

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF
LOUISIANA

Joseph Raymond Steib, Sr. v. Huntington Ingalls, Inc., et al.

Steib · No. No. 24-2486 · Decided April 30, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Eastern District of Louisiana grants Huntington Ingalls Incorporated’s motion to quash a trial subpoena issued to former employee Danny Joyce. The court concludes that the subpoena would impose an undue burden because the proposed testimony largely concerns matters outside Joyce’s personal knowledge and overlaps with prior deposition testimony. The court declines to rule in advance on the admissibility of the prior testimony, stating that objections must be addressed under the Federal Rules of Evidence.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Eastern District of Louisiana
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Gerard Guidry
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Eastern District of Louisiana
DECIDED	April 30, 2026
DOCKET	No. 24-2486
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Defendant moved under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 45 to quash a trial subpoena directed to former employee Danny Joyce. The district court granted the motion.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court applied Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 45(d)(3)(A) and evaluated whether the subpoena imposed an undue burden, considering the relevance of the requested information and the requesting party's need for the testimony.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Unpublished federal district court order; precedential status unknown
PARTIES	Janai Steib, as Independent Executrix of the Estate of Joseph Steib, Sr. v. Huntington Ingalls, Inc.

TOPICS

- discovery dispute
- evidence
- hearsay
- relevance
- civil procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

civil procedure

evidence

asbestos litigation

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether Huntington Ingalls had standing to move to quash a subpoena directed to a nonparty witness.
2. Whether the subpoena subjected Danny Joyce to an undue burden under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 45(d)(3)(A).
3. Whether Joyce's proposed testimony concerning historical practices and information learned during prior investigations and litigation was proper personal-knowledge fact testimony.
4. Whether the court should overrule Huntington Ingalls' objections to plaintiff's designated deposition testimony.

HOLDINGS

1. A party has standing to move to quash a subpoena directed to a nonparty when the party possesses a personal right or privilege in the subject matter of the subpoena. Huntington Ingalls had standing because the subpoena sought information concerning an investigation conducted at its expense and direction.
2. A trial subpoena should be quashed when requiring a retired former corporate representative who is not a designated expert, has not been deposed in the case, and has not otherwise participated in the matter to appear and testify would impose a burden disproportionate to the requesting party's need, particularly where the proposed testimony is cumulative and its relevance is inadequate.
3. A subpoena cannot convert testimony previously given by a witness in a corporate-representative or expert capacity into admissible live fact testimony merely by subpoenaing the witness in a personal capacity. Testimony concerning matters learned from others or through prior investigations and litigation is not proper personal-knowledge fact testimony under Rule 602.
4. Granting the motion to quash did not resolve the admissibility of Joyce's prior designated deposition testimony; that admissibility must be determined under the Federal Rules of Evidence on an objection-by-objection basis.

KEY QUOTATIONS

"Plaintiff may not convert testimony previously given in an expert or corporate-representative capacity into live fact testimony in this matter merely by subpoenaing Mr. Joyce in his personal capacity." (3)

"The admissibility of Mr. Joyce's prior testimony must be determined under the Federal Rules on an objection-by-objection basis." (5)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Danny Joyce formerly worked for Avondale as an industrial hygienist and director of safety and is now retired. Plaintiff sought his live trial testimony concerning Avondale's historical asbestos practices, knowledge of asbestos hazards, household asbestos exposure risks, and an investigation Joyce conducted in 1982, including

information he obtained from a person whose inspections predated Joyce's employment. Plaintiff had already designated testimony from at least seven of Joyce's prior depositions for use at trial, and Huntington Ingalls did not object to use of that testimony subject to the Federal Rules of Evidence.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Joseph Raymond Steib, Sr. brought an asbestos-related action against Huntington Ingalls, Inc. After Steib died, the court substituted Janai Steib as plaintiff in her capacity as independent executrix. Plaintiff issued a subpoena requiring former Avondale employee Danny Joyce to appear and testify at trial. Huntington Ingalls moved to quash, plaintiff opposed, and the court granted the motion while declining to rule on the admissibility of Joyce's previously designated deposition testimony.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Black v. DMNO, LLC, No. CV 16-02708, 2018 WL 488991, at *2 (E.D. La. Jan. 19, 2018)
- Brown v. Braddick, 595 F.2d 961, 967 (5th Cir. 1979)
- Smith v. Tulane Univ., No. CV 24-392, 2024 WL 3595455, at *3 (E.D. La. July 30, 2024)
- Nautimill S.A. v. Legacy Marine Transp., LLC, No. CV 15-1065, 2016 WL 3877977, at *1 (E.D. La. July 18, 2016)
- Wiwa v. Royal Dutch Petroleum Co., 392 F.3d 812, 818 (5th Cir. 2004)
- Jackson v. Avondale Indus. Inc., 469 F. Supp. 3d 689, 698 (E.D. La. 2020)
- Rivet v. Huntington Ingalls, Inc.
- Sentilles v. Huntington Ingalls Incorporated