

SUPREME COURT OF FLORIDA

State v. Harris; State v. Gentes

881 So. 2d 1079 (Fla. 2004) · No. Nos. SC02-2172, SC02-2440 · Decided May 13, 2004

SUMMARY

The Florida Supreme Court reviewed consolidated cases involving whether the State breached plea agreements by initiating civil commitment proceedings under Florida’s Jimmy Ryce Act after defendants completed or neared completion of their prison terms. The court held that such civil commitment proceedings did not violate the plea agreements and that equitable estoppel did not bar the State from seeking commitment. The court quashed the First District’s decisions and remanded the cases.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	Supreme Court of Florida
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Cantero, J.; Anstead, C.J.; Wells, J.; Pariente, J.; Lewis, J.; Bell, J.; Quince, J.
JURISDICTION	Florida
DECIDED	May 13, 2004
DOCKET	Nos. SC02-2172, SC02-2440
DISPOSITION	quashed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	The State sought review of consolidated First District Court of Appeal decisions holding that initiating civil commitment proceedings under the Jimmy Ryce Act breached plea agreements providing for imprisonment followed by probation. The First District certified questions of great public importance.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Published Florida Supreme Court opinion; binding precedent in Florida.
PARTIES	State of Florida v. Morris Harris, Donald Gentes

TOPICS

- plea bargaining
- criminal procedure
- appellate procedure
- ex post facto
- due process

PRACTICE AREAS

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the State breaches a plea agreement providing for imprisonment followed by probation by later initiating discretionary civil commitment proceedings under the Jimmy Ryce Act when the agreement does not mention civil commitment.
2. Whether equitable estoppel bars the State from initiating discretionary civil commitment proceedings under the Jimmy Ryce Act in these circumstances.

HOLDINGS

1. The State does not violate a plea agreement providing for prison followed by probation by later initiating discretionary civil commitment proceedings under the Jimmy Ryce Act when the plea agreement did not mention such proceedings.
2. Equitable estoppel does not bar the State from initiating discretionary Jimmy Ryce Act civil commitment proceedings under these circumstances.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“any bargain that a defendant may strike in a plea agreement in a criminal case would have no bearing on a subsequent involuntary civil commitment for control, care, and treatment.” (881 So. 2d at 1083)

“The plea agreements are still completely in effect, notwithstanding the civil commitment.” (881 So. 2d at 1084)

“We apply Murray v. Regier and hold that the State does not violate a plea agreement for prison time followed by probation when it later initiates discretionary civil commitment proceedings under the Jimmy Ryce Act.” (881 So. 2d at 1085)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Harris and Gentes entered pleas to sexually violent offenses in 1995 and 1993, respectively, before the Jimmy Ryce Act became law. Their plea agreements provided for terms of imprisonment followed by probation but did not mention possible involuntary civil commitment. Before either defendant's release from prison, the State initiated civil commitment proceedings under the Act, and both defendants argued that those proceedings breached their plea agreements.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Harris and Gentes entered plea agreements before enactment of the Jimmy Ryce Act, each receiving prison terms followed by probation. Before their release from prison, the State initiated discretionary civil commitment proceedings under the Act. The trial courts denied motions to enforce the plea agreements, and the First District reversed and remanded. The Supreme Court of Florida accepted jurisdiction, quashed the First District's decisions, and remanded for proceedings consistent with its opinion.

DISPOSITION

quashed

REMAND INSTRUCTIONS

The cases were remanded to the First District Court of Appeal for proceedings consistent with the Supreme Court's opinion.

CASES CITED

- Harris v. State, 879 So. 2d 1223 (Fla. 1st DCA 2002)
- Murray v. Regier, 872 So. 2d 217 (Fla. 2002)
- Murray v. Kearney, 770 So. 2d 273 (Fla. 4th DCA 2000)
- Westerheide v. State, 831 So. 2d 93 (Fla. 2002)
- Kansas v. Hendricks, 521 U.S. 346, 363 (1997)
- State v. Riddle, 862 So. 2d 802 (Fla. 4th DCA 2003)
- State v. McFarland, 28 Fla. L. Weekly D2298, 2003 WL 22259634 (Fla. 1st DCA Oct. 3, 2003)
- State v. Klein, 851 So. 2d 274 (Fla. 5th DCA 2003)
- Marsh v. State, 849 So. 2d 1178, 1181 (Fla. 3d DCA 2003)
- Krischer v. Ford, 847 So. 2d 1050, 1051 (Fla. 4th DCA 2003)
- Sublett v. State, 842 So. 2d 314, 315 (Fla. 5th DCA 2003)
- Sandillo v. State, 842 So. 2d 1018, 1019 (Fla. 5th DCA 2003)
- Satz v. Runion, 838 So. 2d 689, 689-90 (Fla. 4th DCA 2003)
- Krischer v. Faris, 838 So. 2d 600, 602-03 (Fla. 4th DCA 2003)
- Garcia v. State, 847 So. 2d 980 (Fla. 4th DCA 2003)
- Collie v. State, 710 So. 2d 1000 (Fla. 2d DCA 1998)
- State Department of Revenue v. Anderson, 403 So. 2d 397, 400 (Fla. 1981)
- State v. Bellamy, 178 N.J. 127, 835 A.2d 1231, 1238 (2003)
- Harris v. State, 766 So. 2d 1239, 1241 (Fla. 1st DCA 2000)
- Gentes v. State, 828 So. 2d 1051 (Fla. 1st DCA 2002)

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