

Fifth Circuit Court of Appeal
State of Louisiana

No. 25-KA-478

STATE OF LOUISIANA

versus

CHRISTOPHER HUGHES AKA "4"

ON APPEAL THE TWENTY-FOURTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT
PARISH OF JEFFERSON, STATE OF LOUISIANA
NO. 22-5972, DIVISION "J"
HONORABLE STEPHEN C. GREFER, JUDGE PRESIDING

September 02, 2026

TIMOTHY S. MARCEL
JUDGE

Panel composed of Judges Stephen J. Windhorst,
Timothy S. Marcel, and Michael P. Mentz, Pro Tempore

AFFIRMED; REMANDED WITH INSTRUCTIONS

TSM
SJW
MPM



COUNSEL FOR DEFENDANT/APPELLANT,
CHRISTOPHER HUGHES

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STATE OF LOUISIANA

Honorable Paul D. Connick, Jr.

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MARCEL, J.

Defendant, Christopher Hughes, appeals his conviction and sentence for second degree murder in violation of La. R.S. 14:30.1. On appeal, he raises three assignments of error: sufficiency of the evidence; denial of his motion to suppress; and improper admission of other crimes evidence. For the following reasons, we affirm defendant's conviction and sentence and remand with instructions to correct the uniform commitment order and sentencing minutes to reflect that the life sentence is to be served without benefit of probation or suspension of sentence, and to transmit the corrected documents to the appropriate authorities.

PROCEDURAL BACKGROUND

On December 8, 2022, a Jefferson Parish Grand Jury indicted defendant, Christopher Hughes, with second degree murder of Ked'dric "Draco" Williams in violation of La. R.S. 14:30.1.¹ He pled not guilty on January 9, 2023. While the record contains numerous pre-trial pleadings, the pertinent pleadings to the issues raised in defendant's assignments of error are defendant's motion to suppress and the State's 404(B)/*Res Gestae* Notices. The motion to suppress was denied by the trial court on October 13, 2023; the State's 404(B)/*Res Gestae* Notices were granted on May 1 and 2, 2025.

Trial commenced on May 5, 2025, before a twelve-person jury, culminating in a guilty verdict on May 8, 2025. The trial court denied defendant's motion for new trial on June 23, 2025, and sentenced him that day to life imprisonment at hard labor with "eligibility for parole by operation of law."² Defendant timely appealed.

¹ Joralbert J. Lugo was also charged with obstruction of justice for his actions surrounding the homicide. The cases against Lugo and defendant were severed for trial.

² Defendant was sentenced in accordance with the United States Supreme Court's decision in *Miller v. Alabama*, 567 U.S. 460, 132 S.Ct. 2455, 183 L.Ed.2d 407 (2012), and La. C.Cr.P. art. 878.1.

FACTUAL BACKGROUND AND EVIDENCE

On May 25, 2022, sixteen-year-old Ked’ric “Draco” Williams was at Shameka Poole’s residence on Westminster Boulevard in Marrero, Louisiana. According to Ms. Poole, he engaged in an argument on Instagram Live with an unidentified person then left her residence. Approximately ten to fifteen minutes later, someone knocked on her door and told her that “the little boy got shot.” She went outside, recognized Williams, who was wearing a red sweater, as the gunshot victim and called the police.

Within minutes, Jefferson Parish Sheriff’s Office (JPSO) deputies responded to the residence. Upon arrival, they found Williams lying in the yard and immediately began rendering aid, but unfortunately, he succumbed to his injuries and was declared deceased on the scene. The responding deputies removed a cell phone and a toy gun from the victim. Investigating deputies determined the shooting occurred in the 7300 block of Rue Louis Philippe, approximately 0.2 miles away from where Williams’ body was discovered, based on nine 9 mm spent casings recovered in the roadway. The casings were collected for identification and further analysis.³

An autopsy performed by forensic pathologist Dr. Dana Troxclair revealed that a single penetrating gunshot entered Williams’ lower right back and lodged in his left chest, causing fatal internal bleeding. She recovered a copper-jacketed projectile from the victim’s chest and determined the wound was inflicted from a distant range. Dr. Troxclair concluded that the cause of death was a gunshot wound to the trunk, and the manner of death was homicide.

During the investigation, surveillance footage was obtained from multiple locations near Westminster Boulevard and Rue Louis Philippe. According to

³ Photographs and scene documentation were also completed by deputies.

JPSO Detective Ryan Vaught, the lead homicide investigator, the footage showed Williams arriving at Ms. Poole's residence at 5:03 p.m. At 7:39 p.m., he left the residence and walked in the direction of his own home on Montbatten. Later, Williams is captured on footage walking in the direction of Westminster, toward Ms. Poole's residence. Around that same time, a Ford truck was observed pulling from a side street and stopping near the intersection of Rue Louis Philippe and Burnely, where the cartridge casings were later recovered.

Additional video footage showed the vehicle approaching and passing Williams as he walked toward Ms. Poole's residence. Video captures Williams briefly stopping and looking back toward the vehicle. Moments later, at approximately 7:53 p.m., Williams was shot in the back. The footage showed him running toward Ms. Poole's residence, while the Ford truck was captured leaving the area.

While investigating, detectives learned that the victim went by the nickname "Draco" and was affiliated with a group named the Betty Street Youngins or "BSY." JPSO Sergeant Steven Keller testified to listening to recordings of jail calls at the Jefferson Parish Correctional Center made by Derrick Harry, an individual known to live in the area of the homicide and to be affiliated with BSY rivals. Specifically, on May 26, 2022, the day after the murder, he reviewed jail calls in which the participants referenced "4" having "faced Draco" and "put him up."⁴ He testified that during a subsequent call, an individual referred to as "4" joined the conversations.

⁴ One call was placed by Derrick Harry to Antione Wilson. Sergeant Keller testified, "So this phone call was placed. I believe the day or so after the homicide. And listening to the conversation between the two, when Mr. Harry engages Mr. Wilson, Mr. Wilson immediately states gloating about what 4 did and referencing the killing of Draco." He further stated that at the time he reviewed the calls, he did not know the identity of 4.

Detective Vaught also reviewed recordings of the same jail calls and explained that during those calls, the nickname “4” was used and that the speaker identified as “4” took responsibility for the killing of Draco. At that time, the identity of 4 was unknown. He interpreted “faced Draco” to mean that “4” killed him. He further described that the information was coming from “lil D” and that the participants reacted with disbelief before confirming what had occurred.

Based on his recognition of voices, Detective Vaught identified Dandre “D” Lampkin (referred to as “D”) and Gerald “Banga” Lampkin, both relatives of Hughes, as the other participants in the calls. He testified that he believed defendant was the individual who joined the call and said, “What’s happening?”

