

FIFTH DISTRICT COURT OF APPEAL OF FLORIDA

Gerald Paul Quaif v. State of Florida

Quaif · No. 5D2024-0888 · Decided January 23, 2026

SUMMARY

The Fifth District Court of Appeal of Florida affirmed Gerald Paul Quaif’s judgment and sentence in an Anders appeal. The court held that correcting a harmless clerical error in the statutory citation for a five percent surcharge is discretionary rather than mandatory, and declined to remand for correction; Judge Wallis concurred in part and dissented in part.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	Fifth District Court of Appeal of Florida
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Eisnaugle, J.; Kilbane, J.; Wallis, J.
JURISDICTION	Fifth District Court of Appeal of Florida
DECIDED	January 23, 2026
DOCKET	5D2024-0888
DISPOSITION	affirmed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Anders appeal from a judgment and sentence entered by the Circuit Court for Sumter County.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Anders review of the record for reversible error; harmless clerical errors in an Anders case need not be corrected by the appellate court.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Published opinion; binding Florida Fifth District authority on the discretionary nature of correcting harmless clerical errors in Anders cases.
PARTIES	Gerald Paul Quaif v. State of Florida

TOPICS

- appellate procedure
- harmless error
- criminal procedure
- sentencing
- statutory interpretation

PRACTICE AREAS

- criminal appellate procedure
- Anders appeals
- sentencing

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether an appellate court must remand an Anders case to correct a harmless clerical error in the defendant's written sentence.
2. Whether the incorrect statutory citation for the five-percent surcharge required correction despite the absence of prejudice or reversible error.

HOLDINGS

1. Correcting a clerical error that is harmless to the defendant in an Anders case is, at most, discretionary; the appellate court is not required to remand for correction.
2. The court would not remand to correct the erroneous statutory citation because the error was harmless to the defendant and correction was discretionary rather than mandatory.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“As such, we now hold that correcting a clerical error that is harmless to the defendant in an Anders case is, at most, discretionary.” (at 2)

“While courts should not assume the role of appellate counsel, reversible error should not be ignored simply because an indigent appellant or a public defender failed to point it out.” (at 1)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

The written sentence imposed fines for each of Quaif's convictions and a five-percent surcharge on each fine. The sentence incorrectly cited section 960.25, Florida Statutes, as authority for the surcharge, although that section no longer exists and the surcharge authority is section 938.04. The parties and court treated the citation error as harmless to Quaif.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Quaif appealed his judgment and sentence in an Anders proceeding. The Fifth District Court of Appeal reviewed the record, found no reversible error, affirmed, and declined to remand for correction of a harmless statutory citation error in the written sentence.

DISPOSITION

affirmed

CASES CITED

- Anders v. California, 386 U.S. 738 (1967)
- State v. Causey, 503 So. 2d 321, 322–23 (Fla. 1987)
- Bush v. State, 354 So. 3d 626, 626 (Fla. 5th DCA 2023)
- Dubuc v. State, 345 So. 3d 961, 962 (Fla. 5th DCA 2022)
- Bailey v. State, 350 So. 3d 753 (Fla. 4th DCA 2022)
- Echavarria v. State, 270 So. 3d 527, 528 (Fla. 2d DCA 2019)

- Williams v. State, 422 So. 3d 1155, 1164 (Fla. 5th DCA 2025)
- United States v. Wilmoth, 668 F. App'x 455, 457 (4th Cir. 2016)
- United States v. Hill, 358 F. App'x 729, 731 (7th Cir. 2010)
- Gadson v. State, 50 Fla. L. Weekly D2314a (Fla. 5th DCA Oct. 24, 2025)
- State v. Du Bose, 128 So. 4, 6 (Fla. 1930)
- Deblois v. Dominguez, 390 So. 3d 51, 54 n.5 (Fla. 3d DCA 2023)
- Physicians Med. Ctrs. v. Allstate Fire & Cas. Ins. Co., 335 So. 3d 1284, 1289 (Fla. 1st DCA 2022)
- Walker v. State, 357 So. 3d 724, 725 (Fla. 5th DCA 2022)
- Torres v. State, 293 So. 3d 634 (Fla. 5th DCA 2020)

OPINION

PER CURIAM.

FIFTH DISTRICT COURT OF APPEAL STATE OF FLORIDA
 _____ Case No. 5D2024-0888 LT Case No. 2021-CF-000940-A
 _____ GERALD PAUL QUAIF, Appellant, v. STATE OF
 FLORIDA, Appellee. _____ On appeal from the Circuit Court for
 Sumter County. Mary P. Hatcher, Judge. Matthew J. Metz, Public Defender, and Jane Almy,
 Assistant Public Defender, for Appellant.

James Uthmeier, Attorney General, Tallahassee, and Rebecca Rock McGuigan, Bureau Chief,
 Daytona Beach, for Appellee. January 23, 2026 EISNAUGLE, J. In this Anders¹ appeal, we find
 no reversible error and affirm Gerald Paul Quaif's judgment and sentence.

