Circuit Court for Frederick County
Case No. C-10-JV-23-808174

UNREPORTED*

IN THE APPELLATE COURT

OF MARYLAND

No. 0433

September Term, 2023

In Re: E.B.

Beachley,
Shaw,
Meredith, Timothy E.
(Senior Judge, Specially Assigned)

JJ.

Opinion by Shaw, J.

Filed: April 15, 2024

*This is an unreported opinion. This opinion may not be cited as precedent within the rule of stare decisis. It may be cited for its persuasive value only if the citation conforms to Rule 1-104(a)(2)(B).

On February 22, 2023, Appellee Joshua Lyons, on behalf of himself and his son M.L., filed a peace order complaint against Appellant E.B., a juvenile, with the Department of Juvenile Services ("DJS"). The complaint alleged that E.B. engaged in acts that placed Appellees in fear of imminent serious bodily harm, that E.B. harassed them and trespassed on their property. At Appellees' request, DJS authorized the scheduling of a formal peace order hearing in the Circuit Court for Frederick County. On April 17, 2023, at the hearing, Appellant moved to dismiss the case and have it remanded to DJS for an informal resolution. The judge denied his motion and the case proceeded to a hearing on the merits. At its conclusion, the court granted the request and issued a peace order. On May 1, 2023, the court held an additional hearing on Appellant's Motion to Dismiss and at its conclusion, the court reaffirmed its decision to deny the motion. Appellant noted this timely appeal.

Appellant presents two questions for this court's review which we have rephrased.[1]

1. Whether there was sufficient evidence presented to the court for the issuance of a peace order?

2. Whether the court violated Appellant's constitutional right to a fair trial under the Fourteenth Amendment when the judge acted as attorney for Appellee, demonstrated a lack of knowledge of the applicable law and created a hostile and biased courtroom environment?

For reasons set forth below, we shall affirm the judgment of the circuit court.

BACKGROUND

[1] 1. Whether there was sufficient evidence presented by Appellees of a peace order offense?

2. Did the trial court violate Appellant's constitutional right under the fourteenth amendment, to a fair trial where the trial judge acted as attorney for Appellees, demonstrated a lack of knowledge of the applicable law and created a hostile and bias[ed] courtroom environment for respondent's counsel?

Appellee, Joshua Lyons, on behalf of himself and his son, M.L., filed a complaint with DJS for a Peace Order against Appellant E.B., a juvenile, on February 22, 2023. In the complaint, Appellees stated that on February 15, 2023, at approximately 6:27 A.M., E.B. repeatedly rang their doorbell, threatened to break into their home if they did not unlock the door, and claimed "I'm God." They asserted that E.B. committed acts that placed them in fear of imminent serious bodily harm, and that he harassed them and trespassed on their property, located in Adamstown, Maryland.

At the request of Appellees, DJS transferred the matter to the Circuit Court for Frederick County, and on April 17, 2023, the court held a peace order hearing.[2] Appellant requested that the case be dismissed and remanded to DJS for an informal resolution. In support of his motion, Appellant presented two DJS intake officers as witnesses.

> [APPELLANT'S COUNSEL]: . . . Judge Sandy was initially the judge that heard this case. And part of the issue was we thought this case should've been handled at intake pursuant to the law. And so the judge gave us some

[2] **MD. R. JUV. CAUSES 11-505(D):**

(1) Who May File A request for a peace order may be filed by a Department of Juvenile Services intake officer pursuant to Code, Courts Article, § 3-8A-19.1 (b)(1) or a State's Attorney pursuant to § 3 - 8A-19.1 (b)(2).

CJP § 3-8A-19.2(b)(1-2). Grounds for Issuance of Peace Order.

(b)(1) If a peace order request is filed under § 3-8A-19.1(b) of this subtitle, the respondent shall have an opportunity to be heard on the question of whether the court should issue a peace order.

(2) If the court finds by clear and convincing evidence that the respondent has committed, and is likely to commit in the future, an act specified in § 3-8A-19.1(b) of this subtitle against the victim, or if the respondent consents to the entry of a peace order, the court may issue a peace order to protect the victim.

