

SUPREME COURT OF MINNESOTA

State of Minnesota v. Antoine Rumel Little

851 N.W.2d 878 (Minn. 2014) · No. A11-2319 · Decided August 13, 2014

SUMMARY

The Minnesota Supreme Court held that when the State adds a new charge after a defendant has waived a jury trial, the district court must obtain a renewed, personal waiver for the added charge. The court concluded that defense counsel's reference to an earlier waiver did not satisfy Minnesota Rule of Criminal Procedure 26.01 and that the error was plain, prejudicial, and affected the fairness and integrity of the proceedings. The court reversed the court of appeals, vacated the first-degree criminal sexual conduct conviction, and remanded for further proceedings.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	Supreme Court of Minnesota
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Page, Justice; Stras, Justice
JURISDICTION	Minnesota
DECIDED	August 13, 2014
DOCKET	A11-2319
DISPOSITION	reversed_and_remanded
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Little appealed the Minnesota Court of Appeals' affirmance of his first-degree criminal sexual conduct conviction after a bench trial conducted without a renewed personal jury-trial waiver following the State's amendment of the complaint.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court applied plain-error analysis because Little did not object at trial, but concluded that relief was warranted without resolving whether harmless-error or plain-error review governed. Plain error requires an error, that is plain, that affects substantial rights, and that seriously affects the fairness and integrity of the judicial proceedings.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	published precedential opinion
PARTIES	Antoine Rumel Little v. State of Minnesota

TOPICS

criminal procedure

sixth amendment

appellate procedure

standard of review

PRACTICE AREAS

criminal law

criminal procedure

constitutional law

appellate procedure

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether a defendant who has waived a jury trial must personally renew that waiver when the State later amends the complaint to add a new criminal charge.
2. Whether defense counsel's statement that a prior jury-trial waiver had been placed on the record satisfies the personal-waiver requirement for the newly added charge.
3. Whether the district court's failure to obtain a renewed personal waiver constituted plain error affecting Little's substantial rights and requiring relief.

HOLDINGS

1. When the State amends a criminal complaint after a defendant has waived a jury trial, the district court must obtain a renewed waiver of the defendant's right to a jury trial on the newly added charge.
2. Defense counsel's statement that a record had been made of Little's earlier waiver did not satisfy Minnesota's requirement that the defendant personally waive the right to a jury trial in writing or on the record in open court.
3. The district court's failure to obtain a personal jury-trial waiver on the added first-degree charge was plain error affecting Little's substantial rights, and reversal was required to protect the fairness and integrity of the judicial proceedings.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“when the State amends the complaint after a defendant’s jury-trial waiver, the district court must obtain a renewed waiver of the defendant’s right to a jury trial on the newly added charge.” (883)

“Because the statement relied on by the State came from Little’s attorney—not Little himself—the statement does not satisfy the requirements of Minn. R. Crim. P. 26.01.” (883)

“As a result, we reverse Little’s first-degree criminal sexual conduct conviction and remand for further proceedings consistent with this opinion.” (887)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

The State initially charged Little with third- and fourth-degree criminal sexual conduct arising from an encounter with a 14-year-old girl. Little personally waived a jury trial on January 20, 2011. After the State amended the complaint on February 1 to add first-degree criminal sexual conduct, Little did not receive the amended complaint and never personally waived a jury trial on the added charge. The district court conducted a bench trial and convicted Little on all three counts.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

The district court found Little guilty of first-, third-, and fourth-degree criminal sexual conduct after conducting a bench trial. It denied his post-trial motion and sentenced him to 153 months in prison. The court of appeals

affirmed the first-degree conviction, concluding that the district court did not plainly err because no precedent required a renewed jury waiver after an amended complaint. The Minnesota Supreme Court reversed, vacated the first-degree conviction, and remanded.

DISPOSITION

reversed_and_remanded

REMAND INSTRUCTIONS

The court of appeals' decision was reversed, Little's first-degree criminal sexual conduct conviction was vacated, and the matter was remanded to the district court for further proceedings consistent with the opinion.

