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IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS DIVISION OF ST. CROIX

WALEED HAMED, as Execute Estate of MOHAMMAD HAM		
Plaintiff/Counter v. FATHI YUSUF and UNITED 0	rclaim Defendant,) CORPORATION,)	CIVIL NO. SX-12-CV-370 ACTION FOR INJUNCTIVE RELIEF, DECLARATORY
Defendants/Cour	nterclaimants,	JUDGMENT, AND PARTNERSHIP DISSOLUTION WIND UP, AND ACCOUNTING
WALEED HAMED, WAHEEI MUFEED HAMED, HISHAM PLESSEN ENTERPRISES, IN	HAMED, and)))
Additional Counterclain	n Defendants.	Consolidated With
WALEED HAMED, as Execut Estate of MOHAMMAD HAM)))
	Plaintiff,	CIVIL NO. SX-14-CV-287
V.	,	,) ACTION FOR DAMAGES AND DECLARATORY JUDGMENT
UNITED CORPORATION,) DECEARATORT JODGMENT
	Defendant.)
WALEED HAMED, as Execut Estate of MOHAMMAD HAM)) CIVIL NO. SX-14-CV-278
v.	Plaintiff,	ACTION FOR DEBT AND CONVERSION
FATHI YUSUF,)
	Defendant.))

DUDLEY, TOPPER AND FEUERZEIG, LLP

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P.O. Box 756
St. Thomas, U.S. V.I. 00804-0756
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YUSUF'S RESPONSE TO HAMED'S MOTION AS TO HAMED CLAIM NO. H-2: \$2,784,706.25 TAKEN IN 2012 BY YUSUF

Defendant/counterclaimant Fathi Yusuf ("Yusuf"), through his undersigned counsel, respectfully submits this Response to Hamed's Motion as to Hamed Claim No. H-2: \$2,784,706.25 Taken in 2012 by Yusuf (the "Motion").

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INTRODUCTION

Hamed attempts to characterize Yusuf's removal of \$2.7 million as an improper withdrawal and to view it in isolation without awaiting a determination on the overall accounting between the Partners. While there is no dispute that Yusuf's account should be charged with the withdrawal, and it has been in the report prepared by BDO, the accounting which gave rise to this withdrawal is disputed and requires discovery. Yusuf claimed entitlement to the \$2.7 million as a matching withdrawal to reconcile certain corresponding past withdrawals taken by Hamed. Those included \$1.6 million in acknowledged withdrawals removed by the Hameds from the Plaza Extra stores, \$44,355.50 and \$44,696.00 to off-set Waleed Hamed's unilateral withdrawal of all the funds in two bank accounts, one in St. Maarten and one at Cairo Amman Bank in 2012, together with receipts evidencing additional Hamed withdrawals totaling the \$2.7 million. See Exhibit A - Letter from Yusuf to Hamed dated August 15, 2012, setting forth the calculations, which accompanied the Yusuf's withdrawal together with the back-up supporting documentation.

Hamed claims that the \$1.6 million portion of this withdrawal is time-barred by Judge Brady's Order dated July 21, 2017 ("Limitation Order") or, at least, requires discovery, if not barred. Consideration of the \$1.6 million in withdrawals is not time barred because Hamed acknowledged the \$1.6 million in withdrawals in 2012 to various individuals including Bakir Hussein. See Exhibit B – Affidavit of Bakir Hussein. Yusuf's matching withdrawal of \$2.7 million was not wrongful, has been acknowledged, and is allocated to Yusuf as part of the extensive accounting prepared by BDO to reflect past Partnership withdrawals. It should not be viewed in isolation but considered together with the various allocations and transactions that make up the BDO report of past Partnership withdrawals.

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A. Historical System of Withdrawals by the Partners

Throughout the Partnership, the Partners and their agents (*i.e.*, their sons) would withdraw cash from safes at the Plaza Extra Stores. Evidence of these withdrawals came in multiple forms including, *inter alia*, receipts, checks or ledger entries. In addition, the Partners and their agents used funds generated by the Plaza Extra Stores for personal expenses. These payments for personal expenses were to be counted against each Partner as a distribution. The withdrawals and payments for personal expenses were supposed to be done on the "honor system," which relied upon each Partner and their agents to disclose to the other Partner, via "tickets" or receipts left in the store safes, when withdrawals were made or personal expenses were paid from Partnership funds. Occasionally, the Partners would reconcile the various withdrawals and expenses between them.

Upon review of the various accounting records as well as information regarding personal accounts and assets of the Partners and their agents, Yusuf submits that Hamed and his agents failed to fully disclose all of the funds they withdrew from the Partnership or personal expenses they paid with Partnership funds. Consequently, these previously undisclosed withdrawals and expenses are treated as distributions in Yusuf's Original Claims and his Amended Claims. A full accounting of the Partnership withdrawals is set forth in the Expert Report of Fernando Scherrer of BDO Puerto Rico, P.S.C. ("BDO") attached as Exhibit J to the Original Claims. Based on that report, Hamed's withdrawals/distributions exceeded Yusuf's withdrawals/distributions by \$19,341,350.72. See Exhibit J to the Original Claims at p. 62-3. As a result, under the Original Claims, Yusuf calculated that \$9,670,675.36 should be awarded to him to equalize the distributions between the Partners so that both Partners have equal distributions of \$18,820,989.98.

Subsequent to the Limitation Order limiting the accounting claims to those transactions occurring on or after September 17, 2006, BDO adjusted their calculations to reflect only

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Hamed v. Yusuf, SX-12-CV-370

Yusuf's Response to Hamed's Motion As To Hamed Claim No. H-2;

\$2,784,706.25 Taken in 2012 by Yusuf

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transactions from that date forward. Their revised calculations were set forth in Exhibit J-2

attached to the Amended Claims. As per the revised calculations, Yusuf contends that Hamed

received \$5,099,638.44 more than Yusuf for the defined period. As a result of these amended

calculations, Yusuf contends that \$2,549,819.22 should be awarded to him to equalize the

distributions between the Partners for the disparity in distributions from September 17, 2006

forward so that both Partners have equal distributions.

Included among these numerous allocations in the BDO report is the \$2.7 million Yusuf

withdrew in August 2012 and the corresponding and acknowledged Hamed withdrawals.

identified during the hearing on December 15, 2017, the various transactions identified and

allocated by BDO are in dispute. It is Yusuf's position that further discovery is needed as to these

claims as well as any accounting claims that Hamed asserts involving transactions occurring on or

after September 17, 2006 and that review of a single transaction, viewed in isolation is not

appropriate and cannot be ruled upon individually.

