



Domestic Violence Case Summary Criminal Cases

**Including June 2009 – September 2009 Cases
Presented by the Publications Committee of the
Florida Court Education Council**

The Publications Committee of the Florida Court Education Council presents these summaries of both civil and criminal decisions primarily of the Florida Supreme Court and intermediate appellate courts. Until June 2008, these summaries were written, edited, and reviewed quarterly by Eleventh Circuit judges and managers.* The summaries are now written by the Office of the State Courts Administrator's (OSCA) Office of Court Improvement; OSCA's Publications Unit edits the summaries and prepares the index for this document. Since the summaries are written immediately after issuance of each decision, readers are encouraged to check all cases cited before relying on them. This is a cumulative collection consisting primarily of cases from 1996 to the present, but a few cases before 1996 are included as well. Although this collection is typically published quarterly, case summaries added in June, July, August, and September are indicated in **bold**.

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***Roberts v. Lamberti*, 10 So. 3d 1209 (Fla. 4th DCA 2009)**

A defendant is entitled to have a bond set for the offense of violation of an injunction for protection against domestic violence.

***Harmon v. State*, ___ So. 3d ___, 2009 WL 1874083 (Fla. 2d DCA 2009)**

The Second District Court of Appeal found that the mere accusation of a prior domestic violence offense is insufficient reason to deny expunction of records pursuant to section 943.0585, Florida Statutes. The court held that the seriousness of the offense standing alone, was insufficient to support denial of the petition.

Aggravated Stalking

***Miller v. State*, 4 So. 3d 732 (Fla. 1st DCA 2009)**

The trial court gave an additional special instruction that stated that malice may be inferred when a defendant disregards an injunction for protection against domestic violence pursuant to section 784.048(4), Florida Statutes. The trial court therefore instructed the jury that it could find the defendant guilty of acting maliciously even if it found only that he acted in disregard of an injunction. The special instruction effectively eliminated the element of malice that the state had the burden to prove. The statute requires more than simple disregard of an injunction. The appellate court reversed the aggravated stalking conviction and sentence, and remanded the case for retrial on the aggravated stalking count under the revised standard instructions.

Bond

***Roberts v. Lamberti*, 10 So. 3d 1209 (Fla. 4th DCA 2009)**

A defendant is entitled to have a bond set for the offense of violation of an injunction for protection against domestic violence.

***Montgomery v. Jenne*, 744 So. 2d 1148 (Fla. 4th DCA 1999)**

The magistrate setting bail in a battery case considered the arrest affidavit (but no photographs), which alleged the defendant broke the victim's ribs. Subsequently, upon the trial court's consideration of photographs showing the same injuries detailed in the arrest affidavit, the judge, on his own motion, increased the bond. Granting habeas relief, the district court held that (1) a trial judge does not have the authority to increase the bond on his or her own motion; (2) it was error to increase the bond without giving the defendant the required three hours notice, especially since the case was before a judge on the defendant's motion to reduce bond; and (3) increasing the bond is improper unless the state demonstrates that such increase is justified by information not previously available to the committing magistrate who set the initial bond. Since the photographs amounted to "only the same information in different form," the trial judge had no authority to increase the bond.

Burglary

***State v. Byars*, 804 So. 2d 336 (Fla. 4th DCA 2001)**

The defendant was charged with first degree murder and armed burglary of an occupied structure with assault and battery. The defendant had an injunction against him preventing him from entering the structure where the victim was killed. The defendant successfully moved that the second count of armed burglary be dismissed based on *Miller v. State*, 733 So. 2d 955 (Fla. 1998), in which the court held that a complete defense to burglary is established when the defendant can prove that the premises were open

to the public. The state challenged the dismissal because of the domestic violence injunction, which encompassed the victim's workplace. The district court ruled that the intent of *Miller* must be upheld because of the statutory wording in section 810.02(1), Florida Statutes. Because the defendant entered a store that was open to the public, a charge of burglary cannot stand.

State v. Suarez-Mesa, 662 So. 2d 735 (Fla. 2d DCA 1995)

The husband, who had shared the house with his wife but was restrained by a court order (an injunction) from entering the property, was subject to a burglary charge when he entered the premises with the intent to commit a crime.

Collateral Estoppel

State v. Alberts, 9 Fla. Weekly Supp. 278 (Fla. 11th Cir. Ct. 2002)

The state is not collaterally estopped from prosecuting a defendant on the same allegations as were heard in a prior separate civil domestic violence action in which the civil petition was denied. The court held that the parties in the criminal case were different from the parties in the civil case. However, even in the event that the parties and issues were the same, the court held that the elements for a cause of action in a civil domestic violence case were different from the elements required for proof in the criminal domestic violence action.

Conditions of Probation

State v. Williams, 712 So. 2d 762 (Fla. 1998)

The requirement that the defendant pay for drug testing is a special condition of probation that the trial court must pronounce orally at sentencing.

Consent

State v. Clyatt, 976 So. 2d 1182 (Fla. 5th DCA 2008)

The state sought certiorari review of a trial court order barring it from calling independent witnesses to prove that the victim did not consent to an alleged battery committed on her by the defendant. The alleged incident occurred in a fast food restaurant drive-thru where many witnesses observed the defendant bashing the victim's head against the car window from inside the car and choking her. The victim refused to cooperate with the state in the defendant's prosecution, leaving the state with the options of dismissing the case or relying on third-party witness testimony to prove the case. When the state decided to proceed with the prosecution, it had to show that the victim was struck against her will. The testimony provided by third-party witnesses of the attack would constitute merely circumstantial evidence that the victim did *not* consent to the beating. Yet, the testimony of the third-party witnesses also would indicate that the victim seemed to be resisting the attack and was visibly upset, thus leaving but one reasonable inference that the beating was uninvited. The state was unable to provide the court with a specific case where a victim's lack of consent could be proven circumstantially so the court did not allow the witnesses' testimony without having the victim's testimony as well. The district court held that lack of consent has been proven by circumstantial evidence in other types of criminal prosecutions. Additionally, circumstantial evidence has been enough to prove other issues such as a defendant's state of mind. Ultimately, the district court held that there was no distinction between consent and state of mind; consent could thusly be proven by circumstantial evidence as well. Also, the district court looked to the importance of the relevance of the witnesses' testimony. By failing to allow such testimony, the trial

court barred a form of evidence that could have sufficiently established the victim's lack of consent. The order barring third-party eyewitness testimony was quashed.

State v. Conley, 799 So. 2d 400 (Fla. 4th DCA 2001)

The state appealed an order dismissing felony battery. An adversarial hearing occurred, but the state had neglected to subpoena the witnesses to the events. The victim was present and claimed that she instigated the argument and that the injuries she sustained were a result of her own actions, directly contradicting the eyewitness account. The victim claimed she never wanted charges brought against the defendant. The judge dismissed the charges despite the state's objection. In relying both on rule 3.133(b), Florida Rules of Criminal Procedure, and on *State v. Hollie*, 736 So. 2d 96 (Fla. 4th DCA 1999), the district court held that because the hearing was an adversarial hearing at which the defendant never motioned the court for dismissal and because probable cause was clearly established, a dismissal was clearly in error. Judge Warner concurred in a separate opinion, finding that the lower court made an additional error in finding that consent to a battery is a defense. Consent is only a defense in cases of sexual battery, NOT domestic violence. Judge Warner continued by noting consent as a defense to domestic violence is in complete contravention to section 742.2901(2), Florida Statutes, in that the intent behind creating the statute was to make domestic violence a criminal act as opposed to a "private matter."

Contempt

Sando v. State and Lamberti, 972 So. 2d 271 (Fla. 4th DCA 2008)

The appellant sought habeas corpus relief after being sentenced to jail for six months for allegedly violating a domestic violence permanent injunction with a "purge" provision requiring her to complete a 60-day domestic violence class. The appellee filed an affidavit of violation of the permanent injunction by appellant. The court issued a notice of hearing on November 8, 2007, for a hearing on December 11, 2007. The petition reflects that the appellant was not served until December 13, 2008, with the notice of the hearing (two days after the hearing had been held). The court found that the appellant had been served on November 15, 2007. The appellant failed to appear at the hearing and based on the appellee's un rebutted testimony, the trial court found that the appellant had violated the injunction and ordered her to be jailed for six months. The trial court included a "purge" provision that she would be released upon completion of a sixty-day domestic violence class. The appellant was arrested and, at the time of this appeal, remained in custody. The district court held that the trial court's order clearly amounted to a finding of criminal contempt rather than civil contempt since the sanction imposed sought to punish the appellant and the purge itself required her to remain in jail for at least 60 days. The district court noted that the state did not file criminal charges for the appellant's alleged violations nor was she brought back before the court once arrested. Additionally, the state never moved for an order to show cause why the appellant should not be held in criminal contempt. The district court granted habeas corpus relief because the appellant was denied due process before being deprived of her liberty. The state was allowed to file the proper charges for the appellant's contempt in accordance with contempt proceedings that afford the appellant due process.

Jones and Swindle v. Miami-Dade County Corrections and Rehabilitation Department, 967 So. 2d 342 (Fla. 3d DCA 2007)

The appellants sought habeas corpus relief as a result of being sentenced to jail time for failure to comply multiple times with an order to attend a batterers intervention program. Both appellants had received numerous notices for civil contempt hearings for failure to comply with the order to attend the program. After being held in civil contempt several times with the ability to purge the contempt by attending the course, the appellants were issued jail sentences by the court in both cases. While understanding the trial court's frustration with the appellants' continued disregard of the court's order, the district court found

that the final contempt orders were criminal in nature. All the previous contempt orders contained a purge provision, unlike the last orders wherein the appellants were sentenced. The district court indicated that civil contempt is intended to obtain compliance, while the intention of criminal contempt is to punish. In these instances, incarceration was used to obtain compliance, and therefore, required the contemnor to include a purge provision. Once the trial court issued the sentences, the trial court no longer sought compliance but, rather punishment for their failure to comply. The district court stated that these contempt orders were criminal, and the contemnors must be afforded due process, including the right to be represented by counsel if indigent. Additionally, if the sentence is to last longer than six months, the contemnor has a right to a jury trial, and the court must provide a written order with the factual basis for the contempt. Accordingly, the district court granted the appellants' petition for habeas corpus relief and ordered the release of the appellants. The district court further instructed the trial court, if it wished to impose punishment in these contempt cases, to comply with rule 3.840, Florida Rules of Criminal Procedure.

State v. Delama and Jimenez, 967 So. 2d 385 (Fla. 3d DCA 2007)

After an allegedly battered woman was subpoenaed to discuss charges brought against her alleged abuser and failed to appear, the state sought a ruling to show cause for indirect criminal contempt. The court, however, refused to issue the show cause order. On appeal, the district court held that the trial court did not have the authority to deny the state's request to issue a show cause order against an alleged victim of domestic violence when the victim does not want to testify. Note: the dissenting opinion cites California's more "socially progressive" rule that exempts victims of domestic or sexual violence from contempt if they refuse to testify as better public policy than what has been adopted in Florida.

Gordon v. State, 960 So. 2d 31 (Fla. 4th DCA 2007)

A husband appealed several orders stemming from an indirect criminal contempt proceeding arising from alleged violations of a permanent injunction that his wife was granted. In 2004, the wife moved to show cause why the husband should not be held in contempt for instances when he violated the injunction by allegedly sending threatening messages, making phone calls, and stalking the wife at a shopping center. After a hearing, the court entered an order to show cause why the husband should not be held in indirect criminal contempt and attached the wife's motion and affidavit, while the order itself stated no facts constituting the alleged contempt. At arraignment, the husband was questioned about his indigency and was found not to be indigent for the purposes of appointing a public defender. On September 21, 2004, the husband renewed his request for a public defender and, additionally, moved for a change of venue given that the wife's new boyfriend had recently been elected a judge in the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit; both requests were denied. After a hearing, the court found that the husband knowingly and willfully violated the order, and the case was reset for sentencing after the husband spent a "brief period of time in jail." At sentencing, the court placed the husband on probation for one year, 30 days in the county jail on weekends, and regular psychological counseling. On appeal, for which a public defender was appointed to him, the husband argued that fundamental error occurred when the court failed to put forth the essential facts of the contempt and appoint him a public defender. The court held that, although the hearing could have been fashioned differently, the evidence supported the court's finding of contempt. However, while failure to appoint a public defender at the first arraignment was proper, the court held that failure to appoint a public defender for the contempt hearing was improper. Several of the husband's other contentions were also deemed meritless. The court held that even though the wife's new boyfriend was a judge-elect in that circuit, that fact did not mandate a change of venue and that appointing the wife's attorney as a special prosecutor to handle the contempt charge was not improper but, rather, a means of effectuating judicial economy. The district court affirmed the trial court's ruling, but reversed and remanded on the contempt hearing to appoint counsel for the husband.

