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DISTRICT IV

July 17, 2025

To:

Hon. William M. Bratcher
Circuit Court Judge
Electronic Notice

Ellen J. Krahn
Electronic Notice

Kim Bredlau
Register in Probate
Clark County Courthouse
Electronic Notice

Ashley M. Schmitt
Electronic Notice

Gail R. Prock
Electronic Notice

Jacob Allan Idlas
Electronic Notice

T. W. 557139

You are hereby notified that the Court has entered the following opinion and order:

2025AP617-NM

In re the termination of parental rights to M.W., a person
under the age of 18, Clark County v. T.W. (L.C. # 2023TP3)

Before Blanchard, J.¹

Summary disposition orders may not be cited in any court of this state as precedent or authority, except for the limited purposes specified in WIS. STAT. RULE 809.23(3).

Attorneys Jacob Idlas and Ellen Krahn, appointed counsel for T.W., have filed a no-merit report pursuant to WIS. STAT. RULE 809.32 concluding that there is no arguable basis for challenging the order terminating T.W.'s parental rights to M.W. T.W. was advised of his right

¹ This appeal is decided by one judge pursuant to WIS. STAT. § 752.31(2)(e) (2023-24). All references to the Wisconsin Statutes are to the 2023-24 version unless otherwise noted.

To the extent that the 30-day time limit in WIS. STAT. RULE 809.107(6)(e) applies, this court extends the deadline on the court's own motion to the date this decision is issued. See WIS. STAT. RULE 809.82(2)(a).

to file a response to the report and has not responded. On this court's independent review of the record as mandated by *Anders v. California*, 386 U.S. 738 (1967), this court determines that there are no issues of arguable merit. Accordingly, the order terminating T.W.'s parental rights is summarily affirmed.² See WIS. STAT. RULE 809.21.

On June 29, 2023, Clark County petitioned for termination of T.W.'s parental rights, alleging that M.W. was in continuing need of protection or services under WIS. STAT. § 48.415(2)(a). On February 9, 2024, the County filed an amended petition, adding as a second ground the allegation that T.W. had failed to assume parental responsibility under § 48.415(6). Following a two-day trial, the jury returned verdicts against T.W. on both grounds for termination. The circuit court made the statutorily required finding that T.W. is an unfit parent. After a dispositional hearing, the circuit court determined that termination of T.W.'s parental rights is in M.W.'s best interest.

The no-merit report addresses whether there was sufficient evidence to support the jury's verdict as to grounds for termination; whether the circuit court properly exercised its discretion in determining that termination of T.W.'s parental rights was in M.W.'s best interest; and whether there would be arguable merit to a postdisposition motion for a new trial based on T.W.'s objection that, during opening statements, the County misstated the law as to the abandonment ground by stating: "The question is who has assumed parental responsibility for this child over the course of her life?" On this court's review of the record, the court agrees with counsel's description, analysis, and conclusion that these potential issues lack arguable merit.

² The order also terminated the parental rights of M.W.'s mother. Termination of the mother's parental rights is not a subject of this appeal.

The no-merit report sets forth an adequate discussion of the potential issues to support the no-merit conclusion, and this court does not address them further.

Because this court's independent review of the record confirms that counsel correctly analyzed the issues surrounding the termination of T.W.'s parental rights, and because this court's review discloses no other potential issues of arguable merit, the order terminating T.W.'s parental rights is summarily affirmed pursuant to WIS. STAT. RULE 809.21.

Therefore,

IT IS ORDERED that the order is summarily affirmed. WIS. STAT. RULE 809.21.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that Attorneys Jacob Idlas and Ellen J. Krahn are relieved of their obligation to further represent T.W. in this matter. *See* WIS. STAT. RULE 809.32(3).

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that this summary disposition order will not be published.

Samuel A. Christensen
Clerk of Court of Appeals