CASES CITED

- State v. Weltzin, 630 N.W.2d 406, 410 (Minn. 2001)
- State v. Dettman, 719 N.W.2d 644, 651, 655 (Minn. 2006)
- Brady v. United States, 397 U.S. 742, 748 (1970)
- State v. Ross, 472 N.W.2d 651, 653-54 (Minn. 1991)
- State v. Rhoads, 813 N.W.2d 880, 884 (Minn. 2012)
- McGeagh v. Nordberg, 53 Minn. 235, 236-37, 55 N.W. 117, 118 (1893)
- Wittenberg v. Onsgard, 78 Minn. 342, 348, 81 N.W. 14, 16 (1899)
- Turner v. Rogers, 564 U.S. 431, 131 S. Ct. 2507, 2516 (2011)
- Hooper v. State, 838 N.W.2d 775, 786 n.1 (Minn. 2013)
- State v. Griller, 583 N.W.2d 736, 740-42 (Minn. 1998)
- State v. Ramey, 721 N.W.2d 294, 302 (Minn. 2006)
- State v. Powers, 654 N.W.2d 667, 680-81 (Minn. 2003)
- State v. Moore, 438 N.W.2d 101, 105 (Minn. 1989)
- Plowman v. Copeland, Buhl & Co., 261 N.W.2d 581, 583 (Minn. 1977)
- State v. Osborne, 715 N.W.2d 436, 442-43 (Minn. 2006)
- State v. Morrow, 834 N.W.2d 715, 729 n.7 (Minn. 2013)
- State v. Matthews, 800 N.W.2d 629, 633-34 (Minn. 2011)
- Chapman v. California, 386 U.S. 18, 24 (1967)
- State v. Davis, 820 N.W.2d 525, 535-36 (Minn. 2012)
- State v. Hill, 801 N.W.2d 646, 654 (Minn. 2011)
- State v. Kuhlmann, 806 N.W.2d 844, 851-53 (Minn. 2011)
- United States v. Dominguez Benitez, 542 U.S. 74, 81-85 (2004)
- United States v. Williams, 559 F.3d 607, 611-15 (7th Cir. 2009)
- United States v. Vonn, 535 U.S. 55 (2002)
- State v. Roby, 547 N.W.2d 354, 357 (Minn. 1996)

- State v. Juarez, 572 N.W.2d 286, 291 (Minn. 1997)
- State v. Koppi, 798 N.W.2d 358, 364 (Minn. 2011)
- State v. Harbitz, 293 Minn. 224, 226, 198 N.W.2d 342, 343 (1972)
- State v. Hohenwald, 815 N.W.2d 823, 834-35 (Minn. 2012)
- State v. McCray, 753 N.W.2d 746, 754 n.2 (Minn. 2008)
- State v. Pendleton, 759 N.W.2d 900, 911 n.3 (Minn. 2009)
- State v. Caron, 300 Minn. 123, 127-28, 218 N.W.2d 197, 200 (1974)
- State v. Fleck, 810 N.W.2d 303, 310-12 (Minn. 2012)
- State v. Spann, 704 N.W.2d 486, 491 (Minn. 2005)
- Boykin v. Alabama, 395 U.S. 238, 243 (1969)
- Hill v. Lockhart, 474 U.S. 52, 59 (1985)
- Sullivan v. Louisiana, 508 U.S. 275, 281-82 (1993)
- Arizona v. Fulminante, 499 U.S. 279, 309 (1991)
- United States v. Gonzalez-Lopez, 548 U.S. 140, 148-51 (2006)
- State v. Bergeron, 452 N.W.2d 918, 926 (Minn. 1990)
- Sontoya v. State, 829 N.W.2d 602, 604 (Minn. 2013)
- State v. Kaiser, 469 N.W.2d 316, 317 (Minn. 1991)
- State v. Krause, 817 N.W.2d 136, 147-48 (Minn. 2012)