ORS 93.640 ORS 79.1040(10)

Hostmann v. Wilbur-Ellis Company, Civ. No. 95-59-FR Adv. No. 93-3561-dds

In re John W. Stoller, Inc., Case No. 392-37358-dds7

02/28/95 J. Frye reversing DDS Published 178 BR 260 1995 WL 89184

In 1988 Wilbur and Helen Stoller sold property known as the Home Place to Debtor by land sale contract, retaining a life estate for themselves in the house and one acre surrounding the house. In 1989, Wilbur and Helen Stoller then transferred their vendor's interest in the property, excluding their life estate, to John and Joann Stoller by warranty deed. On the same date, John and Joann Stoller executed a Line of Credit Mortgage in favor of Household Finance ("HFC") to secure a debt of \$650,000. The property described as collateral in the mortgage included the Home Place, but included no reference to the land sale contract. In 1991 John and Joann Stoller executed a second line of credit mortgage in favor of HFC to secure a debt of \$690,000; the 1991 mortgage included the same property description with respect to the Home Place. In 1992, Debtor and John and Joann Stoller executed a trust deed and UCC financing statement in favor of Wilbur-Ellis to secure repayment of \$1 million. The collateral included the Home Place as well as all accounts, contract rights and other rights to payment of money. All transactions were promptly recorded.

The bankruptcy court relied upon the case of <u>Bedortha v.</u> <u>Sunridge Land Co., Inc.</u>, 312 Or. 307, 822 P.2d 694 (1991) in finding that HFC's interest in the payments under the land sale contract were superior to Wilbur-Ellis. <u>Bedortha</u> had held the right to receive contract payments under a land sale contract is part of the vendor's real property interest.

Judge Frye reversed, concluding that nothing in the <u>Bedortha</u> case or in the amendments to ORS 93-640 and 79.1040(10) alters the general rule that a mortgage given on real property which is subject to a land sale contract does not constitute a lien on the interest of a holder of a land sale contract without the land sale contract being referred to in the security instruments. Although ORS 93.640 and 79.1040(10) allow a land sale contract to be recorded in real property records, these statutes do no alter the steps required to be taken in order to create a consensual lien. The <u>Bedortha</u> case applies only to judgment liens, not consensual

liens. Wilbur-Ellis is entitled to judgment.

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	IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT LODGEDRECD PAIDDOCKETED		
8	FOR THE DISTRICT OF OREGON		
9	In re)	
10	JOHN W. STOLLER, INC.,) Case No. 392-37358-dds7	
11	Debtor.	Adversary Proceeding No. 93-3561	
12	EDWARD C. HOSTMANN, Trustee,)	
13	Plaintiff,		
14			
15	v.) Civil No. 95-59-FR	
16	WILBUR-ELLIS COMPANY, a California corporation;)) OPINION	
17	HOUSEHOLD FINANCE CORPORATION II, a Delaware corporation;)	
18	CUDDY FARMS, INC., an Oregon corporation; JOHN W. STOLLER		
19	and JOANN M. STOLLER, husband and wife; WILBUR A. STOLLER		
	and HELEN L. STOLLER, husband and wife,		
20	·		
21	Defendants.)	
22	Annette T. Kolodzie		
23	Gary L. Blacklidge David A. Foraker		
24	Greene & Markley, P.C. 1515 S. W. Fifth Avenue, Suite 600		
25	Portland, Oregon 97201		
26	Attorneys for Defendant Wilbur-Ellis Company		
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1 James Ray Streinz McEwen, Gisvold, Rankin, Carter & Streinz 2 1600 Standard Plaza 1100 S. W. Sixth Avenue 3 Portland, Oregon 97204 4 Attorneys for Defendant Household Finance Corporation II 5 6 FRYE, Judge: 7 In the matter before the court, defendant Wilbur-Ellis 8 Company appeals from the final judgment of the bankruptcy 9 court entered on September 22, 1994. 10 The undisputed facts are set forth in the opinion of the Honorable Donal D. Sullivan, United States Bankruptcy Judge 11 12 for the District of Oregon, filed on September 22, 1994. The 13 undisputed facts are as follows: Wilbur and Helen Stoller sold the property [known as 14 the Home Place] to John Stoller Inc. for \$400,000 by 15 a land sale contract dated October 27, 1988. Wilbur and Helen retained a life estate for themselves in the house and one acre of land surrounding the 16 A memorandum of the contract was recorded on house. December 9, 1988. Wilbur and Helen Stoller trans-17 ferred the property to their son John, and his wife Joann Stoller by warranty deed dated May 17, 1989. 18 The warranty deed conveyed Wilbur and Helen's interest free from encumbrances except for their life 19 estate. 20 The parties have agreed through their pleadings that the effect of the warranty deed was to convey 21 the vendor's interest in the land sale contract from Wilbur and Helen to John and Joann. 22 The complaint and answers on file indicate that the warranty deed effected the transfer by virtue of ORS 93.850, even 23 though the deposition testimony of John and Joann Stoller shows that they did not intend or expect to 24 receive an interest in the contract as a result of the warranty deed. 25 Also on May 17, 1989, John and Joann Stoller 26 PAGE 2 - OPINION

