

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF
TEXAS, SHERMAN DIVISION

Dahlia Doggins v. Ruiz Food Products, Inc.

Doggins · No. 4:25-cv-327 · Decided November 24, 2025

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Eastern District of Texas considers Ruiz Food Products, Inc.’s motion to stay the case and compel arbitration of Dahlia Doggins’s 42 U.S.C. § 1981 racial-discrimination claim. The court applies the Federal Arbitration Act and Texas contract law, concluding that the arbitration agreement is valid, non-illusory, and not modified by the employee handbook acknowledgment form. The motion to stay and compel arbitration is granted.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Eastern District of Texas, Sherman Division
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Amos L. Mazzant
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Eastern District of Texas, Sherman Division
DECIDED	November 24, 2025
DOCKET	4:25-cv-327
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Defendant moved under the Federal Arbitration Act to stay the federal civil-rights action and compel arbitration. The court granted the motion and stayed the case pending arbitration.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	On a motion to compel arbitration, the court determines whether the parties formed a valid arbitration agreement and whether the asserted claims fall within its scope. The party seeking arbitration must prove the existence of an agreement by a preponderance of the evidence; ordinary Texas contract-formation principles govern validity, and ambiguities concerning scope are resolved in favor of arbitration after a valid agreement is established.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Unknown; federal district court memorandum opinion and order with no reported citation

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QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the Federal Arbitration Act governs procedural questions concerning the arbitration agreement.
2. Whether the parties formed a valid and enforceable arbitration agreement under Texas contract law.
3. Whether the Handbook Acknowledgment Form incorporated or modified the arbitration agreement.
4. Whether the arbitration agreement was illusory because the employer could allegedly modify or revoke it.
5. Whether Plaintiff's 42 U.S.C. § 1981 racial-discrimination claim falls within the scope of the arbitration agreement.

HOLDINGS

1. The FAA governs procedural matters concerning the arbitration agreement because the agreement expressly states that it is governed by the FAA.
2. The parties entered into a valid arbitration agreement under Texas law.
3. The Handbook Acknowledgment Form did not incorporate or modify the arbitration agreement.
4. The arbitration agreement was not illusory and was enforceable under Texas law.
5. Plaintiff's § 1981 racial-discrimination claim falls within the arbitration agreement's scope.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“Because Defendant does not expressly retain any right within the Agreement to modify or abolish it, and because the Agreement further “survives termination of the employment relationship,” it is not illusory under Texas law.” (Analysis, Part II.B.3)

“It is therefore ORDERED that Defendant Ruiz Food Products, Inc.’s Motion to Stay Case and Compel Arbitration (Dkt. #5) is hereby GRANTED. It is further ORDERED that this case be stayed pending arbitration.” (Conclusion)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Ruiz Food Products employed Dahlia Doggins from April 2016 to April 2021. During her employment, Doggins signed an Arbitration Agreement on April 30, 2019, and also signed a Handbook Acknowledgment Form; she continued working for nearly two years before an alleged workplace injury and subsequent termination. She later filed a § 1981 racial-discrimination claim, and Ruiz sought to compel arbitration under the agreement, while Doggins argued that the Handbook Acknowledgment Form made the arbitration agreement illusory and unenforceable.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiff filed a 42 U.S.C. § 1981 racial-discrimination action against her former employer. Defendant answered and moved to stay the case and compel arbitration based on an arbitration agreement signed during Plaintiff's employment. After briefing, the court required the parties to submit the complete arbitration agreement and employee handbook, which both parties supplemented, and then ruled on the agreement's validity and scope.

DISPOSITION

other

REMAND INSTRUCTIONS

The case is stayed pending arbitration; no remand was ordered.

