26-6184

No. _____

IN THE

ORIGINAL

SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES

IN RE TEENA COLEBROOK, PETITIONER

FILED
JUL 28 2026
OFFICE OF THE CLERK
SUPREME COURT, U.S.

ON PETITION FOR A WRIT OF MANDAMUS DIRECTED TO THE UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS FOR THE SIXTH CIRCUIT AND THE UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT FOR THE MIDDLE DISTRICT OF TENNESSEE

PETITION FOR WRIT OF MANDAMUS

Teena Colebrook

Petitioner Pro Se

6135 Alta Mira Lane

San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

(310) 420-0508

tc4gold@gmail.com

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether mandamus is warranted where a pro se creditor's fraud-based nondischargeability complaint was dismissed at screening on limitations grounds without discovery and without a meaningful opportunity to amend, despite allegations of continuing promises, acknowledgments, partial payments, concealment, reliance, delayed discovery, tolling, and revival.
2. Whether the lower courts gave meaningful effect to the rule that pro se pleadings are liberally construed when Petitioner's complex fraud and nondischargeability allegations were effectively required to be pleaded with lawyer-like precision before factual development could occur.
3. Whether the record presents exceptional circumstances where Petitioner contemporaneously raised concerns about the treatment of her pro se status, the Bankruptcy Court itself confirmed that it conducted an in-depth substantive screening of the complaint, and the appellate process ended without the factual development Petitioner contends was necessary to resolve disputed limitations and fraud issues.
4. Whether a writ should issue in aid of this Court's appellate jurisdiction where the Sixth Circuit has entered judgment and issued its mandate, no lower court can provide the specific relief sought from that completed appellate disposition, and Petitioner seeks remand for meaningful amendment, appropriate discovery, and adjudication on a developed record.

LIST OF PARTIES

Petitioner is Teena Colebrook, appearing pro se.

The parties shown in the judgment of the United States Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit are Teena Colebrook, Plaintiff-Appellant; John Preston Thompson, Defendant-Appellee; Jeanne Ann Burton, Chapter 7 Trustee; and the United States Trustee.

PERSONS AGAINST WHOM RELIEF IS SOUGHT

Petitioner seeks relief directed to the United States Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit, including the panel that entered the May 8, 2026 judgment in Case No. 25-5453: R. Guy Cole, Jr., Amul R. Thapar, and Joan L. Larsen, Circuit Judges, in their official capacities.

Petitioner also seeks relief affecting rulings of Hon. Randal S. Mashburn, United States Bankruptcy Judge for the Middle District of Tennessee, in his official capacity as the judge who entered the challenged bankruptcy rulings.

RELATED PROCEEDINGS

In re John Preston Thompson, U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Middle District of Tennessee, Case No. 3:23-bk-04259.

Teena Colebrook v. John Preston Thompson, U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Middle District of Tennessee, Adversary Proceeding No. 3:24-ap-90025.

In re John Preston Thompson / Colebrook appeal, Bankruptcy Appellate Panel for the Sixth Circuit, BAP No. 24-8011.

Teena Colebrook v. John Preston Thompson, United States Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit, Case No. 25-5453; judgment entered May 8, 2026; mandate issued June 1, 2026. Related proceedings relied upon only for the documented pro se-treatment history include In re John Steve Huffman, U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Middle District of Tennessee, Case No. 3:23-bk-03264, and Teena Colebrook v. John Steve Huffman, et al., Adversary Proceeding No. 3:24-ap-90018.

