NOTICE
This Order was filed under Supreme Court Rule 23 and is not precedent except in the limited circumstances allowed under Rule 23(e)(1).

2026 IL App (4th) 260375-U

NO. 4-26-0375

IN THE APPELLATE COURT

OF ILLINOIS

FOURTH DISTRICT

FILED
November 5, 2026
Carla Bender
4th District Appellate
Court, IL

GARRET R.,	)	Appeal from the
Petitioner-Appellee,	)	Circuit Court of
v.	)	Pike County
GRACE M.,	)	No. 24FA27
Respondent-Appellant.	)	
	)	Honorable
	)	Zachary P. Boren,
	)	Judge Presiding.

PRESIDING JUSTICE STEIGMANN delivered the judgment of the court.
Justices Lannerd and Grischow concurred in the judgment.

ORDER

¶ 1 *Held:* The appellate court affirmed the trial court's order allocating parenting time and significant decision-making responsibilities.

¶ 2 Petitioner, Garret R., and Respondent, Grace M., are the parents of C.W.R. (born March 2024). The parties were never married. In July 2024, Garret filed a petition to determine the existence of a father and child relationship and to allocate parental responsibilities regarding C.W.R.

¶ 3 The ensuing litigation spanned over a year and a half. The trial court characterized the proceedings as a high conflict case, marked by severe hostility and multiple findings of indirect civil contempt against Grace. In January 2026, the court entered an order awarding Garret (1) sole significant decision-making authority and (2) the majority of parenting time.

¶ 4 Grace appeals, arguing (1) the trial court's findings regarding parenting time and

decision-making authority were against the manifest weight of the evidence, (2) Garret was bound by his initial pleadings, which stated that equal parenting time was in the child's best interests, (3) she was unfairly prejudiced by Garret's failure to comply with Illinois Supreme Court Rule 213(f)(2) (eff. Jan. 1, 2018), which required him to disclose his expert witness regarding breast milk prior to trial, and (4) Garret's counsel repeatedly asked improper, demeaning, and irrelevant questions about alleged offers of oral sex and sexual conduct, in violation of the Illinois civil rape shield statute (735 ILCS 5/8-2801 (West 2024)). We disagree and affirm.

¶ 5 I. BACKGROUND

¶ 6 The evidence in this case was presented over the course of nearly two years—spanning from July 2024 to April 2026—across 17 hearings, which included the testimony of 19 witnesses—13 testifying for Garret and 6 for Grace. Because it would be neither practical nor helpful to exhaustively recite every detail of this record, we set forth a summary of the factual and procedural highlights necessary to provide context for the trial court's judgment and the specific issues raised on appeal.

¶ 7 A. The Proceedings Generally

¶ 8 1. *The Events Leading to the Filing of the Petition*

¶ 9 In December 2022, Garret and Grace met through their employment and began a romantic relationship, culminating in the birth of C.W.R. in March 2024. Garret had two children from a previous marriage, R.R. and G.R. In fall 2022, the parties purchased a home together and lived together. During this time, the parties' relationship was strained by family tensions, primarily friction between Grace and Garret's mother, Terri R.

¶ 10 In May 2024, Grace and Terri had an argument at the parties' home regarding Terri's perception that Grace was treating R.R. and G.R. poorly. Following that argument, Grace

barred Garret's family from the couple's residence and demanded that Garret force Terri to apologize. Garret did not do so, resulting in additional arguments and a further breakdown in the relationship. In June 2024, the parties separated, and Grace moved in with her mother, along with C.W.R.

¶ 11 In July 2024, Grace photographed alcohol in Garret's home, refused Garret's request to spend his birthday alone with C.W.R., and threatened to call the police if Garret hosted a birthday party for G.R. at the parties' jointly owned house. Grace later announced she was taking back all the toys, shoes, clothes, and supplies she had ever purchased for R.R. and G.R.—including items that had been gifted to the children "from Santa"—and she later admitted at trial that she took and sold those items online, prompting Garret's ex-wife to threaten a stolen-property report.

¶ 12 2. *The Initial Petition and Response*

¶ 13 In late July 2024, Grace asked Garret to surrender his parental rights to C.W.R. Garret refused and then filed a petition to determine the existence of the father and child relationship regarding C.W.R. In that initial petition, Garret asserted that it was in C.W.R.'s best interests for him to be awarded joint parental decision-making responsibilities and equal parenting time, and he requested that the trial court enter an order to that effect.

¶ 14 In August 2024, Grace responded to the filing by sending hostile texts to Garret, such as, "game on to you and your mom who is paying your lawyer fees now. There is no being friends or getting along. You are dead to me." Later that month, Grace filed her response to Garret's petition, admitting that Garret was C.W.R.'s biological father and requesting that the trial court award her sole parental decision-making responsibilities and the majority of parenting time.

¶ 15 3. *The Events From September 2024 Through April 2025*

¶ 16 In September 2024, the parties appeared in court and presented evidence regarding

temporary parenting time. That day, the trial court entered an order adjudicating Garret to be C.W.R.'s biological father alongside a temporary order awarding Garret daytime parenting time on Saturdays and Mondays. That temporary order directed for parenting exchanges to occur at the parties' respective residences and explicitly ordered both parties not to "engage in any harmful or offensive communication" with one another. However, on the first exchange at her mother's home in Mt. Sterling, Illinois, Grace threatened to report Garret and Terri to law enforcement for trespassing if Garret did not move his car, and she repeatedly flipped Terri off with her middle finger.

¶ 17 Grace conducted herself in a similar manner during multiple exchanges that month, including an occasion when Grace entered Garret's residence and claimed that Garret's grandmother "tried to almost physically assault" her at the door. The trial court later found that this claim was completely unsupported by Grace's own video recording of the encounter. Also, during this time, Grace sent disparaging text messages to Garret.

¶ 18 In October 2024, the trial court entered an agreed modification to the temporary order, moving the parenting exchange location from the parties' residences to the sheriff's office in Barry, Illinois, or Mt. Sterling. Subsequently, on October 19, 2024, Grace went to the Mt. Sterling Police Department instead of the Brown County Sheriff's Office. She then blamed Garret for being at the wrong location and threatened to withhold visitation. He then went to the police department to pick up C.W.R. Grace recorded the exchange on her phone. She told C.W.R. she would "save [him] very soon" and called Garret a "horrible person" in front of C.W.R., among other offensive comments. She texted Garret that she did not care if she was noncompliant with the court orders and made additional offensive remarks.

