Case analysis

Parties

Plaintiff Stephen Slesinger filed suit against defendant Walt Disney Company.

Facts

Stephen Slesinger acquired the rights of commercially exploiting Winnie the Pooh series from original author A.A Milne in 1930. SSI corporation was established by Stephen Slesinger that licensed some exploitation rights to Disney in 1961. SSI filed suit against Disney in 1991 for fraud and breach of contract (Findlaw, 2007).

Procedures

The plaintiff raised three claims; SSI obtained the documents from public dumpsters, Disney maintained confidential and non-confidential copies of restricted items and SSI never altered the original document. A new trial was done to evaluate the misconduct of SSI. Both parties were ordered by the court to appear for judicial arbitration under Code of Civil section 1141.11.

Issues

SSI claimed that Disney had breached the contract because it failed to fulfill contractual obligations. Brach of the contract was conducted against 1983's agreement. Disney misrepresented royalties and compliance. Disney proved with circumstantial evidence that SSI changed the copies of the restricted item list.

Applicable laws

Judicial estoppel is applicable because the plaintiff (Stephen Slesinger) precluded from taking the same position that it was taking in previous legal proceedings. The doctrine of judicial estoppel reveals that SSI was inconsistent with its statements. California’s Business and Professional Code confirms misconduct of SSI. False evidence and misconduct prove fraud of SSI. The alteration of documents was to mislead the defendant and the court.

Holdings

Disney won the case as the court gave it royalty rights over Winnie the Pooh. The judge Florence-Marie Cooper determined misconduct of Stephen Slesinger. SSI committed a breach of confidentiality.

Reasoning

SSI lost the case because it used false tactics for acquiring the documents from Disney office. SSI hired a private detective who searched bins at Disney's headquarters. When the plaintiff didn't find the required items, it attempted to alter the copies of the restricted item list.

Reference

Findlaw. (2007). STEPHEN SLESINGER INC v. WALT DISNEY COMPANY.