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SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA
COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA

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** Unsealed pursuant
to 1/16/05 court
order*

18 Attorneys for Defendant
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20 SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
21 FOR THE COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA, COOK DIVISION

22 THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF
23 CALIFORNIA,
24
25 Plaintiffs,
26
27 vs.
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29 MICHAEL JOSEPH JACKSON,
30
31 Defendant.

Case No. 1133603
MR. JACKSON'S REPLY IN SUPPORT OF
MOTION IN LIMINE TO EXCLUDE
REFERENCE TO CIVIL SETTLEMENT
AMOUNTS AND ACCOMPANYING
DOCUMENTS

Honorable Rodney S. Melville
Date: January 28, 2005
Time: 8:30 a.m.
Dept: SM 2

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1 **A. Introduction**

2 Mr. Michael Jackson submits this Reply in support of his Motion in Limine to Preclude Reference
3 to Settlement Amounts. Mr. Jackson's Motion in Limine seeks to exclude any reference to settlement
4 amounts from civil settlements with third parties. Civil settlements that are remote in time and dictated by
5 considerations which prevent plaintiff from making a claim they constitute an "admission" have no place in
6 this proceeding and are irrelevant.

7 **B. Evidence of Prior Civil Settlement Amounts Is Irrelevant and Inflammatory.**

8 Plaintiff claims evidence of civil settlement amounts, which it has not yet decided to seek leave for
9 admission in evidence, is relevant as an admission against interest. (Plaintiff's Memo, p. 2, lines 10-11).
10 However, a civil settlement is neither an admission against interest, nor relevant to determine the purpose
11 for which a civil settlement was made. Any number of reasons compel a civil settlement, including
12 insurance, third parties, and economic circumstances which have nothing to do with an admission against
13 interest. Further, the settlement itself states it is not an admission of guilt or liability.

14 Plaintiff states:

15 "The prosecution obtained its copies of the relevant documents [involving civil lawsuits]
16 from the Internet. The People are not required to make 'discovery' of them to defendant because
17 they do not come within the provisions of Penal code section 1054.1, nor are they 'Brady' material."
18 (Platiniff's Memo, p. 3, ln 27 to p. 4, ln 3).

19 However, plaintiff's claim is not the standard for section 1054.1. More important, if plaintiff is
20 claiming the settlement is an "admission" against interest, which is a witness statement, and there is no
21 question that plaintiff needed to disclose the information. Any witness statement must be disclosed, and
22 plaintiff has not disclosed it despite getting it off "the Internet."

23 Witness statements are always relevant to the proceeding and must be disclosed. Penal Code section
24 1054.1(f); Thompson v. Superior Court, 53 Cal. App. 4th 480, 488 (1997). Any interview or statements a
25 witness has made, and any writing regarding that statement, should be disclosed to the defendant. Funk v.
26 Superior Court, 52 Cal. 2d 423, 424 (1959). The courts have gone to great lengths to assure that statements
27 a person has made in the possession of law enforcement are disclosed to a defendant. Izazaga v. Superior
28 Court, 54 Cal. 3d 456, 377; Hubbard v. Superior Court, 66 Cal. App. 4th 1163, 11167 (1997).

1 **C. Evidence of Settlement Amounts is Irrelevant to Establish State of Mind, Criminal**
2 **Culpability, or Efforts to Conceal Prior Acts.**

3 Plaintiff claims that if a lawsuit alleged sexual misconduct, and there was a settlement, then there
4 “was a tacit admission that there was merit to the lawsuit.” (Plaintiff’s Memo, p. 3, lines 4-5). However,
5 not only is the conclusion contrary to fact, but also there is no relevance to the conclusion because the claim
6 a lawsuit has merit is not material to this case. Settlement of a civil proceeding is neither an admission
7 against interest nor an admission the lawsuit has merit because numerous other factors having nothing to do
8 with “admissions” or “merit” are involved in civil settlements. Further, the settlement itself recites there is
9 no “admission” contained in the act or the amount of settlement.

10 Plaintiff cites People v. Muniz, 213 Cal. App. 3d 1508 (1989), for the proposition evidence Code
11 section 1152 does not apply to criminal proceedings. (Plaintiff’s Memo, p. 4, lines 20-21). However,
12 Muniz, which was disapproved by the Supreme Court in People v. Escobar, 3 Cal. 4th 740 (1992),^{1/}
13 provided only that offers to the alleged “victim” are not covered by section 1152. Civil settlements to third
14 parties are neither addressed nor covered by the Muniz decision, and the public policy considerations of
15 permitting statements a defendant makes to an alleged “victim” are not present with regard to third party
16 civil settlements 13 years earlier, nor do such civil settlements constitute “admissions” as did the statements
17 defendant made to the victim in Muniz.

