

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
DISTRICT OF MASSACHUSETTS**

_____)	CIVIL ACTION NO: 4:20-CV-40065
ANDRE ROBERTS,)	
on behalf of himself and all)	
others similarly situated,)	
)	
Plaintiff,)	
)	
v.)	
)	
BIMBO BAKERIES USA, INC. and,)	
BIMBO FOODS BAKERIES)	
DISTRIBUTION, LLC)	
Defendants.)	
_____)	

CLASS AND INDIVIDUAL ACTION COMPLAINT

INTRODUCTION

This is an action brought on behalf of individuals who are current and former delivery drivers or “Distributors” of Defendants Bimbo Bakeries USA, Inc. and Bimbo Foods Bakeries Distribution, LLC (together, “Bimbo” or “Defendants”) challenging the unlawful misclassification of them as independent contractors instead of employees. Plaintiff asserts violations of the Massachusetts Wage Act (“MWA”), Mass. Gen. Laws ch. 149, §§ 148, et seq. on a class basis and individual claims under the federal Fair Labor Standards Act (“FLSA”).¹

¹ Plaintiff was recently dismissed from a Fair Labor Standards Act (“FLSA”) collective action styled *Camp v. Bimbo Bakeries USA, Inc.*, 1:18-cv-00378, after the New Hampshire District Court determined that *Bristol-Myers Squibb Co. v. Superior Court of California*, ___ U.S. ___, 137 S. Ct. 1773, 198 L. Ed. 395 (2017), prevented it from exercising personal jurisdiction over Defendants with respect to the FLSA claims of individuals (such as Plaintiff) who did not work in New Hampshire. *See Camp*, 2020 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 60997 (D.N.H. Apr. 7, 2020). Plaintiff’s FLSA claims are tolled as of the date he opted-in to *Camp* (i.e., September 3, 2019).

PARTIES

1. Plaintiff Andre Roberts is an adult resident of Worcester, Massachusetts. From approximately March 2012 through 2019, Roberts delivered breads and baked goods on behalf of Defendants in Massachusetts. During the relevant time, he was Defendants' employee as that term is defined under Massachusetts law and the FLSA.

2. Defendant Bimbo Bakeries USA, Inc. is a corporate entity with its headquarters in Horsham, Pennsylvania. Defendant Bimbo Bakeries USA, Inc. conducts business through distribution facilities across the United States.

3. Defendant Bimbo Foods Bakeries, LLC is corporate entity with its headquarters in Horsham, Pennsylvania. It conducts business through distribution facilities across the United States.

4. Defendants are engaged in interstate commerce and employ individuals engaged in interstate commerce and are therefore covered by the FLSA, and they are "employers" as that term is defined under the respective laws of Massachusetts.

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

5. The Court has original jurisdiction over the FLSA claims asserted in this matter pursuant to 29 U.S.C. § 216(b) and 28 U.S.C. §§ 1331.

6. The Court has supplemental jurisdiction over the state law claims pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1367.

7. The Court also has jurisdiction over this Action pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1332(a) and (d) where the parties are citizens of different states and the amounts in controversy exceed the statutory limits.

8. Venue in this forum is proper pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§ 1391(a) and (b), because a substantial part of the events giving rise to this action occurred in this District and the Defendants are subject to personal jurisdiction in this District.

FACTS

9. The business of Defendants and their affiliates consists of delivering breads and baked goods to grocery stores and other outlets across the United States under the brand names Sara Lee, Nature's Harvest, and others.

10. Defendants pay workers to deliver and distribute these breads and baked goods within specific geographic regions unilaterally determined by Defendants and these areas are referred to as "routes" or "territories."

11. Defendants now require most workers to form corporations as a condition of working for Defendants. Defendants refer to these individuals as "IBPs."

12. Plaintiff worked for Defendants in Massachusetts.

13. The duties of Plaintiff and other Distributors entail, at least in part, driving vehicles weighing less than 10,000 pounds because, for example, Plaintiff and others often visit stores in their personal vehicles to drop off small orders of products and to arrange displays.

14. On a typical week, Distributors such as the named Plaintiff work at least forty hours per week delivering the baked goods for Defendants. This work mainly consists of driving vehicles to stores within a territory designated by Bimbo, delivering Bimbo's products to these stores, and arranging the products on the shelves according to Bimbo's display standards.

15. Plaintiff Roberts estimates having worked approximately 60 hours per week during his tenure working for Defendants.

16. Defendants treat Plaintiff and other IBPs as independent contractors, claiming that they are not entitled to the protections of state and federal employment laws.

