

Genger v Genger

2010 NY Slip Op 33929(U)

June 28, 2010

Sup Ct, New York County

Docket Number: 109749/2009

Judge: Paul G. Feinman

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SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK — NEW YORK COUNTY

HON. PAUL G. FEINMAN

PRESENT: _____
Justice

PART 12

Jenge
- v -
Jenge

INDEX NO. 109749/09E
MOTION DATE _____
MOTION SEQ. NO. 001
MOTION CAL. NO. _____

The following papers, numbered 1 to _____ were read on this motion to/for _____

Notice of Motion/ Order to Show Cause — Affidavits — Exhibits ...
Answering Affidavits — Exhibits _____
Replying Affidavits _____

PAPERS NUMBERED

Cross-Motion: Yes No

Upon the foregoing papers, it is ordered that this motion

¹⁵
**MOTION AND CROSS-MOTIONS BE DECIDED
IN ACCORDANCE WITH ANNEXED DECISION AND ORDER.**

MOTION/CASE IS RESPECTFULLY REFERRED TO JUSTICE FOR THE FOLLOWING REASON(S):

Dated: 6/28/10 ^{6:05 am}

[Signature]
J.S.C.

Check one: FINAL DISPOSITION NON-FINAL DISPOSITION

Check if appropriate: DO NOT POST

SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK
COUNTY OF NEW YORK: CIVIL TERM: PART 12

-----X

ORLY GENGER, in her individual capacity and on behalf of the Orly Genger 1993 Trust (both in its

individual capacity and on behalf of D & K Limited Partnership),

Plaintiff,

against

DALIA GENGER, SAGI GENGER, D & K GP LLC, and TPR INVESTMENT ASSOCIATES, INC.,

Defendants.

-----X

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E-filed papers considered in review of this motion brought by order to show cause for a preliminary injunction, motions for summary judgment, and motion to amend:

	Papers:	E-File Number:
Seq. No. 001	Order to Show Cause & TRO, Exhibits, Memo of Law in Support Affidavit & Affirmation in Opposition, Exhibits, Memo of Law Affidavit & Affirmation in Opposition, Memo of Law, Exhibit	6, 7, 7-1, 9 35, 35-1 - 35-8, 36, 37 38, 39, 40, 40-1
Seq. No. 002	Notice of Motion, Affirmations, Exhibits Pl.'s Omnibus Memo. of Law in Opp. Reply Memo of Law (Dalia Genger) Reply Memo of Law	12, 13, 13-1 - 13-6, 18, 18-1 - 18-9 52 61 65
Seq. No. 003	Notice of Motion, Affirmation, Exhibits, Memo of Law Pl.'s Omnibus Memo. of Law in Opp. Memo of Law in Reply, Affirmation, Exhibit Reply Affirmation, Exhibits, Memo of Law	15, 16, 16-1 - 16-9, 19 52, 53 59, 60, 60-1 62, 62-1, 64
Seq. No. 004	Notice of Motion, Affirmation, Memo of Law, Exhibits Pl.'s Omnibus Memo. of Law in Opp.	20, 21, 22, 22-1 - 22-8 52, 54
Seq. No. 005	Notice of Motion, Affirmation, Memo of Law, Exhibits Pl.'s Omnibus Memo. of Law in Opp.	27, 28, 29, 29-1 52, 55
Seq. No. 006	Notice of Motion, Affirmation, Exhibits Affirmation in Opp., Memo of Law, Exhibits	45, 46, 46-1 - 46-7 47, 48, 48-1 - 48-2

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Memo of Law in Reply	51
Affirmation in Opposition, Memo of Law, Exhibits	56, 57, 57-1 - 57-2
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Transcript of Oral Argument	69

PAUL G. FEINMAN, J.:

The motions bearing sequence numbers 001 through 006 are consolidated for the purpose of decision.

In motion sequence number 001, plaintiff moves by order to show cause for a preliminary injunction and a temporary order restraining defendants from removing from the State or otherwise disturbing shares of D&K Limited Partnership's 48 percent ownership interest in the common stock of TPR Investment Associates, until there is a judicial determination as to who owns these closely held family shares.¹ At oral argument, the court continued the TRO pending determination of these motions.

In motion sequence numbers 002 through 005, each of the defendants originally moved to dismiss the complaint on various grounds. By interim order dated October 21, 2009, these motions were converted pursuant to CPLR 3211 (c) to motions for summary judgment (Doc. 41, 42, 43, 44).²

In motion sequence number 006, plaintiff moves for leave to amend the complaint and submits a proposed amended verified complaint containing additional allegations and naming an additional defendant.

¹Under the terms of the original TRO signed at the time of the signing of the Order to Show Cause, defendants and their agents are stayed from removing or disposing in any manner the shares at issue. Plaintiff was directed to provide an undertaking in the amount of \$150,000.

²Documents and exhibits are referred herein by their designated e-filing document number in the New York State Court's E-Filing System.

All the motions are opposed.

For the reasons set forth below, the motion for a preliminary injunction is granted ; the motions by defendants for summary judgment are each granted in part and otherwise denied, and the motion to amend the complaint is granted to the extent indicated.

Background

The litigants are members of a nuclear family and certain of their family-owned corporations and companies. The central issue concerns the intent behind the signing of a promissory note and pledge agreement in December 1993, executed as part of estate planning tools of the parents of plaintiff Orly Genger and her brother, Sagi Genger, one of the defendants. Plaintiff contends that the note and pledge agreement were part of an entire estate planning scheme by which plaintiff's father, Arie Genger, and plaintiff's mother Dalia Genger, planned to provide for their two children, plaintiff and defendant Sagi Genger, with the greatest amount of funding possible and with minimum tax consequences. Arie and Dalia Genger were divorced in 2004 and the gravamen of this complaint is that in the years following the divorce, plaintiff's mother and brother have deliberately not adhered to the intent behind the promissory note and pledge, and have schemed to seize control of some of the family's closely held companies. Their schemes have been to the detriment of one of the entities, the D&K Limited Partnership, an entity partially owned by the Orly Genger 1993 Trust, and for the benefit of Sagi Genger and for defendant TPR Investment Associates, on which Sagi and Dalia Genger serve as the directors, and of which Sagi Genger is chief executive officer. Among the other relief sought by plaintiff is an injunction restraining further actions that would irreparably harm D&K Ltd. Partnership's ability to recover its interest in the shares originally held by it, that defendants be denied any ability to further erode the holdings of the Orly Genger 1993 Trust, and that shares

already sold be returned to the ownership of the Ltd. Partnership.

Plaintiff argues, and none of the defendants dispute her, that as beneficiary of the Orly Genger 1993 Trust, she has a right to assert causes of action on behalf of the trust, citing *Velez v Feinstein*, 87 AD2d 309 (1st Dept. 1982) (where trustee has failed to enforce a claim on behalf of the trust, the beneficiary may do so). She further argues that as the Orly Genger 1993 Trust is a limited partner of D&K Ltd. Partnership, she has the right to assert causes of action on behalf of the Partnership as against TPR Investment and the other defendants, citing among other cases, *CCG Assoc. I v Riverside Assoc.*, 157 AD2d 435, 442 (1st Dept. 1990) (“[t]he right of a limited partner to bring an action on behalf of the partnership to enforce a right belonging to the partnership is beyond dispute”) (Pl Memo of Law [Doc. 9:4] p. 1 n. 1).³ Defendants’ arguments in opposition are not persuasive.

