

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE CENTRAL DISTRICT OF
CALIFORNIA

Rohit J. Singh v. Next Level ADU Builder and Solar, et al.

Singh v. Next Level ADU Builder and Solar · No. 8:24-cv-02712-FWS-MAR · Decided March 25, 2025

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Central District of California dismissed Rohit J. Singh’s action without prejudice for failure to prosecute and comply with a court order. The court found that Singh failed to file proof of service within the required period and did not respond to an order to show cause regarding dismissal. The court concluded that the relevant dismissal factors, including docket management and the availability of less drastic alternatives, supported dismissal.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Central District of California
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Fred W. Slaughter
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Central District of California
DECIDED	March 25, 2025
DOCKET	8:24-cv-02712-FWS-MAR
DISPOSITION	dismissed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	The district court dismissed the action without prejudice on its own motion after the plaintiff failed to file proofs of service within the Rule 4(m) period and failed to respond to an order to show cause regarding dismissal for lack of prosecution.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court exercised its discretion under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 4(m) and its inherent docket-management authority, weighing the five-factor test for dismissal for failure to prosecute or failure to comply with a court order.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Unpublished district-court order; generally nonprecedential except as permitted by applicable rules.
PARTIES	Rohit J. Singh v. Next Level ADU Builder and Solar, Marco Gonzalez, unnamed Does

TOPICS

service of process

sanctions

civil procedure

civil rights

PRACTICE AREAS

civil procedure

civil rights

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether dismissal without prejudice was authorized under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 4(m) because the defendants had not been served within 90 days after the complaint was filed.
2. Whether dismissal for failure to prosecute and failure to comply with the order to show cause was warranted under the court's inherent docket-management authority after balancing the applicable five factors.

HOLDINGS

1. When a defendant is not served within 90 days after the complaint is filed, the court may dismiss the action without prejudice after notice to the plaintiff or order service within a specified time. The absence of timely proof of service supported dismissal in this case.
2. Dismissal without prejudice was warranted because the public interest in expeditious resolution, the court's need to manage its docket, and the unavailability of effective less drastic alternatives outweighed the neutral or reduced weight of the remaining factors.

KEY QUOTATIONS

"If a defendant is not served within 90 days after the complaint is filed, the court—on motion or on its own after notice to the plaintiff—must dismiss the action without prejudice against that defendant or order that service be made within a specified time." (Dkt. 11 at 1)

"the public's interest in expeditious resolution of litigation; (2) the court's need to manage its docket; (3) the risk of prejudice to defendants/respondents; (4) the availability of less drastic alternatives; and (5) the public policy favoring disposition of cases on their merits." (at 2)

"[A] district court's warning to a party that his or her failure to obey the court's order will result in dismissal can satisfy the 'consideration of alternatives' requirement." (at 3)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Singh filed claims under 42 U.S.C. §§ 1981 and 1982 against Next Level ADU Builder and Solar, Marco Gonzalez, and unnamed defendants. More than 90 days elapsed after the complaint was filed without Singh filing proof that any defendant had been served. After the court issued an order to show cause and warned that failure to respond could result in dismissal, Singh filed no response.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Singh filed the action on December 17, 2024, alleging violations of 42 U.S.C. §§ 1981 and 1982. After more than 90 days passed without a proof of service, the court issued an order to show cause on March 19, 2025,

requiring a response by March 21, 2025. Singh filed nothing by the deadline, and the court dismissed the case without prejudice for failure to prosecute and failure to comply with the court's order.

DISPOSITION

dismissed

CASES CITED

- Oliva v. Sullivan, 958 F.2d 272, 273 (9th Cir. 1992)
- Pagtalunan v. Galaza, 291 F.3d 639, 642 (9th Cir. 2002)
- Yourish v. California, 191 F.3d 983, 990 (9th Cir. 1999)
- Keawe v. Department of Public Safety, 2024 WL 1495085, at *2 (D. Haw. Mar. 15, 2024), report and recommendation adopted, 2024 WL 1492630 (D. Haw. Apr. 5, 2024)
- Ferdik v. Bonzelet, 963 F.2d 1258, 1262-63 (9th Cir. 1992), as amended (May 22, 1992)
- Alliant Credit Union v. Vessel EAGLE REST, 2010 WL 3746727, at *2 (N.D. Cal. Sept. 20, 2010)
- Ewing v. Ruano, 2012 WL 2138159, at *2 (C.D. Cal. June 12, 2012)
- Thomas v. Kernan, 2019 WL 8888200, at *1 (C.D. Cal. July 10, 2019)
- In re Phenylpropanolamine (PPA) Products Liability Litigation, 460 F.3d 1217, 1228 (9th Cir. 2006)
- Worden v. Hemming, 2022 WL 2062331, at *2 (C.D. Cal. Jan. 21, 2022)
- Mora v. Wenrick, 2020 WL 1279233, at *2 (C.D. Cal. Jan. 7, 2020), report and recommendation adopted, 2020 WL 1274211 (C.D. Cal. Mar. 16, 2020)
- Bartok v. Bartok, 2019 WL 6729660 (C.D. Cal. July 15, 2019)
- 942 F.2d 648, 652 (9th Cir. 1991)

