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CRIME & COURTS

U.S. Justice Department opens civil rights probe of Richland jail after deaths, attacks

By Ted Clifford

Updated November 2, 2023 7:56 PM  Gift Article



The Department of Justice and the US Attorney's Office for South Carolina ordered a review of the Sheriff Al Cannon detention centers after the death of Lason Butler in solitary confinement.

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The U.S. Department of Justice and the U.S. Attorney's Office for South Carolina

Do you know why Juneteenth is a federal holiday?

The investigations into the the Alvin S. Glenn Detention Center in Richland County and the Sheriff Al Cannon Detention Center in Charleston County were announced by the justice department Thursday

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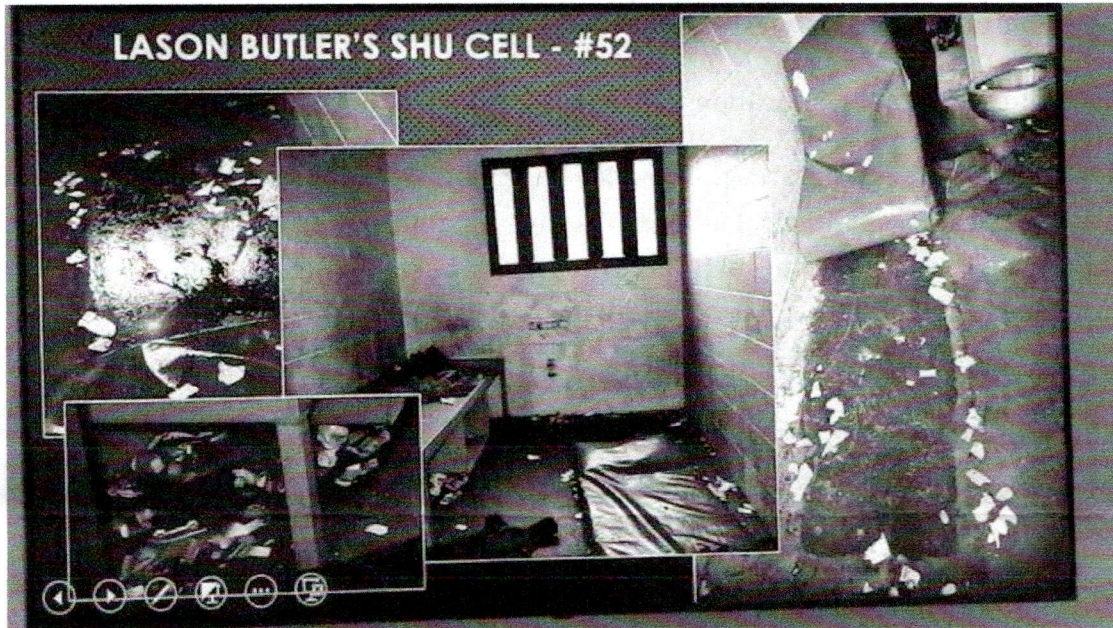
“People confined in local jails across our country do not abandon their civil and constitutional rights at the jailhouse door,” Assistant Attorney General Kristen Clarke said in a news conference. She described investigations into the jail conditions as “a top priority” for the civil rights division of the Department of Justice.

“We understand and appreciate that life may be at stake,”

The investigation into whether conditions at the jail violate comes as scrutiny has grown following deaths, attacks, escapes inside of the Richland County facility. The jail houses inmates of Columbia and Richland County, as well as inmates from Midlands and some individuals arrested on federal charges.

“Over the last 15 months, I’ve held the hands of family members who had to bury their loved ones,” said Adair Burroughs, U.S. Attorney for South Carolina. “I’ve spoken to law enforcement officers that do not feel safe entering these spaces, and I’ve met

with community advocates who are deeply concerned about what appear to be consistent constitutional failures in these facilities. Today I say, 'We hear you.'"



Images of Lason Butler's jail cell, presented during a press conference at the Strom Law Firm in Columbia on Wednesday, Aug. 3, 2022. Lason Butler died while he was incarcerated at Alvin S. Glenn Detention Center. Contributed Images Contributed Images

It is the most prominent acknowledgment to date of what many have characterized as troubled conditions inside of the jails. While the investigation into the Cannon detention center will focus on medical and mental health care, the use of solitary confinement and use of force by staff, the investigation of the Alvin S. Glenn Detention Center will examine whether the jail failed to protect incarcerated people from violence and subjected them to dangerous living conditions.



Investigators will look to see if conditions and practices at Civil Rights of Institutionalized Persons Act. The federal law gives the justice department the authority to investigate abuse and neglect in publicly run facilities. In Charleston, the Justice Department will also be looking to see whether the jail violated the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The populations of both jails are disproportionately people of color, Clarke said, and most inmates have not been convicted of any crime. The investigation into the Richland County jail was born, in part, from publicly available reporting and "credible allegations," according to the Department of Justice.

"We find significant justification to open these investigations now," Clarke said.

However, in a press conference Thursday afternoon, some Richland County officials downplayed the conditions that led to the investigation and instead portrayed the investigation as the product of legal maneuvering by attorneys who have sued the county.

"I think there is certain information, that has been provided by the media to some attorneys, that has, unfortunately, been completely wrong or incorrect," said an attorney for Richland County, Patrick Wright.

"We actually welcome them (the Department of Justice) to come in and have a third party, who is not biased, who will actually take a look at the facts and not just present information that will benefit attorneys and their law firms in a financial way."



Richland County Attorney Patrick Wright responds to a Department of Justice civil rights investigation into the Alvin S. Glenn Detention Center on Thursday, November 2, 2023. Joshua Boucher jboucher@thestate.com

But in describing the reasons for the investigation, Clarke provided a grim list of facts: Inmates lived in cells full of mold and vermin, Clarke said. Since February 2022, there have been six deaths at the Alvin S. Glenn Detention Center in addition to two alleged rapes, 16 confirmed assaults and two escapes. In May and June alone, nine incarcerated people were injured in a series of stabbings. She also referenced a riot, which took place in September, 2021.

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While Richland County officials acknowledged that the jail argued that the investigation fails to take into account work done to remedy many of the issues.

