## IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE EIGHTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT, IN AND FOR BREVARD COUNTY, FLORIDA

CASE NO.: 05-2013-CP-028863

ANNEEN NINA GLORIA BAUM, an individual

Plaintiff,

v.

DAVID A. BAUM, as the Personal Representative of the Estate of Seymour Baum, deceased, and as an individual, et al.

Defendants.

HEARING BEFORE
THE HONORABLE JOHN M. HARRIS

DATE TAKEN:

March 18, 2014

TIME:

1:21 p.m.

PLACE:

Brevard County Courthouse

Moore Justice Center

2825 Judge Fran Jamieson Way

Viera, Florida 32940

REPORTED BY:

Jill E. Hastey, RPR and

Notary Public

National Reporting Service (305)373-7295

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1	APPEARANCES: (CONTINUED)		
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6	APPEARING (VIA TELEPHONE) ON BEHALF OF THE DEFENDANT CHABAD OF SPACE COAST, INC.		
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## PROCEEDINGS

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THE COURT: Please be seated. Good afternoon.

> MR. HENNESSEY: Good afternoon, Your Honor.

MS. HOFFMAN: Good afternoon.

THE COURT: We're trying to get Mr. Jacoby on He's out of town. Because of the length the line. of the hearing, I told him he could listen in today but he can't participate.

> MR. HENNESSEY: Okay.

THE COURT: I don't know if he would want to anyway, but he's not going to be asking any questions. He's just going to be listening in. So give me a minute or two and we'll see if we can track him down and get him on the phone.

Hello? Hello?

All right. Let's go ahead and get started. Just for the record, let me go ahead and get everybody to identify and introduce themselves on the record, starting with my right, and go across.

MR. BOYES: Your Honor, Bill Boyes on behalf of Hadassah.

> THE COURT: Yes, sir.

MR. HENNESSEY: Good afternoon, Your Honor,

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Bill Hennessey. I represent David Baum in his capacity as personal representative of the estate.

THE COURT: Very good. Thank you.

MR. BAUM: I'm David Baum.

MS. HOFFMAN: Teresa Abood Hoffman and Wayne Alder, and we're here on behalf of petitioner, Anneen Gloria Baum.

THE COURT: Outstanding. Very good. All right. Thank you all very much. Mr. Hennessey, what are we doing today?

MR. HENNESSEY: Thank you, Your Honor. Your Honor, we have several motions pending before you today. The first ones were the ones that my client filed. They were to drop parties. Those issues were before you previously, and this is a follow-up hearing to that. And there are several other motions that are also going to be before you which I think are dependant, in part, on what you do with these motions to drop parties.

THE COURT: Okay.

MR. HENNESSEY: And so, if I can, Your Honor,
I put together just a brief timeline in connection with this litigation. May I approach, because I
think it will help with our argument nonetheless?

THE COURT: Thank you.

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MR. HENNESSEY: Thank you. Your Honor, we have two separate cases pending before you. We have this estate administration case, which is pending under Case No. 05-2012-CT-48323, and that's the case where the petition for administration was filed, and then where Nina Baum filed her will contest and her action to remove the personal representative of this estate, my client, and Nina initiated that action by filing a petition, which was the proper procedure under Florida law to initiate a will contest.

It included a number of counts that we didn't agree with, but it included a petition for revocation of probate alleging undue influence and improper execution, and it sought to remove my client on the basis that the will was invalid.

That case was filed initially on June 3rd of 2013, close to ten months ago. The petition itself — did you receive the notebook, Your Honor, that I sent over, the big thick one?

THE COURT: Got it.

MR. HENNESSEY: The petition is in the notebook. You can see from the electronic stamp at the top that it was filed on June 3rd. The petition, because it's a petition for revocation of

probate and a petition to remove the personal representative, is governed by Florida Rule of Civil Procedure 5.025, which is the adversary proceeding rule, and that adversary proceeding rule is in the notebook, if you need to refer to it, behind Tab 24.

And the rule lists out certain proceedings which are adversary proceedings in probate, and they include a petition to revoke probate and a petition to remove a personal representative. And the rule goes on to provide, in 5.025(d)(1), that the petition, when it's an adversary proceeding, needs to be served by formal notice.

THE COURT: Right.

MR. HENNESSEY: Rule 5.040, which is the next tab, 25, describes what needs to happen when you serve by formal notice. It's very similar to the issuance of a summons. A pleading goes out called a formal notice whereby you have 20 days to respond and it needs to get served. It doesn't have to be served in the same formal manner as service of process. It can go by certified mail or a commercial-signed receipt, like FedEx. It could also go by service of process if folks so choose.

