NONPRECEDENTIAL DISPOSITION
To be cited only in accordance with FED. R. APP. P. 32.1

United States Court of Appeals

For the Seventh Circuit
Chicago, Illinois 60604

Submitted January 23, 2024*
Decided January 25, 2024

Before

MICHAEL Y. SCUDDER, *Circuit Judge*

THOMAS L. KIRSCH II, *Circuit Judge*

JOHN Z. LEE, *Circuit Judge*

No. 23-1777

DEVYN C. HOOD,
Plaintiff-Appellant,

v.

LITTLE ROCK OFFICE OF CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT and ERICA L. MURRY,
Defendants-Appellees.

Appeal from the United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois, Eastern Division.

No. 22-cv-6578

Mary M. Rowland,
Judge.

O R D E R

Devyn Hood wants a federal court to enjoin enforcement in Illinois of an Arkansas court's child-support order. He names as defendants the Little Rock branch of

* The appellees were not served with process and are not participating in this appeal. We have agreed to decide the case without oral argument because the appellant's brief and record adequately present the facts and legal arguments, and oral argument would not significantly aid the court. FED. R. APP. P. 34(a)(2)(C).

the Arkansas Office of Child Support Enforcement (which we will call the Little Rock Office) and the mother of his child (Erica Murry, whose name is spelled various ways in the record). The district court dismissed the case for lack of subject-matter jurisdiction, and we affirm.

In an Arkansas court, that state's government sued to establish Hood's paternity and obtain an order of support for his child with Murry. When Hood did not appear, the state court entered a default judgment naming him as the father and ordering him to pay monthly support (some of it retroactive). *Ark. Off. of Child Support Enf't v. Hood*, No. 60DR-22-1177-9 (Ark. Cir. Ct. Sept. 26, 2022). (Although the record before us contains no copy of this judgment, it is publicly available, and we may take judicial notice of it. *See Guerrero v. Howard Bank*, 74 F.4th 816, 819 (7th Cir. 2023).) Hood did not appeal in state court. As authorized by Illinois law, 750 ILCS 22/501 (2023), the Little Rock Office then sent an income-withholding order directly to Hood's employer in Illinois without involving that state's courts.

Next, Hood sued the Little Rock Office and Murry in federal court in Illinois, *see* 42 U.S.C. § 1983, expressly seeking to enjoin enforcement of the Arkansas child-support order. But the district court, prompted by Hood's motion for emergency relief, concluded that Hood's assertion of federal subject-matter jurisdiction was frivolous and dismissed the complaint. The court reasoned that because Hood essentially sought review of a state-court judgment (the Arkansas child-support order), federal jurisdiction was lacking under the *Rooker-Feldman* doctrine. *See Rooker v. Fid. Tr. Co.*, 263 U.S. 413 (1923); *D.C. Ct. of Appeals v. Feldman*, 460 U.S. 462 (1983). The court also flagged other problems with this suit, but we need not address them if *Rooker-Feldman* defeats federal subject-matter jurisdiction—which it does. And because Hood develops no separate appellate argument about the denial of emergency relief (which he sought in part against Illinois actors not named in the underlying complaint), we say no more about that matter.

We review de novo the district court's application of the *Rooker-Feldman* doctrine. *Fliss v. Generation Cap. I, LLC*, 87 F.4th 348, 353 (7th Cir. 2023). *Rooker-Feldman* stems from federal statutes that make the Supreme Court an appellate tribunal over state courts on questions of federal law, but that afford to federal district and circuit courts no similar power over state judgments. *Exxon Mobil Corp. v. Saudi Basic Indus. Corp.*, 544 U.S. 280, 283 (2005); *see also Mains v. Citibank, N.A.*, 852 F.3d 669, 675 (7th Cir. 2017). *Rooker-Feldman* bars federal review when a party seeks relief "tantamount to vacating the state judgment." *Mains*, 852 F.3d at 675.

On appeal, Hood argues that *Rooker-Feldman* does not apply because the focus of his challenge is not the Arkansas judgment itself, but instead the constitutionality of the Arkansas child-support laws that underpin it. But even if Hood could identify a constitutional problem with Arkansas's statutory scheme, the state-court judgment ordering child support is the ultimate source of his injury. *See id*. And what he seeks is an order effectively declaring that judgment void. Hood's claim thus falls squarely within the set barred by *Rooker-Feldman*: "cases brought by state-court losers complaining of injuries caused by state-court judgments rendered before the district court proceedings commenced and inviting district court review and rejection of those judgments." *Exxon Mobil Corp.*, 544 U.S. at 284. As *Feldman* holds, federal courts other than the Supreme Court "do not have jurisdiction" to review "challenges to state-court decisions in particular cases arising out of judicial proceedings even if those challenges allege that the state court's action was unconstitutional." *Feldman*, 460 U.S. at 486; *see also Swartz v. Heartland Equine Rescue*, 940 F.3d 387, 390 (7th Cir. 2019) (holding constitutional challenge to state-court judgment barred by *Rooker-Feldman* doctrine).

If there were merit to Hood's constitutional arguments, then the forum for them would be an Arkansas state court. *See, e.g., Schultz v. Butterball, LLC*, 402 S.W.3d 61, 66–67 (Ark. 2012) (considering on the merits, but rejecting, due process challenge to Arkansas child-support laws). Federal review, on the other hand, is barred by *Rooker-Feldman*.

For that reason, we cannot and do not address the merits of Hood's appellate contention that Arkansas's child-support laws are invalid. To be sure, Hood's appellate brief characterizes the child-support proceedings as a "conspiracy" and accuses the federal district judge of bias in favor of Arkansas. But these assertions are too undeveloped to warrant discussion. *See Shipley v. Chi. Bd. of Election Comm'rs*, 947 F.3d 1056, 1062–63 (7th Cir. 2020).

One wrinkle remains. The district court marked its dismissal "with prejudice," whereas the lack of federal jurisdiction means dismissal should be without prejudice to pursuing any valid claims in an appropriate state court. *See Jakupovic v. Curran*, 850 F.3d 898, 904 (7th Cir. 2017). We thus modify the judgment of the district court to reflect that the dismissal is without prejudice, and we affirm the judgment as modified.