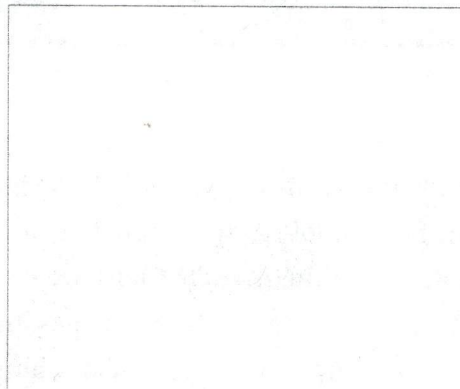
“We are dedicated to ongoing reform,” said Richland County Administrator Leonard Brown. “We have implemented a comprehensive plan that includes a significant allocation of funding by the Richland County Council. This funding is dedicated to

improving the conditions and safety measurements at Alvin S. Glenn, including our efforts to increase staffing levels and significant facility upgrades.”

In October, the Richland County Council approved over \$3 million for a new visitor center. The county has also approved salary increases for employees, renovated the kitchen, which once received a “C” rating from health inspectors and committed to replacing locks throughout the jail.

But many believe these efforts have not gone far enough.

“Time and again, Richland County has refused to act. Now it’s the Department of Justice’s turn,” wrote the Strom Law Firm, which represents the family of Lason Butler, who died in 2021 in Alvin S. Glenn. “This investigation is about more than any single incident or the four walls of Alvin S Glenn. It’s about holding the powerful accountable when they treat citizens like they’re less than human. It’s about justice.”



“Our investigations speak to the issues at the Detention Center. Sometimes money is not the answer to a problem,” said Richland County Sheriff Leon Lott. The Richland County Sheriff’s Department investigates incidents at the jail but has no oversight over the facility.

The Department of Justice is not looking to place either of the facilities under federal control, Clarke said, and she emphasized the department is looking to work cooperatively with jail staff and policymakers to make improvements.

The investigation will involve talking to all relevant stakeholders visits, Clarke said.

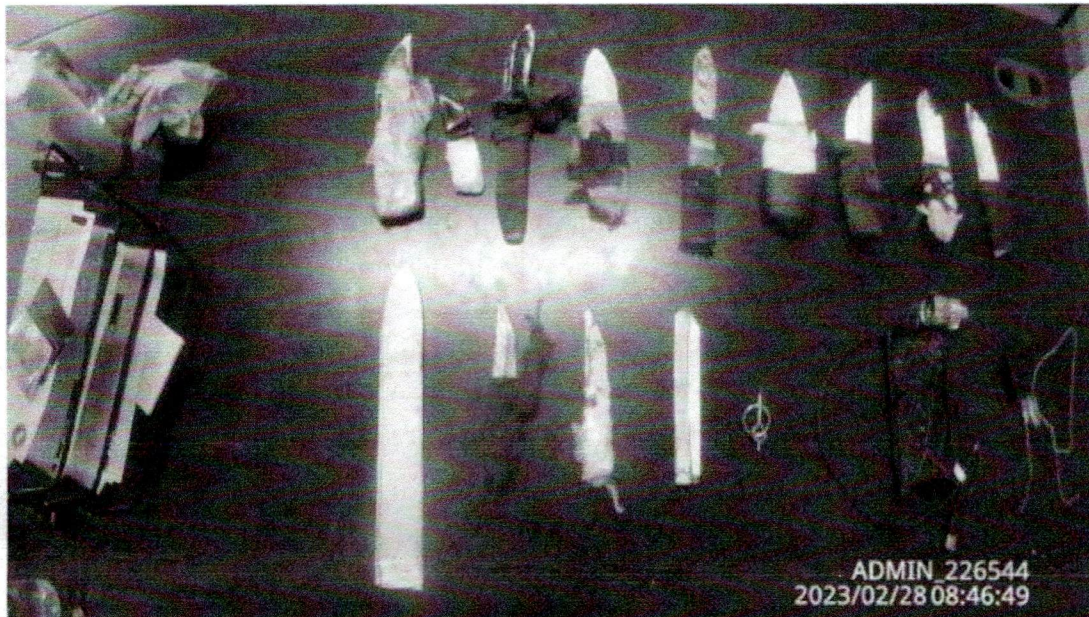
While she pledged to “limit the disruption to the running of the jail,” Clarke said “we will leave no stone unturned.”

What led to this?

The trouble at Alvin S. Glenn Detention Center did not begin overnight. Public attention has been drawn to the jail since a riot there in September 2021, which

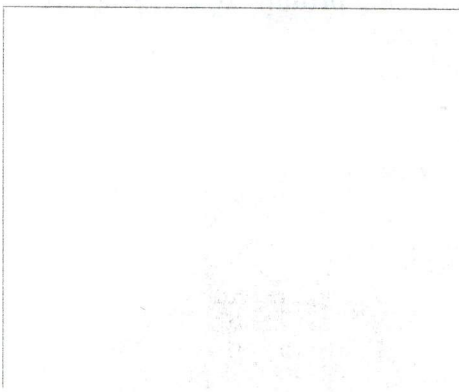
injured two guards. The uprising prompted the resignation of longtime jail director Ronaldo Myers.

The jail was effectively leaderless for almost two years. In August 2022, the jail hired and then promptly fired Tyrell Cato as director after it was revealed that he did not disclose he had been terminated from his previous job following an accusation of sexual harassment.



Improvised weapons recovered from inside of the Alvin S. Glenn Detention Center were shown during a meeting on July 29, 2023. *Richland County*

In February 2022, Lason Butler died of dehydration in solitary confinement, suffering from a serious mental health episode. His body was found with bite marks, and the Richland County Coroner's Office ruled his death a suicide.



A year later, in January 2023, Antonius Randolph was beaten to death by five other inmates who broke into his cell. An investigation by the sheriff's office found that cell doors were routinely left unlocked. While the county denied this was a practice, they admitted that inmates were able to break open the locks on their cells.

Less than a week ago, an inmate who died overnight after requesting medical help was not found by staff until the next morning, despite policy stating that staff are required to perform rounds every 30 minutes.

The bodies of inmates who died in the jail were often not found immediately, Clarke said.

More than a dozen inmates have reported being stabbed. Lawsuits described delays in medical care that led to infections and further injury. One inmate described being left alone in a cell, forced to dress his stitches with toilet paper after a stabbing.

In the first nine months of 2023, the Richland County Sheriff's Department filed 33 incident reports following calls to respond to the jail. A review of those incident reports as well as eight federal lawsuits paint a picture of a facility where stabbings, assaults and fights are common.