In this case, what I'll be explaining to you

is that Ms. Baum failed to serve the petition for revocation of probate and the petition to remove the personal representative properly in accordance with the rule.

We appeared on October 14th of 2013, which was more than 120 days after the petition had been filed. We filed a motion to dismiss and, in the motion to dismiss, we alleged that Nina had never served the petition or her amended petition which she filed. And, by the way, she filed an amended petition on June 28th which also was never served, and we said she hadn't served in accordance with the Florida probate rules, and therefore her petition should be dismissed.

We had trouble getting that motion to dismiss set for hearing and you ultimately set a case management conference for us on November 11th, and November 11th was five months after the case was filed, and we had a hearing. And the purpose of that hearing was to facilitate scheduling of discovery to require Ms. Baum to participate in scheduling of things, because we hadn't been able to get that accomplished, and to address the issues relating to failure to serve.

At that hearing I explained that Ms. Baum had

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a history and other litigation of delay and the like, and you ultimately, at the end of that hearing, ordered a number of things. You compelled her to appear for her depo. You compelled her to produce documents within two weeks. And we had a hearing that you set for December 17th and you said, "I will give you one more month to get the pleadings in this case served." And so at that point you gave her an additional -- it was 32 days, I believe, or close to it, at least more than 30, to get the petition, or the amended petition, the will contest, served.

In the order that you entered in the estate case compelling her to serve is in the pleadings binder. It's behind Tab 9. And in that order you indicated that she needs to serve any respondents not served on or before December 13th, 2013, and you said "shall be dropped as a party."

That order was reviewed by Mrs. Baum's new counsel, and what had happened at that hearing was her two prior lawyers had withdrawn as counsel. Mr. Guralnick had appeared as counsel. this order before it went in. That's what you said at the hearing. About two weeks later Mr.

Guralnick filed a motion to withdraw and Mr.

Guralnick alleged that his client was being uncooperative, that Ms. Baum was claiming that her prior counsel had her file. He said they're denying that, I'm not going to get in the middle of it, I want out, and filed a motion to extend all the deadlines.

So on December 11th you held an emergency hearing on his motion to withdraw and his extension of the deadlines and, at that hearing, you said, "I'm not going to allow you to withdraw at this point. We have a hearing on December 17th, and I'm denying your request for an extension."

He still at that point had time to serve in accordance with the rules and he didn't do it. We had our hearing on December 17th and we appeared before you and, at that point, at that hearing, the main issue we addressed that day was whether Nina Baum's claims, in her separate civil case which she filed relating to alleged promises of support by her father, were timely, and you struck those claims finding that her claims were untimely.

At that hearing we also discussed the motion to dismiss and the fact that the parties had never been served, and the transcript of that hearing on those issues is behind Tab 16 in your notebook, and

I have an excerpt from the transcript here in the notebook, Your Honor. That was an evidentiary hearing, so the transcript is rather voluminous, but the key language starts at the top of page 130 at line 2, where I argue to Your Honor:

We have two other motions that were scheduled today. One of them is pretty intensive legally, but the others were fairly simple. They dealt with failure to serve. And I indicate you had directed Nina Baum to serve the remaining parties in both the will contest and the trust contest by last Friday. We have issues here where claims have not been served, and you told Nina that the parties would be dropped and removed if the complaint in the civil case and the will contest were not served.

And then at page 135, there are arguments that are made in between by Mr. Guralnick on various issues relating to service and the like.

And at page 135, I picked back up at line 20 in my argument, and I say:

"You exercised your discretion in this case once already and allowed them additional time.

This case has now been pending -- or these cases have been pending since June and still haven't been

served. We're well beyond 120 days. When we came before you last time we were already at 157, I believe it was, and you gave them an additional 30 days, and we're still to this day not served, including my client as personal representative of the estate, even in the action, this action, the will contest."

And so you indicated that if they didn't serve within that time frame that the parties would be dropped, and Your Honor responded, "And that's the order of this case right now, right?" Mr.

Hennessey: "Yes, that's where we are." "Okay."

And then Mr. Guralnick explains that, "Well, Your Honor, the reason I didn't get him served is I'm trying to get aliases summons issued but" -- actually, what he says here is that David's the party, all I need to do is serve David, because David is the representative for all the various entities that are involved and the like, so all I need to do is serve David.

