Fifth Circuit Court of Appeal
State of Louisiana

No. 25-KA-456

STATE OF LOUISIANA

versus

MESHACH WOODARD

ON APPEAL FROM THE TWENTY-FOURTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT
PARISH OF JEFFERSON, STATE OF LOUISIANA
NO. 24-3441, DIVISION "D"
HONORABLE JACQUELINE F. MALONEY, JUDGE PRESIDING

April 29, 2026

JOHN J. MOLAISON, JR.

JUDGE

Panel composed of Judges Jude G. Gravois,
Marc E. Johnson, and John J. Molaison, Jr.

AFFIRMED; MOTION TO WITHDRAW GRANTED; REMANDED

JJM
JGG
MEJ

COUNSEL FOR PLAINTIFF/APPELLEE,
STATE OF LOUISIANA

Honorable Paul D. Connick, Jr.
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MESHACH WOODARD

Jane L. Beebe
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MOLAISON, J.

Meshach Woodard, the defendant/appellant, appeals his conviction and sentence for aggravated burglary, two counts of domestic abuse battery with a firearm, domestic abuse aggravated assault with a firearm, aggravated assault with a firearm, and his adjudication as a second-felony offender. For the following reasons, we affirm the convictions and sentences, and we remand for correction of an error patent.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

On August 7, 2024, the Jefferson Parish District Attorney filed a bill of information charging the defendant with one count of aggravated burglary, a violation of La. R.S. 14:60 (count one); two counts of domestic abuse battery with a firearm, a violation of La. R.S. 14:35.3 (counts two and three); one count of domestic abuse aggravated assault with a firearm, a violation of La. R.S. 14:37.7 (count four); and one count of aggravated assault with a firearm, a violation of La. R.S. 14:37.4 (count six). The defendant pled not guilty at arraignment. After the trial court denied the defendant's motion to suppress his statement and later granted the State's motion to introduce other crimes evidence, the defendant accepted a plea deal. On July 8, 2025, the defendant pled guilty as a second-felony offender and was sentenced to ten years imprisonment on counts one, two, three, and six, and five years imprisonment on count four, with all sentences to be at hard labor without the benefit of probation or suspension of sentence and to run concurrently. The trial court granted the defendant's *pro se* motion for appeal on August 15, 2025.

On appeal, the defendant's appointed counsel has filed an appellate brief pursuant to *Anders v. California*, 386 U.S. 738, 87 S.Ct. 1396, 18 L.Ed.2d 493 (1967), and has further filed a motion to withdraw as counsel of record for the defendant.

FACTS

Because the defendant's conviction was the result of a guilty plea, the facts underlying the crime of conviction are not contained in the record. However, at the guilty plea proceeding, the State provided the following factual basis:

THE STATE:

> …With respect to Case Number 24-3441, at trial the State would have proven beyond a reasonable doubt that Meshach Woodard on or about July 2nd, 2024, did violate Louisiana Revised Statute 14:60 in that he did commit aggravated burglary at 709 North Elm Street, Apartment C, Metairie, Louisiana 70003. One to Shameka Jolla. Further, that the same Meshach Woodard on or about July 2nd, 2024, violated Revised Statute 14:35.30 [sic], and then he did commit battery by the intentional use of force or violence upon the person of another household member to-wit Kiaria McMillan while armed with a dangerous weapon to-wit a firearm. Further, the same Meshach Woodard on or about July 2nd, 2024, violated Revised Statute 14:35.30, and then he did commit battery by the intentional use of force or violence upon the person of another household member to-wit Kiaria McMillan while armed with a dangerous weapon to-wit a firearm.
>
> But the same Meshach Woodard on or about July 2nd, 2024, violated by Revised Statute 14:37.7, and then he did assault with a dangerous weapon to-wit a firearm upon the person of another household member to-wit Kiaria McMillan.
>
> Further, that the same Meshach Woodard on or about July 2nd, 2024, violated Revised Statute 14:37.4 in that he did assault Shameka Jolla with a firearm.
>
> As to Case Number 24-4285 , same Meshach Woodard on or about July 21st, 2024, did violate Louisiana Revised Statute 14:79 in that he did willfully violate a protective order issued on July 10th of 2024 by Commissioner Patricia Joyce of the Twenty-Fourth JDC for the State of Louisiana in the Parish of Jefferson Case Number 22-407740. Said protective order is valid from July 10th of 2024 through final disposition of the matter. Mr. Woodard was personally served with said order on July 10th, 2024.
>
> And further that the same Meshach Woodard did commit the same violation on July 22nd, 2024; again, on July 22nd, 2024; on July 23rd, 2024; again, on July 23rd, 2024; again, on July 23rd, 2024; on July 24th, 2024; again, on July 24th, 2024; again, on July 24th, 2024; on July 25th, 2024; and again, on July 25th of 2024; again, on July 25th, 2024; on July 29th of 2024; and finally, again on July 29th of 2024, and that all of those offenses occurred within Jefferson Parish.

