

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF
ILLINOIS, EASTERN DIVISION

Gross v. Martinez

No. 22-cv-06843 (N.D. Ill. Mar. 30, 2026) · No. No. 22-cv-06843 · Decided March 30, 2026

SUMMARY

The court grants summary judgment to six Illinois State Police troopers in a 42 U.S.C. § 1983 action arising from a traffic-stop search of Robert Gross’s vehicle. The court holds that the canine sniff was supported by reasonable suspicion and that the canine alert supplied probable cause for the vehicle search. It further applies the collective knowledge doctrine to several assisting officers and grants summary judgment to two officers who did not participate in the search.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois, Eastern Division
WRITING FOR THE COURT	John F. Kness
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois, Eastern Division
DECIDED	March 30, 2026
DOCKET	No. 22-cv-06843
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Plaintiff brought a 42 U.S.C. § 1983 action alleging that Illinois State Police troopers violated the Fourth Amendment by unlawfully prolonging a traffic stop, conducting a canine sniff, and searching his vehicle. Defendants moved for summary judgment.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Summary judgment is appropriate when there is no genuine dispute as to any material fact and the movant is entitled to judgment as a matter of law. The court draws reasonable inferences in favor of the nonmoving party, but the nonmoving party must identify specific admissible evidence showing a genuine dispute fit for trial.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Unknown; memorandum opinion and order from a federal district court

PARTIES

Robert Gross v. Chad Martinez, Christopher Ehlers, Nicholas Schoen, Tyler Rybczyk, Donald Furhop, Matthew Giamanco

TOPICS

fourth amendment

search and seizure

probable cause

section 1983

summary judgment

PRACTICE AREAS

civil rights

constitutional law

criminal procedure

civil procedure

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether defendants unlawfully prolonged the traffic stop to conduct a canine sniff without independent reasonable suspicion.
2. Whether the canine alert supplied probable cause to search Gross's vehicle without consent or a warrant.
3. Whether the collective knowledge doctrine permitted Giamanco, Rybczyk, and Schoen to rely on Martinez's reasonable suspicion and probable cause.
4. Whether Ehlers and Furhop could be liable where the undisputed evidence showed that they did not participate in the search.

HOLDINGS

1. An officer may prolong a traffic stop to conduct an unrelated canine sweep only when the officer has independent reasonable suspicion that criminal activity is afoot. The court rejected the argument that a canine sniff is permissible merely because the additional detention is de minimis.
2. Martinez had particularized and objective reasonable suspicion sufficient to prolong the traffic stop and conduct the canine sweep.
3. The trained narcotics-detection canine's alert from a lawful roadside position supplied probable cause to search Gross's vehicle without consent or a warrant.
4. The collective knowledge doctrine permitted Giamanco, Rybczyk, and Schoen to rely on Martinez's reasonable suspicion and probable cause, even without proof of express communication of every underlying fact.
5. Summary judgment was proper for Ehlers and Furhop because the undisputed record showed that Ehlers did not participate in the search and Furhop arrived after Gross left, and Gross presented no contrary admissible evidence.

KEY QUOTATIONS

"A traffic stop may become unlawful if it is extended "beyond the time reasonably required to complete the mission" of the stop."

"The correct inquiry here is whether there was an independent basis to prolong the stop and conduct the canine sweep."

“Taken together, the factors Sgt. Martinez observed gave rise to an objectively reasonable suspicion that justified prolonging the traffic stop and deploying the canine.”

“Based on these undisputed facts and the sui generis nature of this canine alert, Sgt. Martinez had probable cause to search Plaintiff’s vehicle.”

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Illinois State Police Sgt. Chad Martinez stopped Robert Gross's vehicle after observing apparent speeding and an improper lane change. During the stop, Martinez observed circumstances he considered suspicious, including a one-way rental from Colorado to Michigan, dogs in the vehicle, a tarp attached to the front headrests, travel at night along I-80, nervousness and apparent inconsistencies, and a lack of skiing equipment. Martinez conducted a canine sweep, the dog alerted near the trunk, and a subsequent search uncovered handguns, ammunition, and cannabis plant material. Other troopers assisted at the scene, while Ehlers allegedly did not participate in the search and Furhop arrived after Gross had left.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

The case was before the Northern District of Illinois on defendants' motion for summary judgment. The court concluded that the traffic stop was lawfully prolonged based on reasonable suspicion, that the canine alert supplied probable cause for the vehicle search, that the collective knowledge doctrine applied to assisting officers, and that two defendants had no evidence of participation in the alleged violation. The court granted summary judgment for all defendants.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Celotex Corp. v. Catrett, 477 U.S. 317 (1986)
- Anderson v. Liberty Lobby, Inc., 477 U.S. 242 (1986)
- Collins v. American Optometric Association, 693 F.2d 636 (7th Cir. 1982)
- Egger v. Phillips, 710 F.2d 292 (7th Cir. 1983)
- Grant v. Trustees of Indiana University, 870 F.3d 562 (7th Cir. 2017)
- Delaware v. Prouse, 440 U.S. 648 (1979)
- Brigham City v. Stuart, 547 U.S. 398 (2006)
- Knowles v. Iowa, 525 U.S. 113 (1998)
- Illinois v. Caballes, 543 U.S. 405 (2005)
- Rodriguez v. United States, 575 U.S. 348 (2015)
- Indianapolis v. Edmond, 531 U.S. 32 (2000)
- United States v. Rodriguez-Escalera, 884 F.3d 661 (7th Cir. 2018)
- United States v. Johnson, 93 F.4th 383 (7th Cir. 2024)

- INS v. Delgado, 566 U.S. 210 (1984)
- United States v. Sokolow, 490 U.S. 1 (1989)
- United States v. Cortez, 449 U.S. 411 (1981)
- United States v. Arvizu, 534 U.S. 266 (2002)
- Illinois v. Gates, 462 U.S. 213 (1983)
- United States v. Cole, 21 F.4th 421 (7th Cir. 2021)
- United States v. Walden, 146 F.3d 487 (7th Cir. 1998)
- United States v. Finke, 85 F.3d 1275 (7th Cir. 1996)
- Gerstein v. Pugh, 420 U.S. 103 (1975)
- United States v. Funches, 327 F.3d 582 (7th Cir. 2003)
- Wyoming v. Houghton, 526 U.S. 295 (1999)
- United States v. Place, 462 U.S. 696 (1983)
- Florida v. Jardines, 596 U.S. 1 (2013)
- United States v. Hensley, 469 U.S. 221 (1985)
- United States v. Williams, 627 F.3d 247 (7th Cir. 2010)
- United States v. Street, 917 F.3d 586 (7th Cir. 2019)
- United States v. Nafzger, 974 F.2d 906 (7th Cir. 1992)
- United States v. Edwards, 885 F.2d 377 (7th Cir. 1989)
- Torry v. City of Chicago, 932 F.3d 579 (7th Cir. 2019)