

THE STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA  
IN THE SUPREME COURT

**RECEIVED**  
NOV 09 2023

APPEAL FROM COLLETON COUNTY  
Court of General Sessions  
Honorable Robert J. Bonds

S.C. SUPREME COURT  
**RECEIVED**  
NOV 09 2023  
SC Court of Appeals

Case No. 2023A1510100220-222, 2023A1510100224-227, 2023A1510100226-268, &  
2023A1510100277-288

The State.....Respondent

vs.

Ryan Lenard Manigo..... Petitioner

PETITION FOR WRIT OF SUPERSEDEAS

**3 Days until Private Pre-Trial Detention Telephone Calls Are Released**

Petitioner, Ryan Manigo, asks this Court to stay the circuit court’s order date October 31, 2023, finding that Petitioner’s pre-trial detention telephone calls are subject to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and ordering the release of the Petitioner’s pre-trial detention telephone calls (72 in total) within 3 days to various media outlets effectively **November 14, 2023**. **Attachment 1.** Furthermore, the Petitioner asks this Court to quash the circuit court’s order granting the release of the communications as subject to FOIA. If left unaddressed, the Petitioner will suffer irreparable harm, while a delay will not be harmful to the media companies that have

made FOIA requests. Moreover, allowing this type of information to be released in this case will result in repetitive decisions around the State – raising broader questions about the right to have this type of ruling reviewed.

### **FACTUAL AND PROCEDURAL HISTORY**

Petitioner was arrested on July 2, 2023.<sup>1</sup> He waived all bond hearings and has been held in pre-trial detention since his arrest. During the entirety of his pre-trial detention, his telephone calls have been monitored and recorded by private companies contracted by the detention facilities. In anticipation of media outlets requesting Petitioner’s telephone calls pursuant to FOIA, Petitioner filed a motion to prevent the release of such communications prior to a hearing where the requesting party, the detention facility, and Petitioner’s counsel could be present to determine whether the communications were subject to release pursuant to FOIA.

On October 19, 2023, a hearing was held in Colleton County in front of the Honorable Judge Robert J. Bonds. Present were counsel for the Petitioner and the State. The State made the circuit court aware that there were several FOIA applications for Petitioner’s communications, but the telephone calls had not been released. The circuit court ordered that the hearing be rescheduled to October 24, 2023, so that the media could have an opportunity to have their counsel present. On October 24, 2023, the circuit court reconvened. Present were counsel for the Petitioner, counsel for two media companies, and the State. After arguments by Petitioner’s counsel and the media’s counsel were heard, the circuit court held that the Petitioner’s telephone communications were public records subject to FOIA and that Petitioner’s various State and Federal Constitutional protections did not prevent the release of the communications. The circuit court held that the detention center should review the communications prior to releasing them to determine if there

---

<sup>1</sup> A portion of the warrants were served July 31, 2023.

are any applicable statutory exemptions to release that they believe applied. The circuit court further held that Petitioner shall then be given three days to review the calls to determine if they believe any exemptions apply and move to intervene. The circuit court ordered that any calls where no exemption applied should be released.

On October 31, 2023, the circuit court issued its written order. **Attachment 2.** On the same day, the circuit court denied a motion to reconsider and a motion to stay its order. **Attachments 3 and 4.** Petitioner subsequently filed a Notice of Appeal and Petition for Writ of Supersedeas with this Court.

### **STANDARD OF REVIEW**

A supersedeas is an extraordinary writ, which appellate courts use only when necessary to preserve the fruits of a meritorious appeal, to avoid irreparable harm, or to prevent a miscarriage of justice. *See* Graham v. Graham, 301 S.C. 128, 130, 390 S.E.2d 469, 470 (Ct. App. 1990) (“[T]he purpose . . . of a supersedeas . . . is to . . . preserve to appellant the fruits of a meritorious appeal where they might otherwise be lost to him” (*quoting* 4A C.J. S. APPEAL & ERROR § 662 at 494-95 (1957)); Andrews v. Sumter Commercial & Real Estate Co., 69 S.E. 604, 606 (S.C. 1910) (explaining that a supersedeas should be issued “only to the extent clearly made to appear to be necessary to prevent irreparable injury or a miscarriage of justice”).

### **I. FOIA**

Our FOIA statute provides that public bodies within South Carolina, upon request from the public, must disclose certain public records. The fundamental purpose of FOIA is “to protect the public from secret government activity.” Glassmeyer v. City of Columbia, 414 S.C. 213, 219, 777 S.E.2d 835, 839 (Ct. App. 2015) (*citing* Perry v. Bullock, 409 S.C. 137, 141, 764 S.E.2d 251, 253 (2014)). The FOIA statute guarantees the public the right to “reasonable access to **certain**

**activities of the government.”** Pope v. Wilson, 427 S.C. 377, 389, 831 S.E.2d 442, 448 (Ct. App. 2019) (emphasis added). This does not authorize unfettered access to all documents and recordings in the possession of the government. Indeed, courts have denied FOIA requests where there was “no evidence in the record demonstrat[ing] disclosure would further the FOIA’s purpose of protecting the public from secret government activity.” Glassmeyer at 223, 777 S.E.2d at 841.

