

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

Maycock v. Cloudfare, Inc.

Maycock · No. 24-cv-07102-JD · Decided September 30, 2025

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Northern District of California quashed a subpoena issued under 28 U.S.C. § 1782 seeking identifying information for operators of the “Debunking Tamworth” website. The Court concluded that related disclosure proceedings were already pending in the United Kingdom and that U.K. courts were better positioned to resolve the parties’ disputes. The denial was without prejudice, and the case was closed because the plaintiff asserted no independent claim.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Northern District of California
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Northern District of California
DECIDED	September 30, 2025
DOCKET	24-cv-07102-JD
DISPOSITION	quashed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	After initially granting Maycock's application for discovery under 28 U.S.C. § 1782 and issuing a subpoena to Cloudfare, the court considered non-party John Doe's motion to quash the subpoena.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Abuse-of-discretion framework governing a district court's discretionary decision whether to provide assistance under 28 U.S.C. § 1782.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Unpublished district court order; precedential status not stated
PARTIES	Daniel Lee Maycock v. Cloudfare, Inc.

TOPICS

- discovery dispute
- foreign affairs
- civil procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

- Civil procedure
- International judicial assistance
- Foreign affairs

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the court should exercise its discretionary authority under 28 U.S.C. § 1782 to enforce a subpoena seeking identification of the operators of a website for use in foreign proceedings.
2. Whether the previously issued § 1782 subpoena should be quashed in light of the multiple related proceedings and the potential conflict with United Kingdom proof-gathering restrictions and policies.
3. Whether non-party John Doe was entitled to attorney's fees or to submit new evidence.

HOLDINGS

1. Section 1782 authorizes, but does not require, a federal district court to provide judicial assistance in connection with foreign or international proceedings.
2. The court declined to exercise its discretionary authority under § 1782 and quashed the previously issued subpoena.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“§ 1782(a) authorizes, but does not require, a federal district court to provide judicial assistance to foreign or international tribunals or to ‘interested person[s]’ in proceedings abroad.” (at 2)

“With the benefit of a more developed record, it has become clear that the Court ought not exercise its broad discretion to order discovery under 28 U.S.C. § 1782. The previously issued subpoena, Dkt. No. 16, is quashed.” (at 3)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Daniel Lee Maycock, a British citizen and former Deputy Mayor of Tamworth, alleged that the website "Debunking Tamworth" published defamatory material about him. He sought identifying information for the website's operators from Cloudflare, a U.S.-based entity, to support contemplated defamation proceedings in England. After the subpoena issued, an internet journalist proceeding as John Doe moved to quash it to protect his identity. The record showed that multiple related disclosure applications were already pending under at least five United Kingdom case numbers.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Maycock sought identifying information from Cloudflare concerning the operators of a website allegedly defaming him, intending to pursue defamation proceedings in England. At the joint request of Maycock and Cloudflare, the court granted the § 1782 application and issued a subpoena. Before Cloudflare responded, John Doe, an internet journalist associated with the website, moved to quash and sought to preserve his anonymity. The court quashed the subpoena, denied Doe's requests for attorney's fees and to submit new evidence, and closed the case while allowing a renewed § 1782 request without prejudice.

DISPOSITION

quashed

CASES CITED

- Intel Corp. v. Advanced Micro Devices, Inc., 542 U.S. 241, 247 (2004)
- Intel Corp. v. Advanced Micro Devices, Inc., 542 U.S. 241, 265 (2004)

OPINION

Maycock v. Cloudfare, Inc.

PER CURIAM.

