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SC Court of Appeals

**To the Honorable Court of Appeals:**

I would like to respectfully inform this Honorable Court of my current status and to the chain of events that lead me here and the events that occurred while under Appeal and this Court's Jurisdiction.

(1) It is not in my best interest to proceed pro se. I have spoken with over a dozen attorneys, none of whom were willing to accept this case. The immediate withdrawal and abandonment of my appellate counsel Araon Wallace and Ryan McKaig has severely prejudiced me. I have already spent thousands of dollars in litigation and with this appeal with my appellate counsel, and I now face financial hardship, depression, and sleepless nights, and mental trauma as a result of their actions.

(2) The case that led to this Appeal is about a lawsuit filed August of 2021 for an alleged breach of a 18 year contract entered into in 2003 to purchase property by owner financing between the Appellate (Rodney White) and Respondent, (Jay Self) the Respondent testified in his deposition under oath that he gave the Appellant and indefinite time in which to pay under the 2003 contract and the contract was never legally canceled. And that he never wrote a letter of termination or instructed anyone to do so. I have been in possession of the property for over 18 years uninterrupted.

(3) Brandon Smith—who represents the Respondents, and the Self family, is also the current Mayor of Greenwood, South Carolina, the very city in which this case was litigated this has raised serious concerns. Greenwood Mills, the Respondent, was once one of the largest companies in Greenwood County, employing thousands of people throughout the region.

(4) Nearly every family in Greenwood has worked for Greenwood Mills, Self Regional Medical Center, or had a family member or neighbor who has. I too have family members who worked there. The Self family, who owns Greenwood Mills, is a prominent family in Greenwood with strong political ties in the city, county and state.

(5) Brandon Smith has used his status as mayor, his political influence, and the power and the status of the Respondents to manipulate these proceedings. Over the course of this matter, I have had four attorneys who initially agreed to represent me but then changed course. Possible "Quid pro Quo" This is not a coincidence, but warrants an investigation:

1. **Senator Billy Garrett** – My first attorney, who has represented me for over 15 years agreed to assist me as stated I could redeem the property under equity redemption, then withdrew shortly after telling me he wasn't willing to take the matter to court, I later found out this was due to political concerns, he had just been elected two months prior to the South Carolina Senate and his law practice is based in the city of Greenwood. No other local attorneys would take this case.
2. **Rachel McConaughy** – My second attorney, who represented me for nearly two and a half years through hearings, depositions, and mediation. Just days before the July 15, 2024 hearing, she told me the plaintiff's attorney had suggested I relinquish my property rights in exchange for later pursuing my counterclaims. I refused. She then said I had no rights, to which I responded: if I had none, why would they ask me to give them up? She admitted she did not believe we would win at trial. I relieved her the morning of the July 15, 2024 hearing.
3. **Aaron Wallace** – My third attorney, was retained four days before the scheduled November 6 2024 hearing, I had to pay him a substantial amount \$15,000 to be retained, He requested a continuance, it was denied, to make matters worse two days before the hearing (my aunt died) Mr Wallace informed the special referee of this, ask again for a continuous due to bereavement and him being retained just

four days prior the newly appointed special referee still denied it. And every motion or request Mr Wallace made was denied or not ruled on. The hearing was held in my absence and Mr Wallace wasn't fully prepared, and at an unfair disadvantage. This could be seen as an abuse of discretion and due process concerns.

4. **Ryan McKaig** – My fourth attorney, who worked for Mr. Wallace's firm and was retained for the appeal for an additional \$6,500. He intentionally omitted the November 6, 2024 partial summary judgment hearing from the appeal package. Only after I noticed the omission it was added—at additional \$600 cost to me. The Nov 6 2024 ruling was detrimental to my appeal package, Their actions undermined my appeal, and they withdrew mid-appeal to avoid liability. I have spent over \$23,000 with the Wallace law firm this abandonment at this critical stage has really prejudice my appeal.

(6) Brandon Smith, met with me gaining my trust we discuss the past events surrounding the 2003 contract we agreed and disagreed on issues He negotiated, alter and misled me into signing the 2021 contract in bad faith, under false pretenses and threats of eviction. I later signed it under duress, He later filed suit for breach of the 2003 contract in August of 2021, relying on a default letter date November 26, 2004 that the Respondent himself, (Jay Self, ) testified under oath he never wrote.

(7) Over two years later Mr Smith amended the complaint to add the 2021 contract that he negotiated and I signed under false pretense. he made claims it was a novation and I default on it was terminated, to which The Respondent (Jay Self) testified that he never sent a termination letter or authorized anyone to do so and to his knowledge no letter was sent.

(8) Brandon Smith stated in the November 6 2024 hearing that he sent a letter of termination, in the Special Referee finding of facts he states that a termination letter was sent, yet no such letter has been produced into evidence, This contradiction lies at the heart of the case, yet it has been ignored.