And you respond on page 137: "Well, if you need to file them, or whatever comes after, you need to file a motion to address that later on, but I entered a ruling last time, which I think was the 17th was the deadline, and it wasn't met, so that



order is going to speak for itself at this point. If anybody needs relief from that, they can file a motion for relief from that order. But going back to the question I had at the beginning of this case" -- well, that goes back to when we had the trial, so the rest of the highlighting isn't important. But you indicated that the order would be binding and anybody that wants relief from it needs to come and seek relief from Your Honor.

Following that hearing, you granted Mr.

Guralnick's motion to withdraw. Mrs. Baum's new

counsel appeared on January 24th, 2014, and we

filed our motion to drop parties on January 28th,

2014, in accordance with your prior order in the

estate case. No relief -- no motion for relief has

ever been filed. No offering of any excusable

neglect or good cause or any other matter has been

offered to explain the failure to serve in a case

which has now been pending since June.

Our civil case is very much the same, Your
Honor, and I don't need to run through all of the
facts, but the civil case was a claim for a
separate independent action. And under Florida
law, when you file a claim against an estate and
there's an objection to the claim, you know that an

independent action gets filed within 30 days of the objection being filed and served, and the independent action is separate from the probate proceeding. It's a separate case that gets filed to enforce a claim.

That separate civil case is pending. I call it the civil cause because it was their claim for promissory estoppel essentially saying dad had promised me some money. Now, you struck that claim over in the estate case but it remains pending because we haven't yet appeared before you to deal with what happens next in that case.

In any event, Nina's complaint in that case, the separate civil case, was filed on June 28th.

It was amended on August 5th. When we appeared before you on November 11th, just like you did in the estate case, you entered an order in the civil case which directed her to serve all parties no later than December 13th.

And again it was because we had a hearing coming up on December 13th, you wanted to make sure everybody was served, and the case has been pending for a long time, and it was well beyond 120 days when you entered that order anyway.

Rule 1.070(j) is the rule of civil procedure

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that deals with time for service. And I've neglected to mention rule 5.025 provides that, in adversary proceedings, the rules of civil procedure apply. And under (j) it says that a party has 120 days to serve process and if they don't serve within 120 days, the court has a bit of discretion. You can either dismiss the case, you can drop the parties who haven't been served, or you can grant a party additional time. And at that hearing, on November 11th, you granted Ms. Baum additional time to serve. You gave her 30 more days plus to get the parties served, and so you exercised your discretion in her favor at that point.

Now, her two lawyers again were permitted to withdraw. Mr. Guralnick comes into that case and he files the motions to withdraw and the motions for extension in that case as well, two weeks later, alleging the exact same issues. The court denies all of those motions and says, essentially, you have to serve. The deadlines are the deadlines.

And we went through the transcript where the court discussed what the effect of its order would be, and that order, in that case, is behind Tab 10 in the notebook, and it says, "Any defendants not

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served on or before December 13th will be dropped as a party, just like the other case." And we were before you at that transcript that I was reading in both cases. It was a hearing that was set on the motions to dismiss in both cases as well as the issue striking Ms. Baum's claim.

We are now here. It's now March 18th. It's 288 days, almost 10 months which have elapsed since the will contest was initially filed, and we still haven't properly been served in this case. You're going to hear in a moment from Ms. Baum's new counsel that a couple of weeks ago they sent out a motion for leave to amend in the civil case under the civil case number, which they attempt to serve by formal notice, but that's the civil case which is governed by the rules of civil procedure and it's well after your time frames anyway. But it wasn't even service of the complaint; it was service of a motion for leave to amend in that case, but it was well after the time frames.

So I want to go through the law with you in this case for just a moment. In the estate case, I talked about rule 5.025 --

THE COURT: Mr. Hennessey, let me ask you to hold up for just a second.

1 MR. HENNESSEY: Yes, sir. 2 THE COURT: I was just given Mr. Jacoby's 3 cell number. Let's see if this works. 4 (Phone call being made.) 5 MR. JACOBY: Hello. 6 THE COURT: Mr. Jacoby? 7 MR. JACOBY: Hello. 8 THE COURT: David, is that you? 9 MR. JACOBY: Yes. 10 THE COURT: I've got you on speakerphone. 11 We're in the middle of Mr. Hennessey's arguments on 12 his motion to drop parties. I'm going to let you 13 listen in, okay? 14 MR. JACOBY: Yes, Your Honor. Thank you for 15 accommodating me. I just want to let you know that 16 I am on my way to Gainesville to a medical 17 appointment and that's why I'm --18 (Phone cutting out.) 19 THE COURT: This isn't going to work. 20 ahead. 21 MR. HENNESSEY: So, Your Honor, as it relates 22 to the law, I walk through with you rule 5.025. 23 That rule says that a will contest is an adversary

representative. It's required to be served by

proceeding, as is a petition to remove a personal

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formal notice. The rules of civil procedure apply.

