

2013 IL App (2d) 110994-U  
No. 2-11-0994  
Order filed June 18, 2013

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IN THE  
APPELLATE COURT OF ILLINOIS  
SECOND DISTRICT

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THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE	)	Appeal from the Circuit Court
OF ILLINOIS,	)	of Winnebago County.
	)	
Plaintiff-Appellee,	)	
	)	
v.	)	No. 07-CF-3052
	)	
EDWARD L. BRYANT,	)	Honorable
	)	Rosemary Collins,
Defendant-Appellant.	)	Judge, Presiding.

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JUSTICE HUTCHINSON delivered the judgment of the court.  
Justices Jorgensen and Spence concurred in the judgment.

**ORDER**

¶ 1 *Held:* We determined that the State's evidence was sufficient to find defendant guilty beyond a reasonable doubt. Therefore, we affirmed the trial court's judgment.

¶ 2 Defendant, Edward L. Bryant, appeals his convictions for first-degree murder pursuant to sections 9-1(a)(1) and (2) of the Code of Criminal Procedure (the Code) (720 ILCS 5/9-1(a)(1), (2) (West 2006). Defendant contends that the State's evidence at trial failed to prove him guilty beyond a reasonable doubt. We affirm the trial court's judgment.

¶ 3 On August 28, 2007, defendant was charged by indictment with four counts of first-degree murder. All counts related to the June 21, 2007, murder of William Jacobsen. Count 1 alleged that defendant murdered the victim without lawful justification, with the intent to kill or do great bodily harm (720 ILCS 5/9-1(a)(1) (West 2006)). Count 2 alleged that defendant murdered the victim without lawful justification, knowing that such an act created a strong probability of death or great bodily harm (720 ILCS 5/9-1(a)(2) (West 2006)). The State nol-prossed the remaining counts before trial. On May 16, 2011, defendant's jury trial commenced.

¶ 4 Elizabeth Jacobsen testified that her 51-year-old son William lived at 638 Whitman Street in Rockford. He would visit her each day and telephone her each evening. She last saw her son when he visited her around 1 p.m. on June 20, 2007. When he did not visit the following day, she testified that she called the police.

¶ 5 Rockford police officer Greg Yalden testified that, at 10:30 p.m. on June 21, 2007, he was dispatched to 638 Whitman for a "welfare check." Upon arrival, Yalden observed that the garage contained no vehicle, the front door was closed, and the house appeared unlit. There were no signs of forced entry. Yalden testified that he knocked on the front door but no one answered. Yalden used his flashlight to bang on the door and, when he did so, the door opened. Yalden yelled out "Rockford Police," but received no answer. He testified that he then called his supervisor, Sergeant Doug Pann. When Pann arrived, the officers entered the home.

¶ 6 Yalden testified that the inside of the home was cluttered and there was a light on in a first-floor bedroom. In the basement, Yalden found a man on the floor. Yalden testified that there was

blood under the man's head and torso; some of the blood was still wet. According to Yalden, the man was "obviously deceased." Yalden observed several items that would normally be kept in a wallet were "strewn-upon the floor and blood-soaked". There was a pair of shoes near the body. Yalden testified that nothing appeared to have been stolen from the home and that he did not find a wallet.

¶ 7 Police detective David Cone of the crime scene unit, testified that he arrived at 638 Whitman along with other officers. Cone testified that he collected blood samples from the scene. Furthermore, he recovered four beer cans from the front porch, six beer cans from the basement, cigarette butts from inside the beer cans, seven separate strands of hair from around the body, swabs from some broken glass found at the scene, and swabs from the thumb latch on the house's front door. Cone testified that he did not know if these items were sent to a lab for DNA testing.

¶ 8 Detective Brain Shimaitis testified that, on June 22, 2007, he collected items of evidence from the victim's house. He testified that he collected a brick with blood stains on it and two chips of brick. Shimaitis testified that "there was a grey metal shelf section that had spattered blood on it. There was blood spattered up the front of a green refrigerator that was there \*\*\* a second grey metal shelf section was on the other side of the blood pool [on the floor.] That also had blood on it." Shimaitis described People's Exhibit No. 38, one of the crime scene photographs: "The grey metal shelf section that was on the basement floor where the primary bloodstaining was, was near the vicinity of the glasses and the brick." Shimaitis testified that he proceeded to defendant's residence and collected clothing he observed in a room on the second floor, including a t-shirt and shoes that

appeared to have blood stains on them and a pair of camouflage shorts. A pocket in the shorts contained defendant's identification card. Shimaitis testified that the shorts were sent to the forensics lab but did not know whether the other items he collected were sent to the lab.