18 In People v. Muniz, 213 Cal. App. 3d 1508 (1989), defendant was charged with forced oral
19 copulation and sexual penetration with a sharp object. The prosecution sought to introduce testimony that
20 defendant offered to pay for some of the alleged victim’s medical expenses and made offers to the alleged
21 victim. The court permitted the testimony over defendant’s objection the offer in compromise was a
22 settlement offer that could not be introduce under Evidence Code section 1152(a). Defendant was
23 convicted of forced oral copulation. The Court of appeal affirmed, finding Evidence Code section
24

25 ^{1/} Plaintiff correctly points out Muniz was disapproved by the Supreme Court in People v. Escobar,
26 3 Cal. 4th 740 (1992) (Plaintiff’s Memo, p. 5, lines 6-10). However, the disapproval goes much further than
27 plaintiff contends because it was the Supreme Court’s disapproved the conclusion of the nature of the injuries
28 in Muniz. Those injuries did not constitute great bodily injury, and defendant’s offer to pay medical bills was
 part of that determination. Plaintiff is asking this court to make a decision to admit evidence in this case based
 on a Court of Appeal decision plaintiff knows was disapproved by the Supreme Court.

1 1152(a)'s prohibition against admission of settlements to establish liability are not applicable to criminal
2 case if the issue was guilt or innocence for the act to which the offer of compromise was made. Id. at 1515.
3 Use of such evidence to show "guilt" is not the same as the use of such evidence in a civil case to show
4 "liability." Id. The statement was an admission against interest as to the issue alleged crime being tried,
5 and not as to some other act or past occurrence. Id. Further, the statement defendant wished to pay for
6 medical expenses was not an offer in compromise, but rather an admission against interest. Id. at 1516.

7 Mr. Jackson has made no offer or settlement suggestion to the current complaining witnesses. The
8 evidence involving settlement amounts regards an 11 and 13-year old "civil" cases where the settlements
9 would be introduce to show civil "liability," not an admission against interest. The proffered evidence fits
10 squarely within the prohibition of section 1152(a) and is not offered to show "guilt" in this case, but rather
11 to show civil "liability" in a prior civil case which is irrelevant.

12 **D. Settlement Amount Evidence Deprives Mr. Jackson of Effective Cross-Examination.**

13 Plaintiff claims that Evidence Code section 1154 was intended to prevent the defendant in a civil
14 case from using the fact that a plaintiff offered to settle his claim for a small amount as evidence that the
15 claim had no real merit if the offer was spurned and the matter went to trial. (Plaintiff's Memo, p. 5, ln 26,
16 to p. 6, ln 1). However, section 1154 covers much more than using evidence against a plaintiff who offered
17 a small amount. The section prohibits any evidence a person has "accepted" a sum of money in satisfaction
18 of a claim, and that section prohibits Mr. Jackson from cross-examining any witness who has accepted a
19 sum of money in satisfaction of their claim "to prove the invalidity of the claim or any part of it."

20 Mr. Jackson will not be able to ask witnesses why they accepted what they accepted in settlement of
21 their invalid claim. He will not be able to ask them the nature of the terms of the settlement to prove the
22 invalidity of their claim. It is not a question of the amount of the settlement because it is a question of the
23 "invalidity" of the claim that Evidence Code section 1154 prohibits when it creates a prohibition against
24 questioning any person about a settlement "to prove the invalidity of the claim or any part of it."

25 The violation of Mr. Jackson's right to a fair trial and due process are patent because he cannot
26 cross-examine the witnesses plaintiff wants to present against him. It is not enough for plaintiff to say that
27 if the court will waive section 1152, it will waive section 1154. The Legislature recognizes that evidence of
28

1 settlements from third parties who are not complaining witnesses in this criminal case are irrelevant to any
2 issue in this case. What plaintiff proposes is a direct violation of Mr. Jackson's rights to a fair trial.

3 **E. No "Admission" Can be Inferred from An 11 or 13-Year Old Third Party Civil Settlement.**

4 Plaintiff claims the settlement agreement Mr. Jackson subscribed in the Chandler lawsuit was
5 subscribed by Mr. Jackson and therefore he made the settlement. (Plaintiff's Memo, p. 6, lines 20-21).
6 Apparently, plaintiff is referring to a document it has not produced in discovery in this case. More
7 important, it is not a question of who signed the document, but rather who made and paid the settlement
8 that is at the heart of the "admission" plaintiff wishes to assert.