According to the verified complaint (Doc. 7-1), plaintiff and her brother Sagi are individually beneficiaries of irrevocable trusts established in 1993 by their parents. Each trust was funded with a \$600,000 gift. As established, the Orly Genger Trust and the Sagi Genger Trust together owned 96 percent in defendant D&K Ltd. Partnership, a family-owned limited partnership. Dalia Genger held the remaining four percent interest, and acted as the general manager. Defendant TPR Investment Associates, Inc. is a corporation founded by plaintiff’s father, Arie Genger who originally was the sole shareholder, and serves as a holding company for the family’s interests. Sagi Genger is presently Chief Executive Officer and a member of the board. Prior to 1993, TPR Investment held a majority interest in non-party Trans-Resources,

³Unless otherwise noted, all factual allegations are taken from plaintiff’s verified complaint (Doc. 7-1).

Inc., a closely held private corporation.⁴

Around the time the two trusts were funded in 1993, D&K Ltd. Partnership purchased 240 shares of common stock, comprising 49 percent of all shares, in TPR Investment for \$10,200,000. The Orly and Sagi Trusts each paid \$600,000, Dalia Genger paid \$50,000, and D&K Ltd. Partnership executed a promissory note dated December 21, 1993 for \$8,950,000, in satisfaction of the balance (Ver. Compl. [Doc. 7-1] ¶ 16, citing attached Ex. 1 [eFile Doc. 7-1:49 *et seq.*]). The note was signed by Dalia Genger as General Partner of D&K Ltd. Partnership. The note required that D&K Ltd. Partnership repay principal and accrued interest in annual installments over a ten-year period. Both trusts, and Dalia Genger, assumed proportional liability for repayment. The note was secured with a Pledge Agreement dated December 21, 1993, signed by Dalia Genger, in which D&K Ltd. Partnership pledged its 240 TPR Investment shares as collateral for repayment of the note (Ver. Compl. [Doc. 7-1] ¶ 18). According to the September 6, 2007, testimony of Sagi Genger in the arbitration proceeding concerning his parents' divorce, the purpose of the note was "[e]ssentially an estate planning tool, to transfer wealth," with the intent to minimize taxes owed by the family members (Doc. 46-5:150-152 [S. Genger EBT, pp. 366, 368]). As a result of the purchase by D&K Ltd. Partnership of TPR Investment stock, the Orly and Sagi trusts each acquired 23.52 percent indirect interest in TPR Investment, and Dalia acquired a 1.96 percent indirect interest. Arie Genger retained 51 percent ownership.

As alleged in the complaint, each member of the family understood and agreed, in the

⁴Trans-Resources is the parent company of several subsidiaries that provide growers with specialty fertilizer and industrial chemicals, and is one of the two largest producers of potassium nitrate in the world (Ver. Compl. [Doc. 7-1] ¶ 12).

“desire to ensure equal wealth transfer to Sagi and Orly and with the estate-planning purposes underlying the creation of the Trusts and D&K [Ltd. Partnership]’s purchase of the TPR shares,” that the note and Pledge Agreement “would never be enforced by any of them” (Ver. Compl. [Doc. 7-1] ¶ 20). Sagi in particular was charged with ensuring that the promissory note and Pledge Agreement would not be enforced and, in the first years, took “specific steps to fulfill that charge,” an example of which follows here (Ver. Compl. [Doc. 7-1] ¶ 20).

D&K Ltd. Partnership made payments on the note until 1999 and then ceased. In November 2002, TPR Investment sent a letter to D&K Ltd. Partnership seeking payment of the past due principal and interest (Doc. 29-1:77-78]). Sagi Genger, TPR’s CEO, explained during his testimony in the above-mentioned arbitration proceeding that this November 2002 letter was merely “pro forma,” and that there was no intent to collect on the note (Doc. 46-5:153 [S. Genger EBT, p. 370]).

In October 2004, Dalia and Arie Genger were divorced, resulting in certain changes to the ownership of certain family entities, memorialized in the Stipulation and Agreement of Settlement, dated October 26, 2004 (Ver. Compl. [Doc. 7-1] ¶ 22, citing Ex. 2 [Doc. 7-1:66 *et seq.*]). In particular, Dalia received sole ownership of Arie Genger’s 250 shares of TPR Investment, the Trans-Resources shares were redistributed such that Dalia Genger owned no shares in that company, and Arie Genger was granted a lifetime voting proxy over the family Trans-Resources shares (Stipulation pp. 5, 8-14 [Doc. 7-1:71, 73-80]). The Stipulation and Agreement of Settlement gave Sagi Genger “full and complete authority” to sell non-liquid assets and distribute them as he saw fit, subject to his fiduciary duties to effectuate the intent of the parties entering the Agreement (Stipulation p. 7 [Doc. 7-1:73]). However, the net proceeds were to be distributed so as to minimally fund a “basic escrow account” after which monies were

to go to TPR Investment “in satisfaction of the parties’ indebtedness” (Stipulation p. 8 [Doc. 7-1:74]).

Despite the changes, both the Orly and Sagi trusts continued to have equal ownership interests in Trans-Resources shares as well as in the TPR Investment shares owned by D&K Ltd. Partnership (Ver. Compl. [Doc. 7-1] ¶ 23).

Also on October 26, 2004, TPR Investment, Arie Genger, and Dalia Genger signed an Assumption Agreement which acknowledged the promissory note’s existence and noted that at that juncture, approximately \$9,980,000, inclusive of interest, was owed by D&K Ltd. Partnership to TPR Investment (Doc. 22-4).

In addition, also on the same date, Sagi and Dalia Genger formed D&K GP LLC to serve as the general partner for D&K Ltd. Partnership (Pl. Mot. 001, Ex. 5 ¶ 5 [Doc. 7-1:151]). Under the agreement, Dalia Genger transferred her general partnership interest in D&K Ltd. Partnership, in exchange for a 99 percent interest in D&K GP; Sagi Genger was granted power to select the manager. Accordingly, D&K GP LLC now held a four percent interest in D&K Ltd. Partnership.

Plaintiff alleges that in the years subsequent to the divorce, Dalia Genger has sought, in collusion with her son Sagi Genger, to “destroy” her former husband financially, and their actions have threatened to destroy plaintiff financially as well (Ver. Compl.[Doc. 7-1] ¶ 25). Thus, when Dalia in effect ceded her control over D&K Ltd. Partnership to Sagi, the restructuring left only the two trusts liable to TPR Investment for repayment of the promissory note (Ver. Compl.[Doc. 7-1] ¶ 27). In August 2006, Sagi Genger on behalf of TPR Investment,

assigned the promissory note to David Parnes,⁵ but stated in writing to Parnes that “D&K LP and its partners have a variety of claims against TPR, and deny the enforceability of the Note.” (Ver. Compl. [Doc. 7-1] ¶ 47, citing Ex. 8 [Doc. 7-1:179-*et seq.*]). In 2007, Sagi Genger allegedly stripped Dalia Genger of her majority interest in TPR Investment by selling an interest to his mother-in-law, Rochelle Fang (Ver. Compl. [Doc. 7-1] ¶ 32). In late 2007 or early 2008, Dalia Genger divested herself of the balance of her TPR Investment shares, leaving Sagi Genger in direct control of TPR Investment and its interest in the promissory note (Ver. Compl. [Doc. 7-1] ¶ 33). As a result, Sagi Genger in essence now wore two hats, as CEO of TPR Investment, the creditor of the note, and as manager of D&K Ltd. Partnership, the debtor on the note (Ver. Compl. [Doc. 7-1] ¶ 34).

