

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF CONNECTICUT

Antoinette C. Taylor v. Phyllis A. Frazier

Case No. 3:24-cv-1041 (KAD) (D. Conn. Dec. 31, 2025) · No. 3:24-cv-1041 (KAD) · Decided December 31, 2025

SUMMARY

This order addresses cross-motions to compel discovery in a defamation and related emotional-distress action arising from alleged statements about a police report and testimony in a probate proceeding. The court granted Plaintiff leave to refile her motion and granted in part and denied in part both parties’ motions to compel, directing limited supplemental responses while sustaining objections to several requests based on relevance, ambiguity, privilege, or the proper timing of expert disclosures.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the District of Connecticut
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Robert A. Richardson
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the District of Connecticut
DECIDED	December 31, 2025
DOCKET	3:24-cv-1041 (KAD)
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Discovery order resolving the parties' cross-motions to compel and Plaintiff's motion for leave to refile a prior motion to compel in a defamation and related tort action.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Discovery rulings are reviewable under the clearly erroneous standard pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1)(A), Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 72(a), and District of Connecticut Local Rule 72.2.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Unknown; discovery order by a federal magistrate judge and not a recommended ruling.
PARTIES	Antoinette C. Taylor v. Phyllis A. Frazier

TOPICS

- discovery dispute
- civil procedure
- defamation
- invasion of privacy
- intentional infliction of emotional distress

PRACTICE AREAS

civil procedure

discovery

defamation

privacy torts

emotional distress

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether Plaintiff should be permitted to refile her prior motion to compel.
2. Whether Defendant was required to provide additional responses to Plaintiff's interrogatories, requests for production, and requests for admission under Rules 26, 33, 34, and 36.
3. Whether Plaintiff was required to answer Defendant's discovery requests concerning the alleged defamatory statements, the police call, publication, damages, medical treatment, estate allegations, and related matters.
4. Whether Plaintiff's general objections and references to the complaint, future depositions, lack of information, privilege, burden, and relevance were sufficient to avoid responding to Defendant's discovery.
5. What scope of phone-record discovery was proportional to the dispute concerning whether Plaintiff called the police.

HOLDINGS

1. Discovery is permitted regarding nonprivileged matters relevant to a claim or defense and proportional to the needs of the case; relevant information is not automatically proportional, and the party resisting discovery bears the burden of showing why discovery should be denied.
2. Plaintiff's motion to refile was granted, and the prior motion to compel was treated as the operative motion; the motion to compel was granted in part and denied in part.
3. Plaintiff must identify and clarify the specific defamatory statements on which her claims are based; she may not avoid responding by referring generally to the amended complaint or by asserting that discovery is premature because depositions may occur later.
4. Discovery into whether Plaintiff called the police concerning Defendant's daughter, the content of the call, and persons who heard or read the alleged statements was relevant and largely compelled, but phone records were limited to the date of the alleged call when that date was known.
5. Attorney-client communications intended to remain confidential for the purpose of obtaining or providing legal advice, and counsel's mental impressions and litigation strategies prepared in anticipation of litigation, remain protected from discovery.
6. A party responding to requests for admission must specifically admit, deny, or state in detail why it cannot truthfully admit or deny, and may assert lack of information only after reasonable inquiry and a statement that known or readily obtainable information remains insufficient.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“As a general matter, Rule 26 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure allows a party to obtain discovery of any nonprivileged matter that is relevant to any party’s claim or defense and proportional to the needs of the case.”” (II)

“The Court orders Plaintiff to provide RFA responses within 21 days of this Order that comply with Rule 36(a)(4) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure.” (IV.C)

“Plaintiff’s Motion to Compel, dkt. #65, is DENIED in part and GRANTED in part, and Defendant’s Motion to Compel, dkt. #78, is GRANTED in part and DENIED in part.” (Conclusion)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Plaintiff alleges that Defendant made or repeated statements accusing Plaintiff, a minister or pastor, of calling police concerning Defendant's daughter and of making a false report. Plaintiff claims the statements were communicated to third parties, including through social media and at a probate-court evidentiary hearing, and damaged her reputation and caused emotional harm. Defendant denies liability and asserts, among other defenses, that the alleged defamatory statements were true. The discovery disputes concerned the identification and publication of the alleged statements, whether Plaintiff made the police call, the parties' damages claims, medical treatment, and allegations concerning an estate and an alleged theft.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiff commenced the action on February 26, 2024, and later filed an amended complaint asserting defamation, false light invasion of privacy, intentional infliction of emotional distress, and negligent infliction of emotional distress. Plaintiff moved to refile and pursue a prior motion to compel, while Defendant separately moved to compel responses to interrogatories, requests for production, and requests for admission. The magistrate judge granted the motion for leave to refile, granted and denied portions of both parties' discovery motions, and directed Plaintiff to provide compliant discovery responses within 21 days.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Conservation L. Found., Inc. v. Shell Oil Co., No. 3:21-CV-933 (JAM), 2023 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 147065, at *34 (D. Conn. Aug. 22, 2023)
- Sullivan v. StratMar Sys., Inc., 276 F.R.D. 17, 19 (D. Conn. 2011)
- New Falls Corp. v. Soni, No. CV 16-6805 (ADS) (AKT), 2020 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 94747, at *4 (E.D.N.Y. May 29, 2020)
- Cole v. Towers Perrin Forster & Crosby, 256 F.R.D. 79, 80 (D. Conn. 2009)
- Oppenheimer Fund, Inc. v. Sanders, 437 U.S. 340, 351 (1978)
- United States v. Mejia, 655 F.3d 126, 132 (2d Cir. 2011)
- Mercator Corp. v. United States, 318 F.3d 379, 383 (2d Cir. 2003)
- Mohr v. Sec. Credit Servs., LLC, 141 F. Supp. 3d 179, 182 (N.D.N.Y. 2015)
- Rivera v. Affinco, LLC, No. 16-CV-1666 (JBA), 2018 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 30198, at *28 (D. Conn. Feb. 26, 2018)

- *Matalavage v. Sheriff of Niagara Cnty.*, No. 20-CV-1254Sk(F), 2023 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 26692, at *34-*35 (W.D.N.Y. Feb. 16, 2023)
- *Croslan v. Hous. Auth. for City of New Britain*, 974 F. Supp. 161, 171 (D. Conn. 1997)
- *Skakel v. Grace*, 5 F. Supp. 3d 199, 206 (D. Conn. 2014)
- *Trilegiant Corp. v. Sitel Corp.*, 272 F.R.D. 360, 364 (S.D.N.Y. 2010)
- *Bank of New York v. Meridien Biao Bank Tanz.*, 171 F.R.D. 135, 146-47 (S.D.N.Y. 1997)
- *Ahern v. Trans Union LLC*, No. 3:01CV2313(DJS), 2002 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 26355, at *3-*4 (D. Conn. Oct. 23, 2002)
- *Weber v. Fujifilm Med. Sys. U.S.A., Inc.*, No. 3:10CV401 (JBA), 2011 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 26027, at *2-*4 (D. Conn. Feb. 17, 2011)
- *Henry v. Champlain Enters.*, 212 F.R.D. 73, 77 (N.D.N.Y. 2003)
- *Russo v. Baxter Healthcare Corp.*, 51 F. Supp. 2d 70, 79 (D.R.I. 1999)
- *City of Hartford v. Monsanto Co.*, No. 3:15CV1544 (RNC), 2017 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 115596, at *5 (D. Conn. July 20, 2017)

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