2a



Crayman Harvey, director the Alvin S. Glenn Detention Center, responds to a Department of Justice civil rights investigation into the center on Thursday, November 2, 2023. Joshua Boucher jboucher@thestate.com

In September, attorneys for an inmate alleged that he was raped by his cellmate. He was then returned to his cell where he was raped again, according to attorneys. While he declined to provide specifics, Wright said that investigators had determined there was no basis for the accusation

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The State contacted Richland County Sheriff's Department investigation.

While county officials Thursday acknowledged that there l at the jail, they emphasized that none of the problems wer The jail's resources have been strained by a range of national trends, from shortages of jail staff around to the rising gang violence and bond reform, county officials said.

“What are the individuals who are in the facility, who are being detained, what steps are they taking to create an environment of safety?” Brown asked during the press conference. “A lot of the incidents that occur, are the detainees, unfortunately, who create a scenario where they are creating an unsafe environment for themselves or other individuals.”

In identifying staffing of the jail as a “concern,” Clarke echoed what officials and attorneys have long pointed to as one of the major problems facing the jail. The Richland County administration has pledged significant pay raises for staff and bonuses for retention.

But the staffing problems may run deeper. At a Richland County Council meeting in April, then-interim jail Director Crayman Harvey identified a need to attract more desirable job candidates in order to change the jail’s culture. Harvey was named the new jail director in August.

Since the beginning of 2023, nine Alvin S. Glenn officers have been arrested on charges including assaulting inmates and smuggling contraband, including drugs and cellphones. One lieutenant at the jail was charged with first-degree criminal sexual conduct after he allegedly beat and then sexually assaulted a woman inside of her home.

The federal investigation comes after multiple inspections of Alvin S. Glenn by the South Carolina Department of Corrections. The department the county submit an improvement plan after a critical review found that for three years the jail had repeatedly violated chronic understaffing to unattended cells.

“While Richland County is still working on making these improvements, progress is being made,” a department spokesman told The State.

But deaths at the jail persisted, despite a pledge to invest upwards of \$12 million in the jail from county officials, leading to an unprecedented inspection in July by a team of 15 experts from the state Department of Corrections.

Another inspection of the jail by the Department of Corrections is scheduled before the end of 2023, according to a spokesperson.

This story was originally published November 2, 2023 at 12:53 PM.

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Ted Clifford *The State*    803-771-8315

Ted Clifford is the statewide accountability reporter at The State Newspaper. Formerly the crime and courts reporter, he has covered the Murdaugh saga, state and federal court, as well as criminal justice and public safety in the Midlands and across South Carolina. He is the recipient of the 2023 award for best beat reporting by the South Carolina Press Association.



CRIME & COURTS

How understaffing, mental health failures led to 'mounting crisis' in Richland County jail

By Ted Clifford

Updated August 13, 2024 4:55 PM  Gift Article



Tamara McGraw and her husband, Joshua Steven McGraw, who is incarcerated at Alvin S. like inside the county jail during a press conference.

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The breaking point for the Richland County jail was years in the making.

As early as 2008, studies commissioned by the county warned that the jail was dangerously understaffed. When the COVID pandemic hit, that breaking point arrived.

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Staff levels plummeted as inmate populations rose. From 2020 to 2023, experts found that about half the time entire housing units, which regularly AD inmate capacity, had just one officer on duty. In January, staff reportedly performed just 28 of a required 1,176 patrols.

Since 2020, reports of stabbings, weapons and contraband skyrocketed. The smell of tobacco and marijuana smoke came to pervade the facility, according to some accounts. Inmates complained of being left without working toilets or drinking water. Holes in the ceiling and faulty cell doors allowed prisoners to escape their housing areas and commit robberies and assaults.

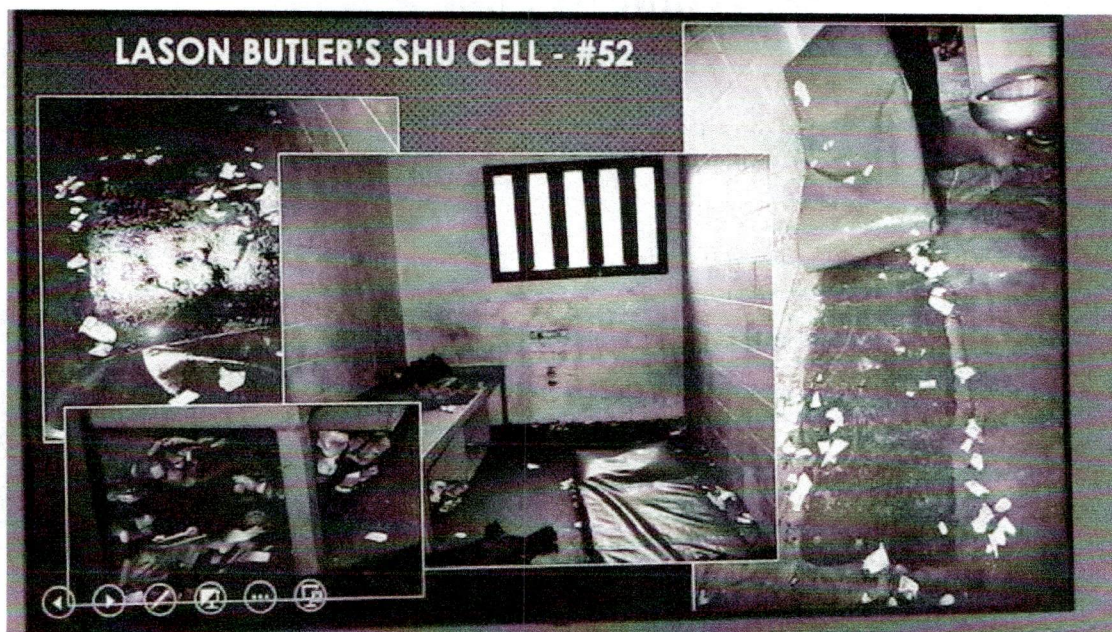


Safety concerns were so serious that in 2022, the jail's health provider declined to renew its contract.

The result, some have warned, is a crisis for inmates diagnosed with a mental illness, which make up two thirds of the jail's population.

This in-depth look inside of the Alvin S. Glenn Detention Center was revealed in court documents filed last week in the U.S. District Court for South Carolina as part of an ongoing lawsuit against Richland County. That lawsuit argues that the jail's conditions violate the constitutional rights of inmates with mental illnesses.