CORPORATE DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

Petitioner is an individual. No corporate disclosure statement is required from Petitioner.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

QUESTIONS PRESENTED	2
LIST OF PARTIES / PERSONS AGAINST WHOM RELIEF IS SOUGHT / RELATED PROCEEDINGS	3
TABLE OF AUTHORITIES	5
PETITION FOR WRIT OF MANDAMUS	6
OPINIONS BELOW	6
JURISDICTION AND BASIS FOR EXTRAORDINARY RELIEF	6
CONSTITUTIONAL AND STATUTORY PROVISIONS INVOLVED	7
STATEMENT OF THE CASE	7
REASONS FOR GRANTING THE WRIT	10
CONCLUSION	16

TABLE OF AUTHORITIES

CASES

Bailey v. Glover, 88 U.S. (21 Wall.) 342 (1874)	12
Erickson v. Pardus, 551 U.S. 89 (2007)	11
Grogan v. Garner, 498 U.S. 279 (1991)	15
Haines v. Kerner, 404 U.S. 519 (1972)	11
Holland v. Florida, 560 U.S. 631 (2010)	12
Holmberg v. Armbrecht, 327 U.S. 392 (1946)	12
Liteky v. United States, 510 U.S. 540 (1994)	14
Young v. United States, 535 U.S. 43 (2002)	12

CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS AND STATUTES

U.S. Const. art. III, § 2	7
U.S. Const. amend. V	7
11 U.S.C. § 523(a)(2)(A)	7
28 U.S.C. § 1254(1)	6
28 U.S.C. § 1651(a)	6, 7
28 U.S.C. § 455	14
28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B)(ii)	7

RULES

Supreme Court Rule 20	6, 7, 10

PETITION FOR WRIT OF MANDAMUS

Petitioner Teena Colebrook respectfully petitions for a writ of mandamus under Supreme Court Rule 20 and the All Writs Act, 28 U.S.C. § 1651(a), in aid of this Court's appellate jurisdiction. Petitioner seeks narrowly tailored relief restoring a meaningful opportunity to amend and develop the factual record underlying her fraud-based nondischargeability claims.

OPINIONS BELOW

The United States Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit entered an unpublished order and judgment on May 8, 2026, in Case No. 25-5453, affirming the bankruptcy judgment. The order and judgment are reproduced at Appendix A. The Sixth Circuit mandate issued June 1, 2026, and is reproduced at Appendix B.

In a related adversary proceeding arising from the same underlying investment relationships, the Bankruptcy Court entered an order on April 19, 2024 denying Petitioner's motion for disqualification. Because that order documents Petitioner's contemporaneous concerns regarding her pro se status and expressly notes that another adversary proceeding filed by Petitioner was undergoing a similar and concurrent in forma pauperis screening process, the Court has included it at Appendix C, together with the filed disqualification motion at Appendix D.

JURISDICTION AND BASIS FOR EXTRAORDINARY RELIEF

This petition is brought under 28 U.S.C. § 1651(a) and Supreme Court Rule 20. This Court has appellate jurisdiction over judgments of the United States courts of appeals under 28 U.S.C. § 1254(1). The writ sought would be in aid of that appellate jurisdiction because it concerns the completed Sixth Circuit judgment and mandate affirming dismissal of Petitioner's federal bankruptcy adversary proceeding.

Rule 20 requires exceptional circumstances and a showing that adequate relief cannot be obtained in another form or from another court. The Sixth Circuit entered judgment on May 8, 2026 and issued its mandate on June 1, 2026. The Bankruptcy Court cannot vacate the Sixth Circuit's judgment, and no other lower tribunal can direct the Sixth Circuit to reopen the completed appellate disposition. Petitioner therefore submits that the specific extraordinary relief requested here is unavailable elsewhere.

Petitioner recognizes that mandamus is discretionary and sparingly exercised. She does not seek ordinary error correction. She submits that the combination of screening dismissal, unresolved fact-dependent limitations issues, lack of meaningful amendment and discovery, the documented treatment of her pro se status, and subsequent affirmance without the factual development she sought presents the exceptional circumstances required by Rule 20.

CONSTITUTIONAL AND STATUTORY PROVISIONS INVOLVED

Article III, Section 2 of the United States Constitution provides for this Court's appellate jurisdiction, subject to such exceptions and regulations as Congress shall make.

The Fifth Amendment provides that no person shall be deprived of life, liberty, or property without due process of law.

