

United States District Court
District of Columbia

Elijah Junaid

Plaintiff

vs.

United States District Court

Defendant

Case No.: 4:25-CV-0297/DRZ

MEMORANDUM OPINION

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Plaintiff filed a Request for Entry of Default and the Clerk of the Court entered Default against United States District Court on January 17, 2025. Now pending before the Court is Plaintiff's Motion for Default Judgment. Upon consideration of Plaintiff's submissions, the relevant legal authorities, and the record as a whole, the Court shall **DENY** Plaintiff's Motion for Default Judgment.

1. Legal Standard

Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 55(a) provides that the clerk of the court "must enter [a] party's default" when a "party against whom a judgment for affirmative relief is sought has failed to plead or otherwise defend." Fed. R. Civ. P. 55(a). Once a default has been entered by the clerk, a court may enter default judgment against that party pursuant to Rule 55(b). See Fed. R. Civ. P. 55(b). To warrant default judgment, the defendant "must be considered a 'totally unresponsive' party, and its default plainly willful, reflected by its failure to respond to the summons and complaint, the entry of default, or the motion for default judgment." *Int'l Painters & Allied Trades Indus. Pension Fund v. Auxier Drywall, LLC*, 531 F. Supp. 2d 56, 57 (D.D.C. 2008) (ESH) (citation omitted).

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2 Default judgment is disfavored in this jurisdiction because courts prefer to
3 resolve claims on their merits. See *Jackson v. Beech*, 636 F.2d 831, 835, 205
4 U.S. App. D.C. 84 (D.C. Cir. 1980). However, default judgments are available
5 to “safeguard plaintiffs ‘when the adversary process has been halted because
6 of an essentially unresponsive party.’” *Mwani v. bin Laden*, 417 F.3d 1, 7, 368
7 U.S. App. D.C. 1 (D.C. Cir. 2005) (quoting *Jackson*, 636 F.2d at 836). The
8 “determination of whether default judgment is appropriate is committed to
9 the discretion of the trial court.” *Auxier Drywall, LLC*, 531 F. Supp. 2d at 57
10 (citing *Jackson*, 636 F.2d at 836). Default judgment may be entered against a
11 corporate defendant that is proceeding absent counsel, as corporate entities
12 are not permitted to appear pro se. See *Motir Servs. Inc. v. Ekwuno*, 191 F.
13 Supp. 3d 98, 107 (D.D.C. 2016) (BAH).

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15 “[E]ntry of a default judgment is not automatic,” however. *Mwani v. bin*
16 *Laden*, 417 F.3d 1, 6, 368 U.S. App. D.C. 1 (D.C. Cir. 2005) (footnote
17 omitted). The procedural posture of a default does not relieve a federal court
18 of its “affirmative obligation” to determine whether it has subject-matter
19 jurisdiction over the action. See *Ludwig*, 82 F.3d at 1092. Additionally, “a
20 court should satisfy itself that it has personal jurisdiction before entering
21 judgment against an absent defendant.” *Mwani*, 417 F.3d at 6. The party
22 seeking default judgment has the burden of establishing both subject-matter
23 jurisdiction over the claims and personal jurisdiction over the
24 defendants. See, e.g., *FC Inv. Grp. LC v. IFX Mkts., Ltd.*, 529 F.3d 1087, 1091,
25 381 U.S. App. D.C. 383 (D.C. Cir. 2008) (“The plaintiffs have the burden of
26 establishing the court’s personal jurisdiction over [the defendants].”); *Khadr*,
27 529 F.3d at 1115 (“[T]he party claiming subject matter jurisdiction . . . has the
28 burden to demonstrate that it exists.”).

2. Discussion

In the present case, the Clerk of the Court entered default against Defendant, and therefore the factual allegations in the Complaint are taken as true. *See R.W. Amrine Drywall*, 239 F. Supp. 2d at 30. The Court finds that Plaintiff's Complaint, alleges that the defendant in this matter, a federal district court, has committed a wrong by enacting a local rule. Judicial Immunity bars plaintiff's suit.

3. Judicial Immunity

A long line of Supreme Court precedent establishes the principle that generally a judge is immune from suit for money damages. *Mireles v. Waco*, 502 U.S. 9, 116 L. Ed. 2d 9, 112 S. Ct. 286 (1991); *Cleavinger v. Saxner*, 474 U.S. 193, 88 L. Ed. 2d 507, 106 S. Ct. 496 (1985); *Butz v. Economou*, 438 U.S. 478, 57 L. Ed. 2d 895, 98 S. Ct. 2894 (1978); *Pierson v. Ray*, 386 U.S. 547, 18 L. Ed. 2d 288, 87 S. Ct. 1213 (1967). Absolute judicial immunity provides immunity from suit as well as from the ultimate imposition of damages; it therefore may not be overcome even by allegations of bad faith or malice. *Mireles v. Waco*, 502 U.S. at 11. In *Ex Parte Virginia*, the Supreme Court held that a judge who was criminally charged for depriving African-Americans of their civil rights to participate as jurors under the Fourteenth Amendment could not invoke the doctrine of judicial immunity. Even today, a judge may be criminally liable for willful deprivations of constitutional rights pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 242, but the same judge is absolutely immune from suit for civil liability for the same alleged unconstitutional deprivation. See *Mireles v. Waco*, 502 U.S. at 10 n.1; *Imbler v. Pachtman*, 424 U.S. 409, 429, 47 L. Ed. 2d 128, 96 S. Ct. 984 (1976); *O'Shea v. Littleton*, 414 U.S. 488, 503, 38 L. Ed. 2d 674, 94 S. Ct. 669 (1974). In *Forrester v. White*, the Court held that a judge is

1 absolutely immune from liability for judicial actions but not for non-judicial
2 actions that judges also may perform.

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4 Although “judicial immunity is not a bar to prospective injunctive relief
5 against a judicial officer acting in her judicial capacity,” *Pulliam v. Allen*, 466
6 U.S. 522, 541-42, 104 S. Ct. 1970, 80 L. Ed. 2d 565 (1984), by statute
7 injunctive relief cannot be granted. *See* 42 U.S.C. § 1983 (“[I]n any action
8 brought against a judicial officer for an act or omission taken in such officer’s
9 judicial capacity, injunctive relief shall not be granted.”).

10 11 **Conclusion**

12 The claims against the defendant are dismissed with prejudice because it is
13 non-justiciable.

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17 **SO ORDERED,**

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19 Date: 1/17/2025

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22 JustTheJudge ☺

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Hon. Just T. Judge
24 District Court Judge
25 District of Columbia
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