

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

COUNTY OF LANCASTER

Lisa Steen,

Plaintiff,

vs.

Michael Anthony Redfern and Melissa Rice,

Defendants.

IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS
SIXTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

Case Number: 2025-CP-29-01133

ORDER GRANTING DEFAULT
JUDGMENT

RECEIVED

FEB 17 2026

SC Court of Appeals

Plaintiff filed this action seeking a declaratory judgment that no valid and enforceable contract existed for Defendants to purchase 473 Old Monroe Highway, Lancaster, South Carolina (the "Property") from Plaintiff; Defendants occupied the Property as tenants; requiring Defendants to vacate the Property; and awarding Plaintiff damages for unpaid rent, late fees, and damage to the Property.

As shown in the filed documents, Defendants did not answer within thirty days, and an order entering default was filed November 10, 2025. This Court held a default judgment hearing on February 5, 2026. Plaintiff and her attorney, Emily N. Brown, and Defendants and their attorney, Donovan M. Steltzner, appeared. Plaintiff and Defendant Melissa Rice testified.

Findings of Fact

Based on the facts pled in the Complaint, the testimony of the witnesses, and the evidence admitted, the Court finds the following:

1. Defendants are in default under Rule 55, SCRCP, and admit the facts pled in the Complaint. Therefore, this hearing is limited to the facts supporting damages claimed by Plaintiff.
2. Plaintiff owns the Property that contains a mobile home and has a mortgage on it.

3. Plaintiff testified she began leasing the Property to Defendant Michael Redfern in 2017 and allowed Defendant Melissa Rice to move in a few months later. Plaintiff charged the Defendants \$400.00 per month, which was the amount she owed on the mortgage.

4. Defendants failed to pay the rent on time each month, and Plaintiff could not pay the mortgage payments without the rent payments resulting in Plaintiff paying late fees to the mortgagee. Plaintiff asked Defendants to pay the late fees, and they did not. Plaintiff entered a ledger showing she paid \$535.12 in late fees since 2017.

5. Plaintiff directed her attorney to send a letter to Defendants on June 26, 2025, increasing the rent to \$900.00 per month and entered a copy of the letter as evidence. The increase became effective August 15, 2025.

6. Plaintiff testified that Defendants failed to pay the increased rent and continued paying only \$400.00 per month. Additionally, Defendants failed to pay rent on other months since 2024 as shown on the unpaid rent ledger admitted as evidence, and the unpaid rent totals \$3,800.00.

7. Plaintiff and her husband lived in the mobile home before she began leasing it to Defendants. The mobile home was in good condition when Plaintiff left. However, Lancaster County Animal Control removed twenty-four dogs from the residence. Plaintiff testified the home is now unlivable because the floors were covered with urine and feces, which damaged the plywood flooring making it spongy. The porch is falling down, and the septic line leaks raw sewage under the mobile home. Defendants failed to report the leak to Plaintiff or repair it. Plaintiff testified she smells a bad odor outside of the mobile home and cannot discern whether it comes from the sewage outside or the damage from the animals inside.

8. Defendant Melissa Rice testified that she believes the Property is livable, and Defendants currently live at the Property. However, based on Plaintiff's testimony and the facts admitted in

the Complaint, including the number of dogs seized by Animal Control, the Court finds Plaintiff's testimony more credible.

9. Plaintiff testified she cannot repair the mobile home and must demolish and remove it and clean up the Property. Plaintiff estimates this will cost her \$40,000.00. However, after hearing the testimony and evaluating the evidence, the Court finds Plaintiff will likely spend less to remove the mobile home and clean up the Property. Therefore, the Court finds Plaintiff is entitled to \$30,000.00 for the damage done by Defendants.

10. Plaintiff asked Defendants to vacate the Property, and they refused. When Plaintiff and her husband go to the Property for inspections, Defendants call the police, and Defendants put up no trespassing signs without her consent since Plaintiff filed this lawsuit. Plaintiff testified that she cannot remove the mobile home and clean up the Property she owns unless Defendants vacate the Property.

Conclusions of Law

Based upon the above findings, this Court concludes as follows:

1. Defendants are in default under Rule 55, SCRCP, and admit the facts pled in the Complaint. Therefore, the Court holds Plaintiff and Defendants did not enter into a valid, enforceable contract for Defendants to purchase the Property from Plaintiff, and Defendants occupy the Property as tenants.

2. Defendants failed to pay rent on time for multiple months since 2017 causing Plaintiff to incur late fees, and Defendants failed to pay the rent owed for multiple months since 2024. Therefore, this Court holds Defendants owe Plaintiff \$4,335.12 for late fees and unpaid rent.

3. Defendants damaged Plaintiff's Property such that Plaintiff must demolish and remove the mobile home and clean up raw sewage from the Property. The Court holds Plaintiffs

damages for cleaning up the Property total \$30,000.00.

