

January 21, 2019

Recency Bias to the Rescue

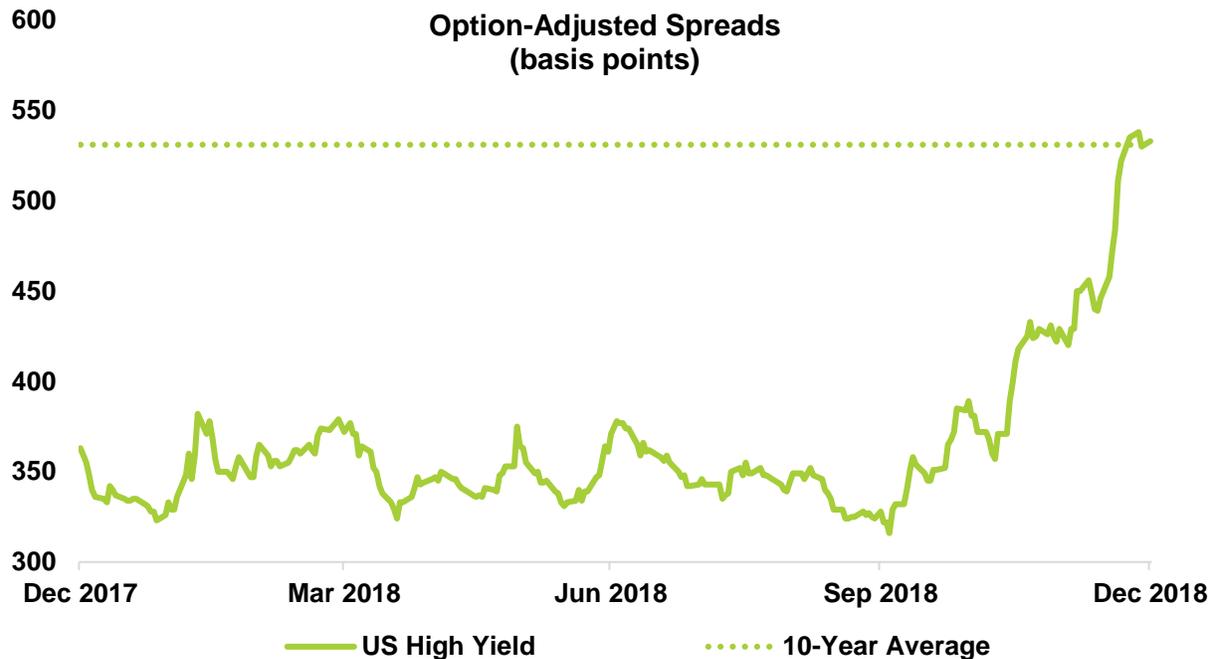
While the performance of Lysander-Fulcra Corporate Securities Fund (the “Fund”) was relatively flat for the year 2018 (-0.6% and -0.1% for Series A and Series F units, respectively), the 4th quarter was a particularly challenging one for the Fund. The returns of Series A and Series F units of the Fund in the final quarter were -2.0% and -1.9%, respectively.

	1 Month	3 Months	YTD	1 Year	Since Inception (Dec 30, 2016)*
Series A	-0.9%	-2.0%	-0.6%	-0.6%	3.6%
Series F	-0.9%	-1.9%	-0.1%	-0.1%	4.2%

*As of December 31, 2018. Returns are annualized.

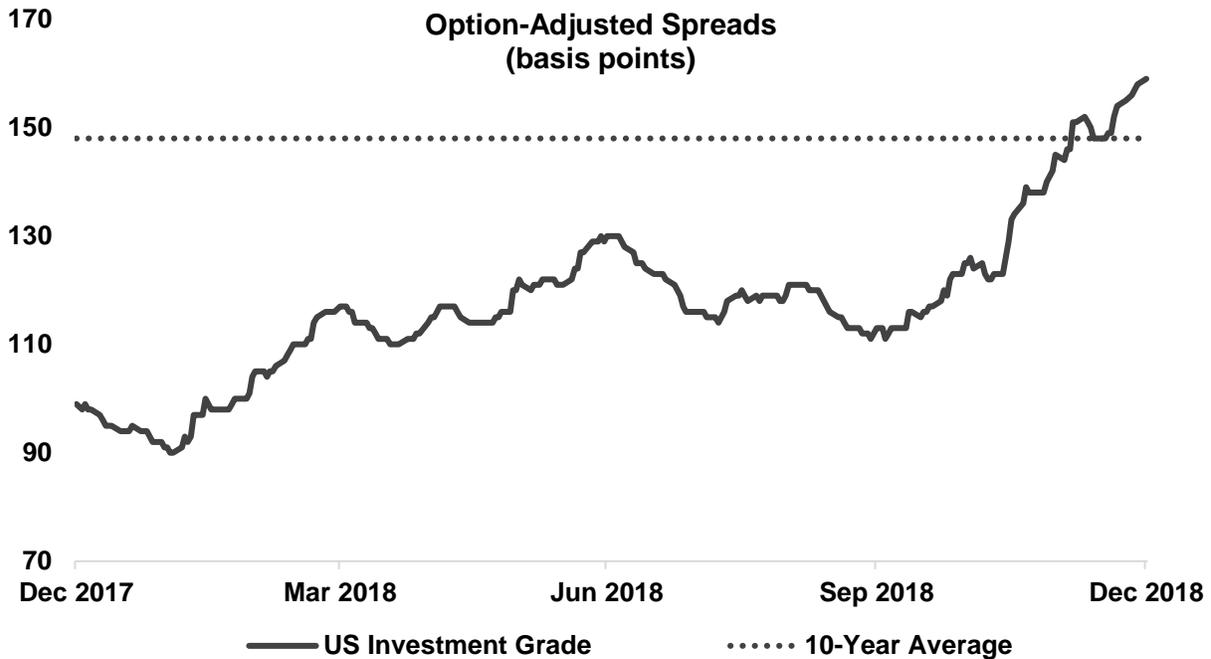
Recency bias, the behaviour of individuals putting greater emphasis on recent events than those in the distant past, seemed to be in force during the last few months of the year. As the decline in the price of risk assets from the end of the 3rd quarter continued well into December (i.e. S&P 500 down 18.9¹ percent from September 28th to December 24th), some investors appeared to have fixated on recent market decline and volatility and continued to sell their investments.