¶ 19 Around this time, Officer Darius Yakle began supervising the parties' parenting

exchanges. While doing so, Yakle developed a personal relationship with Grace, exchanging personal text messages with her and visiting her mother's home in November 2024 to watch a movie. Between October and December 2024, Grace sent multiple messages to Garret, stating that a police officer present at the exchanges would testify on her behalf. Yakle later testified that he recognized a conflict of interest by November 2024 and was instructed by his police chief to remove himself from the parties' dispute.

¶ 20 In November 2024, Grace sent numerous offensive text messages to Garret, including messages suggesting that C.W.R. might not be his biological child. For example, she texted him, "All you are going to get from me now is me coming off as a bitch because now I'm sick of your ugly, worthless, deadbeat, piece of shit self," and, "I'm done with exchanges you can fuck yourself." Twice that month, Grace unilaterally denied Garret his scheduled parenting time, despite his timely arrival for the exchanges. Specifically, she withheld C.W.R. the first time, claiming a cousin was visiting. She later denied Garret parenting time because he did not show her proof of hearing protection for C.W.R., explicitly stating, "I do not care what court orders are."

¶ 21 In December 2024, Garret filed his first petition for adjudication of indirect civil contempt and a motion to modify temporary parenting time, citing Grace's two November visitation denials and her barrage of offensive messages. The following day, Grace reported Garret to DCFS regarding a shotgun he owned and filed a police report alleging Garret had abused her in June 2024.

¶ 22 Later that month, the trial court entered its first contempt order, finding Grace in indirect civil contempt for willfully denying Garret parenting time twice in November 2024 and for repeatedly engaging in harmful and offensive communications, in violation of the September order. The court ordered Grace to pay attorney fees, admonished her on the record that continued

violations could result in criminal contempt and jail time, and ordered the parties to communicate exclusively through the Our Family Wizard app beginning in January 2025. In that same order, the court modified the temporary parenting schedule, awarding Garret weekend parenting time every week from Friday evening to Sunday evening, with all exchanges taking place at the Pike County Sheriff's Office in Pittsfield, Illinois.

¶ 23 On January 10, 2025, during a parenting exchange, Grace struck Garret in the chest and stomach area with C.W.R.'s backpack and told Garret, "you're a fucking idiot," "I hate you," "you'll be lucky if you live to see another year," and "you're a piece of crap, you're not a parent," while telling C.W.R., "mommy will save you from these terrible people very soon." When later ordered to produce her video recordings of the exchanges in discovery, Grace produced screen-recorded, edited clips of the incident that omitted portions of the incident. Grace made similar statements at another exchange later that month.

¶ 24 In February 2025, Garret filed a second petition for indirect civil contempt based on Grace's conduct at the January 10, 2025, exchange and Grace's continued offensive messages. Later that month, Grace's hostile conduct persisted, such as accusing Garret of bruising C.W.R. during a video call and filming Garret and Terri after exchanges.

¶ 25 In March 2025, Grace denied Garret parenting time on three separate occasions, including one weekend where Garret's family had planned C.W.R.'s first birthday party. During that month Grace obtained an emergency stalking no-contact order against Garret's mother, Terri. In her sworn testimony at the emergency hearing, Grace testified that Terri had stalked and followed her into the Pittsfield Walmart after a parenting exchange earlier that month. However, later witness testimony and surveillance camera footage refuted this testimony. Grace voluntarily dismissed her stalking no-contact case in July 2025.

¶ 26 Terri subsequently filed a complaint with the sheriff regarding Grace's false police report, sought an order of protection against Grace, and filed a petition for sanctions against Grace. After hearing evidence on the petition, the trial court found Grace's testimony disingenuous and unbelievable, concluding that Grace had intentionally offered false sworn testimony in bad faith to (1) harass Terri, (2) further her hostile campaign against Garret, and (3) sever Terri's relationship with her grandson. The court later entered an Illinois Supreme Court Rule 137 (eff. Jan. 1, 2018) sanctions judgment ordering Grace to pay Teri $26,033.34.

¶ 27 Later in March 2025, Garret filed a motion for sanctions alongside an amended petition to determine the existence of the father and child relationship, alleging that it was now in C.W.R.'s best interests that he be awarded sole parental decision-making responsibilities and the majority of parenting time. Grace also filed cross-petitions for indirect civil contempt in March and April 2025, alleging Garret called her " 'ugly' " and " 'worthless' " on a February call, spoke to C.W.R.'s pediatrician, Dr. Andrew Barfield, about C.W.R.'s diet without informing her, and told her, " 'It does not effing matter,' " at an exchange when she complained C.W.R. was wearing the same shirt twice.

¶ 28 On March 28, 2025, Garret experienced a tire problem on his vehicle, messaged Grace ahead of time that he would be a few minutes late for the exchange, and arrived around eight minutes late. Grace then lectured Garret about his alleged rudeness, repeatedly threatened to leave, demanded that he apologize and thank her for her graciousness, and ultimately did not exchange C.W.R.

¶ 29 Following an April 2025 hearing, the trial court issued explicit exchange instructions, clarifying that the parties must wait at the exchange location and that a missed exchange does not cancel an entire weekend's parenting time.

¶ 30 4. *Testimony Regarding Breast Milk*

¶ 31 At an evidentiary hearing in May 2025, Dr. Barfield testified as an expert witness for both parties regarding C.W.R.'s medical care and nutrition. Barfield confirmed that C.W.R.'s physical health needs were well met, but he contradicted testimony by Grace at a prior hearing that C.W.R. was exclusively breastfed in September 2024, noting that medical records showed the infant was supplementing with formula and consuming pureed foods. Regarding the parties' dispute over transitioning C.W.R. from breast milk to whole milk in March 2025, Barfield testified that although breastfeeding offers benefits so long as a mother is willing and able, breast milk was no longer medically necessary once C.W.R. reached one year of age. He explained that almost all one-year-olds in the United States transition to an alternative milk shortly after turning one, that whole milk or other alternative milks were completely medically appropriate for C.W.R., and that because there was no medical reason C.W.R. needed to be exclusively on breast milk or exclusively on whole milk, he would support whatever decision benefited the family as a whole.

