

NON-PRECEDENTIAL DECISION - SEE SUPERIOR COURT O.P. 65.37

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA	:	IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF
	:	PENNSYLVANIA
	:	
v.	:	
	:	
	:	
TARIQ CHAMBERS	:	
	:	
Appellant	:	No. 617 EDA 2025

Appeal from the Judgment of Sentence Entered November 15, 2024
In the Court of Common Pleas of Philadelphia County Criminal Division at
No(s): CP-51-CR-0001754-2023

BEFORE: LAZARUS, P.J., SULLIVAN, J., and STEVENS, P.J.E.*

MEMORANDUM BY SULLIVAN, J.:

FILED AUGUST 26, 2026

Tariq Chambers (“Chambers”) appeals from the judgment of sentence following his convictions for two counts of first-degree murder and one count of conspiracy to commit murder.¹ Because Chambers’ claims that the Commonwealth failed to present sufficient evidence and the trial court erred in admitting testimony attributing a phone number to him are without merit, we affirm.

In early June 2021, Isaiah Jones’s (“Jones”) younger brother was shot and killed. **See** N.T., 11/8/24, at 94. Jones and Chambers are cousins. Approximately one week later, Chambers drove Jones and Rayfiq Tiggie (“Tiggie”), in a white car, to 55th and Arch Streets in Philadelphia. Nasire

* Former Justice specially assigned to the Superior Court.

¹ **See** 18 Pa.C.S.A. §§ 2502(a), 903(a).

Brooks ("Brooks") and Steven Griffin ("Griffin", collectively, "the victims") were walking down the street when Tiggle and Jones got out of the car and fired sixteen shots at them, striking them ten times and killing them. **See** N.T. 11/6/24, at 142, 147. Tiggle and Jones reentered the car, and Chambers drove them from the scene. **See** N.T., 11/7/24, at 107–17. The police located the car, registered to Chambers' girlfriend, less than a mile away. **See** N.T. 11/6/24, at 59-60, 65-66; N.T., 11/8/24, at 83. They found masks and Tiggle's fingerprints inside the car. **See** Trial Court Opinion, 6/30/25, at 2.

Surveillance camera footage from eight minutes after the shooting revealed four men² running up the street away from the car in which Chambers and his co-conspirators fled. **See** N.T., 11/7/24, at 107–17. Three of the men then entered an alley that led to Chambers' back door. **See id.** at 113-14. The fourth man continued running up the street. It was later determined he was neither a shooter nor the driver of the car. **See** Trial Court Opinion, 6/30/25, at 2.

At trial, Detective Mikal Carr ("Detective Carr") identified Chambers and Tiggle from the video footage after having worked in the area for seven years and observed Chambers with Tiggle "50 to 100 times." N.T. 11/6/24, 167–73. Detective Robert Lamanna ("Detective Lamanna") also testified that

² Police later determined the car had a fourth occupant, Hamza Ruley ("Ruley"). **See** N.T., 11/8/24, at 88.

Chambers and Tiggie appeared in the surveillance footage. **See** N.T., 11/6/24, at 149-50.

The same day as the shooting, Dwayne Campbell ("Campbell") voluntarily went to the Philadelphia Police Department Homicide Unit and told the police the homicide was motivated by the recent killing of Jones's younger brother, and that Jones had told him, "Me and my brother got him." Trial Court Opinion, 6/30/25, at 3. Campbell also reported Jones showed him a firearm and stated it had "two bodies on it." N.T. 11/7/24, at 42.

When a detective asked Chambers about his whereabouts on the night of the murder, Chambers claimed he was not in the area. Police determined a phone number, (215)600-6761, used by Chambers, was present in the area of the shooting when it occurred. **See** N.T., 11/7/24, 117-19.

Prior to trial, Chambers filed a motion *in limine* to preclude hearsay evidence attributing the phone number to him. The trial court denied the motion. **See** N.T., 11/7/24, 11-12.

At trial, Detective Thorsten Lucke ("Detective Lucke") testified about cell phone records he analyzed for phone numbers attributed to Chambers, Jones, and Tiggie. **See** N.T., 11/7/24, at 94-114. Detective Lucke explained that call detail records showed all three phones were in the general area of the shooting and the location of the car after the shooting. **See id.** at 96-97, 137. Detective Lucke further testified that (215)600-6761 was attributed to Chambers through the investigation. **See id.** at 116. Detective Janel Craig ("Detective Craig") testified regarding the surveillance footage and said during

her investigation Chambers told her he generally drove the white car. **See** N.T., 11/8/24, at 43, 79-89, 117.

