

TEXAS COURT OF APPEALS FOR THE FIRST DISTRICT

In the Matter of D. L. A. v. the State of Texas

Nos. 01-24-00246-CV & 01-24-00247-CV · No. Nos. 01-24-00246-CV & 01-24-00247-CV · Decided February 26, 2026

SUMMARY

The First Court of Appeals of Texas affirmed juvenile adjudications finding that D.L.A. engaged in delinquent conduct by committing two robberies. The court held that the complainants’ in-court identifications were legally sufficient to support the adjudications and that a challenge to the denial of a directed verdict was not the proper vehicle for contesting the admission of evidence.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	Texas Court of Appeals for the First District
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Susanna Dokupil; Justice Guerra; Justice Caughey; Justice Dokupil
JURISDICTION	Texas Court of Appeals, First District
DECIDED	February 26, 2026
DOCKET	Nos. 01-24-00246-CV & 01-24-00247-CV
DISPOSITION	affirmed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Juvenile appeals from orders of the 314th District Court of Harris County adjudicating him as having engaged in delinquent conduct by committing two robberies and committing him to the Texas Juvenile Justice Department. He challenged the denial of his motion for directed verdict on legal-sufficiency grounds.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court reviews the legal sufficiency of evidence supporting a juvenile delinquency adjudication under the criminal-case standard: viewing all evidence in the light most favorable to the verdict, whether a rational factfinder could have found the essential elements beyond a reasonable doubt. A challenge to denial of a directed verdict is treated as a legal-sufficiency challenge. The court defers to the factfinder’s determinations regarding witness credibility, evidentiary weight, and conflicting inferences.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Published opinion; precedential under applicable Texas appellate rules.
PARTIES	D.L.A. v. The State of Texas

TOPICS

family law procedure

appellate procedure

standard of review

evidence

burden of proof

PRACTICE AREAS

juvenile law

criminal law

appellate practice

evidence

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the evidence was legally sufficient to establish beyond a reasonable doubt that D.L.A. committed the robberies of Castillo and Melrose.
2. Whether the trial court erred by denying D.L.A.'s motion for directed verdict based on alleged inconsistencies in the eyewitness testimony and the admission of exhibits concerning extraneous offenses.

HOLDINGS

1. The complainants' in-court identifications, standing alone, constituted legally sufficient evidence from which a rational factfinder could find beyond a reasonable doubt that D.L.A. committed the robberies.
2. A challenge to the denial of a motion for directed verdict is not the proper vehicle for challenging the admissibility of evidence, and legal-sufficiency review considers all evidence admitted at trial, including evidence alleged to have been improperly admitted.

KEY QUOTATIONS

"We affirm the trial court's judgment because the complainants' testimony alone was sufficient to show that D.L.A. committed robbery." (p. 1)

"We hold therefore that the trial court did not err by denying the motion for directed verdict." (p. 14)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

On August 15, 2022, two young men approached Gloria Castillo's vehicle, pointed a gun at her, and demanded that she open the door. They then approached Sam Melrose, demanded his keys, threatened to shoot him, and one struck him with the gun. After D.L.A. was arrested in connection with a stolen vehicle found with a yellow hoodie, backpack, and pellet gun, Castillo and Melrose identified him from a photographic array and in court. The trial court credited their identifications and adjudicated D.L.A. delinquent.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

The State filed two juvenile petitions alleging that D.L.A. committed robbery against Gloria Castillo and Sam Melrose. After an adjudication hearing, the trial court denied D.L.A.'s motion for directed verdict, found that he had engaged in delinquent conduct, and entered a disposition committing him to the Texas Juvenile Justice Department. D.L.A. appealed from the adjudication and disposition orders, and the court of appeals affirmed.

DISPOSITION

affirmed

CASES CITED

- In re Hall, 286 S.W.3d 925, 927 (Tex. 2009)
- In re M.A.F., 966 S.W.2d 448, 450 (Tex. 1998)
- In re L.D.C., 400 S.W.3d 572, 574 (Tex. 2013)
- In re I.F.M., 525 S.W.3d 884, 886 (Tex. App.—Houston [14th Dist.] 2017, no pet.)
- In re B.D.S.D., 289 S.W.3d 889, 893 (Tex. App.—Houston [14th Dist.] 2009, pet. denied)
- Moon v. State, 451 S.W.3d 28, 45 (Tex. Crim. App. 2014)
- In re R.R., 373 S.W.3d 730, 734-35 (Tex. App.—Houston [14th Dist.] 2012, pet. denied)
- Williams v. State, 937 S.W.2d 479, 482 (Tex. Crim. App. 1996)
- Wharton v. State, 711 S.W.3d 92, 101 (Tex. App.—Houston [1st Dist.] 2024, pet. ref'd), cert. denied, No. 25-5977, 2025 WL 3507076 (U.S. Dec. 8, 2025)
- Jackson v. Virginia, 443 U.S. 307, 319, 326 (1979)
- Adames v. State, 353 S.W.3d 854, 859-60 (Tex. Crim. App. 2011)
- Brooks v. State, 323 S.W.3d 893, 899-902 (Tex. Crim. App. 2010)
- In re J.H., 698 S.W.3d 101, 106 (Tex. App.—Houston [14th Dist.] 2024, no pet.)
- In re J.P., 136 S.W.3d 629, 630-31 (Tex. 2004)
- In re K.H., 682 S.W.3d 567, 575 (Tex. App.—Houston [1st Dist.] 2023, pet. denied)
- Bartlett v. State, 270 S.W.3d 147, 150 (Tex. Crim. App. 2008)
- Wiley v. State, 388 S.W.3d 807, 813 (Tex. App.—Houston [1st Dist.] 2012, pet. ref'd)
- Clayton v. State, 235 S.W.3d 772, 778 (Tex. Crim. App. 2007)
- Romano v. State, 610 S.W.3d 30, 34 (Tex. Crim. App. 2020)
- Aguilar v. State, 468 S.W.2d 75, 77 (Tex. Crim. App. 1971)
- Floyd v. State, No. 02-22-00082-CR, 2023 WL 2033831, at *3 (Tex. App.—Fort Worth Feb. 16, 2023) (mem. op., not designated for publication), aff'd, 714 S.W.3d 9 (Tex. Crim. App. 2024)
- Bowden v. State, 628 S.W.2d 782, 784 (Tex. Crim. App. 1982)
- Jackson v. State, 314 S.W.3d 118, 135 (Tex. App.—Houston [1st Dist.] 2010, no pet.)
- Carroll v. State, No. 14-14-00178-CR, 2015 WL 4984961, at *2, *4 (Tex. App.—Houston [14th Dist.] Aug. 20, 2015, no pet.) (mem. op., not designated for publication)
- Parker v. State, 727 S.W.3d 38, 51 (Tex. Crim. App. 2025)
- Ragsdale v. State, 713 S.W.3d 435, 453-54 (Tex. App.—Houston [1st Dist.] 2025, no pet.)