

Expert Analysis

SECOND CIRCUIT REVIEW

Subject-Matter Jurisdiction

In *Behrens v. JPMorgan Chase Bank N.A.*, — F.4th —, 2024 WL 1080026 (2d Cir. Mar. 13, 2024), the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit addressed a question of first impression in the circuit: whether a district court is required to exercise subject-matter jurisdiction where it exists, even if it is invoked belatedly.

In a unanimous opinion authored by Circuit Judge Dennis Jacobs and joined by Circuit Judges Richard C. Wesley and Beth Robinson, the Second Circuit agreed with the district court that a party may forfeit subject-matter jurisdiction by failing to invoke it timely even though lack of subject-matter jurisdiction can be raised at any point in a proceeding.

In so holding, the Second Circuit joined three sister circuits—the U.S. Courts of Appeals for the First Circuit, Fifth Circuit and Tenth Circuit—which have also upheld this “one-way” view of the jurisdictional inquiry. The Second Circuit’s decision clarifies that it is incumbent on litigants to ensure that they do not forfeit any bases for subject-matter jurisdiction and to proactively preserve such arguments.

The District Court’s Decision

The plaintiffs are five former customers of Peregrine Financial Group Inc. (Peregrine), a defunct futures commission merchant. Plaintiffs invested in future and options contracts through Peregrine, but during the subprime mortgage crisis, they allegedly lost their entire investments.

In 2009, they pursued arbitration with the National Futures Association, but did not recover any damages. Then, in 2012, Peregrine’s CEO, Russell Wasendorf Sr., left a confession note after attempting suicide. In the note, Wasendorf confessed that he had embezzled from

MARTIN FLUMENBAUM and BRAD S. KARP are litigation partners at Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison, specializing in complex commercial and white-collar defense litigation. Brad is the Chairman of Paul, Weiss. KRISTINA A. BUNTING, a litigation associate at the firm, assisted in the preparation of this column.



By **Martin Flumenbaum**



And **Brad S. Karp**

Peregrine’s customer accounts and misappropriated some \$200 million for his personal use. The confession prompted a criminal prosecution, Peregrine’s bankruptcy and multiple class-action lawsuits; the plaintiffs tried to participate in some of these actions but were not able to recover any money.

In 2016, the plaintiffs filed suit against defendants in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York, “sketch[ing] a theory of harm that attempted to connect

Judge Vernon S. Broderick dismissed the federal claims as untimely with prejudice and declined to exercise supplemental jurisdiction over the remaining state-law claims.

their prior losses in 2008 with Wasendorf’s confession in 2012.” The plaintiffs alleged that their losses were caused by a massive conspiracy in which some or all of the defendants conspired to permit Wasendorf to steal customer funds from segregated accounts held by Peregrine. The plaintiffs alleged that Defendants had violated the Commodity Exchange Act and Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act (RICO) and also asserted state-law tort claims.

On March 31, 2019, Judge Vernon S. Broderick dismissed the federal claims as untimely with prejudice and declined to exercise supplemental jurisdiction over the remaining state-law claims. Thus, the state-law claims were dismissed without prejudice. With respect to one of the defendants, the district court separately dismissed all claims against it pursu-

ant to an enforceable arbitration agreement.

Over a month later, a number of defendants moved for reconsideration of the district court’s decision, arguing for the first time that the district court was obligated to exercise subject-matter jurisdiction over the plaintiffs’ state-law claims pursuant to CAFA. It was undisputed that the motions were filed after the 14-day deadline for such motions under the local rules. The defendants argued that the court should nevertheless assess their arguments because the court was already considering the plaintiffs’ timely motion for reconsideration so it would be “efficient and judicially proper” for the court to consider other grounds for reconsideration.

The district court denied the defendants’ motion, holding that there was “no legal basis for, and it would be improper to consider” the Defendants’ untimely motions and that “doing so would contravene principles of ensur[ing] the finality of decisions.” The district court also rejected Defendants’ argument that subject-matter jurisdiction questions “are always ripe,” distinguishing between objecting to a federal court’s exercise of jurisdiction (which the district court understood a party could do at any stage of the litigation), and invoking the court’s jurisdiction (which the district court held could be forfeited). The defendants appealed the district court’s decision.

