

2026 IL App (1st) 251187-U
No. 1-25-1187
Order filed September 28, 2026

First Division

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).

IN THE
APPELLATE COURT OF ILLINOIS
FIRST DISTRICT

TERRON JACOX,	)	Appeal from the
	)	Circuit Court of
Plaintiff-Appellant,	)	Cook County.
	)	
v.	)	No. 25 OP 73415
	)	
JENNIFER BAYMON,	)	Honorable
	)	Martha-Victoria Jiminez,
Defendant-Appellee.	)	Judge, presiding.

PRESIDING JUSTICE ELLIS delivered the judgment of the court.
Justices Fitzgerald Smith and Howse concurred in the judgment.

ORDER

¶ 1 *Held:* Affirmed. Trial court’s vacatur of emergency stalking no-contact order was not against manifest weight of evidence.

¶ 2 Petitioner Terron Jacox appeals *pro se* from an order vacating an emergency stalking no-contact order, or “SNCO,” against respondent Jennifer Baymon. Terron claims the trial court misunderstood the evidence and misapplied controlling law. We affirm, as the trial court properly evaluated the evidence and applied the law to the letter.

¶ 3 On April 18, 2025, Terron filed a petition for an emergency and plenary SNCO against Jennifer, whom he identified as his co-worker at a Walgreens store in Chicago. (Jennifer is the store manager, Terron an associate.) Terron identified two recent incidents of alleged stalking.

¶ 4 The first allegedly occurred at the Walgreens where they worked, on April 2 at the very specific time of 12:54 pm. We quote the complaint verbatim: “Contamination concern escalated to job threats. I requested to leave first. I asked to go after voices were raised, no response. Escalation was experiences so I asked to go multiple times. Squeezed out without touching her.”

¶ 5 The second incident alleged, also at the Walgreens, was on April 16 at 4:33 pm, again quoting verbatim: “Threw-up multiple times during this event requested to leave escalation turned into police call when I had to keep swallowing it down. did not move, acknowledge my request to leave. used body as a barrier to keep me inside office, despite demanding I get out.”

¶ 6 The same day it was filed, April 18, the court held a hearing on Terron’s petition. Neither Jennifer nor her counsel were present. The propriety of this uncontested hearing is not before us, so we need not recount it in detail. Suffice it to say that Terron testified about the two alleged incidents of April 2 and April 16, 2025, as pleaded in his petition, and the court issued an emergency SNCO following the hearing.

¶ 7 The emergency SNCO prohibited Jennifer from (i) committing the act of stalking as defined by law; (ii) knowingly coming or remaining within 50 feet of Terron’s residence; and (iii) coming or remaining within 20 feet of Terron while at work at Walgreens. The *ex parte* order directed Jennifer to communicate with Terron at work via “audio communication device.” The order was to remain in effect until the scheduled status hearing on May 9, 2025.

¶ 8 Three days after the hearing—April 21—Jennifer received a copy of the SNCO and a summons to appear at the status hearing on May 9. In the meantime, however, Terron filed a motion to modify the SNCO. He argued in that motion that he had been transferred to a different Walgreens due to the safety concerns he had raised. He asked that the distance restriction the SNCO put in place be modified from 50 to 1,600 feet. The motion also seemed to suggest that Terron was no longer permitted to enter the Walgreens where Jennifer worked. In sum, Terron seemed to believe the restrictions in the SNCO applied to him, not Jennifer, and he feared he might inadvertently violate them because he resided near the Walgreens branch in question.

¶ 9 Terron appeared for a hearing on his motion on April 28. Again, Jennifer was not present or represented by counsel, as she received no notice of the hearing. The motion was heard by Judge Martha-Victoria Jiminez. The court denied the motion. The court advised Terron that he was “not restrained by this order” and that the court couldn’t dictate to Walgreens whom to transfer or suspend, where to place its employees, or whom to restrict from its stores. The court continued the matter to the May 9 status hearing to determine if Jennifer had been served.

