# UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT

Eastern District of California

Honorable Fredrick E. Clement Bankruptcy Judge

2500 Tulare Street, Fifth Floor Department A, Courtroom 11 Fresno, California

Thursday

August 14, 2014

#### PRE-HEARING DISPOSITIONS

#### GENERAL DESIGNATIONS

Each pre-hearing disposition is prefaced by the words "Final Ruling," "Tentative Ruling" or "No Tentative Ruling." Except as indicated below, matters designated "Final Ruling" will not be called and counsel need not appear at the hearing on such matters. Matters designated "Tentative Ruling" or "No Tentative Ruling" will be called.

### MATTERS RESOLVED BEFORE HEARING

If the court has issued a final ruling on a matter and the parties directly affected by a matter have resolved the matter by stipulation or withdrawal of the motion before the hearing, then the moving party shall, not later than 4:00 p.m. (PST) on the day before the hearing, inform the following persons by telephone that they wish the matter to be dropped from calendar notwithstanding the court's ruling: (1) all other parties directly affected by the motion; and (2) Kathy Torres, Judicial Assistant to the Honorable Fredrick E. Clement, at (559) 499-5860.

# ERRORS IN FINAL RULINGS

If a party believes that a final ruling contains an error that would, if reflected in the order or judgment, warrant a motion under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 52(b), 59(e) or 60, as incorporated by Federal Rules of Bankruptcy Procedure, 7052, 9023 and 9024, then the party affected by such error shall, not later than 4:00 p.m. (PST) on the day before the hearing, inform the following persons by telephone that they wish the matter either to be called or dropped from calendar, as appropriate, notwithstanding the court's ruling: (1) all other parties directly affected by the motion; and (2) Kathy Torres, Judicial Assistant to the Honorable Fredrick E. Clement, at (559) 499-5860. Absent such a timely request, a matter designated "Final Ruling" will not be called.

1. <u>14-10416</u>-A-13 FELIX/ISABEL ALVAREZ TOG-2 MOTION TO CONFIRM PLAN 7-2-14 [43]

FELIX ALVAREZ/MV

THOMAS GILLIS/Atty. for dbt.

### Final Ruling

Motion: Confirm Chapter 13 Plan

Notice: LBR 3015-1(d)(1), 9014-1(f)(1); written opposition required

**Disposition:** Granted

Order: Prepared by Chapter 13 trustee, approved by debtor's counsel

Unopposed motions are subject to the rules of default. Fed. R. Civ. P. 55, incorporated by Fed. R. Bankr. P. 7055, 9014(c). Written opposition to this motion was required not less than 14 days before the hearing on this motion. LBR 3015-1(d)(1), 9014-1(f)(1)(B). None has been filed. The default of the responding party is entered. The court considers the record, accepting well-pleaded facts as true. TeleVideo Sys., Inc. v. Heidenthal, 826 F.2d 915, 917-18 (9th Cir. 1987).

Chapter 13 plan confirmation is governed by 11 U.S.C. §§ 1322, 1325 and by Federal Rule of Bankruptcy Procedure 2002(b) and Local Bankruptcy Rule 3015-1. The debtor bears the burden of proof as to each element. *In re Barnes*, 32 F.3d 405, 407 (9th Cir. 1994). The court finds that the debtor has sustained that burden, and the court will approve confirmation of the plan.

2. <u>11-13617</u>-A-13 JUAN/AMPARO SAMANIEGO SL-3

MOTION TO INCUR DEBT 7-28-14 [61]

JUAN SAMANIEGO/MV SCOTT LYONS/Atty. for dbt.

#### Tentative Ruling

**Motion:** Approve Debtor's Incurring New Debt [Vehicle Loan] **Notice:** LBR 9014-1(f)(2); no written opposition required

**Disposition:** Granted

Order: Prepared by moving party

Unopposed motions are subject to the rules of default. Fed. R. Civ. P. 55, incorporated by Fed. R. Bankr. P. 7055, 9014(c). The default of the responding party is entered. The court considers the record, accepting well-pleaded facts as true. TeleVideo Sys., Inc. v. Heidenthal, 826 F.2d 915, 917-18 (9th Cir. 1987).

