#### KEKER VAN NEST &PETERS

# Public Storage

# **Trying a Class Action**

Simona Agnolucci, Partner, Keker, Van Nest & Peters Nathan Vitan, Sr. VP and Chief Legal Officer, Public Storage

June 6, 2019

**PRIVILEGED & CONFIDENTIAL** 

# Case Background

# **Cases and Claims**

#### **Downey v. Public Storage Claims:**

- **<u>\$1 Special</u>**: Misrepresented terms of promotion
- Late Fees: Premature late fees violated Cal. Bus. & Prof. Code § 21713.5(a)(1)
- Lien Fees: Multiple late fees violated Cal. Bus. & Prof. Code § 21713.5(a)(3)
- **Insurance**: Misrepresented terms of insurance program
  - Concealed involvement in and profit from tenant insurance program
    - Copycat claim from *Bowe v. Public Storage* (S.D. Fla.)
  - Misrepresentation that insurance program was mandatory

#### Perez v. Public Storage Claims:

• Same insurance claims as *Downey* 

# **Discovery Coordination**

#### **Stipulated Coordination Order Streamlined Discovery**

- Key efficiencies gained:
  - Limited Depositions
    - · Answers deemed to have been made in both actions
    - Witnesses only deposed once
  - Common written discovery
    - Insurance-related discovery requests served on all parties
    - Plaintiffs permitted to share insurance-related document productions
      - Insurance-related documents marked with a separate Bates Number.
    - Written discovery responses deemed to have been made in both actions

# Limiting the Potential Class Period

LEASE/	RENTAL AGREEMENT
THIS LEASE/RENTAL AGREEMENT is executed this _ the self storage facility, at	, by and between Public Storage (as owner or agent for owner "Owner") of (the
	(as "Occupant"), whose address and alternate contact address are as follows:
	Alternate Contact Name

Occupant Te	lephone	ID/Driver's Licens	е
Occupant En	uail Address for Electr	ronic Communication Occupant's	Author
Enclosed/Par	king Space No	(approximately)	Accourt
FEES AND	CHARGES:		
	Monthly Rent (Du	ue on or before 1stof Month)	
New Account Administration Fee (Non-Refundable)		\$55	
			\$7.

Occupant acknowledges that the above information is correct, that unless C payments are due before the close of business on the first day of the month, an and then fees and other charges that have become due. Occupant also understa reserves the right to require that rent, fees and charges be paid in cash, certified

It is agreed by and between Owner and Occupant:

Occupant understands that if Occupant elects to obtain the insurance offered at this facility a wholly owned subsidiary of Public Storage reinsures the risk for the Perfect Solution Storage Insurance Program, and Public Storage may benefit financially from your purchase of insurance.

1. PURPOSE AND DESCRIPTION OF PREMISES. The parties have entered into this Lease/Rental Agreement for the purpose of renting the above noted storage space (the "Premises") and agree that no ballment or deposit of goods for safekeeping is intended or created hereunder. Occupant shall examine the Premises and the Property and acknowledges that space size is estimated per Building Office Management Association standards and does not refer to usable space, that the size of the Premises and any referenced sizes are approximate, given for illustration only and may vary materially, that Occupant has had the opportunity to measure the Premises prior to moving in, and that the Premises and the Property set of the Premises. This Property being leased or rented has not undergone inspection by a Certified Access Specialist (CASp). Occupant shall have access to the Premises and the common areas of the Property only during the Property's posted hours and days of operation. This access is conditioned on the Owner's ability to maintain the business, rentability, safety, or security of the Premises and the Property, and if such ability is compromised, the Owner may take reasonable preventative or corrective measures such as, but not limited to, restricting access hours and requiring verification of Occupant sidentity. Loitering on the Property or the Premises is prohibited. The person(s) histed above as "Authorized Access Presons" is/are solely agents of the Occupant and is/are not parties to this Lease?

