

Case Brief

Civ Pro, personal jurisdiction, effects of state rules concerning service of process

Bauer, 3/7/15

Identity of Case

Walker v. Armco Steel Co., 446 U.S. 1980

Summary of Facts/Procedural History

This is an interlocutory appeal, I really don't know what the facts are.

Suit was brought in Federal court in OK based on diversity jurisdiction. Trial court dismissed the complaint as barred by an OK statute of limitations that tolled the statute when a complaint was filed and the defendant was served. FRCP's toll the statute when the complaint is filed. 10th Cir. Barely confirmed, and appeal was taken to SCOTUS.

Statement of the Issue

Which law applies?

Holding

State.

Reasoning

Ragan v. Merchants had basically the same facts as this case, and the court went with state law, following the precedent of Erie. Giving the cause of action longer life in federal court than it has in state court would greatly encourage forum shopping, and the purpose of Erie was to increase horizontal uniformity and reduce forum shopping.

Ragan was not overruled by Hanna, as there was a conflict of laws in Hanna and not here (although they have to construe conflict of laws really narrowly to get to that conclusion, since the laws do in fact have different requirements).

The outcome test has a little bit of weight. Its not the outcome of the trial we should be looking at as dispositive to decide whether it is federal or state laws, but rather the outcome of going with one or the other as it would lead to the defendant's rights and forum shopping.

Evaluation