

UNREPORTED
IN THE APPELLATE COURT
OF MARYLAND

No. 1368

September Term, 2025

JOY WILLIAM

v.

UROOJ NAZ

Nazarian,
Leahy,
Sharer, J. Frederick
(Senior Judge, Specially Assigned),

JJ.

PER CURIAM

Filed: June 23, 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 August 2025, the Circuit Court for Baltimore County entered a final protective order against Joy William, appellant, and in favor of Urooj Naz, appellee. He now appeals, raising a single issue: whether the court erred in finding that he committed an act of abuse sufficient to warrant the issuance of a protective order. For the reasons that follow, we shall affirm.

At the protective order hearing, at which appellant did not appear, appellee testified that she was lying in bed when appellant got on top of her and then put both his hands on her chest so that she was unable to breathe. When appellee told him that she couldn't breathe and that he was hurting her, he “just stood up and started laughing at me and said that I'm overreacting[.]” Appellee further testified that he had also committed “bad domestic violence” in the past including scratching her on the breast approximately two months earlier. Based on that testimony, the court entered a final protective order finding that appellant had committed an act of abuse by both assaulting appellee and placing her in fear of imminent serious bodily harm.

In challenging the sufficiency of the evidence to sustain the protective order, appellant first challenges the credibility of appellee's testimony, noting that there “was no documentation of physical injury” and that appellee “did not present photographs” supporting her testimony that appellant had scratched her breast. However, in reviewing the issuance of a protective order, we accept the circuit court's findings of facts unless they are clearly erroneous. *See* Maryland Rule 8-131(c); *Barton v. Hirshberg*, 137 Md. App. 1, 21 (2001). In doing so, we defer to the court's determinations of credibility, as it has “the opportunity to gauge and observe the witnesses' behavior and testimony during the

[hearing].” *Barton*, 137 Md. App. at 21 (quoting *Ricker v. Ricker*, 114 Md. App. 583, 592 (1997)). Here, the court’s findings were supported by appellee’s testimony, which the court determined to be credible. And we cannot say that credibility determination was clearly erroneous based on our review of the record. Moreover, the fact that appellee did not present documents or photographs to support her testimony is irrelevant as the circuit court was “entitled to accept” her testimony regardless of whether it “was or was not contradicted or corroborated by any other evidence.” *Omayaka v. Omayaka*, 417 Md. 643, 659 (2011).

Appellant alternatively contends that appellee’s testimony was insufficient to prove that he placed her in imminent fear of serious bodily harm, and thus that he committed an act of abuse. Specifically, he asserts that appellee “did not testify that she was in fear of the Appellant in relation to future harm”; there was no testimony that appellant had threatened her with future harm; and the act of scratching appellee’s breast or putting his hands on her chest failed “to satisfy the standard of ‘serious bodily injury.’” However, the court also found that appellee was entitled to a protective order on the grounds that appellant had assaulted appellee. And the act of “assault in any degree” is also sufficient to warrant the issuance of a final protective order, even if it did not place the “person eligible for relief in fear of imminent serious bodily harm[.]” Fam. Law Art. § 4-501(b)(1). Appellant does not specifically address the court’s alternative finding that he committed an assault, regardless of whether it caused serious bodily injury. But even if he had raised this issue, we are persuaded that there was sufficient evidence to sustain that finding based on appellee’s testimony that appellant had on separate occasions placed his hands on her

chest with sufficient force that she couldn't breathe and scratched her right breast.

Consequently, the court did not err in entering the final protective order.

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