28 U.S.C. § 1651(a) authorizes this Court to issue all writs necessary or appropriate in aid of its jurisdiction and agreeable to the usages and principles of law.

11 U.S.C. § 523(a)(2)(A) excepts from discharge certain debts for money, property, services, or credit obtained by false pretenses, false representation, or actual fraud.

28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B)(ii) requires dismissal of an in forma pauperis action if the court determines that it fails to state a claim on which relief may be granted.

STATEMENT OF THE CASE

Petitioner is a senior citizen and pro se creditor of limited means. She invested funds through arrangements involving John Preston Thompson and related persons or entities. Petitioner alleged that

her funds were not used as promised and that Thompson and his associates continued for years to acknowledge the obligation and assure repayment.

Petitioner did not immediately sue because she relied upon continuing assurances that repayment would be made. Her evidence includes a February 20, 2013 communication sent on behalf of Warren Forbes, Steve Huffman, and John Preston Thompson stating that bankruptcy was an unacceptable alternative, that they were not going to pursue that option, and that they would make things right with Petitioner. The communication further represented that repayment might take time but would occur. Later communications and payments continued for years, including through 2021. Relevant communications are reproduced at Appendix G.

Petitioner contends that these representations are material not merely as evidence of an unpaid debt, but to explain why she delayed litigation and to support tolling, delayed discovery, revival, fraudulent concealment, reliance, and equitable relief. She submits that the lower courts effectively punished her for attempting to resolve the debt without litigation and for relying upon repeated assurances of repayment.

Thompson later entered bankruptcy. Petitioner filed an adversary proceeding seeking a determination that the debt was nondischargeable because it arose from fraud, false pretenses, false representations, concealment, and related misconduct. The complaint was subjected to substantive screening in connection with Petitioner's request to proceed in forma pauperis.

In its April 19, 2024 order in the related Huffman adversary proceeding, the Bankruptcy Court explained that in forma pauperis screening required an in-depth review of pleading sufficiency and statute-of-limitations issues, and expressly noted that Petitioner's separate adversary proceeding against another debtor was undergoing a similar and concurrent screening process. Petitioner submits that, in the Thompson proceeding now before this Court, fact-dependent limitations issues involving continuing promises, acknowledgments, partial payments, concealment, reliance, and revival should not have been resolved against her at the threshold without meaningful leave to amend and appropriate discovery.

The lower courts characterized Petitioner's claims and the challenge she made under Rule 60(b)(4) as untimely. Petitioner respectfully submits that this conclusion ignored or improperly minimized facts showing continuing promises, acknowledgments, partial payments, concealment, and reliance. Those facts were material to tolling, delayed discovery, revival, and equitable relief, and should not have been resolved against a pro se fraud victim at the screening stage without leave to amend.

Petitioner also raised concerns about the treatment of her pro se status in the related Huffman bankruptcy proceeding before the same Bankruptcy Judge. In an April 2024 motion seeking disqualification, she recorded her recollection that at a January 10, 2024 hearing the Judge stated, in substance, that an adversary proceeding was very difficult to pursue pro se and impossible to win without an attorney. The Judge later denied disqualification, but his written order confirms that he discussed with Petitioner the difficulty and hazards of pro se litigation, while disputing that the discussion reflected bias. Petitioner offers these documents as context concerning her treatment as a pro se litigant by the same court, not as proof that the Thompson proceeding and Huffman proceeding were the same case. Both documents are reproduced at Appendices C and D.

Petitioner does not contend that advising a litigant to obtain counsel is itself improper, nor does she equate adverse rulings with bias. She submits that the documented discussion is relevant because she could not afford counsel, was unable to obtain pro bono representation, proceeded pro se as permitted by law, and then had her complex fraud claims terminated before discovery and without the meaningful amendment she contends was required.

