

1 P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

2 2:42 p.m.

3 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: The next case
4 on our calendar is a fact-finding hearing
5 regarding Ultrabar/Chroma, license no. 74767 --
6 and let's have -- yes, is there a problem?

7 MR. KARAGOUNIS: No, one of the owners
8 of Toppromo wasn't involved with the other cases
9 at all, but he's here.

10 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Right. So I'll
11 let --

12 MR. PAEZ: And I'm going to remove
13 myself because I'm not part of Ultrabar.

14 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: My God, you're
15 not buying another club, Mr. Paez? I thought
16 you're the one who came in to clean up all of
17 this.

18 MR. PAEZ: I'm trying to.

19 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: All right,
20 thank you.

21 MR. PAEZ: Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: So let's have
23 the parties for this case introduce themselves
24 for the record.

25 MR. METZ: Good afternoon, Your Honor.

1 Stephen Metz on behalf of Topppromo entity.

2 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Mr. Metz.

3 MR. KARAGOUNIS: Antonios Karagounis,
4 partner of Topppromo, Inc.

5 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Mr. Karagounis,
6 I need to know how to pronounce your name by now.

7 MR. KARAGOUNIS: Kara-gounis.

8 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Kara-gounis.
9 I apologize. Good afternoon, sir.

10 MR. MARAMARAS: Dimitrios Maramaras,
11 partner in Topppromo, Inc.

12 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Your last name,
13 sir?

14 MR. MARAMARAS: Maramaras, M-A-R-A-M-
15 A-R-A-S.

16 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Mr. Maramaras.
17 And who are you?

18 MR. MARAMARAS: My name is Dimitrios
19 Maramaras.

20 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: No, no, no.
21 You had said something else after that.

22 MR. MARAMARAS: I'm a partner in
23 Topppromo, Inc.

24 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: All right.
25 And you are?

1 MR. KLINE: Andrew Kline here on
2 behalf of the counsel to Arman Amirshahi.

3 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Now, Mr. Metz,
4 regarding Ultrabar/Chroma, can you tell us what
5 is the current ownership status of this
6 establishment?

7 MR. METZ: Okay, the current ownership
8 status is Mr. Amirshahi, 15 percent. Actually,
9 I'm sorry -- well, in this particular case
10 transfers have already -- they weren't subject to
11 approval by the board, but I'll tell you what the
12 status was immediately prior to those transfers.

13 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: All right, hold
14 on.

15 MR. METZ: At least that's my
16 understanding.

17 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Yes.

18 MR. METZ: The other deals we were
19 just talking about in the three other cases, the
20 closing of those deals is subject to approval
21 first by the board.

22 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: All right.

23 MR. METZ: I mean, I'm just telling
24 you about --

25 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Well, why don't

1 you tell me the -- from your understanding why
2 don't you provide me what's being transferred?
3 What's the ownership status of this
4 establishment, from your understanding?

5 MR. METZ: The current ownership
6 status of this entity is Mr. Karagounis owns 70
7 percent and Mr. Dimitrios Maramaras owns 30
8 percent.

9 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: That's the
10 current -- as of when?

11 MR. METZ: That's the moving forward
12 --

13 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: That's moving
14 forward, but what is it now before the ABC Board
15 as active?

16 MR. METZ: The ABC Board, yes. Mr.
17 Amirshahi, 15 percent, Mr. Karagounis, 55 percent
18 -- I'm not going to say this name correctly --
19 Panagiotis Kalamoutsos, 10 percent.

20 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: How do you --
21 can you --

22 MR. METZ: Can I spell that?

23 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Spell that,
24 please.

25 MR. METZ: Yes. Okay, first name P-A-

1 N-A-G-I-O-T-I-S, and last name K-A-L-A-M-O-U-T-S-
2 O-S.

3 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: And how much
4 percentage does he own?

5 MR. METZ: 10 percent.

6 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: And once again

7 --

8 MR. METZ: One other.

9 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: All right, who
10 else?

11 MR. METZ: Dimitrios Maramaras.

12 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: How do you
13 spell that, please?

14 MR. METZ: D-I-M-I-T-R-I-O-S, last
15 name M-A-R-A-M-A-R-A-S. 20 percent.

16 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Dimitrios
17 Maramaras, he owns 10 percent.

18 MR. METZ: Right.

19 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: And Mr.
20 Kalamoutsos he owns 10 percent, Mr. Karagounis 55
21 percent, Mr. Amirshahi owns 15 percent. And as
22 far as the ABC Board is concerned -- who is or
23 was Mr. Massoud Aboughddaren, who was that
24 person?

