

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF
OKLAHOMA

Chad William Reed v. Mark D. Uptegrove, et al.

Reed · No. 25-CV-119-RAW-GLJ · Decided December 12, 2025

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Eastern District of Oklahoma grants motions to dismiss claims brought under 42 U.S.C. § 1983 by pro se plaintiff Chad William Reed against state judicial and prosecutorial defendants. The court concludes that the claims against Judge Emily Maxwell fail to allege personal participation, claims against Special Judge Mark Uptegrove are barred by the Heck and Rooker-Feldman doctrines and judicial immunity, and several claims against District Attorney Mark Matloff are barred by Heck, untimeliness, or failure to state a claim. All claims are dismissed without prejudice, with a separate judgment to be entered.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Eastern District of Oklahoma
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Eastern District of Oklahoma
DECIDED	December 12, 2025
DOCKET	25-CV-119-RAW-GLJ
DISPOSITION	dismissed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiff proceeding pro se and in forma pauperis brought a 42 U.S.C. § 1983 action challenging state-court post-conviction proceedings. The defendants moved to dismiss under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 12(b)(6), and the court granted both motions.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	On a Rule 12(b)(6) motion, the court determines whether the complaint alleges enough facts to state a facially plausible claim for relief. Well-pleaded factual allegations are accepted as true and construed in the plaintiff's favor, but legal conclusions and conclusory statements are disregarded. Pro se pleadings are liberally construed, but a pro se plaintiff must still allege sufficient facts supporting a recognized legal claim.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished district court opinion
PARTIES	Chad William Reed v. Mark D. Uptegrove, Emily Maxwell, Mark Matloff

TOPICS

section 1983 motions to dismiss post-conviction relief federal habeas corpus civil rights

PRACTICE AREAS

civil rights constitutional law post-conviction relief federal civil procedure remedies

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether Reed stated a § 1983 claim against Judge Emily Maxwell based on speculation that she could influence other judges to protect her husband.
2. Whether Reed's claims against Special Judge Mark Uptegrove were barred by *Heck v. Humphrey* because success would imply the invalidity of his conviction or sentence.
3. Whether, to the extent Reed challenged only the denial of his post-conviction application, the Rooker-Feldman doctrine deprived the federal district court of jurisdiction.
4. Whether Special Judge Uptegrove was entitled to absolute judicial immunity from Reed's damages claims.
5. Whether Reed's Napue and Brady claims against District Attorney Mark Matloff were barred by *Heck*.
6. Whether Reed's retaliation claim against Matloff was barred by Oklahoma's two-year statute of limitations.
7. Whether Reed's Eighth Amendment claim against Matloff failed because Reed was a pretrial detainee when the relevant events occurred.

HOLDINGS

1. Reed failed to state a claim against Judge Maxwell because he alleged no specific action by her and relied only on speculation that she could influence another judge to protect her husband.
2. Claims against Judge Uptegrove that, if successful, would necessarily imply the invalidity of Reed's conviction or sentence were barred by *Heck v. Humphrey* because Reed had not shown that his conviction or sentence had been invalidated.
3. To the extent Reed challenged only Judge Uptegrove's application of procedural bars and denial of the post-conviction application, the federal district court lacked jurisdiction under the Rooker-Feldman doctrine.
4. Special Judge Uptegrove was absolutely immune from Reed's claims for civil damages because ruling on Reed's post-conviction application was a judicial act performed in the exercise of judicial discretion.
5. Reed's Napue and Brady claims against Matloff were barred by *Heck* because success on those claims would imply the invalidity of Reed's conviction or sentence.
6. Reed's First Amendment retaliation claim was barred by Oklahoma's two-year statute of limitations because the alleged retaliatory exchange occurred in 2006 and Reed knew of the alleged injury no later than his 2008 conviction.

7. Reed's Eighth Amendment cruel-and-unusual-punishment claim failed because he was a pretrial detainee during the relevant events and the Eighth Amendment's protections do not apply to pretrial detainees.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“To withstand a Rule 12(b)(6) motion, the complaint must allege “enough facts to state a claim to relief that is plausible on its face.”” (at 3)

“In Heck, the Supreme Court stated that, if judgment in favor of the prisoner plaintiff in a Section 1983 damages suit “would necessarily imply the invalidity of his conviction or sentence[, then] the complaint must be dismissed unless the plaintiff can demonstrate that the conviction or sentence has already been invalidated.”” (at 5)

“Under the Rooker-Feldman doctrine, federal district courts have no jurisdiction to consider suits “that amount to appeals of state-court judgments.”” (at 7)