Petitioner also identified financial and business records that she contends warranted inquiry. Thompson reported $610,352 in gross income for calendar year 2021 from wages, commissions, bonuses, tips and/or operating a business, while separately answering that he received no other income during the relevant period. Petitioner does not ask this Court to infer perjury from that record. Rather, she submits that the substantial reported income, continuing unpaid obligation, business interests, and

PPP-related records raised factual questions appropriate for discovery. The relevant income page and business disclosures are reproduced at Appendix F.

Petitioner further identified four separate Tennessee PPP records using the same 503 Ligon Drive, Suite A, Nashville address, the same Volunteer State Bank lender, and the same April 10, 2020 approval date. The supplied records reflect separate borrower names and separate loan numbers. Petitioner has prepared a concise comparison, followed by the underlying condensed records, at Appendix F. She does not contend that these records alone establish PPP wrongdoing. She offers them as concrete discrepancies and common facts warranting targeted discovery concerning ownership, control, business identities, payroll calculations, use and forgiveness of proceeds, and the completeness of bankruptcy disclosures.

One example is Integrity Solutions Group LLC, for which the PPP record reflects an April 10, 2020 approval while the Tennessee Secretary of State record reflects an initial Tennessee filing on February 16, 2021. Another is SPMJ Inc., a Florida corporation whose PPP record used the Nashville Ligon Drive address while its Florida corporate principal address was in Merritt Island; the Florida record identified John P. Thompson as CFO and John S. Huffman as CEO, both using the Ligon Drive address. SPMJ Inc. does not appear on the two-page bankruptcy business list supplied by Petitioner. Petitioner presents these matters as questions for clarification, not as adjudicated wrongdoing.

REASONS FOR GRANTING THE WRIT

I. The petition satisfies Rule 20 because the requested writ is in aid of this Court's appellate jurisdiction, exceptional circumstances are alleged, and the specific relief cannot be obtained elsewhere.

The challenged federal appellate judgment is final and the Sixth Circuit mandate has issued. Petitioner asks this Court to restore an opportunity for meaningful adjudication of her federal bankruptcy claims. No lower court can vacate or recall the Sixth Circuit's completed judgment on Petitioner's behalf. The relief therefore bears directly on this Court's appellate jurisdiction.

The circumstances are exceptional because the case combines a pro se fraud-based nondischargeability complaint, substantive screening, disputed limitations issues intertwined with alleged continuing acknowledgments and partial payments, a documented contemporaneous dispute concerning the treatment of Petitioner's pro se status, and financial/business evidence that Petitioner was never permitted to explore through discovery.

II. The lower courts improperly resolved fact-dependent limitations issues against a pro se fraud victim at the screening stage.

The lower courts characterized Petitioner's claims and her Rule 60(b)(4) challenge as untimely. Petitioner respectfully submits that this conclusion ignored or improperly minimized facts showing continuing promises, acknowledgments, partial payments, concealment, and reliance. Those facts were material to tolling, delayed discovery, revival, and equitable relief, and should not have been resolved against a pro se fraud victim at the screening stage without leave to amend.

Petitioner's delay was not alleged to be the product of indifference to her rights. She alleges that she repeatedly attempted to resolve the debt without litigation because she continued to receive assurances that repayment would be made. The lower courts' approach therefore effectively punished Petitioner for attempting to resolve the debt without litigation and for relying upon continuing representations that the obligation would be honored.

The ruling below creates a dangerous standard for poor pro se litigants: unless a fraud victim pleads with lawyer-like precision at the outset, serious allegations may be dismissed before the merits are ever reached, before discovery occurs, and before amendment can cure technical pleading deficiencies.

Pro se pleadings are to be liberally construed and held to less stringent standards than formal pleadings drafted by lawyers. See Haines v. Kerner, 404 U.S. 519, 520-521 (1972); Erickson v. Pardus, 551 U.S. 89, 94 (2007). Petitioner submits that the practical effect here was the opposite: complex fraud,

limitations, tolling, revival, and bankruptcy issues were effectively required to be pleaded with lawyer-like precision before factual development could occur.