B. Allocations Between the Partners Relating to the \$2.7 Million Withdrawal

by Yusuf to Reconcile Corresponding Past Withdrawals of Hamed

Yusuf submits that in August 2012, in an effort to true-up past documented and

acknowledged withdrawals as between the Hameds and Yusufs, he caused \$2.7 million to be paid

to himself from the Partnership's account. The payment of these funds was made as a matching

withdrawal to address the disparity of the prior Partnership distributions to Hamed and his sons.

The documented support for this allocation to even up the withdrawals between the families

included \$1.6 million to compensate Yusuf for Hamed and his agents' prior withdrawals. See

Exhibit A. The amount had been acknowledged by the Partners repeatedly and was the subject of

their efforts to resolve their differences prior to this suit through "mediation" with members of

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Hamed v. Yusuf, SX-12-CV-370 Yusuf's Response to Hamed's Motion As To Hamed Claim No. H-2: \$2,784,706.25 Taken in 2012 by Yusuf Page 5

their community. Waleed Hamed acknowledged this debt repeatedly in 2012, before various individuals including Bakir Hussein who affirmed that:

> In several open meetings, Mr. Yusuf said that the Hameds took \$1.6 million more than the Yusufs. Waleed Hamed admitted that he took the excess \$1.6 million dollars, which is the difference between the \$2.9 million taken by the Hameds and the \$1.3 million taken by the Yusufs. In addition to the \$1.6 million dollars which I heard Waleed Hamed admit to, both Waleed Hamed and Fathi Yusuf both agreed to additional withdrawals by the Yusufs provided that the Yusuf's produced receipts to show proof of the additional withdrawals.1

See Exhibit B, Affidavit of Bakir Hussein, ¶9.2 Judge Brady has already found that an oral acknowledgement of a debt means, for statute of limitation purposes, that the debt is deemed to have arisen or accrued on the date of the acknowledgment. See Exhibit C, Judge Brady Order, dated April 27, 2015 relating to withdrawal of rent ("Rent Order"), p. 7-8.3

As the \$1.6 million owed to Yusuf was an acknowledged amount in 2012, it, together with additional documented receipts and an allocation of the balances remaining in two bank accounts held in Saint Maarten and at Cairo Amman Bank (closed by Waleed Hamed in 2012) comprised the total withdrawal of \$2.7 million. See Exhibit A. The funds evened out the prior admitted distributions of the Hameds. In the BDO Report, the \$2.7 million dollar withdrawal is included as a charge against Yusuf and the corresponding past withdrawals of the \$1.6 million and other amounts are included as charges against Hamed. See Exhibit D - Table Reflecting Allocation to

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A ledger and receipts were produced by Yusuf at the time he notified Hamed that he intended to make the \$2.7 million payment. See Exhibit A.

² Although raised by Yusuf in the Bench Memorandum for Status Conference, Hamed fails to address the acknowledgment of the debt by Hamed as reflected in the affidavit of Bakir Hussein. See Exhibit A to Bench Memorandum for Status Conference, ftn. 2 and Exhibit 1 thereto.

³ While this case involves a latches based limitation on Yusuf's accounting claims barring pre-September 17, 2016 claims, Judge Brady's analysis shows that the same result would have obtained under the analogous six-year statute of limitation. See Judge Brady Order, dated July 21, 2017 at p. 32.

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Yusuf in the BDO report. Yusuf is not disputing that the funds were removed and that his withdrawal of the funds would count as a partner distribution. The funds were withdrawn so as to true-up the partnership withdrawals by the Hameds. Both are documented, acknowledged and properly allocated in the BDO Report.

Hamed contends that the \$2.7 million matching withdrawal should not have been made and that he is entitled to interest on the withdrawal. The position is without merit. The withdrawal of the \$2.7 million as a matching distribution, as the corresponding earlier Hamed withdrawals are allocated to Hamed. Under Yusuf's global reconciliation of past partnership withdrawals as amended per the Limitation Order, Hamed would still owe \$2,549,819.22 which should be awarded to Yusuf to equalize the distributions between the Partners for the disparity in distributions from September 17, 2006 forward. Subsumed in this global reconciliation are the matching withdrawals of \$2.7 million for each partner. Hence, the \$2.7 million dollar withdrawal by Yusuf cannot be considered and ruled upon without the benefit of considering the corresponding withdrawals by the Hameds that it was meant to equalize. Otherwise, it operates as a windfall to the Hameds. To the extent that the corresponding Hamed withdrawals are disputed, discovery is needed to bring the issue to resolution. In either event, Yusuf has acknowledged the \$2.7 million withdrawal, it is charged against his account and is properly dealt with as part of the cumulative reconciliation, which, at this point, ultimately has the Hameds owing the Yusufs. Hence, this transaction, which occurred in 2012, is disputed and requires further discovery. It is not ripe for resolution at this point.

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Yusuf submits that attempting to adjudicate an isolated withdrawal of a Partner is counterproductive as the cumulative withdrawals of the Partners should be considered before any awards or distributions are made. Hamed attempts to isolate one transaction to view it in a vacuum,

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Yusuf's Response to Hamed's Motion As To Hamed Claim No. H-2:

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which skews the reconciliation. The allocation cannot be viewed without considering its attending

circumstances. To do so would operate as an inappropriate gain to one party and not be a true

reconciliation of acknowledged withdrawals between the Partners. Again, as the issue is disputed,

additional discovery is needed before resolution can be made.

CONCLUSION

Even the revised preliminary accounting of the historical withdrawals and distributions

between the Partners adjusted to reflect the period from September 17, 2006 forward, both

disclosed and undisclosed, still reveals a large discrepancy in Yusuf's favor. Again, these

calculations were prepared without the benefit of deposition testimony and additional written

discovery following the lifting of the discovery stay. It is anticipated that additional discovery will

yield information necessitating further revisions to these calculations. On balance, there exists a

substantial amount due to Yusuf to reconcile the Partners' withdrawals and distributions and to

view one transaction without the comprehensive reconciliation is improper. Accordingly, the

Motion should be denied.

Respectfully submitted,

DUDLEY, TOPPER and FEUERZEIG, LLP

DATED: January 16, 2018

By:

Gregory H. Hodges (V.I. Bar No. 174)

Charlotte K. Perrell (V.I. Bar No. 1281)

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Hamed v. Yusuf, SX-12-CV-370 Yusuf's Response to Hamed's Motion As To Hamed Claim No. H-2: \$2,784,706.25 Taken in 2012 by Yusuf Page 8

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that on this 16th day of January, 2018, I caused the foregoing Yusuf's Response to Hamed's Motion As To Hamed Claim No. H-2: \$2,784,706.25 Taken in 2012 by Yusuf to be served upon the following via the Case Anywhere docketing system:

Joel H. Holt, Esq.

