

Circuit Court for Howard County  
Case No. C-13-CR-19-000813

UNREPORTED  
IN THE COURT OF SPECIAL APPEALS  
OF MARYLAND

No. 49

September Term, 2020

---

DOMINIC RYAN

v.

STATE OF MARYLAND

---

Wells,  
Gould,  
Zarnoch, Robert A.  
(Senior Judge, Specially Assigned),

JJ.

---

PER CURIAM

---

Filed: July 12, 2021

\*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.

Convicted by a jury in the Circuit Court for Howard County of first degree assault, Dominic Ryan, appellant, presents for our review a single question: whether the evidence is sufficient to sustain the conviction. For the reasons that follow, we shall affirm the judgment of the circuit court.

At trial, the State produced evidence that on October 24, 2019, Mohamed Sillah was working at his job as a cook in a restaurant inside the Travel Center of America in Jessup, when Mr. Ryan, who had previously worked at the restaurant, entered the restaurant's kitchen. The State entered into evidence a video recording taken by the restaurant's surveillance camera, which appears to show Mr. Ryan attempting to prepare food. The recording does not show the entirety of the subsequent sequence of events, but Mr. Ryan does not dispute that he and Mr. Sillah engaged in an altercation, during which Mr. Ryan picked up two large kitchen knives. While holding a knife in each hand, Mr. Ryan twice punched Mr. Sillah in his face. Mr. Sillah suffered two lacerations to the lower right part of his face along his jawline, and one laceration to his neck underneath his right ear. Mr. Sillah was transported to Howard County General Hospital, where he told a physician that when he talked, he felt a "laceration opening up." The State entered into evidence photographs of the knives and Mr. Sillah's injuries. The State also entered into evidence an audio recording of a phone conversation between Mr. Ryan and another individual while Mr. Ryan was incarcerated at the Howard County Detention Center. During the conversation, Mr. Ryan stated: "He got hit by accident like when I pucked him the second time, that's when I had the knife in my hand. When I pucked him the second time and it nicked him."

Mr. Ryan first contends that, for numerous reasons, the evidence is insufficient “to establish that Mr. Sillah’s injury amounted to a serious physical injury.” We disagree. Md. Code (2002, 2021 Repl. Vol.), § 3-201(d) of the Criminal Law Article defines “serious physical injury” as “physical injury that . . . creates a substantial risk of death . . . or . . . causes permanent or protracted serious . . . disfigurement[,] loss of the function of any bodily member or organ[,] or . . . impairment of the function of any bodily member or organ.” Here, the State produced evidence that when Mr. Sillah spoke, he felt a laceration caused by Mr. Ryan “opening up.” We conclude that this evidence shows protracted serious impairment of the function of Mr. Sillah’s bodily members and organs related to his ability to speak, and hence, the evidence is sufficient to establish that the physical injury suffered by Mr. Sillah was serious.

Mr. Ryan next contends that, for numerous reasons, the evidence is insufficient to show “that [he] intentionally caused or attempted to cause serious physical injury to Mr. Sillah.” We disagree. We have stated that “a jury may infer the necessary intent from an individual’s conduct and the surrounding circumstances,” and may also infer “that one intends the natural and probable consequences of his act.” *Chilcoat v. State*, 155 Md. App. 394, 403 (2004) (internal citations and quotations omitted). Here, the State presented evidence that after Mr. Ryan and Mr. Sillah engaged in an altercation, Mr. Ryan obtained two large knives and, while holding one of the knives in each hand, twice punched Mr. Sillah in his face. From Mr. Ryan’s conduct and the surrounding circumstances, particularly Mr. Ryan’s decision to place a large knife in each of his hands before punching Mr. Sillah and the location of the punches, the jury could infer that Mr. Ryan had the

specific intent to cause Mr. Sillah a natural and probable consequence of punching an individual in his face while holding a large knife, specifically serious physical injury. Hence, the evidence is sufficient to sustain the conviction.

**JUDGMENT OF THE CIRCUIT COURT  
FOR HOWARD COUNTY AFFIRMED.  
COSTS TO BE PAID BY APPELLANT.**