



(Docket No. 130988)

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, Appellee, v.

SIDNEY BUTLER, Appellant.

*Opinion filed November 20, 2025.*

Justice Overstreet delivered the judgment of the court, with opinion.

This case concerns whether limited testimony by defendant's sister was sufficient to make her available for cross-examination, in order to satisfy the confrontation clause and allow admission of her video recorded interview with child abuse investigators. Defendant was charged with multiple counts of sexually abusing his younger sister over years while she was aged 4 to 8; he was 10 years older. The child's video recorded interview with forensic interviewers recounted various acts of sexual abuse with details about her brother's anatomy. When she was called to the stand during defendant's trial, she provided biographical information but was generally unresponsive to questions about her relationship with her brother. When asked specifically about individual statements in the recorded interview, she said she did not remember.

On appeal, defendant argued that his sister's recorded statements were the only evidence against him, that the interview did not meet statutory requirements for admission into evidence, and that its admission violated his right to confront the witnesses against him. The appellate court affirmed his conviction, concluding defendant had the opportunity to cross-examine his sister, and the supreme court agreed. The court distinguished cases where the minor victims were completely unavailable or unable to testify. Here, defendant's sister answered the questions posed to her and denied remembering the questions posed to her in the forensic interview or stated that she did not know the answer. Both the statutory appearance requirement and defendant's confrontation right were met.