

Circuit Court for Worcester County
Case No. C-23-CR-21-000360

UNREPORTED
IN THE APPELLATE COURT
OF MARYLAND

No. 782

September Term, 2024

BRUCE WILLIAM TRAVERS

v.

STATE OF MARYLAND

Berger,
Tang,
Eyler, James R.
(Senior Judge, Specially Assigned),

JJ.

PER CURIAM

Filed: May 28, 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.

Bruce William Travers, appellant, appeals from the denial, by the Circuit Court for Worcester County, of a motion to correct illegal sentence. For the reasons that follow, we shall affirm the judgment of the circuit court.

In October 2021, Mr. Travers was charged by indictment in circuit court case number C-23-CR-21-000354 (hereinafter “case number 21-354”) with sexual abuse of minor A. and two related offenses. Mr. Travers was also charged by indictment in circuit court case number C-23-CR-21-000360 (hereinafter “case number 21-360”) with sexual abuse of minor B., sexual abuse of minor C., and 86 related offenses. In February 2022, the State extended to Mr. Travers in case number 21-360 a written plea offer. The State proposed that if Mr. Travers pleaded guilty to Count 1 – sexual abuse of B., Count 3 – inducement of B. to engage as a subject in the production of obscene matter, Count 78 – sexual abuse of C., and Count 79 – filming of C. engaging in sexual conduct, the State would “enter the remaining counts nolle prosequi.” The State also agreed to recommend the following sentences:

- For Count 1, a term of imprisonment of 25 years, all but eighteen years suspended.
- For Count 3, a term of imprisonment of ten years, all but two years suspended, to be served consecutively to the sentence for Count 1.
- For Count 78, a term of imprisonment of 25 years, all but eighteen years suspended, to be served consecutively to the sentence for Count 3.
- For Count 79, a term of imprisonment of ten years, all but two years suspended, to be served consecutively to the sentence for Count 78.

In July 2022, Mr. Travers appeared before the court and submitted *Alford* pleas in both cases. The transcript of the plea hearing is not in the record, but the court’s hearing sheets reflect that in case number 21-354, Mr. Travers submitted pleas to Count 1 – sexual abuse of A., and Count 2 – the promotion or distribution of child pornography with respect

to A. In case number 21-360, Mr. Travers submitted pleas to Counts 1, 3, 78, and 79. The court subsequently convicted Mr. Travers of the offenses.

In October 2022, Mr. Travers appeared before the court for sentencing in both cases. The transcript of the sentencing hearing is not in the record, but the court’s hearing sheets and commitment records reflect that in case number 21-354, the court imposed a term of imprisonment of 25 years, all but ten years suspended, for the sexual abuse of A., to commence on August 28, 2021. For the promotion or distribution of child pornography with respect to A., the court imposed a term of imprisonment of ten years, all but three years suspended, to be served consecutively to the sentence for sexual abuse of A. In case number 21-360, the court imposed a term of imprisonment of 25 years, all but fifteen years suspended, for the sexual abuse of B., to be served “consecutive[ly] to the sentence imposed in” case number 21-354. For the inducement of B. to engage as a subject in the production of obscene matter, the court imposed a term of imprisonment of ten years, all but three years suspended, to be served consecutively to the sentence for sexual abuse of B. For the sexual abuse of C., the court imposed a term of imprisonment of 25 years, all but fifteen years suspended, to be served consecutively to the sentence for inducement of B. to engage as a subject in the production of obscene matter. Finally, for the filming of C. engaging in sexual conduct, the court imposed a term of imprisonment of ten years, all but three years suspended, to be served consecutively to the sentence for sexual abuse of C. The commitment record in case number 21-360 states that the “total time to be served is 36 [y]ears to run . . . consecutive[ly] to the sentence imposed in” case number 21-354.

In May 2024, Mr. Travers filed in case number 21-360 the motion to correct illegal sentence, in which he contended that at sentencing, the court stated:

So count 1 in case 354 will begin as of 8/29/21. Count 2, in case 354, will commence upon the completion of the sentence in count 1. And then we go to the next case ending in 360, and just so everyone is clear, Count 1 will begin upon the completion of the sentence in case 354. Count 3 in case 360 will commence upon the completion of the sentence in count 1 and count 79 [sic] will commence upon the completion of the sentence in count 3, and count 79 will commence upon the completion of 78. *All counts are consecutive as I've just outlaid.*

(Emphasis added.) Mr. Travers contended that the “sentence” in case number 21-360 is “ambiguous,” because the sentencing judge “did not say exactly what charges he was referring to,” “should have added all of the sentences together and pronounced on record what the total sentence was and when it would begin,” and erred in repeatedly “stopping the sentence to begin a new portion of the sentence.” Mr. Travers further contended that the convictions in case number 21-360 “should merge for sentencing purposes,” because “they arise from a single incident[,] and the elements of these crimes are reliant upon one another for a conviction.” The court denied the motion.

Mr. Travers contends that for the same reasons presented in the motion, the court erred in denying the motion. We disagree. It is clear from the totality of the record that the sentencing court intended to impose a total term of imprisonment of 35 years, all but thirteen years suspended, in case number 21-354, and a total term of imprisonment of seventy years, all but 36 years suspended, in case number 21-360. It is also clear from the excerpt of sentencing cited by Mr. Travers, which we assume to be correct, and the commitment record subsequently issued by the sentencing court that it intended for the

total term of imprisonment in case number 21-360 to be served consecutively to the total term of imprisonment imposed in case number 21-354. Mr. Travers does not cite any authority that required the sentencing judge to “say exactly what charges he was referring to” instead of using their corresponding count number, and we note that the commitment record specifies the offense to which each sentence corresponds. Mr. Travers also does not cite any authority that required the sentencing judge to “add[] all of the sentences together and pronounce[] on record what the total sentence was,” and we note that the court specified that each term of imprisonment is to begin upon completion of the previous term of imprisonment. Mr. Travers further does not explain what he means by “stopping the sentence to begin a new portion of the sentence,” nor does he cite any authority that finds error in the manner in which the sentencing court sentenced him. Finally, Mr. Travers does not specify any evidence that any of the offenses in case number 21-360 arose “from a single incident,” and does not cite any authority that required the sentencing court to merge the offenses of inducement of a minor to engage as a subject in the production of obscene matter or the filming of a minor engaging in sexual conduct into the offense of sexual abuse of a minor on the ground that the offenses “are reliant upon one another for a conviction.”¹ Hence, the court did not err in denying the motion to correct illegal sentence.

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

¹We further note that although the transcript of the plea hearing is not in the record, it appears from the terms of the State’s written plea offer that Mr. Travers agreed to submit pleas to the offenses in exchange for the entering of nolle prosequi as to the remaining 84 counts and the recommendation of a specific term of imprisonment as to each offense.