“Absolute immunity bars suits for money damages for acts made in the exercise of prosecutorial or judicial discretion.” (at 8)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Reed was convicted of first-degree murder in McCurtain County, Oklahoma, after a 2008 jury trial, and his conviction and sentence were affirmed on direct appeal. His first post-conviction application was denied in 2013, and his second application, filed in 2023, was denied by the state district court and affirmed by the Oklahoma Court of Criminal Appeals in 2024. Reed brought this § 1983 action alleging that state judges improperly handled his post-conviction application and that District Attorney Mark Matloff was responsible for alleged Napue, Brady, retaliation, and cruel-and-unusual-punishment violations.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Reed was convicted of first-degree murder in Oklahoma state court, and the Oklahoma Court of Criminal Appeals affirmed his conviction and sentence. His first application for post-conviction relief was denied and affirmed in 2013. His second application, filed in 2023, was denied by the state district court and affirmed by the Oklahoma Court of Criminal Appeals in 2024. Reed then filed this § 1983 action challenging that denial and asserting constitutional claims against the state judges and district attorney. The federal court dismissed all claims without prejudice and directed entry of a separate judgment.

DISPOSITION

dismissed

CASES CITED

- Bell Atl. Corp. v. Twombly, 550 U.S. 544, 555, 556, 558, 570 (2007)
- Ashcroft v. Iqbal, 556 U.S. 662, 678 (2009)
- Jojola v. Chaves, 55 F.3d 488, 494 (10th Cir. 1995)

- Hall, 935 F.2d at 1110
- Whitney v. New Mexico, 113 F.3d 1170, 1175 (10th Cir. 1997)
- Straub v. BNSF Ry. Co., Straub v. BNSF Ry. Co., 909 F.3d 1280, 1287 (10th Cir. 2018)
- Trujillo v. Williams, 465 F.3d 1210, 1227 (10th Cir. 2006)
- Pahls v. Thomas, 718 F.3d 1210, 1226 (10th Cir. 2013)
- Tonkovich v. Kan. Bd. of Regents, 159 F.3d 504, 532 (10th Cir. 1998)
- Foreman v. Elam, 2019 WL 1413755, at *5 (E.D. Okla. Mar. 28, 2019)
- Alexander v. Lucas, 259 F. App'x 145, 147-148 (10th Cir. 2007)
- Heck v. Humphrey, 512 U.S. 477, 487, 490 (1994)
- Edwards v. Balisok, 520 U.S. 641, 648 (1997)
- Lawson v. Engleman, 67 F. App'x 524, 526 n.2 (10th Cir. 2003)
- Cohen v. Longshore, 621 F.3d 1311, 1315, 1317 (10th Cir. 2010)
- Marshall v. Lombardi, 2013 WL 5223507, at *3 (N.D. Okla. Sept. 16, 2013)
- Bolden v. City of Topeka, 441 F.3d 1129, 1139 (10th Cir. 2006)
- Exxon Mobil Corp. v. Saudi Basic Indus. Corp., 544 U.S. 280, 284 (2005)
- Andrews v. Heaton, 483 F.3d 1070, 1076 (10th Cir. 2007)
- Guttman v. Khalsa, 446 F.3d 1027, 1033 (10th Cir. 2006)
- Mireles v. Waco, 502 U.S. 9, 13 (1991)
- Hunt v. Bennett, 17 F.3d 1263, 1266 (10th Cir. 1994)
- Napue v. People of State of Illinois, 360 U.S. 264, 269, 271-272 (1959)
- Giglio v. United States, 405 U.S. 150, 154 (1972)
- Baldwin v. O'Connor, 466 F. App'x 717, 717-718 (10th Cir. 2012)
- Ramos v. Shepherd, 415 F. App'x 48, 48-49 (10th Cir. 2011)
- Skinner v. Switzer, 562 U.S. 521, 536 (2011)
- Beck v. Muskogee Police Department, 195 F.3d 553, 560 (10th Cir. 1999)
- United States v. Harrell, 642 F.3d 907, 918 (10th Cir. 2011)
- Wallace v. Kato, 549 U.S. 384, 387-388 (2007)
- Abbitt v. Franklin, 731 F.2d 661, 663 (10th Cir. 1984)
- Titsworth v. Oklahoma Department of Corrections, 561 F. App'x 746, 747 (10th Cir. 2014)
- Stevenson v. Grace, 356 F. App'x 97, 98 (10th Cir. 2009)
- Alexander v. Oklahoma, 382 F.3d 1206, 1212 n.1, 1215, 1217 (10th Cir. 2004)
- Bay Area Laundry and Dry Cleaning Pension Trust Fund v. Ferbar Corp. of Cal., 522 U.S. 192, 201 (1997)
- Industrial Constructors Corp. v. U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, 15 F.3d 963, 969 (10th Cir. 1994)
- Colbruno v. Kessler, 928 F.3d 1155, 1162 (10th Cir. 2019)
- Davis v. Morgan, 2021 WL 6298321, at *1 n.2 (N.D. Okla. Sept. 27, 2021)
- Stack v. McCotter, 79 F. App'x 383, 391 (10th Cir. 2003)
- St. Louis Baptist Temple, Inc. v. Federal Deposit Insurance Corp., 605 F.2d 1169, 1172 (10th Cir. 1979)