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Email: jeffreymlaw@yahoo.com

The Honorable Edgar A. Ross Email: edgarrossjudge@hotmail.com

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INDEX OF EXHIBITS

Exhibit A - Letter from Yusuf to Hamed dated August 15, 2012

Exhibit B - Affidavit of Bakir Hussein

Exhibit C - Rent Order from Judge Brady, dated April 27, 2015

Exhibit D - Table Reflecting Allocation to Yusuf in the BDO Report

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Exhibit A

UNITED CORPORATION d/b/a PLAZA EXTRA SUPERMARKET 4C & 4D Sion Farm Christiansted, VI 00820

BY HAND DELIVERY

irenia son

Date: August 15, 2012

Mohnmmed Hamed By and through Waleed Hamed Plaza Extra Supermarket Sion Farm Store Christiansted, V.I. 00820

Re: Notice of Withdrawal

Dear Mr. Hamed,

The amount of \$2,784,706.25 will be withdrawn from United's operating account effective August 15th, 2012. This amount equals the proceeds you previously withdrew through your agent Waleed Hamed. To ensure full accuracy, attached are the receipts you requested during mediation demonstrating the \$1,095,381.75 of withdrawals. The below itemized amounts are not in dispute.

Past Confirmed Withdrawals\$1,	600,000,00
Additional Withdrawals per the attached requested receipts\$1	,095,381.75
Fifty percent (50%) of St. Magreen Bank Account.	. \$44,355,50
Fifty percent (50%) of Cairo Amman Bank	\$44,696.00

Should you have any concerns about these amounts, please provide the basis for your concerns in writing. Thank you.

Yours/ for Fathi Yusuf



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DEFENDANTS' RESPONSE 0112052

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DEFENDANTS' RESPONSE 0112059

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DEFENDANTS' RESPONSE 0112061

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DEFENDANTS' RESPONSE 0112066

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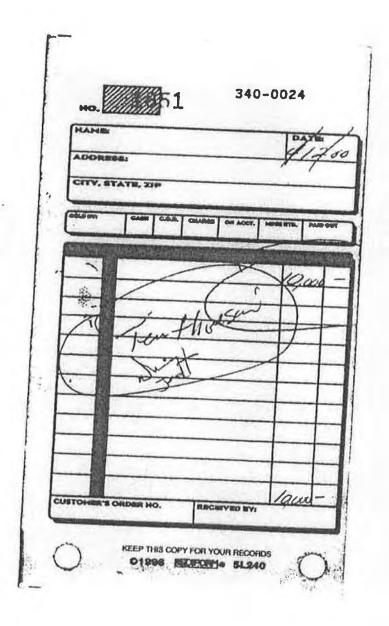
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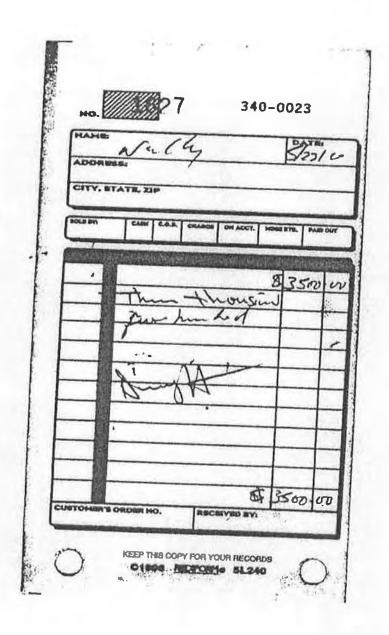
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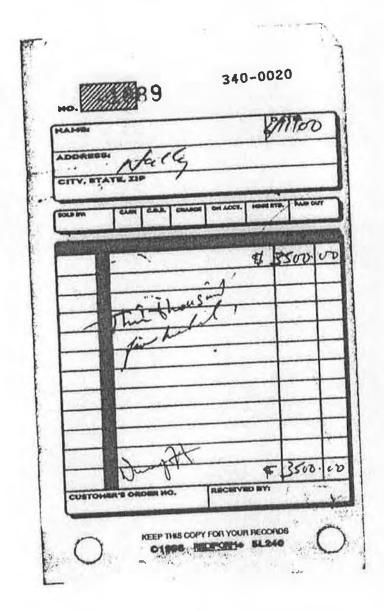
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PLAZA EXTRA

4C-4D'SION FRAM
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(340) 778-6240

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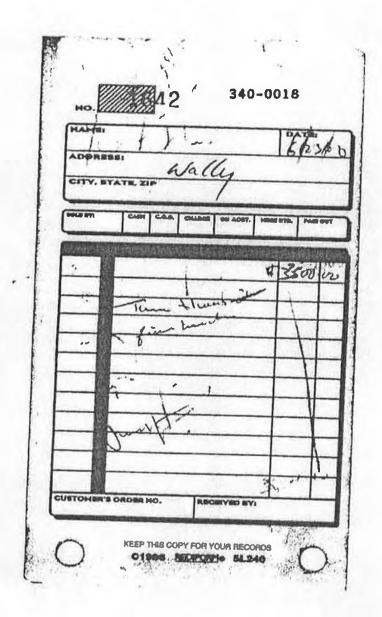
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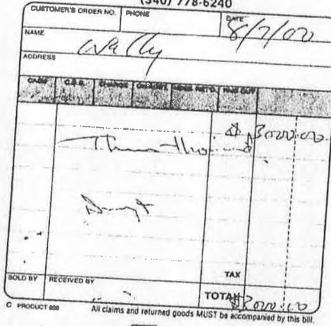
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To Reorder. Thank You

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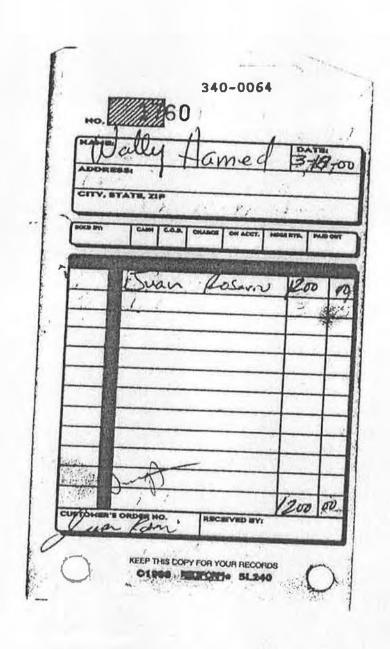
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Plaza Extra 1153

4C & D Estate Sion Farm C'sted, St. Croix, V.I. 00821 Tel: (340) 778-6240 Fax: (340) 778-1200

#14 Estate Plessen F'sted, St. Croix, V.I. 00841 Tel: (340) 719-1870 Fax: (340) 719-1874

PRICE Phone Š Date_ 449-1649 328 000 DESCRIPTION 3 Purchase Order No. Address_ SOLD BY Account QUAN

All claims and returned items MUST be accompanied by this invoice.

