

IN THE COURT OF APPEALS OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI

NO. 2008-KA-00800-COA

MICHAEL JEROME WILLIAMS JR. OCT - 3 2008 APPELLANT

Office of the Clerk
Supreme Court
VERSUS Appeals

STATE OF MISSISSIPPI

APPELLEE

APPEAL FROM THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE $\mathbf{1}^{ST}$ JUDICIAL DISTRICT OF HINDS COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI

BRIEF ON THE MERITS BY APPELLANT

Appellant Seeks Oral Argument

Facsimile:

OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER,
HINDS COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI
William R. LaBarre, MSB No
PUBLIC DEFENDER
Frank L. McWilliams, MSB No
Virginia L. Watkins, MSB. No
Assistant Public Defenders
Post Office Box 23029
Jackson, Mississippi 39225
Telephone: 601-948-2683

601-948-2687

CERTIFICATE OF INTERESTED PERSONS

The undersigned counsel of record certifies that the following persons have an interest in the outcome of this case. These representations are made in order that the justices of the Supreme Court and the judges of the Court of Appeals may evaluate possible disqualification or recusal.

William R. LaBarre, Esq.,
HINDS COUNTY PUBLIC DEFENDER
Frank L. McWilliams, Esq.
Virginia L. Watkins, Esq.,
Assistant Public Defenders
[Valorri Jones, Esq.
Former Assistant Public Defender]
Post Office Box 23029
Jackson, Mississippi 39225

Honorable Swan Yerger
CIRCUIT JUDGE
Post Office Box 327
Jackson, Mississippi 39205

Mr. Michael Jerome Williams Jr.
MDOC No. 62701
SMCI, SMCI No. 2
Post Office Box 1419
Leakesville, Mississippi 39451

So certified, this the 3"day of November, 200

Virginia L. Watkins, MSB No

Michael Jerome Williams Jr. v. State of Mississippi

2008-KA-00800-COA

Table of Contents

Certificate of Interested Persons	
Table of Contents	ii
Table of Authorities	iii
Statement of the Issues	1
Statement of the Case A. Course of the Proceedings Below B. Statement of Facts	2
Summary of the Argument	8
Argument	9
Conclusion	15
Certificate of Service	16

Michael Jerome Williams Jr. v. State of Mississippi

2008-KA-00800-COA

TABLE OF AUTHORITIES

Cases	<u>Page</u>
Deric Bailey v. State, 950 So.2d 225 (Miss.Ct.App. 2005)	10
Bush v. State, 895 So.2d 836 (Miss. 2005)	13; 14
Crane v. Kentucky, 476 U.S. 683 (1986)	11
Kennedy v. State, 278 So.2d 404 (Miss. 1973)	11
Keys v. State, 635 So.2d 845 (Miss. 1994)	11
Terry v. State, 614 So.2d 1115 (Miss. 1998)	11
Wade v. State, 748 So.2d 771 (Miss. 2000)	13; 14
Wells v. State, 604 So.2d 271 (Miss. 1992)	12
Constitutions, Statutes and other authorities	Page
MISS. CODE ANN. §97-3-19(e) (1972)	1; 13
MISS. CODE ANN. § 97-37-5 (1972)	1
AMEND. V, U.S. CONST.	11
AMEND. VI, U.S. CONST.	11
AMEND. XIV, U.S. CONST.	11
Art. 3, § 14, MISS. CONST.	11
MISSISSIPPI RULE OF EVIDENCE 103(a)	11
MISS.R.EVID. 403	12
MISS.R.EVID. 106	12

STATEMENT OF THE ISSUES

- I. The trial court abused its discretion to the fatal prejudice of Mr. Williams when it excluded evidence of his attempted suicide in the hours immediately following the shootings, and
- II. The verdict of the jury was insufficient as a matter of law because the State failed to prove deliberate design on the part of Mr. Williams, an essential element of the crime.

STATEMENT OF THE CASE

A. COURSE OF PROCEEDINGS BELOW

Michael Jerome Williams Jr. was indicted by a Hinds County grand jury for capital murder in the killings of Latanya Thompson and Calvin Jennings on November 20, 2005 during commission of a house burglary in violation of MISS. CODE ANN. § 97-3-19(2)(e) and possession of a firearm by a convicted felon. MISS. CODE ANN. § 97-37-5 (1972); CP 4.

Mr. Williams proceeded to trial before a duly constituted Hinds County jury on December 10, 2007. He was found guilty on all three counts and sentenced to serve two concurrent terms of life imprisonment without possibility of parole and three years on Count 3, possession of a firearm by a convicted felon, to be served concurrent to the two life terms, all in the custody of the Mississippi Department of Corrections. CP 74-79; RE 12-17; T. 454; 460. After prosecution of post-trial motions, all of which were denied, Mr. Williams appealed his conviction, deflected to this honorable Court. CP 83; 84; RE 18.

B. STATEMENT OF FACTS

By 2005, Michael Jerome Williams and Latanya Thompson had been a couple for ten years, beginning their relationship when Latanya was 16 and Mr. Williams just 18 or so. T. 343. Their first child, Arianna, was born when Latanya was 17; two other daughters, Bree and Kiki, followed in short order. T. 344. Marriage was apparently discussed throughout the relationship, Mr. Williams testified, and Latanya had sometime in 2005 purchased a wedding dress for \$400 that she stored at the home of her mother. T. 349-350. Money problems always seemed to interfere with setting an actual date, however, Mr. Williams testified. T. 349. And there was the issue of Mr. Williams' jealousy. "I was too jealous, a lot jealous," Mr. Williams testified at trial. T. 344.

Finally in late 2005, Latanya told Mr. Williams she was moving out to share a home with her best friend, Tawanda Hedge, Hedge's two children and Mr. Williams' three daughters.

T.345. Mr. Williams helped her move into a three bedroom house at 1080 Maria Drive and spent time there with Latanya and their children. T. 345- 346. Hedge and Zachary Thompson,

Latanya's brother who also lived there prior to the shootings, confirmed that Mr. Williams would come to the house to see Latanya and their children. T. 149; 184. He kept clothing there and sometimes spent the night with Latanya. T. 149; 347-348.

On Sunday, November 13, Mr. Williams testified he and Latanya went bowling and he spent that Sunday night with her. T. 348. He testified he got up the next morning for work at Frierson Bailey Lumber Co. and returned that afternoon to find his clothing and other effects packed up. T. 347. Latanya told him that she loved him as the father of her children but was no longer in love with him, Mr. Williams testified. T. 349.

Mr. Williams testified he was determined to win her back; his written statement given to police the morning of the shootings states he was desperately trying to "make amends" with Latanya, also known as Tanya. T. 278. Exhibit 46 (Attached as *Appendix "A."*).

In the early morning hours of that fateful Sunday morning, November 20, 2005, Mr. Williams left a friend's house to gas his car and on the way, drove past Tanya's home at 1080 Maria Drive. T.391. Her green Blazer was parked there and another, unfamiliar car. T. 355; 376; Exhibit 46. Mr. Williams testified on impulse he pulled over and parked his car to tell Tanya he loved her. T. 355; 359. Mr. Williams testified it was not uncommon for him to come at odd hours of the night; Latanya had never told him not to come and he had never before been denied entrance. T.354. And while the couple, like other couples, had arguments, Mr. Williams testified he had never hit Latanya, a fact her brother Zachary confirmed. T. 167; 360.

What Mr. Williams did not know, despite questioning Latanya and her family and friends, was that Latanya had begun seeing Calvin Jennings of Pelahatchie, a young man she met just a few weeks before. T. 353. She had invited Jennings to stay that night with her, their first together. T. 154. Hedge testified that to her knowledge, Mr. Williams did not know Latanya was seeing Jennings or anyone else. T. 186.

Unaware of Jennings' presence, Mr. Williams rang the doorbell three or four times and got no response. T. 355. Concerned, he stepped over to look into the window of Latanya's bedroom, which faced the street, and saw another man laying on what a week earlier had been his side of their bed. T. 356. Mr. Williams testified "I snapped," then went to his car, retrieved the .357 Magnum that he kept fully loaded in the car armrest console and kicked in the door. Tanya came to the front and Mr. Williams testified he "slung her off me" and went into the bedroom where he shot at the shape he saw in the dim, lit only by a glowing blue television screen. T. 375. Jennings ran out and across the street to 1085 Maria Drive, the home of Shamika Whitfield. T. 189. Jennings was bleeding heavily from a chest wound that would shortly kill him; Whitfield refused to let him into her house, but telephoned for police. T. 190.

Mr. Williams testified he looked for the man in the dark, then went through the living room, where he encountered Zachary; Mr. Williams headed next for the kitchen in search of Jennings, whom he did not know. T. 353; 357. When he left the kitchen, Mr. Williams saw Tawanda Hedge standing there and asked where the man was, using pejorative language. T. 176; 357. Hedge testified she tried to throw Mr. Williams off, to keep him from going into Tanya's room, to no avail. T. 177.

Mr. Williams testified he then returned to Latanya's bedroom, where he found her behind the door. T. 358; Exhibit 46 (*Appendix "A"*). Mr. Williams testified he shot her in the chest. T. 407. She slumped to the floor, hands up; "Mike, you're killing me." T. 407; 425. Mr. Williams

testified he said, "I'm sorry, baby," and fired twice more hitting Latanya in each side of the head. T. 425. One of those two shots went through her hand, before going through her head. T. 303-304; Dr. Stephen Hayne, who conducted the autopsies of both Latanya and Calvin Jennings, testified that each died of massive internal bleeding due to gunshot wounds. T. 298; 308. Of the three wounds Latanya sustained, one to the chest and two to the head, any one of the three would have been sufficient to kill her, Dr. Hayne testified. T. 306.

The testimony of Latanya's brother, Zachary Thompson, and her roommate, Tawanda Hedge, substantially supports the testimony of Mr. Williams' as to the course of events inside the house at 1080 Maria Drive, and Jennings' rush outside the house to supposed safety across the street.

Zachary testified when the first knock at the door awakened him, Latanya told him not to answer, that it was Mr. Williams. T. 153; 156. Mr. Williams had a revolver when he came through the door, Zachary testified, and Mr. Williams and Latonya "tussled" at the front door before Mr. Williams pushed her out of the way and into the dark bedroom where Zachary heard a gunshot. T. 157. Jennings then ran past Zachary and out of the house, saying, "he shot me." T.157. A stunned Zachary followed to find Jennings; when Zachary heard two more gunshots he ran back inside. T. 157. Mr. Williams ran past him out of the house with his gun; Zachary found his sister behind her bedroom door. T. 158. Zachary testified his sister appeared to be trying to speak and he told her to stay quiet, that an ambulance was on the way. T. 161. Latanya never spoke again, Zachary testified. T. 161. AMR ambulance personnel pronounced her dead at the scene. T. 218.

Hedge testified that noise at the door awakened her; she only got up when she heard a gunshot. T. 176. She opened the door to see Jennings running out of the house, then heard another shot. T. 176. Hedge testified that Mr. Williams turned the gun at her asking where the

"n----r" was; Hedge said she grabbed Mr. Williams to keep him from going after Tanya; she let him go, she testified, when he turned the gun on her, although Mr. Williams testified he never drew the weapon on her. T. 177; 402.

In response to the call of Shamika Whitfield, Officer Keith Dowd arrived about 3:30 A.M. at Whitfield's house where he found Jennings at the back door. T. 216. Jennings gave Dowd, a former paramedic, his name. T. 217; 218. Dowd testified Jennings, clad only in boxer shorts, was bleeding profusely from both entry and exit wounds in the chest. T. 217. Whitfield gave Dowd a thick curtain and a towel; Dowd wrapped Jennings in the curtain and kept pressure on the wounds with the towel until AMR personnel arrived. T. 217. When Dowd asked Jennings who shot him, Jennings said it was someone his girlfriend knew, before he lapsed into unconsciousness. T. 218. After AMR personnel took Jennings, Dowd testified he went to 1080 Maria Drive, where he was told Latanya was pronounced dead at the scene. T.218.

Mr. Williams testified after he left 1080 Maria Drive, he went to the home of a friend, "John," intending, he testified, "to do something crazy." T. 378. At trial, defense counsel proffered the testimony of Mr. Williams' mother, Beverly Williams, who testified that Mr. Williams entered her apartment early that morning with the gun placed to his temple and tried to fire the revolver, only to have it misfire. T. 323.

Raphael "Ralph" Ward, cousin to Mr. Williams testified that his girlfriend, cousin to Hedge, telephoned him that night to tell him what happened and to ask him to go to 1080 Maria Drive. T. 196. Ward, who testified for the state under subpoena at trial, testified he dressed and drove over to Maria Drive, where he discovered Latanya was dead. T. 197. Ward tried to reach his cousin by cellular telephone; Mr. Williams' sister answered and put Mr. Williams on the line. T. 198. Ward's statement to police related that Mr. Williams said, I think I shot her and that he

could not take Latanya being with anyone else. T. 199. Ward testified his conversation with Mr. Williams was about 30 to 40 minutes after the shooting. T. 201.

Mr. Williams went to the home of his mother, Beverly Williams, and shortly thereafter, to Precinct 1 to turn himself into police. T. 256. Ms. Williams notified police that she had the murder weapon at her home. T. 248; 256. Police secured a search warrant, to which Ms. Williams consented, and recovered the weapon in her home beneath an inflatable mattress at Elton Road Apartments in Jackson the night of November 20, 2005. T. 243.

Mr. Williams, who testified on his own behalf, testified that he had no idea Latanya was seeing another man when he drove past her home that morning. T. 352-353. Mr. Williams also testified that he did not know who he shot until after Jennings was dead. T. 206; 353; Exhibit 46 (Attached as Appendix "A").

SUMMARY OF THE ARGUMENT

It is the fundamental right of each person accused of a crime to present a complete defense to the jurors who are the sole authority on the weight and worth of testimony. In this case, the jury was denied testimony and other evidence, in violation of the U.S. and Mississippi constitutions and the Mississippi Rules of Evidence, to present a complete defense of heat of passion manslaughter in the killing of Latanya Thompson and Calvin Jennings.

Due to the fact that Mr. Williams did not carry a gun with him when he went to the home of Ms. Thompson, mother of his three children, and only retrieved his weapon when he saw her in bed with another man, he submits the state failed to prove the essential element of malice, which is the heart of any charge of deliberate design murder. Had the jury been aware of his attempted suicide, they might well have considered this evidence sufficient to sustain a verdict of manslaughter, versus capital murder.

ARGUMENT

I. The trial court abused its discretion to the fatal prejudice of Mr. Williams when it excluded evidence of his attempted suicide in the hours immediately following the shootings, and

The crucial point in this tragic case, in which two innocent people lost their lives and three little girls were essentially orphaned, is that evidence to further corroborate Mr. Williams' defense that he was caught up in an uncontrollable rage at seeing the mother of his children in bed with another man was excluded. T.269; 331-332; RE 20; 21-22.

At trial, the trial court redacted from the statement of Mr. Williams (Exhibit 46, *Appendix* "A") the following:

- Q. Where did you go after leaving the house?
- A. I just drove to one of my friends house. and [sic] I was thinking about killing myself. I called my mother and told her what I had did. My sister came and picked me up and took me to my mom's house. I talked to god. [initialed "MW] (Appendix "A")

Also excluded was testimony by Ms. Beverly Williams, Mr. Williams' mother, that he entered her apartment that morning with his gun pressed to his temple, distraught over what had happened. In proffered testimony, Ms. Williams told the court that he pulled the trigger several times, but it did not fire. T. 323. Police investigation showed that the .357 Magnum revolver was emptied inside the house 1080 Maria Drive, yet when they recovered the gun, it was fully loaded, another crucial fact the jury could have used to further evaluate Mr. Williams' claim that he was consumed by a violent and uncontrollable rage at seeing the mother of his children in bed with another man. T. 245.

In clearly emotional testimony at trial, Mr. Williams told the jury "when I saw that guy laying on my side of the bed, it was over with" ... "I couldn't stop, I couldn't stop." T. 357. It

was, Mr. Williams testified, as though there was only the roar of seashells inside his head from the time he looked in the window to when he left. T. 356.

Raphael Ralph Ward, Mr. Williams' cousin, spoke to Mr. Williams shortly after the slayings. T. 198. "Mike then told me that he couldn't take Tanya being with anybody else." Ward also testified at trial that Mr. Williams said he thought he had killed someone else, although this information did not appear in his written statement to police. T. 207.

In this case, the state argued vigorously to introduce Ward's testimony about his telephone conversation with Mr. Williams in the first hour after the shootings, yet fought any mention to the jury of his desire to commit suicide just moments after this telephone call, upon realizing what he had done. In the case of *Deric Bailey v. State*, 950 So.2d 225, 231 (Miss.Ct.App. 2006), *rehn'g den'd; cert.den'd*, this prosecutor made the following statement in closing:

Is this a manslaughter. No. [Defense counsel] talked about everything else, and in the last 10 seconds, oh, and if you don't think it's murder, it's heat of passion.

What is heat of passion. In law school I learned this is what heat of passion is. If you're married and you go in and you see your spouse in the bed with another person, you get mad. You don't have a weapon on you but you reach for the gun that's on the dresser and you shoot the lover. That is heat of passion. That is classic heat of passion. [emphasis added]

Id, 950 So.2d at 231. In *Bailey*, this Court did not pass on the propriety of the prosecutor's comments due to lack of a contemporaneous objection. Nonetheless, in this setting, which mirrors the scenario this same prosecutor described, it is disingenuous in the extreme for the prosecutor to claim evidence Mr. Williams tried to kill himself is irrelevant to his state of mind at the time the killings took place, particularly when she sought testimony of Mr. Ward within roughly the same time span.

A trial court's power to admit or exclude evidence is not unlimited; it must be exercised not only within the bounds of the Mississippi Rules of Evidence but also with the mandates of the United States Constitution and the Mississippi Constitution in mind. Reversal may be had only when the reviewing court finds the trial court abused its in excluding evidence *and* "a substantial right of the party is affected," MISSISSIPPI RULE OF EVIDENCE 103(a). [emphasis added]

Crane v. Kentucky, 476 U.S. 683 (1986) establishes that fundamental due process means the accused must have "a meaningful opportunity to present a complete defense." In this instance, Mr. Williams asserts that the trial court denied him the "meaningful opportunity to present a complete defense," as the U.S. Constitution and the Mississippi Constitution so require. AMEND. V, VI, XIV, U.S. CONST.; Art. 3, § 14, MISS. CONST. "When an accused is being tried for a serious offense, ...the jury is entitled to hear any testimony that the appellant might have in the way of an alibi or other defense." Kennedy v. State, 278 So.2d 404, 406 (Miss. 1973). [emphasis added].

In *Terry v. State*, 614 So.2d 1115, (Miss. 1998), the state Supreme Court reversed the embezzlement conviction of Kay Terry for the trial court's abuse of discretion in excluding evidence that would tend to show another may have embezzled the money. *Id.*, at 1123. "A criminal defendant is entitled to present his defense to the finder of fact, and it is fundamentally unfair to deny the jury the opportunity to consider the defendant's *defense where there is testimony* to support the theory. *Keys v. State*, 635 So.2d 845, 848-49 (Miss.1994). *Id.*, 1121. [emphasis added].

In excluding evidence of his attempt at suicide after the killings, the trial court held the evidence was irrelevant; that only his state of mind *during* events was relevant. The trial court also held that the evidence was somehow "prejudicial" to the state under MISS.R.EVID. 403, but

fails to state in the record *how* the evidence may have been prejudicial. Nevertheless, the trial court acceded to the prosecutor's questioning of Raphael Ward as to what Mr. Williams said *to him* in the hours immediately following the shootings, but nothing to show the jury Mr. Williams may have realized what he had wrought in his "uncontrollable rage" and passion and sought to kill himself.

Mr. Williams emptied all six shots from his revolver at the Maria Drive house; yet when police recovered it later that night, it was fully loaded. T. 245. At trial, upon introduction of the gun, Exhibit 30, the prosecutor made an exaggerated point with the jury that the gun had been found fully re-loaded. When the prosecutor sought redaction of Mr. Williams' statement, defense counsel sought to have the entire statement admitted. Giving the jury the entire statement would have provided Mr. Williams the opportunity to explain why the gun was re-loaded, to kill himself. T. 265. The evidence of Mr. Williams' state of mind in those hours after he shot and killed Latanya and Calvin Jennings is highly relevant. The trial court denied him the opportunity to introduce evidence supporting his defense of heat of passion manslaughter; this was information the jury lacked as it evaluated his testimony, depriving him of a fundamental right and it was an abuse of discretion to keep this testimony and information from the jury. In Wells v. State, 604 So.2d 271, 278 (Miss. 1992), the Court noted the requirements of MISS.R.EVID. 106 "When a writing or recorded statement or part thereof is introduced by a party, an adverse party may require him at that time to introduce any other part or any other writing or recorded statement which ought in fairness be considered contemporaneously." In that case, the Court affirmed the conviction, but noted that the disputed evidence, a four-hour videotape, was available in its entirety for the jury to view if it wished and that Wells had the opportunity to show those portions she considered relevant. *Id.*, at 278.

Mr. Williams therefore respectfully asks this honorable Court to reverse and remand his case for a new trial or, under authority of *Wade v. State*, 748 So.2d 771 (Miss. 2000), affirm the conviction and remand for re-sentencing as manslaughter.

II. The verdict of the jury was insufficient as a matter of law because the State failed to prove deliberate design on the part of Mr. Williams, an essential element of the crime.

Under MISS. CODE ANN. § 97-3-19(2)(e), the state had to prove that Mr. Williams (1) killed Latanya Thompson and Calvin Jennings (2) without any authority of law (3) when while engaged in the crime of burglary. Under § 97-3-19(3), an indictment for capital murder gives notice to the accused that the indictment may also include manslaughter.

Under authority of *Bush v. State*, 895 So.2d 836, 843 (¶ 16) (Miss. 2005), "...the critical inquiry is whether the evidence shows "beyond a reasonable doubt that accused committed the act charged, and that he did so under such circumstances that every element of the offense existed; and where the evidence fails to meet this test it is insufficient to support a conviction."

Mr. Williams respectfully submits the state failed to prove the element of deliberate design beyond a reasonable doubt, particularly since he was denied the opportunity to put before the jury evidence tending to support that he was in an uncontrollable rage during the shootings such that would support a manslaughter verdict.

Quite frankly, this is an issue tested as much against our experience as human beings as it is against the law. Who among us has not done an act in blind rage? And, only afterward in the coolness of reason do we realize our mistake? As lawyers, we do not check our humanity upon taking our oath as officers of the court, just as we are mindful of our duty to uphold the law and seek justice.

It is uncontroverted that Mr. Williams did not know Latanya was seeing Calvin Jennings.

Mr. Williams confessed that he "snapped" when he stepped over the front door, looked into her

bedroom window and saw her with another man. Mr. Williams did not walk up to the house with his gun, ready for violence. It was not until he saw her with someone else, "snapped" and went to his car, retrieved his gun and kicked in the door; his rage was so blind that he was virtually oblivious to the presence of his children across the hall from the room of their mother. Then, there is the prosecutor's own argument as to what heat of passion manslaughter should be. Mr. Williams had been with Latanya since he was 18 and she 16; she was the mother of his children. They were not married but had been together for a decade and the shock of seeing her with another man was too much. Mr. Williams confessed he killed Latanya, confessed he killed Calvin Jennings and that he broke down the door to enter, all in the heat of his anger and passion that he had been replaced by Jennings.

"Should the facts and inferences considered in a challenge to the sufficiency of the evidence "point in favor of the defendant on any element of the offense with sufficient force that reasonable men could not have found beyond a reasonable doubt that the defendant was guilty," the proper remedy is for the appellate court to reverse and render. *Id.* [internal citations omitted]

Mr. Williams would respectfully submit that the state failed to show beyond a reasonable doubt that he committed these crimes with the requisite degree of malice sufficient to sustain a conviction of capital murder. He would humbly ask this honorable Court to reverse this cause and remand for a new trial or exercise its inherent authority under *Wade v. State*, 748 So.2d 771 (Miss. 2000), and remand for re-sentencing as manslaughter.

CONCLUSION

In this case, the trial abused its discretion in excluding the testimony of Ms. Beverly Williams and redacting the statement of Mr. Williams showing that he attempted suicide or contemplated suicide. This denied him the fundamental right to present a complete defense to the jury that the killings were done in the heat of passion and an uncontrollable rage when he discovered Latanya Thompson in bed with another man, Calvin Jennings. He would also submit that the state failed to prove beyond a reasonable doubt the essential element of deliberate design necessary to sustain the verdict of capital murder.

For these reasons, supported by the legal authority presented herein, Mr. Williams humbly asks this honorable Court to vacate these convictions and reverse and remand his cause for a new trial or to vacate the capital murder convictions and return his cause to the Hinds County Circuit Court for re-sentencing as manslaughter under the direct remand rule.

Respectfully submitted,

Virginia L. Watkins, MSB No. 9052

Assistant Public Defender

PUBLIC DEFENDER, HINDS COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI

William R. LaBarre, MSB No

PUBLIC DEFENDER

Frank L. McWilliams, MSB No. Virginia L. Watkins, MSB No.

Assistant Public Defenders Post Office Box 23029 Jackson, Mississippi 39225

Telephone:601-948-2683

Facsimile: 601-948-2687

Certificate of Service

I, the undersigned attorney, do hereby certify that I have this day caused to be hand-delivered a true and correct copy of the foregoing BRIEF OF APPELLANT ON THE MERITS to the following:

Honorable Robert Shuler Smith,
DISTRICT ATTORNEY
Hinds County Courthouse
Post Office Box 22747
Jackson, Mississippi 39225

Honorable Swan Yerger
CIRCUIT JUDGE
Hinds County Courthouse
Post Office Box 327
Jackson, Mississippi

Honorable James Hood III
ATTORNEY GENERAL
Charles W. Maris Jr.
Assistant Attorney General
Walter Sillers State Office Building
Post Office Box 220
Jackson, Mississippi 39205-0220

And by United States Mail, postage prepaid, to

Mr. Michael Jerome Williams Jr.

MDOC No. 62701 SMCI, SMCI No. 2

Post Office Box 1419

Leakesville, Mississippi 39451

So certified, this the 3 day of Mully, 2008

Virginia/L. Watkins, MSB No.

Certifying Attorney



WITNESS/SUSPECT STATEMENT FORM CASE# 2005-244193

OB 10/13/1977	SSN#425-35-2061
OB 10/13/19/1	33N# <u>423-33-2061</u>
DDRESS 245 Elton Park	
OME PHONE# 601-376-0772	WORK PHONE#
am currently at the Jackson Polispeak with them regarding this is have elected to waive my rights. We had been broke up for a comake amends of everything. It Last night I was up thinking about love her. I told my partner that her. I went over. I went there a or 4 times. I looked through the snapped. I usually keep a gun of the gun, kicked the door in. Should dude. By that time I don't know	Williams Parker. I am 28 years old and can read & write. I ce Department with Detectives Eric Smith & Ryan Jenkins to investigation. I have been advised of my Miranda rights and I and give a statement without the presence of an attorney would be of days. I had been there for 3 straight days trying to eff here alone after the third day trying to give her space. But it. I thought about going over there telling her how much I I was going to get some gas. I decided to go over there to see and I saw a car parked over there. I rang the door bell about 3 to binds and I saw her lying in the bed with a dude. At time I was not. I ran in the room that they were in and I shot the some back in the room and I shot her in the chest. She
	said baby I'm sorry and I shot her again. After that I just ran. ruth. I didn't mean for none of this to happen. MW
	Questions & Answers
Q: How long had you and LaTo A: 10 years. MW	mya been seeing each other?
Q: Do you all have any children	ı together?
A: Yes. 3 girls. MW	
Q: Have you and LaTonya ever	AA141
A: No. I never hit her. Just son Q: What type of vehicle were y	//
A: My green Cadillac MW/	ou dirving this morning. Apperium Appe
Q: What type of gun did you ha	7. 1 8 2 pas



WITNESS/SUSPECT STATEMENT CONTINUATION

CASE# 2005-244193		
NAME Michael Williams	DATE/TIME November 20, 2005 0801	
Continuation Pg. 2		
Q: Where did you get this gun?		
A: I bought it off the street a long time ago MW		
Q: Do you recall how many times you shot the guy?		
A: I don't even remember MW	•	
Q: Where was he when you shot him?		
A: In the bedroom standing up. /WW		
Q: did you see this guy with any type of weapon?		
A: I don't remember. All I remember is seeing them through the	window and going into the house. MW	
Q: Where was LaTonya when you shot her?	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	
A: In the room standing behind the door MW		
Q: Do you recall how many times you shot her?		
A: I think 3. MW		
Q: Did LaTonya have a weapon of any type?		
A: I don't know. MW		
Q: Who else was present in the house when this occurred?		
A: I don't even remember/MW		
Q: Where did you go after leaving the house?	. 1	
A: I just drove to one of my friends house. and I was thinking about the latest and I was the latest and I was thinking about the latest and I was the la		
what I had did. My sister came and picked me up and took me to	my mom's house. I talked to god///w_	
Q:; What did you do with the gun you used this morning? A: My mom got it form me MW		
Q: Do you know what they did with it?		
A: She got it as far away from me as possible MW		
Q: What did you and your mother do next?		
A: We talked about turning myself in. My uncle came over. I to	ld her that I was sorry for what I did. We drove to	
the Precinct and I turned myself in MW	id not that I was sorry for what I did. We drove to	
Q: Had you ever seen or had any past altercations with the guy yo	on shot this morning?	
A: To this day I never really seen him MW	ou one the morning.	
Q Did you know LaTonya was seeing someone else?		
A: No.MW	1. 1.	
Q: Who else did you tell about this incident other that your mother	er?	
A: My mother told my sister MW	er? Appendix "A" P. 2 B 2 P95	
Q: What is your mother's name?	2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2	
A: Beverly Williams MW	P. 2 0/ 6 P95	
Q: Is everything you told me true & correct?	1 0 13	
A: From the bottom of my heart MV	A	
SIGNED Of STATES SIGN	ED Wohael Williams	

SIGNED Slee