

SUPREME COURT OF FLORIDA

State v. Meeks

789 So. 2d 982 (Fla. 2001) · No. SC00-799 · Decided July 12, 2001

SUMMARY

The Supreme Court of Florida held that, under section 958.14, Florida Statutes (1995), a substantive violation of youthful-offender probation or community control requires the commission of a separate criminal offense. A failure to remain confined to an approved residence, although potentially willful and substantial for purposes of revocation, was classified as a technical or nonsubstantive violation. The court approved the First District Court of Appeal's decision remanding Timothy Meeks for resentencing.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	Supreme Court of Florida
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Lewis, J.; Shaw, J.; Harding, J.; Anstead, J.; Pariente, J.; Quince, J.; Wells, C.J.
JURISDICTION	Florida
DECIDED	July 12, 2001
DOCKET	SC00-799
DISPOSITION	approved
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	The Supreme Court of Florida reviewed a certified question from the First District Court of Appeal concerning the meaning of a substantive violation under section 958.14, Florida Statutes (1995).
STANDARD OF REVIEW	De novo review of the statutory interpretation question certified by the district court of appeal.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Published, precedential Florida Supreme Court opinion
PARTIES	State of Florida v. Timothy Meeks

TOPICS

- sentencing
- probation
- statutory interpretation
- legislative intent
- criminal procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

- criminal law
- sentencing
- probation and community control
- statutory interpretation

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. What constitutes a substantive violation of probation or community control under section 958.14, Florida Statutes (1995), for purposes of determining the maximum sentence that may be imposed on a youthful offender?
2. Whether failure to remain confined to an approved residence, without commission of a separate criminal offense, is a substantive violation or a technical/nonsubstantive violation under section 958.14.

HOLDINGS

1. A substantive violation under section 958.14 refers exclusively to a violation premised on the commission of a separate criminal act. A mere breach of a condition of probation or community control is technical or nonsubstantive unless it involves a separate criminal offense.
2. Meeks's failures to remain confined to his approved residence were technical or nonsubstantive violations, not substantive violations, because the record did not establish that they involved separate criminal offenses.

KEY QUOTATIONS

"Accordingly, we conclude that a "substantive violation," as the phrase is used in section 958.14, refers exclusively to a violation premised on the commission of a separate criminal act." (989)

"A separate act that constitutes a violation becomes a substantive one when it involves the commission of a separate criminal offense." (988)

"However, because a violation must always be willful and substantial to produce a revocation, the Legislature must have meant and intended something other than "substantial" by its use of the word "substantive."" (987)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

In 1992, Timothy Meeks pleaded nolo contendere to attempted armed robbery with a firearm in exchange for a youthful-offender sentence of four years in prison and two years of probation. After serving the prison term, he was placed on probation and later admitted a probation violation, resulting in two years of community control. A subsequent violation report alleged that he failed on four occasions to remain confined to his approved residence, and the trial court revoked community control and imposed a ten-year prison sentence.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Meeks pleaded nolo contendere to attempted armed robbery with a firearm and received a youthful-offender sentence consisting of four years in prison followed by two years of probation. After probation and community-control violations based on failures to remain confined to his residence, the trial court revoked community control and resentenced him to ten years in prison. The First District held that the violations were technical rather than substantive, remanded for resentencing, and certified a question of great public importance. The Supreme Court approved the district court's interpretation.

DISPOSITION

approved

REMAND INSTRUCTIONS

The Supreme Court approved the First District Court of Appeal's decision to the extent it held that only the commission of a separate criminal offense constitutes a substantive violation under section 958.14. The district court's remand for resentencing therefore remained operative.

CASES CITED

- Meeks v. State, 754 So. 2d 101 (Fla. 1st DCA 2000)
- Wilkey v. State, 712 So. 2d 847 (Fla. 4th DCA 1998)
- Quiles v. State, 777 So. 2d 992 (Fla. 2d DCA 2000)
- Escutary v. State, 753 So. 2d 650 (Fla. 3d DCA 2000)
- Johnson v. State, 736 So. 2d 708 (Fla. 2d DCA 1999)
- Robinson v. State, 702 So. 2d 1346 (Fla. 5th DCA 1997)
- Hill v. State, 692 So. 2d 277 (Fla. 5th DCA 1997)
- Johnson v. State, 678 So. 2d 934 (Fla. 3d DCA 1996)
- Dunbar v. State, 664 So. 2d 1093 (Fla. 2d DCA 1995)
- Reeves v. State, 605 So. 2d 562 (Fla. 2d DCA 1992)
- Dunsford v. State, 757 So. 2d 580, 580 (Fla. 1st DCA 2000)
- Dixon v. State, 546 So. 2d 1194, 1195 (Fla. 3d DCA 1989)
- Floyd v. Parole & Probation Commission, 509 So. 2d 919, 922 n.1 (Fla. 1987)
- Berry v. State, 484 So. 2d 86, 87 (Fla. 2d DCA 1986)
- Swilley v. State, 781 So. 2d 458, 460 (Fla. 2d DCA 2001)
- Allen v. State, 666 So. 2d 259, 260 (Fla. 4th DCA 1996)
- Lopez v. State, 722 So. 2d 936, 937 (Fla. 4th DCA 1998)
- Davis v. State, 704 So. 2d 681, 683 (Fla. 1st DCA 1997)
- Thomas v. State, 760 So. 2d 1138 (Fla. 5th DCA 2000)
- McCray v. State, 754 So. 2d 776 (Fla. 3d DCA 2000)
- Inman v. State, 684 So. 2d 899 (Fla. 2d DCA 1996)
- Green v. State, 620 So. 2d 1126 (Fla. 1st DCA 1993)
- Jones v. State, 678 So. 2d 890, 893 (Fla. 4th DCA 1996)
- State v. Lamar, 659 So. 2d 262 (Fla. 1995)
- Brooks v. State, 478 So. 2d 1052 (Fla. 1985)
- State v. Watts, 558 So. 2d 994 (Fla. 1990)