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SC Court of Appeals

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE COURT OF APPEALS

Appeal from Laurens County

Honorable R. Kirk Griffin, Circuit Court Judge

THE STATE,

RESPONDENT,

V.

CAMRIN JAY SMITH,

APPELLANT

APPELLATE CASE NO. 2025-001288

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**THE FOLLOWING EXHIBITS ARE ON FILE WITH THIS COURT:
STATE’S EXHIBIT NO. 2 (911 CALL), STATE’S EXHIBIT NO. 3 (BODY CAMERA
FOOTAGE), STATE’S EXHIBITS NO. 4(A) AND 4(B) (BODY CAMERA FOOTAGE –
SERGEANT FOSTER), STATE’S EXHIBIT NO. 5 (BODY CAMERA FOOTAGE –
DEPUTY WILSON), STATE’S EXHIBIT NO. 12(A) AND (B) (BODY CAMERA
FOOTAGE – LT. MCMAHAN), AND STATE’S EXHIBIT NO. 83 (VIDEO
INTERVIEW).**

1 is going to require some study and perhaps some research is
2 the prejudice component. And I want to see if there's any
3 case law that deals with this issue or anything that comes --
4 that comes close.

5 You know, I -- I'm just thinking out loud. Number one,
6 I think is obvious -- you know, these weapons were found as a
7 result of serving a search warrant, as a result of the
8 shooting are prove -- approved by the same evidence. And
9 again, that goes back to the search warrant. Are the same
10 general nature. I mean, that's a little, if you're in my
11 mind. And then the prejudice.

12 So -- I guess, prongs three and four are the ones that
13 I feel like might need a little more consideration. And
14 obviously I'll make a decision before we get started in the
15 morning. Anything else that we need to do pretrial in terms
16 of motions and/or marking of exhibits, or anything of that
17 nature?

18 MS. DRIGGERS: Yes, Your Honor.

19 THE COURT: Okay.

20 MS. DRIGGERS: We do have another motion to exclude any
21 mention of the -- the Defendant originally being charged with
22 involuntary manslaughter before the charges were upgraded to
23 murder. We believe -- so the charge of involuntary
24 manslaughter was initially charged before a full
25 investigation had been conducted, and relying on the statute

1 for involuntary on its face coupled with what they knew at
2 the time. They felt that that was the appropriate charge
3 then until they finished their investigation. And after that
4 investigation, they decided that involuntary was not the
5 appropriate charge and they upgraded and got appropriate
6 warrants for the charge of murder. And the State is not
7 moving forward on involuntary, we are only moving forward on
8 murder.

9 So we believe that under 402 it would not be relevant.
10 And if Your Honor does believe that it's relevant, we still
11 do not think that it should come in under 403. I believe
12 that it would unnecessarily confuse the jury. Again, we're
13 only moving forward on murder, and if they hear about
14 something that we're not moving forward on, I think it
15 confuse them. And then also, we are going to argue at the
16 end of this that it's not an appropriate, lesser included.
17 We have a good bit of case law for Your Honor to review. But
18 you can't make that determination until you've heard all the
19 evidence.

20 So I think for now, even bringing up something that is
21 not -- something that we don't even think is an appropriate
22 charge, and also something that we're not moving forward on,
23 the jury could start to think about something that again, may
24 -- may or may not even be charged. I think the appropriate
25 time to deal with that charge will be once we presented all

1 the evidence, and Your Honor has the opportunity to determine
2 if you think there's even sufficient evidence to charge it or
3 not charge it.

4 THE COURT: All right.

5 MS. JOHNSTON: Okay. Your Honor, I think two different
6 issues. I think we all agree when it comes to the jury
7 charges, that comes -- we're going to have that discussion
8 later. We're just talking about that initial arrest of the
9 involuntary manslaughter. Your Honor, I want to point out
10 same facts, same situation, same night. It's not a situation
11 where they mistakenly got this involuntary manslaughter
12 because of an error, or because of someone broke down the
13 wrong CDR code or anything. They -- you know, after
14 investigating that night, after interviewing him for almost
15 two hours, investigator when -- went then got a warrant for
16 involuntary manslaughter.

17 Additionally, Your Honor, 403 doesn't apply to the
18 state that directly references the right to fair trial, which
19 my client is the one that holds that protection. I -- I
20 believe that the involuntary manslaughter in that initial
21 arrest goes to bias in the investigation. It -- it goes to
22 the invest -- the integrity of the investigation. And all of
23 that goes to reasonable doubt.

24 Your Honor, I will say my client's right to a fair
25 trial and due process under the Fifth, Sixth, and Fifteenth

1 Amendments is not outweighed by any juror confusion that the
2 State may assert. I think it's absolutely -- absolutely
3 relevant and we should be able to get into that. I -- I
4 don't see how any misleading of the jury is -- is possible
5 when that's how the case went. That's the linear nature of
6 this case. Just because the State -- just because it sounds
7 bad on their part, doesn't mean that we can't get into it.
8 And that we can't cross-examine or impeach certain witnesses
9 with that information. And we -- we think we should be able
10 to get into it, Your Honor, and have it not be excluded from
11 this trial.

12 THE COURT: Anything in response to that?

13 MS. DRIGGERS: Just briefly, Your Honor. I mean, under
14 403, it does talk about misleading the jury. So I do think
15 that it would be appropriate here. And what I'm arguing is
16 that, again, I -- I don't want it to mislead the jury, but
17 what I stated initially is that this is what they charged,
18 again, initially and at that time on its face, thought it was
19 appropriate, and then, again, sought the correct warrant.

20 And again, the issues do kind of go hand in hand with
21 the case law that says it's not the appropriate charge,
22 therefore it's not appropriate, was concluded. It was not
23 the appropriate charge, and that's why the State is moving
24 forward for murder. And then also -- I mean, it would be no
25 different than if our office were to directly indicted it for

1 murder. So same thing, it's just -- it's not relevant
2 information for the jury to consider it. It shouldn't even
3 be something that they're thinking about throughout the
4 trial.

5 THE COURT: I think this issue turns on 403, and really
6 it's always viewed in -- in the light of unfair prejudice to
7 the Defendant, but I don't think that's what the law says.
8 Unfair prejudice can -- can come about I mean, the State can
9 be prejudiced as well, prejudice. It is unfair and
10 distinguished from legitimate impact of evidence, as in the
11 outcome of the case. Unfair prejudice does not mean damage
12 to a Defendant's case that results from legitimate probative
13 force of the evidence rather than prejudiced evidence, which
14 tends to suggest a decision on an improper basis. All
15 evidence is meant to be prejudicial, it's only unfair
16 prejudice, which must be scrutinized under the 403.