The filing, a 917-page motion for an injunction made by lawyers for Disability Rights South Carolina, included detailed reports from three experts who investigated the jail, along with internal emails, depositions of staff and sworn statements of inmates.



Images of Lason Butler's jail cell, presented during a press conference at the Strom Law Firm in Columbia on Wednesday, Aug. 3, 2022. Lason Butler died while he was incarcerated at Alvin S. Glenn Detention Center. Contributed Images Contributed Images

One expert, Dr. Kenneth Ray, wrote that of the more than 50 inspections he had performed nationwide while employed at the U.S. Department of Justice's National Institute of Corrections, the Richland County jail "stands out as particularly hazardous and inappropriate for the management and protection of inmates with Serious Mental Illness."

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This July, four inmates died in the jail, at least three from c **AD**

But county administrators have defended their treatment illnesses.

The detention center is not a mental health hospital, the co
"While we provide necessary mental health care, a jail is r
designed to offer the comprehensive psychotherapy and programming found in
mental health hospitals," the statement said. "This distinction is in line with
standards for jails nationwide."

The jail contracts with Freedom Behavioral Health to provide a team of 10 “qualified mental health professionals, two psychiatry providers, and a discharge planner providing 24/7 services to detainees,” according to the statement.

No inmates were being housed in cells without a working toilet and progress has also been made in renovating the jail’s facilities, the county says. Along with the kitchen, three dorms have been renovated and reopened, while ongoing repairs are being made to lighting fixtures.

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“Claims about poor living conditions at the facility are based on outdated information,” the county wrote.

Warning Signs



By the middle of 2022, safety concerns at the jail were so serious that the private health care companies contracted by the county were sounding the alarm.

A flurry of emails sent in April that year from health care provider Wellpath laid out the situation in stark terms. Staff had been assaulted and threatened by inmates. They were groped, and “unknown liquids” were thrown on them. One provider had “multiple asthma attacks” caused by smoke in the facility.



The staffing shortage meant that there was no way to get in touch with individual officers who were watching multiple dorms. “This poses a safety risk as this leaves no way to call for help in the event of an emergency,” wrote Wellpath’s CEO, in an email to members of county and jail

That same month, Wellpath, which services over 140 detention facilities across the country, decided not to renew its contract with Alvin S. Glavin.

There does not appear to be one specific cause for the deteriorating conditions at Alvin S. Glenn Detention Center. High staff vacancy rates and poor resources for an inmate population with high rates of mental illness have been persistent problems at the jail.

A 2014 study conducted by consultants Pulitzer/Bogard & Associates cautioned that that the jail had a "very high" staff vacancy rate of 13%. Additionally, the study warned of "inherent problems with the organizational structure," notably the lack of on the ground oversight from jail leadership, which limited "effective supervision of inmates and management of the facility"

"Large numbers of inmates with mental illness are straining ASGDC resources, compounding overall inmate supervision challenges." This "will only become more challenging in the coming years," the report said.



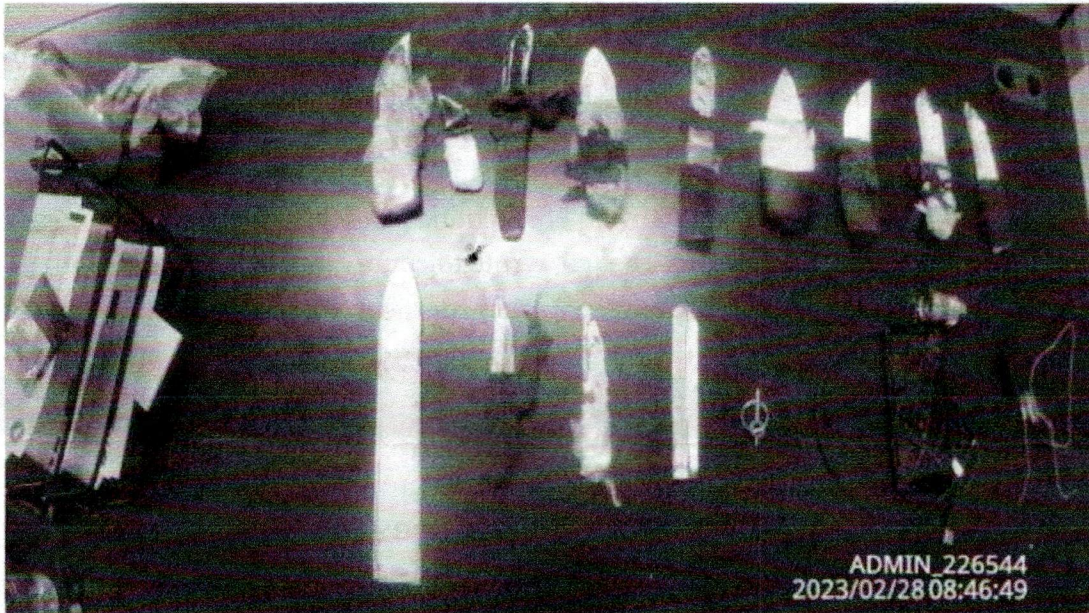
After 2020, these problems appeared to grow more severe.

In September 2021, a riot led to the resignation of the longtime director, who was out of town when inmates took over the jail. The jail would be without a permanent director for the next two years.

This Popu AD **to Memory**

The jail's population was growing while staff numbers stagnated. From 2022 to 2024, the inmate population ballooned from an average of 703 inmates to 999. In the same

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County.



Improvised weapons recovered from inside of the Alvin S. Glenn Detention Center were shown to the Richland County Council during a meeting on July 29, 2023. *Richland County*

The result appears to have been disorder. The total number of serious incidents, including the discovery of drugs and weapons as well as assaults on inmates and staff, grew from 210 in 2021 to 321 in 2023.

AD

During the same time period, the number of 911 calls to the jail rose from 750 in 2020 to 750 in 2023. Emergency calls for alcohol impairment and overdoses inside of the jail rose from 11 in 2020 to 59 in 2023.

Reported stabbings and puncture wounds exploded from 1 in 2020 to 16 in 2023. Reported inmate on inmate assaults with weapons went from none reported in 2020 to 16 in 2023. The number of weapons found in the jail increased by a factor of 6.

"These statistics, however, only begin to scratch the surface of the mounting crisis within the facility," Ray wrote in his report. "These figures are not mere numbers; they represent a clear and present escalation in violence and health-related emergencies."

