

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF
WISCONSIN

Justice Scott Stadler v. Aaron Schoone, Sheila Yohnk, and Tanner H.

25-cv-995-jdp · No. 3:25-cv-00995 · Decided January 13, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Western District of Wisconsin screened Justice Scott Stadler’s pro se civil-rights complaint concerning his arrest, search, criminal charges, and alleged fabrication of evidence. The court abstained under *Younger v. Harris* because the claims were intertwined with ongoing state criminal proceedings, stayed the federal case, and directed the clerk to close it. Stadler was instructed to move to lift the stay within 60 days after the conclusion of his criminal proceedings.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Western District of Wisconsin
WRITING FOR THE COURT	James D. Peterson
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Western District of Wisconsin
DECIDED	January 13, 2026
DOCKET	3:25-cv-00995
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Screening of a pro se prisoner civil-rights complaint under 28 U.S.C. §§ 1915 and 1915A while related state criminal proceedings were pending.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	On screening under 28 U.S.C. §§ 1915 and 1915A, the court accepted the allegations as true, construed the pro se complaint generously, and applied a less stringent standard than for formal pleadings drafted by lawyers.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Unknown; district court opinion with no reported citation
PARTIES	Justice Scott Stadler v. Aaron Schoone, Sheila Yohnk, Tanner H.

TOPICS

- subject matter jurisdiction
- civil procedure
- fourth amendment
- criminal procedure
- section 1983

PRACTICE AREAS

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the federal court must abstain from adjudicating Stadler's constitutional claims concerning his arrest, search and seizure, prosecution, and alleged fabrication of evidence while related state criminal proceedings are pending.
2. Whether the federal case should be stayed and administratively closed pending final resolution of the state criminal proceedings.

HOLDINGS

1. The court must abstain from exercising jurisdiction over Stadler's claims because adjudicating his allegations concerning false arrest and malicious prosecution would interfere with his ongoing state criminal prosecution, and no extraordinary circumstance justified an exception.
2. The case must be stayed and closed by the clerk pending final resolution of the state criminal proceedings, including direct appeals and relevant state collateral review proceedings; Stadler may move to reopen after those proceedings conclude.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“Absent extraordinary circumstances not present here, federal courts must abstain from deciding a claim when doing so would interfere with a state’s pending criminal prosecution.”

“This case is STAYED. The clerk of court is directed to close the case.”

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Stadler alleged that Chippewa County sheriff's deputies arrested him on February 28, 2024, without a valid reason or a valid signed Department of Corrections warrant concerning a probation violation. He alleged that the deputies then conducted a warrantless search and recovered a substance they incorrectly identified as methamphetamine. He further alleged that District Attorney Sheila Yohnk charged him with possession of methamphetamine despite allegedly knowing of the unlawful search and seizure, and that defendants fabricated portions of police reports. At the time of the federal action, Stadler's related state criminal case remained pending and no trial had yet been scheduled.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Stadler filed a complaint alleging false arrest, unlawful search and seizure, malicious prosecution, and fabrication of evidence. The court had allowed him to proceed without prepaying the filing fee, then screened the complaint and determined that adjudicating the claims would interfere with his ongoing state criminal prosecution. The court abstained under Younger, stayed the federal case, and directed the clerk to close it, allowing Stadler to move to reopen after the state proceedings concluded.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Arnett v. Webster, 658 F.3d 742, 751 (7th Cir. 2011)
- Younger v. Harris, 401 U.S. 37 (1971)
- Gakuba v. O'Brien, 711 F.3d 751, 753 (7th Cir. 2013)
- Simpson v. Rowan, 73 F.3d 134, 139 (7th Cir. 1995)
- Heck v. Humphrey, 512 U.S. 477, 486–87 (1994)

OPINION

Justice Scott Stadler v. Aaron Schoone, Sheila Yohnk, and Tanner H.

PER CURIAM.

