

PUBLICATION UPDATE

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Civil RICO

Publication 527 Release 53

May 2015

HIGHLIGHTS

Recent Case Law

- Release 53 discusses numerous important new cases related to the RICO statute.

Recent developments discussed in Release 53 include:

In *Dart Cherokee Basin Operating Co. v. Owens*, ___ U.S. ___, 135 S. Ct. 547, 190 L. Ed. 2d 495 (2014), the Supreme Court clarified that when a state court case is removed from state court to federal court by notice pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1446(a), the notice of removal can simply assert a “plausible” basis for federal jurisdiction, and it need not provide evidentiary detail to support the existence of federal jurisdiction. Once jurisdiction is challenged in federal court, however, the burden falls on the removing defendant to establish federal jurisdiction by a preponderance of the evidence. See Chapter 6, *Instituting a Civil RICO Action*, ¶ 6.03[3].

In *Tymoshenko v. Firtash*, 2014 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 139266 (S.D.N.Y. Sept. 30, 2014), the district court applied a target

analysis to hold that a RICO plaintiff failed to establish proximate cause. The court said that, to establish proximate causation, plaintiffs must plead that they were “the targets, competitors [or] intended victims” of a marketing scheme. See Chapter 6, *Instituting a Civil RICO Action*, ¶ 6.04[5][a][iii].

In *CGC Holding Co. v. Hutchens*, 773 F.3d 1076 (10th Cir. 2014), the Tenth Circuit held that while reliance is not an element of a fraud-based RICO claim, causation is an element, and in cases that arise from fraud, a plaintiff’s ability to show a causal connection between the defendant’s misrepresentation and his or her injury will be predicated on the plaintiff’s alleged reliance on that misrepresentation. The Tenth Circuit went on to reject application of the securities law presumption of reliance (the “fraud on the market” doctrine) to RICO cases. See Chapter 6, *Instituting a Civil RICO Action*, ¶ 6.05[2].

In *Angermeir v. Cohen*, 14 F. Supp. 3d 134, 145 (S.D.N.Y. 2014), a district court refused to subject non-fraud predicate offense allegations such as extortion, and RICO conspiracy allegations, to the par-

ticularity requirement of Rule 9(b). Further, the *Angermeir* opinion followed precedent from other courts within the Second Circuit holding that some aspects of federal fraud claims, such as the mailing element of mail fraud, may not be subject to Rule 9(b). See Chapter 7, *Pretrial Proceedings*, ¶ 7.02[2].

In *Republic of Iraq v. ABB AG*, 768 F.3d 145 (2d Cir. 2014), the Second Circuit held that the common-law *in pari delicto* defense barred the Republic of Iraq from bringing civil RICO claims against associates of Saddam Hussein who allegedly defrauded Iraq out of monies from the United Nations Oil for Food Program. Because the diversion of monies was designed by the Saddam Hussein regime, the Second Circuit concluded that both elements of the defense were established—Iraq shared equal or greater responsibility for the RICO violations with the defendants, and recognizing the defense would not violate any policy underlying enforcement of RICO. See Chapter 9, *Defenses*, ¶ 9.06.

In *United Bhd. of Carpenters & Joiners of Am. v. Bldg. & Constr. Trades Dep't*, 770 F.3d 834 (9th Cir. 2014), the Ninth Circuit held that use of the fear of economic loss did not constitute extortion in a dispute by one labor organization claiming it was being pressured into accepting the

unwanted services of the defendant labor organization. See Chapter 9, *Defenses*, ¶ 9.18.

In *Chesapeake Employers' Ins. Co. v. Eades*, 2015 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 197 (N.D. Ga. Jan. 5, 2015), a district court considered, but declined to accept, the defense that “benefit of the bargain” damages are unavailable under RICO. The court held that the plaintiff’s loss of premium revenue was a sufficiently tangible injury to support a RICO claim, and the fact that an additional uncertain insurance risk was assumed did not diminish the concrete nature of the lost premiums. See Chapter 10, *Remedies* ¶ 10.04[1].

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