

COURT OF APPEALS OF ARKANSAS

Robert Wells v. Timothy Randall

Wells, 2026 Ark. App. 187 (Ark. Ct. App. 2026) · No. CV-24-692 · Decided March 18, 2026

SUMMARY

The Arkansas Court of Appeals affirmed a \$14,800 judgment in favor of Timothy Randall in a replevin action concerning a wheel-alignment machine destroyed by a tornado. The majority declined to resolve the parties’ disputed title and contractual rights de novo, holding that Robert Wells had not demonstrated reversible error. Judges Tucker and Thyer dissented, concluding that Randall failed to prove an ownership or possessory interest sufficient to support the judgment.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	Court of Appeals of Arkansas
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Brandon J. Harrison; Chief Judge Klappenbach; Judge Virden; Judge Gladwin; Judge Barrett; Judge Murphy; Judge Abramson; Judge Tucker; Judge Thyer
JURISDICTION	Arkansas Court of Appeals
DECIDED	March 18, 2026
DOCKET	CV-24-692
DISPOSITION	affirmed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Robert Wells appealed from a Boone County Circuit Court judgment entered after a bench trial in a replevin action. The circuit court awarded Timothy Randall \$14,800, representing the value of a wheel-alignment machine, less a \$2,200 setoff.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The majority did not reach a merits determination of title or expressly apply a distinct evidentiary standard; it held that Wells failed to demonstrate reversible error. The dissent would have applied the clearly erroneous standard to the circuit court's factual findings.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	published
PARTIES	Robert Wells v. Timothy Randall

TOPICS

- replevin
- appellate procedure
- standard of review
- remedies
- contracts

PRACTICE AREAS

appellate procedure

civil procedure

remedies

contracts

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the Court of Appeals should independently determine which party held legal title or a possessory interest in the wheel-alignment machine when the parties did not adequately present or analyze the issue below or on appeal.
2. Whether Wells demonstrated reversible error in the circuit court's \$14,800 replevin judgment.

HOLDINGS

1. The Court of Appeals declined to decide the title issue de novo because the parties had not developed the relevant legal analysis or presented the issue adequately in the circuit court or on appeal.
2. Wells failed to demonstrate reversible error, so the Court of Appeals affirmed the circuit court's judgment awarding Randall \$14,800.

KEY QUOTATIONS

"No thanks. We decline to step off into the void and argue the title issue de novo for one side or the other." (at 2)

"To reverse that judgment, Wells must demonstrate reversible error here. He has not done so." (at 2)

"But our opinions are precedent for what we decide. Ark. Sup. Ct. R. 5-2(c)." (at 2)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Randall acquired contents of an abandoned storage unit through an online auction, including a wheel-alignment machine. The parties gave conflicting testimony about whether Randall bought the property with his own money or with money supplied by Wells, and about any agreement concerning Wells's right to select items from the storage-unit contents. Wells retained the machine after terminating Randall's employment, but a tornado destroyed it four days before trial, leading the circuit court to award Randall \$14,800, offset by \$2,200.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Randall brought a replevin action seeking possession of property acquired from an abandoned storage unit. Before trial, a tornado destroyed the wheel-alignment machine, so the circuit court awarded Randall its value. After the bench trial, Wells appealed, arguing that the damages award was unsupported because he held legal title. The Court of Appeals affirmed, concluding that Wells had not demonstrated reversible error and that the parties had inadequately presented the title issue for appellate resolution.

DISPOSITION

affirmed

CASES CITED

- Anderson v. Sharp Cnty., 295 Ark. 366, 749 S.W.2d 306 (1988)
- City of Greenbrier v. Roberts, 354 Ark. 591, 127 S.W.3d 454 (2003)
- Williams v. Harrell, 226 Ark. 115, 288 S.W.2d 321 (1956)
- Edwards v. Cairns, 2025 Ark. App. 111, 708 S.W.3d 81 (2025)

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