchased any specific

1 product.

2 THE COURT: Thank you.

3 Ms. MacIvor.

4 MS. MacIVOR: Well, I'll say it's a legally sufficient
5 pleading, but not a perfect pleading. The intent was to --

6 THE COURT: I think the intent is to capture those in
7 the title. correct? Each count identifies who is being
8 addressed.

9 MS. MacIVOR: Yes. But, clearly, that's what the
10 count relates to and that's what we meant. Some things in a
11 lengthy pleading slipped us by. I apologize to the Court for
12 that.

13 THE COURT: Every time the title references the
14 particular category of defendants, that is what would govern.

15 MS. MacIVOR: Yes.

16 THE COURT: All right.

17 Unjust enrichment.

18 MS. LICKO: Your Honor, unjust enrichment is an
19 equitable claim. We've laid out the elements of the claim in
20 our papers. It, again, requires that they have fair notice of
21 this claim, that they establish that there's some causation and
22 some injury, which, as we've talked about already, they have
23 not done.

24 They also have to show that there is no adequate legal
25 remedy which is available to them. That's the threshold for

1 showing an unjust enrichment claim. They haven't done that
2 here, and if you look at the case law -- what they do in
3 response is they argue they don't need to do that, but the 11th
4 Circuit authority is clear on that.

5 We have made reference to the case of Tooltrent versus
6 CMT Utensili which makes it clear that unjust enrichment is a
7 claim that is only available if they can show the inadequacy of
8 an available legal remedy. They can't do that here because,
9 again, their unjust enrichment claim is based on paragraphs 1
10 through 128 of the Complaint and those are the same allegations
11 under which they already seek compensatory, consequential and
12 other damages. So they've conceded by the allegations of their
13 Complaint that they do have an adequate remedy at law.

14 They also go on to say that they would like to try to
15 plead this in the alternative. The fact of the matter is they
16 have not pleaded in the alternative. They clearly have not
17 done that. All they've done is to simply say "Because of
18 everything we have said in the previous paragraphs, we,
19 therefore, have a claim for unjust enrichment on all."

20 That's contrary to the 11th Circuit law. The 11th
21 Circuit law holds there can be no such claim for unjust
22 enrichment when that's the claim.

23 Also, they try to say that this claim is based on the
24 wrongdoing of the defendants, and if you look at the case of
25 Tilton, unjust enrichment as an equitable claim has nothing to

1 do with the wrongdoing of the alleged defendants. Defendants
2 can't allege wrongdoing as a basis for unjust enrichment, and
3 that, at the end of the day, is the basis for their unjust
4 enrichment claim.

5 We submit, Your Honor, under 11th Circuit precedent
6 and also under the Florida law that since it's an equitable
7 remedy and they have conceded by their own allegations that
8 they have a remedy at law, this is a claim that must be
9 dismissed.

10 THE COURT: Thank you.

11 MS. MacIVOR: We are pleading in the alternative and
12 because the defendants claim we have no remedy at law,
13 obviously, at some point the decision will be made whether we
14 go forward on that or not.

15 There is no allegation here of wrongful conduct in
16 this particular one. That would be a wrongful enrichment
17 claim. Under Prohias v. Pfizer, which the defendants have
18 relied on, the Court analyzed an unjust enrichment claim based
19 on false advertising and determined under other circumstances
20 to dismiss it, but because they did get the benefit of the
21 bargain from the product that they used.

22 In this case, we're saying that the plaintiffs did
23 not, as an alternative legal theory. That's why we pled unjust
24 enrichment and it's absolutely acceptable. We cited case law
25 in the response I won't bother to go through at this point

1 where at the pleading stage we can plead alternative equitable
2 remedies.

3 THE COURT: Thank you very much. We'll take a 10
4 minute recess and then I'll give will you my decision.

5 [There was a short recess at 10:31 a.m.]

6 THE COURT: Please be seated. Thank you.

7 I'm going to give the parties the benefit of my
8 decision today because we need to move this case along and the
9 parties need to get started with discovery.

10 I'm going to be denying the motion to dismiss the
11 Second Amended Complaint in its entirety as a result of a lack
12 of injury or standing. I believe the pleading sufficiently
13 alleges facts related to injury to the plaintiffs and they have
14 satisfied standing.

15 Furthermore, I do not find that the Twombly decision
16 or Rule 8 changes the landscape of my review of this pleading.
17 Twombly reaffirms Rule 8. Twombly reaffirms that this is
18 notice pleading and plaintiffs need to plead sufficient facts
19 to state a claim, but I think the essence of the arguments
20 addressed in the motion to dismiss is that defendants are
21 dissatisfied with the particularity of those facts. That is
22 not a basis for a dismissal under Rule 8, 12(b)(6).

