

CALIFORNIA COURT OF APPEAL, FIRST APPELLATE DISTRICT, DIVISION TWO

People v. Seigler

People v. Seigler · No. A170503 · Decided December 1, 2025

SUMMARY

The California Court of Appeal held that the trial court abused its discretion by denying Anthony Seigler’s day-of-trial motion to continue criminal proceedings so that he could pursue mental health diversion. The court concluded that the record supported consideration of mental health issues and that the continuance request was not properly rejected solely because the diversion application was filed on the trial date or lacked supporting eligibility evidence at that stage. The court reversed.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	California Court of Appeal, First Appellate District, Division Two
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Richman, J.; Stewart, P.J.; Miller, J.
JURISDICTION	California Court of Appeal, First Appellate District, Division Two
DECIDED	December 1, 2025
DOCKET	A170503
DISPOSITION	reversed_and_remanded
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Defendant appealed from a judgment entered after he pleaded no contest to burglary and negligent discharge of a firearm and was placed on formal probation. He challenged the trial court’s denial of a motion to continue trial so that he could pursue mental health diversion.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Denial of a criminal trial continuance is reviewed for abuse of discretion, including whether the denial was so arbitrary as to violate due process. Reversal generally requires both an abuse of discretion and prejudice.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Published California Court of Appeal opinion certified for publication.
PARTIES	Anthony Seigler v. The People

TOPICS

- criminal procedure
- appellate procedure
- standard of review
- preservation of error
- plea bargaining

PRACTICE AREAS

criminal procedure

appellate procedure

mental health diversion

criminal defense

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the trial court abused its discretion by denying a motion to continue trial so that Seigler could obtain a mental health evaluation and litigate an application for mental health diversion.
2. Whether the denial of the continuance was prejudicial and required reversal of the judgment.

HOLDINGS

1. The trial court abused its discretion by denying Seigler's motion to continue trial where the continuance would have allowed him to obtain a mental health evaluation and pursue mental health diversion, and where the court failed adequately to consider the anticipated benefits, burdens, and whether substantial justice would be served.
2. The error was prejudicial because denial of the continuance deprived Seigler of a meaningful opportunity to obtain an expert evaluation and have his diversion application considered on its merits, and forced him to choose between an immediate trial for which counsel was unprepared and a hastily negotiated plea.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“The scope of discretion always resides in the particular law being applied, i.e., in the “legal principles governing the subject of [the] action” Action that transgresses the confines of the applicable principles of law is outside the scope of discretion and we call such action an “abuse” of discretion.” (at 14)

“Denial of the continuance, and its practical effect of depriving Seigler of a hearing at which he could argue in favor of this outcome on the merits, failed to “ ‘ “subserve . . . the ends of substantial justice.” ’ ” (at 20)

“The judgment is reversed. The case is remanded with directions that defendant be given a reasonable opportunity to file an application for mental health diversion and, should he choose to file such an application, to have it considered on its merits.” (at 27)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

In March 2023, Seigler fired two shots through a bathroom wall while his son was in the bathtub after reporting voices, tapping, and perceived threats that responding officers determined had not occurred. Officers observed signs that Seigler was under the influence of a controlled substance. In a separate April 2023 incident, Seigler was accused of taking property from his girlfriend's mother's home. Defense counsel repeatedly expressed concern that Seigler was delusional, affected by severe drug addiction or mental disease, and unable to understand the consequences of the criminal proceedings.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Seigler was charged in two Lake County Superior Court cases arising from separate incidents. After multiple continuances, defense counsel moved on the day set for trial to continue the proceedings and filed an application

for mental health diversion. The trial court denied the continuance and diversion application as untimely and lacking notice and began preparing for jury selection. Seigler then entered no-contest pleas under agreements providing for concurrent probationary terms. The Court of Appeal reversed and remanded for a reasonable opportunity to apply for mental health diversion and have the application considered on the merits.

DISPOSITION

reversed_and_remanded

REMAND INSTRUCTIONS

The case is remanded for defendant to receive a reasonable opportunity to file an application for mental health diversion and, if he files one, to have it considered on the merits. If diversion is granted and successfully completed, the charges must be dismissed under Penal Code section 1001.36. If defendant does not seek diversion or the trial court denies the application, the judgment is to be reinstated.

CASES CITED

- People v. Navarro, 12 Cal. 5th 285 (2021)
- People v. Reed, 4 Cal. 5th 989 (2018)
- People v. Doolin, 45 Cal. 4th 390 (2009)
- People v. Gonzalez, 12 Cal. 5th 367 (2021)
- People v. Mungia, 44 Cal. 4th 1101 (2008)
- Ungar v. Sarafite, 376 U.S. 575 (1964)
- People v. Beames, 40 Cal. 4th 907 (2007)
- Artus v. Gramercy Towers Condominium Assn., 76 Cal. App. 5th 1043 (2022)
- People v. Williams, 63 Cal. App. 5th 990 (2021)
- People v. Jacobs, 156 Cal. App. 4th 728 (2007)
- Concord Communities v. City of Concord, 91 Cal. App. 4th 1407 (2001)
- Bailey v. Taaffe, 29 Cal. 422 (1866)
- People v. Braden, People v. Braden, 14 Cal. 5th 791 (2023)
- People v. Fields, 13 Cal. 4th 289 (1996)
- People v. Soto, 4 Cal. 5th 968 (2018)
- People v. Fontana, 139 Cal. App. 3d 326 (1982)
- Hughes v. Superior Court, 106 Cal. App. 3d 1 (1980)
- In re Vargas, 83 Cal. App. 4th 1125 (2000)
- People v. Gerson, 80 Cal. App. 5th 1067 (2022)
- Sarmiento v. Superior Court, 98 Cal. App. 5th 882 (2024)
- People v. Frahs, 9 Cal. 5th 618 (2020)
- Hamilton v. Orange County Sheriff's Department, 8 Cal. App. 5th 759 (2017)

- Denton v. City and County of San Francisco, 16 Cal. App. 5th 779 (2017)
- Elkins v. Superior Court, 41 Cal. 4th 1337 (2007)
- People v. Hardy, 65 Cal. App. 5th 312 (2021)
- People v. Watson, 46 Cal. 2d 818 (1956)

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