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DISTRICT III

October 21, 2025

To:

Hon. John P. Anderson
Circuit Court Judge
Electronic Notice

Lexi Pierce
Clerk of Circuit Court
Ashland County Courthouse
Electronic Notice

Carlos Bailey
Electronic Notice

John Blimling
Electronic Notice

Karl Justin Rein 269823
Columbia Correctional Center
2925 Columbia Drive
Portage, WI 53901-0950

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

2023AP1586-CRNM	State of Wisconsin v. Karl Justin Rein (L. C. Nos. 2022CF151,
2023AP1587-CRNM	2022CF152, 2021CF244, 2022CF21, 2022CF22)
2023AP1588-CRNM	
2023AP1589-CRNM	
2023AP1590-CRNM	

Before Stark, P.J., Hruz, and Gill, JJ.

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).

Counsel for Karl Rein has filed a no-merit report concluding that no grounds exist to challenge Rein's convictions entered on his pleas to crimes related to his repeated violations over the course of several months of a protective order entered on behalf of Rein's wife, Mary,¹

¹ Pursuant to the policy underlying WIS. STAT. RULE 809.86(4) (2023-24), we use a pseudonym instead of the victim's name.

All references to the Wisconsin Statutes are to the 2023-24 version.

during their pending divorce. Rein has filed a response challenging his pleas and sentences. Upon our independent review of the records as mandated by *Anders v. California*, 386 U.S. 738 (1967), we conclude there is no arguable merit to any issue that could be raised on appeal. Therefore, we summarily affirm the judgments of conviction. *See* WIS. STAT. RULE 809.21.

The State charged Rein with the following 46 crimes, arising from 5 Ashland County Circuit Court cases: 15 counts of knowingly violating a domestic abuse injunction, with 13 of those counts having the repeater enhancer; 4 counts of attempting to knowingly violate a domestic abuse injunction, with 3 of those counts having a repeater enhancer; 22 counts of felony bail jumping, with 18 of those counts having a repeater enhancer; 1 count of stalking with a previous violent crime conviction, as a repeater; 2 counts of using a computer to send a threatening or obscene message, with both counts as a repeater; and 2 counts of misdemeanor bail jumping.

Pursuant to a global plea agreement, Rein pleaded no contest to 6 counts of knowingly violating a domestic abuse injunction, including 5 counts with a repeater enhancer; 5 counts of felony bail jumping, with 4 of those counts having a repeater enhancer; 1 count of stalking with a previous violent crime conviction, as a repeater; 1 count of using a computer to send a threatening or obscene message, as a repeater; and 1 count of misdemeanor bail jumping. In exchange for his no-contest pleas, the State agreed to recommend that the circuit court dismiss and read in the remaining counts in all 5 cases. The parties remained free to argue with respect to sentencing. Out of a maximum possible 76-year sentence, the court imposed sentences resulting in an aggregate 15-year term, consisting of 7 years of initial confinement followed by 8 years of extended supervision.

The no-merit report addresses whether Rein knowingly, intelligently, and voluntarily entered his no-contest pleas; whether there were any grounds to assert a multiplicity claim; and whether the circuit court properly exercised its sentencing discretion. Upon reviewing the records, we agree with counsel’s description, analysis, and conclusion that these potential issues lack arguable merit.

In his response to the no-merit report, Rein challenges the modification of his pretrial bond, asserting that the State misled the court about “warrants” Rein had from Minnesota. Because any issue related to pretrial bond is now moot, we refrain from addressing it on appeal. *See generally State v. Witkowski*, 163 Wis. 2d 985, 988, 473 N.W.2d 512 (Ct. App. 1991) (holding that appellate courts act only to determine actual controversies and will not consider moot questions).

Rein also asserts that he was wrongfully charged in these matters because his conduct did not violate the domestic abuse injunction. Rein’s valid no-contest pleas, however, waived all nonjurisdictional defects and defenses. *See State v. Lasky*, 2002 WI App 126, ¶11, 254 Wis. 2d 789, 646 N.W.2d 53. To the extent Rein may be suggesting that there was no factual basis for his pleas, the record belies his claim. Further, Rein expressly agreed that there was a factual basis set forth in the complaints to support his no-contest pleas.

Rein also appears to argue that he was charged with stalking solely because he would not accept the State’s plea offer. The record does not support this claim. The stalking charge was based on allegations that Rein engaged in a course of conduct directed at Mary that caused her, and would cause a reasonable person under the same circumstances, to suffer serious emotional

distress where Rein “should have known that at least one of the acts that constituted the course of conduct” would cause Mary to suffer serious emotional distress.