Meanwhile, Detective Shayne LeRouge of the Gretna Police Department was investigating a separate June 2022 shooting which occurred in the 900 block of Romain Street (Gretna investigation). In that incident, an unidentified assailant fired several shots at an unknown person. After learning Christopher Hughes was the person shot at, Detective LeRouge located Hughes at his school and contacted his mother, Ms. Washington. Hughes was transported to the Gretna Police Department and interviewed as a witness to the June 2022 shooting. Detective LeRouge testified that Ms. Washington indicated in this interview that her son may have information regarding a homicide in Jefferson Parish. Hughes and his mother left the station at the conclusion of the interview. In later statements, Ms. Washington denied telling police that defendant had knowledge of the Westminster homicide.

Following an interview by Detective LeRouge about the Gretna investigation on June 25, 2022, Detective Vaught interviewed Hughes regarding the May 2022 Marrero homicide. During the initial, unrecorded portion of the interview, Hughes stated that he knew Williams because they had dated the same

girl and that they were involved in a prior fight. He also confirmed his nickname was “4.” While denying any involvement in Williams’ homicide, Hughes reported having information about the shooting. At this point, detectives began recording the interview.

In the recorded portion of the June 25, 2022 interview with Detective Vaught, Hughes discussed threats he received from Williams. First, he recounted an incident weeks beforehand where Williams brandished a gun at him and his mother. Hughes also reported being aware of statements made by Williams on Instagram Live about him and his family. On the day of the shooting, Hughes recounted being told that Williams was on Instagram Live “saying he made me and my momma run” and calling him “a b**ch.” Additionally, Hughes reported that he was aware that Williams made statements about killing his brother, Dandre.

Detective Vaught then asked Hughes what happened. After a period of silence, he stated, “[unintelligible] killed him [unintelligible]”, and then said, “Who knows.” Detective Vaught responded, “You tell me”, to which Hughes asked, “Ya’ll wanna [sic] know who killed him?” Detective Vaught then asked Hughes if he shot at Williams because he was afraid of him. Hughes answered, “that he was going to kill me.” Detective Vaught then asked, “Okay, just so I’m clear, you shot at Draco...that day...cause you were afraid of him?” At that point, the detectives ended the exchange and exited the room.

Detective Vaught returned stating, “I had to get your mother because of what you told me.” He then advised Hughes of his rights in his mother’s presence. Detective Vaught explained to Hughes and his mother, “So, in other words, cause you disclosed to me that you...shot at Draco, the day he was killed cause you were afraid of him...I still have to go over your rights...because of the situation involving a homicide.”

Afterwards, Ms. Washington responded that she “knew for a fact” Hughes was home at the time of the incident because he had been in bed when she called him at approximately 8:00 p.m. After learning of the shooting through social media, Ms. Washington stated, she called him from inside her home to ask if the individual involved was the same person who had pulled a gun on them. According to Ms. Washington, Hughes answered her phone call and confirmed it was the same person.

Hughes then denied involvement, stating “I didn’t say I killed him...I didn’t say I shot him...that didn’t come out my mouth” and reiterated that he was “scared” and “felt threatened” and that he was home “playing [his] game.” Ms. Washington reiterated that she knew where he was at the time.

Hughes then recounted his actions on the day Williams was killed. He reported going to work with his “paw paw” and estimated that they finished around “6, 6:40,” and that his father dropped him off at home closer to “7:30 or 7:45.” Hughes described receiving a call in which he was told that others, including Dandre, were posting on Instagram “like they did something.”

Detective Vaught questioned defendant about earlier statements in which he took credit for the murder. Hughes insisted that he did not take credit for the shooting, and Ms. Washington stated that he was “not going to take credit.” He also denied being on Instagram Live with Williams but acknowledged viewing the video Williams posted about threatening him and his mother. When asked who committed the shooting, Hughes named “Chubbs from Westwego,” stating he and Williams were “beefing.” Detective Vaught testified at trial that investigators were unable to determine that individual’s identity. Upon conclusion of that interview, Hughes left the station.

Days later, on July 5, 2022, Detective LeRouge arrested Hughes for theft of \$400 in connection with the June 2022 Gretna shooting. While in custody for the unrelated theft, JPSO detectives conducted another recorded interview of Hughes. Detective Vaught informed Hughes and his mother that information was developed regarding a 9 mm handgun. Hughes and his mother were shown photographs of a handgun and individuals from Instagram for identification. Detective Vaught informed Hughes of his rights in his mother's presence; both acknowledged an understanding of those rights and agreed to speak with the detectives.

During the second interview, Hughes informed detectives that he threw a 9 mm handgun into a canal after the incident where someone shot at him. He stated it was a different gun than was used in Mr. Williams' murder. Also in that interview, Hughes explained that he was related to Gerald Lampkin through his half-brother, Dandre Lampkin, and that they were associated with "Forever Mal." He confirmed he was known as "4" and acknowledged prior disagreements involving Draco. While he acknowledged stating "I did it" in the recorded jail call, he explained that his statements were "just bragging" and "trying to get clout." He said he took "clout" because the victim disrespected his brother. Ms. Washington interjected that Hughes was at home and was not taking the blame for something that he did not do.

At trial, Ms. Washington testified to an early May 2022 incident in Marrero where she and defendant were approached by an armed young man who began waving a gun at them. She did not know who the young man was at the time but later learned that it was Williams. Ms. Washington reported the incident to the police, describing a "young kid" who brandished a firearm at her, but felt that the officers "brushed [her] off."

On the day of the murder, May 25, 2022, Ms. Washington testified that after defendant was dismissed from school around 12:30 or 1:00 p.m., she drove him to his grandparents' house in Algiers to work with his grandfather. She recalled that defendant's grandparents, other workers, and his father were present when they arrived. Later, at approximately 8:00 p.m. that evening, defendant's father dropped him off at her home.

Ms. Washington testified to learning of the shooting from a text message sent by Hughes' father at approximately 9:00 p.m. that night. At trial, she identified a blurry photo of defendant's grandparents' street and testified that it depicted Hughes working with his grandfather that day, asserting the photograph confirms that Hughes could not have committed the murder on that day at 7:55 p.m.

Also, during her testimony, Ms. Washington explained that she had been arrested and charged as an accessory to second degree murder for providing an alibi, but those charges were refused by the district attorney's office.

