

SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

Civil Division

Central District, Stanley Mosk Courthouse, Department 224

22STCV06081

WILLIAM B. PITT, et al. vs ANGELINA JOLIE, et al.

June 26, 2026

11:00 AM

Judge: Honorable Cindy Pánuco
Judicial Assistant: Gabriela Tovar
Courtroom Assistant: None

CSR: None
ERM: None
Deputy Sheriff: None

APPEARANCES:

For Plaintiff(s): No Appearances

For Defendant(s): No Appearances

NATURE OF PROCEEDINGS: Ruling on Submitted Matter

The Court, having taken the matter under submission on 06/17/2026 for Hearing on Motion to Quash Service of Summons for Lack of Personal Jurisdiction; --- CRS #9461, now rules as follows:

FINAL RULING

Specially Appearing Cross-Defendant Roland Venturini's Motion to Quash Service of the Summons and First Amended Cross-Complaint for lack of personal jurisdiction is GRANTED. The service of summons and First Amended Cross-Complaint on Venturini is ordered QUASHED. Venturini's alternative request to dismiss or stay on forum non conveniens grounds is MOOT.

Introduction

On February 17, 2022, Plaintiffs filed the Complaint in this Action.

On August 8, 2024, Nouvel, LLC filed its First Amended Cross-Complaint in this Action.

On September 20, 2023, Roland Venturini, filed his instant Motion to Quash service of the Summons and FACC for lack of personal jurisdiction.

On April 9, 2026, Nouvel filed its Oppositions to the Motions to Quash.

On April 9, 2026, Nouvel further filed its Motion to Seal the Declarations of Matthew A. Lesnick in support of Nouvel's Oppositions to the Motions to Quash.

On June 10, 2026, Venturini filed his Reply to the Motion to Quash.

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On June 17, 2026, the court heard oral argument, and took the matter under submission. The Court now rules as follows.

Specially Appearing Cross-Defendant Roland Venturini's Motion to Quash

Specially Appearing Cross-Defendant Roland Venturini moves to quash service of the Summons and First Amended Cross-Complaint filed by Defendant and Cross-Complainant Nouvel, LLC for lack of personal jurisdiction or, in the alternative, for an order dismissing or staying Nouvel's claims against him on forum non conveniens grounds.

A defendant may move to quash service of summons on the ground of lack of jurisdiction of the court over him or her. (Code Civ. Proc., § 418.10, subd. (a)(1).) The court may dismiss without prejudice the complaint in whole, or as to that defendant, when dismissal is made pursuant to Section 418.10. (Code Civ. Proc., § 581, subd. (h).)

Burden on Motion

"When a motion to quash is properly brought, the burden of proof is placed upon the plaintiff to establish the facts of jurisdiction by a preponderance of the evidence." (*Aquila, Inc. v. Sup. Ct.* (2007) 148 Cal.App.4th 556, 568.) When a nonresident defendant challenges personal jurisdiction the burden shifts to the plaintiff to demonstrate by a preponderance of the evidence that all necessary jurisdictional criteria are met. (*Jewish Defense Org. v. Superior Court* (1999) 72 Cal. App. 4th 1045, 1054-1055.) This burden must be met by competent evidence in affidavits and authenticated documentary evidence. (*Id.* at p. 1055.)

An unverified complaint does not serve as substantial evidence for meeting a plaintiff's burden to show personal jurisdiction in opposition to a motion to quash. (See *Sheard v. Sup. Ct.* (1974) 40 Cal.App.3d 207, 210-212.)

Personal Jurisdiction

"A court of this state may exercise jurisdiction on any basis not inconsistent with the Constitution of this state or of the United States." (Code Civ. Proc., § 410.10.) "The Due Process Clause protects an individual's liberty interest in not being subject to the binding judgments of a forum with which he has established no meaningful 'contacts, ties, or relations.'" (*Burger King Corp. v. Rudzewicz* (1985) 471 U.S. 462, 471-472.) A state court may not exercise personal jurisdiction over a party under circumstances that would offend "traditional notions of fair play and substantial justice." (*Asahi Metal Industry Co., Ltd., v. Superior Court of*

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California, Solano County(1987) 480 U.S. 102, 113.)

