

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF
LOUISIANA, LAKE CHARLES DIVISION

Shane Jeansonne v. Stephen Dwight

Jeansonne · No. 2:23-cv-00561 · Decided March 16, 2026

SUMMARY

The court addresses the remand of Shane Jeansonne’s civil rights action challenging Louisiana laws affecting sex offenders. After the Fifth Circuit vacated an earlier dismissal based on Heck v. Humphrey, the court directs issuance of summons and orders defendant Stephen Dwight to respond, followed by discovery and potential summary-judgment proceedings. The court grants Jeansonne’s motion to the extent it requires Dwight to respond after service.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Western District of Louisiana, Lake Charles Division
WRITING FOR THE COURT	James D. Cain, Jr.; Thomas P. LeBlanc
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Western District of Louisiana, Lake Charles Division
DECIDED	March 16, 2026
DOCKET	2:23-cv-00561
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	On remand from the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit after vacatur of the district court's prior dismissal with prejudice, the district court addressed plaintiff's motion to proceed and directed service and further proceedings.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished
PARTIES	Shane Jeansonne v. Stephen Dwight

TOPICS

- civil rights
- pleadings
- service of process
- summary judgment
- appellate procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

- civil rights
- constitutional law
- federal civil procedure
- sex-offender registration laws

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the action should proceed on remand after the Fifth Circuit held that it was not barred by *Heck v. Humphrey*.
2. Whether plaintiff's motion to proceed and order defendant to respond should be granted to the extent necessary to initiate service and further proceedings.

HOLDINGS

1. The action was not Heck-barred, consistent with the Fifth Circuit's prior determination, and any dismissal on remand had to be based on reasons other than Heck.
2. The motion was granted to the extent that Stephen Dwight was ordered to respond to the complaint following service.

KEY QUOTATIONS

"We do not remand this case based on any expectation that Jeansonne might ultimately prevail in his challenge to Louisiana law. But if the district court is to dismiss the action, it must be for reasons other than Heck. So on remand, the district court should consider the merits of Jeansonne's claims concerning state laws passed independently from SORNA." (Doc. 21, p. 3)

"Based on the foregoing the Motion to Proceed and Order Defendant to Respond [Doc. 25] filed by Jeansonne is GRANTED to the extent the defendant, Stephen Dwight, is ordered to respond to the Complaint following service thereof." (Order at 2)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Jeansonne was convicted in the Western District of Louisiana in 2017 of possessing child pornography under 18 U.S.C. § 2252(a)(5)(B). His sentence required registration under SORNA, 34 U.S.C. § 20901 et seq. He then filed this civil-rights action challenging various Louisiana laws affecting sex offenders and seeking declaratory and injunctive relief.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Jeansonne filed a pro se civil-rights complaint challenging various Louisiana laws affecting sex offenders and seeking declaratory and injunctive relief. The district court previously dismissed the action with prejudice as barred by *Heck v. Humphrey*. The Fifth Circuit vacated that judgment, held that the action was not Heck-barred, and remanded for consideration of claims concerning state laws enacted independently of SORNA. On remand, the district court directed issuance of summons, ordered Dwight to respond after service, authorized discovery, and established a schedule for potential summary-judgment motions.

DISPOSITION

other

REMAND INSTRUCTIONS

The clerk must issue summons. Stephen Dwight must file a response within twenty-one days after service. After responsive pleadings are filed, the parties have sixty days to complete appropriate discovery. Thereafter, motions for summary judgment may be filed within thirty days, and any party not filing such a motion must file a statement of issues.

CASES CITED

- United States v. Jeansonne, Criminal Action No. 1:17-cr-267
- Heck v. Humphrey, 512 U.S. 477 (1994)

OPINION

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT WESTERN DISTRICT OF LOUISIANA LAKE CHARLES DIVISION SHANE JEANSONNE DOCKET NO. 2:23-cv-00561 VERSUS JUDGE JAMES D. CAIN, JR. STEPHEN DWIGHT MAGISTRATE JUDGE LEBLANC ORDER Before the court is a civil rights complaint filed by plaintiff Shane Jeansonne who is proceeding pro se and in forma pauperis in this matter. Plaintiff was convicted in the Western District of Louisiana for possessing child pornography in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 2252(a)(5)(B) in 2017.

United States v. Jeansonne, Criminal Action No. 1:17-cr-267. As part of his sentence, he was required to register in accordance with the Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act (“SORNA”), pursuant to 34 U.S.C. § 20901, et seq. See doc. 9, att. 1, p. 1. Through the instant suit, plaintiff seeks to have various state laws affecting sex offenders declared unconstitutional and enjoin their enforcement.

On June 28, 2024, this matter was dismissed with prejudice, finding it was barred by Heck v. Humphrey, 512 U.S. 477 (1994). Doc. 15. Plaintiff appealed and on December 6, 2024, the United States Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals vacated the Court’s judgment, finding that the action was not Heck-barred, and remanded the case for further proceedings, holding, “We do not remand this case based on any expectation that Jeansonne might ultimately prevail in his challenge to Louisiana law.

But if the district court is to dismiss the action, it must be for reasons other than Heck. So on remand, the district court should consider the merits of Jeansonne’s claims concerning state laws passed independently from SORNA.” Doc. 21, p. 3.

Therefore, to determine an appropriate resolution to Jeansonne’s claim, THE CLERK IS DIRECTED to issue summons. IT IS ORDERED that Stephen Dwight file a response within twenty-one (21) days after the date of service.

After all of the responsive pleadings are filed, an additional sixty (60) days is allowed for the parties to complete all appropriate discovery. Thereafter, if deemed appropriate, Jeansonne and/or any other party may file a motion for summary judgment within thirty (30) days, to include

material and relevant affidavits, certified records, interrogatories and answers, admissions, and depositions, if any, and a supporting memorandum brief.

Any party not filing a motion for summary judgment SHALL FILE a Statement of Issues, within the same period, which shall enumerate each genuine issue of material fact perceived by that party which is relevant to this matter, or state that there are none. This statement will be used by the court to determine the necessity of an evidentiary hearing. Based on the foregoing the Motion to Proceed and Order Defendant to Respond [Doc.

25] filed by Jeansonne is GRANTED to the extent the defendant, Stephen Dwight, is ordered to respond to the Complaint following service thereof. All parties shall have the responsibility of promptly reporting to the court and to the other party any change in their mailing address. Failure to do so shall be considered grounds for dismissal under LR 41.3. THUS DONE AND SIGNED in chambers this 16th day of March, 2026. ☐☐ KE UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE -2-