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2017 IL App (3d) 160616-U

Order filed August 10, 2017

IN THE
APPELLATE COURT OF ILLINOIS
THIRD DISTRICT

2017

<i>In re</i> C.W., C.W., and C.W.,	)	Appeal from the Circuit Court
	)	of the 10th Judicial Circuit,
Minors	)	Peoria County, Illinois.
)	
(The People of the State of Illinois,)	
	)	Appeal Nos. 3-16-0616, 3-16-0617, and
Petitioner-Appellee,	)	3-16-0618
	)	Circuit Nos. 16-JA-33, 16-JA-34, and
v.	)	16-JA-35
)	
Jennifer W.,	)	The Honorable
	)	Timothy J. Cusack and
Respondent-Appellant).	)	Kirk D. Schoenbein,
	)	Judges, presiding.

JUSTICE McDADE delivered the judgment of the court.
Presiding Justice Holdridge and Justice O'Brien concurred in the judgment.

ORDER

- ¶ 1 *Held:* The circuit court did not err when it made the minors wards of the court and found the respondent-mother unfit or when it denied trial counsel's motion to withdraw prior to the dispositional hearing.
- ¶ 2 After an adjudicatory hearing, the circuit court found the minors, C.W., C.W., and C.W., neglected by reason of an injurious environment. Following a dispositional hearing, the court,

inter alia, made the minors wards of the court and found the respondent-mother, Jennifer W., to be an unfit parent. On appeal, Jennifer claims error in the entry of the adjudicatory and dispositional orders, as well as the court’s denial of trial counsel’s motion to withdraw prior to the dispositional hearing. We affirm.

¶ 3

FACTS

¶ 4

On February 2, 2016, the State filed juvenile petitions alleging the minors (born March 5, 2001; January 17, 2002; and December 17, 2005) to be neglected by reason of an injurious environment. Due to the similarity of the minors’ names, we will refer to them by their birth order; *i.e.*, the eldest C.W., the middle C.W., and the youngest C.W.

¶ 5

Specifically, the juvenile petitions alleged that Jennifer suffered from mental health problems. The petitions alleged that a psychologist had found Jennifer unfit for duty in her position as an Illinois State Trooper in August 2014 and again in April 2015. The petitions stated that in April 2015, Jennifer was diagnosed with Adjustment Disorder, Psychotic Disorder Not Otherwise Specified (NOS), and Diagnosis Deferred Personality Disorder NOS. In June 2015, she was “diagnosed” with “Shared Delusions in that the mother’s delusions were being shared with the minors and becoming the minor’s [*sic*] delusions.” In August 2015, she was diagnosed with Delusional Disorder, Persecutory Type.

¶ 6

Regarding Jennifer’s alleged delusions, the petitions stated:

“The mother believes that people are coming to her home, drugging her, raping her and rubbing poison ivy on her and she believes there are a number of people involved including the Peoria County Sheriff, Peoria County State’s Attorney, police officers, the father and others[.]”

¶ 7 Further, the petitions alleged that the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) interviewed the minors in June 2015. The youngest C.W. stated that “the people always find them wherever they are and break in and rape and beat his mother, poison the food, drug the mother and beat her and rub poison ivy on her and he named a number of people he had seen do this[.]” The middle C.W. stated that “any home they live in people come in and rape his mother, if the minors tell their address to anyone, the people will come and kill us[.]” The eldest C.W. stated that “he has never seen anything but he believes the mother and [the youngest C.W.] that people are breaking in and hurting them and knows he is being given something to make him not remember[.]”

¶ 8 Lastly, the petitions stated that Jennifer took the children to a police department in McLean County at 2:00 a.m. on May 15, 2015 and told the police that:

“[the youngest C.W.] had told them all, that in the middle of the night seven (7) men, including the father, an uncle, another man, a black man, and three (3) Peoria County deputies, had come in and raped the mother and her sister, placed a plant on their bodies and the mother showed the officer marks, bruises, and rashes and during the interview the mother was erratic and scattered and [the youngest C.W.] spoke to police regarding shadows that looked like people on the ceilings, walls and floor and that they have put flour down and seen hand prints and that the shadow people looked like his dad and uncle and he would see that on the ceiling and walls[.]”