In February, 2022, Lason Butler, a 27-year-old from Orangeburg, was found covered in rat bites, dead of dehydration after suffering an episode of psychosis. His death was ruled a homicide.

That June, a representative of Advanced Correctional Healthcare Inc., which currently provides health care for the jail, wrote to county and jail leadership that they were pulling their nurses out of the facility for the evening when it was discovered that there would only be one officer on duty.

Retirees on SS Are Due a Large Surprise This Wednesday

"There is a serious safety risk in the facility that has risen to a dangerous situation there. The shortage of correctional staff is dangerous not only to the jail staff and inmates but also to the nurses," the representative wrote.

But in 2023, the decision was made to freeze hiring for 65 security and custody staff in order to increase officer salaries and hire additional management staff. This was "an extraordinarily dangerous decision," Ray wrote in his report, later adding, "The psychological stress on inmates due to insufficient oversight can also lead to increased incidents of self-harm and suicide."

A mental health crisis

LaRoyal Harley spent three stints inside the Alvin S. Glenn third ended in tragedy.

Although Harley was not identified in last week's filing, Th details with public reporting about her. Harley's was just o..... multiple failures contributed to the death of an inmate.

After Harley was jailed in Alvin S. Glenn in August 2022 for aggravated assault, mental health providers noted that she struggled with impulse control, anger issues, insomnia, racing thoughts and reliving her crime. While she was not on medication, she requested psychiatric services.

In a report from October 2022, Harley was classified as MH-1, "mental health need, not serious." Records submitted to the court do not indicate what treatment Harley received, if any.

There is "minimal to no behavioral health treatment" at the jail, wrote Nichole Johnson, a forensic psychiatrist who inspected Alvin S. Glenn.

Inmates with mental health needs are typically only seen by a provider once every 30 days, according to court filings. Given the rotating patient population, providers are assigned to dorms, not to specific inmates, meaning there is no set caseload for providers.

In a deposition included in the court filings, the jail's mental health director stated "clinicians do not engage in therapy as there is not sufficient time to address issues which may arise," according to filings.

Retirees o AD
Surprise T

The Consumer Gu

Other than medication, treatment consisted largely of being given handouts on "coping skills" and "coloring pages," Johnson wrote.

In June 2023, Harley was placed on suicide watch after staff overheard her on the phone telling her mom that she wanted to die, according to records filed with the court. A box for "mentally ill and dangerous to herself" was checked on one form dated June 28, 2023.

But after she was placed on suicide watch, mental health staff noted that Harley said she had no thoughts of self harm. Instead, she told staff she wanted to die because no one would pay her bond, according to records.

Suicide watch and assessment at Alvin S. Glenn are "inadequate," Johnson wrote in her report. Assessments for suicide risk were conducted with no privacy, in front of other inmates. Guards also failed to check on inmates who were on suicide watch.

While checks on inmates on suicide watch are meant to be performed at irregular five minute intervals, per jail policy, Johnson wrote that she "reviewed numerous suicide logs and there were hours unaccounted for, watches done on exact intervals, or done in longer intervals than required, i.e. a watch completed 30 minutes apart."

Doctors Identify 10 Popular Medications Now Linked to Memory Decline (See the List)

Harley was released from the jail later in 2023. She was arrested again later that year in connection to a shooting at a club and released on bond, in early January 2024.

In February, Harley was arrested and charged with possession of a weapon during a violent crime.

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When she returned to the jail, Harley was placed on a 10-1 "a status normally assigned to individuals at suicide risk," Disability Rights South Carolina, a group that advocates for Carolinians with disabilities.

Experts hired by Disability Rights' lawyers were critical of One report in the court filing found that in January 2024, 47 inmates were crammed into just 12 intake cells, with no differentiation for mental health classification.

This "falls short of industry standards," wrote Emmitt Sparkman, former deputy commissioner of institutions for the Mississippi Department of Corrections.

Retirees on SS Are Due a Large Surprise This Wednesday

On March 2, three days after she arrived, other inmates reported that Harley was distraught after a judge denied her bond.

"She cried, screamed... you could tell she needed some type of mental evaluation," according to a sworn statement from an inmate who knew Harley from a previous stay in jail. The two women prayed together, the inmate wrote, but their moment of peace was disrupted when Harley got in a fight with another inmate who spit on her.

There were no officers on the unit to break up the fight so the two women were eventually separated by other inmates, according to the statement. A guard later moved Harley to a lockdown unit, Juliet, without consulting mental health professionals.

When Harley was brought to Juliet, the inmate could hear her speaking to someone on one of the tablets issued to inmates, according to a sworn statement from that inmate.

Around 4:30 p.m., guards let the inmates out for recreation. They were returned to their cells for dinner, but no guards came to the cell block until almost 11 p.m., the inmate wrote. It was silent on the cell block, until she heard the sound of the light fixture falling.

AD

At 10:34 p.m., a nurse delivering medication discovered Harley. She had hung herself with sheets tied to an exposed light fixture.

"She was overwhelmed," Richland County Coroner Naida Rutherford told TV station WLTX shortly after Harley's death. "And this was at her own hand. This was not something that the jail did that put her in danger."

In their statement, the county wrote, "we want to emphasize that this individual had specifically denied any suicidal thoughts or tendencies and had no history of mental health issues or treatment."

Those in the jail don't agree with Rutherford's assessment.

"Nobody checked on us," the inmate in the cell next to Harley wrote in her statement. "Light fixtures are exposed with wire hanging [and this] has resulted in the death of a 22 year old girl."

This story was originally published July 30, 2024 at 6:00 AM.

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August 13, 2024

AD

Ted Clifford The State    803-771-8315

Ted Clifford is the statewide accountability reporter at The State Newspaper. Formerly th covered the Murdaugh saga, state and federal court, as well as criminal justice and publi South Carolina. He is the recipient of the 2023 award for best beat reporting by the Souti

SOUTH CAROLINA (CHANGE) > | JUNE 24, 2026



A Department of Justice logo is shown on a podium during a news conference about Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corp., Thursday, Sept. 30, 2010, in Philadelphia. (AP Photo/Matt Slocum)

NEWS

Federal report finds S.C. jail violates Constitution

BY ELIZABETH MARTINEZ | SOUTH CAROLINA
PUBLISHED 1:58 PM ET JAN. 15, 2025

COLUMBIA, S.C. — The United States Justice Department released findings that accuse the Alvin S. Glenn Detention Center (ASGDC) of violating the U.S. Constitution.

