

OHIO COURT OF APPEALS, SEVENTH APPELLATE DISTRICT

State v. Shipp

2026-Ohio-416 · No. 25 BE 0037 · Decided February 10, 2026

SUMMARY

The Seventh District Court of Appeals of Ohio affirmed Cortez Shipp’s convictions and sentence following his guilty plea to aggravated trafficking in methamphetamine. The court held that the trial court complied with Ohio Criminal Rule 11 and that Shipp’s plea was knowing, voluntary, and intelligent. The court also rejected Shipp’s ineffective-assistance claim, finding no demonstrated deficient performance or prejudice.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	Ohio Court of Appeals, Seventh Appellate District
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Mark A. Hanni; Cheryl L. Waite; Carol Ann Robb
JURISDICTION	Ohio Court of Appeals, Seventh Appellate District, Belmont County
DECIDED	February 10, 2026
DOCKET	25 BE 0037
DISPOSITION	affirmed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Cortez Shipp appealed from a Belmont County Court of Common Pleas judgment accepting his guilty plea to aggravated trafficking in drugs and imposing a jointly recommended prison sentence.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The validity of a guilty plea is evaluated under the totality of the relevant circumstances. A trial court must strictly comply with Crim.R. 11(C)(2) when advising a defendant of constitutional rights and substantially comply when advising the defendant of nonconstitutional rights. Ineffective-assistance claims are evaluated under the two-prong Strickland test, including deficient performance and resulting prejudice.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Published Ohio Court of Appeals opinion
PARTIES	Cortez Shipp v. State of Ohio

TOPICS

- plea bargaining
- criminal procedure
- right to counsel
- ineffective assistance
- appellate procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

criminal procedure

criminal defense

appellate practice

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the trial court accepted Shipp's guilty plea knowingly, voluntarily, and intelligently in compliance with Crim.R. 11(C)(2).
2. Whether Shipp was denied the effective assistance of counsel because counsel allegedly failed to review discovery and advise him adequately before the plea.

HOLDINGS

1. The guilty plea was knowingly, voluntarily, and intelligently entered because the trial court strictly complied with Crim.R. 11(C)(2) as to the constitutional rights waived and substantially complied as to the nonconstitutional plea requirements.
2. Shipp failed to establish ineffective assistance of counsel because the record contradicted his claim that counsel failed to review the evidence and he failed to demonstrate prejudice.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“If the plea is not knowing, intelligent, and voluntary, it has been obtained in violation of due process and is void.” (§ 9)

“A guilty plea waives any right to appeal any trial court error, except for errors in the plea itself.” (§ 23)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

The bill of particulars alleged that Shipp possessed and trafficked in methamphetamine, cocaine, and a fentanyl-related compound in Saint Clairsville, Ohio, on March 1, 2025. He was indicted on six first-degree felony counts. Under a plea agreement, he pleaded guilty to aggravated trafficking in methamphetamine, while the State agreed that the remaining five counts would be merged and dismissed and the parties jointly recommended a ten-year minimum to fifteen-year maximum prison sentence. During the plea colloquy, Shipp confirmed that counsel had reviewed the evidence with him, answered his questions, and that he was satisfied with counsel's advice and competence.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

A Belmont County grand jury indicted Shipp on six first-degree felony drug-trafficking and drug-possession counts. After initially pleading not guilty, Shipp negotiated an agreement under which he pleaded guilty to one aggravated-trafficking count, the remaining five counts were merged and dismissed, and the parties jointly recommended a prison term of ten to fifteen years. The trial court accepted the plea and imposed the recommended sentence. Shipp timely appealed, challenging the validity of his plea and asserting ineffective assistance of counsel.

DISPOSITION

affirmed

CASES CITED

- State v. Trubee, 2005-Ohio-552, ¶ 8 (3d Dist.)
- Brady v. United States, 397 U.S. 742 (1970)
- State v. Martinez, 2004-Ohio-6806, ¶¶ 11-12 (7th Dist.)
- Boykin v. Alabama, 395 U.S. 238, 243 (1969)
- State v. Truax, 2007-Ohio-4993, ¶ 8 (7th Dist.)
- State v. Kelley, 57 Ohio St.3d 127 (1991), paragraph two of the syllabus
- State v. Snyder, 2004-Ohio-3366, ¶ 13 (7th Dist.)
- State v. Barnett, 73 Ohio App.3d 244, 249 (2d Dist. 1991)
- Strickland v. Washington, 466 U.S. 668, 687 (1984)
- State v. Bradley, 42 Ohio St.3d 136 (1989), paragraphs two and three of the syllabus
- State v. Calhoun, 86 Ohio St.3d 279, 289 (1999)