Circuit Court for Baltimore City
Case No. 821141011

UNREPORTED*

IN THE APPELLATE COURT

OF MARYLAND**

No. 0495

September Term, 2022

ISAIAH NORMAN RANSOM

V.

STATE OF MARYLAND

Kehoe,
Leahy,
Zic,

JJ.

Opinion by Zic, J.

Filed: June 20, 2023

* This is an unreported opinion, and it may not be cited in any paper, brief, motion, or other document filed in this Court or any other Maryland Court as either precedent within the rule of stare decisis or as persuasive authority. Md. Rule 1-104.

** At the November 8, 2022 general election, the voters of Maryland ratified a constitutional amendment changing the name of the Court of Special Appeals of Maryland to the Appellate Court of Maryland. The name change took effect on December 14, 2022.

On December 8, 2020, Norman Isaiah Ransome,[1] appellant, and Raymond Chang were involved in an automobile accident. Immediately following the accident, Mr. Ransome and Mr. Chang engaged in a physical altercation. As a result, Mr. Ransome was charged in the Circuit Court for Baltimore City with robbery, second-degree assault, and theft between $100 and less than $1,500. charges for second-degree assault and theft proceeded to a jury trial, and a jury found Mr. Ransome guilty of both counts. On May 4, 2022, Mr. Ransome was sentenced to nine years' imprisonment for the second-degree assault conviction and, to be served concurrently, six months' imprisonment for the theft conviction. Mr. Ransome then filed this appeal.

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

On appeal, Mr. Ransome presents two questions, which we have rephrased as follows:[2]

1. Whether the trial court erred in admitting Mr. Chang's testimony regarding the extent of his injuries following an automobile accident and alleged assault.

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[1] The appellant's name is spelled as "Isaiah Ransom" throughout the trial transcript and court documents; however, he has identified his name as "Norman Isaiah Ransome." We will use the proper spelling of Mr. Ransome's full name in this opinion.

[2] Mr. Ransome phrases the questions as follows:

> 1. Where there was both an undisputed automobile accident and a claimed assault, did the trial court err in admitting the complaining witness' testimony regarding his medical treatment, therapy, care, and the extent of his subsequent injuries because the testimony was not relevant to the elements of second-degree assault?
>
> 2. Did the trial court err by refusing to ask venirepersons if they would be unduly biased after hearing testimony detailing the extent of the complaining witness' injuries?

2. Whether the trial court abused its discretion by declining to ask a requested voir dire question regarding jurors' potential biases if they heard testimony about the extent of Mr. Chang's injuries.

For the reasons that follow, we find that the first issue is unpreserved and shall affirm the circuit court's judgment with respect to the second issue.

BACKGROUND

It is undisputed that on December 8, 2020, Mr. Ransome and Mr. Chang were driving on Greenspring Avenue around 4:30 p.m., when they were involved in a vehicle collision between their respective vehicles. As a result of the collision, Mr. Ransome's vehicle swerved off the road, went through a six-foot chain link fence, and crashed into a tree in a wooded area at the bottom of an embankment. Mr. Ransome exited his vehicle, made his way back up to the road, and approached Mr. Chang. Mr. Ransome and Mr. Chang then engaged in a physical altercation, which resulted in Mr. Ransome being charged in the Circuit Court for Baltimore City with robbery, second-degree assault, and theft between $100 and $1,500. The charges for second-degree assault and theft proceeded to a jury trial on May 2 through May 4, 2022.

Before trial, Mr. Ransome raised a motion in limine to limit Mr. Chang's testimony "regarding the extent of his injuries." Defense counsel argued that the elements of second-degree assault do not require that a particular level of injury be established, and, therefore, such evidence is irrelevant under Maryland Rules 5-401 and 5-402 and, given the nature of Mr. Chang's injuries, could be unduly prejudicial under Rule 5-403. At this time, Mr. Ransome did not argue that Mr. Chang's injuries could

have been caused by the car accident immediately before the alleged assault. The State countered that the evidence was "relevant and probative" because Mr. Chang's injuries "tend[ed] to show that the assault did in fact happen as the victim stated." Also, the State explained that it could not present certified medical records related to Mr. Chang's treatment.