Most people in the jail have not been convicted of any crime — they are awaiting hearings or trial dates. They have a right to be free of violence, threats and sexual assault," said Assistant Attorney General Kristen Clarke of the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division. "The Jail has a constitutional duty to protect people in its care from the horrific violations we uncovered here."

Investigators also confirmed there were at least 60 stabbings at the detention center in 2023 alone.

"ASGDC violates the Eighth and Fourteenth Amendments of the United States Constitution by failing to protect incarcerated people from an unreasonable risk of violence and harm from other incarcerated people," officials wrote in the report.

The Eighth and Fourteenth Amendments impose "certain basic duties on prison officials," including taking "reasonable measures to guarantee the safety" of convicted individuals and detainees.

Federal officials report they are committed to working with Richland County and the detention center toward reform.

In response to the report, Richland County officials say they disagree with the department's findings. "Many facts as presented in the report are outdated and do not reflect current conditions at the facility today. We are unwavering in our confidence in the significant changes we've implemented," officials wrote in their release.

According to Richland County, recent renovations at the facility have resulted in the number of assaults with a weapon going down by 82 percent in just one year.

"Over the coming days, the County and our legal team will work with the Department of Justice to correct the department's misguided conclusions and to carefully consider all appropriate recommendations as we continue to enhance the functionality of the facility." Said Richland County officials.

Alvin S. Glenn Detention Center is funded and operated by Richland County and currently houses 965 people.

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(/subscribe/digital/) South Carolina DOC Investigates Jail After 30 Detainee Injuries, Two Escapes and Five Guard Arrests

Loaded on NOV. 15, 2023 published in Prison Legal News November, 2023 (/news/issue/34/11/), page 39
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 Location: South Carolina (/search/?selected_facets=locations:1515).

According to a report by the Charleston Post & Courier on July 31, 2023, the South Carolina Department of Corrections (DOC) had dispatched a team to inspect the Richland County jail, after a series of stabbings, escapes and contraband smuggling by guards.

 The Alvin S. Glenn Detention Center has been under scrutiny by state authorities for several months, following a routine inspection in October 2022 that uncovered more than a dozen violations of minimum jail standards. In January 2023, DOC addressed a letter to County Council Chairman Overture Walker, urging the county to devise a remediation plan. The letter also cautioned that the state might step in and close the jail if problems persisted.

In response, county officials presented a comprehensive plan to DOC in April 2023, which included replacing jail locks and hiring a new director, along with extensive remodeling. Despite these efforts, problems continued to plague the jail. From January 1 to July 17, 2023, at least 30 detainees suffered injuries classified by the Sheriff's department as aggravated assaults – many involving contraband weapons.

There have also been escape attempts. On July 17, 2023, an unnamed detainee stacked chairs and climbed through a hole in the ceiling; his escape was thwarted when he was captured elsewhere in the building. Less than a week earlier, on July 11, 2023, detainee Charles Kenneth Meador, 38, escaped and remained on the run five hours before recapture. On May 9, 2023, detainee Latoya Rivers, 31, turned herself in, one day after walking away from a hospital where she'd been taken from the jail for evaluation.

Errant guards have made news, too. On June 29, 2023, Brient Sapp, 25, was arrested and charged with assaulting an unnamed 36-year-old detainee, allegedly in retaliation for spitting on the guard. Another guard, Martavius Smith, 25, was arrested on April 7, 2023, and charged with assaulting another unnamed detainee two days earlier in the intake area, "where Smith struck the detainee in

the face with a closed fist,” the Sheriff’s department said. That followed arrests for bribery and contraband smuggling of three other guards: Lynntesha Barr, 30, on February 3, 2023; Nakia Smith, 24, on February 1, 2023; and Casey Weirich, 30, on January 25, 2023.

Reacting to this wave of lawlessness, DOC mobilized a team of 15 experts to assess the jail’s security, maintenance, staffing, policy and leadership. The team’s findings are slated for report later in 2023, according to DOC spokesperson Chrysti Shain. Incredibly, the two-day inspection was the first ever undertaken by the state agency, even though it is responsible for overseeing jails statewide.

The jail has continued to report problems since the state investigation was launched. An unidentified 31-year-old detainee was reportedly stabbed by three fellow detainees on September 5, 2023. Two other detainees reported they were sexually assaulted, one by a cellmate on August 26, 2023, and the other allegedly gang-raped by two fellow detainees on September 1, 2023.

One 21-year-old detainee at the jail said that starting August 26, 2023, he was sexually assaulted at least two different times by four different attackers, including a guard. In February 2023, an employee of the law firm representing the 21-year-old man sent a letter to the U.S. Department of Justice requesting a federal investigation into the detention center. That brings the total number of detainee assaults to 33 in just over nine months. Three of the incidents remain under investigation.

County Administrator Leonardo Brown downplayed the investigation, saying DOC’s visit should be considered “an offer for technical assistance” rather than a formal inspection, pointing to its collaborative scheduling for proof. But state officials said their concerns were amplified by the significant number of problems at the jail, especially the rise in aggravated assaults: Sheriff’s department data indicated there were only 26 during the same period in 2022, and just five in 2021. Furthermore, three detainees have died in 2023, with one January death investigated as a murder. No cause has yet been released for the other two deaths.

DOC sent a letter on August 28, 2023, outlining the problems investigators uncovered and giving the county a month to respond. Meanwhile Brown said he is primarily focused on implementing long-term fixes outlined in the plan that the County presented to DOC back in April 2023. The jail kitchen has already been remodeled, and cell renovation – including new locks – is currently in progress. However, these improvements are expected to take up to a year to complete.

Meanwhile Brown promoted interim jail Director Crayman Harvey to take the job permanently in April 2023. Previous Director Tyrell Cato was fired in September 2022 for failing to disclose sexual misconduct allegations from his previous job. Cato is suing the county for wrongful dismissal, arguing that he informed an assistant administrator about the allegations. See: Cato v. Richland Cty., S. Car. Comm. Pleas (Richland Cty.), Case No. 2023CP4001369.

Additional sources: Charleston Post & Courier, WYFF

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT BY DEFENDANT

I understand that if I violate any condition of this Order, a warrant for my arrest will be issued.

I understand and have been informed that I have a right and obligation to be present at trial and should I fail to attend the court, the trial will proceed in my absence.

