1	COURT OF APPEALS
2	STATE OF NEW YORK
3	WORTHY LENDING LLC,
4	
5	Appellant,
6	-against-
7	NEW STYLE CONTRACTORS, INC.,
	Respondent.
8	20 Eagle Street Albany, New York October 19, 2022
10	Before:
11	ACTING CHIEF JUDGE ANTHONY CANNATARO
12	ASSOCIATE JUDGE JENNY RIVERA ASSOCIATE JUDGE MICHAEL J. GARCIA
13	ASSOCIATE JUDGE ROWAN D. WILSON ASSOCIATE JUDGE MADELINE SINGAS
14	ASSOCIATE JUDGE SHIRLEY TROUTMAN
15	Appearances:
16	RICHARD G. HADDAD, ESQ.
17	OTTERBOURG P.C. Attorney for Appellant
18	230 Park Avenue New York, NY 10169
19	GLENN P. BERGER, ESQ.
20	JAFFE & ASHER LLP Attorney for Respondent
	600 Third Avenue
21	9th Floor New York, NY 10016
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24	
25	Karen Schiffmiller Official Court Transcriber



ACTING CHIEF JUDGE CANNATARO: Good afternoon.

Our first appeal today is number 86, Worthy Lending v. New Style Contractors.

Counsel, whenever you're ready?

MR. HADDAD: Good afternoon, and thank you. May it please the court, Richard Haddad for Worthy Lending. I would like to reserve two minutes for rebuttal.

ACTING CHIEF JUDGE CANNATARO: You have two minutes.

MR. HADDAD: Thank you.

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When Worthy Lending sent New Style the notice of assignment, which is found at page 37 of the record, advising New Style that Checkmate had assigned to Worthy all its accounts as collateral security in a direction that payments could only be made to Worthy to get a discharge under Uniform Commercial Code Section 9-406, New Style had only two ways to get a discharge of its obligation.

One, it could pay Worthy in accordance with the notice, set forth at page 37 of the - - - of the record. Or two, if it had any question with respect to the notice that it had received, they could have asked New - - - they could have asked Worthy Lending, under 9-406(c), to supply evidence. Because what 9-406(a) says is if after receipt of the notification, the account debtor may discharge its obligation only by paying the assignee and may not



discharge the obligation by paying the assignor. And if 1 2 you have any question, you request proof of the assignment 3 under 9-406(c), and only if you fail ---4 ACTING CHIEF JUDGE CANNATARO: But there was no 5 request for proof of the assignment in this case, was 6 there? 7 MR. HADDAD: There - - - there was none. 8 New Style did is they ignored the notice. The notice 9 expressly says on it, right there on its face, so the first 10 page in bold, if you pay the borrower, if you pay Checkmate, you will not be discharged from that obligation. 11 12 JUDGE WILSON: Did you have to wait for a default 13 before sending the notice? 14 MR. HADDAD: No, we did not. There are some 15 cases that the defendant has relied upon, in which the 16 default was a pre-requisite. Our agreement, as set forth 17 in Section 4(k) of the - - - of the agreement, which is on 18 page 24 of the record, says we can give notice immediately or - - - or after default. 19 20 JUDGE WILSON: So essentially, the terms of your 21 loan were such that you could call some part of the 22 outstanding balance at will? 23 MR. HADDAD: Well, we could collect directly from 24 the account debtor.

