

COURT OF CRIMINAL APPEALS OF TENNESSEE

Jason White v. John Beard, Warden

No. W2025-01289-CCA-R3-HC · No. W2025-01289-CCA-R3-HC · Decided June 25, 2026

SUMMARY

The Tennessee Court of Criminal Appeals affirmed the summary dismissal of Jason White’s petition for a writ of habeas corpus. The court held that alleged inaccuracies in search-warrant and affidavit-of-complaint materials were not cognizable habeas claims and that the indictment sufficiently charged conspiracy, including an overt act in furtherance of the conspiracy.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	Court of Criminal Appeals of Tennessee
WRITING FOR THE COURT	John W. Campbell, Sr.; Camille R. McMullen; Jill Bartee Ayers
JURISDICTION	Tennessee Court of Criminal Appeals
DECIDED	June 25, 2026
DOCKET	W2025-01289-CCA-R3-HC
DISPOSITION	affirmed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Appeal as of right from the Shelby County Criminal Court's summary dismissal of a petition for writ of habeas corpus.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Whether a petitioner is entitled to habeas corpus relief is a question of law reviewed de novo. A habeas corpus petition may be summarily dismissed when it fails to demonstrate that the judgment is void.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Published opinion
PARTIES	Jason White v. John Beard, Warden, State of Tennessee

TOPICS

- habeas corpus
- criminal procedure
- post-conviction relief
- appellate procedure
- conspiracy

PRACTICE AREAS

- criminal procedure
- habeas corpus
- post-conviction relief
- appellate procedure

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the alleged false information in a search-warrant affidavit and affidavit of complaint rendered the criminal judgments void and supported habeas corpus relief.
2. Whether the indictment was facially defective because it alleged an offense period beginning before the date investigators learned of the package.
3. Whether the indictment was facially defective for failing to allege an overt act in furtherance of the conspiracy.
4. Whether the habeas corpus court properly summarily dismissed the petition without appointing counsel or conducting an evidentiary hearing.

HOLDINGS

1. Alleged constitutional defects in a search warrant, or invalidity in an affidavit of complaint or arrest warrant, would render a judgment voidable rather than void and therefore are not cognizable grounds for habeas corpus relief after a valid conviction.
2. The indictment was not facially defective because it tracked or referenced the applicable methamphetamine and conspiracy statutes, identified the charged offenses and relevant dates, and alleged conduct in furtherance of the conspiracy.
3. Although a conspiracy indictment must allege an overt act in furtherance of the charged conspiracy, the indictment satisfied that requirement by alleging delivery of the methamphetamine parcel and a codefendant's agreement to accept it.
4. The habeas corpus court properly summarily dismissed the petition without appointing counsel or conducting an evidentiary hearing because the petition did not demonstrate a facially void judgment.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“A valid indictment is an “essential jurisdictional element” to any prosecution.” (at 4)

“An indictment passes constitutional muster if it provides: (1) notice of the charge against which the accused must defend himself; (2) an adequate basis for the entry of a proper judgment; and (3) protection of the accused from double jeopardy.” (at 4)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

White and two codefendants were indicted for conspiring to possess 300 grams or more of methamphetamine with intent to sell and deliver within a drug-free school zone. The indictment alleged that members of the conspiracy used an address to receive a methamphetamine shipment and that White and a codefendant caused or agreed to the delivery and acceptance of the package. After convictions and sentencing, White challenged the indictment through habeas corpus, asserting that investigative affidavits contained false shipping-address information, that the alleged offense period was defective, and that the indictment lacked an overt act.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

A Shelby County grand jury indicted White for two conspiracy offenses involving methamphetamine and a drug-free school zone. Following a joint trial, he was convicted, sentenced, and had his convictions affirmed on direct

appeal; post-conviction relief was also denied. White later filed a habeas corpus petition alleging that the indictment was jurisdictionally defective because it relied on false information, alleged an offense period beginning before the alleged discovery of the package, and failed to allege an overt act. The habeas corpus court summarily dismissed the petition, and the Court of Criminal Appeals affirmed.

DISPOSITION

affirmed

CASES CITED

- State v. White, No. W2018-00329-CCA-R3-CD, 2019 WL 549652 (Tenn. Crim. App. Feb. 11, 2019), perm. app. denied (Tenn. July 19, 2019)
- State v. Cole, No. W2017-01980-CCA-R3-CD, 2018 WL 5810011 (Tenn. Crim. App. Nov. 5, 2018), perm. app. denied (Tenn. Mar. 28, 2019)
- White v. State, No. W2022-01437-CCA-R3-PC, 2023 WL 6142444 (Tenn. Crim. App. Sept. 20, 2023), perm. app. denied (Tenn. Apr. 11, 2024)
- State v. Lawson, 291 S.W.3d 864, 869 (Tenn. 2009)
- Faulkner v. State, 226 S.W.3d 358, 361 (Tenn. 2007)
- Summers v. State, 212 S.W.3d 251, 255-56 (Tenn. 2007)
- Dykes v. Compton, 978 S.W.2d 528, 529 (Tenn. 1998)
- Wyatt v. State, 24 S.W.3d 319, 322 (Tenn. 2000)
- Hickman v. State, 153 S.W.3d 16, 20 (Tenn. 2004)
- Dixon v. Holland, 70 S.W.3d 33, 36 (Tenn. 2002)
- Hart v. State, 21 S.W.3d 901, 903 (Tenn. 2000)
- Roberts v. Sexton, No. E2013-01034-CCA-R3-HC, 2013 WL 5210241, at *2 (Tenn. Crim. App. Sept. 13, 2013), perm. app. denied (Tenn. Nov. 13, 2013)
- State v. Hill, 954 S.W.2d 725, 727 (Tenn. 1997)
- State v. Tate, 912 S.W.2d 785, 789 (Tenn. Crim. App. 1995)
- State v. Mayer, No. W1999-00613-CCA-R3-CD, 2000 WL 555000, at *2 (Tenn. Crim. App. May 8, 2000)
- Deakins v. State, No. W2010-00020-CCA-R3-HC, 2011 WL 856942, at *6 (Tenn. Crim. App. Mar. 11, 2011), perm. app. denied (Tenn. July 15, 2011)
- Haynie v. Bell, No. M2006-02752-CCA-R3-CV, 2007 WL 1792534, at *3 (Tenn. Crim. App. June 22, 2007)
- Gann v. State, No. 03C01-9707-CR-00274, 1998 WL 334398, at *1 (Tenn. Crim. App. June 25, 1998)
- State v. Martinez, 372 S.W.3d 598, 607 (Tenn. Crim. App. 2011)
- State v. Carter, No. M2000-02230-CCA-R3-CD, 2002 WL 31370469, at *7 (Tenn. Crim. App. Oct. 21, 2002), aff'd in part, remanded in part, 121 S.W.3d 579 (Tenn. 2003)