

NON-PRECEDENTIAL DECISION - SEE SUPERIOR COURT O.P. 65.37

WASSEN GORO	:	IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF
	:	PENNSYLVANIA
	:	
v.	:	
	:	
	:	
JOSEPH HABIB GORO	:	
	:	
Appellant	:	No. 200 WDA 2026

Appeal from the Order Entered January 27, 2026
In the Court of Common Pleas of McKean County
Civil Division at No: 453 CD 2024

BEFORE: STABILE, J., DUBOW, J., and STEVENS, P.J.E.*

MEMORANDUM BY STABILE, J.:

FILED: August 26, 2026

Appellant, Joseph Habib Goro, appeals *pro se* from the January 27, 2026, order of the Court of Common Pleas of McKean County denying his motion to vacate a default judgment entered against him on January 22, 2026. Upon review, we are constrained to dismiss this appeal because of Appellant's failure to conform to our rules regarding briefing requirements.

Because the procedural history behind this case is rather complicated, we only summarize the relevant facts.

On July 15, 2024, Appellee, Wassen Goro, filed a complaint accusing Appellant of slander/libel/defamation. On October 8, 2024, Appellee filed a praecipe for entry of default judgment against Appellant. On the same date, the prothonotary entered default judgment in favor of Appellee. On October 21, 2024, Appellant filed a motion to dismiss the default judgment. On

* Former Justice specially assigned to the Superior Court.

November 15, 2024, the lower court issued an order which opened the default judgment and ordered Appellant to file an answer in conformity with the Pennsylvania Rules of Civil Procedure. Though an order in his favor was entered, Appellant filed an “appeal against civil action” to this court on November 18, 2024. On January 31, 2025, this Court dismissed Appellant’s appeal as moot. **See *Goro v. Goro***, 1391 WDA 2024.

On January 8, 2026, Appellee once again filed a motion for entry of default judgment as to liability. On January 22, 2026, the lower court granted default judgment as to liability in favor of Appellee, stating that Appellant had failed to file any pleadings which conformed to the Pennsylvania Rules of Civil Procedure. The default judgment was for liability only, and a trial for damages was scheduled for April 1, 2026. On January 27, 2026, Appellant filed a motion to vacate and set aside the default judgment. The lower court denied the motion on the same day for the same reasons that led it to grant default judgment. This appeal followed.

Generally, this court does not have jurisdiction to review the grant of a default judgment where the question of damages is still pending. **See *Sims v. Feingold***, 478 A.2d 868, 869 (Pa. Super. 1984) (“where a judgment has been entered against a defendant by default, but the question of damages remains undetermined, an appeal must await the assessment of damages.”); ***Williams v. Erie Insurance Exchange***, 434 A.2d 752, 753 (Pa. Super. 1981) (“where judgment is entered for liability only, reserving the question of

damages, [the] judgment is 'interlocutory.' Such a judgment is ... not appealable").

However, in the present case, Appellant is not appealing the order granting default judgment in favor of Appellee. Rather, Appellant is appealing the order denying his motion to vacate and set aside default judgment. We have jurisdiction to review this type of appeal pursuant to Pennsylvania Rules of Appellate Procedure 311, which prescribes in relevant part:

General Rule. An appeal may be taken as of right and without reference to Pa.R.A.P. 341(c) from the following types of orders:

- (1) *Affecting Judgments.* **An order refusing to open, vacate, or strike off a judgment.** If orders opening, vacating, or striking off a judgment are sought in the alternative, no appeal may be filed until the court has disposed of each claim for relief

Pa.R.A.P. 311(a)(1) (emphasis added).

Although we have jurisdiction to review this appeal, we must dismiss it because Appellant's brief does not adhere to the requirements laid out in Pa.R.A.P. 2111. "[T]his Court may quash or dismiss an appeal if the defect in the brief is substantial." ***Commonwealth v. Tchirkow***, 160 A.3d 798, 804 (Pa. Super. 2017); **see also** Pa.R.A.P. 2101 ("[I]f the defects are in the brief or reproduced record of the appellant are substantial, the appeal . . . may be quashed or dismissed").