JUDGE WILSON: Yeah, even if - - - even if they

1	weren't so they'd run up two million dollars, let's
2	say, and they weren't in default, you could still acquire
3	some of the of the security directly?
4	MR. HADDAD: Yes. We could collect the
5	collateral payable
6	JUDGE WILSON: And effectively, reduce the
7	reduce the account balance, divert their cash flow to pay
8	down the loan.
9	MR. HADDAD: Well, that's the essence of
10	revolving credit, which is
11	JUDGE WILSON: Yeah.
12	MR. HADDAD: what they had here. You get
13	to borrow against a certain percentage of your accounts
14	receivable and your and your inventory, and as
15	payments come in, more availably is is created, and
16	as you issue new invoices, you get more availability and
17	can borrow more money. And
18	JUDGE WILSON: Right, but here here, the -
19	the the amount of revolving credit is really
20	effectively kind of determined by you, discretionarily,
21	when you decide you want to send a notice. And
22	MR. HADDAD: Well, it's determined based upon -
23	-
24	JUDGE WILSON: it's (indiscernible) yeah.
25	MR HADDAD: it's it's determined

1	based upon the scope of the of the loan agreement,
2	and the maximum amount of collateral. Here, loans were
3	advanced
4	JUDGE WILSON: Um-hum.
5	MR. HADDAD: collateral was provided, and
6	then, unfortunately, what occurred is collateral was
7	was diverted, and money was paid to Checkmate
8	JUDGE WILSON: Was there something that caused -
9	
10	MR. HADDAD: in contravention
11	JUDGE WILSON: you to send the notice?
12	MR. HADDAD: Excuse me?
13	JUDGE WILSON: Was there something that caused
14	you to send the notice when you did?
15	MR. HADDAD: It was the introduction of the
16	financing. It was at the outset of the financing
17	arrangement that the client lender sent the notice, and
18	that that's common in in asset-based financing
19	JUDGE WILSON: Okay.
20	MR. HADDAD: It's designed to encourage the flow,
21	to apply have payments applied immediately, and
22	therefore, make more money available for borrowing, and
23	promoting the commerce, and promoting the borrowing and

lending, so that the borrower can access its assets as

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rapidly as possible.

ACTING CHIEF JUDGE CANNATARO: Can I ask you,
what would - - - what would be the utility of an assignment
if we were to adopt the rule that you're proposing today?

Is there a role for an assignment, or is the security
interest of the type you had all that's ever required in
these types of financing arrangements?

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MR. HADDAD: Right. Well, there's - - - there's actually, when we think about what - - - what is an assignment, as explained in the official comments and in the definitions to the Uniform Commercial Code, there could be two different kinds of - - - multiple kinds of assignments.

There could be an outright sale and assignment.

For example, a factor. They buy a hundred dollar

receivable for eighty dollars. They give the - - - the - 
- the borrower eighty dollars, and the factor hopes to

collect the whole hundred, and if they collect the hundred,

they keep the extra twenty. They're making a profit on it.

A lender which - - who takes an assignment as collateral

security, if we got the hundred cents paid on the - - - on

the receivable, but only eighty dollars was due on the

loan, well, that money would be paid over to the borrower.

That would not be a windfall for us.

So what - - - what - - - the suggestion by the - - by the defendant, and it's implied in - - - in the



1	lower court decision decision that we need to have a
2	separate document called assignments would truly, A, exalt
3	form over substance, but B, disregard the specific
4	provisions within the Uniform Commercial Code within
5	Article 9, that say, as we look at this, what is a secured
6	party.
7	JUDGE WILSON: Is the is the UCC-1 filing
8	important to your claim, or if they didn't exist, you'd
9	still have the you'd still have your claim?
10	MR. HADDAD: Well, under the the
11	filing the purpose of the UCC-1 filing is two
12	is twofold. Number one is to perfect the security interes
13	
14	JUDGE WILSON: Well, I guess I'm asking somethin
15	different
16	MR. HADDAD: and two, to give notice.
17	JUDGE WILSON: Suppose suppose you hadn't
18	done supposed you hadn't made the UCC-1 filings,
19	could you still prevail here?
20	MR. HADDAD: I $-$ - I think that as between us
21	and the borrower
22	JUDGE WILSON: Um-hum.
23	MR. HADDAD: the obligation and the rights
24	were provide were transferred to us in the loan

JUDGE WILSON: In the agreement.