¶ 9 Forensic pathologist Mark Peters testified that he conducted the victim's autopsy. He testified that the victim incurred abrasions along his neck, chest, arms, and legs, and contusions, abrasions, and multiple impacts on all sides of his head. Peters testified that he observed "quite a few" lacerations near the victim's right ear. He also observed that the victim suffered skull fractures. Peters opined that the victim's cause of death was blunt trauma to the head, by a hard object. He testified that the injuries were consistent with the victim being hit in the head with "quite a bit" of force by a brick or a table leg.

¶ 10 Keia Brown testified that she was employed by the Illinois State Police crime laboratory and that she received a number of items connected with this case. She testified that she identified 34 areas of reddish-brown stains on the camouflage shorts. She tested one stain, which produced a positive result for the presence of blood. Brown testified that the lab also received a t-shirt, tennis shoes, socks, and other clothing as well as swabbings from a steering wheel, a gear shift, and beer cans. Brown testified that the lab did not have the resources or the time to test every item. She admitted that the shoes and socks tested negative for the presence of blood while she did not recall if the t-shirt was tested.

¶ 11 Blake Aper testified that he is employed as a scientist at the forensics lab. He testified that he analyzed the DNA found on the blood stains of the camouflage shorts. In his opinion, the blood

stains contained a “mixture” of DNA. Aper testified that he believed, with a reasonable degree of scientific certainty, that the “major contributor” of the DNA found in the stain was the victim. Aper testified that he could not determine the identity of the “low-level contributor.” Aper testified that DNA results from the beer can swabbings excluded defendant, but the results could not exclude the victim. The DNA profile on a bloodstain from a blue shirt taken from defendant’s home matched defendant.

¶ 12 Jeffrey Houde testified that he was an expert in bloodstain pattern analysis. He examined a photograph of the camouflage shorts, but was unable to reach any conclusions “because of the minimal number of stains.”

¶ 13 Patricia Smith testified that she lived in a rooming house at 624 Whitman, next door to the victim. She testified that she did not recall a 2006 arrest for retail theft but admitted that she was convicted in March of 2007 for prostitution. Smith admitted that, for the previous six years, she took Trileptal, Zoloft, and sleeping pills. She admitted that she had been diagnosed with bipolar disorder and that she smoked crack cocaine on the days that she did not see her doctor. However, she denied that she had used any drugs or alcohol since June of 2007. Smith admitted that, at the time of her testimony, she was taking medication for her mental health issues. Smith recalled that, in June of 2007, approximately 10 people lived in the rooming house at 624 Whitman, including defendant. According to Smith, all the residents were active drug users.

¶ 14 Smith testified that, in June of 2007, she observed defendant and the victim sitting on the victim’s front porch. The victim invited Smith to join them. Smith agreed and drank two beers on

the victim's porch. She testified that defendant was wearing a pair of camouflage shorts that evening. Smith testified that defendant had recently sold the victim a pair of shoes but the victim had no money and stated that he would have to go to the bank. Smith testified that the victim drove to a nearby bank while defendant and Smith walked to the same bank. The victim received some cash from the automated teller machine and handed \$10 to defendant. Smith testified that defendant told her he was going to buy drugs. Smith walked back to her house.

¶ 15 Smith testified that, later that evening, she went back to the victim's house. She testified that the victim's door was wide open and that she could hear a radio playing inside. Smith called out the victim's name but received no response. Smith testified that she heard voices coming from inside the house and what sounded like metal falling over in the basement. She then heard the victim's voice call out "Ed." She testified that she did not hear defendant's voice. Smith testified that she took a box of mini-blinds from inside the victim's house and left the premises. Smith explained that the victim had approximately 50 boxes of blinds and had previously offered her a box.

¶ 16 Smith admitted that she was charged with residential burglary for taking the blinds and that she entered into a "cooperation agreement" with the State in exchange for her testimony in the present matter. She testified that she had not yet pleaded in that case and that there was no agreement as to her possible sentence. Smith admitted that she would sometimes hear voices calling her name when she was using drugs, but stated that, she had never heard voices calling out another person's name. She further admitted that she could not recall "certain things" from 2007. She admitted that other men from the rooming house sometimes visited the victim's residence to ask him

for money. Smith admitted that the son of the landlord's wife was also named Ed. Smith admitted that she got high on the night in question. She explained that after leaving the victim's house with his blinds, she went to a friend's house where she spent the night. She did not return home until the early hours of the next morning.