# **Success on Pre-Certification Motions**

#### **Downey v. Public Storage**

- <u>Demurrer</u> to claim that Public Storage prematurely charged late fees
  - Sustained without leave to amend
  - Plaintiff could not establish cognizable economic injury that would grant her standing to assert a UCL claim
- <u>Motion for summary adjudication</u> of claim Public Storage improperly charged multiple late fees
  - Granted in favor of Public Storage
  - Plaintiffs had not met their burden to show a genuine issue of material fact regarding whether they had been charged late fees in violation of Cal. Bus. & Prof. Code § 21713.5(a)(3)

#### **Class Certification**

#### Downey v. Public Storage

"Plaintiffs therefore have failed to show that common issues of fact and law predominate. There must be some connection between the allegedly false advertising and the transaction for which restitution is sought."

Downey Class Certification Order

- Plaintiffs sought certification of claim alleging that Public Storage falsely advertised that customers could rent a unit for \$1 for the first month
  - Plaintiffs argued that tenants could not rent a storage unit for \$1 because they had to pay additional administrative fees and purchase insurance/locks
- · Court denied Plaintiffs' motion to certify the class
  - No evidence that all class members were exposed to the alleged misrepresentations
  - Even if there was uniform exposure, the advertisements at issue were not uniform

#### Perez v. Public Storage

"Plaintiffs seek to certify a class to pursue UCL claims premised on two factual theories . . . . [C]ommon issues predominate, and class certification is granted, as to the first theory, but not as to the second."

Perez Class Certification Order

- Plaintiffs sought certification of two claims:
  - 1. Insurance Requirement: Public Storage misled customers into believing they had to purchase the storage insurance offered at Public Storage facilities.
  - 2. **Reinsurance:** Public Storage failed to disclose that it reinsured the insurance program sold at its facilities.
- Insurance Requirement claim certified
  - Court cautioned that Plaintiffs would have to prove their case based on the uniform sales presentation
- Reinsurance claim not certified
  - No evidence that the materiality of Public Storage's allegedly fraudulent omission was subject to common proof

#### Perez v. Public Storage

"It is important to emphasize that Plaintiffs will have to prove their case based on the training materials and uniform sales representation. If Plaintiffs stray into reliance on individual class members' assertions that sales employees deviated from the presentation, common issues will not predominate and the case will not be able to proceed as a class action."

Perez Class Certification Order

Anticipated discovery needs on certified claim and gained key admissions from class reps for trial.

Q. You testified that you purchased the insurance because a Public Storage employee told you were required to purchase the insurance, right?

A. Correct.

Q. Was that the only reason you purchased the insurance?

A. That's the only reason I purchased Public Storage's insurance, yes.



#### **Trial Issues**

"At trial, Plaintiffs offered a different theory of UCL liability than had been argued in the Motion for Class Certification."

Tentative Statement of Decision

#### **Original Claim**

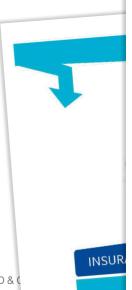
 Public Storage made uniform misleading statements to customers, leading them to believe that they were required to purchase insurance offered to them during the rental transaction.

#### **New Claim**

 Public Storage made uniform misrepresentations to customers that they were required to insure their stored property when there was no such requirement.

INSURANCE ADDENDUM TO LEASE/RENTAL AGREEMENT THIS ADDENDUM TO BE ATTACHED TO AND MADE PART OF THE LEASE/RENTAL AGREEMENT	
Lease/Rental Agreement         Storage Unit         Facility           #	
stored property. I acknowledge that the Lease/Rental Agreement require property that l intend to store at this facility. Purchase of the self-storage requirement. I understand that if I do not have insurance, or if my insur goods. I personally assume all risk of loss and Owner is not responsible This facility and its employees are not qualified or authorized to evaluat offered by this self-storage agent may provide a duplication of coverage source of coverage. Questions regarding the Storage Insurance Progra Smith, Inc. (Marsh). I understand this insurance is not required in order t I ACKNOWLEDGE I HAVE REVIEWED THE ABOVE INSURANCE CEF	rance is not required in order to store ty. HAVE REVIEWED THE ABOVE FICATION AND DISCLOSURES
State         State <th< th=""><th></th></th<>	
Date Signed Tenant Signature Print Name ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: I understand the amount noted is the Premium I must pay monthly for the Amount of Insurance I have selected. I authorize Ovmer to conduct the administrative function of receiving the premium to send to the insurance company on my behalf. I have elected to satisfy my obligation to have insurance for the stored goods by purchasing the insurance protection available through Marsh. I have read and completed this Insurance Election Addendum to apply for the coverage. I have read the insurance literature provided and understand that the insurance Integrated the insurance literature provided and understand that the insurance I applying	