¶ 9 The circuit court entered an order of protection on February 29, 2016, which allowed the minors to reside with Jennifer but directed her to comply with DCFS and ensure that the minors attended counseling. The order also granted the father, from whom Jennifer had been divorced, certain visitation rights. The order also forbade Jennifer from discussing “people coming into the home, rapes or drugging of persons” with the minors.

¶ 10 On June 29, 2016, the circuit court held an adjudicatory hearing. Aaron Rowe, a police officer in Normal, testified that Jennifer arrived at the police station in the early morning hours of May 15, 2015, accompanied by the minors and her sister. Prior to interviewing Jennifer, Rowe’s supervisor told him that Jennifer was a trooper with the Illinois State Police (ISP) and that she was on leave for mental health issues. Jennifer relayed to Rowe that the youngest C.W., who was nine years old, had told her that on the night before, he witnessed seven males enter their home and drug and sodomize Jennifer and her sister. One of the males was the minors’ father. The youngest C.W. had told Jennifer that after the males rendered her and her sister unconscious, the males rubbed a plant on their bodies, which may have been poison ivy, and then sodomized the women with various objects including a wooden spoon. Jennifer told Rowe that she awoke that morning with red spots all over her body. Rowe testified that he did not observe any red marks on Jennifer until she grabbed one of her arms and rubbed it “quite hard.” While Jennifer did show him four somewhat blurry pictures on her phone that she said were of people inside her house without permission, Rowe stated that the pictures had been taken during the daytime. Rowe stated that Jennifer presented him with no evidence that would have led him to believe that the assault had taken place.

¶ 11 Jennifer told Rowe that she came to the police department in Normal, even though she lived in Peoria County, because she could not trust anyone in her home county. Rowe described

Jennifer's demeanor as erratic and her speech as fast-paced. She jumped from topic to topic and back again without temporal clarity. The interview lasted approximately 30 to 45 minutes and did not result in a follow-up investigation. However, a call was placed to DCFS. Rowe stated the following regarding the decision to allow Jennifer to leave with the minors:

“There were references made during the interview that Jennifer either was, she had told me that one of the problems with her husband was that he was saying she would unload a clip into some kind of shadowy figures; and, so, the alarm that we saw, the conclusion of it was, based off what she was telling us and the lack of evidence, that maybe as a state trooper she had other weapons in the household, so, we didn't know if she would try and fire upon intruders that she believed were in the home. That that would injure the children. But, based off of our, what Officer Droege found out, coupled with the entire incident, we didn't believe the children were of [*sic*] harm that night.”

¶ 12 On cross-examination, Rowe admitted that in his report, he stated that Jennifer had shown him different areas of her body including her ankles, arms, and back, and that she had an older bruise on her left wrist, small circular scars from her wrists up to her elbows, two scabbed-over marks on her ankles, and one scabbed-over mark on her back. Rowe also stated that Jennifer told him that when she woke up that morning, she had pain in her rectal and genital regions.

¶ 13 Robert Droege testified that he was a police officer in Normal and that he interviewed the youngest C.W. at the police station on May 15, 2015. The minor told Droege that he had

seen “shadow people” on the walls, floors, and ceilings in his house. Their faces looked like his father and uncle. He stated the “shadow people” would move from one reflective surface to another. He said the “shadow people” would leave marks and bruises on him at night and rub poison ivy on him. He also talked about there being wires sticking out of the walls that were not there before, as well as objects being moved in the house. Droegge testified that he did not perform a physical examination of the minor, but he did not see any marks that looked like poison ivy. Droegge also stated that the minor showed him a mark on his knee and a mark on his ankle, but the minor said the knee mark was from a fall. The ankle mark was an older mark that apparently had some bandage residue around it.

¶ 14 Droegge explained that the minor “was very calm for a nine-year-old at 4:00 in the morning.” Droegge did not mention any sexual assault allegation, as he did not want to influence the minor’s statements. The minor said it was his idea to come to the Normal police department. Droegge also stated that the minor told him they had put flour down in the house one night as a means of trying to identify if someone had been in the house. When they woke up, they found footprints in the flour.

