

In the Supreme Court of the United States

STATE OF OKLAHOMA,

Petitioner,

v.

KADETRIX DEVON GRAYSON,

Respondent.

**On Petition for a Writ of Certiorari to the
Oklahoma Court of Criminal Appeals**

PETITION FOR A WRIT OF CERTIORARI

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QUESTION PRESENTED

Whether *McGirt v. Oklahoma*, 140 S. Ct. 2452 (2020), should be overruled.

LIST OF PROCEEDINGS

Oklahoma Court of Criminal Appeals

No. F-2018-1229

Kadatrix Devon Grayson, Appellant v.
The State of Oklahoma, Appellee

Date of Final Opinion: April 1, 2021

Oklahoma District Court (Seminole County)

No. CF-2015-370

State of Oklahoma, Plaintiff v.
Kadatrix Devon Grayson, Defendant

Date of Judgment and Sentence: December 10, 2018

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
QUESTION PRESENTED	i
LIST OF PROCEEDINGS.....	ii
TABLE OF AUTHORITIES	v
OPINIONS BELOW	1
JURISDICTION.....	2
STATUTORY PROVISIONS INVOLVED.....	2
STATEMENT OF THE CASE.....	3
REASONS FOR GRANTING THE PETITION.....	7
CONCLUSION.....	9

TABLE OF CONTENTS – Continued

Page

APPENDIX TABLE OF CONTENTS

Opinion of the Court of Criminal Appeals,
State of Oklahoma, Remanding with
Instructions to Dismiss (April 1, 2021)..... 1a

District Court of Seminole County,
State of Oklahoma, Findings of Fact and
Conclusions of Law (Signed October 23, 2020,
Filed October 26, 2020)..... 20a

Court of Criminal Appeals, State of Oklahoma,
Order Remanding for Evidentiary Hearing
(August 25, 2020)..... 38a

TABLE OF AUTHORITIES

Page

CASES

<i>McGirt v. Oklahoma</i> , 140 S. Ct. 2452 (2020)	passim
<i>Oklahoma v. Bosse</i> , Petition for Writ of Certiorari, No. 21-186 (U.S.)	3, 7, 8, 9

STATUTES

18 U.S.C. § 1151.....	2
18 U.S.C. § 1152.....	2
18 U.S.C. § 1153(a)	3
28 U.S.C. § 1257(a)	2

JUDICIAL RULES

Sup. Ct. R. 12.7	4
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OPINIONS BELOW

The opinion of the Oklahoma Court of Criminal Appeals, dated April 1, 2021, is included in the Appendix at App.1a-19a., and reported at 485 P.3d 250.

The order of the Oklahoma Court of Criminal Appeals, dated August 25, 2020, remanding the case for an evidentiary hearing is included below at App.36a-40a. The Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law of the District Court in and for Seminole County, State of Oklahoma, dated October 23, 2020, is included below at App.20a-35a. These opinions and orders were not designated for publication.



JURISDICTION

The judgment of the Oklahoma Court of Criminal Appeals was entered on April 1, 2021. App.1a. The jurisdiction of this Court is invoked under 28 U.S.C. § 1257(a).



STATUTORY PROVISIONS INVOLVED

18 U.S.C. § 1151 (in relevant part) **Indian country defined**

[T]he term ‘Indian country’, as used in this chapter, means (a) all land within the limits of any Indian reservation under the jurisdiction of the United States Government, notwithstanding the issuance of any patent, and, including rights-of-way running through the reservation.

18 U.S.C. § 1152 (in relevant part) **Law governing (Indian country)**

Except as otherwise expressly provided by law, the general laws of the United States as to the punishment of offenses committed in any place within the sole and exclusive jurisdiction of the United States, except the District of Columbia, shall extend to the Indian country.

18 U.S.C. § 1153(a)**Offenses committed within Indian country**

Any Indian who commits against the person or property of another Indian or other person any of the following offenses, namely, murder, manslaughter, kidnapping, maiming, a felony under chapter 109A, incest, a felony assault under section 113, an assault against an individual who has not attained the age of 16 years, felony child abuse or neglect, arson, burglary, robbery, and a felony under section 661 of this title within the Indian country, shall be subject to the same law and penalties as all other persons committing any of the above offenses, within the exclusive jurisdiction of the United States.

**STATEMENT OF THE CASE**

Thousands of state criminal prosecutions have been called into question by this Court's decision in *McGirt v. Oklahoma*, 140 S. Ct. 2452 (2020). Like the pending petition in *Oklahoma v. Bosse*, No. 21-186, this case presents the question whether *McGirt* should be overruled. As the petition in *Bosse* explains, review is warranted here to examine that question. The petition for a writ of certiorari in this case should either be granted or, if the petition in *Bosse* is granted, held pending a decision in *Bosse* and then disposed of as is appropriate.

1. As part of a grievance with several people, respondent murdered two people in 2015. Respondent and John Beavers had been fighting over John's

accusation that respondent burglarized his home. Tr. III 8, 98-100.* One particular fight ended at the home of John's uncle, Daniel Thomas, when Daniel broke up the fight and made both parties leave. Tr. III 8. Respondent later texted another person, Summer Gokey, saying he was going to kill John and Daniel. Tr. III 6. Summer shared the text with Daniel, who confronted respondent about it. Tr. III 9. Respondent denied sending the text and left to "deal with" the problem. Tr. III 10.

