

SEP 13 2012

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U.S. COURT OF APPEALS

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS

FOR THE NINTH CIRCUIT

In the Matter of: STEVEN D. MOLASKY,

Debtor,

STEVEN D. MOLASKY,

Appellant,

v.

AUGUSTINE C. BUSTOS,

Appellee.

No. 11-15060

D.C. No. 2:10-cv-00781-JCM-
PAL

MEMORANDUM*

Appeal from the United States District Court
for the District of Nevada
James C. Mahan, District Judge, Presiding

Argued April 20, 2012
Re-Submitted September 11, 2012
San Francisco, California

* This disposition is not appropriate for publication and is not precedent except as provided by 9th Cir. R. 36-3.

Before: NOONAN and MURGUIA, Circuit Judges, and TIMLIN, Senior District Judge.**

Steven D. Molasky (“Molasky”) filed a voluntary bankruptcy petition in which One Cap Holding Corporation (“OneCap”) commenced an adversary proceeding under 11 U.S.C. § 523. Augustine C. Bustos (“Bustos”) intervened in the § 523 complaint. After OneCap was dismissed for failure to prosecute, the bankruptcy court dismissed Bustos. The district court reversed the bankruptcy court’s dismissal. We vacate the district court’s order and remand to the bankruptcy court for proceedings consistent with the discussion below.

An intervenor can proceed after dismissal of the original party if 1) there is an independent basis for jurisdiction, and 2) unnecessary delay would otherwise result. *See Benavidez v. Eu*, 34 F.3d 825, 830 (9th Cir. 1994). The bankruptcy court summarily found no independent basis for jurisdiction for Bustos because Bustos failed to file a timely § 523 complaint. The bankruptcy court erred as a matter of law, however, in failing to recognize that the § 523 deadline is discretionary and may be extended with cause. *See* FED. R. BANKR. P. 4004(b). The deadline can be extended even after the deadline has already run. *See* FED. R. BANKR. P.

** The Honorable Robert J. Timlin, Senior District Judge for the U.S. District Court for Central California, sitting by designation.

4004(b)(2). Failure to meet the § 523 deadline is not a mandatory jurisdictional bar.

The bankruptcy court could have considered various factors in determining whether “cause” existed for extending the § 523 deadline: “(1) whether granting the delay will prejudice the debtor, (2) the length of the delay and its impact on efficient court administration, (3) whether the delay was beyond the reasonable control of the person whose duty it was to perform, (4) whether the creditor acted in good faith, and (5) whether clients should be penalized for their counsel's mistake or neglect.” *In re Magouirk*, 693 F.2d 948, 951 (9th Cir. 1982) (citations omitted). Molasky does not appear prejudiced by allowing jurisdiction, as he was already on notice as to OneCap's complaint. If the bankruptcy court limits Bustos to litigating OneCap's original complaint, Molasky is not exposed to any new complaints. The length of the delay is related specifically to the time it took for OneCap to fail to prosecute, so the delay should not be an undue burden to the court's administrative process. OneCap's failure to prosecute appears to be beyond the reasonable control of Bustos. These equitable arguments suggest that Bustos should be allowed to continue the § 523 action, and “bankruptcy courts . . . are courts of equity and appl[y] the principles and rules of equity jurisprudence.”

Young v. U.S., 535 U.S. 43, 50 (2002) (alteration in original) (quoting *Pepper v. Litton*, 308 U.S. 295, 304 (1939)) (internal quotation marks omitted).

For the reasons stated above, we **VACATE** the district court's order and **REMAND** to the bankruptcy court for a determination of jurisdiction over Bustos under FED. R. BANKR. P. 4004(b).

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In re Molasky, 11-15060

MURGUIA, Circuit Judge, dissenting.

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I respectfully dissent. Bustos failed to file an adversary action before the applicable statute of limitations ran. Rather than seek an extension of the statute of limitations, Bustos reached an agreement with the debtor, Molasky, to intervene in OneCap's case. The scope of Bustos's intervention was expressly limited by the bankruptcy court, so that intervention would not serve as a means of defeating the time bar. Following the dismissal of OneCap, the bankruptcy court properly determined that Bustos could not proceed since his claims were time barred. A court can only retain jurisdiction over an intervenor's claims after dismissal of the original plaintiff if "the court can avoid the senseless delay and expense of a new suit, which at long last will merely bring the parties to the point where they now are." *Benavidez v. Eu*, 34 F.3d 925, 830 (9th Cir. 1994) (internal quotations omitted). Bustos does not pass the *Benavidez* test because dismissing his time-barred claims will not simply postpone the inevitable filing of a new suit.

Bustos does not claim the bankruptcy court abused its discretion in failing to extend the statute of limitations, nor does he seek the "equitable" remedy the majority provides. Rather, Bustos only claims that he satisfies the *Benavidez* test. As noted above, he does not. Bustos elected to intervene on limited grounds. Bustos did not seek an extension of the statute of limitations to assert his own

claims, nor did he seek to be substituted for OneCap before its dismissal. It is not the province of this Court, at this stage, to introduce a remedy that in hindsight appears better for the appellant as a matter of equity. *See, e.g., In Re Bernal*, 207 F.3d 595 (9th Cir. 2000) (holding that where noteholder improperly sought intervention after default where the proper remedy was substitution pursuant to Fed. R. Bankr. P. 7025, court had no remedy for the noteholder); *see also, F.D.I.C. v. Deglau*, 207 F.3d 153, 159 n.2 (3d Cir. 2000). I would affirm the bankruptcy court.