¶ 15 DCFS investigator Heidi Creasy testified that she was assigned to investigate certain allegations made in June 2015 against Jennifer that she was delusional and was thereby placing the minors at risk of harm. Creasy found the minors at their grandmother’s house. Jennifer arrived shortly thereafter, and she was upset. Jennifer made “comments like, not this again. You guys keep trying to do this. Why are you guys investigating me? you [*sic*] need to be investigating what’s been happening to us, not investigating me. This isn’t fair.” Jennifer would not allow Creasy to speak alone with the minors, who were angry. Creasy briefly spoke to the youngest C.W. outside by a tree, but was stopped by Jennifer and told that she could not talk to

him anymore. The youngest C.W. did tell Creasy that “my dad and my uncle and [Peoria County State’s Attorney] Jerry Brady and [Peoria County Sheriff] Mike McCoy have been coming into my house at night. They’ve been rubbing poison sumac on my mom, raping her. They’ve been drugging me. They’ve been making me watch. My dad tied me up. Had me in a chair. I was drugged. I couldn’t do anything.” The males named by the youngest C.W. who were relatives were all from the father’s side of the family. The youngest C.W. also told Creasy that McCoy was videotaping the assaults and storing the tapes in his house. Creasy found it odd that the minor would know the names of these prominent individuals. When asked how he knew Brady was one of the abusers, the youngest C.W. said that while the rapes were occurring, one of the abusers said, “you’re next, Jerry Brady.”

¶ 16 Creasy then asked Jennifer to sign a safety plan, but she refused. After calling her supervisor, Creasy attempted to take the minors into protective custody. However, despite Creasy’s request and the presence of several police officers, the minors would not leave with her, as they said Jennifer was the only one who could keep them safe. Creasy testified that “I absolutely could not get it done without people having to use physical force on those children and that was not a decision [DCFS] or myself was willing to make.” Jennifer did calm down some and agreed to stay with the minors at that location. Creasy and the officers then left.

¶ 17 Creasy testified that she indicated Jennifer for creating an environment injurious to the minors’ welfare. She stated that the juvenile petitions were not filed until almost eight months after the failed attempt at protective custody due to the time it took to obtain administrative subpoenas for Jennifer’s mental health records (which were from various places including the ISP and several therapists); for those records to be delivered; and for them to be reviewed.

¶ 18 On cross-examination, Creasy was asked several questions relating to certain medical records that had been entered into evidence. She agreed that Dr. John Day found that Jennifer did not suffer from any psychoses, but that the ISP psychologist did. She also admitted that one of the reasons that Jennifer did not allow the minors to leave in protective custody was the concern that the safety plan proposed placing the minors with their father, who was one of the alleged abusers. Further, Creasy stated that she had no personal knowledge of the minors' grades in school, but she believed that children could perform well academically but struggle emotionally.

¶ 19 The defense called Jennifer to testify. She claimed that she did not know until the morning of the hearing that she had been diagnosed in April 2015 with Adjustment Disorder, Psychotic Disorder NOS, and Diagnosis Deferred Personality Disorder NOS.¹ She claimed that her attorney started subpoenaing her ISP psychological evaluation reports in November 2014, but those documents had not been received yet. She further alleged that she was unaware of Dr. Jane Velez's diagnosis of August 2015 until DCFS informed her that they were indicating her for an injurious environment. Jennifer also stated that Dr. Luke Dalfiume performed a psychological evaluation of her and that Dr. Dalfiume did not diagnose her with any psychoses.

¶ 20 Jennifer recounted what transpired when the youngest C.W. initially revealed the alleged sexual abuse. She stated that at a time close to bedtime, the youngest C.W. came into the kitchen where she was seated along with her sister and the other two minors. The minor appeared nervous and started crying. He then said DCFS was going come and take the minors tomorrow. When she asked him why, he relayed the story about the sexual abuse, telling her and her sister

¹ Notably, Jennifer's amended answer to the juvenile petition admitted that she had been so diagnosed in April 2015.

that they had been raped. In his description, he told her where the alleged assaulters had hit her. When asked whether she believed the minor, Jennifer testified that “[t]he only thing I believed was, I couldn’t figure out how he knew where some of the marks were on me because I would have had to have been naked for him to see it, and I knew he hadn’t seen me naked.” She claimed that she had marks on her body in those places at the time the youngest C.W. made the allegation—marks she described as bruises on her breasts, vagina, and back, as well as a handprint on the side of her leg.² She claimed that she woke up sore in in those areas on the morning after the alleged assaults took place. She later clarified that the alleged incident took place at her sister’s house, where she and the minors had stayed the night.