> opportunity to get the people who made the decision to send this matter to the court, and they're here pursuant to the subpoena.
>
> [COURT]: I'm sorry, they're here to do what?
>
> [APPELLANT'S COUNSEL]: Testify.
>
> [COURT]: On what issue?
>
> [APPELLANT'S COUNSEL]: On how the decision was made to send this to the court. This is juvenile. This is a juvenile matter.
>
> [COURT]: Yeah, but I don't think that's relevant for this court. How it got here.
>
> [APPELLANT'S COUNSEL]: Respectfully, Your Honor, what happens with regard to this is that there's certain procedures that's supposed to take place pursuant to juvenile. And we're alleging that that procedure didn't take place and wasn't fully -- my client wasn't fully given the benefit of. And they were – in fact, the agency reports that the only reason they reported this to the court is because Mr. Lyons was adamant that it come to this court. And they were under the mistaken belief that because he was adamant, that they must send this case to the juvenile court. And that's not what the rules say. And I can cite the section of the law--
>
> [COURT]: Alright.
>
> [APPELLANT'S COUNSEL]: -- which says that regardless of what a parent thinks, its's up to the juvenile intake officer to make that decision. And they can't make that decision simply because they defer to the adamancy of a parent. That's why we have them here.

The court asked for a proffer from one of the intake officers, who stated that he sent the complaint forward because he "presented the option to the victim with regard to no court involvement with regard to handling the manner [sic] informally" and "[t]he victim basically stated that he did not want to handle it informally. He wanted to pursue it with the court." When asked if this was standard procedure, the intake officer replied "Yes."[3]

[3] ***See* CJP § 3-8A-10(e)(1). Informal Adjustment of the Matter.**

When asked if anything "irregular happened in this case," the intake officer replied "No." Following a recess, the court denied Appellant's Motion to Dismiss and excused the intake officers. The court then proceeded to hear testimony on the merits of case.

The first witness, Mr. Lyons, testified that on the morning of February 15, 2023, he awoke to someone incessantly ringing his doorbell for approximately twenty minutes. When he went downstairs and looked through the window, he realized that the person at his door was E.B. Mr. Lyons testified that he knew E.B. from his time as a coach for a soccer team that his son, M.L., and E.B. played on together. He explained that E.B. kept ringing the doorbell, looked through the windows in the home, began tapping the windows and threatened to break into the house if Mr. Lyons did not open the door. Mr. Lyons called the police who responded and spoke to E.B. on the front lawn before releasing him to his parents. Mr. Lyons testified that there was no damage to the home and that he and M.L. were not physically harmed.

(e)(1) The intake officer may propose an informal adjustment of the matter if, based on the complaint and the inquiry, the intake officer concludes that the court has jurisdiction but that an informal adjustment, rather than judicial action, is in the best interests of the public and the child.

> (2)(i) Except as provided in subparagraph (ii) of this paragraph, the intake officer shall propose an informal adjustment by informing the victim, the child, and the child's parent or guardian of the nature of the complaint, the objectives of the adjustment process, and the conditions and procedures under which it will be conducted.
> [. . .]
> (3) ***The intake officer may not proceed with an informal adjustment unless the child and the child's parent or guardian consent to the informal adjustment procedure.***

(Emphasis added.).

At the conclusion of Appellant's cross examination of Mr. Lyons, the court asked him if he was "in fear of what could or might happen." He replied "Yes, Your Honor." Appellant's attorney objected to the court's question, arguing that Mr. Lyons "didn't testify to that. I finished my testimony and now you're giving him the room to make the case. I'm opposed to that." The court overruled the objection.

Appellant was the next witness and he explained that on the morning of February 15, 2023, his parents told him that he could not go to school. Appellant then went to Appellees' home to ride with them to school so that he could "talk to [his] counselor about bullying and trauma that had happened the week before." Appellant's counsel attempted to elicit additional testimony from Appellant about the trauma. The court, finding that the testimony was "irrelevant," declined to allow further inquiry. Appellant's counsel ended his direct examination.

On cross-examination by Mr. Lyons, Appellant was asked if he ever asked Appellees for a ride to school during the twenty minutes he was ringing the doorbell and yelling threats. Appellant testified that he never had the opportunity to ask for a ride because he did not see Appellee and that he wanted to talk to him face-to-face. No other witnesses were called.

In ruling on the Peace Order, the court found:

> . . . by a preponderance of the evidence that the respondent placed the petitioner and son, petitioners, in fear of serious bodily harm. And based on the bizarre and outlandish statements, and the excessive bell ringing, and the declaration that the respondent was God, and that he'd break the door down if it wasn't open, and then tapping on the window . . . I have to find by preponderance of the evidence that the respondent committed the violation

> under 3-1503, and I find that he did. And I find that he's likely to commit that in the future.