17 So -- you know, we've got a situation where I'm
18 assuming these involuntary manslaughter warrants were drawn
19 up based upon the Defendant's own admission that he shot her,
20 and it was an accident. I can only assume that further
21 investigation led law enforcement to present either to
22 withdraw those warrants and serve warrants for murder, or to
23 directly indict the case for murder.

24 You know, it's also not lost on me that court doesn't
25 have jurisdiction over a case until the grand jury passes

1 upon the indictment. So I think under 403, the mention of
2 the involuntary manslaughter would confuse the issues, would
3 be misleading to the jury. And at least preliminarily, I'm
4 going to grant the State's motion to limit any mention that
5 those warrants were dismissed. Now, there -- I guess, could
6 be some situations where a door may be opened depending on
7 how officers testify or -- you know, if we get to the point
8 in the case where lesser included are -- are to be
9 considered. Perhaps -- you know, it doesn't preclude any
10 mention of involuntary manslaughter. But I think, at least
11 at the outset before any evidence has been presented the fact
12 that these warrants were -- were drawn and -- and then
13 ultimately either withdrawn or upgraded based upon further
14 investigation. I -- I -- I think that would be confusing,
15 and I would limit that introduction under rule 403.

16 And if the case unfolds and the evidence takes us
17 another way, it may -- it may become relevant at some point,
18 but I don't think it's -- I think the prejudicial effect is
19 not substantially outweighed by the probative value. So I
20 will grant the State's motion with regard to the dismissal of
21 the involuntary manslaughter warrants. All right.

22 MS. FINCH: Your Honor, another housekeeping matter. I
23 did put the Defense on notice. I sent them a letter, May
24 28th. Pursuant to Code Section 19-5-520, we would anticipate
25 entering in some Verizon cell phone records. I did just want

1 position to determine what the facts are and apply the law to
2 those facts and thus render a verdict.

3 Ladies and gentlemen, in order to preserve everyone's
4 rights, I can give the opportunity -- the parties an
5 opportunity to object to anything I've said. Any exceptions
6 to anything I've said to the jury from the State? Any
7 objections?

8 MS. FINCH: No, Your Honor.

9 THE COURT: Anything from the Defense?

10 MS. JOHNSTON: None from the Defense, Your Honor.

11 THE COURT: All right. We will now begin the trial.

12 MS. DRIGGERS: Thank you, Judge. Good morning, and
13 thank you for being here. Never point a gun at anything, or
14 anyone that you don't want to lose. On the evening of
15 November 25th, 2023, Grace Abels, the victim in this case,
16 had just finished making dinner for her fiancé, Camrin Smith,
17 the Defendant in this case, when she was suddenly shot in the
18 chest, fell to the ground and died as a result.

19 Grace Abels, who was only 24 years old at the time, was
20 also seven months pregnant. She was so excited to finally
21 have a baby, a little baby girl. But due to the senseless
22 actions of the Defendant in this case, not only was her life
23 taken from her, but so was the light of her unborn baby.

24 Now, let's talk about those actions taken by the
25 Defendant. You're going to hear that that night he picked up

1 a loaded gun and that one, according to his very own
2 statement, he inspected just 30 minutes prior, and then he
3 pointed that gun directly at Grace, and he pulled the trigger
4 shooting her in the heart. And because of those actions, his
5 actions, he has been charged with two counts of murder.

6 One, for the murder of Grace Abels, and the other for
7 her unborn baby, Scarlet. He has also been charged with
8 possession of a weapon during the commission of a violent
9 crime as well as unlawful possession of a sawed-off rifle.

10 Now, as the Judge just said, he's going to go over the
11 law at the very end of this trial, and if he says anything --
12 if I say anything differently than he does, you listen to him
13 over me, okay? But I do want to go over it briefly now so
14 that you know what to be on the lookout for throughout this
15 trial.

16 South Carolina defines murder as the killing of another
17 with malice aforethought; express or implied. Now, malice.
18 What does that word mean? Malice is a mental state, and it
19 will ultimately be up to you all to determine what was going
20 through Camrin Smith's mind when he pulled the trigger that
21 night. Malice has often been defined as the intentional
22 doing of a wrong act without just cause, or excuse, or the
23 intent to inflict an injury under circumstances in which the
24 law would presume an evil intent.

25 And as I mentioned, there can be express malice, or

1 implied. Express malice means the specific intent to kill.
2 And express malice, on the other hand, is conduct which shows
3 a total disregard for human life. And aforethought, what
4 does that mean? Not a common word that we use in everyday
5 speech. It just means that it has to exist the moment the
6 crime is committed.

7 It does not have to be planned; it just has to exist a
8 split second before that crime is committed. And when you
9 look at the circumstances of this crime, whether you believe
10 that Camrin Smith specifically intended to kill her, or that
11 his action showed a total disregard for human life, I submit
12 to you that the evidence is going to show that Camrin Smith
13 had malice aforethought, that he is guilty of murder.

14 And as I mentioned, he is also charged with possession
15 of a weapon during the commission of a violent crime. And
16 South Carolina law says that a person is guilty of that crime
17 if they use a firearm during the commission of -- of what is
18 defined as a violent crime, which includes murder. He has
19 also been charged with unlawful possession of sawed-off
20 rifle, which the law defines as possessing a rifle in which
21 the barrel is less than 16 inches in length.

22 And to be clear, that was a separate -- a separate gun
23 than what he used to shoot Grace Abels. I just want to clear
24 that up from the beginning and you'll hear more about that
25 later in this trial. But I submit to you that the Defendant

1 is guilty of all of these crimes, but as the State, we bear
2 the burden. So as the State, it's not enough for me to just
3 say that. We have to prove it to you, and we have to prove
4 it to you beyond a reasonable doubt. But it's that word
5 reasonable, that's the important part.

6 Proof beyond a reasonable doubt does not mean proof
7 beyond any doubt and all doubt whatsoever, as there are very
8 few things in this life that we know with absolute certainty.
9 It just means we have to give you enough evidence and
10 testimony from that witness stand that you are left firmly
11 convinced of the Defendant's guilt. And I submit to you that
12 we will meet that burden.

13 But let's talk about a few other things that you're
14 going to hear about in this trial. You're going to hear
15 about direct and circumstantial evidence.

16 Now, the law says that circumstantial evidence is just
17 as good as direct. But what's the difference between the
18 two? Direct evidence is if someone goes outside -- a witness
19 goes outside, and they see that it's raining and they come in
20 here and they get on that witness stand, and they say, "I was
21 just outside, and I saw that it was raining." That is direct
22 evidence. They actually saw it raining.