The Second Circuit’s Opinion

The Second Circuit considered “only the question whether the [defendants] could require the district court to exercise subject-matter jurisdiction belatedly, just as parties can successfully object to a court’s lack of jurisdiction” at any time. Recognizing that the Second Circuit had “yet to answer this question in a majority opinion,” the court held that “a federal court’s obligation to decide and exercise jurisdiction is not reciprocal”; that is, “while federal courts must ensure that they do not lack subject-matter jurisdiction, even if the parties fail to identify any jurisdictional defect, there is no corresponding obliga-

» Page 8

PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

Avoiding Conflicts With Prospective Clients

It is the rare lawyer who is not delighted to be approached about a new potential representation. All that developing a specialty and gaining experience has paid off! The lawyer of course needs to do a conflicts check, but, once that is cleared, what is to stop the lawyer from jumping right in and getting as much information as possible to demonstrate to the potential client that the lawyer is the right person for the engagement? In reality, the lawyer should slow down and take precautions to ensure that not only the lawyer but the lawyer’s entire firm are not disqualified.

NY Rule of Professional Conduct 1.18 (Duties to Prospective Clients) (RPC 1.18) lays out the ground rules for avoiding disqualification. The American Bar Association Standing Committee on Ethics and Professional Responsibility (the Committee) recently addressed the issue in Formal Opinion 510 (“Avoiding the Imputation of a Conflict of Interest When a Law Firm is Adverse to One of its Lawyer’s Prospective Clients” (ABA Op 510, or the Opinion). Although the Opinion reviews the issue through the lens of ABA Model Rule 1.18 (Duties to Prospective Client) (Model Rule 1.18), the sections of the Model Rule discussed in ABA Op. 510 are similar, and in part, identical to, those in RPC 1.18.

This article will discuss the points raised in ABA Op. 510. RPC 1.18 and the Opinion should be read in their entirety for a better understanding of the nuances (for an overview of how New York ethics committees and courts have treated RPC 1.18, see R. Simon and N. Hyland, Simon’s New York Rules of Professional Conduct S. 1.18).

What Is a ‘Prospective’ Client?

With one exception in RPC 1.18, the Model Rule and NY definitions of a “prospective client” are identical: “A person who consults with a lawyer about the possibility of forming a client-lawyer relationship with respect to a matter is a prospective client.” Model Rule 1.18(a); RPC 1.18(a) (NY RPC



By **Anthony E. Davis**



And **Janis M. Meyer**

1.18(a) begins with “Except as provided in Rule 1.18(e).” Rule 1.18(e) does not appear in the Model Rule, but is significant and will be discussed later in this article). In other words, if a lawyer speaks or otherwise communicates with someone concerning a potential representation, that person becomes a “prospective client.”

What are the consequences? First, Model Rule 1.18(b) and RPC 1.18(b) each provide that “[e]ven when no client-lawyer representation ensues, a lawyer who

If a lawyer speaks or otherwise communicates with someone concerning a potential representation, that person becomes a “prospective client.”

has learned information from a prospective client shall not use or reveal that information, except as Rule 1.9 would permit with respect to information of a former client” (emphasis added).

We are cautioned that a lawyer must be careful with respect to how much information should be obtained in speaking to a prospective client or risk disqualification in a future matter adverse to the prospective client if the lawyer obtains “disqualifying information.” “Disqualifying information” may be “views on potential resolution options, personal accounts of relevant events, sensitive personal information, and strategies.” ABA Op. 510 (citing ABA Formal Opinion 492). The disqualification may be imputed to the lawyer’s entire firm. Model Rule 1.18(c); RPC 1.18(c). (Model Rule 1.18 (c) and RPC 1.18 (c) each provide: “A lawyer subject to paragraph (b) shall not represent a client with interests

materially adverse to those of a prospective client in the same or a substantially related matter if the lawyer received information from the prospective client that could be significantly harmful to that person in the matter, except as provided in paragraph (d)” (emphasis added)).

The focus of ABA Op 510 is on the question of imputation where the lawyer has obtained information that could be significantly harmful to the client if used adversely, specifically Model Rule 1.18(d) (2), which provides in relevant part: “[w]hen the lawyer has received disqualifying information ... representation is permissible if: (2) the lawyer who received the information took reasonable measures to avoid exposure to more disqualifying information than was reasonably necessary to determine whether to represent the prospective client...” (the relevant provision of RPC 1.18(d)(2) is the same).

What Information Is Reasonably Necessary?

The Opinion reviews the categories of information that the Committee deems “reasonably necessary” for a lawyer to determine whether to represent the prospective client, noting that the information a lawyer seeks may relate in part to professional responsibilities and in part to business considerations.

