## IN THE UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF DELAWARE

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In re:

WASHINGTON MUTUAL, INC., et al.,

Debtors

Chapter 11

Case No. 08-12229 (MFW) Jointly Administered

## MOTION IN LIMINE TO PRECLUDE ANY USE OF OR REFERENCE TO THE EXAMINER'S REPORT

The TPS Consortium hereby files this Motion (the "<u>Motion</u>") in limine to preclude any use of or reference to the final report of Joshua R. Hochberg (the "<u>Examiner</u>") related to the above-captioned Chapter 11 cases (the "<u>Examiner's Report</u>") on the grounds that it is comprised entirely of inadmissible hearsay. In support of the Motion, the TPS Consortium respectfully state as follows:

## PRELIMINARY STATEMENT

While they have yet to announce it formally, it appears the Debtors and other proponents of the Debtors' pending plan of confirmation (the "<u>Plan</u>") will seek to make use of the Examiner's report and references to the Examiner's "investigation" to prop up their unsupported and unsupportable positions in the above-captioned adversary proceeding (the "<u>Adversary Proceeding</u>") and Chapter 11 case (together with the Adversary Proceeding, the "<u>Proceedings</u>"). Lacking the ability to present admissible evidence (either because it does not exist or because the Debtors have hidden behind blanket assertions of attorney-client privilege to avoid producing what, if any, analyses of claims was performed), the parties cite and refer to the Examiner's Report (itself based on an admittedly hurried "investigation," review of untested, self-serving analyses the



parties have refused to subject to discovery, and unsworn interviews of parties' whose interests would be materially benefited by confirmation of the Plan) as though it were admissible evidence, or evidence at all. However, the Examiner's Report does not constitute evidence. Rather, the Examiner's report is, at best, a compilation of hearsay wholly inadmissible for any purpose in the Proceedings.

As such, the Examiner's Report and all references thereto should be ignored by the Court and stricken from the record. And, the Examiner should be precluded from testifying in connection with either of the Proceedings.

## **RELEVANT BACKGROUND**

## A. <u>Appointment And Powers Vested In The Examiner</u>.

1. On July 22, 2010, this Court ordered the Appointment of an Examiner to investigate the "claims and assets that may be property of the Debtors' estates that are proposed to be conveyed, released or otherwise compromised and settled under the Plan and Settlement Agreement, and the claims and defenses of third parties thereto." [Docket No. 5120]. He was also ordered to investigate "such other claims, assets and causes of action which shall be retained by the Debtors and/or the proceeds thereof, if any, distributed to creditors and/or equity interest holders pursuant to the Plan, and the claims and defenses thereto." <u>Id</u>. The United States Trustee appointed Joshua R. Hochberg to this role on July 26, 2010, and the Court approved that appointment on July 28, 2010. [Docket No. 5141, 5162].

2. In connection with his appointment, the Examiner requested and received broad powers to conduct his investigation on an expedited basis. <u>See generally</u>, Order Authorizing Examiner to Demand and Issue Subpoenas Compelling the Production of

Documents and the Oral Examination of Persons and Entities (the "Examiner Discovery Order"). [Docket No. 5259] More specifically, the Court granted the Examiner the ability to compel production of documents within five days of issuance of a subpoena. See id. at ¶ 2(a). The Examiner Discovery Order also imposed on parties resisting such a subpoena based on the assertion of privilege the obligation to produce a privilege log within those same five days. See id. at ¶ 2(b). The Examiner Discovery Order vested in the Examiner the power to compel attendance at sworn oral depositions within five days of issuance of a subpoena. See id. at ¶ 2(c). Finally, the Examiner Discovery Order absolved the Examiner of any "obligation to furnish to any party or other person or entity any communications, documents, or information received from any party or person or entity to participate in any meetings or conversations between the Examiner and such party." Id. at ¶ 2(e).

3. Pursuant to the "agreed"<sup>1</sup> Order directing the Examiner's appointment, the Debtors and other parties were authorized to deliver to the Examiner privileged information while still retaining the ability to assert the privilege as against other parties. See Order, dated July 22, 2010, at ¶ 10. [Docket No. 5120].

## B. <u>The Examiner's "Investigation" And Report.</u>

4. Notwithstanding the broad investigative powers granted the Examiner to enable him to discharge fully his duties, the Examiner apparently did not issue one document subpoena; rather relying on parties to voluntarily deliver documents.

5. The Examiner did not conduct one sworn deposition; rather choosing to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The TPS Consortium were neither consulted nor allowed an opportunity to comment on the proposed Order before it was submitted to the Court for entry as an "agreed" Order.

conduct unsworn interviews of parties, many of whom have vested interests in the outcome of the Examiner's investigation. Of the interviews conducted by the Examiner, twenty were with employees of, or professionals employed by, Defendant WMI or affiliates, seventeen were employees of Defendant JPMC, and seven were employed by the FDIC and/or the Office of Thrift Supervision (both of which have an interest in the Debtors prevailing in the Proceedings). <u>See</u> Examiner's Report, at Appendix 2. Most of the balance of the parties interviewed appear to be parties subject to potential estate or third party claims that would purportedly be extinguished by confirmation of the Plan (e.g., Banco Santander, Goldman Sachs, and Morgan Stanley). <u>See id</u>. ("Witnesses – Other").

