

SUPREME COURT OF GEORGIA

Dempsey v. The State

S25A1111 (Ga. Feb. 17, 2026) · No. S25A1111 · Decided February 17, 2026

SUMMARY

The Supreme Court of Georgia affirmed Le’Quan Dempsey’s convictions for felony murder and related offenses arising from the shooting deaths of John Pendrak and Aiden Reynolds. The court held that the evidence was constitutionally and statutorily sufficient, including evidence linking Dempsey’s Instagram account to the drug deal and evidence of consciousness of guilt. The court also held that evidence of Dempsey’s probation status was relevant, intrinsic to the charged crimes, and not unfairly prejudicial under the applicable evidence rules.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	Supreme Court of Georgia
WRITING FOR THE COURT	LaGrua, Justice; All other Justices of the Supreme Court of Georgia
JURISDICTION	Supreme Court of Georgia
DECIDED	February 17, 2026
DOCKET	S25A1111
DISPOSITION	affirmed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Direct appeal from convictions for felony murder and related offenses following denial of a motion for new trial.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Constitutional sufficiency-of-the-evidence claims are reviewed under the Jackson v. Virginia standard, viewing the evidence in the light most favorable to the verdict and asking whether any rational trier of fact could have found guilt beyond a reasonable doubt. Evidentiary rulings are reviewed for abuse of discretion.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	published
PARTIES	Le’Quan Dempsey v. The State

TOPICS

- criminal procedure
- evidence
- due process
- appellate procedure
- standard of review

PRACTICE AREAS

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the evidence was constitutionally and statutorily sufficient to support Dempsey's convictions.
2. Whether the trial court abused its discretion by admitting evidence that Dempsey was on probation at the time of the murders under Georgia evidence law.

HOLDINGS

1. The evidence, viewed in the light most favorable to the verdicts, was sufficient under constitutional due process for a rational jury to find Dempsey guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.
2. The circumstantial evidence was legally sufficient because the proved facts excluded every reasonable hypothesis other than Dempsey's guilt; the State was not required to disprove every conceivable hypothesis or produce a particular type of evidence.
3. The trial court did not abuse its discretion by admitting evidence that Dempsey was on probation because the evidence was relevant, intrinsic to the charged crimes, and its probative value was not substantially outweighed by the danger of unfair prejudice.

KEY QUOTATIONS

"the evidence presented at trial is viewed in the light most favorable to the verdicts to determine whether any rational trier of fact could have found the defendant guilty beyond a reasonable doubt of all the crimes of which he was convicted." (11)

"evidence is admissible as intrinsic evidence, rather than extrinsic evidence subject to Rule 404(b), when it is "an uncharged act arising from the same transaction or series of transactions as the charged offense, necessary to complete the story of the crime, or inextricably intertwined with the evidence of the charged offense."" (18)

"Accordingly, because the evidence regarding Dempsey's probation status was relevant and "inextricably intertwined" with the other evidence demonstrating his involvement in the murders, the evidence was properly admitted as intrinsic." (20)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Dempsey's Instagram account was used to arrange a purported marijuana transaction with John Pendrak and Aiden Reynolds at Sunset Park, where both victims were shot and killed. Evidence connected Dempsey to the account, the nearby Amy Road house, a Taurus 9mm handgun, relevant phone activity, and attempts to delete or alter digital accounts after the murders. The State also introduced brief references to Dempsey's probation status, including his statements that he deleted Instagram because of probation and that he expected to be locked up for violating probation.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

A Gwinnett County grand jury indicted Dempsey on two counts of felony murder, aggravated assault, armed robbery, and possession of a firearm during the commission of a felony. A jury found him guilty on all counts, and the trial court imposed two concurrent life sentences without parole plus consecutive five-year sentences for the firearm-possession counts; other counts merged or were vacated by operation of law. The trial court denied Dempsey's amended motion for new trial on April 15, 2025, and Dempsey appealed to the Supreme Court of Georgia.

DISPOSITION

affirmed

CASES CITED

- Jackson v. Virginia, 443 U.S. 307, 319 (1979)
- Johnson v. State, 316 Ga. 672, 680 (2023)
- Ridley v. State, 315 Ga. 452, 455 (2023)
- Copeland v. State, 316 Ga. 452, 455 (2023)
- Bates v. State, 317 Ga. 809, 814, 816 (2023)
- Nunnally v. State, 319 Ga. 701, 708 (2024)
- Drennon v. State, Drennon v. State, 314 Ga. 854, 862 (2022)
- Weston v. State, 320 Ga. 472, 474 (2024)
- Rodriguez v. State, 309 Ga. 542, 546 (2020)
- Martin v. State, 316 Ga. 154, 156 (2023)
- Venturino v. State, 306 Ga. 391, 393 (2019)
- Keller v. State, 308 Ga. 492, 505 (2020)
- Heade v. State, 312 Ga. 19, 25 (2021)
- Harris v. State, 310 Ga. 372, 377 (2020)
- Jackson v. State, 317 Ga. 95, 102 (2023)
- Jenkins v. State, 313 Ga. 81, 89 (2022)
- Coleman v. State, 321 Ga. 476, 481 (2025)
- Huff v. State, 299 Ga. 801, 805 (2016)
- Miranda v. Arizona, 384 U.S. 436 (1966)
- Fare v. Michael C., 442 U.S. 707 (1979)
- Clark v. State, 315 Ga. 423 (2023)