

SUPREME COURT OF GEORGIA

Robinson v. State, 278 Ga. 299

602 S.E.2d 574 (2004) · No. S04A0697 · Decided September 13, 2004

SUMMARY

The Supreme Court of Georgia affirmed Don Robinson's convictions arising from a fatal shooting. The court held that statements Robinson made before receiving Miranda warnings while being treated at a hospital were admissible because he was not in custody when questioned. The court distinguished prior precedent involving more coercive hospital questioning and found no Miranda violation.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	Supreme Court of Georgia
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Hines, Justice; All Justices
JURISDICTION	Georgia
DECIDED	September 13, 2004
DOCKET	S04A0697
DISPOSITION	affirmed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Robinson appealed his convictions for felony murder, aggravated assault, and possession of a firearm during the commission of a felony, challenging the denial of his motion to suppress statements made at a hospital before Miranda warnings.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court reviewed whether the trial court erred in denying the motion to suppress; the custody determination for Miranda purposes was evaluated under the objective reasonable-person standard, with the trial court's factual findings supported by uncontradicted testimony.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	published precedential decision of the Supreme Court of Georgia
PARTIES	Don Robinson v. The State

TOPICS

- miranda rights
- suppression of evidence
- criminal procedure
- fifth amendment
- right to counsel

PRACTICE AREAS

- criminal procedure
- constitutional law
- evidence

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether Robinson was in custody for Miranda purposes when he made pre-Miranda statements at the hospital about how he was injured and the vehicle in which he arrived.
2. Whether the trial court erred in denying Robinson's motion to suppress those pre-Miranda statements.

HOLDINGS

1. Robinson was not in custody when he made the statements about his arrival at the hospital because a reasonable person in his situation would not have perceived that he was formally arrested or restrained to the degree associated with a formal arrest.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“Unless a reasonable person in the suspect's situation would perceive that he was in custody, Miranda warnings are not necessary.” (278 Ga. at 300)

“The fact that Chambers may have already suspected Robinson of being the shooter did not render the statements at issue violative of Miranda.” (278 Ga. at 301)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

During a fight at an adult entertainment club, Robinson fired a handgun, fatally shooting security guard Stacy Stegall and injuring another person. Robinson was later admitted to a hospital with a gunshot wound, and a police investigator interviewed him while he was recovering in intensive care. Before Miranda warnings, Robinson answered questions about how he had been shot and how he had arrived at the hospital; after receiving and waiving Miranda warnings, he answered a question about his clothing.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

A Fulton County grand jury indicted Robinson on murder, aggravated assault, and firearm-possession charges arising from a shooting. A jury convicted him on all counts, and the trial court later vacated the malice-murder conviction, denied the remaining new-trial claims, and resentenced him on the remaining convictions. The trial court granted an out-of-time appeal, and the Supreme Court of Georgia affirmed the denial of the suppression motion and the resulting judgments.

DISPOSITION

affirmed

CASES CITED

- Jackson v. Virginia, 443 U.S. 307, 99 S. Ct. 2781, 61 L. Ed. 2d 560 (1979)
- Reinhardt v. State, 263 Ga. 113, 428 S.E.2d 333 (1993)
- Tolliver v. State, 273 Ga. 785, 786, 546 S.E.2d 525 (2001)
- Miranda v. Arizona, 384 U.S. 436, 86 S. Ct. 1602, 16 L. Ed. 2d 694 (1966)
- Hardin v. State, 269 Ga. 1, 3, 494 S.E.2d 647 (1997)

- Hightower v. State, 272 Ga. 42, 43, 526 S.E.2d 836 (2000)
- Harris v. State, 273 Ga. 608, 543 S.E.2d 716 (2001)

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