CPLR 3101(a)(1): Perpetuation of a Party's Own Testimony by Deposition Permitted on Basis of Advanced Age

St. John's Law Review

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of CPLR 3101(a) in light of its liberal construction in *Allen*, the court concluded that the policy limits were relevant to the "subject matter" of the case and that *Allen* mandates their discovery. It also reasoned that since the insurer is the real party in interest in a negligence action, disclosure of the limits of coverage would permit the plaintiff's attorney to better assess the depth of his adversary's commitment. Additionally, the court found that such pretrial discovery in the sound discretion of the judge would not serve to invade the defendant's privacy, and it rejected the argument that the plaintiff's counsel might be tempted to demand excessive damages if high policy limits were discovered.

The settlement rationale for permitting disclosure of the defendant's insurance policy limits is compelling, especially in light of CPLR 104, which mandates liberal construction of the CPLR "to secure the just, speedy and inexpensive determination of every civil judicial proceeding." Moreover, should this controversy reach the Court of Appeals, defendants will find it difficult to overcome the force of the liberal construction of CPLR 3101(a) mandated by *Allen*. Insurer opposition to disclosure may well be reevaluated as carriers for co-defendants and third parties increasingly find themselves in the position of adversaries under the apportionment rule of *Dole v. Dow Chemical Co.* While the inception of no-fault insurance in New York may reduce the urgency for change, the Legislature should not thereby be deterred from amending CPLR 3101(a) to effect this needed reform.

**CPLR 3101(a)(1): Perpetuation of a party's own testimony by deposition permitted on basis of advanced age.**

Pursuant to the full disclosure mandate of CPLR 3101(a)(1), a
party, by service of notice, may take the deposition of an adverse party without a showing of special circumstances. CPLR 3101, unlike CPA 288, however, does not expressly permit a party to perpetuate his own testimony by self-deposition. Case law has construed the statute as permitting this practice without a showing of special circumstances. 

Boyo v. New York City Transit Authority reaffirms the validity of this practice.

In Boyo, the defendant opposed the plaintiff's motion to perpetuate her testimony pursuant to CPLR 3101 on the ground that the plaintiff, a 75-year-old woman, failed to submit a medical affidavit proving that illness, likelihood of death, or other special circumstances mandated the deposition. The Supreme Court, Kings County, held that the plaintiff was entitled to perpetuate her testimony solely on the basis of her advanced age, relying on the legislative intent expressed in CPLR 3403, which provides for a trial preference as a matter of right "in any action upon the application of a party who has reached the age of seventy-five years."

Such a motion should be granted regardless of the absence of special circumstances. Clearly, the intent of the CPLR is to liberalize disclosure. Moreover, CPLR 3117, by restricting the use of depositions at trial, discourages needless self-depositions. Where this practice would be burdensome to the adverse party, he may seek a protective order under CPLR 3103.

CPLR 3101(a)(4): Fourth Department allows disclosure against non-party witness where it will aid preparation for trial.

CPLR 3101(a)(4) provides that a nonparty witness may be required to disclose information material and necessary to a party's claim or defense provided that there exist adequate special circumstances. When the nonparty witness might have been unavailable for trial, or was

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71 CPLR 3107.
74 See note 72 supra. Cf. CPLR 104, 3101(a)(1).
75 CPLR 3117 requires that a party seeking to introduce a deposition at trial show that the witness is either: (1) dead; (2) more than 100 miles from the courtroom; (3) unavailable because of age, sickness, infirmity, or imprisonment; (4) unavailable despite diligent efforts to procure his attendance; or that exceptional circumstances exist.