¶ 10 The day before that scheduled hearing, May 8, Jennifer appeared via counsel to present her motion to file counsel’s appearance and to rehear Terron’s petition under section 120(c) of the Stalking No Contact Order Act. See 740 ILCS 21/120(c) (West 2024). Section 120(c) permits a rehearing of an emergency petition for SNCO if the respondent had no notice of the original hearing and claims to have a meritorious defense. *Id.*

¶ 11 The parties were scheduled for status the following day, May 9, but the court reasoned that, as long as all parties were present, the court would set a schedule right then, rather than make them return the next day. So the court set the date of May 22 for a rehearing of the petition.

¶ 12 Terron objected, claiming he understood the May 9 hearing as the day he would be required to present his proof. He told the court he had lined up witnesses for that day. The court noted, however, that May 9 had never been scheduled for anything other than a status date, principally to ensure that Jennifer had been served with the petition before the case took its next steps. The court informed Terron that the hearing would be “the emergency hearing all over again except now it’s contested.” The court advised Terron that he should bring a lawyer but that, either way, he should be prepared to present all witnesses and proof at that May 22 hearing.

¶ 13 The court then outlined the elements of stalking and advised Terron that “[a]dverse employment actions *** are not stalking.” In response to questions posed by the court, Terron conceded that Jennifer had not threatened him with physical harm, had not caused others to threaten him with physical harm, and had not shown up at his residence. In Terron’s words: “I didn’t say she was stalking specifically.”

¶ 14 But the court aptly pointed out that Terron’s petition did, indeed, at least allege stalking, and Terron would be required to prove as much on May 22. The court advised him that he would be held to a burden and standard of proof regardless of whether he retained counsel.

¶ 15 That brings us to the hearing on May 22. Terron testified that the first incident of stalking occurred on April 2, 2025, in the office of the Walgreens store where he worked as a store associate, with Jennifer as store manager. He walked into Jennifer’s office to discuss a “biohazard contamination issue.” The problem, he told her, was that he had found ice cubes that had either been “spit” or “intentionally dropped” into his “workstation.” He would later explain that his “workstation” was not an office or cubicle but a box—a box sitting on a pushcart full of other such boxes he was assigned to break down that day.

¶ 16 Terron did not know how the ice cubes found their way into the box or who was responsible. But he reported it to Jennifer, who in his opinion did not appreciate the gravity of the situation, acting “dismissive” toward him. Among other things, she told him “this situation would be different if *** a specific person was doing something to intentionally harm [him].” Nevertheless, Jennifer agreed to review security footage with Terron to identify the culprit.

¶ 17 Terron asked her “what was the proper consequence or repercussion for this type of particular situation.” (The judge interjected: “For spilling ice? The repercussion for that?” Terron said yes.) Jennifer said it felt like “an HR issue.” Terron told her that the incident had made him “very uncomfortable” and he wanted to go home. Jennifer replied that, if Terron left work to go home now, he would need to contact HR before returning to work. Terron took that comment as Jennifer threatening to terminate his employment.

¶ 18 So Terron said he would return to work on the floor. But Jennifer stood in the doorway and waved her hands around. To pass her without making physical contact, Terron raised his hands and reached for the doorknob “extremely slowly.” In his words, “When she finally moved her right foot about a centimeter, a very small adjustment, I reached for the doorknob. I opened it and I tried to squeeze out with the room that I was given. And that’s how that event ended.”

¶ 19 The second incident—not pleaded in Terron’s petition—occurred on April 10, 2025, after Terron had left a note on Jennifer’s desk requesting a “schedule shift” to avoid working with a supervisor, Raquel Manares. He was upset with Manares for asking him to move 80 cases of beer in a particular manner, and he “did not want to perform the job task given to [him] because there was a better way to do that job task.”

¶ 20 When Jennifer approached Terron in the cosmetics aisle to discuss the matter, he placed a gray cart between them. Jennifer told him she could not accommodate his request but that he could find someone to switch shifts with him or “cut a day” from his schedule.

¶ 21 Terron asked Jennifer if there was a reason his request was not being accommodated when “this is something that we have been doing for years.” Jennifer did not respond right away, so Terron told her he believed it was a good time to end their conversation. When Jennifer started talking, Terron “was not really in a *** state of mind to perceive what she was stat[ing].”

¶ 22 At some point, Jennifer moved the gray cart, moved closer to Terron, and showed him a schedule. He repeatedly told her he was “okay” with whatever she decided and he would “take it from there.” Jennifer walked away when another employee approached. (As it happened, that employee later traded shifts with Terron with Jennifer’s approval.)