When a defendant moves to quash service of process on jurisdictional grounds, the plaintiff has the initial burden of demonstrating facts justifying the exercise of jurisdiction. (*Jayone Foods, Inc. v. Aekyung Industrial Co. Ltd.*(2019) 31 Cal.App.5th 543, 553.) Once facts showing minimum contacts with the forum state are established, the defendant has the burden to demonstrate the exercise of jurisdiction would be unreasonable. (*Ibid.*)"The plaintiff must provide specific evidentiary facts, through affidavits and other authenticated documents, sufficient to allow the court to independently conclude whether jurisdiction is appropriate. [Citation.] The plaintiff cannot rely on allegations in an unverified complaint or vague and conclusory assertions of ultimate facts. [Citation.]" (*Strasner v. Touchstone Wireless Repair & Logistics, LP*(2016) 5 Cal.App.5th 215, 222.)

A defendant is subject to a state's general jurisdiction if its contacts "are so continuous and systematic as to render [it] essentially at home in the forum State." (*Daimler AG v. Bauman*(2014) 571 U.S. 117, 127.) A nonresident defendant may be subject to the specific jurisdiction of the forum "if the defendant has purposefully availed himself or herself of forum benefits [citation], and the 'controversy is related to or 'arises out of' a defendant's contacts with the forum.' [Citations.]" (*Vons Companies, Inc. v. Seabest Foods, Inc.*(1996) 14 Cal.4th 434, 446.) This test does not require a "causal relationship between the defendant's in-state activity and the litigation." (*Ford Motor Co. v. Montana Eighth Judicial District Court*(2021) 141 S.Ct. 1017, 1026.) The "arise out" of standard "asks about causation," but "relate to" does not. (*Ibid.*) "[W]hen a corporation has 'continuously and deliberately exploited [a State's] market, it must reasonably anticipate being haled into [that State's] court[s] to defend actions 'based on' products causing injury there." (*Id.* at p. 1027.)

General Jurisdiction

General jurisdiction over a corporate defendant exists when the corporation's "affiliations with the State are so 'continuous and systematic' as to render it essentially at home in the forum State." (*Daimler, supra*, 571 U.S. 117, 139 [quoting *Goodyear Dunlop Tires Operations, S.A. v. Brown*(2011) 564 U.S. 915, 919].) For a corporation, the paradigmatic examples of such affiliations are the locations where the defendant is incorporated and of the defendant's principal place of business. (*Daimler, supra*, 571 U.S. 117, 137.)

Nouvel contends that Venturini is subject to general jurisdiction because he was employed by Pitt (a California resident), previously resided in California for nearly ten years, and received compensation in a bank account bearing a California address from January 2016 through July

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2016. (Lesnick Decl. Exh. F; Miranda Decl. Exh. A.) The Court is not persuaded.

It is undisputed that Venturini presently lives and works in France, where he serves as director general of Chateau Miraval. (Venturini Decl. ¶¶ 3-5.) His domicile is therefore France, not California. Venturini’s residence in California more than a decade ago, before he became a resident of France and assumed his role at Chateau Miraval, does not render him “essentially at home” in California today. Nor do his receipt of compensation into a California account during a six-month period in 2016, or his communications with persons in California, approach the “continuous and systematic” affiliations the standard requires. Such contacts do not satisfy the rigorous *Daimler* standard. Nouvel has not shown this to be an “exceptional” case in which an individual is at home somewhere other than his domicile. (*Daimler, supra*, 571 U.S. at p. 139, fn. 19.)

Accordingly, there is no general jurisdiction here.

