

Circuit Court for Prince George's County  
Case No.: C-16-CV-24-004106

UNREPORTED\*

IN THE APPELLATE COURT

OF MARYLAND

No. 128

September Term, 2025

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CHRISTIAN HURLEY

v.

ELICIA PAIGE MCCRANEY DEGNAN, *et al.*

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Graeff,  
Berger,  
Wright, Alexander, Jr.  
(Senior Judge, Specially Assigned),

JJ.

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PER CURIAM

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Filed: May 5, 2026

\*This is a per curiam opinion. Under Rule 1-104, the opinion is not precedent within the rule of stare decisis, nor may it be cited as persuasive authority.

In September 2024, appellant Christian Hurley sued appellees Elicia Paige McCraney Degnan, Michael Degnan, Amber McCraney Degnan, Trey McCraney Degnan, Steven Hu, and Paige Li in the Circuit Court for Prince George’s County alleging negligence related to a dog bite and seeking damages and injunctive relief.<sup>1</sup> Michael and Hu moved to dismiss, and the circuit court held a hearing. At the court’s direction, the remaining appellees moved to dismiss a week later. The circuit court then granted the motions, and this appeal followed.

On appeal, Hurley presents three issues for our review.<sup>2</sup> *First*, he contends that the circuit court erred in granting Michael’s motion to dismiss because the court “consider[ed] matters outside the pleadings without converting under Rule 2-322(c) and affording a reasonable opportunity under Rule 2-501 to respond[.]” He does not attack the substance of the court’s decision; only the material on which it relied in reaching that decision. We are not persuaded.

Michael attached as an exhibit to his motion, documents showing that Hurley had previously sued him in the District Court of Maryland, sitting in Howard County, alleging the same cause of action arising from the same incident. That case resulted in a judgment in Michael’s favor. Put differently, Michael asserted a defense of *res judicata*. *See generally Facey v. Facey*, 249 Md. App. 584, 608 (2021). To be sure, *res judicata* is not

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<sup>1</sup> Because four of the appellees share a surname, we identify them by their first names throughout this opinion. We mean no disrespect in doing so.

<sup>2</sup> Hurley also raises a fourth issue arguing that the “cumulative effect” of the other issues requires reversal. Because we find no error in any of those issues, we need not discuss their cumulative effect.

explicitly enumerated as a defense that may be raised in a preliminary motion to dismiss under Maryland Rules 2-322(a) or (b). But technical discrepancies aside, Michael’s motion to dismiss successfully put the court on notice that *res judicata* was potentially applicable to the case. So notified, the court was permitted to consider *res judicata* on its own initiative regardless of the efficacy of Michael’s motion, and it was not required to treat the motion as one seeking summary judgment. *See Anne Arundel Cnty. Bd. of Educ. v. Norville*, 390 Md. 93, 105–06 (2005). Accordingly, the court did not err in considering matters outside the pleadings.<sup>3</sup>

*Next*, Hurley contends that the circuit court erred in dismissing his complaint with prejudice without making “findings of willfulness, prejudice, or inadequacy of lesser sanctions[.]” He cites to Rule 2-433, which concerns sanctions for a failure of discovery. Put simply, the circuit court did not dismiss the case for a failure of discovery, so it was not required to make any findings of willfulness, prejudice, or the inadequacy of lesser sanctions.

*Finally*, Hurley contends that the circuit court erred “by dismissing non-moving defendants with prejudice and issuing a February 10, 2025 sua sponte ‘nocontact’ [sic] order never requested in any pleading or announced at [the] hearing[.]” The first half of this argument fails because, although only Michael and Hu moved to dismiss before the hearing, the remaining appellees filed motions after the hearing. The record reflects that

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<sup>3</sup> We also reject Hurley’s claim that he was not given a reasonable opportunity to respond to Michael’s motion. He filed an opposition the day after Michael filed the motion and argued it at the hearing.

Hurley filed oppositions to each motion and moved to strike them before the court ultimately granted them. The second half of Hurley’s argument fails because, at the hearing, he asked the circuit court to order the appellees not to contact him or post about him on social media. He cannot challenge the court’s decision to grant the relief he requested. *See Rush v. State*, 403 Md. 68, 95 (2008) (“[O]ne cannot appeal from a favorable ruling[.]”). Accordingly, we shall affirm the circuit court’s judgment.

**JUDGMENT OF THE CIRCUIT  
COURT FOR PRINCE GEORGE’S  
COUNTY AFFIRMED. COSTS TO  
BE PAID BY APPELLANT.**