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executed a trust deed entitled Line of Credit Mortgage (mortgage) in favor of HFC [Household Finance Corporation II] to secure the amount of \$650,000. The property described as collateral included the Home Place. There was no specific reference to the land sale contract in the mortgage. The warranty deed which conveyed the property and land sale contract to John and Joann from Wilbur and Helen was recorded in Yamhill County on May 23, 1989 as Document 04185. Immediately thereafter, the Mortgage executed by John and Joann in favor of HFC was recorded as Document 04186.

The transcripts of John and Joann's depositions indicate that they did not know they had any interest in the proceeds of the land sale contract, so they did not have any intention to transfer the contract proceeds as collateral to HFC. It appears however, that they did intend to transfer whatever they received from Wilbur and Helen by virtue of the John and Joann testified that they warranty deed. thought that the payments on the land sale contract would be paid to Wilbur and Helen. However, they also stated that they understood that the warranty deed and the mortgage would place HFC in first position against the property ahead of Wilbur and Helen Stoller. At the time the deeds were executed, there was little concern about whether HFC or Wilbur and Helen would be first because the Stollers all believed the property was worth enough to pay both obligations in full.

John and Joann executed another line of credit mortgage in favor of HFC on April 12, 1991. The mortgage was to secure a note in the amount of \$690,000 and contained the legal descriptions for most of the property included in the 1989 mortgage. The second HFC mortgage was recorded on April 16, 1991.

In 1992, the debtor, and John and Joann Stoller executed a trust deed and UCC-1a financing statement in favor of Wilbur-Ellis [Wilbur-Ellis Company] to secure repayment of \$1 million. The collateral included the part of the Home Place involved here as well as all accounts, contract rights and other rights to the payment of money. John and Joann's depositions indicate that they did not intend to grant Wilbur-Ellis an interest in the land sale contract because they did not think it was theirs to encumber.

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John Stoller Inc. filed chapter 11 on November 10, 1992. The case was converted to chapter 7 on April 19, 1993. Wilbur-Ellis sued John and Joann Stoller and obtained judgments against them in the amounts of \$937,375.92 and \$51,576.57. The judgments were entered on February 9, 1993 and March 10, 1993, respectively. Wilbur-Ellis obtained relief from the stay to garnish the proceeds of the land sale contract owed by Stoller, Inc. John and Joann Stoller filed chapter 7 on December 27, 1993, and the trustee for their estate has not filed anything to indicate his position on these motions.

Memorandum, pp. 2-5.

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The Chapter 7 trustee for the estate of defendants John and Joann Stoller sold the Home Place property for \$1,000,000. Defendants Household Finance Corporation II (HFC) and Wilbur-Ellis Company (Wilbur-Ellis) filed cross-motions for summary judgment in the bankruptcy proceeding seeking a determination as to which party is entitled to the balance of the proceeds from the Land Sale Contract after defendant Cuddy Farms, Inc., the agreed-upon first interest holder, was paid. The bankruptcy court granted summary judgment in favor of HFC and against Wilbur-Ellis. The court explained:

Creditors and courts in Oregon have struggled with the proper characterization of a land sale contract over the years. While the stream of payments under the contract itself has been considered personal property, it is secured by and transfers an interest in real property. In the last decade, the Oregon legislature has amended the real property recording statutes and Oregon's Commercial Code to remove land sale contracts from Article 9, and to allow the recording of an interest in a land sale contract in the real property records. ORS 93.640 and 79.1040(10). The statutes do not explicitly state whether an interest in a land sale contract is real property or personal property, but notice of the interest is provided by filing in the real property records.

