

Circuit Court for Carroll County  
Case No.: C-06-CR-22-000675

UNREPORTED  
IN THE APPELLATE COURT  
OF MARYLAND\*

No. 688

September Term, 2024

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RAVI M. PANSURIYA

v.

STATE OF MARYLAND

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Wells, C.J.,  
Friedman,  
Woodward, Patrick L.  
(Senior Judge, Specially Assigned),

JJ.

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PER CURIAM

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Filed: August 15, 2025

\*This is a per curiam opinion. Under Rule 1-104, the opinion is not precedent within the rule of stare decisis, nor may it be cited as persuasive authority.

A jury sitting in the Circuit Court for Carroll County found Ravi M. Pansuriya, appellant, guilty of first-degree murder. The court sentenced him to life imprisonment, without the possibility of parole. Mr. Pansuriya appeals, raising a single question: “Did the circuit court err in admitting irrelevant and prejudicial evidence that Appellant dropped out of college years before the alleged offense?” For the reasons to be discussed, we shall affirm the judgment.

### **BACKGROUND<sup>1</sup>**

On October 2, 2022, Appellant’s father, Maganbhai Pansuriya, was murdered in his home. He was stabbed over 40 times and his head and hands dismembered from his body. The torso was found along the side of a road not far from the home, wrapped in sheets and a rug from the home. The head and hands were found in a plastic bag in a nearby creek. Appellant was quickly developed as a suspect and subsequently charged with murder.

At trial, held in November 2023, the State’s first witness was Appellant’s sister, Ameer Pansuriya, the victim’s daughter. From Ameer, the State elicited background information about her brother, Ravi, and their family. She testified that she was then 28 years old, three years younger than Ravi. The family home was located on Old Westminster Road in Carroll County. At the time of the murder, Ameer was in medical school and no longer resided at home. She described the family dynamics, and claimed she avoided returning to the family home on school breaks because “[i]n general, [she] didn’t feel safe

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<sup>1</sup> We refer to members of the Pansuriya family by their first names. We do so to avoid confusion and mean no disrespect.

all the time living at home with Ravi.” The prosecutor then asked further questions regarding Ravi’s background.

[PROSECUTOR]: And so Ravi had dropped out of college, right?

[DEFENSE COUNSEL]: Objection.

THE COURT: Sustained.

[PROSECUTOR]: Okay.

[PROSECUTOR]: Did Ravi complete college?

[WITNESS]: No.

[PROSECUTOR]: Did you know when he stopped going to college?

[WITNESS]: There were a few times when he stopped - -

[DEFENSE COUNSEL]: Objection again just to relevance at this point in time as to his - - why he went to college or when he stopped going to college. I see no relevance.

THE COURT: All right, I will overrule the objection.

[PROSECUTOR]: Okay, after the college did he go to - - what did Ravi and what did your parents do with - -

[WITNESS]: Can you repeat the question? Sorry.

[PROSECUTOR]: Sure, okay. So did Ravi complete college?

[WITNESS]: No.

[PROSECUTOR]: Okay. And once he stopped going to college, did your parents decide to do something?

[WITNESS]: Yes, my parents purchased a hotel, and the deal was finalized in August of 2015. And one of the main reasons they bought this property was so that Ravi could have a job.

[PROSECUTOR]: Okay. And how was Ravi working with your parents?

[WITNESS]: I - - through my observations of seeing them talk about work, I think that it strained their relationship. They would often argue about things running - - about running the hotel, and they often had disagreements.

The State also elicited testimony from Ameer that, in 2019, Ravi married and he and his wife resided in a house the parents had purchased in Frederick. When the marriage ended less than two years later, Ravi moved back in with his parents at the house on Old Westminster Road. Ameer testified that she was concerned about her parents' safety and urged them to ask Ravi to move out of their home, claiming that he had "been violent in the past" and was "verbally abusive" to their parents. Ameer described the relationship between Ravi and their father as "strained."

After Ameer testified, the State called Neeta Pansuriya, the victim's wife and mother of Ravi and Ameer. Neeta testified that she and her husband, Maganbhai, married in their native India in 1989 and immigrated to the United States in 1990. At the time of the murder, Ravi and her husband's 90-year-old mother, who had dementia, resided with them. Ravi had moved back home in the spring of 2022, after his marriage ended.

