

OHIO COURT OF APPEALS, SIXTH APPELLATE DISTRICT

State v. Hernandez

2026-Ohio-679 · No. L-24-1232 · Decided February 27, 2026

SUMMARY

Antonio Hernandez Jr. appealed his Lucas County Court of Common Pleas conviction and sentence of 18 years to life for offenses arising from the shooting death of K.C. The Sixth District Court of Appeals affirmed the judgment, rejecting the appellant's challenges based on the evidence presented at trial.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	Ohio Court of Appeals, Sixth Appellate District
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Christine E. Mayle, J.; Thomas J. Osowik, P.J.; Myron C. Duhart, J.
JURISDICTION	Ohio Court of Appeals, Sixth Appellate District, Lucas County
DECIDED	February 27, 2026
DOCKET	L-24-1232
DISPOSITION	affirmed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Hernandez appealed his convictions and sentence from the Lucas County Court of Common Pleas, arguing that the convictions for murder and felonious assault were against the manifest weight of the evidence because the State failed to disprove his self-defense claim.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Under the manifest-weight-of-the-evidence standard, the appellate court weighs the evidence and reasonable inferences, considers witness credibility, and determines whether the factfinder clearly lost its way and created a manifest miscarriage of justice. In a self-defense case, the court reviews whether the factfinder clearly lost its way in finding that the State disproved at least one self-defense element beyond a reasonable doubt, while giving special deference to the jury's credibility determinations.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Published and precedential Ohio Court of Appeals decision
PARTIES	Antonio Hernandez, Jr. v. State of Ohio

TOPICS

self defense

standard of review

appellate procedure

criminal procedure

evidence

PRACTICE AREAS

criminal law

criminal procedure

appellate practice

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether Hernandez's murder and felonious-assault convictions were against the manifest weight of the evidence because the State failed to disprove his claim of self-defense.
2. Whether the jury clearly lost its way in finding that Hernandez lacked a bona fide belief that he was in imminent danger of death or great bodily harm requiring the use of deadly force.

HOLDINGS

1. The convictions were not against the manifest weight of the evidence because the jury did not clearly lose its way in finding that the State disproved at least one element of self-defense beyond a reasonable doubt.
2. The jury reasonably found that Hernandez did not have a bona fide belief that he was in imminent danger of death or great bodily harm and that deadly force was his only means of escape.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“A person may use deadly force in self-defense where he (1) was not at fault in creating the situation giving rise to the affray; (2) had a bona fide belief that he was in imminent danger of death or great bodily harm and that his only means of escape from such danger was in the use of such force; and (3) did not violate any duty to retreat or avoid the danger.” (¶ 107)

“We do not view the evidence in a light most favorable to the prosecution. “Instead, we sit as a ‘thirteenth juror’ and scrutinize ‘the factfinder’s resolution of the conflicting testimony.’” (¶ 108)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

During a December 2022 gathering at a trailer in Lucas County, Hernandez, who was 17, had a firearm while drinking and socializing with several people, including the victim, K.C., and K.C.'s girlfriend, Zoey. Hernandez admitted that he shot K.C. in the torso but claimed that she approached him with a knife and lunged at him, causing him to believe that he was about to be stabbed. Other witnesses testified that K.C. was empty-handed, officers found no knife on or near her or in the bedroom, and the gun used in the shooting was never recovered.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Hernandez was bound over from juvenile court and tried by a jury on two murder counts and one felonious-assault count, each with a firearm specification. The jury acquitted him of one murder count and convicted him of the other murder count, felonious assault, and both firearm specifications. The trial court imposed an aggregate sentence of 18 years to life. The Sixth District affirmed.

DISPOSITION

affirmed

CASES CITED

- State v. Lathan, 2024-Ohio-2514, ¶ 77 (6th Dist.)
- State v. Messenger, 2022-Ohio-4562, ¶ 14
- State v. Weemes, 2025-Ohio-2319, ¶¶ 32-33
- State v. Thompson, 78 Ohio St. 3d 380, 387 (1997)
- State v. Robinson, 2012-Ohio-6068, ¶ 15 (6th Dist.)
- State v. Martin, 20 Ohio App. 3d 172, 175 (1st Dist. 1983)
- State v. Fell, 2012-Ohio-616, ¶ 14 (6th Dist.)
- State v. Woods, 2023-Ohio-3549, ¶ 54
- State v. Lane, 2023-Ohio-1305, ¶ 24 (6th Dist.)
- State v. Thomas, 77 Ohio St. 3d 323, 330 (1997)
- State v. Barker, 2022-Ohio-3756, ¶ 28 (2d Dist.)
- State v. Links, 2025-Ohio-264, ¶ 22 (6th Dist.)
- State v. Stevenson, 2018-Ohio-5140, ¶ 42 (10th Dist.)
- State v. Sheets, 115 Ohio St. 308, 310 (1926)
- State v. Olsen, 2023-Ohio-2254, ¶ 57 (11th Dist.)
- State v. Walker, 2021-Ohio-2037, ¶ 13 (8th Dist.)
- State v. Tuggle, 2023-Ohio-3965, ¶ 64 (6th Dist.)
- State v. Hughkeith, 2023-Ohio-1217, ¶ 58 (8th Dist.)
- State v. Rydarowicz, 2023-Ohio-916, ¶ 81 (7th Dist.)
- State v. Fisher, 2024-Ohio-5520, ¶ 38 (6th Dist.)