Detective Vaught testified that a Springfield XD-9 subcompact firearm was recovered by the New Orleans Police Department at a residence linked to a juvenile named Jashawn Randall. Linda Tran, an expert in the fields of firearm and toolmark examinations, testified that the Springfield XD-9 was ballistically matched to the nine casings and the autopsy projectile. Law enforcement records showed that Hughes and Randall had been arrested together in a stolen vehicle in Jefferson Parish in 2020. Detectives cited the arrest as linking Hughes, Randall, and the Springfield XD-9 murder weapon. Following Randall's arrest for possession of the firearm, he declined to be interviewed.

Based on the collected surveillance footage, investigators identified the suspect vehicle as an older model Ford F-150 and issued a "be on the look out" or

BOLO for the vehicle. The BOLO led to the stop of the suspect vehicle on August 18, 2022. A search of the truck yielded a .40 caliber S&W semi-automatic handgun belonging to the driver, Kevin Palmer. This weapon was later excluded as the murder weapon by Linda Tran. Investigators determined the truck was owned by Maribel Gonzales. Detective Vaught testified that Ms. Gonzales came to the detective bureau with several individuals, including Joralbert Lugo. Detective Vaught identified a connection between Lugo and defendant. In an interview, Lugo reported to detectives that defendant admitted to murdering Williams and later identified defendant from a photographic lineup.

Also, during their investigation, detectives obtained search warrants for various social media accounts belonging to individuals involved with the incident. Social media evidence presented at trial included a YouTube video uploaded June 16, 2022, showing Randall holding a handgun resembling the Springfield firearm used in the murder with Hughes visible in the background. Instagram evidence showed Williams on Live on the day of the murder. Earlier Live broadcasts and messages reflected conflict between defendant, Dandre, and Williams. Instagram messages from defendant's account, "forevermallbrother," on May 10, 2022 state "On mall I was about to--boutta have ah shootout in front of my momma" near Gerald "D-Banga" Lampkin's house and in response to a question, defendant stated, "Like 10 minutes ago," and further wrote, "I pull up by banga on mall draco in front the door so on mall I upped." Screenshots and Instagram Lives also showed defendant and Dandre with a similar firearm and ammunition consistent with autopsy-recovered hollow points.

At trial, the State's primary fact witness, Joralbert Lugo, testified that during May 2022, he lived with his friend, Jeremy Gonzales. He acknowledged regularly driving a gray Ford pickup truck owned by Jeremy's mother, Maribel Gonzales.

Lugo testified that on May 25, 2022, he picked up Jeremy Gonzales and defendant, Christopher “4” Hughes. At defendant’s direction, he drove to Westminster looking for Williams. Defendant identified Williams, who was wearing a red sweatshirt, and told Lugo to stop the truck. According to Lugo, defendant then exited and fired about eight or nine shots, then re-entered the truck. After the shooting, they drove to Dandre’s nearby residence, parked two streets away and walked through backyards to enter the house. Inside Deandre’s residence, defendant changed clothes, then the three separated.

Lugo stated that he discarded shell casings found in the truck after the incident. He recounted speaking with police in August 2022 regarding the incident and identifying defendant and Dandre to officers in separate photo lineups. At trial, he admitted to being arrested for tampering with evidence by discarding the shell casings and that he entered into a plea agreement with the State in exchange for his testimony at trial. Although he agreed to plead guilty, he had not done so at the time of trial.

During his testimony, Lugo acknowledged initially lying to police. On cross-examination, Lugo acknowledged multiple discrepancies between his testimony and the factual basis of his plea agreement. He testified that portions of the agreement were inaccurate, including statements that Gonzales alerted him to the presence of shell casings and that both he and Gonzales disposed of them, whereas Lugo testified at trial that he alone found and discarded the casings. He also acknowledged differences between the factual basis and his testimony regarding the sequence of events leading to Westminster. Lugo stated that he initially lied but later corrected these statements with the State. He explained that he made up a story because he “did not want to get caught” but that his subsequent

statements were a truthful account. Lugo also denied lying about anything in his agreement with the State.

At trial, Dandre Lampkin denied Hughes came to his residence on the evening of May 25 and asserted that Lugo's statements placing him at the residence between 7:30 and 8:00 p.m. were untrue. He further denied conversations confirming "4" shot Draco, though he acknowledged learning of the shooting via Instagram around 8:30 p.m. that evening.

Detective Vaught testified to investigating defendant's alibi via surveillance footage, but no corroborating evidence was found. Additionally, he contacted defendant's father to investigate the second alibi of being at work. However, defendant's father failed to appear for a scheduled meeting and did not respond to subsequent calls.

At trial, the defense called Christopher Hughes, Sr., defendant's father, and two others who each testified that defendant worked with family until dusk on May 25 in Algiers. They identified video recordings and photographs purportedly showing defendant at the site; however, there was inconsistent testimony about the timing of defendant's work. Christopher Hughes, Sr. testified that he posts videos of his contracting work on Instagram. He identified an Instagram video and related photographs, which he described as depicting defendant on the worksite that day.

Larry Smith and Reverend Clarence Hughes, defendant's grandfather, both testified that defendant was performing construction work at a residence in Algiers on May 25, 2022, and remained there until dark. Mr. Smith identified photographs as depicting defendant working that day but gave inconsistent responses regarding when defendant returned home. Reverend Hughes stated he did not know the exact time defendant left but maintained it was after nightfall.

ASSIGNMENTS OF ERROR

1. Whether the evidence was sufficient to support defendant's conviction.
2. Whether the trial court erred in denying suppression of defendant's June 25, 2022, statement.
3. Whether the court abused its discretion by admitting other crimes/*res gestae*/404(B) evidence.

LAW AND DISCUSSION

Assignment of Error Number One-Sufficiency of the Evidence

Defendant contends that the evidence was insufficient to support the conviction, arguing that the State's case relied heavily on the unreliable self-serving testimony of Joralbert Lugo. Defendant argues that Lugo implicated him only after facing potential charges, and that his testimony lacked key details pertaining to gun type, where the defendant lived or what he was wearing, and that his testimony conflicted with other witness accounts and the physical evidence. Defendant further asserts that Lugo's testimony is the only direct evidence supporting his conviction and that the circumstantial evidence presented at trial did not exclude the reasonable hypothesis of innocence, given that the evidence failed to place him at the scene or in possession of the weapon, and included no confession or incriminating statements, while multiple alibi witnesses placed him at work and home. In addition, no forensic or objective evidence linked him to the crime.

The State responds that Lugo's eyewitness account identified Hughes as the shooter and established identity. The State contends Lugo's testimony was corroborated by evidence of defendant's motive, the defendant's connection to the weapon, and defendant's incriminating statements, including him taking responsibility and initially confessing to the shooting. The State further asserts that

defendant's alibi was unpersuasive and maintains the jury's verdict was rational and supported by the evidence.