It has been explained to me that if I fail to appear before the court as required, a warrant for my arrest will be issued.

ADDRESS
Columbia, SC 29210-3752
CITY/STATE/ZIP
TELEPHONE
SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER
DRIVER'S LICENSE OR ID NUMBER
SIGNATURE OF DEFENDANT
DATE
ATTORNEY REPRESENTING ACCUSED (IF KNOWN)

SPECIAL CONDITIONS OF RELEASE

a. ☐ Placement in custody. The defendant is placed in the custody of: _____
NAME OF PERSON OR ORGANIZATION

ADDRESS CITY/STATE ZIP TELEPHONE
who agrees (1) to supervise the defendant as set forth by the court, (2) to use every effort to assure the appearance of the defendant at all scheduled hearings before the court, and (3) to notify the court immediately in the event the defendant violates any conditions of his release or disappears.

SIGNATURE OF CUSTODIAN (IF APPROVED)

DATE

b. ☐ Restrictions on Travel, Association or Residence. The defendant will comply with each of the following conditions: _____

c. ☐ Part-time Release. The defendant will be released from custody from _____ o'clock, _____ to _____ o'clock, _____
on _____ on condition that he return to the custody of _____
DATE(S) NAME OF PERSON OR ORGANIZATION
at _____ LOCATION as designated.

d. ☒ Other conditions. The defendant will comply with the following other conditions of release:
Def must not possess firearms; Not to be away from residence except for work, legal, church or medical reasons; 8pm-7:00am must be at residence

APPEARANCE RECOGNIZANCE WITH SURETY

On the 6 day of April, 2022, personally appeared before the undersigned judge the surety named below who acknowledged himself indebted to the State of South Carolina, in the sum of \$ 135,000.00 such sum to be levied on his real and personal property for the use of the State, should named defendant fail in performing the conditions of this Order.

The surety, being duly sworn, says that he is a resident and free holder within the State and is worth the sum acknowledged and underwritten herein, over all his debts and liabilities, and exclusive of property exempt from execution.

NAME OF SURETY BONDSMAN COMPANY TELEPHONE
ADDRESS OF SURETY BONDSMAN
CITY/STATE/ZIP
NAME OF INSURANCE COMPANY
ADDRESS OF INSURANCE COMPANY
CITY/STATE/ZIP

SIGNATURE OF SURETY BONDSMAN

SIGNATURE OF JUDGE

DATE

My commission expires January 27, 2030

1B
ORIGINAL

**BAIL PROCEEDING
FORM II**

Criminal Charging Document No. 8

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF Lexington

IN THE General Sessions

2022 APR 13 PM 10:30

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

ORDER SPECIFYING METHODS AND CONDITIONS OF RELEASE

v.

DC Helrigel, Robert Joseph Jr
NAME OF DEFENDANT

LISA M. COMER
CLERK OF COURT
LEXINGTON SC

Offense Charged: Weapons / Unlawful carrying of pistol (2022A3210200916); Drugs / Poss. of other controlled sub. in Sched. I to V - 1st offense (2022A3210200913); Drugs / MDP, Narcotic drugs in Sch. I(b) & (c), LSD, and Sched. II - 1st offense (2022A3210200914); Drugs / Manuf. poss. of other sub. in Sch. I, II, III or IV (1/10/2022) or analogue, w.i.t.d. - 2nd offense (2022A3210200912); Drugs / Trafficking in meth. or cocaine base - 400 g or more (Felony, 25Y to 30Y) (2022A3210200911); Weapons / Poss. weapon during violent crime, if not also sentenced to life without parole or death (2022A3210200915)

At a bail proceeding conducted by the undersigned judge, for the defendant named above, it was determined by the court (check one or both):

- ☒ The release of the defendant on recognizance will not reasonably assure his appearance as required.
☒ The release of the defendant on recognizance will result in an unreasonable danger to the community.

This determination was based upon the following findings of fact: _____

Nature of Circumstances of Offense: Def has an ext crim history

[Considerations: Nature and Circumstances of the offense charged, the defendant's family ties, employment, financial resources, character and mental condition, the length of his residence in the community, his record of convictions, and any record of flight to avoid prosecution or failure to appear at other court proceedings.]

THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED:

- That the above named defendant be released from custody on the condition that he will personally appear before the designated court at the place, date and time required to answer the charge made against him and do what shall be ordered by the court and not depart the State without the permission of the court and be of good behavior.
- That the above named defendant be released from custody provided as follows (check all that apply):

CASH IN LIEU OF BOND

☐ The defendant, acknowledges himself to be indebted to the State of South Carolina in the sum of \$ _____ to secure his release from custody. Should the defendant fail to comply with all terms and conditions of this Order, this sum of money is subject to being forfeited to the State.

CASH PERCENTAGE IN LIEU OF BOND

☐ The defendant, acknowledging himself to be indebted to the State of South Carolina in the full amount of \$ _____, his release to be obtained by payment to the court of _____ % (not to exceed 10%) of the full amount of the bond, deposits \$ _____ to secure his release from custody. Should the defendant fail to perform the conditions of this Order, the full amount shall be levied on his real and personal property for the use of the state.

APPEARANCE RECOGNIZANCE WITH SURETY

☐ The defendant will provide good and sufficient surety approved by the court, in the form hereinafter set forth in this Order, acknowledging an indebtedness to the State in the amount of \$ _____

3. That the defendant shall appear at (check one):

☒ the term of COURT OF GENERAL SESSIONS beginning on June 09, 2022 at 9:00 o'clock, A.M. at General Sessions - Mark H. Westbrook Judicial Center/205 East Main Street/Lexington, SC 29072 / (803) 785-8212 and remain there throughout that term of court. If no disposition is made during that term, the defendant shall appear and remain throughout each succeeding term of court until final disposition is made of his case, unless otherwise ordered by the court.

☐ the session of ☐ MAGISTRATE COURT ☐ MUNICIPAL COURT beginning on _____ at _____ o'clock, _____ at _____
If no final disposition is made during that session, the defendant shall appear at such other times and places as ordered by the court.

Bond Amount(s) \$115,000.00 (CS) or \$115,000.00 (SB)

135,000

135,000

INITIALS OF DEFENDANT

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4. That the defendant will notify the court promptly if he changes his address from the one contained in this order and he will comply with those conditions described hereinafter in the Order.

