

TENNESSEE COURT OF CRIMINAL APPEALS

State of Tennessee v. Jesse Wayne Craddock

No. M2024-01886-CCA-R3-CD (Tenn. Crim. App. Apr. 16, 2026) · No. M2024-01886-CCA-R3-CD · Decided
April 16, 2026

SUMMARY

The Tennessee Court of Criminal Appeals affirmed Jesse Wayne Craddock's convictions for felony murder committed in the perpetration of aggravated child neglect and aggravated child neglect, as well as the associated sentences. The court rejected challenges concerning sufficiency of the evidence, vagueness of the aggravated child neglect statute, the denial of a bill of particulars, suppression of evidence seized from Craddock, and the jury instruction on intoxication. The court also rejected the constitutional challenge to the life sentence for felony murder.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	Tennessee Court of Criminal Appeals
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Matthew J. Wilson; Robert W. Wedemeyer; Camille R. McMullen
JURISDICTION	Tennessee Court of Criminal Appeals
DECIDED	April 16, 2026
DOCKET	M2024-01886-CCA-R3-CD
DISPOSITION	affirmed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Defendant appealed as of right from Wilson County Criminal Court judgments entered after a jury convicted him of felony murder in the perpetration of aggravated child neglect, aggravated child neglect, and simple possession of fentanyl. He challenged the sufficiency of the evidence, the constitutionality of the aggravated child neglect statute, denial of a bill of particulars, denial of suppression relief, refusal to instruct on intoxication, and the constitutionality of his mandatory life sentence.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Sufficiency of the evidence is reviewed by determining whether, after viewing the evidence in the light most favorable to the prosecution and giving the State the strongest legitimate view of the evidence and reasonable inferences, any rational trier of fact could have found the essential elements beyond a reasonable doubt. The appellate court does not reweigh evidence or reassess witness credibility. The adequacy of jury instructions is reviewed de novo without a

presumption of correctness. When the appellate record is incomplete on an issue, the court presumes the correctness of the trial court's ruling. Unpreserved constitutional and other errors are reviewed for plain error only when the defendant requests such review and satisfies the applicable requirements.

PRECEDENTIAL VALUE

published

PARTIES

Jesse Wayne Craddock v. State of Tennessee

TOPICS

criminal procedure

suppression of evidence

appellate procedure

standard of review

void for vagueness

PRACTICE AREAS

criminal law

criminal procedure

appellate procedure

constitutional criminal law

evidence

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the evidence was sufficient to support convictions for felony murder in the perpetration of aggravated child neglect and aggravated child neglect.
2. Whether Tennessee's aggravated child neglect statute is unconstitutionally vague because it does not define the term 'neglect.'
3. Whether the trial court erred by denying Craddock's motion for a bill of particulars.
4. Whether the trial court erred by denying Craddock's motion to suppress the fentanyl bindle seized from his sock and related body-camera footage.
5. Whether the trial court erred by refusing to instruct the jury on voluntary or involuntary intoxication.
6. Whether Craddock's Eighth Amendment challenge to the mandatory life sentence was preserved or warranted relief.

HOLDINGS

1. The evidence was sufficient to support the convictions for felony murder and aggravated child neglect. A rational jury could find that Craddock knowingly neglected his infant daughter by consuming alcohol and illicit drugs while solely responsible for her care, that the neglect adversely affected her health and welfare and caused serious bodily injury and death, and that the conduct satisfied the intent requirement for the underlying felony.
2. The State was not required to prove a separate act of neglect to support the aggravated child neglect and felony murder convictions because Craddock was not charged with both aggravated child abuse and aggravated child neglect.
3. The aggravated child neglect statute is not unconstitutionally vague merely because it does not define 'neglect.' The court adopted the reasoning that the ordinary meaning of neglect, together with the statutory elements, gives a person of ordinary intelligence adequate notice of the prohibited conduct.

4. Craddock was not entitled to relief on his challenge to the denial of a bill of particulars because the appellate record did not contain the denial order or hearing transcript, and the available record supported the ruling.
5. Craddock was not entitled to appellate relief on his suppression challenge because the record lacked the suppression ruling and hearing transcript, and the issue was additionally waived by the absence of a plain-error request, reply to the waiver argument, and adequate record citations.
6. The trial court properly refused to instruct the jury on involuntary intoxication because no evidence showed that Craddock's intoxication was involuntary. The court also properly declined to give a voluntary-intoxication instruction because Craddock abandoned that request and voluntary intoxication did not negate the nature-of-conduct mens rea for aggravated child neglect under the evidence presented.
7. The court declined to consider Craddock's Eighth Amendment challenge because he failed to raise it in the trial court, did not request plain-error review, and sought to present an issue of first impression through plain error.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“We review a challenge to the sufficiency of the convicting evidence to determine whether, “after viewing the evidence in the light most favorable to the prosecution” and providing the State with “the strongest legitimate view of the evidence as well as all reasonable and legitimate inferences which may be drawn therefrom,” “any rational trier of fact could have found the essential elements of the crime beyond a reasonable doubt.””
(4)

“It is well-settled that a defendant has a constitutional right to a complete and correct charge of the law, so that each issue of fact raised by the evidence will be submitted to the jury on proper instructions.” (10-11)

“The determinative question is not whether the accused was intoxicated, but what was his mental capacity at the time.” (12)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Craddock was the sole caregiver for his four-month-old daughter after his wife left the motel room for work. He knowingly consumed alcohol and obtained and consumed illicit drugs, including fentanyl, despite knowing that he would be responsible for the infant's care. Surveillance video showed Craddock lose consciousness and fall on top of the infant, pinning her beneath him for more than ten minutes; the infant died from asphyxia. Police found a fentanyl residue bindle in Craddock's sock, and toxicology detected fentanyl and alcohol in his blood.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

A Wilson County grand jury indicted Craddock on felony murder, aggravated child neglect, and simple possession of fentanyl. The jury convicted him as charged. The trial court imposed a life sentence for felony murder, a concurrent twenty-three-year sentence for aggravated child neglect, and a concurrent eleven-month, twenty-nine-day sentence for simple possession. After the trial court denied his motion for new trial, Craddock timely appealed, and the Court of Criminal Appeals affirmed.