MR. HADDAD: - - - agreement. And it provided that we have the right directly to give the notice, refer - - - called a notice of assignment. So the parties to the agreement recognized that what the nature of this transaction was, was an assignment as collateral, because those words are used right there in 4(k), "notice of assignment"; that's what's in the notice itself. So we have the notice of assignment.

The UCC filing is really to give public notice.

But as between us, the lender, and the account debtor, once the account debtor receives the notice, they're obligated to pay the lender to get that discharge. The General Motors case that - - - that this court decided some years ago refers to that, and says, oh, you might have to - - - you're - - you're not really paying twice; you're really only paying once to get the discharge.

What you did with the rest of your money, that might have been a gift. You took that risk. When you wrote that check for a million-four - - - this isn't, you know, twenty bucks; I'll take the risk. When you wrote that check for a million-four in total disregard of that notice, you're undermining our rights to the collateral, and you're acting contrary to the provisions set forth - -

JUDGE TROUTMAN: And so - - -



MR. HADDAD: - - - in the Uniform Commercial 1 2 Code. 3 JUDGE TROUTMAN: - - - your view is, with respect 4 to assignment, whether it's outright ownership or security 5 interest, it doesn't matter. 6 MR. HADDAD: That - - - that's my view. It's not 7 only my view. It's also the view of the Permanent 8 Editorial Board commentaries. And they explain precisely 9 why that's so important as a policy matter and a proper 10 interpretation of the UCC, and one of the reasons is to 11 protect the New Styles of this world, so that they don't 12 have to dig in and see what kind of - - - what's the nature 13 of the relationship. If they're interested, they can ask 14 us, which they didn't do. But if they're - - - if they 15 don't make that - - - we don't want to pose upon them the 16 burden of figuring it out. 17 ACTING CHIEF JUDGE CANNATARO: Thank you, 18 Counsel. 19 Thank you. MR. HADDAD: 20 MR. BERGER: Good afternoon. May it please the 2.1 court, Glenn Berger, Jaffe & Asher, counsel for New Style 2.2 Contractors.

The court below correct - - - the courts below

correctly decided this. It's undisputed that Worthy has no

assignment. They pleaded a single cause of action under

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1	UCC 9-607. That provision explicitly states that it
2	it has no direct recourse against strangers to the lending
3	relationship.
4	JUDGE WILSON: Well, does where does it sa
5	that?
6	MR. BERGER: 9-607(e).
7	JUDGE WILSON: That just says it doesn't
8	establish any rights itself.
9	MR. BERGER: Yes.
10	JUDGE WILSON: It doesn't say anything about re
11	the word "recourse" isn't in there.
12	MR. BERGER: Pardon me?
13	JUDGE WILSON: I don't think the word "recourse"
14	is in there, right?
15	MR. BERGER: Oh, recourse, maybe. I'm sorry.
16	Recourse may not be
17	JUDGE WILSON: Yeah.
18	MR. BERGER: the word recourse isn't there
19	but it says it provides
20	JUDGE WILSON: So it just it just says it
21	doesn't create any rights.
22	MR. BERGER: Yes, it does not create any rights.
23	JUDGE WILSON: But doesn't 406 create rights?
24	MR. BERGER: I'm sorry, does not
25	JUDGE WILSON: 406.

1	MR. BERGER: 406? As against an an account
2	debtor when there's been an assignment, then
3	JUDGE WILSON: Yeah.
4	MR. BERGER: there would be rights, but
5	_
6	JUDGE WILSON: So this does turn, then, on the
7	assignment, not so much on which section the the
8	claim is brought under.
9	MR. BERGER: Well, the the claim is brought
10	under 9-607
11	JUDGE WILSON: Yeah.
12	MR. BERGER: which provides no rights, and
13	yes, I'm saying that there is no there being no
14	assignment, the there is no direct recourse against
15	my client.
16	JUDGE WILSON: So the Permanent Editorial Board
17	disagrees with you?
18	MR. BERGER: Yes. I'm glad you brought up the -
19	the issue of the lack of the of the UCC-1,
20	because it shows how the Permanent Editorial Board's
21	opinion really goes too far. I mean, if there were an
22	under-secured creditor or a lender with an unperfected
23	security interest could claim to be owner of an account,
24	under that under that provision, and that would not
25	be right. While a UCC-1 may not be necessary for a lender

