

# A. J. Z. Law Firm, LLC

Mailing Address  
P.O. Box 11961  
Columbia, SC 29211

Phone (803) 400-1918  
Fax (803) 403-8005

Physical Address  
2003 Lincoln Street  
Columbia, SC 29201

**Aimee J. Zmroczek, Attorney**  
[aimee@ajzlawfirm.com](mailto:aimee@ajzlawfirm.com)

April 3, 2026

The Honorable Jenny Abbott Kitchings  
[ctapp:filings@sccourts.org](mailto:ctapp:filings@sccourts.org)  
Clerk, South Carolina Court of Appeals  
Post Office Box 11629  
Columbia, South Carolina 29211

**RECEIVED**

**Apr 20 2026**

**SC Court of Appeals**

South Carolina Court of Appeals  
[ctapp:filings@sccourts.org](mailto:ctapp:filings@sccourts.org)  
1220 Senate Street  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

RE: The State, Respondent, v. Christopher Dontell, Appellate  
Indictment No.'s: 2021-GS-26-01198; 2024-GS-26-03534

Dear Ms. Kitchings and Sir/Madam:

Enclosed for filing is a notice of appeal in the above case. Also enclosed is the following:

- (1) Proof of service of the Notice of Appeal on the respondent.

Sincerely,  
s/Aimee J. Zmroczek  
Aimee J. Zmroczek (SC Bar #77193)  
A.J.Z. Law Firm, LLC  
P.O. Box 11961  
Columbia, South Carolina 29211  
(803) 403-7750  
[aimee@ajzlawfirm.com](mailto:aimee@ajzlawfirm.com)  
Attorney for Appellant

cc: Mary Ellen Walter  
Assistant Solicitor  
P.O. Box 1276  
Conway, SC 29528  
Attorney for Respondent

THE STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA  
In The Court of Appeals

---

APPEAL FROM HORRY COUNTY  
Court of General Sessions  
B. ALEX HYMAN, Circuit Court Judge

---

**RECEIVED**

**Apr 20 2026**

**SC Court of Appeals**

Indictment No.'s: 2021-GS-26-01198; 2024-GS-26-03534

---

The State,

Respondent,

v.

Christopher Dontell,

Appellant.

---

---

NOTICE OF APPEAL

---

Christopher Dontell appeals his sentence after a plea in the above case. The sentence was imposed by Honorable B. Alex Hyman on July 14, 2025. This appeal is taken from the denial of the Appellant's request for a reasonable sentence.

April 3, 2026.

s/Aimee J. Zmroczek  
Aimee J. Zmroczek (SC Bar #77193)  
A.J.Z. Law Firm, LLC  
P.O. Box 11961  
Columbia, South Carolina 29211  
(803) 403-7750  
aimee@ajzlawfirm.com  
Attorney for Appellant

THE STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA  
In The Court of Appeals

**RECEIVED**

**Apr 20 2026**

**SC Court of Appeals**

APPEAL FROM HORRY COUNTY  
Court of General Sessions  
B. ALEX HYMAN, Circuit Court Judge

Indictment No.'s: 2021-GS-26-01198; 2024-GS-26-03534

The State,

Respondent,

v.

Christopher Dontell,

Appellant.


PROOF OF SERVICE

I certify that I have served the Notice of Appeal on Mary Ellen Walter, other counsel of record, by depositing a copy of it in the United States Mail, postage prepaid, on April 3, 2026, addressed to her office at Location: 1301 Second Avenue, Conway, SC 29526.

**Mailing:**

**P.O. Box 1276**

**Conway, SC 29528**

  
Aimee J. Zmroczek (SC Bar #77193)  
A.J.Z. Law Firm, LLC  
P.O. Box 11961  
Columbia, South Carolina 29211  
(803) 403-7750  
aimee@ajzlawfirm.com  
Attorney for Appellant

# A. J. Z. Law Firm, LLC

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**Aimee J. Zmroczek, Attorney**  
[aimee@ajzlawfirm.com](mailto:aimee@ajzlawfirm.com)

---

April 3, 2026

The Honorable Renee Elvis  
Horry County Clerk of Court  
PO Box 677  
Conway, SC 29528-0677

RE: The State, Respondent, v. Christopher Dontell, Appellate  
Indictment No.'s: 2021-GS-26-01198; 2024-GS-26-03534

Dear Ms. Elvis:

Please find enclosed for filing a Notice of Appeal, together with certificate of service, in the above referenced case.

Sincerely,



---

Aimee J. Zmroczek (SC Bar #77193)  
A.J.Z. Law Firm, LLC  
P.O. Box 11961  
Columbia, South Carolina 29211  
(803) 403-7750  
[aimee@ajzlawfirm.com](mailto:aimee@ajzlawfirm.com)  
Attorney for Appellant

cc: Mary Ellen Walter  
Assistant Solicitor  
P.O. Box 1276  
Conway, SC 29528  
Attorney for Respondent

THE STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA  
In The Court of Appeals

---

**RECEIVED**

**Apr 20 2026**

**SC Court of Appeals**

APPEAL FROM HORRY COUNTY  
Court of General Sessions  
B. ALEX HYMAN, Circuit Court Judge

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Indictment No.'s: 2021-GS-26-01198; 2024-GS-26-03534

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The State,

Respondent,

v.

