

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF
LOUISIANA

C-Innovation, LLC v. Premier Acquisition Holdings, LLC, et al.

C-Innovation · No. 25-1780 · Decided March 6, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Eastern District of Louisiana addresses motions to dismiss for lack of personal jurisdiction and insufficient service of process in a dispute arising from the charter of an offshore vessel for a Titanic wreckage expedition. The court finds a prima facie basis for specific personal jurisdiction over RMS Titanic, Inc. and Experiential Media Group LLC, while denying the remaining jurisdictional motions without prejudice and denying Apollo's service challenge. The court orders jurisdictional discovery and requires the plaintiff to file a discovery plan by March 31, 2026.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Eastern District of Louisiana
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Eastern District of Louisiana
DECIDED	March 6, 2026
DOCKET	25-1780
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiff opposed defendants' motions to dismiss for lack of personal jurisdiction and, as to Apollo, insufficient service of process. Plaintiff alternatively requested jurisdictional discovery.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	On a motion to dismiss decided without an evidentiary hearing, the plaintiff must make a prima facie showing of personal jurisdiction; the court accepts uncontroverted allegations as true and resolves conflicts in jurisdictional evidence in the plaintiff's favor. The plaintiff bears the burden of demonstrating the need for jurisdictional discovery, and the decision whether to permit such discovery is within the trial court's discretion.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	nonprecedential
PARTIES	C-Innovation, LLC v. Premier Acquisition Holdings, LLC, RMS Titanic, Inc., Experiential Media Group 'EMG' LLC, Alta Fundamental Advisers SP LLC, Star V Partners LLC, Apollo Credit Strategies Master Fund Ltd., PacBridge Partners I Investment Co. Ltd.

TOPICS

personal jurisdiction

service of process

admiralty jurisdiction

charter parties

civil procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

civil procedure

admiralty

contracts

commercial litigation

corporate law

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether Louisiana may exercise specific personal jurisdiction over RMS Titanic and EMG based on their contacts with Louisiana relating to the charter and mobilization of the DINO CHOUEST.
2. Whether the court should dismiss the claims against PAHL, Alta, Star, and Apollo for lack of personal jurisdiction or instead permit jurisdictional discovery.
3. Whether Apollo was properly served with process.

HOLDINGS

1. RMS Titanic and EMG made a prima facie showing of sufficient Louisiana contacts to support specific personal jurisdiction because their representative came to Louisiana and oversaw the outfitting and mobilization of the DINO CHOUEST for the expedition, and the claims arose from those contacts.
2. Dismissal without prejudice was appropriate because additional factual development was needed to determine whether the defendants' relationships to the chartering entities and the Louisiana contacts supported personal jurisdiction.
3. Apollo's motion to dismiss for failure to properly serve process was denied.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“Although due process does not require a nonresident's physical presence within the territorial jurisdiction of the court, the nonresident generally must have “certain minimum contacts . . . such that the maintenance of the suit does not offend ‘traditional notions of fair play and substantial justice.’” (5)

“The Court is persuaded that Launay’s contacts with Louisiana are sufficient to satisfy a prima facie showing of specific personal jurisdiction as to RMS Titanic and EMG, the vessel charterer, on all claims asserted in the lawsuit.” (13)

“IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that jurisdictional discovery shall commence immediately.” (14)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

C-Innovation, a Louisiana limited liability company, chartered the M/V DINO CHOUEST to EMG for an expedition to survey the RMS TITANIC wreckage. The charter required substantial vessel modifications and mobilization in Port Fourchon, Louisiana, where EMG and RMS Titanic representatives oversaw the installation of equipment and remodeling of vessel spaces. The vessel then traveled to the wreckage, but EMG allegedly failed to make required payments, leaving more than \$4 million outstanding. C-Innovation also alleged that the other defendants controlled or operated the chartering entities as alter egos or investors.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

C-Innovation filed suit concerning unpaid amounts allegedly due under a charter party for the offshore supply vessel M/V DINO CHOUEST. The defendants moved to dismiss for lack of personal jurisdiction; Apollo also challenged service of process. The court denied the motions as to RMS Titanic and EMG, denied the motions without prejudice as to PAHL, Alta, Star, and Apollo, denied Apollo's service challenge, and ordered immediate jurisdictional discovery.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Fuld v. Palestine Liberation Organization, 606 U.S. 1, 12-13 (2025)
- Bristol-Myers Squibb Co. v. Superior Court of California, 582 U.S. 255, 262 (2017)
- Ford Motor Co. v. Montana Eighth Judicial District Court, 141 S. Ct. 1017, 1024 (2021)
- Daimler AG v. Bauman, 571 U.S. 117, 137 (2014)
- Fabara v. GoFit, LLC, 308 F.R.D. 380 (D.N.M. 2015)
- Freudensprung v. Offshore Technical Services, Inc., 379 F.3d 327, 342-43 (5th Cir. 2004)
- Ruston Gas Turbines, Inc. v. Donaldson Co., 9 F.3d 415, 418 (5th Cir. 1993)
- Bean Dredging Corp. v. Dredge Technology Corp., 744 F.2d 1081, 1083 (5th Cir. 1984)
- International Shoe Co. v. State of Washington, International Shoe Co. v. Washington, 326 U.S. 310, 316 (1945)
- Goodyear Dunlop Tires Operations, S.A. v. Brown, 131 S. Ct. 2846, 2851 (2011)
- Keeton v. Hustler Magazine, Inc., 465 U.S. 770, 775, 781 n.13 (1984)
- Burger King Corp. v. Rudzewicz, Burger King Corp. v. Rudzewicz, 471 U.S. 462, 475, 479-80 (1985)
- Fielding v. Hubert Burda Media, Inc., 415 F.3d 419, 424 (5th Cir. 2005)
- Felch v. Transportes Lar-Mex S.A. de C.V., 92 F.3d 320, 326 (5th Cir. 1996)
- Nuovo Pignone, SpA v. STORMAN ASIA M/V, 310 F.3d 374, 378 (5th Cir. 2002)
- Rush v. Savchuk, 444 U.S. 320, 332 (1980)
- Consolidated Textile Co. v. Gregory, 289 U.S. 85, 88 (1933)
- Seiferth v. Helicopteros Atuneros, Inc., 472 F.3d 266, 274 (5th Cir. 2006)
- Monkton Insurance Services, Ltd. v. Ritter, 768 F.3d 429, 434 (5th Cir. 2014)
- Davila v. United States, 713 F.3d 248, 264 (5th Cir. 2013)
- Kelly v. Syria Shell Petroleum Development B.V., 213 F.3d 841, 855 (5th Cir. 2000)
- Freeman v. United States, 556 F.3d 326, 342 (5th Cir. 2009)
- Wyatt v. Kaplan, 686 F.2d 276, 283-84 (5th Cir. 1982)

