

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF GEORGETOWN

JIMMY A. RICHARDSON, II, SOLICITOR
FOR THE FIFTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT,
ON BEHALF OF THE GEORGETOWN
COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE,

Petitioner,

vs.

ONE THOUSAND EIGHT HUNDRED
FIFTY-THREE AND 00/100 DOLLARS,
(\$1,853.00) U.S. CURRENCY,

Respondent Property,

STEVEN SYSKASKI ROBINSON,

Respondent.

FOR THE FIFTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS
CASE NO.: 2024-CP-22-00745

ORDER OF FORFEITURE

RECEIVED
MAR 17 2025
SC Court of Appeals

STATEMENT OF THE CASE

Petitioner brought this action for the forfeiture of the above-named Respondent Property pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 44-53-520. Petitioner personally served Respondent with the summons and complaint on October 7, 2024, and Respondent filed an answer on October 23, 2024.

A trial was held on February 24, 2025 before the Honorable B. Alex Hyman. Present at the hearing was Petitioner's Special Prosecutor, James R. Battle and Respondent Steven Robinson.

During the factual presentation, Petitioner submitted live testimony and a photo of narcotics, firearms, cash, and drug paraphernalia seized from Respondent Robinson.

Respondent Robinson cross-examined Petitioner's witness but did not present any evidence.

Based on the evidence presented by the Petitioner, the Court makes the following findings of fact:

FACTUAL FINDINGS

1. Commander John Prevatte works for the Georgetown County Sheriff's Department and is assigned to narcotics investigations.

2. Commander Prevatte handled the investigation of Respondent Robinson for drug dealing.

3. In the course of Commander Prevatte's investigation, the following occurred:

A. Between December 2023 and February 2024, a confidential informant ("CI") ordered narcotics from Respondent Robinson on four separate occasions. Respondent Robinson in turn directed a runner to deliver the narcotics to the CI. The narcotics purchased were: 1.3 grams of heroin, 4.36 grams of meth, 4.58 grams of meth, and 3.79 grams of meth.

B. On April 10, 2024, officers arrested Respondent Robinson for the prior narcotic sales in a traffic stop. Officers found in Respondent Robinson's car: 151 grams of crack, blender, scale, hydraulic press, and \$1,633.00.

C. On April 10, 2024, officers executed a search warrant at Respondent Robinson's residence and found: 120 grams of crack, 122 grams of meth, .76 grams of Fentanyl, 2 firearms, hydraulic press, scales, and \$220.00.

LEGAL FINDINGS

Pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 44-53-520(8), "all monies seized in close proximity to forfeitable controlled substances, drug manufacturing, or distributing paraphernalia" may be forfeited to the State.

In addition, “[a]ny property subject to forfeiture under this article may be seized...if...the seizure is incident to an arrest or a search under a search warrant.” S.C. Code § 44-53-520(b).

“The purpose of a forfeiture hearing is to confirm that the state had probable cause to seize the property forfeited.” *Gowdy v. Gidson*, 391 S.C. 374, 379, 706 S.E.2d 495, 498 (2011) (internal citations omitted).

Possession of one or more grams of cocaine base is prima facie evidence of an intent to distribute narcotics. *See* S.C. Code Ann. § 44-53-375.

In the instant case, Petitioner presented evidence the seized \$1,853.00 was found in close proximity to distribution amounts of narcotics.

Based on the facts presented and law of this State, the Court finds Respondent’s property was properly seized.

NOW THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED:

1. The Respondent Property is forfeited to the State pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 44-53-520;
2. The Georgetown County Sheriff’s Department is the seizing agency;
3. The Respondent Property is to be disposed of in the following manner:
 - a. One Thousand (\$1,000.00) Dollars to the seizing agency;
 - b. Any monies in excess of this amount to be distributed as follows:
 1. Seventy-five percent (75%) to the seizing agency;
 2. Twenty percent (20%) to the prosecuting agency; and
 3. Five percent (5%) must be remitted to the State Treasurer and deposited to the credit of the general fund of the State.