¶ 32 At a subsequent hearing, Natalia Thompson, a pediatric nurse and a friend of Garret's sister, testified as an expert witness regarding her evaluation of the breast milk Grace had provided for Garret in March 2025. Grace objected to this testimony, arguing that her testimony had not been disclosed until after the trial had already commenced and she had not produced a written expert report. The trial court overruled the objection, noting that (1) Thompson was not a retained expert, (2) her opinions arose from events in March 2025, after the original discovery deadlines had passed, (3) Rule 213(f)(2) does not require a written report from an unretained independent expert, and (4) both parties had been permitted to tender late discovery throughout the ongoing proceedings.

¶ 33 Thompson testified that Garret sought her assistance in evaluating several bags of

breast milk that Grace had sent for Garret's parenting time. Based on her hospital experience and pediatric nursing training, Thompson testified that the bags of breast milk provided by Grace had expired according to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines. Two of the bags smelled rancid and did not smell like healthy breast milk, which led her to advise Garret not to feed those bags to C.W.R. and to use his best judgment regarding the remaining bags. She also observed that several of the bags contained small particles or chunks that failed to mix well when shaken, which she had observed in healthy breast milk while working at the hospital. She stated that based on her training and experience, she had no medical or nutritional concerns with C.W.R. being fed whole milk in March 2025, as he was turning one year old.

¶ 34 5. *Events From Spring 2025 Through Fall 2025*

¶ 35 Throughout the remainder of the proceedings in the spring, summer, and fall of 2025, Grace persisted in her hostile conduct toward Garret. She made disparaging remarks toward Garret in front of C.W.R, denied him parenting time, and sent him offensive messages.

¶ 36 For example, during an exchange in May 2025, Grace walked up to Garret's vehicle to film him interacting with C.W.R. As Garret tried to start his own recording and unbuckle C.W.R., an open tobacco chew spit bottle spilled. Grace then scolded Garret in front of the child and later filed a petition seeking to bar him from chewing tobacco. Later that month, Grace reported an alleged violation of the stalking no-contact order to the Pike County Sheriff's Office, claimed she was in fear for her life, and unilaterally denied Garret his parenting time for the entire Memorial Day weekend. Toward the end of the month, Grace messaged Garret: "You are so pathetic and such a liar. My son will be raised to NEVER be like you. You are a horrible role model and he is a better person in 5 minutes than you'll ever be capable of in your whole life."

¶ 37 During a June 2025 exchange, Grace filmed herself approaching Garret's car before

the exchange time and demanding the exchange bag ahead of time. She later asserted that Garret hit C.W.R. in the face with the bag, despite the video showing it merely brushed past him. She also repeatedly told C.W.R., "You're safe now. You're safe now." Later that night, she messaged Garret regarding C.W.R.'s 15-month doctor appointment the next day and warned him,

> "You will not be allowed in the room. *** My son and I are not safe alone with you, and it is not happening. You are not welcome in that room alone with us. If I have to call the police to be there for any—for my own safety and my child, I will."

Grace also failed to notify Garret of two separate medical appointments she scheduled for C.W.R. in May and June 2025.

¶ 38 In July 2025, after Garret informed Grace that C.W.R. got a scratch from falling on a toy stroller, Grace contacted the police, which resulted in an unfounded DCFS report made by Officer Yakle. Later that month, the trial court entered an agreed order modifying the weekend schedule to accommodate Grace's family reunion. However, the court inadvertently wrote the incorrect day. Grace picked up C.W.R. as written in the order, but when the parties could not agree to switch the days, she called Garret names and refused to return C.W.R. that evening as directed, denying Garret the remainder of his weekend parenting time. Grace later stated in a text message that she "never read the court order handed to me."

¶ 39 In August and September 2025, Grace continued to instigate conflict at exchanges, twice standing outside Garret's vehicle to film and distract C.W.R. In August 2025, Grace also texted Garret that his "rude, nasty, two cent opinion, uneducated, and poorly worded" messages were why she refused to share information about C.W.R., threatened that "[y]our time will come very soon you can mark my words on it," and threatened to file for contempt if he cut the child's hair without her permission. Over the course of the dispute, by the trial court's count, Grace

threatened to involve or actually called the police on Garret 12 times and DCFS 3 times.

¶ 40 B. The Trial Court's "Order Regarding Parental Responsibilities and Support"

¶ 41 In January 2026, the trial court issued a comprehensive 49-page written order regarding parental responsibilities and child support. The court detailed the extensive evidence considered over the course of 17 hearings involving 19 witnesses (13 for Garret and 6 for Grace), thoroughly addressing the statutory factors, factual findings, and the court's ultimate conclusions.

¶ 42 After summarizing the trial evidence, the trial court began its written analysis by writing the following:

> "In two and a half years of hearing family and divorce cases, this is the highest conflict case the Court has encountered. [Grace] and [Garret] entered into a relationship rapidly in December 2022. [Grace's] relationship with [Garret's] mother soured. [Grace] obviously had a good relationship with [R.R.] and [G.R.] for some period of time. But the family demands of [Grace] versus [Garret's] family created too much stress for any relationship to survive. [Garret's] mother had a significant conflict with [Grace] on May 1, 2024. [Grace] clearly wanted [Garret] to force his mother to apologize. [Garret] did not make that happen. He appears to have chosen his mother over [Grace]. At that point, there was no realistic possibility for the relationship between [Garret] and [Grace] to survive. There still might have been a coparenting relationship for the best interests of [C.W.R.] But [Grace] chose to weaponize [C.W.R.] against [Garret], using [C.W.R.] to punish [Garret] for choosing his mother over her. As she did that, [Grace] also engaged in an egregious course of conduct designed to alienate [C.W.R.] from [Garret]. For these reasons, as more particularly articulated below, the Court will award majority parenting time

> to [Garret], with every other weekend parenting time to [Grace]. The Court will discuss the factors in 750 ILCS 5/602.7 and 602.5 in turn. While the Court cannot possibly address in writing every argument raised by the parties, the Court will address the most salient arguments in its analysis of the factors below."

¶ 43 The trial court then addressed each of the statutory best interest factors it was required to consider when determining allocation of parenting time and decision-making authority. These findings were extensive, including a recitation of each individual factor, the relevant evidence and factual findings, and the court's reasoning.

¶ 44 Regarding parenting time, the trial court found the following.

¶ 45 The trial court noted that although the parties shared extensive hostility and agreed on almost nothing regarding C.W.R., both parents cared for the child and maintained strong individual relationships with him. C.W.R. was well-adjusted in both homes, participated in early education, and was bonded with both extended families. However, the court found that the lifelong bond C.W.R. shared with his siblings slightly outweighed the extended family relationships at Grace's house, favoring more time spent in Garret's home. For the same reason, the court found the school district factor slightly favored Garret, with whom C.W.R. would be able to share the same schools, teachers, and community activities as his siblings.

