Circuit Court for Prince George's County
Case No. C-16-CR-23-001208

UNREPORTED*

IN THE APPELLATE COURT

OF MARYLAND

No. 475

September Term, 2024

MICHAEL ANTHONY EDWARDS

v.

STATE OF MARYLAND

Wells, C.J.
Beachley,
Eyler, James R.
(Senior Judge, Specially Assigned),

JJ.

Opinion by Wells, C.J.

Filed: November 26, 2025

*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).

A jury in the Circuit Court for Prince George's County convicted appellant Michael Edwards of child sexual abuse. The court sentenced Edwards to a term of 25 years' imprisonment with all but five years suspended. Edwards noted this appeal, presenting two questions for our review. For clarity, we rephrased those questions as follows:[1]

1. Did the trial court abuse its discretion in refusing to strike a prospective juror for cause during *voir dire* when the juror answered affirmatively to whether she, her spouse, her family, or her close friend had ever been the victim of, or accused of, a sexual offense?

2. Was the evidence adduced at trial sufficient to sustain Edwards' conviction?

For reasons to follow, we hold the trial court did not abuse its discretion in refusing to strike the prospective juror. We also hold the evidence was sufficient to sustain Edwards' conviction. Accordingly, we affirm.

FACTUAL AND PROCEDURAL BACKGROUND

In 1995, Edwards began dating a woman, L.S. At the time, L.S. had two daughters: B.L., born in 1984, and S.L., born in 1994. The relationship ended in 2002. In 2021, B.L. told her mother, L.S., that Edwards had engaged in inappropriate sexual conduct with her when Edwards and L.S. were dating. Edwards was subsequently arrested and charged.

[1] Edwards' verbatim questions were:

1. Did the trial court abuse its discretion in refusing to strike for cause a prospective juror who revealed bias during *voir dire*?

2. Was the evidence legally insufficient to support Appellant's conviction?

At trial, L.S. testified that she and Edwards began dating in August 1995, when B.L. and S.L. were approximately 11 years old and 17 months old, respectively. L.S. and Edwards dated for a few years and then broke up in 1998. The parties rekindled their relationship in 1999 and continued dating until 2002.

L.S. testified that while she was dating Edwards, she lived with her daughters at two locations, a home in Oxon Hill Village and a home in Temple Hills, while Edwards lived at a separate address with his two daughters from a previous relationship. L.S. testified that during her relationship with Edwards, there would be times that he would watch her children when she was not at home. L.S. explained that Edwards watched her children "if [she] had to go to work on Saturday, or if [she] was out shopping or something, grocery store, or shopping." L.S. stated that, on one occasion, when she traveled out of state, Edwards "came to [her] townhouse and picked the girls up and kept them . . . overnight[.]" L.S. testified that Edwards was "like a dad" when the two were dating.

L.S. testified that after she and Edwards ended their relationship in 2002, she did not speak to him again until 2021 when the two reconnected. When L.S. later told B.L. about the reconnection, B.L. "got really upset." Sometime later, B.L. told L.S. for the first time that Edwards engaged in inappropriate conduct with her when L.S. and Edwards were previously dating. L.S. subsequently confronted Edwards about the allegations and informed him that B.L. would be filing a report with the police. Edwards denied the allegations and offered to give L.S. money. The following day, L.S. tried to contact Edwards again and discovered that his "number was changed."

B.L., who was 40 years old at the time of trial, testified that she first met Edwards when she "was about ten." At the time, B.L. was living with her mother and baby sister at their home in Oxon Hill Village. When B.L. was "about 11," her family moved to their home in Temple Hills. B.L. testified that after her family moved to Temple Hills, Edwards would "watch [her]" while L.S. was "going to work" or "run[ning] out or something like that." B.L. recalled that, on one occasion, while Edwards was "watching" her, she was sitting on the couch in the living room when Edwards approached her and "start[ed] to, like, play with [her], like, tickle." Edwards then "got on top of [B.L.]" and began "humping" her. B.L. testified that she remembered "feeling something hard" on her vagina, and she stated that she later realized "it was an erection." B.L. testified that the incident "lasted for a little bit, like a couple of minutes maybe." Afterwards, Edwards got up and told B.L. "don't tell anyone."

B.L. testified that "situations like that, the tickle game, would happen periodically, every now and then" as she got older. B.L. added that Edwards would begin by tickling her, "but he would lay on [her] and hump [her] as well[,]" during those incidents. B.L. stated that, although those incidents occurred primarily at her house in Temple Hills, she remembered it happening on at least one occasion at Edwards' home. B.L. testified that on none of those occasions was her mother "in the home when it happened." B.L. stated that the "final situation ended when [she] was about 16."

Regarding the incidents that occurred at Edwards' home, B.L. testified that Edwards had asked her to "come upstairs and to watch a movie or something with him in his room."

B.L. could not remember "where [her] mom was" at the time. B.L. testified that when she went upstairs, Edwards "start[ed] to tickle [her] again" and eventually "rolled over and got on top of [her]." After some time, Edwards got up, went into a nearby bathroom, and masturbated with the door open.

B.L. testified that, on a separate occasion, she was at Edwards' home while her mother "was out of town." On that occasion, Edwards and B.L. were alone in the basement when Edwards started tickling her. This time, according to B.L., Edwards removed her pants and underwear and "began to give [her] oral sex" by placing his mouth on her vagina. At some point, Edwards removed his pants, "put his penis to [B.L.'s] vagina," and "started humping [her.]" Edwards "eventually got up," and B.L. "got up and went upstairs." B.L. testified that, following that incident, there were no more incidents between her and Edwards. B.L. stated that, "other than these incidents," Edwards "was like a dad."

Edwards testified in his own defense, denying the allegations of abuse and refuting the claims that he watched B.L. when L.S. was not at home. In addition, Edwards called several witnesses to testify about, among other things, his relationship with L.S. and her children and his generally good character.

At the conclusion of the evidence, the trial court instructed the jury on the elements of the charged crime:

> The Defendant is charged with the crime of child sexual abuse. Child sexual abuse is sexual molestation or exploitation of a child under 18 years of age, caused by a person with permanent or temporary care, custody or responsibility for the supervision of a child.

> In order to convict the Defendant of child sexual abuse the State must prove: one, that the Defendant sexually abused [B.L.] by acts or attempted acts including cunnilingus, sexual exploitation and sexual molestation; two, that at the time of the abuse [B.L.] was under 18 years of age; and three, that at the time of the abuse, the Defendant was a person with permanent or temporary care, custody or responsibility for the supervision of [B.L.] Cunnilingus means that the Defendant applied his mouth to the sexual organ of [B.L.]
>
> Sexual abuse is not limited to any particular criminal act or acts and may include a wide range of behavior. Sexual abuse does not require that the Defendant commit the act for the purpose of sexual arousal or gratification. Sexual abuse does not require that the Defendant physically touch the victim or cause physical injuries.
>
> Sexual exploitation means that a person takes advantage of or unjustly or improperly uses the minor for his own benefit.
>
> In order to convict the Defendant you must all agree that the Defendant sexually abused [B.L.], but you do not have to all agree on which specific act or acts constituted the abuse.

Ultimately, the jury convicted Edwards of the sole charge of child sexual abuse. This timely appeal followed. Additional facts will be supplied as needed below.

DISCUSSION

I. The Circuit Court Did Not Abuse its Discretion in Refusing to Strike Juror 23 For Cause.

Edwards' first claim of error concerns an issue that arose during the trial court's *voir dire* of prospective jurors prior to the start of trial. As part of *voir dire*, the court asked each prospective juror to answer various questions, including the following:

> Question 13, have you or any member of your immediate family ever been a witness to a crime, a victim of a crime, or been charged or arrested, convicted for a crime?

> Question 14, have you, your spouse, or your family or your close friend ever been the victim of or accused of a sexual offense, whether or not it was ever reported to the police?
>
> * * *
>
> Question 18, do you have some such [sic] strong feelings about the charge of sexual abuse of a minor, that you could not sit through the case and be fair and impartial? I do not want to know if you have strong feelings about sexual abuse. Nobody likes that. So we do not want to know if you like it. We want to know if you can sit through the trial, listen to the evidence, and make a fair judgment of the case.

Later, the court conducted interviews at the bench with each prospective juror who answered the court's questions in the affirmative. During the trial court's interview with Prospective Juror #23 ("Juror 23"), the following colloquy ensued:

> THE COURT: Can you tell me your number out loud?
>
> JUROR 23: 23.
>
> THE COURT: 23 you answered 13 and 14. 13 was have you been a witness, or a family member, witness, victim, or charged.
>
> JUROR 23: To a crime?
>
> THE COURT: Or charged or victim?
>
> JUROR 23: Oh, no, a witness to a crime. I got subpoenaed to court. I did not have to testify, though.
>
> THE COURT: What did you witness? Briefly.
>
> JUROR 23: There was a young lady in the middle of the road. She was high on something. She had a gun. And I tried to help her because she was high.
>
> THE COURT: And you weren't called as a witness?

JUROR 23: Oh, I got subpoenaed to come to court, but I do not know what she did. I did not testify, but I did come to court.

THE COURT: Maybe she took a plea. Okay. Thank you for that. So 14 was about being a victim of sexual abuse.

JUROR 23: Myself and my daughter.

THE COURT: Okay. Were you a child at the time?

JUROR 23: No, I was not. She was.

THE COURT: You were an adult. Okay, she was. Was it somebody that she knew?

JUROR 23: No.

THE COURT: And was it reported?

JUROR 23: No.

THE COURT: And was that because of a choice she made?

JUROR 23: (No audible response.)

THE COURT: Okay. And what did you do to the person?

JUROR 23: Nothing.

THE COURT: Okay. Now I need to ask you a question 18 again, because as many times as I asked it, I still asked it wrong. And the question is, do you have strong feelings about sex abuse cases?

JUROR 23: I mean, I do. But I think I can make a partial [sic] decision.

THE COURT: Okay.

JUROR 23: Well.

THE COURT: All right. So is there anything about the fact that your daughter suffered this through a family friend, or your strong feelings about

> sexual abuse, that could affect your ability to be fair and impartial in this case?
>
> JUROR 23: Now, I do not think so, but I do not know how my body will react. I do not, I do not know if I will cry or whatever. I do not, I do not know, I have no idea.
>
> THE COURT: And if you cry, do you think that means that you wouldn't be fair?
>
> JUROR 23: No.

At the conclusion of the court's *voir dire* of the entire venire, defense counsel indicated that he had "some challenges." The following colloquy ensued:

> DEFENSE COUNSEL: Juror No. 23.
>
> THE COURT: What was wrong with 23?
>
> DEFENSE COUNSEL: Her claims to be a victim of child abuse. I do not believe based upon the manner in which she answered her questions that it was not reported. And that both her and her daughter were victims of child abuse. That is too close for this particular case and I want to strike for cause.
>
> THE COURT: All right. I am going to deny that. I thought she was very, very credible about not reporting it, and nothing being done. She even added some things about being able to listen to the evidence. Next.

Defense counsel eventually used one of his peremptory challenges on Juror 23, and she was excused. Later, after defense counsel had exhausted all of his peremptory challenges and renewed his objection to the court's refusal to strike Juror 23 for cause, the jury was accepted.

A. Standard of Review

"A decision as to removing a juror for bias is entrusted to the broad discretion of the trial judge and an appellate court will not interfere with such an exercise of discretion except in cases of clear abuse." *Adams v. State*, 165 Md. App. 352, 443 (2005). "The reviewing court will not substitute its judgment for that of the trial court unless the trial court's decision is arbitrary and abusive and results in prejudice to the defendant." *Martin-Dorm v. State*, 259 Md. App. 676, 692 (2023) (internal quotations omitted). The "proper inquiry is whether the trial judge had some rational basis for exercising his discretion as he did." *Morris v. State*, 153 Md. App. 480, 503-04 (2003).

B. Parties' Contentions

Edwards argues the trial court abused its discretion in refusing to strike Juror 23 for cause. He contends Juror 23's responses to the court's inquiry regarding her ability to be fair and impartial were too equivocal and "should not have been ignored." He further contends that, even had the prospective juror declared unequivocally that she could be fair and impartial, "it strains credulity that someone with Juror 23's history of sexual abuse could overcome the trauma and emotion associated with having been sexually abused and having a daughter who also had been sexually abused – as a minor – to render a fair and impartial verdict in a case where the defendant was on trial for molesting a young girl."

The State contends the court's refusal to strike Juror 23 was a sound exercise of the court's discretion.[2] The State argues that the court carefully considered Juror 23's responses and properly determined that she could be fair and impartial.

C. Analysis

"*Voir dire* is the primary mechanism through which the constitutional right to a fair and impartial jury, guaranteed by the Sixth Amendment to the United States Constitution and Article 21 of the Maryland Declaration of Rights, is protected." *Mitchell v. State*, 488 Md. 1, 16 (2024) (quoting *Curtin v. State*, 393 Md. 593, 600 (2006)). "In Maryland, the sole purpose of *voir dire* is to ensure a fair and impartial jury by determining the existence of specific cause for disqualification." *Collins v. State*, 463 Md. 372, 376 (2019) (quoting *Pearson v. State*, 437 Md. 350, 356 (2014) (cleaned up)). "There are two categories of specific cause for disqualification: (1) a statute disqualifies a prospective juror; or (2) a collateral matter is reasonably liable to have undue influence over a prospective juror." *Id.* (quoting *Pearson*, 437 Md. at 357). "The latter category is comprised of biases [that are] directly related to the crime, the witnesses, or the defendant." *Id.* at 377 (quoting *Pearson*, 437 Md. at 357).

[2] The State also argues Edwards could not have been prejudiced by the court's decision because he used one of his peremptory challenges to strike Juror 23. We disagree. To be sure, Edwards did utilize a peremptory challenge on the prospective juror, which caused her to be excused from the jury pool; however, the record shows that Edwards ultimately exhausted all of his allotted peremptory challenges. Where, as here, an aggrieved party exhausts all peremptory challenges in striking a prospective juror who had previously been challenged for cause, a lack of prejudice is not presumed, and reversible error may be established. *Moore v. State*, 153 Md. App. 480, 496-97 (2003).

"A party may challenge an individual qualified juror for cause." Md. Rule 4-312(e)(2). "A juror may be struck for cause only where he or she displays a predisposition against innocence or guilt because of some bias extrinsic to the evidence to be presented." *McCree v. State*, 33 Md. App. 82, 98 (1976). "In determining motions to disqualify for cause, the proper focus is on the prospective juror's state of mind, and whether there is some bias, prejudice, or preconception." *Boyer v. State*, 102 Md. App. 648, 659 (1995).

That said, "[p]rospective jurors are presumed to be unbiased, and the challenging party has the burden of proof to overcome that presumption." *Alford v. State*, 202 Md. App. 582, 601 (2001). Moreover, a trial court need not ensure that a prospective juror be free of all preconceived notions related to the defendant's guilt or innocence for the juror to survive a challenge for cause. *Morris*, 153 Md. App. at 500-01. Rather, "[i]t is sufficient if the juror can lay aside his impression or opinion and render a verdict based on the evidence presented in court." *Calhoun v. State*, 297 Md. 563, 580 (1983) (quoting *Irvin v. Dowd*, 366 U.S. 717, 722-23 (1961)). As the Supreme Court of Maryland has noted:

> A juror to be competent need not be devoid of all beliefs and convictions. All that may be required of him is that he shall be without bias or prejudice for or against the parties to the cause and possess an open mind to the end that he may hear and consider the evidence produced and render a fair and impartial verdict thereon.

Id. at 583 (citations and quotations omitted).

Against that legal backdrop, we hold the trial court did not abuse its discretion in refusing to strike Juror 23 for cause. When the court first questioned Juror 23 about her answer to the court's *voir dire* question regarding sexual abuse, she intimated that she and

her daughter, who was a child at the time, were victims of sexual abuse. Regarding the incident involving her daughter, Juror 23 stated the perpetrator was not "somebody that she knew" and that the incident had not been "reported." The court then asked Juror 23 if she had "strong feelings about sex abuse cases," and she responded: "I mean, I do. But I think I can make a partial [sic] decision."[3] When the court asked if there was anything about her daughter's incident or her strong feelings about sexual abuse that could affect her ability to be fair and impartial, Juror 23 stated, "I do not think so," but then added that she did "not know how [her] body will react" or if she "will cry or whatever." Then, when the court asked if Juror 23 thought her potential reaction to the subject matter meant that she "wouldn't be fair," she stated, "No." Later, when the court denied Edwards' motion to strike Juror 23 for cause, the court found Juror 23 "was very, very credible," and the court noted that "she even added some things about being able to listen to the evidence."

Given those circumstances, we cannot say that the court lacked a rational basis in refusing to strike Juror 23 for cause or that the court's decision was arbitrary or abusive. Juror 23 indicated she had experience with sexual abuse (both as a victim and as the parent of a victim) and had strong feelings about sex abuse cases. However, she also stated that despite those experiences and feelings, she believed she could make a fair decision. She also asserted that although she was unsure how she would react during trial, she did not

[3] The State contends that the transcriber's inclusion of "sic" following Juror 23's use of the word "partial" indicates that Juror 23 likely meant that she could make an impartial, *i.e.*, fair, decision. Given the context of the statement, we agree with the State's conclusion. We also note that Edwards does not dispute the State's conclusion in his reply brief.

believe her reaction would affect her ability to be fair. Given those responses, the court had a rational basis for concluding Juror 23 would be able to lay aside her opinions and render a fair verdict based on the evidence presented. We see no abuse of discretion.

To be sure, some of Juror 23's answers, when viewed in isolation under the cold light of the record, could be regarded as ambiguous. But, as we have held, an ambiguous answer, even as to the ultimate question of whether a prospective juror can be open minded, is not dispositive of the question of whether a juror should be struck for cause. *See Morris*, 153 Md. App. at 498-501 (holding that the trial court did not abuse its discretion in refusing to strike a prospective juror who stated he was "probably against" defendants in general but "probably could" keep an open mind until the end of trial). Rather, such a response must be assessed based on the totality of the circumstances, and those circumstances include certain aspects of human interaction, such as body language and tone, that are not typically discernible via the transcript. *Id.* at 502-03. Here, it is evident that the court carefully considered Juror 23's responses and made a reasonable conclusion based on those responses. As we have explained, the trial court "is infinitely more able than we" to attach meaning to a prospective juror's responses, and we should not second-guess those decisions based on what we "would probably have done under the circumstances." *Id.* at 502-04.

We likewise find no merit to Edwards' claim that, even if Juror 23 had provided "unequivocal" responses to the court's questions, she should have been struck based on her experiences with sexual abuse. The relevant inquiry is not simply whether a prospective

juror has a particular belief or status, but rather whether that belief or status would affect the prospective juror's ability to be fair and impartial. *See*, *e.g.*, *Dingle v. State*, 361 Md. 1, 16 (2000) (noting that a prospective juror's professional, vocational, or social status is "not dispositive of a venire person's qualification to serve"); *Wagner v. State*, 213 Md. App. 419, 450 (2013) ("[A]n affirmative answer to the question of whether a family member or close friend was the victim of a violent crime would not have provided cause for disqualification by itself.") (quotations omitted); *Costley v. State*, 175 Md. App. 90, 113 (2007) (noting that a prospective juror should be excused for cause if he "holds a particular belief . . . *that would affect his ability or disposition to consider the evidence fairly and impartially*") (citations and quotations omitted) (emphasis added); *Adams v. Owens-Illinois, Inc.*, 119 Md. App. 395, 402 (1998) ("[A] juror must be discharged for cause *only when that juror cannot be impartial*.") (emphasis added). In short, Juror 23's experiences with sexual abuse did not automatically disqualify her as a prospective juror. Accordingly, and for all the reasons stated herein, the court did not abuse its discretion in refusing to strike Juror 23 for cause.

II. Edwards' Sufficiency Claim was not Preserved, and Even if it was, there was Sufficient Evidence for the Jury to Convict Edwards.

A. Standard of Review

"The standard for appellate review of evidentiary sufficiency is whether, after viewing the evidence in the light most favorable to the prosecution, *any* rational trier of fact could have found the essential elements of the crime beyond a reasonable doubt."

Scriber v. State, 236 Md. App. 332, 344 (2018) (citations omitted). "When making this determination, the appellate court is not required to determine 'whether *it* believes that the evidence at trial established guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.'" *Roes v. State*, 236 Md. App. 569, 583 (2018) (quoting *State v. Manion*, 442 Md. 419, 431 (2015)). "This is because weighing the credibility of witnesses and resolving conflicts in the evidence are matters entrusted to the sound discretion of the trier of fact." *Scriber*, 236 Md. App. at 344 (citations omitted). "We defer to any possible reasonable inferences the [fact-finder] could have drawn from the admitted evidence and need not decide whether the [fact-finder] could have drawn other inferences from the evidence, refused to draw inferences, or whether we would have drawn different inferences from the evidence." *Fuentes v. State*, 454 Md. 296, 308 (2017). "[T]he limited question before an appellate court is not whether the evidence *should have or probably would have* persuaded the majority of fact finders but only whether it *possibly could have* persuaded *any* rational fact finder." *Scriber*, 236 Md. App. at 344 (citations omitted).

B. Parties' Contentions

Edwards contends that the evidence adduced at trial was insufficient to sustain his conviction. He argues the State failed to prove he was in a position of temporary care or responsibility for B.L.'s supervision at the time of the alleged abuse. In support, Edwards highlights various alleged inconsistencies in B.L.'s and L.S.'s testimonies and the lack of evidence regarding when the abuse occurred and the extent of Edwards' responsibility for the supervision of B.L. at the time of the abuse. Edwards also argues the evidence of abuse

"simply was too inconsistent and too incredible to convince a rational jury of [his] guilt beyond a reasonable doubt." In support, Edwards highlights certain inconsistencies and contradictions in the State's evidence and the lack of evidence to corroborate B.L.'s testimony.

The State contends Edwards' sufficiency claim was not properly preserved because when Edwards moved for judgment of acquittal at the close of the State's case, he did not state with particularity his argument in support of that motion. The State further contends that, even if preserved, Edwards' claim is without merit as the evidence was sufficient to sustain his conviction.

C. Analysis

We agree with the State that Edwards' sufficiency claim was not properly preserved. Maryland Rule 4-324 states that when a defendant moves for judgment of acquittal at the close of the evidence, he "shall state with particularity all reasons why the motion should be granted." Md. Rule 4-324(a). Under that rule, "a defendant is . . . required to argue precisely the ways in which the evidence should be found wanting and the particular elements of the crime as to which the evidence is deficient." *Montgomery v. State*, 206 Md. App. 357, 385 (2012) (quoting *Fraidin v. State*, 85 Md. App. 231, 244-45 (1991)). "A motion which merely asserts that the evidence is insufficient to support a conviction, without specifying the deficiency, does not comply with Maryland Rule 4-324(a), and thus does not preserve the issue of sufficiency for appellate review." *Id.* at 385-86 (quoting *Brooks v. State*, 68 Md. App. 604, 611 (1986) (cleaned up)).

Here, when Edwards moved for judgment of acquittal at the close of the State's case, he argued that "at this point, the State has failed to make a prima facie case as to each and every element of the charge[.]" When Edwards later renewed his motion at the close of the defense's case, he again argued the State "failed to produce sufficient evidence upon which a reasonable jury could find guilt beyond a reasonable doubt as to each and every element of the offense." Edwards' arguments, which were the only arguments Edwards put forth in support of his motion, lacked the particularity required by Rule 4-324(a). Therefore, Edwards' sufficiency claim was not preserved for our review. *See Byrd v. State*, 140 Md. App. 488, 494-95 (2001) (holding that the defendant had failed to preserve his sufficiency argument where "[d]efense counsel merely asserted that the evidence was insufficient to send the case to the jury").

Assuming, for argument's sake, that Edwards' claim was preserved, we hold the evidence was sufficient to support his conviction of child sexual abuse. To prove child sexual abuse, the State needed to show Edwards caused "sexual abuse" to B.L. when she was under the age of 18 years. Md. Code, Art. 27 § 35C (2001).[4] "'Sexual abuse' means any act that involves sexual molestation or exploitation of a child" and "includes, but is not limited to: 1. Incest, rape, or sexual offense in any degree; 2. Sodomy; and 3. Unnatural or perverted sexual practices." Md. Code, Art. 27 § 35C(a)(6).

[4] At the time of the alleged acts, the crime of "sexual abuse of a child" was codified in § 35C of Article 27 of the Maryland Code. Md. Code, Art. 27 § 35C (2001); *see also* 2002 Maryland Laws Ch. 26 (enacted October 1, 2002). The crime was later renamed "sexual abuse of a minor" and is now codified in § 3-602 of the Criminal Law Article of the Maryland Code.

In addition, the State needed to show that at the time of the abuse, Edwards was "[a] parent or other person who has permanent or temporary care or custody or responsibility for the supervision of [the] child[.]" Md. Code, Art. 27 § 35C(b). For a person to have responsibility for the supervision of a child, that person need not stand "in loco parentis" to that child. *Pope v. State*, 284 Md. 309, 322-23 (1979). "'Responsibility' in its common and generally accepted meaning denotes 'accountability,' and 'supervision' emphasizes broad authority to oversee with powers of direction and decision." *Id.* at 323. "The determination of 'whether a person has responsibility for the supervision of a [child] is a question of fact for the jury to determine.'" *Westley v. State*, 251 Md. App. 365, 418 (2021) (quoting *Harrison v. State*, 198 Md. App. 236, 243 (2011)).

Here, L.S. testified she and Edwards began dating in August 1995, when B.L. was approximately 11 years old, and aside from a brief hiatus from 1998 to 1999, continued dating until 2002. L.S. testified that, throughout the relationship, Edwards watched her children "if [she] had to go to work on Saturday, or if [she] was out shopping or something, grocery store, or shopping." L.S. testified that on one occasion she traveled out of state, and Edwards "came to [her] townhouse and picked the girls up and kept them . . . overnight[.]"

B.L. testified that, while her mother and Edwards were dating, Edwards would "watch [her]" while her mother was "going to work" or "run[ning] out or something like that." B.L. stated that, on one of those occasions, Edwards got on top of her and "humped" her with his erect penis. B.L. testified that "situations like that" would happen

"periodically" as she got older and that the last incident occurred when she was about 16 years old. B.L. testified that on a separate occasion while her mother and Edwards were dating, she was at Edwards' home when her mother traveled out of state. B.L. testified that on that occasion, Edwards removed her pants and underwear and "began to give [her] oral sex" by placing "his mouth" on her "vagina." According to B.L., Edwards then removed his pants, "put his penis to [B.L.'s] vagina," and "started humping [her.]"

From that evidence, a reasonable inference could be drawn that Edwards had sexually abused B.L. when she was under the age of 18 years. The incidents described by B.L., all of which involved Edwards "humping" B.L. with his erect penis and one of which included Edwards performing oral sex on B.L., met the definition of "sexual abuse." Md. Code, Art. 27 § 35C. In addition, all of the incidents occurred prior to B.L. turning 18 years of age.

A reasonable inference could also be drawn that, at the time of the sexual abuse, Edwards had "temporary care or custody or responsibility for the supervision of" B.L. Both L.S. and B.L. testified that B.L. was routinely left in Edwards' care when L.S. was not at home, and B.L. testified that all of the incidents of abuse occurred either when Edwards was "watching" her or when her mother was out of state.

As such, the evidence was sufficient to sustain Edwards' conviction. The existence of other evidence in support of Edwards' testimony, or in opposition to B.L.'s testimony, does not mean there was insufficient evidence for the jury to convict Edwards. *See Westley*, 251 Md. App. at 419 ("[I]t is the jury's task to resolve any conflicts in the evidence and

assess the credibility of witnesses. . . . In so doing, the jury can accept all, some, or none of the testimony of a particular witness.") (citations and quotations omitted). For the foregoing reasons, we affirm the decision of the lower court.

JUDGMENTS OF THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY AFFIRMED; COSTS TO BE PAID BY APPELLANT.