Saridakis v. State, 936 So. 2d 33 (Fla. 4th DCA 2006)

The appellant was found guilty of indirect criminal contempt for violating a “no contact” order and was sentenced to one year of probation. He appealed on the basis that criminal contempt is not specifically designated as a first degree misdemeanor. See section 775.081(2), Florida Statutes (“Any crime declared by statute to be a misdemeanor without specification of degree is of the second degree”). The appellant further argued that since second degree misdemeanors carry a statutory maximum of sixty days, his sentence exceeded the statutory maximum. The district court affirmed the trial court’s decision, finding that criminal contempt is neither a misdemeanor nor a felony but is punishable by a term of imprisonment up to one year. Although criminal contempt carries a punishment similar to a misdemeanor and “for all practical purposes criminal contempt is the equivalent of a misdemeanor,” it is not a misdemeanor as the legislature did not specifically give it that designation.

McAtee v. State of Florida, 899 So. 2d 1245 (Fla. 4th DCA 2005)

In a criminal contempt hearing, the state has the burden to proceed first and prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the defendant intended to violate the court’s order. The lower court’s determination that the defense should be heard first was a denial of due process as it erroneously placed the burden on the contemnor to prove that she should not be held in contempt. This is contrary to the procedure outlined in rule 3.840, Florida Rules of Criminal Procedure.

Graves v. State, 872 So. 2d 298 (Fla. 2d DCA 2004)

The district court affirmed a judgment that adjudicated a respondent guilty of “direct criminal contempt” for violating his injunction despite a written order holding the respondent in “indirect criminal contempt.” However, the district court did remand the case to the trial court to correct the court reporter’s erroneous transcription of the judge’s oral pronouncement.

Hunter v. State, 855 So. 2d 677 (Fla. 2d DCA 2003)

The respondent was ordered to successfully complete a batterers intervention program as part of an injunction. The respondent enrolled and attended eight classes before being terminated by the program for failure to pay the provider fee and provide proof of community service hours. The respondent was sentenced to ninety days in jail for indirect criminal contempt for violating the injunction. The respondent testified that because he was sentenced to prison on an unrelated offense, he did not have any income and wanted to complete the community service but could not because of his asthma. Furthermore, the batterers program issued a trespass warning against him because he had failed to pay the provider fees. The district court held that the respondent demonstrated a willingness to attend class, but because of his indigency and disabled status, he could not. Furthermore, the state failed to prove an intentional violation of the injunction.

Hagan v. State, 853 So. 2d 595 (Fla. 5th DCA 2003)

The district court reversed the defendant’s conviction for indirect criminal contempt for violating an injunction against repeat violence. The court held, inter alia, that the affidavit of violation was insufficient as it was not based on personal knowledge and the trial court committed reversible error by not having the proceeding transcribed, preventing the trial court from refuting the defendant’s additional due process claims. The court reversed the decision without prejudice to new proceedings being initiated in conformity with rule 3.840, Florida Rules of Criminal Procedure.

Fay v. State, 753 So. 2d 682 (Fla. 4th DCA 2000)

The district court held that it was error for the trial court to deny a motion for judgment of acquittal when the defendant was charged with indirect criminal contempt for possession of a firearm in violation of an injunction for protection against domestic violence, when the evidence that the defendant possessed a firearm prior to the issuance of the injunction, coupled with the circumstantial evidence relating to current possession of the firearm, was insufficient to rebut a reasonable hypothesis of innocence.

Lapushinsky v. Campbell, 738 So. 2d 514 (Fla. 1st DCA 1999)

The district court granted a writ of habeas corpus when the trial judge, hearing the petition for permanent injunction, learned of a violation of the temporary injunction and, in addition to entering the permanent injunction, held the respondent in direct criminal contempt and sentenced him to thirty days in jail. The district court held that the trial court failed to comply with the procedural safeguards set forth in rule 3.840, Florida Rules of Criminal Procedure, when instituting the contempt action.

Burk v. Washington, 713 So. 2d 988 (Fla. 1998)

The Florida Supreme Court approved the result of the Fifth District Court of Appeal's opinion but held that in the future, the criminal speedy trial rule should not apply to criminal contempt proceedings initiated by a court on its own motion.

Washington v. Burk, 704 So. 2d 540 (Fla. 5th DCA 1997)

Indirect criminal contempt is subject to the speedy trial rule, whether initiated by arrest or service of an order to show cause. When the defendant was arrested for violation of an injunction, the state filed a *nolle prosequere* in county court after the defendant filed a motion for discharge, and the state subsequently filed a motion for an order to show cause in circuit court. The speedy trial period for the circuit court action commenced with the defendant's initial arrest rather than with the service of the show cause order.

Brooks v. Barrett, 694 So. 2d 38 (Fla. 1st DCA 1997)

In a contempt proceeding, it was error for the court to amend *sua sponte* a previously entered mutual injunction against domestic violence by either the husband or the wife on the ground that the mutual injunction was prohibited by statute, and the court should enter in its place an injunction against domestic violence against the husband only.

Pompey v. Cochran, 685 So. 2d 1007 (Fla. 4th DCA 1997), **superseded by Fla. Fam. L.R.P. 12.616 as stated in Akridge v. Crow**, 903 So. 2d 346 (Fla. 2d DCA 2005)

Incarceration of the father for failure to pay an amount ordered in prior contempt proceedings arising out of a failure to pay child support was unlawful since there was no evidence to support the trial court's affirmative finding that the father had the ability to pay the purge amount.

Steiner v. Bentley, 679 So. 2d 770 (Fla. 1996)

The statutory directive that domestic violence injunctions "shall" be enforced by civil contempt is directive rather than mandatory. The legislature cannot eliminate the court's inherent indirect criminal contempt power. The portion of the statute expressing legislative intent that indirect criminal contempt may not be used to enforce compliance with injunctions for protection against domestic violence is unconstitutional.

Walker v. Bentley, 678 So. 2d 1265 (Fla. 1996)

The statutory directive that domestic violence injunctions "shall" be enforced by civil contempt is permissive rather than mandatory. The legislature cannot eliminate the court's inherent indirect criminal contempt power. The portion of the statute expressing legislative intent that indirect criminal contempt may not be used to enforce compliance with injunctions for protection against domestic violence is unconstitutional.

Ramirez v. Bentley, 678 So. 2d 335 (Fla. 1996)

The statutory directive that domestic violence injunctions "shall" be enforced by civil contempt is permissive rather than mandatory.

Featherstone v. Montana, 684 So. 2d 233 (Fla. 3d DCA 1996)

The fact that the husband had previously been found in civil contempt and incarcerated for noncompliance with court orders does not bar indirect criminal contempt proceedings based on the same noncompliance.

Zelman v. State, 666 So. 2d 188 (Fla. 2d DCA 1995)

The order holding the husband in indirect criminal contempt for violating a temporary restraining order against harassing his wife by failing to pay her health insurance premiums in a timely fashion was reversed. Neither the final judgment of dissolution nor the temporary restraining order adequately apprised the husband of conduct that was prohibited in regard to the timeliness of payment of the wife's health insurance premiums. The husband's payment of premiums after the due date had passed, but within the grace period, did not constitute indirect criminal contempt.

Counsel (and lack of)

Gordon v. State, 960 So. 2d 31 (Fla. 4th DCA 2007)

A husband appealed several orders stemming from an indirect criminal contempt proceeding arising from alleged violations of a permanent injunction that his wife was granted. In 2004, the wife moved to show cause why the husband should not be held in contempt for instances when he violated the injunction by allegedly sending threatening messages, making phone calls, and stalking the wife at a shopping center. After a hearing, the court entered an order to show cause why the husband should not be held in indirect criminal contempt and attached the wife's motion and affidavit, while the order itself stated no facts constituting the alleged contempt. At arraignment, the husband was questioned about his indigency and was found not to be indigent for the purposes of appointing a public defender. On September 21, 2004, the husband renewed his request for a public defender and, additionally, moved for a change of venue given that the wife's new boyfriend had recently been elected a judge in the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit; both requests were denied. After a hearing, the court found that the husband knowingly and willfully violated the order, and the case was reset for sentencing after the husband spent a "brief period of time in jail." At sentencing, the court placed the husband on probation for one year, 30 days in the county jail on weekends, and regular psychological counseling. On appeal, for which a public defender was appointed to him, the husband argued that fundamental error occurred when the court failed to put forth the essential facts of the contempt and appoint him a public defender. The court held that, although the hearing could have been fashioned differently, the evidence supported the court's finding of contempt. However, while failure to appoint a public defender at the first arraignment was proper, the court held that failure to appoint a public defender for the contempt hearing was improper. Several of the husband's other contentions were also deemed meritless. The court held that even though the wife's new boyfriend was a judge-elect in that circuit, that fact did not mandate a change of venue and that appointing the wife's attorney as a special prosecutor to handle the contempt charge was not improper but, rather, a means of effectuating judicial economy. The district court affirmed the trial court's ruling, but reversed and remanded on the contempt hearing to appoint counsel for the husband.

Tur v. State, 797 So. 2d 4 (Fla. 3d DCA 2001)

The defendant was sentenced to a term of probation after an uncounseled plea pursuant to rule 3.11(b)(1), Florida Rules of Criminal Procedure. The defendant later violated his probation for driving under the influence of alcohol. The district court looked at whether or not a defendant sentenced to a term of probation pursuant to the Florida Rules of Criminal Procedure may be sentenced to incarceration after violating that probation. The district court held that as the trial court could not impose a jail sentence on this defendant for his uncounseled plea to the charges, it cannot later impose a jail term for a violation of the terms of the probation. The case was reversed and remanded for resentencing without incarceration.

Harris v. State, 773 So. 2d 627 (Fla. 4th DCA 2000)

The defendant was charged with a crime allowing imprisonment for up to one year. The state represented that it would not seek jail time. Knowing this, the defendant was tried without a jury and without counsel but never formally waived those rights on the record. The defendant subsequently violated his probation and was sentenced to 60 days in jail. The defendant appealed, alleging that there was a denial of his right to a jury trial and appointed counsel at the original sentencing. In its appellate capacity, the circuit court found that because jail time was a possibility at sentencing, jail time for a violation was permissible. The district court held that the defendant was entitled to a jury trial as well as counsel. The court also held that the trial court could not impose jail time for either the original charge or the probation violation. The decision was reversed and remanded with instructions that the defendant was to be resentenced without any jail time.

Detention

C.D., Petitioner v. Vincent Vurro, Florida Juvenile Detention Center, 975 So. 2d 475 (Fla. 2d DCA 2007)

The petitioner juvenile, charged with domestic violence battery, filed a motion for clarification after the trial court denied the juvenile's original petition seeking a writ of habeas corpus when the juvenile was not given a hearing every 48 hours of his detention. The court granted the motion to clarify and held that the procedures followed in the detention of the petitioner were correct and reflected the legislative intent of chapter 985, Florida Statutes. The 1997 amendment of the section provided that a child may continue to be held in secure detention if the court makes specific, written findings that secure detention is necessary to protect the victim. This change provided a more formalized procedure but at the same time did not resurrect the requirement to continue holding hearings each 48-hour period the juvenile remains in secure detention. The district court held that the procedures correctly followed the legislative intent and, thus, denied clarification.

