

UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS FOR THE SEVENTH CIRCUIT

Daniel Jackson v. Shawn Curry

Daniel Jackson v. Shawn Curry, 888 F.3d 259 (7th Cir. 2018) · No. 17-1898 · Decided April 19, 2018

SUMMARY

The Seventh Circuit dismissed an interlocutory appeal from the denial of qualified immunity for lack of appellate jurisdiction. The court held that the officers' challenges—to the district court's refusal to review an interrogation video at the pleadings stage, to factual disputes about what the video showed, to the consideration of race-based comments as part of the totality of circumstances, and to a superseding-cause argument—did not raise pure legal questions regarding qualified immunity, as required for immediate appeal under the collateral-order doctrine. The case underscores that denials of qualified immunity are appealable only when they turn on legal issues, not factual determinations or the district court's case-management decisions.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Manion; Bauer; Sykes
JURISDICTION	Federal
DECIDED	April 19, 2018
DOCKET	17-1898
DISPOSITION	dismissed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Interlocutory appeal from the denial of a motion to dismiss based on qualified immunity.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	De novo review of jurisdictional issues; the scope of interlocutory review of qualified immunity denials is limited to pure legal questions.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Published
PARTIES	Shawn Curry, et al. v. Daniel Jackson

TOPICS

- appellate procedure
- appellate jurisdiction
- qualified immunity
- fifth amendment

PRACTICE AREAS

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the district court erred by declining to review the interrogation video at the pleadings stage.
2. Whether the district court applied a highly generalized formulation of the law to the officers' race comments, and whether those comments clearly violated the Constitution.
3. Whether the admission of the confession at trial was a superseding cause entitling the officers to qualified immunity.

HOLDINGS

1. The court lacks jurisdiction over the appeal because the issues raised are not pure legal questions regarding qualified immunity. The collateral-order doctrine only permits immediate appeal of qualified immunity denials when the appeal presents pure legal issues, not factual disputes or issues not decided by the district court.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“An interlocutory order is immediately appealable if it ' (1) [is] conclusive on the issue presented; (2) resolve[s] an important question separate from the merits of the underlying action; and (3) [is] effectively unreviewable on an appeal from the final judgment of the underlying action.’” (4)

“Qualified immunity shields government officials 'from liability for civil damages insofar as their conduct does not violate clearly established statutory or constitutional rights of which a reasonable person would have known.’” (4)

“We only have jurisdiction when 'the issue appealed concerned, not which facts the parties might be able to prove, but, rather, whether or not certain given facts showed a violation of clearly established law.’” (4-5)

“The voluntariness of a confession depends on the totality of circumstances, including both the characteristics of the accused and the nature of the interrogation. If those circumstances reveal that the interrogated person's will was overborne, admitting the resulting confession violates the Fifth Amendment.” (10)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Jackson was arrested and interrogated after being identified in a photo lineup. During the interrogation, Jackson was under the influence of drugs and alcohol, showed signs of intoxication, and collapsed. The officers allegedly used coercive tactics, including lying about evidence, exaggerating consequences, and making race-based comments about the jury. The state court reversed his murder conviction due to lack of probable cause for arrest. Jackson sued the officers for violating his Fifth Amendment rights. The officers moved to dismiss based on qualified immunity, and the district court denied the motion.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

The district court denied the officers' motion to dismiss Count II (coerced confession) on qualified immunity grounds. The officers appealed. The Seventh Circuit dismissed the appeal for lack of appellate jurisdiction.

DISPOSITION

dismissed

CASES CITED

- Veseley v. Armslist LLC, 762 F.3d 661 (7th Cir. 2014)
- Catinella v. Cty. of Cook, Ill., 881 F.3d 514 (7th Cir. 2018)
- In re Ortiz, 665 F.3d 906 (7th Cir. 2011)
- United States v. Michelle's Lounge, 39 F.3d 684 (7th Cir. 1994)
- Doe v. Vill. of Deerfield, 819 F.3d 372 (7th Cir. 2016)
- Armstrong v. Daily, 786 F.3d 529 (7th Cir. 2015)
- Harlow v. Fitzgerald, 457 U.S. 800 (1982)
- Mitchell v. Forsyth, 472 U.S. 511 (1985)
- Hurt v. Wise, 880 F.3d 831 (7th Cir. 2018)
- Johnson v. Jones, 515 U.S. 304 (1995)
- Pearson v. Callahan, 555 U.S. 223 (2009)
- Ashcroft v. Iqbal, 556 U.S. 662 (2009)
- Tierney v. Vahle, 304 F.3d 734 (7th Cir. 2002)
- Scott v. Harris, 550 U.S. 373 (2007)
- Chavez v. Martinez, 538 U.S. 760 (2003)
- Sornberger v. City of Knoxville, Ill., 434 F.3d 1006 (7th Cir. 2006)
- United States v. Huerta, 239 F.3d 865 (7th Cir. 2001)
- Malloy v. Hogan, 378 U.S. 1 (1964)
- People v. Jackson, 22 N.E.3d 526 (Ill. App. Ct. 2014)

CITED IN

- Daniel Jackson v. Shawn Curry, Jackson v. Curry, 888 F.3d 259, 262-63 (7th Cir. 2018)