OPINION

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA | S 6 CIVIL MINUTES — GENERAL Case No. 8:24-cv-02712-FWS-MAR Date: March 25, 2025 Title: Rohit J. Singh v. Next Level ADU Builder and Solar, et al. Present: HONORABLE FRED W. SLAUGHTER, UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE Priscilla Deason for Rolls Royce Paschal N/A Deputy Clerk Court Reporter Present for Plaintiff: Attorneys Present for Defendants: Not Present Not Present PROCEEDINGS: (INCHAMBERS) ORDER DISMISSING CASE WITHOUT PREJUDICE FOR FAILURE TO PROSECUTE AND COMPLY WITH COURT ORDER [11] On December 17, 2024, Plaintiff Rohit J. Singh ('Plaintiff') filed this case alleging that Defendants Next Level ADU Builder and Solar, Marco Gonzalez, and unnamed Does violated 42 U.S.C. Sections 1981 and 1982.

(See generally Dkt. 1 (Complaint).) On March 19, 2025, the court issued an Order to Show Cause re Dismissal for Lack of Prosecution (the "OSC"), noting that Plaintiff had not yet filed a proof of

service on Defendants, even though 90 days had since the filing of the Complaint. (Dkt. 11 at 1 (citing, among other authority, Fed. R. Civ. P. 4(m)).)

The court set a response deadline of March 21, 2025, and specifically advised that “[f]ailure to file a timely and appropriate response to this Order may result in dismissal without further order or notice from the court.” (/d.) Now, days after the court’s deadline for Plaintiff to respond to the OSC, Plaintiff has filed nothing. (See generally Dkt.) “If a defendant is not served within 90 days after the complaint is filed, the court—on motion or on its own after notice to the plaintiff—must dismiss the action without prejudice against that defendant or order that service be made within a specified time.” Fed.

R. Civ. P. 4(m). In addition, district courts “have inherent power to control their dockets and may impose sanctions, including dismissal, in the exercise of that discretion.” *Oliva v. Sullivan*, 958 F.2d 272, 273 (9th Cir. 1992). When determining “whether to dismiss a claim for failure to or failure to comply with a court order, the Court must weigh the following factors: CIVIL MINUTES — GENERAL UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA | S 6 tz CIVIL MINUTES — GENERAL Case No. 8:24-cv-02712-FWS-MAR Date: March 25, 2025 Title: Rohit J. Singh v. Next Level ADU Builder and Solar, et al. (1) the public’s interest in expeditious resolution of litigation; (2) the court’s need to manage its docket; (3) the risk of prejudice to defendants/respondents; (4) the availability of less drastic alternatives; and (5) the public policy favoring disposition of cases on their merits.” *v. Galaza*, 291 F.3d 639, 642 (9th Cir.

2002). In this case, the court finds these factors support dismissal due to Plaintiff’s failure to the case and comply with the OSC. (Dkt. 11.) As to the first factor, “[t]he public’s interest in expeditious resolution of litigation a/ways favors dismissal.” *Jd.* at 642.

The second factor also favors dismissal because “‘it is incumbent upon the Court to manage its docket without being subject to routine noncompliance of litigants.’” /d. When a fails to file a proof of service, “the action to come[s] to a complete halt,” which allows a plaintiff “to control the pace of the docket rather than the Court.” *Yourish v. California* 191 F.3d 983, 990 (9th Cir.

1999) (finding that this factor favored dismissal when the had 60 days to file an amended complaint and instead tardily filed a motion for clarification); see *Keawe v. Dept of Pub. Safety*, 2024 WL 1495085, at *2 (D. Haw. Mar. 15, 2024), report and recommendation adopted, 2024 WL 1492630 (D. Haw. Apr. 5, 2024) (dismissing case without prejudice when plaintiff failed to comply with court deadlines to file motion for default judgment, reasoning as to this factor, “Second, the Court’s need to manage its docket weighs in favor of dismissal because Plaintiffs failure to comply with the Court’s orders has interfered with the Court’s ability to manage its docket’).

