

THIRD DIVISION

[G.R. No. 156596, August 24, 2007]

**ADELAIDA INFANTE, PETITIONER, VS. ARAN BUILDERS, INC.,
RESPONDENT.***

DECISION

AUSTRIA-MARTINEZ, J.:

This resolves the Petition for Review on *Certiorari* under Rule 45 of the Rules of Court, seeking the reversal of the Decision^[1] of the Court of Appeals (CA) promulgated on August 12, 2002, which upheld the Order dated September 4, 2001, issued by the Regional Trial Court of Muntinlupa City (RTC).

The undisputed facts and issues raised in the lower courts are accurately summarized by the CA as follows:

Before the Regional Trial Court of Muntinlupa City (or "Muntinlupa RTC"; Branch 276), presided over by Hon. Norma C. Perello (or "respondent judge"), was an action for revival of judgment filed on June 6, 2001 by Aran Builders, Inc. (or "private respondent") against Adelaida Infante (or "petitioner"), docketed as Civil Case No. 01-164.

The judgment sought to be revived was rendered by the Regional Trial Court of Makati City (or "Makati RTC"; Branch 60) in an action for specific performance and damages, docketed as Civil Case No. 15563.

The Makati RTC judgment, which became final and executory on November 16, 1994, decreed as follows:

26. WHEREFORE, the Court hereby renders judgment as follows:

26.1 The defendant ADELAIDA B. INFANTE is ordered to do the following within thirty (30) days from finality hereof:

26.1.1. To deliver to the plaintiff ARAN BUILDERS, INC. the following: (a) the complete plans (lot plan, location map and vicinity map); (b) Irrevocable Power of Attorney; (c) Real Estate Tax clearance; (d) tax receipts; (e) proof of up to date payment of Subdivision Association dues referred to in the "CONTRACT TO SELL" dated November 10, 1986 (Exh. A or Exh. 1);

26.1.2. To execute the deed of sale of Lot No. 11, Block 9, Phase 3-A1, Ayala Alabang Subdivision covered by

TCT No. 114015 for P500,000.00 in favor of the plaintiff;

26.1.3. To pay the capital gains tax, documentary stamp taxes and other taxes which the Bureau of Internal Revenue may assess in connection with the sale mentioned in the preceding paragraph and to submit to the plaintiff proof of such payment;

26.1.4. To secure the written conformity of AYALA CORPORATION to the said sale and to give such written conformity to the plaintiff;

26.1.5. To register the deed of sale with the Registry of Deeds and deliver to AYALA CORPORATION the certificate of title issued in the name of plaintiff pursuant to such registration;

26.2 Upon the compliance of the defendant with the preceding directives, the plaintiff must immediately pay to the defendant the sum of P321,918.25;

26.3 The defendant is ordered to pay plaintiff P10,000.00 as attorney's fees;

26.4 The Complaint for moral and exemplary damages is DISMISSED;

26.5 The COUNTERCLAIM is DISMISSED; and

26.6 Cost is taxed against the defendant.

Petitioner filed a motion to dismiss the action (for revival of judgment) on the grounds that the Muntinlupa RTC has no jurisdiction over the persons of the parties and that venue was improperly laid. Private respondent opposed the motion.

On September 4, 2001, the Muntinlupa RTC issued an order which reads:

The MOTION TO DISMISS is denied.

Admittedly, the Decision was rendered by the Makati Regional Trial Court, but it must be emphasized that at that time there was still no Regional Trial Court in Muntinlupa City, then under the territorial jurisdiction of the Makati Courts, so that cases from this City were tried and heard at Makati City. With the creation of the Regional Trial Courts of Muntinlupa City, matters involving properties located in this City, and cases involving Muntinlupa City residents were all ordered to be litigated before these Courts.

The case at bar is a revival of a judgment which declared the plaintiff as the owner of a parcel of land located in Muntinlupa

City. It is this judgment which is sought to be enforced thru this action which necessarily involves the interest, possession, title, and ownership of the parcel of land located in Muntinlupa city and adjudged to Plaintiff. It goes without saying that the complaint should be filed in the latter City where the property is located, as there are now Regional Trial Courts hereat.

Defendant may answer the complaint within the remaining period, but no less than five (5) days, otherwise a default judgment might be taken against her.

It is SO ORDERED.

Her motion for reconsideration having been denied per order dated September 28, 2001, petitioner came to this Court [CA] via the instant special civil action for certiorari. She ascribes grave abuse of discretion amounting to lack or excess of jurisdiction on the part of respondent judge for "erroneously holding that Civil Case No. 01-164 is a revival of judgment which declared private respondent as the owner of a parcel of land located in Muntinlupa City and (that) the judgment rendered by the (Makati RTC) in Civil Case No. 15563 sought to be enforced necessarily involves the interest, possession, title and ownership of the parcel of land located in Muntinlupa City."

Petitioner asserts that the complaint for specific performance and damages before the Makati RTC is a personal action and, therefore, the suit to revive the judgment therein is also personal in nature; and that, consequently, the venue of the action for revival of judgment is either Makati City or Parañaque City where private respondent and petitioner respectively reside, at the election of private respondent.

On the other hand, private respondent maintains that the subject action for revival judgment is "quasi in rem because it involves and affects vested or adjudged right on a real property"; and that, consequently, venue lies in Muntinlupa City where the property is situated.^[2]

On August 12, 2002, the CA promulgated its Decision ruling in favor of herein private respondent. The CA held that since the judgment sought to be revived was rendered in an action involving title to or possession of real property, or interest therein, the action for revival of judgment is then an action *in rem* which should be filed with the Regional Trial Court of the place where the real property is located. Petitioner moved for reconsideration of the CA Decision but the motion was denied per Resolution dated January 7, 2003.

Hence, herein petition. Petitioner claims that the CA erred in finding that the complaint for revival of judgment is an action *in rem* which was correctly filed with the RTC of the place where the disputed real property is located.

The petition is unmeritorious.

Petitioner insists that the action for revival of judgment is an action *in personam*; therefore, the complaint should be filed with the RTC of the place where either