In November 2007, Sagi Genger and Leah Fang executed an “Amended and Restated Limited Partnership Agreement of D&K Limited Partnership,” permitting D&K GP to “mortgage, hypothecate, pledge, create a security interest in or lien upon, or otherwise encumber the L[imited] P[artner] TRI Interests, for the benefit of the Partnership (Doc. 46-5:218). The document was signed by Sagi Genger, managing member of D&K GP LLC, the General Partner, and Leah Fang, as sole trustee for both the Sagi Genger 1993 Trust and the Orly Genger 1993 Trust, the Limited Partners (Doc. 46-5:223). Plaintiff only learned of this document’s existence in 2009.

In January 2008, Dalia Genger was appointed successor trustee to the Orly Genger 1993 Trust (Ver. Compl. [Doc. 7-1] ¶ 39). She succeeded several other individuals, including two

⁵ Parnes is a former trustee of the Orly Genger 1993 Trust, the present trustee of the Sagi Genger 1993 Trust, an officer of TPR Investment and director of Trans-Resources (Ver. Compl. [Doc. 7-1] ¶ 46). Parnes testified during the arbitration proceeding that the purpose of the transfer of the note to him was to prevent collection by any others (*Id.*).

long-term friends of her son's and her son's sister-in-law. As trustee, Dalia has "complete control over the assets of the Orly Trust, including its ownership interests in TPR (through D&K) and TRI" (Ver. Compl. [Doc. 7-1] ¶ 41).

In 2008, TPR Investment, through CEO Sagi Genger, reclaimed the promissory note from Parnes, and in August 2008, notified D&K Ltd. Partnership's general manager (Sagi Genger), that it was in default under the note and that if it failed to satisfy the full terms of the note, its shares would be sold at public auction (Ver. Compl. [Doc. 7-1] ¶ 52, citing Ex. 10 [Doc. 7-1:185-186]). As the payment was not made, D&K Ltd. Partnership was informed by TPR Investment that the latter would sell the former's 240 shares of common stock in TPR Investment to the highest qualified bidder on February 27, 2009 (Ver. Compl., Ex. 11 [Doc. 7-1:187-188]). Notice was not provided to either of the trusts, but was published in THE NEW YORK POST in October 2008 and again in February 2009 (Ver. Compl. [Doc. 7-1] ¶¶ 52-53, citing Ex. 12 [Doc. 7-1:189-191]).

On January 31, 2009, the general partner of D&K Ltd. Partnership, that is to say D&K GP, and the limited partners, the Sagi and Orly trusts, and TPR Investment, memorialized a document called "Meeting of Partners of D&K LP - Jan. 31, 2009 & Agreement," in which it was agreed that D&K GP could sign for the Limited Partnership and for each individual partner when making the limited partners' assets subject to a pledge (Doc. 22-4:17-18).⁶ This same agreement included the promise of TPR Investment that it would "refrain from enforcing the

⁶Plaintiff alleges she first learned of this agreement only when the documents were provided as part of defendants' papers submitted in their motions to dismiss (Am. Ver. Compl. [Doc. 46-4] ¶ 94).

note against each limited partner for thirty days.” (*Id.* [Doc. 22-4:18] ¶ 8).⁷

The note was foreclosed upon on February 27, 2009, less than the 30 days indicated in the Agreement date, and D&K Ltd. Partnership’s 240 shares of TPR Investment were purchased back by TPR, decreasing the obligations of D&K Ltd. Partnership under the promissory note, and leaving a balance of approximately \$8.8 million that continues to be guaranteed by the Orly and Sagi trusts (Ver. Compl. [Doc. 7-1] ¶ 57, citing Ex. 13 [Doc. 7-1:192-194]). Plaintiff and her attorney only learned in early June 2009 that the note had been foreclosed and that the pledged shares had been sold back to the company (Ver. Compl. [Doc. 7-1] ¶ 65). Plaintiff has made a written demand that TPR Investment return the pledged shares to D&K Ltd. Partnership, but TPR has declined to comply (Ver. Compl. [Doc. 7-1] ¶ 69, citing Ex. 20 [Doc. 7-1:225-227]).

Also in August 2008, Rochelle Fang, as trustee of the Sagi Genger 1993 Trust, and Sagi Genger, sold that trust’s interest in Trans-Resources to another group (named “Trump”), which sale divested Arie Genger from control and put the company in the control of the Trump group (Ver. Compl. [Doc. 7-1] ¶ 60, citing Ex.14 [Doc. 7-1:195-207]). The validity of this sale is under challenge in Delaware Chancery Court, although plaintiff Orly Genger has not joined in that action (Ver. Compl. [Doc. 7-1] ¶ 61).

After this purported sale of the Sagi Genger Trust’s shares of Trans-Resources, plaintiff feared her trust’s shares would not be protected from sale. She requested in writing from her mother as trustee in January 2009 and again in June 2009 that the Orly Genger 1993 Trust retain all of its shares of Trans-Resources and that they not be sold, but Dalia Genger has refused to

⁷The copy of the document e-filed with the court is not clear enough to discern who signed on behalf of the trusts, although presumably it was Dalia Genger, or on behalf of TPR Investment.

agree, or even to respond (Ver. Compl. [Doc. 7-1] ¶¶ 63, 66, citing Ex. 15, 16 [Doc. 7-1:208-215]). Plaintiff, who had brought a proceeding in Surrogate's Court to remove her mother as trustee at the time of her appointment in January 2008, an application which was denied as being premature (Ver. Compl. [Doc. 7-1] ¶¶ 39-40), brought a second application on June 22, 2009, seeking to enjoin Dalia Genger or her agents from doing anything to affect the Orly Genger 1993 Trust's Trans-Resources shares, to remove Dalia as trustee and appoint another in her stead based on breach of fiduciary duties, and for a surcharge for damages (Ver. Compl. [Doc. 7-1] ¶ 67). At this juncture, the Surrogate's Court has ordered that Dalia Genger provide at least 10 days notice before disposing of any of the trust's Trans-Resources shares (Ver. Compl. [Doc. 7-1] ¶ 68, citing Ex.19 [Doc. 7-1:222- 224]).

Plaintiff contends that Dalia Genger has failed to act in the best interests of the Orly Genger 1993 Trust, that Sagi Genger has acted in a self-dealing manner and together with Dalia Genger has undermined the estate plans that intended for both children to benefit equally from the family's wealth (Ver. Compl. [Doc. 7-1] ¶ 58). Plaintiff fears that through defendants' continued scheming, the Orly Genger 1993 Trust's one remaining asset, its ownership of the Trans-Resources shares, will also be wrongly divested (Ver. Compl. [Doc. 7-1] ¶ 59).

The verified complaint alleged 16 causes of action against the various defendants, including replevin of the shares from TPR Investment back to D&K Ltd. Partnership, and a request for a preliminary injunction.

As stated above, defendants each submitted pre-answer motions to dismiss which, after notice by the Court, have been converted to motions for summary judgment pursuant to CPLR 3211 (c). Subsequent to the filing by defendants of their motions, plaintiff moved to amend her complaint "to address, among other things," the defendants' "scheme regarding the Orly Trust's

TRI Shares,” and the involvement in the scheme of Leah Fang, the proposed additional defendant (Pl. Mot. 006, Ex. D, Part 1, Proposed First Am. Ver. Compl., [Doc. 46-4] ¶ 95). The proposed first amended verified complaint contains an additional four causes of action, two against Leah Fang, and two seeking additional declaratory relief, and amends certain of the original causes of action to include the new allegations and those against Leah Fang.

Legal Analysis

For convenience, the motion to amend will be addressed first, and then the preliminary injunction, followed by the motions to dismiss. Because the motion to amend the complaint is granted, the remainder of this decision addresses the claims as alleged in the amended complaint.