Courts, when interpreting the reach of a request pursuant to FOIA, are bound by the basic principles of statutory construction. As this Court is well aware, the primary rule of statutory construction is to ascertain and give effect to the intent of the legislature. Bryant v. State, 384 S.C. 525, 529, 683 S.E.2d 280, 282 (2009). When a statute is penal in nature, it must be strictly construed against the State and in favor of the defendant. State v. Blackmon, 304 S.C. 270, 273, 403 S.E.2d 660, 662 (1991). All rules of statutory construction are subservient to the one in which legislative intent must prevail if it can be reasonably discovered in the language used, and that language must be construed in light of the intended purpose of the statute. State v. Sweat, 386 S.C. 339, 351, 688 S.E.2d 569, 575 (2010). Additionally, when applying the rules of statutory construction a “[c]ourt must presume the legislature did not intend a futile act, but rather intended its statutes to accomplish something.” Denene, Inc. v. City of Charleston, 352 S.C. 208, 574 S.E.2d 196 (2002); *See Also* State v. Long, 363 S.C. 360, 364, 610 S.E.2d 809, 811 (2005) (“The legislature is presumed to intend that its statutes accomplish something”).

For a record to be subject to a FOIA request, three elements must be satisfied. Specifically, the record must be: 1) from a public body, 2) a public record, and 3) related to a government activity. In a case similar to Petitioner’s, the Fourth District Court of Appeal of Florida ruled telephone records from a detention center were not subject to disclosure under their state’s FOIA statute. Bent v. State, 46 So.3d 1047 (Ct. App. 2010). The Court quashed a trial court’s ruling

ordering the release of telephone records. Id. The Court explained, “[a]lthough monitoring of inmate calls for security purposes is related to official business of the jail, maintaining recordings of purely personal calls is not. The recordings at issue are personal phone calls as opposed to records generated by BSO, such as mail logs or logs of phone numbers called.” Id. at 1049. As such the Court found telephone calls themselves are clearly not public records. The Court went on to say that “[a]n inmate’s personal phone calls **do not in any way reflect the actions of government** and releasing the calls would not further the purpose of the Public Records Act.” Id. at 1050 (emphasis added).

**a. Public Record**

A public record is defined in S.C. Code Ann. 30-4-20(c) as:

[A]ll books, papers, maps, photographs, cards, tapes, recordings, or other documentary materials regardless of physical form or characteristics prepared, owned, used, in the possession of, or retained by a public body. Records such as income tax returns, medical records, hospital medical staff reports, scholastic records, adoption records, records related to registration, and circulation of library materials which contain names or other personally identifying details regarding the users of public, private, school, college, technical college, university, and state institutional libraries and library systems, supported in whole or in part by public funds or expending public funds, or records which reveal the identity of the library patron checking out or requesting an item from the library or using other library services, except nonidentifying administrative and statistical reports of registration and circulation, and other records which by law are required to be closed to the public are not considered to be made open to the public under the provisions of this act; nothing herein authorizes or requires the disclosure of those records where the public body, prior to January 20, 1987, by a favorable vote of three-fourths of the membership, taken after receipt of a written request, concluded that the public interest was best served by not disclosing them. Nothing herein authorizes or requires the disclosure of records of the Board of Financial Institutions pertaining to applications and surveys for charters and branches of banks and savings and loan associations or surveys and examinations of the institutions required to be made by law. Information relating to security plans and devices proposed, adopted, installed, or utilized by a public body, other than amounts expended for adoption, implementation, or installation of these plans and devices, is required to be closed to the public and is not considered to be made open to the public under the provisions of this act.

The recordings of inmate telephone calls are not expressly stated as public records by the General Assembly. There is no public interest or pressing need that would be served through disclosure of the intimate recordings between an incarcerated individual and their loved ones. Further, the release of such recordings would not shed light on any governmental activity. These recordings should not be deemed public records simply because a public agency has access to Petitioner's telephone calls. No employee from any detention center participated in the communication or recording of the communications. No public official is party to the communication. These recordings reveal nothing about a governmental agency's conduct. *See Glassmeyer* at 219-20, 777 S.E.2d 835, 839. Given the fact that the purpose of FOIA is "to protect the public from secret government activity[,]" *Id.* at 219, these telephone recordings cannot be equated with public records to which the public should be granted reasonable access.

Moreover, S.C. Code Ann. 30-4-20(c) provides that "records which by law are required to be closed to the public are not considered to be made open to the public under the provisions of this act..." As will be discussed below, Petitioner's telephone calls under the First, Fifth, Sixth, Eighth, and Fourteenth Amendments to the United States Constitution, Article I, §§ 3, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14 and 15 of the Constitution of the State of South Carolina, and *State v. Ellefson*, 266 S.C. 494, 224 S.E.2d 666 (1765) are records which by law are required to be closed to the public. Therefore, they are not public records subject to release under FOIA.

