

IN THE COURT OF APPEALS OF OHIO
SIXTH APPELLATE DISTRICT
LUCAS COUNTY

State of Ohio

Court of Appeals No. L-25-00189

Appellee

Trial Court No. CR0202500127

v.

Michiel Robinson

DECISION AND JUDGMENT

Appellant

Decided: September 15, 2026

* * * * *

Julia R. Bates, Prosecuting Attorney, and
Brenda J. Majdalani, Assistant Prosecuting Attorney, for appellee.

Tyler Naud Jechura, for appellant.

* * * * *

SULEK, J.

{¶ 1} Defendant-appellant, Michiel Robinson, appeals a judgment of the Lucas County Court of Common Pleas which, following his guilty pleas to attempted murder, abduction, and having a weapon while under a disability, imposed a 19-to-24-year prison

sentence. Because Robinson understood the nature and effect of his pleas, the judgment is affirmed.

I. Facts and Procedural Background

{¶ 2} On January 27, 2025, the Lucas County Grand Jury indicted Robinson on counts of attempted murder, felonious assault, kidnapping, abduction, and having a weapon while under a disability. Robinson pleaded not guilty to the charges.

{¶ 3} After Robinson and the State reached a plea agreement, Robinson withdrew his not guilty pleas and pleaded guilty to attempted murder and abduction with attached firearm specifications and having a weapon while under a disability. During the plea hearing, prior to accepting Robinson's plea the trial court first confirmed that Robinson reviewed the plea form with his attorney. The court placed Robinson under oath and inquired:

THE COURT: ... How far have you gone in school?

THE DEFENDANT: Eighth grade.

THE COURT: Eighth grade?

THE DEFENDANT: Uh-huh.

THE COURT: Are you able to read and write the English language?

THE DEFENDANT: Yes.

The court then determined that Robinson had not ingested any drugs or alcohol that would affect his understanding of the proceedings, he was clear headed, no threats or

promises had been made relating to the pleas, and he was satisfied with his attorney. The court then asked:

THE COURT: Do you understand that by entering pleas of guilty, that you are making a complete admission to the allegations contained here in this plea form from this incitement?

THE DEFENDANT: Yes.

{¶ 4} Over multiple pages of transcript, the court then reviewed the penalties Robinson faced periodically confirming Robinson's understanding. The court then reviewed the constitutional rights waived by entering a guilty plea; Robinson indicated that he understood. The court went through each count with Robinson who indicated his desire to plead guilty. When asked why he pleaded guilty to the counts, he stated: "I did it."

{¶ 5} Finally, the court addressed Robinson's counsel who stated that after reviewing the plea form and advisements with Robinson he believed that Robinson entered the pleas knowingly, voluntarily, and intelligently. The court then accepted the pleas finding Robinson guilty. On July 2, 2025, the trial court sentenced Robinson to a total imprisonment term of 19 to 24 years. This appeal followed.

II. Assignment of Error

{¶ 6} Robinson raises one assignment of error for review:

1. The Defendant's plea was not made knowingly or intelligently because he is illiterate.

III. Analysis

{¶ 7} In his sole assignment of error Robinson contends that his illiteracy prevented him from entering knowing or intelligent pleas. A guilty plea must be made knowingly, intelligently, and voluntarily to be constitutionally valid. *State v. Fontanez*, 2026-Ohio-3281, ¶ 22, quoting *State v. Brinkman*, 2021-Ohio-2473, ¶ 10, quoting *State v. Bishop*, 2018-Ohio-5132, ¶ 10. To ensure the validity of a plea, pursuant to Crim.R. 11 a trial court is required to confirm “that the defendant understands the nature of the charges and the maximum penalty, informing the defendant that by pleading guilty, the defendant waives certain constitutional rights, and ‘[i]nforming the defendant of and determining that the defendant understands the effect of the plea of guilty ...,’ Crim.R. 11(C)(2)(b).” *Id.*

{¶ 8} Specifically, prior to accepting a guilty plea, in explaining constitutional rights, a trial court must strictly comply with Crim.R. 11(C), with a failure to do so resulting in an invalid plea, presumed to be neither knowing nor voluntary. *Id.* at ¶ 25, citing *State v. Dangler*, 2020-Ohio-2765, ¶ 14, citing *State v. Clark*, 2008-Ohio-3748, ¶ 31 and *State v. Veney*, 2008-Ohio-5200, syllabus. In addition, where a court completely fails to explain a nonconstitutional right, prejudice is presumed; however, where a court fails to fully comply with Crim.R. 11(C) in explaining nonconstitutional rights, the relevant inquiry is whether the defendant has shown prejudice. *Id.*, citing *Dangler* at ¶ 17.

{¶ 9} Literacy is not a prerequisite to a valid guilty plea though a “lack of education is one factor that could affect [a defendant’s] ability to make a valid guilty

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plea.” *State v. Smith*, 2024-Ohio-1979, ¶ 13 (8th Dist.). In *Smith*, during the plea hearing Smith informed the court that he could neither read nor write. *Id.* at ¶ 14. After ensuring that “Smith understood the nature of the plea, the possible penalties faced, and the constitutional rights he would be giving up by entering a guilty plea ... the court instructed him that if at any time he did not understand or was confused in any way by any statement made, to speak up and any issue raised by him would be addressed[.]” *Id.* The court concluded that under the totality of the circumstances Smith’s guilty pleas were knowingly, intelligently, and voluntarily made. *Id.*

{¶ 10} Here, we first note that when asked Robinson affirmatively stated, under oath, that he could read and write English. Robinson’s counsel reviewed the plea form with him and expressed to the court his belief that the pleas were being entered into knowingly, voluntarily, and intelligently. Further, though not conclusively establishing literacy, Robinson filed multiple handwritten pleadings in the proceedings below and the presentence investigation report refers to letters he sent to one of the victims while in jail. Most importantly, however, complying with Crim.R. 11 the trial court reviewed with Robinson, in detail, the effect of his guilty pleas, the maximum penalties he faced, and the constitutional rights that were being waived. Robinson indicated that he understood and admitted his guilt as to the charges. Accordingly, Robinson knowingly and intelligently pleaded guilty and he is not entitled to withdraw his pleas. Robinson’s sole assignment of error is not well-taken.

IV. Conclusion

{¶ 11} Upon due consideration, the judgment of the Lucas County Court of Common Pleas is affirmed. Pursuant to App.R. 24, Robinson is assessed the costs of this appeal.

Judgment affirmed.

A certified copy of this entry shall constitute the mandate pursuant to App.R. 27.
See also 6th Dist.Loc.App.R. 4.

Christine E. Mayle, J

JUDGE

Myron C. Duhart, J

JUDGE

Charles Sulek, J

CONCUR.

JUDGE

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