

COURT OF APPEALS OF OHIO, TWELFTH APPELLATE DISTRICT, BROWN
COUNTY

State v. Griffin

2025-Ohio-5360 · No. CA2025-03-004 · Decided December 1, 2025

SUMMARY

The Ohio Twelfth District Court of Appeals affirmed Donald W. Griffin's conviction for aggravated menacing under Ohio Revised Code § 2903.21(A). The court held that sufficient evidence supported findings that Griffin knowingly caused the victim to believe he would cause serious physical harm and that the conviction was not against the manifest weight of the evidence.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	Court of Appeals of Ohio, Twelfth Appellate District, Brown County
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Mike Powell, J.; Matthew R. Byrne, P.J.; Robin N. Piper, J.
JURISDICTION	Ohio Court of Appeals, Twelfth Appellate District, Brown County
DECIDED	December 1, 2025
DOCKET	CA2025-03-004
DISPOSITION	affirmed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Criminal appeal from a bench-trial conviction for aggravated menacing in violation of Ohio Revised Code § 2903.21(A).
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Sufficiency of the evidence is reviewed de novo as a question of law, viewing the evidence in the light most favorable to the prosecution and asking whether any rational trier of fact could have found the essential elements proven beyond a reasonable doubt. Manifest weight is reviewed under the entire-record standard, with deference to the factfinder's credibility determinations; reversal is warranted only when the factfinder clearly lost its way and created a manifest miscarriage of justice.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	published
PARTIES	Donald W. Griffin v. State of Ohio

TOPICS

- criminal procedure
- evidence
- appellate procedure
- standard of review
- mens rea

PRACTICE AREAS

Criminal law

Criminal procedure

Appellate practice

Evidence

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether sufficient evidence supported Griffin's conviction for aggravated menacing, including proof that he knowingly caused Mitchell to believe he would cause serious physical harm.
2. Whether Griffin's conviction was against the manifest weight of the evidence.

HOLDINGS

1. The conviction was supported by sufficient evidence because, viewed in the light most favorable to the prosecution, Griffin's retrieval and racking of a firearm immediately after a heated confrontation, together with his turning toward Mitchell, permitted a rational trier of fact to find that Griffin knowingly caused Mitchell to believe he would cause serious physical harm.
2. The conviction was not against the manifest weight of the evidence because the trial court reasonably credited Mitchell's testimony and rejected Griffin's competing account, and the evidence did not weigh heavily against the conviction.

KEY QUOTATIONS

"The relevant inquiry is 'whether, after viewing the evidence in a light most favorable to the prosecution, any rational trier of fact could have found the essential elements of the crime proven beyond a reasonable doubt.'" (¶ 14)

"A threat of physical harm may be implied through actions or conduct without a verbal threat." (¶ 18)

"The State proved beyond a reasonable doubt that Griffin knowingly caused Mitchell to believe that Griffin would cause him serious physical harm." (¶ 38)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

After a verbal confrontation at a gas station, Griffin retrieved a firearm from his vehicle. The victim, Anthony Mitchell, testified that Griffin turned toward him with the firearm and racked its slide, causing Mitchell to believe Griffin was going to shoot him. Mitchell moved his vehicle to protect his daughter, called 911, and reported that his life had been threatened. Griffin denied displaying or racking the firearm, but the trial court credited Mitchell's account.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

The Brown County Municipal Court convicted Griffin after a bench trial and sentenced him to 90 days in jail, all suspended, one year of community control, 24 hours of community service, anger-management services, no contact with the victim, and a prohibition on owning or possessing a firearm during community control. Griffin appealed, challenging the sufficiency and manifest weight of the evidence. The Court of Appeals affirmed.

DISPOSITION

affirmed

CASES CITED

- State v. Moore, 2021-Ohio-1856, ¶ 12 (12th Dist.)
- State v. Tenbrook, 2020-Ohio-5227, ¶ 9 (12th Dist.)
- State v. Jenks, 61 Ohio St.3d 259 (1991)
- State v. Were, 2008-Ohio-2762, ¶ 132
- State v. Richardson, 2016-Ohio-8448, ¶ 13
- State v. Thompkins, 78 Ohio St.3d 380, 387, 1997-Ohio-52
- State v. Barnett, 2012-Ohio-2372, ¶ 14 (12th Dist.)
- State v. Lowry, 2020-Ohio-1554, ¶ 15 (12th Dist.)
- State v. Eskridge, 38 Ohio St.3d 56, 59 (1988)
- State v. Applegate, 2014-Ohio-1697, ¶ 8 (12th Dist.)
- State v. James, 2024-Ohio-621, ¶¶ 47, 50 (12th Dist.)
- State v. Pierce, 2024-Ohio-5357, ¶ 12 (12th Dist.)
- In re Burbrink, 2001-Ohio-8680, *2 (12th Dist.)
- State v. Fields, 84 Ohio App.3d 423, 428 (12th Dist. 1992)
- State v. Szafranski, 2025-Ohio-1104, ¶¶ 51-52 (6th Dist.)
- State v. Brand, 2023-Ohio-557, ¶¶ 123, 125 (12th Dist.)
- State v. Nelson, 2024-Ohio-5750, ¶ 23 (12th Dist.)
- State v. Martin, 20 Ohio App.3d 172, 175 (1st Dist. 1983)