

IOWA COURT OF APPEALS

State of Iowa v. Bryan Francisco Cordona

No. 25-0083 (Iowa Ct. App. Jan. 28, 2026) · No. No. 25-0083 · Decided January 28, 2026

SUMMARY

The Iowa Court of Appeals dismissed Bryan Francisco Cordona’s appeal from sentences imposed after he pleaded guilty to two counts of domestic abuse assault. The court held that Cordona failed to show good cause to appeal an agreed sentencing provision and therefore lacked appellate jurisdiction.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	Iowa Court of Appeals
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Langholz, J.; Chicchelly, P.J.; Buller, J.
JURISDICTION	Iowa Court of Appeals
DECIDED	January 28, 2026
DOCKET	No. 25-0083
DISPOSITION	dismissed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Cordona appealed the sentences imposed after he pleaded guilty to two counts of domestic abuse assault, challenging a personal-search provision in the agreed sentencing terms.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court addressed appellate jurisdiction de novo as a threshold matter; it did not reach the merits of the legality of the search condition.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	published
PARTIES	Bryan Francisco Cordona v. State of Iowa

TOPICS

- appellate jurisdiction
- appellate procedure
- criminal procedure
- plea bargaining
- sentencing

PRACTICE AREAS

- criminal procedure
- appellate procedure
- sentencing
- plea bargaining

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether Cordona demonstrated good cause to appeal sentences imposed pursuant to an agreed plea bargain after pleading guilty to offenses other than a class A felony.
2. Whether the court could reach Cordona's challenge to the agreed personal-search probation condition.

HOLDINGS

1. A defendant who pleaded guilty to offenses other than a class A felony must show good cause to appeal, and a challenge directed solely at nondiscretionary or agreed sentencing terms, without an alleged sentencing error extrinsic to the plea, does not establish good cause.
2. A defendant may not claim that the court erred by adopting in its entirety the terms of a rule 2.10(3) plea agreement that the defendant requested and accepted.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“And because he pleaded guilty to offenses other than a class “A” felony, Cordona must show good cause to appeal.” (at 1)

“As a result, he cannot now claim the court erred by granting his request to adopt the agreement in its entirety.” (at 2)

“Because Cordona has not shown good cause, we lack jurisdiction and dismiss his appeal.” (at 2)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Cordona pleaded guilty to two counts of domestic abuse assault, second offense. Under the plea agreement resolving the aggravated misdemeanor, he agreed to one year in jail with all but fourteen days suspended, two years of probation, and a condition allowing searches of his person, car, or residence during probation. The district court accepted the agreement and imposed the agreed sentence, after which Cordona challenged the personal-search provision on appeal.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

In December 2024, Cordona pleaded guilty to two counts of domestic abuse assault, second offense. The Iowa District Court for Plymouth County accepted a rule 2.10(3) plea agreement and imposed the agreed sentence, including a probation condition requiring him to submit to searches. Cordona appealed, but the Iowa Court of Appeals dismissed the appeal for lack of appellate jurisdiction because he did not establish good cause to appeal an agreed sentence.

DISPOSITION

dismissed

CASES CITED

- State v. Damme, 944 N.W.2d 98, 100 (Iowa 2020)
- State v. Wilbourn, 974 N.W.2d 58, 66 (Iowa 2022)

- State v. Cart, No. 23-1338, 2025 WL 854775, at *2 (Iowa Ct. App. Mar. 19, 2025)
- State v. Spencer, No. 23-0844, 2024 WL 3518267, at *1 (Iowa Ct. App. July 24, 2024)
- State v. Brumley, No. 23-1693, 2024 WL 2842224, at *1 (Iowa Ct. App. June 5, 2024)
- State v. Hightower, 8 N.W.3d 527, 542 (Iowa 2024)
- State v. Rasmus, 90 N.W.2d 429, 430 (Iowa 1958)

OPINION

State of Iowa v. Bryan Francisco Cordona

PER CURIAM.

