

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF MINNESOTA

In re MIRAPEX PRODUCTS LIABILITY
LITIGATION

MDL No.: 07-1836 (JMR/FLN)

This document relates to

GARY E. CHARBONNEAU, et al.,

Civil No. 06-cv-01215 (JMR/FLN)

Plaintiffs,

vs.

BOEHRINGER INGELHEIM
PHARMACEUTICALS, INC., a Delaware
corporation, PFIZER INC., a Delaware
corporation, PHARMACIA
CORPORATION, a Delaware corporation,
and PHARMACIA & UPJOHN
COMPANY LLC,

**DEFENDANTS' MEMORANDUM
OF LAW IN SUPPORT OF MOTION
TO BIFURCATE THE LIABILITY
PHASE OF TRIAL FROM THE
PUNITIVE DAMAGES PHASE OF
TRIAL**

Defendants.

I. INTRODUCTION

Pursuant to Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 42(b), defendants request that this Court bifurcate the liability phase of trial from the punitive damages phase of trial.

II. LEGAL ARGUMENT

Under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 42(b), the “to avoid prejudice, or to expedite and economize, the court may order a separate trial of one or more separate issues, claims, crossclaims, counterclaims, or third-party claims.” In the Eighth Circuit, “[t]he decision of whether to isolate the punitive damages phase of the trial is within the sound discretion of the trial court.” *Thorne v. Welk Inv., Inc.*,

197 F.3d 1205, 1213-14 (8th Cir. 1999). The Eight Circuit Court has recognized that bifurcation of trial into separate phases “to consider, first, liability and compensatory damages, and second, punitive damages, can avoid the potential that evidence pertinent to punitive damages will improperly prejudice a determination on liability and compensatory damages.” *Weimer v. International Flavors & Fragrances, Inc.*, 2007 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 48669, at *6 (N.D. Iowa, July 3, 2007).

Here, bifurcation is warranted because evidence of defendants’ finances is irrelevant to the issue of liability and its introduction during the liability phase would be unduly prejudicial. Bifurcation is necessary to prevent unfair prejudice to defendants during the liability determination.

III. CONCLUSION

For the foregoing reasons, defendants respectfully move for bifurcation of the liability phase of trial from the punitive damages phase of trial.

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FAEGRE & BENSON LLP

By /s/ Joseph Price

Joseph Price, #88201
2200 Wells Fargo Center
90 South Seventh Street
Minneapolis, MN 55402-4501
(612) 766-8617

Michael K. Brown
Barry J. Thompson
Steven J. Boranian
Mildred Segura
REED SMITH LLP
355 South Grand Avenue

Los Angeles, CA 90071

*Attorneys for Defendants Pfizer Inc.,
Pharmacia Corporation, and
Pharmacia and Upjohn Company
LLC*

HALLELAND LEWIS NILAN &
JOHNSON, P.A.

By /s/ Scott A. Smith

Scott A. Smith, #174026
U.S. Bank Plaza South, Suite 600
220 South Sixth Street
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55402-4501
(612) 338-1838

James E. Gray
Bruce R. Parker
VENABLE LLP
750 East Pratt Street
Suite 900
Baltimore, MD 21202
(410) 244-7400

*Attorneys for Defendant Boehringer
Ingelheim Pharmaceuticals, Inc.*