SIGNATURE OF JUDGE

04/04/2022

DATE

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**STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF LEXINGTON**

**Robert Williams Sr.
PO Box 39
Lexington, SC 29071**

SUMMARY COURT SUMMONS

You are hereby summoned to be and appear personally in the

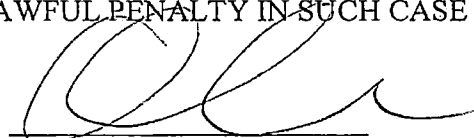
**Preliminary Hearing Court
139 East Main Street
Lexington, SC 29072**

on **May 17, 2022 at 10:30 AM** to serve as a defendant/defense counsel/witness in a Preliminary Hearing in the case of **The State vs. Robert Joseph Helrigel Jr.**

Case number(s): 2022A3210200911 - 16

Offense(s): Drugs (4 Charges) / Weapons (2 Charges)

HEREIN FAIL NOT, ON PAIN OF FORFEITING THE LAWFUL PENALTY IN SUCH CASE MADE AND PROVIDED.


Preliminary Hearing Court

**Preliminary Hearing Court
139 East Main Street
Lexington, SC 29072
Phone: (803) 785-2520
Fax: (803) 785-2678**

April 22, 2022

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E2a e2

WITNESSES

Lexington County Sheriffs Department

Nicholas B Mcmillin

Law Enforcement Case #: 22006746

KO

ARREST WARRANT NUMBER

2022A3210200911

ACTION OF GRAND JURY

TRUE BILL

Foreperson of Grand Jury

Date:

VERDICT

Foreperson of Petit Jury

Date:

DOCKET NO. 2022GS3202541

The State of South Carolina

County of Lexington

COURT OF GENERAL SESSIONS

AUGUST TERM 2022

THE STATE

vs.

Robert Joseph Helrigel Jr

CDR #: 0370

Indictment for

Trafficking Methamphetamine

§ 44-53-0375(C)(5)

S.R. Hubbard III, SOLICITOR

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA)
)
COUNTY OF LEXINGTON)
)

INDICTMENT FOR
Trafficking Methamphetamine

§ 44-53-0375(C)(5)

At a Court of General Sessions, convened in August of 2022, the Grand Jurors of Lexington County present upon their oath:

That **Robert Joseph Helrigel Jr** did in Lexington County, South Carolina on or about April 4, 2022, knowingly and intentionally, willfully and unlawfully sell, cultivate, manufacture, deliver, purchase, or bring into this State, or did provide financial assistance or otherwise, aid, abet, attempt, or conspire to sell, manufacture, cultivate, deliver, purchase, or bring into this State, or was knowingly and intentionally in actual or constructive possession of or did knowingly and intentionally attempt to become in actual or constructive possession of methamphetamine, a controlled substance under provisions of § 44-53-110, et. Seq. Code of Laws of South Carolina 1976, as amended, in a quantity of four hundred (400) grams or more, in violation of § 44-53-375 (c)(5), Code of Laws of South Carolina, 1976, as amended.

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


ASSISTANT SOLICITOR

E2⁶ e2

WITNESSES

Lexington County Sheriffs Department

Nicholas B Mcmillin

Law Enforcement Case #: 22006746

KO

ARREST WARRANT NUMBER

2022A3210200915

DOCKET NO. 2022GS3202544

The State of South Carolina

County of Lexington

COURT OF GENERAL SESSIONS

AUGUST TERM 2022

THE STATE

vs.

Robert Joseph Helrigel Jr

ACTION OF GRAND JURY

TRUE BILL

Foreperson of Grand Jury

Date: 8.8.22

VERDICT

CDR #: 0549

Indictment for

Possession of a Weapon during the
Commission of a Violent Crime

§ 16-23-0490

Foreperson of Petit Jury

Date:

S.R. Hubbard III, SOLICITOR

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

COUNTY OF LEXINGTON

)
)
)
)

INDICTMENT FOR

Possession of a Weapon during the Commission
of a Violent Crime

§ 16-23-0490

At a Court of General Sessions, convened in August of 2022, the Grand Jurors of Lexington County present upon their oath:

That Robert Joseph Helrigel Jr did in Lexington County, South Carolina on or about April 4, 2022 knowingly and willfully, possess a firearm, during the commission of a violent crime or attempt to commit a violent crime, to wit: trafficking methamphetamine such weapon described as a Kel-Tec Sub 2000 and/or Glock 22 pistol in violation of § 16-23-490 of the Code of Laws of South Carolina, 1976, as amended.

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


ASSISTANT SOLICITOR

E2c e2

WITNESSES

Lexington County Sheriffs Department

Nicholas B Mcmillin

Law Enforcement Case #: 22006746

KO

ARREST WARRANT NUMBER

2022A3210200914

ACTION OF GRAND JURY

TRUE BILL

Foreperson of Grand Jury
Date:

Joe H
8822

VERDICT

Foreperson of Petit Jury
Date:

DOCKET NO. 2022GS3202543

The State of South Carolina

County of Lexington

COURT OF GENERAL SESSIONS

AUGUST TERM 2022

THE STATE

vs.

Robert Joseph Helrigel Jr

CDR #: 0183

Indictment for

Possession with Intent to Distribute
Fentanyl

§ 44-53-0370(b)(1)

S.R. Hubbard III, SOLICITOR

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA)
)
COUNTY OF LEXINGTON)
)

INDICTMENT FOR
Possession with Intent to Distribute Fentanyl
§ 44-53-0370(b)(1)

At a Court of General Sessions, convened in August of 2022, the Grand Jurors of Lexington County present upon their oath:

That Robert Joseph Helrigel Jr did in Lexington County, South Carolina on or about April 4, 2022, knowingly and intentionally, willfully and unlawfully sell, distribute, cultivate, manufacture, deliver, purchase, or bring into this State, or did provide financial assistance or otherwise, aid, abet, attempt, or conspire to sell, manufacture, cultivate, deliver, purchase, or bring into this State, possess with intent to distribute or was knowingly and intentionally in actual or constructive possession of or did knowingly and intentionally attempt to become in actual or constructive possession of a control substance classified in Schedule II, to wit : fentanyl, a controlled substance under provisions of § 44-53-110, et. Seq. Code of Laws of South Carolina 1976, as amended, in violation of § 44-53-370(b)(1), Code of Laws of South Carolina, 1976, as amended.

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


ASSISTANT SOLICITOR