A. Motion to Amend the Verified Complaint (Sequence Number 006)

Leave to amend pleadings is to be freely given upon terms that may be just (CPLR 3025 [b]). In addition, CPLR 3025 (a) permits any party to amend a pleading once, without court permission provided it is done under one of the following circumstances: within 20 days of the service of the original pleading; at any time before the period for responding to it has expired, or within 20 days after the service of a responsive pleading. Plaintiff proffers a proposed amended complaint to add a new defendant and new causes of action (Doc 46-4).

Contrary to defendants’ arguments, case law holds that where a defendant has not answered the complaint but instead interposed a motion to dismiss, as was done here, the plaintiff may amend her complaint once as of right, because defendants, by making pre-answer motions, have extended their time to answer (*see, Johnson v Spence*, 286 AD2d 481 [2d Dept. 2001]; *STS Mgt. Dev., Inc. v New York State Dept. of Taxation & Fin.*, 254 AD2d 409 [2d Dept. 2001]; *Miller v General Motors Corp.*, 99 AD2d 454 [1st Dept. 1984], *aff’d* 64 NY2d 1081 [1985]). Although defendants oppose, plaintiff is entitled to serve and file her amended

complaint without review by the court, although the rulings below on defendants' motions shall refine the scope of the proposed amended complaint and require her to file and serve a second amended complaint. Defendants' arguments in opposition, including that there is another action pending, can be pled as affirmative defenses. Plaintiff's motion to amend her complaint is thus granted to the extent indicated.

B. Motion for Preliminary Injunction (Sequence Number 001)

Among the purposes of a preliminary injunction are maintaining the status quo and preventing irreparable injury to a party (*see, e.g., Ma v Lien*, 198 AD2d 186 [1st Dept. 1993], *lv dismissed* 83 NY2d 847 [1994]). To prevail, the party seeking injunctive relief must demonstrate a likelihood of success on the merits; that it will suffer irreparable injury if the relief is not granted; and that the equities balance in its favor (*Aetna Ins. Co. v Capasso*, 75 NY2d 860, 862 [1990]). A preliminary injunction should generally not be granted where there are issues of fact (*Lincoln Plaza Tenants Corp. v MDS Properties Dev. Corp.*, 169 AD2d 509 [1st Dept. 1991]; *but see Ma v Lien, supra* at 187 ["even where the facts are in dispute, the nisi prius court can find that a plaintiff has a likelihood of success on the merits, from the evidence presented"]). If money damages are an adequate remedy, irreparable harm does not exist and injunctive relief should be denied (*Sterling Fifth Assoc. v Carpentille Corp., Inc.*, 5 AD3d 328, 330 [1st Dept. 2004]).

Plaintiff argues that the shares of Ltd. Partnership are unique chattel as contemplated by CPLR 7109, and that accordingly the court should grant a preliminary injunction restraining defendants from disposing of the shares until order of the court. She argues that the D&K Ltd. Partnership shares are unique because they are shares of a closely held family company which represents an ownership in another closely held family company, TPR Investment, and that their

value is dependent, at least in part, on the outcome of the family litigation currently before the Delaware Chancery Court concerning Trans-Resources (Pl. Memo of Law, 5-6 [Doc. 9:8-9]).

Under CPLR 7109, where the chattel is unique, the court may grant a preliminary injunction or temporary restraining order that it may not be transferred, sold, pledged, assigned or otherwise disposed of until the court orders (CPLR 7109 [a]). Defendants argue that the shares are in essence fungible, and that if appropriate, money damages would fully compensate plaintiff (TPR [S. Genger] Aff. in Opp. [Doc. 39] ¶ 6). Sagi Genger avers that the “TPR shares are currently not for sale and there is no intention to sell them at this time or in the near future.” (S. Genger Aff. in Opp. [Doc. 35] ¶ 5). He makes no statements concerning the TRI shares. Plaintiff’s argument, however, is that her parents never meant for the promissory note to be enforced, but rather that the trust funds remain intact for the two children. The recent actions taken by defendants concerning the promissory note which have negatively impacted the Orly Genger 1993 Trust, and the sale of the Trans-Resources shares belonging to the Sagi Genger 1993 Trust, possibly foretell defendants’ plans to sell her trust’s shares of Trans-Resources and thus she seeks court intervention to prevent further dissipation of the trust.

The granting of a preliminary injunction is a discretionary remedy (*Ross v Schenectady*, 259 App. Div. 774, 774 [3d Dept. 1940]; *Dabrinsky v Seagate Assn.*, 239 NY 321 [1925]). Here, where the family shares at issue are intertwined among various family entities, defendants have not offered sufficient evidence to show that the shares of either TPR Investment or Trans-Resources owned by the Orly Genger 1993 Trust are not “unique” and should not be protected from transfer, sale, or assignment until this litigation is ultimately decided. In addition, given that defendant Sagi Genger states there is no immediate plan to sell or otherwise dispose of the TPR Investment shares, an injunction is not likely to cause much harm to defendants. The

balance of equities therefore lies in favor of plaintiff. Accordingly, the motion for a preliminary injunction is granted.

Motions for Summary Judgment

The proponent of a summary judgment motion must make a prima facie showing of entitlement to judgment as a matter of law, tendering sufficient evidence to eliminate any material issues of fact from the case (*Winegrad v New York Univ. Med. Ctr.*, 64 NY2d 851, 853 []). Evidentiary proof must be submitted in admissible form (*Zuckerman v City of N.Y.*, 49 NY2d 557, 562 [1980]). Parties in opposition must submit “evidentiary facts or materials, by affidavit or otherwise ... demonstrating the existence of a triable issue of ultimate fact.” (*Tortorello v Carlin*, 260 AD2d 201, 204 [1st Dept. 1999]). “Issue finding and not issue resolving” is the proper role of the court in deciding such motions (*Winegrad, supra*, at 853). Regardless of the sufficiency of the opposing papers, in the absence of admissible evidence sufficient to preclude any material issue of fact, summary judgment is unavailable (*Alvarez v Prospect Hosp.*, 68 NY2d 320, 324 [1986]).

None of the converted motions for summary judgment contains first-person affidavits, and all rely upon documentary evidence and the pleadings for the bases of their motions. Although plaintiff objects to the lack of first-person affidavits, the converted motions are nonetheless considered by the court and decided on their merits.

Plaintiff argues that all of the motions should be preemptively denied based on the doctrines of issue preclusion and judicial estoppel, pointing to the testimony and evidence presented at the arbitration which resulted in the May 6, 2008, award entitled *Dalia Genger v Arie Genger*, Case No. 13 170 Y 00996 07 (American Arbitration Assn., Commercial Arbitration Tribunal, NYC). (Doc. 46-5:131 *et seq.*). The doctrine of issue preclusion serves

to bar a party from “relitigating in a subsequent action or proceeding an issue that was raised in a prior action or proceeding and decided against that party or those in privity, whether or not the tribunals or causes of action are the same” (*Ryan v New York Tel. Co.*, 62 NY2d 494, 500 [1984]; *see also, Parker v Blauvelt Volunteer Fire Co.*, 93 NY2d 343, 349 [1999]). The doctrine of judicial estoppel prohibits a party that has assumed a certain position in a prior legal proceeding and secured a judgment in its favor, from assuming a contrary position in another action simply because the party’s interests have changed (*City of N.Y. v College Point Sports Assn., Inc.*, 61 AD3d 33, 44 n. 1 [2d Dept. 2009], citations omitted). Notably, of course, the arbitration concerned issues arising from the divorce of plaintiff’s parents, and determined, among other questions, that the promissory note could not be enforced by either parent as against each other. This is not the issue raised by plaintiff in her litigation. Additionally, because the testimony by Sagi Genger, Dalia Genger, and others in that arbitration was offered to answer the questions of whether the note was enforceable, and its value, *as between the former husband and wife*, the witnesses and parties did not address the value or enforceability of the note *as between the children* of Arie and Dalia Genger, *or the family owned companies*. Thus, the testimony adduced in the arbitration may well be admissible in this action, but there is no collateral estoppel effect.