In November 2024, a jury found Chambers, Jones, and Tiggie guilty at a joint trial of two counts of first-degree murder and one count of conspiracy to commit murder.³ The court sentenced Chambers to consecutive sentences of life imprisonment for both murder convictions and a concurrent sentence of 20-40 years of imprisonment for conspiracy to commit murder. Chambers timely filed post-sentence motions, which were denied. Chambers timely appealed and he and the trial court complied with Pa.R.A.P. 1925.

Chambers raises the following issues for our review:

1. Was the evidence insufficient to support the convictions for first[-]degree murder and conspiracy to commit first[-]degree murder?
2. Did the trial court abuse its discretion in admitting testimony attributing a specific phone number to [] Chambers when that testimony was not based on personal knowledge but on hearsay?

Chambers' Brief at 5.

Chambers first argues there was insufficient evidence to prove beyond a reasonable doubt he was guilty of first-degree murder and conspiracy to commit first-degree murder.

Our standard of review for sufficiency claims is as follows:

³ Jones and Tiggie were also found guilty of possession of an instrument of crime. **See** 18 Pa.C.S.A. 907(a).

As a general matter, our standard of review of sufficiency claims requires that we evaluate the record in the light most favorable to the verdict winner giving the prosecution the benefit of all reasonable inferences to be drawn from the evidence. Evidence will be deemed sufficient to support the verdict when it establishes each material element of the crime charged and the commission thereof by the accused, beyond a reasonable doubt. Nevertheless, the Commonwealth need not establish guilt to a mathematical certainty. Any doubt about the defendant's guilt is to be resolved by the fact finder unless the evidence is so weak and inconclusive that, as a matter of law, no probability of fact can be drawn from the combined circumstances.

The Commonwealth may sustain its burden by means of wholly circumstantial evidence. Accordingly, [t]he fact that the evidence establishing a defendant's participation in a crime is circumstantial does not preclude a conviction where the evidence coupled with the reasonable inferences drawn therefrom overcomes the presumption of innocence. Significantly, we may not substitute our judgment for that of the fact finder; thus, so long as the evidence adduced, accepted in the light most favorable to the Commonwealth, demonstrates the respective elements of a defendant's crimes beyond a reasonable doubt, the appellant's convictions will be upheld.

Commonwealth v. Sebolka, 205 A.3d 329, 336-37 (Pa. Super. 2019)

(internal citation and indentation omitted).

First-degree murder is defined, in relevant part, as follows:

§ 2502. Murder

(a) **Murder of the first degree.**—A criminal homicide constitutes murder of the first degree when it is committed by an intentional killing.

18 Pa.C.S.A. § 2502(a).

The Pennsylvania Supreme Court has described the elements of first-degree murder as follows:

To convict a defendant of first[-]degree murder, the Commonwealth must prove: [(1)] a human being was unlawfully killed; [(2)] the defendant was responsible for the killing; and [(3)] the defendant acted with malice and a specific intent to kill.

Commonwealth v. Houser, 18 A.3d 1128, 1133 (Pa. 2011) (internal citations omitted). The intent to kill may be formulated in a fraction of a second. ***See Commonwealth v. Jordan***, 65 A.3d 318, 323 (Pa. 2013). The Commonwealth may prove the specific intent to kill with circumstantial evidence. ***See Commonwealth v. Fletcher***, 861 A.2d 898, 907 (Pa. 2004). The use of a deadly weapon on a vital part of a victim's body is sufficient to establish the specific intent to kill. ***See Commonwealth v. Diggs***, 949 A.3d 873, 878 (Pa. 2009).

A person may be found guilty of conspiracy if "with the intent of promoting or facilitating its commission he: (1) agrees with such other person or persons that they or one or more of them will engage in conduct which constitutes such crime or an attempt or solicitation to commit such crime; or (2) agrees to aid such other person or persons in the planning or commission of such crime or of an attempt or solicitation to commit such crime." 18 Pa.C.S.A. § 903(a).