The debtor seeks to incur new debt to finance the purchase of a vehicle. The total cash price shown on the contract attached as Exhibit B is \$23,388.27 plus license, registration and other fees of \$261.75. The down payment in cash is \$1000, plus a rebate of \$500 for a total down payment shown on the contract of \$1500.00.

The amount requested to be financed is \$22,150.02 at 6.99% interest. The proposed monthly loan payment is \$378.56 per month.

Amended Schedules I and J have been filed indicating that the debtor can afford the plan payment, which is \$1,617.00 per month, projected living expenses, and the proposed monthly loan payment would result from obtaining this financing.

The debtors need the new vehicle to replace a vehicle that was totaled in a car accident. The debtors are both currently working. Both debtors need a vehicle to get to their workplaces. Because both debtors need a vehicle for employment, the court finds that the new debt is a single loan reasonably necessary for the maintenance or support of the debtors and their dependents.

The court will grant the motion, and the trustee will approve the order as to form and content.

3. <u>13-18017</u>-A-13 TYNETTA SHABAZZ
RJR-1
TYNETTA SHABAZZ/MV
RANDY RISNER/Atty. for dbt.

MOTION TO APPROVE LOAN MODIFICATION 7-28-14 [60]

#### Tentative Ruling

Motion: Approval of Mortgage Loan Modification

Notice: LBR 9014-1(f)(2); no written opposition required

Disposition: Granted in part, denied in part

Order: Prepared by moving party according to the instructions below

Unopposed motions are subject to the rules of default. Fed. R. Civ. P. 55, incorporated by Fed. R. Bankr. P. 7055, 9014(c). The default of the responding party is entered. The court considers the record, accepting well-pleaded facts as true. TeleVideo Sys., Inc. v. Heidenthal, 826 F.2d 915, 917-18 (9th Cir. 1987).

The motion seeks approval of a loan modification agreement. A copy of the loan modification agreement accompanies the motion. See Fed. R. Bankr. 4001(c). The court will grant the motion in part to authorize the debtor and the secured lender to enter into the loan modification agreement subject to the parties' right to reinstatement of the original terms of the loan documents in the event conditions precedent to the loan modification agreement are not satisfied. 11 U.S.C. § 364(d); Fed. R. Bankr. P. 4001(c). To the extent the modification is inconsistent with the confirmed plan, the debtor shall continue to perform the plan as confirmed until it is modified.

By granting this motion, the court is not approving the terms of any loan modification agreement. The motion will be denied in part to the extent that the motion requests approval of the loan modification agreement or other declaratory relief. The order shall state only that the parties are authorized to enter into the loan modification agreement subject to the parties' right to reinstate the agreement if all conditions precedent are not satisfied. The order shall not recite the terms of the loan modification agreement or state that the court approves the terms of the agreement.

4. <u>11-17827</u>-A-13 MICHAEL/JEANNYE MORGAN MOTION TO MODIFY PLAN PBB-2 7-10-14 [48]

MICHAEL MORGAN/MV
PETER BUNTING/Atty. for dbt.

#### Final Ruling

Motion: Confirm Modified Chapter 13 Plan

Notice: LBR 3015-1(d)(2), 9014-1(f)(1); written opposition required

**Disposition:** Granted

Order: Prepared by Chapter 13 trustee, approved by debtor's counsel

Unopposed motions are subject to the rules of default. Fed. R. Civ. P. 55, incorporated by Fed. R. Bankr. P. 7055, 9014(c). Written opposition to this motion was required not less than 14 days before the hearing on this motion. LBR 3015-1(d)(2), 9014-1(f)(1)(B). None has been filed. The default of the responding party is entered. The court considers the record, accepting well-pleaded facts as true. TeleVideo Sys., Inc. v. Heidenthal, 826 F.2d 915, 917-18 (9th Cir. 1987).

Chapter 13 plan confirmation is governed by 11 U.S.C. §§ 1322, 1323, 1325, 1329 and by Federal Rules of Bankruptcy Procedure 2002(a)(5) and 3015(g) and Local Bankruptcy Rule 3015-1. The debtor bears the burden of proof as to each element. *In re Barnes*, 32 F.3d 405, 407 (9th Cir. 1994). The court finds that the debtor has sustained that burden, and the court will approve modification of the plan.