¶ 21 Jennifer testified that the youngest C.W. would not calm down and would not sleep. She said the minor wanted to leave the house, but that he did not want to talk to anyone at hospitals or “at Peoria County.” He suggested Jennifer’s friend, who was married to a police officer in Normal, so they left in her car and drove to the police department in Normal.

¶ 22 Jennifer stated that she started the minors in counseling when they first refused to see their father in March 2015 and which lasted until May 2015. The minors were currently seeing Dr. Dalfiume for counseling. She further stated that all three of the minors were doing well in school and were involved in extracurricular activities.

¶ 23 Jennifer also testified that she believed the minors were being abused by their father. She claimed it started in 2014 when he learned where Jennifer was living. She said that the minors’

² When asked on cross-examination about whether she took pictures of these injuries, Jennifer said she tried, but her phone broke and her “cloud” and Facebook accounts had been hacked. She thought that she may still have some of the pictures on her computer, which she thought was probably still at her father’s house, where she had lived from March 2015 to February 2016.

father told the eldest C.W. that “they were going to come visit us where we sleep.” She installed a system of eight video cameras in her apartment and claimed that it started showing random men and women in her apartment. She did not know who the people were, and she showed the stills to the ISP and DCFS. She turned the pictures over to the ISP. She also said that “[t]hings started to happen I couldn’t explain.” This apparently included household objects moving inexplicably.

¶ 24 On cross-examination, Jennifer agreed that an ISP psychological report detailed that on June 29, 2014, her sister reported to the police that her husband (the minors’ uncle) beat her, drugged her, sexually assaulted her, and rubbed poison ivy on her genitalia. Jennifer stated that her sister’s five-year-old daughter witnessed the incident and reported it. Jennifer denied that those allegations sounded similar to the allegations that came from her own son in 2015. She also said she believed that her sister’s husband had broken into her residence.

¶ 25 After Jennifer’s testimony concluded, the guardian *ad litem* was given an opportunity to speak. Regarding the middle C.W., the guardian *ad litem* said he told her that his father had raped him and sold him to other men. He said he had been asleep, but he knew it happened because he saw a list containing the men’s names. She also stated that the middle C.W. backtracked on some parts of his claims when she asked him whether he told Jennifer and whether Jennifer had taken him to the hospital. In addition, the guardian *ad litem* said that when the middle C.W. talked about his father, he consistently used the phrase “father of the year” and talked about how his father kept trying to be the “father of the year.”

¶ 26 Regarding the youngest C.W., the guardian *ad litem* said he told her that he knew Peoria County State’s Attorney Jerry Brady was involved because he heard someone say that name during the assault. He also said that while the alleged assaulters were all wearing masks, he

knew that his father and uncle were involved. Further, he said that his father came into the house and drugged him and the middle C.W. and that his father hits him and leaves bruises. He said that Jennifer never took him to the hospital or took pictures; rather, she would just put “stuff” on the bruises.

¶ 27 Regarding the eldest C.W., the guardian *ad litem* said he told her that his father hits him and his brother. He also said that Jennifer did not take him to the hospital, but that she would merely put some “stuff” on the bruises. He also said Jennifer had let him read the report containing the shared delusions “diagnosis.” When the guardian *ad litem* questioned him about it, she said that the eldest C.W. apparently realized the magnitude of Jennifer allowing him to see such a document, so he backtracked on his statement and said that Jennifer did not let him see the report. After that point, he could not account for how he saw the report.

¶ 28 The guardian *ad litem* stated that she had anywhere from 450 to 500 children on her docket at any given time, and that in her 11 years as a guardian *ad litem*, there was never a time when she did not believe anything a child told her—until the instant case. She believed that the children had been coached, as evidenced by the middle C.W.’s insistence on testifying in court “to look his dad in the eye and tell his dad all the bad things he has done.” She also said she had never seen any child who had been sexually abused who wanted to testify in court about it and with such vehemence.

