

Ex parte Chambers

A party created a corporation that competed with a prior employer despite the existence of a valid non-compete agreement. The trial court granted an injunction, which the party repeatedly violated. After a contempt finding and court-ordered dissolution of the corporation, the party resumed doing business as a sole proprietorship and was again cited for contempt by the trial court. The party appealed the second contempt charge.

The Texas Supreme Court defined contempt as disobedience to or disrespect of a court by acting in opposition to its authority, and classified contempt as either direct (taking place within the presence of the court) or constructive (actions taken outside of the court's presence). In this case, the actions were considered constructive contempt as they constituted willful disobedience of a written court order by actions taken outside the courtroom.