The court ruled that Mr. Chang had "a right to testify as to the events that occurred and the result of what happened based on that," so he could testify about his injuries and how he felt but could not draw medical conclusions in his testimony. The court explained that defense counsel would be able to object on a case-by-case basis to Mr. Chang's testimony if she felt "as though [Mr. Chang's] going outside of it and it's a hearsay that's not supported by an exception."

After this ruling but before trial, the circuit court clarified that it was not a "generalized broad ruling" and not all of Mr. Chang's medical testimony was precluded: "So I just wanted to make certain that we're clear about the fact that [the motion] was denied as a sweeping limitation, but it will be allowed on a case-by-case basis as it pertains to the questions that are posed to the witness in regards to the injuries, okay."

On the first day of trial, before opening arguments, the court cautioned the State about its questioning of Mr. Chang in light of its lack of certified medical records: "I need to caution [the State] to make certain that she instructs her witness that he is not a medical expert and that you do not have his medical records to put into this [c]ourt." The trial judge explained:

> So based on the rules of evidence as you are aware of them and the fact that you have no certified medical records, make certain that you have counseled your witnesses about those things that they can testify to. . . . I just want to make certain that that's clear because if it gets to the point that it's too much, then it could be deemed prejudicial and I might have to declare a mistrial.

During trial, the State offered testimony from Mr. Chang. He testified that, while he was driving northbound on Greenspring Avenue, a gray car immediately behind him was flashing its lights and then started to pass Mr. Chang on his left by driving into the southbound lane. Mr. Chang stated that the gray car then scraped Mr. Chang's car along the driver's side, Mr. Chang pulled over, and he saw the gray car veering off the road, towards a fence. Mr. Chang testified that he then went to check on the other driver, which is when he met the other driver, Mr. Ransome, in the street and asked, "Hey, are you okay?" He stated that Mr. Ransome asked him for his insurance, so he turned to retrieve it, but Mr. Ransome then said, "You're not leaving." Mr. Ransome was standing between Mr. Chang and Mr. Chang's car. Mr. Chang testified that Mr. Ransome suddenly ripped the lanyard from around Mr. Chang's neck, Mr. Chang put his arms up to protect his face, and Mr. Ransome started to punch him in the head.

Mr. Chang went on to testify about the extent of his injuries and the medical treatment he received, which he attributed to the alleged assault. In this testimony, Mr. Chang explained his medical treatment during the months after the collision, but the State did not offer any medical records related to that treatment.

A witness to the car accident and physical altercation also testified on behalf of the State. [This witness testified that she was driving in the opposite direction at the time of

the collision, turned around, and came to a stop near Mr. Ransome's and Mr. Chang's vehicles to "see if everybody was okay." She testified to seeing a gentleman get "out of his car in the woods and come out and [] hit[] who I now know [a]s Mr. Chang, in the head and body" while Mr. Chang blocked his own face without fighting back; she witnessed Mr. Ransome hit Mr. Chang "at least four or five times." She testified that she felt "unnerved" by this scene so drove past the stopped vehicles a bit, exited her vehicle, and announced to the parties that she was calling 911, hoping that Mr. Ransome would stop hitting Mr. Chang. She stated, "At that point, he stopped hitting him and Mr. Chang started to come towards me." Mr. Chang got into this witness's car, and she drove her car about 40 feet farther down the road to wait for the police to arrive.

The jury found Mr. Ransome guilty of both second-degree assault and theft between $100 and $1,500.[3] On May 4, 2022, the circuit court sentenced Mr. Ransome to nine years' imprisonment for the second-degree assault conviction and, to be served concurrently, six months' imprisonment for the theft conviction. Mr. Ransome timely filed this appeal.

[3] Evidence to support the theft conviction was also adduced at trial, but we do not detail that evidence here because this appeal does not put at issue anything directly related to the theft charge or conviction.

DISCUSSION

I. THE ISSUE OF WHETHER THE TRIAL COURT ERRED IN ADMITTING MR. CHANG'S TESTIMONY REGARDING THE EXTENT OF HIS INJURIES IS NOT PRESERVED FOR APPELLATE REVIEW.

