

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF NEW JERSEY**

RAZOR USA LLC and SHANE CHEN,)	
)	C.A. No. 2:19-cv-12939-JMV-AME
Plaintiffs,)	Honorable John Michael Vazquez, U.S.D.J.
)	Honorable Andre M. Espinosa, U.S.M.J.
v.)	
)	
DGL GROUP, LTD.,)	
)	
Defendant.)	
)	

**STIPULATED ORDER GOVERNING
THE TAKING OF REMOTE DEPOSITIONS**

WHEREAS Coronavirus Disease 2019 (“COVID-19”) continues to affect the operation of the judicial system and to affect the ability of individuals to travel and to congregate, and

WHEREAS, limiting travel and promoting social distancing among witnesses and the attorneys in this case are legitimate reasons for remote depositions pursuant to Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 30(b)(4), and

WHEREAS the Parties have agreed, pursuant to Rules 1, 29, and 30(b)(4) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, by and through their undersigned counsel and subject to Court approval, to the following terms governing the taking in this case of Remote Depositions (as that term is defined below):

I. GENERAL GUIDELINES AND SCOPE

1. This Stipulated Order Governing the Taking of Remote Depositions (the “Protocol”) will govern, subject to Court approval, the taking of depositions in the above-captioned matter as a supplement to the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure; United States District Court for New Jersey Local Rules; and the Scheduling Order dated September 19, 2019.

2. This Protocol does not modify the governing rules for the taking of depositions imposed by the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, United States District Court for New Jersey Local Rules, the Scheduling Order dated September 19, 2019, or the Federal Rules of Evidence except to the extent those rules are specifically modified herein.

II. DEFINITIONS

3. “Attending Counsel” shall mean legal counsel for a Party or for the Witness who is not deposing counsel or defending counsel, but who is attending a Remote Deposition.

4. “Defending Counsel” shall mean the legal counsel of the party, Parties, non-party, or non-parties defending a deposition in this litigation. In the event a non-party Witness does not have counsel, then “Defending Counsel” shall mean the Witness himself or herself.

5. “Deposing Counsel” shall mean the legal counsel of the Party noticing and taking a deposition in this litigation.

6. “Noticing Party” means a Party that noticed the Remote Deposition of a Witness pursuant to Federal Rules of Civil Procedure 26 and 30 or Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 45.

7. “Non-parties” shall mean all natural or legal persons that are neither Parties nor persons retained by any of the Parties or the Parties’ counsel and from whom a Party is seeking testimony at a deposition in this litigation.

8. “Platform” means any computer program, application, or other technology or combination of technologies that enables the Parties to conduct a Remote Deposition in accord with this Protocol.

9. “Remote Deposition” means any deposition by oral examination conducted pursuant to Federal Rules of Civil Procedure 27, 30, or 45 where fewer than all of the participants—including Deposing Counsel, Defending Counsel, Attending Counsel, the Witness,

court reporters, or videographers—are physically present in the same location at the time the deposition is taken. A “Remote Deposition” shall mean a deposition conducted using a Platform as agreed to under this Protocol that allows for one or more of the Witness, Attending Counsel, Deposing Counsel, Defending Counsel, the court reporter, and videographer to participate in a deposition without attending the deposition in person, or any other means to which the Deposing Counsel, Defending Counsel, and Attending Counsel agree.

10. “Witness” means the person, including non-parties, whose Remote Deposition has been noticed in this litigation.

III. AGREEMENT TO CONDUCT REMOTE DEPOSITIONS

11. Pursuant to Fed. R. Civ. P. 29(a) and Fed. R. Civ. P. 30(b)(4), Remote Depositions in this case shall be taken so that such depositions comply with all applicable state and local health and safety regulations and orders in the location of the Witness, and any federal regulations and orders concerning social distancing and public health.

12. Any Party may notice a Remote Deposition or request that a witness appear for a Remote Deposition. If any Party or a Party or non-party Witness objects to the taking of the deposition by remote means, it shall notify the entity requesting the Remote Deposition, in writing, of the objection a reasonably amount of time before the scheduled Remote Deposition.

