

THE STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA  
In the Court of Appeals

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APPEAL FROM RICHLAND COUNTY  
Court of Common Pleas

Alison Renee Lee, Circuit Court Judge

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Appellate Case No.: 2013-000717  
Case No: 2011-CP-40-08373

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Joseph D. McMaster, .....Appellant,

v.

John H. Dewitt, M.D., and Carolina Psychiatric Services, P.A., ..... Respondents.

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BRIEF OF RESPONDENT  
CAROLINA PSYCHIATRIC SERVICES, P.A.

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SC Court of Appeals

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## STATEMENT OF ISSUES ON APPEAL

- I. IS CAROLINA PSYCHIATRIC SERVICES, P.A. ENTITLED TO SUMMARY JUDGMENT FOR ALL OF THE REASONS STATED BY RESPONDENT DEWITT IN HIS INITIAL BRIEF, WHICH ARE INCORPORATED HEREIN BY REFERENCE?
2. DID CAROLINA PSYCHIATRIC SERVICES, P.A. PROPERLY RECEIVE SUMMARY JUDGMENT BECAUSE IT HAS NOT WAIVED ITS STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS DEFENSE?
3. DID CAROLINA PSYCHIATRIC SERVICES, P.A. PROPERLY RECEIVE SUMMARY JUDGMENT BECAUSE ITS AGENT, DR. DEWITT, RECEIVED SUMMARY JUDGMENT?

## STATEMENT OF THE CASE

On May 13, 2008, attorney Joe McMaster had an Adderall induced psychosis for which he was admitted to Palmetto Health Baptist Hospital. (R. p. 56, lines 3-6) He remained hospitalized until May 28, 2008. (*Id.*, lines 7-9) Mr. McMaster had been a patient of Dr. John DeWitt, psychiatrist, since 1993. According to Mr. McMaster, during the May hospitalization, Dr. DeWitt told Mr. McMaster that his psychosis was Adderall induced. After the hospitalization, Dr. DeWitt stopped prescribing Adderall to Mr. McMaster. (R. pp. 80-83)

On June 16, 2011, more than three years later, Mr. McMaster filed a notice of intent to sue Dr. DeWitt, alleging that his psychosis was caused by Dr. DeWitt over-prescribing Adderall. (R. pp. 10-11) Mr. McMaster knew that he had a medication induced psychosis when he was hospitalized in May of 2008. (R. pp. 80-83) Since Mr. McMaster sued more than three years after his hospitalization and after the statute of limitations expired, Dr. DeWitt moved for summary judgment on November 20, 2012. (R. pp. 22-23) Dr. DeWitt's employer, Carolina Psychiatric Services, moved for summary judgment on the same grounds on November 28, 2012. (R. pp. 24-25) Two days before the motion hearing was scheduled, Mr. McMaster submitted an affidavit contradicting his sworn deposition testimony.

Judge Alison Renee Lee heard arguments on the motions on December 13, 2012, and entered an order granting summary judgment for both Defendants on February 21,

2013. (R. pp. 4-8) Judge Lee found “no genuine issue of material fact about the date [Mr. McMaster] was on notice of his claim.” (R. p. 7). She relied upon:

- The pleadings (R. pp. 12-21);
- Deposition excerpts from Mr. McMaster, pp. 34-35, 46-47, 53-54 (R. pp. 26-36, 80-83, 86-87);
- Deposition excerpts from Dr. Dave Davis, pp. 35-36 (R. pp. 29-30);
- An affidavit by Mr. McMaster which includes a discharge summary from Palmetto Health Baptist dated 7/2/2008 – 7/27/2008 and a discharge summary from Palmetto Health Baptist dated 9/25/2008 – 12/2/2008 (R. pp. 40-42);
- A discharge summary from Palmetto Health Baptist dated 5/13/2008 – 5/28/2008 (R. p. 111);
- Hospital records dated 6/25/2008 – 7/10/2008 (R. pp. 117-392);
- A detention order request from Columbia Mental Health dated 5/11/2008 (R. p. 102);
- Progress notes from Palmetto Health Richland dated 5/13/2008 and 5/17/2008 (R. pp. 104-105); and
- An exam for emergency admission at Palmetto Health Richland dated 5/13/2008 (R. pp. 109-110).

Judge Lee disregarded Mr. McMaster's affidavit which contradicted his deposition testimony as a sham affidavit. In addition, Judge Lee determined that tolling due to insanity under South Carolina Code Section 15-3-545(D) was not available to Mr. McMaster. (R. p. 6) She entered summary judgment for the Defendants finding that the Complaint was barred by the statute of limitations. (R. p. 8)

Mr. McMaster filed a motion for reconsideration on March 5, 2013, which was denied by Judge Lee on March 11, 2013. (R. p. 9) Mr. McMaster served his notice of appeal on March 28, 2013.