Christopher Dontell,

Appellant.

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NOTICE OF APPEAL

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Christopher Dontell appeals his sentence after a plea in the above case. The sentence was imposed by Honorable B. Alex Hyman on July 14, 2025. This appeal is taken from the denial of the Appellant's request for a reasonable sentence.

April 3, 2026.

s/Aimee J. Zmroczek  
Aimee J. Zmroczek (SC Bar #77193)  
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P.O. Box 11961  
Columbia, South Carolina 29211  
(803) 403-7750  
aimee@ajzlawfirm.com  
Attorney for Appellant

THE STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA  
In The Court of Appeals

---

APPEAL FROM HORRY COUNTY  
Court of General Sessions  
B. ALEX HYMAN, Circuit Court Judge

**RECEIVED**

**Apr 20 2026**

**SC Court of Appeals**

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Indictment No.'s: 2021-GS-26-01198; 2024-GS-26-03534

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The State,

Respondent,

v.

Christopher Dontell,

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PROOF OF SERVICE

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I certify that I have served the Notice of Appeal on Mary Ellen Walter, other counsel of record, by depositing a copy of it in the United States Mail, postage prepaid, on April 3, 2026, addressed to her office at Location: 1301 Second Avenue, Conway, SC 29526.

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Conway, SC 29528

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P.O. Box 11961  
Columbia, South Carolina 29211  
(803) 403-7750  
aimee@ajzlawfirm.com  
Attorney for Appellant

WITNESSES

Jared P Soucy Horry County Police Department

*Jared P Soucy*

*Dustin Smith*

*Dustin Smith*

DOCKET NO. 2021GS2601198

The State of South Carolina

County of Horry

Scott R. Hixson

20H05351

COURT OF GENERAL SESSIONS

MARCH, 2021 TERM

ARREST WARRANT NUMBER

2020A2610700958

CDR: 0049 16-17-0410

DOA: 11/12/2020

ACTION OF GRAND JURY

TRUE BILL

*Carla Daniel*

Foreperson of Grand Jury

Date:

VERDICT

APR 21 2021

Foreperson of Petit Jury

Date:

ORIGINAL

Jimmy A. Richardson, II, Solicitor

ATTORNEY: T. Kirk Truslow

Indictment for

CRIMINAL CONSPIRACY

Christopher Allen Dontell  
W/M



vs.

THE STATE

DATE RECEIVED FROM GRAND JURY

RENEE M. ELVIS  
CLERK OF COURT  
HORRY COUNTY, SC

2021 APR 22 P 2:54

FILED  
HORRY COUNTY

69

RECEIVED  
Apr 20 2026  
SC Court of Appeals

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA )  
 )  
COUNTY OF HORRY )

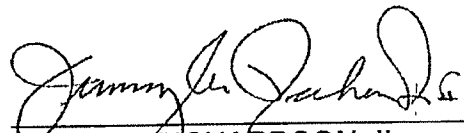
INDICTMENT

At a Court of General Sessions, convened on March 25, 2021, the Grand Jurors of Horry County present upon their oath:

CRIMINAL CONSPIRACY  
CDR: 0049 16-17-0410

That Christopher Allen Dontell did in Horry County on or about October 2, 2020 combine with Meagan Marie Jackson, and/or with other persons, for the purpose of accomplishing a criminal or unlawful object or an object that is neither criminal nor unlawful through criminal or unlawful means, to wit: Murder, in violation of Section 16-17-410, S. C. Code of Laws, 1976, as amended.

Against the peace and dignity of the State, and contrary to the statute in such case made and provided.



JIMMY A. RICHARDSON, II  
FIFTEENTH CIRCUIT SOLICITOR

DOCKET NO. 2021GS2601197

The State of South Carolina  
County of Horry

Scott R. Hixson 20H05351

COURT OF GENERAL SESSIONS

MARCH, 2021 TERM

THE STATE

vs.

