

OHIO COURT OF APPEALS, SEVENTH APPELLATE DISTRICT

State v. Fields

2026-Ohio-867 · No. 25 BE 0038, 25 BE 0042 · Decided March 13, 2026

SUMMARY

The Ohio Seventh District Court of Appeals affirmed DaJuan D. Fields's convictions and sentence of 24 to 29.5 years in prison. The court held that law enforcement conducted justified protective sweeps of his home under *Maryland v. Buie* and properly seized drugs observed in plain view. The court also held that the trial court was not required to accept the parties' recommended two-year sentence for felonious assault.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	Ohio Court of Appeals, Seventh Appellate District
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Mark A. Hanni; Carol Ann Robb; Katelyn Dickey
JURISDICTION	Ohio Seventh District Court of Appeals
DECIDED	March 13, 2026
DOCKET	25 BE 0038, 25 BE 0042
DISPOSITION	affirmed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Defendant appealed from Belmont County Common Pleas Court judgments denying his amended motion to suppress and sentencing him after no-contest and guilty pleas.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	For suppression rulings, the appellate court accepts factual findings supported by competent, credible evidence and independently reviews de novo the application of law to those facts. The court also reviewed the trial court's sentencing decision for abuse of discretion.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Published Ohio Court of Appeals opinion
PARTIES	DaJuan D. Fields v. State of Ohio

TOPICS

- suppression of evidence
- fourth amendment
- search and seizure
- sentencing
- plea bargaining

PRACTICE AREAS

- criminal law
- criminal procedure
- constitutional law
- sentencing
- appellate procedure

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether officers were justified under the Fourth Amendment in conducting protective sweeps of the main floor and upstairs of Fields's home after executing an arrest warrant.
2. Whether drugs observed during the protective sweeps were properly seized under the plain-view doctrine.
3. Whether the trial court abused its discretion by imposing an eight-year sentence instead of the parties' jointly recommended two-year sentence.
4. Whether Fields's guilty plea was not knowing, intelligent, and voluntary because the trial court did not permit him to withdraw it after imposing a sentence greater than the parties' recommendation.

HOLDINGS

1. The officers conducted a justified protective sweep of the main floor. A precautionary sweep of areas adjoining the place of arrest was permissible without probable cause or reasonable suspicion, and the circumstances also supplied articulable facts supporting a broader protective sweep.
2. The protective sweep of the upstairs was justified because the officers reasonably believed that an unsecured person posing a danger could be present there.
3. The drugs observed on the main floor and upstairs were properly seized because they were in plain view during justified protective sweeps.
4. The trial court did not abuse its discretion by imposing an eight-year sentence for felonious assault rather than the parties' jointly recommended two-year sentence because the court warned Fields that it was not bound by the recommendation and ordered a presentence investigation before sentencing.
5. Fields's guilty plea was not rendered unknowing or involuntary by the court's refusal to allow withdrawal after sentencing because he was advised of the maximum penalty and that the court was not bound by the joint recommendation.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“A protective sweep is “a quick and limited search of premises, incident to an arrest and conducted to protect the safety of police officers or others.”” (¶ 37)

“Beyond that, however, we hold that there must be articulable facts which, taken together with the rational inferences from those facts, would warrant a reasonably prudent officer in believing that the area to be swept harbors an individual posing a danger to those on the arrest scene.” (¶ 38)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Law enforcement executed a high-risk arrest warrant at Fields's home to locate and arrest him for a serious felonious assault, with information that other participants and firearms might be involved. Officers quickly located and arrested Fields on the main floor, encountered other individuals, observed a juvenile flee from the home, and conducted protective sweeps of the main floor and upstairs. Officers observed drugs in plain view during the sweeps. Fields later entered a no-contest plea to drug possession and a guilty plea to felonious assault

after being advised that the court was not bound by the parties' recommended two-year sentence; the court imposed eight years for felonious assault.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

A Belmont County grand jury indicted Fields on drug, trafficking, weapons, and felonious-assault charges, and later returned a superseding indictment. The trial court denied Fields's amended motion to suppress, after which Fields pleaded no contest to felony-one drug possession with a major drug offender specification and guilty to second-degree felonious assault with a repeat violent offender specification. The court imposed an aggregate mandatory minimum sentence of 24 years, with a possible maximum of 29.5 years. Fields and his counsel separately appealed; the appeals were consolidated, and the appellate court affirmed.

DISPOSITION

affirmed

CASES CITED

- State v. Chuppa, 2025-Ohio-3117, ¶ 14 (11th Dist.)
- State v. Burnside, 2003-Ohio-5372, ¶ 8
- State v. Williams, 2024-Ohio-943, ¶ 43 (7th Dist.)
- State v. Venham, 96 Ohio App. 3d 649, 653 (4th Dist.)
- State v. Rice, 129 Ohio App. 3d 91, 94 (7th Dist.)
- State v. Eggleston, 2015-Ohio-958, ¶ 18 (11th Dist.)
- Mapp v. Ohio, 367 U.S. 643, 654 (1961)
- State v. Kessler, 53 Ohio St. 2d 204, 207 (1978)
- Coolidge v. New Hampshire, 403 U.S. 443, 454-55 (1971)
- Maryland v. Buie, 494 U.S. 325, 327, 333-35 (1990)
- Boykin v. Alabama, 395 U.S. 238, 243 (1969)
- State v. Engle, 74 Ohio St. 3d 525, 527 (1996)
- State v. Sarkozy, 2008-Ohio-509, ¶ 22
- State v. Dangler, 2020-Ohio-2765, ¶ 16
- State v. Underwood, 124 Ohio St. 3d 365 (2010)
- State v. Frye, 2025-Ohio-569, ¶ 21 (7th Dist.)
- State v. Leasure, 2024-Ohio-476, ¶¶ 1-3
- State v. Jordan, 2024-Ohio-2361, ¶¶ 23, 29, 32 (8th Dist.)
- State v. Jordan, 2025-Ohio-5859 (8th Dist.)