



RECEIVED

Sep 01 2026

SC Court of Appeals

ALAN WILSON
ATTORNEY GENERAL

September 1, 2026

The Honorable Jenny A. Kitchings
Clerk, South Carolina Court of Appeals
Post Office Box 11629
Columbia, South Carolina 29211

RE: State v. Braden Spears Bowers – Appellate Case No. 2026-000479

Dear Ms. Kitchings:

The above-referenced criminal appeal is currently pending before this Court. On August 28, 2026, Appellant Braden Spears Bowers—via appellate counsel—filed a motion entitled “Petition for Order to Unseal Court’s Exhibits and Continue Abeyance Hold.” Through that motion, Bowers asks this Court to: (1) issue an order unsealing Court’s Exhibit # 1 (Order for Bail) and Court’s Exhibit # 2 (Consent Order), which were introduced under seal at Bowers’s guilty plea hearing;¹ and (2) continue holding the appeal in abeyance until the matter has been ruled upon. The State respectfully asks this Court to please accept this letter in lieu of a formal return to Bowers’s motion.

In response to Bowers’s motion, the undersigned counsel for the State reached out to one of the solicitors involved in the prosecution of Bowers’s case to ascertain whether unsealing the currently-sealed court’s exhibits at this time would pose any issues. Based on the information received in response to that inquiry, it appears unsealing the exhibits could potentially pose a safety risk to Bowers himself. Accordingly, the State respectfully asks this Court to: (1) deny Bowers’s request to fully unseal the previously-sealed court’s exhibits at this time; (2) issue an order directing Court’s Exhibit # 1 and Court’s Exhibit # 2 be transported to this Court *under seal*; and (3) permit both counsel for the State and Bowers’s appellate counsel to review the exhibits under seal once those sealed exhibits have been successfully transported to the Court. Furthermore, please be advised that, prior to submitting this response to Bowers’s motion, the undersigned counsel for the State consulted with Bowers’s appellate counsel about the State’s proposed alternative remedy, and Bower’s appellate counsel indicated she does not oppose the State’s request.

Thank you very much, and, if you should have any questions or concerns or if a more formal return is desired, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Page 1 of 2

¹ To aid in this Court’s resolution of the matter, a copy of the full eight-page transcript from Bowers’s guilty plea hearing has been included with the State’s letter return.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Mark R. Farthing', with a stylized, cursive script.

Mark R. Farthing
Senior Assistant Deputy Attorney General
S.C. Bar Number 76901

MRF/

Enclosure

cc: Wanda H. Carter, Esq. (via electronic service)
Victim Advocacy Division

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA) COURT OF GENERAL SESSIONS
) 2023-GS-23-0122
COUNTY OF GREENVILLE)
)
)
)
STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA)
) PLAINTIFF)
) vs.) TRANSCRIPT OF RECORD
)
BRADEN SPEARS BOWERS)
) DEFENDANT)

January 9, 2023
Greenville, South Carolina

B E F O R E:

THE HONORABLE ALEX KINLAW, JR., Judge.

A P P E A R A N C E S:

HUNTER BLOUIN, ESQ.
Attorney for The State

TEAL JOHNSON, ESQ.
Attorney for The Defendant

APRIL HERRON
Official Court Reporter

INDEX OF WITNESSES

BRADEN BOWERS

Examination By The Court4

» > ○ < «

Certificate of Reporter8

COURT EXHIBITS

<u>NO</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>	<u>ID</u>	<u>EV</u>
1	Order for bail	4	
2	Consent order	4	

BRADEN BOWERS-EXAMINATION BY THE COURT

1 (WHEREUPON, Court's Exhibits Nos. 1 & 2 were
2 marked for identification only.)

3 THE COURT: All right.

4 MR. BLOUIN: Your Honor, this will be a deferred
5 sentence.

6 THE COURT: All right.

7 THE CLERK: We didn't know about it ahead of
8 time.

9 MR. BLOUIN: Oh, no, no, no, we're deferring it
10 now. It's not a sentence. We're not sentencing him,
11 we're deferring it.

12 THE CLERK: Your Honor, this is case
13 2023-GS-23-0122, The State vs. Braden Spears Bowers,
14 indicted for trafficking cocaine, pleading to the
15 same, it's a waiver. And a deferred sentence.