We start by addressing the question of preservation. The State argues that this issue was not properly preserved for appellate review because Mr. Ransome did not timely object to the State's questions designed to elicit testimony from Mr. Chang about the extent of his injuries. The State highlights Mr. Ransome's objections throughout the trial transcripts, explaining that all the objections during Mr. Chang's testimony were seemingly hearsay objections, not objections to Mr. Chang's discussion of the extent of his injuries. Asserting that "the record does not suggest that the court understood [Mr. Ransome's] objection" to relate to Mr. Chang's description of his injuries but rather only to "what the doctor said," the State concludes that Mr. Ransome's appellate arguments regarding Mr. Chang's testimony about the extent of his injuries are unpreserved.

Mr. Ransome counters that the "continuous[] and repeated[]" objections during Mr. Chang's trial testimony were timely and sufficient to preserve the issue for appellate review. Mr. Ransome argues that his objections put the trial court on notice of his desire to limit Mr. Chang's testimony about his injuries. Mr. Ransome also states that he "does not argue preservation of statements where no objection was made."

"Ordinarily[,] appellate courts will not address claims of error which have not been raised and decided in the trial court." *State v. Hutchinson*, 287 Md. 198, 202 (1980). It is well-established that failure to contemporaneously object before the trial court results in an unpreserved issue that is not customarily reviewable by appellate

courts. *Id.* *See also Savoy v. State*, 420 Md. 232, 243 (2011) (noting the "general rule requiring preservation of claims by contemporaneous objection"); *Hammond v. State*, 257 Md. App. 99, 119-20 (2023) (emphasizing the requirement to contemporaneously object). The Supreme Court of Maryland[4] has described the rule requiring contemporaneous objections as "strict." *Bruce v. State*, 328 Md. 594, 627 (1992).

"[W]hen a motion *in limine* to exclude evidence is denied, the issue of the admissibility of the evidence that was the subject of the motion is not preserved for appellate review unless a contemporaneous objection is made at the time the evidence is later introduced at trial." *Klauenberg v. State*, 355 Md. 528, 539 (1999) (citations omitted). *See also Wise v. State*, 243 Md. App. 257, 275-76 (2019) (finding objection during a hearing on motion in limine did not obviate need for timely objection when evidence was elicited at trial), *aff'd*, 471 Md. 431 (2020). Because Mr. Ransome's motion in limine was denied, Maryland Rule 4-323(a) required his counsel to object when the evidence that was the subject of the motion was later introduced during trial. *Klauenberg*, 355 Md. at 539. Counsel may request a continuing objection or must lodge an objection every time the contested evidence is or threatens to be introduced. *Fone v. State*, 233 Md. App. 88, 113 (2017) ("[T]o preserve an objection, a party must either

[4] At the November 8, 2022 general election, the voters of Maryland ratified a constitutional amendment changing the name of the Court of Appeals of Maryland to the Supreme Court of Maryland. The name change took effect on December 14, 2022. *See also* Md. Rule 1-101.1(a) ("From and after December 14, 2022, any reference in these Rules or, in any proceedings before any court of the Maryland Judiciary, any reference in any statute, ordinance, or regulation applicable in Maryland to the Court of Appeals of Maryland shall be deemed to refer to the Supreme Court of Maryland . . . .").

object each time a question concerning the matter is posed or . . . request a continuing objection to the entire line of questioning." (cleaned up)). Mr. Ransome's counsel did not request a continuing objection.

This Court has also established that when a question seeks an inadmissible answer, counsel must object immediately to the question rather than waiting to hear the answer. *Fowlkes v. State*, 117 Md. App. 573, 587 (1997) (explaining that this requirement is grounded in Maryland Rule 4-323(a)). "The question is 'whether or not [defense] counsel could or should have known from the question that the answer would be objectionable.'" *Id.* (quoting *Bruce*, 328 Md. at 628). In *Byrd v. State*, this Court held that an issue was not properly preserved because "the objection was made after [the witness's] answer was given" and defense counsel should have known, based on the question, that the information provided in the answer would be objectionable. 98 Md. App. 627, 631 (1993), *abrogated on other grounds*, *Winters v. State*, 434 Md. 527 (2013).

