

OHIO COURT OF APPEALS, ELEVENTH APPELLATE DISTRICT,
ASHTABULA COUNTY

State v. White

2026-Ohio-1692 · No. 2025-A-0019, 2025-A-0020 · Decided May 11, 2026

SUMMARY

The Ohio Eleventh District Court of Appeals affirmed Laura Regina White’s convictions for murder with a firearm specification, tampering with evidence, gross abuse of a corpse, and felonious assault. The court held that challenged evidence, including testimony concerning statements, a noose, and a journal, was properly admitted or subject to invited error, and that the journal was sufficiently authenticated.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	Ohio Court of Appeals, Eleventh Appellate District, Ashtabula County
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Robert J. Patton; John J. Eklund; Eugene A. Lucci
JURISDICTION	Ohio Court of Appeals, Eleventh Appellate District, Ashtabula County
DECIDED	May 11, 2026
DOCKET	2025-A-0019, 2025-A-0020
DISPOSITION	affirmed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	White appealed judgments of the Ashtabula County Court of Common Pleas convicting her of murder with a firearm specification, tampering with evidence, gross abuse of a corpse, and felonious assault. She challenged the admission of alleged other-acts evidence and the authentication of a journal.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Evidentiary rulings and motions for mistrial are reviewed for abuse of discretion. Unpreserved evidentiary claims are reviewed for plain error, and alleged evidentiary error is subject to harmless-error analysis.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Published Ohio Court of Appeals opinion
PARTIES	Laura Regina White v. State of Ohio

TOPICS

- evidence
- relevance
- authentication
- appellate procedure
- standard of review

PRACTICE AREAS

criminal law

evidence

criminal procedure

appellate procedure

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether testimony concerning an arrest warrant and White's jailhouse statement constituted inadmissible other-acts evidence.
2. Whether testimony concerning White's methamphetamine use, a prior accidental shooting involving C.F., and the sexual relationship between White and C.F. was admissible under Evid.R. 404(B), R.C. 2945.59, and Evid.R. 403.
3. Whether admission of photographs and testimony concerning a noose constituted reversible evidentiary error or invited error.
4. Whether the journal entries constituted inadmissible other-acts evidence.
5. Whether the State sufficiently authenticated the journal under Evid.R. 901.

HOLDINGS

1. The trial court did not abuse its discretion in denying a mistrial or admitting the testimony because the arrest-warrant testimony did not identify White or describe any surrounding misconduct, and the jailhouse statement did not indicate that White was incarcerated for an unrelated crime, wrong, or act.
2. The trial court did not abuse its discretion in admitting limited testimony that White used methamphetamine daily because the evidence was relevant to a non-propensity issue, including identity or opportunity, and its probative value was not substantially outweighed by unfair prejudice. Any error alternatively was harmless.
3. The trial court did not abuse its discretion in admitting limited testimony concerning a prior accidental shooting because it was relevant to show that White and C.F. had access to the suspected firearm and that the firearm was operable, and the evidence was not unduly prejudicial.
4. White could not obtain reversal based on the noose evidence because the challenged testimony concerning suicidal ideation was elicited by defense counsel and any error was invited.
5. The trial court did not abuse its discretion or commit plain error in admitting testimony about White's prior sexual relationship with C.F. because the relationship was offered as evidence of motive and was not overly prejudicial.
6. The journal entries did not constitute other-acts evidence under Evid.R. 404(B) because the entries expressed thoughts and emotions concerning White's tumultuous relationship with C.F., rather than conduct constituting another crime, wrong, or act. The entries were admissible to provide context and establish motive, and their probative value was not substantially outweighed by unfair prejudice.
7. The journal was properly authenticated under Evid.R. 901 because its contents and distinctive characteristics supported a finding that it was White's journal.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“In general, the determination to admit or exclude evidence lies within the discretion of the trial court and will not be reversed absent an abuse of discretion.” (¶ 65)

“Similarly, the act of writing in a journal is not an “other act” that triggers Evid.R. 404. Instead, it would be the contents of the entry that are important.” (¶ 112)

“The requirement of authentication or identification as a condition precedent to admissibility is satisfied by evidence sufficient to support a finding that the matter in question is what its proponent claims.” (¶ 117)

“For the reasons set forth above, the judgments of the Ashtabula County Court of Common Pleas are affirmed.” (¶ 123)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

White lived with the victim, C.F., at a residence in Ashtabula County. After C.F. disappeared, officers investigated the residence and ultimately discovered his decomposed body concealed in a crawl space; an autopsy identified multiple fatal gunshot and shotgun wounds. The State introduced testimony concerning White's statements, a prior shooting involving C.F., White's relationship with C.F., a noose, and a journal recovered from the residence. The jury convicted White of murder and related offenses.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

White was indicted in two cases, found competent and sane after competency and sanity proceedings, and tried in the murder case. The jury acquitted her of aggravated murder but convicted her of murder, tampering with evidence, gross abuse of a corpse, and related firearm specifications. In the separate case, she entered an Alford plea to felonious assault and the kidnapping count was dismissed. The trial court imposed an aggregate sentence of 22 years to life in the murder case and a concurrent four-to-six-year sentence in the assault case. The appellate court consolidated the appeals and affirmed.

DISPOSITION

affirmed

CASES CITED

- State v. Miller, 2015-Ohio-956, ¶¶ 14, 21
- State v. Diar, 2008-Ohio-6266, ¶ 66
- State v. Morris, 2012-Ohio-2407, ¶ 14
- State v. O'Neil, 2024-Ohio-512, ¶ 48 (11th Dist.)
- State v. Beechler, 2010-Ohio-1900, ¶ 62 (2d Dist.)
- State v. Gonzalez, 2008-Ohio-2749, ¶ 48 (7th Dist.)
- State v. Shine-Johnson, 2018-Ohio-3347, ¶ 98 (10th Dist.)
- State v. Alexander, 2007-Ohio-4177, ¶ 36 (10th Dist.)
- State v. Williams, 2012-Ohio-5695, ¶¶ 19-20
- State v. Isom, 2025-Ohio-604, ¶ 33 (11th Dist.)

- State v. Hartman, 2020-Ohio-4440, ¶¶ 23, 29
- State v. Echols, 2024-Ohio-5088
- State v. Zachery, 2021-Ohio-2176, ¶ 35 (11th Dist.)
- State v. Morris, 2014-Ohio-5052, syllabus, ¶ 25
- State v. Barker, 2014-Ohio-4131, ¶ 94 (11th Dist.)
- State v. Williams, 6 Ohio St.3d 281, 290 (1983)
- State v. Jackson, 2023-Ohio-2193, ¶ 72 (3d Dist.)
- State v. Rodgers, 2023-Ohio-734, ¶ 77 (2d Dist.)
- State v. Breneman, 2020-Ohio-4151, ¶ 48 (2d Dist.)
- State v. Gaines, 2003-Ohio-6855, ¶¶ 17-18, 23 (8th Dist.)
- United States v. Ojomo, 332 F.3d 485, 489 (7th Cir. 2003)
- United States v. Ramirez, 45 F.3d 1096, 1102 (7th Cir. 1995)
- State v. Easter, 75 Ohio App.3d 22, 25 (4th Dist. 1991)
- State v. Jaskiewicz, 2013-Ohio-4552, ¶ 12 (11th Dist.)
- State v. Lautanen, 2023-Ohio-1945, ¶ 59 (11th Dist.)
- North Carolina v. Alford, 400 U.S. 25 (1970)