**b. Public Body**

A public body is defined in S.C. Code Ann. 30-4-20(a) as:

[A]ny department of the State, a majority of directors or their representatives of departments within the executive branch of state government as outlined in Section 1-30-10, any state board, commission, agency, and authority, any public or governmental body or political subdivision of the State, including counties, municipalities, townships, school districts, and special purpose districts, or any organization, corporation, or agency supported in whole or in part by public funds

or expending public funds, including committees, subcommittees, advisory committees, and the like of any such body by whatever name known, and includes any quasi-governmental body of the State and its political subdivisions, including, without limitation, bodies such as the South Carolina Public Service Authority and the South Carolina State Ports Authority. Committees of health care facilities, which are subject to this chapter, for medical staff disciplinary proceedings, quality assurance, peer review, including the medical staff credentialing process, specific medical case review, and self-evaluation, are not public bodies for the purpose of this chapter.

The detention centers that have, and will continue to detain, Petitioner are public bodies under the statute. However, those **detention centers have contracted with private, for profit, companies to record and maintain detainees telephone calls.** It is common practice for private companies to contract with detention facilities and monitor detainee telephone calls. The private companies charge detainees and the people they communicate with – typically their families, loved ones, and attorneys – fees to place the telephone calls. The detention center retains access to the recordings for security purposes, but the private companies maintain and possess the recordings. Simply put, the media is attempting to refashion a private business transaction into a public record because of the general nature of jail. Such a leap far exceeds the expectations of Petitioner, the private business, or those who have willingly accepted the calls.<sup>2</sup>

Moreover, FOIA requires public bodies to give access to public records involving government activity. While the detention centers where Petitioner is incarcerated at have access to his telephone calls and can facilitate releasing them pursuant to a FOIA request, they are not the body that is in possession of them. Because the private companies possessing the telephone calls do not fall within the definition of a “public body” as defined by S.C. Code Ann. 30-4-20(a), the telephone calls are not subject to release pursuant to FOIA.

---

<sup>2</sup> Notably, those who receive calls from the pre-trial detainees or inmates are at no time in this message told these calls can be subject to FOIA or subject to being made public, raising serious privacy considerations.

## II. UNITED STATES AND SOUTH CAROLINA CONSTITUTIONS

Article VI of the United States Constitution provides that it “shall be the supreme law of the land; and the judges in every state shall be bound thereby, anything in the ...laws of any State to the contrary notwithstanding.” United States Constitution Article VI. Furthermore, the South Carolina Supreme Court has stated “... where there is a conflict between [a] statute and the State Constitution, the Constitution overrides the statute.” State v. Whitener, 225 S.C. 244, 81 S.E.2d 784 (1954).

“It is well settled that the interpretation of the state's constitution is a matter for the courts.” Baddourah v. McMaster, 433 S.C. 89, 103, 856 S.E.2d 561, 568 (2021). “State courts may afford more expansive rights under state constitutional provisions than the rights which are conferred by the Federal Constitution.” State v. Easler, 327 S.C. 121, 131 n.13, 489 S.E.2d 617, 622 n.13 (1997), overruled on other grounds by State v. Greene, 423 S.C. 263, 814 S.E.2d 496 (2018). “This relationship is often described as a recognition that the federal Constitution sets the floor for individual rights while the state constitution establishes the ceiling.” State v. Forrester, 343 S.C. 637, 643, 541 S.E.2d 837, 840 (2001).

### a. Right to Privacy

The South Carolina Constitution contains an express right to privacy provision that favors an interpretation offering a higher level of privacy protection than the Fourth Amendment. *See State v. Key*, 431 S.C. 336, 848, S.E.2d 315 (2020). Notably, our Supreme Court has found that our State Constitution affords broader protections under other provisions. Most recently in Planned Parenthood S. Atl. v. State, 882 S.E.2d 770 (S.C. 2023), reh'g denied (Feb. 8, 2023), our Supreme Court recognized that article I, section 10 of our State Constitution granted a broader right to privacy than the federal Constitution based on the plain language of the text. As Chief

Justice Beatty wrote in his separate opinion in Planned Parenthood S., “[w]e interpret our constitution to ensure South Carolinians retain the rights it guarantees.” Id.

In State v. Ellefson, our Supreme Court held that under the First Amendment of the United States Constitution, pre-trial detainees have the right to not have their written communications screened for purposes other than detention security. Ellefson, 226 S.C. 494, 224 S.E.2d 666 (1976). “When a pre-trial detainee remains in custody, he is not disrobed of his constitutional rights and laid bare for the zealous investigation of his case. He is cloaked with the presumption of innocence. His rights are curtailed only to the extent ‘justified by the considerations underlying our penal system.’” Id. at 500, 224 S.E.2d at 669 (*citing* Price v. Johnston, 334 U.S. 266, 285-86 (1948), overruled on other grounds by McCleskey v. Zant, 499 U.S. 467 (1991)).

Our Supreme Court ruled that a warrantless search of the detainees’ communications for the purposes of an investigation was unconstitutional. Id. Furthermore, the Court reached this determination even though a detainee signed a card at intake authorizing jail officials to read his mail. Id. at 502, 224 S.E.2d at 670. “The court ... cannot assume there was consent. For noncustodial searches, the current test is whether or not the consent was voluntary under the totality of the circumstances. The skeletal details of the so called ‘consent’ belie it. If we were to hold the Petitioner consented to waive his constitutional rights here, the doctrine of consent would be effectively emasculated.” Id. at 502-503, 224 S.E.2d 666, 670 (*citing* People v. Henry, 65 Cal.2d 842, 56 Cal.Rptr. 485, 423 P.2d 557 (1967) and Schneckloth v. Bustamonte, 412 U.S. 218 (1973)).