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF WISCONSIN

JUSTICE SCOTT STADLER,

Plaintiff, v. OPINION and ORDER AARON SCHOONE, SHEILA YOHNK, 25-cv-995-jdp and TANNER H., Defendants. Plaintiff Justice Scott Stadler, proceeding without counsel, is currently confined at the Chippewa County Jail. Stadler alleges that he was arrested without a valid reason and that officials are pursuing fraudulent criminal charges against him. The court has already concluded that Stadler may proceed without prepaying any portion of the filing fee. The next step is for me to screen Stadler's complaint and dismiss any portion that is legally frivolous or malicious, fails to state a claim upon which relief may be granted, or asks for money damages from a defendant who by law cannot be sued for money damages. 28 U.S.C. §§ 1915 and 1915A. In doing so, I must accept his allegations as true and construe the complaint generously, holding it to a less stringent standard than formal pleadings drafted by lawyers. Arnett v. Webster, 658 F.3d 742, 751 (7th Cir. 2011). I conclude that I must abstain from exercising jurisdiction over Stadler's claims under Younger v. Harris, 401 U.S. 37 (1971). I will stay the case and direct the clerk of court to close it. Stadler can move to reopen the case after his criminal charges are resolved.

ALLEGATIONS OF FACT

On February 28, 2024, Stadler was arrested by defendant Chippewa County sheriff's deputies Aaron Schoone and Tanner H. without a valid reason. Stadler's allegations are somewhat difficult to understand, but I take him to be saying that they arrested him without a valid, signed Department of Corrections warrant regarding a probation violation. They then conducted a warrantless search in which they recovered a substance that they incorrectly claim to be methamphetamine. Defendant district attorney Sheila Yohnk charged him with possession of methamphetamine despite knowing about the illegal search and seizure. Defendants presented police reports that fabricated at least part of the events.

ANALYSIS

Stadler contends that defendants violated his constitutional rights by seizing him and searching his property without a valid reason, by charging him with possession of a drug that he did not have, and by fabricating evidence. But I cannot consider Stadler's claims because they are intertwined with his ongoing state-court criminal case. Electronic state court records show that Stadler currently faces charges regarding this incident, with a trial yet to be scheduled. See *State v. Stadler*, Chippewa County Case No. 2024CF178. Absent extraordinary circumstances not present here, federal courts must abstain from deciding a claim when doing so would interfere with a state's pending criminal prosecution. *Younger*, 401 U.S. at 43–44. Stadler's claims about his allegedly false arrest and malicious prosecution would unduly interfere with his criminal proceedings. See *Gakuba v. O'Brien*, 711 F.3d 751, 753 (7th Cir. 2013). So I must abstain from deciding these claims until those proceedings have ended. I will stay this case and direct the clerk of court to close it. That means that Stadler may move to reopen this case after the conclusion of the state criminal proceedings, including all appeals and any relevant state collateral review proceedings. See *Simpson v. Rowan*, 73 F.3d 134, 139 (7th Cir. 1995). But if Stadler's criminal case results in a conviction, he may not be able to proceed with all his claims in this case; I will have to dismiss any claims for which a judgment in his favor would imply the invalidity of a state conviction. *Heck v. Humphrey*, 512 U.S. 477, 486–87 (1994).

ORDER

IT IS ORDERED that:

1. The court will abstain from exercising jurisdiction, pursuant to *Younger v. Harris*, 401 U.S. 37 (1971), pending final resolution of plaintiff's state criminal proceedings.
2. This case is STAYED. The clerk of court is directed to close the case.
3. Plaintiff must move to lift the stay within 60 days after the conclusion of his criminal proceedings, including any direct appeal. If plaintiff fails to comply with this order, the case will remain closed, and plaintiff may be barred by the statute of limitations from bringing his federal claims in any future case. Entered January 13, 2026. BY THE COURT: /s/

JAMES D. PETERSON

District Judge