23 An example of circumstantial evidence is if you go to
24 sleep, and when you wake up, your grass is wet, there's
25 puddles in your yard, puddles in the driveway, puddles on the

1 street, there's water droplets on your car. And based on
2 those observations and circumstances, you determine that it
3 rained the night before. You didn't see it rain, but based
4 on those circumstances, you can determine, beyond a
5 reasonable doubt, that it rained the night before.

6 Now, I guess it is possible that somehow someone came
7 in with enough water, soaked your grass and somehow created
8 the puddles, and your neighbor hosed out your car, for
9 whatever reason. But that isn't reasonable. That is not a
10 reasonable doubt.

11 Another thing that you-all are going to have to do
12 throughout this trial is determine the credibility and
13 believability of witnesses. Now, you're going to have to
14 look at the exhibits, look at the evidence, but also, very
15 importantly, you're going to listen to witnesses, and it'll
16 be up for you all to determine if what you think they are
17 saying is believable. If it is credible.

18 Now the Judge is going to tell you that you can believe
19 one witness over many, or many over one, that you can believe
20 parts of someone's statement and not believe the other parts.
21 That would be up for you all to determine. So let's also
22 talk about what you're going to hear, the evidence that
23 you're going to see that will help prove the Defendant's
24 guilt.

25 You're going to hear the 911 call from that night where

1 the Defendant calls 911, and says that he accidentally shot
2 Grace. Now, from the very beginning of this trial, it is
3 very important that you listen and you pay close attention.
4 Listen to that 911 call. Listen to what the Defendant is
5 focused on, and what he's not focused on.

6 Very importantly, evidence will also show that after
7 shooting Grace, the Defendant did not initially call 911. He
8 called his dad first, and it was his dad that instructed him
9 to call 911. You'll also see from those call records not
10 only that, after getting instructed to call 911, he waited
11 over another minute to eventually call 911.

12 You're also going to hear from Laurens County EMS, and
13 they're going to tell you that by the time they arrived that
14 night, both Grace and her unborn baby were already dead.
15 That Grace was cold, lifeless and beyond medical help.
16 You're going to hear that there was nothing that they could
17 do at that point to save Grace or her unborn baby.

18 You're also going to hear from several law enforcement
19 officers and investigators from the Laurens County Sheriff's
20 Office. They're responded to the scene that night, and also
21 continued investigating this case. And you'll get to see
22 their body-worn camera footage of the scene for yourselves.
23 The pictures that they took and the evidence that they
24 collected. One of those items being the gun that Camrin used
25 to shoot Grace with. And evidence will show that when law

1 enforcement arrived, they located that firearm, and the
2 magazine in that gun had been fully loaded.

3 You'll also get to hear and see an initial statement
4 given by the Defendant at the scene that night as well as a
5 recorded interview that he gave that same night. And now
6 that interview is really hard to hear. We're going to try to
7 get you through it so that you can hear it.

8 But I really, again, want you to listen because he
9 admits, in that interview, to picking up a gun, pointing it
10 directly at Grace and pulling the trigger. And listening to
11 and watching both of those interviews, listen -- listen to
12 what he's not saying, watch his expressions. Does this seem
13 right, or does something seem a little off.

14 Evidence will also show that the Defendant used a Bersa
15 380 to shoot Grace. You're going to hear from a firearms
16 expert from South Carolina Law Enforcement Division, referred
17 to as SLED, and she's going to tell you about the numerous
18 safety measures on that particular gun. And the evidence
19 will show that the Defendant liked guns, he owned guns and he
20 shot guns.

21 You're going to hear from numerous witnesses, including
22 people that have lived with the Defendant on different
23 occasions, as well as from his own father, and from his very
24 own statements, just how much he liked guns. You're going to
25 hear that he owned a lot of guns, that law enforcement

1 collected nine different guns from his house in all different
2 types of guns; handguns, a sawed-off rifle, shotguns.

3 And very importantly, you're going to hear from
4 numerous witnesses this one thing, the Defendant knew gun
5 safety and that he practiced it. Evidence will also show
6 that the Defendant was shooting guns including that Bersa 380
7 that same day. You're going to hear testimony both from a
8 statement given by the Defendant himself as well as his
9 father, that the day that he shot Grace, he was out shooting
10 all of his guns.

11 And you're going to hear from the Defendant's statement
12 that he had just inspected that very gun, 30 minutes, before
13 pulling the trigger. And in his statement, I, again, ask you
14 to listen. Listen to his explanation or explanations,
15 rather, as to what he had allegedly forgotten in those short
16 30 minutes.

17 You're also going to hear from the pathologist in this
18 case, Dr. Clair Rose. And she will tell you that she ruled
19 this case a homicide. She'll walk you through the factors
20 that led her to that determination, and evidence will show
21 you that Grace was shot with a what is called "An
22 intermediate range." And you'll learn that -- that is within
23 three to four feet. You'll hear that Grace was shot in the
24 heart, and that she died as a result of that gunshot wound.

25 You've already heard that Grace was pregnant at the

1 time of her death, and you'll learn that that baby whose name
2 was going to be "Scarlet" was seven months along, and she was
3 viable at the time, but that she also died as a result of the
4 gunshot wound to Grace.

5 Now, I can't say for sure what the Defense is going to
6 get up here and tell you, but I do believe that they're
7 likely going to get up here and claim that this was an
8 accident, or just some game. That is what the Defendant told
9 law enforcement after all. But I want you to remain focused,
10 really pay attention to the evidence, to the circumstances,
11 and to the steps that the Defendant would've had to take and
12 simply forgotten all of them for this to be an accident.

13 I submit to you this was no accident, this was murder.
14 At the end of this trial, my co-counsel, Elizabeth Able
15 Finch, she's going to get up here, and she's going to walk
16 you through the evidence. She's going to walk you through
17 the law and she's going to do exactly as I'm asking now, and
18 that is to return a verdict of guilty on all charges. Thank
19 you.

20 MS. JOHNSTON: Morning. I am not going to get up here
21 and tell you what happened that night was an accident. What
22 I'm going to tell you is what happened that night was a
23 mistake. A mistake isn't malice. A mistake is not
24 malicious. We're not going to dispute that Camrin pointed
25 that gun at Grace, and pulled the trigger. He made the worst

1 mistake of his life that night.

2 And guys, they were -- they were cooking dinner; they
3 were joking around, he made a mistake. And guys, in the eyes
4 of the law, there are different levels of culpability. We've
5 decided that as -- as a society in South Carolina. Now,
6 South Carolina, generally speaking, we -- we divide unlawful
7 killing into two groups; murder and manslaughter. The only
8 difference between those two is, is there malice, or is there
9 not?