Specific Jurisdiction

Specific jurisdiction can be exercised if: (1) the defendant has purposefully availed itself of forum benefits with respect to the matter in controversy; (2) the controversy is related to or arises out of the defendant's contacts with the forum; and (3) the assertion of jurisdiction would comport with fair play and substantial justice. (*VirtualMagic Asia, Inc. v. Fil-Cartoons, Inc.* (2002) 99 Cal.App.4th 228, 238.) Factors for purposeful availment include: (1) whether defendant directed activities at forum residents; or (2) defendant created continuing obligations with residents. (*Ibid.*)

Purposeful Availment

“If the nonresident defendant does not have substantial and systematic contacts in the forum sufficient to establish general jurisdiction, he or she still may be subject to the *specific* jurisdiction of the forum, if the defendant has purposefully availed himself or herself of forum benefits, and the ‘controversy is related to or ‘arises out of’ a defendant’s contacts with the forum.’” (*Vons Companies, Inc. v. Seabest Foods, Inc.* (1996) 14 Cal.4th 434, 446.) The purposeful availment test is only satisfied if the defendant purposefully and voluntarily directs its activities toward California so that the defendant should expect, because of the benefits it receives, to be subject to jurisdiction here based on its contacts with California. (*Snowney v. Harrah’s Entertainment, Inc.* (2005) 35 Cal.4th 1054, 1062.) Purposeful availment occurs when a nonresident defendant purposefully directs its activities at California residents, deliberately engages in significant activities here, or creates “continuing obligations” between itself and

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California residents. (*Id.* at pg. 1063.)

Each defendant's contacts with the forum state must be assessed individually. (*Calder v. Jones* (1984) 465 U.S. 783, 790; *Anglo Irish Bank Corp., PLC v. Superior Court* (2008) 165 Cal.App.4th 969, 980.) However, "[a] corporation or other business entity acts through authorized individuals, and the activities of its employees are attributed to the business entity for purposes of personal jurisdiction." (*Anglo Irish Bank*, at pp. 983-984.)

The purposeful availment inquiry focuses on the defendant's intentionality. (*Pavlovich v. Superior Court* (2002) 29 Cal.4th 262, 269.) This prong is only satisfied when the defendant purposefully and voluntarily directs his activities toward the forum so that he should expect, by virtue of the benefit he receives, to be subject to the court's jurisdiction based on his contacts with the forum. (*Id.*) The purposeful availment requirement ensures that a defendant will not be haled into a jurisdiction solely as a result of random, fortuitous or attenuated contacts, or of the unilateral activity of a third person. (*Id.*) When a defendant purposefully avails itself of the privilege of conducting activities within the forum state, it has clear notice that it is subject to suit there and can act to alleviate the risk of burdensome litigation by procuring insurance, passing the expected costs onto consumers, or, if the risks are too great, severing its connection with the state. (*Id.*) Purposeful availment requires that the defendant have performed some type of affirmative conduct which allows or promotes the transaction of business within the forum state. (*Goehring v. Superior Court* (1998) 62 Cal.App.4th 894, 907.)

Nouvel advances two theories of purposeful availment: that Venturini committed intentional torts expressly aimed at California, and that he maintained deliberate, ongoing business contacts with California. Neither carries Nouvel's burden on this record.

First, as to the "effects test," "[m]ere injury to a forum resident is not a sufficient connection to the forum." (*Walden v. Fiore* (2014) 571 U.S. 277.) The proper inquiry is whether the defendant's own conduct connects him to the forum in a meaningful way, not whether the plaintiff experienced an injury or effect there. (*Ibid.*; *David L. v. Superior Court* (2018) 29 Cal.App.5th 359, 372 [requiring a "'substantial connection with the forum State,' not just 'with persons who reside there'"].)

The conduct underlying Nouvel's claims – the alleged diversion of Chateau Miraval's assets to side projects, the alleged misappropriation of its trademarks, and the alleged shareholder deadlock at Quimicum – is alleged to have occurred in France and Luxembourg, in Venturini's asserted capacity as a director and officer of a French corporation. That Nouvel, a California LLC, allegedly felt the economic consequences of that conduct in California is

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insufficient. (*Walden*, supra, 571 U.S. at p. 290; *Axiom Foods, Inc. v. Acerchem Int'l, Inc.* (9th Cir. 2017) 874 F.3d 1064, 1069-1070 [allegation that a defendant “engaged in wrongful conduct targeted at a plaintiff whom the defendant knows to be a resident of the forum state” does not establish minimum contacts].)