5. 11-61728-A-13 FRANK GARCIA
DJD-1
SETERUS, INC./MV
JAMES MILLER/Atty. for dbt.
DARREN DEVLIN/Atty. for mv.

MOTION FOR RELIEF FROM AUTOMATIC STAY 7-30-14 [96]

### Tentative Ruling

Motion: Stay Relief

Notice: LBR 9014-1(f)(2); no written opposition required

**Disposition:** Granted

Order: Prepared by moving party

Subject: 24819 Gardena Drive, Madera, CA

Unopposed motions are subject to the rules of default. Fed. R. Civ. P. 55, incorporated by Fed. R. Bankr. P. 7055, 9014(c). The default of the responding party is entered. The court considers the record, accepting well-pleaded facts as true. TeleVideo Sys., Inc. v. Heidenthal, 826 F.2d 915, 917-18 (9th Cir. 1987).

The plan in this case was confirmed on September 6, 2012. The confirmed plan places the claim of the moving creditor in Class 2. The plan also does not revest property of the estate in the debtor upon confirmation.

The debtor is obligated to make loan payments to the moving party pursuant to a promissory note secured by a deed of trust on the real property described above. The deed of trust and all rights and

interest secured by it was assigned by Citimortgage, Inc. F/K/A Citicorp Mortgage, Inc. to Federal National Mortgage Association ("Fannie Mae"). The moving party is Seterus, Inc., an authorized servicer for Fannie Mae.

According to the motion, the debtor has defaulted on the loan with the moving party. Seventeen postpetition payments are now past due. Cause exists to grant relief under  $\S 362(d)(1)$ .

The motion will be granted, and the 14-day stay of Federal Rule of Bankruptcy Procedure 4001(a)(3) will be waived. No other relief will be awarded.

6. 14-11332-A-13 RONALD ESCOBAR
MHM-3
MICHAEL MEYER/MV
JAMIE XIONG-VANG/Atty. for dbt.
WITHDRAWN

MOTION TO DISMISS CASE FOR FAILURE TO MAKE PLAN PAYMENTS 7-31-14 [51]

### Final Ruling

The motion withdrawn, the matter is dropped as moot.

7. 13-17533-A-13 ALEX/PRISCILLA PANG
JRL-1
ALEX PANG/MV
JERRY LOWE/Atty. for dbt.

MOTION TO MODIFY PLAN 7-11-14 [45]

# Final Ruling

Motion: Confirm Modified Chapter 13 Plan

Notice: LBR 3015-1(d)(2), 9014-1(f)(1); written opposition required

**Disposition:** Granted

Order: Prepared by Chapter 13 trustee, approved by debtor's counsel

Unopposed motions are subject to the rules of default. Fed. R. Civ. P. 55, incorporated by Fed. R. Bankr. P. 7055, 9014(c). Written opposition to this motion was required not less than 14 days before the hearing on this motion. LBR 3015-1(d)(2), 9014-1(f)(1)(B). None has been filed. The default of the responding party is entered. The court considers the record, accepting well-pleaded facts as true. TeleVideo Sys., Inc. v. Heidenthal, 826 F.2d 915, 917-18 (9th Cir. 1987).

Chapter 13 plan confirmation is governed by 11 U.S.C. §§ 1322, 1323, 1325, 1329 and by Federal Rules of Bankruptcy Procedure 2002(a)(5) and 3015(g) and Local Bankruptcy Rule 3015-1. The debtor bears the burden of proof as to each element. *In re Barnes*, 32 F.3d 405, 407 (9th Cir. 1994). The court finds that the debtor has sustained that burden, and the court will approve modification of the plan.

8. <u>13-13646</u>-A-13 JANELLE JAMES
PBB-3
JANELLE JAMES/MV
PETER BUNTING/Atty. for dbt.

