

Striking Cook Jones' answer and entering default against her are necessary to "compensate the court [and Plaintiff] for the added expenses caused by [Cook Jones'] discovery abuses, . . . deter others from engaging in similar conduct, and [] penalize [Cook Jones]." Thornton, 787 F. App'x at 638 (quoting Wouters, 9 F.3d at 933). Moreover, "less drastic sanctions would not ensure compliance with the [C]ourt's orders." Eagle Hosp. Physicians, 561 F.3d at 1306. The Court is mindful of the general preference to resolve claims on the merits and recognizes that striking a defendant's answer is an extreme sanction. Thus, the Court only strikes a party's pleading in the rarest of cases when no other remedy would be sufficient. Unfortunately, this is one of those cases. Merely requiring Cook Jones to pay Plaintiff's costs or the other sanctions available to the Court would not remedy the disruption that Cook Jones has caused to the Court's administration, would not adequately cure the prejudice she caused, and would not sufficiently deter her and other litigants from engaging in similar egregious conduct. Moreover, Cook Jones' history of sanctions before this Court supports a stiff sanction.²¹

²¹ On December 28, 2020, the Court reprimanded Cook Jones for abandonment of her client in violation of Georgia Rule of Professional Conduct 1.3. Sealed Order Harriet M. Singleton v. Garden City, Georgia, et al. ("Singleton"), No. 4:19-cv-106 (S.D. Ga. Dec. 28, 2020) ECF No. 53. While that case involved Cook Jones' appearance as an attorney, and this case involves her appearance as a litigant, the failures she demonstrated in that case resemble those at hand. Cook Jones failed to respond to basic discovery requests on behalf of her client, failed to file a motion to withdraw despite representation to the Court that she would do so, failed to respond to the Court's show cause order, and failed to timely appear for a show cause hearing. See Sealed Findings and Recommendation Singleton, Case No. 4:19-cv-106 (S.D. Ga. March 17, 2020) ECF No. 31. While Cook Jones admitted her shortcomings and apologized for them in Singleton, as in this case, she also deflected blame towards her staff and even an attorney who did not work with her. See id. at pp. 8–9; Counsel's Objections to Magistrate Judge's Proposed Findings [a]nd Recommendations Singleton, No. 4:19-cv-106 (S.D. Ga. May 14, 2020) ECF No. 35, p. 3. In Singleton, unlike this case, the Court found that the conduct leading to Cook Jones' reprimand "[did] not appear to be a case of malfeasance or conscious dereliction of responsibilities. Rather, it is a case of negligent oversight, administrative failures, and poor judgment." Sealed Findings and Recommendation Singleton, No. 4:19-cv-106 (S.D. Ga. March 17, 2020) ECF No. 31, p. 7. Nonetheless, it is troubling that Cook Jones willfully disregarded this Court's Orders and her discovery obligations in this case shortly after having been reprimanded by the Court for disregarding the Court's Orders and her obligations to her client in another case. See Jacovetti L., P.C. v. Shelton, No. 2:20-CV-00163-JDW, 2020 WL 1491320, at *5 (E.D. Pa. Mar. 27, 2020) ("In addition, in fashioning its sanctions, the Court is mindful of [counsel's] history of sanctions. The Court is not sanctioning [counsel] for those past violations. However, the prior sanctions, and [counsel's] failure to

CONCLUSION

The Court **OVERRULES** Cook Jones' Motion to Set Aside and Objections to Orders Denying Defendant Shalena Cook Jones' Emergency Motions to Reschedule her Deposition and for Reconsideration. (Doc. 89.) Additionally, the Court **GRANTS IN PART** Plaintiff Skye Musson's Motion for Sanctions Striking Defendant Shalena Cook Jones' Answer and Entering Default Judgment. (Doc. 88.) Pursuant to Rule 37(b), Rule 37(d), and the Court's inherent authority, the Court **GRANTS** Plaintiff's Motion for Sanctions to the extent that it requests the Court strike Cook Jones' Answers and enter default against her. The Court **STRIKES** Cook Jones' Answer to the Complaint, (doc. 11), and her Answer to the Amended Complaint, (doc. 34). The Court **DIRECTS** the Clerk of Court to enter default against Cook Jones on the docket. Additionally, the Court **GRANTS** Plaintiff's request to the extent that it requests that Cook Jones reimburse Plaintiff for all reasonable costs, fees, and expenses incurred as a result of Cook Jones' disregard of her obligations and failure to comply with this Court's Orders. Specifically, Cook Jones shall reimburse Plaintiff for all reasonable costs, fees, and expenses associated with: (1) scheduling and attending Cook Jones' deposition at which she failed to appear; (2) responding to Defendants' Motion to Amend Scheduling Order, (doc. 69); (3) drafting and filing Plaintiff's Motion for Sanctions, (doc. 88), and supporting briefs; and (4) responding to Cook Jones'

change his ways, demonstrate that harsher sanctions are necessary to make the point.”). Cook Jones' conduct in this case warrants the sanctions meted out in this Order even absent her reprimand. However, her history and failure to change her ways further supports the Court's decision. In Singleton, the Court sealed all pleadings regarding Cook Jones' sanction to save her the embarrassment of a public reprimand. Consequently, the Court will provide a copy of this Order with this footnote redacted to the Clerk. The Court **DIRECTS** the Clerk of Court to file the redacted version of this Order on the public docket. The Court **DIRECTS** the Clerk of Court to file the unredacted version of this Order in a restricted manner whereby it can only be accessed by the Court as well as the parties and counsel to this case. The unredacted version shall be transmitted to the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals in the event of any appeal. Counsel and the parties **shall not** disclose the unredacted version of this Order or the contents of this footnote to any other persons in any manner without written Court approval.