

SUPREME COURT OF GEORGIA

Montgomery v. The State

S25A1395 · No. S25A1395 · Decided December 9, 2025

SUMMARY

The Supreme Court of Georgia affirmed Christie Montgomery’s convictions for malice murder and related offenses arising from the shooting death of Justice Jackson. The court held that the circumstantial-evidence standard under OCGA § 24-14-6 did not apply because the State presented direct eyewitness testimony, and it deemed Montgomery’s juror-misconduct claim abandoned under Supreme Court Rule 22.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	Supreme Court of Georgia
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Justice Pinson
JURISDICTION	Supreme Court of Georgia
DECIDED	December 9, 2025
DOCKET	S25A1395
DISPOSITION	affirmed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Montgomery appealed her convictions for malice murder and related offenses, challenging the sufficiency of the evidence under OCGA § 24-14-6 and the denial of a mistrial based on alleged juror misconduct. The Court of Appeals transferred the appeal to the Supreme Court of Georgia.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court viewed the evidence in the light most favorable to the verdict when addressing the circumstantial-evidence claim. The court reviewed the unpreserved or unsupported appellate claim under Supreme Court Rule 22, which deems an appellate claim abandoned when the appellant presents neither argument nor supporting authority.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	published
PARTIES	Christie Montgomery v. The State

TOPICS

- criminal procedure
- evidence
- appellate procedure
- preservation of error

PRACTICE AREAS

criminal law

criminal procedure

appellate practice

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether OCGA § 24-14-6 required the State to exclude every other reasonable hypothesis because much of the evidence against Montgomery was circumstantial.
2. Whether the trial court erred by denying Montgomery's motion for a mistrial based on a juror's research concerning guns and bullet calibers.

HOLDINGS

1. OCGA § 24-14-6 does not apply when the State presents any direct evidence of the defendant's guilt. Because eyewitness O'Cain directly testified that Montgomery raised a gun and shot Jackson, Montgomery's claim under the statute failed.
2. Montgomery abandoned her claim that the trial court erred by denying a mistrial because she presented neither argument nor supporting authority for the claim on appeal.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“Because the State presented direct evidence of Montgomery’s guilt, OCGA § 24-14-6 does not apply, and so Montgomery’s claim fails.” (7)

“The claim is therefore deemed abandoned.” (8)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Montgomery shared a DeKalb County apartment with Chelsea Hughes and Jackson. After Montgomery returned home with several people and accused someone of stealing marijuana, Hughes saw Montgomery holding a gun, and eyewitness Josh O’Cain testified that he saw Montgomery raise a gun and shoot Jackson. Jackson died from the shooting; police recovered a Taurus nine-millimeter pistol and cartridge casings, while firearms-expert testimony indicated that the fatal bullet was consistent with several possible firearms, including a Ruger that Montgomery testified she owned.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

A DeKalb County grand jury indicted Montgomery for malice murder, felony murder, aggravated assault, and possession of a firearm during the commission of a felony. After a March 2022 jury trial, she was convicted on all counts and sentenced to life imprisonment plus five consecutive years; the felony-murder count was vacated as a matter of law and aggravated assault merged with malice murder. The trial court denied her motion for new trial and amended motion, and she timely appealed. The Court of Appeals transferred the case to the Supreme Court of Georgia, which decided the appeal on the briefs and affirmed.

DISPOSITION

affirmed

CASES CITED

- Brown v. State, 288 Ga. 902, 904 (2011)
- Jackson v. State, 311 Ga. 626, 630 (2021)
- Douglas v. State, 321 Ga. 739, 747 (2025)
- Jackson v. Virginia, 443 U.S. 307 (1979)
- French v. State, 321 Ga. 665, 670 (2025)

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