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Plaza Extra 0793 & 250100 #14 Estate Plessen Fsted, St. Croix, V.I. 00841 Tel: (340) 719-1870 CHARGE 449-1648 Fax: (340) 719-1874 A A Phone OFFC OFFC Date. 36 our when ALLOS > 000 4C & D Estate Sion Farm C'sted, St. Croix, V.J. 00821 3 Ser. DESCRIPTION Fax: (340) 778-1200 Tel: (340) 778-6240 3 3 Received by Purchase Order No. SOLD BY Account Address OUAN

All claims and returned items MUST be accompanied by this invoice

Plaza Extra 0894

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#14 Estate Plessen Fsted, St. Croix, V.I. 00841 Tel: (340) 719-1870 Fax: (340) 719-1874

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Plaza Extra 1202

4C & D Estate Sion Farm C'sted, St. Croix, V.I. 00821 Tel: (340) 778-6240 Fax: (340) 778-1200 #14 Estate Plessen F'sted, St. Croix, V.f. 00841 Tel: (340) 719-1870 Fax: (340) 719-1874

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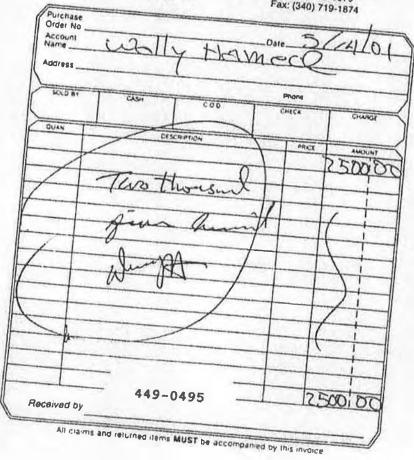
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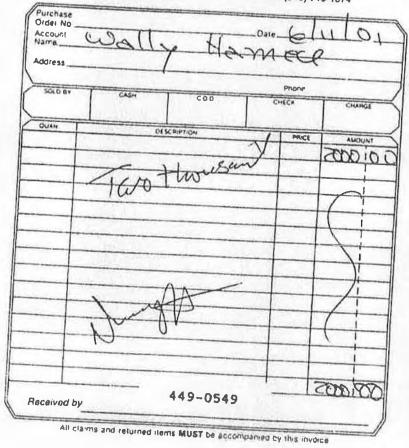
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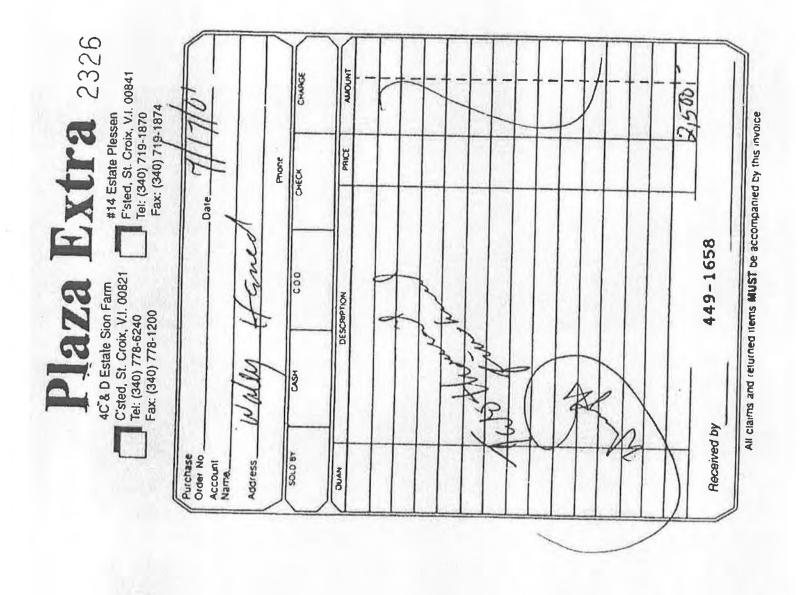
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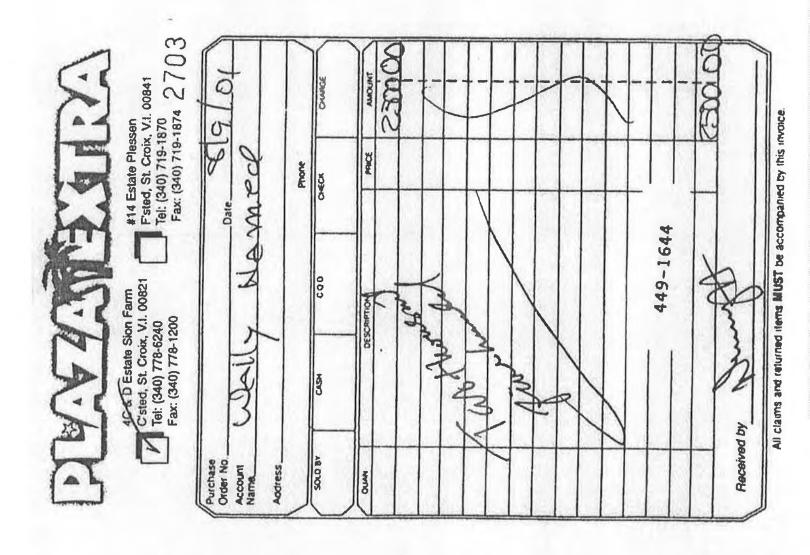
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Exhibit B

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS DIVISION OF ST. CROIX

TERRITORY OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS)
) SS
DIVISION OF ST. CROIX)

AFFIDAVIT OF BAKIR HUSSEIN

I, BAKIR HUSSEIN, being first duly sworn, declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

- 1. I am an adult of sound mind, and a resident of St. Croix, Virgin Islands; I personally know Fathi Yusuf, Waleed Hamed, and Mohammed Hamed. I make this affidavit of my own personal knowledge and information.
- 2. I attended several meetings and had numerous discussions with Fathi Yusuf, Waleed Hamed and Mohammed Hamed, together and separately, and as such, I am aware of the facts in this Affidavit.
- 3. Sometime in mid-2012, I heard rumors of a potential split between the Hamed and Yusuf families. I visited Mr. Yusuf to ask about the split, and at the time Mr. Yusuf said there was nothing wrong between the families, except that Mr. Yusuf wanted to separate from the Hameds.
- 4. A few weeks later, I asked him again about the rumored split, Mr. Yusuf then expressed his concerns regarding the unauthorized withdrawals of funds by Waleed Hamed. At that point, I realized along with other friends of both families that there was a problem between the Yusuf and Hamed families.
- 5. Over a six to eight month period, I was involved in a total of three meetings between the Hamed and Yusuf families. Other mutual friends were also present at those meeting. One of the meetings was held at Best Furniture, while the other meetings were held at various locations.
- 6. There were two major disputes between the Yusufs and Hameds. The first dispute was Waleed Hamed's unauthorized taking of monies belonging to the Plaza Extra supermarket stores

