

APPELLATE COURT OF ILLINOIS, FIRST DISTRICT, FOURTH DIVISION

People v. Johnson

2026 IL App (1st) 230142 · No. 1-23-0142 · Decided June 4, 2026

SUMMARY

The Illinois Appellate Court affirmed Robert Johnson's convictions for attempted first degree murder and being an armed habitual criminal. The court held that the evidence was sufficient and that statements recorded on police body-camera video were admissible as prior identifications and prior inconsistent statements; any error concerning other challenged hearsay was not plain error or prejudicial ineffective assistance.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	Appellate Court of Illinois, First District, Fourth Division
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Justice Lyle; Presiding Justice Navarro; Justice Quish
JURISDICTION	Appellate Court of Illinois, First District
DECIDED	June 4, 2026
DOCKET	1-23-0142
DISPOSITION	affirmed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Defendant appealed following a jury conviction for attempted first degree murder and being an armed habitual criminal and the imposition of concurrent prison terms of 21 and 20 years. He challenged the sufficiency of the evidence and the admission of alleged hearsay evidence. The appellate court affirmed.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Sufficiency of the evidence is reviewed under whether, viewing the evidence in the light most favorable to the State, any rational trier of fact could find the essential elements beyond a reasonable doubt. Evidentiary rulings are reviewed for abuse of discretion. Forfeited claims are reviewed for plain error only when there is clear and obvious error and either the evidence is closely balanced or the error is sufficiently serious to affect the fairness and integrity of the proceeding. Ineffective-assistance claims require objectively unreasonable performance and prejudice.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Published Illinois appellate opinion

PARTIES

Robert Johnson, a/k/a Eugene Johnson v. The People of the State of Illinois

TOPICS

criminal procedure

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PRACTICE AREAS

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QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the evidence was sufficient to prove Johnson guilty of attempted first degree murder beyond a reasonable doubt.
2. Whether the trial court erred in admitting body-camera footage and testimony concerning statements by Fleming and a child reported through a police dispatch.
3. Whether any forfeited evidentiary error constituted plain error.
4. Whether trial counsel was ineffective for failing to preserve objections to the challenged evidence.

HOLDINGS

1. The evidence was sufficient for a rational trier of fact to find Johnson guilty of attempted first degree murder beyond a reasonable doubt. The jury could credit Fleming's recorded pretrial account that Johnson pointed a firearm at her and fired, while rejecting or discounting her conflicting trial testimony.
2. The portion of the body-camera footage showing Fleming state that Johnson shot at her was admissible as both a prior identification and a prior inconsistent statement under Illinois Rule of Evidence 801(d) (1). Its admission was not error.
3. The challenged evidence concerning the front-porch exchange and the report that a child said someone was shooting at his mother did not warrant reversal. Even assuming error, the evidence was not closely balanced and did not constitute second-prong structural plain error.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“We set aside a conviction only when “the evidence is so improbable or unsatisfactory that it creates a reasonable doubt of the defendant’s guilt.”” (¶ 31)

“An abuse of discretion exists only if the decision was “arbitrary, fanciful, or unreasonable to the degree that no reasonable person would agree with it.”” (¶ 45)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

During an October 30, 2021 altercation at Crystal Fleming's home, Johnson fought with Fleming and her stepfather, Michael Haney. Fleming's pretrial statements, recorded in police interviews and body-camera footage, indicated that Johnson pointed a firearm at her and fired once, while her trial testimony recanted or denied

seeing Johnson possess or fire a gun. Police recovered a spent shell casing and an apparent bullet hole, forensic testing linked the casing to a firearm recovered from the home, and Johnson told police that the gun went off during the altercation. Fleming identified Johnson as the shooter in a recorded interview.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Johnson was charged in the Circuit Court of Cook County with attempted first degree murder, aggravated discharge of a firearm, home invasion, and being an armed habitual criminal. Following a jury trial, he was convicted of attempted murder, aggravated discharge, and armed habitual criminal, and acquitted of home invasion. The aggravated-discharge conviction was merged into the attempted-murder conviction, and the court imposed concurrent sentences of 21 years and 20 years. The trial court denied his posttrial motion, and he timely appealed.

DISPOSITION

affirmed

CASES CITED

- People v. Gray, 2024 IL 127815, ¶¶ 20, 29
- People v. Grayer, 2023 IL 128871, ¶¶ 28, 32
- People v. Bush, 2023 IL 128747, ¶¶ 33, 36, 56-57, 71, 79
- People v. Conway, 2023 IL 127670, ¶¶ 16, 20
- People v. Joiner, 2018 IL App (1st) 150343, ¶ 62
- People v. Mulosmani, 2022 IL App (1st) 200635, ¶ 65
- People v. Thompson, 2020 IL App (1st) 171265, ¶ 35
- People v. Hill, 2023 IL App (1st) 150396, ¶ 23
- Phoenix Capital, LLC v. Nsiah, 2023 IL App (1st) 220067, ¶ 20
- People v. Jackson, 2022 IL 127256, ¶ 37
- People v. Thompson, 238 Ill. 2d 598, 608-10 (2010)
- People v. Patterson, 217 Ill. 2d 407, 427-28 (2005)
- People v. Temple, 2014 IL App (1st) 111653, ¶ 51