

COURT OF APPEALS FOR THE FIRST DISTRICT OF TEXAS

Brian Ward Coulter v. The State of Texas

No. 01-24-00304-CR · No. 01-24-00304-CR · Decided December 18, 2025

SUMMARY

The First Court of Appeals of Texas reviewed Brian Ward Coulter’s Anders appeal from a capital-murder conviction and life-without-parole sentence. The court found no reversible error or arguable grounds for review, affirmed the trial court’s judgment, and granted appointed counsel’s motion to withdraw.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	Court of Appeals for the First District of Texas
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Per Curiam; Amparo "Amy" Guerra; Caughey; Dokupil
JURISDICTION	Court of Appeals for the First District of Texas
DECIDED	December 18, 2025
DOCKET	01-24-00304-CR
DISPOSITION	affirmed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Coulter appealed his capital-murder conviction and life-without-parole sentence. His appointed appellate counsel filed an Anders brief and a motion to withdraw, asserting that the appeal was frivolous and presented no reversible error.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	In an Anders appeal, the reviewing court independently examines the entire record to determine whether arguable grounds for review or reversible error exist; counsel's conclusion that the appeal is frivolous is not itself determinative.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	nonprecedential
PARTIES	Brian Ward Coulter v. The State of Texas

TOPICS

- appellate procedure
- criminal procedure
- right to counsel
- standard of review
- preservation of error

PRACTICE AREAS

- criminal appellate procedure
- Anders appeals
- capital murder

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether appointed appellate counsel satisfied the requirements for withdrawal under *Anders v. California* by filing a brief that professionally evaluated the record and identified no arguable grounds for reversal.
2. Whether the appellate court's independent review of the entire record disclosed any reversible error or arguable grounds for review.
3. Whether appointed counsel's motion to withdraw should be granted.

HOLDINGS

1. In an *Anders* appeal, the reviewing court—not appointed counsel—must independently examine the entire record to determine whether any arguable grounds for review or reversible error exist.
2. Counsel's *Anders* brief and motion to withdraw complied with the *Anders* requirements because counsel professionally evaluated the record, provided record references and legal authority, informed Coulter of his rights, and provided access to the appellate record.
3. The record contained no reversible error and presented no arguable grounds for review; the appeal was frivolous.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“We have independently reviewed the entire record, and we conclude that no reversible error exists in the record, there are no arguable grounds for review, and the appeal is frivolous.” (at 2)

“We note that appellant may challenge a holding that there are no arguable grounds for an appeal by filing a petition for discretionary review in the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals.” (at 2)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

A court found Brian Ward Coulter guilty of the felony offense of capital murder. The trial court assessed punishment at confinement for life without the possibility of parole. On appeal, appointed counsel reviewed the record and concluded that no reversible error or arguable ground for review existed.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

The 178th District Court of Harris County found Coulter guilty of capital murder and assessed punishment at confinement for life without the possibility of parole. Coulter timely appealed. Appointed counsel filed an *Anders* brief and motion to withdraw; Coulter did not file a response. After independently reviewing the entire record, the court affirmed the trial court's judgment and granted counsel's motion to withdraw.

DISPOSITION

affirmed

CASES CITED

- *Anders v. California*, 386 U.S. 738, 744-45 (1967)
- *High v. State*, 573 S.W.2d 807, 811-12 (Tex. Crim. App. 1978)
- *Mitchell v. State*, 193 S.W.3d 153, 155 (Tex. App.—Houston [1st Dist.] 2006, no pet.)
- *Kelly v. State*, 436 S.W.3d 313, 319-22 (Tex. Crim. App. 2014)
- *In re Schulman*, 252 S.W.3d 403, 408-09 (Tex. Crim. App. 2008)
- *Garner v. State*, 300 S.W.3d 763, 767 (Tex. Crim. App. 2009)
- *Bledsoe v. State*, 178 S.W.3d 824, 826-27, 827 n.6 (Tex. Crim. App. 2005)
- *Ex parte Wilson*, 956 S.W.2d 25, 27 (Tex. Crim. App. 1997)

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