UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

United States v. Joyner

Criminal Action No. 23-309 (RC) (D.D.C. June 19, 2026) · No. 23-309 (RC) · Decided June 19, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the District of Columbia rules on numerous pretrial motions in a federal criminal prosecution involving alleged Hobbs Act robberies, carjackings, and firearm offenses. The court denies the motion to suppress tangible evidence and resolves various motions concerning Rule 404(b) evidence, criminal history, identifications, toolmark and DNA evidence, photographs, expert testimony, jail calls, and other evidentiary matters, granting some motions in whole or in part and denying others.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the District of Columbia
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Rudolph Contreras
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the District of Columbia
DECIDED	June 19, 2026
DOCKET	23-309 (RC)
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Pretrial memorandum opinion resolving the defendant's motion to suppress and numerous motions in limine and the Government's motions to admit other-crimes and impeachment evidence in a pending federal criminal prosecution.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Search-warrant probable cause is reviewed deferentially to determine whether the issuing judge had a substantial basis for finding probable cause. Rule 404(b) admissibility requires a proper non-character purpose and compliance with Rule 403. Expert testimony is evaluated under Federal Rule of Evidence 702 and Daubert. Motions in limine are evaluated under the court's inherent authority to manage trial proceedings.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Persuasive district-court authority; nonprecedential as a pretrial memorandum opinion.

TOPICS

suppression of evidence · fourth amendment · probable cause · evidence · expert testimony

PRACTICE AREAS

criminal procedure · evidence · constitutional criminal procedure · expert testimony

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the search warrant for Joyner's residence was supported by probable cause and whether the seized evidence should be suppressed.
2. Whether photographs of Joyner's prior firearm possession were admissible under Federal Rule of Evidence 404(b).
3. Whether evidence of clothing worn during an unrelated April 26, 2023 arrest was admissible to prove identity.
4. Whether evidence concerning a fraudulent transaction using a robbery victim's credit card was admissible to prove identity.
5. Whether Joyner's prior burglary and theft convictions were admissible for impeachment under Federal Rule of Evidence 609.
6. Whether the Government could use cross-admissible evidence from separate charged offenses to establish the identity of the masked perpetrator.
7. Whether the Government could present the proposed law-enforcement identification testimony.
8. Whether jail-call recordings initially produced in a nonfunctioning format could be used in the Government's case-in-chief.
9. Whether firearm and toolmark identification testimony satisfied Rule 702 and Daubert and what limitations were required.
10. Whether the challenged photographs, expert evidence, identification evidence, and other proposed trial evidence should be excluded or limited under the Federal Rules of Evidence.

HOLDINGS

1. The search warrant for Joyner's Valley Avenue residence was supported by probable cause because the affidavit established connections between Joyner, the residence, his alleged offenses, and items likely to be found there.
2. Even if the warrant lacked probable cause, suppression would be unwarranted under the good-faith exception because the affidavit was not so lacking in indicia of probable cause that a reasonably well-trained officer would have known the search was illegal.
3. The Government could not introduce the five photographs of Joyner possessing firearms in its case-in-chief merely to prove knowing actual possession or access to firearms, but could seek admission if Joyner opened the door by asserting a lack-of-access or lack-of-possession defense.
4. Evidence depicting clothing and accessories Joyner wore during an unrelated April 26, 2023 arrest was admissible under Rule 404(b) to prove the identity of the masked perpetrator of specified charged

robberies and a carjacking, subject to sanitization to minimize prejudice.

5. Evidence of a fraudulent transaction involving a robbery victim's stolen credit card and an associate of Joyner was admissible under Rule 404(b) to prove Joyner's identity as the perpetrator of the related robbery.
6. Joyner's prior first-degree burglary, third-degree burglary, and theft convictions were admissible for impeachment if he testified because their probative value on credibility outweighed their prejudicial effect under Rule 609.
7. Much of the evidence concerning the separate charged robberies and carjackings could be cross-admissible under Rule 404(b) to prove the identity of the masked perpetrator, subject to a separate Rule 403 analysis for particular evidence.
8. The proposed firearm and toolmark identification testimony satisfied Rule 702 and Daubert and was admissible, but the expert could not describe the casings as a 'match,' give statistical certainty, or claim exclusion of all other firearms; the testimony had to conform to the DOJ Uniform Language for Testimony and Reports.
9. The Government was precluded from eliciting law-enforcement testimony identifying Joyner in surveillance footage, comparing footage across incidents, or providing investigative summaries when the testimony was not based on the witness's personal knowledge; a proposed identification by an officer familiar with Joyner was provisionally accepted subject to renewal.
10. The Government was barred from introducing jail-call recordings initially produced in a nonfunctioning format during its case-in-chief, but could use the recordings on rebuttal or cross-examination if Joyner opened the door.

KEY QUOTATIONS

> *“Because the Court has found that Detective O’Donnell’s affidavit amply supports a finding of probable cause, it could deny Mr. Joyner’s motion to suppress on that basis alone.”* (7)

> *“Toolmark analysis is not an exact science, and the jury should not be led to believe otherwise.”* (49)

> *“In sum, the Court believes that the testimony limitations as codified in the DOJ ULTR are reasonable and should govern here.”* (50)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Joyner was charged with allegedly committing ten armed robberies and two armed carjackings in and around Washington, D.C., Maryland, and Virginia, over approximately three weeks in April and May 2023. The Government's evidence included surveillance footage of a masked perpetrator, clothing and accessories allegedly linking Joyner to the offenses, evidence concerning a stolen credit card, firearm and toolmark evidence, DNA evidence, photographs, and prior convictions. Law enforcement searched Joyner's Valley Avenue residence under a warrant issued by a D.C. Superior Court judge and recovered clothing, shoes, identity cards, and payment cards allegedly connected to the charged conduct.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Shamell Naquan Joyner was charged in a twenty-eight-count superseding indictment involving Hobbs Act robberies, carjackings, firearm offenses, and felon-in-possession charges. The court previously denied motions to dismiss or sever certain counts. After hearing oral argument on June 15, 2026, the court resolved the pending evidentiary motions before the scheduled June 29, 2026 jury trial.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Illinois v. Gates, 462 U.S. 213 (1983)
- United States v. Thomas, 989 F.2d 1252 (D.C. Cir. 1993)
- United States v. Leon, 468 U.S. 897 (1984)
- Herring v. United States, 555 U.S. 135 (2009)
- United States v. Cassell, 292 F.3d 788 (D.C. Cir. 2002)
- United States v. Linares, 367 F.3d 941 (D.C. Cir. 2004)
- United States v. Lawson, 410 F.3d 735 (D.C. Cir. 2005)
- Drew v. United States, 331 F.2d 85 (D.C. Cir. 1964)
- United States v. Burwell, 642 F.3d 1062 (D.C. Cir. 2011)
- United States v. Jackson, 627 F.2d 1198 (D.C. Cir. 1980)
- United States v. Lipscomb, 702 F.2d 1049 (D.C. Cir. 1983) (en banc)
- Daubert v. Merrell Dow Pharmaceuticals, Inc., 509 U.S. 579 (1993)
- Kumho Tire Co. v. Carmichael, 526 U.S. 137 (1999)
- United States v. Harris, 502 F. Supp. 3d 28 (D.D.C. 2020)
- Luce v. United States, 469 U.S. 38 (1984)