¶ 29 At the close of the hearing, the circuit court announced its decision. The court found that while “shared delusions” as alleged in the petition was not an actual diagnosis, the therapist’s conclusion was still relevant. The court found, with that tweak, that the State had proven the allegations of the petition by a preponderance of the evidence. The court noted that not all of the diagnoses were the same, but they were still consistent in that Jennifer’s thought pattern was

impaired. The court found that due to Jennifer's delusions, the minors had a distorted view of reality that had a deleterious effect on their relationship with their father and had significant negative impacts on their ability to feel safe. Further, the court questioned Jennifer's motives for changing therapists, which the court stated were based on her dislike for the therapists trying to get the minors to work through their false beliefs, rather than validate those beliefs. The court found that a nexus existed between Jennifer's mental issues, including her false beliefs, and the creation of an injurious environment for the minors. Accordingly, the court entered an order finding the minors to be neglected by reason of an injurious environment.

¶ 30 On July 22, 2016, Jennifer's counsel filed a motion to withdraw alleging that Jennifer had been uncooperative. The affidavit attached to the motion alleged that Jennifer was neither responding to correspondence nor complying with the contract for legal services, and that she owed the firm over \$2,400.

¶ 31 The caseworker compiled a dispositional hearing report in August 2016. The current caseworker had received the case in June 2016. She stated that Jennifer had been cooperative, had signed all necessary paperwork, and had allowed her to visit the home and children when necessary. Jennifer appeared to be taking good care of the minors, who had been doing well in school and who felt safe living at home with Jennifer.

¶ 32 The caseworker reported that the middle C.W., who was 14 years old at the time, had anger issues. He was very defensive regarding Jennifer and he was "very inappropriate towards his father, calling him a 'sexual abuser' often during visits." The caseworker indicated that the middle C.W. had been "severely affected" by the events of the case and needed to be in counseling as soon as possible. The eldest C.W. would not say hello or goodbye to his father and would talk to him during visits only when necessary. The youngest C.W. was the only one

who would speak to his father and engage him in conversation during visits. However, he would become standoffish when the middle C.W. would call his father a sexual abuser. The caseworker stated that the minors' relationships with their father had been destroyed by the allegations of the sexual abuse of Jennifer.

¶ 33 The caseworker reported that on July 22, 2016, Jennifer stated she wanted to start counseling for herself and the minors with Dr. Day. The caseworker told her that the agency would not be able to pay for Dr. Day's services. As of August 10, 2016, Jennifer had not taken any steps to set up counseling for herself and the minors.

¶ 34 On August 17, 2016, the circuit court called the case for a dispositional hearing, and it addressed counsel's motion to withdraw first. Regarding the motion, counsel stated, "[e]ssentially, it's for financial reasons." During the court's questioning of Jennifer about her financial situation, she stated that she was not happy with counsel's performance at the adjudicatory hearing, and counsel added that this was another reason to grant the motion. In arriving at its ruling, the court stated:

“The Court's going to exercise its discretion, [counsel], in this particular situation, not to allow you to withdraw. I'm going to deny it for this reason, and I want to be sensitive. Attorneys are making money to – as a living, and so they're entitled to be paid. That's – the Court's got no dispute with that. This is a different kind of case. This is a case involving 3 minors. Court has to consider their best interest. We've already gone through an adjudication.

And – you know – [Jennifer], I just want to say this.

Almost every party that doesn't prevail in their litigation, they turn and they think that their attorney didn't do a good job. And that's understandable, and sometimes they're right, sometimes they're wrong, sometimes they're right and wrong. There's little [*sic*] bit on – so I just want to let you know that [counsel], I thought, did a fine job. He's an experienced attorney, and it's just kind of normal to be disappointed in the whole situation and to transfer some of that disappointment to the attorney.