LAW AND DISCUSSION

Under the procedure adopted by this Court in *State v. Bradford*, 95-929 (La. App. 5 Cir. 6/25/96), 676 So.2d 1108, 1110-11,[1] appointed appellate counsel has filed a brief asserting that she has thoroughly reviewed the trial court record and cannot find any non-frivolous issues to raise on appeal. Accordingly, pursuant to *Anders v. California*, and *State v. Jyles*, 96-2669 (La. 12/12/97), 704 So.2d 241 (*per curiam*), appointed counsel requests permission to withdraw as counsel of record for the defendant.

In *Anders*, the United States Supreme Court stated that appointed appellate counsel may request permission to withdraw if she finds her case to be wholly frivolous after a conscientious examination of it.[2] The request must be accompanied by " 'a brief referring to anything in the record that might arguably support the appeal' " so as to provide the reviewing court "with a basis for determining whether appointed counsel have fully performed their duty to support their clients' appeals to the best of their ability" and to assist the reviewing court "in making the critical determination whether the appeal is indeed so frivolous that counsel should be permitted to withdraw." *McCoy v. Court of Appeals of Wisconsin, Dist. 1*, 486 U.S. 429, 439, 108 S.Ct. 1895, 1902, 100 L.Ed.2d 440 (1988) (quotation omitted).

In *Jyles*, 704 So.2d at 241, the Louisiana Supreme Court stated that an *Anders* brief need not tediously catalog every meritless pretrial motion or objection made at trial with a detailed explanation of why the motions or objections lack merit. The Supreme Court explained that an *Anders* brief must demonstrate by full discussion and analysis that appellate counsel has cast an advocate's eye over the

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[1] In *Bradford*, this Court adopted the procedures outlined in *State v. Benjamin*, 573 So.2d 528, 530 (La. App. 4 Cir. 1990), which were sanctioned by the Louisiana Supreme Court in *State v. Mouton*, 95-981 (La. 4/28/95), 653 So.2d 1176, 1177 (*per curiam*).

[2] The United States Supreme Court reiterated *Anders* in *Smith v. Robbins*, 528 U.S. 259, 120 S.Ct. 746, 145 L.Ed.2d 756 (2000).

trial record and considered whether any ruling made by the trial court, subject to the contemporaneous objection rule, had a significant, adverse impact on shaping the evidence presented to the jury for its consideration. *Id.*

When conducting a review for compliance with *Anders*, an appellate court must conduct an independent review of the record to determine whether the appeal is wholly frivolous. *Bradford*, 676 So.2d at 1110. If, after an independent review, the reviewing court determines that there are no non-frivolous issues for appeal, it may grant counsel's motion to withdraw and affirm the defendant's conviction and sentence. However, if the court finds any legal point arguable on the merits, it may either deny the motion and order the court-appointed attorney to file a brief arguing the legal points identified by the court, or grant the motion and appoint substitute appellate counsel. *Id*.

The defendant's appellate counsel asserts that after a detailed review of the record, she could find no non-frivolous issues to raise on appeal. She explains that the motion for appeal in this case was filed *pro se* after a negotiated plea and sentence. The trial court engaged the defendant in a thorough colloquy prior to accepting his plea and again when the sentence in count one was vacated, and he pled to being a second-felony offender. Appellate counsel notes that the plea in this case was not made in accordance with *State v. Crosby*, 338 So.2d 584 (La. 1976), or *North Carolina v. Alford*, 400 U.S. 25, 91 S.Ct. 160, 27 L.Ed.2d 162 (1970), so no pre-trial rulings were preserved for appeal. Counsel also observes that had the defendant been found guilty at trial, his sentencing exposure on count one was up to thirty years. Had he been adjudicated a fourth-felony offender, the defendant may have faced a sentencing range of twenty years to life imprisonment. Therefore, his negotiated plea and sentence were within range and less than his potential sentence exposure had he not pled guilty.

The State responds that appellate counsel sufficiently complied with the applicable requirements. It states that the brief indicates counsel reviewed the record and found no non-frivolous issues to raise on appeal. The State contends that a review of the record reveals no non-frivolous issues that would support reversing the convictions or vacating the defendant's sentences. It further states that a review of the record reveals no irregularity or constitutional infirmity in the guilty plea that would render the plea invalid.

Appellate counsel filed a motion to withdraw as attorney of record for the defendant, stating that she thoroughly reviewed the trial court record and found no non-frivolous issues to raise on appeal and no rulings of the trial court that would arguably support the appeal. Counsel's appellate brief indicates that she notified the defendant of her filing. Additionally, this Court sent the defendant a letter by certified mail on November 25, 2025, informing him that counsel had filed a brief and that he had thirty days to file a *pro se* supplemental brief. The defendant has not filed a brief in this Court.

