

SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK, APPELLATE DIVISION,
FOURTH JUDICIAL DEPARTMENT

People v. Clarke

2026 NY Slip Op 02530 · No. 177 KA 20-00981 · Decided April 24, 2026

SUMMARY

The New York Appellate Division, Fourth Department, affirmed Trevor E. Clarke’s convictions for multiple sex offenses and endangering the welfare of a child. The court rejected his weight-of-the-evidence challenge, declined to review an unpreserved constitutional claim concerning the presentation of a defense, and modified the judgment to require concurrent sentences on counts 2 and 6, reducing the aggregate sentence from 52 years to life to 37 years to life.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	Supreme Court of the State of New York, Appellate Division, Fourth Judicial Department
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Curran, J.P.; Montour, J.; Smith, J.; Ogden, J.; DelConte, J.
JURISDICTION	Supreme Court of the State of New York, Appellate Division, Fourth Judicial Department
DECIDED	April 24, 2026
DOCKET	177 KA 20-00981
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Defendant appealed from a Monroe County Court judgment entered after a jury convicted him of multiple sex offenses and endangering the welfare of a child.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	For a weight-of-the-evidence claim, the court viewed the evidence in light of the elements of the charged crimes and gave great deference to the jury's credibility determinations. The constitutional evidentiary claim was reviewed for preservation, and the court declined interest-of-justice review of the unpreserved claim. The sentence was reviewed for whether it was unduly harsh or severe and was modified in the interest of justice.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Published intermediate appellate decision; uncorrected and subject to revision before publication in the Official Reports.

PARTIES

Trevor E. Clarke, defendant-appellant v. The People of the State of New York, respondent

TOPICS

sentencing

appellate procedure

standard of review

preservation of error

criminal procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

criminal law

criminal procedure

appellate sentencing

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the jury's verdict was against the weight of the evidence.
2. Whether the trial court's preclusion of questioning concerning statements attributed to defendant deprived defendant of his constitutional right to present a defense.
3. Whether the aggregate sentence of 52 years to life was unduly harsh and severe.

HOLDINGS

1. The verdict was not against the weight of the evidence.
2. The constitutional claim was unpreserved because defendant did not assert at trial a constitutional right to introduce the excluded evidence, and the court declined to review the claim in the interest of justice.
3. The aggregate sentence of 52 years to life was unduly harsh and severe under the circumstances, and the judgment was properly modified to direct that the sentences on counts 2 and 6 run concurrently, resulting in an aggregate sentence of 37 years to life.

KEY QUOTATIONS

*"Where, as here, "witness credibility is of paramount importance to the determination of guilt or innocence, the appellate court must give '[g]reat deference . . . [to the] fact-finder's opportunity to view the witnesses, hear the testimony and observe demeanor'" ([*1])*

*"The determination of an appropriate sentence requires the exercise of discretion after due consideration given to, among other things, the crime[s] charged, the particular circumstances of the individual before the court and the purpose of a penal sanction, i.e., societal protection, rehabilitation and deterrence" ([*2])*

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

A jury convicted defendant of multiple counts of sexual abuse, predatory sexual assault against a child, and endangering the welfare of a child arising from conduct involving child victims. The appellate record included witness testimony with asserted inconsistencies and testimony concerning statements attributed to defendant. The trial court imposed an aggregate prison sentence of 52 years to life, which the Appellate Division concluded was not justified under the circumstances.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