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#### Storage Presentation Script For Internal Use Only

"All of our customers are required to have insurance on their goods in storage. One option is to purchase insurance through the Perfect Solution Storage Insurance Program." (Provide them with a brochure)

HOW MUCH COVERAGE

# The purchase of this insurance is not required to complete your rental transaction



CALL US TOLL-FREE (877) 878-6730

#### IT'S A **GOOD POLICY** TO GET INSURANCE.



#### DON'T JUST STORE IT. **PROTECT IT.**

#### IS YOUR PROPERTY COVERED?

Your belongings are important to you. Why else would you be keeping them in storage? Protect your property from loss or damage with the right coverage. After all, you are responsible for the things you're storing at this facility and insurance for your stored belongings is required.

CHECK YOUR CURRENT POLICY Your renters' or homeowners' policy may provide the insurance you need. Check with your agent to determine if your personal property stored at a location other than your home or business

CHECK YOUR CURRENT POLICY Your renters' or homeowners' policy may provide the insurance you need. Check with your agent to determine if your personal property stored at a location other than your home or business is covered.

**PRIVILEGED & CONFIDENTIAL** 

LEASE/RENTAL	ACREEMENT
LENGLINEITIC	AOREENTERT

THIS LEASE/RENTAL AGREEMENT is executed this \_\_\_\_\_\_, by and between Public Storage (as owner or agent for owner "Owner") of the self storage facility, at \_\_\_\_\_\_

(as "Occupant"), whose address and alternate contact address are as follows:

and

Occupant Address	
Occupant City/State/Zip Code	
Occupant Telephone	ID/Driver's License
Occupant Email Address for Electronic Co	mmunication Occupant's Author
Premises: Enclosed/Parking Space No	(approximately
FEES AND CHARGES:	

Occupant understands that if Occupant elects to obtain the nsurance available at the Property, the additional amount for such insurance coverage must be included with the nonthly payments as noted above

 Monthly Rent (Due on or before 1st of Month)
 New Account Administration Fee (Non-Refusdable
 Dishonored Check Charge

 \$55.50
 Lien Fee 1 after (31) Days (Whether or not Sale Occurs)

 \$7.50
 Lien Fee 2 after (40) Days (Whether or not Sale Occurs)

 \$130.00
 Lien Sale Fee

By INITIALING HERE\_\_\_\_\_\_, Occupant acknowledges that the above information is correct, that unless Occupant is identified above as a business, Occupant is an individual, that all payments are due before the close of business on the day indicated, and that all payments are to be applied to the oldest delinquency first, including late charges and other fees which have become due. Occupant also understands and agrees to pay the charges, fees and Rent as noted above and that Owner reserves the right to require that Rent, fees and charges be paid in cash, certified check or money order.

It is agreed by and between Owner and Occupant:

1. PURPOSE AND DESCRIPTION OF PREMISES. The parties have entered into this Lease/Rental Agreement for the purpose of renting the above noted storage space (the "Premises") and agree that no bailment or deposit of goods for safekeeping is intended or created hereunder. Occupant shall examine the Premises and the Property and, by INITIALING HERE \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, acknowledges that space size is estimated per Building Office Management Association standards and does not refer to usable space, that the size of the Premises and any referenced sizes are approximate, given for illustration only and may vary materially, that Occupant has had the opportunity to measure the Premises prior to moving in, and that the Premises and the Property are satisfactory for all purposes for which Occupant shall use the Premises and the Property is proven the Property being leased or rented has not undergone inspection by a Certified Access Specialist (CASp). Occupant shall have access to the Premises and the common areas of the Property being leased or rented has not undergone inspection by a Certified Access Specialist (CASp). Occupant shall have access to the Premises and the common areas of the Property only during the Property's postel hours and days of operation. This access is conditioned on the Owner's ability to maintain the business, relability, safety, or security of the Premises and the Property and if such ability is compromised, the Owner may take reasonable preventative or corrective measures such as, but not limited to, restricting access hours and requiring verification of Occupant's identity. The person(s) listed above as "Authorized Access Persons" isfare solely agents of the Occupant and isfare not parties to this Lease/Rental Agreement, has/have no relate of the and are being on upditing to the intermone active from domes or from the premises and the domes and adve not parties to this Lease/Rental Agreement, has/have no relate of the access to the bine on the intermone active the premose or anone the bine on the priore

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self storage facility, at (as "Occupant"), whos	e address and alternate contact address are as follows:	
Occupant Address	<b>OCCUPANT UNDER</b>	<b>RSTANDS THAT OWNER WILL NOT</b>
Occupant City/State/Zip Code Occupant Telephone ID/Driver's License	INSURE OCCUPAN	T'S PERSONAL PROPERTY AND
Occupant Email Address for Electronic Communication Occupant's Author Premises: Enclosed/Parking Space No. (approximately	THAT OCCUPANT IS	S OBLIGATED UNDER THE TERMS
FEES AND CHARGES:	OF THIS LEASE/REM	NTAL AGREEMENT TO INSURE HIS
Monthly Rent (Due on or before 1seof Month)     New Account Administration Fee (Non-Refundable)     Dishonored Check Charge     \$13	OWN GOODS.	

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LEASE/RENTA	L AGREEMENT			
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and (as "Occupant"), when	e address and alternate contact address are as follows:			
Occupant Address	To the extent Occup	ant's insu	rance lapse	es or Occupant
Occupant City/State/Zip Code Occupant Telephone ID/Driver's License	does not obtain insu			•
Occupant Email Address for Electronic Communication Occupant's Author Premises: Enclosed/Parking Space No. (approximately	Occupant's personal	property	stored in	the Premises,
FEES AND CHARGES:	Occupant agrees Occ	cupant will	personally	assume all risk
Monthly Rent (Due on or before 1s of Month)New Account Administration Fee (Non-Refundable)Dishonored Check Charge \$7.	of loss.			
\$13	Lien Sale Fee			

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LEASE/RENTAL	AGREEMENT
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(as "Occupant"), whose address and alternate contact address are as follows:

and

Occupant Address	
Occupant City/State/Zip Code	
Occupant Telephone	ID/Driver's License

Premises: Enclosed/Parking Space No. (approximately\_

FEES AND CHARGES:

 Monthly Rent (Due on or before 1st of Month)
 New Account Administration Fee (Non-Refundable)
 Dishonored Check Charge

This Lease/Rental Agreement and any written amendments . . . set forth the entire agreement of the parties with respect to the subject matter hereof and supersedes all prior agreements or understandings with respect thereto.

 \$55.50
 Lien Feel after (31) Days (Whether or not Sale Occurs)

 \$7.50
 Lien Feel 2 after (40) Days (Whether or not Sale Occurs)