- without Mr. Yusuf's knowledge. The second dispute concerned the issue of excess funds that were withdrawn by the Hameds for which the Yusuf's did not take in matching withdrawals.
- 7. As to the first dispute, Mr. Yusuf, Walced Hamed, and Mohammed Hamed agreed that Mr. Yusuf would receive title to two properties in satisfaction of Walced Hamed's unauthorized withdrawals. The first property is an 8 acre property located in Jordan, and the second property was a 9-10 acre property in Tutu Park.
- 8. To my knowledge the first property was transferred to Mr. Yusuf, however to date the second property was not transferred.
- 9. In several open meetings, Mr. Yusuf said that the Hameds took \$1.6 million more than the Yusufs. Waleed Hamed admitted that he took the excess \$1.6 million dollars, which is the difference between the \$2.9 Million taken by the Hameds and the \$1.3 Million taken by the Yusufs. In addition to the \$1.6 million dollars which I heard Waleed Hamed admit to, both Waleed Hamed and Fathi Yusuf both agreed to additional withdrawals by the Yusufs provided that the Yusufs produced receipts to show proof of the additional withdrawals.
- 10. I personally heard Waleed Hamed admitting to owing \$1.6 million dollars to the Yusufs as a result of excess withdrawals by the Hameds, and that the receipts for that amount were not available because they were destroyed prior to the raid by the U.S. Government.
- 11. In addition, Mr. Yusuf and Walced Hamed discussed the unpaid rent on the Plaza Extra East store that has been pending for many years. Specifically, Waleed Hamed agreed to pay the rent for the rental period prior to 2004.
- 12. At one point, there was an agreement in place between the Hameds and Fathi Yusuf that the Hameds would transfer two (2) properties to Mr. Yusuf for what he had discovered so far.
- 12. Despite meeting with both sides, individually and together on a number of occasions, two issues began to stand out as the sticking points.
- 13. First, Fathi Yusuf stated that the Hameds were not being straight with him when the Hameds refused to transfer the second property, as agreed for the transactions he had discovered so far. On the other hand, Waleed Hamed said that he did not believe that Fathi would not stop with his final request for the third property for everything. At the end, the parties could not agree to the transfer of the third piece of land to satisfy Mr. Yusuf's claims regarding the unauthorized monies taken by the Hameds. The parties also could not agree on how to divide up the business and go their separate ways.

I attest that the above facts are true.

Date: 59-10-2014

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN TO before me On this _ O day of _ _____, 2014.

NOTARYPUBLIC

MIZAR A. DEWOOD My Cormission #: LNP-09-11 Expires. July 14, 2015 St. Croix, U.S.V.I.

Exhibit C

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

DIVISION OF ____ST. CROIX

MOHAMMED HAMED by his authorized agent WAL	FFD HAMED	CASE NO.	SX-12-CV-370	
The second secon	Plaintiff)	ACTION FOR	DAMAGES; ET AL	
Vs.)			
FATHI YUSUF and UNITED CORPORATION. ET AL))			

NOTICE OF ENTRY OF JUDGMENT/ORDER

TO:	JOEL HOLT, ESQ.; CARL HARTMANN III, Esquire	HON. EDGAR ROSS (edgarrossjud	ge@hotmail.com)
	NIZAR DEWOOD, ESQ.; GREGORY HODGES, Esquire	JUDGES AND MAGISTRATES OF TH	IE SUPERIOR COURT
	MARK ECKARD, ESQ.; JEFFREY MOORHEAD, Esquire	LAW CĽERKS; LAW LIBRARY;	T; RECORD BOOK
	Please take notice that on APRIL 27, 2015		Memorandum Order was
enter	ed by this Court in the above-entitled matter.		
Dated	1: April 27, 2015		
		ESTRELLA H. GEORG	E (ACTING)
		Clerk of the Superior	or Court
		J.	4
		By: IRIS D. CINTR	ON

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IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS DIVISION OF ST. CROIX

MOHAMMED HAMED by his authorized agent WALEED HAMED,)
Plaintiff/Counterclaim Defendant,	
v. FATHI YUSUF and UNITED CORPORATON,) CIVIL NO. SX-12-CV-370
Defendants/Counterclaimants) ACTION FOR DAMAGES, etc.
V.	}
WALEED HAMED, WAHEED HAMED, MUFEED HAMED, HISHAM HAMED, and PLESSEN ENTERPRISES, INC.	
Counterclaim Defendants.)

MEMORANDUM OPINION AND ORDER

THIS MATTER is before the Court on Defendant United Corporation's Motion to Withdraw Rent and Memorandum of Law in Support of United's Motion ("Motion"), filed September 9, 2013; Plaintiff's Response, filed September 16, 2013; United's Reply, filed September 27, 2013; Plaintiff's Motion for Partial Summary Judgment re the Statute of Limitations Defense Barring Defendants' Counterclaim Damages Prior to September 16, 2006 (Plaintiff's "Summary Judgment Motion"), filed May 13, 2014; and Defendant's Brief in Opposition ("Opposition"), filed June 6, 2014. For the reasons that follow, United's Motion will be granted and Plaintiff's Summary Judgment Motion will be denied, in part.

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

In its instant Motion, United seeks allegedly past due rents for Bay No. 1 of United Shopping Plaza, defined therein as "69,680 Sq. Ft. Retail Space...," "utilized for the day to day operations of Plaza Extra East Store located at 4C and 4D Estate Sion Farm, St. Croix, Virgin Islands." Motion, 1-2. Since 1986 this retail space has been leased by United to the Hamed-Yusuf Partnership ("Partnership"). According to United, and supported by the Affidavit of Defendant Yusuf, the Partnership has paid rent to United for leasing that space while operating Plaza Extra-East. Between 1986 and 1993, the parties settled rents following a request made by United. Motion, 3. Additionally, between 2004 and 2011, after United requested a rent payment for those years, the Partnership authorized payment to United for \$5,408,806. Motion, 7 (Yusuf Affidavit, ¶7 and Exhibit B).

However, according to United, the Partnership owes United substantial unpaid rents from 1994-2004 and from January 1, 2012 - September 30, 2013. As a result of the injunction, entered in April 2013, Yusuf, a United shareholder, is unable to unilaterally withdraw money from the Partnership accounts for the purpose of paying rent or for any other reason. United requests the Court to allow United to withdraw rent in the amount of \$3,999,679.73 (for 1994-2004) and \$1,234,618.98 (for 2012-2013) for a total of \$5,234,298.71 from the Partnership's account. Motion 1-2.

