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**OPINION OF THE COURT OF CRIMINAL
APPEALS, STATE OF OKLAHOMA
(APRIL 1, 2021)**

IN THE COURT OF CRIMINAL APPEALS
OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA

NACOLE RYAN BAIN,

Petitioner,

v.

THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA,

Respondent.

Case No. C-2019-853

An Appeal from the District Court of Okmulgee County,
the Honorable Douglas A. Kirkley, District Judge

Before: Dana KUEHN, President Judge.,
Scott ROWLAND, Vice President Judge.,
Gary L. LUMPKIN, Judge., David B. LEWIS, Judge.,
Robert L. HUDSON, Judge.

OPINION

ROWLAND, VICE PRESIDING JUDGE:

Nacole Ryan Bain entered a guilty plea in the District Court of Okmulgee County to crimes charged in the following two cases: in Case No. CF-2018-196, First Degree Murder, in violation of 21 O.S.Supp.2012,

§ 701.7(A); and in Case No. CM-2018-492, Larceny of Merchandise from Retailer, in violation of 21 O.S.Supp.2016, § 1731. The Honorable Douglas A. Kirkley, District Judge, accepted Bain's plea and sentenced her to life imprisonment with the possibility of parole on the first degree murder conviction and thirty days on the larceny conviction. The sentences were ordered to be served concurrently. Bain filed a timely motion to withdraw her guilty plea. After a hearing on the motion to withdraw held on November 20, 2019, the motion was denied. Bain appeals the denial of this motion, raising the following issues:

- (1) whether the State of Oklahoma had jurisdiction to prosecute her;
- (2) whether her plea was entered as a result of coercion and duress; and
- (3) whether she received effective assistance of counsel.

We find relief is required on Bain's jurisdictional challenge in Proposition 1, rendering her other claims moot. Bain claims the State of Oklahoma did not have jurisdiction to prosecute her. She relies on 18 U.S.C. § 1153 and *McGirt v. Oklahoma*, 591 U.S. ___, 140 S.Ct. 2452 (2020).

On August 19, 2020, this Court remanded this case to the District Court of Okmulgee County for an evidentiary hearing. We directed the District Court to make findings of fact and conclusions of law on two issues: (a) Bain's status as an Indian; and, (b) whether the crime occurred within the boundaries of the Muscogee (Creek) Reservation. Our order provided that if the parties agreed as to what the evidence would show with regard to the questions presented,

the parties could enter into a written stipulation setting forth those facts, and no hearing would be necessary.

The Honorable Douglas A. Kirkley set the hearing on remand for October 21, 2020. On October 16, 2020, the parties filed written, agreed Stipulations and Joint Motion to Strike Hearing in which they agreed: (1) that Bain has some Indian blood; (2) that she was a recognized member of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation on the date of the charged offense; (3) that the Muscogee (Creek) Nation is a federally recognized tribe; and, (4) that the charged crime occurred within the boundaries of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Reservation.

The District Court accepted the parties' stipulations and on December 15, 2020, filed its Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law in the District Court of Okmulgee County.¹ The District Court found the facts recited above in accordance with the stipulations. The District Court concluded that Bain is an Indian under federal law and that the charged crimes occurred within the boundaries of the Muscogee (Creek) Reservation. The District Court's findings are supported by the record. The ruling in *McGirt* governs this case and requires us to find the District Court of Okmulgee County did not have jurisdiction to prosecute Bain. Accordingly, we grant relief on error raised in Proposition 1.

¹ The District Court's Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law were initially filed in this Court on January 25, 2021. They were filed in this Court again with attachments on February 3, 2021.

DECISION

The Judgment and Sentence of the district court is **VACATED** and the matter is **REMANDED WITH INSTRUCTIONS TO DISMISS**. Pursuant to Rule 3.15, *Rules of the Oklahoma Court of Criminal Appeals*, Title 22, Ch. 18, App. (2021), the **MANDATE** is **ORDERED** to issue in twenty (20) days from the delivery and filing of this decision.