Second, as to business contacts, Nouvel relies on Venturini’s 2017 travel to California, Venturini’s communications with Pitt, Jolie, and Warren Grant concerning Chateau Miraval, and Venturini’s receipt of compensation from Pitt. (Lesnick Decl. Exhs. C-G.) These contacts, individually or in combination, do not establish purposeful availment.

As to the 2017 travel, “a defendant’s transitory presence will support jurisdiction only if it was meaningful enough to ‘create a substantial connection’ with the forum State.” (*Picot v. Weston* (9th Cir. 2015) 780 F.3d 1206, 1213; see *Roman v. Liberty Univ., Inc.* (2008) 162 Cal.App.4th 670, 680-681 [single visit to California insufficient].) Nouvel’s own evidence indicates that the 2017 travel was prompted principally by a personnel issue at the estate and a dinner planned for Pitt, and Nouvel does not establish that the visit was tethered to the alleged misconduct in any meaningful way. (Lesnick Decl. Exh. G; See *In re Auto. Antitrust Cases I & II*, supra, 135 Cal.App.4th at pp. 124-125 [business meeting in California lacking a logical nexus to the alleged conspiracy did not support jurisdiction].) At oral argument, Nouvel conceded that it possessed no evidence that Venturini traveled to California for a purpose tied to the tortious allegations, during the time period it alleges the conduct occurred.

The communications likewise do not establish purposeful availment. What matters is the purpose and nature of the communications, not the mere fact that they were directed to persons located in California. (See *Hall v. LaRonde* (1997) 56 Cal.App.4th 1342, 1346-1347; *Moncrief v. Clark* (2015) 238 Cal.App.4th 1000, 1006 [purposeful availment where communications were made “for the purpose of facilitating” a transaction].) The record reflects that Venturini’s correspondence concerned the operation of a physical estate in France rather than any California-focused transaction or course of conduct. Communications concerning the business of a French estate are not converted into California contacts merely because some recipients happened to be located in California. (*David L.*, supra, 29 Cal.App.5th at p. 374 [“Simply directing conduct at a plaintiff knowing that she has significant California connections does not satisfy the minimum contacts inquiry.”].) Here too, Nouvel conceded during oral arguments that it possessed no communications about intent to travel to California, or actual travel in California, for meetings related to the alleged tortious conduct, during the relevant time period.

Nor does Venturini’s receipt of compensation from California establish purposeful availment. A nonresident “does not subject [himself] to personal jurisdiction in [California] merely by

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accepting . . . payments from California.” (*Elkman v. Nat’l States Ins. Co.* (2009) 173 Cal.App.4th 1305, 1321; see *ParaFi Digital Opportunities LP v. Egorov* (2025) 108 Cal.App.5th 124, 136-137 [“receiving payment from California investors is not sufficient to demonstrate purposeful availment” where the alleged misuse of funds occurred abroad].) Venturini was compensated for work performed in France. That Pitt remitted that compensation from California does not convert Venturini’s management of a French estate into California-directed activity.

Taken together, these contacts do not create the requisite substantial connection with California. (*Sher v. Johnson* (9th Cir. 1990) 911 F.2d 1357, 1362-1363.)

Accordingly, Nouvel has not carried its burden of establishing purposeful availment by a preponderance of the evidence. The Court need not reach the issue of Relatedness. Specially Appearing Cross-Defendant Roland Venturini’s Motion to Quash is GRANTED.

Conclusion

Specially Appearing Cross-Defendant Roland Venturini’s Motion to Quash Service of the Summons and First Amended Cross-Complaint for lack of personal jurisdiction is GRANTED. The service of summons and First Amended Cross-Complaint on Venturini is ordered QUASHED. Venturini’s alternative request to dismiss or stay on forum non conveniens grounds is MOOT.

Moving party to give notice.

Certificate of Service is attached.