DISPOSITION

affirmed

CASES CITED

- Jackson v. Virginia, 443 U.S. 307, 319 (1979)
- State v. Davis, 354 S.W.3d 718, 729 (Tenn. 2011)
- State v. Williams, 558 S.W.3d 633, 638 (Tenn. 2018)
- State v. Dorantes, 331 S.W.3d 370, 379, 390 (Tenn. 2011)
- State v. Sisk, 343 S.W.3d 60, 65 (Tenn. 2011)
- State v. Campbell, 245 S.W.3d 331, 335 (Tenn. 2008)
- State v. Stephens, 521 S.W.3d 718, 724 (Tenn. 2017)
- State v. Gardner, 716 S.W.3d 388, 406 (Tenn. Crim. App. 2024)
- State v. Sherman, 266 S.W.3d 395, 404-05 (Tenn. 2008)
- State v. Mateyko, 53 S.W.3d 666, 670-73 (Tenn. 2001)
- State v. Ducker, 27 S.W.3d 889, 896-97 (Tenn. 2000)
- State v. Weems, 619 S.W.3d 208, 224 (Tenn. 2021)
- State v. Prater, 137 S.W.3d 25, 34 (Tenn. Crim. App. 2003)
- State v. Adams, 24 S.W.3d 289, 295-96 (Tenn. 2000)
- State v. Blair, 2016 WL 6776356, at *7 (Tenn. Crim. App. Nov. 16, 2016)
- State v. Bray, 2008 WL 624914, at *13 (Tenn. Crim. App. Mar. 10, 2008)
- State v. Dewitt, 2016 WL 6638857, at *11 (Tenn. Crim. App. Nov. 10, 2016)
- State v. Gold, 2013 WL 4278760 (Tenn. Crim. App. Aug. 15, 2013)
- State v. Raymundo, 2010 WL 4540207, at *14-15 (Tenn. Crim. App. Nov. 10, 2010)
- State v. Barlow, 2010 WL 1687772, at *11 (Tenn. Crim. App. Apr. 26, 2010)
- State v. Wiggins, 2007 WL 3254716, at *5 (Tenn. Crim. App. Nov. 2, 2007)
- State v. Goodwin, 2023 WL 7324497, at *36, *38 (Tenn. Crim. App. Nov. 7, 2023)
- State v. Woodard, 2017 WL 2590216, at *10 (Tenn. Crim. App. June 15, 2017)
- State v. Minor, 546 S.W.3d 59, 74 (Tenn. 2018)
- State v. Enix, 653 S.W.3d 692, 701 (Tenn. 2022)
- State v. Smith, 1990 WL 134934, at *3 (Tenn. Crim. App. Sept. 20, 1990)
- State v. Burton, 2016 WL 3351316, at *4 (Tenn. Crim. App. June 9, 2016)
- State v. Adler, 2002 WL 1482704, at *6 (Tenn. Crim. App. Feb. 19, 2002)
- State v. Ballard, 855 S.W.2d 557, 560 (Tenn. 1993)
- State v. Rimmer, 623 S.W.3d 235, 296-97 (Tenn. 2021)
- State v. Richardson, 875 S.W.2d 671, 674 (Tenn. Crim. App. 1994)
- State v. Cooper, 736 S.W.2d 125, 131 (Tenn. Crim. App. 1987)
- State v. Speck, 944 S.W.2d 598, 600 (Tenn. 1997)

- State v. Thompson, 2023 WL 4552193, at *5 (Tenn. Crim. App. July 14, 2023)
- State v. James, 315 S.W.3d 440, 446 (Tenn. 2010)
- State v. Anderson, 985 S.W.2d 9, 17 (Tenn. Crim. App. 1997)
- State v. Clark, 452 S.W.3d 268, 295 (Tenn. 2014)
- State v. Hawkins, 406 S.W.3d 121, 128 (Tenn. 2013)
- Nye v. Bayer Cropscience, Inc., 347 S.W.3d 686, 699 (Tenn. 2011)
- State v. Kain, 24 S.W.3d 816, 819 (Tenn. Crim. App. 2000)
- Baggett v. State, 220 Tenn. 592, 597, 421 S.W.2d 629, 631 (1967)
- State v. Godsey, 60 S.W.3d 759, 773 (Tenn. 2001)
- State v. Howard, 693 S.W.2d 365, 368 (Tenn. Crim. App. 1985)
- Wiley v. State, 183 S.W.3d 317, 333 (Tenn. 2006)
- State v. Buggs, 995 S.W.2d 102, 107 (Tenn. 1999)
- State v. Booker, 656 S.W.3d 49 (Tenn. 2022)
- State v. Newman, 2025 WL 1378781, at *6 (Tenn. Crim. App. May 13, 2025)
- State v. Lowe, 2026 WL 810567, at *14 (Tenn. Crim. App. Mar. 24, 2026)
- State v. Fusco, 404 S.W.3d 504, 532, 535-36 (Tenn. Crim. App. 2012)
- State v. Cody, 2023 WL 9006670, at *20 (Tenn. Crim. App. Dec. 28, 2023)
- State v. Pewitte, 2025 WL 3510902, at *5 (Tenn. Crim. App. Dec. 8, 2025)