C. Dalia Genger’s Motion for Summary Judgment (Sequence Number. 002)

The first amended verified complaint alleges three causes of action against Dalia Genger: breach of fiduciary duty (1st cause of action), fraud (5th cause of action), and conspiracy to commit fraud (8th cause of action).

As argued by defendant, the claim of breach of fiduciary duty is also at issue in a proceeding currently before the Surrogate’s Court entitled *In the Matter of the Application of*

Orly Genger, as a person interested, for the removal of Dalia Genger as Trustee of the Orly Genger 1993 Trust pursuant to SCPA § 711 (1), File No. 17/2008 (Surrogate's Court NY County). Plaintiff does not address this argument. Accordingly, in the interest of judicial economy, the branch of defendant's motion seeking summary judgment and dismissal as to the complaint's 1st cause of action, is granted, on the ground that the same claim is pending in another court proceeding (CPLR 3211 [a] [4]).

The 5th Cause of Action sounds in fraud, while the 8th Cause of Action alleges conspiracy to commit fraud among the four defendants. As an initial matter, it is well established that “a mere conspiracy to commit a fraud is never of itself a cause of action,” although allegations of conspiracy are permitted to connect the actions of separate defendants with an otherwise actionable tort (*Alexander & Alexander of N.Y. Inc. v Fritzen*, 68 NY2d 968, 969 [1986] [citation omitted]). As explained in *Brackett v Griswold*, “[t]he allegation that there was a conspiracy to commit the fraud does not effect the substantial ground of action,” and “[t]he *gravamen* is fraud and damage, and not the conspiracy.” (112 NY 454, 466-467 [1889]). “The allegation and proof of a conspiracy in an action of this character is only important to connect a defendant with the transaction and to charge him [*sic*] with the acts and declarations of his [*sic*] co-conspirators, where otherwise he [*sic*] could not have been implicated.” (*Id.*). Accordingly, the 8th cause of action is dismissed as against this defendant, and the others.

To state a claim for fraud, plaintiff must allege “a material misrepresentation of a fact, knowledge of its falsity, an intent to induce reliance, justifiable reliance . . . and damages” (*Eurycleia Partners, LP v Seward & Kissel, LLP*, 12 NY3d 553, 559 [2009]). In addition, under CPLR 3016 (b), the circumstances constituting the wrong must be stated in detail.

Defendant Dalia Genger argues that plaintiff's claims are unspecific and general in

nature. In particular, she argues that there is no allegation of the manner in which plaintiff relied on any of her statements, or in what manner she, defendant, could have prevented the enforcement of the promissory note and the foreclosure sale. Although plaintiff argues in opposition that Dalia Genger made many statements over the years, including sworn statements, affirming that all interested parties to the note had agreed that TPR Investment would never seek to enforce the promissory note (Am. Ver. Compl. [Doc. 46-4] ¶¶ 62, 145-147), none of defendant's statements *explicitly* make this assertion other than in the context of the divorce proceedings. However, plaintiff also argues that even after she requested that her mother, as trustee, not encumber the remaining assets of the trust, her mother signed the January 2009 Meeting Agreement which gave power to D&K GP - the company controlled by Dalia and Sagi Genger - to pledge the Orly Genger 1993 Trust's shares of Trans-Resources as security for the promissory note, and which indemnified Sagi Genger, among others. There are also the transactions over the years that apparently have given Sagi Genger, and Dalia Genger, potential control over family assets in a way that has harmed plaintiff's share.

When claiming that the defendants together acted to commit a fraud, the plaintiff need not allege and prove that each defendant committed every element of fraud but only facts which support an inference that the defendants knowingly agreed to cooperate in a fraudulent scheme (*Snyder v Puente De Brooklyn Realty Corp*, 297 AD2d 432, 435 [3d Dept.2002], *lv denied*, 99 NY2d 506 [2003]; *LeFebre v New York Life Ins. & Ann. Corp.*, 214 AD2d 911, 912 [3d Dept. 1995]). Plaintiff alleges that the various defendants together committed fraud by, for example, creating the conditions that resulted in the "sham sale" of the TPR Investment assets owed by D&K Ltd. Partnership, and agreeing in the January 2009 Meeting Agreement to give power to D&K GP, the company controlled by Dalia and Sagi, to pledge the Orly Trust's shares of Trans-

Resources as security for the promissory note (Am. Ver. Compl. [Doc. 46-4] ¶¶ 76-68, 151). Plaintiff asked repeatedly for information about her trust, but because defendant has not been forthcoming nor kept her informed, she did not know that there was any need to attempt to protect the assets of her trust.

The evidence and arguments provided by both parties show that there is a question of fact as to whether Dalia Genger acted with intent to commit fraud against plaintiff's trust, and to lull plaintiff into a false sense of security as to the status of her trust. Accordingly, the branch of defendant's motion to dismiss the 5th cause of action is denied.

D. Sagi Genger's Motion for Partial Summary Judgment (Sequence Number 003)

Defendant Sagi Genger seeks summary judgment and dismissal of the 6th, 7th, 8th, and 16th causes of action.⁸

The 6th cause of action sounds in fraud. The elements of fraud are set out above in the discussion of Dalia Genger's motion. The complaint focuses on the statements made by defendant in particular during the 2007 - 2008 arbitration proceeding, which helped form the basis for the arbitrator's decision that the parties never intended for the note to be collected and that it was not an asset to be valued, statements of which the plaintiff was aware and which caused her to believe that her trust fund was secure and that no one would enforce the note.

The 7th cause of action alleges aiding and abetting fraud. The elements of aiding and abetting fraud are that there exists a fraud, the defendant knew of the fraud, and the defendant provided substantial assistance to advance the fraud's commission (*M&T Bank Corp. v Gemstone CDO VII, Ltd.*, 23 Misc. 3d 1105A; 881 NYS2d 364, 2009 NY Slip Op 50590(U)

⁸He does not seek summary judgment as to the 2nd, 3rd, or 4th causes of action, in which he is also named.

{Sup. Ct., Erie County 2009}, *aff'd in part, mod in part*, 68 AD3d 1747 [4th Dept. 2009], quotation and citation omitted). The complaint contends that defendant and D&K GP knowingly assisted in the “sham sale” of the D&K Ltd. Partnership shares, failed to notify the Partnership members of the foreclosure and sale, the sale of which harmed the Orly Trust, and entered into the Meeting Agreement which now allows defendant and D&K GP to pledge or encumber the Trans-Resources shares owned by the Orly Genger 1993 Trust.

Defendant argues that summary judgment is appropriate based on the documentary evidence. He contends that prior to this litigation, plaintiff never claimed that the note or pledge agreement were invalid. Among the evidence he points to in arguing the note’s enforceability, is testimony of Arie Genger acknowledging that payments were made by D&K Ltd. Partnership on the promissory note (Doc. 16-4:3-4) , the Assumption Agreement signed by Dalia, Arie, and Sagi Genger on October 25, 2004, acknowledging the nearly \$10,000,000 due under the note (Doc. 16-6]), the November 19, 2008 letter from plaintiff’s counsel to the Surrogate, stating in part that “D&K [Ltd. Partnership] is indebted on a multi-million dollar note to TPR, which is secured by D&K’s 49% stock interest, and which has not been serviced for years” (Doc. 16-8]), and a document signed by plaintiff dated December 27, 2007, in which she states that the trust “is indebted in the amount of approximately \$4.5 million” (Doc. 16-9]).