Christopher Allen Dontell  
W/M



ATTORNEY: T. Kirk Truslow

Indictment for

MURDER

Jimmy A. Richardson, II, Solicitor

ORIGINAL

WITNESSES

Jared P Soucy Horry County Police Department

*JARITA ORLEY*

*DESTIN SANCHEZ*

*JACKIE WILKINSON*

ARREST WARRANT NUMBER

2020A2610202359

CDR: 0116 16-03-0010, 0020

DOA: 11/11/2020

ACTION OF GRAND JURY

TRUE BILL

*Tom Truslow*

Foreperson of Grand Jury

Date:

VERDICT

APR 21 2021

Foreperson of Petit Jury

Date:

FILED  
HORRY COUNTY  
2021 APR 22 P 2:54  
RENEE N. ELVIS  
CLERK OF COURT  
HORRY COUNTY, SC

NP  
7-14-25

DATE RECEIVED FROM  
GRAND JURY

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA )  
 )  
COUNTY OF HORRY )

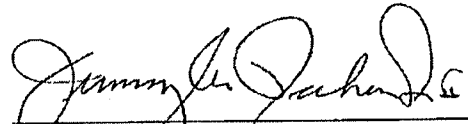
INDICTMENT

At a Court of General Sessions, convened on March 25, 2021, the Grand Jurors of Horry County present upon their oath:

MURDER  
CDR: 0116 16-03-0010,0020

That Christopher Allen Dontell did in Horry County, on or about October 2, 2020, while acting in concert with other(s), willfully, feloniously, and intentionally kill the victim, Gregory Vincent Rice, with malice aforethought, either express or implied, by means of shooting him and the victim did die as a proximate result thereof on or about in Horry County, in violation of Section 16-03-0010, S. C. Code of Laws, 1976, as amended.

Against the peace and dignity of the State, and contrary to the statute in such case made and provided.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
JIMMY A. RICHARDSON, II  
FIFTEENTH CIRCUIT SOLICITOR

**WITNESSES**

Investigator Stephen Brown, Horry County  
Solicitor's Office  
051-0147669

*Ginger Pop*

ARREST WARRANT NUMBER

2024-GS-26-03535  
DOA: 1/1/1/2020

DOCKET NO. 2024-GS-26-03535

**The State of South Carolina**

County of Horry

Mary-Ellen Walker  
20H05351

COURT OF GENERAL SESSIONS

June 2024 TERM

ACTION OF GRAND JURY

**TRUE BILL**

*Meredith Brown*

Foreperson of Grand Jury  
Date: JUN 12 2024

VERDICT

CHRISTOPHER ALLEN DONTELL  
W/M



V.

THE STATE

Indictment for

CONSPIRACY TO COMMIT KIDNAPPING

CDR: 0017

Statute: 16-03-0920

Foreperson of Petit Jury  
Date:

**ORIGINAL**

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA    )  
  )  
COUNTY OF HORRY                )

INDICTMENT

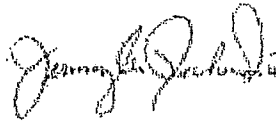
At a Court of General Sessions, convened on June 12, 2024, the Grand Jurors of Horry County present upon their oath:

**Conspiracy to Commit Kidnapping**

CDR: 0017 16-03-0920

The Defendant, Christopher Dontell, on or about October 2, 2020, in Horry County, South Carolina, did, along with Meagan Marie Jackson, enter into an agreement, confederation, or conspiracy to unlawfully seize, confine, inveigle, decoy, kidnap, abduct or carry away the victim, Gregory Rice, by any means whatsoever without authority of law in violation of the provisions of Section 16-3-910 (1976, as amended). The Defendant, Christopher Dontell, did, along with Meagan Marie Jackson, commit overt acts towards carrying out such unlawful agreement, confederation, or conspiracy in violation of Section 16-3-920 of the South Carolina Code of Laws (1976, as amended).

Against the peace and dignity of the State, and contrary to the statute in such case made and provided.



---

JIMMY A. RICHARDSON, II  
FIFTEENTH CIRCUIT SOLICITOR

**WITNESSES**

Investigator Stephen Brown, Horry County  
Solicitor's Office  
051-0147669

Ginger Pop

**ARREST WARRANT NUMBER**

2024-GS-26-03535  
DOA: 11/11/2020

**ACTION OF GRAND JURY**

**TRUE BILL**

Meredith Bowers  
Foreperson of Grand Jury  
Date: JUN 12 2024

**VERDICT**

Foreperson of Petit Jury  
Date:

DOCKET NO. 2024-GS-26-03535

**The State of South Carolina**

County of Horry

Mary-Ellen Walter  
20H05351

**COURT OF GENERAL SESSIONS**

**June 2024 TERM**

THE STATE

V.

CHRISTOPHER ALLEN DONTELL  
W/M



Indictment for

**CONSPIRACY TO COMMIT KIDNAPPING**

CDR: 0017

Statute: 16-03-0920

FILED  
HORRY COUNTY

2024 JUN 13 A 11:38

RENEE N. ELVIS  
CLERK OF COURT  
HORRY COUNTY, SC

DATE RECEIVED FROM  
GRAND JURY

NP  
7-14-25

**ORIGINAL**

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA )  
 )  
COUNTY OF HORRY )

INDICTMENT

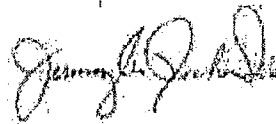
At a Court of General Sessions, convened on June 12, 2024, the Grand Jurors of Horry County present upon their oath:

**Conspiracy to Commit Kidnapping**

CDR: 0017 16-03-0920

The Defendant, Christopher Dontell, on or about October 2, 2020, in Horry County, South Carolina, did, along with Meagan Marie Jackson, enter into an agreement, confederation, or conspiracy to unlawfully seize, confine, inveigle, decoy, kidnap, abduct or carry away the victim, Gregory Rice, by any means whatsoever without authority of law in violation of the provisions of Section 16-3-910 (1976, as amended). The Defendant, Christopher Dontell, did, along with Meagan Marie Jackson, commit overt acts towards carrying out such unlawful agreement, confederation, or conspiracy in violation of Section 16-3-920 of the South Carolina Code of Laws (1976, as amended).

