

THE STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
In The Court of Appeals
APPEAL FROM GREENVILLE COUNTY
Court of General Sessions

Patrick C. Fant, III, Circuit Court Judge

Appellate Case No. 2025-000367

The State of South Carolina

Respondent,

v.

Zachary David Hughes

Appellant

STATUS REPORT

On July 21, 2026, this Court granted the Appellant's Motion to Stay the Appeal and Remand to Circuit Court. This Court's order also mandated that counsel for Appellant provide the Court with written status updates every thirty days. Pursuant to this Court's Order, counsel for Appellant provides this Court with its second status report, which is intended as a summary of significant activities and/or developments which have occurred within the last 30 days.

In the last 30 days, counsel for Appellant and/or members of the defense team have:

- Retained the services of a former federal special agent to assist with their investigation in connection with the Appellant's forthcoming motion for new trial;
- Communicated with the Assistant Attorney General who prosecuted Bradley Post (AAG), the former fiancé of Christina Parcell, to arrange an interview to learn more about what the Attorney General's Office and the 13th Circuit Solicitor's Office knew

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about the child pornography that demonstrated Parcell's abuse of her own child and when they knew it;

- Communicated with two Greenville County Sheriff's Office (GCSO) deputies who counsel for Appellant believe have important information about what the prosecution team in *State v. Zachary Hughes* knew about the child pornography that demonstrated Parcell's abuse of her own child and when they knew it;
- Communicated with and interviewed an Assistant Solicitor (AS) from the 13th Circuit Solicitor's Office who actually participated in the trial of Mr. Hughes;
- Communicated with a former Assistant Solicitor (FAS) from the 13th Circuit Solicitor's Office who prosecuted a case connected with the Appellant's case and who had access to discovery that included the child pornography that demonstrated Parcell abused her own child;
- Moved the circuit court for the disqualification of the 13th Circuit Solicitor's Office in participating in any proceedings pursuant to this Court's remand; and
- Visited the Appellant at Lieber Correctional Institution to update him on the status of the investigation and consult with him about next steps.

Significant developments which have occurred in the last 30 days include but are not limited to:

- On August 12, 2026, the AAG emailed counsel for Appellant and indicated that she had not received any additional information from law enforcement in the Bradley Post case after March of 2022, and she mailed her "full case file" to the 13th Circuit Solicitor's Office ("minus CSAM/forensic reports") both in March of 2022 and April of 2024. The AAG also stated in writing that her superiors would not allow her to meet with counsel for Appellant for an interview;

- On August 14, 2026, the trial court communicated with the parties to inform them that the Chief Administrative Judge for the 13th Circuit would be presiding over the remand proceedings, and he would not;
- On August 14, 2026, counsel for Appellant and the former, federal special agent interviewed the AS. During the interview, the AS stated, in pertinent part, that
 - o he and co-counsel collaborated in the drafting of the pleadings the State filed leading up to trial in 2024 and 2025;
 - o he and co-counsel had actually viewed images depicting Parcell and her child in the nude as early as August or September of 2024, as early as five or six months before the Appellant's trial. The AS specifically acknowledged that they had seen at least one video that depicted Parcell's child in the nude and Parcell walking out from behind the camera and also appearing nude with her child in the video;
 - o the AS also, both on his own and in response to questioning by counsel for Appellant, provided a multi-pronged rationalization for why the State characterized counsel for Appellant's assertions related to the child pornography and Parcell's participation in the abuse as "unfounded," "wholly unsubstantiated," and otherwise. The AS suggested, in part, that it was impossible to know the full context associated with the pornographic images because Parcell was no longer alive to be questioned;
 - o the AS told counsel for Appellant that, in collaboration with his co-counsel, he

drafted a trial brief¹ which the State submitted to the trial court *ex parte* shortly before the trial.² The AS stated that the State acknowledged in the trial brief that images containing Parcell and her child in the nude existed. According to the AS, however, the State also mentioned in connection with these images that the child had failed to authenticate them when asked, and, without the ability to question Parcell it would be difficult to eliminate the possibility that Parcell was coerced and/or a victim of sex trafficking;³ and

