

LOUISIANA COURT OF APPEAL, SECOND CIRCUIT

State of Louisiana v. Jarvis Dewayne Taylor

No. 56,618-KA · No. 56,618-KA · Decided December 23, 2025

SUMMARY

The Louisiana Second Circuit Court of Appeal reviewed Jarvis DeWayne Taylor’s conviction for second degree murder and mandatory life sentence. Taylor argued that the evidence was insufficient because the killing was committed in sudden passion or heat of blood, warranting a manslaughter verdict. The court held that the evidence supported the jury’s rejection of the mitigating factors and affirmed the conviction and sentence.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	Louisiana Court of Appeal, Second Circuit
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Stephens, J.; Stone, J.; Robinson, J.
JURISDICTION	Louisiana Court of Appeal, Second Circuit
DECIDED	December 23, 2025
DOCKET	56,618-KA
DISPOSITION	affirmed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Taylor appealed his unanimous jury conviction for second degree murder and mandatory life sentence, arguing that the evidence was insufficient because the State failed to disprove sudden passion or heat of blood sufficient to reduce the offense to manslaughter.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	For a sufficiency-of-the-evidence claim, the appellate court views the evidence in the light most favorable to the prosecution and asks whether any rational trier of fact could have found the essential elements of the crime beyond a reasonable doubt. The court may not substitute its appreciation of the evidence for that of the fact finder, reassess witness credibility, or reweigh the evidence. For the claimed reduction from murder to manslaughter, the question is whether a rational trier of fact could have found that the mitigatory factors were not established by a preponderance of the evidence.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Published Louisiana Court of Appeal opinion
PARTIES	Jarvis Dewayne Taylor v. State of Louisiana

TOPICS

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PRACTICE AREAS

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QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the evidence was sufficient to support Taylor's second degree murder conviction under the Jackson v. Virginia standard.
2. Whether the jury could rationally find that Taylor failed to prove by a preponderance of the evidence that the killing occurred in sudden passion or heat of blood immediately caused by legally sufficient provocation, such that the offense should be reduced to manslaughter.

HOLDINGS

1. The evidence was sufficient for a rational jury to find Taylor guilty of second degree murder, including the requisite specific intent to kill or inflict great bodily harm.
2. The jury could rationally find that Taylor failed to establish by a preponderance of the evidence the mitigatory factors of sudden passion or heat of blood and legally sufficient provocation; therefore, reduction of the murder conviction to manslaughter was not warranted.

KEY QUOTATIONS

"The standard of appellate review for a sufficiency of the evidence claim is whether, after viewing the evidence in the light most favorable to the prosecution, any rational trier of fact could have found the essential elements of the crime beyond a reasonable doubt." (p. 10)

"The evidence in this case was sufficient to support the jury's verdict of second degree murder." (p. 13)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Taylor entered his former girlfriend Ebony Lewis's apartment through a window after observing her from outside. He was armed with an eight-inch butcher knife and obtained a second knife from the apartment before stabbing Lewis multiple times in the face and neck, causing fatal sharp-force injuries. Taylor acknowledged the killing but offered changing explanations for having snapped, including seeing Lewis engaged in phone sex and learning that she had had multiple sexual partners. He did not call 911 or successfully render aid, instead leaving the apartment and going to a bridge, where he told officers that he had killed Lewis.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Taylor was indicted in the Fourth Judicial District Court for Ouachita Parish for the second degree murder of Ebony Lewis. A jury unanimously found him guilty, and the trial court sentenced him on April 14, 2025, to mandatory life imprisonment at hard labor without benefit of probation, parole, or suspension of sentence. The Louisiana Court of Appeal, Second Circuit, affirmed the conviction and sentence.

DISPOSITION

affirmed

CASES CITED

- Jackson v. Virginia, 443 U.S. 307, 99 S. Ct. 2781, 61 L. Ed. 2d 560 (1979)
- State v. Tate, 01-1658 (La. 5/20/03), 851 So. 2d 921, cert. denied, 541 U.S. 905 (2004)
- State v. Pigford, 05-0477 (La. 2/22/06), 922 So. 2d 517
- State v. Dotie, 43,819 (La. App. 2 Cir. 1/14/09), 1 So. 3d 833, writ denied, 09-0310 (La. 11/6/09), 21 So. 3d 297
- State v. Smith, 94-3116 (La. 10/16/95), 661 So. 2d 442
- State v. Morehead, 55,825 (La. App. 2 Cir. 10/23/24), 400 So. 3d 302, writ denied, 24-01434 (La. 2/19/25), 400 So. 3d 932
- State v. Jackson, 53,497 (La. App. 2 Cir. 5/20/20), 296 So. 3d 1156
- State v. Walker, 53,975 (La. App. 2 Cir. 6/30/21), 321 So. 3d 1154, writ denied, 21-01334 (La. 11/23/21), 328 So. 3d 83
- State v. Fields, 42,761 (La. App. 2 Cir. 1/9/08), 973 So. 2d 973, writ denied, 08-0469 (La. 9/26/08), 992 So. 2d 983
- State v. Reed, 14-1980 (La. 9/7/16), 200 So. 3d 291, cert. denied, 580 U.S. 1166 (2017)
- State v. Lombard, 486 So. 2d 106 (La. 1986)
- State v. Tompkins, 403 So. 2d 644 (La. 1981)
- State v. Ary, 56,273 (La. App. 2 Cir. 5/21/25), 411 So. 3d 972
- State v. Kennell, 54,577 (La. App. 2 Cir. 6/29/22), 342 So. 3d 437
- State v. Efferson, 52,306 (La. App. 2 Cir. 11/14/18), 259 So. 3d 1153, writ denied, 18-2052 (La. 4/15/19), 267 So. 3d 1131
- State v. Leger, 05-0011 (La. 7/10/06), 936 So. 2d 108, cert. denied, 549 U.S. 1221 (2007)
- State v. Burse, 19-381 (La. App. 5 Cir. 2/12/20), 289 So. 3d 690, writ denied, 20-00650 (La. 11/24/20), 305 So. 3d 104