For example, the lawyer must determine whether the representation would present the lawyer with a conflict, whether the lawyer can represent the prospective client competently, and whether the prospective client seeks to use the lawyer’s services to commit a crime, noting obligations under Rules 1.1, 1.2(d), 1.7, and 1.16(a). The Opinion accepts that this is necessary information. There may also be firm policies, e.g., prohibiting contingency cases, that the lawyer would need to identify in determining whether the lawyer can take on the matter.

The Committee suggests that there is other information that the lawyer may seek that may not be “reasonably necessary” to determine whether to take on the representation. Included in that category are information relating to the expense of handling the matter, and details the lawyer

» Page 8

BONDS

Contact us by phone or email at info@blaikiegroupp.com

Express Solutions Expressly for Bonding Problems Since 1933

THE **BLAIKIE** GROUP

- Appeals
- Discharge Lien
- Guardian
- Supersedeas
- Executor
- Lost Instrument

111 John St., 16th Floor, New York, New York 10038

212-962-BOND 212-267-8440

D. Nicholas Blaikie Colette M. Blaikie Fayth Vasseur Christine Harding

www.blaikiegroupp.com

LAWYER TO LAWYER

FLORIDA ATTORNEY

LAW OFFICES OF RANDY C. BOTWINICK

Formerly of Pazer, Epstein, Jaffe & Fein

CONCENTRATING IN PERSONAL INJURY



RANDY C. BOTWINICK
34 Years Experience



- Car Accidents
- Slip & Falls
- Maritime
- Wrongful Death
- Defective Products
- Tire & Rollover Cases
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Construction Accidents

Co-Counsel and Participation Fees Paid



JAY HALPERN
39 Years Experience

Now associated with Halpern, Santos and Pinkert, we have obtained well over \$100,000,000 in awards for our clients during the last three decades. This combination of attorneys will surely provide the quality representation you seek for your Florida personal injury referrals.

MIAMI 150 Alhambra Circle Suite 1100, Coral Gables, FL 33134 P 305 895 5700 F 305 445 1169

PALM BEACH 2385 NW Executive Center Drive Suite 100, Boca Raton, FL 33431 P 561 995 5001 F 561 962 2710

Toll Free: **1-877-FLA-ATTY (352-2889)**

From Orlando to Miami... From Tampa to the Keys | www.personalinjurylawyer.ws

GERSOWITZ LIBO & KOREK P.C.

New Jersey Office

Let Us Help With Your NJ Injury Litigation

- Over \$1 Billion Recovered on Behalf of Our Clients
- Michael A. Fruhling, ESQ: Board of Governors for the NJAJ
- Jeff S. Korek, ESQ: New Jersey Bar Member

GLK

39 Years Experience

Call 24/7: **866-450-4101**

157 Engle Street Englewood, NJ 07631

LAWYERTIME.COM

THE NY NO-FAULT ARBITRATION ATTORNEY TO THE PERSONAL INJURY MEMBERS OF THE BAR



ANDREW J. COSTELLA JR., ESQ.

CONCENTRATING IN NO-FAULT ARBITRATION FOR YOUR CLIENTS' OUTSTANDING

MEDICAL BILLS & LOST WAGE CLAIMS

SUCCESSFULLY HANDLING THOUSANDS OF NO-FAULT CLAIMS

Proud to serve and honored that NY's most prominent personal injury law firms have entrusted us with their no-fault arbitration matters

LAW OFFICES OF ANDREW J COSTELLA JR., ESQ., A PROFESSIONAL CORPORATION

600 Old Country Road, Suite 307, Garden City, NY 11530

(516) 747-0377 | arbmail@costellalaw.com

Reach your peers to generate referral business Lawyer to Lawyer For information, contact Carol Robertson at 212-457-7850, or email crobertson@alm.com



Legal Compass: The World's Best Source of Law Firm Data.

Delve deep into legal insights on Financials, Lateral Moves, Diversity, Office Trends... With proprietary, named data on 250,000+ Firms, Lawyers and Companies!

Request your **FREE DEMO** today at at.alm.com/LegalCompass

ALM.Intelligence | LEGAL COMPASS

ANTHONY E. DAVIS is a partner at Fisher-Broyles and JANIS M. MEYER is of counsel at Clyde & Co US.

