

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF KANSAS

Phillip Franklyn Vance-Meyers v. Johnson County, Kansas, et al.

Vance-Meyers · No. No. 26-2272-KHV · Decided June 1, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the District of Kansas overrules the plaintiff's motions to file a master evidence catalog and a supplemental memorandum under seal. The court holds that the plaintiff failed to show a significant interest outweighing the common-law presumption of public access to judicial records and had not demonstrated a need to submit the evidence catalog at the preliminary pleading stage. The court also finds any request for a discovery-related protective order premature.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the District of Kansas
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Kathryn H. Vratil
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the District of Kansas
DECIDED	June 1, 2026
DOCKET	No. 26-2272-KHV
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	The plaintiff moved to file a master evidence catalog and a supplemental memorandum under seal, characterizing the requests as motions for a protective order and leave to file evidence under seal. The district court overruled both motions.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court applied the common-law presumption of public access to judicial records and weighed the public interest in access against the interests asserted in support of sealing. The party seeking sealing had to identify a real and substantial interest favoring nondisclosure and support it with particular and specific facts.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Unpublished district court memorandum and order; persuasive rather than generally binding outside the case.
PARTIES	Phillip Franklyn Vance-Meyers v. Johnson County, Kansas, et al.

TOPICS

civil procedure

pleadings

injunctions

evidence

PRACTICE AREAS

civil procedure

sealing of judicial records

pleading and preliminary screening

injunctive relief

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether plaintiff established a sufficient interest to overcome the common-law presumption of public access and permit filing his master evidence catalog under seal.
2. Whether plaintiff established a sufficient interest to overcome the presumption of public access and permit filing his second supplemental memorandum supporting his emergency motion for a temporary restraining order and preliminary injunction under seal.
3. Whether plaintiff's request for a protective order concerning information produced during discovery was ripe.

HOLDINGS

1. The court held that plaintiff did not overcome the presumption of public access because he failed to show a need to file the master evidence catalog at the preliminary pleading-screening stage and failed to identify a real and substantial interest in nondisclosure that outweighed the public interest.
2. The court held that plaintiff did not overcome the presumption of public access because he did not attach the proposed memorandum or identify specific information in it requiring protection, and merely asserted that it referenced and incorporated the evidence catalog.
3. The court held that any request for protection of information plaintiff might produce during discovery was premature.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“The party seeking to overcome the presumption of public access must show that some significant interest which favors non-disclosure outweighs the public interest in access to court proceedings and documents.” (at 1)

“At this preliminary stage, plaintiff must adequately plead his claims— he does not have to submit evidence in support of any such claims.” (at 2)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Plaintiff sought to seal a master evidence catalog containing 230 exhibits, asserting that it included sensitive personal information and trial strategy. He did not submit the catalog with his sealing motions, and the limited excerpts available in the record appeared to summarize proposed trial exhibits without revealing sensitive personal information beyond what was already disclosed in the complaint. Plaintiff also sought to seal a second supplemental memorandum supporting his request for emergency injunctive relief, but did not attach the proposed memorandum or explain what information required protection.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiff filed an action in the District of Kansas and moved to seal a 230-exhibit master evidence catalog and a second supplemental memorandum supporting his emergency motion for a temporary restraining order and preliminary injunction. The court noted that a magistrate judge was screening the complaint under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B), concluded that plaintiff had not shown either a need to file the catalog at that stage or a significant interest outweighing the public right of access, and overruled both motions.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Mann v. Boatright, 477 F.3d 1140, 1149 (10th Cir. 2007)
- Nixon v. Warner Communications, 435 U.S. 589, 599 (1978)
- Crystal Grower's Corp. v. Dobbins, 616 F.2d 458, 461 (10th Cir. 1980)
- Helm v. Kansas, 656 F.3d 1277, 1292 (10th Cir. 2011)
- Colony Insurance Co. v. Burke, 698 F.3d 1222, 1241 (10th Cir. 2012)
- Gulf Oil Co. v. Bernard, 452 U.S. 89, 102 n.16 (1981)
- United States v. Bacon, 950 F.3d 1286, 1294 (10th Cir. 2020)
- Conley v. Gibson, 355 U.S. 41, 47 (1957)
- Swierkiewicz v. Sorema N.A., 534 U.S. 506, 512 (2002)