Dismissal of Charges

State v. Clyatt, 976 So. 2d 1182 (Fla. 5th DCA 2008)

The state sought certiorari review of a trial court order barring it from calling independent witnesses to prove that the victim did not consent to an alleged battery committed on her by the defendant. The alleged incident occurred in a fast food restaurant drive-thru where many witnesses observed the defendant bashing the victim's head against the car window from inside the car and choking her. The victim refused to cooperate with the state in the defendant's prosecution, leaving the state with the options of dismissing the case or relying on third-party witness testimony to prove the case. When the state decided to proceed with the prosecution, it had to show that the victim was struck against her will. The testimony provided by third-party witnesses of the attack would constitute merely circumstantial evidence that the victim did *not* consent to the beating. Yet, the testimony of the third-party witnesses also would indicate that the victim seemed to be resisting the attack and was visibly upset, thus leaving but one reasonable inference that the beating was uninvited. The state was unable to provide the court with a specific case where a victim's lack of consent could be proven circumstantially so the court did not allow the witnesses' testimony without having the victim's testimony as well. The district court held that lack of consent has been proven by circumstantial evidence in other types of criminal prosecutions. Additionally, circumstantial evidence has been enough to prove other issues such as a defendant's state of mind. Ultimately, the district court held that there was no distinction between consent and state of mind; consent could thusly be proven by circumstantial evidence as well. Also, the district court looked to the importance of the relevance of the witnesses' testimony. By failing to allow such testimony, the trial

court barred a form of evidence that could have sufficiently established the victim's lack of consent. The order barring third-party eyewitness testimony was quashed.

State v. Greaux, 977 So. 2d 614 (Fla. 4th DCA 2008)

The state appealed the *sua sponte* dismissal of domestic violence charges against a defendant charged with domestic aggravated assault with a deadly weapon and domestic battery. At a hearing, the prosecutor explained that the defendant had been extended a plea offer and that the victim no longer wanted to prosecute. After being sworn in, the victim represented that she had not been hit or threatened by the defendant. However, after being questioned by the state, she admitted having a cell phone thrown at her, having her head pushed into a pillow on the bed and witnessing the defendant go to a closet where a stun gun was kept. After hearing the victim assert she wanted to keep the family together and did not wish to proceed, the court dismissed the case over the state's objection. The state argued that only the prosecutor has the authority to determine whether to go forward with the prosecution. The district court agreed with the state that the sole discretion to charge and prosecute crimes lies with the prosecutor, despite the court's knowledge that the victim wishes not to proceed or to testify. Additionally, the defendant argued that dismissal was proper under the Topsy Coachman doctrine since the state had failed to establish a prima facie case. This argument did not sway the district court since the defendant failed to move for dismissal in writing and did not notice the state of such a motion. Accordingly, the district court reversed the dismissal and remanded the case for reinstatement of the charges.

State v. Conley, 799 So. 2d 400 (Fla. 4th DCA 2001)

The state appealed an order dismissing felony battery. An adversarial hearing occurred, but the state had neglected to subpoena the witnesses to the events. The victim was present and claimed that she instigated the argument and that the injuries she sustained were a result of her own actions, directly contradicting the eyewitness account. The victim claimed she never wanted charges brought against the defendant. The judge dismissed the charges despite the state's objection. In relying both on rule 3.133(b), Florida Rules of Criminal Procedure, and on *State v. Hollie*, 736 So. 2d 96 (Fla. 4th DCA 1999), the district court held that because the hearing was an adversarial hearing at which the defendant never motioned the court for dismissal and because probable cause was clearly established, a dismissal was clearly in error. Judge Warner concurred in a separate opinion, finding that the lower court made an additional error in finding that consent to a battery is a defense. Consent is only a defense in cases of sexual battery, NOT domestic violence. Judge Warner continued by noting consent as a defense to domestic violence is in complete contravention to section 742.2901(2), Florida Statutes, in that the intent behind creating the statute was to make domestic violence a criminal act as opposed to a "private matter."

State v. Wheeler, 745 So. 2d 1094 (Fla. 4th DCA 1999)

It was improper for the trial court to dismiss an aggravated stalking charge when the dismissal was based on the victim's desire not to pursue prosecution. The district court reviewed the well-recognized law regarding prosecutorial discretion in this regard.

Domestic Violence Multiplier

Mathew v. State, 837 So. 2d 1167 (Fla. 4th DCA 2003)

The district court considered two issues: first, that the trial court was not neutral and participated to the extent that the defendant was denied a fair trial and, second, that the use of the domestic violence multiplier in sentencing was improper absent a jury finding, beyond a reasonable doubt, that domestic violence was committed in front of their minor child as is required in *Apprendi v. New Jersey*, 530 U.S. 466 (2000). The court affirmed the conviction and held that although the trial court's comments were improper, they did not rise to the level of fundamental error. The court reversed for resentencing without

the multiplier as the jury was never instructed to consider whether the child witnessed the domestic violence.

Rolle v. State, 835 So. 2d 1258 (Fla. 4th DCA 2003)

Although the conviction was affirmed, the district court held that the trial court erred in using a domestic violence multiplier when imposing the defendant's sentence as the court held that children were not present when the violence occurred. The court considered *State v. Werner*, 609 So. 2d 585, 586 (Fla. 1992), in its discussion of a child's "presence." The case was remanded to the trial court for sentence correction.

Double Jeopardy

State v. Rothwell, 981 So. 2d 1297 (Fla. 1st DCA 2008)

The state appealed the court's dismissal of a felony battery charge on the basis that it violated the principles of double jeopardy. The defendant had been found in criminal contempt of court for violating a domestic violence injunction by committing a battery against the victim whom the injunction was intended to protect. The state also charged the defendant with a separate felony battery offense. The court dismissed this charge on double jeopardy grounds in that the contempt was predicated on the same offense. The district court distinguished the circumstances when double jeopardy protections are triggered as follows: Convictions on multiple offenses arising out of the same conduct are allowed if each offense requires proof of an element the other does not. However, if the elements of an offense are entirely subsumed within an adjudication or conviction, separate convictions for a substantive offense are not allowed. The focus is on the elements of the offense instead of the conduct involved. Because each offense requires proof of an element the other does not and neither offense is completely subsumed by the other, the district court held that prosecution of the separate felony battery charge did not violate double jeopardy protections, and the felony battery charge should not have been dismissed.

Vazquez v. State, 953 So. 2d 569 (Fla. 4th DCA 2007)

The defendant appealed a conviction of one count of aggravated stalking. The defendant argued that the trial court's decision to allow the state to amend the aggravated stalking count in the information to include certain specific events violated the defendant's right against double jeopardy because his actions on those dates formed the basis of the original stalking charge for which he already had been charged and sentenced. While the state argued that "simple" stalking and aggravated stalking each contain one element that the other does not and are therefore different under the *Blockburger* test, see section 775.021 (4)(a), Florida Statutes (2002), the defendant stated it violated the double jeopardy clause of the Florida Constitution. The district court found that the defendant was correct. The court held that since all that aggravated stalking requires to differentiate itself from "simple" stalking is the element of an injunction, the two are not separate offenses. Since the record shows that the two convictions were based upon the same charging documents (harassing phone calls), the district court vacated the defendant's conviction for aggravated stalking and remanded for resentencing.

Doty v. State, 29 Fla. Weekly D2129 (Fla. 4th DCA), ***opinion withdrawn and superseded on denial of rehearing by***, 884 So. 2d 547 (Fla. 4th DCA 2004)

It was a violation of double jeopardy to try a defendant for battery as well as for violation of a domestic violence injunction since the statutory elements of battery are contained within the offense of violating a domestic violence injunction, a greater offense.

Anderson v. State, 877 So. 2d 958 (Fla. 5th DCA 2004)

It was not an abuse of discretion to deny a mistrial for one isolated, unsolicited reference by a witness to the defendant's previous prison sentence. Curative instruction to the jury was sufficient to dissipate prejudice. However, the appellate court found it was double jeopardy to try a defendant for battery and

battery on a person over 65 years of age as they are not separate offenses since simple battery is a lesser offense to battery on a person over 65.

Young v. State, 827 So. 2d 1075 (Fla. 5th DCA 2002)

Double jeopardy bars conviction for both battery AND violation of an injunction (here, for repeat violence) when the violation consists of the battery itself. “Young was convicted of violating the injunction by committing a battery. Because the crime of battery did not contain any elements distinct from the elements of a violation of section 784.047 [prohibiting willfully violating an injunction for protection against repeat violence], the crimes are not separate under the *Blockburger* test.”

Due Process

Sando v. State and Lamberti, 972 So. 2d 271 (Fla. 4th DCA 2008)

The appellant sought habeas corpus relief after being sentenced to jail for six months for allegedly violating a domestic violence permanent injunction with a “purge” provision requiring her to complete a 60-day domestic violence class. The appellee filed an affidavit of violation of the permanent injunction by appellant. The court issued a notice of hearing on November 8, 2007, for a hearing on December 11, 2007. The petition reflects that the appellant was not served until December 13, 2008, with the notice of the hearing (two days after the hearing had been held). The court found that the appellant had been served on November 15, 2007. The appellant failed to appear at the hearing and based on the appellee’s un rebutted testimony, the trial court found that the appellant had violated the injunction and ordered her to be jailed for six months. The trial court included a “purge” provision that she would be released upon completion of a sixty-day domestic violence class. The appellant was arrested and, at the time of this appeal, remained in custody. The district court held that the trial court’s order clearly amounted to a finding of criminal contempt rather than civil contempt since the sanction imposed sought to punish the appellant and the purge itself required her to remain in jail for at least 60 days. The district court noted that the state did not file criminal charges for the appellant’s alleged violations nor was she brought back before the court once arrested. Additionally, the state never moved for an order to show cause why the appellant should not be held in criminal contempt. The district court granted habeas corpus relief because the appellant was denied due process before being deprived of her liberty. The state was allowed to file the proper charges for the appellant’s contempt in accordance with contempt proceedings that afford the appellant due process.

Jones and Swindle v. Miami-Dade County Corrections and Rehabilitation Department, 967 So. 2d 342 (Fla. 3d DCA 2007)

The appellants sought habeas corpus relief as a result of being sentenced to jail time for failure to comply multiple times with an order to attend a batterers intervention program. Both appellants had received numerous notices for civil contempt hearings for failure to comply with the order to attend the program. After being held in civil contempt several times with the ability to purge the contempt by attending the course, the appellants were issued jail sentences by the court in both cases. While understanding the trial court’s frustration with the appellants’ continued disregard of the court’s order, the district court found that the final contempt orders were criminal in nature. All the previous contempt orders contained a purge provision, unlike the last orders wherein the appellants were sentenced. The district court indicated that civil contempt is intended to obtain compliance, while the intention of criminal contempt is to punish. In these instances, incarceration was used to obtain compliance, and therefore, required the contemnor to include a purge provision. Once the trial court issued the sentences, the trial court no longer sought compliance but, rather punishment for their failure to comply. The district court stated that these contempt orders were criminal, and the contemnors must be afforded due process, including the right to be represented by counsel if indigent. Additionally, if the sentence is to last longer than six months, the contemnor has a right to a jury trial, and the court must provide a written order with the factual basis for

the contempt. Accordingly, the district court granted the appellants' petition for habeas corpus relief and ordered the release of the appellants. The district court further instructed the trial court, if it wished to impose punishment in these contempt cases, to comply with rule 3.840, Florida Rules of Criminal Procedure.

Gordon v. State, 960 So. 2d 31 (Fla. 4th DCA 2007)

A husband appealed several orders stemming from an indirect criminal contempt proceeding arising from alleged violations of a permanent injunction that his wife was granted. In 2004, the wife moved to show cause why the husband should not be held in contempt for instances when he violated the injunction by allegedly sending threatening messages, making phone calls, and stalking the wife at a shopping center. After a hearing, the court entered an order to show cause why the husband should not be held in indirect criminal contempt and attached the wife's motion and affidavit, while the order itself stated no facts constituting the alleged contempt. At arraignment, the husband was questioned about his indigency and was found not to be indigent for the purposes of appointing a public defender. Later, on September 21, 2004, the husband renewed his request for a public defender and, additionally, moved for a change of venue given that the wife's new boyfriend had recently been elected a judge in the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit; both requests were denied. After a hearing, the court found that the husband knowingly and willfully violated the order, and the case was reset for sentencing after the husband spent a "brief period of time in jail." At sentencing, the court placed the husband on probation for one year, 30 days in the county jail on weekends, and regular psychological counseling. On appeal, for which a public defender was appointed to him, the husband argued that fundamental error occurred when the court failed to put forth the essential facts of the contempt and appoint him a public defender. The court held that, although the hearing could have been fashioned differently, the evidence supported the court's finding of contempt. However, while failure to appoint a public defender at the first arraignment was proper, the court held that failure to appoint a public defender for the contempt hearing was improper. Several of the husband's other contentions were also deemed meritless. The court held that even though the wife's new boyfriend was a judge-elect in that circuit, that fact did not mandate a change of venue and that appointing the wife's attorney as a special prosecutor to handle the contempt charge was not improper but, rather, a means of effectuating judicial economy. The district court affirmed the trial court's ruling, but reversed and remanded on the contempt hearing to appoint counsel for the husband.