16 Please raise your right hand.

17 BRADEN POWERS, after being duly
18 sworn{,}testified as follows:{F}

19 THE CLERK: Thank you.

20 EXAMINATION

21 BY THE COURT:

22 Q All right, you're Brandon Spears Bowers; is that
23 correct?

24 A Yes, sir.

25 Q You're 34 years of age?

BRADEN BOWERS-EXAMINATION BY THE COURT

1 A Yes, sir.

2 Q Are you married?

3 A No, sir.

4 Q Do you have children?

5 A No, sir.

6 Q How far did you go in school?

7 A College.

8 Q All right. You're represented by Ms. Johnson,
9 at this time?

10 MS. JOHNSON: Judge, I'm standing in for Chris
11 Shipman from the public defender's office.

12 THE COURT: All right.

13 BY THE COURT:

14 Q Are you satisfied with the services of
15 Mr. Shipman, as well as Ms. Johnson?

16 A Yes, sir.

17 Q Do you have any complaints to make against the
18 solicitor's office or anybody?

19 A No, sir.

20 Q All right. This Indictment ending in 0122
21 charges you with trafficking in cocaine, 28 grams or more.
22 This Indictment alleges that this occurred in Greenville
23 County on or about the 25th day of September of last year;
24 is that correct?

25 A Yes, sir.

BRADEN BOWERS-EXAMINATION BY THE COURT

1 Q All right. You understand I can sentence you up
2 to 25 years in prison; do you understand that?

3 A Yes, sir.

4 Q Are you aware you have A Constitutional right to
5 a trial, to remain silent, to confront any witnesses The
6 State has against you, or to assert any defenses that you
7 may have. Are you waiving all those rights and want to
8 move forward and plead guilty to this offense?

9 A Yes, sir.

10 Q Are you pleading guilty voluntarily, no one
11 coerced you, threatened you in any way?

12 A (Mr. Bowers shook his head.)

13 Q All right. Do you have any questions of
14 anything I just asked you?

15 A No, sir.

16 THE COURT: All right.

17 MR. BLOUIN: May it please the Court, Your
18 Honor. This is case -- and if I can hand up what
19 we've marked as Court's Exhibits 1 and 2. They're
20 both -- one's an order for bail, the other is an
21 order for conditions during this guilty plea. We are
22 all coming to an agreement as far as deferring the
23 sentence until a future date and allowing him out on
24 a GPS monitor. Obviously, those two orders would be
25 filed under seal. The bail order, we'd ask that the

BRADEN BOWERS-EXAMINATION BY THE COURT

1 clerk's office, of course, have permission to share
2 that with The Defense so he can get on the monitor.

3 THE COURT: All right.

4 MR. BLOUIN: As to the factual summary, this
5 occurred on or about September 25, 2022. Deputies
6 were called to 408 Bond Street in Greenville County
7 in regard to an individual asleep on a front porch
8 not belonging to him. He was asleep using a bag of
9 marijuana as a pillow. Also found with him was a
10 large bag of white powder, which was cocaine.
11 Approximately a pound of cocaine and the marijuana
12 weighed approximately a pound, as well.

13 His prior record is fairly minimum. He has a
14 2012 failure to stop; 2019, malicious injury to
15 personal property; and a 2014, driving under the
16 influence in North Carolina. He's spent 108 days so
17 far in the jail.

18 THE COURT: All right.

19 Sir, you agree with the facts as outlined by The
20 State?

21 MR. BOWERS: Yes, sir.

22 THE COURT: All right. I'll go ahead and accept
23 your plea as being freely and voluntarily given, you
24 indicated that you're satisfied with the services of
25 not only Mr. Shipman, by also Ms. Johnson standing in

BRADEN BOWERS-EXAMINATION BY THE COURT

1 for Mr. Shipman.

2 All right, the sentence is deferred.

3 MS. JOHNSON: Thank you, Your Honor.

4 MR. BLOUIN: Thank you, Your Honor.

5 THE COURT: All right.

6 (WHEREUPON, the proceedings were concluded.)

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

BRADEN BOWERS-EXAMINATION BY THE COURT

CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA)
COUNTY OF GREENVILLE)

I, APRIL P. HERRON, Official Court Reporter for
the Thirteenth Judicial Circuit of the State of South
Carolina, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true,
accurate and complete Transcript of Record of the
proceedings had and evidence introduced in the trial of
the captioned case, relative to appeal, in the Court of
General Sessions for Greenville County, South Carolina, on
the 9th day of January, 2023.

I do further certify that I am neither of kin,
counsel nor interest to any party hereto.

April 20, 2026

APRIL P. HERRON, Court Reporter

BRADEN BOWERS-EXAMINATION BY THE COURT

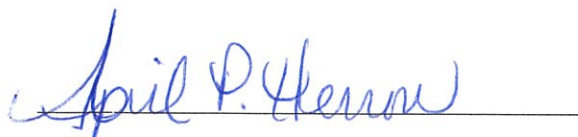
CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA)
COUNTY OF GREENVILLE)

I, APRIL P. HERRON, Official Court Reporter for
the Thirteenth Judicial Circuit of the State of South
Carolina, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true,
accurate and complete Transcript of Record of the
proceedings had and evidence introduced in the trial of
the captioned case, relative to appeal, in the Court of
General Sessions for Greenville County, South Carolina, on
the 9th day of January, 2023.

I do further certify that I am neither of kin,
counsel nor interest to any party hereto.

April 20, 2026



APRIL P. HERRON, Court Reporter