The manner in which a notice is required to be served is delineated in the rules.

You entered orders which indicated that she had a deadline within which to serve which she didn't comply with. She's violated your order. This court unquestionably has the ability to control its own docket. You have the ability to enter an order telling parties when they need to complete their service by and, in this case, you exercised your discretion in her favor in the first instance giving her some more time and she continued to violate your order and continued to do so up until today.

Two weeks ago they attempted to file something, and you'll hear about that, but again, that in and of itself is deficient. It's well after the time frames and it's filed over in the separate civil case, not in the existing probate case where the will contest and trust contest -- or the will contest, I'm sorry, and petition for removal is pending.

We have a strong public policy in Florida relating to the expeditious administration of estates. You've probably heard those cases before.

There's a case, an old Florida Supreme Court case from 1956, In Re: Williamson's Estate, which says, "As a matter of public policy in this state, the estates of decedents shall be speedily and finally determined with dispatch."

Meaning, again, that you have the ability to control your docket. You can keep cases moving along as appropriate.

One of the cases that I've included in the notebook is In Re: Estate of Odza, O-d-z-a. It's a 4th DCA case from 1983, and the court held that adversary proceedings filed under 5.025, you're required to strictly comply with the procedural requirements in the statute as it relates to service by formal notice. And, again, that wasn't complied with.

As a result of the unserved petition, we are now here, 10 months, close to 10 months after this case was originally filed. There's been no progress made in this case. Not one deposition has been taken. The only things we've been addressing in this will contest and petition for removal are these issues relating to when is Nina ever going to serve people.

The rule 1.070, the other rule that's

applicable here, as I said, gives parties 120 days to complete service. And we discussed the fact that if you don't do that, you can either drop the party, you can dismiss a party, or you can exercise discretion and give them some more time.

You've exercised that discretion previously.

It's incumbent upon them to come in and demonstrate to you good cause or excusable neglect as to why they didn't comply with your order and serve within the requisite time frames.

When we were before you, the case had been pending already for over six months and had not been served and you gave them another 30 days and they still didn't comply. My client is the personal representative. He's not ducking or dodging service.

Under the formal notice rules, I, as his resident agent, have to accept service for him, and so it's very simple in this case to have completed service. But Nina Baum, because of all the -- the uncooperative with her lawyers, this case was never served and so we are here now in a situation where my opponent hasn't done anything to try to get relief from the order, as you indicated she would have to do.

The case law makes it clear that where we are now, we're at the last step. This case -- this case should be dismissed. The will contest and the petition for removal and/or the personal representative and other folks who haven't been served needs to be dropped as parties.

So in connection with the will contest, my understanding is that the following parties have never been served because there's no proof of service in the estate case relating particularly prior to the order. Now, you're going to hear that they filed a motion in the other case, which is in the other case that they served by formal notice two weeks ago, but the following parties were never served in the estate petition case:

David Baum, individually and as personal representative; Bruce Baum, who is David's brother; Lisa, or Liza Baum; and the Friends of the Israeli Defense Forces. You'll see in the will, as drafted, the bulk of this estate, in the terms of the will, are going to charities. One of the charities is Friends of the Israeli Defense Forces.

Rule 5.040 places the burden on the petitioner to file for proof of service showing that service is made. That's specifically set

forth in rule 5.040. You'll see, in the record, there's no proof of service because service was never made.

In the will contest case, Your Honor, my client is an indispensable party. He's the personal representative of this estate. Under Florida law he's got a duty to defend the validity of the will. In an estate case, the personal representative is always an indispensable party.

And I cited to you a number of cases standing for that proposition, including Smith v. DeParry, behind Tab 33, for the proposition that personal representatives is an indispensable party in a will contest. It makes sense they have a duty to defend the validity of the will. So because she's failed to serve, the dropping of my client as a party causes this case to be dismissed.