Appellant's counsel objected to the court's ruling, stating:

> We're going to appeal. This is outlandish. Your ruling is outlandish. And the standard, sir, is clear and convincing. That's what the standard is, but I know that you can easily find clear and convincing, too. And so you can change it now, if you like, but you said that you found by preponderance of evidence. That is not the standard, with all due respect.

The court took a recess to consider Appellant's argument. Following the recess, the court stated:

> I stand corrected. I had the standard of proof for peace orders, but I thought it was the juvenile, but it's adult, and there's a different standard. I didn't know that there was a different standard, but apparently there is. So for a juvenile, you have to find by what we call 'clear and convincing evidence' that the incident took place. There's no doubt about that. I can find beyond a reasonable doubt, I find that he did those things, Mr. Lyons, that you said he did. And that's the issue that the [c]ourt has to find by clear and convincing evidence.
>
> There is strong evidence that he's likely to do it again. And I'll give you the exact language. And he's likely to commit those acts of similar acts like that in the future, before an order can be – a petition can be issued.

The court granted the petition and ordered E.B. not to contact Appellees, harass them or enter their residence. The order expired on October 17, 2023.

On May 1, 2023, the court, *sua sponte*, held a hearing to reconsider its denial of Appellant's Motion to Dismiss. The intake officers, however, were not available to testify. Appellant argued that, under the "Court's and Judicial Proceedings, Section 38(a)-10 F3," the intake officers had discretion to decide whether to send the petition for a peace order to court for a formal hearing. He asserted that DJS failed to exercise its discretion due to

Mr. Lyons' adamancy that the petition be heard in the circuit court. The court considered his argument and stated that because the officers were not present, there was no testimony on the record that the intake officer believed that he had no other choice. The court presented Appellant with three options: (1) set a new date and reissue the subpoenas to have the officers present at the next hearing; (2) proceed without a rehearing; or (3) Appellees could dissolve the peace order given that Appellant was in counseling. Appellant declined the court's offer arguing that "[a]ll of this stuff is tainted because someone didn't apply the law" and that "I don't want any more hearings. I think the record is clear."

During discussions between the court and Appellant's counsel, the court read into the record, a letter submitted by DJS, that explained their position.

> [W]e sent this matter to court, not because [Appellee] was adamant, but because we did not have [Appellee's] consent to proceed in handling this matter informally. Therefore, the Department had two options; either close the case or send [it] to court.
>
> Since your complaint met the criteria for a peace order complaint to proceed, we could not simply close the case and decided to send the matter to the [c]ourt so that the judge could determine if the peace order would be granted.

The court expressed its concern stating:

> But [Appellant's counsel] raises a good point. I mean, obviously my reading of it and his are consistent with or accurate. That is, [DJS has] an option, regardless if [Mr. Lyons and M.L.] don't consent [DJS] can – they can make a determination.
>
> They can go with the peace order, which they did, or they can dismiss it. But if they thought in every case, if the victim had to consent or had to come to court, then they'd be wrong and that might be – that might happen in every case.

The court, again, gave Appellant the option to reset the hearing and Appellant declined the court's offer. The court then reaffirmed its decision to deny Appellant's Motion to Dismiss.

STANDARD OF REVIEW

On appeal, a trial court's decisions interpreting and applying the law are reviewed *de novo*. *Piper v. Layman*, 125 Md. App. 745, 754 (1999). An appellate court will accept the trial court's findings of fact unless they are clearly erroneous. *Piper*, 125 Md. App. at 754. However, when it comes to the "ultimate conclusion [] we must make our own independent appraisal by reviewing the law and applying it to the facts of the case." *Id.*

"To determine whether a judge has abdicated his or her neutrality, in contravention to a respondent's right to a fair trial, we review whether a reasonable person could question the judge's impartiality." *State v. Payton*, 461 Md. 540, 561 (2018) (citing *Archer v. State* 383 Md. 329, 356–57 (2004)). Trial judges have great discretion, however, the "manner in which a trial judge exercises that discretion must be impartial." *Payton*, 461 Md. at 561. If the trial judge's impartiality could be questioned by a reasonable person, "'then the defendant has been deprived of due process and the judge has abused his or her discretion.'" *Id.* at 561 (quoting *Archer*, 383 Md. at 357).