United argues that it was a common practice for the Partnership to make lump sum rent payments as opposed to monthly or even yearly payments. Motion, 3. United argues that it did not

¹ Defendant United's Counterclaim seeks back rent from Bays 1, 5 and 8 located in the same premises. However, for purposes of winding up the Partnership and because United's Motion only seeks back rent for Bay No. 1, this Order addresses only Bay No. 1.

seek rental payments for 1994-2004 because certain relevant financial records, informally referred to as the "black book," were seized by the FBI during the course of a criminal investigation. Motion, 7; Yusuf Affidavit, ¶8. As a result, United was unable to properly determine the amounts of past due Partnership rent and for that reason did not demand payments.

United explains in detail that the rent for Plaza Extra - East "is calculated based upon the 2012 sales of Plaza Extra -Tutu Park, St. Thomas store..." (Motion, 4). "The sales are divided by the square footage to arrive at a percentage amount. That percentage amount is multiplied by the sales of the Plaza Extra - East store located at 4C & 4D Estate Sion Farm, St. Croix." Motion, 5. According to United, this formula has been agreed upon by United and the Partnership and "...was used to calculate the rent for the period of May 5th, 2004 through December 31st, 2011... the monthly rate of \$58,791.38 is what the current monthly rent is." Yusuf Affidavit, ¶8; Exhibit C (Rent Calculations Sheet).

Plaintiff, in his Response, argues that Yusuf cites no procedural basis that would allow United, in its capacity as landlord, to withdraw rents from the Partnership's accounts. Response, 1. Plaintiff further argues that United has issued rent notices for \$250,000.00 per month as opposed to the \$58,791.38 per month stated in Yusuf's affidavit for rent allegedly due from January, 2012. Response, 4. Without disputing that some rent is due, Plaintiff disputes United's calculations, pointing to discrepancies in the store's square footage² and implying that the rent for Plaza Extra - Tutu and Plaza Extra - East should be identical. Response, 4-5.

² Plaintiff argues that the square footage of Bay No. 1 is 67,498 sq. ft. as opposed to United's claim of 69,280 sq. ft. Response, 4-5. United has consistently averred that Bay No. 1 is 69,680 sq. ft. The Court will accept the previously undisputed square footage of Bay No. 1 as 69,680 sq. ft. and will allow monetary adjustments based on deviations from this area measurement if more accurate assessments in the future reveal that this area measurement is inaccurate. This can be accomplished as part of the Liquidating Partner's and Master's responsibilities during the wind up process.

Plaintiff, in both his Response and Summary Judgment Motion, asserts a statute of limitations defense for the past rents (1994-2004). Plaintiff cites V.I. Code Ann Tit. 5, §31(3) which sets a six year statute of limitations for "...actions upon contract or liability, express or implied, excepting those mentioned in paragraph (1)(C) of this article." Response, 5-6; Plaintiff's Summary Judgment Motion, 2-3.

United responds to Plaintiff's statute of limitations argument by claiming that Yusuf and Plaintiff's authorized agent, Waleed Hamed, reached an oral agreement in early 2012 to have the Partnership pay the past due rent back to United. Opposition, 10-11. This oral agreement was allegedly breached by Plaintiff when his attorney sent United a letter dated May 22, 2013 claiming that no agreement on rent had ever been reached. Opposition, 11; Exhibit D. Yusuf, by his affidavit, asserts that an agreement was reached for past rent to be paid when the Partnership's "black book" was returned by the FBI and a proper calculation could be achieved. Yusuf Affidavit, ¶¶4-6. Only when Yusuf's son discovered that the FBI had returned the black book in early 2013, did United calculate the past rent and seek repayment from the Partnership.

Hamed has admitted that the Partnership owes United rent: "We pay rent...we owe Mr. Yusuf... I don't pay for half. Still we owe him some more." Exhibit E, Hamed Deposition, p. 86; 10-14. Through an interpreter, Hamed admitted that rent is controlled by Yusuf, that he does not object to paying rent and that Yusuf (on behalf of United) could charge rent and collect it. Exhibit E, Hamed deposition p. 119; 7-11. In fact, when Hamed was asked "...if rent was not paid from January 1, 1994 through May 4, 2004, would you agree that rent should be paid," Hamed responded, "It should be paid." Exhibit E, Hamed Deposition, p. 117; 21-25.

Yusuf claims that he alone had been in charge of calculating rent and had bound the Partnership to paying United rent. Opposition, 11; Exhibit B, Yusuf Deposition p. 86; 8-12. Yusuf specified that United would charge the Partnership rent at \$5.55 per square foot, "the same as the old one." *Id.* Yusuf states that the rental terms, as discussed with Hamed, revived the previous arrangement which had begun in 1986 and extended the landlord-tenant relationship from January, 1994 through 2004, briefly discussing how rent is calculated for Plaza Extra - East based on the percentage of sales from the Plaza Extra - St. Thomas store. Yusuf Deposition p. 88; 4-9; p. 89; 19-22.

DISCUSSION

The Court will examine whether the Partnership owes United rents from 1994 to 2004 (past due rent) and from 2012 to 2013. This inquiry is limited to the issue of rents and does not extend to other relief sought by Defendants' Counterclaim or to other aspects of Plaintiff's Motion for Partial Summary Judgment beyond the issue of past due rents.

1. The Court has the authority to order the Partnership to repay past due rent.

Plaintiff argues that United has failed to cite a procedural justification for the Court to order the Partnership to pay past due rent to United. Response, 1.

Without a written partnership agreement, as is the case between Hamed and Yusuf, courts will look to the Uniform Partnership Act to determine a partnership's property and its obligations to creditors (codified at 26 V.I.C. § 24; § 177, respectively). "The reason is that dissolution does not terminate or discharge pre-existing contracts between the partnership and its clients, and expartners who perform under such contracts do so as fiduciaries for the benefit of the dissolved partnership." Labrum & Doak v. Ashdale, 227 B.R. 391, 409 (Bankr. E.D. Pa. 1998).

In connection with winding up the Partnership, the Court has made several discretionary decisions regarding asset allocation in accordance with the Uniform Partnership Act and for the benefit of the partners. See Final Wind Up Plan, entered January 9, 2015. As the parties move forward with the wind up process, it is necessary to determine what constitutes Partnership property. Most of this determination can and should be done without judicial intervention but, in the case of past rents, Hamed cannot agree with Partnership creditor United, or with Yusuf, a United shareholder and Hamed's equal partner in the Partnership, as to the amount of rent that the Partnership owes United.

