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Ohio Fifth District Court of Appeals Case Summaries

Case Caption	Case No(s)	Character of Proceeding	Judgment	Topics and Issues	Author	Date of Judgment Entry
Neal v. Stuff	2025 CA 0103	Appeal from the Richland County Court of Common Pleas, Case No. 2025CV0526R	Affirmed	Manifest weight of the evidence; Suppression Mourice Neal, an inmate at the Richland Correctional Institution, appealed the Richland County Court of Common Pleas' November 4, 2025 decision granting the warden's motion to dismiss his petition for a writ of habeas corpus. Neal had been indicted in 2022 for failure to register, convicted by a jury, and sentenced in 2023, with his conviction affirmed on direct appeal in 2025. In his habeas action, Neal raised four assignments of error challenging the sufficiency of the evidence, the timeliness and validity of the indictment and arrest procedures, and alleged constitutional violations. However, the appellate court found that Neal failed to support his arguments with citations to the record or relevant legal authority as required by appellate rules. Because he did not properly demonstrate error, the court disregarded his assignments of error and affirmed the trial court's dismissal of his petition.	Baldwin	4/6/2026
Williams v. Mid-Ohio Coal Co.	25 CA 000032	Appeal from the Court of Common Pleas of Guernsey County , Case No. 23 CV 363	Reversed and Remanded	An indexing error in the county recorder's office in 1891 caused a break in the chain of title for certain underground-mineral rights and spawned a legal dispute over ownership of those rights. The dispute is resolved under the claim-preclusion doctrine in favor of property owners whose predecessors in interest had filed a quiet-title action in 1954 and, relying on the erroneous index, had served the complaint on the 1891 owner of the mineral rights. Doris and Robert Williams appealed a trial court decision that had granted summary judgment to Mid-Ohio Coal Company regarding ownership of mineral rights beneath their 35-acre property. The dispute stemmed from a complex chain of title dating back to the 1880s, including an 1891 indexing error that obscured the transfer of mineral rights through multiple entities before reaching Mid-Ohio in 1940. In 1954, the Williamses' predecessors successfully obtained a default judgment quieting title to both the surface and mineral rights against Wheeling Coal, which still appeared in the records as the owner due to the indexing error. The appellate court found that a diligent title search in 1954 would not have revealed Mid-Ohio's interest, and thus the earlier judgment was valid and binding. Applying the doctrine of claim preclusion, the court held that Mid-Ohio, as a successor in interest to Wheeling Coal, was in privity with a party to the 1954 case and was therefore barred from asserting ownership. The court reversed the trial court's decision and remanded the case with instructions to enter judgment in favor of the Williamses.	Gormley	4/6/2026
State v. Hammond	25CA000031	Appeal from the Guernsey County Court of Common Pleas, Case No. 25-CR-14	Affirmed	Unlawful Conduct with a Minor - Guilty Plea - Sentence Clay A. Hammond appealed his conviction and five-year term of community control after pleading guilty in the Guernsey County Common Pleas Court to fourth-degree felony unlawful sexual conduct with a minor. Hammond, age twenty-nine, engaged in sexual conduct with a fifteen-year-old coworker he met while working at a McDonald's in Cambridge, Ohio. Originally charged with a third-degree felony due to being more than ten years older than the victim, the charge was reduced to a fourth-degree felony pursuant to a plea agreement in which Hammond pleaded guilty. The parties jointly recommended five years of community control, sex offender counseling, no contact with the victim, Tier II sex offender registration, and the trial court also prohibited Hammond from using marijuana despite his medical marijuana card. Hammond's appellate counsel filed an Anders brief asserting no meritorious grounds for appeal, though raising whether the trial court erred in accepting the plea and imposing sentence. The appellate court found the trial court fully complied with Criminal Rule 11 during the plea colloquy, held Hammond's jointly recommended sentence was not subject to appellate review because it was authorized by law, and concluded the prohibition on marijuana use was a permissible condition of community control authorized by statute and not an abuse of discretion. Finding the appeal wholly frivolous, the court granted counsel's motion to withdraw and affirmed Hammond's conviction and sentence.	Hoffman	4/7/2026
State v. King	2025 CA 00166	Appeal from the Stark County Court of Common Pleas, Case No. 2023-CR-0212	Affirmed	Ineffective assistance of counsel in post-conviction relief proceedings Anthony Cooper-King appealed the Stark County Court of Common Pleas' denial of his motion for leave to file an untimely petition for postconviction relief following his convictions on multiple felony drug-possession charges and an aggregate prison sentence of twenty to twenty-four years. After his direct appeal was unsuccessful, Cooper-King filed a petition for postconviction relief beyond the 365-day statutory deadline, asserting ineffective assistance of trial counsel based on counsel's failure to call a co-defendant as a witness and introduce allegedly exculpatory evidence, including bank records and dash-camera footage. The trial court denied the petition as untimely, finding Cooper-King failed to show he was unavoidably prevented from discovering the facts supporting his claims. On appeal, Cooper-King argued the delay should be excused because his retained appellate counsel failed to timely file the petition. The appellate court rejected that argument, explaining postconviction proceedings are civil in nature, there is no constitutional right to counsel or effective assistance of counsel in such proceedings, and attorney error does not excuse failure to meet statutory filing requirements. Because Cooper-King did not satisfy the jurisdictional exceptions allowing review of an untimely petition, the appellate court held the trial court lacked authority to consider the petition and affirmed the denial of his motion.	Popham	4/7/2026

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State v. Jefferson	25-COA-021	Appeal from the Ahsland County Court of Common Pleas, Case No. 24-CRI-198	Affirmed	Manifest weight on possession of cocaine and Operating a Vehicle Impaired ("OVI") Preston D. Jefferson appealed his Ashland County convictions for possession of cocaine with a major drug offender specification and operating a vehicle under the influence, arguing that both convictions were against the manifest weight of the evidence. Jefferson had been indicted after Ohio State Highway Patrol stopped him for traffic violations and arrested him for OVI following failed field sobriety tests. During an inventory search of his vehicle, troopers discovered over one hundred grams of cocaine hidden in a compartment behind the driver's seat as well as smaller baggies containing narcotics in the driver's door pocket within Jefferson's reach. Although Jefferson denied ownership and claimed he had only recently purchased the truck, evidence showed he had owned the vehicle for three years. Troopers also testified Jefferson exhibited signs of impairment, including glassy bloodshot eyes, dilated pupils, odor of alcohol, erratic driving, and multiple clues of intoxication during field sobriety testing. The appellate court found sufficient credible evidence established Jefferson had constructive possession of the cocaine and was impaired while operating the vehicle, concluded the jury did not lose its way in reaching its verdicts, and affirmed Jefferson's convictions and sentence of eleven to sixteen and one-half years in prison.	King	4/7/2026