

JS-6

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA
CIVIL MINUTES - GENERAL

Case No.	CV 17-7791 PA (AFMx)	Date	October 30, 2017
Title	VRM v. Clifton Edward Doc Jones, et al.		

Present: The Honorable PERCY ANDERSON, UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE

Kamilla Sali-Suleyman

Not Reported

N/A

Deputy Clerk

Court Reporter

Tape No.

Attorneys Present for Plaintiff:

Attorneys Present for Defendants:

None

None

Proceedings: IN CHAMBERS - COURT ORDER

The Court is in receipt of a Notice of Removal filed by defendant Glenn Bailey (“Defendant”) on October 25, 2017. In its Complaint, plaintiff VRM (Vendor Resource Management), Duly Authorized Agent for the Secretary of Veterans Affairs (“Plaintiff”) alleges a single state law claim for unlawful detainer. Defendant, who is appearing pro se, asserts that this Court has subject matter jurisdiction on the basis of federal question jurisdiction under 28 U.S.C. § 1331.

Federal courts are of limited jurisdiction, having subject matter jurisdiction only over matters authorized by the Constitution and Congress. *See, e.g., Kokkonen v. Guardian Life Ins. Co.*, 511 U.S. 375, 377, 114 S. Ct. 1673, 128 L. Ed. 2d 391 (1994). A “strong presumption” against removal jurisdiction exists. *Gaus v. Miles, Inc.*, 980 F.2d 564, 567 (9th Cir. 1992). In seeking removal, the defendant bears the burden of proving that jurisdiction exists. *Scott v. Breeland*, 792 F.2d 925, 927 (9th Cir. 1986).

Under 28 U.S.C. § 1331, this Court has original jurisdiction over civil actions “arising under” federal law. Removal based on § 1331 is governed by the “well-pleaded complaint” rule. *Caterpillar, Inc. v. Williams*, 482 U.S. 386, 392, 107 S. Ct. 2425, 96 L. Ed. 2d 318 (1987). Under the rule, “federal jurisdiction exists only when a federal question is presented on the face of plaintiff’s properly pleaded complaint.” *Id.* at 392, 107 S. Ct. at 2429, 96 L. Ed. 2d 318. If the complaint does not specify whether a claim is based on federal or state law, it is a claim “arising under” federal law only if it is “clear” that it raises a federal question. *Duncan v. Stuetzle*, 76 F.3d 1480, 1485 (9th Cir. 1996). Thus, plaintiff is generally the “master of the claim.” *Caterpillar*, 482 U.S. at 392, 107 S. Ct. 2425, 96 L. Ed. 2d 318. There is no federal question jurisdiction simply because there is a federal defense to the claim. *Id.* at 392, 107 S. Ct. at 2429, 96 L. Ed. 2d 318. The only exception to this rule is where plaintiff’s federal claim has been disguised by “artful pleading,” such as where the only claim is a federal one or is a state claim preempted by federal law. *Sullivan v. First Affiliated Sec., Inc.*, 813 F. 2d 1368, 1372 (9th Cir. 1987).

Here, the underlying Complaint contains a single cause of action for unlawful detainer. Defendant alleges that removal is proper because Plaintiff’s actions in attempting to evict Defendant violate the Protecting Tenants at Foreclosure Act (the “PTFA”), 12 U.S.C. § 5220, or that Plaintiff’s

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unlawful detainer action is an artfully pleaded action that is in fact for violation of the PTFA. (Notice of Removal ¶¶ 10, 13, 17.) However, the PTFA does not create a private right of action; rather, it provides a defense to state law unlawful detainer actions. See Logan v. U.S. Bank Nat. Ass'n, 722 F.3d 1163, 1165 (9th Cir. 2013) (affirming dismissal of complaint because the PTFA “does not create a private right of action allowing [plaintiff] to enforce its requirements”). Therefore, Defendant’s allegations do not provide a proper basis for removal, as a federal defense cannot form a basis for removal. See, e.g., Vaden v. Discover Bank, 556 U.S. 49, 70, 129 S. Ct. 1262, 173 L. Ed. 2d 206 (2009). Additionally, because the Complaint alleges only a state law claim for unlawful detainer, it does not present a claim “arising under” federal law.

For the foregoing reasons, Defendant has failed to meet his burden to demonstrate that federal subject matter jurisdiction exists over this action. Because the Court lacks subject matter jurisdiction, this action is hereby remanded to Los Angeles County Superior Court, Case No. 17U06049. See 28 U.S.C. § 1447(c). Defendant’s Request to Proceed In Forma Pauperis (Docket No. 3) is denied as moot.

IT IS SO ORDERED.