Against the peace and dignity of the State, and contrary to the statute in such case made and provided.



---

JIMMY A. RICHARDSON, II  
FIFTEENTH CIRCUIT SOLICITOR

**WITNESSES**

Investigator Stephen Brown, Horry County  
Solicitor's Office  
051-0147669

*Ginger Pop*

**ARREST WARRANT NUMBER**

2024-GS-26-03534  
DOA: 11/11/2020

DOCKET NO. 2024-GS-26-03534

**The State of South Carolina**  
County of Horry

Mary-Ellen Walter  
20H05351

**COURT OF GENERAL SESSIONS**

June 2024 TERM

**ACTION OF GRAND JURY**

**TRUE BILL**


*Meredith Rowers*

Foreperson of Grand Jury  
Date: JUN 12 2024

**VERDICT**

**THE STATE**

**V.**

**CHRISTOPHER ALLEN DONTELL**  
w/ M 

Indictment for

**ACCESSORY AFTER THE FACT**

CDR: 2413

Statute: 16-01-0055

Foreperson of Petit Jury  
Date:

**ORIGINAL**

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA )  
 )  
COUNTY OF HORRY )

INDICTMENT

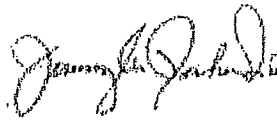
At a Court of General Sessions, convened on June 12, 2024, the Grand Jurors of Horry County present upon their oath:

**Accessory After The Fact**

CDR: 2413 16-01-0055

The defendant, Christopher Allen Dontell, did on or about October 2 through October 4, 2020, in Horry County, South Carolina, wilfully, knowingly, and intentionally harbor or assist Meágan Jackson with the crime of Murder, knowing that Meagan Jackson had committed the crime of murder of Gregory Rice. All in violation of 16-01-0055, *South Carolina Code of Laws* (1976, as amended).

Against the peace and dignity of the State, and contrary to the statute in such case made and provided.



---

JIMMY A. RICHARDSON, II  
FIFTEENTH CIRCUIT SOLICITOR

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE COURT OF GENERAL SESSIONS

COUNTY OF Horry

STATE

VS.

INDICTMENT/CASE#: 2021GS2601198

A/W#: 2020A2610700958

CHRISTOPHER ALLEN DONTELL

AKA:

Race: W Sex: M Age: 41

Address:

City, State, Zip:

DL#

SID#

Date of Offense: 10/02/2020

S.C. Code §: 16-17-0410

CDR Code #: 0049

SENTENCE SHEET

\*CDL Yes No CMV Yes No Hazmat Yes No
In disposition of the above indictment comes now the Defendant who was

CONVICTED OF or PLEADS

TO: Criminal Conspiracy (NMT 5 years or \$5,000)

In violation of § 16-17-0410 of the S.C. Code of Laws, bearing CDR Code # 0049

NON-VIOLENT VIOLENT SERIOUS MOST SERIOUS Mandatory GPS § 17-25-45

(CSC w/minor 1st or CSC w/minor 3rd)

The charge is: As indicted, Lesser Included Offense, Defendant Waives Presentment to Grand Jury (def.'s initials)

The plea is: Without Negotiations or Recommendation, Negotiated Sentence, Recommendation by the State.

ATTEST:

Mary-Elen Walter, Solicitor SC Bar # 103036

Christopher Allen Dontell, Defendant

Aimee J. Zmroczek, Attorney for Defense SC Bar # 77193

WHEREFORE, the Defendant is committed to the State Department of Correction County Detention Center,

for a determinate term of 5 days/months/years Time Served Youthful Offender Act not to exceed years

and/or to pay a fine of \$; provided that upon the service of days/months/years/Time Served and or payment

of \$; plus costs and assessments as applicable\*; the balance is suspended with probation for

months/years and subject to South Carolina Department of Probation, Parole and Pardon Services standard conditions of probation, which are incorporated by reference.

The sentence shall run

CONCURRENT or CONSECUTIVE to sentence on:

The Defendant is to be given credit for time served pursuant to S.C. Code § 24-13-40 to be calculated and applied by SCDoc.

1588 days/months

To include time spent on monitored house arrest prior to trial and sentencing.

The Defendant Shall be Released from County Detention Center.

Pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 922 and § 16-25-30 it is unlawful for a person convicted of a violation of § 16-25-20 or § 16-25-65 (Domestic Violence) to ship, transport, possess, or receive a firearm or ammunition.