The question of sufficiency of the evidence is properly raised in the trial court by a motion for post-verdict judgment of acquittal pursuant to La. C.Cr.P. art. 821. *State v. Nguyen*, 22-286 (La. App. 5 Cir. 2/27/23), 359 So.3d 108, 118. In this case, defendant did not file a motion for post-verdict judgment of acquittal but did file a Motion for New Trial asserting that the verdict was contrary to the law and evidence on June 22, 2025. The Motion for New Trial was denied by the trial court on June 23, 2025.

While the denial of a motion for new trial based on the verdict being contrary to the law and evidence is not subject to review on appeal, both the Louisiana Supreme Court and this Court have addressed an appellate review of sufficiency claims under these circumstances. *State v. Ellis*, 18-463 (La. App. 5 Cir. 7/15/19), 276 So.3d 633, 642. Thus, we consider the merits of defendant's assignment as to sufficiency.

The constitutional standard for sufficiency of the evidence is whether, upon viewing the evidence in a light most favorable to the prosecution, any rational trier of fact could find that the State proved all the essential elements of the crime beyond a reasonable doubt. *Jackson v. Virginia*, 443 U.S. 307, 99 S.Ct. 2781, 61 L.Ed.2d 560 (1979); *State v. Lafrance*, 24-392 (La. App. 5 Cir. 4/2/25), 413 So.3d 1205, 1219, *writ denied*, 25-544 (La. 10/14/25), 419 So.3d 354. This directive that the evidence be viewed in the light most favorable to the prosecution requires the reviewing court to defer to the actual trier of fact's rational credibility calls, evidence weighing, and inference drawing. *Lafrance*, 413 So.3d at 1219. This deference to the fact-finder does not permit a reviewing court to decide whether it believes a witness or whether the conviction is contrary to the weight of the

evidence. *State v. Reed*, 24-329 (La. App. 5 Cir. 4/2/25), 413 So.3d 1166, 1178, writ denied, 25-561 (La. 9/10/25), 415 So.3d 1277. Further, a reviewing court errs by substituting its appreciation of the evidence and the credibility of witnesses for that of the fact-finder and overturning a verdict on the basis of an exculpatory hypothesis of innocence presented to, and rationally rejected by, the jury.

Lafrance, 413 So.3d at 1219. When addressing the sufficiency of the evidence, consideration must be given to the entirety of the evidence, including inadmissible evidence that was erroneously admitted, to determine whether the evidence is sufficient to support the conviction. *Reed*, 413 So.3d at 1177.

In its determination of whether any rational trier of fact would have found the defendant guilty, a reviewing court will not re-evaluate the credibility of witnesses or re-weigh the evidence. *State v. Salvant*, 24-205 (La. App. 5 Cir. 3/19/25), 411 So.3d 74, 89, writ denied, 25-485 (La. 9/16/25), 416 So.3d 473. The credibility of a witness is within the sound discretion of the trier of fact, who may accept or reject, in whole or in part, the testimony of any witness. *Id.*

Encompassed within proving the elements of an offense is proving the identity of the defendant as the perpetrator. The State is required to negate any reasonable probability of misidentification to carry its burden of proof. *Id.* In the absence of internal contradiction or irreconcilable conflicts with physical evidence, one witness's testimony, if believed by the trier of fact, is sufficient to support a requisite factual finding. *Id.*

Evidence may be either direct or circumstantial. Circumstantial evidence consists of proof of collateral facts and circumstances from which the existence of the main fact can be inferred according to reason and common experience. *State v. Gilmore*, 24-552 (La. App. 5 Cir. 8/27/25), 421 So.3d 1039, 1052. When

circumstantial evidence is used to prove the commission of an offense, La. R.S. 15:438 provides, “[A]ssuming every fact to be proved that the evidence tends to prove, in order to convict, it must exclude every reasonable hypothesis of innocence.” This is not a separate test from the *Jackson* standard, but rather provides a helpful basis for determining the existence of reasonable doubt. *Id.* All evidence, both direct and circumstantial, must be sufficient to support the conclusion that the defendant is guilty beyond a reasonable doubt. *Id.*

The reviewing court is not required to determine whether a defendant’s suggested hypothesis of innocence offers an exculpatory explanation of events. Rather, the reviewing court must evaluate the evidence in the light most favorable to the State and determine whether the possible alternative hypothesis is sufficiently reasonable that a rational juror could not have found proof of guilt beyond a reasonable doubt. *State v. Howard*, 24-145 (La. App. 5 Cir. 12/18/24), 409 So.3d 915, 930, *writ denied*, 25-96 (La. 4/8/25), 405 So.3d 566.

In this case, the defendant does not challenge the sufficiency of the evidence regarding the essential statutory elements of his second degree murder conviction. Instead, his argument centers on the issue of identity, specifically attacking the credibility of Lugo’s testimony and the State’s reliance on circumstantial evidence. At trial, the State presented the eyewitness testimony of Lugo, who identified defendant as the shooter. He testified that he was with defendant on the day of the incident, that defendant directed him to turn around when they saw Williams, and that defendant exited the vehicle and shot him.

Lugo admitted that he initially provided false statements to law enforcement, discarded shell casings from the vehicle following the incident, and was charged with tampering with evidence and that he testified pursuant to an agreement with the State in connection with that charge.

On appeal, defendant attacks Lugo's credibility, emphasizing his prior inconsistent statements, his initial falsehoods to law enforcement, and his agreement with the State in connection with a charge of tampering with evidence. The jury heard the testimony in detail, as well as the witness' explanation for his prior statements. Resolution of conflicting testimony rests solely with the trier of fact, who may accept or reject, in whole or in part, the testimony of any witness. *State v. Burnham*, 16-468 (La. App. 5 Cir. 2/8/17), 213 So.3d 470, 474, *writ denied*, 17-664 (La. 4/6/18), 240 So.3d 184. In the absence of internal contradiction or irreconcilable conflicts with physical evidence, the testimony of one witness, if believed by the trier of fact, is sufficient to support a conviction. *State v. McKinney*, 20-19 (La. App. 5 Cir. 11/4/20), 304 So.3d 1097, 1103. Credibility calls are for the jury and simply put, the jury believed Lugo and found his testimony credible.

Defendant also asserts that without Lugo's testimony the remaining evidence failed to rebut his alibi defense. At trial, defendant presented an alibi defense through multiple witnesses, including his mother, father, grandfather, and a coworker, Larry Smith, who testified that he was working at a residence in Algiers until night on May 25. The defense also introduced a video from defendant's father's phone in which defendant and his co-worker are seen outside of Clarence Hughes house, along with a photograph captured from that video, all of which purportedly depict defendant at the worksite on the day of the murder.

