

CONNECTICUT APPELLATE COURT

State v. Valle

AC 46735 · No. AC 46735 · Decided December 23, 2025

SUMMARY

The Connecticut Appellate Court affirmed David Valle’s convictions for two counts of cruelty to animals, threatening in the second degree, and interfering with an officer. The court declined to review the defendant’s unpreserved claim that exhibits relating to dismissed charges were improperly submitted to the jury because he did not identify the exhibits or articulate a legal or factual basis for exclusion. The court also rejected his as-applied vagueness challenge to General Statutes § 53-247 (a), concluding that his alleged conduct fell within the statute’s unmistakable core.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	Connecticut Appellate Court
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Clark, J.; Alvord, J.; Wilson, J.
JURISDICTION	Connecticut Appellate Court
DECIDED	December 23, 2025
DOCKET	AC 46735
DISPOSITION	affirmed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	The defendant appealed from a judgment of conviction after a jury trial for two counts of cruelty to animals, threatening in the second degree, and interfering with an officer. The trial court had previously granted the defendant's motion for judgment of acquittal on three other animal-cruelty counts and the charges of reckless burning and tampering with physical evidence.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court reviewed the unpreserved evidentiary claim under Connecticut's preservation rules and declined review because the claim was not distinctly raised. It reviewed the as-applied vagueness challenge de novo as a question of law and considered it under the third prong of State v. Golding.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Published and precedential Connecticut Appellate Court opinion
PARTIES	David Valle v. State of Connecticut

TOPICS

criminal procedure

preservation of error

due process

void for vagueness

appellate procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

criminal law

criminal procedure

constitutional law

appellate practice

animal cruelty

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the trial court erred by submitting to the jury exhibits that related in part to charges on which the defendant had been acquitted.
2. Whether General Statutes § 53-247 (a) was unconstitutionally vague as applied to the defendant's conduct.

HOLDINGS

1. The court declined to review the defendant's claim because it was not adequately preserved. A general objection to submitting all full exhibits did not identify the specific exhibits to be excluded or state the factual or legal basis for exclusion.
2. Section 53-247 (a) was not unconstitutionally vague as applied to the defendant because confining dogs in a dirty, unsanitary outdoor cage and failing to provide sufficient food or water for weeks or months falls within the statute's unmistakable core of prohibited conduct.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“Because “any appeal will be limited to the ground asserted” at trial; (internal quotation marks omitted) State v. Miller, supra, 229 Conn. App. 449; it is axiomatic that a party cannot preserve a claim for appeal simply by asserting a general objection without identifying any legal ground therefor.” (at 12)

“A person of ordinary intelligence would know that confining dogs to a dirty, unsanitary, outdoor cage and failing to provide them with sufficient food or water for weeks or months at a time does not constitute proper care.” (at 19)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Firefighters responding to a report of smoke at the defendant's property found a burning shed and two dogs in visibly poor condition. One dog was confined in an outdoor kennel with unsanitary conditions, inadequate water, and no meaningful protection from the weather; both dogs were emaciated, dehydrated, and shivering. The defendant confronted the firefighters, threatened to shoot them, and attempted to pull away their hose. The defendant was convicted of cruelty to animals, threatening, and interfering with an officer.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

The defendant was tried in the Superior Court for the judicial district of Fairfield, geographical area number two. After the state rested, the trial court granted judgment of acquittal on three animal-cruelty counts and the reckless-burning and evidence-tampering charges. The jury convicted the defendant on the remaining charges, and the court imposed a total effective sentence of 1456 days of incarceration, execution suspended after fourteen months, followed by three years of probation. The Connecticut Appellate Court affirmed.

DISPOSITION

affirmed

CASES CITED

- State v. Golding, 213 Conn. 233, 239-40, 567 A.2d 823 (1989)
- In re Yasiel R., 317 Conn. 773, 781, 120 A.3d 1188 (2015)
- State v. Ramon A. G., 336 Conn. 386, 395, 246 A.3d 481 (2021)
- State v. Lueders, 225 Conn. App. 612, 639, 317 A.3d 69, cert. denied, 349 Conn. 920, 321 A.3d 402 (2024)
- State v. Miller, 229 Conn. App. 435, 449, 327 A.3d 448, cert. denied, 351 Conn. 909, 330 A.3d 880 (2025)
- State v. Harris, 147 Conn. 589, 598, 164 A.2d 399 (1960)
- State v. Anonymous (83-FG), 190 Conn. 715, 726-27, 463 A.2d 533 (1983)
- State v. Cain, 25 Conn. App. 503, 525-26, 596 A.2d 449 (1991), aff'd, 223 Conn. 731, 613 A.2d 804 (1992)
- Guddo v. Guddo, 185 Conn. App. 283, 287, 196 A.3d 1246 (2018)
- Connecticut Bank & Trust Co. v. Munsill-Borden Mansion, LLC, 147 Conn. App. 30, 38, 81 A.3d 266 (2013)
- State v. Roberts, 224 Conn. App. 471, 490, 312 A.3d 1086, cert. denied, 349 Conn. 912, 314 A.3d 602 (2024)
- State v. Hearl, 182 Conn. App. 237, 265-66, 190 A.3d 42, cert. denied, 330 Conn. 903, 192 A.3d 425 (2018)
- State v. Josephs, 328 Conn. 21, 30, 176 A.3d 542 (2018)
- Middletown v. Wagner, 228 Conn. App. 265, 281-82, 325 A.3d 253 (2024)
- State v. Acker, 160 Conn. App. 734, 746-47, 125 A.3d 1057 (2015), cert. denied, 320 Conn. 915, 131 A.3d 750 (2016)
- State ex rel. Gregan v. Koczur, 287 Conn. 145, 157, 947 A.2d 282 (2008)