¶ 46 The trial court found that C.W.R.'s physical health would be preserved well by either party. However, the court was gravely concerned for C.W.R.'s mental health and emotional development because of "[Grace's] demonstrated pattern of alienating [C.W.R.] from [Garret] and making [C.W.R.] believe he is not safe with [Garret]." The court wrote the following on that point:

> "[T]here is not one shred of evidence to suggest that [Garret] is actively telling [C.W.R.] anything negative about [Grace]. But [she] is actively poisoning

> [C.W.R.'s] mind against his father. This egregious pattern is certainly detrimental to [C.W.R.'s] mental health, and therefore this factor cuts strongly in favor of more parenting time with [Garret]."

¶ 47 The trial court noted both parents worked full-time jobs and that the parties lived about a 45 minute or longer drive apart, noting that this distance has not been convenient but was not "a significant impediment." However, "[t]he parties have demonstrated no ability to cooperate in arrangements."

¶ 48 The trial court stated that it disagreed with Garret's arguments that Grace be ordered to obtain mental health counseling or jail time, noting there was no criminal contempt petition before the court and the evidence presented did not support an order for counseling. The court stated, "The Court believes the adjudication of this case should communicate to [Grace] how important it is that she not take further steps to alienate [C.W.R.] from [Garret] or to purposefully poison that relationship. If further steps are needed, the Court would address appropriate petitions or motions in the future."

¶ 49 The trial court repeatedly found Grace to be an "extremely unbelievable witness" whose disrespectful and condescending courtroom demeanor bordered on direct criminal contempt. The court highlighted a litany of inconsistencies and fabrications in her testimony, noting she was particularly unbelievable where Garret was concerned. For example, Grace accused Garret of shoving her during a dispute in June 2024, but the court found no evidence to support this claim. She also falsely accused Garret's grandmother of injuring her—an assertion directly contradicted by video evidence—and feigned ignorance about which police officer would testify on her behalf in order to hide a conflict of interest. Most significantly, the court highlighted Grace's obtaining an emergency stalking no contact order against Terri in March 2025 by falsely swearing

that Terri had followed her to Walmart after an exchange. The court concluded that Grace offered this false sworn testimony specifically to undermine Terri's relationship with her grandson, determining that this pervasive pattern of untruthfulness weighed strongly in favor of limiting Grace's parenting time.

¶ 50 Beyond her false testimony, the trial court found that Grace engaged in abusive and controlling behavior toward Garret. The court noted that Grace was untruthful about her reasons for denying Garret parenting time in November 2024, and she also intentionally submitted incomplete videos of a January 2025 exchange to conceal her own physical assault on him. Conversely, the court found Garret's claim that Grace hit him with a backpack during that same January exchange to be fully proven by his testimony and the accompanying recordings. Further, Grace directed threats at Garret, sending him messages such as, "you'll be lucky if you live to see another year," and, "Your time will come very soon you can mark my words on it."

¶ 51 In light of this extreme hostility, the trial court found Grace's claims that she fostered Garret and C.W.R.'s father-son relationship to be entirely insincere. Her purported efforts to encourage their bond were in actuality transparent attempts to manufacture photographic evidence to use in court or to exercise control over Garret, such as when she brought C.W.R. to Garret's workplace for his first birthday only to unilaterally deny Garret his scheduled parenting time the very next day, deliberately ruining his family's planned celebration.

¶ 52 The trial court found that when Grace denied Garret his court-ordered parenting time on two occasions in March 2025, despite his being present for the exchange, Grace "showed she is completely unwilling to place the needs of [C.W.R.] over her own needs." In total, Grace unilaterally denied Garret parenting time on seven occasions, sometimes for multiple days, from November 2024 to July 2025. The court continued, writing the following:

> "Although she at times has articulated the idea that spending time with [Garret] is in [C.W.R.'s] best interests, she spent her time lecturing [Garret] on his rudeness and demanding that he thank her for her graciousness instead of simply exchanging [C.W.R.] *** The only purpose for lecturing [Garret], arguing with him, and ultimately trying to use the plain language of the Court order against him, was to punish him for breaking up with her and not choosing her over his mother. The purpose was certainly not to advance [C.W.R.'s] interests over her own. It is heartbreaking to watch the videos of those two exchanges. [Grace] weaponized [C.W.R.] against [Garret] in the most hurtful way—by denying [Garret] time with his son. Her argument that he charged at her or swore at her on March 28 is unsupported by the record. Her argument that he was rude on March 28 is also not well supported (he did observe—correctly—that she had denied him parenting time before), and even if he had been rude, that would not be a basis to deny court-ordered parenting time."

¶ 53 The trial court detailed Grace's "egregious course of conduct designed to alienate" C.W.R. from Garret. She repeatedly belittled Garret in the child's presence and made statements encouraging C.W.R. to feel unsafe with his father. Because Grace herself introduced the very recordings proving this behavior, the court noted she was either unaware of or indifferent to the harm she was causing, inferring that her unrecorded, private statements to C.W.R. were likely even worse.

¶ 54 In contrast to Grace's conduct, Garret demonstrated a genuine willingness to facilitate C.W.R.'s relationship with Grace, frequently agreeing to modify weekend parenting schedules at her request. The trial court noted that Garret strictly adhered to court-ordered

exchange protocols and limited communication during his parenting time. The court highlighted Garret's highly effective coparenting relationship with his ex-wife, noting that she testified he was her " 'best friend.' " Overall, the court concluded that Grace's consistent intent to poison C.W.R.'s mind against his father weighed strongly in favor of awarding Garret more parenting time.

¶ 55 Regarding decision-making authority under section 602.5 of the Illinois Marriage and Dissolution of Marriage Act (Act) (750 ILCS 5/602.5 (West 2024)), the trial court reiterated its earlier points when applicable. It found the "level of conflict between the parties strongly suggested the parent with primary residential care of [C.W.R.] will need to make significant decisions for [C.W.R.]" Ultimately, the court found that it would be in C.W.R.'s best interest for Garret to have primary parenting time and all significant decision-making and for Grace to have parenting time every other weekend.