DISCUSSION

Mootness

Appellate courts, generally, do not opine on abstract propositions or moot questions that may arise from expired orders. *State v. Ficker*, 266 Md. 500, 506–07 (1972). A case

is considered moot when there is no longer an existing controversy between the parties at the time it is before the court. *Coburn v. Coburn*, 342 Md. 244, 250 (1996). However, when collateral consequences flow from a lower court's disposition, mootness does not preclude appellate review. *Piper v. Layman*, 125 Md. App. 745, 753 (1999). In the present case, we hold that the stigma attached to the peace order disposition was a collateral consequence sufficient to allow appellate review. We, therefore, shall consider the merits of this appeal.

I. The evidence was sufficient.

Appellant argues that the court erred in granting the peace order because the evidence was not sufficient. While he does not dispute what happened on February 15, he contends that Appellees failed to prove that M.L. was placed "in fear of imminent serious bodily harm" because M.L. never testified to experiencing such fear. We disagree.

Maryland Courts and Judicial Proceedings Article, Section 3-8A-19.2 (b)(2) provides that a peace order may be granted:

> **(2)** If the court finds by clear and convincing evidence that the respondent has committed, and is likely to commit in the future, an act specified in § 3-8A-19.1(b) of this subtitle against the victim, or if the respondent consents to the entry of a peace order, the court may issue a peace order to protect the victim.

The offenses enumerated under §3-8A-19.1 (b) are:

(i) An act that causes serious bodily harm;
(ii) An act that places the victim in fear of imminent serious bodily harm;
(iii) Assault in any degree;
(iv) Rape or sexual offense under §§ 3-303 through 3-308 of the Criminal Law Article or attempted rape or sexual offense in any degree;
(v) False imprisonment;

(vi) Harassment under § 3-803 of the Criminal Law Article;
(vii) Stalking under § 3-802 of the Criminal Law Article;
(viii) Trespass under Title 6, Subtitle 4 of the Criminal Law Article; or
(ix) Malicious destruction of property under § 6-301 of the Criminal Law Article.

During the hearing, Mr. Lyons testified that Appellant repeatedly rang the doorbell and threatened to break into the home if he did not unlock the door. Mr. Lyons also testified to M.L.'s physical reaction, that M.L. was afraid to go outside, that M.L. began checking all of the doors and windows to make sure that they were locked, and that he, Mr. Lyons, had to call 911 for help. Mr. Lyons stated, "I tried to have as little interaction, because obviously this wasn't normal behavior. And I wasn't trying to make him any other – any angrier or agitated. I did call 911. I let him know I was going to call 911."

Based on this record, we hold there was sufficient evidence to support the judge's finding that the ground of placing the petitioners in fear of imminent serious bodily injury was proved by the clear and convincing standard. While M.L. did not testify, Mr. Lyons' unrefuted testimony and the reasonable inferences therefrom, established his fear as well as his son's fear of serious bodily harm. He stated that E.B. said he was "God" and he described E.B.'s behavior as "not typical behavior and was very frightening to [M.L.][.]" In our reading of the peace order statute, there is no requirement that a petitioner use specific words in order to be granted relief. The court may glean from testimony given that a person was placed in fear of imminent serious bodily harm.

Appellant, nevertheless, claims that we should reverse the trial court's decision because the court never made a finding that there was 'clear and convincing evidence' of a threat or fear of immediate/imminent serious bodily harm. In its initial determination,

the court did err in finding that the standard was preponderance of the evidence. However, when the judge was made aware of his mistake, he took a recess to evaluate the law. He returned to the courtroom, acknowledged his misunderstanding, applied the proper standard and granted the Peace Order. As such, the court did not err.

> [COURT]: I'm going to have a look at the code. . . . We'll take a short recess. Thank you.
>
> [. . .]
>
> [COURT]: . . . I do find by clear and convincing evidence that the event took place, that it was bizarre, that it was scary, and that it was so outlandish and so out of character that it is likely to happen, at that time, likely to happen again. So I'm going to issue an order.

II. Appellant was provided a fair trial.

Appellant also argues that he was denied a fair trial in violation of the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution. He contends that "the court demonstrated lack of knowledge of the law, threatened Appellant's counsel with contempt, refused to hear Appellant's Motion to Dismiss and acted as counsel for Appellees."

We have addressed Appellant's contention that the court lacked knowledge and in making that determination, we held that the judge did not err in his findings as revised. We now examine whether the conduct of the judge in asking questions, the judge's decision to deny Appellant's motion to dismiss and his alleged threats about contempt resulted in the denial of a fair trial.

