

NON-PRECEDENTIAL DECISION - SEE SUPERIOR COURT O.P. 65.37

IN RE: JULIA M. SHERLOCK	:	IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF
	:	PENNSYLVANIA
	:	
APPEAL OF: JOAN SHERLOCK	:	
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	:	
	:	
	:	No. 31 EDA 2026

Appeal from the Order Entered November 19, 2025
In the Court of Common Pleas of Chester County
Orphans' Court at No(s): 1518-0854

BEFORE: LAZARUS, P.J., MURRAY, J., and FORD ELLIOTT, P.J.E.*

MEMORANDUM BY FORD ELLIOTT, P.J.E.: **FILED SEPTEMBER 21, 2026**

Joan Sherlock appeals *pro se* from the order, titled as a "Status Order," which denied her "Praecipe for Entry of Final Order."¹ The appellee, the Estate

* Retired Senior Judge assigned to the Superior Court.

¹ "In a decedent's estate, generally the confirmation of the final account of the personal representative represents the final order, subject to exceptions being filed and disposed of by the court." ***In re Estate of Cherwinski***, 856 A.2d 165, 166-67 (Pa. Super. 2004). While, here, the Orphans' Court, in an order dated May 6, 2022, made its rulings on, *inter alia*, Joan's "Objections to Accounting," that order expressly provided for a future "final order," to be issued following the submission of "an affidavit setting forth the final amount of [the Estate's] exceptional litigation expenses post-dating February 13, 2020[.]" Order, 5/6/22, at 2 (unpaginated).

Presently, the Orphans' Court implicitly acknowledges that no "final order" was ever issued, but states that "no further order is required as the court issued its ruling in the May 6, 2022 order on the accounting and objections after an evidentiary hearing." Orphans' Court Opinion, 1/2/26, at 4. Nevertheless, a dismissal of objections is "neither an adjudication or a decree of distribution, (Footnote Continued Next Page)

of Julia M. Sherlock, Keven Sherlock, Executor, has filed an application to quash this appeal. We dismiss this appeal and deny the application to quash as moot.

The Orphans' Court summarized the procedural posture of this case as follows:

On November 1, 2021, Joan filed objections to [the] accounting. The Honorable Bret M. Binder held a hearing on the objections on March 31, 2022. On May 6, 2022, Judge Binder issued an order on the objections. . . .

Both Joan and the executor[, Kevin Sherlock,] filed petitions for reconsideration. On May 18, 2023, Judge Binder denied the petitions. On June 28, 2024, Joan filed a motion for actions against William Luttrell[, Esquire, the attorney representing the estate,] and the executor. The executor filed preliminary objections to the motion for sanctions. On August 14, 2024, [the Orphans' Court]

and as such is an improper antecedent to confirmation of an account." **Matter of Estate of Meininger**, 532 A.2d 475, 477 (Pa. Super. 1987).

Neither the 2022 status order, nor the presently appealed-from 2025 order denying Joan's praecipe, point to the existence of an order confirming the final account. As an exception to this finality rule, an unpublished memorandum of this Court concluded that an order dismissing objections to a final account was a final order where no claims or parties remained, **see In re Estate of McLeod**, 2021 WL 1750888 at *9 n.3 (Pa. Super., filed May 4, 2021) (unpublished memorandum) (citing **In re Nadzam**, 203 A.3d 215, 219 (Pa. Super. 2019)); **see also** Pa.R.A.P. 341(b)(1), but the May 6, 2022 order, by its very language, did not extinguish all claims and parties and explicitly provided for further litigation and the issuance of a final order. Thus, while the court opines that its November 19, 2025 status order is not a final order, believing its May 6, 2022 order to have already been final, we conclude that the 2025 order's operative effect resolves, once and for all, all claims and all parties, rendering it appealable as a final order. **See** Status Order, 11/19/25, at 3 ("There are no outstanding issues for adjudication before this court in this matter.").

sustained the preliminary objections and dismissed the motion for sanctions against [Attorney] Luttrell and executor. . . .

On June 2, 2025, Joan filed objections to the affidavit of exceptional litigation expenses. The objections requested “the entire matter be reconsidered/re-evaluated” and the monies be distributed immediately.

On August 6, 2025, [the Orphans’ Court] dismissed Joan’s objections[:] “because Joan’s objections raise the same claims that were previously litigated[.]”

On August 13, 2025, Joan filed a motion for reconsideration[.]

On September 4, 2024, [the Orphans’ Court] denied Joan’s motion for reconsideration. On September 9, 2025, Joan filed a memorandum of law in support of her motion, but the court had already denied her motion. No appeal was filed from the court’s September 4, 2025 order.

On September 15, 2025, the executor filed its affidavit of exceptional litigation expenses (noting a copy of said affidavit was attached to objector/Joan’s objections to affidavit of exceptional litigation expenses filed June 2, 2025).

On September 29, 2025, Joan filed a praecipe for entry of final decree. On October 28, 2025, Joan sent correspondence to chambers copying [Attorney Luttrell] requesting a status.

On November 19, 2025, [the Orphans’ Court] issued a status order.

On December 1, 2025, Joan filed a notice of appeal of the November 19, 2025 status order.

Orphans’ Court Opinion, 1/12/26, at 1-3 (some names altered; unnecessary capitalization omitted).

In conjunction with her appeal, Joan filed a thirteen-page document purporting to be her concise statement of errors complained of on appeal pursuant to Pennsylvania Rule of Appellate Procedure 1925(b). The first three

pages provide paragraphs of text that ostensibly provide background into the case from her perspective. Then, beginning on page four, Joan alleges, in what can only be described as outline format, six broad errors, containing dozens of sub- and sub-sub-issues, numbering somewhere near one-hundred discrete averments of error. **See generally** Pa.R.A.P. 1925(b) Statement, 12/12/25. We find Joan's concise statement flouts the rules and is the functional equivalent of no statement.