¶ 17 Rockford police officer Rob Hatfield testified that, on June 21, 2007, he was sent to canvass the neighborhood around 638 Whitman. At 634 Whitman, he met defendant in his second-floor room. Defendant told Hatfield that he knew the victim and that he drank beer with the victim on the victim's porch the night prior. Defendant told Hatfield that Patricia Smith also came over to the victim's house the night prior and drank beer. Defendant told Hatfield that he stayed on the victim's porch with the victim until 12:15 a.m. He told Hatfield that when he left the victim's house, the victim was still on the porch. Hatfield testified that defendant was cooperative. He told Hatfield that he had known the victim for "awhile" and that they would often sit on the victim's porch, drinking beer and listening to music. Defendant volunteered to talk with Hatfield at the Public Safety Building and Hatfield drove him there.

¶ 18 Detective Jeff Stovall testified on the State's behalf. He testified that he spoke with Patricia Smith at 2:05 a. m. on June 22, 2007. Stovall testified that he came in contact with Smith when she "crossed our police tape, stated that we were looking for her, she told us her name; and then we asked if she'd come down to the Public Safety Building for further interviews." Smith agreed to an interview at the Public Safety Building. Stovall testified that, on June 25, 2007, he picked Smith up at her residence and drove her to the Public Safety Building.

¶ 19 Prince Bey testified that he was in federal custody, awaiting sentencing after having been convicted of conspiracy to sell 100 grams of heroin. He testified that he expected his sentence to be between 4 and 40 years in prison. Bey testified that, in 1991, he had been convicted of home invasion and residential burglary and was sentenced to 17 years in prison. In 2007, he was convicted of attempted obstruction of justice. In 2009, he was convicted of aggravated battery and sentenced to two years in prison. Bey testified that he had not entered into any agreement regarding his testimony in the present matter.

¶ 20 Bey testified that on June 22, 2007, he was arrested in Winnebago County. He testified that he had used cocaine and marijuana on the day of his arrest. Bey testified that, while in a holding cell at the Winnebago County jail, he encountered defendant. Bey was familiar with defendant, having met him on prior occasions. Bey testified that they were “both kind of out of it” because both men had used drugs that day. Bey testified that he asked defendant why he had been arrested and that defendant responded that he was arrested for a home invasion, but that he was innocent of that charge. According to Bey, defendant added, “I hit the motherfucker in the head, but I’m here for a home invasion I didn’t do.” Bey admitted that he did not recall defendant’s exact words but testified that defendant said he “got into it with some old man or something,” and hit him for “like \$15 or something” but later found out that the man had given the money to someone else. Bey testified that when he asked defendant if the incident took place on Whitman, defendant replied affirmatively and said that the man “live[d] in the same building or something.” Bey testified that defendant told him that “a female named Pat \*\*\* she was outside waiting on him when it happen or something.”

¶ 21 Bey testified that, the following day, he saw defendant again while in a holding cell after attending court. He testified that defendant discussed “about the same thing pretty much, about him saying that he killed the old man and \*\*\* he said he hit him in the head. I think he said something like with a table leg or something.” Bey testified that he relayed this information to a corrections officer who referred him to a sergeant.

¶ 22 Bey testified that between June 23, 2007, and July 10, 2007, he was released from custody. He was arrested again on July 10, 2007, on aggravated battery charges. At that time, he spoke with two detectives, who asked him if he had any information regarding other crimes in the area. Bey told the detectives about defendant. Bey testified that the detectives did not make any promises regarding his charges. Bey testified that, later that same day, he selected a photograph of defendant out of a photo line-up.

¶ 23 Records from the Winnebago County jail showed that Bey was booked in at 1:25 p.m. on June 22, 2007. Defendant was booked in at 2:34 p.m. that same day. Records also showed that, on June 25, 2007, Bey and defendant appeared in the same court room. Furthermore, court documents show that defendant was originally charged with home invasion. See No. 2007-TC-002441-CF.

