

FIRST DISTRICT COURT OF APPEAL OF FLORIDA

Goodson v. State of Florida

Goodson · No. No. 1D2024-1762 · Decided June 10, 2026

SUMMARY

The First District Court of Appeal reversed the summary denial of Ruben Goodson’s postconviction claim concerning counsel’s failure to retain a toxicology expert. The court held that it could not affirm based on trial-record materials that were not included in the record or attached to the postconviction court’s order, including by taking judicial notice of the court’s records from Goodson’s direct appeal.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	First District Court of Appeal of Florida
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Winokur, J.; M.K. Thomas, J.; Treadwell, J.
JURISDICTION	First District Court of Appeal of Florida
DECIDED	June 10, 2026
DOCKET	No. 1D2024-1762
DISPOSITION	reversed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Appeal from a summary denial of a Florida Rule of Criminal Procedure 3.850 motion for postconviction relief.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The appellate court reviews a summary denial of a Rule 3.850 postconviction claim under Florida Rule of Appellate Procedure 9.141(b)(2)(D) and must reverse unless the record conclusively shows that the appellant is entitled to no relief.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Published opinion; precedential value under Florida law.
PARTIES	Ruben Goodson v. State of Florida

TOPICS

- state post-conviction relief
- appellate procedure
- ineffective assistance
- criminal procedure
- judicial notice

PRACTICE AREAS

- criminal procedure
- post-conviction relief
- appellate procedure
- ineffective assistance

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the appellate court could affirm the summary denial of Ground Three by considering a trial transcript from a prior appeal that was not part of the record identified by Florida Rule of Appellate Procedure 9.141(b)(2)(A).
2. Whether the failure of the postconviction court to address Ground Three and attach the portions of the record conclusively showing that Goodson was entitled to no relief required reversal under Rule 9.141(b)(2)(D).

HOLDINGS

1. In an appeal from a summary denial of postconviction relief, the State may not overcome the postconviction court's failure to attach the required record portions by supplementing the record, submitting the documents in an appendix, or asking the appellate court to take judicial notice of missing documents that are outside the record defined by Rule 9.141(b)(2)(A).
2. The order summarily denying Ground Three must be reversed because the postconviction court did not indicate and attach portions of the record conclusively showing that Goodson was entitled to no relief on that ground.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“When a denial of a postconviction claim is “based on the records in the case,” the postconviction court must attach to its order “that portion of the files and records that conclusively shows that the defendant is entitled to no relief[.]”” (at 3)

“Generally speaking, if a court denies a postconviction motion based on the records in the case, we must reverse unless the portions of the record attached to the order support the order’s conclusions.” (at 3)

“Because the court did not indicate and attach the portions of the record that show conclusively that the appellant is entitled to no relief on Ground 3, we REVERSE in accordance with rule 9.141(b)(2)(D).” (at 3)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Goodson sought postconviction relief based on claims that trial counsel was ineffective for failing to retain a blood-spatter expert and a toxicology expert. The postconviction court did not address the toxicology-expert claim in Ground Three and did not attach record portions conclusively refuting that claim. The State relied on a trial transcript from Goodson's prior direct appeal to support affirmance.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Goodson filed a Rule 3.850 motion asserting ten grounds, including ineffective-assistance claims concerning the failure to retain blood-spatter and toxicology experts. The postconviction court summarily denied Ground Two and appeared to deny Ground Three using the reasoning for Ground Two without addressing Ground Three or attaching the portions of the record required by Rule 3.850. On appeal, the State argued that the appellate court could rely on the trial transcript from Goodson's direct appeal by taking judicial notice of its own records.

DISPOSITION

reversed

REMAND INSTRUCTIONS

The opinion reverses the order denying Ground Three. No more specific remand instruction is stated in the opinion.

CASES CITED

- Thames v. State, 454 So. 2d 1061, 1065 (Fla. 1st DCA 1984)
- St. Cyr v. State, 126 So. 3d 1166 (Fla. 4th DCA 2012)
- Griffin v. State, 573 So. 2d 979 (Fla. 5th DCA 1991)
- McClain v. State, 629 So. 2d 320 (Fla. 1st DCA 1993)
- Bennett v. State, 946 So. 2d 84, 85 (Fla. 4th DCA 2006)
- Hillsborough Cnty. Bd. of Cnty. Comm'rs v. Pub. Emps. Rels. Comm'n, 424 So. 2d 132, 134 (Fla. 1st DCA 1982)