4. Furthermore, the Court holds Defendants are tenants, not owners and have rendered the Property unlivable. Therefore, the Court orders Defendants to vacate the Property within ten days after the date the Court files this order.

NOW THEREFORE, IT IS ORDERED that

1. Plaintiff and Defendants did not enter into a valid, enforceable contract for Defendants to purchase the Property.
2. Defendants occupied the Property as tenants.
3. Defendants pay Plaintiff \$4,335.12 for unpaid rent and late fees.
4. Defendants pay Plaintiff \$30,000.00 for damage to the Property.
5. Defendants vacate the Property within ten days after the Court files this order.

AND IT IS SO ORDERED.

FEB 17 2026

SC Court of Appeals

FORM 4

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF
IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS

JUDGMENT IN A CIVIL CASE

CASE NO. 2025-CP-29-01133

Lisa Steen

Michael Anthony Redfern and

PLAINTIFF(S)

Melissa Rice

DEFENDANT(S)

Submitted by: Emily N. Brown	Attorney for : <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Plaintiff <input type="checkbox"/> Defendant or <input type="checkbox"/> Self-Represented Litigant
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DISPOSITION TYPE (CHECK ONE)

- JURY VERDICT.** This action came before the court for a trial by jury. The issues have been tried and a verdict rendered.
- DECISION BY THE COURT.** This action came to trial or hearing before the court. The issues have been tried or heard and a decision rendered. See Page 2 for additional information.
- ACTION DISMISSED (CHECK REASON):** Rule 12(b), SCRPC; Rule 41(a), SCRPC (Vol. Nonsuit); Rule 43(k), SCRPC (Settled); Other
- ACTION STRICKEN (CHECK REASON):** Rule 40(j), SCRPC; Bankruptcy; Binding arbitration, subject to right to restore to confirm, vacate or modify arbitration award; Other
- STAYED DUE TO BANKRUPTCY**
- DISPOSITION OF APPEAL TO THE CIRCUIT COURT (CHECK APPLICABLE BOX):**
 Affirmed; Reversed; Remanded; Other

NOTE: ATTORNEYS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR NOTIFYING LOWER COURT, TRIBUNAL, OR ADMINISTRATIVE AGENCY OF THE CIRCUIT COURT RULING IN THIS APPEAL.

IT IS ORDERED AND ADJUDGED: See attached order (formal order to follow) Statement of Judgment by the Court:

ORDER INFORMATION

This order ends does not end the case.

Additional Information for the Clerk : _____

ELECTRONICALLY FILED - 2026 Feb 09 2:55 PM - LANCASTER - COMMON PLEAS - CASE#2025CP2901133

INFORMATION FOR THE JUDGMENT INDEX		
Complete this section below when the judgment affects title to real or personal property or if any amount should be enrolled. If there is no judgment information, indicate "N/A" in one of the boxes below.		
Judgment in Favor of (List name(s) below)	Judgment Against (List name(s) below)	Judgment Amount To be Enrolled (List amount(s) below)
Lisa Steen	Michael Redfern	\$34,335.12
Lisa Steen	Melissa Rice	\$34,335.12
		\$
If applicable, describe the property, including tax map information and address, referenced in the order:		

The judgment information above has been provided by the submitting party. Disputes concerning the amounts contained in this form may be addressed by way of motion pursuant to the SC Rules of Civil Procedure. Amounts to be computed such as interest or additional taxable costs not available at the time the form and final order are submitted to the judge may be provided to the clerk. **Note: Title abstractors and researchers should refer to the official court order for judgment details.**

E-Filing Note: In E-Filing counties, the Court will electronically sign this form using a separate electronic signature page.

Circuit Court Judge	Code	Judge	Date
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For Clerk of Court Office Use Only

This judgment was entered on the _____ day of _____, 20____ and a copy mailed first class or placed in the appropriate attorney's box on this _____ day of _____, 20____ to attorneys of record or to parties (when appearing pro se) as follows:

ATTORNEY(S) FOR THE PLAINTIFF(S)

ATTORNEY(S) FOR THE DEFENDANT(S)

CLERK OF COURT

Court Reporter:

E-Filing Note: In E-Filing counties, the date of Entry of Judgment is the same date as reflected on the Electronic File Stamp and the clerk's entering of the date of judgment above is not required in those counties. The clerk will mail a copy of the judgement to parties who are not E-Filers or who are appearing pro se. See Rule 77(d), SCRCP.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION REGARDING DECISION BY THE COURT AS REFERENCED ON PAGE 1.

This action came to trial or hearing before the court. The issues have been tried or heard and a decision rendered.



Lancaster Common Pleas

Case Caption: Lisa Steen VS Michael Anthony Redfern , defendant, et al
Case Number: 2025CP2901133
Type: Order/Judgment and Form 4

So Ordered

Vernon F. Dunbar

Electronically signed on 2026-02-09 14:50:49 page 8 of 8