1	to have recourse against its borrower, it does it is
2	required for it to have recourse against anybody else.
3	JUDGE WILSON: And so does it matter that here
4	they did file the UCC-1s, and they checked the box
5	designating them as assignments on the form?
6	MR. BERGER: I'm sorry. I didn't
7	JUDGE WILSON: Sure. The form on the box that is
8	checked on the UCC-1 is assignment for the secured
9	interest.
10	MR. BERGER: There is but there was no
11	assignment.
12	JUDGE WILSON: Well, that's the box that says on
13	the UCC-1.
14	MR. BERGER: But I I understand, but there
15	but there was no assignment in this case, and then -
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17	JUDGE WILSON: So your argument is they checked
18	the wrong box.
19	MR. BERGER: Well, UCC-1 is not does not
20	create the security interest as
21	JUDGE WILSON: Right.
22	MR. BERGER: as the court knows. It's
23	simply is what's needed to perfect it, so a person could
24	say they have collateral on anything they want on a UCC-1,
25	but it better be there in the security agreement, otherwise

it's not valid. Likewise, if there's no assignment, we're saying that there is no - - - the notice of assignment that was sent is of no force and effect. And we - - - and the cases we cite will say that, in fact, even if that notice is disregarded, if there is no underlying assignment, then the notice of assignment is of no force and effect.

In this case, by the way, it was not disregarded. It would - - - my client did actually ask - - - inquire of Checkmate, the vendor that provided the goods and services, the vendor who invoiced it, and - - - and it was told that there was a dispute. But the point is that there's a - - - absolutely no - - - no assignment in this case. And the court - - - the cases we have here, including those in New York and other cases where we've cited, there is - - - if there is no notice - - - no underlying assignment, then there is no - - -

JUDGE RIVERA: So - - - so - - -

MR. BERGER: - - - valid notice of assignment.

JUDGE RIVERA: So - - - so to be clear, you're saying they had to have some separate documentation of a straight assignment?

MR. BERGER: Yes, in order to - - -

JUDGE RIVERA: Without that, there's no way to - to recognize a right, let's put it that way, to be able
to demand that you pay them instead of the people you owe.



MR. BERGER: No, actually I - - -

JUDGE RIVERA: Correct? Or am I misunderstanding

you?

MR. BERGER: - - - I'd want to clarify that. Thank you.

JUDGE RIVERA: Yes, please.

MR. BERGER: Thank you. What I'm saying is that a secured creditor in Worthy's position can seek to recover on its collateral - - its interest is in collateral. It can seek to recover on accounts receivable as its collateral. It can - - it has recourse against its borrower. It has recourse against its collateral. It has recourse against the proceeds of that collateral. What it doesn't have is the right to impose direct liability on - - personal liability on the account debtors unless there's an assignment. That is what we're saying.

And as I - - - as I said, the - - - the interest - - - Worthy's interest is solely in the collateral. If you, for example, pay - - - if there's an assignment, and you pay the predecessor in interest, you haven't satisfied the debt. It's a very basic premise. But that's not the case with a security interest. Here is the current holder of that account, Checkmate, that provided the goods and services, invoiced my client, and - - and told my client, by the way, to disregard Worthy's notices, but - - but



aside from that, the fact is that it's - - - that it is the owner of the account, and therefore, there's nothing wrong, or at least, my client cannot be personally held liable for having paid the vendor who paid - - - who provided the services if there's not been an assignment of the interest.

JUDGE RIVERA: If - - - so if your client suspects there's a dispute, then - - - then maybe there is an assignment. Why - - - why not seek a judicial declaration? Or why not try and resolve this question?