Specifically, the complaint stated that Rein sent letters to Mary, her employers, her landlord, and the attorney that was representing her in the divorce matter. In a letter to Mary’s employer, Rein accused her of stealing from the employer, and he also disclosed her social security number. According to Mary, Rein had done something similar in the past and had succeeded in getting her fired from previous employment. Mary also stated that a letter Rein sent to her landlord suggested he “was trying to take control” of her residence. In a letter to Mary’s attorney, Rein accused Mary of infidelity and theft; disclosed intimate details of their relationship, including a description of a prior sexual encounter Rein had with Mary; and denied any culpability for an earlier stalking conviction. Rein directed Mary’s attorney to ensure that Mary received a copy of his letter, stating that he loved his wife and that he did not care if the letter resulted in additional charges. Mary told law enforcement that she feared Rein would continue to “try to destroy her life in any way he can,” adding that she worried his attacks on her personal and professional relationships might continue to escalate. Based upon this record, any challenge regarding a factual basis for his stalking conviction would therefore lack arguable merit.

Rein also contends that the circuit court judge should not have presided over both the divorce matter and Rein’s criminal cases, suggesting bias on the part of the circuit court. There is a presumption that a judge is free of bias and prejudice. *State v. Jensen*, 2011 WI App 3, ¶95, 331 Wis. 2d 440, 794 N.W.2d 482 (2010). To overcome the presumption, the party asserting judicial bias must show by a preponderance of the evidence that the judge is biased or

prejudiced. ***Id.*** Rein fails to establish any bias on the part of the circuit court, and there is nothing in the record to suggest judicial bias or prejudice against Rein.

Rein’s response additionally challenges the circuit court’s sentencing discretion, asserting that his sentences are excessive. As noted above, we agree with appellate counsel’s conclusion that the record discloses no arguable basis for challenging the sentences imposed. In reviewing a sentence, this court is limited to determining whether there was an erroneous exercise of discretion. *See State v. Echols*, 175 Wis. 2d 653, 681, 499 N.W.2d 631 (1993). Proper sentencing discretion is demonstrated if the record shows that the court “examined the facts and stated its reasons for the sentence imposed, ‘using a demonstrated rational process.’” *State v. Spears*, 147 Wis. 2d 429, 447, 433 N.W.2d 595 (Ct. App. 1988) (citation omitted).

Here, the circuit court considered the seriousness of the offenses; Rein’s character, including his lengthy criminal history; and the need to protect the public. *See State v. Gallion*, 2004 WI 42, ¶¶39-46, 270 Wis. 2d 535, 678 N.W.2d 197. There is a presumption that Rein’s aggregate sentence, which is well within the maximum allowed by law, is not unduly harsh or unconscionable, nor “so excessive and unusual” as to shock public sentiment. *See State v. Grindemann*, 2002 WI App 106, ¶¶31-32, 255 Wis. 2d 632, 648 N.W.2d 507; *see also Ocanas v. State*, 70 Wis. 2d 179, 185, 233 N.W.2d 457 (1975).

Rein also claims that the circuit court relied on inaccurate information at sentencing. Defendants have a due process right to be sentenced on the basis of accurate information. *State v. Tiepelman*, 2006 WI 66, ¶¶ 9, 26, 291 Wis. 2d 179, 717 N.W.2d 1. In order to establish a due process violation, the defendant has the burden of proving, by clear and convincing evidence,

both that the information was inaccurate and that the court actually relied on the inaccurate information in sentencing. *Id.*, ¶26.

According to Rein, the circuit court inaccurately described him as a “dangerous violent person” when he had never been convicted of “being a physically violent person.” The record, however, belies his claim. The presentence investigation report (PSI) set forth Rein’s criminal history, including convictions for stalking, domestic abuse, and disorderly conduct as an act of domestic abuse. The PSI recounted that one of the disorderly conduct convictions arose from allegations that he pinned down a woman on a couch; threatened to hit her with his fists; and shut the bathroom door on her head, causing her pain. With respect to a subsequent disorderly conduct conviction, Rein was alleged to have kicked open the door to his home, telling his then-wife that he was going to “beat her ass” and “kill you bitch.” The PSI also noted Mary’s stated belief that Rein “would physically harm her because he has in the past.”

A sentencing court may “conduct an inquiry broad in scope and largely unlimited either as to the kind of information considered or the source from which it comes.” *Handel v. State*, 74 Wis. 2d 699, 703, 247 N.W.2d 711 (1976). Given Rein’s criminal record, Rein fails to establish that the court’s characterization of him as “dangerous” was inaccurate.

Our independent review of the record discloses no other potential issue for appeal.²

² To the extent Rein raised additional complaints in his response that we have not specifically addressed, they are also rejected because we discern no potential issues of arguable merit.

Therefore,

IT IS ORDERED that the judgments are summarily affirmed. WIS. STAT. RULE 809.21.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that Attorney Carlos Bailey is relieved of his obligation to further represent Karl Rein in these matters. *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