CPLR 3140: Interdepartmental Conflict Develops

St. John's Law Review
In Goldner v. Lendor Structures, Inc., the appellate division, second department, conditionally granted plaintiff's motion to impose 3126 penalties on defendant for failing to appear at pre-trial examinations. The court's holding in Goldner is in conformity with the views of the first department, i.e., 3126 penalties "apply to notices of examination as well as orders therefor."

The cases arising out of CPLR 3126 have fallen into a pattern. Although CPLR 3126 contains unequivocal language, courts have made their 3126 penalty orders only on a conditional basis. While a litigant should not be deprived of his day in court because of his attorney's wrongdoing, refusals to make disclosure impede the judicial process and consume substantial amounts of money. A practical solution to this dilemma would be the continued imposition of substantial attorney's fees as one of the conditions attached to an order pursuant to CPLR 3126.

**CPLR 3140: Interdepartmental conflict develops.**

CPLR 3140 mandates that "the appellate division in each judicial department shall adopt rules governing the exchange of appraisal reports intended for use at the trial in proceedings for condemnation. . . ." The rule of the appellate division, second department, adopted pursuant to CPLR 3140, provides that in "proceedings for condemnation . . . the attorneys for the respective parties shall file with the clerk of the trial court . . . any appraisal report intended to be used at the trial . . . together with a separate copy . . . for each adverse party to the claim." In In re Inwood, claimant sought an exchange of appraisal reports covering the damaged parcel. The court granted the condemnor's motion to vacate claimant's notice to exchange appraisal reports holding that claimant could obtain only those appraisals which were on file with the clerk of the trial court.

In contrast, the fourth department's implementation of CPLR 3140 requires attorneys to "serve upon their adversaries . . . a copy of all appraisal reports intended to be used at the trial."

This rule was recently construed in City of Buffalo v. Ives:

---

41 Misc. 2d 1049, 247 N.Y.S.2d 419 (Sup. Ct. Queens County 1964) (held that 3126 penalties were imposable only after disobedience of "court order" for disclosure). See also The Quarterly Survey of New York Practice, 41 St. John's L. Rev. 309 (1966).


118 29 App. Div. 2d at 979, 289 N.Y.S.2d at 689.

119 7B McKinney's CPLR 3126, supp. commentary 124 (1967).


wherein the court, emphasizing the word “all,” reasoned that the
condemnor should not be allowed to have appraisals made, discard
the highest, and submit the lowest.

Both the second and fourth department rules use the words
“intended to be used at the trial.” When is an appraisal report
“intended to be used at the trial?” It logically follows from the
disposition made by the Inwood court that only appraisal reports
on file are “intended to be used at the trial.” However, the
decision in Ives seems to indicate that the mere preparation
of an appraisal ipso facto makes it “intended to be used at the
trial.” The Inwood court seems to have reached the better
result. An amendment to the fourth department’s rule requiring
filing of appraisals should bring about the better result achieved
in Inwood.

ARTICLE 32 — ACCELERATED JUDGMENT

CPLR 3212(e): Entry of partial summary judgment proper
despite outstanding counterclaims in excess of demands
in complaint.

CPLR 3212(e) permits a court to grant summary judgment
“as to one or more causes of action, or part thereof . . . on such
terms as may be just.” The court is further authorized to sever
the cause of action in which summary judgment is granted from
any remaining cause of action.122

In Dalminter v. Dahmine,123 appellants contended that special
term erred in granting partial summary judgment to plaintiffs,
since meritorious counterclaims in excess of the amounts in the
complaint and directly related thereto had not been tried.

The appellate division, first department, held that since the
counterclaims were not inseparable from plaintiffs’ causes of action,
it was within the discretion of special term to enter partial
summary judgment under CPLR 3212(e).124 However, the court
pointed out that the defendants were protected by a stay of
execution until the remaining issues were tried.

122 It is interesting to note that this provision is somewhat redundant
in light of CPLR 5012 which authorizes the court to order a severance
and direct judgment “upon a part of a cause of action or upon one or
more causes of action as to one or more parties.” See 5 WEINSTEIN,
KORN & MILLER, NEW YORK CIVIL PRACTICE §§ 501201 et seq. (1967).
124 It should be noted, however, that where there is but one cause of
action and one or more counterclaims which raise triable issues, it would
be improper to award summary judgment for an amount equal to or
greater than the prayer for relief, since there can be no severance. See
N.Y.S. 221 (2d Dep’t 1927).