However, the alibi testimony contained inconsistencies, specifically regarding the timing of when defendant returned home, including differences between defendant's statements and the account of the alibi witnesses relative to the 7:53 p.m. shooting, all of which the jury was entitled to consider in assessing credibility. The jury, by returning a guilty verdict, found the State's witnesses

credible and rejected defendant's version of events. A reviewing court will not reweigh those credibility determinations on appeal. *See State v. Woods*, 23-41 (La. App. 5 Cir. 11/15/23), 376 So.3d 1144, 1157, *writ denied*, 23-1615 (La. 5/29/24), 385 So.3d 700.

Accordingly, viewing the evidence in the light most favorable to the State with deference to credibility determinations, we find that a rational trier of fact could have concluded that defendant was the perpetrator of the homicide, that the State negated any reasonable probability of misidentification, and the jury was entitled to reject defendant's alibi defense. This assignment lacks merit.

Assignment of Error Number Two-Admission of Statement

In assignment of error number two, defendant challenges the admission of statements made during custodial interrogation on June 25, 2022, arguing that he was in custody and entitled to *Miranda* warnings, and that law enforcement failed to scrupulously honor his request for an attorney. He also argues that as a seventeen-year-old, custody should have been evaluated from a juvenile perspective. Defendant contends that post-warning statements should have been suppressed because detectives ignored an invocation of counsel, and that his waiver was not knowing or voluntary given his age, educational difficulties, and interrogation circumstances. Finally, he argues that the error is not harmless, as the State relied heavily on the statements, and the jury requested them during deliberations.

The State responds that the trial court correctly denied the motion to suppress defendant's June 25, 2022, statement, asserting that the issue is barred by the law of the case doctrine, and alternatively, that defendant was not in custody during the initial interrogation and any error was harmless.

A pre-trial motion to suppress targeted the defendant's June 25, 2022, and July 5, 2022, statements.⁵ At the September 14, 2023, suppression hearing, Detective Vaught testified that the homicide investigation involved multiple jurisdictions, and that in the Gretna investigation, defendant was treated as a victim-witness of a crime. He stated that Detective LeRouge with the Gretna Police Department reached out to his agency because he heard that they were investigating a murder in the Westminster Marrero area; Detective LeRouge told him that the victim in his investigation, defendant, may have been a witness or victim of the shooting. Detective Vaught testified that, according to Detective LeRouge, defendant's mother believed her son was with the person that was shot in the Westminster area.

Later, Detective LeRouge reached out to Detective Vaught again to let him know that the defendant was in his office in relation to the Gretna investigation and asked if he would like to speak with him. Upon meeting Detective LeRouge at the Gretna station, Detective Vaught was informed that interviewed defendant was interviewed and participated in a lineup procedure but did not make an identification in the Gretna matter. Detective Vaught was then introduced to Ms. Washington. During this introductory encounter, Detective Vaught informed her that he wanted to speak with defendant regarding the information she provided about her son being with someone who was killed in the Westminster area.

The detectives then entered the interview room where the defendant was seated in a corner chair, slouched with his hands in his pockets and not restrained. Detective Vaught had obtained "a workup from the public school he was attending" and recalled there was no mention of defendant having special needs,

⁵ Defendant's assignment of error and argument relates solely to the June 25, 2022 statement.

and that defendant was in the tenth grade at the time. He also stated that defendant was unrestrained and not under arrest and agreed to be questioned.

Detective Vaught testified that *Miranda* warnings were given after the defendant mentioned fear and possible self-defense, and that his mother participated in the interview thereafter. He acknowledged defendant's mother saying that "We're going to need a lawyer" but noted that she re-engaged with him and ultimately agreed to continue the interview without counsel. He further testified that at the conclusion of the interview, defendant and his mother freely left and walked out of the police station and drove away.

When ruling on the pre-trial motion to suppress, the trial judge found that defendant was not in custody before *Miranda* warnings were given, considered him a victim witness, and denied suppression of both pre-and post-warning portions of the June 25, 2022 statement. A prior writ application challenging that ruling was denied by this Court after a finding of no custody and noting that defendant and his mother left the station. *Hughes v. State*, 23-K-512 (La. App. 5 Cir. 11/8/23) (unpublished writ disposition), *writ denied*, 23-1627 (La. 2/23/24), 379 So.3d 655.

On appeal, defendant again challenges the admissibility of his June 25, 2022 statement. Under the doctrine of "law of the case," an appellate court will generally decline to consider its own rulings of law on a subsequent appeal in the same case. *State v. Allen*, 17-685 (La. App. 5 Cir. 5/16/18), 247 So.3d 179, 185, *writ denied*, 18-1042 (La. 11/5/18), 255 So.3d 998. The law of the case doctrine is discretionary; however, reconsideration of a prior ruling is warranted when, in light of a subsequent trial record, it is apparent that the determination was patently erroneous and produced unjust results. *State v. Falcon*, 13-849 (La. App. 5 Cir. 3/12/14), 138 So.3d 79, 87-88, *writ denied*, 14-769 (La. 11/14/14), 152 So.3d 877.

Our prior writ disposition reflects that this Court considered defendant's challenge to the denial of the motion to suppress the June 25, 2022, statement, found that defendant was not in custody at the time of the statement, and denied relief. However, in our disposition, we noted that the video recording of the statement admitted at the time of the suppression hearing was not included in the writ application. *See Hughes*, 23-K-512.

At trial, the State introduced the video-recorded portion of the June 25, 2022 statement and presented further testimony from Detectives Vaught and LeRouge, as well as Ms. Washington, regarding the circumstances surrounding the interview and the recorded exchange. We are now presented with a complete record which includes the video-recorded portion of the June 25, 2022, statement and trial testimony.

Upon review, we find the testimony presented at trial to be consistent with the suppression hearing testimony, no additional material facts are provided in the trial record. Detective Vaught testified that defendant was at the Gretna Police Department as a victim of a separate shooting and that when he met with the defendant. According to Detective Vaught, defendant was not under arrest, was unrestrained throughout, free to leave, and in fact, left with his mother. At the time of the interview, he thought of defendant as a "source of information."