Desvousges v. Desvousges, 926 So. 2d 1293 (Fla. 2d DCA 2006)

The appellant challenged the order from the trial court, finding her guilty of violating an injunction for protection against domestic violence. The appellant argued that the trial court failed to follow the requirements of rule 3.840, Florida Rules of Criminal Procedure, for indirect criminal contempt because it failed to order a sworn affidavit from a person with knowledge of the facts. The district court agreed and reversed the order of the trial court without prejudice to new proceedings held in conformity with rule 3.840.

Griffith v. State, 922 So. 2d 436 (Fla. 2d DCA 2006)

The appellant, who was the defendant in a post-conviction criminal proceeding, challenged the denial of his two motions for relief and argued that he was denied due process when the trial court abruptly ended the hearing and removed him from the courtroom. The appellant was not able to complete his questioning of the witness, nor was he able to call any other witnesses or fully explain his position. Instead, the trial judge sua sponte ordered a civil injunction against the appellant and his family in favor of the witness, called the appellant a liar, and announced that he was not entitled to any post-conviction relief. The district court reversed and remanded the trial court's decision, finding that, by entering the injunctions against the appellant and his family members and by making statements that he was "incredible" and a "liar" before the completion of all of the evidence, the court had improperly departed from its role as a neutral arbitrator, and that the appellant was entitled to a full evidentiary hearing.

McAtee v. State of Florida, 899 So. 2d 1245 (Fla. 4th DCA 2005)

In a criminal contempt hearing, the state has the burden to proceed first and prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the defendant intended to violate the court's order. The lower court's determination that the defense should be heard first was a denial of due process as it erroneously placed the burden on the contemnor to prove that she should not be held in contempt. This is contrary to the procedure outlined in rule 3.840, Florida Rules of Criminal Procedure.

Evidence

Nicholson v. State, 10 So. 3d 142 (Fla. 4th DCA 2009)

Kevin Nicholson appealed his conviction and sentence for first-degree murder claiming that the trial court erred by denying his motion for judgment of acquittal because the state's case consisted of circumstantial evidence of an uncharged collateral crime which was insufficient to support the conviction. The defendant also argued that the trial court erred in admitting collateral evidence that he stalked, threatened, and assaulted the victim. The court noted that the standard of review for admission of evidence is abuse of discretion; but that discretion is limited by the rules of evidence. The appellate court concluded that the previous assault and stalking, although consisting of prior bad acts, were admissible as relevant to prove motive and intent under the *Williams* rule, which is codified in section 90.404(2)(a), Florida Statutes. The court also noted that the prior bad acts were not made a feature of the trial and affirmed the conviction.

State v. Clyatt, 976 So. 2d 1182 (Fla. 5th DCA 2008)

The state sought certiorari review of a trial court order barring it from calling independent witnesses to prove that the victim did not consent to an alleged battery committed on her by the defendant. The alleged incident occurred in a fast food restaurant drive-thru where many witnesses observed the defendant bashing the victim's head against the car window from inside the car and choking her. The victim refused to cooperate with the state in the defendant's prosecution, leaving the state with the options of dismissing the case or relying on third-party witness testimony to prove the case. When the state decided to proceed with the prosecution, it had to show that the victim was struck against her will. The testimony provided by third-party witnesses of the attack would constitute merely circumstantial evidence that the victim did *not* consent to the beating. Yet, the testimony of the third-party witnesses also would indicate that the victim seemed to be resisting the attack and was visibly upset, thus leaving but one reasonable inference that the beating was uninvited. The state was unable to provide the court with a specific case where a victim's lack of consent could be proven circumstantially so the court did not allow the witnesses' testimony without having the victim's testimony as well. The district court held that lack of consent has been proven by circumstantial evidence in other types of criminal prosecutions. Additionally, circumstantial evidence has been enough to prove other issues such as a defendant's state of mind. Ultimately, the district court held that there was no distinction between consent and state of mind; consent could thusly be proven by circumstantial evidence as well. Also, the district court looked to the importance of the relevance of the witnesses' testimony. By failing to allow such testimony, the trial court barred a form of evidence that could have sufficiently established the victim's lack of consent. The order barring third-party eyewitness testimony was quashed.

State v. Greaux, 977 So. 2d 614 (Fla. 4th DCA 2008)

The state appealed the *sua sponte* dismissal of domestic violence charges against a defendant charged with domestic aggravated assault with a deadly weapon and domestic battery. At a hearing, the prosecutor explained that the defendant had been extended a plea offer and that the victim no longer wanted to prosecute. After being sworn in, the victim represented that she had not been hit or threatened by the defendant. However, after being questioned by the state, she admitted having a cell phone thrown at her, having her head pushed into a pillow on the bed and witnessing the defendant go to a closet

where a stun gun was kept. After hearing the victim assert she wanted to keep the family together and did not wish to proceed, the court dismissed the case over the state's objection. The state argued that only the prosecutor has the authority to determine whether to go forward with the prosecution. The district court agreed with the state that the sole discretion to charge and prosecute crimes lies with the prosecutor, despite the court's knowledge that the victim wishes not to proceed or to testify. Additionally, the defendant argued that dismissal was proper under the Topsy Coachman doctrine since the state had failed to establish a prima facie case. This argument did not sway the district court since the defendant failed to move for dismissal in writing and did not notice the state of such a motion. Accordingly, the district court reversed the dismissal and remanded the case for reinstatement of the charges.

State v. Delama and Jimenez, 967 So. 2d 385 (Fla. 3d DCA 2007)

After an allegedly battered woman was subpoenaed to discuss charges brought against her alleged abuser and failed to appear, the state sought a ruling to show cause for indirect criminal contempt. The court, however, refused to issue the show cause order. On appeal, the district court held that the trial court did not have the authority to deny the state's request to issue a show cause order against an alleged victim of domestic violence when the victim does not want to testify. Note: the dissenting opinion cites California's more "socially progressive" rule that exempts victims of domestic or sexual violence from contempt if they refuse to testify as better public policy than what has been adopted in Florida.

Wheeler v. State, 956 So. 2d 517 (Fla. 2d DCA 2007)

The defendant appealed an order denying a motion to suppress evidence seized from an alleged illegal search. Officers responded to an anonymous domestic violence phone call and arrived at the home of the defendant. After questioning the defendant at his door, the officers were presented with a scenario in which nothing seemed suspicious, nor were they led to believe that anyone other than the defendant was in the house. Acting on the information placed on the 911 call, the officers decided to enter the home in search of the alleged victim since they had a "reasonable belief" that they would find the injured woman. As a result of this search, the officers found contraband. The defendant moved to suppress the evidence arguing that it was an illegal search since the officers did not have probable cause. The trial court denied his motion. On appeal, the district court found that the officers did not have a reasonable basis to believe a grave emergency had transpired (which would give rise to an exception to the warrant requirement allowing them to enter) and that the officers entered illegally. To affirm on these facts would constitute adopting a per se exception to the warrant requirement that would allow police to enter a closed dwelling based solely on an anonymous phone call alleging an emergency without further corroboration when at the scene. The court held that the officers needed to seek out additional factual information about what had occurred before making the decision to enter the premises. The court reversed the order denying suppression and remanded.

Coverdale v. State, 940 So. 2d 558 (Fla. 2d DCA 2006)

The defendant challenged admission of statements made at trial by the victim and detective and sought reversal of his conviction. The nature of the victim's statement dealt with the defendant's previous incarceration for other offenses and that the defendant had molested her friend's daughter. At trial, the court denied two defense motions for a mistrial and instead instructed the jury to ignore the last statement of the victim. The trial court determined that the incarceration comment was not "so prejudicial" to deny the defendant a fair trial. The district court upheld the lower court's position on allowing the first statement, stating there was no abuse of discretion under a harmless error analysis. However, the district court found that the second statement regarding comments alluding to alleged molestation were far too prejudicial. The district court found that the trial court abused its discretion in denying the motion for mistrial. The nature of the detective's statement dealt with defendant's response to her when she showed him the contact order and his irate reaction. At trial, the court denied the defense motion that the prejudicial effect of the statement outweighed its probative value and denied the defense motion for a mistrial. The district court found that the trial court erred in failing to balance the danger of unfair

prejudice against the probative value. The district court reversed and remanded for a new trial based on the admission of victim's testimony regarding the child molestation and the detective's testimony.

Chacon v. State, 937 So. 2d 1177 (Fla. 3d DCA 2006)

The district court affirmed the trial court's conviction of a defendant for aggravated battery with a deadly weapon, attempted aggravated battery, and aggravated stalking over the defendant's appeal that improper hearsay testimony and character evidence were admitted into evidence. The appellant's complaint that admitting victim's testimony about the appellant's threats to the victim and her family should result in a reversal of the verdict were held to be unfounded by this court. Admissions of a party are exceptions to the hearsay rule, and the victim's testimony went to the appellant's intent to harm rather than coming in as bad character evidence.

Valdes v. State, 930 So. 2d 682 (Fla. 3d DCA 2006)

The defendant appealed convictions and sentences on twelve counts of sexual abuse, claiming that the trial court erred in allowing the defendant's former wife to testify that he had been physically violent in the home and that the testimony was irrelevant and prejudicial. The district court disagreed, finding that collateral testimony concerning domestic violence in the home offered to explain why minor children who were victims failed to disclose the sexual abuse for so long, and placed the entire relationship between the defendant and the two minors into perspective. The context of the crimes charged and proof of the crimes themselves could not be fully explained and adjudicated without detailed reference to the uncharged domestic violence. A trial court has broad discretion in determining the relevance of evidence, and such a determination should not be disturbed absent an abuse of discretion. The evidence of uncharged physical violence was properly admitted and was relevant to the threats and intimidation from the respondent to the victims if the abuse were disclosed, and admission of this testimony far outweighed its prejudicial nature.

Izquierdo v. State, 890 So. 2d 1263 (Fla. 5th DCA 2005)

The trial court did not err in allowing a deputy to read the victim's affirmative answers to a domestic violence checklist during the prosecutor's direct examination because the deputy's testimony was not offered for the truth of the matter but was instead used to impeach the victim's earlier testimony that her husband was "loveable and tender" and a "nice" person of whom she was never afraid.

Santiago v. State, 889 So. 2d 200 (Fla. 4th DCA 2004)

In discussing the standard of proof required in a revocation of probation, the district court affirmed the portion of the defendant's revocation of probation supported by non-hearsay evidence. The district court did reverse, as an abuse of discretion, the portion of the revocation based on hearsay statements of the victim and the victim's mother and the circumstantial evidence of red marks on the victim's face, regardless of their being coupled with the officer's non-hearsay observations of the victim, as this alone was insufficient to prove the alleged battery.

Torres v. State, 870 So. 2d 149 (Fla. 2d DCA 2004)

The district court held that the trial court erred in basing its finding on legally insufficient evidence that should have been deemed inadmissible hearsay. The state's sole witness alleged the defendant violated his injunction by calling the witness's daughter at his household without possessing independent knowledge concerning the identity of the person who called his household.

Brooks v. State, 868 So. 2d 643 (Fla. 2d DCA 2004)

The victim's testimony that the defendant "was sent back to prison" following a prior incident of domestic violence involving the same victim was improper and unfairly prejudicial. The district court found that error was not harmless and the trial court abused its discretion in denying a mistrial. First, the curative statement to the jury was ineffective to cure improper evidence of the defendant's prior criminal behavior.

Second, the jury would be less likely to believe the defendant acted in self-defense if it believed that the defendant committed a prior act of domestic violence. Third, the victim's statement had a substantial negative impact on the defense trial strategy in that the defense was not planning on the defendant testifying, which he then had to do to refute the victim's statements, and was then subject to impeachment on two prior felony convictions.

Pilorge v. State, 876 So. 2d 591 (Fla. 5th DCA 2004)

The trial court erred by denying the defendant's motion for judgment of acquittal on the charge of violation of a special pretrial condition to have no contact with the alleged victim. The district court reversed the trial court's ruling because the state failed to provide competent substantial evidence that the appellant had notice of the special pretrial condition. Section 741.29, Florida Statutes, creates no presumption of notice, either orally or in writing. The state must prove notice of the special pretrial condition with competent substantial evidence.

