

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA

NO. 08-80232-CIV-MARRA/JOHNSON

JANE DOE NO. 3,

Plaintiff,

v.

JEFFREY EPSTEIN,

Defendant.

/

ORDER DENYING MOTION TO ENTER DEFAULT

THIS CAUSE comes before the Court on Plaintiff's Motion for Entry of Default by Clerk (DE 5), filed May 29, 2008. The motion is now fully briefed and is ripe for review. The Court has carefully considered the motion and is otherwise fully advised in the premises.

On July 16, 2008, the Court issued an Order to Show Cause¹ why default should not be entered against Defendant Jeffrey Epstein (DE 17), arguing that Defendant had let more than twenty days elapse after service of process before attempting to respond to the Complaint. As the Court explained, under New York law, personal service may be made on an individual by

delivering the summons within the state to a person of suitable age and discretion at the actual place of business, dwelling place or *usual place of abode* of the person to be served *and by either mailing the summons to the person to be served at his or her last known residence* or by mailing the summons by first class mail to the person to be served at his or her actual place of business in an envelope bearing the legend "personal and confidential" and not indicating on the outside thereof, by return address or otherwise, that the communication is from an attorney or concerns an action against the person to be served, such delivery and mailing to be

¹The Court presumes familiarity with the contents of this Order.

effected within twenty days of each other.

N.Y. C.P.L.R. § 308(2) (McKinney 2008) (emphasis added). Based on the Court's reading of the Affidavit of Service (DE 4), it appeared that Plaintiff's process server had mailed a copy of the Summons and Complaint to Defendant on May 5, 2008. What appeared to be a distortion in the document due to its electronic upload into the Court's CM/ECF system, however, was apparently a line striking the language from the affidavit regarding the mailing of the Summons and Complaint. (*See* DE 21.) Plaintiff brought this error to the Court's attention after the Court issued its Order to Show Cause.

Because the Summons and Complaint were not mailed to Defendant, service was not accomplished under New York law.² *See* N.Y. C.P.L.R. § 308(2). Further, as the Court has already explained, service was not effective under either the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure or Florida law.³ Accordingly, Plaintiff's Motion for Entry of Default Against Defendant(DE 5) is **DENIED**. Plaintiff shall have forty-five (45) days from the date of entry of this Order to serve a copy of the Summons and Complaint on Defendant. Failure to serve Defendant within forty-five days shall result in dismissal of the above-styled action pursuant to Fed. R. Civ. P. 4(m). It is further **ORDERED** that Defendant is relieved of responsibility from responding to the Court's

²Interestingly, Plaintiff did not bring this issue to the Court's attention in its Reply brief. Defendant's Response to the Motion (DE 10) made clear that he assumed all the steps were taken to serve Defendant in accordance with New York law, including that copies were sent through the mail.

³The Court again declines to allow discovery on whether Richard Barnett resides at Defendant's New York home. Mr. Barnett submitted an affidavit sworn under penalty of perjury that he does not reside at that address. (*See* Barnett Aff.) Plaintiff has not submitted any evidence to suggest that Mr. Barnett is not credible, so allowing discovery on this point would simply be a waste of resources.

Order to Show Cause (DE 17) issued on July 16, 2008.

DONE AND ORDERED in Chambers at West Palm Beach, Palm Beach County, Florida, this 25th day of July, 2008.



KENNETH A. MARRA
United States District Judge

Copies furnished to:
all counsel of record