**AN APPEAL FROM THE DISTRICT COURT OF
OKMULGEE COUNTY, THE HONORABLE
DOUGLAS A. KIRKLEY, DISTRICT JUDGE**

APPEARANCES AT PLEA HEARING

Cory Felkins
Attorney at Law
P.O. Box 998
Okmulgee, OK 74447
Attorney for Defendant

Carol Iski
Assistant District Attorney
314 West 7th Street, 2nd Floor
Okmulgee, OK 74447
Attorney for State

APPEARANCES ON APPEAL

Katrina Conrad-Legler
Oklahoma Indigent Defense System
P.O. Box 926
Norman, OK 73070
Attorney for Petitioner

APPEARANCES ON MOTION TO WITHDRAW

Ryan Ferguson
Attorney at Law
100 SW 1st Street
Checotah, OK 74426
Attorney for Defendant

Carol Iski
Assistant District Attorney
314 West 7th Street, 2nd Floor
Okmulgee, OK 74447
Attorney for State

APPEARANCES ON REMAND

Mike Hunter
Attorney General of Oklahoma
Joshua Fanelli
Asst. Attorney General
313 N.E. 21st Street
Oklahoma City, OK 73105
Attorney for State

Carol Iski
Assistant District Attorney
314 West 7th Street, 2nd Floor
Okmulgee, OK 74447
Attorney for State

Katrina Conrad-Legler
Oklahoma Indigent Defense System
P.O. Box 926
Norman, OK 73070
Attorney for Defendant' Petitioner

OPINION BY: ROWLAND, V.P.J.

KUEHN, P.J.: Concur

LUMPKIN, J.: Concur in Results

LEWIS, J.: Specially Concur

HUDSON, J.: Specially Concur

**LUMPKIN, JUDGE:
CONCURRING IN RESULTS:**

Bound by my oath and the Federal-State relationships dictated by the U.S. Constitution, I must at a minimum concur in the results of this opinion. While our nation's judicial structure requires me to apply the majority opinion in the 5-4 decision of the U.S. Supreme Court in *McGirt v. Oklahoma*, ___ U.S. ___, 140 S. Ct. 2452 (2020), I do so reluctantly. Upon the first reading of the majority opinion in *McGirt* I initially formed the belief that it was a result in search of an opinion to support it. Then upon reading the dissents by Chief Justice Roberts and Justice Thomas I was forced to conclude the Majority had totally failed to follow the Court's own precedents, but had cherry picked statutes and treaties, without giving historical context to them. The Majority then proceeded to do what an average citizen who had been fully informed of the law and facts as set out in the dissents would view as an exercise of raw judicial power to reach a decision which contravened not only the history leading to the disestablishment of the Indian reservations in Oklahoma, but also willfully disregarded and failed to apply the Court's own precedents to the issue at hand.

My quandary is one of ethics and morality. One of the first things I was taught when I began my service in the Marine Corps was that I had a duty to follow lawful orders, and that same duty required me to resist unlawful orders. Chief Justice Roberts' scholarly and judicially penned dissent, actually following the Court's precedents and required analysis, vividly reveals the failure of the majority opinion to

follow the rule of law and apply over a century of precedent and history, and to accept the fact that no Indian reservations remain in the State of Oklahoma.² The result seems to be some form of “social justice” created out of whole cloth rather than a continuation of the solid precedents the Court has established over the last 100 years or more.

The question I see presented is should I blindly follow and apply the majority opinion or do I join with

² I Senator Elmer Thomas, D-Oklahoma, was a member of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs. After hearing the Commissioner’s speech regarding the Indian Reorganization Act (IRA) in 1934, Senator Thomas opined as follows:

I can hardly see where it (the IRA) could operate in a State like mine where the Indians are all scattered out among the whites and they have no reservation, and they could not get them into a community without you would go and buy land and put them on it. Then they would be surrounded very likely with thickly populated white section with whom they would trade and associate. I just cannot get through my mind how this bill can possibly be made to operate in a State of thickly-settled population. (emphasis added).