Viglione v. State, 861 So. 2d 511 (Fla. 5th DCA 2003)

The district court, citing *State v. Skolar*, 692 So. 2d 309 (Fla. 5th DCA 1997), recognized the rule that the victim's telephone "calls for help" to third parties made while the victim was being held against his will and threatened during a kidnapping incident are admissible under the same excited utterance or spontaneous statement exception to the hearsay rule that would permit admission of a victim's 911 call.

Rodriguez v. State, 842 So. 2d 1053 (Fla. 3d DCA 2003)

The trial court improperly permitted the victim's testimony regarding a restraining order she obtained subsequent to an argument she and the defendant had that resulted in the defendant's charge of aggravated assault with a deadly weapon against the victim. The district court held that the testimony should not have been admitted as it bolstered the victim's credibility.

Butler v. State, 842 So. 2d 817 (Fla. 2003)

The defendant alleged, inter alia, that the trial court erred by allowing the state to elicit testimony regarding alleged prior acts of violence committed by the defendant. The supreme court held that the trial court did not err in allowing the cross examination of defense witnesses on other crimes evidence as "the evidence was admissible to explain and modify direct testimony, was relevant and probative, and its probative value was not outweighed by the prejudicial effect."

Colwell v. State, 838 So. 2d 670 (Fla. 2d DCA 2003)

The district court reversed the trial court's revocation of the defendant's probation for violation of probation for committing domestic battery. The court held that it was an error to base the revocation, in part, on inadmissible hearsay and other insufficient evidence. The only testimony offered at the revocation hearing was that of a deputy who testified that the victim told him that the defendant had grabbed her and she was afraid to go back to the house. Further, the deputy testified that the victim was hysterical and had a faint mark on her neck. The evidence was insufficient to find that the defendant violated probation. Note: the trial court found that the victim's statement did not meet the excited utterance exception as too much time passed between the time of the alleged incident and her statement to the deputy.

Gonzalez-Valdes v. State, 834 So. 2d 933 (Fla. 3d DCA 2003)

The defendant shot and killed the victim and raised the battered woman's syndrome as a defense. The court held that the trial court did not abuse its discretion in admitting the victim's ex-wife's testimony that she was never abused during their 29-year marriage. The court held that the testimony had direct bearing on the validity of the expert's opinion concerning the defendant's alleged battered woman's syndrome defense. The trial court did not abuse its discretion in denying a mistrial as a result of the prosecutor's questions regarding the defendant's relationship with men even though the court had previously granted a

motion in limine to prohibit the prosecution from eliciting testimony that suggested that the defendant had been a prostitute, as the questions were not unduly prejudicial.

Robertson v. State, 829 So. 2d 901 (Fla. 2002)

This was a landmark collateral crimes domestic violence case. It was reversible error “as a matter of law” to allow as *Williams* rule evidence “a prior threat six years earlier against a different victim and involving a different weapon” to prove absence of mistake or accident. The supreme court noted it was “unable to find...any cases in Florida where a prior threat against a different victim was admitted under the *Williams* rule to prove the absence of mistake or accident of the present offense.” The court did cite, with apparent approval, cases allowing “prior crimes against the same victim as the charged offense.”

Franklin v. State, 825 So. 2d 487 (Fla. 5th DCA 2002)

The defendant appealed his conviction for violation of a domestic violence injunction for which the violation was a series of three phone calls to his wife, arguing that the court abused its discretion in denying motions for mistrial when his wife gave testimony that could have been interpreted to show that he had violent tendencies. The injunction allowed for telephone contact between the parties regarding issues of the parties' minor children if the conversation concerned visitation or emergency issues regarding the children and the conversations were “sterile and focused on” the children. The call in question lasted one hour, and the parties discussed the children as well as various problems the defendant was having. The court held that the victim's testimony, although problematic, did not warrant reversal as motioned by the defendant because, even if the injury had been improperly influenced by the testimony, the influence would not have affected the counts of improper contact but rather the stalking counts of which he was acquitted.

Coley v. State, 816 So. 2d 817 (Fla. 2d DCA 2002)

Jamie Coley appealed from his judgment and sentence for aggravated battery, arguing that the trial court erred in failing to redact portions of a 911 tape admitted into evidence, which referred to a nonexistent restraining order. The state argued that, even if the reference to the restraining order should have been redacted from the tape, its admission into evidence was harmless. The test for harmless error requires the state to prove that there was no reasonable possibility that the error of complaint contributed to the verdict. *State v. DiGuilio*, 491 So. 2d 1129, 1138 (Fla. 1986). Here the state did not meet its burden, and as a result, the court reversed and remanded the judgment.

Mills v. State, 816 So. 2d 170 (Fla. 3d DCA 2002)

The respondent appealed from a judgment of conviction for aggravated battery. The district court affirmed the lower court's decision, concluding that the domestic violence permanent injunction and the arrest warrant issued, based upon alleged violations of the injunction, were admissible under section 90.402, Florida Statutes, and not *Williams* rule evidence. The court held that evidence of uncharged crimes, which are inseparable from the crime charged, is not *Williams* rule evidence and is admissible if it is a relevant and inseparable part of the act, which is in issue. “It is necessary to admit the evidence to adequately describe the deed.” *Coolen v. State*, 696 So. 2d 738, 742-743 (Fla. 1997) (quoting *Griffin v. State*, 639 So. 2d 966, 968 (Fla. 1994)).

Werley v. State, 814 So. 2d 1159 (Fla. 1st DCA 2002)

The district court affirmed the trial court's conviction of aggravated battery with a deadly weapon and held that 1) the trial court did not abuse its discretion in admitting 911 tapes, regardless of the fact that the victim did not call the police until an hour after the alleged battery occurred, as she was shaken and visibly frightened when the police arrived and 2) evidence of prior convictions was admissible pursuant to section 90.806(1), Florida Statutes, for the purpose of impeaching statements made by the defendant but offered by the wife during her testimony, and the trial court found that the statement made by the wife was “exculpatory hearsay” offered for the truth of the matter.

Simmons v. State, 790 So. 2d 1177 (Fla. 3d DCA 2001)

The defendant was charged with aggravated battery, aggravated assault with a deadly weapon, armed kidnapping, and battery of his girlfriend. Evidence of the defendant's prior violent behavior towards the victim was properly admitted into evidence to prove the defendant's intent to commit the crimes of aggravated battery, aggravated assault, and battery and was properly admitted to prove the defendant's intent to terrorize the victim, as contained within the kidnapping count. The state filed a notice of intent to rely upon evidence of other crimes, namely the battery of a previous girlfriend. At trial, the defendant testified he had never engaged in violent behavior, and the state used the previous battery to impeach his testimony. On appeal, the district court held that the admission of the prior violence was properly admitted, and no abuse of discretion existed. The court also held that since the trial court initially granted a motion for acquittal in the kidnapping charge, a reversal of that decision was not in fact double jeopardy.

Stoll v. State, 762 So. 2d 870 (Fla. 2000)

The supreme court rejected the state's argument that statements of the victim to a witness were admissible under the excited utterance exception to the hearsay rule when the proper predicate was not established by the state and when such a finding was not made by the trial court. An alternative argument that the witness's testimony was admissible under the state-of-mind exception to the hearsay rule was rejected because the victim's state of mind was not found to be relevant to any issue in the case. The supreme court also held that it was error to admit the victim's handwritten statement of a prior domestic violence case.

State v. Frazier, 753 So. 2d 644 (Fla. 5th DCA 2000)

The district court upheld the ruling of the trial court in which the victim's statements to her treating physician identifying the defendant as her assailant were not given for purposes of medical diagnosis or treatment and were therefore inadmissible and not excepted from the hearsay rule. The district court held, however, that statements on the 911 tape identifying the defendant as her assailant may be admissible if the trial court determines on remand that the statements are hearsay but qualify as excited utterances. The statements on the 911 tape may be excluded as hearsay if the court determines that the statements are *not* excited utterances or admissible on some other grounds. The district court also held that statements on the 911 tape were also not inadmissible as violative of the defendant's right to confrontation as such hearsay is evidence firmly rooted in the common law, and its reliability can be inferred.

McFadden v. State, 732 So. 2d 412 (Fla. 3d DCA 1999)

The district court, contrary to the other district courts, held that it was reversible error to allow impeachment of a testifying defendant on cross examination with evidence of a prior guilty plea for a separate aggravated battery on the same victim when adjudication was withheld. Such a prior withholding of adjudication is not a "conviction" pursuant to section 90.610(1), Florida Statutes (permitting an attack on the credibility of an accused with a prior felony conviction). The court held that it makes no difference whether the prior withholding of adjudication came about by a plea of guilty rather than a plea of *nolo contendere*. Further, the trial court erred in allowing the state to elicit evidence of "specifics" of the prior withheld adjudication offense (i.e., aggravated battery) and to identify the victim of the prior offense as the same victim in the case at bar. The "specifics" may not be elicited, even if the defendant is properly impeached with a prior conviction. Finally, the trial court erred by refusing to allow the defendant to explain to the jury that the reason that he denied being previously convicted was adjudication had, in fact, been withheld.

Nelson v. State, 704 So. 2d 752 (Fla. 5th DCA 1998)

The trial court did not abuse its discretion in granting the state's motion *in limine* excluding evidence that the defendant had filed two petitions for domestic violence against the victim after the criminal incident,

when it was the defendant who had gone to the victim's home and initiated the encounter giving rise to the criminal charge, so that the probative value of the evidence was outweighed by the danger of confusion of issues or misleading the jury.

Williams v. State, 714 So. 2d 462 (Fla. 3d DCA 1997)

Statements that the victim made to the police officer and tape recordings of the 911 call, which were admitted into evidence under the excited utterances exception to the hearsay rule, were sufficient to sustain a conviction, although the victim and her son who made the 911 call gave conflicting testimony at trial.

Boroughs v. State, 684 So. 2d 274 (Fla. 5th DCA 1996)

Testimony concerning the abusive nature of the defendant's relationship with the victim, including the defendant's prior "bad acts," was relevant to prove the sexual battery victim's lack of consent and to explain why the victim did not immediately contact the police.

Expunging Criminal History

Harmon v. State, __ So. 3d __, 2009 WL 1874083 (Fla. 2d DCA 2009)

The Second District Court of Appeal found that the mere accusation of a prior domestic violence offense is insufficient reason to deny expunction of records pursuant to section 943.0585, Florida Statutes. The court held that the seriousness of the offense standing alone, was insufficient to support denial of the petition.

Williams v. State, 879 So. 2d 77 (Fla. 3d DCA 2004)

The defendant is not entitled to expunge a criminal history for certain offenses as determined by statute, one of which is an act of domestic violence as defined in section 741.28, Florida Statutes.

Harmless Error

Coverdale v. State, 940 So. 2d 558 (Fla. 2d DCA 2006)

The defendant challenged admission of statements made at trial by the victim and detective and sought reversal of his conviction. The nature of the victim's statement dealt with the defendant's previous incarceration for other offenses and victim's statement that the defendant had molested her friend's daughter. At trial, the court denied two defense motions for a mistrial and just instructed the jury to ignore the last statement of each victim. The court determined that the incarceration comment was not "so prejudicial" to deny the defendant a fair trial. The district court upheld the lower court's position on allowing the first statement, stating there was no abuse of discretion under a harmless error analysis. However, the district court found the second statement regarding comments alluding to alleged molestation to be far too prejudicial. The district court found that the trial court abused its discretion in denying the motion for mistrial. The nature of the detective's statement dealt with defendant's response to her when she showed him the contact order and his irate reaction. At trial, the court denied the defense motion that the prejudicial effect of the statement outweighed its probative value and denied the defense motion for a mistrial. The district court found that the trial court erred in failing to balance the danger of unfair prejudice against the probative value. The district court reversed and remanded for a new trial based on the admission of victim's testimony regarding the child molestation and the detective's testimony.

Coley v. State, 816 So. 2d 817 (Fla. 2d DCA 2002)

The appellant appealed from his judgment and sentence for aggravated battery, arguing that the trial court erred in failing to redact portions of a 911 tape admitted into evidence, which referred to a nonexistent restraining order. The state argued that even if the reference to the restraining order should have been redacted from the tape, its admission into evidence was harmless. The test for harmless error requires the state to prove that there was no reasonable possibility that the error of complaint contributed to the verdict. *State v. DiGuilio*, 491 So. 2d 1129, 1138 (Fla. 1986). Here the state did not meet its burden, and as a result, the court reversed and remanded the judgment.