FILED JUL 14 P 5:55 Horry County

**SPECIAL CONDITIONS:**

**PTUP** after \_\_\_\_\_ months/years

**And Other Terms Listed Below:**

- Substance Abuse Counseling
- Completion of GED
- Random Drug/Alcohol Testing
- Attend Voc. Rehab. Or Job Corp
- No Contact with Victim
- Domestic Violence Intervention Program
- Mental Health Counseling
- May serve W/E beginning: \_\_\_\_\_
- Sex Offender Registry pursuant to S.C. Code § 23-3-430
- Public Service Employment \_\_\_\_\_ days/hours
- Central Registry of Child Abuse and Neglect pursuant to S.C. Code § 17-25-135.
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

FILED  
 PROBATION  
 2021 JUL 14 P 12:55  
 FEDERAL CLERK  
 CLERK OF COURT  
 Horry County, SC

**RESTITUTION**     **Deferred**     **Def. Waives Hearing**     **Ordered**

Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_ plus 20% fee: \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Payment Terms: \_\_\_\_\_  Set by SCDPPPS

Recipient: \_\_\_\_\_

*Fine:		\$	_____
Fine may be pd. in equal consecutive weekly/ <u>monthly</u> pmts. of	\$ <u>25.00</u>	Beginning	<u>8/14/25</u>
§14-1-206 (Assessments 107.5%)		\$	_____
§14-1-211 (A)(1)(Conv. Surcharge)	\$100	\$	<u>100.00</u>
§14-1-211 (A)(2)(DUI Surcharge)	\$100	\$	_____
§56-5-2995 (DUI Assessment)	\$12	\$	_____
§56-1-286 (DUI Breath Test)	\$25	\$	_____
§14-1-212 (Law Enforce., Funding)	\$25	\$	<u>25.00</u>
§14-1-213 (Drug Court Surcharge)	\$150	\$	_____
§34-11-70(b)and(c), and 34-11-90(c)and(d) (Admin Fraud Check Court Costs)	\$41	\$	_____
§50-21-114 (BUI Breath Test Fee)	\$50	\$	_____
§56-5-2942(J) (Vehicle Assessment)	\$40/ea	\$	_____
3% to County (if paid in installments)	TBD	\$	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Appointed PD or appointed other counsel, Proviso requires \$500 be paid to Clerk during probation and shall be collected before any other fees	\$500	\$	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> § 17-3-30(B) Unpaid Application Fee to be paid to the Public Defender Fund	TBD	\$	<u>3.75</u>
	<b>TOTAL</b>	\$	<u>128.75</u>

Clerk of Court/Deputy Clerk: Benee Elvis  
 Court Reporter: Ray Richardson

Presiding Judge: [Signature]  
 Judge Code: Hyman 2776  
 Sentence Date: 12/4/24 7/14/25

SENTENCING TO BE HELD  
 AT A LATER DATE

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

COUNTY OF HORRY

STATE

VS.

CHRISTOPHER ALLEN DONTELL

AKA:

Race: W Sex: M Age: 41

DOB: [REDACTED] SS# [REDACTED]

Address: [REDACTED]

City, State, Zip: [REDACTED]

DL#\* [REDACTED] SID# [REDACTED]

\*CDL Yes  No  CMV Yes  No  Hazmat Yes  No

In disposition of the above indictment comes now the Defendant who was

CONVICTED OF or  PLEADS

TO: Accessory After The Fact (NMT 15 years)

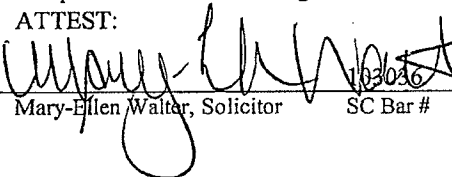
In violation of § 16-01-0055 of the S.C. Code of Laws, bearing CDR Code # 2413

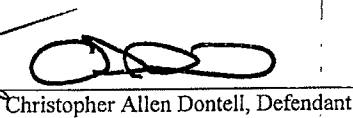
NON-VIOLENT  VIOLENT  SERIOUS  MOST SERIOUS  Mandatory GPS  § 17-25-45  
(CSC w/minor 1<sup>st</sup> or CSC w/minor 3<sup>rd</sup>)


The charge is:  As indicted,  Lesser Included Offense,  Defendant Waives Presentment to Grand Jury. (def.'s initials)

The plea is:  Without Negotiations or Recommendation,  Negotiated Sentence,  Recommendation by the State.

ATTEST:

  
Mary-Ellen Walter, Solicitor SC Bar # 103036

  
Christopher Allen Dontell, Defendant

  
Aimee J. Zmroczek, Attorney for Defense SC Bar # 77193

WHEREFORE, the Defendant is committed to the  State Department of Correction  County Detention Center,

for a determinate term of 15 days/months/years/Time Served  Youthful Offender Act not to exceed \_\_\_ years

and/or to pay a fine of \$ \_\_\_; provided that upon the service of \_\_\_ days/months/years/Time Served and/or payment

of \$ \_\_\_; plus costs and assessments as applicable\*; the balance is suspended with probation for

months/years and subject to South Carolina Department of Probation, Parole and Pardon Services standard conditions of probation, which are incorporated by reference.

