

MICHIGAN COURT OF APPEALS

Darnell Jones v. Chippewa Circuit Court Judge, Genesee County
Prosecutor, Kinross Correctional Facility Warden, Director of
Department of Corrections, Detective Jeff Hooper, and Department
of Corrections

No. 374352 · No. No. 374352 · Decided June 8, 2026

SUMMARY

The Michigan Court of Appeals affirmed the denial of Darnell Jones’s petition for a writ of habeas corpus. The court held that, even assuming no probable cause conference was held, that omission did not create a jurisdictional defect or deprive the circuit court of jurisdiction after Jones was bound over for trial. The court also concluded that the alleged failure to hold a probable cause conference did not invalidate Jones’s conviction or sentence.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	Michigan Court of Appeals
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Adrienne N. Young, P.J.; Stephen L. Borrello, J.; Christopher M. Trebilcock, J.
JURISDICTION	Michigan Court of Appeals
DECIDED	June 8, 2026
DOCKET	No. 374352
DISPOSITION	affirmed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Appeal as of right from the Chippewa Circuit Court's order granting summary disposition for respondents and denying and dismissing a petition for a writ of habeas corpus.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Questions of law, including interpretation of statutes and court rules establishing jurisdiction, are reviewed de novo.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Published and precedential Michigan Court of Appeals opinion
PARTIES	Darnell Jones v. Chippewa Circuit Court Judge, Genesee County Prosecutor, Kinross Correctional Facility Warden, Director of Department of Corrections, Detective Jeff Hooper, Department of Corrections

TOPICS

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PRACTICE AREAS

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QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the alleged failure to hold a probable cause conference deprived the district or circuit court of jurisdiction over Jones's criminal case.
2. Whether habeas corpus could be used to obtain relief from Jones's conviction and sentence based on the alleged probable cause conference defect.
3. Whether the circuit court properly dismissed the habeas petition after determining that the alleged defect was not jurisdictional.

HOLDINGS

1. Even assuming that no probable cause conference was held, the failure did not create a jurisdictional defect or deprive the district court of continuing jurisdiction over the case.
2. Once the preliminary examination was held and Jones was bound over on a charge, the circuit court obtained jurisdiction over him; the alleged absence of a probable cause conference did not defeat that jurisdiction.
3. Habeas corpus is unavailable as a substitute for an appeal to review the merits of a criminal conviction, although it may be available when the convicting court lacked jurisdiction and the defect was radical; Jones did not establish such a jurisdictional defect.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“Traditionally, this statutory prohibition has been interpreted to be a declaration that “habeas corpus cannot serve as a substitute for an appeal and cannot be used to review the merits of a criminal conviction.”” (-2-)

“Because MCR 6.108 expressly permits the waiver of a probable cause conference, it stands to reason that a violation of that rule does not create a jurisdictional defect.” (-3-)

“Once a preliminary examination is held and the defendant is bound over on any charge, the circuit court obtains jurisdiction over the defendant.” (-3-)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Jones was arrested in November 2015 and charged with armed robbery, first-degree home invasion, and felony-firearm. After arraignment, the district court scheduled a probable cause conference and preliminary examination; the record did not clearly establish whether the conference occurred, but Jones was bound over to the Monroe Circuit Court after the preliminary examination. He later pleaded nolo contendere to armed robbery and received a prison sentence of 270 to 600 months. In 2024, he sought habeas relief based on the alleged failure to hold a probable cause conference.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Jones was convicted in Monroe County Circuit Court after pleading nolo contendere to armed robbery and was sentenced to 270 to 600 months in prison. In 2024, he filed a habeas corpus petition in the Chippewa Circuit Court, arguing that the absence of a probable cause conference deprived the criminal courts of jurisdiction. The circuit court granted respondents' motion for summary disposition and dismissed the petition, concluding that habeas corpus could not be used as a writ of error and that the alleged defect was not jurisdictional. The Michigan Court of Appeals affirmed.

DISPOSITION

affirmed

CASES CITED

- People v. LeBlanc, 465 Mich. 575, 579; 640 N.W.2d 246 (2002)
- Chen v. Wayne State Univ., 284 Mich. App. 172, 191; 771 N.W.2d 820 (2009)
- People v. Price, 23 Mich. App. 663, 669-670; 179 N.W.2d 177 (1970)
- People v. Bowling, 299 Mich. App. 552, 559-560; 830 N.W.2d 800 (2013)
- People v. Robinson, ___ Mich. ___, ___; ___ N.W.3d ___ (2026) (Docket No. 167595); slip op. at 8
- People v. Johnson, 427 Mich. 98, 103; 398 N.W.2d 219 (1986)
- Gerstein v. Pugh, 420 U.S. 103; 95 S. Ct. 854; 43 L. Ed. 2d 54 (1975)
- Winters v. Dalton, 207 Mich. App. 76, 79; 523 N.W.2d 636 (1994)
- People v. Lown, 488 Mich. 242, 268; 794 N.W.2d 9 (2011)
- People v. Unger, 278 Mich. App. 210, 221; 749 N.W.2d 272 (2008)
- People v. Goecke, 457 Mich. 442, 458-459; 579 N.W.2d 868 (1998)
- People v. Stanley, unpublished per curiam opinion of the Court of Appeals, issued May 20, 2025 (Docket No. 366735), slip op. at 9-10
- People v. Otto, 348 Mich. App. 221, 263 n. 11; 18 N.W.3d 336 (2023)