

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF
PENNSYLVANIA

Alex Belfi v. Honorable Nina Wright Padilla, Thomas Wagner,
LendingClub Bank, N.A., et al.

Belfi · No. No. 24-05489 · Decided December 4, 2025

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania grants Judge Nina Wright Padilla’s Rule 12(b)(6) motion to dismiss Alex Belfi’s Second Amended Complaint with prejudice. The court concludes that Belfi’s claims arising from prior Pennsylvania state-court litigation are barred by statutes of limitations, res judicata, judicial immunity, Eleventh Amendment immunity, and the Rooker-Feldman doctrine. The court also determines that amendment would be futile.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania
WRITING FOR THE COURT	John Milton Younge
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania
DECIDED	December 4, 2025
DOCKET	No. 24-05489
DISPOSITION	dismissed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Defendant Judge Nina Wright Padilla moved under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 12(b)(6) to dismiss Plaintiff's Second Amended Complaint. The court granted the motion and dismissed the claims against the moving defendant with prejudice, concluding that amendment would be futile.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	On a Rule 12(b)(6) motion, the court accepts well-pleaded allegations as true, construes them in the plaintiff's favor, and determines whether the complaint states a facially plausible claim. A statute-of-limitations defense may be resolved on a motion to dismiss only when the time bar is apparent on the face of the complaint. The court may consider exhibits attached to the complaint, public records, and documents integral to or explicitly relied upon in the complaint without converting the motion to one for summary judgment.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished, nonprecedential district court memorandum

PARTIES

Alex Belfi v. Honorable Nina Wright Padilla, Thomas Wagner,
LendingClub Bank, N.A., City of Philadelphia, et al.

TOPICS

motions to dismiss

statute of limitations

res judicata

section 1983

PRACTICE AREAS

civil procedure

civil rights

constitutional law

remedies

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the claims against Judge Nina Wright Padilla were barred by the applicable statute of limitations.
2. Whether claim preclusion, or res judicata, barred Belfi's claims against Judge Padilla based on prior federal litigation arising from the same conduct.
3. Whether Judge Padilla was entitled to absolute judicial immunity for acts performed in her judicial capacity and within her jurisdiction.
4. Whether an official-capacity claim against Judge Padilla was barred by Eleventh Amendment immunity.
5. Whether the complaint stated a civil RICO claim under 18 U.S.C. § 1962(c) against Judge Padilla.
6. Whether dismissal with prejudice was appropriate because amendment would be futile.

HOLDINGS

1. Claims under 42 U.S.C. § 1983 arising in Pennsylvania are subject to a two-year limitations period, and Belfi's claims against Judge Padilla were time-barred because the alleged conduct occurred between December 2017 and January 2020 while the action was filed in October 2024.
2. Res judicata barred Belfi's claims against Judge Padilla because a prior action involved a final judgment on the merits, the same parties, and the same cause of action or course of wrongful conduct.
3. Judge Padilla was absolutely immune from Belfi's civil-rights claims because the challenged acts were judicial functions performed in the exercise of jurisdiction, even if the acts allegedly involved legal or procedural error.
4. Belfi's official-capacity claim against Judge Padilla was barred by the Eleventh Amendment because the claim was effectively against Pennsylvania and Pennsylvania had not waived its immunity.
5. Belfi failed to state a civil RICO claim under 18 U.S.C. § 1962(c) because he did not allege facts showing a pattern of racketeering activity or that Judge Padilla participated in an enterprise engaged in racketeering.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“To survive dismissal, ‘a complaint must contain sufficient factual matter, accepted as true, to state a claim [for] relief that is plausible on its face.’” (Section III)

“The statute of limitations begins to run as soon as the right to institute and maintain suit arises; lack of knowledge, mistake or misunderstanding do not toll the running of the statute of limitations.” (Section IV.A)

“Claim preclusion also “bars not only claims that were brought in a previous action, but also claims that could have been brought.”” (Section IV.B)

“It is “preposterous” to hold that “whenever a judge makes an error of law or procedure in a matter properly before him or her, that judge is not entitled to judicial immunity.”” (Section IV.C.i)