While the interview was not initially recorded, recording began when defendant requested to speak with Detective Vaught a second time. Shortly into the recorded interview, defendant made an arguably inculpatory comment. At that point, Detective Vaught retrieved defendant's mother, and a *Miranda* advisal was given. The video confirms that the defendant's mother's initial reference to counsel was addressed by the detectives and that she elected to proceed. Also, Ms. Washington testified that while she was not present when detectives initially

questioned defendant, she was later brought into the interview room after being told that defendant had “confessed to something.” Notably, she acknowledged that after defendant’s rights were read, she allowed him to speak with detectives and that she had “no problem” with him speaking to them at that time. Again, the evidence shows defendant left freely after his interview. On this record, the trial court did not err in finding no custody prior to warning and that, after advisal, questioning proceeded with the mother’s agreement. In light of a complete trial record, we adhere to our prior ruling.

Regardless, even assuming error, which we do not, the erroneous admission of a confession or inculpatory statement is subject to harmless error analysis. *State v. Brown*, 18-1999 (La. 9/30/21), 330 So.3d 199, 248, *cert. denied*, -- U.S. --, 142 S.Ct. 1702, 212 L.Ed. 2d 596 (2022). Here, independent evidence establishing defendant’s guilt was presented, including Lugo’s eyewitness identification, surveillance video chronology of the shooting, linkage to the vehicle, the weapon match, social media evidence, and the jail call in which the participants referred to “4” and discussed the offense. The evidence also established a motive arising from prior conflict between the defendant and the victim. Thus, any error in the admission of the June 25, 2022 statement would be harmless in light of the evidence presented in this case. We therefore conclude that Assignment of Error Number Two lacks merit.

Assignment of Error Number Three-Admission of Other Crimes Evidence

In his final assignment of error, defendant asserts that the trial court erred in admitting other crimes evidence, including testimony regarding defendant’s theft arrest, evidence of a prior arrest involving defendant and Randall, and a YouTube video. Defendant maintains that this evidence was improperly admitted as “*res gestae*” or under La. C.E. art. 404(B) and served only to portray him as having a

criminal disposition. The State responds that the evidence was properly admitted and that defendant failed to preserve certain claims for review. Regardless, the State contends that any error was harmless.

July 2022 Theft Arrest

Defendant first asserts that the State exceeded the scope of the trial court's pretrial ruling by eliciting testimony that defendant had been arrested for theft. For context, on January 29, 2024, the State filed a Notice of Intent to Introduce Evidence as *Res Gestae* or In the Alternative Under La. C.E. Article 404(B). At the February 21, 2024 hearing, the State maintained that the Gretna shooting incident and the homicide investigation were closely intertwined and described the circumstances surrounding the failed firearm sale and subsequent interview of defendant, emphasizing that this information was referenced in defendant's statement.

Specifically, the State explained that on June 7, 2022, a shooting occurred on Romain Street in Gretna involving the defendant and his friend, Brandon Henry, who were identified as victims through surveillance footage and physical evidence. The investigation revealed that defendant and Henry arranged to sell a firearm for \$400, but instead, defendant allegedly took the money and fled with the firearm, after which he was fired at. The State further explained that, while being investigated as a victim in the Gretna shooting, defendant was simultaneously developed as a person of interest in the homicide. Defendant was brought to the Gretna Police Department for the shooting investigation, and JPSO detectives interviewed him there regarding the homicide. The State noted that the investigations overlapped and referenced one another and that the Gretna investigation resulted in the defendant being charged with theft.

The trial court found that the evidence was admissible as *res gestae*, explaining that it was “part of the entire narrative” necessary to show how defendant came to be at the Gretna Police Department and why he was questioned, including why Detective Vaught was called to that location. However, the trial court recognized that parameters limiting the scope of the State’s presentation of the evidence were warranted. Specifying that the State could not ask questions about whether he was subsequently prosecuted, charged, or “anything along those lines” explaining that it did not want to expand the evidence beyond what was necessary to play defendant’s statement and that the State could not disclose anything through witnesses that isn’t disclosed in the statement that would be played.

Defendant filed a writ application with this Court. We denied the application finding no abuse of discretion in allowing the State to refer to the events at the Gretna Police Department for purposes of narrative completeness. In our disposition we explained that the trial court’s ruling did not preclude the State from asking details about trying to sell a firearm at the time he was shot at as this information was part defendant’s statement that had already been deemed admissible at trial. *See also Hughes v. State*, 24-K-95 (La. App. 5 Cir. 2/29/24), writ denied, 24-316 (La. 3/14/24), 381 So.3d 705.

On appeal, defendant contends that the State improperly elicited testimony regarding his arrest for theft, exceeding the scope of the trial court’s ruling. Defendant refers to Detective LeRouge’s direct examination testimony regarding the circumstances under which defendant was questioned at the Gretna station by JPSO. On direct examination, the prosecutor asked, “Now fast-forward to July. Was [defendant] arrested by Gretna PD?” Detective LeRouge confirmed that he arrested defendant. The State then asked, “And for what reason?” to which the

detective answered for theft. The State followed, “of what?” and Detective LeRouge responded, “money ... for approximately \$400.” The State further asked, “and what was that theft of money, \$400, in relation to?” Detective LeRouge explained that the arrest was in connection with the June 7 shooting he had previously referenced, stating that they met with suspects, who provided statements regarding their involvement in the shooting and their reasons for doing so.

Later, during cross-examination of defendant’s mother, Ms. Washington, she confirmed that defendant was first brought to Gretna on a matter unrelated to this case. Defense counsel then stated, “That involves a theft and a case where somebody shot at [defendant],” to which Ms. Washington responded, “correct.”

Review shows the defense did not contemporaneously object to the State’s line of questioning at trial, and in fact, as set forth above, later referenced the alleged theft during examination of defendant’s mother. Thus, the issue is not properly preserved for review. Regardless, preservation aside, the erroneous admission of other crimes evidence is subject to harmless error analysis. *State v. Loggins*, 23-519 (La. App. 5 Cir. 10/30/24), 397 So.3d 1265, 1287. In determining harmless error, it is “not whether, in a trial that occurred without the error, a guilty verdict would surely have been rendered, but whether the guilty verdict actually rendered in the trial was surely unattributable to the error.”

An error is harmless beyond a reasonable doubt if it is unimportant in relation to the whole. *Id.* Here, we find the State’s reference to the theft arrest was harmless in light of the substantial other evidence of defendant’s guilt presented by the State, including, eyewitness testimony, surveillance video, the weapon match, social media evidence, and the jail call in which the participants referred to “4” and discussed the offense. The evidence also established a motive arising from prior

conflict between the defendant and the victim. Given this evidence, we conclude that the jury's verdict was surely unattributable to any possible error in eliciting testimony regarding defendant's arrest and that this assignment of error lacks merit as to this issue.