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The somewhat conflicting case law concerning the nature of a vendor's interest in a land sale contract was reviewed and analyzed in the case of <u>Bedortha v. Sunridge Land Co., Inc.</u>, 312 Or. 307, 822 P.2d 694 (1991). The Oregon Supreme Court defined the issue before it in <u>Bedortha</u> as:

. . . whether a vendor's right to receive payments under an executory land sale contract is a separate personal property interest of the vendor or whether that interest is part of the vendor's real property interest and, therefore subject to a judgment lien.

The court affirmed the Court of Appeals in holding that "the right to receive contract payments - unless properly severed - is part of the vendor's real property interest."

Although the creditor in <u>Bedortha</u> was a judgment lien creditor rather than a consensual secured creditor, the analysis applied by the Oregon Supreme Court is equally applicable to the transaction between the Stollers and HFC. The transfer of the vendor's interest in the contract from Wilbur and Helen to John and Joann was simultaneous with the transfer from John and Joann to HFC to secure the The vendor's right to receive the contract loan. payments and the title to the property itself were transferred to John and Joann in a single package subject only to the vendee's interest of Stoller, Inc. and the life estate of Wilbur and Helen. There is no evidence to indicate that John and Joann took any action to sever the interests once they were transferred together through the warranty deed. Whatever it was that John and Joann received as a result of the warranty deed, they immediately transferred to HFC as collateral for the loan in 1989.

The recent unpublished opinion in <u>In re Gold</u> <u>Key Properties, Inc.</u>, BAP No. OR-93-1635-AsMeO, slip op. (Bankr. 9th Cir. Feb. 4, 1994) was applying Oregon law before it was amended in 1989, and therefore, it is not decisive in this matter.

CONCLUSION

Although it would have been prudent for HFC to have specifically described the land sale contract

PAGE 5 - OPINION

in the mortgage, the documents and timing of the recording of the deed and mortgage were adequate to allow HFC to prevail as first lien holder (after Cuddy's interest) to the proceeds of the land sale contract.

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STANDARD OF REVIEW

A bankruptcy court's conclusions of law are reviewed <u>de</u> <u>novo</u>. <u>In re Weisman</u>, 5 F.3d 417, 419 (9th Cir. 1993).

ISSUE PRESENTED

The issues presented in this appeal are (1) whether the 8 bankruptcy court erred in holding that HFC had a valid, per-9 10 fected security interest in the interest of the vendors of the real property, Wilbur A. Stoller and Helen L. Stoller, 11 12 under the Land Sale Contract dated October 27, 1988 between Wilbur A. Stoller and Helen L. Stoller and the debtor, John 13 W. Stoller, Inc., covering the Home Place (the Land Sale 14 Contract); and, if so, (2) whether the interest of HFC in 15 the interest of the vendors, Wilbur A. Stoller and Helen L. 16 Stoller, in the proceeds due under the Land Sale Contract 17 is prior to the interest of Wilbur-Ellis in such proceeds. 18

CONTENTIONS OF THE PARTIES

Wilbur-Ellis contends that the standard deed of trust used by the debtor, John W. Stoller, Inc., to convey to HFC a security interest in the property did not describe the Land Sale Contract as collateral and, therefore, the deed of trust did not create a right to the proceeds from the Land Sale Contract. Wilbur-Ellis contends that the deed of trust ///