Alternatively, if an objectionable answer is unexpected based upon the question asked, "the offended party" must object "as soon . . . as the grounds for objection become apparent," Maryland Rule 4-323(a), and "move immediately to strike the objectionable answer." *Williams v. State*, 99 Md. App. 711, 717 (1994), *aff'd on other grounds*, 344 Md. 358 (1996). *See also Prince v. State*, 216 Md. App. 178, 194 (2014) (explaining that the objection "must come quickly enough to allow the trial court to prevent mistakes or cure them in real time"). During Mr. Chang's direct examination, every instance that he testified about the extent of his injuries was preceded by a question from the State that sought to elicit such testimony. We do not find that any of the answers to which Mr.

Ransome objected at trial were unexpected based upon the questions asked. Even if an answer was unexpected, however, defense counsel did not move to strike any of Mr. Chang's testimony; the issue, therefore, was not preserved in this manner.

Mr. Ransome opposed Mr. Chang's testimony as to the extent of his injuries. Because defense counsel did not request a continuing objection, she was required to object to each question that sought to elicit testimony about the extent of Mr. Chang's injuries, before he responded to the question, in order to preserve the issue. Defense counsel did not object to any question—but rather objected to Mr. Chang's answers—during Mr. Chang's direct examination, making each of the objections in the below-reviewed testimony untimely.

During Mr. Chang's testimony at trial, Mr. Ransome's counsel first raised an objection when Mr. Chang began to relay the doctors' diagnosis:

> [The State]: And can you describe the pain that you had [the morning after the incident]?
>
> [Mr. Chang]: I had pain in my left leg. In the morning it started as just a light pain, but by the end of the day, I had trouble bending the leg. The doctors diagnosed it as a –
>
> [Defense Counsel]: Objection.

Defense counsel explained her basis as hearsay and relevance. The State argued that it was admissible for "the effect on the listener" because "[a]s a result of the diagnosis, [Mr. Chang] went and did the treatment." The court precluded Mr. Chang from testifying as to the diagnosis but allowed the State "to ask him about the effect of the diagnosis without the diagnosis."

Defense counsel next objected during Mr. Chang's response to the State's request, again, for him to describe his pain after the incident. Mr. Chang began by stating, "That's a long[,] complicated answer." He went on to describe, at length, various symptoms, including "headaches and nausea and fatigue," vomiting, loss of appetite, "visual distortions," and problems with balance. Within his response, when he started a sentence, "And the doctor said --," defense counsel interrupted with an objection. The court sustained the objection "as to what the doctor said," indicating that he understood the objection to be based on hearsay.

Mr. Chang then explained that his wife took him to an appointment with his primary care doctor, and the following exchange occurred:

> [The State]: And as a result of that appointment what if anything did you do next?
>
> [Mr. Chang]: I got an MRI.
>
> [The State]: And after you go the MRI, what did [sic] anything did you do next?
>
> [Mr. Chang]: After I got the MRI, they told me that --
>
> [Defense Counsel]: Objection.

The court sustained the objection and instructed the State to "[g]ive [Mr. Chang] a more direct question, not so broad." Direct examination proceeded:

> [The State]: So after you got the MRI, did the doctor tell you to do anything?
>
> [Mr. Chang]: Yes. The doctor told me that --
>
> [Defense Counsel]: Objection.

> [The State]: As a result of what the doctor told you, what if anything did you do next?
>
> [Mr. Chang]: The doctor told me to go --
>
> [Defense Counsel]: Objection.
>
> [The Court]: What did you do next after what the [doctors] told you. Just say what you did next, your next action.
>
> [Mr. Chang]: I went to the hospital.
>
> [The Court]: Okay.
>
> [Mr. Chang]: I went to the ER because the doctor told me that my life --
>
> [Defense Counsel]: Objection.

The court directed the State to move on to the next question.

Mr. Chang later testified that he was prescribed Diamox:

> [Mr. Chang]: And the next medication they put me on was Diamox.
>
> [The State]: And what [sic] did you take Diamox?
>
> [Mr. Chang]: I took Diamox because I had inter-cranial hypertension.
>
> [Defense Counsel]: Objection.