Defendant also argues that the statute of frauds bars plaintiff’s 6th and 7th causes of action because plaintiff claims that the promissory note has been orally modified. General Obligations Law § 5-701 requires that agreements which by their terms are not to be performed within one year, or which are promises to answer for the debt or default of another person, must be in writing and subscribed by the party to be charged therewith (GOL § 5-7-1 [a] [1]-[2]). The parol evidence rule of the General Obligations Law provides that where a written agreement contains

a provision stating that it cannot be changed orally, then such a document cannot be changed by executory agreement unless it is in writing, signed by the party against whom enforcement of the change is sought (GOL § 15-301 [1]). Thus, defendant argues that plaintiff cannot claim that the parties legally agreed, orally, that the note would not be enforceable.

Defendant's arguments are unpersuasive. Courts have also found, specifically in regard to promissory notes, that when parties contest whether a notice is enforceable, there is an issue of fact that survives summary judgment and the statute of frauds will not prevent the court's examination of parol evidence on the issue. For example, in *Greenleaf v Lachman*, the Court examined a promissory note allegedly executed so as to avoid negative income tax treatment, and found an exception to the parol evidence rule in order to allow admission of parol evidence, not to vary the terms of the writing, but to show that a "writing, although purporting to be a contract, is, in fact, no contract at all." (216 AD2d 65, 66 [1st Dep't. 1995], *lv denied* 88 NY2d 802 [1996]). Similarly, in *Dayan v Yurkowski*, the Court denied summary judgment and held that the defendant's parol evidence should be considered to show that the note, while valid on its face, was not intended to take effect (238 AD2d 541 [2d Dep't 1997]; *see also, Paolangeli v Cowles*, 208 AD2d 1174, 1175 [3d Dep't 1994]).

Here, where plaintiff and all the defendants copiously cite to factual support, a material issue of fact exists regarding the intention of the note's enforceability. While the documents speak for themselves, plaintiff raises material questions of fact concerning the actual intent behind the promissory note. She argues that the promissory note's purpose was to facilitate the estate planning of Arie Genger and the transfer of funds between the family members with lessened tax consequences. Indeed, it is curious that interest payments were made by the Partnership for several years and then ceased, and that Sagi Genger testified that TPR

Investment's 2002 notice was "pro forma" and not meant as an actual request that payment be made. It could be found that enforcement of the note's terms was only made after Sagi Genger allegedly came into control of both TPR Investment and D&K Ltd. Partnership. Given the testimonial evidence in particular, there is a question of fact as to whether the promissory note was intended to be an enforceable agreement, and it would be premature to apply a Statute of Frauds analysis to the cause of action. In addition, as plaintiff has established that there are questions of fact as to whether defendant acted with intent to defraud plaintiff and D&K Ltd. Partnership and provided substantial assistance to D&K GP in particular to advance the fraud's commission, the branch of the motion seeking summary judgment and dismissal of the 6th and 7th causes of action is denied.

The 8th cause of action alleges conspiracy to commit fraud. For the same reasons set forth above in discussing Dalia Genger's motion, this branch of defendant's motion is granted.

The 16th cause of action alleges promissory estoppel. This is an equitable cause of action and must allege "a clear and unambiguous promise by defendants upon which [the plaintiff] reasonably and foreseeably relied to [plaintiff's] detriment." (*401 Hotel, L.P. v MTI/The Image Group, Inc.*, 251 AD2d 125, 126 [1st Dept. 1998]). Here, plaintiff alleges that it was the promise and intent of Arie Genger and the family as a whole, that the promissory note was not to be enforced, so as to preserve the trust accounts, and that she relied on that promise these many years only to learn that one of the main assets of her trust account had been sold in violation of the promise. Defendant argues not only that the documents state otherwise, but that plaintiff may not assert promissory estoppel in order to avoid the affirmative defense of the statute of frauds, citing *Cohen v Brown, Harris, Stevens, Inc.*, 64 NY2d 728 (1984), and *Lowinger v Lowinger*, 287 AD2d 39, 45 (1st Dept. 2001), *lv denied* 98 NY2d 605 (2002).

While the assertion of the statute of frauds is often sufficient to cause a dismissal of a claim of promissory estoppel, exceptions include where “the circumstances are such as to render it unconscionable to deny” the promise upon which the plaintiff has relied (*see, Philo Smith & Co. v. USLIFE Corp.*, 554 F.2d 34, 36 [2d Cir. N.Y. 1977]). Here, where there are questions of fact as to whether defendants intentionally breached the family agreement concerning the entirety of the estate planning and unconscionably caused plaintiff to lose a significant amount of her trust funds to their benefit, with the possibility of losing all of the funds, defendant has not established entitlement to summary judgment and dismissal of the claim of promissory estoppel notwithstanding his defense of the statute of frauds (*see, Swerdloff v Mobil Oil Corp.*, 74 AD2d 258, 261 [2d Dep’t 1980], *app denied* 50 NY2d 913 [1980]). Accordingly, defendant’s motion for summary judgment and dismissal of the 16th cause of action is denied.

E. D&K GP's Motion for Partial Summary Judgment (Sequence Number 004)

Defendant D&K GP seeks summary judgment and dismissal of “all” the causes of action of the complaint as against it, but its motion papers specifically addresses only the 4th, 6th, 7th, and 8th causes of action.⁹

As an initial issue, D&K GP argues that plaintiff, “in her capacity as beneficiary under the Orly Trust and in the Orly Trust’s capacity as limited partner in D&K LP, agreed not to bring an action against D&K GP.” (Lyons {D&K GP} Aff. [Doc. 21] ¶ 5). Specifically, defendant points to the “Amended and Restated Limited Partnership Agreement of D&K Limited Partnership,” in which Leah Fang as trustee for both the Orly and Sagi trusts, agreed that the trusts expressly waived their right to bring an action against D&K GP, the General Partner; Sagi

⁹D&K GP did not seek summary judgment as against the 2nd or 3rd causes of action, in which it is also named as a defendant.

Genger signed on behalf of D&K GP (Doc. 22-8). Accordingly, D&K GP argues that summary judgment and dismissal of the claims against it should be dismissed in their entirety. However, this agreement provides that its partners, which include the Orly Genger 1993 Trust, may sue for “fraud, bad faith, or willful misconduct.” (Doc. 22-8:5). Plaintiff alleges that there has been bad faith and fraud by various family entities as concerns the enforcement of the promissory note, and including various documents signed on behalf of the Genger trusts, as well as D&K Ltd. Partnership. At the very least, there appear to be irregularities. Summary judgment and dismissal on this ground is not appropriate.

The 4th cause of action, brought by the Orly Genger 1993 Trust and D&K Ltd. Partnership against both defendant D&K GP and Sagi Genger, claims defendants prevented the Ltd. Partnership from honoring its obligations under the note, and that it tortiously interfered with the contract.