Adherence to our general precepts regarding Rule 1925 concise statements is not merely a suggestion:

An appellant's concise statement must identify the errors with sufficient specificity for the trial court to identify and address the issues the appellant wishes to raise on appeal. **See** Pa.R.A.P. 1925(b)(4)(ii) (requiring [] Rule 1925(b) statement to "concisely identify each ruling or error that the appellant intends to challenge with sufficient detail to identify all pertinent issues for the judge"). This Court explained in **Riley v. Foley**, [783 A.2d 807, 813 (Pa. Super. 2001)], that [Rule] 1925 is a crucial component of the appellate process because it allows the trial court to identify and focus on those issues the parties plan to raise on appeal. We further determined that "a [c]oncise [s]tatement which is too vague to allow the court to identify the issues raised on appeal is the functional equivalent to no [c]oncise [s]tatement at all." **Commonwealth v. Dowling**, [778 A.2d 683, 686-87 (Pa. Super. 2001)]. "Even if the trial court correctly guesses the issues [the a]ppellant raises on appeal and writes an opinion pursuant to that supposition[,], the issues are still waived." **Kanter v. Epstein**, [866 A.2d 394, 400 (Pa. Super. 2004)] (citation omitted).

Satiro v. Maninno, 237 A.3d 1145, 1150 (Pa. Super. 2020) (brackets omitted). Moreover, when an appellant's concise statement identifies too many issues for appeal in a manner that impedes meaningful review, this Court has found waiver of all issues:

Our law makes it clear that [Rule] 1925(b) is not satisfied by simply filing any statement. Rather, the statement must be “concise” and coherent as to permit the trial court to understand the specific issues being raised on appeal.

Specifically, this Court has held that when appellants raise an “outrageous” number of issues in their [Rule] 1925(b) statement, the appellants have deliberately circumvented the meaning and purpose of Rule 1925(b) and have thereby effectively precluded appellate review of the issues they now seek to raise. We have further noted that such “voluminous” statements do not identify the issues that appellants actually intend to raise on appeal because the briefing limitations contained in [Pennsylvania Rule of Appellate Procedure] 2116(a) makes the raising of so many issues impossible. Further, this type of extravagant [Rule] 1925(b) statement makes it all but impossible for the trial court to provide a comprehensive analysis of the issues.

Id. at 1150-51 (citations, original brackets, and some quotation marks omitted); ***see also Jones v. Jones***, 878 A.2d 86, 90-91 (Pa. Super. 2005) (appellant’s twenty-nine issues written in narrative form made it impossible to discern from Rule 1925(b) statement which claims actually identified issues and which provided unnecessary background information resulting in waiver).

Here, Joan’s “concise” statement contains myriad sentence fragments, totaling over one hundred averments, replete with a seemingly random assortment of legal phrases, citations to case law and other authorities, and “facts” that she believes are germane to her panoply of arguments. As such, she, in effect, presented to the Orphans’ Court with such a voluminous filing that it is the functional equivalent of no concise statement at all. ***See Satiro***, 237 A.3d at 1150-51. Accordingly, she has impeded meaningful review of this

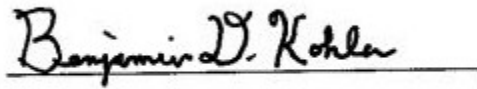
appeal, and we dismiss this appeal in its entirety.^{2, 3} **See *id.*; see also Jones**, 878 A.2d at 90-91.

Appeal dismissed. Application to quash denied as moot.

² We acknowledge that some disputes, given their nature, inherently lend themselves to the existence of potentially more issues. **See, e.g., *Eiser v. Brown & Williamson Tobacco Corp.***, 938 A.2d 417, 427 (Pa. 2007) (noting appellants preserved their claims, despite raising twenty-four issues with sub-issues, because they “brought forth a complicated multi-count lawsuit with numerous defendants resulting in many trial court rulings”). However, this estate matter is decidedly not one of those more complex situations.

³ Joan’s eighty-three-page appellant’s brief is similarly rambling, deficient, and organized haphazardly in outline format. In fact, the executor argues that she “violates almost every rule of appellate procedure that governs briefs.” Appellee’s Brief at 14; **see also *id.*** at 14-19 (discussing, with particularity, the brief’s apparent deviations from the rules of appellate procedure); Application to Quash Appeal, 5/4/26, at 1-9 (same). We emphasize that “although this Court is willing to construe liberally materials filed by a *pro se* litigant, *pro se* status generally confers no special benefit upon an appellant.” ***Commonwealth v. Lyons***, 833 A.2d 245, 251-52 (Pa. Super. 2003) (citation omitted). To the contrary, “any layperson choosing to represent himself in a legal proceeding must, to some reasonable extent, assume the risk that his lack of expertise and legal training will prove his undoing.” ***Vann v. Com., Unemployment Comp. Bd. of Review***, 494 A.2d 1081, 1086 (Pa. 1985) (citation omitted). A *pro se* litigant must comply with the procedural rules set forth in the Pennsylvania Rules of Court. **See *Lyons***, 833 A.2d at 252. At a minimum, notwithstanding its general unintelligibility, Joan’s brief violates Pa.R.A.P. 2119(c) given that it contains no direct record citations. In any event, we need not reach the application to quash Joan’s brief based on our dismissal pursuant to Rule 1925.

Judgment Entered.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Benjamin D. Kohler", is written over a horizontal line.

Benjamin D. Kohler, Esq.
Prothonotary

Date: 9/21/2026