Because the release of Petitioner’s telephone calls subject to FOIA are not for the purposes of security, any release would violate Petitioner’s First, Fifth, Sixth, Eighth, and Fourteenth Amendments to the United States Constitution and Article I, §§ 3, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14 and 15 of the Constitution of the State of South Carolina. Furthermore, despite the telephone calls providing an

alert that they are being recorded, this Court cannot conclude there was consent.

**b. Right to a Fair Trial**

Under both the United States Constitution and the South Carolina Constitution, a defendant in a criminal prosecution is constitutionally guaranteed a fair trial by an impartial jury. U.S. Const. amend. VI; S.C. Const. art. I Section 14. This “most fundamental of all freedoms” must be maintained at all costs. Estes v. Texas, 381 U.S. 534, 540 (1965).

In Patterson v. State of Colorado ex rel. Attorney General, 205 U.S. 454, 462 (1907), the United States Supreme Court interpreted the requirement of an impartial jury to mean that “the conclusions to be reached in a case will be induced only by evidence and argument in open court, and not by any outside influence, whether of private talk or public print.” Subsequently, in Sheppard v. Maxwell, 384 U.S. 333, 357 (1966), the Supreme Court ruled that a trial court erred by “holding that it lacked power to control the publicity about the trial.” The Court specifically found that “the trial court might well have proscribed extrajudicial statements by any lawyer, party, witness, or court official which divulged prejudicial matters,” noting that with the pervasiveness of modern communications and the difficulty of erasing prejudicial publicity from the minds of the jurors, the trial courts must take strong measures to ensure that the balance is never weighed against the accused. Sheppard, 384 U.S. at 361, 362.

If Petitioner’s private communications with his family, loved ones, and attorneys are released to the media, he will be deprived of his right to a fair trial. Having the public listen to Petitioner’s most private conversations that are either not related to his case or that are related to his defense, will not enable a fair and impartial jury to be impaneled. Not only will the public be given access to information prior to trial, but they will be given access to information that may not

even be admissible at trial. Thereby eviscerating his constitutional rights. For these reasons, the release of Petitioner's telephone calls subject to FOIA will violate his First, Fifth, Sixth, Eighth, and Fourteenth Amendments to the United States Constitution and Article I, §§ 3, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14 and 15 of the Constitution of the State of South Carolina.

**c. Equal Protection**

The South Carolina Constitution provides that no "person shall be denied the **equal protection** of the laws." S.C. Const. art. I, § 3 (emphasis added). "The *sine qua non* of an **equal protection** claim is a showing that similarly situated persons received disparate treatment." Grant v. S.C. Coastal Council, 319 S.C. 348, 354, 461 S.E.2d 388, 391 (1995) (emphasis added). Only the calls of pre-trial detainees who cannot afford or are denied bond are subject to recording by the detention center. Requiring that the private communications of indigent pre-trial detainees be made public for anyone that submits a FOIA request, creates an unconstitutional classification that more affluent people accused of a criminal offense do not suffer. An interpretation that FOIA applies to pre-trial detainee's jail calls implicates a suspect class, i.e. indigency, and must survive strict scrutiny in order to survive. People accused of crimes and released from detention centers, on bond, or otherwise, do not have their communications recorded by a public agency absent a warrant. Even with a warrant these communications are not subject to FOIA disclosure.

**d. Due Process**

"Due Process is not a technical concept with fixed parameters unrelated to time, place, and circumstances; rather it is a flexible concept that calls for such procedural protections as the situation demands." State v. Legg, 416 S.C. 9, 13, 785 S.E.2d 369, 371 (2016). The pre-trial release of Petitioner's private jail calls will undoubtedly affect his ability to receive a fair trial. Counsel

for various media companies that have made FOIA requests for Petitioner's jail calls have said that any infringement on Petitioner's right to a fair trial is easily cured by the trial judge through voir dire, or possibly a change of venue. Asking potential jurors to set aside whatever opinions or impressions they may have formed about a pre-trial defendant, after listening to or reading about the defendant's private pre-trial communications with others is "to shut the stable door after the horse has bolted." The only way to protect Petitioner's right to a fair trial is to find that pre-trial detainee's private communications are not subject to FOIA requests.

### III. FOIA EXEMPTIONS

S.C. Code Section 30-4-40, entitled "Matters exempt from disclosure" specifically provides, in pertinent part:

- (a) A public body may but is not required to exempt from disclosure the following information:
  - (2) Information of a personal nature where the public disclosure thereof would constitute unreasonable invasion of personal privacy. . . .
  - (3) Records, video or audio recordings, or other information compiled for law enforcement purposes, but only to the extent that the production of such law enforcement records or information:
    - (A) would interfere with a prospective law enforcement proceeding;
    - (B) would deprive a person of a right to a fair trial or an impartial adjudication;
    - (C) would constitute an unreasonable invasion of personal privacy; ... [or]
    - (F) would endanger the life or physical safety of any individual.
  - (4) Matters specifically exempted from disclosure by statute or law.