But what I'm concerned about is that we have litigated adjudication, we're here on the cusp of disposition, and a new attorney would set this way back. Not a little bit back, way back. Because a new attorney would want to get the transcripts of the adjudication so they can speak intelligently at the disposition and file any motions or make any requests. And so we're taking [*sic*] about having to generate transcripts, allow the new attorney to come up to speed. And so really the timing – if this were before or if this were after – before adjudication or after disposition, I'd be more inclined to grant it. But – and I – I'm not saying it's done for any other reason, other than what's set forth in there. But it's just the timing with these 3 boys kind of still hanging up in the air on the juvenile case. I think the Court will exercise its discretion, deny the motion at this time, until we at least get through

disposition. And then Court will allow [counsel], if he wishes, to renew it. And I won't require a new motion[.]”

While the case had been scheduled for the hearing, it was continued after Jennifer's counsel stated that he had not seen the dispositional hearing report, even though the caseworker indicated that it had been delivered to counsel's office two days earlier.

¶ 35 On September 21, 2016, the circuit court held the dispositional hearing. Jennifer testified that the allegations were made by the youngest C.W. and that she never told the minors that she was being sexually abused. She claimed that “the only thing I am truly guilty of is I said something must have happened only because the kid knew where marks were that he couldn't have known.” She also claimed that the minors had behavioral issues during visitation with their father on only one occasion. She also indicated that neither she nor the minors were currently in counseling, but that it was supposed to start in a few weeks.

¶ 36 The court also questioned Jennifer at the dispositional hearing. In particular, the court asked Jennifer whether there were things that she used to believe that she now believed were not true. After several responses that the court described as evasive, Jennifer finally admitted that there were things that she used to believe were true. When pressed for examples, she said that she no longer believed that items were being moved in her house.

¶ 37 The caseworker testified that she had attempted to get Jennifer and the minors into counseling. She stated that Jennifer insisted on seeing Dr. Day, whose fees were not covered by the agency. The caseworker further stated that she had not spoken with Jennifer since August but that had Jennifer agreed to see a counselor covered by the agency, the minors would have been in counseling by the date of the hearing. In addition, in response to questioning by the

court, the caseworker reiterated that she believed the minors’ animosity toward their father was due to their false beliefs about him.

¶ 38 After the hearing, the circuit court entered a dispositional order that: (1) found it was in the minors’ best interest to be made wards of the court; (2) found Jennifer to be an unfit parent; and (3) named DCFS guardian with the right to place. The unfitness finding’s basis was as follows:

“[c]hronic and severe paranoid and persecution delusions about family members, law enforcement and strangers targeting, surveilling, attacking and threatening to harm her and the minors that she has conveyed to minors and has acted out in their presence so that the minors either believe or act consistent with the delusions including holding false beliefs that the father has abused or will abuse them.”

¶ 39 Jennifer appealed.

¶ 40 ANALYSIS

¶ 41 On appeal, Jennifer claims that the circuit court’s adjudicatory and dispositional orders were erroneous. However, we note that Jennifer’s brief contains no argument related to the court’s adjudicatory decision. The entirety of Jennifer’s argument section is devoted to challenging the court’s dispositional decision. Thus, Jennifer has forfeited any claim that the court erred when it adjudicated the minors neglected. See Ill. S. Ct. R. 341(h)(7) (eff. Jan. 1, 2016) (stating that “[p]oints not argued are waived and shall not be raised in the reply brief, in oral argument, or on petition for rehearing”); *Vancura v. Katris*, 238 Ill. 2d 352, 370 (2010)

(holding that “[a]n issue that is merely listed or included in a vague allegation of error is not ‘argued’ and will not satisfy the requirements of [Rule 341(h)(7)]”).

¶ 42 In challenging the circuit court’s dispositional ruling, Jennifer asserts that: (1) she was cooperative with DCFS; (2) the minors were cared for, doing well in school, and participating in extracurricular activities; (3) the allegations of sexual abuse came from the minors, not from her; (4) there was no consensus on whether she suffered from any psychoses; (5) the minors were allowed to remain with her even after the failed attempt at taking them into protective custody; (6) she placed the minors into counseling immediately after they first refused to visit with their father; and (7) the court’s finding that she conveyed delusions to the minors was against the manifest weight of the evidence.