¶ 56 C. "The Court Ordered Parenting Plan"

¶ 57 On March 23, 2026, the trial court entered a Court Ordered Parenting Plan, stated to have been entered consistent with the court's January 27, 2026 order. The parenting plan set out the specific terms of the parties' parenting arrangement and added provisions that the January order did not contain, including the following: (1) a vacation provision granting each parent annual vacation time; (2) provisions governing information sharing and parental communication; and (3) provisions addressing changes in residence, temporary changes, and relocation. The plan further added a series of "Other Provisions" governing parental conduct—among them restraints on disparaging the other parent, on discussing child support in the child's presence, and on withholding parenting time for nonpayment of expenses—spanning more than ten paragraphs.

¶ 58 D. The Trial Court's "Order Resolving Remaining Issues"

¶ 59 In April 2026, the trial court issued an order resolving all remaining issues

following a March 2026 hearing. Addressing Garret's February 2025 second petition for indirect civil contempt, the court found that Grace's messages between January 8 and 25, 2025—specifically calling Garret a " 'monster' " and stating she would tolerate his existence—constituted direct civil contempt for violating the order against harmful and offensive communications. The court noted it had already addressed Grace's inappropriate actions during the January 10, 2025, exchange in its January order.

¶ 60 Garret also filed a motion for sanctions and other relief in June 2026, alleging that Grace denied him 48 hours of parenting time from May 24 to 26, 2025, called him an " 'asshole' " during a June 1, 2025, exchange, and failed to inform him of C.W.R.'s doctor appointments on May 20 and June 6, 2025. The trial court noted that the parenting time denial was already covered by the January order and found that the June 1 comment did not constitute a violation.

¶ 61 Finally, the trial court addressed Garret's February 2026 petition for indirect civil contempt regarding C.W.R.'s Social Security card. Grace admitted she refused to obey the court order to share the card. Although Garret eventually received the card in March 2026 so he could secure insurance for the minor, he incurred attorney fees to get it. The court found Grace in indirect civil contempt for this refusal. After discussing child support, the court ruled on sanctions. Because the court had already factored Grace's other contemptuous actions into its allocation of parental responsibility, it sanctioned her solely for the Social Security card violation, ordering her to pay Garret's related attorney fees.

¶ 62 This appeal followed.

¶ 63 II. ANALYSIS

¶ 64 Grace appeals, arguing (1) the trial court's findings regarding parenting time and decision-making authority were against the manifest weight of the evidence; (2) Garret was bound

by his initial pleadings, which stated that equal parenting time was in the child's best interests; (3) she was unfairly prejudiced by Garret's failure to comply with Illinois Supreme Court Rule 213(f)(2) (eff. Jan. 1, 2018), which required him to disclose his expert witness regarding breast milk prior to trial; and (4) Garret's counsel repeatedly asked improper, demeaning, and irrelevant questions about alleged offers of oral sex and sexual conduct, in violation of the Illinois civil rape shield statute (see 735 ILCS 5/8-2801 (West 2024)). We disagree and affirm.

¶ 65 A. Illinois Supreme Court Rule 311(a)

¶ 66 Because this case involves a matter affecting the allocation of parenting time, this case is designated as "accelerated" pursuant to Illinois Supreme Court Rule 311(a) (eff. July 1, 2018), which requires this court issue our decision within 150 days of the filing of a notice of appeal except unless there has been "good cause shown." Ill. S. Ct. R. 311(a)(5) (eff. July 1, 2018).

¶ 67 Grace filed her amended notice of appeal on April 1, 2026, which means our decision was due on August 27, 2026. However, both parties requested oral argument in this case, and the case was docketed and heard on October 14, 2026. As a result, the case was not submitted for a decision until after oral argument. Because the case was not ready for disposition until after October 14, 2026, we find good cause for issuing our decision beyond the 150-day deadline. See *In re Marriage of Mayes*, 2018 IL App (4th) 180149, ¶ 53 (finding good cause where accommodating requests for oral argument delayed the filing of the decision).

¶ 68 B. Motions Taken With The Case

¶ 69 We note that both parties filed motions, which were taken with the case.

¶ 70 In April 2026, Garret filed a motion to dismiss for lack of appellate jurisdiction. He argues that the trial court's final order in this matter was entered on January 27, 2026, but that Grace did not file her original notice of appeal until March 30, 2026, and her amended notice of

appeal until April 1, 2026—outside the 30-day window provided by Illinois Supreme Court Rule 303(a)(1) (eff. July 1, 2017). Grace responds that the January 27, 2026 order was not a final, appealable judgment, because the court reserved issues and retained jurisdiction to enter a parenting plan setting the substantive terms of the parties' allocation, and that the court's March 23, 2026 parenting plan—which added substantive provisions governing parenting time and the allocation of parental responsibilities—was the first final, appealable allocation judgment under Illinois Supreme Court Rule 304(b)(6) (eff. Mar. 8, 2016). We agree with Grace and conclude that we have jurisdiction. See *In re Marriage of Capitani*, 368 Ill. App. 3d 486, 487, 488-89 (2006) (holding the entry of a joint parenting order, which included specific provisions regarding custody not included in an earlier judgment for dissolution of marriage, was the appealable final judgment).

¶ 71 In May 2026, Grace filed a "Motion for Extension of Time for the Preparation of the Reports of Proceedings," seeking leave until May 26, 2026, to file the outstanding transcripts and supplement the record on appeal. We grant the motion.

¶ 72 C. Illinois Supreme Court Rule 341(h)(6)

¶ 73 In his brief, Garret points out that the statement of facts in Grace's appellate brief fails to comply with Illinois Supreme Court Rule 341(h)(6) (eff. Oct. 1, 2020). Specifically, Garret contends that Grace's statement of facts is a one-sided recitation of the evidence, hand-picked from approximately 21 days of trial, which she believes supports her request for a reversal or retrial. Garret asserts that Grace's summary is not stated "without argument or comment" (internal quotation marks omitted), as required by the rule, but instead contains numerous nonfactual conclusions and comments, including personal attacks against his attorney. We completely agree.

¶ 74 Rule 341(h)(6) requires the statement of facts to "contain the facts necessary to an understanding of the case, *stated accurately and fairly without argument or comment*, and with

appropriate reference to the pages of the record on appeal." (Emphasis added.) *Id.*

¶ 75 Grace's statement of facts violates this rule by being argumentative, speculative, and riddled with legal conclusions. For example, she asserts that Garret, "through his attorney and in open court, engaged in making harmful and offensive comments to [my] mother while she was on the stand and in closing argument." The brief then presents a series of allegedly contradictory or offensive statements made by Garret and his attorney to advance her argument that Garret violated the September 2024 court order that the parties were not to "engage in any harmful or offensive communication." In another instance, the brief simply declares that Garret "does not communicate well about the child" and proceeds to argue that conclusion. Grace's statement of facts strays so far from being stated accurately and fairly without argument or comment that a reader could easily forget he or she did not inadvertently wander into the analysis section of the brief. Indeed, the only discernible difference between her statement of facts and her analysis section is the heading itself.