Under South Carolina law, "[w]hether a record is exempt from disclosure depends on the particular facts of the case." Glassmeyer at 219, 777 S.E.2d at 839 (*citing City of Columbia v. ACLU*, 323 S.C. 384, 387 (1996)); *See also Evening Post Publ'g Co. v. Berkeley Cnty. Sch. Dist.*, 392 S.C. 76, 82 (2011) (the "determination of whether documents or portions thereof are exempt

from FOIA must be made on a case-by-case basis.”). This Court, therefore, must engage in a fact-specific analysis in assessing the applicability of the exemptions. As discussed below, the facts in this matter weigh heavily against public disclosure of the telephone call recordings.

**a. Privacy Exemptions**

Although the exemptions set forth in S.C. Code Section 30-4-40 are to be “narrowly construed” to avoid “a blanket prohibition of disclosure,” the “privacy exemption” expressly exempts from disclosure “[i]nformation of a personal nature where the public disclosure thereof would constitute unreasonable invasion of personal privacy.” Pope v. Wilson, 427 S.C. 377, 389, 831 S.E.2d 442, 448 (Ct. App. 2019); S.C. Code Ann. § 30-4-40(a)(2).

In assessing whether certain information should be classified as private and exempt from disclosure, the courts must “resort to general privacy principles, which examination involves a balancing of conflicting interests—the interest of the individual in privacy on the one hand against the interest of the public’s need to know on the other.” Glassmeyer at 220, 777 S.E.2d at 839 (*quoting* Burton v. York Cty. Sheriff’s Dep’t, 358 S.C. 339, 352 (Ct. App. 2004)).

The Court of Appeals in Glassmeyer, quoting at length a decision from the Supreme Court of Michigan interpreting the FOIA privacy exemption, adopted its sound reasoning:

Simply put, disclosure of employees’ home addresses and telephone numbers to plaintiff **would reveal little or nothing about a governmental agency’s conduct, nor would it further the stated public policy undergirding the Michigan FOIA.** Disclosure of employees’ home addresses and telephone numbers would not shed light on whether the University of Michigan and its officials are satisfactorily fulfilling their statutory and constitutional obligations and their duties to the public. When this tenuous interest in disclosure is weighed against the invasion of privacy that would result from the disclosure of employees’ home addresses and telephone numbers, the invasion of privacy would be clearly unwarranted.

Id. at 221 (*quoting* Mich. Fed’n of Teachers & Sch. Related Pers. v. Univ. of Mich., 481 Mich. 657, 753 N.W.2d 28, 43 (2008)) (emphasis added). Disclosure of such private and personal

information “‘would not appreciably further ‘the citizens’ right to be informed about what their government is up to’ and ‘would reveal little or nothing about the employing agencies or their activities.’” *Id.* (quoting U.S. Dep’t of Def. v. Fed. Labor Relations Auth., 510 U.S. 487, 497 (1994)). Balancing the privacy interests against the public interest, the Court of Appeals concluded that the information such as home addresses, telephone numbers, and personal e-mail addresses constitutes “information of a personal nature where the public disclosure thereof would constitute unreasonable invasion of personal privacy” and are exempt from disclosure under section 30-4-40(a)(2). *Id.* at 223. *See also* City of Columbia v. Am. Civ. Liberties Union of S.C., Inc., 323 S.C. 384, 387 (1996) (reasoning that the contents of an investigatory report of a public body may be exempt from FOIA under the privacy exemption, following a fact-specific analysis).

Here, the release of Petitioner’s personal telephone calls would violate the privacy exemption contained in FOIA. The telephone calls do not contain information related to any government action or operation. The telephone calls do not provide citizens insight into how the government is being run. Accordingly, the telephone calls are not subject to release pursuant to FOIA.

**b. Right to a Fair Trial**

FOIA contains an exemption to release of records where it would violate a person’s right to a fair trial. As discussed in section II. b. of this petition, the release of Petitioner’s telephone calls would violate his right to a fair trial. Not only would the telephone calls be heard by prospective jurors prior to trial but the telephone calls would also have potentially inadmissible evidence contained in the recordings. Accordingly, the telephone calls are not subject to release pursuant to FOIA.

**c. Exempted by Statute or Law**

FOIA contains an exemption to release of records where the release is exempted by some other statute or law. As previously argued in this petition, the release of Petitioner's private telephone calls would violate Title 30, Chapter 4 of the South Carolina Code of Laws (FOIA), the First, Fifth, Sixth, Eighth, and Fourteenth Amendments to the United States Constitution, Article I, §§ 3, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14 and 15 of the Constitution of the State of South Carolina, and State v. Ellefson, 266 S.C. 494, 224 S.E.2d 666 (1976). Accordingly, the telephone calls are not subject to release pursuant to FOIA.

