

State of Minnesota

District Court

County of Hennepin

Fourth Judicial District

State of Minnesota,
Plaintiff,

Judge Lisa K. Janzen
Case Type: Criminal

ORDER

v.

Brittany Latesha Crutchfield,
Defendant.

Case No. 27-CR-21-19723, 27-CR-21-
23456, 27-CR-22-15550

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. Defendant (date of birth 03/06/1988) was charged in File No. 27-CR-21-19723 with Burglary-3rd Degree-Steal (Felony) arising from an incident alleged to have occurred on 10/21/2021; in File No. 27-CR-21-23456 with Burglary-3rd Degree-Steal (Felony) arising from an incident alleged to have occurred on 12/19/2021; in File No. 27-CR-22-15550 with Burglary-3rd Degree-Steal (Felony) arising from an incident alleged to have occurred on 8/5/2022. On 10/13/21, Judge Larson ordered that Defendant undergo an evaluation to assess Defendant's competency to proceed for Rule 20 purposes on misdemeanor offenses which alleged to have occurred on or before the above offenses referenced in this Order. Those findings were applied to the above cases as well.
2. On 10/13/21, Judge Larson ordered that Defendant undergo an evaluation to assess Defendant's competency to proceed in this matter pursuant to Minn.R.Crim.P. 20.01.
3. Dr. Bruce Renken, Ph.D., for Psychological Services of Hennepin County District Court, reviewed Defendant's records, interviewed Defendant, and filed a written report with this Court.
4. Dr. Bruce Renken, Ph.D., for Psychological Services of Hennepin County District Court, opined that Defendant, due to mental illness or cognitive impairment, lacks

the ability to rationally consult with counsel; or lacks the ability to understand the proceedings or participate in the defense. This opinion was uncontested by either party.

5. On 10/26/21, the Defendant appeared counsel before the Court and Judge Lisa Janzen found Defendant incompetent to stand trial and ordered the criminal proceedings in this matter be suspended until Defendant is restored to competency to proceed. Judge Lisa Janzen ordered the Hennepin County Prepetition Screening Program to conduct prepetition screening.
6. On 09/8/22, Judge Browne of Hennepin County District Court issued an Order for Commitment as a Person Who is Chemically Dependent Person and as a Person who Poses a Risk of Harm Due to a Mental Illness (Rule 20) in MNCIS Case No. 27-MH-PR-22-944; the Defendant was civilly committed to the Commissioner of Human Services.
7. On 10/3/22, the Defendant was admitted to CBHH Alexandria.
8. On 11/4/22 a Notification of Reduction in Custody was filed into this criminal case, noting a Provisional Discharge to a community setting, namely Paris Crutchfield's home (Brittany Crutchfield's sister) 3133 Central Avenue NE, Minneapolis, MN 55418, to go into effect on or after 11/9/22 as the Defendant was determined to no longer require in-patient level of care as of 11/9/22.
9. Defendant remains incompetent and the criminal case remains suspended pursuant to Minn.R.Crim.P. 20.01, Subd. 6(b).
10. If the Criminal Court Judge denied the request to provisionally discharge the defendant to a community setting, the defendant would be released to the jail on the previously ordered bail.
11. The Hennepin County Jail does not provide competency restoration treatment or therapy and is not able to administer *Jarvis* orders.
12. If the defendant was provisionally discharged to the jail, the court would have to make the impossible decision as to whether to keep the incompetent defendant in

the jail not receiving treatment with a suspended criminal case, or, to release the defendant to the street.

13. Given the options, Judge Chou approved the request to provisionally discharge Defendant and amended bail.

ANALYSIS

There is no case directly on point in Minnesota as to whether an incompetent defendant, whose criminal case has been suspended, can be held in the jail awaiting restoration to competency while not receiving competency restoration treatment at said jail. In dealing with similar issues, courts around the country have held that “incompetent criminal defendants – as pretrial detainees – have a liberty interest in being free from incarceration absent a criminal conviction.” *Goodman v. Utah Department of Human Services*, 180 F.Supp.3d 998, 1009 (D. Utah 2016); that the “Constitutional questions pertaining to the pretrial confinement of incompetent criminal defendants are analyzed under the due process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.” *State v. Hand*, 429 P.3d 502 (Wash. 2018); and that the relevant question is whether the nature and duration of said detention, “is reasonably related to the purpose for which he was committed.” *Id.* (citing *Jackson v. Indiana*, 406 U.S. 715, 738, 92 S.Ct. 1845, 32 L.Ed.2d 435 (1972)).

In *Jackson*, the court held that:

a person charged by a State with a criminal offense who is committed solely on account of his incapacity to proceed to trial cannot be held more than the reasonable period of time necessary to determine whether there is a substantial probability that he will attain that capacity in the foreseeable future. If it is determined that this is not the case, then the State must either institute the customary civil commitment proceeding that would be required to commit indefinitely any other citizen, or release the defendant. Furthermore, even if it is determined that the defendant probably soon will be able to stand trial, his continued commitment must be justified by progress toward that goal.

406 U.S. 715, 738, 92 S.Ct. 1845, 32 L.Ed.2d 435 (1972). Similarly, in *United States v. Jackson*, 306 F.Supp. 4 (N.D.Cal. 1969), the court held that the accused, who was incompetent to stand trial because of serious mental illness, that was not likely to be cured in foreseeable future, and who had already spent over a year and a half in federal hospital must be discharged from federal custody and responsibility for accused should transfer to state. The underlying tone in all of these decisions is the general understanding as stated in *Cook v. Ciccone*, 312 F.Supp. 822 (W.D.Mo. 1970), that "Such consideration is dictated by the inherent unfairness and substantial injustice in keeping an unconvicted person in federal custody to await trial where it is plainly evident his mental condition will not permit trial within a reasonable period of time." 312 F.Supp. at 824.

ORDER

1. Defendant is released in the criminal case under the conditions set forth in the amended conditional release order.
2. Defendant is ordered to cooperate with his civil commitment including following all treatment recommendations and appearing at all court appearances in the civil and criminal cases.
3. DHS shall continue to submit a written reports addressing the Defendant's competency to proceed in the criminal case when the Defendant has attained competency, or at least every six months.

DATED: November 4, 2022

BY THE COURT:



Lisa K. Janzen
Judge of District Court
Fourth Judicial District