

COURT OF APPEALS OF OHIO, ELEVENTH APPELLATE DISTRICT, LAKE COUNTY

State v. Lucas

2026-Ohio-230 · No. 2025-L-079 · Decided January 27, 2026

SUMMARY

The Ohio Eleventh District Court of Appeals affirmed Dale C. Lucas's convictions and sentence for domestic violence, attempted abduction, and violating a protection order. The court held that domestic violence and attempted abduction were not allied offenses requiring merger because they involved distinct acts and a separate animus. The court also held that the maximum, consecutive sentences for domestic violence and attempted abduction were not contrary to law.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	Court of Appeals of Ohio, Eleventh Appellate District, Lake County
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Scott Lynch, J.; Matt Lynch, P.J.; John J. Eklund, J.
JURISDICTION	Ohio Court of Appeals, Eleventh Appellate District, Lake County
DECIDED	January 27, 2026
DOCKET	2025-L-079
DISPOSITION	affirmed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Lucas pleaded guilty to felony domestic violence, attempted abduction, and misdemeanor violation of a protection order in the Lake County Court of Common Pleas. He appealed his convictions and sentence, arguing that domestic violence and attempted abduction were allied offenses that should have merged and that the trial court imposed unlawful maximum, consecutive sentences.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The allied-offenses issue was reviewed de novo as a legal determination based on the specific facts, but because Lucas did not object at sentencing, the appellate court also applied plain-error review. Felony sentencing was reviewed under R.C. 2953.08(G)(2), permitting modification or remand if the appellate court clearly and convincingly finds that the record does not support consecutive-sentence findings or that the sentence is contrary to law.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Published Ohio Court of Appeals opinion

PARTIES

Dale C. Lucas v. State of Ohio

TOPICS

double jeopardy

sentencing

criminal procedure

appellate procedure

standard of review

PRACTICE AREAS

criminal law

criminal procedure

appellate sentencing

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the trial court committed plain error by failing to merge domestic violence and attempted abduction as allied offenses of similar import under R.C. 2941.25.
2. Whether the trial court's imposition of maximum, consecutive sentences for domestic violence and attempted abduction was contrary to law or improperly penalized Lucas for accepting a plea agreement.

HOLDINGS

1. The trial court did not err, plainly or otherwise, by imposing separate sentences for domestic violence and attempted abduction because the offenses were committed through distinct acts and with a separate animus.
2. The maximum, consecutive sentences for domestic violence and attempted abduction were not contrary to law. The trial court had discretion to impose prison terms within the statutory ranges, and the record supported the sentence notwithstanding the court's reference to the benefit of the plea agreement.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“An affirmative answer to any of the above will permit separate convictions.” (¶ 8)

“Trial courts have full discretion to impose a prison sentence within the statutory range and are no longer required to make findings or give their reasons for imposing maximum ... sentence[s].” (¶ 17)

“Contrary to Lucas’ argument on appeal, his sentence was based on his conduct and the principles of sentencing.” (¶ 18)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

On December 13, 2024, Lucas struck and punched a dating-partner victim and restrained her at his grandmother's residence by preventing her from leaving. He also threatened the victim and, after being served with a protection order, repeatedly contacted her by written messages and telephone calls. Lucas had a prior domestic-violence conviction and later pleaded guilty to domestic violence, attempted abduction, and violating the protection order.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

A Lake County grand jury indicted Lucas on domestic violence, abduction, and violating a protection order. Pursuant to a plea agreement, he pleaded guilty to the charges, with the abduction count reduced to attempted abduction. The trial court imposed consecutive eighteen-month prison terms for domestic violence and attempted abduction and a concurrent 180-day jail term for violating the protection order. Lucas appealed, and the Eleventh District affirmed.

DISPOSITION

affirmed

CASES CITED

- State v. Ruff, 2015-Ohio-995
- State v. Bailey, State v. Bailey, 2022-Ohio-4407
- State v. Smallwood, 2025-Ohio-1001, ¶¶ 44-45 (6th Dist.)
- State v. Marcum, 2016-Ohio-1002, ¶ 1
- State v. Adkins, 2025-Ohio-4526, ¶ 7 (11th Dist.)
- State v. Sergeant, 2016-Ohio-2696, ¶ 34