Our independent review of the record supports appellate counsel's assertion that no non-frivolous issues exist for appeal. The bill of information identifies the defendant and the crimes charged and plainly and concisely states the essential facts constituting the charged offenses. It also sufficiently identifies the defendant and the crimes charged. The minute entries show that the defendant and his counsel appeared at all crucial stages of the proceedings against him, including his arraignment, guilty plea proceeding, and sentencing. Therefore, the defendant's presence at these stages does not present any issues that would support an appeal.

Further, the defendant pled pursuant to the bill of information. If a defendant pleads guilty, he normally waives all non-jurisdictional defects in the proceedings leading up to the guilty plea and precludes review of such defects either by appeal or post-conviction relief. *State v. Turner*, 09-1079 (La. App. 5

Cir. 7/27/10), 47 So.3d 455, 459. Here, the defendant entered unqualified pleas of guilty; consequently, all non-jurisdictional defects are waived.

We reviewed the record and found no irregularities in the defendant's guilty pleas that would render the pleas invalid. Once a court sentences a defendant, only those guilty pleas that are constitutionally infirm may be withdrawn by appeal or post-conviction relief. A guilty plea is constitutionally infirm if the defendant does not enter it freely and voluntarily, if the *Boykin* colloquy is inadequate, or if the defendant enters the plea because of a plea bargain or what he justifiably believes was a plea bargain and the State does not keep that bargain. *State v. McCoil,* 05-658 (La. App. 5 Cir. 2/27/06), 924 So.2d 1120, 1124.

The record shows no constitutional infirmity in the defendant's guilty pleas. The court advised the defendant that in case number 24-3441, he will serve ten years at hard labor without the benefit of probation or suspension of sentence for counts one, two, three, and six; for count four, he will serve five years at hard labor without the benefit of probation or suspension of sentence. The court ordered all counts in 24-3441 to run concurrently. In case number 24-4285, the court advised that it will sentence the defendant to six months on each count. The transcript of the plea colloquy shows that the defendant understood he was pleading guilty to one charge of aggravated burglary as a double bill; he understood that the sentencing range as a multiple offender on count one was ten to sixty years in the Department of Corrections, and that his sentence would be ten years without the benefit of probation or suspension of sentence.

The defendant indicated that he understood the nature of the crimes to which he was pleading guilty. The defendant was properly advised of his *Boykin* rights. During the colloquy with the trial judge, the defendant was advised that by pleading guilty, he was waiving his rights to a trial by a judge or a jury, to be presumed innocent until the District Attorney proved his guilt beyond a reasonable

doubt, to require the District Attorney to call witnesses who, under oath, would testify against him, and to call witnesses on his behalf who would testify in his favor. The judge also advised the defendant that he was giving up his right to remain silent and to not have his silence held against him as evidence of guilt, and to appeal any adverse verdict at trial. Additionally, on the waiver of rights form, the defendant initialed next to these rights and placed his signature at the end of the form, indicating that he understood that he was waiving these rights by pleading guilty.

In addition, the defendant answered negatively when asked if he was suffering from any physical or mental impairments that would affect his ability to enter the guilty plea. As to his highest level of education, the defendant stated he completed the eleventh grade.

The defendant acknowledged that if he is convicted of a felony in the future, he could be multiple billed, which would increase the penalty for that conviction. The defendant acknowledged that pleading guilty was a "knowing, intelligent, free, and voluntary act" on his part, and he denied that any threats or promises were made to encourage him to plead guilty. He stated that he was satisfied with the way his attorney handled his case. The defendant stated he understood all of the possible legal consequences explained to him by his attorney and by the court and still wished to plead guilty. Further, the defendant acknowledged that by pleading guilty, he may be subject to additional consequences or waivers of constitutional rights, including the rights to vote, to bear arms, to due process, and to equal protection. He acknowledged that he understood that there could be potential consequences of pleading guilty that could impact college admission and financial aid, public housing benefits, employment and licensing restrictions, and standard approval for probation or parole revocation. The judge accepted the guilty pleas as knowingly, intelligently, freely, and voluntarily made.

La. C.Cr.P. art. 881.2(A)(2) precludes a defendant from seeking review of a sentence imposed in conformity with a plea agreement, which was set forth in the record at the time of the plea. *State v. Washington*, 05-211 (La. App. 5 Cir. 10/6/05), 916 So.2d 1171, 1173. In this case, the defendant's sentence was imposed in accordance with the terms of the plea agreement. Further, his sentences fall within the sentencing ranges set forth in the respective statutes.