Tortious interference with contractual relations consists of four elements: a contract between plaintiff and a third party; the defendant’s knowledge of the contract; the defendant’s intentional inducement of the third party to breach or otherwise render performance impossible; and resulting damages to plaintiff (*Kronos, Inc. v AVX Corp.*, 81 NY2d 90, 94 [1993], citation omitted). Defendant argues that, as the general partner to D&K Ltd. Partnership, it is a party to the contract at issue, that it, too, has also been injured by the nonpayment and resulting foreclosure, and that a party to a contract cannot tortiously interfere with the contract (Def. Memo of Law § IV [Doc. 22:12]). Plaintiff argues that according to Sagi Genger’s testimony during the arbitration proceeding, Dalia Genger had repaid her four percent interest in the promissory note, and that therefore D&K GP was not a party to the agreement.

Here, the contract is the promissory note between D&K Ltd. Partnership and TPR

Investment. Defendant D&K GP knew of the contract, but was also the general partner of the Limited Partnership from 2004 onward, and thus is understood to be a party to the contract. This is because the management of the property and the business of the partnership are vested exclusively in the general partners (*Durant v Abendroth*, 97 NY 132, 144 [1884]). By law, a general partner in a limited partnership is subject to all the restrictions and liabilities of a partner in a partnership without limited partners, although it may not undertake certain actions without the written consent of the limited partners, as defined in the statute (Limited Partnerships § 98). Thus, plaintiff's argument that Dalia Genger had repaid the interest she owed on the promissory note, does not divest defendant of its rights and duties as general partner. Accordingly, as it was the general partner of D&K Ltd. Partnership, no claim of tortious interference with the contract may lie. Summary judgment and dismissal of the 4th cause of action against defendant is granted.

The 6th and 7th causes of action are fraud, and aiding and abetting fraud. The elements of both causes of action have been previously set forth. There are questions of material fact as to whether defendant engaged in fraud and in aiding and abetting fraud, and accordingly the branch of defendant's motion for summary dismissal of these two causes of action is denied.

The branch of the motion to dismiss the 8th cause of action, claiming conspiracy to commit fraud, is granted, for the reasons stated previously as concerns the other defendants.

F. TPR's Motion for Summary Judgment (motion sequence no. 005)

Defendant TPR moves for summary judgment and dismissal of the 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th, 14th, 15th, and 16th causes of action as against it. In sum, it argues that the documentary evidence establishes that there are no material questions of fact that would preclude a grant of summary judgment and dismissal of the complaint as against it.

The branch of the motion to dismiss the 8th cause of action, alleging conspiracy to

commit fraud, is granted for the reasons set forth above concerning the other defendants.

The 9th cause of action seeks declaratory relief and damages pursuant to NY UCC §§ 9-627, 610, and 611-614, as concerns the notice of foreclosure and the sale. UCC § 9-610 provides that every aspect of the disposition of collateral after a default must be commercially reasonable. UCC § 9-611 (c) (2) provides that before the disposition of collateral, the secured party shall send an authenticated notification of disposition to “any secondary obligor.” UCC § 9-612 (b) provides that for a non-consumer transaction, 10 days is sufficient notice before the disposition. UCC § 9-613 (a) (4) requires that for the notification of disposition to be sufficient, it must include a statement that the debtor is entitled to an accounting of the unpaid indebtedness and the charge, if any, for an accounting. UCC § 9-613 (a) (5) requires that for the notification of disposition to be sufficient, it must state the time and place of the public disposition or the time after which any other disposition is to be made. UCC § 9-627 provides that simply because a greater amount could have been obtained is not in itself sufficient to preclude the secured party from establishing that the disposition was made in a commercially reasonable manner, and describes what are commercially reasonable dispositions.

The complaint alleges that TPR Investment failed to properly notify the Orly Genger 1993 Trust or Orly Genger of the sale of the shares of TPR owed by D&K Ltd. Partnership, and that the notice of August 31, 2008 failed to state that D&K Ltd. Partnership is entitled to an accounting of its unpaid indebtedness, or to provide the time and place of the disposition of the collateral. In addition, the \$2,200,000 sale price was only a “fraction” of the original \$10,200,000 purchase price, and failed to take into consideration certain potential monies received from the sale of TRI shares to the Trump group.

Defendant TPR Investment argues that it fully complied with the UCC requirements

when noticing the default and conducting the foreclosure sale. In addition, it argues that even if it could be found that plaintiff never received notice of the default and sale, she has not alleged that she suffered redressable damages, as she makes only a generalized statement that the shares sold for a fraction of their original purchase price (Def. Memo of Law [Doc.29] p. 8, citing Ver. Compl. [Doc. 7-1] ¶ 146)). It also argues that plaintiff does not offer any evidence as to what the fair market value of the TPR Investment shares might have been and, as stated explicitly in the statute, an enforcement will not be found commercially unviable simply because a greater amount could have been obtained (UCC § 9-627 [a]).

An examination of the notice shows that certain of the complaint's allegations have no merit but that others are meritorious (Def. Memo of Law [Doc. 29] p. 7, citing Ex. K [Doc. 29-1:136]). The notice is not addressed to either of the limited partners, the Orly or Sagi Genger trusts, who as guarantors, are secondary obligors, and there is no proof of service provided by defendant establishing notification. The notice indicates that the date of the sale was February 27, 2009, but does not indicate the date of the notice itself, meaning that defendant has not established that the 10-day rule was adhered to. Furthermore, given that the January 31, 2009, Meeting Agreement stated in paragraph 8 that TPR would wait 30 days until selling the shares, it appears that the sale on February 27, 2009 was premature in any event (see Doc. 22-4:17-18)). As for the claimed violation of UCC § 9-627, there remain questions of fact as to whether the sale was itself conducted in a commercially reasonable manner as set forth in the statute, whether or not the shares were sold at a value far lesser value than their worth. However, the notice clearly indicates the date, time, and location of the sale, and also that D&K Ltd. Partnership is entitled to an accounting and includes the telephone number to call. Accordingly, the branch of defendant's motion seeking summary judgment and dismissal of the 9th cause of

action is granted solely to the extent that the claims seeking declarations of violations of UCC § 9-613 (a) (4) and (a) (5), are dismissed. The remainder of the 9th cause of action remains.

The 10th cause of action alleges conversion and seeks replevin, and the 11th cause of action seeks a judgment declaring that D&K Ltd. Partnership has a superior right to possess chattel under CPLR 7101. Conversion is when a person, without authority, intentionally exercises control over the property of another person and interferes with the other person's right of possession (*see, Sporn v MCA Records Inc.*, 58 NY2d 482, 487 [1983]). Replevin, under Article 71 of the CPLR, is a remedy ancillary to an action to recover a chattel (*see Sears Roebuck & Co. v Austin*, 60 Misc. 2d 908, 908 [Civ. Ct., NY County 1969]). Defendant argues that plaintiff does not adequately plead the elements of conversion and thus cannot establish that replevin is appropriate, nor does she show that she is entitled in the 11th cause of action to a declaration that she has a superior right to that of defendant's in the TPR Investment shares. It argues that plaintiff does not establish that its assuming ownership rights to the shares was unauthorized, nor does she show that D&K Ltd. Partnership or any other entity had a superior right.

The claim of conversion and replevin, and the declaration as to whose right is superior, go to the heart of plaintiff's complaint. Because, as set forth in the discussion above, there are disputed questions of fact as to the intent of the promissory note and Pledge Agreement and whether enforcement of them was ever contemplated, there can be no summary determination as to who is entitled to the shares and no declaratory relief granted at this time. Accordingly, the branches of defendant's motion for summary dismissal of the 10th and 11th causes of action are denied.

