

SUPREME COURT OF MINNESOTA

Stiles v. State

716 N.W.2d 327 (Minn. 2006) · No. A05-2081 · Decided June 15, 2006

SUMMARY

The Supreme Court of Minnesota affirmed the denial of Justin Stiles's second petition for postconviction relief. The court held that his claims concerning lesser-included-offense jury instructions were either barred by the rule against retroactive application of a new rule of law or barred under *Knafla* and Minn. Stat. § 590.04, subd. 3. The court therefore concluded that the postconviction court properly denied the petition without an evidentiary hearing.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	Supreme Court of Minnesota
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Hanson, Justice
JURISDICTION	Minnesota
DECIDED	June 15, 2006
DOCKET	A05-2081
DISPOSITION	affirmed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Appeal from the denial, without an evidentiary hearing, of Stiles's second petition for postconviction relief.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court reviewed whether the postconviction court erred in summarily denying the petition without an evidentiary hearing. A petition may be summarily denied when the issues have previously been decided in the same case.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Published, precedential opinion
PARTIES	Justin Brooks Stiles v. State of Minnesota

TOPICS

- state post-conviction relief
- successive petitions
- lesser included offense instructions
- jury instructions
- appellate procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether Stiles's second postconviction petition could obtain review of his previously litigated lesser-included-offense claims based on the intervening decision in *State v. Dahlin*.
2. Whether the postconviction court erred by denying the second petition without an evidentiary hearing.

HOLDINGS

1. Stiles could not prevail under either characterization of *Dahlin*. If *Dahlin* announced a new rule of law, it did not apply retroactively because Stiles's conviction was final before *Dahlin* was decided. If *Dahlin* did not announce a new rule, the claims were barred by *State v. Knaffla* and Minn. Stat. § 590.04, subd. 3, because the claims were known and had actually been litigated in Stiles's first postconviction appeal.
2. The postconviction court did not err in denying Stiles's second petition without an evidentiary hearing.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“A new rule of law, announced after a direct appeal has been completed, may present a claim that was unknown on direct appeal, and thus is not barred by Knaffla.” (329)

“If Dahlin is a new rule of law, it does not apply retroactively to Stiles' case, which was not pending when Dahlin was decided.” (329)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

On January 8, 1998, Stiles and four others planned to rob marijuana dealer Heinz Moorman. During the robbery, Moorman appeared to reach for a gun, and Stiles and Charlie Seepersaud shot him several times, killing him. Stiles requested jury instructions on second-degree unintentional felony murder, third-degree murder, and first-degree heat-of-passion manslaughter, but the district court instructed only on the charged murder offenses.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Stiles was convicted of two counts of first-degree felony murder and one count of second-degree intentional murder. He did not pursue a direct appeal but later filed a first postconviction petition challenging the denial of lesser-included-offense jury instructions; the Minnesota Supreme Court affirmed the denial of that petition. After the court decided *State v. Dahlin*, Stiles filed a second postconviction petition asserting the same instructional claims under *Dahlin*. The postconviction court summarily denied the second petition, and the Supreme Court of Minnesota affirmed.

DISPOSITION

affirmed

CASES CITED

- *Stiles v. State*, 664 N.W.2d 315 (Minn. 2003)

- State v. Dahlin, 695 N.W.2d 588 (Minn. 2005)
- State v. Knaffla, 309 Minn. 246, 243 N.W.2d 737 (1976)
- O'Meara v. State, 679 N.W.2d 334 (Minn. 2004)
- Teague v. Lane, 489 U.S. 288, 310-11, 109 S. Ct. 1060, 103 L. Ed. 2d 334 (1989)
- State v. Blanche, 696 N.W.2d 351, 378 n.11 (Minn. 2005)

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