

Current U.S. Supreme Court Argued Cases Profiles
Law and Individual Rights
Mr. Krieger

INSTRUCTIONS: Carefully read your assigned case. Make sure you understand the summary of the case facts and the question for the Supreme Court. If you don't understand something, see me in R-Block on Tuesday or write down your question prior to class. THEN, prepare a list of bullet points so you can discuss your case with other students who have not read your case. You should be able to explain the facts and question for the Court **IN YOUR OWN WORDS**. **You will not have this sheet in front of you.** Evaluation will be based on other students' comprehension of your case. Be prepared to submit your notes. **If you type notes, print them BEFORE class starts.**

Case #1

Summary of Case Facts

A State of Connecticut law prohibits the possession of firearms without a license. To obtain a handgun license, an individual must apply with a local licensing officer and the application process involves an investigation into the applicant's mental health history, criminal history, and moral character. The Connecticut law permits the licensee to "have and possess in his dwelling" a pistol or revolver. The license is specific to a particular address, and the handguns permitted by the license may not be removed from that address. Three individuals with licenses sought to transport their handguns to shooting ranges and competitions. Transporting their handguns is prohibited by the rule. The three individuals and petitioner Connecticut State Rifle & Pistol Association filed a lawsuit in federal district court, asking the court to declare the restrictions unconstitutional.

Question for the U.S. Supreme Court

Does a Connecticut rule banning the transportation a licensed, locked, and unloaded handgun to a home or shooting range outside city limits violate the Second Amendment, the Commerce Clause, or the constitutional right to travel?

Case #2

Summary of Case Facts

Homer Pancake, a gay man, began working for the city of Denver, Colorado as a child welfare services coordinator in 2003. During his ten-year career with the City of Denver, Pancake received positive performance evaluations and numerous accolades. In 2013, Pancake began participating in a gay recreational softball league. Shortly thereafter, Pancake received criticism for his participation in the league and for his sexual orientation and identity generally. During a meeting in which Pancake's supervisor was present, at least one individual openly made disparaging remarks about Pancake's sexual orientation and his participation in the gay softball league. Around the same time, the City of Denver informed Pancake that it would be conducting an internal audit of the program funds he managed. Shortly afterwards, the City of Denver fired Pancake allegedly for "conduct unbecoming of its employees."

Question for the U.S. Supreme Court

Does Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits against employment discrimination "because of . . . sex" encompass discrimination based on an individual's sexual orientation?

Case #3

Summary of Case Facts

While on patrol, Galanis County (Montana) Sheriff's Deputy Mark McLure ran a registration check on a 2001 Toyota pickup truck. McLure's computer check confirmed that the truck was registered to a Jacob Bishop and Bishop's license had been revoked. McLure assumed Bishop was driving the truck and initiated a traffic stop even though he did not observe any traffic violations. After identifying the truck driver as Bishop, the State of Montana charged Bishop with driving on a revoked license. Driving on a revoked license is a misdemeanor in Montana. The maximum sentence for this type of charge is one year in jail and a \$2,500 fine. Bishop argued that the traffic stop violated his Fourth Amendment rights.

Question for the U.S. Supreme Court

Under the Fourth Amendment, is it reasonable for an officer to suspect that the registered owner of a vehicle is the one driving the vehicle without any other information to the contrary?

Case #4

Summary of Case Facts

Jonas King enjoyed a happy marriage and valued his family for many years. However, in 2008, his marriage began to falter, and his wife began an extramarital affair. By the next year, the formerly happy couple was heading toward divorce, and King allegedly became abusive toward his wife and estranged from their children. King increasingly suffered from depression and obsessive compulsive disorder, and though he saw several psychologists and psychiatrists who prescribed antidepressants, anti-anxiety medications, and sleep aids, he refused to take his medications as directed.

In November 2009, King went to his wife's grandmother's house, where his family was visiting, and shot and killed his wife, his two daughters, and the grandmother. King was arrested and charged with first degree murder. Experts for the defense and the prosecution agreed that King exhibited major depressive disorder, obsessive-compulsive, borderline, paranoid, and narcissistic personality tendencies. Under Florida law, a jury cannot consider mental disease or defect as a defense to a crime. King was sentenced to death for the four killings.

Question for the U.S. Supreme Court

Can a state abolish the insanity defense without violating the Eighth and Fourteenth Amendments?

Case #5

Summary of Case Facts

Gregory Maddox was charged with second-degree murder and exercised his right to a jury trial. After deliberating, ten of the twelve jurors found that the prosecution had proven its case against Maddox beyond a reasonable doubt, while two jurors reached the opposite conclusion. Under Tennessee's non-unanimous jury verdict law, agreement of only ten jurors is sufficient to enter a guilty verdict. Maddox was sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole.

Question for the U.S. Supreme Court

Does the Sixth Amendment's right of an impartial jury guarantee a unanimous verdict in state criminal trial cases or does the guarantee only apply to federal criminal cases?