At the hearing, Mr. Lyons provided the court with a narrative of the events that took place on the morning of February 15 and the court asked several questions, which were not objected to by Appellant's counsel.

> [COURT]: Okay. Tell me what, if anything, happened that you saw or heard [Appellant] do that you believe are grounds for a peace order to be issued.
>
> [. . .]
>
> [COURT]: And how do you know - - did you know [Appellant]?
>
> [. . .]
>
> [COURT]: . . . . Don't tell me what somebody told you that [E.B.] might've done.

At the conclusion of cross examination by Appellant, the court asked the following:

> [COURT]: Let me ask one question; when you called 911, were you in fear of what could or might happen?
>
> [MR. LYONS]: Yes, your honor.
>
> [APPELLANT'S COUNSEL]: Your Honor, - that's --
>
> [COURT]: Okay. Sir, don't interrupt my question, and don't interrupt the answer.
>
> [APPELLANT'S COUNSEL]: He didn't testify to that. I finished my testimony and now you're giving him the room to make the cases. And I'm opposed to that.
>
> [COURT]: Okay.
>
> [APPELLANT'S COUNSEL]: I object to that.
>
> [COURT]: Overruled.

Under Maryland Rule 5-614(b), the court may interrogate any witness and a court's questioning will be upheld on appeal where it is "'a legitimate effort to sharpen issues and clarify difficult points for the [fact finder].'" *Handy v. State*, 201 Md. App. 521, 550 (2011) (quoting *Pearlstein v. State*, 76 Md. App. 507, 515 (1988)). If, however, the court's questions would lead a reasonable person to believe the judge is partial to either side, such bias violates the Sixth Amendment right to a fair trial. *Furda v. State*, 194 Md. App. 1, 63-66 (2010).

In *Diggs v. State* and *Ramsey v. State*, the Supreme Court of Maryland addressed judicial partiality, drawing a distinction between cases where a judge merely asked clarifying questions to aid the trier of fact and cases where the judge's questions or comments would have caused "a reasonable person to question the impartiality of the judge. . . ." *Diggs, et al. v. State*, 409 Md. 260, 289 (2009). In *Diggs* and *Ramsey,* the judge rehabilitated the State's case by laying the foundation for a drug distribution charge during the direct examination of the lead detective; rehabilitated another detective who appeared confused; and questioned the appellant's sister concerning pertinent facts in the case. *Diggs*, 409 Md. at 293. The Supreme Court found that the questions or comments bolstered the State's case while also "implying a disbelief in the defense and created the appearance of partiality in front of the jury." *Diggs*, 409 Md. at 293. The Supreme Court determined "the judge acted as a co-prosecutor, and his behavior exceeded 'mere impatience' and crossed the line of propriety, creating an atmosphere so fundamentally

flawed as to prevent Diggs and Ramsey from obtaining fair and impartial trials." *Diggs*, 409 Md at 293.

In *State v. Payton*, the Supreme Court of Maryland was asked to evaluate a judge's impartiality when the judge allowed the State to reopen its case-in-chief after the defense has moved for judgment of acquittal. 461 Md. 540, 545 (2018). The Supreme Court held that "it was fundamentally unfair to Respondent for the court to permit the State to recall a witness in order to persuade the trial judge and eventually the jury that the evidence in the case was legally sufficient to sustain a conviction." *Payton*, 461 Md. at 564. In *Payton*, the Supreme Court declined to apply a different standard in non-jury proceedings stating that "[a] jury's presence, however, is not dispositive to our analysis of a trial judge's apparent impartiality." *Payton*, 461 Md. at 564 (citing *Archer v. State*, 383 Md. 329, 335–36 (2004)). "To hold otherwise would suggest that the defendant's right to a fair trial, and thus an impartial judge, diminishes when the jury leaves the courtroom." *Payton*, 461 Md. at 564. The test, therefore, is whether "a reasonable person would be justified in questioning the trial judge's impartiality" with or without a jury present. *Id.* at 565.

Here, we hold that the judge did not act as an advocate but rather simply sought clarification of testimony that had been given. Appellant did not contest the details of the incident as relayed by Mr. Lyons, nor did Appellant contest Mr. Lyons' observations of M.L.'s physical reaction and statements or that he placed a 911 call. As we see it, the testimony of Mr. Lyons established a fear of imminent serious bodily harm sufficient for a peace order well before the court raised its clarifying question. Nevertheless. we hold that

the court's questioning was limited in scope, and it did not create an environment of partiality.

