



## Simplifying Complex Mechanisms to Clearly Demonstrate Fraud

### The Case: East West Bancorp et al. v. Ahern Rentals, Inc.

California-based DC Solar Solutions, Inc. marketed the versatility and sustainability of their mobile solar generator unit and its effectiveness for various applications such as lighting Hollywood movie sets and powering remote cellphone towers. This product attracted investors with promises of federal solar tax credits and a continuous stream of rental income. However, claims about its reliability were largely misleading, and most of the units were never manufactured.

The FBI uncovered historic criminal fraud when it determined that DC Solar had been operating a \$2.5 billion Ponzi scheme related to the sale and lease of their mobile solar generators. IMS Legal Strategies partnered with long-time clients Thomas, Alexander & Forrester LLP (also known as TAF Attorneys) on this significant case, following several successful collaborations on billion-dollar fraud matters. The firm represented a group of institutional investors in a program involving units allegedly sold by DC Solar Solutions, Inc. and leased to end users by Ahern Rentals, an equipment rental company.

### The Challenge

This dispute focused on Ahern Rentals' role in the enterprise, which involved a complex mechanism of faked leases, fraudulent acceptance certificates, and hidden circular payments. Multiple laws and regulations governing the transactions added another layer of complexity. To succeed, our trial team needed to clearly explain these intricate details to jurors and ensure the core arguments of the case were supported with compelling evidence.

## The Solution

Over the course of three years, IMS developed strategic graphics to supplement pre-trial motion hearings, multiple jury research exercises, and a seven-week trial held in the Superior Court of California, County of Los Angeles Central District.

In addition to creating engaging plaintiff presentations, our visual advocacy consultants took charge of developing the opposing case strategy and presentation for the mock trials to ensure valid research data and feedback was elicited. The client commended our work as allowing them to better understand their own case. We worked tirelessly with the legal team to shape their visual messaging and produce exhibits that were both informative and convincing.

Furthermore, the IMS expert witness search team identified, vetted, and engaged five expert witnesses to provide essential context and clarity to our client's position aimed at recovering investor funds.

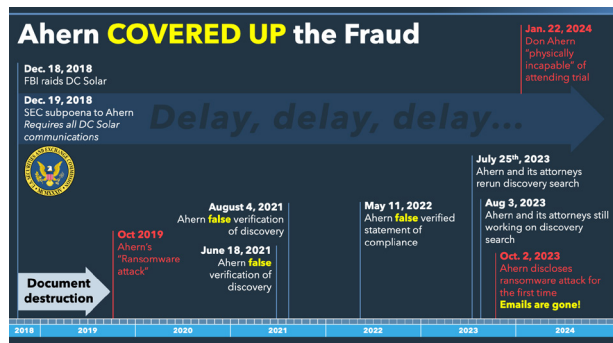
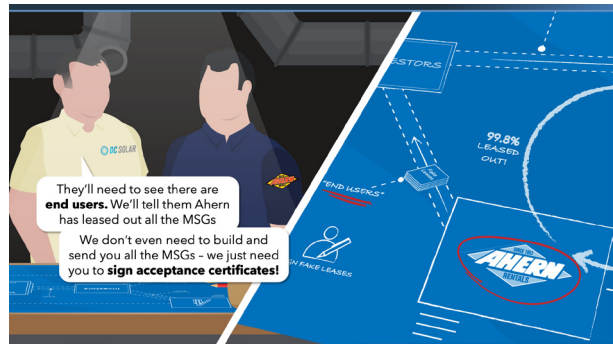
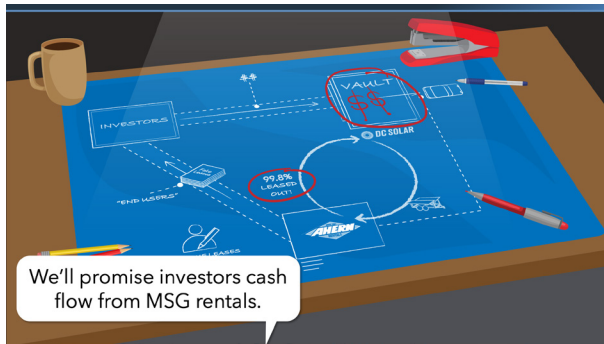
- **A solar tax credit expert** with 20+ years of experience in the solar industry, possessing deep industry knowledge of solar tax incentives/credits and having conducted more than 1,500 solar energy due diligence projects.
- **A California equipment leasing expert** who has 45+ years of experience overseeing secured equipment loans and leases, equipment financing, sales, and credit, with an extensive background in full-life-cycle equipment leasing transactions.
- **An expert in legal ethics in California** with 40+ years of experience advising on professional responsibility and legal ethics, having served as an independent arbitrator/mediator and authored several publications on legal malpractice.
- **An expert on legal ethics** who is a certified specialist in legal malpractice and has 20+ years of experience in legal ethics and professional liability, giving hundreds of continuing legal education presentations across the country on legal ethics.
- **A handwriting/signature authentication expert** with 40+ years of experience as a forensic document examiner in the US Army and the US Postal Service, examining documents in conjunction with thousands of criminal and civil cases for all branches of the government.

At trial, IMS consultants and graphic designers produced a series of visual aids to explain the deceptive accounting processes and lease revenue fraud conducted by DC Solar Solutions, Inc. and Ahern Rentals. We collaborated with our client to prepare a powerful closing argument presentation that summarized a substantial volume of evidence and concisely demonstrated Ahern Rentals' complicity in the fraudulent scheme.

# The Outcome

The jury returned a verdict in favor of the plaintiff group, finding Ahern Rentals liable for aiding and abetting criminal fraud and awarding full damages totaling \$951 million.

# Media Examples



**IMS Legal Strategies** serves trusted law firms and corporations worldwide to elevate strategies and protect reputations. IMS provides comprehensive solutions for complex legal and business matters, including specialized advisory and analytical support, global expert witness services, data-driven litigation consulting, powerful visual advocacy, and flawless presentation technology. As a strategic partner for the full case lifecycle, we work collaboratively with clients to uncover and analyze core arguments, develop a strong story around key themes, and deliver compelling presentations that reinforce the narrative.

IMS offers a fully integrated international team with decades of practical experience in more than 45,000 cases and 6,500 trials. We are driven to help clients overcome challenges and achieve the best possible results. Together, we win. Visit [imslegal.com](https://imslegal.com) for more.