6. The Examiner admits that his investigation was rushed. See Examiner's Report, at p. 3. In reaching his conclusions, the Examiner apparently received and relied on the same legal analysis and evaluations the Debtors and other parties in favor of the Settlement, through their broad assertions of privilege, have steadfastly refused to make available through discovery. <u>See</u> Examiner's Report, at p. 14. This was confirmed by deposition witnesses produced by the Debtors, although those witnesses refused even to reveal the topics on which analyses were provided to the Examiner. <u>See</u> Deposition of William C. Kosturos, November 16, 2010, at 112-115. As such, it is impossible to determine which (if not all) of the Examiner's conclusions are based on information withheld from, and unavailable to be tested by, other parties in the discovery process.

7. The Examiner's rushed "investigation" of the matters at issue in the Adversary Proceeding consisted of unsworn interviews with the general counsel of Defendant WMI, the CEO and general counsel of Defendant JPMC, representatives of

the OTS (an entity much maligned for its contributions to the collapse of the Debtors and a counter-party to the secret side letters at issue in the Adversary Proceeding), and a representative of Goldman Sachs (an entity with potential liability for its role in connection with the structuring, issuance and sale of the Trust Preferred Securities and an entity proposed to receive broad releases of such claims if the Plan is confirmed).<sup>2</sup>

8. At the conclusion of his rushed "investigation," Mr. Hochberg filed the Examiner's Report on November 1, 2010. (Docket #5735).

## C. The Current Attempted Misuse Of The Examiner's Report.

9. Debtors apparently seek to bolster their position by reference and/or citation to the Examiner's Report. See Declaration of William C. Kosturos [Docket No. 6083] at ¶¶ 28, 51, 68-69, 77, 79; Declaration of Jonathan Goulding, [Docket No. 6098] at ¶13; Declaration of Charles Edward Smith, [Docket No. 6092] at ¶7. Perhaps most troubling is that, notwithstanding WMI's prior broad assertion of the attorney-client privilege to resist discovery and WMI's promise to the Court that such withheld information would not be used to prove up the Plan and/or related Settlement, the Debtors and others now urge the Court to rely on the Examiner's Report for those very purposes (and others) even though the Examiner's conclusions are based, in whole or in part, on the withheld materials.<sup>3</sup> See Debtors' Memorandum of Law in Support of Confirmation, [Docket No. 6085] at p. 27 (urging the Court to "rely on the Examiner's Report, and the conclusions set forth therein").

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> While counsel for the TPS Consortium met with the Examiner, such discussions apparently were not the basis of any of the Examiner's conclusions.

## **ARGUMENT**

10. The Examiner's Report, which Debtors seek to introduce as an exhibit, is a 300 page out-of-court assertion, on which Debtors seek to rely in their confirmation brief, in their expert report, and undoubtedly through witnesses. The TPS Consortium cannot cross-examine the Examiner and cannot ascertain what the witnesses told the Examiner. The Debtors even claim that all discussions with the Examiner were privileged. Deposition of William C. Kosturos, November 16, 2010, at 112-115. With the use and reliance on the Examiner's Report, the Debtors attempt to create the type of black box that the hearsay rule operates to exclude. See, e.g., In re: Fibermark, Inc., 339 B.R. 321, 326 (Bankr. D. Vt. 2006); In re Enron Corporation Securities, Derivative & "ERISA" Litigation, 623 F. Supp. 2d 798, 823 n.21 (S.D. Texas, 2009). The Examiner's Report is rank hearsay, inadmissible in both the Adversary Proceeding and Confirmation Hearing, and it cannot be relied on, used, or referenced by the Debtors.

11. An Examiner's Report cannot, as a matter of law, serve as a replacement for discovery or evidentiary presentation because the Examiner's factual conclusions "[are] inadmissible hearsay." <u>U.S. v. Moore</u>, 27 F.3d 969, 975 (4th Cir. 1994). Simply put, "the materials upon which [the Examiner] rel[ied] to produce the Report constitute out-of-court statements that lack the indices of reliability required for admission into evidence under the Federal Rules." <u>In re Fibermark, Inc.</u>, 339 B.R. at 326. <u>See In re</u> <u>Monus</u>, 1995 WL 469694, at \*8-9 (Bankr. N.D. Ohio May 18, 1995) (excluding as unreliable hearsay an Examiner's Report "of nearly 1,000 pages relying on sworn and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> By separate motion, the TPS Consortium seeks to exclude and/or strike all references to, and use of, the withheld information in connection with Plan confirmation.

unsworn testimony and statements by individuals, some of whose identities are not revealed, and on a variety of documents, the authenticity of which may be subject to challenge under the Federal Rules of Evidence."). The very purpose of the hearsay rule is to exclude out-of-court assertions because they cannot be tested by cross-examination. <u>Anderson v. United States</u>, 417 U.S. 211, 220 (1974).

