

FIRST DISTRICT COURT OF APPEAL OF FLORIDA

John Edward McGlaun v. State of Florida

No. 1D2023-2681 (Fla. 1st DCA Oct. 1, 2025) · No. 1D2023-2681 · Decided October 1, 2025

SUMMARY

The First District Court of Appeal affirmed John Edward McGlaun’s habitual felony offender sentence following his conviction for traveling to meet a minor for unlawful sexual conduct. The court declined to decide the impact of *Erlinger v. United States* on Florida’s habitual felony offender sentencing procedures, holding instead that any error in having the sentencing court, rather than a jury, determine the qualifying facts was harmless beyond a reasonable doubt.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	First District Court of Appeal of Florida
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Per Curiam; Lewis, J.; Rowe, J.; Bilbrey, J.
JURISDICTION	First District Court of Appeal of Florida
DECIDED	October 1, 2025
DOCKET	1D2023-2681
DISPOSITION	affirmed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Direct appeal from a conviction and habitual felony offender sentence for traveling to meet a minor for unlawful sexual conduct.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Harmless error beyond a reasonable doubt; the court considered whether the record demonstrated beyond a reasonable doubt that a rational jury would have made the same findings relevant to the sentence.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Published opinion; precedential subject to the postdecision-motion finality provision.
PARTIES	John Edward McGlaun v. State of Florida

TOPICS

- sentencing
- harmless error
- appellate procedure
- criminal procedure
- sixth amendment

PRACTICE AREAS

- criminal law
- criminal procedure
- sentencing
- appellate practice

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether, under *Erlinger v. United States*, the Sixth Amendment required a jury to find beyond a reasonable doubt the facts qualifying McGlaun for a habitual felony offender sentence under section 775.084, Florida Statutes.
2. Whether any error resulting from the sentencing court's factfinding was harmless beyond a reasonable doubt.

HOLDINGS

1. The court did not decide whether *Erlinger* applies to section 775.084 because, even assuming that it applies, any error in the sentencing procedure was harmless.
2. Any error in failing to have a jury determine the habitual felony offender qualifying facts was harmless beyond a reasonable doubt because the record demonstrated that no rational jury would have found those facts differently.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“We affirm without deciding Erlinger’s impact, if any, on section 775.084 because, even assuming Erlinger applies, any error in this case is harmless.” (at 1)

“The record demonstrates beyond a reasonable doubt that no rational jury would have found the timing of the predicate convictions relative to Appellant’s release from his latest sentence and the other HFO qualifying facts any differently than found by the sentencing court.” (at 1-2)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

McGlaun was convicted of traveling to meet a minor for unlawful sexual conduct and received a habitual felony offender sentence. At sentencing, he did not contest the qualifying habitual felony offender facts, object to the State's evidence proving those facts, introduce contrary evidence, or argue that he did not qualify for the enhancement. The record showed that the timing of his predicate convictions relative to his release from his latest sentence and the other qualifying facts were undisputed.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Following his conviction, the Circuit Court for Holmes County imposed a habitual felony offender sentence. On direct appeal, McGlaun argued that the sentencing court, rather than a jury, improperly found the facts required for habitual felony offender enhancement under section 775.084, Florida Statutes. The First District affirmed, concluding that any assumed error was harmless beyond a reasonable doubt.

DISPOSITION

affirmed

CASES CITED

- *Erlinger v. United States*, 602 U.S. 821 (2024)

- Avalos v. State, 50 Fla. L. Weekly D1950a, 2025 WL 2486901, *1 (Fla. 6th DCA Aug. 29, 2025)
- Galindez v. State, 955 So. 2d 517, 523 (Fla. 2007)
- Scott v. State, 413 So. 3d 276 (Fla. 5th DCA 2025)
- Jackson v. State, 410 So. 3d 4 (Fla. 4th DCA 2025)
- Capra v. State, 403 So. 3d 1063 (Fla. 5th DCA 2025)
- State v. Fleming, 61 So. 3d 399 (Fla. 2011)
- Wainwright v. State, 411 So. 3d 392 (Fla. 2025)

OPINION

John Edward McGlaun v. State of Florida

PER CURIAM.

FIRST DISTRICT COURT OF APPEAL

STATE OF FLORIDA

_____ No. 1D2023-2681 _____

JOHN EDWARD MCGLAUN,

Appellant, v.

STATE OF FLORIDA,

Appellee. _____ On appeal from the Circuit Court for Holmes County. Russell S. Roberts, Judge. October 1, 2025 PER CURIAM. Following his conviction for traveling to meet a minor for unlawful sexual conduct, Appellant contests his habitual felony offender (HFO) sentence. He claims error occurred when the sentencing court, not a jury, made the findings of fact required to enhance a HFO sentence under section 775.084(1)(a), Florida Statutes (2022). Appellant argues that under *Erlinger v. United States*, 602 U.S. 821 (2024), he was entitled to a jury determination of those facts with the State being required to prove the qualifying HFO elements beyond a reasonable doubt. Appellant also argues that the sentencing procedures to impose a HFO sentence in section 775.084(3)(a), Florida Statutes, are now unconstitutional under the holding in *Erlinger*. * Like the Sixth District recently did in *Avalos v. State*, 50 Fla. L. Weekly D1950a, 2025 WL 2486901, *1 (Fla. 6th DCA Aug. 29, 2025), “[w]e affirm without deciding *Erlinger*’s impact, if any, on section 775.084 because, even assuming *Erlinger* applies, any error in this case is harmless.” In considering harmless error when the claimed error is failure to have a jury finding during sentencing, the issue is “whether the failure to have the jury make the . . . finding . . . contributed to the . . . sentence—in other words, whether the record demonstrates beyond a reasonable doubt that a rational jury would have found” the same thing. *Galindez v. State*, 955 So. 2d 517, 523 (Fla. 2007). During his sentencing hearing, Appellant did not contest the HFO qualifying facts or the admission of any of the State’s evidence to prove these facts. He did not introduce any contrary evidence and never argued that he did not qualify for an HFO sentence enhancement. The record demonstrates beyond a reasonable doubt that no rational jury would have found the timing of the predicate convictions relative to Appellant’s release from his

latest sentence and the other HFO qualifying facts any differently than found by the sentencing court. Since any error here is harmless, Appellant's HFO sentence is affirmed. See *Scott v. State*, 413 So. 3d 276 (Fla. 5th DCA 2025); *Jackson v. State*, 410 So. 3d 4 (Fla. 4th DCA 2025); *Capra v. State*, 403 So. 3d 1063 (Fla. 5th DCA 2025).

AFFIRMED. LEWIS, ROWE, and BILBREY, JJ., concur. * Appellant's sentence is before us on direct appeal, and it is thus not final for purposes of the application of decisional law issued after sentencing. See *State v. Fleming*, 61 So. 3d 399 (Fla. 2011); cf. *Wainwright v. State* 411 So. 3d 392 (Fla. 2025) (holding that *Erlinger* does not apply retroactively to a postconviction claim). 2

_____ Not final until disposition of any timely and authorized motion under Fla. R. App. P. 9.330 or 9.331. _____ Jessica J. Yeary, Public Defender, and Tyler Kemper Payne, Assistant Public Defender, Tallahassee, for Appellant. James Uthmeier, Attorney General, and Kristie Regan, Assistant Attorney General, Tallahassee, for Appellee. 3