

FIRST DIVISION

[G.R. No. 146197, September 27, 2005]

SECURITY BANK CORPORATION (FORMERLY SECURITY BANK AND TRUST COMPANY), PETITIONER, VS. INDIANA AEROSPACE UNIVERSITY, THE BRANCH SHERIFF, REGIONAL TRIAL COURT OF MUNTINLUPA CITY, BRANCH 256, AND THE REGISTER OF DEEDS OF MAKATI CITY, RESPONDENTS.

DECISION

CARPIO, J.:

The Case

Before this Court is a petition for review^[1] assailing the 22 February 2000 and 29 November 2000 Resolutions^[2] of the Court of Appeals in CA-G.R. SP No. 56534. The Court of Appeals denied the petition of Security Bank and Trust Company ("Security Bank") for failure to comply with Section 3, Rule 46 of the 1997 Rules of Civil Procedure as amended by Supreme Court Circular No. 39-98.^[3]

The Antecedent Facts

On 20 September 1996, Security Bank as mortgagee and Innovatech Development and Management Corporation ("Innovatech") as mortgagor entered into a real estate mortgage. Innovatech secured its P25,000,000 loan from Security Bank with a mortgage on fourteen condominium units located at Tito Jovy Tower, Buencamino St., Alabang, Muntinlupa City with Condominium Certificates of Title No. 41863, 41864, 41865, 41866, 41867, 41868, 41869, 41870, 41871, 41872, 41873, 41875, 41876 and 41877 of the Register of Deeds of Makati City.

In a letter^[4] dated 1 July 1997, Inigo A. Nebrida and Librada C. Nebrida, Innovatech's Vice-President and Treasurer, respectively, informed Security Bank that Innovatech sold the fourteen condominium units to Indiana Aerospace University ("Indiana") of Mactan, Cebu. Innovatech provided Security Bank with copies of the Deed of Sale with Assumption of Mortgage^[5] it made with Indiana as well as Indiana's loan application with Bank of Southeast Asia for P69,000,000. According to Innovatech, part of the proceeds of Indiana's loan with the Bank of Southeast Asia would be used to pay the loan with Security Bank.

The loan with Security Bank matured on 19 September 1997 without payment from either Innovatech or Indiana. Consequently, Security Bank filed a petition for notarial foreclosure of the fourteen condominium units under Act No. 3135,^[6] as amended by Act No. 4118. The public auction was held on 29 January 1998, at 10:00 a.m., at the City Hall of Muntinlupa City. During the public auction, the condominium units were sold for P32,839,290 to Security Bank as the only and

highest bidder.

On 25 February 1998, Innovatech filed an action against Security Bank for Annulment of Extrajudicial Foreclosure Sale and Certificate of Sale, Reconveyance of Properties and Damages with Prayer for Temporary Restraining Order and Writ of Preliminary Injunction. On 26 March 1998, the Regional Trial Court of Muntinlupa City, Branch 256 ("trial court") granted the Writ of Preliminary Injunction in favor of Innovatech.

The 26 March 1998 Order became the subject of a petition for certiorari docketed as CA-G.R. SP No. 49326 filed by Security Bank before the Court of Appeals. In its Decision^[7] promulgated on 24 August 1999,^[8] the Court of Appeals dismissed Security Bank's petition for lack of merit. However, in an Amended Decision promulgated on 8 June 2000,^[9] the Court of Appeals set aside its 24 August 1999 Decision and nullified the writ of preliminary injunction issued by the trial court. Innovatech filed a motion for reconsideration of the Amended Decision but the Court of Appeals denied the motion in its Resolution of 19 February 2002.^[10] Innovatech filed a petition, docketed as G.R. No. 152157, before this Court. This Court denied the petition in its 10 April 2002 Minute Resolution and denied with finality Innovatech's motion for reconsideration on 6 September 2002.

Meanwhile, on 22 June 1998, Indiana filed a Complaint-in-Intervention with prayer for the issuance of Temporary Restraining Order and/or Preliminary Prohibitory and Mandatory Injunction.

On 1 February 1999, the trial court issued an Order^[11] the dispositive portion of which reads:

WHEREFORE, the Writ of Preliminary Mandatory Injunction is GRANTED. Subject to the filing of a bond in the amount of P1,000,000.00 by Plaintiff-Intervenor to pay the damages which Defendant may sustain by reason of the issuance of the Writ of Preliminary Mandatory Injunction, if this Court should finally decide that Plaintiff-Intervenor is not entitled thereto, the Office of the Registry of Deeds of Makati City and any person acting in its behalf, are hereby directed to cancel the registration and annotation of the Certificate of Sale dated January 29, 1998 at the back of Condominium Certificates of Title [N]os. 41863, 41864, 41865, 41866, 41867, 41868, 41869, 41870, 41871, 41872, 41873, 41875, 41876 and 41877 which was inscribed thereon on February 3, 1998 and known as Entry [N]o. 1454/CCT 41863. And since the regularity of the extrajudicial foreclosure proceedings conducted by the Notary Public in connection with the condominium units covered by the aforementioned condominium certificates of title is one of the issues in this case, the Office of the Registry of Deeds and any person acting in its behalf are likewise enjoined and prohibited from subsequently undertaking the registration and annotation of the Certificate of Sale dated January 29, 1998 at the back of Condominium Certificates of Title [N]os. 41863, 41864, 41865, 41866, 41867, 41868, 41869, 41870, 41871, 41872, 41873, 41875, 41876 and 41877 until further order from this Court and trial on the merits of the instant case.

Set this case for hearing on the merits on February 12 and 24, 1999 both at 9:30 a.m.

SO ORDERED.^[12]

Security Bank moved for reconsideration of the Order. In its Order^[13] of 3 November 1999, the trial court denied Security Bank's motion for lack of merit.

Security Bank went to the Court of Appeals for relief.

The Resolutions of the Court of Appeals

In its assailed Resolution of 22 February 2000,^[14] the Court of Appeals denied due course to Security Bank's petition. The Court of Appeals ruled:

x x x However, the petition does not indicate the dates when petitioner received a copy of the Order dated 01 February 1999 and when the Motion for Reconsideration was filed in violation of Section 3, Rule 46 of the 1997 Rules of Civil Procedure **as amended by Circular 39-98** (Emphasis supplied) which provides:

"Sec. 3. Contents and filing of petition; effect of non-compliance with requirements. – x x x In actions filed under Rule 65, the petition shall further indicate the material dates showing when notice of the judgment or final order or resolution subject thereof was received, when a motion for new trial or reconsideration, if any, was filed and when notice of the denial thereof was received. x x x

The failure of the petitioner to comply with any of the foregoing requirements shall be sufficient ground for the dismissal of the petition."

WHEREFORE, in view of the foregoing, the petition is hereby **DENIED DUE COURSE** and consequently **DISMISSED**.

SO ORDERED.^[15]

Security Bank filed a motion for reconsideration. However, in its Resolution of 29 November 2000,^[16] the Court of Appeals denied Security Bank's motion.

Hence, the recourse to this Court.

The Issue

The sole issue for resolution is whether the Court of Appeals erred in dismissing Security Bank's petition on mere technicality despite the bank's substantial compliance with Section 3, Rule 46 of the 1997 Rules of Civil Procedure as amended by Circular No. 39-98.

Security Bank asserts that the date of filing of the motion for reconsideration appears in the body of the petition. Security Bank likewise contends that the certified true copy of the 1 February 1999 Order attached to the petition clearly shows the stamped date of receipt of the Order. Hence, Security Bank insists that