¶ 23 When asked by the court why he viewed this interaction with Jennifer as harassing or threatening conduct, Terron answered that Jennifer had intentionally invaded his space, moved an obstruction he had placed between them, and “used her doing her job as the reason for doing so.” Jennifer did not touch him or threaten to “put her hands on” him but did lean toward him to show him the schedule, leaving less than a foot of space between them.

¶ 24 The third incident occurred on April 16, 2025, after Terron started “throwing up inside [his] mouth and swallowing it down.” Terron notified management he was not feeling well and needed to go home. He then went into the store’s office. Once there, Jennifer called another employee, Alaina Byron, into the office. Jennifer asked Terron, “[A]re you going home for good?” Terron did not respond to Jennifer but told Byron that he needed assistance, after which Jennifer said, “[O]h, right, I need a witness now.”

¶ 25 When asked by the court how this interaction was harassing, Terron said Jennifer's asking him if he was going home for good was "an intentional misunderstanding of the events." He took Jennifer's question as a query into whether he was ending his employment. He believed Jennifer's statement about needing a witness was a reference to instructions she had received from the district manager after Terron asked him to implement a "safety plan." According to Terron, Jennifer referenced the need for a witness "in an instigative, malicious manner."

¶ 26 Terron testified that he asked to leave the office multiple times. When he "made an attempt to the door," Jennifer blocked the exit, moved her hands, and "continued talking about something unrelated to *** [Terron's] request to leave." Jennifer did not touch him or threaten him with physical harm, but she did block the doorway for more than 20 minutes. After blocking Terron's second attempt to leave the office, she repeatedly told him, "[Y]ou have to go. You have to get out. You have to leave. Don't come back."

¶ 27 At some point, Terron called 911. While he talked to the operator, he was shaking and "throwing up in [his] mouth and swallowing it down while choking on it." Jennifer moved from the doorway, approached him, and reached for her cell phone to call the district manager. While reaching "under" Terron, her hair grazed Terron's beard. At that point, Terron "blacked out" for an unspecified amount of time. He could not recall everything he said during that time but remembered that he continued to talk to the 911 operator while Jennifer complained about Terron on the phone with the district manager. After he hung up, he waited in the office for the police. When the police arrived about 30 minutes later, Terron told them what happened. He went home shortly thereafter. No arrests resulted from the police visit.

¶ 28 Terron acknowledged that Jennifer never interacted with him outside of work, had never been to his home, had never followed him home from work, had never physically touched him, had never threatened to touch him, and had never monitored his whereabouts outside of work.

¶ 29 After his testimony, Terron told the court that he had witnesses, but they were not present because they were “scheduled to be presented May 9th.” He asked “for the case to have room for them to be present.” The court denied the request, stating that it had made it “very clear” that the hearing was set for May 22, 2025, and that if Terron had wanted to present witnesses, he “had to make efforts to have them here.”

¶ 30 After Terron rested, Jennifer’s counsel moved for a directed finding. The court granted the motion, finding that Terron failed to establish a *prima facie* case of stalking. No doubt, Terron “fe[lt] strongly” about the incidents and took them personally. But his overreactions to “fairly normal, *** benign, workplace situations” were not enough to warrant an SNCO.

¶ 31 The incident on April 2, 2025, involving ice cubes found in a box he was required to break down, was a *de minimis* infraction of a workplace policy at most. The court rejected the notion that Jennifer falsely imprisoned Terron in her office. She was merely “doing her duties” trying to resolve a workplace issue after Terron had raised the incident with her.

¶ 32 Jennifer’s refusal, at least initially, to accommodate his request for a shift change on April 10, even if unreasonable, was neither harassing nor threatening and thus did not constitute “stalking.” And the April 16 incident again involved “workplace matter[s]” that, even if unpleasant for Terron, did not amount to threatening or harassing behavior.

¶ 33 The court entered a directed finding in favor of Jennifer and vacated the emergency SNCO. This timely appeal followed.

¶ 34 On appeal, Terron's points of error can be summarized as claims that the court (i) misunderstood and misapplied the statutory factors for stalking; (ii) erred in rescheduling the hearing, thus depriving him the opportunity to call witnesses; and (iii) was biased against him.