13. The Parties agree to promptly confer in good faith with each other and, if applicable, the Witness to attempt to resolve objections pursuant to Paragraph 12 above. If the objection is not resolved, the person objecting may, pursuant to Scheduling Order and Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 30(b)(4), schedule a telephone conference with the Court in an attempt to resolve the dispute, and thereafter, if necessary, file a motion for a protective order or a motion to quash with the Court seeking an order regarding the conduct of the deposition.

14. Except as provided in Paragraph 12 above, the Parties hereby expressly waive all objections to any Remote Deposition based solely on the fact that the deposition was taken using remote means.

IV. THE TECHNOLOGY TO BE USED FOR REMOTE DEPOSITIONS

15. Any Platform must allow for the court reporter to accurately record, and for all participating attorneys and the court reporter to hear and see, the Witness, Deposing Counsel, and Defending Counsel.

16. The Parties agree that Digital Evidence Group and Veritext may be used for Remote Depositions. Any Party may, with reasonable notice to all other Parties, add a new vendor to the list of vendors included in this Paragraph.

17. Unless otherwise agreed, the Platform of the Noticing Party who first noticed the deposition shall be used for that Remote Deposition.

18. The Party whose Platform is used to conduct a Remote Deposition shall be responsible for arranging the taking of a Remote Deposition with the vendor and ensuring that email invitations to attend the deposition remotely are sent to the Witness and participating attorneys. Deposing Counsel, Defending Counsel, and all Attending Counsel shall communicate to each other their respective email addresses, including the email address of the Witness and all persons intending to attend the deposition.

19. Upon any Party's or the Witness's request, a Noticing Party whose Platform is to be used to conduct the Remote Deposition shall arrange for the Witness and any participating attorneys to participate in a "test run" of the Platform. The Parties shall ensure that the Witness has access to technology that meets the minimum standards required by the Platform. The Parties may, by agreement, modify any of the requirements in this Paragraph.

20. Remote Depositions subject to this Protocol shall be recorded by stenographic means. The deposition may be recorded by audiovisual means at the election of either Party, at that Party's expense.

21. Any costs associated with providing the Platform for the taking of a Remote Deposition shall be the responsibility of the Noticing Party whose Platform is being used for the Remote Deposition. Other Parties will still bear their own costs for copies of transcripts and copies of video recordings from any deposition.

22. Deposing Counsel and/or Defending Counsel may elect to have a technical specialist attend a Remote Deposition, at their own expense, to address technical issues.

V. EXHIBITS

23. Pursuant to Fed. R. Civ. P. 30(f)(2), Deposing Counsel shall be responsible for ensuring that any exhibits that they wish to mark and use at a Remote Deposition can be shown to the Witness in a manner that enables the Witness and counsel for all Parties to review the exhibits during the course of the deposition. Deposing Counsel may elect either to: (1) Use pre-marked hard-copy exhibits for a Remote Deposition; or (2) Mark and use exhibits for a Remote Deposition through the Platform enabled for Remote Depositions, which shall enable Deposing Counsel to share exhibits with the Witness, court reporter, Defending Counsel, and Attending Counsel. If a Party uses pre-marked hard-copy exhibits, copies of such exhibits shall be sent via Federal Express, U.S. Postal Service, or UPS to Defending Counsel, the other Parties, and the court reporter in advance of the deposition. Any such package containing exhibits shall not be opened until the commencement of the Remote Deposition.

24. The Witness, Defending Counsel, and any persons not affiliated with the Deposing Counsel other than the vendor shall not review any exhibit until it is introduced as an exhibit by the Deposing Party at the Remote Deposition or requested by the Deposing Counsel.

25. If the Platform for a Remote Deposition does not permit the court reporter to mark exhibits remotely, Deposing Counsel shall be responsible for marking exhibits and ensuring that such marks are communicated to the court reporter and all participating attorneys on the record during the Remote Deposition.