The court overruled this objection, stating, "He can testify as to why he took that medication." Mr. Chang then testified, "The doctors told me that I had a cerebral --," and defense counsel objected; the court sustained the objection without explanation.

After Mr. Chang explained the function of Diamox, his testimony continued as follows:

> [The State]: And you said that you also took blood thinners?
>
> [Mr. Chang]: That's right.
>
> [The State]: Why did you take blood thinners?
>
> [Mr. Chang]: I took blood thinners because I had a blood clot caused by --
>
> [Defense Counsel]: Objection.
>
> [The Court]: Overruled. You can answer. You can continue to answer. Overruled.
>
> [Mr. Chang]: The diagnosis that I had from --
>
> [Defense Counsel]: Objection.
>
> [The Court]: You can continue. Overruled.
>
> [Mr. Chang]: The diagnosis I had gotten from the MRI when I fell down in my house was for a blood clot in my brain. . . .

These were defense counsel's final objections during Mr. Chang's testimony.

The State went on to question Mr. Chang about his injuries, symptoms, and medical treatment, and Mr. Chang testified that he had a stroke following the incident, which affected his movement and speech, and that he had an allergic reaction to the Diamox he was prescribed following his stroke. He testified that he was, therefore, left "bedridden" and had to "go through painful physical therapy," and his wife became his caretaker. Defense counsel did not object to any of these questions or responses. Because all of defense counsel's objections during Mr. Chang's testimony were untimely

with regard to the question presented, as explained above, we conclude that the issue is not preserved for appellate review.

Defense counsel was required to object to every question that sought to elicit the contested evidence—testimony about the extent of Mr. Chang's injuries. *See Fone*, 233 Md. App. at 113. Not only were each of the objections that defense counsel lodged here untimely, but defense counsel also did not object to every instance that the contested evidence was elicited or offered. We find that this is another ground to conclude that the issue is not preserved.

For these reasons, we hold that the issue of whether the trial court erred in admitting Mr. Chang's testimony regarding the extent of his injuries is not preserved for appellate review. We decline to further address the matter.

II. THE TRIAL COURT DID NOT ABUSE ITS DISCRETION WHEN IT DECLINED TO PROPOUND MR. RANSOME'S REQUESTED VOIR DIRE[5] QUESTION ABOUT JUROR BIAS REGARDING MR. CHANG'S MEDICAL TREATMENT TESTIMONY.

Again, we first address whether this issue was properly preserved. Md. Rule 4-323(c) (requiring parties to object or make known to the court the action the party desires the court to take at the time of the court's ruling or order); *Lopez-Villa v. State*, 478 Md. 1, 11-13 (2022) (finding issue not preserved when counsel submitted questions before voir dire and did not object or re-request the questions after voir dire). Because trial strategy evolves throughout the trial, a party's submission of voir dire questions before

[5] "Voir dire" is the questioning of prospective jurors. *Pearson v. State*, 437 Md. 350, 356 (2014).

the court decides which questions to ask does not indicate to the court that, after voir dire has concluded, the party still desires the court to ask those questions. *Lopez-Villa*, 478 Md. at 12-13. *See, e.g.*, *Foster v. State*, 247 Md. App. 642, 647-48 (2020) ("[I]f the claim involves the court's decision to ask a voir dire question over a defense objection, the defendant must renew the objection upon the completion of jury selection."). Also, though, a party does not waive an objection to the court's decision not to ask a requested voir dire question when the party accepts the later-empaneled jury. *State v. Stringfellow*, 425 Md. 461, 469-71 (2012) (explaining that such objections are "incidental to the inclusion/exclusion of a prospective juror"). It follows, then, that when parties wish to preserve such an objection, they must submit their proposed voir dire question(s), then object to the court's decision not to ask their question(s) sometime between the conclusion of voir dire and the empaneling of the jury. *See Prince*, 216 Md. App. at 194 (explaining that timely objections "allow the trial court to prevent mistakes or cure them in real time").