¶ 76 We reiterate that the rules regarding appellate briefs are not mere suggestions. When procedural violations interfere with our review of the issues on appeal, it is within our discretion to strike the noncompliant brief. See *Parkway Bank & Trust Co. v. Korzen*, 2013 IL App (1st) 130380, ¶ 10. Nevertheless, when violations of supreme court rules do not hinder or preclude our review, and when the appellee has provided a proper statement of facts, as in the present case, we will simply disregard any noncompliant statements in the appellant's brief. See *In re Marriage of Wendy S.*, 2020 IL App (1st) 191661, ¶ 15; see also *Twardowski v. Holiday Hospitality Franchising, Inc.*, 321 Ill. App. 3d 509, 511 (2001) (noting that a court may review an otherwise insufficient appeal where it understands the intended issues, especially when aided by a cogent brief from the opposing party). Accordingly, we now address the merits of Grace's claims on

appeal.

¶ 77 C. The Trial Court's Decision Was Not Against the Manifest Weight of the Evidence

¶ 78 Grace argues that the trial court's decision granting majority parenting time and primary decision-making responsibility to Garret was against the manifest weight of the evidence. We disagree.

¶ 79 1. *The Applicable Law and the Standard of Review*

¶ 80 a. Parenting Time

¶ 81 A trial court must allocate parenting time according to the best interests of the child. 750 ILCS 5/602.7(a) (West 2024). The court must consider all relevant factors, including the following:

> "(1) the wishes of each parent seeking parenting time;
>
> (2) the wishes of the child, taking into account the child's maturity and ability to express reasoned and independent preferences as to parenting time;
>
> (3) the amount of time each parent spent performing caretaking functions with respect to the child in the 24 months preceding the filing of any petition for allocation of parental responsibilities or, if the child is under 2 years of age, since the child's birth;
>
> (4) any prior agreement or course of conduct between the parents relating to caretaking functions with respect to the child;
>
> (5) the interaction and interrelationship of the child with his or her parents and siblings and with any other person who may significantly affect the child's best interests;

(6) the child's adjustment to his or her home, school, and community;

(7) the mental and physical health of all individuals involved;

(8) the child's needs;

(9) the distance between the parents' residences, the cost and difficulty of transporting the child, each parent's and the child's daily schedules, and the ability of the parents to cooperate in the arrangement;

(10) whether a restriction on parenting time is appropriate;

(11) the physical violence or threat of physical violence by the child's parent directed against the child or other member of the child's household;

(12) the willingness and ability of each parent to place the needs of the child ahead of his or her own needs;

(13) the willingness and ability of each parent to facilitate and encourage a close and continuing relationship between the other parent and the child;

(14) the occurrence of abuse against the child or other member of the child's household;

(15) whether one of the parents is a convicted sex offender or lives with a convicted sex offender and, if so, the exact nature of the offense and what if any treatment the offender has successfully participated in; the parties are entitled to a hearing on the issues raised in this paragraph (15);

(16) the terms of a parent's military family-care plan that a parent must complete before deployment if a parent is a member of the United States Armed Forces who is being deployed; and

(17) any other factor that the court expressly finds to be relevant." *Id.*

§ 602.7(b).

¶ 82 A reviewing court will not disturb a trial court's allocation of parenting time unless " 'it is against the manifest weight of the evidence, is manifestly unjust, or is the result of an abuse of discretion.' " *Jameson v. Williams*, 2020 IL App (3d) 200048, ¶ 53 (quoting *In re Marriage of Whitehead*, 2018 IL App (5th) 170380, ¶ 21).

¶ 83 b. Decision-Making Responsibility

¶ 84 A trial court "shall allocate decision-making responsibilities according to the child's best interests." 750 ILCS 5/602.5(a) (West 2024). In making that decision, the court must consider all relevant factors including the following:

> "(1) the wishes of the child, taking into account the child's maturity and ability to express reasoned and independent preferences as to decision-making;
>
> (2) the child's adjustment to his or her home, school, and community;
>
> (3) the mental and physical health of all individuals involved;
>
> (4) the ability of the parents to cooperate to make decisions, or the level of conflict between the parties that may affect their ability to share decision-making;
>
> (5) the level of each parent's participation in past significant decision-making with respect to the child;
>
> (6) any prior agreement or course of conduct between the parents relating to decision-making with respect to the child;
>
> (7) the wishes of the parents;
>
> (8) the child's needs;
>
> (9) the distance between the parents' residences, the cost and difficulty of transporting the child, each parent's and the child's daily schedules, and the ability

of the parents to cooperate in the arrangement;

(10) whether a restriction on decision-making is appropriate under Section 603.10;

(11) the willingness and ability of each parent to facilitate and encourage a close and continuing relationship between the other parent and the child;

(12) the physical violence or threat of physical violence by the child's parent directed against the child;

(13) the occurrence of abuse against the child or other member of the child's household;

(14) whether one of the parents is a sex offender, and if so, the exact nature of the offense and what, if any, treatment in which the parent has successfully participated; and

(15) any other factor that the court expressly finds to be relevant." *Id.* § 602.5(c).

¶ 85 We review a trial court's ruling regarding the allocation of decision-making responsibilities under a manifest weight of the evidence standard. *In re Marriage of McLean*, 2025 IL App (5th) 250094, ¶ 72. "A decision is against the manifest weight of the evidence when an opposite conclusion is apparent or when the court's findings appear to be unreasonable, arbitrary, or not based on evidence." (Internal quotation marks omitted.) *Id.*

¶ 86 "The [trial] court is not required to make explicit findings on each factor, nor is it required to refer to every factor." *Id.* ¶ 73. "In child custody cases, there is a strong and compelling presumption in favor of the result reached by the trial court because it is in a superior position to evaluate the evidence and determine the best interests of the child." *In re Marriage of Agers*, 2013

IL App (5th) 120375, ¶ 25.