The Virgin Islands Supreme Court, in denying Defendants' appeal of this Court's Wind Up Plan, stated that "...matters that fall within the administration of winding up the partnership, over which the Superior Court possesses considerable discretion... are not immediately appealable." Yusuf v. Hamed, 2015 V.I. Supreme LEXIS 6, at *5-6 (V.I. February 27, 2015)(citing Belleair Hotel Co. v. Mabry, 109 F.2d 390, 391 (5th Cir. 1940); see also United States v. Antiques Ltd. P'Ship, 760 F.3d 668, 671-72 (7th Cir. 2014)).

Appellate courts, when treating a lower court's supervision over a wind up process as similar to a receivership, "...have recognized 'the scores of discretionary administrative orders a [trial] court must make in supervising its receiver." Hamed, 2015 V.I. Supreme LEXIS 6, at *6 (quoting S.E.C. v. Olins, 541 Fed. Appx. 48, 51 (2d Cir. 2013) (quoting IIT v. Vencap, Ltd., 519 F.2d 1001, 1020 (2d Cir. 1975)).

With the aim of winding up the Partnership in a fair and efficient manner, the Court in this Order exercises its "considerable discretion" to determine how much rent the Partnership owes to United as a debt due and owing under the Uniform Partnership Act.

2. The statute of limitations does not bar Defendant United's claim for rent and United is entitled to past due rent in the amount of \$3,999,679.73 for 1994-2004.

Plaintiff argues that the Partnership is not responsible for rent from 1994-2004 because the six year statute of limitations for actions in debt expired in 2010, two years before the filing of his original Complaint in this action. Defendant United argues that the parties entered into an oral contract in 2012 that bound the Partnership to pay the past due rents as soon as a proper accounting could be done (i.e. the black book was recovered). When the black book was located in early 2013 and United made a subsequent demand for past rent, Plaintiff claimed that "there was never an understanding that rent would be paid for this time period..." and even if there had been, the statute of limitations had expired (preventing all claims for rents that came due prior to September, 2006). Motion, Exhibit D. According to Defendant United, the Partnership reneging on the agreement to pay back rents constituted a breach of contract which carries a six year statute of limitations that has yet to expire.

The Court views this matter somewhat differently. While 5 V.I.C. § 31(3) sets a six year statute of limitations for contractual liabilities such as payment of rents, there are certain equitable principles which operate to toll a statute of limitations. The "acknowledgment of the debt" doctrine (also known as the "revival of the promise to pay" doctrine) is recognized as follows:

A debt which is time-barred may be "revived" by an acknowledgment by the debtor. 'It has long been recognized that the expiration of the statutory period does not bar the claim if the plaintiff can prove an acknowledgment, a new promise, or part payment made by the defendant either before or after the statute has run. . . . Such conduct revives the cause of action so that the statute starts to run again for the full statutory period.'

Gee v. CBS, Inc., 471 F. Supp. 600, 663 (E.D. Pa. 1979)(quoting Developments in the Law Statutes of Limitations, 63 Harvard L.Rev. 1177, 1254 (1950)).

Most courts only apply the acknowledgment of the debt doctrine when there exists "a clear, distinct, or unequivocal acknowledgment of the debt... [which] is sufficient to take the case out of the operation of the statute. It must be an admission consistent with a promise to pay. If so, the law will imply the promise, without its having been actually or expressly made. There must not be uncertainty as to the particular debt to which the admission applies." *CBS, Inc.* 471 Supp. at 664 (citing In re Nicolazzo's Estate, 414 Pa. 186, 190, 199 A.2d 455, 458 (1964), quoting Palmer v. Gillespie, 95 Pa. 340 (1880)).

Courts have employed a second equitable principle when tolling a statute of limitations, referred to as the "payment on account doctrine." Similar to the acknowledgment of the debt doctrine, the payment on account doctrine "... is regarded as an acknowledgment of liability." Basciano v. L&R Auto Parks, Inc., 2012 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 17750, *36-39 (E.D. Pa. February 10, 2012)(citing Quaker City Chocolate & Confectionery Co. v. Delhi-Warnock Bldg. Ass'n, 53 A.2d 597, 600 (Pa. 1947)("There can be no more clear and unequivocal acknowledgment of debt than actual payment.")). To toll the statute of limitations, a partial payment "must constitute a constructive acknowledgment of the debt from which a promise to pay the balance may be inferred." GE Med. Sys. v. Silverman, 1998 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 886, * 20-21 (E.D. Pa. Feb. 2, 1998)(quoting City of Philadelphia v. Holmes Electric Protective Co., 335 Pa. 273, 6 A.2d 884, 888 (Pa. 1939)). See also Quaker City Chocolate & Confectionery Co., 53 A.2d at 600 ("Ordinarily, a payment on account of a debt is regarded as an acknowledgment of liability

and of willingness to pay the balance due thereon and therefore is held to interrupt the operation of the statute").³

In this case, both the acknowledgment of the debt doctrine and the payment on account doctrine apply to toll the statute of limitations on United's rent claims.

Regarding the acknowledgment of the debt, United has proven with sufficient certainty that the Partnership owes United rent from 1994 to 2004. Notwithstanding Plaintiff's denial that the parties had an agreement regarding past rents, Yusuf, by his affidavit, swears that Waleed Hamed entered into an agreement to pay United past due rent once the black book was recovered in early 2013. Opposition, 10-11; Exhibit D, Yusuf Affidavit, ¶4-6. Yusuf specifically addresses how rent is calculated (\$5.55 per square foot), stating that the past due rent is "the same as the old one," referring to the 1986-1994 rental amounts. Yusuf Deposition p. 86; 8-12. Yusuf presents more than sufficient evidence that the Partnership's arrangement with United from 1986 to 1994 was identical, in terms of past due rent, as the arrangement between 1994 through 2004.

Nothing presented by Hamed calls into questions the validity of this debt or the application of the acknowledgment of the debt doctrine. Hamed has admitted on several occasions that Yusuf is in charge of rent, that the Partnership owes United rent for January 1, 1994 through May 4, 2004, and that the rent for this period should be paid to United. Opposition, Exhibit E, Hamed Deposition, p. 117-119. It is clear that the Partnership, through the statements of both Hamed and Yusuf, has

³ Courts will only allow "...a payment on a debt to qualify as an acknowledgment..." if there is an "unequivocal acknowledgment" of the debt, but have considered a debtor's payment on part of a debt to evidence an acknowledgment of the debt and therefore have tolled the statute of limitations. See Basciano, 2012 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 17750, at *36. From the acknowledgment of the debt the law will infer a promise to pay the underlying debt. Receiver of Anthracite Trust Co. v. Loughran, 19 A.2d 61, 62 (Pa. 1941) (citing Dick v. Daylight Garage, 335 Pa. 224, 6 A.2d 823, 826 (Pa. 1939)).

acknowledged a debt for rents owed to United, which is determined to be in the amount of \$3,999,679.73 (based upon 69,680 sq. ft. @ \$5.55/sq. ft.) for the period January 1, 1994 to May 4, 2004.