OBJECTION TO CLAIM OF BANK OF AMERICA, N.A., CLAIM NUMBER 4 6-27-14 [44]

### Final Ruling

Objection: Objection to Claim

Notice: LBR 3007-1(b)(1); written opposition required

**Disposition:** Sustained

Order: Prepared by objecting party

Unopposed objections are subject to the rules of default. Fed. R. Civ. P. 55, incorporated by Fed. R. Bankr. P. 7055, 9014(c); LBR 9001-1(d), (n) (contested matters include objections). Written opposition to the sustaining of this objection was required not less than 14 days before the hearing on this objection. None has been filed. The default of the responding party is entered. The court considers the record, accepting well-pleaded facts as true. TeleVideo Sys., Inc. v. Heidenthal, 826 F.2d 915, 917-18 (9th Cir. 1987).

#### LEGAL STANDARDS

One basis for disallowing a claim filed by a creditor is that "such claim is unenforceable against the debtor and property of the debtor, under any agreement or applicable law for a reason other than because such claim is contingent or unmatured." 11 U.S.C. § 502(b)(1). If a claim cannot be enforced under state law, then the claim cannot be allowed after objection under § 502(b)(1). In re GI Indus., Inc., 204 F.3d 1276, 1281 (9th Cir. 2000).

A statute of limitation under state law is an affirmative defense that is a proper basis for objection to a proof of claim. Claudio v. LVNV Funding, LLC, 463 B.R. 190, 195 (Bankr. D. Mass. 2012). Although a creditor may file a proof of claim under § 501(a) based on a stale claim, the claim will not be allowed under § 502(b) when an objection to claim raises an applicable statute of limitations as an affirmative defense. See In re Andrews, 394 B.R. 384, 388 (Bankr. E.D.N.C. 2008) (citing In re Varona, 388 B.R. 705 (Bankr. E.D. Va. 2008)).

#### ANALYSIS

A statute of limitations in California bars an action on a contract, obligation or liability founded on an instrument in writing after four years. Cal. Civ. Proc. Code §§ 312, 337(1). Another statute of limitations in California bars an action on an oral contract after two years. Cal. Civ. Proc. Code § 339.

The claimant's proof of claim has an attachment that provides supporting information for a "revolving consumer credit agreement." These are ordinarily in writing, but the claim does not state whether the contract is supported by a writing. But whether in writing or oral, an action to enforce it is barred under both the 2-year and 4-year statutes of limitations in California. The petition date for this case is May 23, 2013. The last payment on the account according to the claimant's own admission was March 30, 2009, more than 4 years before the petition date.

The objection's well-pleaded facts show that the debtor has not made any payments on the loan held by the responding party since March 30, 2009. Thus, no payment has been made for over 4 years before the

filing of the petition on May 23, 2013.

9. 14-10946-A-13 MATTHEW/JULIA ARMAS MOTION TO DISMISS CASE FOR MHM-1MICHAEL MEYER/MV PETER BUNTING/Atty. for dbt.

FAILURE TO MAKE PLAN PAYMENTS 7-31-14 [36]

No tentative ruling.

10. <u>14-12649</u>-A-13 DANIEL/MOLLY LAVILLA MOTION TO DISMISS CASE FOR MICHAEL MEYER/MV THOMAS GILLIS/Atty. for dbt. RESPONSE FILED

FAILURE TO MAKE PLAN PAYMENTS 7-31-14 [<u>23</u>]

No tentative ruling.

<u>14-10855</u>-A-13 ELISEO OROZCO 11. JDR-1 ELISEO OROZCO/MV JEFFREY ROWE/Atty. for dbt. RESPONSIVE PLEADING

MOTION TO CONFIRM PLAN 6-27-14 [37]

No tentative ruling.

12. 14-10855-A-13 ELISEO OROZCO MHM-1MICHAEL MEYER/MV

CONTINUED MOTION TO DISMISS CASE FOR UNREASONABLE DELAY THAT IS PREJUDICIAL TO CREDITORS AND/OR MOTION TO DISMISS CASE 6-5-14 [26]

JEFFREY ROWE/Atty. for dbt.

No tentative ruling.

13. <u>14-10855</u>-A-13 ELISEO OROZCO MHM-2MICHAEL MEYER/MV JEFFREY ROWE/Atty. for dbt.

MOTION TO DISMISS CASE FOR FAILURE TO MAKE PLAN PAYMENTS 7-31-14 [46]

No tentative ruling.