¶ 24 Stovall was recalled to the stand as defendant’s witness. Stovall testified that, during his interview with Smith, Smith denied taking blinds from the victim’s house. According to Stovall, Smith stated that she found the blinds in the victim’s garage. Stovall testified that, on June 26, 2007, he and Detective Jeff Schelling went to the victim’s house. They found a boom box on a chair in the front room. They turned on the power button and noticed that the volume was very loud. Stovall testified that the volume control button was broken, and a tool similar to a screwdriver was needed to adjust it. There was no tool in the boom box at the time. While the boom box was playing,

Schelling went into the basement and yelled out “Ed,” to see if Stovall could hear him from the front porch. Stovall testified that he could not hear him. Stovall testified that the boom box was not playing when Yalden, the first officer on the scene, arrived. Stovall also testified that the victim’s vehicle was found, after his death, near the Fairgrounds housing complex, which is west of the victim’s house. He testified that Fairgrounds was an area where narcotics were commonly sold.

¶ 25 Defendant testified that he was 49 years of age and had been convicted of misuse of a credit card in October 2000, resulting in an eight-year prison sentence. He testified that, in June of 2007, he was living in a rooming house at 634 Whitman on the second floor. He testified that he knew the victim and considered him a friend. He testified that the victim would invite him over once or twice a week on summer evenings. The two would drink beer and talk.

¶ 26 Defendant testified that, on June 18, 2007, he sold the victim a pair of tennis shoes for \$10. The victim intended to pay for the shoes with cash but realized that he did not have enough cash on him. Defendant testified that the victim asked him and Smith to accompany him to a nearby bank. Because the passenger door of the victim’s car did not open, defendant and Smith walked to the bank. At the bank, the victim gave defendant \$10. Defendant testified that he and Smith then “went looking for some cocaine.” After buying cocaine, defendant and Smith went back to the rooming house to smoke it.

¶ 27 Defendant testified that he did not go to the victim’s house on June 19, 2007. He testified that, on June 20, 2007, he went to the victim’s house between 10:15 p.m. and 10:30 p.m. The victim was outside drinking and listening to music. Smith came over later. Defendant and Smith left the victim’s house around 12:15 a.m. Defendant went home. The victim remained on his porch.

¶ 28 Defendant identified the camouflage shorts and explained that he wore them over a week before the victim's death when he and the victim were drinking beer on the victim's porch. Defendant testified that the victim cut his lip on his beer can. When the victim spit out some of the beer, the wind blew some of the victim's saliva onto defendant's shorts. Defendant testified that he wore the same shorts on June 20, 2007, during the day. He testified that he took them off in the evening and put them in a pile in his room, before taking a shower and going over to the victim's house that night. Defendant denied hitting or killing the victim and also denied driving the victim's car.

¶ 29 Defendant admitted that he was in a holding cell with Bey. He testified that he told Bey that it was "crazy" that the police were questioning him about a murder when he was arrested for a home invasion. Defendant denied that he told Bey that he hit or killed an old man with a table leg or that he had wanted the man to give him \$15. Defendant recalled that he left the victim's porch on the night of June 20, 2007, because the victim said "somebody was coming over or [the victim] was going somewhere."

¶ 30 Stovall testified in rebuttal that when he spoke with defendant on June 22, 2007, defendant stated that he went over to the victim's house between 11 p.m. and 11:30 p.m. on the night in question. Stovall testified that defendant never told him about selling shoes to the victim or about the victim spitting blood onto defendant's shorts. Stovall testified that defendant did not mention that the reason he left the victim's house was because someone was coming over or because the victim had to go somewhere. Stovall testified that when he told defendant that it appeared that defendant was the last person to see the victim alive, defendant replied, "Right. But I don't know if she [Smith] went back though."

¶ 31 On May 18, 2011, the jury returned verdicts of guilty on two counts of first degree murder. On September 30, 2011, defendant was sentenced to 60 years in prison. Defendant timely appeals.

¶ 32 Defendant contends that the evidence adduced at trial failed to prove him guilty beyond a reasonable doubt. Specifically, defendant argues that the State's case was based on two "inherently unbelievable" witnesses and circumstantial forensic evidence that precluded any rational finding that defendant was guilty. The State responds that the evidence was sufficient to convict defendant.

¶ 33 When an appellate court reviews the sufficiency of the evidence, the relevant question is "whether, after viewing the evidence in the light most favorable to the prosecution, any rational trier of fact could have found the essential elements of the crime beyond a reasonable doubt. *Jackson v. Virginia*, 443 U.S. 307, 319 (1979); *People v. Cooper*, 194 Ill. 2d 419, 430-31 (2000). All reasonable inferences from the evidence must be allowed in favor of the State. *People v. Gonzalez*, 239 Ill. 2d 471, 478 (2011).