Jurisdiction

Young v. State, 739 So. 2d 1179 (Fla. 4th DCA 1999)

The district court held that the trial court was without jurisdiction to revoke probation when the warrant charging the defendant with probation violation was delivered to the sheriff's office after the expiration of the probationary period. It was error to find that the defendant had absconded from supervision by failing to file monthly reports with her probation officer when the defendant was not hiding, nor had she departed the jurisdiction of the state, and the probationary period was thereby tolled.

Paulk v. State, 733 So. 2d 1096 (Fla. 3d DCA 1999)

The district court held that in order to invoke jurisdiction of the court, not only must a timely affidavit of violation of probation be filed (within the period of probation), but the judge must sign and issue an arrest warrant, and that warrant must be delivered to the proper officer for execution within that same time period. The district court rejected the trial court's conclusion that a probationer absconds by failing to sign up for intake and by failing to appear at a duly noticed hearing. *See also Tatum v. State*, 736 So. 2d 183 (Fla. 1st DCA 1999), in which it was determined that the probation revocation process was not timely and commenced when the arrest warrant was not delivered to the sheriff until the probationary term had expired.

McGraw v. State, 700 So. 2d 183 (Fla. 4th DCA), ***implied overruling on other grounds recognized by Stambaugh v. State***, 891 So. 2d 1136 (Fla. 4th DCA 1997)

The trial court lacked jurisdiction to entertain an application for revocation of probation based on a violation that occurred during the probationary period, for which the affidavit of violation and arrest warrant were not filed with the clerk until six days after the term of probation had expired.

Jury and Jurors

Cazeau v. State, 873 So. 2d 528 (Fla. 4th DCA 2004)

The district court held that the trial court's failure to instruct the jury on a particular element of a crime is a fundamental error, requiring reversal, when that element is disputed at trial. In the instant case, the district court reversed the trial court because the jury was never informed that, in order to convict the defendant of aggravated stalking, it must first find that the defendant had knowledge of the injunction, which is an element of the crime.

Peters v. State, 2004 Fla. App. LEXIS 7355 (Fla. 4th DCA 2004)

The trial judge in a domestic battery case did not excuse a juror who had previously been a victim of domestic abuse. The juror said she would rather sit on a different case because her past experiences of spousal abuse would influence her. The juror expressed that she was still devastated by the abuse and believed that these experiences would play a role in how she decided this case but could still decide the case based solely on the evidence and law. The district court held that a juror's statement that she can be fair does not erase a doubt as to impartiality when the juror has previously expressed some attitude or

previous experience that continues to affect the juror in some way. The trial court should excuse any juror for cause if any reasonable doubt exists as to whether the juror is impartial.

Tindle v. State, 832 So. 2d 966 (Fla. 5th DCA 2002)

It was reversible error for the trial court to deny the defendant's motion to dismiss the amended information and was fundamental error to instruct the jury in a way permitting the jury to find that one alleged victim was threatened while the other had a well-founded fear that violence was imminent because the crime of aggravated assault requires that the victim must both have been threatened *and* have a well-founded fear that violence was imminent. The judgment was vacated, and the case was remanded.

Rodriguez v. State, 816 So. 2d 805 (Fla. 3d DCA 2002)

The appellant appealed his conviction for felony battery in a domestic violence case following a jury trial, claiming that the trial court erred in denying his challenge for cause to a potential juror. It was found that during *voir dire*, the trial court did not allow the defendant to strike a potential juror who had revealed that she had been exposed to domestic violence in her past. The district court held that the juror is not impartial when one side must overcome a set opinion in order to prevail. If a prospective juror's statements raise reasonable doubts as to that juror's ability to make an impartial verdict, the juror should be excused. Note that when it is not completely clear whether or not a juror should be dismissed, then those cases should be resolved in favor of excusing the juror rather than leaving a doubt as to his or her impartiality. The conviction was reversed, and the case was remanded.

Henry v. State, 756 So. 2d 170 (Fla. 4th DCA 2000)

The district court held that when the defendant was convicted for violating an injunction for protection against domestic violence, a new trial was required based on the fact that the trial court erroneously failed to excuse a juror for cause. The juror, who in his capacity as a paramedic and firefighter regularly worked with the police department and had responded to a number of domestic violence cases, gave answers that demonstrated reasonable doubt as to his ability to lay aside a bias in favor of law enforcement.

Jury Instructions

Miller v. State, 4 So. 3d 732 (Fla. 1st DCA 2009)

The trial court gave an additional special instruction that stated that malice may be inferred when a defendant disregards an injunction for protection against domestic violence pursuant to section 784.048(4), Florida Statutes. The trial court therefore instructed the jury that it could find the defendant guilty of acting maliciously even if it found only that he acted in disregard of an injunction. The special instruction effectively eliminated the element of malice that the state had the burden to prove. The statute requires more than simple disregard of an injunction. The appellate court reversed the aggravated stalking conviction and sentence, and remanded the case for retrial on the aggravated stalking count under the revised standard instructions.

Juvenile

C.D., Petitioner v. Vincent Vurro, Florida Juvenile Detention Center, 975 So. 2d 475 (Fla. 2d DCA 2007)

The petitioner juvenile, charged with domestic violence battery, filed a motion for clarification after the trial court denied the juvenile's original petition seeking a writ of habeas corpus when the juvenile was not given a hearing every 48 hours of his detention. The court granted the motion to clarify and held that the procedures followed in the detention of the petitioner were correct and reflected the legislative intent of

chapter 985, Florida Statutes. The 1997 amendment of the section provided that a child may continue to be held in secure detention if the court makes specific, written findings that secure detention is necessary to protect the victim. This change provided a more formalized procedure but at the same time did not resurrect the requirement to continue holding hearings each 48-hour period the juvenile remains in secure detention. The district court held that the procedures correctly followed the legislative intent and, thus, denied clarification.

Permanent Injunction

Sando v. State and Lamberti, 972 So. 2d 271 (Fla. 4th DCA 2008)

The appellant sought habeas corpus relief after being sentenced to jail for six months for allegedly violating a domestic violence permanent injunction with a “purge” provision requiring her to complete a 60-day domestic violence class. The appellee filed an affidavit of violation of the permanent injunction by appellant. The court issued a notice of hearing on November 8, 2007, for a hearing on December 11, 2007. The petition reflects that the appellant was not served until December 13, 2008, with the notice of the hearing (two days after the hearing had been held). The court found that the appellant had been served on November 15, 2007. The appellant failed to appear at the hearing and based on the appellee’s un rebutted testimony, the trial court found that the appellant had violated the injunction and ordered her to be jailed for six months. The trial court included a “purge” provision that she would be released upon completion of a sixty-day domestic violence class. The appellant was arrested and, at the time of this appeal, remained in custody. The district court held that the trial court’s order clearly amounted to a finding of criminal contempt rather than civil contempt since the sanction imposed sought to punish the appellant and the purge itself required her to remain in jail for at least 60 days. The district court noted that the state did not file criminal charges for the appellant’s alleged violations nor was she brought back before the court once arrested. Additionally, the state never moved for an order to show cause why the appellant should not be held in criminal contempt. The district court granted habeas corpus relief because the appellant was denied due process before being deprived of her liberty. The state was allowed to file the proper charges for the appellant’s contempt in accordance with contempt proceedings that afford the appellant due process.

Gordon v. State, 960 So. 2d 31 (Fla. 4th DCA 2007)

A husband appealed several orders stemming from an indirect criminal contempt proceeding arising from alleged violations of a permanent injunction that his wife was granted. In 2004, the wife moved to show cause why the husband should not be held in contempt for instances when he violated the injunction by allegedly sending threatening messages, making phone calls, and stalking the wife at a shopping center. After a hearing, the court entered an order to show cause why the husband should not be held in indirect criminal contempt and attached the wife’s motion and affidavit, while the order itself stated no facts constituting the alleged contempt. At arraignment, the husband was questioned about his indigency and was found not to be indigent for the purposes of appointing a public defender. On September 21, 2004, the husband renewed his request for a public defender and, additionally, moved for a change of venue given that the wife’s new boyfriend had recently been elected a judge in the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit; both requests were denied. After a hearing, the court found that the husband knowingly and willfully violated the order, and the case was reset for sentencing after the husband spent a “brief period of time in jail.” At sentencing, the court placed the husband on probation for one year, 30 days in the county jail on weekends, and regular psychological counseling. On appeal, for which a public defender was appointed to him, the husband argued that fundamental error occurred when the court failed to put forth the essential facts of the contempt and appoint him a public defender. The court held that, although the hearing could have been fashioned differently, the evidence supported the court’s finding of contempt. However, while failure to appoint a public defender at the first arraignment was proper, the court held that failure to appoint a public defender for the contempt hearing was improper. Several of the husband’s

other contentions were also deemed meritless. The court held that even though the wife's new boyfriend was a judge-elect in that circuit, that fact did not mandate a change of venue and that appointing the wife's attorney as a special prosecutor to handle the contempt charge was not improper but, rather, a means of effectuating judicial economy. The district court affirmed the trial court's ruling, but reversed and remanded on the contempt hearing to appoint counsel for the husband.

Revocation of Probation

Roundtree v. State, 955 So. 2d 1184 (Fla. 3d DCA 2007)

The defendant, who pled guilty to aggravated battery, appealed the revocation of his probation for failing to report to his probation officer, changing his address without permission, not undergoing psychological evaluation, and not completing a domestic violence intervention program. After being in compliance for two months, the defendant stopped reporting to his probation officer after the hurricanes in July and August of 2005. Attempts were made to contact the defendant at his home, but the defendant never responded. At the revocation hearing, the defendant testified that he was hospitalized for six weeks and spent an additional six weeks in a convalescent home. Once he was able to return to his obligations for probation, he had lost the contact information for his probation officer, had attempted to get his psychological evaluation done but did not have enough money to pay, and was turned away from the domestic violence intervention classes because they were full. The trial court found his reasons for failing to report not to be credible and revoked his probation for the aforementioned reasons. On appeal, the court agreed with the trial court in finding that the defendant did violate the terms of his probation for not reporting to his officer and for changing his address without permission. However, the district court did not find violations for his failure to undergo a psychological evaluation and complete the classes since no specific time frame to finish these requirements was given by the trial court. A year was left on his probation, giving him sufficient time to complete these requirements. As a result, the district court reversed that portion of the revocation and remanded to the trial court for a determination on whether the sentence should be reconsidered.

Service

Livingston v. State, 847 So. 2d 1131 (Fla. 4th DCA 2003)

The district court reversed the trial court's conviction for violation of a permanent injunction for protection against repeat violence. Service of the permanent injunction must occur regardless of the fact that the defendant had been personally served with the temporary injunction. However, the district court affirmed the trial court's denial of the motion for a judgment of acquittal for aggravated stalking even though no service occurred. The court held that actual notice is not an essential element that must be proven beyond a reasonable doubt, only that an injunction or some other restriction was in place at the time when the victim was followed or harassed by the accused.

Silas v. State, 6 Fla. Weekly Supp. 628 (Fla. 20th Cir. Ct. 1999)

The circuit court, appellate division, held that when the defendant was charged with violation of a permanent injunction for protection against domestic violence, he was entitled to a judgment of acquittal based on the fact that he was never personally served with the permanent injunction in accordance with rule 12.610, Florida Family Law Rules of Procedure. The fact that the temporary injunction had been personally served does not change the requirements that the permanent injunction be personally served.

Hernandez v. State, 713 So. 2d 1120 (Fla. 3d DCA 1998)

The defendant was entitled to a judgment of acquittal on the charge of violation of a domestic violence injunction because the trial court erroneously took judicial notice of the fact that the court file reflected that

the defendant was personally served with a copy of the injunction. Service of an injunction is an element of the state's case that the state must prove.

Cordova v. State, 675 So. 2d 632 (Fla. 3d DCA 1996)

Although judicial notice of elemental facts in a criminal case is permissible, the trial court erred in taking judicial notice of the fact that the defendant was served with a copy of the injunction he was alleged to have violated. Service of the injunction on the defendant is not a fact that is "generally known within the territorial jurisdiction of the court," nor is it the type of fact that is not subject to dispute because it is capable of accurate and ready determination by resorting to a source whose accuracy cannot be questioned. The stamped return of service gave rise to a permissive inference that service occurred. The return of service itself, although hearsay, is admissible under the public records exception.

