

SUPREME COURT OF FLORIDA

Reaves v. State

826 So. 2d 932 (Fla. 2002) · No. SC00-840 · Decided June 20, 2002

SUMMARY

The Supreme Court of Florida reviews the summary denial of William Reaves's motion for postconviction relief under Florida Rule of Criminal Procedure 3.850. The court remands for an evidentiary hearing on claims that trial counsel was ineffective for failing to present a voluntary intoxication defense and related claims, while affirming the denial of relief on the remaining claims. The court also addresses alleged jury misconduct, Brady violations, public-records access, penalty-phase ineffectiveness, and cumulative error.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	Supreme Court of Florida
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Per Curiam; Shaw, J.; Pariente, J.; Quince, J.; Anstead, J.; Wells, C.J.; Harding, J.; Lewis, J.
JURISDICTION	Florida
DECIDED	June 20, 2002
DOCKET	SC00-840
DISPOSITION	reversed_and_remanded
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Appeal from the summary denial of a Florida Rule of Criminal Procedure 3.850 motion for postconviction relief by a prisoner under sentence of death.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	On review of a summary denial of postconviction relief, the court determines whether the motion, files, and records conclusively show that the prisoner is entitled to no relief or whether the claim is legally insufficient. When no evidentiary hearing has occurred, factual allegations not refuted by the record are accepted as true.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Published precedential opinion of the Supreme Court of Florida.
PARTIES	William Reaves v. State of Florida

TOPICS

- post-conviction relief
- ineffective assistance
- sentencing
- criminal procedure
- evidence

PRACTICE AREAS

Florida postconviction capital litigation

criminal procedure

ineffective assistance of counsel

death penalty

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether Reaves was entitled to an evidentiary hearing on his claim that trial counsel was ineffective for failing to investigate and present a voluntary-intoxication defense.
2. Whether the remaining guilt-phase and penalty-phase ineffective-assistance claims were legally sufficient or refuted by the record.
3. Whether Reaves adequately pleaded a Brady violation concerning allegedly withheld materials.
4. Whether Reaves waived his public-records claim by failing to pursue it in the trial court.
5. Whether Reaves was entitled to interview jurors based on an allegation that one juror discussed his guilt before deliberations.
6. Whether Reaves's claim that he was insane for purposes of execution was premature.
7. Whether cumulative error required postconviction relief.

HOLDINGS

1. A postconviction defendant is entitled to an evidentiary hearing on an ineffective-assistance claim when the claim is legally sufficient and the record does not conclusively refute it. Reaves's allegation that counsel failed to present a voluntary-intoxication defense met that standard.
2. Voluntary intoxication is a defense distinct from insanity and may be available to negate specific intent even when the defendant was capable of distinguishing right from wrong.
3. Claims that counsel inadequately questioned jurors, failed to cross-examine witnesses, conceded guilt, or failed to object to drug-use and other-bad-acts evidence were properly denied when they were deficiently pleaded, speculative, or unsupported by a showing of deficient performance and prejudice.
4. Reaves was not entitled to relief on his penalty-phase ineffective-assistance claims because the proposed mitigation was cumulative or insufficient to establish a reasonable probability that the balance of aggravating and mitigating circumstances would have changed.
5. The trial court properly denied an evidentiary hearing on Reaves's Brady claim because the motion did not allege facts showing that the withheld materials were favorable, suppressed by the State, and prejudicial.
6. A postconviction movant waives a public-records claim by failing to pursue the issue in the trial court.
7. Juror interviews are not permitted based solely on allegations concerning a juror's premature discussion of guilt or misunderstanding of jury instructions; an overt prejudicial act, external influence, or express agreement to disregard the law must be alleged.
8. A claim that a prisoner is insane for purposes of execution is premature until the Governor has conducted the proceedings required by Florida law.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“However, in cases where there has been no evidentiary hearing, we must accept the factual allegations made by the defendant to the extent that they are not refuted by the record.” (937)