¶ 34 A reviewing court will not substitute its judgment for that of the trier of fact on issues of the weight of the evidence or the credibility of the witnesses. *Jackson*, 443 U.S. at 319. This same standard of review applies regardless of whether the evidence is direct or circumstantial and regardless of whether the defendant receives a bench or jury trial. *Cooper*, 194 Ill. 2d at 431.

¶ 35 The triers' of facts conclusions are not conclusive. *People v. Jones*, 404 Ill. App. 3d 734, 744 (2010). Where the record leaves a reasonable doubt, a reviewing court must reverse the judgment. *People v. Smith*, 185 Ill. 2d 532, 542 (1999). "[A] court of review has a duty to carefully review the evidence and to reverse the conviction of the defendant when the evidence is so unsatisfactory as to raise a serious doubt as to the defendant's guilt." *People v. Estes*, 127 Ill. App. 3d 642, 651 (1984).

However, the trier of fact determines the witnesses' credibility, weighs the evidence, draws inferences, and resolves any conflicts in the evidence. *People v. Ortiz*, 196 Ill. 2d 236, 259 (2001).

¶ 36 Here, defendant contends that the State failed to prove that he murdered the victim without lawful justification, with the intent to kill or do great bodily harm (720 ILCS 5/9-1(a)(1) (West 2006)). Defendant argues that the state's case was based on the testimony of two "inherently unbelievable" witnesses. Patricia Smith was a prostitute and drug user suffering from bipolar disorder. Prince Bey was a convicted drug dealer, who testified that he was under the influence of drugs when defendant confessed to him. Both witnesses were facing sentencing in pending criminal matters. Although, the legislators have not defined the terms "inherently unbelievable," under Illinois law, a witness's testimony is defined as "inherently improbable" if it is "contrary of [sic] the laws of nature or universal human experience, so as to be incredible and beyond the limits of human belief, or if the facts stated by the witness demonstrate the falsity of the testimony." See *People v. Strauser*, 146 Ill. App. 3d 128, 135 (1986), quoting *Bucktown Partners v. Johnson*, 119 Ill. App. 3d 346, 354 (1983).

¶ 37 In the current matter, we agree with the State. Defendant offers several arguments to support his position that Smith's and Bey's testimony was inherently unbelievable. First, defendant asserts that Smith did not see or hear defendant in the victim's house at the time of the murder and that the experiment conducted by Stovall and Schelling proved that it was unlikely that Smith could have heard the victim call out "Ed." However, the record reflects that, during cross-examination, Smith was adamant regarding her opinion that defendant and the victim were in the victim's home. Specifically, Smith testified, "[T]hey were the only two people in the house at the time." When defense counsel asked Smith if she was just assuming that defendant was in the victim's house

because she heard the victim say defendant's name, she responded, "why would he call his name if he wasn't there?" When defense counsel asked whether the victim may have called out "Ed" to elicit help from defendant, Smith responded, "[B]ecause the way he call[ed] his name, the tone of voice and the way he said his name is like as if he was being irrational or something \*\*\* like he was trying to reason with him or something."

¶ 38 Here, the record reflects that Smith testified that she felt certain that defendant and the victim were in the house. During the State's re-direct examination, defense counsel questioned Smith regarding the reasons behind her certainty and she offered a rational response as to why she believed defendant was in the house although she did not hear him speak. A rational juror could have determined that Smith's explanation was reasonable. See *Gonzalez*, 239 Ill. 2d at 478.

¶ 39 Moreover, it is possible that a rational juror may have disregarded Stovall's and Schelling's experiment. *Id.* It is unclear whether the boom box was playing at the time of the murder, at what volume the boom box was playing, or what may have been playing at the time. Furthermore, the experiment did not control for extraneous factors such as how the noise levels in the neighborhood change from day to night or varying degrees of sensitivity of one person's hearing to another's. Smith's testimony that she heard the sound of metal "falling over" was corroborated by the testimony of Shimaitis, a detective who examined the crime scene. Regardless, the credibility of the witnesses was for the jury to determine. See *People v. Rojas*, 359 Ill. App. 3d 392, 398 (2005). It is not the place of this court to substitute our judgment for that of the trier of fact. *Id.*

