

# **Exhibit 1**

UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT  
DISTRICT OF CONNECTICUT  
BRIDGEPORT DIVISION

In Re	*	Case No. 22-50073 (JAM)
	*	
HO WAN KWOK and GENEVER	*	
HOLDINGS CORPORATION,	*	
	*	
Debtor.	*	
LUC A. DESPINS,	*	Adv. Proc. No. 22-05027
	*	
Plaintiff,	*	
	*	
v.	*	
	*	
BRAVO LUCK, LIMITED, et al.,	*	
	*	
Defendant.	*	
LUC A. DESPINS,	*	Adv. Proc. No. 23-05017
	*	
	*	Bridgeport, Connecticut
Plaintiff,	*	August 29, 2023
	*	
v.	*	
	*	
TAURUS FUND, LLC, et al.,	*	
	*	
Defendants.	*	
	*	
* * * * *		

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS  
BEFORE THE HONORABLE JULIE A. MANNING  
UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY JUDGE

APPEARANCES:

Chapter 11 Trustee:	LUC A. DESPINS, ESQ.
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Proceedings recorded by electronic sound recording, transcript produced by transcription service.

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1 held the status conference with regard to that matter.

2 The only other thing the U.S. Trustee's Office may  
3 want, I have no idea, Attorney Claiborn, but that motion  
4 that's seeking to remediate different issues at the Sherry-  
5 Netherland apartment also seeks the employment. So I don't  
6 know if you want the order to refer to Section 327 or  
7 something too. I have no idea. But maybe you can all work  
8 that out before we have a hearing.

9 And maybe if you all come in and there's no  
10 problem, you'll go first at 2 p.m. Okay?

11 MR. DESPINS: That's a good incentive.

12 THE COURT: All right. So with regard to the  
13 status conference that was held today that -- the status  
14 conference has been held. There's no need for any -- no  
15 further status conferences will be scheduled and a notice of  
16 hearing will issue on ECF No. 2113. Okay?

17 So then how would you like to proceed next?

18 MR. DESPINS: We'll go to Mahwah at this point.

19 THE COURT: Go right ahead.

20 MR. DESPINS: Thank you, Your Honor.

21 So Your Honor, this is a motion to approve a  
22 settlement with the Department of Justice. That's under  
23 document 24 in the adversary proceeding. And I have already  
24 testified as to this, but I think it's important that we set  
25 the stage again on this because last time that was not the

1 main focus. I wanted the Court to know about it, but  
2 clearly that was not the purpose of that hearing.

3 So the first question is why enter into a  
4 settlement with the DOJ? Second question is what does the  
5 settlement do or not do? And so let me try to address that.

6 The first question is why?

7 As we state in the motion, the DOJ has expressly  
8 targeted the Mahwah mansion as a -- that's not a verb --  
9 forfeitable asset and they've actually identified that  
10 asset. We did not know about it. So we have to be candid  
11 with the Court. We did not know about that asset until the  
12 indictment was released.

13 And, however, the Department of Justice, their  
14 tools are sort of limited in the pre-conviction phase in the  
15 sense that they cannot obtain title to this property now or  
16 do much with it before there's a conviction, which is a  
17 final conviction. Given that the trial is not going to last  
18 -- not going to start until April I think, at least until  
19 April of next year, obviously, the DOJ and we were aware of  
20 what was going there and we're really concerned about this  
21 very valuable asset being left in limbo for lack of a better  
22 term.

23 So, however, because they identified this asset as  
24 a potentially forfeitable asset, we did not want to begin  
25 any adversary proceeding which could be perceived as hostile

1 towards the DOJ because obviously it's important we believe  
2 to work with them as cooperatively as possible. Why?

3 Because they have all sorts of tools that we don't  
4 have. We don't want them to be fighting us and us being at  
5 cross purposes with them with respect to this asset, and  
6 this is where we came up with this idea of -- first of all,  
7 we did our homework. We believe that this asset through the  
8 relief we're seeking in the adversary proceeding is an  
9 estate asset. We're convinced of that. The Court will have  
10 to determine if that's the case or not. That's for another  
11 day.

12 But we approached the DOJ and said we want to go  
13 forward with this adversary proceeding to try to establish  
14 that this is an asset of the estate. And eventually, if the  
15 Court rules in our favor, to sell this asset to liquidate it  
16 for the benefit of holders of allowed claims.

17 And so we had this discussion about, okay, how is  
18 that going to play out, because their view is that they have  
19 superior claims. And I'm not going to go into all the  
20 details on this, but we pointed out and we cited in the  
21 motion some case law, because there's a lot of cases on this  
22 where Chapter 11 trustees or Chapter 7 trustees are battling  
23 against the DOJ over issues like that as to who has first  
24 dibs on an asset of the -- and I'm saying in those cases the  
25 alleged wrongdoer -- and, you know, obviously we want to

1 avoid that.

2 And we also wanted to avoid the following, which  
3 is we filed this adversary proceeding. In my dreams, we  
4 prevail. We sell the assets and the DOJ comes in and says  
5 thank you very much, we will take that money, and thank you  
6 for your work, and that's the end of it. We could not have  
7 that.

8 This estate cannot be in a position where it's  
9 financing any other activity. It has to net neutral. And I  
10 believe more than net neutral, and I'll get to that piece in  
11 a second. So that we negotiated the fact that if we  
12 prevail, that's very important, only if we prevail.

13 This settlement agreement does not dictate the  
14 sale of the property because it provides that certain things  
15 will happen if we prevail.

16 So if we prevail and we sell the asset, we can use  
17 the net proceeds to pay all the expenses that the estate  
18 will have incurred. At that time, we thought we would incur  
19 not only legal fees, but security fees, a broker to sell the  
20 property, a mortgage if -- there's no mortgage on the  
21 property, but if there are people that have mechanics liens  
22 that need to be paid, that of course comes off the top.

23 So that creates a concept of net proceeds. And  
24 the net proceeds under that stipulation, we're kicking down  
25 -- that down the road, which is to be determined. And I'll

1 come back to why there's not more progress on that. So the  
2 net proceeds are very important.

3 And what I said is, okay, that's great. We're  
4 going to get all our expenses back. That's good. But this  
5 case is not being run for the professionals for the case.  
6 There has to be a benefit to the estate. That's where we  
7 came in with the deemed expense of a million dollars.

8 So that assuming for a second that we prevail, the  
9 mansion is sold, we get all the expenses paid, and the DOJ  
10 and us cannot agree on the distribution of the net proceeds,  
11 we're getting a million dollars to the estate guaranteed.  
12 And it says in there to be paid to the holders of allowed  
13 claims, so an allowed claim in your court, so it has to be  
14 an allowed claim, allowed claims of victims. And, you know,  
15 people pointed out, well, victims is not defined.

16 That's not an accident. Meaning, I want to have a  
17 shot at convincing the DOJ that the victims -- first of all,  
18 you have to have an allowed claim. You cannot receive a  
19 penny of this unless you have an allowed claim as determined  
20 by Your Honor. But if you have an allowed claim, the issue  
21 of who's a victim or not, that's -- I would like that to be  
22 subject to further discussion.

23 But the bottom line is this estate will end up  
24 with a million positive, if we're right that this property  
25 is part of the estate. And we feel pretty strongly that is