¶ 35 As an initial matter, Jennifer argues that this appeal should be dismissed, as Terron's brief violates Illinois Supreme Court Rule 341 (eff. Oct. 1, 2020). We agree that Terron's brief is deficient in many respects. Most notably, Illinois Supreme Court Rule 341(h)(7) (eff. Oct. 1, 2020) requires that an appellant's brief contain reasoned argument supported by citations to the authorities and pages of the record.

¶ 36 Terron's brief contains little such detail. His arguments merely state conclusions, without tying the facts of the case and the judge's reasoning to errors of law recognized by decisions of an Illinois court. He does list case law at times but only for general propositions. Not once, for example, does Terron even explain the elements he was required to prove for his case, much less how the court erred in its conclusion that he failed to prove a *prima facie* case.

¶ 37 A reviewing court must have the issues on appeal clearly defined, pertinent authority cited, and a cohesive legal argument presented. *Lewis v. Heartland Food Corp.*, 2014 IL App (1st) 123303, ¶ 5. An appellant's *pro se* status does not relieve him of his obligation to comply with Rule 341. *Wing v. Chicago Transit Authority*, 2016 IL App (1st) 153517, ¶ 7.

¶ 38 We would be within our rights to dismiss the appeal, as Jennifer requests. See *Holzrichter v. Yorath*, 2013 IL App (1st) 110287, ¶ 77. That is never our first option, nor do we choose it here. We will consider the appeal on the merits as best we can, largely because Jennifer's brief coherently explains every facet of the background and trial testimony, along with citations to the record and supporting authorities.

¶ 39 But our willingness to consider the merits, despite the deficiencies of Terron's brief, comes with a caveat. There is a limit to the lengths we will go to cobble together an argument for an appellant, lest we cease to be a neutral arbiter and become his advocate. See *People v. Givens*, 237 Ill. 2d 311, 328 (2010); *Tuna v. Wisner*, 2023 IL App (1st) 211327, ¶ 56; *Stallings v. Santander Consumer USA Inc.*, 2026 IL App (1st) 250554-U, ¶¶ 13-14. That would be particularly unfair to the appellee, Jennifer, who would not have the chance to respond to the case law we discovered, the arguments that we crafted and honed for the appellant. Considering the merits does not mean we will make Terron's arguments for him.

¶ 40 Terron first argues that the court misinterpreted and misapplied the statutory factors for stalking. Without more detail, it is difficult to know whether Terron is raising a legal question or a challenge to the court's findings. But either way, our standard of review is *de novo* under these circumstances. Legal questions are always reviewed *de novo*. *People v. Morgan*, 2025 IL 130626, ¶ 22. Typically, our review of a court's factual findings are not reviewed *de novo* but under the deferential manifest-weight standard. *Id.* ¶ 20.

¶ 41 But a combination of two factors makes our review here *de novo*. First, this was a bench, not a jury trial. And second, the court entered a directed finding that Terron had failed to establish a *prima facie* case of stalking.

¶ 42 At a bench trial, the court's consideration of a motion for directed finding comes in two steps. See 735 ILCS 5/2–1110 (West 2024); *In re Estate of Coffman*, 2023 IL 128867, ¶ 51. First, the court determines as a matter of law whether the plaintiff has put forth *some* evidence on each element to establish a *prima facie* case. *Estate of Coffman*, 2023 IL 128867, ¶ 52. That ruling, a question of law, is subject to *de novo* review on appeal. *Id.*

¶ 43 If (and only if) the plaintiff has submitted at least some proof on each element to establish a *prima facie* case, the trial court then proceeds to step two, where it considers the totality of the evidence presented at that point, including that which favors the defendant and any credibility judgments and reasonable inferences it may draw. *Id.* ¶ 53. After weighing and balancing the evidence, the court then must make the *factual* determination whether *sufficient* evidence exists on each element of the plaintiff's case. *Id.* ¶ 54. If not, the court directs a finding for the defendant. That second-step determination is reviewed for manifest error. *Id.*

¶ 44 The court's ruling here was at the first step. The court ruled that Terron did not establish a *prima facie* case. So our review is *de novo*, meaning we give no deference to the circuit court's reasoning and independently determine whether Terron established a *prima facie* case.