Stalking

Nicholson v. State, 10 So. 3d 142 (Fla. 4th DCA 2009)

Kevin Nicholson appealed his conviction and sentence for first-degree murder claiming that the trial court erred by denying his motion for judgment of acquittal because the state's case consisted of circumstantial evidence of an uncharged collateral crime which was insufficient to support the conviction. The defendant also argued that the trial court erred in admitting collateral evidence that he stalked, threatened, and assaulted the victim. The court noted that the standard of review for admission of evidence is abuse of discretion; but that discretion is limited by the rules of evidence. The appellate court concluded that the previous assault and stalking, although consisting of prior bad acts, were admissible as relevant to prove motive and intent under the *Williams* rule, which is codified in section 90.404(2)(a), Florida Statutes. The court also noted that the prior bad acts were not made a feature of the trial and affirmed the conviction.

Menefee v. State, 980 So. 2d 569 (Fla. 5th DCA 2008)

The defendant appealed the judgment and sentence for the offense of misdemeanor stalking on the basis that the method by which he chose to stalk was a ham radio and the state was preempted from punishing communications that were regulated by the federal government. The defendant and victim were both licensed amateur ham radio operators. The victim claimed that the defendant stalked him over the radio waves by making death threats and crude comments directed at the victim causing him emotional distress. The defendant's motion to dismiss the charge on the basis that the state had no authority to prosecute this behavior since it was regulated by federal law was denied and the defendant was found guilty of misdemeanor stalking. On appeal, the district court affirmed because the court did have the authority to punish criminal conduct regardless of the manner in which it was carried out. The state was not preventing or prohibiting the actual transmissions over the airwaves, but rather was exercising its right to enforce state laws that prohibit criminal behavior. The defendant's conviction was based on the nature of his criminal conduct and not on the tool with which he chose to commit the crime. The fact that the tool that the defendant used to stalk the victim was a federally regulated means of communication had no bearing on the fact that a crime was committed.

Vazquez v. State, 953 So. 2d 569 (Fla. 4th DCA 2007)

The defendant appealed a conviction of one count of aggravated stalking. The defendant argued that the trial court's decision to allow the state to amend the aggravated stalking count in the information to include certain specific events violated the defendant's right against double jeopardy because his actions on those dates formed the basis of the original stalking charge for which he already had been charged and sentenced. While the state argued that "simple" stalking and aggravated stalking each contain one element that the other does not and are therefore different under the *Blockburger* test, see section 775.021 (4)(a), Florida Statutes (2002), the defendant stated it violated the double jeopardy clause of the Florida Constitution. The district court found that the defendant was correct. The court held that since all

that aggravated stalking requires to differentiate itself from “simple” stalking is the element of an injunction, the two are not separate offenses. Since the record shows that the two convictions were based upon the same charging documents (harassing phone calls), the district court vacated the defendant’s conviction for aggravated stalking and remanded for resentencing.

St. Fort v. State, 943 So. 2d 314 (Fla. 4th DCA 2006)

The district court reversed the defendant’s aggravated stalking conviction holding that armed threats cannot constitute stalking under section 784.048, Florida Statutes. The court held that because the statute’s purpose is to criminalize conduct that falls short of assault or battery, then actual assaults and batteries are not within the ambit of the aggravated stalking statute and such offenses are already condemned by other statutes. The district court reiterated a previous ruling in the Third District that the essence of the stalking offense lies in nonconsensual contact of harassing or intimidating conduct. Because the victim continued to live together with the alleged stalker, the facts of this case did not constitute stalking. Since the conduct complained of was the foundation for a separate conviction on assault, battery and related counts, these acts were outside the “ken” of acts prohibited by the stalking statute.

Cazeau v. State, 873 So. 2d 528 (Fla. 4th DCA 2004)

The district court held that the trial court’s failure to instruct the jury on a particular element of a crime is a fundamental error, requiring reversal, when that element is disputed at trial. In the instant case, the district court reversed the trial court because the jury was never informed that, in order to convict the defendant of aggravated stalking, it must first find that the defendant had knowledge of the injunction, which is an element of the crime.

Gaspard v. State, 848 So. 2d 1161 (Fla. 1st DCA 2003)

The trial court erred in failing to instruct the jury that knowledge of an injunction is an essential element of the offense of aggravated stalking, regardless of the fact that section 784.048(4), Florida Statutes, is silent as to whether knowledge is an element. The supreme court has determined that knowledge of an injunction is a statutory element under section 784.048(4). *State v. Johnson*, 676 So. 2d 408 (Fla. 1996). The court reversed the trial court’s decision.

Rodriguez-Cayro v. State, 828 So. 2d 1060 (Fla. 2d DCA 2002)

The district court denied the petitioner’s writ of certiorari to quash the circuit court’s denial of his petition for a writ of prohibition to enjoin a misdemeanor stalking charge pending against him in county court for which the petitioner argued that the proceedings were barred by the statute of limitations. The district court held that the circuit court’s conclusion that stalking is a “continuing course of conduct crime for which the statute of limitations begins to run only when the course of conduct stops” was correct and that the circuit court appropriately denied the writ.

Jordan v. State, 802 So. 2d 1180 (Fla. 3d DCA 2001)

The defendant appealed a conviction for aggravated stalking and trespassing after violating a domestic violence injunction on the grounds that the evidence presented was not sufficient to sustain the charges. The court held that the defendant’s conduct in visiting the home after the issuance of the injunction and continuing phone calls from jail subsequent to his arrest constituted stalking under section 741.30, Florida Statutes.

Stone v. State, 798 So. 2d 861 (Fla. 4th DCA 2001)

The defendant appealed convictions for numerous charges including an aggravated stalking charge. The only evidence supporting the charge was the probable cause affidavit detailing the events of the night in question. The district court held that it was improper for the court to accept a *nolo contendere* plea on this charge pursuant to section 784.048(3), Florida Statutes, as there was no factual basis outside the

affidavit, and the single incident alleged occurred on one occasion. There was no other evidence presented that the defendant had contact with the victim at any other juncture; therefore, a charge of aggravated stalking was inappropriate because it was a single act.

Butler v. State, 715 So. 2d 339 (Fla. 4th DCA 1998)

Disjointed and discrete incidents, interspersed with one or more reconciliations between the defendant and the victim, who were in an “on and off again” marital relationship, are not instances of repeated harassing conduct constituting aggravated stalking.

State v. Gagne, 680 So. 2d 1041 (Fla. 4th DCA 1996)

Double jeopardy does not bar a subsequent prosecution for aggravated stalking when the defendant had previously been convicted for violating an injunction based on the same conduct.

State v. Johnson, 676 So. 2d 408 (Fla. 1996)

The defendant was properly convicted of aggravated stalking when he had previously been convicted of contempt for violating an injunction based on the same conduct. Each of the offenses contained an element not contained in the other.

Violation of Probation or Injunction

Roberts v. Lamberti, 10 So. 3d 1209 (Fla. 4th DCA 2009)

A defendant is entitled to have a bond set for the offense of violation of an injunction for protection against domestic violence.

Oates v. State, 872 So. 2d 351 (Fla. 2d DCA 2004)

In this revocation of probation case, the district court held, inter alia, that the state failed to prove a willful and substantial violation of probation by the defendant, which was due, in large part, to the omission of a date by which to complete his domestic violence treatment for which the defendant was not near the end of his probationary period. The court held that the state proved only two of the four violations found by the trial court. The decision was reversed, and the case was remanded.

Seitz v. State, 867 So. 2d 421 (Fla. 3d DCA 2004)

The trial court did not abuse its discretion when it revoked the appellant’s probation and held that the appellant violated his previously entered injunction when he publicly published and disseminated the victim’s pharmaceutical records to various persons in Miami-Dade County without a legitimate purpose. The trial court held that the defendant’s actions violated his injunction because the published information caused the victim to suffer emotional distress. The defendant argued his actions did not violate his injunction since he had no direct contact with the victim. The defendant also argued that the trial court had no jurisdiction to revoke his probation because the probation period had not yet commenced. However, the district court held that the court is free to revoke probation at any time for misconduct that demonstrates the probationer’s unfitness for probation as a sentencing alternative.

Gaspar v. State, 845 So. 2d 986 (Fla. 1st DCA 2003)

When a conviction for aggravated stalking has been reversed, any sentence imposed after revocation of probation based solely on the conviction must be vacated. This, however, does not preclude the state from seeking revocation of probation on other grounds.

Hoffman v. State, 842 So. 2d 895 (Fla. 2d DCA 2003)

The defendant, a respondent in a civil case, was convicted of violation of the injunction for sending cards to the petitioner’s residence and for allegedly violating the 500 foot provision of the injunction. The trial

court erred in finding that the defendant had violated the injunction as the cards were addressed to other residents of the petitioner's household and as the injunction did not specifically prohibit this. Additionally, the trial court erred in finding that the defendant had violated the 500 foot provision of the injunction as the state failed to prove the exact distance the defendant was from the petitioner. The court held that the state's burden of proof in an indirect criminal contempt case is to prove every element beyond a reasonable doubt.

Robinson v. State, 840 So. 2d 1138 (Fla. 1st DCA 2003)

The court reversed the trial court's conviction for violation of a domestic violence injunction for failing to grant the appellant's motion for judgment of acquittal. The court held that the state failed to establish that the appellant knew the permanent injunction had been entered against him. The appellant's conviction for aggravated battery was upheld, however.

Colwell v. State, 838 So. 2d 670 (Fla. 2d DCA 2003)

The district court reversed the trial court's revocation of the defendant's probation for violation of probation for committing domestic battery. The court held that it was an error to base the revocation, in part, on inadmissible hearsay and other insufficient evidence. The only testimony offered at the revocation hearing was that of a deputy who testified that the victim told him that the defendant had grabbed her and she was afraid to go back to the house. Further, the deputy testified that the victim was hysterical and had a faint mark on her neck. The evidence was insufficient to find that the defendant violated probation. Note: the trial court found that the victim's statement did not meet the excited utterance exception as too much time passed between the time of the alleged incident and her statement to the deputy.

Dunkin v. State, 780 So. 2d 223 (Fla. 2d DCA 2001)

The defendant was placed on probation for a period of three years and ordered to complete an outpatient sex offenders treatment program until he was officially discharged by the program's administrator. The probation officer claimed the defendant was in violation of his probation because he was absent from the sex offenders program without permission on three separate occasions without notification to the therapist as to why he missed the sessions. The defendant contended that the missed appointments were due to illness. The terms of his probation did not specify that the defendant successfully complete the program on the first try, just that the program be completed within the three-year period of his probation. The circuit court revoked the defendant's probation, but the district court reversed and remanded the case on the grounds that the defendant's termination from the sex offenders program was insufficient to establish a "willful and substantial" violation of probation and therefore did not warrant a revocation.

Muthra v. State, 777 So. 2d 1067 (Fla. 3d DCA 2001)

The district court held that the trial court abused its discretion when it found that the defendant had violated the terms of and revoked probation for failing to pay restitution and perform community service hours. The court reversed the probation revocation on the grounds that the original order never specified a schedule for completing this sentence, and there was still sufficient time in the probationary period for the sentence to be completed. The court also held that a violation cannot be deemed willful when a defendant, as this one, was incarcerated on unrelated charges for the first three months of the probationary period.

Suggs v. State, 795 So. 2d 1028 (Fla. 2d DCA 2001)

The defendant appealed a denial of her motion to dismiss an aggravated stalking charge. The court reversed and remanded the decision on the grounds that a defendant cannot be charged with a violation of a permanent injunction unless the defendant was served with the injunction. In this case, there was no service on the defendant; therefore the court found that she cannot be charged with a violation.

Brown v. State, 776 So. 2d 329 (Fla. 5th DCA 2001)

The defendant failed to complete an intake interview with the probation officer, as the court ordered, and was asked to call back and provide the information requested by the officer. The defendant failed to do so, and the court held that the defendant's failure to complete the intake procedure was a substantial enough violation to justify the revocation of the probation.

Meadows v. State, 747 So. 2d 1043 (Fla. 4th DCA 2000)

When the state agreed at the beginning of a probation violation hearing not to proceed on a count alleging aggravated battery and domestic violence, but did proceed on a second count alleging accessing 911 for a non-emergency purpose, the case was reversed and remanded by the district court. Because the revocation of probation was based upon two violations, it was not apparent whether the trial court would have revoked the defendant's probation based upon the remaining violation.