¶ 87 2. *This Case*

¶ 88 Grace requests that we reverse the trial court's order regarding parenting time and allocation of parental responsibilities, asking that we either order equal parenting time or remand for a new trial. Grace's arguments focus heavily on what she essentially characterizes as Garret's unclean hands throughout the litigation. She repeatedly contends that Garret is not credible, trustworthy, or capable of parenting their child. However, all these claims were fully presented to the trial court, which expressly found Grace to be thoroughly unbelievable as a witness and determined that Garret was in the better position to care for C.W.R.

¶ 89 Grace argues that the trial court erred by focusing on the parties' conduct instead of considering only C.W.R.'s best interests. This argument ignores the statutory framework. The legislature has explicitly directed the trial court to consider numerous factors when determining a child's best interests under sections 602.5 and 602.7 of the Act (750 ILCS 5/602.5, 602.7 (West 2024)), several of which directly relate to parental conduct. These statutory factors include each parent's (1) ability to cooperate, (2) past caretaking performance, (3) abuse or threats of physical violence, (4) willingness to place the child's needs ahead of his or her own, and, crucially, (5) willingness and ability to facilitate and encourage a close and continuing relationship between the child and the other parent. The trial court's consideration of Grace's pervasive misconduct fell squarely within its statutory mandate.

¶ 90 "It is no small burden to show that a [trial] court's ruling on decision-making responsibilities is against the manifest weight of the evidence." *Williams*, 2020 IL App (3d) 200048, ¶ 50. In this case, the trial court issued an exhaustive 49-page written order detailing the evidence it found compelling and explicitly assessing witness credibility.

> "Any time a trial court serves as a fact finder, perhaps the single most important thing the court can do is say whom it believes and whom it does not. When the trial court favors us with such a finding, we are at the height of our deference to that court." *People v. Carter*, 2021 IL App (4th) 180581, ¶ 68.

¶ 91 The record shows that the trial court took great care in fashioning a parenting plan that served C.W.R.'s best interests while preserving appropriate parenting time for Grace. The court acknowledged Grace's caretaking capabilities and the bond she shares with C.W.R., but it rightly emphasized that the allocation of parenting time directly reflected the intense hostility between the parties—hostility driven by Grace's actions toward Garret and his family. The court specifically highlighted Grace's obtaining an emergency stalking no-contact order against Garret's mother based on false testimony, noting that it was offered deliberately to undermine Terri's relationship with C.W.R. The court appropriately found this pattern of untruthfulness to be a significant factor weighing heavily in favor of limiting Grace's parenting time.

¶ 92 Given Grace's persistent attempts to poison C.W.R.'s relationship with Garret, the geographical distance between the parties' homes, and her refusal to cooperate in court-ordered exchanges, awarding equal parenting time would have been unreasonable and contrary to the child's welfare. As the trial court recognized, an equal-time arrangement would have subjected C.W.R. to ongoing conflict and weaponization against his father. Garret clearly demonstrated that he was and would continue to encourage a relationship between C.W.R. and Grace. Indeed, Garret's did just that under extremely difficult and hostile conditions caused by Grace. His patience and willingness under those circumstances, which could have provided an easy excuse for retaliation in kind, along with his diligent following of court orders, demonstrates that it is in C.W.R.'s best interests for Garret to have majority parenting time and decision-making because

he can handle the stress of dealing with Grace's hostility without negatively affecting the child or the child's relationship with his mother. Ultimately, the court reasonably determined that Garret was far better situated to promote C.W.R.'s overall development and ensure a continued, positive relationship with both sides of the family as the primary decision maker.

¶ 93 Nothing in this record suggests that the trial court failed to consider any relevant statutory factor or that its findings were arbitrary or against the manifest weight of the evidence. To the contrary, the evidence strongly supported the trial court's decision to allocate majority parenting time and sole decision-making authority to Garret. Finally, we commend the trial court for its exceptionally thorough and comprehensive written ruling, which provided great assistance to this court on review.

¶ 94 D. Judicial Admissions

¶ 95 Grace next argues that Garret is bound by alleged "judicial admissions" in his original petition, temporary petition, and early testimony, in which he stated that equal parenting time was in C.W.R.'s best interests. This argument is wholly without merit.

¶ 96 1. *The Applicable Law*

¶ 97 "[I]n order for a statement to qualify as a judicial admission, it must be a party's statement *** about a concrete fact within that party's peculiar knowledge. *** [Citation.] Inferences, appearances, and opinions do not qualify." (Internal quotation marks omitted.) *People v. Hancock*, 2014 IL App (4th) 131069, ¶ 132. A judicial admission has the effect of "withdrawing a fact from issue and dispensing wholly with the need for proof of the fact." (Internal quotation marks omitted.) *Knauerhaze v. Nelson*, 361 Ill. App. 3d 538, 557-58 (2005). Accordingly, "[t]he doctrine of judicial admissions requires thoughtful study for its application so that justice not be done on the strength of a chance statement made by a nervous party." (Internal quotation marks

omitted.) *Smith v. Pavlovich*, 394 Ill .App. 3d 458, 468 (2009). Furthermore, a legal conclusion—defined as a " 'statement that expresses a legal duty or result but omits the facts creating or supporting the duty or result.' "—cannot qualify as a judicial admission. *Carlson v. Michael Best & Friedrich LLP*, 2021 IL App (1st) 191961, ¶ 69 (quoting Black's Law Dictionary (11th ed. 2019)).

¶ 98 2. *This Case*

¶ 99 Under the Act, the allocation of parental decision-making and parenting time must be made according to the child's best interests. 750 ILCS 5/602.5(a), 602.7(a) (West 2024). Both sections require the trial court to independently evaluate multiple statutory factors and any other factors the court finds relevant. The ultimate determination of what arrangement serves the child's best interests is a legal conclusion that the court—not the parties—must reach after weighing all the relevant evidence. Indeed, the Act expressly provides that even mutual agreements between parties regarding parental responsibility allocation are not binding on the court. Section 502(b) of the Act states that the terms of a settlement agreement, "except those providing for the support and parental responsibility allocation of children, are binding upon the court." 750 ILCS 5/502(b) (West 2024). This deliberate exclusion reflects the legislature's intent that the court retain independent authority over custody determinations, regardless of what the parties have agreed to or alleged. See *In re Marriage of Iqbal*, 2014 IL App (2d) 131306, ¶ 35 ("It is the public policy of this state that courts have an independent duty to ensure that the arrangements made by divorcing parents that directly affect their children—those relating to custody, child support, and visitation—are in the best interest of the children.").