23 The Second Amended Complaint sufficiently alleges
24 reliance and causation. The fraud-based claims are pled with
25 sufficient particularity in light of the nature of the claims

1 that are raised in this lawsuit, and the plaintiffs have
2 discussed that at length in their response with citation to
3 case law. I will not repeat that here.

4 I do not agree that the FDUPTA claim needs to be
5 alleged with the particularity required for a fraud-based
6 claim.

7 Count III, consumer protection, does not fail to state
8 a claim. I do not find -- and I think my remarks during the
9 course of the hearing may have previewed my views on this
10 matter -- I do not find that any of these definitions by this
11 entity that defines what terms might be used and what
12 components might be used in pet food bars the litigation that
13 is presented here with claims of false advertising.

14 The Economic Loss Rule is not a bar to the count for
15 negligence. When the plaintiffs go back to correct some of the
16 problems with the Second Amended Complaint, however, they're
17 just to specify that they're seeking property damage for
18 illness to cats and dogs so we're clear that there is no
19 overlap with the prohibition of the Economic Loss Rule.

20 The Complaint does state a claim for strict products
21 liability sufficiently to satisfy the Court.

22 The claim for injunctive relief is dismissed. I
23 already intimated as much. That is not a separate cause of
24 action. That is a prayer for relief that one can include with
25 respect to any of the counts where you seek that in the

1 alternative to the legal remedies that are requested.

2 Plaintiffs' warranty claims, Counts VII and VIII, are
3 not barred for the failure to allege privity and do state a
4 cause of action, and the unjust enrichment claim is properly
5 pled as well.

6 The plaintiffs need to simply go back and remove the
7 injunctive relief claim, incorporate any of that language where
8 it is appropriate prayers for relief, and be very clear that
9 the caption of each count which identifies those defendants
10 which are being addressed within the body of each count are the
11 only ones addressed. I think that was an error in the
12 draftsmanship.

13 So I think those are the only two things I need to
14 have the plaintiffs go back and correct.

15 I'm going to ask the plaintiffs to file their
16 Complaint by next Friday and I am going to lift the bar on
17 merits discovery.

18 There is the one outstanding issue regarding the
19 several defendants who have challenged personal jurisdiction.

20 So Ms. MacIvor, why don't you tell me where you are on
21 that.

22 MS. MacIVOR: The deposition is set on April 21 and 22
23 and we'll be briefing shortly as soon as we get the transcripts
24 thereafter.

25 THE COURT: Is there a deadline for the briefing or

1 no?

2 MS. MacIVOR: Your Honor said --

3 THE COURT: Whenever you're ready?

4 MS. MacIVOR: Right. It took some time to schedule
5 and collect the documents.

6 THE COURT: My announcement today that you are going
7 to go forward with merits discovery is as to other defendants,
8 not these who are challenging personal jurisdiction.

9 I need an updated pretrial schedule in this case and I
10 want to fix a date for the filing of the motion for class
11 certification. In the order I issue today or Monday
12 memorializing my oral rulings today, I will ask the parties to
13 give me an updated and revised schedule to govern the case from
14 this point forward.

15 Once the pleading is amended next Friday, I don't need
16 to see these arguments again. You can simply keep them as
17 defenses in your Answer to that Complaint. I don't think that
18 opens the door to a renewed motion to dismiss that raises all
19 these arguments. I have not been persuaded by them at this
20 juncture. What I've asked Ms. MacIvor to do doesn't change the
21 allegations sufficiently to warrant having these issues
22 readdressed.

23 Is there anything else that I can address for the
24 parties?

25 MS. LICKO: Your Honor, two issues. One, there is a

1 footnote within the motion to dismiss which deals with three
2 particular defendants because there are no substantive
3 allegations against them, and those three are Proctor and
4 Gamble Colgate-Palmolive and Nestle USA. There has been no
5 opposition to the motion to dismiss, as we pointed out in a
6 footnote in our reply, footnote number 13, footnote number 16
7 in the motion to dismiss. She simply has failed to respond.
8 So those defendants would take the position that that has been
9 waived --

10 THE COURT: You're not going to be naming them in the
11 new one?

12 MS. MacIVOR: They are named and there are paragraphs
13 about that. I've said before, people give me an affidavit that
14 they have nothing to do with the pet food and I'll take them
15 out.

16 THE COURT: I don't think you addressed that, though.
17 I sort of just assumed they're not going to be there anymore
18 because there's nothing about them presently.

19 In your merits discovery, if you find something out,
20 you can always seek leave to amend to bring them back in.

21 MS. MacIVOR: That's fine, Your Honor.

22 MS. LICKO: Your Honor, a second thing, too. We
23 haven't had time to discuss it amongst the defendants,
24 obviously, but I think the thinking would be -- if you want, we
25 can talk to Ms. MacIvor -- to work out a schedule that

1 contemplates bifurcated discovery, class discovery first and
2 then merits discovery.