## STATEMENT OF THE FACTS

Dr. John DeWitt is a psychiatrist who treated Attorney Joe McMaster. Dr. DeWitt prescribed Mr. McMaster Adderall for the treatment of Adult Attention Deficit Disorder. On May 13, 2008, Mr. McMaster was involuntarily committed to Palmetto Health Baptist Hospital. He remained in the hospital until May 28, 2008, when he was discharged in good health. (R. p. 112) According to Mr. McMaster, Dr. DeWitt informed him that the hospitalization was a result of Adderall induced psychosis and ceased prescribing the medication. Mr. McMaster was admitted to the hospital about one month later on June 25, 2008, for paranoia. (R. p. 4)

Mr. McMaster's Notice of Intent and Complaint does not mention the May 2008 hospitalization. (R. p. 6; p. 13, ¶10) However, he testified in his deposition that he knew his May 2008 psychosis was Adderall induced. (R. p. 5; pp. 80-83).

## ARGUMENT

### **I. CAROLINA PSYCHIATRIC SERVICES, P.A. IS ENTITLED TO SUMMARY JUDGMENT FOR ALL OF THE REASONS STATED BY RESPONDENT DEWITT IN HIS INITIAL BRIEF, WHICH ARE INCORPORATED HEREIN BY REFERENCE.**

Carolina Psychiatric Services, P.A. includes and incorporates, by reference, all of the arguments asserted by Respondent DeWitt in his Initial Brief. (Initial Br. of Resp't, pp. 4-15)

### **II. CAROLINA PSYCHIATRIC SERVICES, P.A. PROPERLY RECEIVED SUMMARY JUDGMENT BECAUSE IT HAS NOT WAIVED ITS STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS DEFENSE.**

Mr. McMaster argues, per Rule 8 of the South Carolina Rules of Civil Procedure and *Davie v. Atkinson*, 281 S.C. 102, 313 S.E.2d 648 (Ct. App. 1984), that Carolina Psychiatric Services, P.A. did not plead the statute of limitations defense in its answer and thus has waived this affirmative defense. This argument is valid, but is not a complete statement of the law. In *Austin v. Conway Hospital, Inc.*, the South Carolina Court of Appeals took a step further and held that *Davie* meant only that "the statute of limitations must be pleaded *at some point*." 292 S.C. 334, 337, 356 S.E.2d 153, 155 (1987) (emphasis added). The court in *Austin* further cited *Sauls-Baker Co. v. Atlantic C.L. R. Co.*, 109 S.C. 285, 969 S.E. 118 (1918), as support for this holding. In *Sauls-Baker Co.* the defendant was allowed to amend its pleadings to include a statute of limitations defense *after* the first trial and appeal, but before the second trial. 109 S.C. 285, 969 S.E. 118. Under this precedent, it is clear that Carolina Psychiatric Services, P.A. has not waived the statute of limitations as an affirmative defense. Furthermore, Carolina Psychiatric Services, P.A. timely made its Motion for Summary Judgment after

Mr. McMaster's deposition in which he stated he was aware upon admission to the hospital in May 2008 that his hospitalization was medicine-induced. The lower court properly granted summary judgment in its favor.

**III. CAROLINA PSYCHIATRIC SERVICES, P.A. PROPERLY RECEIVED SUMMARY JUDGMENT BECAUSE ITS AGENT, DR. DEWITT, RECEIVED SUMMARY JUDGMENT.**

Even if this Court finds that Carolina Psychiatric Services, P.A. waived its statute of limitations defense, the lower court nonetheless still properly granted Carolina Psychiatric Services, P.A. summary judgment because it properly granted Dr. DeWitt summary judgment.

If Dr. DeWitt is entitled to summary judgment on the statute of limitations issues, then so is Carolina Psychiatric Services, P.A. Mr. McMaster admits in both his Notice of Intent to File Suit and his Complaint that Dr. DeWitt was an employee of Carolina Psychiatric Services, P.A. (R. pp. 10-11; p. 12, ¶ 5) Mr. McMaster also asserts in both his Complaint that Carolina Psychiatric Services, P.A. is liable for malpractice through the actions of Dr. DeWitt. (R. p. 12, ¶ 6) Also, Mr. McMaster has not set forth in his pleadings or through discovery that Carolina Psychiatric Services, P.A. is liable to Mr. McMaster independent of any alleged negligence by Dr. DeWitt. In its Answer, Carolina Psychiatric Services, P.A. admits Dr. DeWitt was its employee. As such, there is no genuine issue of material fact as to the employee/employer relationship between Carolina Psychiatric Services, P.A. and Dr. DeWitt; Carolina Psychiatric Services, P.A. is only liable to Mr. McMaster if Dr. DeWitt is found liable. Because the lower court found

complete summary judgment in favor of Dr. DeWitt, Carolina Psychiatric Services, P.A.  
is therefore relieved of any liability to Mr. McMaster.

**CONCLUSION**

For the reasons stated herein, Respondents urge this Court to affirm Judge Lee's order for summary judgment.

TURNER, PADGET, GRAHAM & LANEY, P.A.

November 4, 2013

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CERTIFICATE OF COUNSEL

The undersigned certifies that the BRIEF OF RESPONDENT CAROLINA PSYCHIATRIC SERVICES, P.A. complies with Rule 211(b), SCACR, as well as the South Carolina Supreme Court's Order dated August 13, 2007.

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PROOF OF SERVICE

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I certify this 4th day of November 2013 that I have served copies of the BRIEF OF RESPONDENT CAROLINA PSYCHIATRIC SERVICES, P.A. and CERTIFICATE OF COUNSEL upon other counsel of record, by mailing same, postage prepaid in the United States mail, addressed to the following:

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