 \$130.00
 Lien Sale Fee

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INSURANCE ADDENDUM TO LEASE/RENTAL AGREEMENT THIS ADDENDUM TO BE ATTACHED TO AND MADE PART OF THE LEASE/RENTAL AGREEMENT	
Lease/Rental Agreement	
stored properly. I acknowledge that the Lease/Rental Agreement require properly that lintend to store at this facility. Purchase of the self-storage requirement. I understand that if I do not have insurance, or if my insur goods. I personally assume all risk of loss and Owner is not responsible	Lease/Rental Agreement requires ance that covers loss or damage for that I intend to store at this facility.
Smith, Inc. (Marsh). I understand this insurance is not required in order to unre my goods at an incomp. I ACKNOWLEDGE I HAVE REVIEWED THE ABOVE INSURANCE CERTIFICATION AND DISCLOSURES Date Signed Print Name  New Hampshire Insurance Company APPLICATION FOR INSURANCE	
I elect to obtain the insurance coverage available through Marsh, in the amount indicated below.          \$5,000 Coverage         \$15,000 Coverage         \$15,000 per Month         Initial	
Date Signed Print Name Print Name ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: I understand the amount noted is the Premium I must pay monthly for the Amount of Insurance I have selected. I authorize Owner to conduct the administrative function of receiving the premium to send to the insurance company on my behalf. I have elected to satisfy my obligation to have insurance for the stored goods by purchasing the insurance protection available through Marsh. I have read and completed this Insurance Election Addendum to apply for the coverage. I have read the insurance literature provided and understand that the insurance I am applying for underwritten by New Hampshire Insurance Company has EXCLUSIONS and CONDITIONS.	
COVERAGE EFFECTIVE: The insurance coverage will be effective immediately upon completion of your application and payment of Premium. You will become insured effective as of that time, for the Amount of Insurance you selected and initialed above.	Keker Van Nest & P
ELIGIBILITY: I understand that insurance on personal property in the enclosed storage space described in the Rental Agreement is available to all	

t I intend to store at this facility.

THIS ADDENDUM TO BE ATT		THE LEASE/RENTAL AGREEMENT	
Lease/Rental Agreement	Storage Unit	Facility	
responsible for insuring his own goods and un under the terms of this lease/rental agreement INSUR	derstands that Owner will not insure Occup to insure his own goods. ANCE CERTIFICATION AND DIS	v Occupant at occupant's sole risk. Occupant is so vant's personal property and that Occupant is obliga SCLOSURES that I understand I am solely responsible to insure	ated
stored property. I acknowledge that the Lease property that I intend to store at this facility. Pre- requirement. I understand that if I do not have goods. I personally assume all risk of loss and This facility and its employees are not qualifie offered by this self-storage agent may provide	Inchase of the self-storage insurance, or if my insur Owner is not responsible		I do not have insurance, or if my am personally responsible for any loss
Source of coverage. Questions regarding the S Smith, Inc. (Marsh). 1 understand this insurance I ACKNOWLEDGE I HAVE REVIEWED THE A Date Signed Tenant Sign	BOVE INSURANCE CEF	amage to my g	
	New Hampshire Insurance Con APPLICATION FOR INSURAN urance coverage available through Marsh,	npany ICE	
\$5,000 Coverage \$15.00 per Month Initial	\$4,000 Coverage \$13.00 per Month Initial	\$3,000 Coverage \$11.00 per Month Initial	
Date Signed Tenant Sig		Print Name	
Owner to conduct the administrative function of a obligation to have insurance for the stored good	eceiving the premium to send to the insurar s by purchasing the insurance protection av verage. I have read the insurance literature	nce company on my behalf. I have elected to satisfy vailable through Marsh. I have read and completed provided and understand that the insurance I am apply	y my this
COVERAGE EFFECTIVE: The insurance coverage will be effective immediately upon completion of your application and payment of Premium. You will become insured effective as of that time, for the Amount of Insurance you selected and initialed above.			u will Keker Van Nest & Pete
ELIGIBILITY: I understand that insurance on personal property in the enclosed storage space described in the Rental Agreement is available to all			o all

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# **Mid-Trial Motions**

#### Motion to Decertify the Class

• Plaintiffs' claims were premised on individualized misrepresentations made by specific employees, not the uniform sales presentation

#### **Motion for Judgment**

- Following close of Plaintiffs' evidence, moved for judgment on the grounds that there was insufficient evidence of any misrepresentations or fraudulent omissions
  - Evidence of disclosures affirmatively established no liability

#### **Motion to Strike Damages Theory**

• During closing briefing, Plaintiffs attempted to offer their damages model through an attorney declaration in lieu of expert testimony

# Diversity