ELECTRONICALLY FILED - 2026 Jul 23 3:47 PM - LAURENS - COMMON PLEAS - CASE#2024CP3000353

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA	)	
	)	IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS
COUNTY OF LAURENS	)	Case No. 2024-CP-30-00353

Deborah S. Lyda,	)	
	)	
Plaintiff(s),	)	ORDER
vs.	)	
	)	
Rhonda Sweat individually and as Pesonal Representative of the Estate of Dale Andrew Sweat,	)	
	)	
	)	
Defendant(s).	)	

This matter is before the Court on the motion of the Defendant for a new trial, to amend findings and to alter or amend the judgment previously rendered.

Defendant has made several agruments in her Memorandum in support of her motions which will be discussed herewith.

I. Defendant points out that the certificate of title issued by the South Carolina DMV is prima facie evidence of the facts appearing in it but admits that this is a rebuttable presumption. This Court finds that the fraudulent and/or forged documentation, being the Bill of Sale (Plaintiff's Exhibit # 4), which formed the basis for the issuance by the DMV of its certificate is sufficient evidence to overcome the presumption of the validity of title set forth in the certificate. Would Defendant contend that a forged deed in a chain of title would convey any interest to the recipient of such a deed? The fact that subsequent deeds appear valid and accurate does not avail one claiming ownership derived through a forged deed. The situation in the instant case is similar; although Plaintiff's exhibits 3 & 5 appear straightforward and reliable, they are based on a clearly invalid instrument for the reasons set forth previously.

II. Defendant contends that Plaintiff lacks standing to pursue her claims. This contention is based on the claim that Defendant's company owned the trailer, but this contention

begs the question. As this Court has found Plaintiff to be the rightful owner of the trailer, it follows that she clearly has standing to bring this action.

III. As to Defendant's contention that the action is barred by the statute of limitations, this Court finds that until some action was taken which put Plaintiff on notice of an adverse claim to the trailer, the time for computing the statute of limitations did not begin to run. There was no evidence that Plaintiff was made aware of Defendant's claim of ownership until she had the Laurens County Sheriff's Department take possession of the trailer, which was May 14, 2021. This action was commenced on April 15, 2024, less than three years later and within the limits of the statute.

IV. This Court has reviewed its findings and conclusions regarding conversion and the issue of punitive damages and is satisfied with the prior order.

THEREFORE, Defendant's motions are denied.

July 23, 2026
Laurens, SC

W. Reid Cox, Jr., Special Referee for
Laurens County

ELECTRONICALLY FILED - 2026 Jul 23 3:47 PM - LAURENS - COMMON PLEAS - CASE#2024CP3000353

ELECTRONICALLY FILED - 2026 Jul 23 3:47 PM - LAURENS - COMMON PLEAS - CASE#2024CP3000353

Laurens Common Pleas

Case Caption:	Deborah S. Lyda VS Rhonda Sweat
Case Number:	2024CP3000353
Type:	Master/Order/Other

K. Michelle Simmons

K. Michelle Simmons