

Circuit Court for Harford County
Case No.: C-12-CR-23-000740

UNREPORTED*

IN THE APPELLATE COURT

OF MARYLAND

No. 1846

September Term, 2024

CHARLES ALFRED WEBSTER, JR.

v.

STATE OF MARYLAND

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.

A jury in the Circuit Court for Harford County convicted appellant Charles Alfred Webster, Jr., of attempted first-degree murder and related offenses. The court later sentenced him to lifetime incarceration, all but 30 years suspended; a consecutive 20 years' incarceration, all but 5 years suspended; and a consecutive 15 years' incarceration, all but 5 years suspended, followed by 5 years' supervised probation. On appeal, Webster contends the trial court erred by refusing to ask three voir dire questions and by propounding two jury instructions. These issues, however, are not preserved for our review.

To preserve an objection to the trial court's voir dire, a party must make "known to the court the action that the party desires the court to take or the objection to the action of the court." Md. Rule 4-323(c). "[M]erely submitting proposed voir dire questions, which are later rejected or modified by the trial court, is [not] sufficient to satisfy the preservation requirement[.]" *Lopez-Villa v. State*, 478 Md. 1, 11–12 (2022) (italics omitted).

Ahead of trial here the parties submitted proposed voir dire to the court. Webster asked the court to ask the prospective jurors whether they or any member of their family had (1) "ever been involved in a legal dispute in which [they] contacted the Office of the State's Attorney for Harford County" or (2) "ever been involved in a criminal case as a victim, witness, or defendant."¹ He also asked the court to ask whether "any member of the panel [would] give a witness/victim testimony more or less scrutiny than that of any other witness/victim who has Criminal felony convictions." At a status conference the day before trial, the court explained that it would ask the first two questions only as to the prospective

¹ The State's proposed voir dire contained essentially identical questions.

jurors—not their family members—and it declined to ask the third question. At trial, after the court completed voir dire, it asked the parties whether they had any objections. Both signaled that they did not. By failing to object to the court’s voir dire, Webster failed to preserve the issue for our review. *See id.*

Similar to voir dire, “[n]o party may assign as error the giving or the failure to give an instruction unless the party objects on the record promptly after the court instructs the jury, stating . . . the objection.” Md. Rule 4-325(f). At the close of evidence here, the trial court propounded two jury instructions on consciousness of guilt—one on flight and one on alteration of appearance. After it finished instructing the jury, the court asked the parties whether they had any objections. Both signaled that they did not. Consequently, Webster also failed to preserve the issue for our review. *See id.*

But still, Webster asks us to overlook his failure to preserve these issues because he chose to represent himself at trial and did not know that he needed to object after the court’s voir dire and jury instructions. In Maryland, however, “the procedural, evidentiary, and appellate rules apply alike to parties and their attorneys. No different standards apply when parties appear *pro se.*” *Tretick v. Layman*, 95 Md. App. 62, 86 (1993). Because Webster failed to object to the trial court’s voir dire and jury instructions, the issues are not preserved for our review, and we shall affirm.

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