The sentence shall run

CONCURRENT or  CONSECUTIVE to sentence on:

The Defendant is to be given credit for time served pursuant to S.C. Code § 24-13-40 to be calculated and applied by SCDOC.

1500 days/months

To include time spent on monitored house arrest prior to trial and sentencing.

The Defendant Shall be Released from County Detention Center.

Pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 922 and § 16-25-30 it is unlawful for a person convicted of a violation of § 16-25-20 or § 16-25-65 (Domestic Violence) to ship, transport, possess, or receive a firearm or ammunition.

FILED  
HORRY COUNTY  
JUL 14 P 12:55  
RECEIVED CLYVIS  
CLERK OF COURT  
HORRY COUNTY, SC

**SPECIAL CONDITIONS:**

**PTUP** after \_\_\_\_\_ months/years

**And Other Terms Listed Below:**

- Substance Abuse Counseling
- Completion of GED
- Random Drug/Alcohol Testing
- Attend Voc. Rehab. Or Job Corp
- No Contact with Victim
- Domestic Violence Intervention Program
- Mental Health Counseling
- May serve W/E beginning: \_\_\_\_\_
- Sex Offender Registry pursuant to S.C. Code § 23-3-430
- Public Service Employment \_\_\_\_\_ days/hours
- Central Registry of Child Abuse and Neglect pursuant to S.C. Code § 17-25-135.
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

FILED  
 HONORABLE CLERK OF COURT  
 Horry County, SC  
 2024 JUL 14 P 12:55

**RESTITUTION**  **Deferred**  **Def. Waives Hearing**  **Ordered**

Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_ plus 20% fee: \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Payment Terms: \_\_\_\_\_  Set by SCDPPPS

Recipient: \_\_\_\_\_

**\*Fine:**

Fine may be pd. in equal consecutive weekly monthly pmts. of

	\$ <u>25.00</u>	Beginning	<u>8/14/25</u>	\$ _____
§14-1-206 (Assessments 107.5%)				\$ _____
§14-1-211 (A)(1)(Conv. Surcharge)		\$100		\$ <u>100.00</u>
§14-1-211 (A)(2)(DUI Surcharge)		\$100		\$ _____
§56-5-2995 (DUI Assessment)		\$12		\$ _____
§56-1-286 (DUI Breath Test)		\$25		\$ _____
§14-1-212 (Law Enforce. Funding)		\$25		\$ <u>25.00</u>
§14-1-213 (Drug Court Surcharge)		\$150		\$ _____
§34-11-70(b)and(c), and 34-11-90(c)and(d) (Admin Fraud Check Court Costs)		\$41		\$ _____
§50-21-114 (BUI Breath Test Fee)		\$50		\$ _____
§56-5-2942(J) (Vehicle Assessment)		\$40/ea		\$ _____
3% to County (if paid in installments)		TBD		\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Appointed PD or appointed other counsel, Proviso requires \$500 be paid to Clerk during probation and shall be collected before any other fees		\$500		\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> § 17-3-30(B) Unpaid Application Fee to be paid to the Public Defender Fund		TBD		\$ <u>3.75</u>
		<b>TOTAL</b>		\$ <u>128.75</u>

Clerk of Court/Deputy Clerk:  
Court Reporter:

Bonnie Elvis  
Kay Richardson

Presiding Judge: \_\_\_\_\_  
Judge Code: \_\_\_\_\_  
Sentence Date: 12/4/24 2776  
7/14/25

SENTENCING TO BE HELD  
AT A LATER DATE Page 2 of 2

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA )  
 )  
COUNTY OF HORRY )  
 )  
The State of South Carolina, )  
 )  
 )  
vs. )  
 )  
Chris Dontell, )  
 )  
Defendant. )

IN THE Horry County General Sessions Court  
IN THE FIFTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

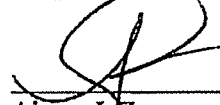
Indictment No's: 2021GS2601198  
and 2024GS2603534

NOTICE OF MOTION TO RECONSIDER

**TO: The Honorable B. Alex Hyman ,**

**YOU ARE HEARBY NOTIFIED** that the above-captioned defendant, through his attorney will move before the court on Monday September 22, 2025 at 9:00 a.m. or as soon thereafter as she may be heard for a motion to reconsider the sentences in this case.

