



The South Carolina Court of Appeals

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March 11, 2026

Ms. Kathrine Haggard Hudgins, Esquire
1330 Lady St., Ste.401
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Ms. Ambree Michele Muller, Esquire
PO Box 11549
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Re: The State v. Francisco Maldonado-Molina
Appellate Case No. 2023-001995

Dear Counsel:

Enclosed is the decision of the Court. The remittitur will be sent as provided by Rule 221(b) of the South Carolina Appellate Court Rules.

Very truly yours,

Handwritten signature of Jasmine D. Smith, Deputy Clerk, in blue ink. The signature is written in a cursive style and includes the name "Jasmine D. Smith, Deputy" followed by "CLERK" printed below it.

cc: Alan McCrory Wilson, Esquire
Barry Joe Barnette, Esquire
The Honorable J. Derham Cole

**THIS OPINION HAS NO PRECEDENTIAL VALUE. IT SHOULD NOT BE
CITED OR RELIED ON AS PRECEDENT IN ANY PROCEEDING
EXCEPT AS PROVIDED BY RULE 268(d)(2), SCACR.**

**THE STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
In The Court of Appeals**

The State, Respondent,

v.

Francisco Maldonado-Molina, Appellant.

Appellate Case No. 2023-001995

Appeal From Spartanburg County
J. Derham Cole, Circuit Court Judge

Unpublished Opinion No. 2026-UP-112
Submitted February 3, 2026 – Filed March 11, 2026

AFFIRMED

Senior Appellate Defender Kathrine Haggard Hudgins, of
Columbia, for Appellant.

Attorney General Alan McCrory Wilson and Assistant
Attorney General Ambree Michele Muller, both of
Columbia; and Solicitor Barry Joe Barnette, of
Spartanburg, all for Respondent.

PER CURIAM: Francisco Maldonado-Molina appeals his convictions for murder, attempted murder, first-degree burglary, and possession of a weapon during the commission of a violent crime and sentences of life without parole,

thirty years' imprisonment, and fifteen years' imprisonment. On appeal, Maldonado-Molina argues the trial court erred by allowing testimony regarding a handgun and large sum of money found in his backpack when the United States Marshals apprehended him because the items were not evidence of flight or consciousness of guilt. We affirm pursuant to Rule 220(b), SCACR.

We hold any error regarding the admission of testimony about the handgun and money was harmless because two eyewitnesses, one of whom was a victim in the incident, identified Maldonado-Molina as the shooter and testimony regarding cellular telephone record analysis showed Maldonado-Molina at the crime scene when the shooting occurred. See *State v. Pagan*, 369 S.C. 201, 212, 631 S.E.2d 262, 267 (2006) ("Generally, appellate courts will not set aside convictions due to insubstantial errors not affecting the result."); *id.* ("[A]n insubstantial error not affecting the result of the trial is harmless where 'guilt has been conclusively proven by competent evidence such that no other rational conclusion can be reached.'" (quoting *State v. Bailey*, 298 S.C. 1, 5, 377 S.E.2d 581, 584 (1989))); *State v. Martin*, 403 S.C. 19, 27, 742 S.E.2d 42, 46 (Ct. App. 2013) ("Decisions concerning the admission of flight evidence are subject to a harmless error analysis."); *State v. Singleton*, 395 S.C. 6, 13, 716 S.E.2d 332, 335-36 (Ct. App. 2011) (providing an appellate court should reverse a conviction based on the improper admission of evidence when "there is a reasonable probability the jury's verdict was influenced by the challenged evidence" (quoting *Fields v. Reg'l Med. Ctr. Orangeburg*, 363 S.C. 19, 26, 609 S.E.2d 506, 509 (2005))); *Pagan*, 369 S.C. at 212-13, 631 S.E.2d at 268 (holding that although the trial court erred in admitting certain testimony, the error was harmless because witness testimony established the defendant's guilt beyond a reasonable doubt).

AFFIRMED.¹

GEATHERS, HEWITT, and CURTIS, JJ., concur.

¹ We decide this case without oral argument pursuant to Rule 215, SCACR.