Maganbhai "was an internal medicine doctor," with offices in Westminster and Hampstead. Neeta owned and managed a retail liquor store in Emmitsburg. In October 2022, Neeta regularly worked Sundays at the liquor store, leaving home about 10:15AM and returning home about 7:45PM.

Neeta also testified about Ravi's post-high school education:

[PROSECUTOR]: Do you remember when Ravi graduated from high school?

[WITNESS]: I think so, 2010.

[PROSECUTOR]: And where did he go after high school, if anywhere?

[WITNESS]: After high school, he went first to a Towson University program.

[PROSECUTOR]: And did he stay at Towson?

[WITNESS]: He stayed one year, and after that he went to UMBC.

[PROSECUTOR]: All right, and did he graduate from UMBC?

[WITNESS]: He did not graduate, but he did - -

[DEFENSE COUNSEL]: Objection to the relevance. How is this - - I will stand up. How is any of this relevant, his education?

THE COURT: I am going to overrule the objection. You don't need to approach.

[PROSECUTOR]: You can continue.

[WITNESS]: He did two years, all undergrad classes. He was - - he kept switching majors, but he did not get a degree.

[PROSECUTOR]: Okay. And I am going to fast forward to 2022. Was Ravi in school in 2022, if you know?

[WITNESS]: He told yes, but technically he was not.

[PROSECUTOR]: So he told you he was, but he was not?

[WITNESS]: Yes.

Neeta later testified, without objection, that, after Ravi's divorce she and her husband "were trying to convince or tell him to get a degree while working in the hotel so [he would have] more scope," and he took some classes, but "he was always weak in math, so he dropped the math class." Neeta further related that Ravi did take a "computer

entrance class” and “he was doing on the side his commercial real estate license preparation.”

On cross-examination, defense counsel questioned Neeta about Ravi’s education:

[DEFENSE COUNSEL]: So Ravi went to - - Ravi went to college?

[WITNESS]: Yeah.

[DEFENSE COUNSEL]: He went to Towson?

[WITNESS]: First after 12<sup>th</sup> grade he went in Towson.

[DEFENSE COUNSEL]: And you weren’t happy with his performance at Towson?

[WITNESS]: He did not like Towson, so he said, I want to go either UMBC or College Park. And we told that, okay, apply. Wherever you get, you can go there. And he got UMBC.

[DEFENSE COUNSEL]: And you weren’t happy with what he was doing at UMBC with his performance? He didn’t do well?

[WITNESS]: Because - -

[DEFENSE COUNSEL]: Just the question is you weren’t happy with his performance at college?

[WITNESS]: Like, he was doing all right the first two year. But after that he was struggling with science subject and math.

[DEFENSE COUNSEL]: So you weren’t happy with him?

[WITNESS]: No. Yes.

The State subsequently introduced into evidence, without objection, a recorded interview of Ravi and a police detective. The recording, which was played to the jury without any apparent redactions, included the following exchange:

DETECTIVE HARBAUGH: You are going to have to read all of these. These are really standard questions for everybody, okay?

Education level, how far did you go in school?

RAVI PANSURIYA: Some college.

DETECTIVE HARBAUGH: Okay. What kind of college classes did you take?

RAVI PANSURIYA: Like a major?

DETECTIVE HARBAUGH: When you say some college, I would only - -

RAVI PANSURIYA: Partly, the University of self.

DETECTIVE HARBAUGH: Oh, okay. Yeah.

RAVI PANSURIYA: Well, I was a UNBC [sic] - - and it's - - I had done career sciences.

Neeta testified on direct examination that she and her husband bought the Best Western hotel in Frederick to give Ravi a place to work. Maganbhai was “the main investor and major partner” in the hotel, and Neeta and Ravi also had partnership interests. Because Ravi was the general manager and “working partner,” Neeta testified that he “was getting all [the] information.”