Similarly, the payment on account doctrine acts as a bar to Plaintiff's statute of limitations defense. The Partnership's partial payments "...constitute a constructive acknowledgment of the debt from which a promise to pay the balance may be inferred." *GE Med. Sys.*, 1998 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 886, at *20-21. For the period of the operation of Plaza Extra – East from 1986 through 2011, the Partnership made two lump sum rent payments to United (covering the periods from 1986-1994 and from 2004-2011). Motion, Yusuf Affidavit, ¶7; Exhibit B (previous rental check for \$5.4 million). United and Yusuf have explained in detail how rent is calculated and why United did not collect rent for the period in question due to the unavailability of their financial records. Motion, 4, 7; Yusuf Affidavit, ¶8.

Therefore, both the acknowledgment of the debt doctrine and the payment on account doctrine apply to the facts of the rent dispute between United and the Partnership. The six year statute of limitations for United's past rent claims was tolled as a result and began to run on May 22, 2013 when Hamed first disputed the validity of the 1994-2004 rent debt. Motion, Exhibit D. United is within the timeframe with which to bring this claim and has presented sufficient information, through affidavits, depositions, and other evidence in the record, for the Court to grant United's Motion as to that period and to direct the Partnership to pay United the sum of \$3,999,679.73.

3. Defendant United is also entitled to rent from 2012 to 2013 in the amount of \$58,791.38 per month.

Plaintiff does not argue that the Partnership is exempt from paying rent to United. "[I]t is undisputed that United is the landlord and Plaza Extra is the tenant at the Sion Farm location, for which rent is due since January of 2012." Response, 1. Rather, Plaintiff claims that United itself has created a dispute regarding rents from January 2012 by issuing rent notices seeking increased rent in the amount of \$250,000.00 per month, rather than the \$58,791.38 per month set out in Yusuf's affidavit. Response, 4. The proof before the Court is clear as to United's claim that rent is due for Bay No. 1 at the rate of \$58,791.38 per month from January 1, 2012 to September 30, 2013, when United's Motion was filed.⁴

As the fee simple owner and landlord of Bay No. 1 United Shopping Plaza, United is entitled to rents from the Partnership for its continued use of Bay No. 1 for the operations of Plaza Extra - East. Therefore, the Court will order the Partnership to pay United the sum of \$1,234,618.98 for rent from January 1, 2012 through September 30, 2013, Plus rent due from October 1, 2013 at the same rate of \$58,791.38 per month until the date that Yusuf assumed sole possession and control of Plaza extra – East.

On the basis of the foregoing, it is hereby

ORDERED that Defendant United Corporation's Motion to Withdraw Rent is GRANTED, and the Liquidating Partner, under the supervision of the Master, is authorized and directed to pay

⁴ It is acknowledged that United delivered notices to the Partnership following the April 2013 Preliminary Injunction, seeking to collect an increased rent sum of \$250,000.00. United presents in its Motion and proofs no numerical or factual justification for such claims, which are not considered in this Order.

Mohammad Hamed, by Waleed Hamed v. Fathi Yusuf and United Corporation; SX-12-CV-370 Memorandum Opinion and Order Page 12 of 12

from the Partnership joint account for past rents due to United the total amount of \$5,234,298.71, plus additional rents that have come due from October 1, 2013 at the rate of \$58,791.38 per month, until the date that Yusuf assumed full possession and control of Plaza Extra – East. It is further

ORDERED that Plaintiff's Motion for Partial Summary Judgment is DENIED, in part, as to Plaintiff's claims that the statute of limitations precludes Defendant United's claims for past due rent.

Dated: April 27, 2015

DOUGLAS A. BRADY
Judge of the Superior Court

ATTEST:

ESTRELLA GEORGE Acting Clerk of the Court

Bv:

Court Clerk Supervisor

CERTIFIED TO BE A TRUE COPY

This 211 day of

CLERK OF THE COURT

By ____ Court Clerk*

Exhibit D

Summary calculation of Additional Income as a result of withdrawals from Supermarkets' accounts (or partnership's accounts) - January 1994 to August 2014. (Including adjustments for withdrawals before 9/17/2006 as instructed by the Court)

Summary of Withdrawals

	Hamed											
Description		Mohammad	W	aleed		Waheed		Mufeed		Hisham		Total
Funds received from partnership through checks	\$	1,500,000.00	\$	-	\$	-	\$	-	\$	-	\$	1,500,000.00
Withdrawals from the partnership with a signed ticket/receipt				237,352.75		-		-		-		237,352.75
Amount owed by Hamed family to Yusuf as per agreement before raid Sept 2001. As per Mike's testimony these tickets were burned. (Refer to Letter dated August 15, 2012)		-		1,778,103.00		-		-		-		1,778,103.00
Payments to third parties on behalf of Hamed/Yusuf with partnership funds either with tickets or checks		-		20,311.00		-		-		-		20,311.00
Payments to Attorneys with partnership's funds		-	;	3,749,495.48		372,155.95		-		-		4,121,651.43
Funds received by cashier's checks		-		-		-		-		-		-
Total Partnership		1,500,000.00	5,	785,262.23		372,155.95		-				7,657,418.18
Deposits to bank and brokerage accounts		16,505.80		430,439.13		100,000.00		306,999.56		510,061.57		1,364,006.06
Payments to credit cards				422,824.70				179,786.80				602,611.50
Investments (cost) sold as per tax returns				-								
Subtotal Lifestyle analysis		16,505.80		853,263.83		100,000.00		486,786.36		510,061.57		1,966,617.56
Net Withdrawals	\$	1,516,505.80	\$ 6,	638,526.06	\$	472,155.95	\$	486,786.36	\$	510,061.57	\$	9,624,035.74

						Yusuf					
F	Fathi	Nejeh	Maher	Yusuf	Najat	Zayed	Syaid	Amal	Hoda	Yacer	Total
\$	4,284,706.25	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 4,284,706.25
	-	-	2,000.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,000.00
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
		_	_	_	_	-	_			-	-
	183,607.05	20,370.00	33,714.00	_							237,691.0
	163,007.03	20,370.00	33,714.00	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	237,091.0
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	1/0.010.00	00.070.00	05 744 00								4 504 007 00
4	,468,313.30	20,370.00	35,714.00	-	-	-	-		-	-	4,524,397.30
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	-		_	-	_	_	_	_		-	
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5 4	,468,313.30	\$ 20,370.00	\$ 35,714.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 4,524,397.30

Difference
\$ (2,784,706.25
235,352.75
1,778,103.00
20,311.00
3,883,960.38
-
3,133,020.88
1,364,006.06
602,611.50
1,966,617.56
\$ 5,099,638.44

Note:
1 Total amounts include adjustments made for withdrawals in 2016.