Corporate Update

Former 23andMe Attorney Takes Legal Reins of Weight Watchers as It Attempts Makeover

BY TRUDY KNOCKLESS

WW INTERNATIONAL, parent of Weight Watchers, has appointed Jacqueline Cooke, a former top attorney at 23andMe, as general counsel and corporate secretary.

Cooke steps into the role following the December departure of prior legal chief Michael Colosi, amid the New York-based company's financial restructuring and shift toward medications for



Weight Watchers continues to hold meetings, but it is a declining business.

chronic weight management. He received \$918,772 in severance, bringing his 2023 compensation to \$2.18 million, according to WW's recently filed proxy statement.

Cooke's new role takes her from one struggling firm to another. 23andMe was devastated by a data breach last year, a time it already was struggling to find recurring sources of revenue to buttress DNA tests, which a customer only purchases once. 23andMe, valued at \$6 billion in 2021, now trades for 45 cents a share, shriveling its market value at just \$218 million.

Weight Watchers, meanwhile, has seen its stock plunge from \$39 in May 2021 to \$1.80, in part because of investor uncertainty over the company's ability to retool itself to capitalize on the weight loss medication craze. When the company announced in late February that Oprah Winfrey would not stand for reelection as a director, the company's shares tumbled nearly 25% within hours.

Cooke had been with South San Francisco, California-based 23andMe nearly nine years, starting as associate general counsel and rising to privacy officer and general counsel, the No. 2 legal post.

In a LinkedIn post, Cooke said that in her new role she aims to merge her passion for health and well-being with her legal expertise to support Weight Watchers' transformation into a global leader in weight health.

"So grateful for the warm welcome that I have received from the WW team," she wrote.

Weight Watchers and Cooke could not be reached for comment.

Prior to 23andMe, Cooke served as legal counsel at Genomic Health and as an attorney at Latham & Watkins.

@TrudyKnockless can be reached at tknockless@alm.com.

Red Lobster GC-Turned-CEO Retires as Chain Owner Casts for Buyer

BY CHRIS O'MALLEY

SIX months after clawing his way up from Red Lobster general counsel to CEO, Horace Dawson will be replaced by a restructuring expert as its Thailand-based owner prepares to sell the financially floundering seafood restaurant chain.



Horace Dawson, CEO of Red Lobster

Dawson will retire by month's end to make room for new CEO Jonathan Tibus, managing director of Atlanta-based management consultancy Alvarez & Marsal.

Dawson could not be immediately reached for comment.

He has worked for the 660-restaurant chain for 21 years. He became CEO in September, replacing Kelli Valade, who led Red Lobster for eight months before resigning to become CEO of Denny's.

Until then, Dawson had been executive vice president and general counsel at the seafood chain since 2014. For 11 years prior he held general counsel roles at Darden Restaurants and its Red Lobster unit, which Darden sold in 2014 to Golden Gate Capital for \$2.1 billion.

In 2016, Thai Union Group bought a minority stake in Red Lobster and in 2020 bought the remainder. But Red Lobster found itself

INFORMATION SECURITY

Protecting Your Class: Safeguards for the Current Cybersecurity and Privacy Landscape

BY DEREK DRAGOTTA

Stay vigilant: 2023 was a banner year for bad actors and 2024 is shaping up to be the same. Ransomware and data breaches are still on the rise, as are the costs associated with them. Artificial intelligence (AI), aside from its legitimate value, is allowing bad actors, even those with limited skills and technology, to quickly shift tactics and generate more believable scams. There is a significant uptick in attempted fraudulent filings, especially in open-class settlements. Additionally, the multitude of new privacy legislation and other security requirements that govern our day-to-day activities are arriving like a torrent out of the floodgates.

While flipping over your keyboard, and shouting "I can't take it anymore" à la Billy Joel in "We Didn't Start the Fire" may sound like a tempting reprieve, I can assure you there is a better way to maintain your sanity. For some assistance on that front, below are surefire ways you can protect your organization, as well as your class.

Follow Your Framework

A successful information security program always starts with a proven framework. Without one, your control implementation will be unstructured and haphazard, at best, and

DEREK DRAGOTTA is senior vice president of JND Legal Administration, where he oversees the development, implementation and monitoring of the company's Information Security Program, including the policies, standards, procedures and controls required to achieve corporate objectives. He is a member of ISACA and ISC2.

auditing and assessing your program will be more difficult for you and anyone auditing your controls. You don't build a house without a blueprint, so why implement a security program without a framework?

