MEMORANDUM DECISION

IN THE
Court of Appeals of Indiana

Steven Michael Sandquist,
Appellant-Respondent

v.

Heidi Lynne Sandquist,
Appellee-Petitioner

February 27, 2024

Court of Appeals Case No.
23A-DC-2064

Appeal from the Allen Superior Court

The Honorable Lori K. Morgan, Judge
The Honorable Sherry Hartzler, Magistrate

Trial Court Cause No.
02D08-1708-DC-1150

Memorandum Decision by Judge Crone
Judges Bailey and Pyle concur.

Crone, Judge.

[1] Steven Michael Sandquist, pro se, appeals the trial court's order modifying his parenting time with his minor son, H.S., as well as the court's order that he pay his child support arrearage and attorney's fees. We emphasize that a litigant who proceeds pro se is held to the same rules of procedure that trained counsel is bound to follow. *Smith v. Donahue*, 907 N.E.2d 553, 555 (Ind. Ct. App. 2009), *trans. denied, cert. dismissed*. Indeed, pro se litigants are afforded no inherent leniency simply by virtue of being self-represented. *Zavodnik v. Harper*, 17 N.E.3d 259, 266 (Ind. 2014). One risk a litigant takes when he proceeds pro se is that he will not know how to accomplish all the things an attorney would know how to accomplish. *Smith*, 907 N.E.2d at 555. When a party elects to represent himself, there is no reason for us to indulge in any benevolent presumption on his behalf or to waive any rule for the orderly and proper conduct of the appeal. *Foley v. Mannor*, 844 N.E.2d 494, 496 n.1 (Ind. Ct. App. 2006).

[2] Although failure to comply with the appellate rules does not necessarily result in waiver of the issues presented, it is appropriate where, as here, such noncompliance substantially impedes our review. *In re Moeder*, 27 N.E.3d 1089, 1097 (Ind. Ct. App. 2015), *trans. denied*. First, Indiana Appellate Rule 43(C) states that an appellate brief "shall be produced in a neat and legible manner[.]" The lion's share of the handwritten text in Sandquist's twenty-seven-page appellate brief is illegible. Consequently, there are countless words and sentences that we are wholly unable to decipher or understand.

[3] Additionally, although Sandquist's brief contains a statement of the case and statement of facts as required by Indiana Appellate Rules 46(A)(5) and -(A)(6), neither statement actually provides any legible, much less relevant, information necessary for disposition. Instead, he merely repeats some language from the appellate rules as to what information is required, and then he proceeds to provide irrelevant information. In other words, we have been supplied with no coherent explanation of "the nature of the case, the course of proceedings relevant to the issues presented for review, and the disposition of these issues by the trial court[,]" and we have been provided no "facts relevant to the issues presented for review." Ind. Appellate Rules 46(A)(5), -(A)(6).

[4] Moreover, Indiana Appellate Rule 46(A)(8) requires that contentions in an appellant's brief be supported by cogent reasoning, but Sandquist's brief is replete with bald statements and assertions unsupported by cogent argument. The mere citation to legal authority in support of an argument is insufficient if it is not also supported by cogent reasoning. The only thing we can discern from his brief is that he is upset with the disposition of child custody/parenting time following the dissolution of his marriage. That is an insufficient basis upon which to engage in meaningful appellate review.

[5] It is well established that we will not search the record to find a basis for a party's argument, nor will we search the authorities cited by a party in order to find legal support for his position. *Young v. Butts*, 685 N.E.2d 147, 151 (Ind. Ct. App. 1997). In short, this Court will "not become an advocate for a party, or address arguments that are inappropriate or too poorly developed or expressed

to be understood." *Basic v. Amouri*, 58 N.E.3d 980, 984 (Ind. Ct. App. 2016). Failure to abide by our rules of appellate procedure has resulted in waiver of Sandquist's claims on appeal. We affirm the trial court in all respects.

[6] Affirmed.

Bailey, J., and Pyle, J., concur.

APPELLANT PRO SE

Steven Michael Sandquist
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