2020 Arrest with Randall and 2022 YouTube Video

Defendant contends that the trial court erred in admitting evidence of a prior juvenile arrest in which he and Randall were found in a stolen vehicle in 2020, arguing that the incident was unrelated to the charged offense, and did not qualify as *res gestae* or admissible other crimes evidence. He further argues that the trial court erred in admitting a YouTube rap video, asserting that the video had minimal probative value and was introduced to portray him as having a criminal disposition. The State responds that this evidence was properly admitted as *res gestae* to provide narrative completeness and explain the development of the investigation. The State further contends that the evidence was admissible under La. C.E. art. 404(B) to establish identity, motive, opportunity, and absence of mistake, particularly to show defendant's connection to Randall and access to the firearm used in the homicide, and alternatively, the State maintains the error was harmless.

For context, on April 15, 2025, the State filed a second Notice of Intent to Introduce Evidence as *Res Gestae* or in the Alternative under La. C.E. Article 404(B), seeking to introduce evidence of defendant's March 1, 2020, arrest with Randall. The State argued that the March 2020 arrest was intertwined and essential for narrative completeness contending that defendant's prior arrest with Randall, coupled with Randall's possession of the firearm used to murder Williams, provided necessary context for the investigation, and explained the development of an investigative lead. Alternatively, the State argued the evidence was admissible 404(B) evidence maintaining that the evidence was relevant to

defendant's identity as the perpetrator and his opportunity to possess the firearm through his connection with Randall.

Thereafter, on April 24, 2025, the State filed a Supplemental Notice of Intent to Introduce Evidence as *Res Gestae* or in the Alternative Under La. C.E. Article 404(B), seeking to introduce a rap music video and still images depicting the defendant. The State contended that Lugo's identification of defendant and the firearm in the video provided context for the investigation and connected defendant to the murder weapon. The State explained that a YouTube video titled "lee5pfbop" was located. The State further provided that Lugo stated the weapon used to murder Williams was traded by defendant to another individual at the video shoot.

On May 1, 2025, a hearing was held on the State's second notice pertaining to evidence of defendant's March 2020 arrest with Randall. The trial court found that the prior interaction between defendant, Randall, and the firearm could serve as the link that led investigators to develop defendant as a suspect, making it a part of the overall investigation. The court acknowledged the temporal gap between the 2020 arrest and the 2022 homicide but reasoned that if the prior incident provided the connection between defendant, Randall, and the weapon, it could still qualify as an integral part of the State's case.

On May 2, 2025, a hearing was held regarding the State's supplemental notice at which the State argued that the rap video was admissible as *res gestae* under La. C.E. art. 404(B) because it showed defendant's association with Randall and helped establish a connection between defendant and the firearm. Specifically, the State contended that defendant and Randall were both visible in the video and that testimony from Lugo would establish that the murder weapon was present at

the video shoot and maintained that it was necessary to explain case development, provide narrative completeness, and link the defendant to the firearm.

The trial court found that the video recording and still images from the video served as an additional link in connecting the defendant to the weapon and was significant, if not essential, to the State's case. The trial court concluded that the evidence was part of the State's case, necessary for narrative completeness, and admissible as *res gestae* under La. C.E. art. 404(B). The court allowed the State to introduce still images and muted video depicting the firearm in the possession of the defendant or Randall, subject to cross.

At trial, during Deputy Savage's testimony regarding defendant's March 2020 arrest, after a bench conference, the trial court instructed the jury that it may hear evidence of defendant's involvement in another offense and that such evidence could be considered only for a limited purpose, including proof of motive, opportunity, intent, preparation, plan, knowledge, identity, or absence of mistake or accident. The court further instructed that defendant was on trial only for the charged offense and could not be found guilty merely because he may have committed another offense. Detective Savage thereafter testified that defendant and Randall were apprehended together, and he identified defendant in court. He further stated that to his knowledge, the individuals were simply together in the vehicle and that he had no information regarding the nature of their relationship.

NOPD Detective Lane testified that during a 2022 investigation, officers recovered a firearm from a residence associated with Randall. He later secured the arrest warrant for Randall in connection with the firearm. Detective Vaught testified that the firearm used in this homicide was later determined to be the same weapon recovered in that investigation. He further explained that after reviewing law enforcement databases, he learned that the defendant and Randall were

previously arrested together in 2020, which he described as a connection between defendant, Randall, and the firearm.

During Detective Vaught's testimony, the State introduced the June 16, 2022 YouTube video and still image from the video. He testified that during his investigation, he located the video depicting Randall and defendant. The video was admitted over defense objection and played for the jury. He identified a screenshot from the video showing Randall and defendant and described Randall as holding a firearm while the defendant appeared in the background. He further compared the firearm depicted in the video to the weapon recovered from Randall's bedroom, noting similarities in features. He testified that he became aware of the video through Lugo.

During Lugo's testimony, the State questioned him about whether he had seen the firearm after the homicide, he stated that he saw it in a music video. He identified the defendant in a screenshot and stated that he believed that the defendant had sold the firearm to the individual holding the gun in the video, just prior to the video shoot.

The fundamental rule in Louisiana governing the use of evidence of other crimes, wrongs, or acts is that such evidence is not admissible to prove that the accused committed the charged crime because the defendant has committed other such crimes in the past. *State v. Fuxan*, 24-302 (La. App. 5 Cir. 5/14/25), 415 So.3d 387, 412. However, while the State may not admit evidence of other crimes to prove the defendant is a person of bad character, evidence of prior crimes may be admitted if the State establishes an independent relevance aside from proving the defendant's criminal character. *Id.* Evidence of other crimes, wrongs, or acts is allowed to prove motive, opportunity, intent, preparation, plan, knowledge, identity, absence of mistake or accident, or when it relates to conduct, formerly

referred to as *res gestae*, that constitutes an integral part of the act or transaction that is the subject of the present proceeding. *Id.* See also La. C.E. art. 404(B)(1).

Res gestae events constituting other crimes are deemed admissible because they are so nearly connected to the charged offense that the State could not accurately present its case without reference to them. *Fuxan*, 415 So.3d at 412. The *res gestae* doctrine is designed to allow the story of the crime to be told in its entirety by proving its immediate context of happenings in time and place. *Id.* at 413. Close connexity in time and location is required between the charged and uncharged conduct to ensure that “the purpose served by admission of the other crimes evidence is not to depict the defendant as a bad man, but rather to complete the story of the crime on trial by proving its immediate context of happenings near in time and place.” *Id.*

The test of whether *res gestae* evidence is admissible is not simply whether the State might somehow structure its case to avoid any mention of the uncharged act or conduct but whether doing so would deprive its case of narrative momentum and cohesiveness, with power not only to support conclusions, but to sustain the willingness of jurors to draw the inferences, whatever they may be, necessary to reach an honest verdict. *Id.* Even when the other crimes evidence is offered for a purpose allowed under Article 404(B)(1), the evidence is not admissible unless it tends to prove a material fact at issue or to rebut a defendant’s defense. *State v. Frickey*, 22-261 (La. App. 5 Cir. 3/1/23), 360 So.3d 19, 50, writ denied, 23-468 (La. 11/8/23), 373 So.3d 59.

