

COURT OF APPEALS, SECOND APPELLATE DISTRICT OF TEXAS AT FORT WORTH

Aundra Dawayne Elbert Taylor v. The State of Texas

No. 02-25-00150-CR · No. No. 02-25-00150-CR · Decided May 7, 2026

SUMMARY

The Texas Court of Appeals, Second Appellate District, affirmed Aundra Dawayne Elbert Taylor’s murder conviction and life sentence. The court held that the jury rationally rejected Taylor’s self-defense claim regarding the shooting death of Michael Sansom, particularly because Sansom did not threaten Taylor, display a weapon, or make threatening movements.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	Court of Appeals, Second Appellate District of Texas at Fort Worth
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Dabney Bassel; Bassel; Womack; Wallach
JURISDICTION	Court of Appeals, Second Appellate District of Texas at Fort Worth
DECIDED	May 7, 2026
DOCKET	No. 02-25-00150-CR
DISPOSITION	affirmed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Taylor appealed his jury conviction for murder and life sentence from the 297th District Court of Tarrant County, arguing that the State failed to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that self-defense did not apply.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court viewed all evidence in the light most favorable to the verdict and asked whether any rational factfinder could have found the essential elements of murder beyond a reasonable doubt and rejected self-defense beyond a reasonable doubt. The court deferred to the jury's resolution of conflicts, credibility determinations, evidentiary weight, and reasonable inferences, and did not reweigh the evidence.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Unpublished memorandum opinion; not designated for publication under Texas Rule of Appellate Procedure 47.2(b).
PARTIES	Aundra Dawayne Elbert Taylor v. The State of Texas

TOPICS

- self defense
- criminal procedure
- evidence
- appellate procedure
- standard of review

PRACTICE AREAS

Texas criminal law

criminal appellate practice

evidence sufficiency

self-defense

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the evidence was legally sufficient to support Taylor's murder conviction and the jury's rejection of his self-defense claim.
2. Whether a rational jury could find beyond a reasonable doubt that Taylor was not justified in using deadly force against Sansom when Sansom merely approached and stood next to Parker without displaying or reaching for a weapon.

HOLDINGS

1. The evidence was legally sufficient for a rational jury to find that Taylor intentionally or knowingly caused Sansom's death and to reject Taylor's self-defense justification beyond a reasonable doubt.
2. A defendant claiming self-defense bears the burden of producing evidence supporting the defense, while the State bears the burden of persuasion to disprove the raised defensive issue through proof of guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

KEY QUOTATIONS

"In an evidentiary-sufficiency review, we view all the evidence in the light most favorable to the verdict to determine whether any rational factfinder could have found the crime's essential elements beyond a reasonable doubt." (7)

"The defendant bears the burden to produce evidence supporting the defense, while the State bears the burden of persuasion to disprove the raised issues." (8-9)

"A jury is permitted to reject even uncontradicted defensive testimony, so long as its rejection of that evidence was rational in light of the remaining evidence in the record and is not contradicted by indisputable objective facts." (10)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

At approximately 2:00 a.m. at a convenience store, Taylor encountered Marques Parker, who questioned whether Taylor was a member of or killer for a gang. Taylor claimed Parker's hand was positioned near a gun in a backpack and that Parker threatened him. When Michael Sansom approached Parker and stood beside him, Taylor shot both men in the face; Sansom had said nothing, displayed no firearm, and was holding his hands in a nonthreatening manner. Taylor also fired multiple shots at a third person who was fleeing, and that person suffered a gunshot wound to the hand.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

A jury acquitted Taylor of capital murder but convicted him of the lesser-included offense of murder for intentionally or knowingly causing Michael Sansom's death by shooting him. The jury assessed life

imprisonment, and the trial court sentenced Taylor accordingly. The Texas Court of Appeals overruled Taylor's sole sufficiency point and affirmed the judgment.

DISPOSITION

affirmed

CASES CITED

- Jackson v. Virginia, 443 U.S. 307, 319, 99 S. Ct. 2781, 2789 (1979)
- Queeman v. State, 520 S.W.3d 616, 622 (Tex. Crim. App. 2017)
- Brooks v. State, 323 S.W.3d 893, 894-95 (Tex. Crim. App. 2010)
- Clewis v. State, 922 S.W.2d 126 (Tex. Crim. App. 1996)
- Zuniga v. State, 551 S.W.3d 729, 739 (Tex. Crim. App. 2018)
- Tate v. State, 500 S.W.3d 410, 413 (Tex. Crim. App. 2016)
- Harrell v. State, 620 S.W.3d 910, 914 (Tex. Crim. App. 2021)
- Martin v. State, 635 S.W.3d 672, 679 (Tex. Crim. App. 2021)
- Braughton v. State, 569 S.W.3d 592, 608-12 (Tex. Crim. App. 2018)
- Villa v. State, 514 S.W.3d 227, 232 (Tex. Crim. App. 2017)
- Carter v. State, 620 S.W.3d 147, 149 (Tex. Crim. App. 2021)
- Saxton v. State, 804 S.W.2d 910, 913-14 (Tex. Crim. App. 1991)
- Zuliani v. State, 97 S.W.3d 589, 594 (Tex. Crim. App. 2003)
- Krajcovic v. State, 393 S.W.3d 282, 286 (Tex. Crim. App. 2013)
- Adames v. State, 353 S.W.3d 854, 860 (Tex. Crim. App. 2011)
- Clarabut v. State, No. 09-23-00321-CR, 2025 WL 2792956, at *14 (Tex. App.—Beaumont Oct. 1, 2025, no pet.)

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