PAGE 6 - OPINION

created a lien on the proceeds from the Land Sale Contract, 1 2 and that it is entitled to judgment in its favor. HFC contends that the bankruptcy court correctly conclu-3 ded that the deed of trust executed by John and Joann Stoller 4 in favor of HFC created a security interest in favor of HFC in 5 the real property know as the Home Place, including a security 6 interest in the proceeds from the Land Sale Contract. 7 8 ANALYSIS The system of recording consensual liens is established 9 10 under O.R.S. 93.640(1), which states, in part: 11 Every conveyance, deed, land sale contract, assignment of all or any portion of a seller's or purchaser's interest in a land sale contract or 12 other agreement or memorandum thereof affecting the 13 title of real property within this state which is not recorded as provided by law is void as against any subsequent purchaser in good faith and for a 14 valuable consideration of the same real property, or any portion thereof, whose conveyance, deed, land 15 sale contract, assignment of all or any portion of a seller's or purchaser's interest in a land sale 16 contract or other agreement or memorandum thereof is first filed for record, and as against the heirs 17 and assigns of such subsequent purchaser. 18 O.R.S. 93.643(1) provides, in part: "To give constructive 19 notice of an interest in real property, a person must have 20 documentation of the interest recorded in the indices main-21 tained under ORS 205.130 in the county where the property is 22 located." 23 The "Line of Credit Mortgage" executed by the borrowers, 24 John and Joann Stoller, and the lender, HFC, states, in part, 25 111 26

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that the "[b]orrower is indebted to Lender in the principal 1 2 sum of \$650,000.00," and that in order: TO SECURE to Lender the repayment of the 3 indebtedness . . . Borrower in consideration of the indebtedness herein recited and the trust herein 4 created, irrevocably grants and conveys to Trustee, 5 in trust, with power of sale, the following described property located in the County of Yamhill, 6 State of Oregon. 7 See attached. 8 TOGETHER with all the improvements now or hereafter erected on the property, and all easements, 9 rights, appurtenances and rents . . . all of which shall be deemed to be and remain a part of the 10 property covered by this Deed of Trust . . . Exhibit 2 to Affidavit of Gary L. Blacklidge, p. 1. 11 The attachment to the Line of Credit Mortgage contains a legal 12 13 description of the property known as the Home Place. There is no reference in the Line of Credit Mortgage to 14 the Land Sale Contract or to the disposition of the proceeds 15 from the Land Sale Contract. There are no terms in the Line 16 of Credit Mortgage which directly or indirectly refer to the 17 proceeds from the Land Sale Contract. 18 While HFC argues that the reference to the word "rights" 19 contained in the last paragraph above "broadens the reach of 20 the lien of the Trust Deed" (Appellee's Brief, p. 10), this 21 court finds that the word "rights" unambiguously refers to 22 the real property rights that arise from an interest in real 23 property and does not refer to the contractual rights that 24 someone may have to the property. This is particularly true 25 in this case where the facts are clear that John and Joann 26

PAGE 8 - OPINION

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Stoller did not know that they had any contractual rights to the proceeds from the Land Sales Contract, and they necessarily had no intent to transfer any right that they had to those proceeds at the time that the Line of Credit Mortgage was executed.

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A vendor's interest in a land sale contract and the 6 vendor's interest in the land itself are separate interests. 7 Security Bank v. Chiapuzio, 304 Or. 438, 444, 747 P.2d 335 In Bullock v. Roost, 119 B.R. 787 (Bankr. D. Or. (1987). 1990), the court explained:

The Oregon Supreme Court held that, under Oregon law, a vendor of an executory land sale contract possesses two distinct, divisible and separable interests. The first is the vendor's interest in the real property subject to the land sale contract. The second is the vendor's interest in the contract itself (that is, the right to receive the payments made and to be made on the contract).

Id. at 790, discussing Security Bank v. Chiapuzio, 304 Or. at 443-44.

In order for HFC to prevail, this court would have to 17 conclude that the terms of the trust deed executed by John and 18 Joann Stoller in favor of HFC created a lien on the interest 19 of John and Joann Stoller to the payments made on the Land 20 Sale Contract, as well as a lien on the property itself, where 21 only the interest in the land itself is referred to in the 22 security instruments. HFC argues, and the bankruptcy court 23 agreed, that the interest of the vendor in a land sale con-24 tract is a real property interest which is conveyed whenever 25 111 26

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the interest of the vendor in the land itself is conveyed to a consensual secured creditor.