IN THE COURT OF APPEALS OF IOWA

_____ No. 25-0083 Filed January 28, 2026 _____ State of Iowa,
Plaintiff–Appellee, v. Bryan Francisco Cordona, Defendant–Appellant. _____ Appeal
from the Iowa District Court for Plymouth County, The Honorable Jessica Noll, Judge.

APPEAL DISMISSED

_____ Debra S. De Jong of De Jong Law Firm, P.C., Orange City, attorney for appellant. Brenna Bird, Attorney General, and Zachary Miller, Assistant Attorney General, attorneys for appellee. _____ Considered without oral argument by Chicchelly, P.J., and Buller and Langholz, JJ. Opinion by Langholz, J. 1 LANGHOLZ, Judge. In December 2024, Bryan Cordona pleaded guilty to two counts of domestic abuse assault, second offense. The first count was an aggravated misdemeanor because he caused bodily injury; the second was a serious misdemeanor. See Iowa Code § 708.2A(2)(a)–(b), (3)(a)–(b) (2024). To resolve the aggravated misdemeanor, he and the State entered into a plea agreement wherein Cordona agreed to a sentence of one year in jail, with all but fourteen days suspended, and two years of probation. He also agreed to “submit to a search of [his] person, car, and/or residence at any time during probation pursuant to the policies and procedures of the Iowa Department of Correctional Services.” The court accepted the agreement and imposed the agreed-to sentence.¹ Cordona now appeals his sentences, urging that the personal-search provision is unlawful. But before we consider the merits, Cordona must first secure appellate jurisdiction. And because he pleaded guilty to offenses other than a class “A” felony, Cordona must show good cause to appeal. See *id.* § 814.6(1)(a)(3). He has not. Generally, our supreme court has blessed direct appeals of sentences that were “neither mandatory nor agreed to in the plea bargain.” *State v. Damme*, 944 N.W.2d 98, 100 (Iowa 2020). In 2022, it “save[d] for another day the question of whether good cause exists to solely appeal an agreed sentence without an accompanying sentencing error outside the scope of the plea agreement.” *State v. Wilbourn*, 974 N.W.2d 58, 66 (Iowa 2022). Since then, we have consistently held that solely challenging nondiscretionary or 1 On the serious misdemeanor, the court imposed a one-year jail sentence with all but seven days suspended and placed Cordona on probation for only one year. We thus focus—as does Cordona—on the plea and sentence for the

aggravated misdemeanor. 2 agreed-to sentencing terms, without further alleging any errors extrinsic to the plea, is not good cause to appeal. See, e.g., *State v. Cart*, No. 23-1338, 2025 WL 854775, at *2 (Iowa Ct. App. Mar. 19, 2025); *State v. Spencer*, No. 23-0844, 2024 WL 3518267, at *1 (Iowa Ct. App. July 24, 2024); *State v. Brumley*, No. 23-1693, 2024 WL 2842224, at *1 (Iowa Ct. App. June 5, 2024). Cordona received the full benefit of his bargain. Indeed, by negotiating a rule 2.10(3) plea, Cordona specifically requested that the plea's terms be "[b]inding upon the court" and reserved his right to go to trial should the court decline to accept "the terms and conditions of the plea agreement." See generally Iowa Rule Crim. P. 2.10(3); *State v. Hightower*, 8 N.W.3d 527, 542 (Iowa 2024). As a result, he cannot now claim the court erred by granting his request to adopt the agreement in its entirety. And in so finding, we continue to adhere to the longstanding rules that "[a] party to a criminal proceeding cannot assume inconsistent positions in the trial and appellate courts," nor may a defendant "allege an error in which he himself acquiesced, or which was committed or invited by him, or was the natural consequence of his own actions." *State v. Rasmus*, 90 N.W.2d 429, 430 (Iowa 1958) (cleaned up). Because Cordona has not shown good cause, we lack jurisdiction and dismiss his appeal. APPEAL DISMISSED. 3