

1 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
2 DISTRICT OF NEVADA

3 KEVIN FEAGINS, YOLANDA FEAGINS,)
4 KEVIN FEAGINS, JR., a Minor, JOSHUA)
5 FEAGINS, a Minor, ANDRE FEAGINS, a Minor,)
6 and JONATHAN FEAGINS, a Minor, by and)
7 through their parents, KEVIN FEAGINS and)
8 YOLANDA FEAGINS,)

Case No.: 2:11-cv-01121-GMN-GWF

AMENDED ORDER

Plaintiffs,

vs.

9 THE TRUMP ORGANIZATION, a foreign)
10 corporation, TRUMP RUFFIN COMMERCIAL)
11 LLC, a foreign limited liability company, TRUMP)
12 INTERNATIONAL HOTEL & TOWER-LAS)
13 VEGAS UNIT OWNERS ASSOCIATION, a)
14 Nevada non-profit corporation, OTIS ELEVATOR)
15 COMPANY a foreign corporation, and DOES I)
16 through XXX, inclusive,)

Defendants.

16 This Order hereby amends the Order at ECF No. 81, filed on September 25, 2013, as
17 follows: On Page 7 beginning at line 19, the word "not" was inserted between the words "does"
18 and "find," so the sentence should now read as follows: "However, this Court does not find that
19 Plaintiffs' claims were wholly unreasonable." The sentence now starts on page 7 at line 23.
20 There are no other amendments to said Order.

21 Pending before the Court is Plaintiffs' Motion to Reconsider (ECF No. 72), Defendant
22 Trump Ruffin Tower I, LLC's ("Trump") Response (ECF No. 73), Defendant Otis Elevator
23 Company's ("Otis") Response (ECF No. 76) and Plaintiffs' Reply (ECF No. 77).

24 Also before the Court is Defendant Trump's Motion for Attorney's Fees (ECF No. 74),
25 Plaintiffs' Response (ECF No. 78) and Defendant Trump's Reply (ECF No. 79).

1 **I. PLAINTIFFS' MOTION TO RECONSIDER (ECF No. 72)**

2 Plaintiffs filed the instant personal injury complaint in the Eighth Judicial District Court,
3 Clark County, Nevada, on May 9, 2011. (ECF No. 1.) Plaintiffs allege that they suffered injury
4 when they were trapped inside an elevator at the Trump Hotel International Las Vegas that went
5 into free fall for twenty stories. (Id.) This case was removed on July 7, 2011. (Id.)

6 Plaintiffs' Motion to Reconsider (ECF No. 72) appears to be a timely objection pursuant
7 to Local Rule IB 3-1 to the ruling by the Magistrate Judge rendered on November 30, 2012
8 (ECF No. 71) denying Plaintiffs' Motion for Sanctions filed on October 29, 2012 (ECF No. 67).

9 Plaintiffs argue that Magistrate Judge Foley,

10 "completely ignored the bad faith failure by all of the appearing defendants to
11 timely file their answers to the Complaint in May, 2012, per the lift stay Order
12 (Document 39) and then such order denying the sanctions claims on page 2,
13 lines 7-11, erroneously finding that the failure to comply with the interim
status report was not bad faith and erroneously finding that Plaintiffs did not
attempt to obtain such compliance."

14 (ECF No. 72, pp. 7-8.)

15 Defendant Trump responds by arguing there is no legal basis for the motion and requests
16 sanctions for having to respond to the meritless motion. (ECF No. 73.) Likewise, Defendant
17 Otis argues there is no rational basis for Plaintiffs' repeated filings other than to vex, harass,
18 annoy and cause an unnecessary increase in the cost of litigation which constitutes an abuse of
19 the legal process and bad faith per se. (ECF No. 76, pp. 4-5.) Plaintiffs' Reply maintains the
20 magistrate judge failed to address the failure of the Defendants to comply with the lift stay order
21 when they untimely filed their answer. (ECF No. 77, p. 3.)

22 **A. Plaintiffs' Motion For Sanctions (ECF No. 67)**

23 Plaintiffs' Motion for Sanctions (ECF No. 67) requested the Court strike Defendants'
24 Answers to the Complaint citing several misdeeds committed by the Defendants. First,
25 Plaintiffs claim Defendant Trump failed to comply with the automatic stay provision required by

1 NRS 18.130 when it continued submitting multiple filings in this case: Defendant Trump
2 removed the action to federal court (ECF No. 1), filed a Motion to Strike Plaintiffs' Prayer for
3 Punitive or Exemplary Damages pursuant to FRCP 12(f) (ECF No. 5), filed its own Demand for
4
5 Cost Bond (ECF No. 4), a Certificate of Interested Parties (ECF No. 3) and their Statement
6 Concerning Removal (ECF No. 2). (ECF No. 67, pp. 2-3.) Next, Plaintiffs claim Defendant Otis
7 ignored the automatic stay by joining in Trump's Motion to Strike (ECF No. 9). Additionally,
8 Plaintiffs claim the Defendants allowed themselves to be in default when they untimely filed
9 their Answers (ECF Nos. 41, 43). Furthermore, Plaintiffs claim Defendants failed to stipulate to
10 a requested extension of the discovery deadlines and finally, Plaintiffs claim Defendants' failure
11 to cooperate and file a Joint Interim Status Report evidences their bad faith and justifies the
12 imposition of sanctions.

