

Circuit Court for Cecil County  
Case No. C-07-CR-24-000410

UNREPORTED  
IN THE APPELLATE COURT  
OF MARYLAND

No. 2337

September Term, 2024

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JEFFREY ALLEN LANDER

v.

STATE OF MARYLAND

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Friedman,  
Kehoe, Stephen H.,  
Kenney, James A., III  
(Senior Judge, Specially Assigned),

JJ.

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PER CURIAM

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Filed: May 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 Cecil County of involuntary manslaughter and reckless endangerment, Jeffrey Allen Lander, appellant, presents for our review a single issue: whether the court erred in admitting “prior bad acts testimony/evidence.” For the reasons that follow, we shall affirm the judgments of the circuit court.

Mr. Lander was initially charged with second degree murder, manslaughter, assault, and related offenses. At trial, the State presented evidence that on January 24, 2024, Mr. Lander called 911 and reported that his girlfriend Judy Gee had been “shot on accident.” Police officers and paramedics responded to Mr. Lander and Ms. Gee’s residence at 743 Bell Manor Road, where they discovered Ms. Gee “slumped to the left on [a] couch, [with] the end of an arrow protruding from [her] right shoulder.” Ms. Gee was taken to a hospital, where she subsequently died of her wound. While “processing” the residence, a crime scene technician discovered and seized an “Excalibur Exocet 200 crossbow.” During an interview with police, Mr. Lander stated he and Ms. Gee “were arguing a little bit,” and Mr. Lander told Ms. Gee that he “was going hunting.” Mr. Lander “pulled [his] bow down off the wall and started out the door,” when “the damn thing went off.”

Corporal Donald Lidy of the Cecil County Sheriff’s Office subsequently took the crossbow to a store known as “Autumn Sky Outfitters” to determine its “operability” and “functionality.” The owner of the store, Donovan Cullings, subsequently inspected the crossbow “to make sure everything was operational on it [and that] there was nothing faulty.” At trial, Mr. Cullings, whom the court recognized “as an expert in the use and operation of archery and/or crossbow,” testified that when he examined the crossbow, he

noticed that “the rope cocker was wrapped through the trigger guard.” Police also discovered that Mr. Lander “had no current hunting license for 2023 or after.”

Mr. Lander contends that the court “erred in admitting irrelevant or otherwise impermissible and/or overly prejudicial prior bad acts testimony/evidence.” Prior to trial, Mr. Lander moved in limine to preclude the State “from mentioning prior bad acts of Mr. Lander.” Mr. Lander stated: “[T]wo of the State’s witnesses, Mackenzi[e] Cooper and Jordan Bilodeau, make references in interviews and on video speculating about problems between Mr. Lander and [Ms.] Gee. The State has also disclosed text messages allegedly sent by Mr. Lander to . . . Jordan Bilodeau.”

At a hearing on the motion, defense counsel explained that Ms. Cooper is Ms. Gee’s daughter, and Mr. Bilodeau is Ms. Cooper’s husband. Defense counsel stated that “the two of them provided . . . to police . . . a text message exchange that occurred on June 30th of 2023.” Defense counsel asked the court “to exclude any testimony regarding . . . the generalizations by either of those witnesses and . . . also those specific text message exchanges.” The prosecutor responded that “the conversation between Jordan and [Mr. Lander] involves [Mr. Lander] making statements or threats of harm to Judy . . . , and telling Jordan that he had better, essentially, come get her or else.” After reviewing the exchange, the court denied the motion, stating: “I don’t find that this is offered as evidence of a prior bad act. I certainly take into consideration the nature of the charges, the arguments that have been offered by the State; and the [c]ourt does believe that it’s relevant and does believe that it is admissible.”

At trial, the State called Mr. Bilodeau, and the following colloquy occurred:

[PROSECUTOR:] In the past, had you ever communicated with Jeff Lander in any other means, not in person?

[MR. BILODEAU:] Yes.

[PROSECUTOR:] How might you have communicated with him in the past?

[MR. BILODEAU:] Facebook.

[PROSECUTOR:] And when you say Facebook, can you just describe a little bit about how that might have happened or how you would have communicated with him?

[MR. BILODEAU:] It was over Facebook Messenger and I was talking to Judy and something happened to her phone, so she had to start using Jeff's phone.

[PROSECUTOR:] How often would you communicate with Jeff over that Messenger website?

[MR. BILODEAU:] Not often.

[PROSECUTOR:] Your Honor, may I approach the witness with what's marked as State's 17 and 18 for identification –

THE COURT: Yes, sir.

[PROSECUTOR:] – previously shown to counsel?

THE COURT: Thank you.

[PROSECUTOR:] Mr. Bilodeau, I'm going to hand you two documents. Right now, I'm just going to ask you to tell me whether or not you recognize them or not.

[MR. BILODEAU:] Yes.

[PROSECUTOR:] Why [sic] do you recognize these documents to be?

[MR. BILODEAU:] Texts.

[PROSECUTOR:] Texts between whom?

[MR. BILODEAU:] Me and Jeff.

[PROSECUTOR:] And do you recall how exactly these texts were exchanged?

[MR. BILODEAU:] No.

[PROSECUTOR:] And are you able to tell based on looking at those documents when that conversation might have taken place?

[MR. BILODEAU:] I'd say August or September.

[PROSECUTOR:] If I were to hand you the document back, take a look at it, would that help you?

[MR. BILODEAU:] Yes.

[PROSECUTOR:] You don't have to read it, just if that helps refresh your memory. So when did that conversation take place, if you're able to recall?