The Monroe County Court entered judgment on May 28, 2020, after a jury verdict convicting defendant of five counts of first-degree sexual abuse, three counts of predatory sexual assault against a child, one count of third-degree sexual abuse, and two counts of endangering the welfare of a child. On appeal, defendant challenged the weight of the evidence, the exclusion of evidence bearing on his right to present a defense, and the severity of his sentence. The Appellate Division rejected the weight-of-the-evidence challenge, declined to review the unpreserved constitutional claim, and modified the sentence by directing concurrent sentences on counts 2 and 6.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- People v. Danielson, 9 NY3d 342, 349 (2007)
- People v. Bleakley, 69 NY2d 490, 495 (1987)
- People v. Harris, 15 AD3d 966, 967 (4th Dept 2005)
- People v. Streeter, 118 AD3d 1287, 1288 (4th Dept 2014)
- People v. Bailey, 239 AD3d 1375, 1376 (4th Dept 2025)
- People v. Cerroni, 225 AD3d 1117, 1120 (4th Dept 2024)
- People v. Watts, 218 AD3d 1171, 1173-1174 (4th Dept 2023)
- People v. Woolson, 122 AD3d 1353, 1355 (4th Dept 2014)
- People v. Simmons, 106 AD3d 1115, 1116 (2d Dept 2013)
- People v. Garrow, 126 AD3d 1362, 1363 (4th Dept 2015)
- People v. Farrar, 52 NY2d 302, 305 (1981)
- People v. Franklin, 206 AD3d 1610, 1613 (4th Dept 2022)

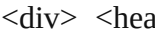
OPINION

People v. Clarke 2026 NY Slip Op 02530

PER CURIAM.

People v Clarke - 2026 NY Slip Op 02530 skip to main content

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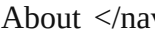
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April 24, 2026

Appellate Division, Fourth Department

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This decision is uncorrected and subject to revision before publication in the Official Reports.

<p>THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK, RESPONDENT,</p>

<p>v</p>

<p>TREVOR E. CLARKE, DEFENDANT-APPELLANT.</p>

</div> <p>Supreme Court of the State of New York, Appellate Division, Fourth Judicial Department</p> <p>Decided on April 24, 2026</p> <p>177 KA 20-00981</p> <p>Present: Curran, J.P., Montour, Smith, Ogden, And Delconte, JJ.</p>

<div> <p>SARAH S. HOLT, CONFLICT DEFENDER, ROCHESTER (KATHLEEN P. REARDON OF COUNSEL), FOR DEFENDANT-APPELLANT. </p> <p>BRIAN P. GREEN, DISTRICT ATTORNEY, ROCHESTER (GRAZINA HARPER OF COUNSEL), FOR RESPONDENT. </p> </div> <p>

</p><p>Appeal from a judgment of the Monroe County Court (Douglas A. Randall, J.), rendered May 28, 2020. The judgment convicted defendant, upon a jury verdict, of sexual abuse in the first degree (five counts), sexual abuse in the third degree, predatory sexual assault against a child (three counts), and endangering the welfare of a child (two counts). </p> <p></p>[*1] <p>It is

hereby ORDERED that the judgment so appealed from is unanimously modified as a matter of discretion in the interest of justice by directing that the sentences of incarceration imposed on counts 2 and 6 of the indictment shall run concurrently with each other and as modified the judgment is affirmed.</p> <p>Memorandum: Defendant appeals from a judgment convicting him, upon a jury verdict, of five counts of sexual abuse in the first degree (Penal Law § 130.65 [1], [4]), three counts of predatory sexual assault against a child (former § 130.96), one count of sexual abuse in the third degree (§ 130.55), and two counts of endangering the welfare of a child (§ 260.10 [1]).</p>

