

COURT OF APPEALS FOR THE TENTH APPELLATE DISTRICT OF TEXAS

Sampson Walter Graves v. the State of Texas

Graves v. State · No. 10-25-00271-CR · Decided June 18, 2026

SUMMARY

The Tenth Court of Appeals of Texas reviewed Sampson Walter Graves's convictions for two counts of aggravated assault with a deadly weapon. The court held that the evidence was sufficient to support the conviction involving James Williamson, including based on circumstantial evidence of Graves's vehicle conduct. The court modified the judgments to reflect Graves's not-guilty pleas and affirmed them as modified.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	Court of Appeals for the Tenth Appellate District of Texas
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Lee Harris; Chief Justice Johnson; Justice Smith; Justice Harris
JURISDICTION	Court of Appeals for the Tenth Appellate District of Texas
DECIDED	June 18, 2026
DOCKET	10-25-00271-CR
DISPOSITION	affirmed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Appeal from jury convictions for two counts of aggravated assault with a deadly weapon and two life sentences; appellant challenged the sufficiency of the evidence supporting the conviction involving James Williamson, and the State sought correction of the plea entries in the judgments.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court reviewed the sufficiency of the evidence by viewing all evidence in the light most favorable to the verdict and asking whether any rational trier of fact could have found the essential elements beyond a reasonable doubt. The court deferred to the jury's resolution of conflicts, credibility determinations, weighing of evidence, and reasonable inferences, and considered the cumulative force of the evidence rather than using a divide-and-conquer approach.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	nonprecedential
PARTIES	Sampson Walter Graves v. The State of Texas

TOPICS

evidence

standard of review

appellate procedure

criminal procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

Texas criminal law

criminal appellate practice

aggravated assault

evidence sufficiency

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the evidence was legally sufficient to support Graves's conviction for aggravated assault with a deadly weapon against James Williamson, including whether his operation of the truck objectively constituted a threat of imminent bodily injury.
2. Whether the trial court's judgments should be reformed to reflect Graves's not-guilty pleas rather than guilty pleas.

HOLDINGS

1. The evidence was sufficient for a rational jury to find beyond a reasonable doubt that Graves's driving objectively constituted a threat of imminent bodily injury to Williamson.
2. The appellate court had authority to reform the judgments to reflect Graves's actual not-guilty pleas and to affirm the judgments as modified.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“When addressing a challenge to the sufficiency of the evidence, we consider whether, after viewing all of the evidence in the light most favorable to the verdict, any rational trier of fact could have found the essential elements of the crime beyond a reasonable doubt.” (at 2)

“After viewing the evidence in the light most favorable to the verdict and based on the cumulative force of all of the evidence, we conclude that any reasonable trier of fact could have found that Graves’s driving objectively constituted a threat of imminent injury.” (at 5)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Graves struck Sheila Richardson in the face with a full beer can while she was seated in a vehicle. When James Williamson intervened, Graves threatened to kill both Williamson and Richardson, attempted to hit and grab Williamson, rammed his truck into Richardson's parked vehicle, and drove toward the two as they fled toward a pool area. Witnesses testified that the truck came within a few feet or inches of the complainants and that Graves angrily revved the truck before leaving.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Following a jury trial in the 19th District Court of McLennan County, Graves was convicted of two counts of aggravated assault with a deadly weapon and sentenced to life imprisonment on each count. On appeal, he challenged only the sufficiency of the evidence supporting the count involving Williamson. The State asserted that the judgments incorrectly reflected guilty pleas; the court agreed, reformed the judgments to reflect not-guilty pleas, and affirmed as modified.

DISPOSITION

affirmed

CASES CITED

- Jackson v. Virginia, 443 U.S. 307, 319, 99 S. Ct. 2781, 61 L. Ed. 2d 560 (1979)
- Villa v. State, 514 S.W.3d 227, 232 (Tex. Crim. App. 2017)
- Williams v. State, 235 S.W.3d 742, 750 (Tex. Crim. App. 2007)
- Cary v. State, 507 S.W.3d 750, 757 (Tex. Crim. App. 2016)
- Hooper v. State, 214 S.W.3d 9, 16-17 (Tex. Crim. App. 2007)
- Merritt v. State, 368 S.W.3d 516, 525 (Tex. Crim. App. 2012)
- Brooks v. State, 323 S.W.3d 893, 899 (Tex. Crim. App. 2010)
- Ramsey v. State, 473 S.W.3d 805, 809 (Tex. Crim. App. 2015)
- Malik v. State, 953 S.W.2d 234, 240 (Tex. Crim. App. 1997)
- Daugherty v. State, 387 S.W.3d 654, 665 (Tex. Crim. App. 2013)
- Zuniga v. State, 551 S.W.3d 729, 732-33 (Tex. Crim. App. 2018)
- Gardner v. State, S.W.3d 274, 285 (Tex. Crim. App. 2009)
- Mosley v. State, 983 S.W.2d 249, 254 (Tex. Crim. App. 1998)
- Ferguson v. State, 435 S.W.3d 291, 293 (Tex. App.—Waco 2014, pet. struck)
- Cummins v. State, 646 S.W.3d 605 (Tex. App.—Waco 2022, pet. ref'd)

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