[MR. BILODEAU:] June 30th.

[PROSECUTOR:] Of what year?

[MR. BILODEAU:] '23.

[PROSECUTOR:] And based on that conversation, are you able to tell who initiated it?

[MR. BILODEAU:] Jeff did.

[PROSECUTOR:] And do you know where these documents or copies of this came from?

[MR. BILODEAU:] Yes.

[PROSECUTOR:] Where'd they come from?

[MR. BILODEAU:] My Facebook.

[PROSECUTOR:] And did, at any point, you ever speak to any member of the Cecil County Sheriff's Office?

[MR. BILODEAU:] No.

[PROSECUTOR:] What about after January of this year?

[MR. BILODEAU:] Yes.

[PROSECUTOR:] Okay. Do you recall [when] you would have done that?

[MR. BILODEAU:] No. I don't remember.

[PROSECUTOR:] And did you provide them any information during the course of speaking to them about whatever your conversation was about?

[MR. BILODEAU:] Yes.

[PROSECUTOR:] Yes.

. . . Your Honor, at this point I'm going to seek to admit State's 17 and 18 into evidence and publish.

[DEFENSE COUNSEL]: Defense objects, Your Honor.

THE COURT: I note your objection. The Court's going to overrule, admit the document.

(State's Exhibit 17, 18 is received into evidence)

[PROSECUTOR]: Thank you, Your Honor. If I can reapproach the witness?

THE COURT: Yes.

[PROSECUTOR:] So Mr. Bilodeau, on State's 17, if you can just tell me, starting at the top, what information is present at the top [of] that document or what does it say?

[MR. BILODEAU:] "You better come get this."

[PROSECUTOR:] Well, before that. Does it tell you who that conversation is between?

[MR. BILODEAU:] Yes.

[PROSECUTOR:] And who does it indicate?

[MR. BILODEAU:] Me and Jeff.

[PROSECUTOR:] Okay. Now, when you say, Jeff, do you – did you recognize who you were talking to at the time?

[MR. BILODEAU:] Yes.

[PROSECUTOR:] And who was that person?

[MR. BILODEAU:] That was Jeff.

[PROSECUTOR:] Okay. And by Jeff, you mean who, exactly?

[MR. BILODEAU:] Lander.

[PROSECUTOR:] Thank you. All right. And do you know which time of day this conversation took place?

[MR. BILODEAU:] It was night.

[PROSECUTOR:] And the documents are now admitted into evidence, so can you tell me how that conversation would have started?

[MR. BILODEAU:] He called me and I wasn't at my phone and I asked him what's up.

[PROSECUTOR:] And what was his response to your question?

[MR. BILODEAU:] "You better come get this bitch."

[PROSECUTOR:] And when he said that to you, did you have any idea who he was referring to?

[MR. BILODEAU:] Yes.

[PROSECUTOR:] Who was he referring to?

[MR. BILODEAU:] Judy.

[PROSECUTOR:] And what did you say in your response to that comment?

[MR. BILODEAU:] “Why? What happened?”

[PROSECUTOR:] And what, if any, response did he provide?

[MR. BILODEAU:] “She has pushed it too fucking far.”

[PROSECUTOR:] And what, if any response, did you make to that comment?

[MR. BILODEAU:] I said, “Jeff, are you serious or bullshitting?”

[PROSECUTOR:] And what did Jeffrey respond?

[MR. BILODEAU:] “I’m fucking serious.”

[PROSECUTOR:] And what did you say, if anything, after that?

[MR. BILODEAU:] “What is she doing?”

[PROSECUTOR:] And what was Mr. Lander’s response?

[MR. BILODEAU:] “About to get shot.”

[PROSECUTOR:] And your response to that comment?

[MR. BILODEAU:] “Doubtful.”

[PROSECUTOR:] And anything he said after that?

[MR. BILODEAU:] “Come get her, please.”

Following the close of the evidence, the jury acquitted Mr. Lander of second degree murder, first degree assault, and second degree assault, but convicted him of involuntary manslaughter and reckless endangerment.

Mr. Lander contends that because the “testimony and exhibits regarding this text exchange were not relevant,” “any relevance was grossly outweighed by its potential to unfairly prejudice” him, and “prior bad acts . . . evidence is otherwise presumptively inadmissible,” the court erred in admitting the testimony and evidence. The State “agrees that the messages were evidence of other bad acts,” but counters that “the court properly admitted them,” “the probative value of the messages was not substantially outweighed by any danger of unfair prejudice,” and “the messages offered to prove specific intent were harmless.”

We agree with the State. Assuming, without deciding, that the messages constituted evidence of prior bad acts, Rule 5-404(b) states that while “[e]vidence of other crimes, wrongs, or acts . . . is not admissible to prove the character of a person in order to show action in the conformity therewith,” it “may be admissible for other purposes, such as proof of motive, opportunity, intent, preparation, common scheme or plan, knowledge, identity, absence of mistake or accident, or in conformity with Rule 5-413.” Here, evidence that Mr. Lander had previously threatened to shoot Ms. Gee because she had “pushed it too . . . far” was admissible to prove motive and intent. Because, as the State observes, Mr. Lander’s “intent was the only contested issue of the trial,” the probative value of the evidence was not substantially outweighed by the danger of unfair prejudice. For these reasons, we conclude that the court did not err in admitting the evidence. Even if the court had erred in admitting the evidence, we note, as does the State, that “the jury acquitted Mr.

Lander of all charges involving specific intent.” Hence, any error by the court in admitting the evidence was harmless.

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