When asked whether Ravi was “successful as the general manager of the hotel,” Neeta replied: “Not a hundred percent. We had to guide because when we bought the hotel, he was too young, and we had to always ask and guide everything.” Her husband had been asking Ravi for passwords so he could review matters pertaining to the hotel, but when Ravi would not give them to him, he “decided to take a working member title” while Ravi kept the general manager title; in this way Maganbhai could gain access to the

information about the hotel he was seeking. Maganbhai planned to attend a “yearly convention” in late October 2022 where he could take a class that would lead to the “working member title.” He was murdered, however, in early October of that year.

According to Neeta, since July 2022 the relationship between father and son had been strained and the men were not on speaking terms. On the day of the murder, Sunday October 2<sup>nd</sup>, Ravi left the house around 9:45AM, telling his mother he was going to the library.<sup>2</sup> When Neeta left for work about one-half hour later, Maganbhai was reading a book and his mother was watching television. Maganbhai had planned to go to a religious event that afternoon with Neeta’s sister and brother-in-law. About 2:30PM that afternoon, she called Maganbhai to remind him to get ready for the event, but he did not answer the phone. About an hour or so later, she called Ravi who told her that Maganbhai had gone “outside.” Neeta did not speak with Maganbhai after leaving for work that morning.

Raman Kaneria, Neeta’s brother-in-law, testified that, when Maganbhai did not show up at his house when expected, he texted him just before 4:00PM to say that they were ready to go. When Maganbhai did not reply to the text, he called the Pansuriya’s home’s land line. Ravi answered the phone and Mr. Kaneria said, “we are ready to go. Where is your father?” Mr. Kaneria testified that Ravi told him that Maganbhai was not going. Mr. Kaneria never heard from Maganbhai after that.

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<sup>2</sup> The State presented evidence that, in fact, Ravi went to several stores, including Walmart where he purchased a hatchet. The hatchet was later tied to the murder and/or dismemberment of the victim.



Neeta returned home from work about 7:45PM. She noticed that Maganbhai's car was there. She also noticed blood near the door's entrance and on a wall, and that a hallway rug and a rug in the laundry room were missing. She observed some blood in the first-floor bathroom and marks on the tub. It appeared to Neeta that something had happened to Maganbhai. Ravi arrived home a few minutes later, driving his father's pick-up truck. When Neeta asked about Maganbhai, Ravi said he had left the house in an Uber. Neeta testified that Ravi discouraged her from calling 911, but she eventually took her cell phone, went outside to her vehicle, locked herself in the vehicle, and called 911.

In his recorded interview with the police, Ravi told the detective that he had gone to the mall and Walmart that morning and returned home about 11:30AM, at which time he saw his father and grandmother in the living room. He went to his room upstairs, but he claimed to overhear his father arguing with his grandmother about the television. After that argument, Ravi related that his father came upstairs, got dressed (in a blue dress shirt and dress pants), and left about 12:30PM in a "black SUV" – "like some kind of taxi or Uber."<sup>3</sup> Ravi said his father never returned to the house.

Ravi told the detective that he "was studying the whole day" in his bedroom and did not leave the house until about 7:00PM. He related that he drove his father's pick-up truck "around town" for about 15 minutes just because it is rarely driven and he wanted to run it. He said he did not hear or see anything unusual at the house that day.

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<sup>3</sup> Maganbhai was wearing gray sweatpants when his body was found, clothing that Neeta described he was wearing when she left for work that day.

We need not summarize all the evidence.<sup>4</sup> We note, however, that the State’s evidence indicated that Maganbhai was murdered in his home. Ravi’s fingerprint was recovered from the adhesive side of a piece of duct tape, and duct tape was used on sheets and the rug placed around Maganbhai’s body. “Biological matter” was recovered from the back of Maganbhai’s pick-up truck. Maganbhai’s wallet and Rolex watch were recovered from a tin in Ravi’s bedroom. Maganbhai’s cell phone and Ravi’s cell phone were in the same locations throughout the afternoon and evening on the day of the murder.

### **DISCUSSION**

Appellant maintains that the court erred in allowing Amee and Neeta to testify that he “stopped” going to college, he “kept switching majors,” and he did not obtain a college degree. He argues that “this testimony” should have been excluded as it was not relevant. He asserts that “[w]hatever his reasons for not finishing college, the fact that he did not finish bore no relation to his actions and state of mind at the time” of his father’s murder. Moreover, he asserts that this testimony “impugn[ed his] character” and “had the capacity to sway the jury as it deliberated over whether the State proved the *mens rea* for first degree murder.” He asserts that it is akin to the introduction of “other bad acts evidence,” which must be excluded to avoid a jury from concluding that a defendant is a “bad person” and should be convicted even where evidence is lacking to support the conviction. He urges this Court to reverse his convictions and remand for a new trial.

