

OHIO COURT OF APPEALS, FIFTH APPELLATE DISTRICT, DELAWARE
COUNTY

State of Ohio v. Rico Williams

2025-Ohio-5309 · No. 25 CAA 01 0009 · Decided November 24, 2025

SUMMARY

The Ohio Fifth District Court of Appeals affirmed Rico Williams's convictions, including possession of a fentanyl-related compound. The court held that the evidence, including Williams's recorded admission and laboratory identification of fentanyl, was legally sufficient and that the conviction was not against the manifest weight of the evidence.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	Ohio Court of Appeals, Fifth Appellate District, Delaware County
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Craig R. Baldwin, P.J.; William B. Hoffman, J.; Robert G. Montgomery, J.
JURISDICTION	Ohio Fifth District Court of Appeals
DECIDED	November 24, 2025
DOCKET	25 CAA 01 0009
DISPOSITION	affirmed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Rico Williams appealed his jury convictions, challenging the sufficiency and manifest weight of the evidence supporting Count One, possession of a fentanyl-related compound.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	For sufficiency, the court viewed the evidence in the light most favorable to the prosecution and asked whether any rational trier of fact could have found the essential elements proven beyond a reasonable doubt. For manifest weight, the court reviewed the entire record, weighed the evidence and reasonable inferences, considered witness credibility, and determined whether the jury clearly lost its way and created a manifest miscarriage of justice. The court applied the ordinary presumption in favor of the judgment and verdict.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	published precedential opinion
PARTIES	Rico Williams v. State of Ohio

TOPICS

criminal procedure

evidence

standard of review

appellate procedure

statutory interpretation

PRACTICE AREAS

criminal law

criminal procedure

appellate practice

evidence

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the evidence was legally sufficient to prove that Williams knowingly possessed a fentanyl-related compound in violation of R.C. 2925.11(A) and (C)(11)(d).
2. Whether Williams's conviction for possession of a fentanyl-related compound was against the manifest weight of the evidence.
3. Whether R.C. 2925.11(C)(9)(a) precluded a fentanyl-related-compound conviction because the tested sample was not tested for marijuana.

HOLDINGS

1. The evidence was legally sufficient to support Williams's conviction because his recorded admission established knowing possession and identified one of the drugs as fentanyl, while laboratory testing confirmed the presence of a fentanyl compound.
2. R.C. 2925.11(C)(9)(a) did not preclude Williams's conviction because subsection (C)(9)(b) applies when the offender knows or has reason to know that the substance contains a fentanyl-related compound, and Williams admitted that one of the baggies contained fentanyl.
3. The conviction was not against the manifest weight of the evidence because the jury did not clearly lose its way or create a manifest miscarriage of justice.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“The test for sufficiency of the evidence 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.”” (¶ 9)

“Accordingly, R.C. 2925.11(C)(9)(a) does not apply.” (¶ 15)

“Nor can we say that the jury clearly lost its way and created such a manifest miscarriage of justice that the conviction must be reversed and a new trial ordered.” (¶ 16)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

During a traffic stop, Ohio State Highway Patrol Sergeant James King arrested Williams on an outstanding warrant and searched him incident to the arrest, finding a digital scale with white powder residue. The passenger provided King with loaded firearms and baggies containing suspected drugs, and Williams subsequently received Miranda warnings and admitted that the drugs and guns were his and that one baggie contained fentanyl. Laboratory testing identified methamphetamine, cocaine, and a fentanyl compound; Williams had also previously been convicted of felony drug possession.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Williams was indicted in the Delaware County Court of Common Pleas on five felony counts, including possession of a fentanyl-related compound. After a jury trial, the jury found him guilty on all counts and the related firearm specifications. The trial court denied Williams's Crim.R. 29(A) motion for acquittal, and Williams timely appealed. The Fifth District Court of Appeals affirmed.

DISPOSITION

affirmed

CASES CITED

- State v. Worley, 2021-Ohio-2207
- State v. Jenks, 61 Ohio St.3d 259, 574 N.E.2d 492 (1991)
- State v. Smith, 80 Ohio St.3d 89, 102, 684 N.E.2d 668 (1997)
- Jackson v. Virginia, 443 U.S. 307, 99 S.Ct. 2781, 61 L.Ed.2d 560 (1979)
- State v. Lang, 129 Ohio St.3d 512, 2011-Ohio-4215, 954 N.E.2d 596, ¶ 219
- State v. Thompkins, 78 Ohio St.3d 380, 386-387 (1997)
- State v. Smith, 1997-Ohio-355
- Tibbs v. Florida, 457 U.S. 31, 42, 102 S.Ct. 2218, 72 L.Ed.2d 652 (1982)
- State v. Martin, 20 Ohio App.3d 172, 175, 485 N.E.2d 717 (1983)
- Seasons Coal Co., Inc. v. Cleveland, 10 Ohio St.3d 77, 80 (1984)