“The Eleventh Amendment is a jurisdictional bar which deprives federal courts of subject matter jurisdiction.” (Section IV.C.ii)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Belfi alleged that Mary E. Brophy forged his signature on a partnership agreement and sued him in the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas. During that litigation, the state court froze an account containing veterans' disability benefits, and judgment was entered against Belfi in January 2020 after a November 2019 trial. Belfi's state appeal and later efforts to vacate or remove the state case were unsuccessful, and prior federal actions concerning the same events were dismissed. In this action, he again challenged the state-court conduct and asserted due process, statutory, RICO, and related claims against Judge Padilla and other defendants.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Belfi litigated an underlying state-court dispute concerning a partnership and an account freeze involving veterans' disability benefits. After judgment was entered against him in state court, his appeal was quashed, and he pursued several unsuccessful state and federal proceedings seeking relief from the judgment and related garnishment. He filed this action in October 2024, later amended his complaint twice, and asserted due process, federal statutory, Pennsylvania statutory, RICO, and related claims. The court granted Judge Padilla's motion to dismiss the Second Amended Complaint with prejudice.

DISPOSITION

dismissed

CASES CITED

- Ashcroft v. Iqbal, 556 U.S. 662 (2009)
- Bell Atlantic Corp. v. Twombly, 550 U.S. 544 (2007)
- Tatis v. Allied Interstate, LLC, 882 F.3d 422, 426 (3d Cir. 2018)
- McTernan v. City of York, 577 F.3d 521, 526 (3d Cir. 2009)
- Schmidt v. Skolas, 770 F.3d 241, 249 (3d Cir. 2014)
- Kalu v. Spaulding, 113 F.4th 311, 325 (3d Cir. 2024)
- Erickson v. Pardus, 551 U.S. 89, 94 (2007)
- Tourscher v. McCullough, 184 F.3d 236, 240 (3d Cir. 1999)
- Pocono International Raceway v. Pocono Produce, 468 A.2d 468, 471 (Pa. 1983)

- *Montanez v. Secretary Pennsylvania Department of Corrections*, 773 F.3d 472, 480 (3d Cir. 2014)
- *Belfi v. Wagner*, No. 23-CV-4346, 2024 WL 4349953 (E.D. Pa. Sept. 30, 2024)
- *Taylor v. Sturgell*, 553 U.S. 880, 892 (2008)
- *Lubrizol Corp. v. Exxon Corp.*, 929 F.2d 960, 963 (3d Cir. 1991)
- *Crimone v. McCabe Weisberg & Conway, P.C.*, 737 F. App'x 107, 109-10 (3d Cir. 2018)
- *Duhaney v. Attorney General of the United States*, 621 F.3d 340, 347 (3d Cir. 2010)
- *Stump v. Sparkman*, 435 U.S. 349, 355-56 (1978)
- *Harvey v. Loftus*, 505 F. App'x 87, 90 (3d Cir. 2012) (per curiam)
- *Azubuko v. Royal*, 443 F.3d 302, 303-04 (3d Cir. 2006) (per curiam)
- *Gallas v. Supreme Court of Pennsylvania*, 211 F.3d 760, 768 (3d Cir. 2000)
- *Figueroa v. Blackburn*, 208 F.3d 435, 443-45 (3d Cir. 2000)
- *Barnes v. Winchell*, 105 F.3d 1111, 1122 (6th Cir. 1997)
- *Great Western Mining & Mineral Co. v. Fox Rothschild LLP*, 615 F.3d 159, 165-66 (3d Cir. 2010)
- *Kentucky v. Graham*, 473 U.S. 159, 166 (1985)
- *Hafer v. Melo*, 502 U.S. 21, 26 (1991)
- *Laskaris v. Thornburgh*, 661 F.2d 23, 25 (3d Cir. 1981)
- *Blanciak v. Allegheny Ludlum Corp.*, 77 F.3d 690, 694 n.2 (3d Cir. 1996)
- *Care One Management LLC v. United Healthcare Workers East*, 43 F.4th 126, 135 (3d Cir. 2022)
- *Averbach v. Rival Manufacturing Co.*, 809 F.2d 1016, 1018 (3d Cir. 1987)
- *Peeples v. Citta*, 501 F. App'x 109, 111 (3d Cir. 2012)
- *Harper-Bey v. New Jersey*, 512 F. App'x 128, 129 n.1 (3d Cir. 2013)
- *Mehta v. City of Jersey City*, 360 F. App'x 270, 271 (3d Cir. 2010)