¶ 100 Because this ultimate finding is a legal determination exclusively reserved for the trial court, Garret could not possess concrete knowledge that a 50/50 parenting schedule would

serve C.W.R.'s best interests. His initial pleadings and early testimony requesting equal parenting time represented his legal position and personal opinion at the onset of the litigation, not a concrete fact capable of being judicially admitted.

¶ 101 Moreover, Grace's assertion that the circumstances of this case were "largely static" and known prior to trial is blatantly false. Grace's misconduct escalated and became increasingly apparent as the litigation progressed. From the onset of the case, the parties' ability to communicate degraded entirely due to Grace's behavior, culminating in the trial court sanctioning her for indirect civil contempt multiple times for her abusive conduct toward Garret and her unilateral denials of his parenting time. Garret could not possibly have known that Grace would violate court orders, commit perjury, or poison C.W.R. and his relationship.

¶ 102 Finally, Grace cites no Illinois case finding that an initial allegation in a child-custody pleading regarding the best interests of the child constitutes a judicial admission that prevents a party from later seeking a different arrangement. Nor does she cite any authority suggesting a parent's initial pleading can bind the trial court's ultimate, independent custody determination.

¶ 103 E. Evidentiary Issues

¶ 104 Last, Grace argues that the trial court erred by erroneously (1) permitting statements and questions concerning Grace's sexual history or alleged offers of sexual favors in exchange for parenting arrangements, ostensibly in violation of Illinois Rule of Evidence 412(b) (eff. Oct. 15, 2015) and section 8-2801 of the Code of Civil Procedure (735 ILCS 5/8-2801 (West 2024)) and (2) allowing Thompson to testify as an expert witness regarding breast milk.

¶ 105 We note that Grace's briefing on these points is largely unhelpful, because it repeatedly devolves into an unclean hands argument against Garret. However, regarding the first

issue, the rape shield law (735 ILCS 5/8-2801 (West 2024)) is wholly inapplicable to this case (see *id.* (discussing evidence offered against a "victim")). Moreover, as to both claims, Grace has failed to demonstrate that she suffered any prejudice, let alone substantial prejudice, from their admission.

¶ 106 1. *The Applicable Law and the Standard of Review*

¶ 107 "Generally, evidentiary rulings are within the sound discretion of the trial court and will not be reversed on review absent an abuse of discretion." *Lovell v. Sarah Bush Lincoln Health Center*, 397 Ill. App. 3d 890, 900 (2010). A trial court abuses its discretion only when the ruling is arbitrary, fanciful, or unreasonable, or where no reasonable person would take the view adopted by the trial court. *Id.*

¶ 108 "Erroneous evidentiary rulings are only a basis for reversal if the error was substantially prejudicial and affected the outcome of trial." (Internal quotation marks omitted.) *First Midwest Bank v. Rossi*, 2023 IL App (4th) 220643, ¶ 160; see *Fragogiannis v. Sisters of St. Francis Health Services, Inc.*, 2015 IL App (1st) 141788, ¶ 32 ("[A] party is not entitled to reversal based on an erroneous evidentiary ruling unless the error substantially prejudiced the aggrieved party and affected the outcome of the case."). "Conversely, where it appears that an error did not affect the outcome of the trial, or where the reviewing court can see from the entire record that the error did not result in substantial prejudice, the judgment will not be disturbed." *Bachman v. General Motors Corp.*, 332 Ill. App. 3d 760, 785 (2002). "Moreover, in a bench trial there is a strong presumption that the trier of fact relied only upon proper evidence in reaching its decision on the merits." *Toushin v. First Merit Bank*, 2021 IL App (1st) 192171, ¶ 87.

¶ 109 The party seeking reversal bears the burden of showing prejudice. *Rossi*, 2023 IL App (4th) 220643, ¶ 160.

¶ 110 2. *This Case*

¶ 111 Regarding Thompson's testimony on breast milk, even if she had not been properly disclosed as an expert under Illinois Supreme Court Rule 213(f) (eff. Jan. 1, 2018), Grace suffered no prejudice resulting from Thompson's testimony. Whether C.W.R. strictly required breast milk was merely one of many factors the trial court evaluated. The parties' shared expert, Dr. Barfield, testified consistently that while breast milk is recommended as long as the mother is willing to provide it, the minor could safely go without it for periods of time, and Garret expressed no opposition to breastfeeding. Further, the evidence showed that by August and September 2024, C.W.R. was already consuming formula and pureed foods. Thompson's testimony largely consisted of a lay observation that some breast milk provided to Garret smelled sour—an observation that hardly requires expert qualifications. Grace has failed to articulate how this specific testimony influenced the court to rule against her.

¶ 112 Similarly, regarding the questions about Grace's sexual conduct, we conclude it is highly improbable that these isolated discussions had any prejudicial impact on the trial court's ruling. Over the course of 17 hearings involving numerous witnesses, these brief exchanges were mere drops in an ocean of evidence. The record overwhelmingly demonstrates that the court based its custody and parenting time decisions on Grace's abusive conduct toward Garret, her pervasive untrustworthiness, and her repeated, intentional violations of court orders, which were designed to deprive Garret of time with his son. Grace has not met her burden of showing that the admission of this evidence substantially prejudiced her or affected the outcome of the case.

¶ 113 F. Epilogue

¶ 114 Although not wholly frivolous, this appeal appears to be yet another attempt by Grace to weaponize the legal system to satisfy her own ends. Her brief serves largely as a vehicle

for her to attempt to discredit Garret and the trial court simply because she disagrees with the outcome. She has provided no argument that would persuade this court to reverse the trial court's decision, nor any valid reason to reweigh the evidence in her favor. The trial court painstakingly set forth its findings in a detailed 49-page written order. Given the extreme hostility Grace has demonstrated in this case and Grace's prior violations of court orders—which the court noted bordered on criminal contempt—the trial court clearly and appropriately felt compelled to proactively address all relevant issues on the record.

¶ 115 We commend the trial court for its boundless patience throughout this litigation. Presiding over 17 hearings in what it accurately described as the "highest conflict case" it had ever encountered, the trial court authored an astonishingly in-depth and comprehensive order. The record reveals a volatile environment spurred on by Grace's abusive conduct, her unilateral denials of Garret's parenting time, and her deliberate weaponization of their son for her own ends. The trial court handled this exceptionally difficult matter with commendable thoroughness and care.

¶ 116 III. CONCLUSION

¶ 117 For the reasons stated, we affirm the trial court's judgment.

¶ 118 Affirmed.