

NONPRECEDENTIAL DISPOSITION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 February 2, 2026*
Decided February 2, 2026

Before

MICHAEL B. BRENNAN, *Chief Judge*

DAVID F. HAMILTON, *Circuit Judge*

THOMAS L. KIRSCH II, *Circuit Judge*

No. 25-1717

MICHELLE L. VEASEY,
Plaintiff-Appellant,

v.

Appeal from the United States District
Court for the Central District of Illinois.

No. 4:23-cv-04143-SLD

MIKE THOMS, et al.,
Defendants-Appellees.

Sara Darrow,
Chief Judge.

ORDER

Michelle Veasey, the former owner of Playmakers Sports Bar and Grille in Rock Island, Illinois, appeals the summary judgment rejecting her claims that four local officials violated her rights to due process when revoking the tavern's liquor license.

* We have agreed to decide the case without oral argument because the briefs 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 district court determined that three of the officials were immune from suit and that Veasey presented no evidence that the fourth violated her rights. We affirm.

In 2023, Rock Island police filed an administrative complaint alleging that Playmakers violated a city ordinance that prohibited liquor licensees from allowing loitering or unruly conduct on the premises. The complaint was signed by city attorneys David Morrison and Hector Lareau. Soon thereafter, Veasey filed a Freedom of Information Act request for reports from police investigations of Playmakers—a request that Rock Island Police Chief Richard Landi denied the next day.

Mike Thoms, the commissioner of the Rock Island Local Liquor Control Commission, convened a hearing, after which he issued an order revoking Playmakers' license. Playmakers appealed to the state Liquor Control Commission, which modified the sanction to a 30-day suspension. After a later disturbance in which a minor was discovered to have been inside the bar, Thoms held another hearing, determined that Playmakers violated the ordinances against permitting minors or loitering on the premises, and revoked Playmakers' license. The state liquor commission upheld that determination.

Veasey then filed this suit, alleging that Thoms discriminated against her based on race by revoking the tavern's license (she says she was the region's lone Black business owner); that Morrison and Lareau improperly withheld evidence before the hearings; and that Landi discriminated against her during the police department's investigations and corruptly upheld an internal affairs investigation that cleared the department of wrongdoing.

The court ultimately granted the defendants' motion for summary judgment. The court concluded that Thoms was shielded by absolute quasi-judicial immunity because he acted in a judicial capacity when presiding over the proceedings. *See Killinger v. Johnson*, 389 F.3d 765, 770 (7th Cir. 2004), modified by *Brunson v. Murray*, 843 F.3d 698, 709–714 (7th Cir. 2016). The court similarly determined that Morrison and Lareau were entitled to absolute quasi-prosecutorial immunity because they were acting in a prosecutorial capacity. *See Tobey v. Chibucos*, 890 F.3d 634, 649–50 (7th Cir. 2018). And as to Landi, the court determined that Veasey did not present evidence from which a reasonable jury could infer that he violated her rights.

On appeal, Veasey recites the facts that she says took place but does not engage with the district court's reasons for granting summary judgment. The district court, however, wrote a thorough opinion addressing Veasey's claims under the correct legal

standards, and we have little to add. We have reviewed the record and affirm the judgment substantially for the reasons the district court stated.

We note finally Veasey's argument that the district judge was disqualified under 28 U.S.C. § 455 based on a conflict of interest in being married to a state court judge in Rock Island County. (Veasey apparently regards the state court judge as an employee of the county.) Although a judge should disqualify herself in any proceeding in which her impartiality "might reasonably be questioned," 28 U.S.C. § 455(a), the district judge's impartiality here cannot be questioned "reasonably." The standard is an objective one, viewed from the perspective of an observer possessing all material facts. *Salem v. Att'y Registration & Disciplinary Comm'n of Sup. Ct. of Ill.*, 85 F.4th 438, 442 (7th Cir. 2023). Based on the limited record of this case, a reasonable observer would not believe that the federal judge, based solely on her marriage to a state court judge working in the same county as four local officials, would be biased to rule in their favor.

AFFIRMED