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IN THE COURT OF APPEALS OF NORTH CAROLINA

No. COA22-608

Filed 18 April 2023

Gaston County, Nos. 17 JT 219-220

IN THE MATTER OF: L.M. & L.E.

Appeal by respondent-mother from order entered 18 April 2022 by Judge John K. Greenlee in Gaston County District Court. Heard in the Court of Appeals 7 March 2023.

Elizabeth Myrick Boone for petitioner-appellee Gaston County Department of Health and Human Services.

Garron T. Michael for respondent-appellant mother.

Raleigh Divorce Law Firm, by Katelyn Bailey Heath, for guardian ad litem.

MURPHY, Judge.

Respondent-Mother appeals from the trial court's 18 April 2022 order terminating her parental rights in L.M. and L.E. Counsel for Mother filed a no-merit brief under Rule 3.1(e) of the North Carolina Rules of Appellate Procedure on 9 September 2022. With logistical assistance from counsel, Mother exercised her opportunity to file a *pro se* brief in accordance with Rule 3.1(e) on 10 October 2022.

Counsel filing a Rule 3.1(e) no-merit brief is required to "identify any issues in the record on appeal that arguably support the appeal and must state why those

issues lack merit or would not alter the ultimate result.” N.C. R. App. P. 3.1(e) (2023). Here, counsel fully complied with all of the requirements of Rule 3.1(e) and identified three issues for our independent review: (1) Whether the trial court erred in determining that grounds existed to terminate Mother’s parental rights in accordance with N.C.G.S. § 7B-1111(a)(2); (2) whether the trial court erred in concluding that terminating Mother’s parental rights was in the children’s best interest; and (3) whether the trial court erred in denying Mother’s Rule 17 guardian ad litem’s objection to her being called as a witness by Petitioner.

Mother’s *pro se* brief contains approximately 590 pages, many of which contain additional pages’ worth of text due to the inclusion of scaled-down images of varying degrees of quality and legibility.¹ Although we have fully considered the entirety of her filing, we do not attempt to distill Mother’s filing into distinct or separate issues as “[i]t would extend this opinion to a most unreasonable length for us to consider *seriatim* [her critiques of] the rulings [and procedures] of the court below, and would be of no practical value[.]” *Moseley v. Johnson*, 144 N.C. 257, 262 (1907).

In accordance with *In re L.E.M.*, we have conducted an independent review of the issues raised in the no-merit brief. *In re L.E.M.*, 372 N.C. 396, 402 (2019) (“We conclude that the text of Rule 3.1([e]) plainly contemplates appellate review of the

¹ Mother has included some documents which appear to be communications or depictions of events which have occurred since the conclusion of the hearing on 13 January 2022. While we have reviewed these documents, we conclude they are beyond the scope of this appeal and irrelevant to our consideration of the trial court’s order.

issues contained in a no-merit brief.”). We have also reviewed Mother’s *pro se* brief. “[W]e are satisfied that the trial court’s order terminating [Mother]’s parental rights is supported by clear, cogent, and convincing evidence and is based on proper legal grounds. Accordingly, we affirm the trial court’s order terminating [Mother]’s parental rights.” *In re K.M.S.*, 380 N.C. 56, 59 (2022).

AFFIRMED.

Judges ARROWOOD and RIGGS concur.

Report per Rule 30(e).