In the present case, before voir dire began, Mr. Ransome's counsel requested "a question regarding whether hearing about injuries would prejudice [the jurors] to whether or not an assault occurred." To clarify that the question was not a Pattern Jury Instruction, defense counsel rephrased her question: "I'm asking if we could inquire as to whether if they heard testimony regarding injury, if that would cause bias to whether or not an assault occurred." The court responded:

> [N]o because I believe that, one, strong feeling regarding an assault, the fact that it's an assault and does anybody have any strong feelings in regards to an assault, I think that it

> would be covered regarding that, and then you can engage. And those persons who stand up, when you come in, when they're brought up, I think you can voir dire them regarding the information about the effect and any bias that they might have on that. I think it would be covered through that.

Defense counsel responded, "Okay, Your Honor." After the court concluded group voir dire but before individual voir dire began, defense counsel stated, "I renew my objection to the earlier question that I requested that the Court denied . . . ." The court took no further action with respect to Mr. Ransome's requested question.

In *Lopez-Villa*, the Supreme Court of Maryland found that, when a defendant requests a voir dire question prior to voir dire and the court declines to propound that question, the defendant must reassert the objection to the court's ruling at a later time. 478 Md. at 4.[6] Although it is insufficient to "merely submit[] proposed *voir dire* questions, which are later rejected or modified by the trial court," *id.* at 11-12, Mr. Ransome both submitted his requested question prior to voir dire and reasserted, after group voir dire, his objection to the court's refusal to propound that question. We find that this reasserted request was sufficient to preserve the issue.

Turning to the merits, Mr. Ransome argues that his requested question was designed to discover "whether jury members could distinguish" between injuries caused by the car accident and injuries caused by an alleged assault. Mr. Ransome also argues

[6] In *Lopez-Villa*, at the end of voir dire, the trial court asked counsel, "Did I miss any questions . . . what you previously objected to, which I will preserve for the record," and defense counsel responded, "no." 478 Md. at 4. The Supreme Court held that the defendant had not properly preserved his objection to the court's refusal to propound his proposed voir dire questions. *Id.*

that this requested question aimed to "nullify the effect" of the court's pretrial ruling that allowed Mr. Chang's medical treatment testimony. Mr. Ransome notes that the State relied on Mr. Chang's extensive medical treatment testimony, "directing the jury to establish a causal connection between the alleged assault and Mr. Chang's reported injuries" in closing argument. He concludes that, without asking his requested voir dire question, improper juror bias prejudiced him, and, therefore, exclusion of the question was harmful error.

The State, on the other hand, argues that the trial court properly exercised its broad discretion during voir dire. The court denied Mr. Ransome's request, "finding that its 'strong feelings' question about 'assault' covered the subject." The State argues that the trial court's voir dire made Mr. Ransome's question unnecessary, the question was not mandatory under Maryland law, and the trial court's decision was not an abuse of discretion.

Defendants have a constitutional right to "an impartial jury." U.S. Const. amend. VI; Md. Const. Decl. of Rts. art. 21; *see State v. Ablonczy*, 474 Md. 149, 156-57 (2021) (discussing the right to an impartial jury provided for in the United States Constitution and Maryland Declaration of Rights). "Voir dire is critical to assure" this right "will be honored." *Washington v. State*, 425 Md. 306, 312 (2012) (quoting *Stewart v. State*, 399 Md. 146, 158 (2007)) (citations omitted). The goal of voir dire is to "obtain jurors who will be impartial and unbiased." *Moore v. State*, 412 Md. 635, 645 (2010) (citation and quotation marks omitted). Maryland employs "limited voir dire," which aims to "ensure a fair and impartial jury by determining the existence of specific cause for

disqualification."[7] *Pearson v. State*, 437 Md. 350, 356-57 (2014) (citations and formatting omitted); *Williams v. State*, 246 Md. App. 308, 340-41 (2020) (discussing purpose of Maryland voir dire).

It is the trial judge's duty to "eliminate from the venire panel prospective jurors who will be unable to perform their duty fairly and impartially and to uncover bias and prejudice." *Washington*, 425 Md. at 313; *Dingle v. State*, 361 Md. 1, 10 (2000). In furtherance of this duty, the court must tailor all voir dire questions to the particular facts of the case and biases that could arise in the context of the case. *Moore*, 412 Md. at 654. The Supreme Court of Maryland explained the court's role in voir dire as follows:

> [T]he trial court has broad discretion[8] in the conduct of voir dire, most especially with regard to the scope and the form of the questions propounded, and that it need not make any particular inquiry of the prospective jurors unless that inquiry is directed toward revealing cause for disqualification.