Respectfully Submitted,



\_\_\_\_\_  
Aimee J. Zmroczek, #77193  
A.J.Z. Law Firm, LLC  
2003 Lincoln Street  
P.O. Box 11961  
Columbia, South Carolina 29211  
T-803-400-1918, F-803-403-8005  
[aimee@ajzlawfirm.com](mailto:aimee@ajzlawfirm.com)  
Attorney for Defendant

Date: July 23, 2025  
Columbia, South Carolina

COPY

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA )  
 )  
COUNTY OF Horry )  
 )  
The State of South Carolina, )  
 )  
vs. )  
 )  
Chris Dontell, )  
 )  
Defendant, )

IN THE Horry County General Sessions Court  
IN THE FIFTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT  
  
Indictment No's: 2021GS2601198  
and 2024GS2603534

MOTION TO RECONSIDER  
SENTENCING

COMES NOW the Defendant, Chris Dontell, by and through undersigned counsel, and respectfully moves this Honorable Court to reconsider the sentence imposed on July 14, 2025. In support of this Motion, Defendant shows the Court as follows:

I. PROCEDURAL BACKGROUND

On December 4, 2024, Defendant entered a plea of guilty to accessory after the fact and criminal conspiracy. On July 14, 2025, this Court imposed the maximum sentence permitted under the law: 15 years and 5 years consecutively.

Prior to sentencing, the Defendant cooperated fully with law enforcement and prosecution. This cooperation was material and substantial, resulting in the successful prosecution and conviction of codefendant Meghan Jackson. Despite such cooperation, which typically weighs as a mitigating factor, the Court imposed the maximum sentence.

II. BASIS FOR RECONSIDERATION

The Defendant's cooperation significantly furthered the interests of justice. Once protection for his family was guaranteed, Defendant provided truthful, and substantial assistance, including the testimony at trial. Defense will submit a memorandum with that transcript incorporated into a memorandum that will follow this filing. The prosecution's case against the

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codefendant may not have succeeded without Defendant's involvement. Maximum sentencing, under these circumstances, may constitute a disproportionate penalty in light of the Defendant's pivotal role in aiding the State.

Additionally, at sentencing, mitigating factors—particularly cooperation—may not have been fully weighed or may have been outweighed by factors not explicitly addressed on the record. Courts have discretion to revisit sentences where justice and fairness demand it, especially where a cooperating defendant is punished more severely than warranted.

### III. PRAYER FOR RELIEF

I respectfully submit this motion to reconsider the sentencing in the matter of Chris Dontell, particularly in light of the defendant's cooperation with authorities in this case. While the Court has the discretion to impose a sentence within the statutory guidelines, I ask that you consider the broader implications of not giving the defendant credit for their cooperation.

The defendant's willingness to cooperate has led directly to the conviction of his co-defendant. This cooperation was not only beneficial to the prosecution, but it was instrumental in securing a conviction that may otherwise not have been possible. To not acknowledge this cooperation in the sentencing process would not only be unjust to the defendant but could set a harmful precedent for future cases, particularly in instances where other individuals in similar positions may be hesitant to cooperate, fearing that their cooperation will go unrewarded.

By failing to offer any leniency or consideration for cooperation, we risk undermining the cooperative model that has been vital in prosecuting complex criminal cases. The success of this model relies on defendants' willingness to aid law enforcement in the pursuit of justice, often at great personal risk. Penalizing cooperation discourages such behavior, which could ultimately harm the public interest and law enforcement efforts.

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Therefore, I respectfully request that the Court take these factors into account when reconsidering the sentence, as doing so would reinforce the importance of cooperation, both in this case and in the broader criminal justice system. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully Submitted,



Aimee J. Zmroczek, #77193  
A.J.Z. Law Firm, LLC  
2003 Lincoln Street  
P.O. Box 11961  
Columbia, South Carolina 29211  
T-803-400-1918, F-803-403-8005  
[aimee@ajzlawfirm.com](mailto:aimee@ajzlawfirm.com)  
Attorney for Defendant

Date: July 23, 2025  
Columbia, South Carolina

ORDER  
JUL 23 2025  
CLERK OF COURT  
COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA

COPY

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): 2024-GS-26-03534  
2024-GS-26-03535

v.

CHRISTOPHER ALLEN DONTELL  
DEFENDANT

ORDER DENYING MOTION TO RECONSIDER

FILED  
HORRY COUNTY  
2025 MAR 24 A 8:20  
RENEE N. ELYS  
CLERK OF COURT  
HORRY COUNTY, SC

This matter comes before the Court by way of a Notice of Motion to Reconsider, filed by counsel for the Defendant on July 23, 2025<sup>1</sup>. For the reasons stated below, that motion is hereby DENIED.

#### FACTUAL BACKGROUND

The Defendant worked as a Deputy Coroner for Horry County. While so employed, he began an extra-marital affair with his co-defendant Meagan Jackson, who had four children by the victim in this case, Gregory Rice. Jackson was working as a body transport person at the time and worked frequently with the Defendant. Throughout the course of this affair, the Defendant lied to his wife and took measures to hide his relationship with Jackson.

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<sup>1</sup> Although counsel notes that a memorandum would follow, no such memorandum was filed.