(9) Brandon Smith has Orchestrated the entire matter, he altered the 2021 contract negotiated it signed it as a witness, and filed a suit against me. He even involving city employees, to help cover up a wrongful 2022 eviction where my house was demolished—an issue central to my counterclaims. The plaintiffs lawsuit that was filed by Mr Smith is based on breach and termination of two contracts, Clearly this lawsuit was filed without the Respondent (Jay Self's) knowledge base on his testimony in his deposition. Brandon Smith is also a material witness in this case.

(10) After I relieved my attorney on July 15, 2024, Judge Griffith referred the matter to a Special Referee “for a full hearing on the merits.” It took the Clerk of Court 90 days to find an attorney willing to take the case, as many declined due to conflicts or discomfort. The Clerk even admitted her frustration, noting she had contacted several attorneys who did not feel comfortable handling this matter.

(11) Mr Smith used his influence during this period. In an email, he wrote: “*if the courts cannot find a special referee for some reason, the plaintiff is fine with the court hearing at least the non-damages portion of the case.*” This request foreshadowed bifurcation. The Clerk eventually appointed Chuck Watson—former County Attorney for Greenwood and prior Attorney to Senator John Drummond, who was married to the Respondent family member Holly Self Drummond. Mr. Watson bifurcated the case, hearing non-damages issues first, contrary to Judge Griffith's order for a full hearing on the merits. (Conflict of interest concerns.)

(12) On Oct 22, 2025 Smith influenced the referee to proceed without properly notifying me of his appointment, I wasn't properly notified. the Special referee suggest Mr Smith file a motion for summary judgment, and he bifurcate the case—shielding Respondents from liability on my counterclaims. ( emails will show the special referee and Brandon Smith scheduling a hearing with the anticipation that I wouldn't be attending.) This email raises concerns of impartiality.

(13) There was no motion for summary judgment legally filed for the November 6 2024 hearing yet they proceed with summary judgment Mr Wallace filed a motion in opposition to plaintiffs motion for summary-

judgment on November 4 2024, there wasn't any ruling on this motion that was never filed.

(14) On November 22 2024 the special referee granted partial summary judgment even without considering the properly filed motion in opposition to summary judgment and there was genuine disputes of material facts Mr Smith made reference that there was disputed facts in the November 6 2024 hearing that we're completely disregarded, this was a procedural error and the deprivation of due process.

(15) On April 9 2025 while my appeal was pending I was wrongfully evicted by the Respondent's attorney, my Appellate counsel Araon Wallace informed me the very same day that he was just seeing the email from the plaintiffs attorney that was sent to him February 21 2025, The email stated (please pass along to your client he has 15 days to remove any personal property items from the property). This wasn't a legal notice, Mr Wallace stated that "he should have served you with a notice of eviction". But he was my attorney of Record.

(16) On April 22 2025 Mr Smith attempted to misuse Rule 60, my Appellate counsel's agreed to allow this and wanted to use a purposed motion to stay, to request leave from this Court to allow a hearing by the special referee to amended his final order to add an eviction provision. My attorneys falsely stated in the initial brief that the courts did not allow Respondents to use Rule 60,. In a email the referee said he would allow it if all parties consented. The special referee stated in a email stated rule 60 was steep an opening the case wouldn't work for the plaintiff, but if all parties consent he would allow it.

(17) On April 30 2025 My appellate counsel had a purposed motion to stay perpare in respond to Respondents rule 60 motions and to get leave from this Court to hold a hearing to amended the final order. This would have made the current appeal moot, shield them from any liability and conceal the wrongful eviction by Respondent, I objected to the use of rule 60 for this purpose. And this changed thier plans.

(18) On May 15 2025 my appellate counsel's file a motion for an extension using the very same language that I objected to they filed it any way the same language later appears in the initial bierf that was filed, I asked that the motion didn't exclude this language it was filed after I opposed to cover their tracks Mr Makiag email this Court stating he thought he filed it the day before (emails will prove this.)

(19) After this failed, on May 20, 2025 Mr Smith asked my counsel Araon Wallace to accept service of a lawsuit for a proper eviction. He declined, saying. " He hasn't retained me for that so you will need to serve him directly". I was never served, Mr Smith then used his influence to secure a writ of ejection from the magistrate court, to conceal/cover up the prior illegal eviction. Smith was granted publication and i was labeled a trespasser in the local newspaper, while this case was pending appeal to determine my equitable interest, It was only after I contracted the magistrate court , citing the Appeals Court's jurisdiction, did the magistrate stay the order.

(20) On July 21, 2025 My Appellate attorneys sent me the initial brief to review at 10:47 pm then filed the brief at 11:17 pm before the midnight deadline. I wasn't afforded the opportunity to review the brief and discuss my concerns this was strategically done to depive me of due process, I had requested to review the brief in a reasonably amount of time over a dozen times or the course of months after I rush to review I emailed my appellate counsel's stating I object to the brief and the time in which It was sent was unacceptable and how I was disappointed in how the appeal had been handled and I wanted to dicuss moving forward, Mr Wallace emails me the following morning stating they have decided how they where moving forward and that they were withdrawing.

