

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF
OHIO, WESTERN DIVISION

Ted K. Davis, Jr. v. Judge Charles Chamberlain

Davis v. Chamberlain · No. 1:25-CV-624 · Decided January 15, 2026

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Southern District of Ohio overruled Ted K. Davis Jr.’s objections to a magistrate judge’s report and recommendation and adopted the recommendation in full. The court granted Judge Charles Chamberlain’s motion to dismiss and dismissed the action with prejudice, concluding that the claims were barred by the domestic-relations and Rooker-Feldman doctrines and that judicial immunity also applied.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Southern District of Ohio, Western Division
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Michael R. Barrett
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Southern District of Ohio, Western Division
DECIDED	January 15, 2026
DOCKET	1:25-CV-624
DISPOSITION	dismissed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Davis objected to a magistrate judge's report and recommendation recommending denial of preliminary injunctive relief and dismissal of his claims. The district court overruled the objections, adopted the report and recommendation, granted Judge Chamberlain's motion to dismiss, and dismissed the action with prejudice.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	For properly made objections to a dispositive report and recommendation, the district court conducts de novo review under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 72(b)(3) and 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1). Vague, general, frivolous, conclusory, or otherwise nonspecific objections do not trigger de novo review.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished district court order; persuasive authority only
PARTIES	Ted K. Davis, Jr. v. Judge Charles Chamberlain

TOPICS

motions to dismiss

subject matter jurisdiction

injunctions

family law

civil procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

civil procedure

family law

constitutional law

civil rights

remedies

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether Davis's objections to the magistrate judge's report and recommendation required de novo review.
2. Whether the federal district court could exercise jurisdiction over claims that effectively challenged or sought nullification of state-court domestic-relations judgments.
3. Whether the domestic-relations abstention doctrine and the Rooker-Feldman doctrine required dismissal.
4. Whether Judge Chamberlain was entitled to judicial immunity.

HOLDINGS

1. Vague, general, frivolous, or conclusory objections do not satisfy the objection requirement and do not require de novo review; the court reviewed only the objections that were sufficiently specific.
2. The domestic-relations abstention doctrine independently defeated federal district court jurisdiction because Davis's constitutional claims were merely a pretext for seeking relief from state domestic-relations judgments.
3. Even if the claims fell outside the domestic-relations exception, Rooker-Feldman barred them because Davis was a state-court loser alleging injuries caused by state-court judgments and seeking federal review or nullification of those judgments.
4. The court stated that Judge Chamberlain was entitled to judicial immunity from suits arising from performance of judicial functions.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“The Rooker-Feldman doctrine applies “to the ‘narrow’ set of ‘cases brought by state-court losers complaining of injuries caused by state-court judgments rendered before the district court proceedings commenced and inviting district court review and rejection of those judgments.’”

“Although his arguments are “cloaked in the language of constitutional torts,” he fundamentally “attacks the validity of the state court’s judgment in the divorce . . . proceedings and seeks its nullification as the primary form of relief.””

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Davis sought federal relief from garnishment of his social security disability income and asked the court to invalidate orders entered during his Ohio divorce proceedings. Those state proceedings included repeated contempt findings based on Davis's failure to pay spousal support, maintain life insurance, and comply with

court orders; the state trial court imposed monetary sanctions and a suspended jail sentence, and the Ohio appellate court affirmed. Davis sued the visiting state-court judge who presided briefly over the divorce matter, characterizing his claims as constitutional torts and seeking nullification of the state-court orders.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Davis filed a federal action seeking emergency termination or enjoinder of an income-withholding order and relief from orders entered in his Ohio divorce proceedings. The magistrate judge construed the filing as seeking preliminary injunctive relief, found no irreparable injury and a low likelihood of success, and recommended disposition against Davis. After reviewing Davis's objections, the district court adopted the recommendation, granted the defendant's motion to dismiss, and dismissed the case with prejudice.

DISPOSITION

dismissed

CASES CITED

- *Miller v. Currie*, 50 F.3d 373, 380 (6th Cir. 1995)
- *Berkshire v. Dahl*, 928 F.3d 520, 530 (6th Cir. 2019)
- *Davis v. Davis*, 2022-Ohio-3179, ¶¶ 15-16, 41, 62 (12th Dist.)
- *Cole v. Yukins*, 7 F. App'x 354, 356 (6th Cir. 2001)
- *Spencer v. Bouchard*, 449 F.3d 721, 725 (6th Cir. 2006)
- *Mira v. Marshall*, 806 F.2d 636, 637-38 (6th Cir. 1986) (per curiam)
- *In re Burrus*, 136 U.S. 586 (1890)
- *Burrell-El v. Kelley*, No. 1:18-CV-254, 2018 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 95150, at *6 (S.D. Ohio Apr. 12, 2018)
- *Danforth v. Celebrezze*, 76 F. App'x 615, 616 (6th Cir. 2002)
- *Rooker v. Fidelity Trust Co.*, 263 U.S. 413 (1923)
- *District of Columbia Court of Appeals v. Feldman*, 460 U.S. 462 (1983)
- *Vanderkodde v. Mary Jane M. Elliott, P.C.*, 951 F.3d 397, 402 (6th Cir. 2020)
- *Exxon Mobil Corp. v. Saudi Basic Industries Corp.*, 544 U.S. 280, 284 (2005)
- *Greenberg v. Slatery*, No. 22-5886, 2023 U.S. App. LEXIS 7334, at *4 (6th Cir. Mar. 28, 2023)
- *Olivares v. Performance Contracting Group*, 76 F. App'x 603, 604-05 (6th Cir. 2003)
- *Brookings v. Clark*, 389 F.3d 614, 617 (6th Cir. 2004)