The U.S. Government's National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) and the independent International Organization for Standardization (ISO), for example, are industry standard frameworks with NIST's Cyber Security Framework (CSF), 800-171, and 800-53, and ISO's 27001 and 27002 being the most common. There are several other frameworks and standards available and some—such as Payment Card Industry (PCI), Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), The Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act (GLBA) and the Health Information Trust Alliance (HITRUST)—include controls geared toward organizations that operate in a particular industry, offer a specific service or process certain types of data.

Find the one(s) that best meets your organization's needs and begin assessing, deploying and continuously monitoring the applicable controls in your environment to ensure they are operating effectively.

What's on TAP?

Every framework is comprised of technical, administrative and physical (TAP) controls intended to provide your organization with defense-in-depth protection. Implement as many controls as are applicable to your organization and ensure the intended objective is relevant and beneficial so controls provide real-world value. Implementing controls for the sake of checking a box can put a strain on resources and prevent you from addressing legitimate security concerns because you're busy implementing controls for

non-existent risk. ISO controls and those of similar frameworks tend to be more guidance-based, leaving open to interpretation how a control is designed and implemented. NIST's controls, on the other hand, tend to be much more direct and prescriptive.

Regardless of which you select, be sure your framework is serving your organization and not the other way around. It is important to note that frameworks are not updated often, and certainly not at the speed at which technology, or bad actors, advance. To stay ahead of the curve, assess your controls and policies no less than annually, or whenever significant changes occur, to ensure you're effectively managing risk.

It is important to note that the depth of an organization's controls also reflects their capabilities. For example, administrators who handle large, complex, class actions likely

Tracker reports that 13 states have already signed comprehensive consumer privacy bills and another 14 have bills actively in the legislative process. If your organization already has a comprehensive framework in place, then many of these requirements may already be covered by existing controls. NIST 800-53 rev. 5, for example, contains over 1,000 controls spread across 20 individual control families and runs the gamut from access control and physical security to third party relationship management and privacy.

Aside from compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements, a robust program aligned with an industry-standard framework will ensure you meet many of your client's, or the courts, obligations as well. It is likely that your organization is already subject to a number of security and privacy requirements by way of master service agreements

Every framework is comprised of technical, administrative and physical controls intended to provide your organization with defense-in-depth protection.

have a deeper bench of controls than those who don't. Settlements that, for example, involve health care providers, credit bureaus, government agencies or large financial institutions not only require the administrator have a robust framework but frequently include industry, regulatory or client-specific security requirements that fall outside of a normal control set.

Compliance and Contracts

As mentioned earlier, new security and privacy requirements continue to be on the horizon. As of Jan. 19, 2024, the International Association of Privacy Professionals' (IAPP) Privacy

or similar contractual instruments, for example, business associate agreements (BAAs) for settlements involving health care data or additional privacy clauses for handling data on persons outside of the United States.

Similarly, the Northern District of California's data protection checklist also includes specific requirements directed at entities handling the administration of settlements.

Data Sprawl and Data Hygiene

Data sprawl has become increasingly important due to the increase in remote work and greater adoption of cloud-based technology. » Page 8

Q&A

Renee Meisel, General Counsel of UnitedLex, On Understanding and Growing the Business

BY TRUDY KNOCKLESS

WHILE many women have made significant strides and are now better represented in the legal field, there remains room for improvement, particularly in attaining more representative leadership roles, UnitedLex's general counsel, Renee Meisel, said.



Renee Meisel, general counsel of UnitedLex

"Recently, I came across a list of newly appointed GCS, and what struck me was that amidst a long list dominated by male names, there were only about two or three female names. Seeing this compiled on a list made me realize the lack of female representation in upward mobility within companies. It made me question whether women are adequately represented in promotion decisions or if they need to seek opportunities outside their current organizations."

Meisel, originally from a rural town called Broken Arrow in Oklahoma and a proud member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, describes herself at heart as a simple country girl.

However, Meisel's professional journey is anything but simple. For the past five months, she has served as the executive vice president and general counsel for UnitedLex, which provides support services to law firms and corporate legal departments.

Prior to joining UnitedLex, Meisel was a principal at PracticLaw PLLC, a consulting and law firm she founded in 2023. Before that, she served as chief operating officer at Breakwater Solutions. Additionally, she spent four years at Purpose Legal where she rose to chief legal officer. Early in her career, she spent 11 years at Dell in various legal and legal operations roles.

In a conversation with Corporate Counsel, Meisel discussed her career trajectory and how legal ops and the legal department