#### **IV. PUBLIC POLICY**

Release of a pre-trial detainee's private communications would also violate the public policy as expressed by the South Carolina General Assembly. It is well established that our courts "exercise restraint when undertaking the amorphous inquiry of what constitutes public policy." Taghivand v. Rite Aid Corp., 411 S.C. 240, 768 S.E.2d 385, 387 (2015). Given that public policy is amorphous, this Court should consider what the implications are for releasing private communications from pre-trial detainees pursuant to FOIA requests. It should not be lost on this Court that FOIA provides any citizen the right to access government materials-this is not simply utilized by credentialed and reputable media outs. Allowing the release of Petitioner's telephone calls opens the public policy floodgates. The following policy considerations are merely the beginning of this Court's inquiry:

- a. Should jurors, witnesses, and victims be permitted to acquire telephone calls pursuant to FOIA?
- b. How is the South Carolina Victims' Bill of Rights implicated when the telephone calls involve a victim?
- c. Should people receiving calls have the ability to intervene and object to calls being

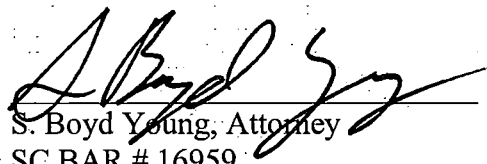
- released pursuant to FOIA?
- d. Should telephone calls to minors be subject to forced consent and released pursuant to FOIA?
  - e. Should pre-trial detainees be permitted to file lawsuits when telephone calls are misattributed to them?
  - f. What are the implications of technology being able to manipulate telephone recordings and the voices that are recorded?
  - g. What resources would be needed from all South Carolina pre-trial detention centers, the Judicial System, and the Bar to facilitate the review, legal objections, and legal rulings related to endless FOIA requests for any and all recorded telephone calls held by those detention centers?
  - h. What are the implications of pre-trial detainees having access to other pre-trial detainees' telephone calls pursuant to FOIA?

Release of pre-trial detainee telephone calls would affect not just the detainee but many other unrelated individuals and entities. Because a finding that pre-trial detainee telephone calls are subject to FOIA would violate the public policy of South Carolina, this Court should find that they are not subject to FOIA.

### **CONCLUSION**

Petitioner's telephone calls are not subject to FOIA. The release of his telephone calls would violate Title 30, Chapter 4 of the South Carolina Code of Laws (FOIA), the First, Fifth, Sixth, Eighth, and Fourteenth Amendments to the United States Constitution, Article I, §§ 3, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14 and 15 of the Constitution of the State of South Carolina, and State v. Ellefson, 266 S.C. 494, 224 S.E.2d 666 (1976). This Court should issue a stay and quash the lower court's order.

November 9, 2023



S. Boyd Young, Attorney  
SC BAR # 16959  
Capital Trial Division  
1330 Lady Street, Suite 401  
Columbia, SC 29201

Robert L. Bank, Jr., Attorney  
SC BAR # 1011125  
Capital Trial Division  
1330 Lady Street, Suite 401  
Columbia, SC 29201

Matthew Walker, Attorney  
SC BAR# 72535  
Fourteenth Circuit Public Defender  
319 N Lucas St,  
Walterboro, SC 29488

# **ATTACHMENT ONE**

## Bank, Robert

---

**From:** Sean Thornton <sthornton@scsolicitor14.org>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 8, 2023 3:39 PM  
**To:** Young, Boyd; Isaac McDuffie Stone, III; Bank, Robert; Taft, Renee; Walker, Matthew;  
Bonds, Robert Law Clerk (Monica Main)  
**Subject:** RE: [External] Re: Manigo calls

Boyd,

I have just sent you and Matthew Walker a link to the phone calls from evidence.com

There are three that I would consider exempt under FOIA and would NOT release.

Call number 174446 placed on 07/20/23 to 757-325-7251

Call number 180242 placed on 07/20/23 to 757-325-7251

Call number 530778 placed on 10/25/23 to 757-325-7251

The remaining calls I would plan on releasing under FOIA and would do so on Tuesday November 14<sup>th</sup>.

Sean Thornton

---

**From:** Young, Boyd <byoung@sccid.sc.gov>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 8, 2023 2:38 PM  
**To:** Sean Thornton <sthornton@scsolicitor14.org>; Duffie Stone <dstone@scsolicitor14.org>; Bank, Robert <rbank@sccid.sc.gov>; Taft, Renee <rtaft@sccid.sc.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: [External] Re: Manigo calls

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

I forgot that Friday is a holiday. Out of an abundance of caution we'll file the appeal tomorrow. Can you give me your best estimate? Thanks

---

**From:** Sean Thornton <sthornton@scsolicitor14.org>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 3, 2023 10:29 AM  
**To:** Young, Boyd <byoung@sccid.sc.gov>; Isaac McDuffie Stone, III <dstone@scsolicitor14.org>; Bank, Robert <rbank@sccid.sc.gov>; Taft, Renee <rtaft@sccid.sc.gov>  
**Subject:** [External] Re: Manigo calls

I should be able to give that date to you next week.

