

INTERMEDIATE COURT OF APPEALS OF THE STATE OF HAWAI‘I

Iwamoto v. Medeiros, Jr.

Iwamoto v. Medeiros, Jr. · No. CAAP-23-0000713 · Decided January 13, 2026

SUMMARY

The Hawai‘i Intermediate Court of Appeals held that the defendant sufficiently raised a title-to-real-estate defense under Hawai‘i District Court Rules of Civil Procedure Rule 12.1. Because title was placed in issue, the district court lacked jurisdiction under Hawai‘i Revised Statutes § 604-5(d) to enter a writ and judgment for possession. The court vacated the November 13, 2023 writ and judgment and remanded for further proceedings.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	Intermediate Court of Appeals of the State of Hawai‘i
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Katherine G. Leonard, Presiding Judge; Clyde J. Wadsworth, Associate Judge; Kimberly T. Guidry, Associate Judge
JURISDICTION	Intermediate Court of Appeals of the State of Hawai‘i
DECIDED	January 13, 2026
DOCKET	CAAP-23-0000713
DISPOSITION	vacated
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Medeiros appealed from the District Court's writ of possession and judgment for possession entered in favor of Iwamoto in an ejectment and summary-possession dispute involving real property.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Unpublished summary disposition order; not for publication in the West's Hawai‘i Reports and Pacific Reporter.
PARTIES	William Medeiros, Jr. v. Tiffany S. Iwamoto, Successor Co-Trustee of the Alfred Pogtis, Jr., and Carman C. Pogtis Joint Revocable Trust

TOPICS

- subject matter jurisdiction
- appellate procedure
- real estate
- probate
- civil procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

- appellate procedure
- civil procedure
- real estate
- probate

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether Medeiros sufficiently asserted a defense of title under DCRCP Rule 12.1 to deprive the District Court of jurisdiction under HRS § 604-5(d).
2. Whether the District Court erred by entering a judgment and writ of possession after Medeiros raised a claim that title to the real property was in issue.

HOLDINGS

1. Medeiros sufficiently raised a claim to title because his Rule 12.1 motion and declaration identified the source, nature, and extent of his claimed interest in the property.
2. The District Court lacked jurisdiction under HRS § 604-5(d) once Medeiros sufficiently raised a claim that title to the property was in issue, and therefore erred in entering judgment against him.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“Regardless of the ultimate strength or weakness of Medeiros's claim to title, we conclude that he sufficiently raised the claim, thus depriving the District Court of jurisdiction pursuant to HRS § 604-5.” (at 4)

“For the foregoing reasons, the District Court's November 13, 2023 Writ of Possession and the Judgment for Possession are vacated.” (at 5)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Iwamoto, acting as successor co-trustee, sought possession of real property on Wai‘anae Valley Road. Medeiros asserted that he had an undivided interest in the property based on the wills of Alfred Pogtis, Sr. and Mildred Pogtis, contending in substance that Alfred Pogtis, Jr. received only a life estate and that Medeiros and his brother Don would inherit an interest. Medeiros supported his defense with a written motion, declaration, and copies of the relevant wills. The District Court nevertheless entered judgment and a writ of possession for Iwamoto.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Iwamoto filed a District Court complaint asserting claims for summary possession, assumpsit, and damages. Medeiros defended on the ground that he held an undivided interest in the property and filed a written defense-of-title motion and declaration under DCRCP Rule 12.1. The District Court entered a writ and judgment for possession against Medeiros on November 13, 2023. The Intermediate Court of Appeals concluded that Medeiros sufficiently raised title to the property, vacated the writ and judgment, and remanded for further proceedings, including possible dismissal.

DISPOSITION

vacated

REMAND INSTRUCTIONS

The writ of possession and judgment for possession are vacated. The case is remanded to the District Court for further proceedings consistent with the order, including possible voluntary dismissal or sua sponte dismissal by the District Court.

CASES CITED

- Morgan v. Planning Department, County of Kaua‘i, 104 Hawai‘i 173, 180-81, 86 P.3d 982, 989-990 (2004)
- O'Connor v. Diocese of Honolulu, 77 Hawai‘i 383, 386, 885 P.2d 361, 364 (1994)
- Captain Andy's Sailing, Inc. v. Department of Land and Natural Resources, 113 Hawai‘i 184, 194, 150 P.3d 833, 843 (2006)

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