25 MR. KARAGOUNIS: He was my original

1 partner when we opened the business in 2006.

2 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: But when did he
3 move out of the business?

4 MR. KARAGOUNIS: He purchased his
5 shares in 2012, I believe.

6 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: And so you saw
7 -- so how much -- so what percentage of the
8 business did you own prior to purchasing the
9 share?

10 MR. KARAGOUNIS: I was at 50 percent.

11 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: So you owned 50
12 percent?

13 MR. KARAGOUNIS: But at the time I had
14 given my partners Dimitrios Maramaras and
15 Panagiotis Kalamoutsos 5 percent each, so I had
16 given part of my percentage. And that's what
17 they were reflected at the time.

18 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: I don't care
19 about the 5 percent, I told you, I only care
20 about --

21 MR. KARAGOUNIS: I'm being
22 transparent. I understand you.

23 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: You don't have
24 to report the 5 percent. You don't have to
25 report to the ABC Board less than 10 percent.

1 MR. KARAGOUNIS: Okay.

2 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Okay, the first
3 one was I assume 9.99 percent. Then it's less
4 than 10 percent, but the information that we have
5 here, that we have a partner who owned 50 percent
6 of the entity who at least the past seven years
7 we don't know who this person is. This person
8 didn't own this place anymore. And then we have
9 Mr. Kalamoutsos who owns 10 percent and we don't
10 know who he was. And now Mr. Maramaras, we have
11 never heard of this anyway because he owned 20
12 percent of the entity and it was never reported
13 to the board.

14 MR. KARAGOUNIS: I'm assuming it was
15 Mr. Amirshahi who reported it to the board.

16 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: He owns 50
17 percent, you own 50 percent.

18 MR. KARAGOUNIS: No, 15.

19 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: I'm sorry.

20 MR. KARAGOUNIS: 15 percent.

21 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: You own 50
22 percent, sir?

23 MR. KARAGOUNIS: I own 55 percent. So
24 what you have is not accurate, you're right.

25 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: All right. The

1 information that you provided to us, that was
2 provided to us on the license is that you own 50
3 percent, Mr. Massoud Aboughddaren, you own 50
4 percent. And Mr. Amirshahi you own nothing.
5 He's not on the license.

6 MR. KARAGOUNIS: Yes, he wasn't part
7 of the business at the time that the business
8 sold. And it was never updated, that was the
9 issue.

10 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: All right. How
11 is that, that we can have -- am I missing
12 something -- and the reason I say I'm missing
13 something is because at least -- Mr. Kline, he's
14 your client -- I mean, he owns three other clubs.
15 He has been informed ABC lawyer at the time. He
16 owns 15 percent of the entity, so why is it that
17 your client doesn't show up on our records?

18 MR. KLINE: Mr. Chairman, he is
19 recently my client, I was not involved in any of
20 these licenses, have not been involved in any of
21 these licenses. I have represented him for the
22 past three months in an effort to disentangle him
23 from all of these businesses.

24 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: But he doesn't
25 own any, that's why the ABC is wasting time. He

1 has no ownership stake in Ultrabar/Chroma.

2 MR. KLINE: I understand that, Mr.
3 Chairman. I understand that as we've discussed
4 in connection with the previous cases --

5 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: But that's
6 different though, because he owned all three
7 businesses. His name was on there, so I'm just
8 curious why he didn't want the ABC Board to know
9 that he owned 15 percent of Ultrabar?

10 MR. KLINE: Mr. Chairman, I can't
11 respond to that in terms of why he didn't want
12 the ABC Board to know. I don't really think that
13 was it, given that I think he's been before you,
14 probably in connection with --

15 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: No, he wouldn't
16 have been. Because unless he brought some letter
17 to say that he was authorized to represent this
18 entity, at least in the four years I'm here, I've
19 been here. I wouldn't have allowed him to
20 represent this entity because as you know, Mr.
21 Kline, every time when I go through there I look
22 at a sheet and I see names and people here in
23 front of me. And they give me a name and it's
24 not the name that I'm expecting, and I always ask
25 them to provide verification. So it troubles me

1 in this particular case that he owned 15 percent
2 of the entity and since he is the one who does
3 the legal and regulatory for all your case, that
4 he is a face -- at least what I'm told, at least
5 with the other three entities -- why is it that
6 he did not think it was necessary to inform the
7 ABC Board that he was a major player in
8 Ultrabar/Chroma.

