

SUPERIOR COURT OF PENNSYLVANIA

Commonwealth v. Ames

2025 Pa. Super. 75 · No. 881 EDA 2024 · Decided March 26, 2025

SUMMARY

The Pennsylvania Superior Court reviewed the dismissal of firearm-related charges against Khaleeq Ames under Pennsylvania's compulsory joinder rule, 18 Pa.C.S. § 110. The court held that the prior prosecution involving possession of a single firearm during a domestic incident did not have a sufficient logical relationship with the later prosecution concerning a broader straw-purchasing scheme, vacated the dismissal order, and remanded for further proceedings.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	Superior Court of Pennsylvania
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Nichols, J.; Panella, P.J.E.; Stabile, J.
JURISDICTION	Pennsylvania Superior Court
DECIDED	March 26, 2025
DOCKET	881 EDA 2024
DISPOSITION	reversed_and_remanded
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	The Commonwealth appealed from an order of the Philadelphia County Court of Common Pleas granting Khaleeq Ames's motion to bar prosecution under Pennsylvania's compulsory-joinder statute, 18 Pa.C.S. § 110, and dismissing the charges with prejudice.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Where the relevant facts are undisputed, whether prosecution is barred by the compulsory-joinder rule is subject to plenary and de novo review.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Published Pennsylvania Superior Court opinion
PARTIES	Commonwealth of Pennsylvania v. Khaleeq Ames

TOPICS

criminal procedure

appellate procedure

appellate jurisdiction

standard of review

PRACTICE AREAS

criminal procedure

appellate procedure

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the later prosecution was barred by Pennsylvania's compulsory-joinder rule because it was based on the same criminal conduct or arose from the same criminal episode as Ames's prior prosecution.
2. Whether the later prosecution and the prior prosecution had a substantial duplication of issues of law and fact sufficient to establish the required logical relationship.

HOLDINGS

1. The later prosecution was not barred by the compulsory-joinder rule because the prior prosecution for possessing a single firearm during a domestic incident and the later prosecution concerning a broader straw-purchasing scheme did not have the required substantial duplication of issues of law and fact.
2. When the relevant facts are undisputed, the determination whether prosecution is barred by the compulsory-joinder rule is reviewed plenarily and de novo.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“The logical relationship prong of the test requires “a substantial duplication of issues of law and fact.”” (at 5-6)

“Although the single Glock included in the matter at 1899-2022 was one of the multiple firearms included in the instant case, we cannot conclude that there is a “substantial duplication of issues of law and fact.”” (at 11)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Agents investigated firearm purchases made by Ames's girlfriend and ultimately concluded that she and her sister had purchased thirteen firearms and transferred them to Ames as part of a straw-purchasing scheme. During a police response to a domestic incident, officers found one of those firearms, a Glock, in Ames's bag, leading to his arrest and guilty plea for possessing a firearm as a prohibited person. After that prosecution, the Commonwealth charged Ames with numerous offenses relating to the broader alleged straw-purchasing scheme, including offenses involving the Glock.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Ames previously pleaded guilty to possessing a firearm as a person not permitted to possess firearms and was sentenced. He was later charged in an investigating-grand-jury prosecution with numerous firearms-related offenses arising from an alleged straw-purchasing scheme. The trial court concluded that the later prosecution was barred because it arose from the same criminal episode as the earlier prosecution, but the Superior Court reversed and remanded.

DISPOSITION

reversed_and_remanded

REMAND INSTRUCTIONS

Remand for further proceedings consistent with the opinion; the Superior Court relinquished jurisdiction.

CASES CITED

- Commonwealth v. Copes, 295 A.3d 1277 (Pa. Super. 2023)
- Commonwealth v. Brown, 212 A.3d 1076 (Pa. Super. 2019)
- Commonwealth v. Perfetto, 207 A.3d 812, 815, 821-22 (Pa. 2019)
- Commonwealth v. Johnson, 247 A.3d 981, 982, 987 (Pa. 2021)
- Commonwealth v. Forrester-Westad, 282 A.3d 811, 821-22 (Pa. Super. 2022)
- Commonwealth v. Reid, 77 A.3d 579, 581-86 (Pa. 2013)
- Commonwealth v. Hude, 458 A.2d 177, 180-81 (Pa. 1983)
- Commonwealth v. Bracalielly, 658 A.2d 755, 757-62 (Pa. 1995)
- Commonwealth v. George, 38 A.3d 893, 894-98 (Pa. Super. 2012)

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