1 2 3

4 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

5 NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

6 7 DANIEL LEE MAYCOCK, Case No. 24-cv-07102-JD 8 Plaintiff,

ORDER RE SUBPOENA

v. 9

10 CLOUDFARE, INC.,

Defendant. 11 12 13 Pro se plaintiff Daniel Lee Maycock requests a subpoena for documents under 28 U.S.C. 14 § 1782 to discover the identities of the operators of a website called “Debunking Tamworth.” See 15 Dkt. No. 1. Maycock is a British citizen and a “former Deputy Mayor of Tamworth,” and says 16 that the “Debunking Tamworth” website published defamatory content about him. Id. ¶¶ 4, 7, 9. 17 He represents that he “intends to initiate defamation proceedings in the High Court of Justice in 18 England upon identifying the operators of ‘Debunking Tamworth,’” and that “Cloudfare, Inc., a 19 U.S.-based entity, possesses the identifying information of the website’s operators.” Id. ¶ 4. 20 At the joint request of Maycock and Cloudfare, the Court granted Maycock’s request to 21 issue a subpoena to Cloudfare under 28 U.S.C. § 1782. Dkt. Nos. 14, 15. The subpoena 22 commanded Cloudfare to produce “[d]ocuments sufficient to identify any account holder(s) 23 associated with the domain ‘debunkingtamworth.com’ from October 21, 2023 to December 23, 24 2024.” Dkt. No. 16. But before Cloudfare responded to the subpoena, a motion to quash the 25 subpoena was filed by non-party “John Doe,” an internet journalist who wrote for the “Debunking 26 Tamworth” site and who desires to keep his identity a secret. Dkt. No. 21. Cloudfare and 27 Maycock agreed that Cloudfare’s response to the subpoena would be stayed pending the Court’s

1 DISCUSSION

2 As an initial matter, the subpoena to Cloudfare, Dkt. No. 16, was properly granted. 3 28 U.S.C. § 1782 provides that “[t]he district court of the district in which a person resides or is 4 found may order him to give his testimony or statement or to produce a document or other thing 5 for use in a proceeding in a foreign or international tribunal, including criminal investigations 6 conducted before formal accusation. The order may be made . . . upon the application of any 7 interested person and may direct that . . . the document or other thing be produced[] before a 8 person appointed by the court.” As Maycock and Cloudfare agreed, these requirements were met 9 in this

case. Dkt. No. 14. 10 Even so, the landscape has shifted in important ways since the Court granted Maycock's 11 request to issue the subpoena. The journalist who wishes to keep his identity a secret (proceeding 12 as John Doe) has appeared in the case and requested to quash the subpoena. Dkt. No. 21. 13 Maycock's and Doe's filings made in connection with Doe's motion to quash make clear that the 14 subpoena should be quashed. 15 A key development in the record is Maycock's acknowledgement that "multiple related 16 proceedings are already underway," and "[d]isclosure applications have been filed to gather 17 evidence for a defamation claim against Debunking Tamworth" under at least five different case 18 numbers in the United Kingdom. Dkt. No. 22 at 5, 7-8 (listing "case/claim/petition numbers": 19 KB-2024-003082, KB-2024-003470, CV-25-00734334-0000, COS-P12-25, and KB-2025- 20 000321). The High Court of Justice in England is where Maycock states he is planning to file his 21 defamation suit, see Dkt. No. 1 ¶ 4, and it appears that is where his multiple pre-suit disclosure 22 applications are pending. "§ 1782(a) authorizes, but does not require, a federal district court to 23 provide judicial assistance to foreign or international tribunals or to 'interested person[s]' in 24 proceedings abroad." Intel Corp. v. Advanced Micro Devices, Inc., 542 U.S. 241, 247 (2004). On 25 the record that has now developed, the Court is concerned about the possibility that the § 1782(a) 26 request here may conflict with "foreign proof-gathering restrictions or other policies of a foreign 27 country." Id. at 265. In any event, the Court finds that it need not conclusively answer that 1 answer for themselves whether the disclosure Maycock seeks is appropriate under the United 2 || Kingdom's laws. 3 Maycock and Doe have raised a host of other disputes that the courts in the United 4 || Kingdom are much better positioned to answer than this Court. These include legal questions 5 under U.K. law regarding whether any defamation lawsuit filed by Maycock would be time- 6 || barred, and highly factual questions such as whether Maycock is seeking to harass Doe or whether 7 Doe has harassed Maycock. See Dkt. Nos. 21, 22, 24. 8 With the benefit of a more developed record, it has become clear that the Court ought not 9 exercise its broad discretion to order discovery under 28 U.S.C. § 1782. The previously issued 10 subpoena, Dkt. No. 16, is quashed.

11 CONCLUSION

12 The denial of assistance under 28 U.S.C. § 1782 is without prejudice to a renewed request 13 as circumstances may warrant. Doe's requests for attorney's fees, Dkt. No. 21, and to submit new 14 || evidence, Dkt. No. 29, are denied. Maycock did not assert a legal claim independent from the 3 15 request for a discovery order under 28 U.S.C. § 1782, see Dkt. No. 1, and so the case is closed.

a 16 IT IS SO ORDERED. 3 17 Dated: September 30, 2025 18 19

JAMES JPONATO

20 United pftates District Judge 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28