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SC Court of Appeals

December 27, 2013

South Carolina Court of Appeals  
1015 Sumter Street  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201  
Attn: Clerk of Court

In Re: South Carolina v. David Jamar Benjamin  
Indictment No. 2013-GS-09-00051, et al

Dear Madam Clerk of Court,

This letter is to inform you of the status of the pending criminal appeal in the above-captioned case.

I was contacted by the Brownstone Law Firm from Winter Park, Florida, by letter dated August 9, 2013, requesting the transcript of record so the Brownstone Law Firm could perfect an appeal in the above referenced matter. I informed them that a deposit would be required and upon completion of the transcript the balance would be due. I informed them that the balance had to be paid before the transcript would be sent to them.

The transcript was due on December 21, 2013. The transcript was completed on December 19, 2013. A phone call was made to Brownstone Law Firm letting them know that the transcript was completed. The paralegal, Ashley Baez, informed me that she needed a copy of the billing by e-mail to submit to their payroll department. I submitted the billing on December 19, 2013.

I did not hear from anyone, so I contacted Ms. Baez back on December 23, 2013, letting her know that I had not received payment. She informed me that it would take one week to get the check cut and sent to me. I told her the transcript was completed, that it was now past my due date deadline and the transcript had to be sent to comply with the South Carolina Court Rules. Ms. Baez informed me that she would try to expedite payment. I received an e-mail later that day, on December 19, 2013, stating that she was unable to expedite it, but asked me "is it possible to file an extension of time?" I informed her that it was not possible, as I had finished my work and it was ready for delivery. I did not hear anything further on December 23, 2013.

On December 26, 2013, I called the Brownstone Law Firm again to find out the status of the payment for the transcript. At that time I talked to another lady, and I didn't get her name, but I took it to be a supervisor in the law firm, informing me that they were having problems getting paid from their client, and until they could get paid from their client that I couldn't get paid. I informed her that I did not contract with their client, but I contracted with the law firm and I expected to get paid by the law firm, irregardless of their client's situation. She said I would be getting an e-mail informing me of their situation and that they would be requesting an extension of time on their end. I have not received any such e-mail to this point.

From the beginning it was made very clear to the Brownstone Law Firm that I was dealing with them strictly in doing my job and being paid for the transcript, and upon completion of the transcript the balance was due and the transcript would be delivered to them. No such payment has been made, so, therefore, the transcript is sitting in my office waiting to be sent.

I try to be very diligent in the performance of my duties as a court reporter for the State of South Carolina, and after 23 years I believe I have proven that I have been diligent in doing my duties, so I hope you understand why I am pursuing this matter so strongly.

Thank you very much for your consideration.



Michael R. Watts  
7th Circuit Court Reporter  
State of South Carolina.

cc: James Goldsmith, Jr., Attorney at Law, Brownstone Law Firm  
Paralegal Ashley Baez, Brownstone Law Firm  
Desiree Allen, S.C. Court Administration  
Wendy Keefer, Attorney at Law, Keefer & Keefer Law Firm

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