9 The admission plaintiff wants to assert is that the payment of a large sum of money is an admission
10 against interest, not the settlement itself. It is the amount of the settlement that this Motion in Limine
11 requests be excluded from evidence, because it is the amount of the settlement that is irrelevant. Plaintiff's
12 claim that Mr. Jackson reached settlements with civil claimants in the past is irrelevant to this proceeding,
13 and the speculation about the amount of those settlements or the source of payment, whether by third
14 parties or insurance carriers, is improper because plaintiff has produced no evidence in discovery
15 concerning those amounts or who paid them.

16 Settlements are often involuntary and dictated by insurance companies. Western Polymer
17 Technology, Inc. v. Reliance Ins. Co., 32 Cal. App. 4th 14, 23-28 (1995). Unless the plaintiff is prepared to
18 prove Mr. Jackson paid every dime of these settlements and that no insurance was involved, plaintiff's
19 claim of conscious state, admission, or proof of criminality lacks foundation and is irrelevant. The time for
20 plaintiff to make this showing was for this hearing, and plaintiff has made no showing.

21 Plaintiff states "But it was defendant's signature on the Agreement and release, not the
22 representative of his insurance carrier." (Plaintiff's Memo, p. 7, lines 13-14). However, insurance carriers
23 rarely if ever sign civil settlements involving their insured because their only interest is to get a release from
24 the claimant, and the issue here is not who signed the settlement, but who made and paid for the settlement.

25 What plaintiff is asking this court to do is engaged in a debate over a settlement made 11-years ago
26 and another made 13-years ago where witnesses have disappeared, memories have faded, and documents do
27 not exist. This 11 and 13-year old debate is not only stale, but also far too remote to have any relevance to
28 this case. The use of a claimed admission from 11 and 13-years ago is not only a violation of the statute of

1 limitations, but also a violation of Mr. Jackson's right to a speedy trial. The prohibition against stale claims
2 is specifically designed to prevent precisely what has happened here from fading memories and
3 disappearance of witnesses.

4 **F. Claims of Settlement Amounts Violate the Prohibitions in the Statute of Limitations.**

5 **1. The settlement amounts are time remote and time barred.**

6 Plaintiff claims:

7 "Evidence Code section 1108 permits the introduction of evidence of other of the defendant's
8 sexual offenses quite apart from the statute of limitations for the earlier of those offenses."

9 (Plaintiff's Memo, p. 8, lines 7-8).

10 However, prior offense evidence does not include prior civil settlement amounts, nor the
11 speculation of who paid the settlement or why it was made. Prior offense evidence under section 1108 was
12 not designed to permit an plaintiff from claiming an admission from a stale third party civil settlement
13 where the amount of the settlement is irrelevant.

14 Plaintiff cites People v. Branch, 91 Cal. app. 4th 274 (2001), for the proposition that evidence of
15 "molestation" committed 30 years earlier is admissible under section 1108. (Plaintiff's Memo, p. 8, lines
16 9-10)./ However, evidence of "molestation" is not evidence of a civil settlement amount, nor is it an
17 attempt to create an "admission" where no such admission exists.

18 In People v. Branch, 91 Cal. App. 4th 274, 281 (2001), the court stated:

19 "In this regard, section 1108 implicitly abrogates prior decisions ... indicating that
20 'propensity' evidence is per se unduly prejudicial to the defense. [Citation.]" (People v. Falsetta
21 (1999) 121 Cal.4th 903, 911 (Falsetta)). Our Supreme Court has determined that the admission of
22 evidence regarding a defendant's propensity to commit a sex act under section 1108 does not violate
23 the defendant's right to due process of law. (Falsetta, supra, at pp. 910, 922.)

24 The existence of a civil settlement does not establish a "propensity" to commit an offense, nor did
25 the abrogation of "propensity" evidence in section 1108 cover the "propensity" to settle civil claims. Mr.
26 Jackson, just like any other large business, has settled thousands of civil claims in his lifetime. The
27
28

1 abrogation of "propensity" evidence for sex acts by section 1108 never included civil settlements with third
2 parties, and such evidence is both irrelevant and outside the scope of section 1108.

3
4 **2. Plaintiff cannot use 13 year old settlement amounts to show criminal intent.**

5 Evidence of civil settlement amounts should be excluded under Evidence Code section 352 because
6 it has no probative value. Such evidence has no logical connection to the claimed "admission" plaintiff
7 seeks to assert, and any such connection is far outweighed by the prejudicial effect of such evidence. The
8 evidence is speculative as to the reasons for the settlement amount, who paid the settlement amount, and
9 whether the settlement was voluntary, involuntary, or compelled by irrelevant circumstances that render it
10 far more prejudicial than any probative value.

11
12 **E. Conclusion.**

13 For the foregoing reasons, Mr. Jackson requests his Motion in Limine to Exclude Reference to
14 Settlement Amounts be granted.

15
16 DATED: January 26, 2005

Respectfully submitted,

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