MR. BERGER: I understand. My client faces a Hobson's choice, and - - - and a lot of these cases have that, where they are a general contractor, you have subcontractors that are invoicing it, and sub - - - subcontractors that the money is just presumably being paid for. And it's caught between the lien law, where it's required by law to satisfy those obligations, and - - - and - - - in either 9-607 or 9-406 of the UCC, where there's financing given to the subcontractor. In that case, it's really facing an impossible choice.

It happens to be in this particular case, since there was no actual assignment, that the case law we cite says that there is no consequence to my client for having - - if they did not make that inquiry about it, although they did with their actual vendor.

JUDGE WILSON: I guess you could have



interpolated the money, right, but then your subcontractor doesn't get paid for a while.

MR. BERGER: That's right. I mean, they - - these public projects are going to go down the tubes, if - if subcontractors aren't being paid, plus they're
liable personally for - - - under the lien law. So that's
the dilemma that my client was faced, as a factual matter.
But the point is that, as a legal matter here, since there
was no assignment, that my client should not be made
personally liable.

They - - - certainly they could - - - had the option to pay the - - - to pay Worthy. And under the contract as between Worthy and Checkmate, that's perhaps - - Worthy is the one entitled to that payment. But the question is whether my client could be retroactively liable for payments it already made to Checkmate.

JUDGE WILSON: And so what would your liability have been, do you think, if you'd paid Worthy?

MR. BERGER: Well, the liability would be, on the other hand, that they would have been personally liable under the lien law, for not paying its subcontractors.

And, again, I - - - I don't see why, and I don't think it's been raised in the papers of the - - - of the appellant, as to why they can't just get an assignment.

You know, you're talking about sophisticated commercial

transactions. It seems like the easiest thing in the world 1 2 to be able to get an assignment. Although they say it's a 3 burden, I don't understand how it is. It seems like the 4 simplest thing in the world to be able to get an 5 assignment. And even if they don't, as I said, they still 6 have recourse against their borrower and against their 7 collateral. 8 ACTING CHIEF JUDGE CANNATARO: Well, we've seen 9 one possible answer to that question is under 9-607, they 10 don't have to get an assignment. 11 MR. BERGER: 12 ACTING CHIEF JUDGE CANNATARO: Get an assignment.

They don't have to - - - I'm sorry?

MR. BERGER: Right - - - oh, well, but the point is that - - - what I'm saying under 9-607(e), if they don't, then they have no rights under that section itself. That section confers no rights of liability upon a stranger to that lending relationship, as my client is.

ACTING CHIEF JUDGE CANNATARO: If that's all, Counsel?

MR. BERGER: Yes, thank you.

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ACTING CHIEF JUDGE CANNATARO: Okay.

Checkmate telling the borrower to MR. HADDAD: disregard the notice is precisely the problem. And it's precisely the reason why 9-406(c) says if you have a question, ask the secured lend - - - party.



1	lender. Don't
2	JUDGE WILSON: Is there a business reason why you
3	don't want an assignment? Why you why you prefer a
4	security interest to an assignment?
5	MR. HADDAD: It it well, it's
6	it's the nature of the financing the financial
7	transaction. What we are and a security interest is
8	a collateral assignment.
9	JUDGE WILSON: Yeah.
LO	MR. HADDAD: That that's actually what it
L1	is. The magic
L2	JUDGE WILSON: You could actually have the claim
L3	assigned to yourself, right?
L4	MR. HADDAD: We we have we have the
L5	claim assigned to us as collateral security. We don't own
L6	it.
L7	JUDGE WILSON: Yeah.
L8	MR. HADDAD: It's it's
L9	collateral.
20	JUDGE WILSON: But I'm asking, but you could own
21	it, right?
22	MR. HADDAD: You you could own
23	it, but then we'd get the windfall that I spoke about
24	earlier. We'd collect the million-four
25	JUDGE WILSON: Well



MR. HADDAD: - - - and if they only were owed a million - - - if we're only owed a million at the time, we'd have gotten a 400,000 windfall. Instead we were owed three million and we didn't get paid anything, so we're - - we're the one out of luck here. But I - - - had they paid us and had there been a surplus, the money would go to Check - - - to Checkmate.