CASES CITED

- Henry Schein, Inc. v. Archer & White Sales, Inc., 586 U.S. 63, 65 (2019)
- Volt Info. Scis., Inc. v. Bd. of Trs. of Leland Stanford Junior Univ., 489 U.S. 468, 478 (1989)
- CompuCredit Corp. v. Greenwood, 565 U.S. 95, 97-98 (2012)
- Moses H. Cone Mem'l Hosp. v. Mercury Constr. Corp., 460 U.S. 1, 24 (1983)
- Dean Witter Reynolds, Inc. v. Byrd, 470 U.S. 213, 219, 221 (1985)
- Lloyd's Syndicate 457 v. FloaTEC, L.L.C., 921 F.3d 508, 516 n.5 (5th Cir. 2019)
- Will-Drill Res., Inc. v. Samson Res. Co., 352 F.3d 211, 214 (5th Cir. 2003)
- United Steelworkers of Am. v. Warrior & Gulf Nav. Co., 363 U.S. 574, 582-83 (1960)
- Prima Paint Corp. v. Flood & Conklin Mfg. Co., 388 U.S. 395, 404 n.12 (1967)
- Kubala v. Supreme Prod. Servs., Inc., 830 F.3d 199, 201-02, 204 (5th Cir. 2016)
- IQ Prods. Co. v. WD-40 Co., 871 F.3d 344, 348 (5th Cir. 2017), cert. denied, 584 U.S. 1031 (2018)
- Webb v. Investacorp, Inc., 89 F.3d 252, 258 (5th Cir. 1996)
- Mitsubishi Motors Corp. v. Soler Chrysler-Plymouth, Inc., 473 U.S. 614, 628 (1985)
- Grant v. Houser, 469 F. App'x 310, 315 (5th Cir. 2012)
- Banc One Acceptance Corp. v. Hill, 367 F.3d 426, 429 (5th Cir. 2004)
- AT&T Techs., Inc. v. Commc'ns Workers of Am., 475 U.S. 643, 650 (1986)
- First Options of Chi., Inc. v. Kaplan, 514 U.S. 938, 939 (1995)
- Carey v. 24 Hour Fitness, USA, Inc., 669 F.3d 202, 205-06 (5th Cir. 2012)
- Morrison v. Amway Corp., 517 F.3d 248, 254 (5th Cir. 2008)
- In re Capco Energy, Inc., 669 F.3d 274, 279-80 (5th Cir. 2012)
- Coffel v. Stryker Corp., 284 F.3d 625, 640 n.17 (5th Cir. 2002)
- In re 24R, Inc., 324 S.W.3d 564, 567-68 (Tex. 2010)
- Torres v. S.G.E. Mgmt., L.L.C., 397 F. App'x 63, 68 (5th Cir. 2010)
- Royston, Rayzor, Vickery, & Williams, LLP v. Lopez, 467 S.W.3d 494, 505 (Tex. 2015)

- In re Whataburger Restaurants LLC, 645 S.W.3d 188, 194 (Tex. 2022)
- Fleetwood Enters., Inc. v. Gaskamp, 280 F.3d 1069, 1073 (5th Cir. 2002)
- Goad v. St. David's Healthcare P'ship, L.P., LLP, 2016 WL 2853573, at *2-4 (W.D. Tex. May 13, 2016)
- Disch v. Grubbs Auto. GRA, LLC, 2024 WL 2819524, at *2 (N.D. Tex. June 3, 2024)
- Reinagel v. Deutsche Bank Nat. Tr. Co., 735 F.3d 220, 227 (5th Cir. 2013)
- Valero Ref., Inc. v. M/T Lauberhorn, 813 F.2d 60, 64 (5th Cir. 1987)
- Chandler, Jr. v. Waterwood Nat. Associates, L.P., 2006 WL 1030068, at *2 (S.D. Tex. Apr. 19, 2006)
- Farmers Group, Inc. v. Geter, 620 S.W.3d 702, 709 (Tex. 2021)
- City of Denton v. Brian Rushing, Calvin Patterson and Kevin Marshall, City of Denton v. Rushing, 570 S.W.3d 708, 712 (Tex. 2019)
- Owen v. Hendricks, 433 S.W.2d 164, 166 (Tex. 1968)
- Berwick v. Wagner, 336 S.W.3d 805, 809 (Tex. App.—Houston [1st Dist.] 2011, pet. denied)
- Myers v. Solais Lighting, LLC, 2022 WL 441612, at *10 (E.D. Tex. Jan. 3, 2022), report and recommendation adopted, 2022 WL 433128 (E.D. Tex. Feb. 11, 2022)
- Augustine v. Dallas Med. Ctr., LLC, 2019 WL 3806037, at *4 (E.D. Tex. June 25, 2019), report and recommendation adopted, 2019 WL 3940644 (E.D. Tex. Aug. 21, 2019)
- In re Bank One, N.A., 216 S.W.3d 825, 826 (Tex. 2007)
- In re D. Wilson Constr. Co., 196 S.W.3d 774, 782-83 (Tex. 2006)