Respondent ultimately shot and killed Summer and another person with her, Joseph Bounds, using a .22 caliber gun he owned. Tr. II 163, 169, 171, 175; Tr. III 92; Tr. IV 119. While Summer appeared to have died instantly, Joseph's body was found outside of the car on the driver's side, pinned under the car door, with four broken ribs. Tr. II 142, 164, 166. There were two smudges consistent with muddy handprints on the outside of the open driver's door where Mr. Bounds was pinned. Tr. II 166.

The State prosecuted respondent for two counts of murder in the first degree and one count of possession of firearm after former felony conviction. The jury found him guilty on all counts, and the court imposed a sentence of life imprisonment on counts I and II and 10 years of imprisonment on count III. Respondent then appealed his conviction to the Court of Criminal Appeals.

2. After this Court issued its decision in *McGirt*, the Court of Criminal Appeals remanded the case to

* All fact citations are to the volume and page number of the transcript of respondent's trial (Tr.), which is available below. See Sup. Ct. R. 12.7.

the trial court for an evidentiary hearing. App.37a. On remand, the parties stipulated that respondent had 1/4 Seminole blood and that he was a member of the Seminole Nation. App.23a. The court then held that the Seminole reservation remains in existence based on the precedent established in *McGirt*. App.24a-33a. Based on the stipulations and its own findings, the district court concluded that respondent was an Indian who committed crimes in Indian country. App.33a-35a.

The Court of Criminal Appeals vacated the convictions, adopting the trial court's conclusions and holding that the federal government had exclusive authority to prosecute respondent for the crimes at issue. App.11a.

Three judges wrote separate opinions. Judge Lumpkin concurred in the result. App.13a-15a. He expressed his view that the Court's opinion in *McGirt* "contravened * * * the history leading to the disestablishment of the Indian reservations in Oklahoma," but concluded that he was bound to follow it. App.13a.

Judge Lewis specially concurred, concluding that under *McGirt*, "Oklahoma has no jurisdiction over an Indian who commits a crime in Indian Country" and the Seminole Nation's reservation was not disestablished. App.16a.

Judge Hudson also concurred in the result. App. 17a-19a. Like Judge Lumpkin, he concurred "as a matter of *stare decisis*," but he observed that *McGirt* was a "hugely destabilizing force to public safety in eastern Oklahoma." App.17a, 19a. He noted that some crime victims and their family members "can look forward to a do-over in federal court of the

criminal proceedings where *McGirt* applies,” and “[s]ome cases may not be prosecuted at all by federal authorities because of issues with the statute of limitations, the loss of evidence, missing witnesses or simply the passage of time.” App.18a-19a. “*McGirt* must seem like a cruel joke,” he concluded, “for those victims and their family members who are forced to endure such extreme consequences in *their* case.” App.19a.



REASONS FOR GRANTING THE PETITION

In the decision below, the Oklahoma Court of Criminal Appeals applied *McGirt* to free yet another criminal from state custody, exacerbating the crisis in the criminal-justice system in Oklahoma. As the State of Oklahoma explains in its petition in *Bosse*, reconsideration of *McGirt* is the only realistic avenue for ending the ongoing chaos affecting every corner of daily life in Oklahoma. This case presents yet another opportunity to end the damage caused by *McGirt*. This petition should either be granted or, if the petition in *Bosse* is granted, held pending a decision in *Bosse* and then disposed of as is appropriate.

As explained more fully in *Bosse*, *McGirt* was wrongly decided, and the Court's review is urgently needed because no recent decision has had a more immediate and disruptive effect on life in an American State. *McGirt* contravened longstanding precedent on the disestablishment of Indian reservations. 140 S. Ct. at 2485 (Roberts, C.J., dissenting). It did so by wrongly reasoning that historical materials showing the original public meaning of statutes may be considered in the disestablishment inquiry "only" to "clear up" statutory ambiguity. *See id.* at 2467-2468, 2469-2470 (majority opinion). But consideration of history is necessary precisely because it is unclear whether Congress's alienation of Indian lands at the turn of the century changed the Indian country status of the land. *See id.* at 2488 (Roberts, C.J., dissenting). Under the correct framework prescribed by this Court's precedent, it is clear that Congress disestablished the Creek territory in Oklahoma, as well as the

territories of the four other Oklahoma tribes. And with that conclusion, it is clear the decision below is incorrect and warrants reversal.

Overruling *McGirt* and restoring the state jurisdiction it stripped is important not only for this case and the victims of the terrible crimes at issue. As the Chief Justice correctly predicted, the “burdens” of the *McGirt* decision on the State of Oklahoma have been “extraordinary.” 140 S. Ct. at 2500. The challenges from that seismic shift in jurisdiction have rippled through every aspect of life in Oklahoma. Most immediately, *McGirt* has jeopardized the State’s jurisdiction over thousands of criminal cases—this case being just one of them.

The question presented in this case is materially identical to the third question presented in *Bosse*. The Court should either grant review in this case or hold the petition pending the resolution of the third question presented in *Bosse*.



CONCLUSION

The petition for a writ of certiorari should be granted. In the alternative, if the petition in *Oklahoma v. Bosse*, No. 21-186, is granted, the petition in this case should be held pending a decision there and then disposed of as is appropriate.

Respectfully submitted,

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