Now, my opponent is going to argue that you shouldn't dismiss this case, Your Honor, because, if it's dismissed, I might be time barred from re-filing a new will contest. But the law that I provided to you, Your Honor, in the notebook, there are two cases that I focused on in particular. One is Powell v. Madison County, and the other is Pixton v. William Scotsman. And in those cases the

parties had failed to serve, and the plaintiff said, "Well, Your Honor, if you dismiss my case for failure to serve, even though it's a without prejudice dismissal, I'm going to be barred from re-filing, and that would be prejudicial to me."

And the court in those cases went through the typical analysis and said, "Look, you know, this case has been pending for a long time. You haven't shown me good cause or excusable neglect for the delay, and so the fact that you may not be able to re-file your case is of no consequence at the end of the day if you don't comply with my orders and you don't comply with the rules."

And that's ultimately what Powell and Pixton say. Those cases are in your notebook, Your Honor, behind 26 and 27.

Finally, Your Honor, my opponent cites, in her response to my motion to drop parties, the case of Aguilar v. Aguilar, and that's a probate case. She cites that case for the proposition that the probate rules don't require that objections to the validity of a will be served within three months, they just have to be filed.

So, in that case, what happened in Aguilar was the defending party, the personal

representative, said, "Well, you filed your will contest timely but you didn't serve it within three months." And the court in Aguilar said, "Well, you don't have to serve -- there's nothing in the probate rule which requires you to serve within three months, or the probate statute, and so therefore I'm not going to dismiss it on that ground."

That's a very different situation that we have here where the rules of civil procedure govern -- first of all, you don't have to serve within three months, but you do have to serve within 120 days. Or even if you don't, you have to serve at least within some reasonable amount of time, and the court here has entered orders directing parties to serve petitions within time certain, and those orders were simply just violated.

And so Aguilar, although it discusses issues relating to the time of service, isn't applicable in this particular case because we're not dealing with failure to serve within three months, we're dealing with failure to serve over an extended period of time even after this court directed her to serve.

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In sum, Your Honor, in the estate case, I ask that you drop David Baum individually as personal representative, Bruce Baum, Liza Baum, Friends of the Israeli Defense Forces as parties, and I request you dismiss the amended petition on the basis that, once those parties are dropped, the case is over because the personal representative is an indispensable party.

In connection with the civil case, the following parties were not served in the civil case: David Baum, individually; Pine Ridge Plaza. The only party in that case who, when we appeared in that other case, Your Honor, was David Baum as personal representative, and that was because we needed to get a lis pendens stricken from the property, which you did strike, but that David Baum, as personal representative, appeared, but none of the parties were ever served. And so I'm asking that you drop all the parties who were never served, other than the personal representative, as parties in that separate civil case.

And, Your Honor, I have proposed orders for you on that at the conclusion of the hearing if you're interested. Thank you, Your Honor. Your Honor, if I might have one more moment, Your Honor?

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things. My client would of course tell you that Nina was estranged from her father. I shared with you some of the litigation history of Nina previously. There are all kinds of horrible things that have happened over the years that have resulted in Nina being not part of this family at all, and, ultimately, at the end of the day, what's very telling is that the charities who stand to inherit in this estate are not saying that David stole money. They're not contending that David's The rabbi that Ms. Hoffman done anything wrong. was referring to is represented by Mr. Jacoby. Jacoby stands with David in this action.

We have a will contested, a disgruntled daughter who is looking to take advantage of the estate. But worse, we have a serial litigant who abuses process. And I have stood before you, Your Honor, and I stood before you flabbergasted over the fact that I can't schedule simple hearings with her counsel. And I've had to come before you to try to get things set and I've worked with your judicial assistant to do the same.

You set deadlines in this case because we were dealing with a litigant who is being incredibly uncooperative. Notwithstanding the

deadlines which you set, she still failed to comply with them.

The case law, as it relates to dismissal for failure to serve, makes it clear that the burden is on my opponent to present evidence, evidence in the record, of good cause or excusable neglect for failing to serve process. She didn't do that. She offered you no affidavits, no evidence.

Instead, she stood before you and told a sordid tale which we just disagree with. And the charities, we disagree with. At the end of the day, Your Honor, there's been no showing as to why she should be excused from having failed to comply with your orders.

The motion, from a procedural perspective, I just want to echo what Mr. Boyes said. I contacted the clerk after speaking with Ms. Hoffman, and you might do the same, but the will contest, and you probably know this, gets filed in the estate proceeding. It's given the same case number. It's not given a separate case number relating to the will contest proceeding. It gets filed in the estate case as a petition for revocation of probate as a probate case number. She's confusing adversary proceedings under 5.025 with independent