UNIVERSAL TECHNOLOGIES HOLDINGS LTD: WILL THIS MATTER BE A LITTLE EMBARRASSING FOR SOMEBODY ?

A former, Independent Non-Executive Director of publicly listed Universal Technologies Holdings Ltd (Code: 8091, The Growth Enterprise Market of The Stock Exchange of Hongkong Ltd) appears to have been rather naughty, as far as HSBC Bank Canada is concerned.

Because HSBC Bank Canada, a subsidiary of HSBC Holdings plc (Code: 5, Main Board, The Stock Exchange of Hongkong Ltd), has just issued legal Proceedings in the Hongkong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) of the People's Republic of China (PRC), naming Mr Lee Yee Bun as the sole Defendant.

In High Court Action, Number 1808, HSBC Bank Canada has alleged that Mr Lee Yee Bun, who is about 64 years old, owes the bank \$C274,806.39 (about \$HK1,607,617.38), plus interest on the sum of \$C254,439.07 (about \$HK1,488,468.56) at the rate of 4.50 percent per annum from June 25, 2004.

HSBC Bank Canada is alleging, in its Statement of Claim, attached to Writ of Summons, Number 1808, that there exists a guarantee, dated February 22, 1996, whereby Mr Lee Yee Bun 'guaranteed to pay to the Plaintiff (HSBC Bank Canada) all present and future debts and liabilities direct or indirect, absolute or contingent, now or at any time and from time to time, thereafter due or owing by Kaiser-Elgin Holdings Ltd ("the Borrower") to the Plaintiff to the extent of Canadian \$1,440,000.00 and interest thereon.' (Paragraph One)

Kaiser-Elgin Holdings Ltd, as at May 9, 2000, was allegedly indebted to HSBC Bank Canada in the amount of \$C1,485,910.69 (about \$HK8,692,577.54).

On May 11, 2000, it is alleged that the bank demanded of Mr Lee Yee Bun that he honour his commitment to Kaiser-Elgin Holdings Ltd, in accordance with his guarantee.

But, at Paragraph 4 of the Statement of Claim, it is alleged:

'The Defendant has failed to make any payment to the Plaintiff despite the demand.'

HSBC Bank Canada, then, sued Mr Lee Yee Bun in the Supreme Court of British Columbia of Canada, it is alleged.

But, on February 28, 2001, Mr Lee Yee Bun did not appear before the Court and the Court 'ordered the Defendant to pay the Plaintiff the sum of Canadian \$1,535,010.68 (about \$HK8,979,812.48)...'.

On September 29, 2002, it is alleged that HSBC Bank Canada took possession of some Canadian properties, formerly belonging to Kaiser-Elgin Holdings Ltd, and promptly sold them.

The sales proceeds of these properties brought \$C1,419,794.98 into the bank's coffers and that amount of money was used to offset the debt of Kaiser-Elgin Holdings Ltd.

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