

COURT OF APPEALS OF OHIO, SEVENTH APPELLATE DISTRICT,
COLUMBIANA COUNTY

State v. Jackson

2026-Ohio-1325 · No. 25 CO 0029 · Decided April 10, 2026

SUMMARY

The Seventh District Court of Appeals of Ohio affirmed Davante L. Jackson’s convictions and sentence for fentanyl-related trafficking and possession, drug trafficking and possession, and tampering with evidence. The court rejected his claims that counsel was ineffective for withdrawing a motion to suppress and that his no-contest plea was not knowingly, intelligently, and voluntarily entered. The court concluded that the record did not establish ineffective assistance and that the trial court substantially complied with Crim.R. 11(C)(2).

CASE DETAILS

COURT	Court of Appeals of Ohio, Seventh Appellate District, Columbiana County
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Mark A. Hanni, J.; Cheryl L. Waite, P.J.; Carol Ann Robb, J.
JURISDICTION	Ohio Court of Appeals, Seventh Appellate District, Columbiana County
DECIDED	April 10, 2026
DOCKET	25 CO 0029
DISPOSITION	affirmed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Direct criminal appeal from convictions and sentence following a no contest plea. The defendant challenged trial counsel's withdrawal of a motion to suppress and the knowing, intelligent, and voluntary nature of his plea.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Ineffective-assistance claims are evaluated under the two-prong Strickland test, requiring deficient performance and prejudice. The validity of a felony plea is reviewed under Crim.R. 11(C)(2): strict compliance is required for constitutional rights and substantial compliance for nonconstitutional rights.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	published
PARTIES	Davante L. Jackson v. State of Ohio

TOPICS

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QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether trial counsel rendered ineffective assistance by withdrawing a motion to suppress without Jackson's prior knowledge.
2. Whether Jackson's no contest plea was unknowing, unintelligent, or involuntary because he allegedly did not understand the consequences of the withdrawn suppression motion and the rights waived by the plea.

HOLDINGS

1. Jackson failed to establish ineffective assistance of counsel because the record did not demonstrate a valid ground for suppression, his assertions concerning probable cause were speculative and unsupported by the appellate record, withdrawing the motion could have been a matter of trial strategy or plea negotiation, and he failed to show prejudice.
2. Jackson's no contest plea was knowingly, intelligently, and voluntarily entered because the trial court strictly complied with Crim.R. 11(C)(2) as to constitutional rights and substantially complied as to nonconstitutional rights, and the court addressed his lack of initial awareness of the withdrawn suppression motion by allowing consultation with counsel and confirming that his questions had been answered.

KEY QUOTATIONS

"If the plea is not knowing, intelligent, and voluntary, it has been obtained in violation of due process and is void." (§ 21)

"Nothing on the record indicates that Appellant's plea was anything less than knowingly, intelligently, and voluntarily entered." (§ 29)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Jackson was driving a vehicle stopped for not having a visible license plate and was also impaired. While in the police cruiser, he removed a container of pills and handed it to his passenger; the pills contained 14.58 grams of a fentanyl-related compound that he attempted to conceal. He was indicted on trafficking, possession, and tampering-with-evidence charges, later entered a no contest plea after counsel withdrew a suppression motion, and received an aggregate sentence of five and one-half to seven and one-half years.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

A Columbiana County grand jury indicted Jackson on five drug- and evidence-related offenses. After counsel withdrew a motion to suppress as part of plea negotiations, Jackson entered a no contest plea. The trial court accepted the plea, imposed an aggregate sentence of five and one-half to seven and one-half years, and ordered specified terms to run concurrently or consecutively. Jackson timely appealed, and the Seventh District affirmed.

DISPOSITION

affirmed

CASES CITED

- Strickland v. Washington, 466 U.S. 668, 687 (1984)
- State v. Bradley, 42 Ohio St.3d 136 (1989)
- State v. Calhoun, 86 Ohio St.3d 279, 289 (1999)
- State v. Spaulding, 151 Ohio St.3d 378, 2016-Ohio-8126, 89 N.E.3d 554, ¶ 94
- State v. Brown, 115 Ohio St.3d 55, 2007-Ohio-4837, 873 N.E.2d 858, ¶ 65
- State v. Hartman, 93 Ohio St.3d 274, 299, 754 N.E.2d 1150 (2001)
- State v. Ishmail, 54 Ohio St.2d 402, 406, 377 N.E.2d 500 (1978)
- State v. Gervin, 2016-Ohio-5670, ¶ 23 (3d Dist.)
- State v. Carter, 2017-Ohio-7501, ¶ 78 (7th Dist.)
- State v. Cabiness, 2025-Ohio-3087, ¶ 25 (5th Dist.)
- 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)

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