III. This Court's precedents recognize that limitations principles should not become a shield for concealed fraud.

This Court has long recognized that limitations principles should not be used as a shield for concealed fraud. In Bailey v. Glover, 88 U.S. (21 Wall.) 342, 349-350 (1874), the Court recognized that where fraud remains concealed, limitations should not run until the fraud is discovered or, through reasonable diligence, should have been discovered. Likewise, Holmberg v. Armbrecht, 327 U.S. 392, 397 (1946), recognized the equitable principle that fraudulent concealment may toll limitations.

This Court has also recognized that equitable tolling may apply where a litigant has diligently pursued rights but extraordinary circumstances prevented timely filing. See Holland v. Florida, 560 U.S. 631, 649 (2010); Young v. United States, 535 U.S. 43, 49-50 (2002).

Petitioner does not contend that these authorities automatically resolve every limitations issue in her favor. She submits instead that they demonstrate why allegations concerning concealment, continuing assurances, acknowledgments, partial payments, delayed discovery, and reliance could not properly be treated as immaterial at the threshold.

The question was not simply whether years had passed. The question was whether the conduct Petitioner alleged during those years legally affected when her claims accrued, whether limitations were tolled, whether the debt or limitations period was revived, and whether equitable principles prevented the alleged wrongdoers from benefiting from delay they themselves induced. Those issues should have been addressed on a developed record rather than conclusively resolved against an indigent pro se creditor before discovery and meaningful amendment.

IV. The record raises a serious due-process concern regarding the treatment and prejudgment of Petitioner's pro se claims.

Petitioner does not contend that an adverse judicial ruling, standing alone, establishes bias. Nor does she ask this Court to infer misconduct merely because the Bankruptcy Judge denied her motion for disqualification in the related Huffman proceeding. The significance of that record is narrower: Petitioner's concerns regarding her treatment as a pro se litigant by the same Bankruptcy Judge were raised contemporaneously in the lower court, and the Judge's written order confirms that a substantive discussion concerning the difficulties and hazards of pro se litigation occurred.

At the January 10, 2024 hearing, before the adversary complaint was subsequently filed, Petitioner recalls that the Bankruptcy Judge advised her, in substance, that proceeding with an adversary action without counsel would be extremely difficult and that she could not succeed without an attorney. Petitioner responded that she could not afford counsel but would gladly accept pro bono representation if it could be provided.

Petitioner placed that account before the Bankruptcy Court in her April 2024 filing seeking disqualification. Although no transcript of the January hearing is presently available, the Bankruptcy Judge's subsequent written order confirms that a substantive discussion concerning Petitioner's pro se status occurred. The Court acknowledged discussing the difficulty a pro se litigant faces in navigating complex litigation and the potential problems or hazards associated with proceeding without counsel. The Court denied that this discussion reflected bias and stated that Petitioner remained free to proceed pro se. Petitioner relies on this related-case record only as contextual evidence relevant to the practical treatment of her pro se status in contemporaneous proceedings before the same court.

The disqualification order also confirms a practical filing impediment. While Petitioner's in forma pauperis application remained unresolved, standard Clerk's Office procedures prevented her from using the electronic filing system. Although the Bankruptcy Judge found no intentional discrimination, the Court expressly recognized that the policy might need to be reconsidered where an adversary plaintiff

has a pending in forma pauperis request because the additional review may delay a ruling. Petitioner's electronic filing access was then restored.

Petitioner does not rely on these circumstances as independent proof of misconduct. She submits that they form part of the total procedural context: she was cautioned about proceeding without counsel, could not obtain counsel, encountered practical filing limitations while her IFP request was pending, and ultimately had her claims dismissed before discovery or meaningful amendment.

Petitioner has previously litigated a separate bankruptcy adversary proceeding pro se for years without seeking disqualification of the judges involved. Her present concern therefore is not that a judge ruled against her; it is the particular combination of the documented pro se discussion, the procedural treatment that followed, and the termination of her claims before factual development.

