

Syllabus

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SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES

Syllabus

IN RE BEATLE

PETITION FOR MANDAMUS TO THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT
COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

No. 09–26. Decided July 6, 2020

Petitioner was charged with 15 counts of murder, but the prosecution only provided probable cause to support two of the counts. Petitioner disputed that the remaining 13 murders occurred and moved to dismiss the related charges for lack of probable cause. The motion to dismiss was denied and petitioner brought this mandamus action to compel the District Court to dismiss the 13 unsupported counts of murder.

Held: To survive a motion to dismiss, each count of a crime must be supported by probable cause. Because the prosecution failed to establish probable cause for 13 of the murder counts, they must be dismissed. Pp. 1–3.

Mandamus granted.

REHNQUIST, J., delivered the opinion for a unanimous Court.

Opinion of the Court

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SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES

No. 09–26

IN RE THEBEATLE2012, ET AL.

ON PETITION FOR WRIT OF MANDAMUS TO THE UNITED
STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

[July 6, 2020]

JUSTICE REHNQUIST delivered the opinion of the Court.

The respondent made an effort to prosecute the petitioner, TheBeatle2012, for fifteen (15) counts of murder. In an unsworn statement made under the penalty of perjury, the petitioner asserted that only 2 murders had been committed, and therefore, moved to dismiss the remaining 13 counts for a lack of probable cause. The respondent claimed that probable cause must not be established for all related counts of a charge, but rather, only one of said charges. The court sided with the respondent and denied the petitioner’s motion to dismiss.

This Court was asked to provide mandamus relief to the petitioner, compelling the District Court to dismiss the other 13 counts for a lack of probable cause.

I

The District Court has shown a misguided interpretation of the Constitution and has erred in its decision regarding probable cause. We were given a very open-and-shut case: can the prosecution use one instance of probable cause in order to levy multiple counts of the same charge? The answer, simply put, is no. The Constitution is explicit in that probable cause is required for every offense, in any matter.

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As is said in the Fourth Amendment of the Constitution, “and no warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause.” See U. S. Const. amend. IV. Thus, it is mandated that probable cause must be present when the prosecution charges a person with any individual offense. If not, the prosecution would be effectively contending the Fourth Amendment if they are granted the ability to add on additional charges without any probable cause. While the Constitution does permit that a warrant can be issued with probable cause, it does not permit that one probable cause is enough for multiple warrants. And, as far as we’re concerned, the prosecution is not some magical force that can go above the law as it pleases.

The fact is the District Court’s ruling creates many new avenues for malicious prosecution to occur. As an example, if I were to murder JUSTICE PITNEY, the prosecution could (so long as they have probable cause for that single murder offense), charge me for another count of murder, and another, and another, until I reach the point where I can no longer possibly defend myself. This is, obviously, malicious, and very possible given the precedent that the District Court has set. The prosecution must provide probable cause for each individual murder offense; a series of events cannot be linked together by using one instance of probable cause.

This argument’s clarification, however, was likely unnecessary. According to Rule 9(a) of the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure, “[t]he court may issue more than one warrant . . . for the same defendant.” See Fed. R. Crim. P. 9(a) (1944). While the court may issue more than one warrant for the same defendant, it is required that each warrant has its own probable cause.

* * *

Our country was founded on the principle that, while there can be arrests for probable cause, citizens have a right

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to due process. Issuing several arrest warrants without a concrete legal basis erodes this principle and is a dangerous precedent that this Court must act on.

The petition for a writ of mandamus is granted and the District Court is directed to dismiss the 13 unsupported counts.

It is so ordered.