10 Guys, you might be thinking, "What -- now, what is
11 malice?" Well, even a dog knows the difference between when
12 it's been kicked or tripped over. And guys, as a society, we
13 have distinguished between when you kill someone with hate in
14 your heart versus acting stupidly.

15 We're going to hear a lot of facts throughout this
16 trial and a lot more facts. And I'm not going to dispute a
17 lot of them. There is one big thing we do dispute, though,
18 and that's that Camrin had malice in his heart.

19 Now, you're going to hear in a little bit the 911 call.
20 You're going to hear Camrin that night. Pay attention, guys.
21 What -- what you're looking for is malice. That's the only
22 thing on it. Please separate the substance from the volume,
23 and you'll see at the end when you hear from Camrin and you
24 see his heart, the only way you -- you guys can do that is by
25 searching your own hearts. But remember that the opposite of

1 malice is love.

2 THE COURT: State may call its first witness.

3 MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Your Honor. Thank you, Your
4 Honor. The State calls Danielle Prather to the stand.

5 DEPUTY DANIELLE PRATHER,

6 being duly sworn, testified as follows:

7 THE CLERK: Thank you. You may have a seat.

8 DIRECT EXAMINATION

9 BY MS. CLEVELAND:

10 Q. Thank you. Please state your name for the record.

11 A. Danielle Prather. D-A-N-I-E-L-L-E P-R-A-T-H-E-R.

12 Q. And, Ms. Prather, where are you from?

13 A. I'm from Laurens County.

14 Q. And what do you do for a living?

15 A. I'm the deputy director for the Laurens County 911
16 department.

17 Q. And how long have you been with the Laurens County
18 911?

19 A. A little over 17 years.

20 Q. And what does your job title entail?

21 A. So the deputy director oversees the operations of
22 our 911 center. We are also responsible for records request
23 where we would provide -- if it's a legal request, a CAD
24 report, or a 911 call, or any audio that our center
25 processes.

1 Q. And we'll get into detail about the 911 call and
2 the CAD. I just want you to take a step back and explain
3 what happens when a call comes in to your department.

4 A. So whenever a 911 call is made, it's routed
5 through the 911 system, and then it is delivered to a 911
6 PSAP, that's a public safety answering point, and it is
7 determined based off of the location of the coordinates of
8 the call, or the location of the cell phone tower that
9 they're hitting on.

10 So anytime somebody calls 911, there's a lot of backend
11 technological stuff that's happens before it actually gets
12 delivered to our center. And then once the 911 call is
13 received by our dispatchers, we start the interrogation of
14 trying to determine where, what, when, how, what is going on.

15 Q. And does your office contact law enforcement?

16 A. Yes. Any of the calls that we receive, we
17 dispatch for fire police and EMS for all of Laurens County.
18 So we take the initial call, we get the information about
19 what services are needed and then we send the appropriate
20 responders.

21 Q. And a part of this system when a call comes in to
22 your office, what is generated during a 911 call, if
23 anything?

24 A. So when the 911 call originally is received, we
25 get a timestamp of when the call is made, we get the

1 coordinates if it's coming from a cell phone of the location
2 of the caller, and we get the phone number that it's coming
3 from. Everything else is based off of the interrogation of
4 the caller. That is done by our 911 call takers.

5 Q. And how is this information kept up then?

6 A. We use a computer aided dispatch program, CAD for
7 short, and we document and record pretty much all of the
8 details of the call that we receive from the caller. We also
9 track and store the information of the responders, such as
10 their response times, who was sent, who responded, all of
11 that.

12 Q. And just to go back, what does CAD stand for
13 again?

14 A. Computer aided dispatch.

15 Q. And how are CAD reports created?

16 A. So whenever there's a request for a call, the CAD
17 reports are stored. Historically, we have CADs all the way
18 back from whenever we started using these systems. We can
19 search based off of a date and time. We can search based off
20 of a location, or based off of a name that may be associated
21 with a call. We can also search based off of certain call
22 types.

23 Q. And is the CAD report generated for every single
24 call?

25 A. Every single call has a CAD report that is used to

1 track all of the details of that call from start to finish.
2 Now whether or not that CAD report is generated and printed,
3 no, that is only based at a request of somebody that has a
4 legal means to need it.

5 Q. Thank you, Ms. Prather. And just going to fast
6 forward to why we're here today. Did your office receive a
7 call regarding this case?

8 A. Yes, ma'am.

9 Q. And was the CAD generated for that?

10 A. Yes, ma'am.

11 MS. CLEVELAND: I'm now handing you what has been
12 previously marked as State's Exhibit 1 for identification
13 purposes.

14 (State's Exhibit Number 1 marked for identification.)

15 MS. CLEVELAND: Your Honor, would you like a copy?

16 THE COURT: Thank you.

17 BY MS. CLEVELAND:

18 Q. Ms. Prather, what did I just hand you?

19 A. This is a CAD report, it's a command log
20 documentation of an incident that occurred on 11/25/23.

21 Q. And how do you know that?

22 A. Because that's the details and the information
23 that's provided at the top of it. The fact that it has our
24 letterhead at the top means that it was printed or produced
25 by our 911 office.

1 Q. And does it appear to -- had you previously seen
2 this document?

3 A. Yes, ma'am.

4 Q. And have you -- does it look consistent with --

5 A. Yes, ma'am. It looks like an unredacted full CAD
6 report for this incident.

7 Q. Has it been altered in any way?

8 A. No, ma'am.

9 MS. CLEVELAND: At this time, Your Honor, the State
10 moves to enter State's Exhibit 1 into evidence.

11 MS. JOHNSTON: Without objection, Your Honor.

12 THE COURT: State's 1 is admitted without objection.

13 (State's Exhibit Number 1 admitted into evidence.)

14 MS. CLEVELAND: Permission to publish?

15 THE COURT: Yes, ma'am.

16 MS. CLEVELAND: Sorry about that, Your Honor.

17 BY MS. CLEVELAND:

18 Q. Ms. Prather, you have just published what you have
19 identified as the CAD. What day did your office receive a
20 call regarding this case?

