

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

Robert Barnes, et al. v. G4S Secure Solutions (USA) Inc., et al.

Barnes · No. 23-cv-12897 · Decided February 9, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan addresses motions in a racial-discrimination class action brought by former Renaissance Center security personnel against corporate and individual defendants. The court grants the individual defendants’ motion to adopt and join the corporate defendants’ motion to dismiss or for a more definite statement, denies that motion, and denies related motions to stay proceedings as moot following the Sixth Circuit’s affirmance of the denial of arbitration. The court concludes that the second amended complaint provides sufficient notice and is not an impermissible shotgun pleading.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan, Southern Division
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Robert J. White
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan, Southern Division
DECIDED	February 9, 2026
DOCKET	23-cv-12897
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiffs filed a second amended class-action complaint alleging racial discrimination and related claims arising from their employment as security personnel. Corporate Defendants moved to dismiss under Rule 12(b)(6) or, alternatively, for a more definite statement under Rule 12(e), and to stay proceedings pending an arbitration appeal. Individual Defendants moved to adopt and join those motions.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	A Rule 12(b)(6) motion is evaluated under the plausibility standard: the complaint must contain sufficient factual matter, accepted as true, to state a facially plausible claim, with the complaint construed in the light most favorable to the plaintiff. A Rule 12(e) motion is discretionary and should be granted only when a pleading is so

excessively vague or ambiguous that it is unintelligible and seriously prejudices the defendant's ability to answer.

PRECEDENTIAL VALUE

unknown

TOPICS

motions to dismiss

motion for a more definite statement

pleadings

civil procedure

employment discrimination

PRACTICE AREAS

civil procedure

employment law

civil rights

employment discrimination

appellate procedure

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the Individual Defendants could adopt and join the Corporate Defendants' motion to dismiss or for a more definite statement.
2. Whether the second amended complaint was an impermissible shotgun pleading under the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure.
3. Whether the second amended complaint was sufficiently specific and intelligible to satisfy Rules 8 and 10 and avoid dismissal under Rule 12(b)(6) or a more definite statement under Rule 12(e).
4. Whether the motion to stay proceedings pending the arbitration appeal remained justiciable after the Sixth Circuit affirmed the denial of arbitration.

HOLDINGS

1. Individual Defendants were permitted to adopt and join the Corporate Defendants' motion because the arguments were transferable, all Defendants were proceeding in lockstep, and no prejudice resulted from the lack of a separate concurrence request.
2. The second amended complaint was not an impermissible shotgun pleading warranting dismissal because it separated materially distinct claims into separate counts and provided sufficient notice of the legal theories and factual bases asserted.
3. The second amended complaint stated claims sufficient to survive Rule 12(b)(6) because its factual allegations, accepted as true, raised a reasonable expectation that discovery would reveal evidence of unlawful conduct.
4. A more definite statement was not warranted because the second amended complaint was not so excessively vague or ambiguous as to be unintelligible or to seriously prejudice Defendants in answering.
5. The Corporate Defendants' motion to stay and Individual Defendants' related motion to adopt and join were denied as moot because the Sixth Circuit had resolved the arbitration appeal and affirmed the denial of arbitration.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“A claim has facial plausibility when the plaintiff pleads factual content that allows the court to draw the reasonable inference that the defendant is liable for the misconduct alleged.” (II.B)

“A motion under Rule 12(e) should not be granted unless the complaint is so excessively vague and ambiguous as to be unintelligible and as to prejudice the defendant seriously in attempting to answer it.” (II.B.2)

“Given these detailed, specific allegations pertaining to each Individual Defendant by name, Plaintiffs go well beyond labels and conclusions or a mere formulaic recitation of the elements of their claims, and they certainly provide enough facts to raise a reasonable expectation that discovery will reveal evidence of illegal conduct.” (II.B.2)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Plaintiffs are Black former security personnel who worked at Detroit’s Renaissance Center for or in connection with G4S Secure Solutions, Renaissance Center Management Company, General Motors, and Allied Universal. They alleged a years-long hostile work environment, racial slurs and harassment, discriminatory treatment of Black visitors, failures to promote, retaliation, and violations of federal and Michigan civil-rights laws. The second amended complaint named multiple corporate and individual defendants and alleged that the defendants acted jointly, tolerated discriminatory conduct, and retaliated against employees who complained.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

