

COURT OF APPEALS OF OHIO, SECOND APPELLATE DISTRICT, GREENE COUNTY

State v. Bryant

2026-Ohio-2199 · No. 2025-CA-60 · Decided June 12, 2026

SUMMARY

The Ohio Second District Court of Appeals affirmed Breyon X. Bryant’s convictions for kidnapping, felonious assault, and rape following Alford guilty pleas in two related criminal cases. The court held that the pleas were knowing, intelligent, and voluntary, that the trial court adequately established the required factual basis, and that Bryant failed to demonstrate ineffective assistance of counsel.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	Court of Appeals of Ohio, Second Appellate District, Greene County
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Michael L. Tucker; Mary E. Epley; R. Patrick Huffman
JURISDICTION	Ohio Court of Appeals, Second Appellate District, Greene County
DECIDED	June 12, 2026
DOCKET	2025-CA-60
DISPOSITION	affirmed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Criminal appeal from judgments of conviction and sentence entered after the appellant entered Alford guilty pleas in two related cases.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Ineffective-assistance claims are reviewed under the two-part Strickland framework requiring deficient performance and resulting prejudice. The validity of the Alford pleas was reviewed based on whether the record demonstrated that the pleas were knowing, intelligent, and voluntary and supported by strong evidence of actual guilt.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	published
PARTIES	Breyon X. Bryant v. State of Ohio

TOPICS

- plea bargaining
- ineffective assistance
- criminal procedure
- appellate procedure
- standard of review

PRACTICE AREAS

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the trial court properly accepted Bryant's Alford pleas as knowing, intelligent, and voluntary when the court did not take sworn testimony or personally question defense counsel about the investigation or recommendation to plead guilty.
2. Whether the trial court's inquiry concerning Bryant's belief that the evidence was strong, rather than an express finding by the court that the evidence was strong, invalidated the Alford pleas.
3. Whether trial counsel was ineffective for allowing Bryant to plead guilty while identifying all pretrial rulings as potential appellate issues and for not securing no-contest pleas.

HOLDINGS

1. The trial court properly accepted Bryant's Alford pleas because the record showed that he understood the charges and plea agreement, had thoroughly discussed the pleas and possible defenses with counsel, recognized the strength of the State's evidence, sought to avoid a greater penalty, and explained his reasons for pleading guilty despite maintaining his innocence.
2. The trial court's question asking whether Bryant understood that he was pleading guilty because the evidence was strong and he sought to avoid a greater penalty did not invalidate the pleas or prejudice Bryant.
3. Bryant failed to establish ineffective assistance of counsel because he showed neither deficient performance that invalidated the knowing, intelligent, and voluntary nature of his pleas nor resulting prejudice.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“A defendant may plead guilty while protesting innocence if he “intelligently concludes that his interests require entry of a guilty plea and the record before the judge contains strong evidence of actual guilt.”” (¶ 13)

“Under Alford, the test is simply whether the defendant “intelligently concludes that his interests require entry of a guilty plea and the record before the judge contains strong evidence of actual guilt.”” (¶ 24)

“To prevail on an ineffective-assistance claim, a defendant must show that trial counsel rendered deficient performance and that the deficient performance prejudiced the defense.” (¶ 30)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Bryant faced numerous charges, including rape, kidnapping, and felonious assault, in two related Greene County criminal cases. Immediately before trial, he entered Alford pleas under an agreement requiring pleas to kidnapping and felonious assault in one case and rape in the other, while the State dismissed the remaining charges. During the plea hearing, Bryant acknowledged that the evidence was sufficient to convict him, identified damning text messages, stated that he sought the benefit of the plea bargain, and maintained his factual

innocence. The prosecutor placed on the record a factual basis describing the alleged rape, kidnapping, and strangulation of a second victim.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Bryant was indicted in Greene County Common Pleas Court Case No. 2024 CR 0134 and charged by bill of information in Case No. 2025 CR 0518. After an unsuccessful suppression motion in the 2024 case, he entered Alford pleas to kidnapping and felonious assault in that case and rape in the 2025 case in exchange for dismissal of the remaining charges. The trial court accepted the pleas, found him guilty, imposed consecutive prison terms, and Bryant timely appealed, challenging the validity of the pleas and alleging ineffective assistance of counsel.

DISPOSITION

affirmed

CASES CITED

- North Carolina v. Alford, 400 U.S. 25 (1970)
- State v. Padgett, 67 Ohio App.3d 332 (2d Dist. 1990)
- State v. Martin, 2026-Ohio-954 (2d Dist.)
- State v. Gossard, 2003-Ohio-3770 (2d Dist.)
- State v. Piacella, 27 Ohio St.2d 92 (1971)
- State v. Cunningham, 2023-Ohio-4305 (4th Dist.)
- State v. Satterwhite, 2021-Ohio-2878 (12th Dist.)
- Strickland v. Washington, 466 U.S. 668 (1984)
- State v. Bradley, 42 Ohio St.3d 136 (1989)
- State v. Brooks, 2025-Ohio-3292 (2d Dist.)
- State v. Davis, State v. Davis, 2026-Ohio-52 (2d Dist.)

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