21 A. The call time was 11/25/23 at 20:36:47.

22 Q. And who, at your office, took the call?

23 A. The 911 dispatcher that answered the line was
24 Lillie Lee.

25 Q. And are you Lillie Lee's supervisor?

1 A. Yes, ma'am.

2 Q. And what time did that 911 call come in?

3 A. It came in at 20:36:47.

4 Q. And that's 8:36 p.m.?

5 A. Yes, ma'am.

6 Q. And who made that call?

7 A. The original complainant was Camrin Smith.

8 Q. And what was the phone number associated with that
9 911 call?

10 A. 864-8941-176.

11 Q. And what was the call in reference to?

12 A. Mr. Smith was calling from 4218 Highway 14 in
13 Laurens, and reporting that his wife had been accidentally
14 shot in the chest.

15 Q. And what time was law enforcement -- and what time
16 was dispatch sent out to law enforcement to respond to the
17 scene?

18 A. 20:37:27.

19 Q. So That's 8:37:27 seconds?

20 A. Uh-huh.

21 Q. In the evening, correct?

22 A. Yes, ma'am.

23 Q. And then per the CAD report, who responded to the
24 scene?

25 A. So according to the CAD report, Sheriff's office

1 was dispatched, they had three units initially respond. That
2 would've been; Echo 1, which is the lieutenant, Jeremy
3 McMahan; Echo 3, David Gardner; and Echo 4, William Miller.

4 Q. And what departments are they?

5 A. They're with Laurens County Sheriff's Office.

6 Q. And so, we just talked about the CAD, the CAD is
7 separate from a 911 call, correct?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. So we're just going to transition into a
10 conversation about 911 calls in general.

11 A. Okay.

12 Q. So how does your office -- well, first, does your
13 office record 911 calls?

14 A. Yes. All 911 calls are recorded in our center.

15 Q. And how is that conducted?

16 A. It is -- they're recorded and stored on a
17 network-sharing device that records and stores the audio for
18 up to three years. If the records are pulled or requested,
19 they are saved indefinitely until deleted.

20 Q. And every single call that comes into your
21 department saved?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. And who, if anyone, do you share these calls with?

24 A. We only release them for legal purposes. The
25 agencies that we service such as the Sheriff's Office could

1 reco -- request a copy of an audio, or the public citizens
2 can fill out a FOIA, Freedom of Information Act form, and
3 request the audio or we can have the information released in
4 needs of a subpoena.

5 Q. So we are now going to transition to the specific
6 911 call in this case. Were you asked to pull the 911 call?

7 A. Yes. Our office was, yes.

8 Q. Okay. And did you do -- oh, your office do so?

9 A. Yes.

10 MS. CLEVELAND: Okay. I am now -- okay. Have --
11 handing you what has been previously identified -- oh, marked
12 as State's Exhibit 2 for identification purposes.

13 (State's Exhibit Number 2 marked for identification.)

14 BY MS. CLEVELAND:

15 Q. Ms. Prather, what have I just handed you?

16 A. It appears to be a disc that has the 911 audio for
17 this call on it.

18 Q. And have you previously listened to that 911 call?

19 A. Yes, ma'am.

20 Q. Would you recognize that call if I played it for
21 you?

22 A. Yes, ma'am.

23 MS. CLEVELAND: The State moves to introduce State's
24 Exhibit 2 into evidence.

25 MS. JOHNSTON: Without objection, Your Honor.

1 THE COURT: State's 2 is admitted without objection.

2 (State's Exhibit Number 2 admitted into evidence.)

3 MS. CLEVELAND: Permission to publish?

4 THE COURT: Yes, ma'am.

5 (State's Exhibit 2 was played)

6 BY MS. CLEVELAND:

7 Q. Ms. Prather, is that call consistent with the
8 phone call that you previously listened to?

9 A. Yes, ma'am.

10 MS. CLEVELAND: No further questions.

11 THE COURT: Cross, if any?

12 MS. JOHNSTON: No questions for this witness.

13 THE COURT: Thank you, ma'am. You can step down.

14 THE WITNESS: Thank you.

15 THE COURT: The State can call your next witness.

16 MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Your Honor. The State calls
17 Bill Williams.

18 DEPUTY WILLIAM WILLIAMS,

19 being duly sworn, testified as follows:

20 THE CLERK: Thank you. You may have a seat.

21 DIRECT EXAMINATION

22 BY MS. CLEVELAND:

23 Q. Thank you for being here. Can you please state
24 your name and spell your name for the record?

25 A. Okay. It's William, W-I-L-L-I-A-M. And last name

1 is Williams, W-I-L-L-I-A-M-S.

2 Q. Mr. Williams, where are you from?

3 A. I was originally born in Osaka, Japan.

4 Q. And where do you live in the United States?

5 A. I live in Clinton, South Carolina.

6 Q. And where do you work?

7 A. Laurens County Coroner's Office.

8 Q. How long have you been with the Laurens County --?

9 A. The last five years.

10 Q. And what's your position with Laurens County
11 Coroner's now?

12 A. Now I'm a senior -- senior deputy coroner.

13 Q. And what does that position entail?

14 A. That position entails assisting the coroner to
15 investigate deaths, whether it'd be accidental or unexpected.
16 They could be suicides, homicides, whatever. Our main job is
17 to go out to that scene to determine cause and manner of
18 death. May not always happen exactly on the scene. You
19 might have to get other information as well.

20 Q. And does your role with the Laurens County
21 Coroner's Office require specific training?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. What training have you received?

24 A. The training I received when I -- prior to this, I
25 just got re-upped for my EMT national registry certification.

1 I worked in EMS prior to that. And that seems to be a good
2 segue to becoming a deputy coroner because of the medical
3 terminology that we learned, also applies as well as -- to be
4 in a coroner.

5 Q. And where were you working in November 2023?

6 A. Laurens County Coroner's Office.

7 Q. What was your position at that time?

8 A. Deputy Coroner.

9 Q. And just to get a general overview, what does the
10 coroner's office do?

11 A. We have to: Number one, go out on the scenes,
12 investigate the scenes, enquire as much information as
13 possible from there, try to determine the next of kin that
14 may be related so we can get positive identification.
15 Sometimes that evidence is not there, so we have to search
16 and do quite a bit.

17 Plus, our office prepares the final death certificates.
18 We work with funeral homes once the arrangements have been
19 decided upon by the next of kin, and considerable paperwork
20 with this job.

21 Q. So when you have to go out to a scene, how -- oh,
22 actually when -- let me rephrase. When is the coroner's
23 office notified?

24 A. We are notified by dispatch. The order which it
25 normally goes is law enforcement is normally there first on

1 scene, more than likely the fire department, waiting for EMS
2 to get there. And once they have confirmed the -- the death,
3 then they will contact dispatch again and give them Signal 9.
4 That's a term we use for a death. And then in turn, they
5 will notify me. I happen to be on call that night.