9 MR. KLINE: The only thing I can do is
10 state the obvious, which is he did these things
11 and was given responsibility for doing these
12 things, but apparently did not do them very well.
13 And that seems to be apparent across the cases
14 that we discussed today, and that is all I know
15 with respect to the position, Mr. Chairman.

16 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Thank you for
17 your representation, Mr. Kline, but I also full
18 disclosure, I've never been to any of these
19 entities from what I've heard, and based on the
20 location of these establishments -- they're
21 popular entities, so I mean they are major money-
22 makers for the district. They add a substantial
23 to the economy, the night-life economy the
24 district has. It baffles me that we could have
25 someone who is this well-known as his ownership

1 in this entity from the ABC Board. And I guess
2 Mr. Marmaras, you have owned -- I'm sorry, Mr.
3 Maramaras, you have owned 30 percent --

4 MR. MARAMARAS: 20. 20.

5 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: No, prior to
6 today what percentage of Ultrabar did you own?

7 MR. MARAMARAS: 20 percent.

8 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Your ownership
9 today remains at 20 percent? In the transfer
10 what percentage of this entity will you own?

11 MR. MARAMARAS: Mine will be 10
12 percent.

13 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: So did anyone
14 tell you how long you had 20 percent ownership in
15 this entity?

16 MR. MARAMARAS: 2016 I believe, the
17 end of 2016.

18 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: So for the past
19 three years no one ever told you that you need to
20 make yourself known to the ABC Board?

21 MR. MARAMARAS: No, Mr. Amirshahi was
22 handling all that.

23 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: So why is that
24 you're making yourself known to us today?

25 MR. MARAMARAS: Because after all this

1 that's happened it's come to our attention that I
2 wasn't on any paperwork and we hired Mr. Kline
3 and we hired -- I mean, we hired legal
4 representation to help us fix this situation.

5 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: So you just
6 entered into a relationship and you own 20
7 percent. Who knew that you owned 20 percent of
8 this entity?

9 MR. MARAMARAS: My partners.

10 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: And you've been
11 sharing the profits and -- I mean, you've been
12 sharing the profits at least for the past three
13 years and we don't know who you are, and I'm not
14 sure who else knows who you are. And I don't
15 even know whether or not you qualify to even be
16 an owner, because you have not -- at least prior
17 to this -- these proceedings you have not
18 provided this entity -- you have not provided us
19 with any information to say that you're even
20 qualified to own 10 percent of this entity.

21 So whose -- who has been a face of
22 Ultrabar Corp.? Who has been the face? Who is
23 the person?

24 MR. KARAGOUNIS: That would be Mr.
25 Amirshahi and myself.

1 CHAIRMAN ANDERSON: Mr. who?

2 MR. KARAGOUNIS: Amirshahi.

3 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Oh, you mean
4 previously?

5 MR. KARAGOUNIS: Previous, yes. From
6 now on we are just the two people remaining, 70
7 percent for myself, 30 percent for Mr. Maramaras.

8 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: So who is
9 running -- who was running the entity?

10 MR. KARAGOUNIS: From now on it will
11 be Mr. Maramaras.

12 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: So Mr.
13 Maramaras, you have owned 20 percent of this
14 establishment for the past three years. So what
15 experience, if you have any, in running a night
16 club?

17 MR. MARAMARAS: I've been working at
18 the night club as well for years. I had a little
19 sabbatical for a little accident that I had and
20 I've been working part-time over there, trying to
21 make a living while I'm recovering. But I'm
22 strong enough now, I can pick up a lot more
23 responsibilities now.

24 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: But you say
25 you've been working, I mean, in what capacity?

1 MR. MARAMARAS: As a manager.

2 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: As a manager?

3 MR. MARAMARAS: As a manager,
4 staffing.

5 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Do you have an
6 ABC manager's license?

7 MR. MARAMARAS: I have an ABC
8 manager's license, yes.

9 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Oh.

10 MR. MARAMARAS: I have an ABC
11 manager's license, yes. Once I had my injury we
12 hired a general manager.

13 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: I know. So --

14 MR. MARAMARAS: And then he took over
15 a lot of the day-to-day --

16 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: So you had an
17 ABC manager's license for this establishment?

18 MR. KARAGOUNIS: For here, yes.

19 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: But how did you
20 know to go get an ABC manager's license?

