

An unpublished opinion of the North Carolina Court of Appeals does not constitute controlling legal authority.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

No. COA24-883

Filed 7 May 2025

Stokes County, No. 22CRS050381

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

v.

MICHAEL ANTHONY REGO, Defendant.

Appeal by Defendant from judgment entered 10 April 2024 by Judge Angela B. Puckett in Stokes County Superior Court. Heard in the Court of Appeals 18 March 2025.

Attorney General Jeff Jackson, by Assistant Attorney General Hillary F. Patterson, for the State.

Sean P. Vitrano for Defendant.

PER CURIAM.

Defendant Michael Anthony Rego appeals from the trial court's judgment entered upon his guilty plea to trafficking in methamphetamine. Counsel for Defendant filed an *Anders* brief on behalf of Defendant, asking this Court to independently review the proceedings to determine whether any issue exists entitling Defendant to relief. Our review shows no error, and we therefore affirm the trial

court's judgment.

I. Factual and Procedural Background

On 15 March 2023, Officer Rose of the City of King Police Department was patrolling the Days Inn in King, an area known for narcotics trafficking and use, when he observed a truck registered to Defendant parked directly beside the Days Inn office. Officer Rose knew Defendant lived locally and found his presence at the Days Inn suspicious because of his knowledge of Defendant's reputation for being involved in drug trafficking. After Defendant briefly entered and exited the Days Inn office, Officer Rose informed another patrol officer, Officer James, of Defendant's actions.

Officer James, also familiar with Days Inn and Defendant's reputation, began tailing Defendant when he observed Defendant crossing the stop bars while making a left-turn through an intersection. Officer Rose arrived at the scene after Officer James stopped Defendant's vehicle because of the traffic violation. Officer Rose observed two suboxone strips in plain view in Defendant's vehicle. Shortly thereafter, a canine unit responded to the scene and the canine alerted to the presence of narcotics in Defendant's vehicle. Officers searched the vehicle and discovered a lockbox containing 34.56 grams of methamphetamine.

On 23 May 2022, a Stokes County grand jury indicted Defendant on two counts of trafficking in methamphetamine and on one count of maintaining a vehicle for using, keeping, or selling methamphetamine. On 8 May 2023, Defendant moved to

suppress evidence obtained from the traffic stop leading to his arrest. The matter came on for hearing two days later before Judge Angela B. Puckett in Stokes County Superior Court. Following the hearing, the trial court denied Defendant's motion to suppress. After providing the requisite notice of intent to appeal from the denial of his motion to suppress, Defendant entered a conditional guilty plea to one count of trafficking in methamphetamine. The trial court entered judgment on Defendant's guilty plea on 10 April 2024.

Defendant timely appeals from the trial court's order denying Defendant's motion to suppress and the judgment entered upon his guilty plea.

II. Analysis

Counsel for Defendant filed a brief pursuant to *Anders v. California*, 386 U.S. 738 (1967), and *State v. Kinch*, 314 N.C. 99, 331 S.E.2d 665 (1985), requesting "this Court to conduct a full and independent review of the record to determine whether counsel has overlooked a potentially meritorious issue and whether any reversible error exists." In his brief, counsel presents four potential issues: (1) whether the indictment was sufficient to grant the trial court subject matter jurisdiction; (2) whether the trial court erred by denying Defendant's motion to suppress; (3) whether the trial court erred by accepting Defendant's guilty plea; and (4) whether the trial court erred when sentencing Defendant.

Under *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) (quoting *State v. Hamby*, 129 N.C. App. 366, 367–68, 499 S.E.2d 195, 195–96 (1998)). In doing so, “we will review the legal points appearing in the record, transcript, and briefs, not for the purpose of determining their merits (if any) but to determine whether they are wholly frivolous.” *Kinch*, 314 N.C. at 102–03, 331 S.E.2d at 667 (citing *Anders*, 386 U.S. at 744). Having conducted a full and independent review of the proceedings, we hold there exists no issue entitling Defendant to relief and the appeal is wholly frivolous.

III. Conclusion

For the aforementioned reasons, we hold Defendant’s appeal is without merit and dismiss.

DISMISSED.

Panel consisting of Chief Judge DILLON and Judges CARPENTER and GRIFFIN.

Report per Rule 30(e).