- The AS stated that he would characterize counsel for Appellant’s assertions in connection with the child pornography in the same way if he had to do it again (“unfounded,” etc.).
- On August 17, 2026, the FAS informed counsel for Appellant that he would be willing to allow counsel for Appellant to interview him, but he wanted counsel for Appellant to communicate with the FAS’s lawyer to schedule the interview; and
- As of the filing of this status report, the two GCSO deputies with whom counsel for Appellant have communicated have neither acknowledged receipt of the request nor agreed to an interview. On August 21, 2026, counsel for the Appellant contacted the point of contact at the GCSO for the service of subpoenas. The point of contact agreed

1 During the interview, counsel for Appellant requested a copy of the trial brief, and the AS and Deputy Solicitor indicated that they would consider providing a copy to counsel for Appellant. As of the filing of this status report, counsel for Appellant have not received a copy.

2 Counsel for Appellant requested permission from the trial court to allow the parties to submit trial briefs *ex parte*, and the trial court granted the request. Counsel for the Appellant also submitted *ex parte* their own trial brief to the trial court shortly before the trial, and it has been designated as part of the record on appeal.

3 Counsel for Appellant have been unable to locate any evidence that Parcell was coerced or a victim of sex trafficking, and the AAG’s factual basis in Post’s guilty plea does not state nor suggest any concerns the State had about Parcell being coerced or a victim of sex trafficking.

to forward the request to the deputies but stated “I can not (sic) force them to respond.”

Over the next 30 days, counsel for Appellant plan to interview the FAS and other witnesses who may have important and relevant information, they anticipate having a more crystallized view of the theories they will pursue in a motion for new trial, and they hope to be able to provide this Court with more information related to possible filing and/or hearing dates for the motion for new trial.

Respectfully submitted,

s/Andrew B. Moorman, Sr.
s/Mark Moyer
Andrew B. Moorman, Sr. (SC Bar # 69670)
Mark Moyer (SC Bar # 64155)
Moyer Law Firm, LLC
12 Whitsett Street
Greenville, South Carolina 29601
(864) 775-5800 (Moorman)
(864) 775-5811 (Moyer)
andy@andymoormanlaw.com
mark@markmoyerlaw.com
Attorneys for Appellant

OTHER COUNSEL OF RECORD:

Melody Brown, Esquire
Assistant Attorney General
P.O. Box 11549
Columbia, South Carolina 29211
mbrown@scag.gov

Cindy S. Crick Esquire
Greenville County Solicitor's Office
305 East North Street
Greenville, South Carolina 29601
ccrick@greenvillecounty.org

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PROOF OF SERVICE

I certify that on this, the 21st day of August, 2026, Appellant's Second Status Report was served on the Thirteenth Circuit Solicitor's Office and the South Carolina Attorney General's Office by email and/or US Mail.

Respectfully submitted,

s/Andrew B. Moorman, Sr.

Andrew B. Moorman, Sr. (SC Bar # 69670)

Mark Moyer (SC Bar # 64155)

Moyer Law Firm, LLC

12 Whitsett Street

Greenville, South Carolina 29601

(864) 775-5800 (Moorman)

(864) 775-5811 (Moyer)

andy@andymoormanlaw.com

mark@markmoyerlaw.com

OTHER COUNSEL OF RECORD:

Melody Brown, Esquire
Sanders Linker, Esquire
Assistant Attorney General
P.O. Box 11549
Columbia, South Carolina 29211
mbrown@scag.gov
paullinker@scag.gov

Cindy S. Crick Esquire
Greenville County Solicitor's Office
305 East North Street
Greenville, South Carolina 29601
ccrick@greenvillecounty.org

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