We write briefly to explain why we do not remand for the correction of a harmless clerical error
 appearing in Appellant's sentence. ¹ Anders v. California, 386 U.S. 738 (1967). The written
 sentence imposes fines for each of Appellant's convictions, along with a five percent surcharge on
 each fine.

However, the sentence incorrectly cites section 960.25, Florida Statutes, as authority for the
 surcharge. While section 960.25 no longer exists, authority for the surcharge is found in section
 938.04, Florida Statutes. This error is clearly harmless to the defendant. Nevertheless, our court
 has, from time to time, corrected harmless clerical errors in Anders cases.

See, e.g., Bush v. State, 354 So. 3d 626, 626 (Fla. 5th DCA 2023) (correcting "a clerical error to
 show that Appellant entered a plea of guilty, not nolo contendere"); Dubuc v. State, 345 So. 3d
 961, 962 (Fla. 5th DCA 2022) (correcting a clerical error in the title of the judgment); see also
 Bailey v. State, 350 So. 3d 753 (Fla. 4th DCA 2022) (remanding for correction of a cost citation);
 Echavarria v. State, 270 So.

3d 527, 528 (Fla. 2d DCA 2019) (remanding for correction of a cost citation). Although we have done so in practice, our decisions do not identify any authority for an appellate court to sua sponte correct harmless clerical errors in a defendant's paperwork. Indeed, correcting a harmless error is not authorized by the Anders procedure set forth in *State v. Causey*, 503 So.

2d 321 (Fla. 1987). See *Williams v. State*, 422 So. 3d 1155, 1164 (Fla. 5th DCA 2025). In *Causey*, the Florida Supreme Court established our Anders procedure, instructing that, "[w]hile courts should not assume the role of appellate counsel, reversible error should not be ignored simply because an indigent appellant or a public defender failed to point it out." 503 So.

2d at 322–23 (emphasis added). The federal courts concur, declining to correct harmless errors in Anders cases. See, e.g., *United States v. Wilmoth*, 668 F. App'x 455, 457 (4th Cir. 2016) ("In accordance with Anders, we have reviewed the entire record in this case and found no meritorious issues for appeal, other than the risk enhancement issue, which we conclude fails harmless error review."); *United States v. Hill*, 358 F. App'x 729, 731 (7th Cir.

2010) (applying harmless error analysis to potential error in Anders case). While decisions like *Bush* and *Dubuc* permit a panel of our court to correct harmless clerical errors in Anders cases, we are not aware of any decision holding that correcting such an error is mandatory.² As such, we now hold that correcting a clerical error that is harmless to the defendant in an Anders case is, at most, discretionary.

We therefore decline to correct the statutory citation for the five percent surcharge in this case. Given that our decision today, and decisions like *Bush* and *Dubuc*, will likely evade review, we direct the Clerk of this court, pursuant to Florida Rule of General Practice and Judicial Administration 2.140(2) and (3), to refer this opinion to the Clerk of the Florida Supreme Court and the Appellate Court Rules Committee of The Florida Bar for consideration of a rule amendment clarifying the scope of an appellate court's Anders review.

AFFIRMED. KILBANE, J., concurs. WALLIS, J., concurs in part, dissents in part, with opinion. ² See *Gadson v. State*, 50 Fla. L. Weekly D2314a (Fla. 5th DCA Oct. 24, 2025) ("As our supreme court explained nearly a century ago, 'no decision is authority on any question not raised and considered, although it may be involved in the facts of the case.'" (quoting *State v. Du Bose*, 128 So.

4, 6 (Fla. 1930))); see also *Deblois v. Dominguez*, 390 So. 3d 51, 54 n.5 (Fla. 3d DCA 2023) ("The general rule is that issues, even jurisdictional issues, lurking in the record but not addressed do not bind the court in later cases." (citation and internal bracket omitted)); *Physicians Med. Ctrs. v. Allstate Fire & Cas. Ins. Co.*, 335 So. 3d 1284, 1289 (Fla.

1st DCA 2022) ("[I]f an issue is not argued, or though argued is ignored by the court, or is reserved, the decision does not constitute a precedent to be followed[.]" (citation omitted)). ³

_____ Not final until disposition of any timely and authorized motion under Fla. R. App. P. 9.330 or 9.331. _____ 4 Case No. 5D2024-0888 LT Case No. 2021-CF-000940-A WALLIS, J., concurring in part, dissenting in part.

I concur with the majority's affirmance of the appellant's judgment and sentence. I respectfully dissent, however, to the majority's declination to remand for correction of the statutory citation. I would instead follow this court's prior precedents in remanding for correction of such error in Anders cases. See *Dubuc v. State*, 345 So. 3d 961, 962 (Fla. 5th DCA 2022) (affirming judgment and sentence but remanding with directions to correct statutory citation in judgment); *Walker v. State*, 357 So.

3d 724, 725 (Fla. 5th DCA 2022) (same); *Torres v. State*, 293 So. 3d 634 (Fla. 5th DCA 2020) (same). 5