To prove the existence of a criminal conspiracy, the Commonwealth must demonstrate the defendant: "(1) entered an agreement to commit or aid in an unlawful act with another person or persons, (2) with a shared criminal intent and, (3) an overt act was done in furtherance of the conspiracy." ***Commonwealth v. Chambers***, 188 A.3d 400, 410 (Pa. 2018) (citations omitted). "Once the conspiracy is established beyond a reasonable

doubt, a conspirator can be convicted of both the conspiracy and the substantive offense that served as the illicit objective of the conspiracy.” ***Id.*** at 410 (citations omitted). Moreover, the essence of criminal conspiracy is the agreement between co-conspirators, which can be proved directly or, more often, circumstantially, but is not established by mere association or presence at the crime scene. We have explained:

[M]ere association with the perpetrators, mere presence at the scene, or mere knowledge of the crime is insufficient to establish that a defendant was part of a conspiratorial agreement to commit the crime. There needs to be some additional proof that the defendant intended to commit the crime along with his co-conspirator. Direct evidence of the defendant’s criminal intent or the conspiratorial agreement, however, is rarely available. Consequently, the defendant’s intent as well as the agreement is almost always proven through circumstantial evidence, such as by the relations, conduct or circumstances of the parties or overt acts on the part of the co-conspirators. Once the trier of fact finds that there was an agreement and the defendant intentionally entered into the agreement, that defendant may be liable for the overt acts committed in furtherance of the conspiracy regardless of which co-conspirator committed the act.

Commonwealth v. Golphin, 161 A.3d 1009, 1019 (Pa. Super. 2017) (internal citations omitted).

Regarding conspiracy to commit first-degree murder, a conspirator must possess the specific intent to kill. ***See Commonwealth v. Reed***, 347 A.3d 795, 801 (Pa. Super. 2025). “Whether a person had the same intent to kill as their co-conspirator may be inferred from words, conduct, the attendant circumstances including the actions taken after the killing and all reasonable

inferences that follow from them.” ***Id.*** (internal citation and quotation marks omitted).

Further, in any prosecution, the Commonwealth must establish the identity of the defendant as the perpetrator of the offenses beyond a reasonable doubt. ***See Commonwealth v. Smyser***, 195 A.3d 912, 915 (Pa. Super. 2018). Generally, any indefiniteness or uncertainty in the identification evidence goes to the weight of the evidence, not sufficiency. ***See Commonwealth v. Orr***, 38 A.3d 868, 874 (Pa. Super. 2011) (*en banc*). As with any element of an offense, the Commonwealth may sustain its burden of proving the defendant’s identity as the perpetrator of the offenses by circumstantial evidence. ***See Smyser***, 195 A.3d at 915.

Chambers argues there was insufficient evidence to prove he was at the scene of the shooting or in the car used to take the shooters to the scene because the Commonwealth presented no eyewitness testimony and the surveillance footage was too blurry to identify anyone. ***See*** Chambers’ Brief at 20. He further asserts that even if the evidence was sufficient to prove he was at the scene, it did not prove he was the driver of the car rather than a passenger who was merely present. ***See id.*** at 21-22. Finally, Chambers argues the evidence did not establish his specific intent to kill because he did not use a deadly weapon and there was no evidence he knew about the shooting before it occurred. ***See id.*** at 22-23. Stated differently, Chambers argues that the Commonwealth failed to prove identity and intent. Thus,

Chambers asserts the evidence was insufficient to sustain all three of his convictions.

The trial court found the evidence sufficient to sustain the convictions.

It explained:

Here, the evidence, viewed in the light most favorable to the Commonwealth establishes that [Chambers], Tiggie[,] and Jones were lying in wait for the [victims], exited the vehicle and fired at least 16 shots at the [victims] from behind. []Brooks had gunshot wounds to his mid back, left and right lower back, and the back of high thigh. []Griffin had gunshot wounds to his upper back, mid back, two on his lower back, and on his buttock[s].

* * * *

The direct and circumstantial evidence . . . was sufficient to support the convictions.

Trial Court Opinion, 6/30/25, unnumbered at 7-8.

Viewing the evidence in the light most favorable to the Commonwealth as verdict winner, sufficient evidence supports Chambers' convictions. First, the Commonwealth presented sufficient evidence to establish Chambers' identity, including Detectives Lamanna's and Carr's testimony that he and Tiggie were the men shown in the surveillance video running away from the car used in the shooting eight minutes after the shooting. **See** N.T., 11/6/24, at 152-59, 168-72; N.T. 11/8/24, at 139. Chambers' identity was further proved by the fact the car was registered to his girlfriend at his residence and his statement that he frequently drove the car. **See** N.T., 11/8/24, at 89-91, 95. Finally, the evidence showed Chambers was related to Jones and the victim of the shooting that led to the reprisal killing. Thus, the evidence

viewed, as it must be, in the light most favorable to the Commonwealth was sufficient evidence to show Chambers drove the car that brought the shooters to and from the scene.