2.1

The 9-102(73) provides - - - sets forth the definition of secured party. And it includes both a secured lender with a security interest, or a person who buys the accounts with an outright assignment. So the definition is broad enough to cover both under 9-102(71) - - -

JUDGE SINGAS: Counselor, is there a current dispute now between Worthy and Checkmate over who owns Checkmate's - - -

MR. HADDAD: There never was a dispute. There never was a dispute. There is no dispute in the record.

There is no dispute pleaded. There was no dispute. They now say there was a dispute. When we look at what the lower court held, and the lower court said, well, paragraph 13 of the complaint admits a dispute. Oh, no, it does not. It does not dispute a dispute.

Look at paragraph 13 of the complaint. It says they owe the money. It says there's a default. But a



default is not a dispute, so as to prevent us from 1 2 enforcing our rights. If - - - if a default were a 3 dispute, collateral would be worthless, because the only 4 time - - - the only time you look to your collateral, is 5 when the borrower stops paying. We would much rather - - -6 JUDGE GARCIA: But that's not true in - - -7 MR. HADDAD: - - - just get paid. 8 JUDGE GARCIA: That's not true in this case, 9 right? I mean, you didn't have to wait for a default. 10 MR. HADDAD: Well - - - well, no, to - - - to We - - - we certainly wouldn't - - - we certainly 11 collect. 12 wouldn't be suing had the borrower paid us. Had we been 13 paid currently by our borrower, as required, we wouldn't be 14 suing New Style. New Style took - - - you know, got that 15 risk by disregarding the notice, by listening to Checkmate, 16 by ignoring the definitions in the Uniform Commercial Code, 17 and I think the Permanent Editorial Board policy lays it 18 out very, very clearly as to saying that there's no reason 19 to require an assignment - -20 JUDGE RIVERA: And - - -21 MR. HADDAD: -- and if we would do --22 JUDGE RIVERA: - - - and if we - - - if we 23 disagree with you, that means you're out? There's no other 24 recourse? No other way to get paid?

MR. HADDAD:

There's no other way to get paid

1	from New Style, if you were going to disagree with us.
2	JUDGE RIVERA: Right.
3	MR. HADDAD: Checkmate went bankrupt, because
4	that's what happens. It's when companies get into
5	financial difficulty, that they tell their customers, hey,
6	don't pay the bank; pay me.
7	JUDGE WILSON: So did you file a proof of claim
8	in the bankruptcy?
9	MR. HADDAD: We we got a very small amount
10	in in the bankruptcy. The debt still exceeds the
11	million-four. Although the lien law claims that tha
12	were referenced earlier, those those were all
13	satisfied and paid. That that's not a dispute. But
14	but there is there is no dispute to
15	answer Your Honor's question, there is no dispute in the
16	record. There's no dispute by Check by Checkmate
17	that they gave us the security interest, that they signed
18	the security agreement, that they authorized us to give th
19	notice, and that we did so with with with thei
20	permission. So we
21	ACTING CHIEF JUDGE CANNATARO: Thank you, Mr.
22	Haddad.
23	MR. HADDAD: Thank you.
24	(Court is adjourned)



## CERTIFICATION I, Karen Schiffmiller, certify that the foregoing transcript of proceedings in the Court of Appeals of Worthy Lending, LLC v. New Style Contractors, Inc., No. APL 2022-04 was prepared using the required transcription equipment and is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. Karen Schiffmille Signature: Agency Name: eScribers Address of Agency: 7227 North 16th Street Suite 207 Phoenix, AZ 85020 Date: October 25, 2022

