

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE MIDDLE DISTRICT OF
FLORIDA, TAMPA DIVISION

Michael P. Martin v. Thirteenth Judicial Circuit Court in and for
Hillsborough County, Florida

Martin · No. 8:25-cv-01848-JLB-TGW · Decided November 21, 2025

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Middle District of Florida granted the Thirteenth Judicial Circuit Court’s motion to dismiss Michael P. Martin’s constitutional and declaratory-relief action. The court held that the Rooker-Feldman doctrine deprived it of subject-matter jurisdiction because Martin sought review of, and relief from, the scope and enforcement of a prior Florida state-court judgment. The complaint was dismissed without prejudice, and the case was closed.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Middle District of Florida, Tampa Division
WRITING FOR THE COURT	John L. Badalamenti
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Middle District of Florida, Tampa Division
DECIDED	November 21, 2025
DOCKET	8:25-cv-01848-JLB-TGW
DISPOSITION	dismissed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	The defendant moved to dismiss the complaint under Federal Rules of Civil Procedure 12(b)(1) and 12(b)(6). The court granted the motion under Rule 12(b)(1), holding that the Rooker-Feldman doctrine deprived the court of subject matter jurisdiction, and dismissed the complaint without prejudice.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	For a facial Rule 12(b)(1) challenge, the court determines whether the complaint sufficiently alleges a basis for subject matter jurisdiction and accepts the allegations as true. Because the court dismissed under Rule 12(b)(1), it did not reach the merits or the Rule 12(b)(6) arguments.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished district court order; nonprecedential

PARTIES

Michael P. Martin v. Thirteenth Judicial Circuit Court in and for Hillsborough County, Florida

TOPICS

subject matter jurisdiction

motions to dismiss

civil procedure

due process

takings clause

PRACTICE AREAS

civil procedure

constitutional law

real property

civil rights

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the Rooker-Feldman doctrine deprived the federal district court of subject matter jurisdiction over Martin's challenge to the scope and enforcement of the state-court judgment.
2. Whether Martin could avoid Rooker-Feldman by characterizing his challenge as one concerning post-judgment conduct and constitutional violations.
3. Whether the alleged denial of hearings on Martin's state-court motions supplied an independent federal claim.

HOLDINGS

1. The Rooker-Feldman doctrine barred Martin's action because he was a state-court loser seeking federal relief from injuries caused by the state-court judgment and post-judgment orders, requiring the district court to interpret and potentially modify or overturn that judgment.
2. Martin could not circumvent Rooker-Feldman by characterizing his challenge to the state judgment as a different constitutional or post-judgment claim.
3. The alleged denial of hearings did not provide an independent basis for federal adjudication because the state court considered and rejected the merits of Martin's motions, and a hearing was not required.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“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.” (at 284)

“Although narrow in its application, a state court loser cannot avoid Rooker-Feldman’s bar by cleverly cloaking her pleadings in the cloth of a different claim. Pretext is not tolerated.” (at 1005)

“only when the injury asserted is ‘caused by the judgment itself.’” (at 1212)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Martin owned property in Tampa that had been reconfigured into a tract containing Block E, and he obtained a permit to construct an accessory structure. Nearby property owners sued in Florida state court, which entered judgment declaring the construction illegal and ordering Martin to remove the structure and restore Block E to a non-buildable condition. After the state appellate court affirmed, the state trial court entered or enforced post-

judgment directives concerning demolition of the structure, pool, and pickleball court and denied Martin's motions concerning a stay, judicial disqualification, and modification of the injunction. Martin then sued the state judicial circuit in federal court, claiming that the post-judgment orders violated federal and Florida takings provisions and federal due process.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Martin sought declaratory and injunctive relief in federal court based on alleged takings and due-process violations arising from post-judgment orders entered in an underlying Florida state-court property dispute. The state trial court entered judgment against him, the Florida Second District Court of Appeal affirmed, and subsequent state-court orders directed compliance with the judgment. After Martin filed this federal action and the court denied his motion for a temporary restraining order, the Thirteenth Judicial Circuit moved to dismiss. The district court dismissed the action without prejudice for lack of subject matter jurisdiction.

DISPOSITION

dismissed

CASES CITED

- Bryant v. Avado Brands, Inc., 187 F.3d 1271, 1273 n.1 (11th Cir. 1999)
- Boone v. Secretary, Department of Corrections, 377 F.3d 1315, 1316 (11th Cir. 2004)
- Kokkonen v. Guardian Life Insurance Co. of America, 511 U.S. 375, 377 (1994)
- Lawrence v. Dunbar, 919 F.2d 1525, 1528-29 (11th Cir. 1990)
- Sweet Pea Marine, Ltd. v. APJ Marine, Inc., 411 F.3d 1242, 1247 n.2 (11th Cir. 2005)
- Stalley ex rel. United States v. Orlando Regional Healthcare System, Inc., 524 F.3d 1229, 1232 (11th Cir. 2008)
- Exxon Mobil Corp. v. Saudi Basic Industries Corp., 544 U.S. 280, 283-84 (2005)
- Behr v. Campbell, 8 F.4th 1206, 1208, 1210-13 (11th Cir. 2021)
- Rooker v. Fidelity Trust Co., 263 U.S. 413, 414-16 (1923)
- D.C. Court of Appeals v. Feldman, 460 U.S. 462, 463, 486 (1983)
- Thomas v. Bartholomew, 2025 WL 1179583, at *7 (11th Cir. 2025)
- May v. Morgan County, Georgia, 878 F.3d 1001, 1003-07 (11th Cir. 2017)

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