6 Q. So tell me about why we are here today. How did
7 the Laurens County Coroner's Office get involved in this
8 case?

9 A. Because it -- number one, it was in Laurens County
10 that the death took place. I was the one on call on duty
11 that night.

12 Q. Mr. Williams, I'm sorry to interrupt. Can you
13 just speak up a little?

14 A. Is that better? Let me see. Testing 1, 2, 3.
15 Copy, copy, copy.

16 Q. You're (inaudible).

17 A. All right. Okay.

18 Q. Sorry to interrupt. So you were saying that you
19 received dispatch, you were on --

20 A. Call.

21 Q. You were on that night?

22 A. Yes, ma'am.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. And they will contact me through my phone, plus
25 there will be a CAD that will show up on my phone and text,

1 giving me the directions to where I need to go for that
2 particular death scene.

3 Q. And what day were you notified regarding this
4 scene?

5 A. All right. It was on November 25, 2023.

6 Q. And what time were you notified?

7 A. 8:52 p.m.

8 Q. And what was the location you were directed to go?

9 A. It was a residence off of Highway 14, going
10 towards Gray Court, but it was in Laurens still.

11 Q. And what time did you arrive at the actual scene?

12 A. I got on scene about 9:23 p.m.

13 Q. Upon arriving at the scene, what did you do first?

14 A. My first response or action is I'll talk to EMS
15 that's on scene, in this particular case, it was the captain
16 Troy Eldridge, to give the details of why this was a Signal
17 9. And what is involved, what medical steps did they do to
18 try to resuscitate the patient?

19 Actually, there was another medic that confirmed the
20 Signal 9, but they got another call and had to leave. So the
21 captain on shift stayed there on scene until I got there.

22 Q. So after getting kind of an overview from EMS,
23 what did you do?

24 A. Then I also spoke with some of the law enforcement
25 that was there as to what happened. And then we had to wait

1 before we did any further investigation because one of the
2 officers went to get a search warrant before we messed with
3 anything on that scene.

4 Q. And when were you able to go to the residence?

5 A. Once the officer got the search warrant -- I mean,
6 we -- we were in the residence, but we weren't touching or
7 moving or looking for anything until that warrant came back.

8 Q. Okay. And when you were eventually allowed to
9 move out, did you ever check Grace's body temperature?

10 A. No.

11 Q. Why not?

12 A. Our office does not conduct body temperatures. We
13 -- the one that's recommended, that we're not trained to do,
14 is called a liver temperature test. And in order to do that,
15 you have to make an incision on that person and then inject
16 the probe to get the readout.

17 But a lot goes into that factor. You got to know the
18 ambient temperature -- temperature of the room and factor all
19 that in. Again, our office is not trained to do that task.
20 Plus, she was going to go for an autopsy, and one general
21 rule with a pathologist: "Don't do anything with that body,
22 especially invasive."

23 Q. And what was Grace's pronounced time of death?

24 A. 8:50 p.m.

25 Q. And do you recall who announced her time of death?

1 A. It would've been Sarah. She was with Medic 5.
2 She was a paramedic. She's a paramedic for EMS.

3 Q. And why was it the EMS who pronounced or announced
4 the time of death rather coroners or other departments?

5 A. That's been our protocol for this county.

6 Q. Okay. And --

7 A. They -- in -- in addition to that, you know, to
8 make sure they've got the equipment, analysis equipment and
9 all that -- that you can put on the patient to make sure
10 there's no signs of life, or there are signs of life there.

11 Q. And what do you do upon learning time of death?

12 A. I put that down into my report. And then I'm
13 going into other things as asking questions based on the
14 decedent's appearance. Again, touching the patient after we
15 got the search warrant, checking for any kind of rigor,
16 notice she was cyanotic or bluish in her facial areas around
17 her lips and her body.

18 Q. And so just going back to your involvement while
19 on the scene -- or really what is the coroner's office
20 protocol, or is there a protocol in handling a body of crime
21 scene?

22 A. We want to make sure the chain of command or the
23 handoffs are all in order. In this particular case, we let
24 everybody do their investigations. Once their tasks were
25 done, we also had a criminal scene investigator there as well

1 doing her investigation too. And I go around, I would take
2 pictures of the scene outside of the scene, and detailed
3 pictures of the decedent.

4 Q. And while you were on the scene investigating, was
5 Grace's body moved at any point?

6 A. Not moved, no. No, ma'am. She was still in that
7 position where she was found.

8 Q. You didn't look at her body, or...?

9 A. I did -- I did later.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. Again, once we got the warrant here, because CSI
12 wanted to turn the body over, there was a left -- towards the
13 left breast, entry of a GSW gunshot wound. And she needed
14 assistance to lift the body over to check to see if there was
15 an exit wound, which there was not an exit wound.

16 Q. So you assisted in --

17 A. I assisted --

18 Q. -- crime scene?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. Okay. And when you -- when you assisted the crime
21 scene investigation, were you wearing gloves when you moved
22 her body?

23 A. Yes, ma'am.

24 Q. Were there any items taken off of Grace's person
25 while you were on the scene?

1 A. Yes, ma'am. Later, I removed her necklace. I
2 removed -- it's had a five-star emblem on it. I moved a
3 white colored ring with a clear stone from her and took it
4 outside and give it -- gave it to her father and sister that
5 were on the scene as well. They were outside. They weren't
6 inside with us.

7 Q. And was Grace's body eventually removed from the
8 scene?

9 A. Yes, ma'am.

10 Q. Who -- how was Grace's body moved?

11 A. Her body was moved after she was loaded into a
12 body bag. Everything was done. Nobody else needed anything,
13 but we did one thing for the family. So once we carried her
14 body out to the stretcher, our -- our particular stretcher
15 would not fit inside that mobile home. So the body had to be
16 moved down, four or five flights of steps, carried and then
17 loaded onto the stretcher. She was strapped three times to
18 secure her, and the bag was open slightly to let the family
19 make identification that this was Grace Abels, and they did.

20 Q. And who assisted in the --?

21 A. Some other law enforcement on scene.

22 Q. And where was Grace's body transfered (inaudible)?

23 A. After that, I went en route to Laurens County
24 Memorial Hospital, which is now Prisma, and took her body to
25 the morgue there. From there she will be transported by

1 another service to Prisma in Greenville to conduct the
2 autopsy.

3 Q. So after you transferred her body to the morgue,
4 what did you do following that transportation?

5 A. Okay. Following that, I would -- I made contact
6 with the doctor. I left a voicemail with the doctor that
7 would've been on call. Just gave him a brief notification
8 name suspected cause of death, age, and her name.