17. Nevertheless, the work of Plaintiff and other IBPs falls squarely within Defendants' usual course of business and their work is integral to Defendants' baked goods distribution business, and Defendants also directly employ delivery drivers who perform the same work for Defendants but who are treated as W2 employees.

18. In order to work for Defendants, Plaintiff and other IBPs were required to pay a substantial sum of money to purchase purported "Distribution Rights". Most IBPs finance these purchases through loans facilitated by Defendants (often via Advantafirst Capital Financial Services, LLC a wholly-owned subsidiary of Defendants' parent company).

19. Plaintiff and other IBPs are not engaged in independent businesses. Rather, Plaintiff and IBPs generally work exclusively for Defendants and (where applicable) their associated corporate entities generally exist for the sole purpose of working for Defendants. In fact, Plaintiff and other IBPs are prohibited from performing any similar delivery work for another company.

20. Defendants exercise virtually unlimited control over Plaintiff's and IBP's work, dictating all prices, requiring Plaintiff and IBPs to deliver to stores that are not profitable, employing supervisors who travel to stores in Plaintiff' territories to review their work, and threatening to terminate Plaintiff and IBPs whose work does not satisfy Defendants' standards.

21. Defendants unilaterally determine the "price" that its customers (i.e., the grocery stores) must pay Defendants for the products that IBPs are required to deliver to Defendants' customers.

22. Defendants then pay Plaintiff and other IBPs compensation for their distribution services each week, in an amount roughly equal to the difference between the amount of money that Defendants' customers pay for products and the amount of money that Defendants purport to

“charge” IBPs for Defendants’ products.

23. Indeed, Defendants have directly paid compensation to Plaintiff and other IBPs pursuant to the arrangement described above during the relevant statutory period up until the present as direct compensation for their delivery services.

24. Plaintiff and other IBP’s routinely work more than forty hours per week, and they are not paid any “time-and-a-half” overtime premium for their hours worked over forty.

25. Each week, Defendants also make deductions from the earnings of Plaintiff and other IBPs. These deductions are itemized on weekly “settlement sheets” and include, *inter alia*, deductions for route loan repayments, use of Defendants’ electronic equipment, lost or stolen product that is never purchased at retail locations, insurance coverage that benefits Defendants, supplies, truck lease payments, penalties for returning too much stale product to Defendants, and other fines and penalties.

26. In addition, Plaintiff and other IBOs regularly incur work-related expenses for, *inter alia*, gas, vehicle maintenance/repair, and insurance. Defendants do not reimburse Plaintiff and other IBPs for such expenses, which are directly related to the work Plaintiff and other IBPs perform for Defendants.

27. Though Plaintiff regularly work more than forty hours per week, Defendants do not provide any overtime premium for those hours worked over forty each week.

28. Defendants’ misclassification of its delivery drivers as independent contractors and the additional violations Massachusetts law described above were willful and undertaken in bad faith because, among other reasons, delivery drivers who provide identical services as Plaintiff have been held to be employees of Defendants. See Matter of Cowan, 159 A.3d 1312 (N.Y. App. Div. 2018) (holding that Bimbo Bakeries “exercised sufficient supervision, direction

Explore Litigation Insights

Docket Alarm provides insights to develop a more informed litigation strategy and the peace of mind of knowing you're on top of things.

Real-Time Litigation Alerts



Keep your litigation team up-to-date with **real-time alerts** and advanced team management tools built for the enterprise, all while greatly reducing PACER spend.

Our comprehensive service means we can handle Federal, State, and Administrative courts across the country.

Advanced Docket Research



With over 230 million records, Docket Alarm's cloud-native docket research platform finds what other services can't. Coverage includes Federal, State, plus PTAB, TTAB, ITC and NLRB decisions, all in one place.

Identify arguments that have been successful in the past with full text, pinpoint searching. Link to case law cited within any court document via Fastcase.

Analytics At Your Fingertips



Learn what happened the last time a particular judge, opposing counsel or company faced cases similar to yours.

Advanced out-of-the-box PTAB and TTAB analytics are always at your fingertips.

API

Docket Alarm offers a powerful API (application programming interface) to developers that want to integrate case filings into their apps.

LAW FIRMS

Build custom dashboards for your attorneys and clients with live data direct from the court.

Automate many repetitive legal tasks like conflict checks, document management, and marketing.

FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

Litigation and bankruptcy checks for companies and debtors.

E-DISCOVERY AND LEGAL VENDORS

Sync your system to PACER to automate legal marketing.