21 MR. KARAGOUNIS: Because I was a
22 manager at the business.

23 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: But how did you
24 know that you had to go get an ABC manager's
25 license? Who told you to go get an ABC manager's

1 license?

2 MR. MARAMARAS: Well, I think it was

3 --

4 MR. KARAGOUNIS: That was me.

5 MR. MARAMARAS: When he first
6 purchased the Ultrabar and I became a manager, he
7 notified me I had to become an ABC manager
8 license.

9 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: I'm asking for
10 a reason, because when you were -- and I'm saying
11 when you were a manager, someone told you that
12 you had to go to ABC Board to go get a license to
13 be an ABC manager. But when you owned 20 percent
14 of the establishment, nobody told you that you
15 had to go to the ABC Board and say, "Oh, by the
16 way, I now own 20 percent of the establishment?"

17 MR. KARAGOUNIS: Mr. Anderson?

18 CHAIRMAN ANDERSON: Yes, sir?

19 MR. KARAGOUNIS: Can I respond to that
20 question?

21 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Yes, sir.

22 MR. KARAGOUNIS: When it comes to the
23 ABC manager's license, when an inspector comes in
24 for any potential violation or to check ID's
25 under-age drinking, they will always ask for --

1 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Who do they ask
2 for?

3 MR. KARAGOUNIS: For the owner or the
4 ABC manager's license.

5 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Right. So if
6 they come and ask for the owner or ABC manager's
7 license, Mr. Maramaras can say I'm an owner. I
8 don't need an ABC manager's license, I'm an
9 owner. And so therefore he's an owner and I
10 think it's clear to everybody that if you own
11 more than 10 percent, you're an owner. You own
12 20 percent, so why did he show his ABC license?
13 Why did he just not say, and maybe -- this is --
14 so many times I've been here and we have
15 individuals jump up and say, "I'm an owner." And
16 when we check our records, this person has no
17 ownership -- although our records will say he
18 doesn't -- but this person has no ownership or he
19 doesn't own a place, but he jumps up and say I'm
20 an owner. And here in this particular case, here
21 is someone who is a legitimate owner who has
22 never identified himself as an owner, but he
23 surely identified himself as an ABC manager.

24 MR. KARAGOUNIS: My understand
25 throughout all these years is that unless your

1 name is on the liquor license, as far as ABC is
2 concerned, you cannot operate an establishment
3 without ABC manager's license. The license was
4 always under my name, so I knew that I didn't --
5 it was under my name, but any manager that is
6 operating the license is not under the name, so
7 how do they identify themselves?

8 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: But every owner
9 who owns more than -- every individual or entity
10 who owns more than 10 percent they have to be on
11 the license as an owner.

12 MR. KARAGOUNIS: I understand that
13 now, yes.

14 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: But -- okay, in
15 all these establishments you only own 30 percent,
16 37 percent. Why do you show up as an owner? You
17 could have said -- why do you show up as an owner
18 because you only own 37 percent? That's not
19 necessarily that far from 20 percent.

20 MR. KARAGOUNIS: The liquor license
21 was under my name.

22 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: I know, but you
23 only own 37 percent. I mean, not this one, the
24 other entities. You only own 37 percent; you
25 didn't own 50 percent or 70 percent, so why your

1 name?

2 MR. KARAGOUNIS: Originally I did own
3 50 percent before we had to sell our shares for
4 investment. So the way we started out the
5 business is not this one; the way that it started
6 is that it was at 50/50 or 60/40 before Arman and
7 I. This is not the same situation. Mr.
8 Amirshahi came in months later, so it was Mr.
9 Aboughddaren and myself that were 50/50
10 originally.

11 MEMBER SHORT: So three years ago Mr.
12 Maramaras got on the license, correct? Or he
13 became part owner, more than 10 percent three
14 years ago?

15 MR. KARAGOUNIS: Yes.

16 MEMBER SHORT: And you've been in
17 business how long in Washington D.C.?

18 MR. KARAGOUNIS: Since 2006.

19 MEMBER SHORT: And you don't know the
20 rules about when you change ownership you have to
21 come down here and re-register the license? You
22 didn't know that?

23 MR. KARAGOUNIS: I did not know the
24 specific rule and I was with Mr. Amirshahi on
25 that because he was the one to renew the liquor

1 license.

2 MEMBER SHORT: So you have how many
3 different clubs that you are owners in?

4 MR. KARAGOUNIS: I have eight
5 different establishments.

6 MEMBER SHORT: Eight different
7 establishments. And you don't have any idea when
8 you change names on the liquor license, on the
9 ownership, that that person's name had to go on
10 the license?