9 Q. And why -- why would you reach out to the doctor?

10 A. That's -- that's kind of a courtesy. We just
11 don't send bodies up there, and they don't know who's coming
12 in.

13 Q. Up where?

14 A. Up -- okay. Up where is Greenville Memorial
15 Hospital. And that's where -- we don't have a pathologist in
16 our county, so they have to go to Greenville. Well, that's
17 what they've been using to do the autopsy. It was
18 Dr. Claire Rose that did that autopsy.

19 Q. Okay. And you reached out to her following --?

20 A. And spoke -- yes.

21 Q. So following Grace's transfer and -- her transfer
22 to Greenville, what are you doing in the meantime?

23 A. I also contacted the transporter, it's Biocair,
24 and they do that service. They picked up her body from
25 Laurens hospital and transported her to the Greenville

1 morgue, and she was scheduled to be autopsied the following
2 day or so.

3 Q. And are you ever notified about the results of the
4 autopsy?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. What do you do when --?

7 A. When -- well, no -- well, we can get preliminary
8 reports, what the doctor sees right up front during the
9 autopsy, but we want to wait till we get the final report
10 back before anything's discussed, anything's released in that
11 manner. We want to have the full report back.

12 Q. And just to clarify, you and the coroner's office
13 do not determine manner of death or cause, it's determined by
14 the pathologist, correct?

15 A. When we do autopsies, correct. We can do
16 determination cause of death, let's say for a natural
17 (inaudible) decedent just has prior co, you know,
18 comorbidities and was -- had a history of, you know,
19 life-threatening problems. We can make that call. We don't
20 need to always do it through an autopsy.

21 Q. Okay. So did you ever get notified about the
22 results of Grace's autopsy?

23 A. Yes, we were.

24 Q. What did you do?

25 A. We -- we were sent that autopsy report. We went

1 -- went through it, entered it into the system, and then as
2 soon as we get those back, we notify the family, the next of
3 kin to -- to come to the office and pick up a copy of that
4 autopsy report. That is -- that does belong to that family.

5 MS. CLEVELAND: I beg the Court's indulgence, Your
6 Honor?

7 THE COURT: Yes, ma'am.

8 MS. CLEVELAND: No further questions.

9 THE COURT: Cross-examination?

10 CROSS-EXAMINATION

11 BY MS. JOHNSTON:

12 Q. Good morning, Deputy Williams.

13 A. Good morning. How are you?

14 Q. Doing well. How are you?

15 A. All right.

16 Q. (Inaudible) a little?

17 A. Can you still hear me? Good.

18 Q. I'll say, Deputy Williams, we were having a little
19 trouble over the (inaudible) --

20 A. Okay.

21 Q. -- just --

22 A. All right. Got you. Look -- all right. Use my
23 stage voice. Okay.

24 Q. All right. Deputy Williams, you testified just a
25 moment ago on direct that you arrived at 9:23 p.m. So after

1 you arrived, you testified, you spoke with EMS and law
2 enforcement and some family members?

3 A. Right.

4 Q. And you mentioned you did a report reflected
5 everything you did on this case?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. Okay. Even beyond that night?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. Okay. And in that report, it includes a lot of
10 things that you personally observed?

11 A. Yeah. There's -- there's some things. Yes.

12 Q. Okay. You included; it was single wide trailer?

13 A. Uh-huh.

14 Q. That that night it was 37 degrees?

15 A. Yes, it was, it was cold that night. Yep.

16 Q. And then you also included, again, the people you
17 spoke to -- kind of the relevant information.

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. Also, aside from -- from that, you included some
20 of your medical observations?

21 A. Uh-huh.

22 Q. Okay. I want to talk about one of those,
23 specifically, before mentions that that (inaudible) was --
24 was fixed and present. Can that process be affected by
25 temperature?

1 A. Yes, it can be. But inside the house, the ambient
2 temperature was normal. It wasn't cold.

3 Q. Your report indicated you cleared the scene late,
4 so 10:00 --

5 A. About 2:01 on the 26th.

6 Q. 2:00 a.m.?

7 A. A.m. Yes, ma'am.

8 Q. So you -- you followed up because again, your
9 report didn't stop that night?

10 A. No, ma'am -- no, ma'am.

11 Q. You followed up on the case with kind of an
12 additional report at -- at the end and indicated, spoke with
13 Grace's family that night, and kind of explained what the
14 next steps were?

15 A. Yes, ma'am.

16 Q. Autopsy and what they should expect?

17 A. That's correct.

18 Q. You -- you also wrote that on November 28th you
19 spoke with Sharon Knight about the autopsy?

20 A. Yeah. Sharon Knight is the scheduler for the
21 autopsies.

22 Q. Makes sense. All right. And then that same day,
23 you spoke with Grace's father and started coordinating the
24 funeral?

25 A. Yes, that's correct.

1 Q. Also, you spoke -- you indicated that you spoke
2 with another -- or a law enforcement, Captain Parish with
3 Fountain Inn.

4 A. I believe that should be corrected to Paris.
5 Somehow, I got Parish in there. Yeah.

6 Q. Who is that?

7 A. He is related to the family of the decedent.
8 There was some relation there, but he wasn't on scene,
9 somehow, we just spoke out of respect. But he wasn't trying
10 to take over the scene or do any investigation. Yes, ma'am.

11 Q. What did y'all talk -- or rather what did you
12 learn after speaking with him because you didn't put any
13 notes in the conversation?

14 A. Not really. He just pretty much said he will
15 leave it with Laurens County Law Enforcement to do their
16 part.

17 Q. You don't remember how long y'all spoke that day?

18 A. It was brief.

19 Q. He called you?

20 A. No, I called him.

21 Q. Called him?

22 A. Yeah.

23 Q. Okay. All right. And then that day --

24 A. One or the other, may -- but anyway, he -- I
25 mentioned his name. We spoke. Yes.

1 Q. Okay. And then later on, you indicate, December
2 7th, spoke with Chris's dad again about picking up some of
3 her baggies.

4 A. Yeah, that -- that was her purse, backpack that I
5 took from the scene. And -- and Grace Abels -- her sister,
6 Crystal Abels came over and signed for those belongings. Her
7 father happened to be out of town in Oklahoma during that
8 time, visiting family.

9 Q. And then you have a final note in your report that
10 you called and let Grace's dad know when the autopsy report
11 was finished?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. And that wasn't until January 24th?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. Okay. Deputy Coroner -- oh, excuse me. Deputy
16 Coroner Williams, can your report make a determination of
17 motive or intent?