The position taken by HFC, that the interest of the vendor in a land sales contract is encumbered whenever an interest in the land is created, does apply to a judgment lien creditor by operation of law. O.R.S. 18.350; <u>May v. Emerson</u>, 52 Or. 262, 96 P. 454, 96 P. 1065 (1908); <u>Bedortha v. Sunridge Land Co.</u>, 312 Or. 307, 822 P.2d 694 (1991).

9 However, this same rule has not been applied to the claim of a consensual lien creditor who is required to specifically 10 describe the property to be encumbered in the security instru-11 ments. A vendor who mortgages its interest in land that is 12 subject to a land sale contract does not grant a security 13 interest in the vendor's interest in the land sale contract. 14 See, e.g., Pedersen v. Barkhurst, 139 Or. 483, 10 P.2d 347 15 (1932); Lathrop v. Lewis, 247 Or. 560, 431 P.2d 268 (1967); 16 and Security Bank v. Chiapuzio, supra. 17

This court concludes that nothing in the Bedortha case or 18 in the amendments to O.R.S. 93.640 and 79.1040(10) alters the 19 general rule that a mortgage given on real property which is 20 subject to a land sale contract does not constitute a lien on 21 the interest of a holder of a land sale contract without the 22 land sale contract being referred to in the security instru-23 ments. O.R.S. 93.640 and 79.1040(10) allow a land sale con-24 tract to be recorded in real property records, but these 25 111 26

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statutes do not alter the steps required to be taken in order to create a consensual lien.

3 The <u>Bedortha</u> case applies to judgment liens. <u>Bedortha</u> does not apply to consensual liens. Consensual liens, such 4 as liens that attach from mortgages and trust deeds, are liens 5 that attach by virtue of contract. Call v. Jeremiah, 246 Or. 6 568, 425 P.2d 502 (1967). A consensual lien is created by 7 the contracts of the parties. A consensual lien in property 8 is referenced in security instruments. Whether the Land Sale 9 Contract at issue here created a real property interest or a 10 11 personal property interest, the contractual rights of the parties are separate from the property interests of the parties. 12 In order to create a consensual lien, the contract rights must 13 be specified in the security instruments. 14

CONCLUSION

HFC does not have a valid, perfected security interest 16 in the interest of the vendors under the Land Sale Contract 17 dated October 27, 1988 between Wilbur A. Stoller and Helen L. 18 Stoller and the debtor, John W. Stoller, Inc., covering the 19 Home Place. Wilbur-Ellis has an interest in the proceeds from 20 the Land Sale Contract by virtue of its judgment lien. 21 The court reverses the judgment of the bankruptcy court in favor 22 of HFC and will enter judgment in favor of Wilbur-Ellis. 23

DATED this 28 day of February, 1995.

len J St HELEN J. FRYE

United States District Judge

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8	UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT			
9	FOR THE DISTRICT OF OREGON			
10	In Re:	Bankruptcy Case No.		
11	JOHN W. STOLLER, INC.,	392-37358-dds7		
12	Debtor,	Adversary Proceeding No. 93-3561-dds		
13	EDWARD C. HOSTMANN, Trustee,			
14	Plaintiff,	SUMMARY JUDGMENT TO HOUSEHOLD FINANCE CORPORATION		
15	v.)			
16	WILBUR-ELLIS COMPANY, a) California corporation,)			
17	HOUSEHOLD FINANCE (CORPORATION II, a Delaware)			
18	corporation, CUDDY FARMS,) INC., an Oregon corporation,)			
19	JOHN W. STOLLER and JOANN M.) STOLLER, husband and wife,			
20	WILBUR A. STOLLER and) HELEN L. STOLLER, husband)			
21	and wife, FARM CREDIT) SERVICES LEASING CORP., a)			
22	Minnesota corporation,) BANCORP LEASING AND			
23	FINANCIAL CORP., an Oregon) corporation, and OREGON			
24	TURKEY GROWERS, an Oregon) cooperative association,			
25 26	Defendants.			
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	PAGE 1 - MEMORANDUM	63		

1 The chapter 7 trustee sold property referred to as 2 the "Home Place" for \$1 million. He filed this complaint to 3 determine the priority among various claimants to the 4 proceeds of the Home Place ("Property") and the Clyde Place. 5 The debtor purchased the Property through a land sale 6 contract with a purchase price of \$400,000. Household 7 Finance Corporation II ("HFC") and Wilbur-Ellis Company 8 ("Wilbur-Ellis") filed cross-motions for summary judgment 9 concerning a portion of the proceeds of the land sale 10 contract.

