

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF
LOUISIANA, LAFAYETTE DIVISION

Francine Simon v. Brookshire Grocery Co.

Simon · No. 6:24-CV-01591 · Decided February 2, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Western District of Louisiana denied Brookshire Grocery Co.’s motion to file under seal surveillance-video still images attached to its motion for summary judgment. The court held that a stipulated confidentiality agreement and protective order did not overcome the strong presumption of public access to judicial records, and that the defendant had not shown specific, compelling reasons for sealing the exhibit.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Western District of Louisiana, Lafayette Division
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Carol B. Whitehurst
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Western District of Louisiana, Lafayette Division
DECIDED	February 2, 2026
DOCKET	6:24-CV-01591
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Defendant moved for leave to file under seal a store surveillance video submitted as an exhibit to its pending motion for summary judgment. The motion was referred to the magistrate judge for determination.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Strict, document-by-document and line-by-line balancing of the public's common-law right of access to judicial records against the interests favoring nondisclosure.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished

TOPICS

- civil procedure
- discovery dispute
- evidence
- commercial litigation

PRACTICE AREAS

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether Defendant showed specific and compelling reasons sufficient to overcome the strong presumption of public access to a surveillance video filed as an exhibit to a motion for summary judgment.
2. Whether a stipulated confidentiality agreement and protective order governing discovery materials justified sealing the surveillance video after related materials had been filed in the court record.

HOLDINGS

1. The motion to seal was denied because Defendant failed to articulate specific, compelling reasons sufficient to overcome the strong presumption of public access to judicial records.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“Sealing judicial records and blocking public access require a “stricter balancing test.”” (at 1)

“Under both standards, the working presumption is that judicial records should not be sealed.” (at 1)

“But at the adjudicative stage, when materials enter the court record, the standard for shielding records from public view is far more arduous.” (at 1)

“Accordingly, because Defendant has failed to articulate specific, compelling reasons sufficient to overcome the strong presumption of public access to judicial records, IT IS ORDERED that Defendant’s Motion for Leave to File Exhibit Under Seal (Rec. Doc. 32) is DENIED.” (at 1)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

The dispute involved surveillance video from an alleged slip-and-fall incident at a Brookshire Grocery Co. store. Defendant asserted that the video contained confidential information about store camera placement and argued that disclosure could create risks involving criminal activity and store incidents. Defendant nevertheless attached ten still images from the video to its summary-judgment motion, thereby publicly disseminating the camera-placement information it sought to protect.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Before removal, the parties entered into a stipulated confidentiality agreement and protective order in the Fifteenth Judicial District Court. After removal, Defendant produced surveillance video to Plaintiff under that order and attached ten still images from the video to its motion for summary judgment. Defendant then moved to seal the video exhibit, but the court denied the motion.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- June Med. Servs., L.L.C. v. Phillips, 22 F.4th 512, 521 (5th Cir. 2022)
- Binh Hoa Le v. Exeter Fin. Corp., 990 F.3d 410, 420 (5th Cir. 2021)

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