

MEMORANDUM DECISION

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IN THE COURT OF APPEALS OF INDIANA

Chad Aaron Farmer,
Appellant-Defendant,

v.

State of Indiana,
Appellee-Plaintiff.

December 27, 2022

Court of Appeals Case No.
22A-CR-1048

Appeal from the Wayne Superior
Court

The Hon. Charles K. Todd, Jr.,
Judge

Trial Court Cause No.
89D01-1902-MR-1

Bradford, Chief Judge.

Case Summary

- [1] In February of 2019, following an altercation in which Audie Corn got the better of his roommate Chad Farmer, Farmer obtained a knife and stabbed Corn twice in the chest, killing him. The State charged Farmer with murder, a jury found him guilty as charged, and the trial court sentenced him to fifty years of incarceration with two years suspended to probation. Farmer contends that the State failed to produce sufficient evidence to sustain his conviction for murder. Because we disagree, we affirm.

Facts and Procedural History

- [2] Donald Berry allowed Farmer and Corn to live with him in his Richmond apartment. Berry's girlfriend, Miranda Smith, and her six-year-old son, H.M., lived in the apartment, as well. On February 6, 2019, the group and a few other individuals were drinking and smoking marijuana. At some point, while Smith was attempting to put H.M. to sleep, Farmer was in his room listening to music. Berry asked Farmer to turn the music's volume down to allow H.M. to go to sleep; he did, but only temporarily. Corn went to Farmer's bedroom and told him that he needed to turn the music down, to which Farmer responded by telling Corn, "[***] you, b[****]." Tr. Vol. III. p. 89. Farmer and Corn began fighting, and Berry broke it up. During the fight, Farmer had fallen and hit his head but did not want to go to the hospital to be evaluated, so he stopped the bleeding, went back into his bedroom, and shut the bedroom door.
- [3] At approximately 3:00 a.m., Farmer got out of bed, got a knife, went to the bathroom, and went to the kitchen. Corn was either asleep at the kitchen table

or looking down at his phone when Farmer stabbed him twice in the chest. Berry heard the commotion and called 911. Police soon arrived and took Farmer into custody. Farmer was able to walk, follow instructions, and navigate the stairs appropriately. While being transported to jail, Farmer told a police officer, “I only did it because he beat me up an hour ago.” Tr. Vol. II p. 228. Farmer, who complained of head pain, was transported to the hospital. When medical personnel asked Farmer what had happened, Farmer said, “I retaliated.” Tr. Vol. III p. 232. After being released from the hospital, Farmer admitted that he had gotten out of bed, grabbed the knife, and gone to the kitchen with the intent to stab Corn. Farmer also admitted repeatedly that he had been acting out of anger and had retaliated against Corn by stabbing him. Farmer acknowledged that Corn had not been armed, had not been “doing anything,” and had either been asleep or looking down at his phone when he had stabbed him. Tr. Vol. VI p. 44.

[4] Meanwhile, at approximately 3:15 a.m., medics had arrived at the apartment to treat Corn’s injuries, and he was taken to the hospital. When Corn arrived at the hospital, he was in cardiac arrest and had no pulse due to the chest wall trauma and blood loss; Corn died at 3:57 a.m. The State charged Farmer with murder, and, on February 14, 2022, a jury found him guilty as charged. The trial court sentenced Farmer to fifty years of incarceration, with two years suspended to probation.

Discussion and Decision

- [5] Farmer contends that the State failed to produce sufficient evidence to sustain a finding that he had intended to kill Corn when he stabbed him twice in the chest. “When reviewing the sufficiency of the evidence to support a conviction, appellate courts must consider only the probative evidence and reasonable inferences supporting the verdict.” *Drane v. State*, 867 N.E.2d 144, 146 (Ind. 2007). We will neither assess witness credibility nor “weigh the evidence to determine whether it is sufficient to support a conviction.” *Id.* When presented with conflicting evidence, the court “must consider it most favorably to the trial court’s ruling.” *Id.* The appellate court will affirm the conviction “unless no reasonable fact-finder could find the elements of the crime proven beyond a reasonable doubt.” *Id.* “It is therefore not necessary that the evidence overcome every reasonable hypothesis of innocence.” *Id.* “The evidence is sufficient if an inference may reasonably be drawn from it to support the verdict.” *Id.*
- [6] In order for a jury to convict Farmer of murder, the State was required to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that Farmer knowingly or intentionally killed Corn. Ind. Code § 35-42-1-1. A person engages in conduct “‘knowingly’” if the person is “aware of a high probability that he is doing so.” Ind. Code § 35-41-2-2(b). “Our Supreme Court has long held that *intent* to commit murder may be inferred from the use of a deadly weapon in a manner likely to cause death.” *Booker v. State*, 741 N.E.2d 748, 755 (Ind. Ct. App. 2000) (emphasis in original).
- [7] Here, Farmer stabbed Corn twice in the chest, a particularly vulnerable part of the body. The Indiana Supreme Court has observed that “an assault [...] with a

knife or similar sharp object—particularly to the chest or head region—rarely occurs without awareness of a high probability that death will result.” *McEwen v. State*, 695 N.E.2d 79, 87 (Ind. 1998). Because the *mens rea* to commit murder may be inferred from the use of a deadly weapon in a manner likely to cause death or serious bodily injury, the jury was free to infer that Farmer knowingly and intentionally committed murder by stabbing Corn twice in the chest.

[8] We affirm the judgment of the trial court.

Brown, J., and Pyle, J., concur.