

Posted Date	Name of Case (Docket Number)	Type
May 7, 2024	<p data-bbox="277 149 857 176">STATE OF NEW JERSEY V. RAVEL STOKES (21-07-0507)</p> <p data-bbox="277 203 1401 359">The case at issue arises out of a homicide which was captured on a home surveillance system that took place during daylight hours in the City of Trenton. The suspect can be seen on the video walking down the sidewalk seconds before he/she reaches the victim and shoots him in the head, causing his death. The question presented was whether a proposed expert in the field of digital forensics should be permitted to testify and proffer an opinion at trial regarding the estimated height of the individual captured on the surveillance video based upon the application of a technique called reverse projection photogrammetry.</p> <p data-bbox="277 386 1401 590">The court held a Rule 104 hearing at which time the State's proposed expert testified. Based on the evidence adduced at the hearing, the court ruled that the expert's testimony was admissible pursuant to N.J.R.E 702. In that regard: (1) the subject of the testimony was beyond the ken of the average juror and would assist the trier of fact to understand whether the height of the individual depicted in the video was consistent with the defendant's height; (2) the expert was duly qualified in the field of digital forensics, including reverse projection photogrammetry; and (3) the expert's testimony and opinions were reliable because they are "based on a sound, adequately-founded scientific methodology involving data and information of the type reasonably relied on by experts in the field." State v. Olenowski, ___ N.J. ___ (2023)(slip op. at 8).</p>	Trial
Jan. 10, 2024	<p data-bbox="277 646 732 674">STATE OF NEW JERSEY V. J.D. (20-09-0475)</p> <p data-bbox="277 701 1401 905">On September 25, 2020, J.D. plead guilty to two counts of criminal sexual contact in the fourth degree in violation of N.J.S.A. 2C:14-3(b). Shortly thereafter, he was deemed incompetent as a result of an intellectual disability, low-IQ and a lack of formal education—having only completed the 8th grade. Two experts opined that J.D. could attain competency with education, although these opinions were disputed by a third expert. As J.D. was not deemed a danger to himself or to others, he was not subject to incarceration or institutionalization pre-trial. In response to a court order requesting guidance on the type of educational services needed to assist J.D. in attaining competency, it was confirmed that no State program exists to provide educational services on an out-patient basis to assist J.D. with attaining competency.</p> <p data-bbox="277 932 1401 1087">On December 20, 2022, the State moved to have a Guardian appointed to assist J.D. in procuring disability benefits that could defray the cost of private educational services and to otherwise assist J.D. in procuring private educational services necessary to attain competency. On March 15, 2023, in an interlocutory Order and opinion of first impression, this court addressed, among other factors, Constitutional considerations and denied the State's motion to appoint a Guardian and compel J.D., a criminal defendant, to procure private educational services for the purpose of attaining competency.</p> <p data-bbox="277 1115 1401 1213">Following a competency hearing on July 26, 2023, by separate Order and opinion dated August 1, 2023, the court: (i) determined that J.D. was not competent and was not likely to attain competency; (ii) vacated J.D.'s guilty plea; and (iii) dismissed with prejudice the complaint against J.D. Based upon the August 1, 2023 Order, the March 15, 2023 Order is now final.</p>	Trial