(21) These actions by the Respondents counsel has caused me irreparable harm—loss of property, personal belongings, finances, emotional distress, and mental-health struggles, My own appellate counsel compounded this harm by failing to notify me of opposing counsel (15 day vacate letter) this wasn't a legal notice but more of a ( bullie demand) to vacate voluntarily, my counsel Araon Wallace failed to notify me, and later took the position to aligning with opposing counsel's narrative, falsely claiming the Respondent believed the final order was unclear, and agreeing to Respondents misuse of rule 60, it this would heip to shield them from liability, and conceal the wrongful eviction by Respondent.

(22) The lawsuit filed against me was frivolous it was based on a breach of a 18 year old contract with a default letter that I never received and the Respondent (Jay Self) testified he never sent it and it bears no signature or proof it was sent or received, to make matters worse Mr Smith amended the complaint over two years later to add a breach of the 2021 contract for the same property, the Respondent also testified he never sent a letter of termination for that contract.

(23) I make these claims only after careful review. I possess evidence, including emails, text messages, depositions, affidavits, transcripts, and admissions by Counsel that they intended to "muddy the waters" with the initial brief, my counsel's drafted the initial brief with a vague question on possessory rights I can prove the initial brief and designation of matter aligns with Respondent's narrative. (By reviewing the November 6 2024 hearing transcript).

(24) Their actions constitute ineffectiveness, incompetence, malpractice, denial of due process, at best. Misconduct, obstruction, collusion at worst. My Appellate attorneys Aaron Wallace and Ryan McKaig knew about the wrongful eviction instead of reporting it they agreed with the Respondent attorney to use Rule 60 to conceal misconduct, I was denied due process, in reviewing the initial brief.

(25) This case has been grossly mishandled, I've had four attorneys that all we're aware of the plaintiff's attorney Brandon Smith's misconduct, but none has reported it. This has deeply damaged my trust in Attorneys, and the judicial system. Beyond the personal injustice, Mr Smith is the mayor of Greenwood. His behavior in handling this case risks eroding public confidence in both the Mayor's office and the courts of Greenwood. I have been devastated the property was where I operated business and my source of income, My personal possessions for over 20 years were destroyed and disposed of like trash.

(26) Attorneys are duty-bound to be zealous advocates and to protect their client's rights. But their first duty is to the candor of the courts and their ethical and legal responsibility to the judicial system, Mr Smith has been an over zealous advocate for his client, and he seems to have a vested interest in the outcome of this case, I trusted 4 lawyers to defend and protect my rights, I have been failed at every stage.

(27) South Carolina law requires that parties be afforded a meaningful opportunity to present their case, Mr Wallace was retained 4 days prior the November 6 2024 hearing he was denied a reasonable request for continuance, and was forced into a trial unprepared he didn't adequately protect me against this prejudice, recognizing the impossibility of preparing under such constant, this led to attorney incompetence and ineffectiveness and judicial abuse of discretion.

(28) The initial brief and Designation of Matter on the surface it appears to align with my interests but after careful review of the brief and designation of matter it aligns perfectly with Respondent narrative and the Special Referee's February 21 2025 final order that my Appellate counsel's false claim is a hearing transcript. Their intentions were to (Muddy the waters).

(29) It is imperative that this Court preserve the record and intervene. At minimum, the Court should investigate the immediate withdrawal of counsel after filing the Initial Brief and Designation of Matter, and misuse of rule 60 to conceal a wrongful eviction while under appeal, the Special Referee for abuse of discretion and abuse of power, in order to protect both the integrity of this Court and of the judicial system there have been many ethical violations committed in this appeal and the case. These claims are just the tip of this INJUSTICE ICEBERG.

**I respectfully pray for the following relief:**

- That this Court, in the interest of justice, take these matters into careful consideration. Preserve the initial brief and Designation of matter records for review
- Investigate the immediate withdrawal of Appellant's Counsel.
- That this Court grant a hearing to address the misconduct, collusion, and violations that occurred while this case was pending appeal.

- or alternatively grant me leave to retain counsel and report these matters to the appropriate oversight agencies without jeopardizing my rights in this appeal.
- Further grant any such relief this Court deems just and proper.

I would like to thank the Court for the opportunity to submit this letter, I have been dealing with this matter for nearly 5 years now, I have put my money and trust in 4 Attorneys, it has been one big roller coaster ride. I have been devastated and drained financially, mentally, and physically I have sleepless nights and anxiety, I am currently in a deep state of depression, I have loss my business, property, and personal possessions, and personal relationships, I have loss trust in Attorneys and the judicial system, the recent withdrawal of counsel has caused mental trauma, I have seeked psychiatric help, I know these are some serious cliams, I make them in Good faith I stand ready to present the preponderance of evidence supporting these claims at a hearing or at the Courts request. I am in desperate need of relief, Without this Court's intervention a grave miscarriage of justice will result.

**Respectfully submitted,**

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rodney White".

Rodney White

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