Circuit Court for Baltimore City
Case No. 123202011

UNREPORTED

IN THE APPELLATE COURT

OF MARYLAND

No. 2089

September Term, 2024

IKEM RAVENELL

v.

STATE OF MARYLAND

Graeff,
Berger,
Wright, Alexander, Jr.
(Senior Judge, Specially Assigned),

JJ.

PER CURIAM

Filed: April 14, 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.

Convicted by a jury in the Circuit Court for Baltimore City of armed carjacking and related offenses, Ikem Ravenell, appellant, presents for our review a single issue: whether the court "properly excluded a key defense witness." For the reasons that follow, we shall affirm the judgments of the circuit court.

At trial, the State called Kevin Crummedy, who testified that on June 19, 2023, Ronald Crowell was driving Mr. Crummedy in Mr. Crowell's black 2013 Acura to "play lottery." In the "4800 block of Stafford," Mr. Crummedy and Mr. Crowell were approached by a man who "was asking . . . about his girlfriend." When Mr. Crowell "backed up," the man "jumped in the back seat of the car, went into a bag, pulled out a handgun," and stated: "[Y]ou know what time it is." The man put the gun to Mr. Crummedy's head and asked for his phone and money. After Mr. Crummedy complied, the man asked Mr. Crowell for his phone. When Mr. Crowell replied that he did not have a phone, the man ordered Mr. Crowell "to pull off." While "making a left, Mr. Crowell jumped out of the car." The man subsequently "got in [the] front of the car," "got himself adjusted to the car," and told Mr. Crummedy "to get the hell out." Mr. Crummedy exited the car, and the man "took of[f]." Mr. Crummedy identified Mr. Ravenell in court as the man who robbed Mr. Crummedy, "pointed a gun at [his] head," and "took [Mr.] Crowell's car."

Mr. Ravenell contends that the court "erred in excluding [his] mother from testifying." Two days before trial, Mr. Ravenell filed with the court his proposed voir dire, in which he asked the court to ask the venire, among other questions: "Are there any members of this panel who may know the possible Defense witness[]: Tasha Transou?" At

trial, defense counsel, after the jury was sworn, made "a motion to sequester," and the court granted the motion. Following the close of the State's case and the court's denial of defense counsel's motion for judgment of acquittal, the following colloquy occurred:

> [DEFENSE COUNSEL]: So I want to call that witness, which is his mother.
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> The State said he is going to object to that. The State's aware of her – the detective spoke to her at the scene. So Mr. State's going to say, I think, 30-day rule, and I understand the 30-day rule. But it was submitted four or five days – whenever we submitted the answer – whenever we submitted the voir dire. The State's aware of her, because his detective spoke to her, so I think it's relevant that she could testify.
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> [PROSECUTOR]: Well, one, we're not – respectfully – I did not know – I don't even have her date of birth to look up her record. But assuming arguendo that His Honor would permit her to testify, she violated the rule against sequestration. She was here in the morning listening to testimony. And it – and I – I believe she was in the back, and I confirmed it with the deputy sheriff, that she was in the courtroom while testimony. And Your Honor know better than anybody –
>
> THE COURT: She was?
>
> [DEFENSE COUNSEL]: She was.
>
> [PROSECUTOR]: Yes.
>
> [DEFENSE COUNSEL]: I told her – yeah, when I saw her, I told her to leave, but she was in here.
>
> [PROSECUTOR]: And I heard her speaking to family members outside (inaudible . . .)[.] So that's what – here's the issue.
>
> THE COURT: All right. So the Court's going to – the Court's going to sustain the State's objection to this witness's testimony for both the reasons, lack of appropriate notice and also violation of the sequestration order.

Mr. Ravenell contends that, for numerous reasons, the "court erred in excluding [Ms. Transou] from testifying because neither the discovery violation nor the violation of the sequestration order provided sufficient basis to do so." The State counters that "Mr. Ravenell did not preserve his claim . . . because he did not make a proffer of the witness's testimony." Alternatively, the State contends that the "witness's undisputed violation of the sequestration order and discussion with Mr. Ravenell's family members," and "Mr. Ravenell's undisputed discovery violation[,] support[] the . . . court's exercise of discretion as to the sanction."

We agree with the State that Mr. Ravenell's contention is not preserved for our review. The Supreme Court of Maryland has long held that "[o]rdinarily, a formal proffer of the contents and relevancy of the excluded evidence must be made in order to preserve for review the propriety of the trial court's decision to exclude the subject evidence." *Merzbacher v. State*, 346 Md. 391, 416 (1997) (citations omitted). Here, defense counsel did not proffer to the court the contents and relevancy of Ms. Transou's expected testimony.[1] Hence, we shall not reach the propriety of the court's decision to exclude the testimony.

JUDGMENTS OF THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR BALTIMORE CITY AFFIRMED. COSTS TO BE PAID BY APPELLANT.

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[1]In his brief, Mr. Ravenell contends that Ms. Transou's "testimony would have been of a limited nature, *i.e.*, that [Mr. Ravenell] called her while driving the vehicle in a panic."