As to the multiple bill proceedings, the record reflects that the State filed a multiple bill on count one alleging the defendant to be a second-felony offender. The trial judge told the defendant that he was being shown the waiver of rights form as a multiple offender and asked if he recognized it, to which the defendant answered affirmatively. The defendant acknowledged that he went over this form with his attorney, he was able to read and understand the form, and he initialed the form where appropriate. The judge asked if the defendant understood that he had the right to not stipulate to the multiple bill, to have a hearing and force the district attorney to prove he was the same individual who had a prior felony record, to prove that the prior conviction occurred within the time period necessary to support enhancement of the sentence, to prove that he was properly advised at the time of his prior plea of his rights, and of his right to remain silent throughout the hearing. The defendant indicated he understood all of these rights.

During the colloquy, the trial judge told the defendant that the sentencing range as a multiple offender on count one was ten to sixty years in the Department of Corrections, and his actual sentence would be ten years imprisonment without the benefit of probation or suspension of sentence. Further, the waiver of rights form reflects that the defendant was advised that the applicable sentencing range was ten to sixty years and that he would receive a sentence of ten years without the benefit of probation or suspension of sentence, as evidenced by his initials next to each advisal and his signature on the form.

Afterwards, the defendant indicated that he was satisfied with the manner in which his attorney and the court explained the rights he was waiving as a second-felony offender. The defendant indicated no one was forcing or coercing him to "enter this guilty plea." The trial judge subsequently found that the defendant made a knowing, intelligent, free, and voluntary act of "pleading guilty as a second-felony offender," and the judge accepted it. With regards to defendant's enhanced sentence, this Court has consistently recognized that La. C.Cr.P. art. 881.2(A)(2) precludes a defendant from seeking review of an enhanced sentence to which the defendant agreed. *State v. Surgi*, 24-293 (La. App. 5 Cir. 2/26/25), 406 So.3d 1181, 1189. The defendant's enhanced sentence falls within the sentencing range set forth in the statutes. *See* La. R.S. 14:60 and La. R.S. 15:529.1. Additionally, the defendant's stipulation to the multiple bill was beneficial to him, as he received a ten-year enhanced sentence as a second-felony offender, when he could have received up to sixty years. Accordingly, the defendant's guilty plea to the multiple bill and his sentence thereon do not present any non-frivolous issues to be reviewed on appeal.

Because appellate counsel's brief adequately demonstrates by full discussion and analysis that she has reviewed the trial court proceedings and cannot identify any basis for a non-frivolous appeal, and an independent review of the record supports counsel's assertion, appellate counsel's motion to withdraw as attorney of record for the defendant is granted.

ERRORS PATENT DISCUSSION

The record was reviewed for errors patent, according to La. C.Cr.P. art. 920;[8] *State v. Oliveaux*, 312 So.2d 337 (La. 1975); and *State v. Weiland*, 556 So.2d 175 (La. App. 5 Cir. 1990). The review reveals one error patent in this case which requires correction.

The sentencing transcript does not reflect the trial judge ordered the defendant's enhanced sentence to run concurrently with each count and with any and all sentences defendant was serving. However, the sentencing minute entry reflects that the enhanced sentence was "to run concurrently with each count and any and all other sentences currently serving time for." Additionally, the UCO has a checked box next to "This sentence shall be concurrent with any or every sentence the offender is now serving." The UCO also indicates that the enhanced sentence was to run concurrent with "each count and any and all other sentences currently serving time for." The transcript prevails. *State v. Lynch*, 441 So.2d 732, 734 (La. 1983). Accordingly, we remand this matter for correction of the sentencing minute entry and the UCO to delete the provision related to the concurrent nature of defendant's enhanced sentence.

CONCLUSION

For the foregoing reasons, the defendant's convictions and sentences are affirmed and we remand for correction of the error patent. Counsel's motion to withdraw is granted.

AFFIRMED; MOTION TO WITHDRAW GRANTED; REMANDED

SUSAN M. CHEHARDY
CHIEF JUDGE

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NOTICE OF JUDGMENT AND CERTIFICATE OF DELIVERY

I CERTIFY THAT A COPY OF THE OPINION IN THE BELOW-NUMBERED MATTER HAS BEEN DELIVERED IN ACCORDANCE WITH **UNIFORM RULES - COURT OF APPEAL, RULE 2-16.4 AND 2-16.5** THIS DAY **APRIL 29, 2026** TO THE TRIAL JUDGE, CLERK OF COURT, COUNSEL OF RECORD AND ALL PARTIES NOT REPRESENTED BY COUNSEL, AS LISTED BELOW:

CURTIS B. PURSELL
CLERK OF COURT

25-KA-456

E-NOTIFIED

24TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT (CLERK)
HONORABLE JACQUELINE F. MALONEY (DISTRICT JUDGE)
ANDREA F. LONG (APPELLEE)
JANE L. BEEBE (APPELLANT)
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