11 Are you saying that you don't have any
12 knowledge of that?

13 MR. KARAGOUNIS: I have the knowledge
14 that if somebody's on the liquor license, you
15 need to have them on there.

16 MEMBER SHORT: If they're an owner,
17 they're on the liquor license, correct?

18 MR. KARAGOUNIS: That's --

19 MEMBER SHORT: So why was his name on
20 the liquor license?

21 MR. KARAGOUNIS: Whose name?

22 MEMBER SHORT: The gentleman sitting
23 there right beside you. Three years ago --

24 MR. KARAGOUNIS: He was a 5 percent
25 owner and from acquiring different smaller

1 owners, he became 10 percent.

2 MEMBER SHORT: So when he became 10
3 percent, why was his name put on the license?

4 MR. KARAGOUNIS: I thought that the
5 license would have to be updated next time you
6 apply for a license, not at the time of the
7 purchase.

8 MEMBER SHORT: I'll just say this; I'm
9 not pleased with your answers. You've been in
10 business for a long time in the city, and I think
11 you should know better. I think that you know
12 better. I think that you're being very deceptive
13 today. That's all I have, Mr. Chair. You've
14 been very deceptive today. I'm not pleased with
15 it, at all.

16 That's all I have, Mr. Chair.

17 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Thank you, Mr.
18 Short. Any other comments by any of the board
19 members?

20 Before I make a motion, I'm just very
21 concerned that the way -- at least this
22 establishment has been, this -- the others were
23 bad, but I believe this is the worst one because
24 we have an owner who has identified himself on
25 all the other establishments, but for whatever

1 reason this owner has not been identified. And
2 but not for this issue, the ABC Board wouldn't
3 have known that here's someone who owns 15
4 percent of the establishment who has had constant
5 interface with this agency, but chose not to
6 share with the agency that he owned a significant
7 portion of this establishment.

8 I am very troubled with this
9 transaction. I'm hoping that it is what's been
10 presented to us, that's what it is. But I'm
11 troubled based on the history, that I'm not sure
12 if what's presented, if the ABC Board can take it
13 at face value.

14 I'm troubled, I can't do anything
15 further, other than I can only say to you that
16 based on representation today, I'm troubled. But
17 with that said, I will make a motion, it's out of
18 at least our hands. All we're doing currently is
19 allowing the process to occur. So the parties
20 will provide licensing with the requisite
21 documents for licensure for the transfer and the
22 licensing department will make a determination
23 whether or not the proper documents have been
24 provided to satisfy the board. So the motion
25 that's been made is that the ABC Board will

1 authorize licensing decision to move forward with
2 the review of the licensing application to see
3 whether or not the transfer application can move
4 forward.

5 Is there a second?

6 MEMBER CROCKETT: Second.

7 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: Ms. Crockett
8 has seconded the motion. All those in favor say
9 aye.

10 (Chorus of aye.)

11 Those opposed?

12 The matter passes 5-0-0.

13 I want to thank you for being here
14 today and try to be as clear as can be under
15 these circumstances. However, I just want the
16 record to reflect that I'm very troubled with
17 these transactions and it appears that this is
18 not the first. So maybe the parties will appear
19 in front of us again. And I hope that if you do
20 -- I hope we have better answers to explain why
21 that -- the information that is required is not
22 provided to us, and I do hope that we have
23 learned, counsel, and that counsel will provide
24 these entities, the owners of these entities with
25 what the law is. I know that these

1 establishments provide a significant portion of
2 revenue and entertainment for the residents of
3 the District of Columbia and for the surrounding
4 jurisdiction. And it is not my intent that these
5 entities don't continue to operate. However, the
6 entities have to operate within the confines of
7 the law. And if -- yes, that's all I say, all
8 right?

9 Thank you for being here today.

10 MR. KLINE: Thank you.

11 MR. KARAGOUNIS: Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON ANDERSON: The board will
13 be -- I can't do it -- the board will be in --
14 well, what I'll do --

15 No, I can't. I can't. We're off the
16 record.

17 (Whereupon, the above-entitled matter
18 went off the record at 3:09 p.m.)
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25

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This is to certify that the foregoing transcript

In the matter of: Ultrabar/Chroma
Stock Transfer

Before: DCABRA

Date: 10-02-19

Place: Washington, DC

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