

Circuit Court for Prince George's County  
Case No.: C-16-CR-23-000929

UNREPORTED  
IN THE APPELLATE COURT  
OF MARYLAND

No. 1542

September Term, 2023

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SEANA R. THOMPSON

v.

STATE OF MARYLAND

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Wells, C.J.,  
Graeff,  
Kehoe, Christopher B.  
(Senior Judge, Specially Assigned),

JJ.

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PER CURIAM

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Filed: January 2, 2025

\*This is a per curiam opinion. Under Rule 1-104, the opinion is not precedent within the rule of stare decisis, nor may it be cited as persuasive authority.

A jury in the Circuit Court for Prince George’s County convicted Seana R. Thompson, appellant, of knowingly transporting a handgun in a vehicle. The court later sentenced her to two years’ incarceration, all but time served suspended in favor of two years of supervised probation.

On appeal, Thompson contends that the evidence was insufficient to support her conviction. In reviewing this issue, we must “determine whether . . . *any* rational trier of fact could have found the essential elements of the crimes beyond a reasonable doubt.” *Williams v. State*, 251 Md. App. 523, 569 (2021) (cleaned up). Put differently, “the limited question before us is not whether the evidence should have or probably would have persuaded [most] fact finders but only whether it possibly could have persuaded any rational fact finder.” *Smith v. State*, 232 Md. App. 583, 594 (2017) (cleaned up). We conduct our review keeping in mind our role of reviewing both the evidence and all reasonable inferences deducible from it in a light most favorable to the State. *Smith v. State*, 415 Md. 174, 185–86 (2010); *Williams*, 251 Md. App. at 569.

To convict Thompson of the crime charged, the State had to prove she “knowingly transport[ed]” a handgun in a vehicle. Md. Code Ann., Crim. Law (“CR”) § 4-203(a)(1)(ii). Thompson argues the State failed to show that she “knew” about the handgun. We disagree.

The evidence at trial showed that Thompson was driving a car with a passenger in the front seat when she was lawfully stopped by the police. During a subsequent, lawful search of the vehicle, an officer found a handgun in “a bag located on the floorboard of the driver’s rear side . . . in the middle of two food containers in the bag[.]” Thompson’s status as the driver of the vehicle, no matter “whether [she] actually own[ed], [was] merely

driving, or [was] the lessee of the vehicle, permit[ted] an inference, by [the jury], of knowledge, by [Thompson], of contraband found in that vehicle.” *State v. Smith*, 374 Md. 527, 550 (2003).

To be sure, as Thompson points out, some Maryland cases discuss additional factors beyond a defendant’s status as a driver that helped support an inference of their knowledge of contraband in the car. *See, e.g., Gimble v. State*, 198 Md. App. 610, 625–26 (2011) (holding that evidence of flight, in addition to the defendant’s status as the driver and sole occupant of the vehicle, permitted an inference that the defendant had knowledge of contraband in the vehicle). Even so, though often helpful, no additional factors are *necessary* beyond a defendant’s status as a driver to permit a fact-finder to infer their knowledge of contraband in the vehicle. *See Smith*, 374 Md. at 550 (“In other words, the knowledge of the contents of the vehicle can be imputed to the driver of the vehicle.”). And, in any event, on the body-worn camera footage played at trial, Thompson can be heard referring to the car as hers and telling the police that she had a hoodie “in the back,” thus linking her to the backseat. What’s more, as the driver, Thompson was in proximity to the handgun found on the floorboards behind her seat, and there were no backseat passengers. Thus, the evidence, when viewed in the light most favorable to the State, was sufficient to sustain Thompson’s conviction.

**JUDGMENT OF THE CIRCUIT  
COURT FOR PRINCE GEORGE’S  
COUNTY AFFIRMED. COSTS TO  
BE PAID BY APPELLANT.**