Dingle, 361 Md. at 13-14 (citations omitted).

The Supreme Court of Maryland has established that certain areas of inquiry are "mandatory," such as bias related to race, ethnicity, or cultural heritage. *See Curtin v. State*, 393 Md. 593, 609 n.8 (2006); *Pearson*, 437 Md. at 356-57. Mr. Ransome does not argue that his requested question was mandatory under Maryland law.

[7] In other jurisdictions, voir dire also allows "fishing for information" that assists in the "intelligent exercise of peremptory challenges." *Pearson*, 437 Md. at 357 (citation and quotation marks omitted).

[8] Along with broad discretion, the trial judge has great responsibility as the decision-maker throughout the voir dire process. *Dingle*, 361 Md. at 14-15.

Our Supreme Court has also more broadly identified two "areas of inquiry that may reveal cause for a juror's disqualification: (1) examination to determine whether the prospective juror meets the minimum statutory qualifications for jury service, and (2) examination to discover the juror's state of mind as to the matter in hand or any collateral matter reasonably liable to have undue influence over him." *Washington*, 425 Md. at 313. "The latter category is comprised of 'biases directly related to the crime, the witnesses, or the defendant.'" *Pearson*, 437 Md. at 357 (quoting Washington, 425 Md. at 313).

When a requested question is directed to a specific cause for disqualification, "failure to allow such questions is an abuse of discretion constituting reversible error." *Langley v. State*, 281 Md. 337, 342 (1977) (citation and quotation marks omitted).[9] Importantly, however, "the form of questions propounded rest[s] firmly within the discretion of the trial judge." *Washington*, 425 Md. at 313 (citations omitted); *see Dingle*, 361 Md. at 13 (stating that the court has broad discretion "with regard to the scope and the form of the questions propounded" (citations omitted)). When this Court reviews a trial court's "exercise of discretion during the voir dire," we ask "whether the questions posed and the procedures employed have created a reasonable assurance that prejudice would be discovered if present." *Washington*, 425 Md. at 313 (citation omitted). "On review of the voir dire, an appellate court looks at the record as a whole to

[9] This Court affords trial courts "considerable deference" regarding "the particular questions to ask and areas to cover in voir dire." *Washington*, 425 Md. at 314. We review the court's "rulings on the record of the voir dire process as a whole for an abuse of discretion." *Id.*

determine whether the matter has been fairly covered." *Id.* at 313-14 (citations omitted).

Mr. Ransome's requested question aimed to discover whether extensive medical testimony would have undue influence over a juror such that the juror may make improper inferences about whether the alleged assault occurred.[10] During group voir dire, after explaining that the "State alleges that [Mr. Ransome] committed the crimes of assault and theft," the court asked, "Does any member of the panel hold strong feelings regarding assault?" Prior to voir dire, the court ruled that this "strong feelings" question would cover the issue defense counsel raised. Although the "strong feelings" question does not specifically mention injuries or medical treatment, it is common knowledge that assault allegations may be accompanied by injuries and/or medical treatment. Also, we reemphasize that trial courts hold broad discretion with regard to the "form of questions propounded" during voir dire. *Washington*, 425 Md. at 313. The circuit court's question provided reasonable assurance that the prejudice about which Mr. Ransome was concerned, as explained to the trial judge by his trial counsel, would have been discovered by this question if present. Accordingly, we find that the court did not abuse its discretion in declining to ask Mr. Ransome's requested voir dire question, and we

[10] Mr. Ransome argues in his brief that the question was designed to discover "whether jury members could distinguish" between injuries caused by the car accident and injuries caused by an alleged assault, but Mr. Ransome's trial counsel explained to the trial judge that the question would reveal bias as to "whether or not an assault occurred." Mr. Ransome did not request that the trial court ask a question to distinguish between injuries caused by the car accident and injuries caused by assault, and he cannot now assert that "failure" to ask such a question was error. Md. Rule 4-323(c) (requiring parties to object or make known to the court the action the party desires the court to take at the time of the court's ruling or order).

affirm the judgment of the circuit court.

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