14. <u>14-11857</u>-A-13 HAN/IN KIM
HJA-4
HAN KIM/MV
H. AHN/Atty. for dbt.

MOTION TO AVOID LIEN OF BH FINANCIAL SERVICES, LLC 6-18-14 [63]

### Final Ruling

Motion: Avoid Lien that Impairs Exemption

Notice: LBR 9014-1(f)(1); written opposition required

**Disposition:** Granted

Order: Prepared by moving party

Unopposed motions are subject to the rules of default. Fed. R. Civ. P. 55, incorporated by Fed. R. Bankr. P. 7055, 9014(c). Written opposition to this motion was required not less than 14 days before the hearing on this motion. LBR 9014-1(f)(1)(B). None has been filed. The default of the responding party is entered. The court considers the record, accepting well-pleaded facts as true. TeleVideo Sys., Inc. v. Heidenthal, 826 F.2d 915, 917-18 (9th Cir. 1987).

Section 522(f) of the Bankruptcy Code authorizes the court to avoid a lien "on an interest of the debtor in property to the extent that such lien impairs an exemption to which the debtor would have been entitled." 11 U.S.C. § 522(f)(1). There are four elements to avoidance of a lien that impairs an exemption: (1) there must be an exemption to which the debtor would have been entitled; (2) the property must be listed on the schedules and claimed as exempt; (3) the lien must impair the exemption claimed; and (4) the lien must be a judicial lien or nonpossessory, nonpurchase-money security interest in property described in § 522(f)(1)(B). Goswami v. MTC Distrib. (In re Goswami), 304 B.R. 386, 390-91 (B.A.P. 9th Cir. 2003). Impairment is statutorily defined: a lien impairs an exemption "to the extent that the sum of-(i) the lien; (ii) all other liens on the property; and (iii) the amount of the exemption that the debtor could claim if there were no liens on the property; exceeds the value that the debtor's interest in the property would have in the absence of any liens." 11 U.S.C.  $\S$  522(f)(2)(A).

The responding party's judicial lien, all other liens, and the exemption amount together exceed the property's value by an amount greater than or equal to the debt secured by the responding party's lien. As a result, the responding party's judicial lien will be avoided entirely.

15. <u>14-11857</u>-A-13 HAN/IN KIM
HJA-5
HAN KIM/MV
H. AHN/Atty. for dbt.

MOTION TO AVOID LIEN OF TARGET NATIONAL BANK 6-18-14 [69]

### Final Ruling

Motion: Avoid Lien that Impairs Exemption

Notice: LBR 9014-1(f)(1); written opposition required

Disposition: Granted

Order: Prepared by moving party

Unopposed motions are subject to the rules of default. Fed. R. Civ. P. 55, incorporated by Fed. R. Bankr. P. 7055, 9014(c). Written opposition to this motion was required not less than 14 days before the hearing on this motion. LBR 9014-1(f)(1)(B). None has been filed. The default of the responding party is entered. The court considers the record, accepting well-pleaded facts as true.  $TeleVideo\ Sys.$ ,  $Inc.\ v.\ Heidenthal$ , 826 F.2d 915, 917-18 (9th Cir. 1987).

Section 522(f) of the Bankruptcy Code authorizes the court to avoid a lien "on an interest of the debtor in property to the extent that such lien impairs an exemption to which the debtor would have been entitled." 11 U.S.C. § 522(f)(1). There are four elements to avoidance of a lien that impairs an exemption: (1) there must be an exemption to which the debtor would have been entitled; (2) the property must be listed on the schedules and claimed as exempt; (3) the lien must impair the exemption claimed; and (4) the lien must be a judicial lien or nonpossessory, nonpurchase-money security interest in property described in § 522(f)(1)(B). Goswami v. MTC Distrib. (In re Goswami), 304 B.R. 386, 390-91 (B.A.P. 9th Cir. 2003). Impairment is statutorily defined: a lien impairs an exemption "to the extent that the sum of—(i) the lien; (ii) all other liens on the property; and (iii) the amount of the exemption that the debtor could claim if there were no liens on the property; exceeds the value that the debtor's interest in the property would have in the absence of any liens." 11 U.S.C.  $\S$  522(f)(2)(A).