¶ 45 That settled, it is difficult to credit Terron's argument that the court failed to consider "the statutory factors, ongoing safety concerns, and broader implications of proximity, despite evidence of workplace harassment and interference with bodily autonomy," or that the trial court "improperly substituted at-will employment logic and workplace authority *** rather than addressing petitioner's right to legal protection for coercive, non-consensual conduct."

¶ 46 First, Terron did not list the statutory factors and explain how he satisfied each element of his claim under the statute, much less how, specifically, the trial court got it wrong. The first order of business for an appellant, carrying the burden of demonstrating error, is to explain how the evidence he presented established his claim. Terron has forfeited this argument by failing to provide the rudimentary basics of an appellate argument. Ill. S. Ct. R. 341(h)(7) (eff. Oct. 1, 2020) (points not sufficiently argued on appeal are forfeited).

¶ 47 In any event, we fully agree with Judge Jiminez’s ruling. Under the Act, “stalking” means “engaging in a course of conduct directed at a specific person” where the respondent “knows or should know that this course of conduct would cause a reasonable person to fear for his or her safety, the safety of a workplace, school, or place of worship, or the safety of a third person or suffer emotional distress.” 740 ILCS 21/10 (West 2024). A “course of conduct” means two or more acts that include following, surveilling, monitoring, or threatening another person or interfering with or damaging that person’s property. *Id.*

¶ 48 Terron showed none of that here. For one, Terron initiated every single incident he raised. He came to Jennifer to complain about the ice cubes in his box. He asked her to change his shift. He left the register and asked to leave work when he felt sick. We are hard-pressed to find that Jennifer engaged in a “course of conduct” that Terron himself initiated each time.

¶ 49 Second, we agree with the circuit court that the incidents were not of such a character that a reasonable person would fear for his safety. Terron, himself, conceded he never felt such fear. The only time Jennifer even physically contacted Terron—causing him to “black out,” he said—was when her hair grazed his beard as she reached for her cell phone to call her boss.

¶ 50 The court properly characterized these incidents as “*de minimis*” workplace disputes. However unpleasant some of Jennifer’s comments may have been to Terron subjectively, they did not objectively rise to the level of threats of violence or intimidation as required by the Act. See *Henby v. White*, 2016 IL App (5th) 140407, ¶ 26. We find no error in the court’s consideration of the evidence or statutory elements.

¶ 51 Nor do we find error in the court’s scheduling of the case, Terron’s next argument. A court’s rulings on case management and continuances are within its discretion; we will find an

abuse of that discretion only if no reasonable person would adopt the trial court's ruling. *Doe v. Parrillo*, 2021 IL 126577, ¶ 65; *Evard v. Monsanto Co.*, 2025 IL App (1st) 241235, ¶ 62. Terron claims that he understood the May 9 hearing date as one where he would put on proof, and thus he organized his witnesses to appear that day. But the court's initial order made clear that May 9 was merely a status hearing to confirm that Jennifer had been served.

¶ 52 Once the court disabused Terron of this notion on May 8, the date that Jennifer appeared and requested a rehearing, Terron had the opportunity to prepare his witnesses for May 22, when the hearing was held. The court specifically told Terron to have any witnesses or any other proof ready on May 22. We see no way in which Terron was treated unfairly. Indeed, it would have been patently unfair to force Jennifer to try the case on May 9, only one day after she appeared.

¶ 53 Finally, Terron claims the court was biased against him. He provides no legal or factual support for that argument and thus has forfeited it. See Ill. S. Ct. R. 341(h)(7) (eff. Oct. 1, 2020).

¶ 54 The claim is meritless in any event. Judge Jiminez showed eminent patience in dealing with Terron throughout the proceeding, carefully explaining to him on May 8 what he would be required to prove at the rehearing on May 22, what kinds of evidence the court would and would not accept, and encouraging him to retain counsel. At the rehearing, the court indulged Terron during lengthy pauses and breaks, when Terron continually repeated himself and, at times, as Terron evaded the court's reasonable questioning. The mere fact that the court disagreed with him on the merits is not evidence of bias. *Eychaner v. Gross*, 202 Ill. 2d 228, 280 (2002).

¶ 55 The judgment of the circuit court is affirmed.

¶ 56 Affirmed.