

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

Williams v. State of New York

Williams, 2026 NY Slip Op 03472 (Supreme Court of the State of New York Appellate Division Second Judicial Department 2026) · No. 2022-03537, 2025-12485 · Decided June 3, 2026

SUMMARY

The Appellate Division, Second Department affirmed dismissal of Shawn Williams's claim for damages under Court of Claims Act § 8-b arising from his vacated murder conviction and imprisonment. The court held that Williams failed to establish by clear and convincing evidence that he did not commit the charged acts, citing deficiencies in his alibi evidence and the credibility of the recanting eyewitness. The court also dismissed the appeal from the underlying decision because no appeal lies from a decision.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	Supreme Court of the State of New York, Appellate Division, Second Judicial Department
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Angela G. Iannacci, J.P.; Lara J. Genovesi, J.; Carl J. Landicino, J.; Laurence L. Love, J.
JURISDICTION	Supreme Court of the State of New York, Appellate Division, Second Department
DECIDED	June 3, 2026
DOCKET	2022-03537, 2025-12485
DISPOSITION	affirmed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	The claimant appealed from a Court of Claims decision and judgment dismissing his claim for damages for unjust conviction and imprisonment under Court of Claims Act § 8-b after a nonjury trial.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court deferred to the Court of Claims' assessment of witness credibility and reviewed whether the record supported the finding that Williams failed to establish his statutory claim by clear and convincing evidence.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	published
PARTIES	Shawn Williams v. State of New York

TOPICS

appellate procedure damages remedies burden of proof evidence

PRACTICE AREAS

New York civil procedure claims against the State wrongful conviction and imprisonment appellate practice evidence and burden of proof

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether an appeal lies from a Court of Claims decision.
2. Whether Williams established by clear and convincing evidence that he did not commit any of the acts charged, as required for recovery under Court of Claims Act § 8-b.
3. Whether the Court of Claims properly assessed the credibility of the recanting eyewitness, the alibi witnesses, and the identification expert.

HOLDINGS

1. No appeal lies from a decision, so the appeal from the Court of Claims decision was dismissed.
2. Williams failed to establish by clear and convincing evidence that he did not commit any of the acts charged in the accusatory instrument; therefore, dismissal of his unjust-conviction claim was proper.
3. The record supported the Court of Claims' findings that the recanting eyewitness's testimony was incredible and that Williams's identification expert was unpersuasive.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“The Legislature enacted Court of Claims Act § 8-b in 1984 to allow innocent persons to recover damages from the state where they can prove by clear and convincing evidence that they were unjustly convicted and imprisoned”

“Clear and convincing evidence is “a higher, more demanding standard than the preponderance standard””

“to meet [his or] her burden of presenting clear and convincing evidence of [his or] her innocence, [a claimant must] demonstrate that the evidence makes it highly probable that what [he or she] claims is what actually happened with said evidence being neither equivocal nor open to opposing presumptions”

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Williams was convicted of second-degree murder based principally on an eyewitness identification and was sentenced to twenty-five years to life. The eyewitness later recanted, and the conviction was vacated in 2018. In his subsequent unjust-conviction claim, Williams relied on alibi evidence, the recantation, and expert identification testimony, but the Court of Claims found the testimony contradictory, lacking in specific recollection, or otherwise unpersuasive.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Williams was convicted of second-degree murder and sentenced to twenty-five years to life. After a prosecution witness recanted, the Supreme Court, Kings County, vacated the conviction in 2018. Williams then brought a Court of Claims Act § 8-b claim against the State; following a nonjury trial, the Court of Claims dismissed the claim. The Appellate Division dismissed the appeal from the decision because no appeal lies from a decision and affirmed the judgment.

DISPOSITION

affirmed

CASES CITED

- Schicchi v. J.A. Green Constr. Corp., 100 AD2d 509
- Long v. State of New York, 7 NY3d 269, 273
- Cooper v. State of New York, 236 AD3d 749, 749
- Tuckett v. State of New York, 44 NY3d 432, 436
- Warney v. State of New York, 16 NY3d 428, 434
- People v. Britton, 31 NY3d 1019, 1024
- Serrano v. State of New York, 244 AD3d 777, 778
- Murnane v. State of New York, 288 AD2d 277, 277-278
- Morales v. State of New York, 183 Misc 2d 839, 849, affd 282 AD2d 245
- Tuckett v. State of New York, 222 AD3d 1348, 1351, affd 44 NY3d 432
- Taylor v. State of New York, 266 AD2d 385, 385