

SUPREME COURT OF ARKANSAS

Kelley v. Shults

2017 Ark. 112 (2017) · No. CV-17-261 · Decided April 3, 2017

SUMMARY

In this dissenting opinion, Justice Rhonda K. Wood argues that the Arkansas Supreme Court should consider the State's emergency request for a temporary stay despite the absence of a written circuit-court order in the appellate record. She contends that the filing requirement is procedural rather than jurisdictional and that the court should order the State to supplement the record under Arkansas Rule of Appellate Procedure–Civil 6(e), rather than dismiss the stay request.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	Supreme Court of Arkansas
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Rhonda K. Wood, Associate Justice
JURISDICTION	Arkansas
DECIDED	April 3, 2017
DOCKET	CV-17-261
DISPOSITION	dismissed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	The State immediately appealed from the circuit court's oral order requiring disclosure of unredacted copies of a package insert and label and sought an emergency stay. The majority dismissed the request because the record did not contain a filed written order; the dissent would have ordered supplementation of the record.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The dissent characterizes the issue as an expedited request for temporary appellate relief under Rule 6-1, rather than review of the merits or a motion to dismiss. It distinguishes the jurisdictional question of finality from procedural record-completion requirements.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Published dissenting opinion; the dissent's reasoning is nonbinding.
PARTIES	Wendy Kelley, in her official capacity as Director of the Arkansas Department of Correction, Arkansas Department of Correction v. Steven Shults

TOPICS

appellate procedure

appellate jurisdiction

final judgment rule

civil procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

appellate procedure

civil procedure

remedies

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the absence of a filed written order deprived the Supreme Court of Arkansas of jurisdiction to consider the State's emergency request for a temporary stay.
2. Whether the court should permit the State to supplement the appellate record with the subsequently filed written order rather than dismissing the stay request.

HOLDINGS

1. In the dissent's view, the requirement that a circuit court reduce an oral pronouncement to a filed written order is procedural rather than jurisdictional and did not require dismissal of the emergency stay request.
2. The dissent would have ordered the State to supplement the record with the subsequently filed written order instead of dismissing the request for a stay.

KEY QUOTATIONS

"I dissent because the proper course is to order the State to supplement the record." (2017 Ark. 112, at 1)

"The majority sua sponte dismisses the stay request for lack of jurisdiction, once again conflating procedural issues with jurisdictional ones." (2017 Ark. 112, at 2)

"Rather than dismissing the request for a stay, we should give the State an opportunity to provide the most up-to-date record." (2017 Ark. 112, at 3)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

The circuit court ordered the State to disclose within thirty minutes unredacted copies of the package insert and label for recently acquired potassium chloride. The State immediately appealed and sought an emergency stay. At the time of the request, the circuit court's oral order had not been reduced to a written order filed by the clerk, although a written order was filed the following afternoon.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

The circuit court ordered the State, from the bench, to disclose the requested materials within thirty minutes. Although a written order was later filed, the State did not supplement the appellate record with it. The majority dismissed the emergency stay request, while Justice Wood dissented and would have permitted the State to supplement the record under the appellate rules.

DISPOSITION

dismissed

CASES CITED

- Summerville v. Thrower, 369 Ark. 231, 253 S.W.3d 415 (2007)
- Bradley v. State, 2015 Ark. 144, 459 S.W.3d 302
- Kontrick v. Ryan, 540 U.S. 443 (2004)
- Kowalski v. Rose Drugs of Dardanelle, Inc., 2009 Ark. 524, 357 S.W.3d 432

OPINION

Kelley v. Shults.dissent

2017 Ark. 112

PER CURIAM.

Cite as 2017 Ark. 112

SUPREME COURT OF ARKANSAS

No. CV-17-261 Opinion Delivered: April 3, 2017

WENDY KELLEY, IN HER OFFICIAL

CAPACITY AS DIRECTOR OF THE EMERGENCY MOTION FOR

ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF IMMEDIATE STAY

CORRECTION, AND THE ARKANSAS

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION

APPELLANTS

V. STEVEN SHULTS DISSENTING OPINION.

APPELLEE

RHONDA K. WOOD, Associate Justice The circuit court, from the bench, ordered the State to disclose within thirty minutes unredacted copies of the package insert and label for the State's recently-acquired potassium chloride. The State immediately appealed and filed a motion for an emergency stay. At the time, the oral order was not issued in written form and filed by the circuit clerk. A written order has subsequently been filed; however, the State has not supplemented the record on appeal to include the written order. The majority dismisses the appeal for this reason. It maintains that our rules impose a jurisdictional requirement that a written order be filed in order for this court to consider the State's emergency request for a stay. I dissent because the proper course is to order the State to supplement the record. This court has jurisdiction to grant stays in an expedited and extraordinary fashion under Rule 6-1 of the Rules of the Arkansas Supreme Court. Appellants have sought relief Cite as 2017 Ark. 112 under this rule. Rule 6-1(c) provides a necessary mechanism for applications of temporary relief such as this. The Rule requires only certified copies of the pleadings, which "are treated as the record." Ark. Sup. Ct. R. 6-1(a). At the time the motion was filed, it is undisputed by the parties that the circuit court ordered immediate relief, despite not entering a written order until the following afternoon. The State complied with the requirements of Rule 6-1. The majority sua sponte dismisses the stay request for lack of jurisdiction, once again conflating procedural issues with jurisdictional ones. Certainly, under

Arkansas Rule of Civil Procedure 58 and Administrative Order No. 2, we require circuit courts to reduce their oral pronouncement to a written form to be filed with the clerk. Yet these two rules are procedural rather than jurisdictional. Procedural law is defined as “[t]he rules that prescribe the steps for having a right or duty judicially enforced, as opposed to the law that defines the specific rights or duties themselves.” *Summerville v. Thrower*, 369 Ark. 231, 237, 253 S.W.3d 415, 420 (2007). As I have noted in an earlier case, “Clarity would be facilitated if courts and litigants used the label ‘jurisdictional’ not for claim-processing rules, but only for prescriptions delineating the classes of cases (subject-matter jurisdiction) and the persons (personal jurisdiction) falling within a court’s adjudicatory authority.” *Bradley v. State*, 2015 Ark. 144, at 7, 459 S.W.3d 302, 306 (Wood, J., dissenting) (citing *Kontrick v. Ryan*, 540 U.S. 443, 454-55 (2004)). Because neither party objected to the lack of a filed, written order, we are under no obligation to raise the issue on our own. I recognize that the question whether an order is final and subject to appeal is a jurisdictional question that this court will raise sua sponte. *Kowalski v. Rose Drugs of 2 Cite as 2017 Ark. 112 Dardanelle, Inc.*, 2009 Ark. 524, 357 S.W.3d 432. However, what is before us today is a request for a temporary stay alone, not the merits of an appeal or a motion to dismiss the appeal. We have never addressed the final-order issue at this early stage. The most deliberate action for us would be to order the State to supplement the record with the subsequent written order. We have authority for doing so under the rules: “If anything material to either party is omitted from the record by error or accident . . . the appellate court . . . on its own initiative, may direct that the omission or misstatement be corrected, and if necessary, that a supplemental record be certified or transmitted.” Ark. R. App. P.–Civ. 6(e). Rather than dismissing the request for a stay, we should give the State an opportunity to provide the most up-to-date record. For this reason, I dissent. WOMACK, J., joins. 3