“Insanity is a complete defense if, at the time of the crime, the defendant was incapable of distinguishing between right and wrong as a result of a mental disease or defect. Voluntary intoxication is a separate theory and is available to negate specific intent, such as the element of premeditation essential in first-degree murder.” (938-939)

“To this end, any jury inquiry is limited to allegations which involve an overt prejudicial act or external influence, such as a juror receiving prejudicial nonrecord evidence or an actual, express agreement between two or more jurors to disregard their juror oaths and instructions.” (943-944)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Reaves was convicted of premeditated first-degree murder for shooting Indian River County Deputy Sheriff Richard Raczkoski and was sentenced to death after a retrial. The evidence included testimony and statements indicating that Reaves had used or abused drugs and claimed he was intoxicated or affected by cocaine when he fired the weapon. His trial counsel did not present a voluntary-intoxication defense during the guilt phase, despite a jury instruction conference concerning that defense and additional evidence of substance abuse.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Reaves was convicted and sentenced to death after retrial, and the Supreme Court of Florida affirmed on direct appeal. He filed an initial postconviction motion in 1996, later amended it, and filed the operative motion on February 17, 1999. Following a Huff hearing, the trial court summarily denied relief without an evidentiary hearing. The Supreme Court of Florida remanded for an evidentiary hearing on the ineffective-assistance claim concerning failure to present a voluntary-intoxication defense and affirmed the denial of relief in all other respects.

DISPOSITION

reversed_and_remanded

REMAND INSTRUCTIONS

Remand to the trial court for an evidentiary hearing on the claims concerning whether trial counsel was ineffective for failing to raise a voluntary-intoxication defense and related subclaims. The denial of postconviction relief was affirmed in all other respects.

CASES CITED

- Reaves v. State, 574 So. 2d 105 (Fla. 1991)
- Reaves v. State, 639 So. 2d 1, 3 (Fla. 1994)
- Freeman v. State, 761 So. 2d 1055, 1061 (Fla. 2000)
- Strickland v. Washington, 466 U.S. 668, 104 S. Ct. 2052, 80 L. Ed. 2d 674 (1984)
- Patton v. State, 784 So. 2d 380, 386-87 (Fla. 2000)

- Kitchen v. State, 764 So. 2d 868, 869 (Fla. 4th DCA 2000)
- Stewart v. State, 801 So. 2d 59, 65 (Fla. 2001)
- Rivera v. State, 717 So. 2d 477, 485 n. 12 (Fla. 1998)
- Linehan v. State, 476 So. 2d 1262, 1264 (Fla. 1985)
- Kennedy v. State, 547 So. 2d 912, 913 (Fla. 1989)
- Magill v. State, 457 So. 2d 1367, 1370 (Fla. 1984)
- Sireci v. State, 773 So. 2d 34, 40 n. 11 (Fla. 2000)
- Cherry v. State, 781 So. 2d 1040, 1048 (Fla. 2000)
- Jennings v. State, 583 So. 2d 316, 321 (Fla. 1991)
- Occhicone v. State, 768 So. 2d 1037, 1049 (Fla. 2000)
- Way v. State, 760 So. 2d 903, 910 (Fla. 2000)
- Strickler v. Greene, 527 U.S. 263, 280 (1999)
- Asay v. State, 769 So. 2d 974, 982 (Fla. 2000)
- Johnston v. State, 708 So. 2d 590, 592-93 (Fla. 1998)
- Lopez v. Singletary, 634 So. 2d 1054, 1058 (Fla. 1993)
- Johnson v. State, 804 So. 2d 1218, 1225 (Fla. 2001)
- Sims v. State, 444 So. 2d 922, 925 (Fla. 1983)
- Devoney v. State, 717 So. 2d 501, 504 (Fla. 1998)
- Johnson v. State, 593 So. 2d 206, 210 (Fla. 1992)
- Mitchell v. State, 527 So. 2d 179, 181 (Fla. 1988)
- Thompson v. State, 796 So. 2d 511, 515 n. 5 (Fla. 2001)
- Huff v. State, 622 So. 2d 982 (Fla. 1993)