Under Rule 2111 of Pennsylvania Appellate Procedure, briefs filed with this Court must include a jurisdictional statement, the order in question,

statement of the scope and standard of review, statement of questions involved, statement of the case, summary of the argument, argument section, conclusion, copy of the statement of errors complained of on appeal, and certification of compliance. **See** Pa.R.A.P. 2111. The argument section must “be divided into as many parts as there are questions to be argued” and meaningfully develop each claim with relevant legal authority and record citations. **See** Pa.R.A.P. 2119(a)-(c). Briefs must also include a table of contents and a table of citations. **See** Pa.R.A.P. 2174. “[I]t is beyond cavil that, where an appellate brief fails to provide any discussion of a claim with citation to relevant authority or fails to develop the issue in any other meaningful fashion capable of review, that claim is waived.” **Viall v. Garvin**, 318 A.3d 905, 925 (Pa. Super. 2024).

We note that Appellant is bringing this appeal *pro se*, and as such, we are willing to liberally construe material submitted by Appellant. **Commonwealth v. Adams**, 882 A.2d 496, 497-98 (Pa. Super. 2005). However, we may not afford special relief to an appellant because of his *pro se* status. **Commonwealth v. Rivera**, 685 A.2d 1011 (Pa. Super. 1996). “To the contrary, any person choosing to represent himself in a legal proceeding must, to a reasonable extent, assume that his lack of expertise and legal training will be his undoing.” **Jordan v. Penn. State Univ.**, 276 A.3d 751, 761 (Pa. Super. 2022). It is well-settled that a *pro se* litigant must comply with the Pennsylvania Rules of Court. **Id.** at n.3.

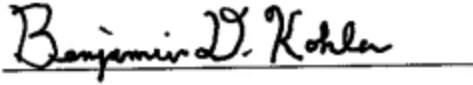
Here, Appellant's brief fails most, if not all, of the requisites in Pa.R.A.P. 2111. His brief has no table of contents, table of citations, statement of jurisdiction, statement of the scope and standard of review, statement of questions involved nor a statement of the case. Appellant's brief consists of dozens of pages of factual assertions which fail to raise any clear and concise questions for this Court to review on appeal. Even if we were to consider Appellant's brief as one big "argument" section, it would still be impossible for us to review it, because Appellant fails to submit any concrete authorities in support of his position. The only references in the brief are sporadic and vague citations to "Pennsylvania state law 14." While Appellant makes multiple references to a "meritorious defense," he fails to identify this defense at all. His entire argument is undeveloped and unsupported by any legal authority.

We therefore are constrained to hold that the defects in Appellant's brief are substantial due to his failure to include most of the requirements under Pa.R.A.P. 2111.¹ Further, by relying exclusively on factual recitations without accompanying legal authorities, Appellant has failed to develop any cognizable argument. Accordingly, we dismiss this appeal and remand the case back to the trial court for an assessment of damages.

¹ Not only did Appellant fail to file a satisfactory brief, he also failed to meet the requirements of Pa.R.A.P. 1925. Rule 1925(B)(4)(iv) provides that a statement of matters complained of on appeal "should not be redundant or provide lengthy explanations as to any error." The 1925(b) statement must be sufficiently "concise" and "coherent." ***Jiricko v. Geico Ins. Co.***, 947 A.2d 206, 210 (Pa. Super. 2008). Appellant's Rule 1925 statement failed both of these prongs.

Appeal dismissed. Case remanded for further proceedings in accordance with this memorandum. Jurisdiction relinquished.

Judgment Entered.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Benjamin D. Kohler", is written over a horizontal line.

Benjamin D. Kohler, Esq.
Prothonotary

DATE: 08/26/2026