John Collier, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, *Memorandum of Explanation* (regarding S. 2755), p. 145, hearing before the United States Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, February 27, 1934. Senator Morris Sheppard, D-Texas, also on the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, stated in response to the Commissioner’s speech that in Oklahoma, he did not think “we could look forward to building up huge reservations such as we have granted to the Indians in the past.” *Id.* at 157. In 1940, in the Foreword to Felix S. Cohen, *Handbook of Federal Indian Law* (1942), Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes wrote in support of the IRA, “[t]he continued application of the allotment laws, under which Indian wards have lost more than two-thirds of their reservation lands, while the costs of Federal administration of these lands have steadily mounted, must be terminated.” (emphasis added).

Chief Justice Roberts and the dissenters in *McGirt* and recognize “the emperor has no clothes” as to the adherence to following the rule of law in the application of the *McGirt* decision?

My oath and adherence to the Federal-State relationship under the U.S. Constitution mandate that I fulfill my duties and apply the edict of the majority opinion in *McGirt*. However, I am not required to do so blindly and without noting the flaws of the opinion as set out in the dissents. Chief Justice Roberts and Justice Thomas eloquently show the Majority’s mischaracterization of Congress’s actions and history with the Indian reservations. Their dissents further demonstrate that at the time of Oklahoma Statehood in 1907, all parties accepted the fact that Indian reservations in the state had been disestablished and no longer existed. I take this position to adhere to my oath as a judge and lawyer without any disrespect to our Federal-State structure. I simply believe that when reasonable minds differ they must both be reviewing the totality of the law and facts.

LEWIS, JUDGE, SPECIALLY CONCURRING:

Based on my special writings in *Bosse v. State*, 2021 OK CR 3, ___ P.3d ___ and *Hogner v. State*, 2021 OK CR 4, ___ P.3d ___, I concur in the decision to dismiss this case for the lack of state jurisdiction.

HUDSON, J., SPECIALLY CONCURS:

Today's decision dismisses convictions for first degree murder and larceny of merchandise from retailer from the District Court of Okmulgee County based on the Supreme Court's decision in *McGirt v. Oklahoma*, 140 S. Ct. 2452 (2020). This decision is unquestionably correct as a matter of *stare decisis* based on the Indian status of Petitioner and the occurrence of these crimes on the Creek Reservation. Under *McGirt*, the State has no jurisdiction to prosecute Petitioner for the crimes in this case. Instead, Petitioner must be prosecuted in federal court. I therefore as a matter of *stare decisis* fully concur in today's decision. Further, I maintain my previously expressed views on the significance of *McGirt*, its far-reaching impact on the criminal justice system in Oklahoma and the need for a practical solution by Congress. *See Bosse v. State*, 2021 OK CR 3, ___ P.3d ___ (Hudson, J., Concur in Results); *Hogner v. State*, 2021 OK CR 4, ___ P.3d ___ (Hudson, J., Specially Concur); and *Krafft v. State*, No. F-2018-340 (OkI.Cr., Feb. 25, 2021) (Hudson, J., Specially Concur) (unpublished).

**DISTRICT COURT OF OKMULGEE COUNTY,
STATE OF OKLAHOMA, FINDINGS OF FACT
AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW
(SIGNED DECEMBER 14, 2020,
FILED DECEMBER 15, 2020)**

IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF THE OF TWENTY-
FOURTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT OF THE STATE
OF OKLAHOMA SITTING IN AND FOR
OKMULGEE COUNTY

NACOLE RYAN BAIN,

Appellant/Defendant,

v.

THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA,

Appellee/Plaintiff.

Okmulgee County District Court
Case Nos. CF-2018-196

Court of Criminal Appeals
Case No.: C-2019-853

Before: Douglas KIRKLEY, District Judge.

NOW on this 14th day of December, 2020, the above-styled matter comes on before me, the undersigned Judge, pursuant to an order from the Oklahoma Court of Criminal Appeals remanding this case for an evidentiary hearing. The State is represented by

District Attorney Carol Iski and Assistant Attorney General Joshua Fanelli. The Appellant/ Defendant is represented by Katrina Conrad-Legler of the Oklahoma Indigent Defense System. After examining the file herein and accepting the stipulations by the parties, this Court finds no evidentiary hearing is requested by the parties, and based on the stipulations, makes the following findings:

FINDINGS OF FACT

4. [sic] The Court of Criminal Appeals has asked this Court to make a determination as to Appellant/ Defendant's status as an Indian. This Court finds, by stipulation of the parties, that Nacole Ryan Bain has 7/64 Indian blood and has been a member of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation since October 15, 1997.