Evidence that Chambers delivered the shooters to the scene, hurried them away from it immediately after they fired sixteen shots at the victims, and fled with the shooters permitted the inference he was aware of their specific intent to kill and shared that intent; thus, that evidence was sufficient to sustain his conviction for conspiracy to commit first-degree murder. **See Commonwealth v. Wayne**, 720 A.2d 455, 465 (Pa. 1998) (explaining “[t]he precise and deliberate actions of [the] appellant and the [co-conspirators] establish[ed] a concerted conscious decision by all three persons to join together with the purpose of taking the life of [the victim]”); **Reed**, 347 A.3d at 802-03 (holding evidence was sufficient to prove first-degree murder as a conspirator, regardless of who fired the fatal shot, where Reed conspired to murder the victim and was present when the victim was shot). Additionally, cell phone location data and police identification placed Chambers, Tiggie, and Jones at the scene of the killings and fleeing immediately after the killings, which also helped prove Chambers conspired to murder the victims. **See Fletcher**, 861 A.2d at 907 (explaining the specific intent to kill may be proved by circumstantial evidence). This conduct was sufficient to prove conspiracy to commit first-degree murder.

Because conspiracy to commit first-degree murder was established beyond a reasonable doubt, Chambers could also be properly convicted of the

underlying offense of first-degree murder. **See Chambers**, 188 A.3d at 410; **Commonwealth v. Le**, 208 A.3d 960, 969 (Pa. Super. 2019) (explaining that regardless of who killed the victim, all co-conspirators can share the specific intent to kill and be properly convicted of first-degree murder). Therefore, Chambers' claim that there was insufficient evidence to support his convictions is without merit.

In his second and final claim, Chambers argues the trial court abused its discretion by denying his motion to preclude testimony attributing phone number (215) 600-6761 to him. On appeal, he specifically argues Detectives Lucke and Craig lacked personal knowledge under Pennsylvania Rule of Evidence 602 because their anticipated testimony relied solely on a hearsay statement of a non-testifying witness and any testimony attributing the number to Chambers should have been excluded based on Pennsylvania Rules of Evidence 602 and 802.⁴

As a procedural matter, the "motion *in limine*" Chambers referred to was an oral motion made by counsel on the day of trial. **See** N.T., 11/7/24, at 11-12. Chambers' counsel argued that the sole means of linking Chambers to the phone number obtained was through a non-testifying witness. Thus, the detectives relied on this hearsay statement only, and any testimony regarding

⁴ Rule 602 provides that "[a] witness may testify to a matter only if evidence is introduced sufficient to support a finding that the witness has personal knowledge of the matter. Evidence to prove personal knowledge may consist of the witness's own testimony." Pa.R.E. 602. Rule 802 is the general rule against hearsay. **See** Pa.R.E. 802.

this phone number would be hearsay. Chambers framed this as an inadmissible hearsay argument both at trial and on appeal. **See id.** at 11 (indicating “wanting to limit reference to a phone number . . . attributable to [Chambers] being hearsay”); Chambers’ Statement of Errors Complained of on Appeal, at 1 (stating “the Court erred in denying [] Chamber’s Motion *in Limine* . . . attributing a particular phone number to him as such testimony was based on and constituted hearsay”); Chambers’ Brief at 25 (asserting “any testimony that [] Chambers used that number constituted hearsay.”).

The trial court denied the motion *in limine*, essentially permitting the testimony of detectives regarding the phone number and phone records attributed to Chambers. **See** N.T., 11/7/24, at 12. As noted in the record, the Commonwealth generally asserted Chambers’ assumption that this purported hearsay statement was the sole basis for obtaining this information was not accurate; instead, the investigatory process led the detectives to subpoena phone records for the number attributed to Chambers. **See id.** at 11. Contrary to Chambers’ assertion that “the trial court declined to permit [] Chambers to re-raise this issue on [] cross-examination”, Chambers’ Brief at 25,

the trial court simply stated, “[t]he ruling stands.” N.T., 11/7/24 at 10. The ruling that the trial court referred to permitted the Commonwealth to bring the phone records in evidence. Nowhere in the record does the trial court indicate Chambers was precluded from discussing how Detectives Lucke and Craig’s investigation led them to the information regarding the phone number

and the records obtained thereafter on cross-examination. It simply indicated that the phone records were not excluded.

The admissibility of evidence

is a matter for the discretion of the trial court and a ruling thereon will be reversed on appeal only upon a showing that the trial court committed an abuse of discretion. An abuse of discretion may not be found merely because an appellate court might have reached a different conclusion, but requires a result of manifest unreasonableness, or partiality, prejudice, bias, or ill-will, or such lack of support so as to be clearly erroneous.