12. "While an Examiner is employed to conduct an investigation, 'he [is] not charged – nor could he be – with the duty to 'hear and determine' any claims in a case." <u>Fibermark</u>, 339 B.R. at 326, quoting <u>In re Rickel & Associates, Inc.</u>, 272 B.R. 74, 87-88 (Bankr. S.D.N.Y. 2002). "The facts, as found by the Examiner, are not 'true' just because they are in the Report." <u>Id</u>. at 327. "They explain and justify the Examiner's conclusions. That is all." <u>Id</u>. "The Examiner's rendition of the facts may not be relied upon to prove the truth of the matter." <u>Id</u>. Rather, if parties "wish to 'prove' the accuracy of the Examiner's conclusions" in Court, "they must do so with admissible evidence." <u>Id</u>. This is especially true when the conclusions are based on information not available to those who would challenge the Examiner's conclusion. <u>See Carnegie Intern.</u> <u>Corp.</u>, 51 B.R. 252, 258 (Bankr. Ind. 1984) ("Both under the Act and the Code everything uncovered by an examiner including facts reported to the court regarding possible causes of action, is to be made available to estate representatives").

13. "While [Bankruptcy Code Section] 1106 requires the Examiner to file a 'statement' of his investigation, his findings do not have the binding effect on the Court or parties of those of a special master, arbitrator or magistrate; nor do they have the evidentiary character of an opinion by a Court expert appointed pursuant to Rule 706 of

the Federal Rules of Evidence." <u>In re Baldwin United Corp.</u>, 46 B.R. 314, 316 (Bankr. S.D. Ohio 1985).

14. Nor would it be sufficient for Debtors to offer a rote recitation that the Examiner's reliance on the hearsay evidence was reasonable. Here, there can be no "good grounds" for relying solely on the self-interested statements of parties who cannot be tested by cross-examination. This is particularly so where Debtors have the temerity to claim that witness discussions with Examiner were entirely privileged, depriving The TPS Consortium to even know what was said or even what topics were discussed. <u>See</u> Deposition of William C. Kosturos, November 16, 2010, at 112-115. Because the Examiner's Report is premised only on second-hand and undisclosed privileged information, "the [] court can," and should, "exclude [the Examiner's] opinion as irrelevant." <u>Paoli</u>, 35 F.3d at 749 n.19.

15. Debtors seek to confuse the matter with vague reference to three cases, none of which even contain the word "hearsay," let alone analyze the admissibility issue presented by this motion. In <u>Walnut Equipment Leasing</u>, the Court simply recited the fact that, "in his Report dated April 27, 1998," the Examiner concluded that, "given the complexity of the issue, a resolution through negotiation was strongly recommended." 1999 WL 288651, \*4. None of the factual portions of the Examiner's Report were offered or admitted. <u>In re Ionosphere Clubs, Inc.</u>, 156 B.R. 414 (S.D.N.Y. 1993), is even further afield. In that case, the Court rejected a claim by creditors and journalists who sought access to an Examiner's materials under the public records law. <u>Id</u>. at 431. The Court found that the Examiner's findings, which were "no more binding on the court than those of any other attorney[]," were not subject to the public records law because they

had not been filed with the court. <u>Id</u>. at 433. Thus, the Court did not consider, even in passing, the question of whether the Report's contents would have survived a hearsay challenge.

16. Finally, in <u>In re PWS Holdings Corp. Bruno's Inc.</u>, 288 F.3d 224, 240 (3rd Cir. 2000), "the parties d[id] not dispute the Findings of Fact contained in the Examiner's Final Report." Thus, the Third Circuit found no abuse of discretion in the District Court's decision "to accept the Examiner's decision to evaluate the claims using the business enterprise method." <u>Id</u>. at 242. This decision to adopt the Examiner's methodology is vastly different from the situation presented here, where the TPS Consortium challenge the Examiner's factual determinations as having been based entirely on hearsay. Debtors cannot overcome the evidentiary infirmity of the report by relying on cases where past litigants failed to properly raise the issue.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Examiner's Report, the "facts" underlying it, and the conclusions derived therefrom are rank hearsay (or worse) and clearly inadmissible. Therefore, for the reasons stated above, this Court should grant the Motion in its entirety, thereby precluding any Plan Proponent from using or referencing the Examiner's Report during the Confirmation Hearing. Dated: Wilmington, Delaware November 29, 2010

Respectfully submitted,

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## UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF DELAWARE

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In re: WASHINGTON MUTUAL, INC., et al., Debtors

Chapter 11

Case No. 08-12229 (MFW) Jointly Administered

## **CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

I, Marla Rosoff Eskin, of Campbell & Levine, LLC, hereby certify that on November 29,

2010, I caused a copy of the Motion in Limine to Preclude Any Use of or Reference to the

Examiner's Report to be served upon the individual listed below via First Class Mail:

Dated: November 29, 2010

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