¶ 43 “At the dispositional hearing, the court shall determine whether it is in the best interests of the minor and the public that he be made a ward of the court, and, if he is to be made a ward of the court, the court shall determine the proper disposition best serving the health, safety and interests of the minor and the public.” 705 ILCS 405/2-22(a) (West 2016). When determining whether wardship is appropriate, the court must consider whether the parents are “unfit or are unable, for some reason other than financial circumstances alone, to care for, protect, train or discipline the minor or are unwilling to do so, and that the health, safety, and best interest of the minor will be jeopardized if the minor remains in the custody of his or her parents[.]” 705 ILCS 405/2-27(1) (West 2016). The State must prove parental unfitness at the dispositional hearing by a preponderance of the evidence. *In re April C.*, 326 Ill. App. 3d 245, 257 (2001). We will not disturb the court’s unfitness determination unless it is against the manifest weight of the evidence. *Id.* A decision is against the manifest weight of the evidence when the record clearly shows that the opposite conclusion was the proper result. *Id.*

¶ 44 Our review of the record reveals no error in the circuit court’s dispositional ruling. It is evident from the court’s ruling that it did not find Jennifer to be credible regarding her claim that the responsibility for the delusions was solely with the minors, and we have found nothing in the record to contradict that credibility determination (see, e.g., *In re S.S.*, 313 Ill. App. 3d 121, 127 (2000)). While Jennifer placed the minors in counseling after they refused to see their father, she pulled them out when it appeared that the therapist was trying to help the minors dispel the delusions. The minors had not been in therapy between June and the date of the hearing in September 2016, the responsibility for which fell solely on Jennifer. Due to the readily apparent damage the allegations had caused to the relationships between the father and the minors, the lack of therapeutic intervention cannot reasonably be justified. Thus, no matter what level of responsibility Jennifer in fact had for the delusions—and her diagnoses from several mental health professionals and evasive answers to the court’s questions at the dispositional hearing both indicated that she was struggling with delusional thought patterns—she was doing little to nothing to get the minors the help they needed. Under these circumstances, we hold that the circuit court’s dispositional order, including its rulings that it was in the minors’ best interest to be made wards of the court and that Jennifer was an unfit parent, was not against the manifest weight of the evidence.

¶ 45 Jennifer’s third argument on appeal is that the circuit court erred when it denied trial counsel’s motion to withdraw prior to the dispositional hearing.

¶ 46 In relevant part, Supreme Court Rule 13(c)(3) provides that a court may deny an attorney’s motion to withdraw “if the granting of it would delay the trial of the case, or would otherwise be inequitable.” Ill. S. Ct. R. 13(c)(3) (eff. July 1, 2013). We review a court’s

decision on an attorney's motion to withdraw for an abuse of discretion. *In re J.D.*, 332 Ill. App.3d 395, 404 (2002).

¶ 47 Our review of the record reveals no error in the circuit court's decision to deny counsel's motion to withdraw. Of paramount importance to the court's decision was the timing of the motion, which was between the adjudicatory and dispositional hearings. The court noted that a new attorney would want to see transcripts of the adjudication, which would take time to generate and read. The court added that the new attorney would also have to formulate strategy after reading the transcripts and getting up to speed on the history of the case. The court addressed other relevant considerations, including the fee issue, Jennifer's complaint about counsel's representation at the adjudicatory hearing, and the lengthy time the case had been pending. The court's decision reflects a thorough consideration of the matter and contains nothing to indicate an abuse of discretion. See, *e.g.*, *id.* at 405.

¶ 48 Furthermore, contrary to Jennifer's claim on appeal, it is of no consequence that the dispositional hearing had to be continued because counsel had not seen the dispositional report. Counsel did not request the court to reconsider his motion to withdraw when it was determined that a continuance was needed. It is disingenuous to claim now on appeal that the court's decision was erroneous in light of counsel's tacit acquiescence to continuing the representation through the dispositional hearing. Accordingly, we reject Jennifer's argument and hold that the court's decision to deny the motion did not constitute an abuse of discretion.

¶ 49 CONCLUSION

¶ 50 The judgment of the circuit court of Peoria County is affirmed.

¶ 51 Affirmed.