13 **B. Magistrate Judge's Order (ECF No. 71)**

14 The magistrate judge addressed Plaintiffs' claim that "Defendants' failure to submit an
15 ISR and refusal to stipulate to Plaintiffs' Motion (#46) to extend discovery was in bad faith."
16 (ECF No. 71, p. 2.) The Court found as follows:

17 "The Court finds Defendants have not acted in bad faith. Because this matter
18 was stayed on on (sic) the ISR's due date, an ISR could not be filed. When the
19 District Court lifted the stay (#39), this case returned to "the normal litigation
20 track." No new schedule or deadline for the ISR were (sic) entered. Both
21 Trump and Otis represent to the Court that Plaintiffs did not attempt to confer
22 regarding a proposed ISR after the stay was lifted, and Plaintiffs themselves
23 have not filed an ISR.

22 Furthermore, both parties' failure to file an ISR has had no prejudicial effect.
23 The purpose of an ISR is to estimate trial length, and inform the Court whether
24 trial will be eliminated or shortened by substantive motions. See LR 26-3. The
25 Court is aware that Otis has filed a Motion for Summary Judgment (#44), and
that Trump has filed a joinder to it (#45). Should summary judgment be
denied in whole or in part, the parties will be required to submit proposed trial
dates and estimate trial length. See LR 16-4, LR 26-1(e)(5)."

1 (ECF No. 71, p. 2.) The Magistrate Judge’s written order did not address Plaintiffs’ other
2 arguments related to the sanction request: stay violation, opposition to the discovery extension,
3 and the untimely filing of their answers to the complaint.

4 **C. Legal Analysis**

5 Pursuant to Local Rule IB 3-1, “a district judge may reconsider any pretrial matter
6 referred to a magistrate judge in a civil or criminal case pursuant to LR IB 1-3, where it has been
7 shown that the magistrate judge’s ruling is clearly erroneous or contrary to law... The district
8 judge may affirm, reverse, or modify, in whole or in part, the ruling made by the magistrate
9 judge.” LR IB 3-1.

10 Plaintiffs present four different reasons why this Court should find Defendants’ conduct
11 and omissions deserve sanctions in accordance with Local Rule 4-1: Defendants are guilty of
12 Criminal Contempt pursuant to NRS 199.340; Combination to Resist Process pursuant to NRS
13 199.410; Criminal Conspiracy pursuant to NRS 199.480; and that this Court should exercise its
14 inherent power to strike Defendants’ Answers.

15 1. Stay

16 This Court finds that neither Defendant Trump nor Otis ever explained their failure to
17 adhere to the 30-day stay provided by the same nonresident security statute, NRS 18.130.
18 Therefore, on March 19, 2012, this Court ordered a stay pending compliance with NRS 18.130.
19 (ECF No. 29.) After the stay was lifted on May 7, 2012, the case was returned to the normal
20 litigation track. (ECF No. 40.) This Court imposed the stay to remedy the Plaintiffs’ failure to
21 comply with NRS 18.130. However, more importantly, the Court’s written Order (ECF No. 29)
22 provided a remedy for the failure of both Defendants to comply with the 30-day automatic stay
23 when it denied without prejudice, the Motion to Dismiss (ECF No. 16) filed by Otis, and the
24 Motion to Strike (ECF No. 5) filed by Trump. Therefore, the Court finds that Defendants’
25 failure to comply with the automatic stay is no longer an appropriate basis for sanctions.

1 Nevertheless, this issue was previously addressed by this Court in its Order denying
2 Plaintiffs’ objections to the magistrate judge’s decision. (ECF No. 65.) The June 27, 2012
3 discovery deadline sought to be extended, had already been extended once before. (ECF No.
4 23.) In the initial Discovery Plan and Scheduling Order, the discovery deadline was originally
5 March 28, 2012 – providing for 180 days for discovery from the date it was filed October 3,
6 2011. (Id.) The parties were granted a 90-day extension of that March 28, 2012 deadline so that
7 the new deadline was June 27, 2012. (Id.) Therefore, discovery was open for approximately five
8 and one half months² from October 3, 2011 until the stay was imposed on March 19, 2012 and
9 then discovery was again open for an additional seven and a half weeks from May 7, 2012 until
10 June 27, 2012.

