

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF SOUTH
CAROLINA

Ivory Williams, Topaz Williams-Fripp, and Ivory Williams as
Guardian of R.F., a minor v. The Beaufort County Sheriff's Office,
Deputy Sheriff William Grey, Sergeant Troy Krapf, and the South
Carolina Highway Patrol

Williams · No. 9:24-cv-1746-BHH · Decided March 17, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the District of South Carolina adopts a magistrate judge’s report and recommendation and grants defendants’ motion for summary judgment on plaintiffs’ 42 U.S.C. § 1983 Fourth Amendment claims arising from a traffic stop. The court concludes that the stop, detention, use of firearms, and handcuffing were objectively reasonable and that the individually sued officers are alternatively entitled to qualified immunity. The court declines supplemental jurisdiction over the remaining state-law claims and remands them to the Beaufort County Court of Common Pleas.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the District of South Carolina
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Bruce H. Hendricks
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the District of South Carolina
DECIDED	March 17, 2026
DOCKET	9:24-cv-1746-BHH
DISPOSITION	remanded
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Defendants moved for summary judgment on Plaintiffs' 42 U.S.C. § 1983 claim after removal from state court. Following a magistrate judge's Report and Recommendation, Plaintiffs objected. The district court conducted de novo review of the objections, granted summary judgment on the federal claim, and remanded the remaining state-law claims.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court reviewed the portions of the magistrate judge's Report to which specific objections were made de novo under 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1). It reviewed unobjected portions for clear error. Summary

judgment was appropriate if no genuine dispute of material fact existed and the movant was entitled to judgment as a matter of law; evidence was viewed in the light most favorable to the nonmoving party.

PRECEDENTIAL VALUE

Unpublished federal district court order; precedential status is unknown.

TOPICS

section 1983

qualified immunity

police misconduct

summary judgment

civil procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

Civil rights

Constitutional law

Federal civil procedure

Police misconduct

Remedies

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the evidence established a genuine dispute of material fact regarding the legality of the initial traffic stop under the Fourth Amendment.
2. Whether Defendants' extension of the traffic stop and use of a high-risk stop procedure and handcuffs were objectively reasonable under the Fourth Amendment.
3. Whether Defendants Gray and Krapf were entitled to qualified immunity.
4. Whether the court should decline supplemental jurisdiction over Plaintiffs' remaining state-law claims and remand them to state court.

HOLDINGS

1. The initial traffic stop was lawful because Deputy Gray had, at minimum, reasonable suspicion and, in fact, probable cause to believe that Plaintiffs had committed a traffic violation by speeding.
2. Defendants' extension of the traffic stop was objectively reasonable because Plaintiffs continued driving for more than six minutes after the officer activated his blue lights and siren and disregarded commands to stop, creating probable cause to believe they failed to stop for blue lights and supporting an inference that criminal activity might be afoot.
3. The brandishing of firearms and handcuffing of Plaintiffs during the high-risk traffic stop were objectively reasonable under the totality of the circumstances and did not constitute excessive force under the Fourth Amendment.
4. Defendants Gray and Krapf were entitled to qualified immunity because the traffic-stop conduct did not violate Plaintiffs' constitutional rights and, alternatively, did not violate clearly established rights of which a reasonable person would have known.
5. The court declined to exercise supplemental jurisdiction over Plaintiffs' remaining state-law claims and remanded those claims to the Beaufort County Court of Common Pleas.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“Though the total of approximately twenty minutes for the entire Traffic Stop may have been longer than that required for a standard speeding ticket—as Plaintiffs initially faced before their failure to stop exacerbated the situation—their actions provided ‘at least a minimal level of objective justification for the belief that criminal activity is afoot,’ and prompted a different sequence of events that resulted in a more in-depth investigation, including cuffing Plaintiffs.” (8)

“Ultimately, based on the evidence of record, the Court finds that the force used here—the brandishing of firearms and handcuffing Plaintiffs—was entirely reasonable based on the totality of the circumstances, and the Court finds no genuine dispute of material fact as to whether Defendants’ use of force was excessive.” (10)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Plaintiffs, a mother and her two teenage children, were returning from a basketball game when Deputy Gray observed their vehicle traveling faster than surrounding traffic and recorded a speed of 77 miles per hour. Gray activated his blue lights and siren, but Plaintiffs continued driving for more than six minutes, changing lanes and not complying with commands to stop, before stopping; during that interval Plaintiffs called 911. Officers then conducted a high-risk traffic stop, brandished firearms, and handcuffed Plaintiffs, leading to a § 1983 claim alleging wrongful seizure, detention without probable cause, and excessive force.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiffs filed the action in state court alleging state-law claims and a federal § 1983 claim. Defendants removed the action to federal court on April 8, 2024, and later moved for summary judgment. Magistrate Judge Molly H. Cherry recommended granting summary judgment on the § 1983 claim and remanding the state-law claims; after reviewing Plaintiffs' objections de novo, the district court adopted the Report in full.

DISPOSITION

remanded

REMAND INSTRUCTIONS

The remaining state-law claims are remanded to the Beaufort County Court of Common Pleas for consideration.

CASES CITED

- Anderson v. Liberty Lobby, Inc., 477 U.S. 242, 248-249 (1986)
- Celotex Corp. v. Catrett, 477 U.S. 317, 317, 323 (1986)
- Perini Corp. v. Perini Constr., Inc., 915 F.2d 121, 123-124 (4th Cir. 1990)
- Perez v. Arnold Transp., No. 3:15-cv-3162-TLW, 2018 WL 2301850, at *3 (D.S.C. Feb. 12, 2018)
- Crawford v. Newport News Indus. Corp., No. 4:14-cv-130, 2018 WL 4561671, at *2 (E.D. Va. Mar. 2, 2018)
- Kershaw v. Newport News Indus. Corp., 2018 WL 8058614 (4th Cir. Oct. 25, 2018)
- Mathews v. Weber, 423 U.S. 261 (1976)
- Diamond v. Colonial Life & Accident Ins. Co., 416 F.3d 310, 315 (4th Cir. 2005)

- United States v. Palmer, 820 F.3d 640, 649 (4th Cir. 2016)
- United States v. Bowman, 884 F.3d 200, 213 (4th Cir. 2018)
- Pennsylvania v. Mimms, 434 U.S. 106 (1977)
- United States v. Crittendon, 883 F.2d 326, 329 (4th Cir. 1989)
- Graham v. Connor, 490 U.S. 386, 396 (1989)
- Henry v. Purnell, 652 F.3d 524, 531 (4th Cir. 2011)

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