VI. COMPLIANCE WITH THE FEDERAL RULES

26. A Remote Deposition will be deemed to have been conducted “before an officer” as required by Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 30(b)(5)(A) so long as that officer attends the deposition via the same Platform used to connect all other remote participants, and so long as all participants (including the officer) can clearly hear and be heard by all other participants.

27. Notwithstanding any other rule to the contrary, the Parties stipulate that the Witness’ oath or affirmation may be administered remotely. The Parties further agree that a deposition was conducted before an officer authorized to administer oaths as required by Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 28(a)(1)(A), and agree not to challenge the validity of any oath administered by the court reporter, even if the court reporter is not a notary public in the state where the deponent is located, so long as the court reporter is a notary.

28. The Parties agree that depositions conducted by remote means as provided herein may be used at a trial or hearing pursuant to the provisions of Fed. R. Civ. P. 32 to the same extent that an in-person deposition may be used at trial or hearing.

VII. MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

29. Any person physically located in the same room as the Witness during the taking of a Remote Deposition must be logged onto the Platform with a separate video connection or be otherwise viewable by a camera at all times during the course of the Remote Deposition. At the beginning of the Remote Deposition, every person logged onto the Platform or otherwise viewing or listening to the Deposition must be identified for the record. Any person joining or leaving the Deposition after its beginning must be identified at the time of his or her arrival or departure.

30. All persons participating in a Remote Deposition are responsible for ensuring that no unidentified persons can hear the audio or view the video of the Remote Deposition. The audio connection shall be muted when appropriate.

31. During a Remote Deposition, the Witness may not communicate with any person, except through the Platform, by any means, including through gestures, handwritten communications, email, chat, instant messaging, or text messaging. This restriction does not apply to conversations between the Witness and Defending and Attending Counsel during breaks or other recesses not on the record which can occur in breakout rooms provided by Platform or other means, to the extent such breaks or recesses and any such conversations taking place during them occur in the manner permitted under applicable federal and local rules and procedures.

32. If technical difficulties arise during the taking of a Remote Deposition, counsel for the Parties must meet and confer immediately, by telephone or other means, to determine whether the Remote Deposition can proceed or should be continued to a future date. If technical difficulties arise which make the completion of a Remote Deposition impracticable, the counsel for Parties and the Witness shall resume the Remote Deposition at the earliest, mutually-

convenient opportunity. Either Party may seek, in a joint telephone conference, a protective order governing whether and/or the terms under which the Remote Deposition may resume.

33. Based on their experience under this Protocol and the needs of individual witnesses: (1) The Parties, or the Parties and any non-party Witness, may agree to modifications of or deviations from this Protocol applicable to an individual Remote Deposition without Court approval; and (2) The Parties may stipulate and submit to the Court for its approval modifications to this Protocol applicable to all depositions.

34. The Noticing Party shall serve a copy of this Protocol with any future subpoenas for a deposition that may proceed by remote means. This Protocol need not be served in connection with any depositions for which service has already been (or is hereafter) accepted by counsel of record for one of the Parties. The Parties shall use their best efforts to obtain the consent of a non-party Witness to this Protocol after service of the Subpoena. If a Party cannot obtain a non-party Witness' consent to this Protocol, it shall inform the other Parties. Any Party may, with notice to the non-party Witness, seek a telephone conference with the Court to resolve the dispute.

35. All persons attending depositions taken by remote means are reminded that the typical rules of professionalism and etiquette during depositions still apply. All persons attending depositions taken pursuant to this order who do not have an immediate need to speak shall ensure that their telephone or video conference lines are muted. All persons who speak acknowledge that delays in transmission may result from the use of remote means and shall endeavor to accommodate such delays in the conduct of the deposition. In addition, all persons attending depositions taken pursuant to this order shall ensure that they can do so in a space that is relatively free from distractions that would interfere with the deposition.

IT IS SO STIPULATED, THROUGH COUNSEL OF RECORD.

Dated: December 27, 2021

Respectfully Submitted,

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Dated: December 28, 2021

SO ORDERED.

/s/ André M. Espinosa
Honorable André M. Espinosa
United States Magistrate Judge

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