Under 28 U.S.C. § 455, recusal is required where judicial impartiality might reasonably be questioned, while Liteky v. United States, 510 U.S. 540, 555 (1994), makes clear that ordinary judicial rulings and remarks do not ordinarily establish bias absent a sufficiently extreme showing. Petitioner relies on the record here not to seek punishment of the judge, but to demonstrate why a fresh opportunity for developed adjudication is warranted.

V. The financial and business records demonstrate why discovery, rather than threshold dismissal, was important.

The bankruptcy and business records attached at Appendix F identify specific matters that Petitioner was never permitted to explore. Thompson reported more than $610,000 in gross income for 2021 while the debt to Petitioner remained unpaid. Petitioner also identified numerous business interests, many using the same Nashville address, and four separate PPP loan records with a common approval date, address, and lender.

These records do not by themselves establish fraud, false bankruptcy disclosures, or improper PPP borrowing. That is precisely why discovery matters. Petitioner seeks an opportunity to ask targeted questions, obtain complete applications and financial records, and determine whether the apparent

discrepancies have innocent explanations or bear materially on her pleaded fraud and nondischargeability theories.

Appropriate discovery on remand could address the identity, ownership, and control of the relevant businesses; PPP and other pandemic-relief applications in any jurisdiction; payroll and employee calculations; loan proceeds and forgiveness; the source and disposition of substantial income; acknowledgments and payments on the debt; and the completeness of bankruptcy disclosures. Petitioner seeks factual development, not a Supreme Court finding of wrongdoing on an incomplete record.

VI. Bankruptcy relief for the honest but unfortunate debtor should not become a procedural shield against meaningful review of fraud-based obligations.

This Court has explained that a central purpose of the Bankruptcy Code is to provide a fresh start to the honest but unfortunate debtor. Grogan v. Garner, 498 U.S. 279, 286-287 (1991). Petitioner submits that this principle does not extend to insulating allegedly fraud-based obligations from meaningful judicial review where a creditor has pleaded concealment, continuing promises, partial payments, and reliance and seeks a fair opportunity to develop the record.

The Federal Trade Commission previously obtained a stipulated permanent injunction and monetary judgment involving Thompson in connection with debt-relief activities. Petitioner recognizes that the stipulated order does not constitute an admission of every allegation and does not prove her separate claims. Relevant excerpts are included at Appendix E solely as context supporting why she believed her fraud allegations warranted careful factual consideration rather than threshold termination.

VII. The requested relief is narrowly directed to restoring meaningful adjudication.

Petitioner respectfully asks this Court to issue a writ of mandamus, or such other extraordinary relief as is just and proper, directing the Sixth Circuit to recall or stay its mandate to the extent necessary, vacate or remand the judgment affirming dismissal, and permit further proceedings in which Petitioner's fraud-based nondischargeability claims may be amended and developed through appropriate discovery before dispositive resolution of disputed limitations issues.

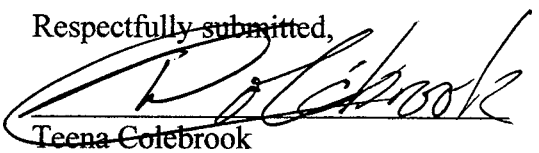
In the alternative, Petitioner requests relief directing that she receive a meaningful opportunity to amend her pro se complaint unless amendment is legally futile, and that the lower courts consider the pleaded facts concerning continuing acknowledgments, partial payments, concealment, delayed discovery, reliance, tolling, and revival on a developed record.

Petitioner does not ask this Court itself to conduct discovery or decide whether the attached business and financial records establish fraud. She asks for restoration of the ordinary fact-development process that was foreclosed when the adversary proceeding ended at screening.

CONCLUSION

For the foregoing reasons, the petition for a writ of mandamus should be granted, or the Court should grant such other extraordinary relief as it deems just and proper.

Respectfully submitted,



Teena Colebrook
Petitioner Pro Se
6135 Alta Mira Lane
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401
(310) 420-0508
tc4gold@gmail.com

Date: August 18th 2026