

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF
MISSISSIPPI, ABERDEEN DIVISION

Donta Jermaine West v. Sheriff Eddie Hawkins, et al.

West · No. 1:25CV11-DAS · Decided May 28, 2026

SUMMARY

The court denied plaintiff Donta Jermaine West’s motion to hold the defendants in contempt for allegedly falsifying information in police reports. The court explained that disputes regarding police statements and defendants’ contentions are ordinarily resolved by the factfinder, including a jury in a criminal case.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Northern District of Mississippi, Aberdeen Division
WRITING FOR THE COURT	David A. Sanders
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Northern District of Mississippi, Aberdeen Division
DECIDED	May 28, 2026
DOCKET	1:25CV11-DAS
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiff moved to hold defendants in contempt for allegedly falsifying information used as evidence.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unknown
PARTIES	Donta Jermaine West v. Sheriff Eddie Hawkins, et al.

TOPICS

- contempt
- evidence
- civil rights
- constitutional law

PRACTICE AREAS

- civil rights
- constitutional law
- prisoner civil rights

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the court should hold defendants in contempt based on alleged false statements in police reports that plaintiff claimed had been used as evidence against him.

HOLDINGS

1. The court denied plaintiff's motion to hold defendants in contempt because disputes over the truthfulness of police statements and the parties' competing contentions are ordinarily matters for the factfinder, not grounds for contempt on the showing presented.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“However, it is commonplace for statements of police and contentions of defendants to differ, and such disputes are settled by the factfinder in the ordinary course of proceedings.”

“It is the province of the jury to determine the facts in a criminal case – and apply to those facts to the law given by the court through jury instructions.”

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

West alleged that statements in police reports were false and had been used against him to detain him. He characterized the allegedly false statements as falsified evidence and sought a contempt order against the defendants. The court treated the allegations as factual disputes ordinarily resolved by the factfinder rather than as grounds for contempt.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

The plaintiff filed a motion for contempt under docket entry 57, asserting that statements in police reports were untruthful and had been used to detain him. The district court denied the motion, explaining that disputes between police statements and a defendant's contentions are ordinarily resolved by the factfinder.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Duncan v. Louisiana, 391 U.S. 145, 156 (1968)
- McKoy v. North Carolina, 494 U.S. 433, 449, 110 S. Ct. 1227, 1236, 108 L. Ed. 2d 369 (U.S. 1990) (plurality opinion) (Blackmun, J., concurring)

OPINION

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF MISSISSIPPI ABERDEEN DIVISION DONTA JERMAINE WEST PLAINTIFF v. No. 1:25CV11-DAS SHERIFF EDDIE HAWKINS, ET AL. DEFENDANTS ORDER DENYING PLAINTIFF’S MOTION [57] TO HOLD DEFENDANTS IN CONTEMPT FOR “FALSIFYING INFORMATION AS ‘EVIDENCE’” This matter comes before the court on the plaintiff’s motion

[57] for “contempt,” arguing that the court should hold the defendants in contempt “due to statements falsifying information as “evidence.” Doc.

57. He states that he has presented “probative evidence to prove a contested fact.” *Id.* He argues that certain statements in police reports were not truthful and have been used against him to detain him. *Id.* However, it is commonplace for statements of police and contentions of defendants to differ, and such disputes are settled by the factfinder in the ordinary course of proceedings.

The Founders established in our Constitution that an accused has the right to a trial by jury in a criminal case. “In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the State and district wherein the crime shall have been committed....” U.S. Const. amend.

VI. (emphasis added). The requirement of jury trial in a criminal case is applicable to the states through the Fourteenth Amendment. *Duncan v. Louisiana*, 391 U.S. 145, 156 (1968). It is the province of the jury to determine the facts in a criminal case – and apply to those facts to the law given by the court through jury instructions. Indeed, “[j]uries are typically called upon to render unanimous verdicts on the ultimate issues of a given case.” *McKoy v. North Carolina*, 494 U.S. 433, 449, 110 S. Ct.

1227, 1236, 108 L. Ed. 2d 369 (U.S. 1990) (plurality opinion) (Blackmun, J., concurring). That is what has transpired in the present case, and the plaintiff’s request for an order holding the defendants in contempt of court is DENIED. SO ORDERED, this, the 28th day of May, 2026. /s/ David A. Sanders UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE