

Circuit Court for Anne Arundel County  
Case No.: C-02-FM-24-001432

UNREPORTED

IN THE APPELLATE COURT

OF MARYLAND\*

No. 572

September Term, 2025

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DE SHAWN ANTHONY PATTEN

v.

RAKSHA DHUKOO

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Reed,  
Shaw,  
Harrell, Glenn T., Jr.  
(Senior Judge, Specially Assigned),

JJ.

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PER CURIAM

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Filed: December 4, 2025

\*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.

On April 22, 2025, the Circuit Court for Anne Arundel County granted Raksha Dhukoo, appellee, an absolute divorce from De Shawn Patten, appellant. The judgment, among other things, also awarded Ms. Dhukoo sole legal and primary physical custody of the parties' minor child; awarded Mr. Patten visitation with the child "at such times and under such circumstances as are agreed upon by the parties"; and ordered Mr. Patten to pay \$915 monthly in child support and an additional \$85 monthly for child support arrearages. Mr. Patten noted an appeal. For the reasons to be discussed, we shall affirm the judgments.

Both parties were self-represented in the circuit court, and Mr. Patten continues to represent himself on appeal.<sup>1</sup> Ms. Dhukoo instituted the divorce proceedings by filing a complaint, which Mr. Patten answered. Mr. Patten subsequently filed a counter-complaint. Mr. Patten failed to appear for a pre-trial conference on December 2, 2024, and a show cause order was then issued which, among other things, directed Mr. Patten to show cause "why any relief requested in the opposing party's" complaint should not be granted. He was also ordered to appear for a show cause hearing on April 22, 2025 and advised that "[f]ailure to appear and show cause as directed may result in the conversion of the show cause hearing into a merits hearing[,] [a]t which time, testimony may be taken in support of the opposing party's" complaint, "which may resolve the case in its entirety." The court, on December 2nd, also issued an order scheduling the merits trial for April 22, 2025.

Mr. Patten failed to respond to the show cause order and he did not appear for the April 22<sup>nd</sup> hearing. The circuit court took the testimony of Ms. Dhukoo, and it also

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<sup>1</sup> Ms. Dhukoo did not file a brief in this Court.

accepted into evidence a “brief custody report” prepared by the circuit court’s custody evaluation unit. The report was based on two interviews with Ms. Dhukoo (at least one including a home visit where the minor child was also observed) and two telephone interviews with Mr. Patten. The evaluator offered no recommendations, but noted her “concern[] for the safety of [the child] if left in the unsupervised care of Mr. Patten, given his admission of recent PCP use, post substance abuse treatment and a hospitalization.”<sup>2</sup>

Ms. Dhukoo testified that she is a “child development specialist” and “lead teacher” working as a civilian for the U.S. Army at a local military base. She sought sole legal and physical custody of the minor child (born in 2020), raising concerns about Mr. Patten’s substance abuse. She did arrange for short visits between father and child, which she herself supervised. Ms. Dhukoo informed the court that Mr. Patten works as a landscaper at Bowie State University, earning about \$60,000 per year. She testified that she earns “[a]bout the same.”

On appeal, Mr. Patten makes two requests: one related to visitation and the other to child support. With regard to visitation, he “request[s] a modification of the current visitation order[.]” He does not allege that the circuit court erred in issuing its order—in fact, he acknowledges that the court had “concerns” based on his “past struggles with substance abuse.” But he claims that “since the order was put in place,” he has “taken

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<sup>2</sup> According to the report, Mr. Patten was “hospitalized in June 2024 after jumping out of a car while believed to be under the influence of alcohol and PCP.” Ms. Dhukoo testified that Mr. Patten was hospitalized after he “drove the car in the middle of the embankment of 495 and hit the guardrail[,]” and he called her the next day and “he said he was too high to remember what had happened.”

significant and consistent steps toward rebuilding [his] life and proving [his] commitment to being a safe, responsible, and loving parent.” He attached to his brief results of purported “drug screens” showing negative results for various substances. These test results, however, were not part of the record before the circuit court and, consequently, we shall not consider them. If Mr. Patten desires a modification of the visitation order, he must file a motion for modification with the circuit court.

As for child support, Mr. Patten requests “a possible modification” because “[a]t this time, [he is] struggling to keep up with [his] financial responsibilities.” He claims that “rent, utilities, transportation, and other necessary bills, have increased” making it “difficult to meet” all of his obligations, including child support. He attached a paystub dated July 30, 2025 and bank statements from May, June, and July 2025 and he asks that this Court “review [his] financial situation and consider adjusting [his] support amount to reflect [his] current ability to pay.” We decline to do so. The child support obligation was based on the child support guidelines and the evidence then before the circuit court. Any change in Mr. Patten’s financial situation and request for modification of his child support obligation should be raised in the circuit court.

**JUDGMENTS OF THE CIRCUIT COURT  
FOR ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY  
AFFIRMED. COSTS TO BE PAID BY  
APPELLANT.**