

SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF DELAWARE

Langston v. Hennley

No. 51, 2026 · No. No. 51, 2026 · Decided March 18, 2026

SUMMARY

The Delaware Supreme Court dismissed an appeal from interlocutory procedural orders entered by a Family Court Commissioner in a protection from abuse proceeding. The court also deemed the appellant's mandamus petition unopposed after the appellant failed to respond to a show-cause notice.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	Supreme Court of the State of Delaware
JURISDICTION	Supreme Court of the State of Delaware
DECIDED	March 18, 2026
DOCKET	No. 51, 2026
DISPOSITION	dismissed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	The appellant appealed interlocutory procedural orders entered by a Family Court Commissioner in a protection from abuse proceeding and separately sought mandamus relief. After receiving an order to show cause, the appellant did not respond within the required ten-day period.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Published opinion; the order does not expressly state a precedential designation.
PARTIES	Nathan Langston v. Sarah Hennley

TOPICS

- appellate procedure
- interlocutory appeal
- domestic violence
- family law
- writ of certiorari

PRACTICE AREAS

- family law
- appellate procedure
- civil procedure
- remedies

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

- Whether the appeal should be dismissed because it sought review of interlocutory orders and challenged decisions of a Family Court Commissioner over which the Supreme Court questioned its appellate jurisdiction.

2. Whether the petition for a writ of mandamus should be dismissed because the appellant failed to demonstrate entitlement to mandamus relief.
3. Whether the action should be dismissed as unopposed after the appellant failed to respond to the show-cause notice within the required ten-day period.

HOLDINGS

1. When an appellant fails to respond within the required period to a properly issued show-cause notice concerning dismissal of an appeal and mandamus petition, dismissal of the action may be deemed unopposed.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“The appellant having failed to respond to the notice to show cause within the required ten-day period, dismissal of this action is deemed unopposed.” (¶ 2)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

The underlying proceeding was a protection from abuse matter in the Delaware Family Court. A Family Court Commissioner entered orders addressing procedural matters. The appellant sought appellate review and also requested mandamus relief, but did not respond to the Supreme Court's show-cause notice within the prescribed period.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

The Family Court Commissioner entered procedural orders in a protection from abuse proceeding. Langston appealed those orders and filed documents styled as a petition for a writ of mandamus. The Delaware Supreme Court issued a show-cause notice concerning the interlocutory nature of the orders, the Court's jurisdiction over an appeal from a Family Court Commissioner's decision, and the lack of demonstrated entitlement to mandamus relief. After failed certified-mail delivery and reissuance by first-class mail, Langston failed to respond, and the action was dismissed as unopposed.

DISPOSITION

dismissed

OPINION

PER CURIAM.

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF DELAWARE NATHAN LANGSTON,¹ § §
Petitioner Below, § No. 51, 2026 Appellant, § § Court Below—Family Court v. § of the State of
Delaware § SARAH HENNLEY, § File No. CN26-01168 § Petition No. 26-01196 Respondent
Below, § Appellee. § Submitted: March 10, 2026 Decided: March 18, 2026 ORDER (1) The
appellant filed a notice of appeal seeking review of orders entered by a Family Court
Commissioner relating to procedural matters in a protection from abuse proceeding.

The appellant also filed documents styled as a petition for a writ of mandamus. The Senior Court Clerk issued a notice, by certified mail, directing the appellant to show cause why the appeal should not be dismissed because the orders are interlocutory and this Court lacks jurisdiction to consider an appeal from the decision of a Family Court Commissioner.

The notice also directed the appellant to show cause why the writ petition should not be dismissed because it fails to demonstrate entitlement to mandamus relief. 1 The Court previously assigned pseudonyms to the parties under Supreme Court Rule 7(d).

(2) Postal records reflect that the postal service attempted delivery of the certified mail on February 12 and 17, 2026, but no authorized recipient was available; notice of the attempted delivery was left at the address.

On February 26, 2026, the Chief Deputy Clerk reissued the notice to show cause by first-class mail. The appellant having failed to respond to the notice to show cause within the required ten-day period, dismissal of this action is deemed unopposed. NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS ORDERED, under Supreme Court Rules 3(b)(2) and 29(b), that the appeal is DISMISSED. BY THE COURT: /s/ Collins J. Seitz, Jr. Chief Justice 2