¶ 40 Defendant next asserts that Smith and Bey were both drug addicts and convicts and, therefore, were not credible witnesses. However, it is the function of the jury to determine if a witness is credible. *Jackson*, 443 U.S. at 319. Smith's drug use does not make her testimony

inherently unbelievable. See *People v. Larry*, 30 Ill. 2d 533, 536 (1964). The same is true regarding Bey's testimony. That was a question for the jury, which, in this case, found otherwise. See *People v. Armstrong*, 183 Ill. 2d 130, 146-47 (1998) (holding that the unreliability of testimony by narcotics addicts is a function for the jury to determine). Moreover, the witnesses' convictions do not make their testimony unreliable. The credibility of a witness may be impeached by conviction for prior crimes. *People v. Cox*, 195 Ill. 2d 378, 381-86 (2001). Nevertheless, whether the prior crimes affect the credibility of the witness is a determination for the jury. *People v. Malone*, 78 Ill. 2d 34, 41 (1979). Again, the jury was aware of the witnesses' prior convictions and determined that they maintained some credibility. Although a witness's testimony may be suspect due to his [or her] criminal background, reasonable doubt can be overcome if the testimony is partially corroborated. *People v. Diaz*, 297 Ill. App. 3d 362, 3268 (1998). Here, Smith's testimony was partially corroborated by the crime scene and the testimony of the crime scene detective Stovall. Bey's testimony was partially corroborated by Peters, who conducted the autopsy and opined that the victim's injuries were consistent with being hit in the head by a brick or a table leg. Bey's testimony was also corroborated by the record, which showed that defendant had been initially arrested on a home invasion charge. Bey's testimony is also corroborated by the record; which indicates that Bey and defendant were booked on the same day, and were in the same courtroom together, during the same time period.

¶ 41 Defendant next asserts that Smith's bipolar disorder caused her to lack credibility. A witness's mental deficiency is considered only to the extent that it affects credibility. *People v. Williams*, 147 Ill. 2d 173, 212 (1991). The issue of Smith's credibility was a question for the jury. *Ortiz*, 196 Ill. 2d at 259. The jury here found Smith credible and we will not substitute our judgment for that of the jury regarding issues of credibility. *Rojas*, 359 Ill. App. 3d at 398 .

¶ 42 Lastly, defendant asserts that both Smith's and Bey's testimony was not credible because they may have believed they would receive a reduced sentence in exchange for their testimony. This argument is not supported by the record. No evidence was adduced at trial that suggested that the witnesses believed their testimony would bring about lighter sentences. To the contrary, both witnesses testified that they did not believe that their testimony would result in reduced sentences.

¶ 43 We note that defendant cites *People v. Newell*, 103 Ill. 2d 465, 470 (1984) and *People v. Washington*, 375 Ill. App. 3d 1012 (2007), to support his argument that neither Smith nor Bey presented "a version of the truth that a rational trier of fact could have accepted." We, however, agree with the State that *Washington* and *Newell* are distinguishable. Both cases dealt with accomplice testimony, where the accomplice who implicated defendant testified under immunity. Moreover, in *Newell*, the testimony was not corroborated and was directly contradicted by two other accomplices. See *Newell*, 103 Ill. 2d at 471.

¶ 44 In the current matter, neither witnesses's testimony was so inherently improbable that it is contrary to the laws of nature and universal human experiences. See *Strauser*, 146 Ill. App. 3d at 135, quoting *Bucktown Partners*, 119 Ill. App. 3d at 354. Nor was their testimony beyond the limits of human belief. *Id.* Each testified that they had not been promised any leniency for their testimony, neither expressed any malice toward defendant, and there were no serious inconsistencies or repeated impeachment of testimony that would lead this court to disregard the credibility the jury assigned to each witness. See *Washington*, 375 Ill. App. 3d at 1015.

¶ 45 Moreover, the testimony of Smith and Bey was not the only evidence adduced at trial. In this case, numerous detectives, police officers, and forensic experts offered testimony against defendant. Although, the forensic evidence may have been mostly circumstantial, the evidence was presented

at trial, without objection, and a reasonable juror could have found the totality of the evidence sufficient to convict defendant. When we view the “evidence in the light most favorable to the prosecution, we determine that a rational trier of fact could have found the essential elements of the crime beyond a reasonable doubt.” *Cooper*, 194 Ill. 2d at 430-31, quoting *Jackson*, 443 U.S. at 319. Therefore, we affirm defendant’s conviction.

¶ 46 For the foregoing reasons, we affirm the judgment of the circuit court of Winnebago County.

¶ 47 Affirmed.