11 All parties acknowledge that Cuddy Farms, Inc. 12 ("Cuddy") has the first interest in the proceeds pertaining 13 to part of the land, and that issues of fact remain as to the 14 amount of the proceeds to be allocated to that part of the 15 property. The present motions seek a ruling on who is 16 entitled to the balance of the proceeds of the land sale 17 contract after Cuddy has been paid its share. The 18 outstanding balance owing on the contract has not yet been 19 decided, but the parties believe they may be able to resolve 20 that issue after further discovery.

On the issue presented by the cross-motions, summary
 judgment should be granted in favor of HFC for the following
 reasons.

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FACTS

The basic facts are undisputed. Wilbur and Helen
 Stoller sold the property to John Stoller Inc. for \$400,000
 PAGE 2 - MEMORANDUM

1 by a land sale contract dated October 27, 1988. Wilbur and 2 Helen retained a life estate for themselves in the house and 3 one acre of land surrounding the house. A memorandum of the 4 contract was recorded on December 9, 1988. Wilbur and Helen 5 Stoller transferred the property to their son John, and his 6 wife Joann Stoller by warranty deed dated May 17, 1989. The 7 warranty deed conveyed Wilbur and Helen's interest free from 8 encumbrances except for their life estate.

9 The parties have agreed through their pleadings that 10 the effect of the warranty deed was to convey the vendor's 11 interest in the land sale contract from Wilbur and Helen to 12 John and Joann. The complaint and answers on file indicate 13 that the warranty deed effected the transfer by virtue of 14 ORS 93.850, even though the deposition testimony of John and 15 Joann Stoller shows that they did not intend or expect to 16 receive an interest in the contract as a result of the 17 warranty deed.

18 Also on May 17, 1989, John and Joann Stoller executed 19 a trust deed entitled Line of Credit Mortgage (mortgage) in 20 favor of HFC to secure the amount of \$650,000. The property 21 described as collateral included the Home Place. There was 22 no specific reference to the land sale contract in the 23 mortgage. The warranty deed which conveyed the property and 24 land sale contract to John and Joann from Wilbur and Helen 25 was recorded in Yamhill County on May 23, 1989 as 26 Document 04185. Immediately thereafter, the Mortgage PAGE 3 - MEMORANDUM

executed by John and Joann in favor of HFC was recorded as
 Document 04186.

3 The transcripts of John and Joann's depositions 4 indicate that they did not know they had any interest in the 5 proceeds of the land sale contract, so they did not have any 6 intention to transfer the contract proceeds as collateral to 7 It appears however, that they did intend to transfer HFC. 8 whatever they received from Wilbur and Helen by virtue of the 9 warranty deed. John and Joann testified that they thought 10 that the payments on the land sale contract would be paid to 11 However, they also stated that they Wilbur and Helen. 12 understood that the warranty deed and the mortgage would 13 place HFC in first position against the property ahead of 14 Wilbur and Helen Stoller. At the time the deeds were 15 executed, there was little concern about whether HFC or 16 Wilbur and Helen would be first because the Stollers all 17 believed the property was worth enough to pay both 18 obligations in full.

John and Joann executed another line of credit mortgage in favor of HFC on April 12, 1991. The mortgage was to secure a note in the amount of \$690,000 and contained the legal descriptions for most of the property included in the 1989 mortgage. The second HFC mortgage was recorded on April 16, 1991.