Sean Thornton

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone  
Get [Outlook for Android](#)

---

**From:** Young, Boyd <[byoung@sccid.sc.gov](mailto:byoung@sccid.sc.gov)>

**Sent:** Friday, November 3, 2023 7:55:01 AM

**To:** Sean Thornton <[sthornton@scsolicitor14.org](mailto:sthornton@scsolicitor14.org)>; Duffie Stone <[dstone@scsolicitor14.org](mailto:dstone@scsolicitor14.org)>; Bank, Robert <[rbank@sccid.sc.gov](mailto:rbank@sccid.sc.gov)>; Taft, Renee <[rtaft@sccid.sc.gov](mailto:rtaft@sccid.sc.gov)>

**Subject:** Manigo calls

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.
---

My understanding is that I need to know the potential date of release in order to file an appeal. Do y'all happen to know when we'll get notice to start the clock? Thanks

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

---

This communication and any attachment thereto is intended only for use by the addressee(s) named herein, and may contain legally privileged and/or confidential information. If you are not the intended recipient of this e-mail, you are hereby notified that any dissemination, utilization, distribution or copying of this e-mail, and any attachments thereto, is strictly prohibited. If you have received this e-mail in error please notify the Commission on Indigent Defense immediately and permanently delete the original and any copy of any e-mail and any printout thereof. SCCID may be reached by using the email address of the sender, or at 803-734-1343.

# **ATTACHMENT TWO**

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA )  
COUNTY OF COLLETON )

COURT OF GENERAL SESSIONS  
FOR THE FOURTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

Indictment Nos.: 2023A1510100220-222,  
2023A1510100224-227, 2023A1510100281-288,  
2023A1510100277-280, 2023A1510100266-268

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA )

AMENDED ORDER

v. )

RYAN LENARD MANIGO, )

Defendant. )

This matter is before the Court on Defendant's "Motion to Preclude the Release of Defendant's Private Communications Being Held and Maintained by the Colleton County Detention Center" filed August 9, 2023. Following a brief hearing on October 19, 2023, this Court entered an Order continuing the matter and prohibiting the release of the requested records until further notice. A full hearing on the matter was held on October 24, 2023.

**HISTORY**

The above-named Defendant was arrested on July 2, 2023, and subsequently indicted. Since that time, he has been held in pretrial detention in both Colleton County and Clarendon County. On August 9, 2023, Defendant, by and through his attorneys, moved for an Order precluding the release of Defendant's jail calls pursuant to Title 30, Chapter 4 of the South Carolina Code of Laws ("FOIA Statute), and various articles of the United States Constitution and Constitution of the State of South Carolina.

A hearing was held on the Motion on October 19, 2023, before this Court, at which time the State informed the Court that multiple media outlets had submitted FOIA requests to the Colleton County Sheriff's Office for copies of the Defendant's recorded jail calls. This Court, after finding that the parties failed to notify the media outlets of the hearing, continued the matter so

each entity could be given an opportunity to address the Court. The matter was re-scheduled for October 24, 2023, and this Court issued an Order Prohibiting the Release of Information Until Further Order of the Court.

At the hearing on October 24, 2023, Gray Media Group, Inc. (WCSC-Charleston) was represented by Mark A. Peper and Brenna D. Wiles of The Peper Law Firm, P.A. and FITSNews was represented by Catherine Wyse of DeShon Law Firm. WCIV-Charleston was present but not represented by counsel. The Fourteenth Circuit Solicitor, Duffie Stone, III, was present, along with counsel for the Defendant, Robert Bank, Boyd Young, and Matthew Walker. The Defendant waived his right to appear.

#### LAW

S.C. Code Ann. § 30-4-20(a) defines a "public body" as "any department of the State...any public or governmental body or political subdivision of the State, including counties..." A "public record includes all books, papers, maps, photographs, cards, tapes, recordings, or other documentary materials regardless of physical form or characteristics prepared, owned, used, in the possession of, or retained by a public body." S.C. Code Ann. § 30-4-20(c).

The South Carolina Freedom of Information Act provides that "a person has a right to inspect, copy, or receive an electronic transmission of any public record of a public body, except as otherwise provided by Section 30-4-40, or other state and federal laws, in accordance with reasonable rules concerning time and place of access." S.C. Code Ann. § 30-4-30(A)(1).

S.C. Code Ann. § 30-4-40(a) provides specific exemptions that "a public body may but is not required to exempt from disclosure." Further, "if any public record contains material which is not exempt under subsection (a)..., the public body shall separate the exempt and nonexempt

material and make the nonexempt material available in accordance with the requirements of this chapter." S.C. Code Ann. § 30-4-40(b).

"Any expectation of privacy in outbound calls from prison is not objectively reasonable and the Fourth Amendment is therefore not triggered by the routine taping of such calls." U.S. v. Van Poyck, 77 F.3d 285 (9<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1996). Further, to the extent inmates at the Colleton County Detention Center have a reasonable expectation of privacy, any limitation on the right does not prohibit the publication of matter which is of legitimate public or general interest. Soc'y of Prof'l Journalists v. Sexton, 283 S.C. 563, 324 S.E.2d 313 (1984). As a matter of law, if a person, whether willingly or not, becomes an actor in an event of public or general interest, then the publication of his connection with such an occurrence is not an invasion of his right to privacy. Doe v. Berkeley Publishers, 329 S.C. 412, 496 S.E.2d 636 (1998).

S.C. Code Ann. § 30-4-110(A) provides that a public body may file a request for a hearing with the circuit court if it is unable to make a "good faith determination as to whether the information is exempt from disclosure." S.C. Code Ann. § 30-4-110(B) provides that a person with a specific interest in the underlying records shall have the right to "request a hearing with the court or to intervene in an action previously filed" if a request for disclosure "may result in the release of records or information exempt from disclosure under Section 30-4-40(a)(1), (2), (4), (5), (9), (14), or (19)."

