

Title: Amoroso & Constantino vs. Vantage Drilling International et al.

Facts:

Ronnie Adriano R. Amoroso and Vicente R. Constantino, Jr., the petitioners, allege they were employed by Vantage International Payroll Company Pte. Ltd (Vantage Payroll) and Vantage International Management Co. Pte. Ltd (Vantage Management) respectively, foreign corporations organized under Singaporean laws.

- Employment and Conditions:** Amoroso and Constantino were hired as administrators and deployed to West Africa. They worked from July 2011 to September 2013 without receiving wages or overtime pay for an aggregate of 252 days. They claimed a working routine of 42 consecutive days for at least 12 hours per day followed by 21 days off.
- Dismissal:** On December 11, 2015, Amoroso and Constantino were verbally notified of their terminations due to redundancy, followed by a formal email. They contested this on the grounds of non-existent redundancy and also demanded a redundancy package.
- Overtime Pay Demand:** On December 20, 2015, Amoroso demanded pay for overtime hours rendered from September 2011 to September 2013.
- Disciplinary Hearing and Dismissal:** Amoroso was informed of his suspension and repatriation on December 22, 2015; a disciplinary hearing was conducted on January 7, 2016, post which he was dismissed for gross misconduct.

Amoroso and Constantino filed a complaint on December 13, 2016, against numerous entities within the Vantage Group and Supply Oilfield Services, Inc., seeking solidary liability for illegal dismissal, nonpayment of wage, separation pay, and damages.

Procedural Posture:

- Labor Arbiter:** The complaint was dismissed citing no jurisdiction over Vantage Payroll, which lacked legal presence in the Philippines.
- NLRC:** An appeal to the NLRC resulted in agreement with the Labor Arbiter, maintaining that without jurisdiction over Vantage Payroll, the complaint could not proceed.
- Court of Appeals:** Amoroso and Constantino's petition for certiorari was dismissed for lack of merit, affirming prior decisions.
- Supreme Court:** Amoroso and Constantino filed a Petition for Review on Certiorari

challenging the decisions of lower tribunals, focusing on jurisdiction and the due process issues surrounding their employers.

****Issues:****

1. Whether jurisdiction was effectively acquired over the respondents.
2. Whether the doctrine of piercing the corporate veil can apply without prior jurisdiction.
3. The appropriateness of consolidating the liabilities of the Vantage Group affiliates.

****Court's Decision:****

The Supreme Court held that no jurisdiction was acquired over Vantage Payroll, Vantage Management, and Vantage International as summons were only served through the resident agent of Vantage Company, and there was no evidence submitted to prove that the other respondents conducted business in the Philippines. Therefore, the Labor Arbiter or any Philippine tribunal could not validly have acquired such jurisdiction requisite for applying the piercing doctrine. This rendered the decisions of not moving forward with the trial regarding merits a correct application of ensuring proper jurisdictional procedures.

****Doctrine:****

The Court reinforced that the principle of piercing the corporate veil can only apply when jurisdiction over the entity is properly established. The jurisdictional deficiency is not resolved merely by service of summons on one entity's representative when others are implicated.

****Class Notes:****

- ****Piercing the Corporate Veil****: This doctrine is conditional upon legal jurisdiction and is used to prevent wrongful use of corporate structures. Jurisdiction must be clear before corporate separateness can be ignored.
- ****Jurisdiction Principles****: Ensure notice and opportunity to be heard through proper service of summons.
- ****Personal Jurisdiction****: In labor and other disputes, presence or business conduct in the jurisdiction matters.

****Historical Background:****

The case underscores critical aspects of jurisdiction related to foreign corporations under Philippine law and illustrates complexities when national boundaries intersect with employment law. This reflects broader global trends as businesses expand offshore operations. The decision is steeped in traditional doctrines of corporate law emphasizing

both sovereignty and procedural fairness.