

Circuit Court for Prince George's County  
Case No.: CAD06-26267

UNREPORTED\*

IN THE APPELLATE COURT

OF MARYLAND\*\*

No. 2012

September Term, 2022

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STARSHA SEWELL

v.

JOHN HOWARD

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Wells, C.J.,  
Arthur,  
Eyler, James R.  
(Senior Judge, Specially Assigned),

JJ.

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Opinion by Eyler, James R., J.

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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 and the Court of Appeals of Maryland to the Supreme Court of Maryland. The name change took effect on December 14, 2022.

Starsha Sewell, appellant, and John Howard, appellee, are the parents of two minor children. On August 3, 2012, this Court upheld a contempt finding in the circuit court against Sewell, but vacated a modification of child custody order because Sewell was not given proper notice. *See Sewell v. Howard*, No. 2236, Sept. Term, 2011 (filed August 3, 2012).

The circuit court held hearings following our remand and, on July 29, 2014, the Circuit Court for Prince George’s County entered an order granting Mr. Howard sole legal and physical custody of the children; denying Ms. Sewell visitation; and ordering Ms. Sewell to pay child support. Thereafter, Ms. Sewell filed numerous motions to vacate the custody order pursuant to Maryland Rule 2-535(b), claiming that the circuit court lacked jurisdiction to enter the custody order and that various parties involved in her case, including the judge, the Assistant State’s Attorney, the Prince George’s County Police Department, and the Department of Social Services had engaged in fraudulent or discriminatory activity. On January 18, 2018, the circuit court denied those motions in an Opinion and Order of Court. Ms. Sewell appealed, and we affirmed, holding that the circuit court had jurisdiction to enter the 2014 custody order and that Ms. Sewell had failed to demonstrate the existence of any fraud, mistake, or irregularity that would have warranted the court vacating that judgment. *See Sewell v. Howard*, No. 2266, Sept. Term, 2017 (filed August 31, 2018).

Undeterred, Ms. Sewell has continued to file motions to vacate the 2014 custody order and all directives issued by the circuit court to enforce that order. Ms. Sewell appealed from the denial of some of those motions, and in each instance, we affirmed,

finding that her claims are barred by the law of the case doctrine. *See, e.g., Sewell v. Howard*, No. 1148, Sept. Term, 2021 (filed May 4, 2022); *Sewell v. Howard*, No. 162, Sept. Term, 2021 (filed November 30, 2021); *Sewell v. Howard*, No. 741, Sept. Term, 2020 (filed May 28, 2021); *Sewell v. Howard*, No. 366, Sept. Term, 2020 (filed May 11, 2021); *Sewell v. Howard*, No. 2196, Sept. Term, 2019 (filed April 6, 2021); *Sewell v. Howard*, No. 2102, Sept. Term, 2019 (filed July 28, 2020); *Sewell v. Howard*, No. 3312, Sept. Term, 2018 (filed April 13, 2020); *Sewell v. Howard*, No. 852, Sept. Term, 2018 (filed July 1, 2019).

Ms. Sewell now appeals from the circuit court’s denial of two more such motions, filed on May 16, 2022 and July 15, 2022 respectively, both of which are identified as “Md. Rule 2-535 (B) Motion For Relief On The Basis Of Fraud and Civil Rights Deprivation & To Stay/Quash July 29, 2014 Order As A Product of Fraud For Lack of Jurisdiction and 18 USC 241 and 18 USC 242 Conspiracy Against Secured Civil Rights.”<sup>1</sup> Ms. Sewell again claims the circuit court lacked jurisdiction to enter the custody order and that she was fraudulently deprived of her federal civil rights and substantial due process. However, we have previously addressed these contentions on appeal and held that they lack merit. Consequently, Ms. Sewell’s claim is barred by the law of the case doctrine. *See Baltimore Cnty. v. Baltimore Cnty. Fraternal Ord. of Police, Lodge No. 4*, 220 Md. App. 596, 659

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<sup>1</sup> On September 6, 2022, the circuit court provided its reasons for denying the motions by letter, notably addressed only to Ms. Sewell. Thereafter, on January 13, 2023, the court formally denied the motions by written order, stating “This case is closed statistically.” Ms. Sewell timely appealed from that final order on January 20, 2023.

(2014) (noting that “neither the questions decided [by the appellate courts] nor the ones that could have been raised and decided are available to be raised in a subsequent appeal” (quotation marks, citation, and emphasis omitted)).<sup>2</sup>

**JUDGMENT OF THE CIRCUIT  
COURT FOR PRINCE GEORGE’S  
COUNTY AFFIRMED.**

**COSTS TO BE PAID BY  
APPELLANT.**

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<sup>2</sup> Moreover, even if Ms. Sewell’s claims were not barred by the law of the case doctrine, we would affirm because none of the contentions raised in her motion establish the existence of fraud, mistake, or irregularity within the meaning of Rule 2-535(b).