This was an opportunity for the Fund because the Fund was prepared – the Fund had sufficient cash in its portfolio to deploy upon the occurrence of market disruption. This was partly due to Fulcra’s scepticism of the near-record small risk premiums (yield spread) that most corporate bonds offered.



Source: ICE BofAML Bond Indices

¹ Including dividends reinvested in the Index



Source: ICE BofAML Bond Indices

With our scepticism turning into a buying withdrawal through the year, we focused on buying yield to call, short maturity, and tendered bonds. We believe these investments protect capital and provide an attractive return for a short period of 30 to 90 days.

What we saw as an idiosyncratic investment opportunity arrived during the 4th quarter, where there was broad-based sell off in the market and no security was immune. This provided the opportunity to buy more of some of our favourite bonds at very attractive prices and provided buying impetus. In the final quarter of 2018, eight of the Fund's top 15 positions had an aggregate -2.1% impact on the Fund's performance. We responded by buying more of every one of these eight bonds in the last 2 months of the year. The impact of this on the bond metrics of the Fund's portfolio was as follows:

At the end of the 3rd quarter, the Fund's portfolio had a current yield of 5.6%, yield to maturity of 5.8%, duration of 1.4 years and cash / government securities of 20.3%.

By the end of the 4th quarter, the Fund's portfolio had a current yield of 6.6%, yield to maturity of 8.2%, duration of 1.7 years and cash / government securities of 18.0%.

Cash continued to be a relatively large position in the Fund's portfolio at the end of the year, in part due to the early redemption (14 months before maturity) of the Fund's position in the Urban One 9.25% bonds, on December 20.

Urban One is a multi-media company focused on black culture in the United States. According to the company, Urban One is the largest distributor of urban content in the country. Several years ago, the company invested into a new hotel / casino business with MGM Resorts International. Urban One's stake in this business became valuable enough to use as collateral against a privately arranged bond, proceeds of which were used to retire the 9.25% bonds.

While not essential to an investment thesis, minority equity investments such as this can turn out to be sources of value that the market may not appreciate. What is particularly advantageous for us as an investor is that credit rating agencies generally do not ascribe value to these minority equity investments unless they generate some meaningful dividends. We are aware that many corporate bond investors would typically rely solely on the ratings from credit rating agencies and a simpleton cash flow multiple valuation to form their views of the bonds issued by a company.

This bond redemption by Urban One was executed in December when there was not one high yield bond issued in the US. The last time there was not a single high yield bond issued in a month was November 2008. In our view, this shows that good things can still happen in a “bad” market.

Despite the negative returns in the market, the Fund closed out what we considered a successful investment in Urban One and generated liquidity without having to sell its investments. The Urban One bonds illustrate that not all companies need “the market” to refinance their obligations and those that don’t could be attractive investments for the Fund.

While capital markets ended 2018 with a thud, the start of 2019 has been the opposite; equity and high yield credit indices were up 6.63% and 3.92%, respectively². The play of recency bias highlighted fearful behaviour of markets in December while highlighting the opposite in January. Call it “fear and greed” or “quant models rebalancing”, short term market behaviour is noise but can create the fertile ground for which future returns can be reaped. Happy farming!

² Index close on December 31st, 2018 to close on January 18th, 2019. Equity index is S&P500 with dividends reinvested. High Yield Credit index is the Bank of America / Merrill Lynch Master II. Both in USD.

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