

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF
MICHIGAN, SOUTHERN DIVISION

Gayland Coles v. Flex N Gate Forming Technologies, L.L.C.

Coles · No. 2:04-cv-73671 · Decided February 19, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan denied Plaintiff Gayland Coles’s motions seeking relief and certification under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 54(b), and denied a miscellaneous motion as moot. The court held that the case had been fully closed by a stipulated dismissal with prejudice nearly 20 years earlier, leaving no pending claim eligible for Rule 54(b) certification, and that Coles’s related allegations concerning settlement fraud, Rule 11, due process, and Rule 60 were either not actionable under the cited rules or untimely.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan, Southern Division
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Susan K. DeClercq
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan, Southern Division
DECIDED	February 19, 2026
DOCKET	2:04-cv-73671
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiff filed post-judgment motions seeking relief under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 54(b), asserting that a failure-to-promote claim remained pending and requesting certification for an appeal. The district court denied the motions and denied a miscellaneous motion as moot.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The opinion does not expressly identify a standard of review for the Rule 54(b) motions. It applies the text of Rules 54(b), 60(b), and 60(c), and notes that district courts have discretion to determine whether a Rule 60(b) motion was made within a reasonable time.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished district court opinion
PARTIES	Gayland Coles v. Flex N Gate Forming Technologies, L.L.C.

TOPICS

civil procedure

appellate procedure

final judgment rule

motion for reconsideration

mootness

PRACTICE AREAS

civil procedure

appellate procedure

employment law

civil rights

remedies

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 54(b) authorized entry of judgment and appellate certification when the entire case had already been dismissed with prejudice.
2. Whether Coles could obtain relief nearly twenty years after the stipulated dismissal based on alleged fraud, attorney misconduct, or due-process violations.
3. Whether Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 11(b) provided an actionable basis for the relief sought.
4. Whether any motion under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 60(b) was timely under Rule 60(c).

HOLDINGS

1. Rule 54(b) relief and certification were unavailable because the case was no longer open and no claim remained pending after the stipulated dismissal order resolved the entire action with prejudice.
2. Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 11(b) did not provide an actionable basis for the relief sought because it governs representations made in pleadings, motions, and other papers rather than providing a remedy for alleged settlement fraud or unfairness.
3. Any motion for relief under Rule 60(b) was untimely because it was filed nearly twenty years after the relevant order and therefore was not made within a reasonable time; grounds under Rules 60(b)(1), (2), and (3) also are subject to a one-year limit.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“A decision is final if it ends the litigation on the merits and leaves nothing for the court to do but execute the judgment.” (Section II)

“Civil Rule 54(b) allows the district court to enter final judgment on one or more claims that have been determined when the case remains open because other claims remain pending” (Section III.A)

“Nearly 20 years later is not within a reasonable time.” (Section III.B)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Coles alleged that FNG failed to promote him because of his race and asserted related discrimination, hostile-work-environment, and retaliation claims. After partial summary judgment and reconsideration proceedings, the parties settled, and the court dismissed the action in its entirety with prejudice. Coles later alleged that the settlement was fraudulent and that the failure-to-promote claim had not been included, but the district court and Sixth Circuit treated the settlement and dismissal as resolving the case.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Coles sued Flex N Gate for racial discrimination, hostile work environment, and retaliation under 42 U.S.C. § 1981, Title VII, and the Michigan Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act. The district court granted summary judgment in part on the federal failure-to-promote claim, later reinstated the state-law failure-to-promote claim on reconsideration, and subsequently dismissed the entire case with prejudice pursuant to the parties' settlement. The district court denied Coles's later motion to vacate the summary judgment order as untimely, and the Sixth Circuit denied his appeal. Nearly twenty years later, Coles filed the motions addressed in this opinion.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- In re Fifth Third Early Access Cash Advance Litig., 925 F.3d 265, 273 (6th Cir. 2019)
- Bd. of Trs. of Plumbers, Pipe Fitters & Mech. Equip. Serv. Local Union No. 392 v. Humbert, 884 F.3d 624, 625-26 (6th Cir. 2018)
- Cordts v. Huron Charter Twp., No. 18-13017, 2021 WL 1339510, at *1 (E.D. Mich. Apr. 8, 2021)
- Days Inns Worldwide, Inc. v. Patel, 445 F.3d 899, 905-06, 908 (6th Cir. 2006)
- Johnson v. Fitz, No. 2:15-cv-02745, 2025 WL 1659291, at *4 (W.D. Tenn. June 10, 2025)