

SCOTUS Opinion: Court Rejects Ineffective Assistance Of Counsel Claim

30 Mar 2021

Despite a mountain of circumstantial evidence demonstrating that Anthony Hines killed motel worker Katherine Jenkins and stole her car and money, leading to his murder conviction in state court, the Sixth Circuit held that Hines received ineffective assistance of counsel under *Strickland v. Washington*, 466 U.S. 668 (1984) because Hines' counsel failed to develop the argument that the murder might have been by the hand of Kenneth Jones, who reportedly found Jenkins' body. Jones' account of his discovery had some discrepancies, which it was later revealed to be because Jones was at the motel because he was with his long-running mistress, and did not want to be fully forthcoming.

The Court, in an 8-1 *per curiam* decision, reversed, holding that the Sixth Circuit failed to "carefully consider all the reasons and evidence supporting the state court's decision" to convict, and refraining from undoing the conviction unless it was truly "lacking in justification." The "voluminous" evidence pointing toward Hines' guilt far outweighed the novel speculation surrounding Jones. Justice Sotomayor dissented without comment.

A link to the case of *Mays v. Hines* is here: https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/20pdf/20-507_h315.pdf

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TAGGED: Ineffective Assistance of Counsel, Strickland v. Washington, Mays v. Hines