#### **FINDINGS OF FACT AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW**

Based on the forgoing, the pleadings, the memoranda, and exhibits submitted by the parties, to include a recent Circuit Court Order entered in Charleston County on August 1, 2023<sup>1</sup>, and the

---

<sup>1</sup> Order of the Hon. Jean H. Toal granting Plaintiff's Complaint for Declaratory Judgment and Injunctive Relief. (2023-CP-10-03027)

arguments presented by the parties, this Court makes the following findings of fact and conclusions of law:

1. I find that the Colleton County Sheriff's Office ("CCSO") and the Clarendon County Sheriff's Office are a public body as defined in S.C. Code Ann. § 30-4-20(a).
2. I find that the Colleton County Detention Center "CCDC" and the Clarendon County Detention Center are maintained by the local Sheriff's Offices, where Defendant was/is being held in pretrial detention.
3. I find that both detention centers record and maintain or instructs a 3<sup>rd</sup> party to do so on their behalf, all calls of inmates in their custody at both detention centers, including the Defendant's calls.
4. I find that inmates held in pretrial detention are informed prior to and during each outgoing call that the call is being recorded and monitored.
5. I find that the receiving party is informed during each call that the call is being recorded and monitored.
6. I find that the recordings made of jail calls at each detention center are public records as defined by S.C. Code Ann. § 30-4-20(c).
7. I find that Defendant cannot meet the burden of showing that the release of any recordings pursuant to FOIA is an unreasonable invasion of privacy.
8. Having found the recordings to be public records, I find that each detention center must comply with S.C. Code Ann. § 30-4-30(c) and timely notify the requestors of its determination(s). If the request is granted, the detention center, pursuant to the FOIA statute, must then furnish the records no later than thirty calendar days from the date of the final determination.

9. I find that cited exemptions preventing disclosure, if any, must be related to specific records and recordings, and that proper notice must be given to the requesting parties pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 30-4-40.
10. I find that if the detention center determines that each specific recording is not exempt from release pursuant to FOIA, it must provide 3 business days' notice to the above-named Defendant of its intent to release the records and recordings to the requesting parties, so to provide an opportunity for the Defendant to seek subsequent relief from this Court.
11. I find that, in the absence of a subsequent Order from this Court, each detention center shall timely comply with the procedures set forth in the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act.
12. I find that the Defendant's rights under Title 30, Chapter 4 of the South Carolina Code of Laws (FOIA), the First, Fifth, Sixth, Eighth, and Fourteenth Amendments to the United States Constitution and Article I, §§ 3, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14 and 15 of the Constitution of the State of South Carolina, State v. Ellefson, 266 S.C. 494, 224 S.E.2d 666 (1975), and State v. Blackwell, 420 S.C. 127, 801 S.E.2d 713 (2017) do not prevent the disclosure of calls under FOIA.

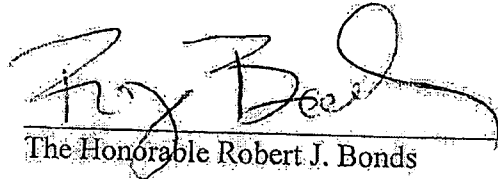
### ORDER

Having applied the facts of this case to the law, it is hereby ORDERED that:

1. The relief sought by Defendant is hereby DENIED.
2. The October 18, 2023, Order Prohibiting the Release of Information Until Further Order is hereby lifted.
3. The public body must comply with the procedures set forth in the Freedom of Information Act and this Order.

4. The public body must provide an opportunity for the Defendant to seek subsequent relief from this Court by informing Defendant of its intent to release any of the requested records and recordings, if applicable, no less than 3 business days to doing so.

**AND IT IS SO ORDERED!**

  
The Honorable Robert J. Bonds

This \_\_\_ day of October 2023.  
Walterboro, South Carolina

OCT 31 2023 PM 2:52  
COLLECTOR EQ 93, REBECCA H. HILL

# **ATTACHMENT THREE**

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA  
COUNTY OF COLLETON

COURT OF GENERAL SESSIONS  
FOURTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA,

v.

RYAN LENARD MANIGO,

Defendant.

Indictment No. 2023A1510100220-222

**Re: Defendant's motion to reconsider the release of jail calls pursuant to FOIA**

The Defendant's Motion to Reconsider is hereby

Denied

ORDERED.



The Honorable Robert J. Bonds  
Chief Administrative Judge

Date:

10/31/23

# **ATTACHMENT FOUR**

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA  
COUNTY OF COLLETON

COURT OF GENERAL SESSIONS  
FOURTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA,

v.

RYAN LENARD MANIGO,


Defendant.

Indictment No. 2023A1510100220-222

**ORDER**

Re: Defendant's motion to Stay the release of Jail Calls pursuant to FOIA

The Defendant's Motion to Stay is hereby  Denied  ORDERED.

  
The Honorable Robert J. Bonds  
Chief Administrative Judge

Date: 10/31/23

**RECEIVED**  
NOV 09 2023  
S.C. SUPREME COURT