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<sup>4</sup> Appellant’s brief contains a rather comprehensive summary of the forensic evidence presented at trial and provides more details than we include in this opinion.

The State first asserts that Appellant did not “preserve the entire scope of this argument for appellate review” as he objected on relevancy grounds and made no argument at trial that the testimony was unfairly prejudicial. The State further asserts that the testimony was “relevant to the history of [Ravi’s] relationship with his father, and it was not unfairly prejudicial.” Moreover, the State maintains that, given that Ravi’s conviction was “based on overwhelming evidence of his guilt, . . . any error in admitting testimony that [he] did not complete college was harmless beyond a reasonable doubt.”

We are not convinced that appellant preserved the issue for our review. The defense objected, solely on relevancy grounds, to Ameer’s testimony that Ravi did not “complete college” and to Neeta’s testimony that Ravi “did not graduate” from UMBC or get a degree and “kept switching majors,” but there was no request for a continuing objection and no objection was lodged to Neeta’s subsequent testimony that, after his divorce, she and her husband encouraged Ravi to “get a degree while working” at the hotel and that he took some classes, but “he was always weak in math, so he dropped the math class.” Also, Ravi’s recorded interview with the police was played for the jury, without objection, which included Ravi’s response when asked about his educational level. In other words, it was clear from Ravi’s own words that he had “[s]ome college” education and had taken classes at UMBC in “career sciences,” but did not earn a college degree. Moreover, on cross-examination of Neeta, it was defense counsel who sought to elicit information about how she felt about Ravi’s time at Towson University and UMBC – asking, “you weren’t happy with his performance at college?” – the implication, from defense counsel, that he had not done well academically.

“‘Objections are waived if, at another point during the trial, evidence on the same point is admitted without objection.’” *Benton v. State*, 224 Md. App. 612, 627 (2015) (quoting *DeLeon v. State*, 407 Md. 16, 31 (2008)). Accordingly, “to preserve an objection a party must either object each time a question concerning the [matter is] posed or . . . request a continuing objection to the entire line of questioning.” *Wimbish v. State*, 201 Md. App. 239, 261 (2011) (cleaned up), *cert. denied*, 424 Md. 293 (2012). In our view, the defense’s objections to Amee’s and Neeta’s testimony at issue here were waived when there was no objection to Neeta’s subsequent testimony about Ravi’s education and to the playing of Ravi’s own response to the police detective’s inquiry as to his educational level.

But even if we assume the objections were preserved and further assume that the testimony at issue – that Ravi had begun college at Towson University, transferred after a year to UMBC, kept switching majors, and did not complete college, graduate, or obtain a college degree – was not relevant, we would nonetheless agree with the State that any error in admitting it was harmless beyond a reasonable doubt. *See Dorsey v. State*, 276 Md. 638, 659 (1976) (“[W]hen an appellant . . . establishes error, unless a reviewing court, upon its own independent review of the record, is able to declare a belief, beyond a reasonable doubt, that the error in no way influenced the verdict, such error cannot be deemed ‘harmless’ and a reversal is mandated.”). To conclude that the error did not contribute to the guilty verdict, we must “find that error unimportant in relation to everything else the jury considered on the issue in question, as revealed by the record.” *Dionas v. State*, 436 Md. 97, 109 (2013) (quotation marks and citation omitted). Having reviewed the trial record and the substantial evidence elicited by the State to prove its case, we readily

conclude that any error in admitting the testimony regarding Ravi’s college attendance did not contribute to the jury’s guilty verdict.

Finally, we disagree with Appellant that this testimony constituted “additional evidence impugning [his] character . . . and had the capacity to sway the jury as it deliberated over whether the State proved the *mens rea* for first degree murder.” Transferring to another university, dropping certain classes, switching majors, and stopping studies prior to obtaining a college degree is not so unusual. Nor, standing alone, is it in any way reflective of a “bad person.”

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