3 THE COURT: We have put off discovery now for about a
4 year.

5 MS. MacIVOR: We would definitely oppose that. They
6 are often inextricably intertwined, merits and class. You're
7 still going to have to get into substantive allegations to
8 analyze them for class certification purposes anyway.

9 THE COURT: I'm going to be seeing disputes, "This
10 goes beyond class certification. Discovery is overly broad."
11 This is not a narrow case. This is one where there are a
12 number of issues.

13 MS. LICKO: What we would like to do, Your Honor, and
14 we'd like time to talk about it among ourselves, is if we are
15 going to move towards discovery, is allow us the opportunity to
16 narrow it as you suggested. Otherwise, it's going to be
17 discovery of an entire pet food industry of every single
18 defendant, every single retailer in the entire United States.

19 So what we would like to do, as you suggested,
20 certainly the plaintiffs know which plaintiff had a dog or cat
21 which was injured by a specific product. Through discovery, we
22 could narrow down the issues over which there will be
23 discovery. I think we would like an opportunity to do that.

24 We'll try to address it with Ms. MacIvor first, but
25 then go back to you with the opportunity, if we can't agree,

1 that would be a logical way of approaching this case because,
2 otherwise, it will be all over the board of every single brand
3 of pet food purchased or sold in the United States since 2003.
4 It is just a massive, massive case.

5 THE COURT: If I don't certify a class here, you still
6 have all of these plaintiffs and all of these defendants with
7 all the same necessary discovery.

8 MS. LICKO: But they will, if it's not a class, they
9 will be limited to those specific products that they really
10 have a claim about because they were injured by -- let's say if
11 it's Nestle's pet food, the other 23 defendants don't need to
12 be here.

13 Through discovery, we could narrow down because, as
14 she has pointed out, they know exactly what happened. They
15 don't have to put that in their Complaint, but we should have
16 the right to know through discovery what it is they're really
17 talking about so we can start to frame the issues.

18 THE COURT: Well, I believe what you are suggesting
19 then is you first be allowed to have discovery of the
20 plaintiffs before submitting to discovery by the plaintiffs.

21 MS. LICKO: That would certainly narrow it down, Your
22 Honor, yes.

23 THE COURT: Or at least initial discovery that --

24 MS. MacIVOR: We would oppose that, Your Honor. I
25 think we could definitely -- if I could finish -- I think we

1 can definitely proceed with discovery at the same time. I
2 don't think it's going to be -- I know as a plaintiff, and I
3 said this before, I have no interest in looking at massive
4 quantities of documents. There will be certain things we need
5 to ask for. I've been careful and I have worked with many
6 defendants. We worked things out with Kroger. We're going to
7 continue to do that. I just think this is premature. We're
8 not there.

9 I have alleged the defendants in the Complaint that we
10 just had a long argument about and there's not going to be a
11 case where there's not defendants in the case. I need to be
12 able to go forward with certain things and to delay things
13 after there has been a stay in discovery for almost a year and
14 say "Well, wait a minute. Let's give the defendants discovery
15 before we give the plaintiffs discovery" just puts the Federal
16 Rules, flips it on its ear, in my opinion. It's unfair,
17 quantumly so.

18 You know, we will be happy to give them a list. We
19 have provided mandatory disclosure. Many of the defendants
20 haven't. I'm standing here. I'll give them the brands in
21 mandatory disclosure.

22 MS. LICKO: Your Honor, we propose that we try to work
23 with plaintiffs' counsel on that. I was involved with some of
24 the jurisdictional discovery issues. If we can't work it out,
25 we'd like the opportunity to bring it back to you.

1 THE COURT: You certainly can.

2 I am not favorably inclined to a bifurcation of
3 discovery. I do it in other purported class actions where,
4 perhaps, you might have one named representative suing on
5 behalf of a class. But here we have a number of plaintiffs
6 and, as I said, if I don't certify a class, all plaintiffs and
7 all defendants will probably still be before me. It's not a
8 case that would probably go away because I didn't certify a
9 class because it's a sizable enough group that there are a
10 number of claims that will still proceed.

11 So I'm not, and in light of the history of this case,
12 with the way I have tied the plaintiffs' hands in their ability
13 to gather facts and information, I'm not inclined to keep that
14 in place any longer than I have already.

15 I thank everyone for coming in this morning and for
16 the excellent work in briefing these issues and in your oral
17 presentations.

18 You all have a good day.

19 MS. MacIVOR: Thank you, Your Honor.

20 MS. LICKO: Thank you.

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1 C E R T I F I C A T E

2 I hereby certify that the foregoing is an accurate
3 transcription of proceedings in the above-entitled matter.

4

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