



SOUTH CAROLINA COMMISSION ON INDIGENT DEFENSE

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Wanda H. Carter, Chief Appellate Defender

RECEIVED

Jun 29 2026

S.C. SUPREME COURT

June 29, 2026

Honorable Patricia A. Howard
Clerk, South Carolina Supreme Court
Post Office Box 11330
Columbia, South Carolina 29211

Re: Appellate Case 2026-001087 - Justin Jamal Lewis v. State

Dear Ms. Howard,

Please accept this letter in lieu of a return to Justin J. Lewis' pro se motion received by the Court on June 8 2026, where he has in effect requested the appointment of appellate counsel from the Office of Appellate Defense in reference to his pending PCR appeal.

Mr. Lewis was convicted of distribution of heroin per bench trial held during the September 2018 term of the Florence County General Sessions Court before Judge Thomas A. Russo, who sentenced him to imprisonment for a period of twelve years. Mr. Lewis appeared pro se at trial.

On February 21, 2019, Mr. Lewis filed a PCR application with the Florence County Clerk's Office, and thereafter a PCR hearing was held on December 19, 2019, before Judge D. Craig Brown. The PCR action was summarily dismissed by Judge Brown per Order signed on June 11, 2020, and filed on June 19, 2020. Mr. Lewis appealed Judge Brown's Order.

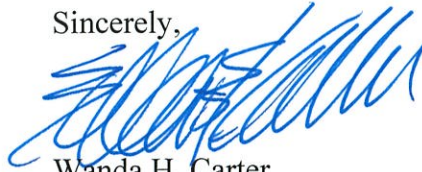
On June 14, 2023, the South Carolina Supreme Court reversed and remanded the case for a new hearing on allegations regarding pre-trial counsel's ineffectiveness as such constituted proper PCR material for review. See Lewis v. State, 439 S.C. 635, 889 S.E.2d 570 (2023). Subsequently, a PCR hearing was held on October 27, 2025, before Judge Walton J. McLeod, who ultimately signed an Order of Dismissal dated May 7, 2026, and filed on May 27, 2026. Mr. Lewis appealed Judge McLeod's Order of Dismissal.

This Court accepted the Notice of Appeal filed from Judge McLeod's Order and assigned the appellate case number above to this appeal. On June 8, 2026, this Court received Mr. Lewis' pro se motion requesting in effect appellate representation from the Office of Appellate Defense on appeal. Our Office accepts appellate representation of Mr. Lewis on his PCR appeal

pending receipt of the returned (and completed) affidavit of indigency, which was mailed to him on June 18, 2026.

I am available should any questions or inquiries arise regarding this letter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Wanda H. Carter', is written over the word 'Sincerely,'.

Wanda H. Carter
Chief Appellate Defender

WHC/sl

cc: D. Russell Barlow, Esquire