<p>Defendant contends that the verdict is against the weight of the evidence. We reject that contention. Viewing the evidence in light of the elements of the crimes as charged to the jury (<i>see People v Danielson</i>, 9 NY3d 342, 349 [2007]), we conclude that the verdict is not against the weight of the evidence (<i>see generally People v Bleakley</i>, 69 NY2d 490, 495 [1987]). Where, as here, "witness credibility is of paramount importance to the determination of guilt or innocence, the appellate court must give '[g]reat deference . . . [to the] fact-finder's opportunity to view the witnesses, hear the testimony and observe demeanor' " (<i>People v Harris</i>, 15 AD3d 966, 967 [4th Dept 2005], <i>lv denied</i> 4 NY3d 831 [2005], quoting <i>Bleakley</i>, 69 NY2d at 495; <i>see</i> <i>People v Streeter</i>, 118 AD3d 1287, 1288 [4th Dept 2014], <i>lv denied</i> 23 NY3d 1068 [2014], <i>reconsideration denied</i> 24 NY3d 1047 [2014]). Although a different verdict would not have been unreasonable, we cannot conclude that the jurors " 'failed to give the evidence the weight it should be accorded' " (<i>People v Bailey</i>, 239 AD3d 1375, 1376 [4th Dept 2025], <i>lv denied</i> 44 NY3d 1009 [2025]). Any inconsistencies in the testimony of the witnesses merely presented credibility issues for the jury to resolve (<i>see People v Cerroni</i>, 225 AD3d 1117, 1120 [4th Dept 2024], <i>lv denied</i> 41 NY3d 1017 [2024]; <i>People v Watts</i>, 218 AD3d 1171, 1173-1174 [4th Dept 2023], <i>lv denied</i> 40 NY3d 1013 [2023]; <i>People v Woolson</i>, 122 AD3d 1353, 1355 [4th Dept 2014], <i>lv denied</i> 25 NY3d 1078 [2015]).</p> <p>Defendant further contends that County

Court deprived him of his constitutional right to present a defense when it precluded him from questioning one of the victims about statements she attributed to defendant that she had previously attributed to a third party. We conclude that "defendant did not assert a constitutional right to introduce the excluded evidence at trial," and that his constitutional claim is therefore unpreserved for our review (*People v Simmons*, 106 AD3d 1115, 1116 [2d Dept 2013], lv denied 22 NY3d 1043 [2013]; *see People v Garrow*, 126 AD3d 1362, 1363 [4th Dept 2015]), and we decline to exercise our power to review that contention as a matter of discretion in the interest of justice (*see* CPL 470.15 [6] [a]).

Finally, we agree with defendant that the sentence is unduly harsh and severe. "The determination of an appropriate sentence requires the exercise of discretion after due consideration given to, among other things, the crime[s] charged, the particular circumstances of the individual before the court and the purpose of a penal sanction, i.e., societal protection, rehabilitation and deterrence" (*People v Farrar*, 52 NY2d 302, 305 [1981]). Here, although defendant's conduct was heinous and despicable, we conclude that the aggregate prison sentence of 52 years to life is not justified under the circumstances of this case (*see People v Franklin*, 206 AD3d 1610, 1613 [4th Dept 2022], lv denied 38 NY3d 1150 [2022]). In contrast to the aggregate sentence imposed by the court, which effectively guarantees a life sentence without the possibility of parole, we conclude that a prison sentence aggregating to 37 years to life is an appropriate sanction for the crimes committed (*see id.*). We therefore modify the judgment, as a matter of discretion in the interest of justice, by directing that the sentences of incarceration imposed on counts 2 and 6 of the indictment shall run concurrently with each other (*see* CPL 470.15 [6] [b]).

Entered: April 24, 2026

Ann Dillon Flynn

Clerk of the Court

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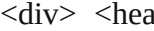
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PER CURIAM.

People v Clarke - 2026 NY Slip Op 02530

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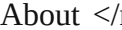
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It is hereby ORDERED that the judgment so appealed from is unanimously modified as a matter of discretion in the interest of justice by directing that the sentences of incarceration imposed on counts 2 and 6 of the indictment shall run concurrently with each other and as modified the judgment is affirmed.

Memorandum: Defendant appeals from a judgment convicting him, upon a jury verdict, of five counts of sexual abuse in the first degree (Penal Law § 130.65 [1], [4]), three counts of predatory sexual assault against a child (former § 130.96), one count of sexual abuse in the third degree (§ 130.55), and two counts of endangering the welfare of a child (§ 260.10 [1]).

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