

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF HORRY

IN THE COURT OF GENERAL SESSIONS
OF THE FIFTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
PLAINTIFF

INDICTMENT(S): 2021-GS-26-01191

vs.

MEAGAN MARIE JACKSON
DEFENDANT

ORDER DENYING DEFENDANT'S
REQUEST FOR NEW TRIAL

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Apr 17 2026

SC Court of Appeals

This matter came before the Court on defendant's "Motion for New Trial or, in the Alternative, for Judgment *Non-Obstante Veredicto*" filed June 25, 2025. The State filed a response on February 11, 2026, and a hearing was held on February 19, 2026. Thomas Brittain, Esquire, and Preston Brittain, Esquire, represented the defendant, who was in custody and present. Senior Assistant Solicitor Mary-Ellen Walter was present on behalf of the State. The defendant's motion is DENIED for the reasons stated below.

The only ground argued during the hearing was the Court's instructing the jury on the "hand of one, hand of all" theory of accomplice liability, despite having granted a directed verdict on the charge of criminal conspiracy. The other grounds alleged in Defendant's written motion were abandoned by defense counsel during the hearing and will not be addressed in this order.

The "hand of one, hand of all" doctrine—South Carolina's theory of accomplice liability—remains a valid and distinct basis for criminal culpability, wholly independent of conspiracy. What matters is that the defendant knowingly participated in a common plan or purpose to commit a crime. *See, e.g., State v. Sellers*, 442 S.C. 140, 148, 898 S.E.2d 116, 120 (2024). Contrary to the defendant's assertion, the absence of a conspiracy charge has no bearing on the applicability of the "hand of one, hand of all" doctrine. *See State v. Mattison*, 388 S.C. 469, 479, 697 S.E.2d 578, 584




(2010), quoting *State v. Dickman*, 341 S.C. 293, 295, 534 S.E.2d 268, 269 (2000) (“It is well settled that a defendant may be convicted on a theory of accomplice liability pursuant to an indictment charging him only with the principal offense.”) See also *Randolph v. Bodison*, No. CIV.A. 3:10-162-RBH, 2010 WL 5139103, at *4 (D.S.C. Sept. 14, 2010), report and recommendation adopted, No. CIV.A. 3:10-162-RBH, 2010 WL 5139085 (D.S.C. Dec. 9, 2010) (“Thus, a person can be found guilty as an accomplice even though there is no common design (i.e., conspiracy) if he is present and intentionally aids and abets the perpetrator. The fact that the trial court granted a directed verdict on the conspiracy charge does not necessarily preclude an instruction on accomplice liability.”)

A trial court has a responsibility to charge a jury on the correct law of South Carolina and the law that fits the evidence that was presented at trial. *State v. Perry*, 440 S.C. 396, 892 S.E.2d 273 (2023). “If any evidence supports a requested jury charge, the trial court should grant the request.” *State v. Ward*, 374 S.C. 606, 613-614, 649 S.E.2d 145, 149 (2007) (citing *State v. Brown*, 362 S.C. 258, 262, 607 S.E.2d 93, 95 (Ct.App. 2004)).

During the trial of this case, co-defendant Christopher Dontell testified that he pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit murder and that his co-conspirator was the defendant. While Dontell maintained that the defendant shot and killed the victim, the defense’s cross-examination of Dontell and their case theory was certainly geared to plant the seed that Dontell, not the defendant, was the shooter. The State presented ample, unrefuted evidence that the defendant and Dontell were together for much, if not all, of the night of the murder and that they acted in concert for weeks after the murder to conceal the victim’s death from law enforcement. Thus, there was evidence to support the requested “hand of one, hand of all” jury instruction.

WHEREFORE, because this Court was required to instruct the jury on the law as determined from the evidence presented and because there was evidence presented to support criminal liability under the “hand of one, hand of all” doctrine, the defendant’s motion for new trial is hereby DENIED.

IT IS SO ORDERED.


HONORABLE BENJAMIN H. CULBERTSON
Presiding Judge
15th Circuit, General Sessions

Date: April 8, 2026

FILED
HOBBS COUNTY
2025 APR 11 10 15
BENJAMIN H. CULBERTSON
CLERK OF COURT
HOBBS COUNTY, SC

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April 17, 2026

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SC Court of Appeals

RE: The State v. Meagan Jackson
Appellate Case No.: 2026-000473

Please let this letter serve as notice that Ms. Jackson's Order Denying Defendant's Request for New Trial was signed by The Honorable Benjamin Culbertson and clocked on April 8, 2026. I am also providing a copy of this Order.

We no longer need this case held in abeyance. Thank you for your assistance in this matter.



Lacey Thompson
Attorney at Law

Enclosures

Cc: Mary Ellen Walter, Esq.
Melody Jane Brown, Esq.
Wanda H. Carter, Esq.
The Honorable Benjamin H. Culbertson