

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF
OHIO, WESTERN DIVISION AT DAYTON

Joshua Baker, et al. v. PJ Ohio, LLC, et al.

Baker · No. 3:25-cv-3 · Decided February 17, 2026

SUMMARY

The court held Defendants’ motion to stay the proceedings and compel arbitration in abeyance because Plaintiffs disputed formation of the arbitration agreements. The court ordered limited discovery concerning the agreements’ validity, referred that discovery to the magistrate judge, set a summary trial for May 14, 2026, and imposed an April 14, 2026 discovery deadline.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Southern District of Ohio, Western Division at Dayton
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Michael J. Newman
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Southern District of Ohio, Western Division at Dayton
DECIDED	February 17, 2026
DOCKET	3:25-cv-3
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Defendants moved to stay the proceedings and compel arbitration. The court found a genuine factual dispute concerning whether Plaintiffs formed or signed the arbitration agreements and held the motion in abeyance pending limited discovery and a summary trial on contract formation.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	When the formation or existence of an arbitration agreement is genuinely disputed, the court must permit targeted discovery and conduct a limited trial on the issue under the Federal Arbitration Act.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Unknown; federal district court order with no reporter citation.

TOPICS

- arbitration
- contract formation
- discovery dispute
- civil procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the conflicting electronic records and Plaintiffs' affidavits created a genuine dispute of fact concerning formation and validity of the arbitration agreements.
2. Whether the court should hold Defendants' motion to stay the proceedings and compel arbitration in abeyance and permit limited discovery followed by a summary trial under 9 U.S.C. § 4.

HOLDINGS

1. Conflicting electronic records and affidavits denying signature created a genuine dispute of fact concerning formation of the arbitration agreements, including whether Plaintiffs agreed to arbitrate at all.
2. The motion to stay the proceedings and compel arbitration should be held in abeyance while the parties conduct narrowly tailored discovery and proceed to a summary trial limited to formation of the arbitration agreements.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“This creates a genuine dispute of fact in the instant case as to the arbitration agreements’ formation—including whether Plaintiff “agreed to arbitrate at all.””

“Additionally, pursuant to the Federal Arbitration Act (9 U.S.C. § 4), the Court SCHEDULES a summary trial limited to the question of formation of the arbitration agreements for 9:00 a.m. on May 14, 2026.”

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Defendants presented electronic records indicating that Plaintiffs Joshua Baker and Tristan Berghoff-Wagner signed the arbitration agreements at issue. Each Plaintiff submitted an affidavit denying that he or she signed the agreements. The conflicting evidence created a genuine dispute concerning whether the parties formed the arbitration agreements and whether Plaintiffs consented to arbitration.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Defendants PJ Ohio, LLC, Serazen, LLC, PJ Las Vegas, LLC, PJ North Carolina, LLC, Doug Pak, and Darcie Mangus moved to stay the case and compel arbitration. Plaintiffs opposed the motion and submitted affidavits denying that they signed the arbitration agreements, while Defendants submitted electronic records indicating that Plaintiffs had signed them. The court held the motion in abeyance, referred the matter for limited discovery, set a summary trial concerning formation of the arbitration agreements, and imposed a discovery deadline.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- **Boykin v. Fam. Dollar Stores of Mich., LLC**, 3 F.4th 832 (6th Cir. 2021)

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