The responding party's judicial lien, all other liens, and the exemption amount together exceed the property's value by an amount greater than or equal to the debt secured by the responding party's lien. As a result, the responding party's judicial lien will be avoided entirely.

16. <u>14-11857</u>-A-13 HAN/IN KIM HJA-6 HAN KIM/MV H. AHN/Atty. for dbt. MOTION TO AVOID LIEN OF AMERICAN EXPRESS BANK, FSB 6-18-14 [75]

# Final Ruling

Motion: Avoid Lien that Impairs Exemption

**Notice:** LBR 9014-1(f)(1); written opposition required

Disposition: Granted

Order: Prepared by moving party

Unopposed motions are subject to the rules of default. Fed. R. Civ. P. 55, incorporated by Fed. R. Bankr. P. 7055, 9014(c). Written opposition to this motion was required not less than 14 days before the hearing on this motion. LBR 9014-1(f)(1)(B). None has been filed. The default of the responding party is entered. The court considers the record, accepting well-pleaded facts as true. TeleVideo Sys., Inc. v. Heidenthal, 826 F.2d 915, 917-18 (9th Cir. 1987).

Section 522(f) of the Bankruptcy Code authorizes the court to avoid a lien "on an interest of the debtor in property to the extent that such lien impairs an exemption to which the debtor would have been entitled." 11 U.S.C. § 522(f)(1). There are four elements to avoidance of a lien that impairs an exemption: (1) there must be an exemption to which the debtor would have been entitled; (2) the

property must be listed on the schedules and claimed as exempt; (3) the lien must impair the exemption claimed; and (4) the lien must be a judicial lien or nonpossessory, nonpurchase-money security interest in property described in § 522(f)(1)(B). Goswami v. MTC Distrib. (In re Goswami), 304 B.R. 386, 390-91 (B.A.P. 9th Cir. 2003). Impairment is statutorily defined: a lien impairs an exemption "to the extent that the sum of—(i) the lien; (ii) all other liens on the property; and (iii) the amount of the exemption that the debtor could claim if there were no liens on the property; exceeds the value that the debtor's interest in the property would have in the absence of any liens." 11 U.S.C. § 522(f)(2)(A).

The responding party's judicial lien, all other liens, and the exemption amount together exceed the property's value by an amount greater than or equal to the debt secured by the responding party's lien. As a result, the responding party's judicial lien will be avoided entirely.

17. 14-11461 -A-13 ANDREA SOUSA
MHM-2
MICHAEL MEYER/MV
RICHARD BAMBL/Atty. for dbt.

MOTION TO DISMISS CASE FOR FAILURE TO MAKE PLAN PAYMENTS 7-31-14 [53]

No tentative ruling.

18. 14-12362-A-13 BENITO/MARTHA GALARZA CONTINUED OBJECTION TO

DEUTSCHE BANK NATIONAL TRUST COMPANY/MV

THOMAS GILLIS/Atty. for dbt. MELISSA VERMILLION/Atty. for mv.

No tentative ruling.

CONTINUED OBJECTION TO CONFIRMATION OF PLAN BY DEUTSCHE BANK NATIONAL TRUST COMPANY 6-6-14 [16]

19. <u>14-12362</u>-A-13 BENITO/MARTHA GALARZA TOG-3 BENITO GALARZA/MV

THOMAS GILLIS/Atty. for dbt. RESPONSIVE PLEADING

No tentative ruling.

CONTINUED MOTION TO VALUE COLLATERAL OF DEUTSCH BANK, N.A. NATIONAL TRUST COMPANY 6-13-14 [30]

20. <u>14-12772</u>-A-13 CORINA BARRON
MHM-1
MICHAEL MEYER/MV
JANINE ESQUIVEL/Atty. for dbt.

No tentative ruling.

21. <u>13-14086</u>-A-13 IDA JONES
SAH-14
IDA JONES/MV
SUSAN HEMB/Atty. for dbt.
NON-OPPOSITION

No tentative ruling.

MOTION TO DISMISS CASE FOR FAILURE TO MAKE PLAN PAYMENTS 7-31-14 [52]

MOTION FOR RELIEF FROM AUTOMATIC STAY 6-27-14 [134]