In 1992, the debtor, and John and Joann Stoller
 executed a trust deed and UCC-1a financing statement in favor
 PAGE 4 - MEMORANDUM

of Wilbur-Ellis to secure repayment of \$1 million. The
collateral included the part of the Home Place involved here
as well as all accounts, contract rights and other rights to
the payment of money. John and Joann's depositions indicate
that they did not intend to grant Wilbur-Ellis an interest in
the land sale contract because they did not think it was
theirs to encumber.

8 John Stoller Inc. filed chapter 11 on November 10, 9 1992. The case was converted to chapter 7 on April 19, 1993. 10 Wilbur-Ellis sued John and Joann Stoller and obtained 11 judgments against them in the amounts of \$937,375.92 and 12 The judgments were entered on February 9, 1993 \$51,576.57. 13 and March 10, 1993, respectively. Wilbur-Ellis obtained 14 relief from the stay to garnish the proceeds of the land sale 15 contract owed by Stoller, Inc. John and Joann Stoller filed 16 chapter 7 on December 27, 1993, and the trustee for their 17 estate has not filed anything to indicate his position on 18 these motions.

ANALYSIS

20 Creditors and courts in Oregon have struggled with 21 the proper characterization of a land sale contract over the 22 While the stream of payments under the contract years. 23 itself has been considered personal property, it is secured 24 by and transfers an interest in real property. In the last 25 decade, the Oregon legislature has amended the real property 26 recording statutes and Oregon's Commercial Code to remove PAGE 5 - MEMORANDUM

land sale contracts from Article 9, and to allow the recording of an interest in a land sale contract in the real property records. ORS 93.640 and 79.1040(10). The statutes do not explicitly state whether an interest in a land sale contract is real property or personal property, but notice of the interest is provided by filing in the real property records.

The somewhat conflicting case law concerning the nature of a vendor's interest in a land sale contract was reviewed and analyzed in the case of <u>Bedortha v. Sunridge</u> <u>Land Co., Inc.</u>, 312 Or. 307, 822 P.2d 694 (1991). The Oregon Supreme Court defined the issue before it in <u>Bedortha</u> as:

. . . whether a vendor's right to receive payments under an executory land sale contract is a separate personal property interest of the vendor or whether that interest is part of the vendor's real property interest and, therefore subject to a judgment lien.

The court affirmed the Court of Appeals in holding
 that "the right to receive contract payments - unless
 properly severed - is a part of the vendor's real property
 interest."

Although the creditor in <u>Bedortha</u> was a judgment lien
 creditor rather than a consensual secured creditor, the
 analysis applied by the Oregon Supreme Court is equally
 applicable to the transaction between the Stollers and HFC.
 The transfer of the vendor's interest in the contract from
 Wilbur and Helen to John and Joann was simultaneous with the
 PAGE 6 - MEMORANDUM

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1 transfer from John and Joann to HFC to secure the loan. The 2 vendor's right to receive the contract payments and the title 3 to the property itself were transferred to John and Joann in 4 a single package subject only to the vendee's interest of 5 Stoller, Inc. and the life estate of Wilbur and Helen. There 6 is no evidence to indicate that John and Joann took any 7 action to sever the interests once they were transferred 8 together through the warranty deed. Whatever it was that 9 John and Joann received as a result of the warranty deed, 10 they immediately transferred to HFC as collateral for the 11 loan in 1989.

The recent unpublished opinion in <u>In re Gold Key</u>
 Properties, <u>Inc.</u>, BAP No. OR-93-1635-AsMeO, slip op. (Bankr.
 9th Cir. Feb. 4, 1994) was applying Oregon law before it was
 amended in 1989, and therefore, it is not decisive in this
 matter.

CONCLUSION

Although it would have been prudent for HFC to have
specifically described the land sale contract in the
mortgage, the documents and timing of the recording of the
deed and mortgage were adequate to allow HFC to prevail as
first lien holder (after Cuddy's interest) to the proceeds of
the land sale contract.

DONAL D. SULLIVAN Bankruptcy Judge

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1		Fred M. Granum
2]]	Annette T. Kolodzie Robert L. Carlton Robert J. Vanden Bos Thomas Churchill U. S. Trustee James Ray Streinz Kent V. Snyder John D. Albert Eric Yandell Mark B. Comstock Kathleen Evans John W. Mitchell
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