5. This Court finds, by stipulation of the parties, that the Muscogee (Creek) Nation is a federally recognized Tribe.

6. The Court of Criminal Appeals has further asked this Court to make a determination as to whether the crime occurred in Indian Country. This Court finds, by stipulation of the parties, that Nacole Ryan Bain committed the crime at issue in this case within Okmulgee County, which lies entirely within the Muscogee (Creek) Reservation boundaries.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

3. The Court finds, pursuant to *McGirt v. Oklahoma*, 140 S. Ct, 2452 (2020), that Nacole Ryan Bain is an Indian for purposes of federal criminal jurisdiction.

App.14a

4. The Court further finds the crime occurred within the boundaries of the Creek Reservation.

Signed this 14th day of December, 2020

/s/ Douglas Kirkley

District Judge

**COURT OF CRIMINAL APPEALS,
STATE OF OKLAHOMA, ORDER REMANDING
FOR EVIDENTIARY HEARING
(AUGUST 19, 2020)**

IN THE COURT OF CRIMINAL APPEALS
OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA

NACOLE RYAN BAIN,

Petitioner,

v.

THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA,

Respondent.

Case No. C-2019-853

Before: David B. LEWIS, Presiding Judge.,
Dana KUEHN, Vice President Judge.,
Gary L. LUMPKIN, Judge., Robert L. HUDSON,
Judge., Scott ROWLAND, Judge.

**ORDER REMANDING FOR
EVIDENTIARY HEARING**

Nacole Ryan Bain entered a guilty plea in the District Court of Okmulgee County to crimes charged in the following two cases: in Case No. CF-2018-196, First Degree Murder, in violation of 21 O.S.Supp.2012, § 701.7(A); and in Case No. CM-2018-492, Larceny of Merchandise from Retailer, in violation of 21 O.S.Supp.

2016, § 1731. The Honorable Douglas A. Kirkley, District Judge, accepted Bain's plea and sentenced her to life imprisonment with the possibility of parole on the first degree murder conviction and thirty days on the larceny conviction. The sentences were ordered to be served concurrently. Bain must serve 85% of her sentence on the First Degree Murder conviction before she is eligible for parole. should consider any evidence the parties provide, including but not limited to treaties, statutes, maps, and/or testimony.

The District Court Clerk shall transmit the record of the evidentiary hearing, the District Court's findings of fact and conclusions of law, and any other materials made a part of the record, to the Clerk of this Court, and counsel for Bain, within five (5) days after the District Court has filed its findings of fact and conclusions of law. Upon receipt thereof, the Clerk of this Court shall promptly deliver a copy of that record to the Attorney General. A supplemental brief, addressing only those issues pertinent to the evidentiary hearing and limited to twenty (20) pages in length, may be filed by either party within twenty (20) days after the District Court's written findings of fact and conclusions of law are filed in this Court.

Provided however, in the event the parties agree as to what the evidence will show with regard to the questions presented, they may enter into a written stipulation setting forth those facts upon which they agree and which answer the questions presented and provide the stipulation to the District Court. In this event, no hearing on the questions presented is necessary. Transmission of the record regarding the matter, the District Court's findings of fact and conclusions

of law, and supplemental briefing shall occur as set forth above.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Clerk of this Court shall transmit copies of Bain's Brief-in-Chief and Application for Evidentiary Hearing on Sixth Amendment Claim with this Order, to the District Court of Okmulgee County.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

WITNESS OUR HANDS AND THE SEAL OF THIS COURT this 19th day of August, 2020.

/s/ David B. Lewis
Presiding Judge

/s/ Dana Kuehn
Vice Presiding Judge

/s/ Gary L. Lumpkin
Judge

/s/ Robert L. Hudson
Judge

/s/ Scott Rowland
Judge

/s/ John D. Hadden
Clerk