The victim was last seen and heard from on October 2, 2020. The Defendant and Jackson spent that entire night together, traveling from their homes in Rivers Edge Plantation (*albeit* in separate cars) to the Lewis Ocean Bay Heritage Preserve, then to have dinner at Abuelo's, a local restaurant, and so on throughout the evening. Jackson reported Rice missing on October 5, 2020. Law enforcement initially treated the matter as a missing-person case and began by gathering Rice's cell phone records. Phone records revealed that Jackson was the last person to speak with Rice on October 2, 2020, and law enforcement quickly focused on her and the Defendant. The Defendant was interviewed four times before his arrest - on October 13, 2020, October 15, 2020, October 23, 2020, and November 11, 2020. During each of these interviews, he adamantly denied having any knowledge of Rice's whereabouts. The Defendant was arrested on November 11, 2020, following the fourth pre-arrest interview. After retaining counsel, the Defendant signed a proffer agreement and was again interviewed by law enforcement on June 29, 2021. During this interview, the Defendant finally acknowledged *some* participation in Rice's disappearance and murder, *albeit* a somewhat benign role. Defendant violated the terms of his proffer when he refused to submit to a polygraph examination and the State terminated the agreement.

FILED  
HORRY COUNTY  
2021 MAR 28  
A 8:20  
RENEA ELLIS  
CLERK OF COURT  
HORRY COUNTY, SC

The Defendant and Jackson were listed for trial in December of 2024. Over the State's objection, Jackson was granted a continuance, and the State opted to proceed solely against the Defendant, who was charged with murder, accessory after the fact to murder, conspiracy to commit kidnapping, and conspiracy to commit murder. Pretrial motions were argued, and a jury was selected and sworn. On December 3, 2024, as the State was about to begin its opening statement, the Defendant indicated that he wanted to plead guilty as charged to accessory after the fact to murder. On December 4, 2024, the Defendant pleaded guilty to accessory after the

fact to murder and conspiracy to commit murder and indicated that he would testify against Megan Jackson. There were no agreements with the State as to his sentence, which was held in abeyance until after Jackson's trial.

Meagan Jackson was tried by a jury and convicted of murder on June 18, 2025. The Defendant testified at that trial that he drove Jackson to Rice's apartment complex and, when he pulled up next to Rice as he walked down the street, Jackson jumped out of the van and shot Rice multiple times. They then loaded Rice's body into the van and drove to the Myrtle Beach Funeral Home, where they stored Rice's body until the Defendant retrieved it the next day. He wrapped Rice's body in a tarp he purchased at Lowe's Home Improvement, secured it with zip ties, drove to the Little Pee Dee River over the County line into Marion County, secured cinder blocks around the body with ratchet straps and dumped Rice's body into the river, where it remained until November 7, 2020, when it was discovered by some local <sup>trial</sup> <sub>enforcement</sub>. The Defendant admitted that it was not until December 9, 2024, that he finally took on his role in the murder.

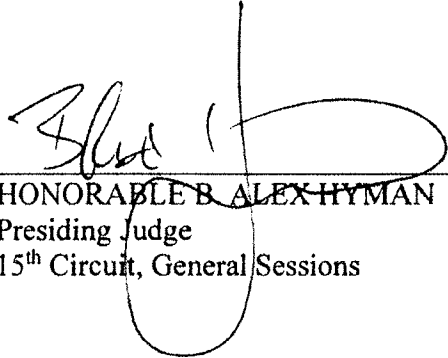
On July 14, 2025, the Defendant stood before this Court for sentencing and requested probation, a sentence that was wholly inappropriate given the facts of this case and his involvement in the murder of Greg Rice. While this Court recognized that the defendant was remorseful, by this Court's calculations, approximately 1500 days passed between the murder of Greg Rice and the Defendant's admission of what happened that night. Based on everything that was brought forth during the Defendant's guilty plea, Jackson's trial, and the Defendant's sentencing hearing, this Court sentenced the Defendant to 15 years on accessory after the fact to murder and five years on conspiracy to commit murder and ordered that the sentences were to run consecutively.

FILED  
HORRY COUNTY  
2026 MAR 21 A 8:20  
RENEE N. ELVIS  
CLERK OF COURT  
HORRY COUNTY, SC

"A trial judge is allowed broad discretion in sentencing within statutory limits. A sentence is not excessive if it is within statutory limitations and there are no facts supporting an allegation of prejudice against a defendant." *Brooks v. State*, 325 S.C. 269, 271-272, 481 S.E.2d 712, 713 (1997). The sentence imposed, while the maximum allowed, is within statutory limits. There has been no allegation of prejudice against the Defendant. This Court sees no reason to alter the sentence originally imposed.

WHEREFORE, the Motion to Reconsider Sentence is hereby DENIED.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

  
HONORABLE B. ALEX HYMAN  
Presiding Judge  
15<sup>th</sup> Circuit, General Sessions

Date: 3/23/26

FILED  
Horry County  
2026 MAR 24 A 8:20  
RENEE N. ELVIS  
CLERK OF COURT  
HORRY COUNTY, SC