For other crimes evidence to be admitted under La. C.E. art. 404(B)(1), one of the factors enumerated in the article must be at issue, have some independent relevance, or be an element of the crime charged. *Fuxan*, 415 So.3d at 413. The State is only required to make some showing of sufficient evidence to support a

finding that the defendant committed the other independently relevant acts. *Id.*

Additionally, the probative value of the extraneous evidence must outweigh its prejudicial effect. La. C.E. art. 403; *State v. Shorter*, 23-128 (La. App. 5 Cir. 11/29/23), 377 So.3d 421, 436, *writ denied*, 23-1669 (La. 5/29/24), 385 So.3d 704. The fact that the other acts or crimes occurred well before the offense for which defendant is on trial is not sufficient, in and of itself, to require the exclusion of the evidence. *Fuxan*, 415 So.3d at 413. Remoteness in time, in most cases, is only one factor to be considered when determining whether the probative value of the evidence outweighs its prejudicial effect. Generally, a lapse in time will go to the weight of the evidence, rather than to its admissibility. *Id.*

On appeal, it is the defendant's burden to show that he was prejudiced by the admission of the other crimes evidence. *Fuxan*, 415 So.3d at 413. Absent an abuse of discretion, a trial court's ruling on the admissibility of evidence pursuant to La. C.E. art. 404(B)(1) will not be disturbed. *Id.*

On the record before us, we find the trial court did not abuse its discretion in admitting the evidence as *res gestae* and under La. C.E. art. 404(B). The State offered the evidence to connect the defendant and Randall, and to link defendant to the firearm used in the homicide-relying on a prior arrest to show the two men's association and relying on a June 2022 video depicting both men, with Randall holding a firearm to support its theory regarding the weapon's connection to defendant.

Under this view, the evidence had independent relevance to issues of identity or linkage to the murder weapon and was sufficiently related to the charged offense; the trial court did not abuse its discretion in admitting the evidence to permit the State to present a coherent narrative of the investigation. *See State v. Tatum*, 25-295 (La. App. 5 Cir. 2/25/26), 432 So.3d 206 (where phone

videos of a firearm matching the murder weapon were found to have independent relevance to identity and linkage to the murder weapon, sufficient connection to permit a coherent narrative, and no abuse of discretion found; any error was harmless given the evidence linking defendant to the weapon); *also State v. Washington*, 24-550 (La. App. 5 Cir. 8/27/25), 421 So.3d 1020, *writ denied*, 25-1190 (La. 2/10/26), 425 So.3d 1201 (in which rap videos showing gang association and retaliatory motive were admitted as *res gestae*, and, alternatively, under art. 404(B), this Court found the videos provided necessary context regarding the relationship among the individuals and were admissible for narrative completeness and were admissible to establish motive, intent, knowledge, and identity, and that any error was harmless in light of overwhelming evidence of guilt.)

Further, even if the admission of the other crimes evidence in this case constituted error, which we do not find, an improper reference to other crimes evidence is subject to the harmless error rule, i.e., whether the verdict actually rendered in the case was surely unattributable to the error. *Loggins*, 397 So.3d at 1287. Considering the overwhelming evidence of defendant's guilt presented in this case, including eyewitness testimony of Lugo, evidence regarding the vehicle involved in the offense, and the recorded jail calls indicating defendant's involvement, as well as the evidence linking defendant to the firearm used in the homicide, any improper admission of other crimes evidence by the trial court was harmless when viewing the evidence as a whole. This assignment lacks merit.

ERROR PATENT DISCUSSION

The record was reviewed for errors patent according to La. C.Cr.P. art. 920; *State v. Oliveaux*, 312 So.2d 337 (La. 1975); and *State v. Weiland*, 556 So.2d 175 (La. App. 5 Cir. 1990).

The sentencing transcript and minutes reflect a life sentence “with eligibility for parole by operation of law,” but do not state that the sentence is to be served without benefit of probation or suspension of sentence as mandated by La. R.S. 14:30.1, and the Uniform Commitment Order (UCO) omits benefit restrictions. Under La. R.S. 15:301.1, statutory restrictions are self-activating, nevertheless, remand is necessary for correction of the UCO and sentencing minute entry to reflect the restrictions. *See State v. Davis*, 18-485 (La. App. 5 Cir. 4/10/19), 269 So.3d 1123, 1136, *writ denied*, 19-716 (La. 11/12/19), 282 So.3d 229.

DECREE

For the foregoing reasons, we affirm defendant’s conviction and sentence and remand with instructions to correct the uniform commitment order and sentencing minutes to reflect that the life sentence is to be served without benefit of probation or suspension of sentence, and to transmit the corrected documents to the appropriate authorities.

AFFIRMED; REMANDED WITH INSTRUCTIONS

SUSAN M. CHEHARDY
CHIEF JUDGE

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STEPHEN J. WINDHORST
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NOTICE OF JUDGMENT AND CERTIFICATE OF DELIVERY

I CERTIFY THAT A COPY OF THE OPINION IN THE BELOW-NUMBERED MATTER HAS BEEN DELIVERED
IN ACCORDANCE WITH **UNIFORM RULES - COURT OF APPEAL, RULE 2-16.4 AND 2-16.5** THIS DAY
SEPTEMBER 2, 2026 TO THE TRIAL JUDGE, CLERK OF COURT, COUNSEL OF RECORD AND ALL PARTIES
NOT REPRESENTED BY COUNSEL, AS LISTED BELOW:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Curtis B. Pursell", is written over a horizontal line.

CURTIS B. PURSELL
CLERK OF COURT

25-KA-478

E-NOTIFIED

24TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT (CLERK)		
HONORABLE STEPHEN C. GREFER (DISTRICT JUDGE)		
JANE C. HOGAN (APPELLANT)	DARREN A. ALLEMAND (APPELLEE)	HONORABLE PAUL D. CONNICK, JR.
THOMAS J. BUTLER (APPELLEE)	LEO M. AARON (APPELLEE)	(APPELLEE)
BROOKE A. HARRIS (APPELLEE)		

MAILED

NO ATTORNEYS WERE MAILED