Young v. State, 739 So. 2d 1179 (Fla. 4th DCA 1999)

The district court held that the trial court was without jurisdiction to revoke probation when the warrant charging the defendant with probation violation was delivered to the sheriff's office after the expiration of the probationary period. It was error to find that the defendant had absconded from supervision by failing to file monthly reports with her probation officer when the defendant was not hiding, nor had she departed the jurisdiction of the state, and the probationary period was thereby tolled.

Mitchell v. State, 717 So. 2d 609 (Fla. 4th DCA 1998)

The claim that the trial court erred in finding the defendant in violation of probation because the order of probation did not specify the time frame for completion of a domestic batterers intervention program was not preserved for appellate review. The district court found that there was no merit to the claim due to the fact that the time period for completion of the program was implicit in other dictates imposed by the court order and supported by the trial court's revocation of probation.

Rawlins v. State, 711 So. 2d 137 (Fla. 5th DCA 1998)

Two unexcused absences from a substance abuse treatment program amounts to a material probation violation. The probation officer lacked the authority to substitute a program different from that ordered by the court.

Violation of Probation

Roundtree v. State, 955 So. 2d 1184 (Fla. 3d DCA 2007)

The defendant, who pled guilty to aggravated battery, appealed the revocation of his probation for failing to report to his probation officer, changing his address without permission, not undergoing psychological evaluation, and not completing a domestic violence intervention program. After being in compliance for two months, the defendant stopped reporting to his probation officer after the hurricanes in July and August of 2005. Attempts were made to contact the defendant at his home, but the defendant never responded. At the revocation hearing, the defendant testified that he was hospitalized for six weeks and spent an additional six weeks in a convalescent home. Once he was able to return to his obligations for probation, he had lost the contact information for his probation officer, had attempted to get his psychological evaluation done but did not have enough money to pay, and was turned away from the domestic violence intervention classes because they were full. The trial court found his reasons for failing to report not to be credible and revoked his probation for the aforementioned reasons. On appeal, the court agreed with the trial court in finding that the defendant did violate the terms of his probation for not reporting to his officer and for changing his address without permission. However, the district court did not find violations for his failure to undergo a psychological evaluation and complete the classes since no specific time frame to finish these requirements was given by the trial court. A year was left on his

probation, giving him sufficient time to complete these requirements. As a result, the district court reversed that portion of the revocation and remanded to the trial court for a determination on whether the sentence should be reconsidered.

Violence Against Women Act (Federal)

U.S. v. Bailey, 112 F.3d 758 (4th Cir. 1997)

The portion of the Violence Against Women Act that makes it a federal crime to cause bodily injury to one's spouse after crossing state lines with the intent to do so, 18 U.S.C. section 2261(a)(2), does not exceed Congress' authority under the Commerce Clause.

Visitation

Singleton v. Bullard, 701 So. 2d 590 (Fla. 5th DCA 1997)

The trial court exceeded its authority by entering a post-conviction order requiring the Department of Corrections to allow visitation between the inmate and the minor child during the inmate's incarceration. The statutory provision permitting the trial court to grant the court permission for special visitation when visiting was restricted by court order did not apply in the case when the trial court was not eliminating the restriction it had earlier imposed.

Warrantless Entry

Wheeler v. State, 956 So. 2d 517 (Fla. 2d DCA 2007)

The defendant appealed an order denying a motion to suppress evidence seized from an alleged illegal search. Officers responded to an anonymous domestic violence phone call and arrived at the home of the defendant. After questioning the defendant at his door, the officers were presented with a scenario in which nothing seemed suspicious, nor were they led to believe that anyone other than the defendant was in the house. Acting on the information placed on the 911 call, the officers decided to enter the home in search of the alleged victim since they had a "reasonable belief" that they would find the injured woman. As a result of this search, the officers found contraband. The defendant moved to suppress the evidence arguing that it was an illegal search since the officers did not have probable cause. The trial court denied his motion. On appeal, the district court found that the officers did not have a reasonable basis to believe a grave emergency had transpired (which would give rise to an exception to the warrant requirement allowing them to enter) and that the officers entered illegally. To affirm on these facts would constitute adopting a per se exception to the warrant requirement that would allow police to enter a closed dwelling based solely on an anonymous phone call alleging an emergency without further corroboration when at the scene. The court held that the officers needed to seek out additional factual information about what had occurred before making the decision to enter the premises. The court reversed the order denying suppression and remanded.

Espiet v. State, 797 So. 2d 598 (Fla. 5th DCA 2001)

The trial court erred in failing to grant a motion for judgment of acquittal as to aggravated assault and resisting without violence charges because the state failed to adduce evidence that the deputies were in lawful performance of their duties when they entered the defendant's home without a warrant. When the deputy entered the house to arrest the defendant on a misdemeanor charge of domestic violence, he was not engaged in the lawful performance of his duties. The courts generally agree that a lawful enforcement officer may not make a warrantless entry into a person's home to arrest the person for a misdemeanor offense. The provisions of section 901.15(7), Florida Statutes, which allow a law enforcement officer to

arrest a person for an act of domestic violence without a warrant, do not permit forcible entry into a person's home to effectuate the arrest based on a misdemeanor offense. The decision of the trial court was reversed and remanded.

Williams Rule (Other Crimes) Evidence

***Fiddemon v. State*, 858 So. 2d 1100 (Fla. 4th DCA 2003)**

The district court reversed the trial court's judgment convicting the defendant of the second degree murder of his girlfriend. Prior to the trial, the court granted the defendant's motion *in limine* to preclude evidence regarding the defendant's prior assault on his girlfriend. At the trial, the court allowed the state to introduce evidence of the assault based on the theory that the defense had "opened the door" by presenting evidence of a ten-year-old domestic violence incident involving the girlfriend's former husband. The district court reversed the decision and held that in order for prior bad acts to be admitted into evidence under the "opening the door" argument, the defense must first present misleading testimony or a factual assertion that the state would have the right to correct. (Note: the court discussed in a footnote that evidence of prior violence or assaults may be relevant to establish motive, intent, or premeditation.)

***Robertson v. State*, 829 So. 2d 901 (Fla. 2002)**

This was a landmark collateral crimes domestic violence case. It was reversible error "as a matter of law" to allow as Williams rule evidence "a prior threat six years earlier against a different victim and involving a different weapon" to prove absence of mistake or accident. The supreme court noted it was "unable to find...any cases in Florida where a prior threat against a different victim was admitted under the *Williams* rule to prove the absence of mistake or accident of the present offense." The court did cite, with apparent approval, cases allowing "prior crimes against the same victim as the charged offense."

***Mills v. State*, 816 So. 2d 170 (Fla. 3d DCA 2002)**

The respondent appealed from a judgment of conviction for aggravated battery. The Third District affirmed the lower court's decision, concluding that the domestic violence permanent injunction and the arrest warrant issued, based upon alleged violations of the injunction, were admissible under section 90.402, Florida Statutes, and not *Williams* rule of evidence. The court held that evidence of uncharged crimes, which are inseparable from the crime charged, is not *Williams* rule of evidence and is admissible if it is a relevant and inseparable part of the act, which is in issue. "It is necessary to admit the evidence to adequately describe the deed." *Coolen v. State*, 696 So. 2d 738, 742-743 (Fla. 1997) (quoting *Griffin v. State*, 639 So. 2d 966, 968 (Fla. 1994)).

***Simmons v. State*, 790 So. 2d 1177 (Fla. 3d DCA 2001)**

The defendant was charged with aggravated battery, aggravated assault with a deadly weapon, armed kidnapping, and battery of his girlfriend. Evidence of the defendant's prior violent behavior towards the victim was properly admitted into evidence to prove the defendant's intent to commit the crimes of aggravated battery, aggravated assault, and battery and was properly admitted to prove the defendant's intent to terrorize the victim, as contained within the kidnapping count. The state filed a notice of intent to rely upon evidence of other crimes, namely the battery of a previous girlfriend. At trial, the defendant testified he had never engaged in violent behavior, and the state used the previous battery to impeach his testimony. On appeal, the district court held that the admission of the prior violence was properly admitted, and no abuse of discretion existed. The court also held that since the trial court initially granted a motion for acquittal in the kidnapping charge, a reversal of that decision was not in fact double jeopardy.

***Boroughs v. State*, 684 So. 2d 274 (Fla. 5th DCA 1996)**

Testimony concerning the abusive nature of the defendant's relationship with the victim, including the defendant's prior "bad acts," was relevant to prove the sexual battery victim's lack of consent and to explain why the victim did not immediately contact the police.

Witnesses

State v. Clyatt, 976 So. 2d 1182 (Fla. 5th DCA 2008)

The state sought certiorari review of a trial court order barring it from calling independent witnesses to prove that the victim did not consent to an alleged battery committed on her by the defendant. The alleged incident occurred in a fast food restaurant drive-thru where many witnesses observed the defendant bashing the victim's head against the car window from inside the car and choking her. The victim refused to cooperate with the state in the defendant's prosecution, leaving the state with the options of dismissing the case or relying on third-party witness testimony to prove the case. When the state decided to proceed with the prosecution, it had to show that the victim was struck against her will. The testimony provided by third-party witnesses of the attack would constitute merely circumstantial evidence that the victim did *not* consent to the beating. Yet, the testimony of the third-party witnesses also would indicate that the victim seemed to be resisting the attack and was visibly upset, thus leaving but one reasonable inference that the beating was uninvited. The state was unable to provide the court with a specific case where a victim's lack of consent could be proven circumstantially so the court did not allow the witnesses' testimony without having the victim's testimony as well. The district court held that lack of consent has been proven by circumstantial evidence in other types of criminal prosecutions. Additionally, circumstantial evidence has been enough to prove other issues such as a defendant's state of mind. Ultimately, the district court held that there was no distinction between consent and state of mind; consent could thusly be proven by circumstantial evidence as well. Also, the district court looked to the importance of the relevance of the witnesses' testimony. By failing to allow such testimony, the trial court barred a form of evidence that could have sufficiently established the victim's lack of consent. The order barring third-party eyewitness testimony was quashed.

Valdes v. State, 930 So. 2d 682 (Fla. 3d DCA 2006)

The defendant appealed convictions and sentences on twelve counts of sexual abuse, claiming that the trial court erred in allowing the defendant's former wife to testify that he had been physically violent in the home and that the testimony was irrelevant and prejudicial. The district court disagreed, finding that collateral testimony concerning domestic violence in the home offered to explain why minor children who were victims failed to disclose the sexual abuse for so long, and placed the entire relationship between the defendant and the two minors into perspective. The context of the crimes charged and proof of the crimes themselves could not be fully explained and adjudicated without detailed reference to the uncharged domestic violence. A trial court has broad discretion in determining the relevance of evidence, and such a determination should not be disturbed absent an abuse of discretion. The evidence of uncharged physical violence was properly admitted and was relevant to the threats and intimidation from the respondent to the victims if the abuse were disclosed, and admission of this testimony far outweighed its prejudicial nature.

Zuchel v. State, 824 So. 2d 1044 (Fla. 4th DCA 2002)

The defendant, charged with aggravated stalking and violation of the restraining order, filed a writ of prohibition after the trial court denied his motion for disqualification. The district court granted the defendant's request and remanded the case to the trial court for assignment of a new judge. The appellate court held that the trial court's denial of the basic fundamental right of cross examination of the victim would give a "reasonably prudent person a well-founded fear of judicial bias." The Fourth District noted that the fact that the state was allowed to use the victim's testimony in its opposition to the motion to reduce bond.

Kronjack v. State, 8 Fla. L. Weekly Supp. 282 (Fla. 10th Cir. Ct. 2001)

The Tenth Judicial Circuit Court held that the trial court did not abuse its discretion in finding a child competent to testify in a domestic violence battery trial when the trial judge found that the seven-year-old child was in the correct grade for her age, making good progress in school, and understood the difference between what she observed and what someone else may have told her, in accordance with the standard set out in *Kertell v. State*, 649 So. 2d 892 (Fla. 2d DCA 1995).

Lima v. State, 732 So. 2d 1173 (Fla. 3d DCA 1999)

The district court held that in a probation revocation hearing for the commission of a domestic violence-related battery, it is not a denial of the Sixth Amendment's Confrontation Clause to present the victim's testimony via satellite transmission, so long as there is a showing that the victim "was unable to attend." This holding will also apply to the trial itself, as opposed to a probation violation hearing.