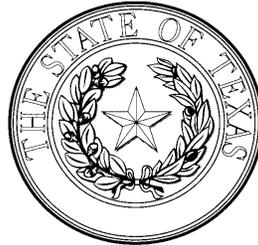


Opinion issued June 18, 2020



In The
Court of Appeals
For The
First District of Texas

NO. 01-18-01010-CV

MARGARET ARTHUR REID, Appellant
V.
MENGHESTEAB WOREDE, Appellee

**On Appeal from the 234th District Court
Harris County, Texas
Trial Court Case No. 2016-51280**

MEMORANDUM OPINION

Margaret Arthur Reid was riding in a Metrolift bus when it was struck from behind by a vehicle driven by Menghesteab Worede. Reid was injured in the collision, and she sued Worede for damages. A jury found in her favor for past medical expenses in the amount of \$3,074, but it awarded nothing for pain and

suffering. The trial court rendered judgment on the verdict, awarded pre- and post-judgment interest, and ordered Worede to pay all taxable court costs. Reid appealed pro se.

Pro se litigants are held to the same standards as licensed attorneys. *Mansfield State Bank v. Cohn*, 573 S.W.2d 181, 184–85 (Tex. 1978). Reid filed as her appellate brief a short, handwritten letter in which she stated that (1) opposing counsel talked to several jurors during the course of trial, (2) the jury did not award any pain-and-suffering damages, (3) the “judge went to sleep,” (4) a juror worked for Metrolift, and (5) the bus driver lied. The letter-brief did not include “a clear and concise argument for the contentions made, with appropriate citations to the authorities and to the record,” as required by the Texas Rules of Appellate Procedure. *See* TEX. R. APP. P. 38.1(i).

We ordered Reid to redraw her brief, conforming to the Rules of Appellate Procedure, no later than January 30, 2020. More than a month has passed since the due date, and Reid has not responded.

“Appellate briefs are to be construed reasonably, yet liberally, so that the right to appellate review is not lost by waiver.” *Perry v. Cohen*, 272 S.W.3d 585, 587 (Tex. 2008). We “should reach the merits of an appeal whenever reasonably possible.” *Id.* (citing *Verburgt v. Dorner*, 959 S.W.2d 615, 616 (Tex. 1997)). The purpose of an appellate brief is to acquaint the court with the issues in a case and to

present argument that will enable the court to decide the case. *Tyurin v. Hirsch & Westheimer, P.C.*, No. 01-17-00014-CV, 2017 WL 4682191, at *1 (Tex. App.—Houston [1st Dist.] Oct. 19, 2017, no pet.) (mem. op.).

Reid did not state specific issues, direct us to facts in the record that support her contentions, identify legal authority, or explain why judgment should be rendered in her favor. Because the role of the appellate court is to be a neutral adjudicator, we cannot “perform an independent review of the record and applicable law to determine whether there was error.” *Coleman v. Progressive County Mut. Ins. Co.*, No. 01-16-00448-CV, 2017 WL 3184753, at *1 (Tex. App.—Houston [1st Dist.] July 27, 2017, no pet.) (mem. op.). Reid’s letter fails to meet the substantive requirements of an appellate brief, and Reid has waived all claims of error. *See* TEX. R. APP. P. 38.1.

We affirm the trial court’s judgment.

Peter Kelly
Justice

Panel consists of Chief Justice Radack and Justices Kelly and Goodman.