Commonwealth v. Johnson, 42 A.3d 1017, 1027 (Pa. 2012) (internal quotation marks and citations omitted).

Hearsay is an out-of-court statement admitted for the truth of the matter asserted. **See** Pa.R.E. 801, 802. In other words, it “is a statement made by someone other than the declarant while testifying at trial and is offered into evidence to prove the truth of the matter asserted, [and] is normally inadmissible at trial.” ***Commonwealth v. Ali***, 10 A.3d 282, 315 (Pa. 2010); **see also** Pa.R.E. 801(c), 802.

Chambers’ initial argument at trial was based on a speculative assumption that obtaining Chambers’ phone number was based solely on a statement of a non-testifying witness that he alleged was hearsay. Nothing in this record shows an evidentiary basis for this assertion; indeed, counsel merely stated “other than that [statement], I’m not certain where they get that phone number.” N.T., 11/7/24, at 11. The Commonwealth responded it was in the course of the investigation that this number was attributed to

Chambers, and not exclusively the alleged hearsay statement. **See id.** Counsel did not respond to the Commonwealth's argument. After hearing argument, the trial court denied the motion and allowed the information into evidence. Nowhere did the trial court limit cross-examination to explore the basis for obtaining the records, or prohibit cross-examination with Detectives Lucke or Craig that there may have been other investigative roads that led them to their conclusion that this was the phone number Chambers used. The court only indicated that the records would not be precluded. Any notion that counsel could not cross-examine them on the topic would be a misunderstanding on Chambers' part.

A review of the record shows Chambers did not even discuss the phone records when he cross examined Detective Craig. Now for the first time on appeal, Chambers offers a dual argument, namely the Commonwealth failed to show a lack of personal knowledge in violation of Rule 602, when it relied solely on a hearsay statement by a non-testifying witness, which is not permitted under Rule 802. **See** Chambers' Brief at 30.

The trial court disagreed with Chambers' claim on appeal and noted Chambers' failure to raise a timely objection regarding this dual argument. It explained "[t]he evidence established that the phone was registered to [Chambers'] girlfriend, at the address where [Chambers] resided. At no point did [Chambers] object to the provenance of the telephone company records which so indicated." Trial Court Opinion, 6/30/25, unnumbered at 5 (record citations omitted). The trial court explained that the final determination of

whether the phone connected to that number was used by Chambers was left to the jury. **See id.** at 6.

We discern no abuse of discretion by the trial court in admitting testimony attributing the phone number to Chambers. Chambers, while consistently claiming at trial to present a hearsay objection, and arguing the same in his Rule 1925(b) Statement, now states in his brief that he now, in fact, is contesting both Rule 602 and 802 in combination. Nowhere in the trial record is Rule 602 mentioned, or even the concept that the detective had no personal knowledge of this information other than a hearsay statement. **See Commonwealth v. Caruso**, --- A.3d ---, 2026 WL 1529716 at *10 (Pa. Super. June 1, 2026) (explaining a claim that is not preserved below and is raised for the first time on appeal is waived). The record is also devoid of any questioning or argument regarding Detective Craig's personal knowledge of the phone number. Thus, Chambers' Rule 602 argument is waived.

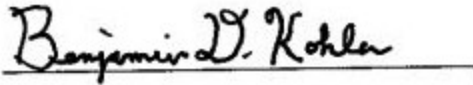
Moreover, Detective Lucke testified as an expert witness. **See** N.T., 11/7/24, at 94. As affirmatively indicated in the language of Rule 602, the requirement that a witness have personal knowledge "does not apply to a witness's expert testimony under Rule 703." Pa.R.E. 602. Chambers does not address this clear language. An expert witness is not required to have personal knowledge pursuant to Rule 602.

Considering Chambers only preserved a "hearsay" argument, the trial court did not abuse its discretion by admitting the information regarding the phone records and Detective Lucke's or Craig's testimony regarding those

records.⁵ Therefore, Chambers' second claim is partially waived and otherwise without merit.

Judgment of sentence affirmed.

Judgment Entered.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Benjamin D. Kohler", is written over a horizontal line.

Benjamin D. Kohler, Esq.
Prothonotary

Date: 8/26/2026

⁵ Further, Chambers does not identify the alleged out-of-court statement being offered to prove the truth of the matter asserted and has failed to show how the testimony the witnesses offered as a result of an independent investigation constitutes inadmissible hearsay.