The 12th cause of action seeks a preliminary injunction to enjoin TPR Investment from in

any matter disposing of the TPR shares pending a final determination of the declaratory judgment branch of the complaint. This cause of action is redundant of the motion separately brought by plaintiff and opposed by defendants on grounds similar to those articulated by defendant in its motion for summary judgment. As the plaintiff's motion for a preliminary injunction has been granted as set forth above, summary judgment and dismissal of this cause of action is granted. Of course, if what plaintiff is seeking is a permanent injunction, the cause of action would have to be repleaded.

The 13th cause of action seeks a constructive trust on behalf of D&K Ltd. Partnership. In equity, a constructive trust may be imposed when the movant establishes that there is a confidential or fiduciary relationship, a promise, a transfer in reliance thereon, and unjust enrichment (*Sharp v Kosmalski*, 40 NY2d 119, 121 [1976], citations omitted). Defendant argues that there is no relationship between it and plaintiff, perhaps overlooking that this claim is brought on behalf of D&K Ltd. Partnership, a minority shareholder of TPR Investment. It is disputed as to whether TPR Investment owed a fiduciary duty of care to minority shareholder D&K Ltd. Partnership (*see Alpert v 28 Williams St. Corp.*, 63 NY2d 557, 568 [1984] [fiduciary duty of majority to minority shareholders; *Salm v Feldstein*, 20 AD3d 469 [2d Dept. 2005] [fiduciary duty of managing member of company and co-member to plaintiff]). The parties dispute, of course, whether defendant was among the entities promising that the promissory note would never be enforced. Defendant argues that there was no transfer in reliance, however plaintiff sufficiently argues that D&K Ltd. Partnership pledged its shares of TPR in reliance of the promise that the note would be not enforced, citing *Lester v Zimmer*, 147 AD2d 340, 341-342 (3d Dept. 1989), which notes that the elements of a constructive trust are "flexible," and the "transfer" should be interpreted broadly. Whether defendant was unjustly enriched is a matter to

be determined at trial. Accordingly, as there are questions of fact, summary judgment is denied as to the 13th cause of action.

The 14th and 15th causes of action, brought on behalf of the Orly Genger 1993 Trust, allege constructive and actual fraudulent conveyance under New York Debtor & Creditor Law §§ 273, 276, and 277. Section 273 of the Debtor and Creditor Law provides that “every conveyance made . . . by a person who is or will be thereby rendered insolvent is fraudulent as to creditors without regard to his actual intent if the conveyance is made or the obligation is incurred without a fair consideration.” Section 276 of the Debtor & Creditor Law provides that a conveyance is actually fraudulent if it was made with actual intent “to hinder, delay, or defraud either present or future creditors.” Section 277 provides that a conveyance of partnership property made either when the partnership is insolvent or will be rendered insolvent by the conveyance, is fraudulent as to partnership creditors if the conveyance is made (a) to a partner even if there is a promise by the partner to pay partnership debts, or (b) to a non-partner without fair consideration to the partnership.

None of these statutes apply to the facts here, and defendant’s motion for summary judgment and dismissal of the two causes of action must be granted based on failure to state a cause of action. In New York, only creditors may maintain actions for fraudulent conveyance (*Geren v Quantum Chemical Corp.*, 99 F3d 401, 1995 WL 737512, **2 [2d Cir. [NY] 1995], citing *Pappa Bros. v Thompson*, 214 NYS2d 13, 15 [Sup. Ct. Nassau County, 1961]). Although plaintiff argues that the Orly Genger 1993 Trust is a creditor, she is misapplying the statute. A creditor is defined as an entity “having any claim, whether matured or unmatured, liquidated or unliquidated, absolute, fixed or contingent.” (Debtors & Creditors Law § 270). The complaint alleges that certain of the assets of the trust were wrongly conveyed to defendant by the actions

of Sagi Genger. However, to establish a constructive fraudulent conveyance, plaintiff must demonstrate: (1) that there was a conveyance; (2) that the defendant would become insolvent as a result of the conveyance; and (3) there was no fair consideration for the conveyance (see, *United States v Sweeney*, 418 F. Supp. 2d 492, 498 [SDNY 2006], citation omitted). To establish intentional fraudulent conveyance, plaintiff must show in addition that there was actual intent “to hinder, delay, or defraud . . . creditors” (*Sweeney*, at 498). Not only does plaintiff not establish that she is a creditor who has a claim, but she does not allege that *defendant* became insolvent because of the conveyance of the TPR shares. Furthermore, she offers nothing more than the statement that the shares were bought by TPR Investment for a “fraction” of their original value, to establish that there was no fair consideration. Her reliance on Debtor and Creditor Law § 277 is also misplaced, based on the facts alleged in the pleadings. Accordingly, the 14th and 15th causes of action are dismissed on summary judgment.

The 16th cause of action alleges promissory estoppel on behalf of D&K Ltd. Partnership. Defendant’s motion for summary dismissal of this cause of action is granted for the same reasons set forth in the discussion of the branch of Sagi Genger’s motion for summary judgment and dismissal of this cause of action.

Therefore,

As to Motion Sequence Number 001, due deliberation having been had, and it appearing to this Court that a cause of action exists in favor of the plaintiff and against the defendants and that the plaintiff is entitled to a preliminary injunction on the ground that the subject of the action is unique and that the defendants threaten to do an act in violation of the plaintiff’s rights respecting the subject of the action, tending to render the judgment ineffectual, as set forth in the aforesaid decision, it is

ORDERED that the undertaking is continued in the sum of \$ 150,000.00 , conditioned that the plaintiff, if it is finally determined that she was not entitled to an injunction, will pay to the defendants all damages and costs which may be sustained by reason of this injunction; and it is further

ORDERED that defendants, their agents, servants, employees and all other persons acting under the jurisdiction, supervision and/or direction of defendants, are enjoined and restrained, during the pendency of this action, from doing or suffering to be done, directly or through any attorney, agent, servant, employee or other person under the supervision or control of defendant or otherwise, any of the following acts: removing the Shares from the state, or otherwise transferring, selling, pledging, assigning, or otherwise disposing of the Shares; and it is further

ORDERED that as to Motion Sequence Number 002, the motion for summary judgment by Dalia Genger is granted only to the extent of dismissing the 1st and 8th causes of action as against her in the first amended verified complaint, and is otherwise denied; and it is further

ORDERED that as to Motion Sequence Number 003, the motion for partial summary judgment by Sagi Genger is granted only to the extent of dismissing the 8th and 16th causes of action as against him in the first amended verified complaint, and is otherwise denied; and it is further

ORDERED that as to Motion Sequence Number 004, the motion for partial summary judgment by D&K GP is granted only to the extent of dismissing the 4th and 8th causes of action against it in the first amended verified complaint, and is otherwise denied, and it is further

ORDERED that as to Motion Sequence Number 005, the motion for summary judgment by TPR Investment Associates, Inc., is granted only to the extent of dismissing the 8th, 12th, 14th,

15th, and 16th causes of action in their entirety as against this defendant, and as to the 9th cause of action, dismissing the claims alleging violations of UCC § 9-613 (a) (4) and (a) (5); and the motion is otherwise denied; and it is further

ORDERED that as to Motion Sequence Number 006, the motion to amend the complaint is granted to the extent set forth above; plaintiff shall e-file and serve a second amended complaint incorporating the limitations set forth herein, and serve it on all parties who shall then serve their answers in accordance with the CPLR; and it is further

ORDERED that the parties shall appear for a preliminary conference in Supreme Court, 60 Centre Street, room 212, on September 15, 2010, at 2:15 p.m.

This constitutes the decision and order of the court.

Dated: June 28, 2010
New York, New York

605 pm

Paul J. Feinman

J.S.C.