The third factor, the risk of prejudice to Defendants, is neutral given that it is uncertain whether they have been served. Cf. *Pagtalunan*, 291 F.3d at 642 (“To prove prejudice, a defendant must establish that plaintiff’s actions impaired defendant’s ability to proceed to trial or threatened to interfere with the rightful decision of the case.”).

As to the fourth factor, the court has attempted less drastic alternatives, but they have been unsuccessful. The court gave Plaintiff ample time to respond to the OSC and informed him that failure to file a timely and appropriate response to the OSC may result in dismissal of his claims. (Dkt. 11); see *Ferdik v. Bonzelet*, 963 F.2d 1258, 1262 (9th Cir. 1992), as amended CIVIL MINUTES — GENERAL UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA J S 6 tz CIVIL MINUTES — GENERAL Case No. 8:24-cv-02712-FWS-MAR Date: March 25, 2025 Title: Rohit J. Singh v. Next Level ADU Builder and Solar, et al. (May 22, 1992) (“[A] district court’s warning to a party that his or her failure to obey the court’s order will result in dismissal can satisfy the ‘consideration of alternatives’ requirement.”); see also *Alliant Credit Union v. Vessel EAGLE REST*, 2010 WL 3746727, at *2 (N.D.

Cal. Sept. 20, 2010) (“The Court’s prior order warned Plaintiff that the failure to file an amended complaint or a notice of voluntary dismissal would result in the dismissal of the action.”); *Keawe*, 2024 WL 1495085, at *2 (“Fourth, less drastic sanctions are not appropriate and would be futile given Plaintiff’s repeated failure to comply with the Court’s prior orders.”).

The court therefore finds this factor weighs in favor of dismissal. Finally, the public policy favoring disposition on the merits generally weighs against dismissal, but “it logically rests upon an inherent presumption a litigant... has manifested a diligent desire to prosecute his or her claims.” *Ewing v. Ruano*, 2012 WL 2138159, at *2 (C.D. Cal. June 12, 2012).

Indeed, “it is the plaintiffs responsibility to move a case toward a merits disposition.” *Thomas v. Kernan*, 2019 WL 8888200, at *1 (C.D. Cal. July 10, 2019) (citing *v. Morgan Stanley & Co.*, 942 F.2d 648, 652 (9th Cir. 1991)).

Therefore, “this factor ‘lends little support’ to a party whose responsibility it is to move a case toward disposition on the merits but whose conduct impedes progress in that direction.” *In re Phenylpropanolamine (PPA) Prod. Liab. Litig.*, 460 F.3d 1217, 1228 (9th Cir. 2006) (citations omitted).

The court finds Plaintiff’s failure to timely prosecute this case by filing a proof of service lessens the of the public policy favoring disposition on the merits. See *Ewing*, 2012 WL 2138159, at *2. The court therefore finds this factor is neutral and does not preclude dismissal.

In summary, on balance, the court finds the relevant factors weigh in favor of dismissal. See *Ferdik*, 963 F.2d at 1263 (“Even if the prejudice factor as well as the fifth factor regarding the

public policy favoring disposition on the merits both weighed against dismissal, they would not outweigh the other three factors that strongly support dismissal here.”).

Indeed, courts regularly dismiss cases for failure to timely file a proof of service after a plaintiff fails to respond to an order to show cause regarding dismissal for lack of prosecution. See, e.g., *Worden v. Hemming*, 2022 WL 2062331, at *2 (C.D. Cal. Jan. 21, 2022) (“The Court finds that Plaintiff has abandoned his claims by failing to file the required Proofs of Service or respond to the Court’s orders.

The Court dismisses this action without prejudice for lack of prosecution CIVIL MINUTES — GENERAL UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA | S 6 tz CIVIL MINUTES — GENERAL Case No. 8:24-cv-02712-FWS-MAR Date: March 25, 2025 Title: Rohit J. Singh v. Next Level ADU Builder and Solar, et al. and for failure to comply with a Court order.”); *Mora v. Wenrick*, 2020 WL 1279233, at *2 (C.D.

Cal. Jan. 7, 2020), report and recommendation adopted, 2020 WL 1274211 (C.D. Cal. Mar. 16, 2020) (“In light of the procedural history of this case, including Plaintiff’s failure to file a proper proof of service of the summons and complaint or comply with the Court’s orders, and the factors weighing in favor of dismissal, the Court concludes that dismissal of this action for failure to prosecute is warranted.”); *Bartok v. Bartok*, 2019 WL 6729660 (C.D.

Cal. July 15, 2019) (denying reconsideration of order dismissing for lack of prosecution after proof of service not timely filed); see also Fed. R. Civ. P. 4(m). This case is therefore DISMISSED WITHOUT PREJUDICE. CIVIL MINUTES — GENERAL