The Court had previously denied Defendants’ request to compel arbitration as to Plaintiffs Robert Barnes and Maurice Duck, and Defendants appealed the ruling as to Barnes. Plaintiffs filed a second amended complaint while the appeal was pending. The Sixth Circuit later affirmed the denial of arbitration, rendering the stay motion and the related joinder motion moot. The Court granted Individual Defendants’ motion to adopt and join the dismissal/more-definite-statement motion, denied the Corporate Defendants’ motion, denied the stay-related motions as moot, and allowed Plaintiffs until February 20, 2026, to seek leave to amend.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Livonia Pub. Schs. v. Selective Ins. Co., 443 F. Supp. 3d 815, 861 (E.D. Mich. 2018)
- Jarvis v. Cooper, No. 12-11804, 2013 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 44717, at *30 (E.D. Mich. Mar. 28, 2013)
- Tuttle v. Land, No. 10-11221, 2010 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 52057, at *8-11 (E.D. Mich. May 27, 2010)
- Ashcroft v. Iqbal, 556 U.S. 662, 678 (2009)
- Bell Atl. Corp. v. Twombly, 550 U.S. 544, 555-56, 556, 570 (2007)
- Elec. Merch. Sys. LLC v. Gaal, 58 F.4th 877, 882 (6th Cir. 2023)
- Thompson v. Bank of Am., N.A., 773 F.3d 741, 750 (6th Cir. 2014)

- *League of United Latin Am. Citizens v. Bredesen*, 500 F.3d 523, 527 (6th Cir. 2007)
- *Swierkiewicz v. Sorema N.A.*, 534 U.S. 506, 514 (2002)
- *Goodlow v. Porter*, No. 23-12992, 2024 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 92698, at *4 (E.D. Mich. Mar. 1, 2024)
- *Diakite v. Yellen*, No. 23-10470, 2024 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 27855, at *12-13 (E.D. Mich. Feb. 16, 2024)
- *Compuware Corp. v. IBM*, 259 F. Supp. 2d 597, 600 (E.D. Mich. 2003)
- *Lee v. Ohio Educ. Ass’n*, 951 F.3d 386, 393 (6th Cir. 2020)
- *Ogbonna-McGruder v. Austin Peay State Univ.*, 91 F.4th 833, 840 (6th Cir. 2024)
- *K.O. v. G6 Hosp., LLC*, 728 F. Supp. 3d 624, 640-41 (E.D. Mich. 2024)
- *Ferrer v. Detroit Club Mgmt. Corp.*, No. 22-11427, 2025 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 166857, at *19 (E.D. Mich. Aug. 27, 2025)
- *Sharp v. Williams Prods.*, No. 22-11247, 2024 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 50490, at *11-12 (E.D. Mich. Mar. 21, 2024)
- *Moralez v. McDonalds*, No. 20-13023, 2023 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 114167, at *5 (E.D. Mich. Feb. 8, 2023)
- *Howell v. Father Maloney’s Boys’ Haven, Inc.*, 976 F.3d 750, 752 (6th Cir. 2020)
- *Marcilis v. Twp. of Redford*, 693 F.3d 589, 596 (6th Cir. 2012)
- *Finley v. Huss*, 723 F. App’x 294, 297 (6th Cir. 2018)
- *Coley v. Lucas Cty., Ohio*, 799 F.3d 530, 543 (6th Cir. 2015)
- *S.Y. v. Wyndham Hotels & Resorts, Inc.*, 519 F. Supp. 3d 1069, 1078 (M.D. Fla. 2021)
- *Kyle K. v. Chapman*, 208 F.3d 940, 944 (11th Cir. 2000)
- *J.L. v. Best W. Int’l, Inc.*, 521 F. Supp. 3d 1048, 1075 (D. Colo. 2021)