An unpublished opinion of the North Carolina Court of Appeals does not constitute controlling legal authority. Citation is disfavored, but may be permitted in accordance with the provisions of Rule 30(e)(3) of the North Carolina Rules of Appellate Procedure.

IN THE COURT OF APPEALS OF NORTH CAROLINA

2021-NCCOA-642

No. COA20-863

Filed 16 November 2021

Stokes County, No. 17 CRS 50208

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

v.

JOSEPH DWIGHT LAWSON

Appeal by defendant from judgment entered 20 May 2020 by Judge William A. Wood, II, in Stokes County Superior Court. Heard in the Court of Appeals 6 October 2021.

Attorney General Joshua H. Stein, by Assistant Attorney General Rory Agan, for the State.

Gilda C. Rodriguez for defendant-appellant.

ZACHARY, Judge.

¶ 1 Defendant Joseph Dwight Lawson appeals from a judgment entered upon his *Alford* plea.[1] Counsel for Defendant filed an *Anders* brief, and Defendant filed three

[1] An *Alford* plea is a guilty plea in which the defendant does not admit to any criminal act, but admits that there is sufficient evidence to convince the judge or jury of the defendant's guilt. *See North Carolina v. Alford*, 400 U.S. 25, 37, 27 L. Ed. 2d 162, 171 (1970); *State v. Baskins*, 260 N.C. App. 589, 592 n.1, 818 S.E.2d 381, 387 n.1 (2018), *disc. review denied*, 372 N.C. 102, 824 S.E.2d 409 (2019).

pro se briefs. After careful review, we affirm.

¶ 2 On 20 May 2020, Defendant entered into a plea agreement with the State in which his first-degree murder charge was reduced to voluntary manslaughter. The trial court subsequently entered judgment in accordance with the plea agreement, sentencing Defendant to a term of 60 to 84 months in the custody of the North Carolina Division of Adult Correction. Defendant entered oral notice of appeal in open court.

¶ 3 Counsel appointed to represent Defendant on appeal has filed a brief pursuant to *Anders v. California*, 386 U.S. 738, 18 L. Ed. 2d 493, *reh'g denied*, 388 U.S. 924, 18 L. Ed. 2d 1377 (1967), indicating that she was unable to "identify an issue with sufficient merit to support a meaningful argument for relief[.]" Counsel requests that this Court conduct its own review of the record for possible prejudicial error. Counsel has also demonstrated to the satisfaction of this Court that she has complied with the requirements of *Anders* and *State v. Kinch*, 314 N.C. 99, 331 S.E.2d 665 (1985), by advising Defendant of his right to file arguments with this Court and providing him with the documents necessary to do so.

¶ 4 Defendant has filed three *pro se* briefs with this Court, but none of his arguments embrace any of the limited issues for which he has an appeal of right following his *Alford* plea. *See* N.C. Gen. Stat. § 15A-1444(a1)–(a2) (2019). Moreover, none of the proposed issues has merit, based on our careful review of the record. Thus,

Defendant is not entitled to relief on these bases.

¶ 5 "Under our review pursuant to *Anders* and *Kinch*, we must determine from a full examination of all the proceedings whether the appeal is wholly frivolous." *State v. Frink*, 177 N.C. App. 144, 145, 627 S.E.2d 472, 473 (2006) (citation and internal quotation marks omitted). As required by *Anders* and *Kinch*, we have conducted a full examination of the record for any issue with arguable merit. We have been unable to find any error, and we conclude that this appeal presents no issue that might entitle Defendant to relief. Accordingly, we affirm the judgment entered in this case.

AFFIRMED.

Judges CARPENTER and WOOD concur.

Report per Rule 30(e).