

SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF DELAWARE

Charles v. State

No. 370, 2025 · No. No. 370, 2025 · Decided April 6, 2026

SUMMARY

The Delaware Supreme Court affirmed the Superior Court’s denial of Harry Charles’s motion for postconviction relief. The court held that the motion was procedurally barred as untimely under Superior Court Criminal Rule 61 and failed to satisfy the rule’s pleading requirements.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	Supreme Court of the State of Delaware
WRITING FOR THE COURT	N. Christopher Griffiths; Seitz, Chief Justice; Legrow, Justice; Griffiths, Justice
JURISDICTION	Supreme Court of the State of Delaware
DECIDED	April 6, 2026
DOCKET	No. 370, 2025
DISPOSITION	affirmed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Appeal from the Superior Court's denial of a motion for postconviction relief under Delaware Superior Court Criminal Rule 61.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Abuse of discretion
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Published Delaware Supreme Court opinion; precedential status is identified as published in the supplied metadata.
PARTIES	Harry Charles v. State of Delaware

TOPICS

- state post-conviction relief
- post-conviction relief
- ineffective assistance
- criminal procedure
- appellate procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

- criminal procedure
- post-conviction relief
- ineffective assistance of counsel
- appellate procedure

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the Superior Court abused its discretion by denying Charles's motion for postconviction relief as untimely under Superior Court Criminal Rule 61(i)(1).
2. Whether the motion satisfied the pleading requirements of Superior Court Criminal Rule 61(i)(5).

HOLDINGS

1. The motion was procedurally barred as untimely because it was filed more than one year after the judgment of conviction became final.
2. The motion did not satisfy the pleading requirements of Superior Court Criminal Rule 61(i)(5).

KEY QUOTATIONS

“The Superior Court did not abuse its discretion when it denied the motion for postconviction relief: it was procedurally barred as untimely filed” (at 2)

“NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS ORDERED that the State’s motion to affirm is GRANTED and the judgment of the Superior Court is AFFIRMED.” (at 2)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

On September 27, 2021, Harry Charles pleaded guilty to second-degree murder, possession of a firearm during the commission of a felony, and second-degree conspiracy. On December 15, 2021, the Superior Court imposed an aggregate sentence of twenty-five years of incarceration followed by decreasing levels of community supervision. Charles later filed a motion for postconviction relief alleging ineffective assistance of counsel more than three years after his convictions became final.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Charles pleaded guilty to second-degree murder, possession of a firearm during the commission of a felony, and second-degree conspiracy, and the Superior Court sentenced him to an aggregate of twenty-five years of incarceration followed by decreasing levels of community supervision. He did not appeal, and his convictions became final thirty days later. More than three years after finality, he filed a Rule 61 motion alleging ineffective assistance of counsel. The Superior Court denied the motion, and the Delaware Supreme Court affirmed while granting the State's motion to affirm.

DISPOSITION

affirmed

OPINION

PER CURIAM.

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF DELAWARE HARRY CHARLES, § § No. 370, 2025 Defendant Below, § Appellant, § Court Below–Superior Court § of the State of Delaware v. § § Cr. ID No. 2006000287A (K) STATE OF DELAWARE, § § Appellee. §

Submitted: February 3, 2026 Decided: April 6, 2026 Before SEITZ, Chief Justice; LEGROW and GRIFFITHS, Justices. ORDER After consideration of the appellant's opening brief, the State's motion to affirm, and the record on appeal, we affirm the Superior Court's denial of the appellant's motion for postconviction relief.

On September 27, 2021, the appellant, Harry Charles, pleaded guilty to second-degree murder, possession of a firearm during the commission of a felony, and second-degree conspiracy. On December 15, 2021, the Superior Court sentenced Charles to an aggregate of twenty-five years of incarceration followed by decreasing levels of community supervision. Charles did not appeal his convictions or sentence and, accordingly, his convictions became final thirty days thereafter.¹ On August 1, 2024—more than three years and six 1 Del.

Super. Ct. Crim. R. 61(m)(1)(i). months after his convictions became final—Charles filed a motion for postconviction relief under Superior Court Criminal Rule 61, raising claims of ineffective assistance of counsel.

The Superior Court did not abuse its discretion when it denied the motion for postconviction relief: it was procedurally barred as untimely filed² and did not satisfy the pleading requirements of Rule 61(i)(5). NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS ORDERED that the State's motion to affirm is GRANTED and the judgment of the Superior Court is AFFIRMED. BY THE COURT: /s/ N. Christopher Griffiths Justice 2 Del.

Super. Ct. Crim. R. 61(i)(1) (providing in part that “[a] motion for postconviction relief may not be filed more than one year after the judgment of conviction is final”). 2