Appellant's argument concerning the court's decision to deny his Motion to Dismiss mischaracterizes the record. Not only did the judge hear Appellant on his Motion to Dismiss at the merits hearing, the court, *sua sponte*, later, held another hearing on the motion. At that hearing, the intake officers were not available to testify. Appellant's counsel argued the merits of his motion and the court gave him three options for its further consideration, which Appellant declined, stating: "I don't want any more hearings. I think the record is clear." The court then reaffirmed its initial decision. As we see it, the court did not refuse to hear Appellant's motion. He presented arguments in support of the motion at the merits hearing and again during the court's reconsideration hearing. The court simply did not grant the motion.

Appellant also alleges that the court created a hostile courtroom environment when the court threatened Appellant's attorney with sanctions.

> [APPELLANT'S COUNSEL]: Okay. So Mr. Lyons, is it true that you were told by juvenile services that they wanted to do an informal adjustment?
>
> [COURT]: I'm not allowing that. I made it real clear. This man is not an attorney. He's not going to make a rule. If you have a problem with the way juvenile services brought this case, counsel, then you need to file the appropriate complaints with the administrative offices of the court.
>
> [. . .]
>
> [COURT]: And I'm not going to keep repeating myself. I'm just going to say I'm going to sustain the objection.
>
> [. . .]

> [APPELLANT'S COUNSEL]: I heard the [c]ourt say that the [c]ourt had made a ruling on me asking for dismissal. And I want to be heard on the dismissal.
>
> [COURT]: You're borderline being in contempt if you pursue this line, sir. And I don't want to hold anybody in contempt. I don't want to hear anymore about your motion to dismiss.
>
> [. . .]
>
> [APPELLANT'S COUNSEL]: . . . But I want to cite section 3-8A-10(e)(1) and (e)(3), and that goes to talk about what intake officers are supposed to do. . . .
>
> [COURT]: Okay. I'm denying any more argument - -
>
> [APPELLANT'S COUSNEL]: Okay. Can I - -
>
> [COURT]: - - on this discussion and I told you that now - -
>
> [APPELLANT'S COUNSEL]: - - can I just finish my argument, please.
>
> [COURT]: Mr. Mahone, I've told you that for the fourth time; I don't want to hear any more about the request for dismissal.
>
> [APPELLANT'S COUNSEL]: There's one more section that I want the [c]ourt to be aware of, please.
>
> [COURT]: Let's just say that any more, I'm going to have no choice but to hold you in contempt.
>
> [APPELLANT'S COUNSEL]: Okay, Your Honor, but I have to cite the section.
>
> [COURT]: You're defying me. You're defying every time I've mentioned it, sir, you insist upon talking.

To be sure, a judge is invested with the responsibility to maintain the dignity of the courtroom. "[T]here is no question that the trial judge has broad discretion to control the conduct in his or her courtroom. . . ." *Biglari v. State*, 156 Md. App. 657, 674 (2004); *see In re Elrich*, 416 Md. 15, 36 (2010). The "'power of the judiciary to control its own proceedings, the conduct of participants, the actions of officers of the court and the

environment of the court,'" is a power "'absolutely necessary for a court to function effectively and do its job of administering justice.'" *Gutloff v. State*, 207 Md. App, 176, 202 (2012) (quoting *Commonwealth v. Means*, 454 Mass. 81, 92 (2009)).

It is clear that, here, the court did not create a hostile or biased environment. Rather, the court sought to confine the hearing to evidence that was in accordance with its rulings. The record shows that on multiple occasions, Appellant's counsel interrupted the court, continued to reraise issues that the court had ruled upon and ignored the court's requests to stop. While a litigant may properly object to a court's ruling, once his or her objection is made, the litigant is not welcome to disregard the court's ruling. Here, we hold that the court did not act inappropriately nor did the court create a hostile or biased environment.

In sum, there was sufficient evidence presented for the issuance of a peace order, the court did not act as an advocate for the Appellees, did not fail to address Appellant's motion to dismiss, did not create a biased or hostile environment, and did not violate Appellant's right to a fair trial.

JUDGMENT OF THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR FREDERICK COUNTY AFFIRMED. COSTS TO BE PAID BY APPELLANT.