11 Defendants defended their case and timely concluded their discovery. Defendant Trump
12 now argues that this Court’s stay from March 19, 2012 to May 7, 2012 was “artificially” created
13 by the Plaintiffs due to their failure to comply with the posting of their out-of-state bonds
14 pursuant to NRS 18.130. (ECF No. 73, p. 9.) However, it appears the depositions of the
15 Plaintiffs were taken not during the Court’s stay but rather during the week of February 20,
16 2012, despite the fact they were in Texas. (ECF No. 61, p. 3 and ECF No. 62, p. 5.) Defendants
17 also took the depositions of several health care providers and educators of the Feagins’ children.
18 (Id.) Apparently, Plaintiffs chose not to begin any discovery until after the first discovery
19 extension was approved. (Id.) Plaintiffs also claim the magistrate judge’s decision “overlooks
20 Plaintiffs unrequited efforts to extend discovery so that the parties could comply with the joint
21 interim status report.” (ECF No. 72, p.9.) The Court agrees with the magistrate judge that the
22 Plaintiffs had sufficient time to conduct discovery but waived that opportunity. There is no
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24
25 ² Notwithstanding the Court’s reference in its prior Order that “Defendants also point out that discovery was open
for eight months prior to the stay.” (ECF No. 65, p. 2) The hearing transcript reveals the Defendants were
referring to eight months total—six months prior to the stay, plus six weeks after. (ECF No. 59, p. 7.)

1 evidence that the magistrate judge would have ruled differently had the motion been filed as a
2 joint request.

3 Likewise, for the reasons provided infra, Plaintiffs' claim regarding the need to reopen
4 discovery for the purposes of filing a joint interim status report is not persuasive. Plaintiffs
5 never filed an Individual Interim Status Report, etc. The Court finds the Defendants' failure to
6 join in a motion to extend discovery deadlines is an insufficient basis for sanctions.

7 4. Joint Interim Status Report

8 While it does appear that contrary to the magistrate judge's finding, Plaintiffs did attempt
9 to confer with Defendants regarding the filing of the Joint Interim Status Report, the magistrate
10 judge was correct in finding that Plaintiffs did not file an Individual Interim Status Report.
11 Furthermore, the Magistrate Judge correctly found that the purpose of the filing of the report (to
12 advise and update the Court) was otherwise satisfied and the Plaintiffs suffered no prejudice by
13 the actions or failures of the Defendants.

14 **II. DEFENDANT TRUMP'S MOTION FOR SANCTIONS (ECF No. 74)**

15 Defendant Trump moves this Court to find Plaintiffs' counsel violated local rules and is a
16 vexatious, frivolous litigant filing motions merely to vex, harass and annoy Defendants,
17 needlessly wasting the Court's resources and justifying a sanction – ordering Plaintiffs' counsel
18 to pay Defendants' fees and costs incurred for having to respond to Plaintiffs' Motion/Objection.
19 Defendant Otis also moves the Court for sanctions in its Response to Plaintiffs' Motion for
20 Reconsideration. (ECF No. 76.) Specifically, Defendants Trump and Otis question whether
21 Plaintiffs' counsel had a good faith basis to object to the ruling by the Magistrate Judge pursuant
22 to LB IB 3-1.

23 However, this Court does not find that Plaintiffs' claims were wholly unreasonable. The
24 Magistrate Judge's Order did not address all the issues raised in Plaintiffs' Motion; the
25 Defendants did fail to comply with the stay pursuant to NRS 18.130, and did fail to file timely

1 Answers to the Complaint. Accordingly, Defendant Trump's Motion for Sanctions (ECF No.
2 74) is denied.

3 **TO THE EXTENT THAT PLAINTIFFS' COUNSEL AND COUNSEL FOR**
4 **DEFENDANTS TRUMP AND OTIS HAVE RESORTED TO PERSONAL ATTACKS**
5 **AGAINST EACH OTHER, THE COURT HEREBY STRONGLY WARNS ALL**
6 **COUNSEL THAT SUCH CONDUCT WILL NO LONGER BE TOLERATED.**

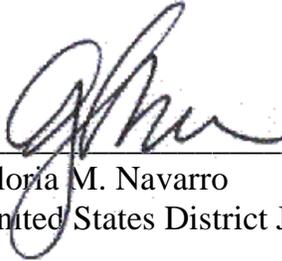
6 **III. CONCLUSION**

7 Therefore, the Court finds that Plaintiffs' description of Defendants' conduct and
8 omissions as "contemptuous," "criminal" and, so forth, is not substantiated by the record.
9 Accordingly, Plaintiffs' Motion to Reconsider (ECF No. 72) is **DENIED**.

10 The Court further finds that Defendant Trump's characterization of counsel for Plaintiffs
11 as "vexatious," "annoying," "harassing," etc., is not substantiated by the record. Accordingly,
12 Defendants' Motions for Attorneys' Fees and Sanctions (ECF Nos. 74, 76) are **DENIED**.

13 **DATED** this 27th day of September, 2013.

14 **NUNC PRO TUNC DATE:** September 25, 2013.

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19 Gloria M. Navarro
20 United States District Judge
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