18 A. Well, I just took down what I saw, what I knew it,
19 I didn't get into the motive part of it. None of those
20 things. That's -- that's another department agency's job to
21 do.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. No.

24 Q. All right. So no liability or deal in your
25 report?

1 A. No.

2 Q. All right.

3 A. I never did see the Defendant at all on the scene.
4 He was already with law enforcement in their vehicle.

5 Q. Okay. And as -- as you know with your training in
6 homicide is different?

7 A. Yes -- yes, it is.

8 Q. Okay. There -- there is a distinction. Homicide
9 is just what?

10 A. Homicide is -- we all know it has maybe murder.
11 We found a number of weapons on that particular scene. It
12 was obvious --

13 Q. I want to interrupt you.

14 A. Okay.

15 Q. So homicide is a classification, correct?

16 A. Yes.

17 MS. CLEVELAND: Objection, Your Honor.

18 THE WITNESS: Yeah.

19 MS. CLEVELAND: This is beyond the scope of the direct.
20 This is not beyond -- and beyond his expertise as a deputy
21 coroner. He doesn't go into the distinctions of homicide and
22 murder. As you heard him testify, the role of the coroner is
23 to basically be a representative of the deceased.

24 THE COURT: Well, first, with regards to being beyond
25 the scope of the direct, cross-examination, 611 (b),

1 cross-examination lists, "May be cross-examined on any matter
2 relevant to any issue in the case." So overruling that
3 objection. I'm going to ask the -- the -- Counsel to
4 rephrase the question.

5 MS. CLEVELAND: Yes, Your Honor.

6 THE COURT: You can give him -- you can give him the
7 difference in the definitions and ask him if he knows them.
8 But asking him anything to give an opinion on anything is --
9 is improper.

10 MS. JOHNSTON: I'll move on, Your Honor.

11 THE COURT: All right. Thank you.

12 BY MS. JOHNSTON:

13 Q. Okay. Just one thing. You ruled, in your report,
14 manner of death as homicide, correct?

15 A. Uh-huh.

16 MS. JOHNSTON: Thank you, Deputy Williams. I don't
17 have any further questions.

18 THE WITNESS: Okay. All right.

19 THE COURT: Any re-direct?

20 MS. CLEVELAND: No further questions, Your Honor.

21 THE COURT: Ms. Johnston, I think you need to activate
22 your body mic.

23 MS. JOHNSTON: Okay.

24 THE COURT: All right.

25 MS. JOHNSTON: It should be on.

1 THE COURT: We're just having a little bit of
2 difficulty. Madam Court Reporter is having some issues.

3 MS. JOHNSTON: Was it -- was it just then? Because it
4 was on --

5 THE COURT: Yes.

6 MS. JOHNSTON: Okay. Let me -- let me readjust and see
7 if it's any different.

8 THE COURT: You can step down, sir.

9 THE WITNESS: Thank you, sir.

10 MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you. Your Honor, I think it may
11 be an appropriate time for our morning break.

12 THE COURT: Okay. All right. Ladies and gentlemen of
13 the jury, we're going to take the recess, we've been in the
14 courtroom, it's about an hour and 15 minutes now. Those of
15 you that are taking notes, leave your notes and your pens in
16 the seats, and come back to the seat where you've been
17 sitting.

18 I guess, we're going to have assigned seats. Don't
19 discuss the case, don't get your deliberations, don't do any
20 research about any means whatsoever. We'll get you back out
21 probably about 15 minutes in the jury room.

22 (Jury exits courtroom at 11:00 a.m.)

23 THE COURT: Yeah, I think it's better for the -- for
24 Madam Court Reporter to get the mic -- mic part is on your
25 --- somewhere close -- closer to you (inaudible) somewhere

1 like that.

2 MS. DRIGGERS: And Judge, just so you -- I guess so
3 everyone knows, that mic does not amplify. It is only for
4 her. So I know that he -- he kept trying to move it closer.
5 That might have nothing (inaudible).

6 THE COURT: Just -- just to remind you, the witnesses,
7 especially if they're soft spoken or if they have a tendency
8 to speak down into their chest. Because -- I mean, he was
9 facing the other way, and when I asked you to have him speak
10 up, it's because I couldn't hear him. And so just make sure
11 that they keep the voices up. All right. We'll be in recess
12 until 11:15.

13 MS. DRIGGERS: Judge -- Judge, I do need to put
14 something on the record.

15 THE COURT: Okay.

16 MS. DRIGGERS: From Defense's opening -- can we shut
17 those doors, please? Your Honor, I did not want to object in
18 the middle and send jury out, draw more attention, but she
19 did specifically reference manslaughter, which Your Honor
20 instructed yesterday must not to be brought out.

21 I did not want -- again, to object, draw attention to
22 it. She said there's a difference between murder and
23 manslaughter. I would just ask to put on the record and then
24 if it happens again, then we'll have to see.

25 THE COURT: I -- I directed that the dismiss -- I said

1 the dismissal of the involuntary manslaughter warrants
2 couldn't be brought up. I don't think I specific -- I don't
3 think I limited to anything. The evidence will determine
4 whether there's -- any of us are included as charge. But I
5 don't think anything that was raised based in the Defense's
6 opening was outside of the scope of my ruling yesterday.

7 So I -- I appreciate you bringing that up. But we'll -
8 - we'll see if the evidence requires any (inaudible) or not,
9 so -- I -- I think her argument was -- was within my pretrial
10 ruling from yesterday.

11 MS. DRIGGERS: Okay. Thank you, Judge.

12 THE COURT: All right. We'll be in recess.

13 MS. FINCH: Your Honor, just -- it's --

14 THE COURT: All right.

15 MS. FINCH: So sorry. Our next four witnesses are
16 witnesses that we are going to have the body cam. So just --
17 I wanted to make sure the Court had an opportunity to review
18 that. It's my understanding, we don't anticipate any
19 objections. I don't want to speak for Ms. Johnston, of
20 course, but...

21 THE COURT: We -- we watched them this morning and, you
22 know, a lot of them, I -- I couldn't, there were a lot of
23 them that were pretty difficult to hear what was necessarily
24 going on. Any objections to any -- anything in the -- the
25 body-cam that's been provided?

1 MS. JOHNSTON: They have, Your Honor.

2 THE COURT: Any objection?

3 MS. JOHNSTON: Oh, I'm so sorry. I thought you asked
4 if they had been provided. I don't -- I don't anticipate an
5 objection. Again, if something comes up or if they're
6 offered and I see an objection, I don't want -- I don't want
7 you to think that I'm talking out of the side of my mouth,
8 Your Honor, but I have reviewed them.

9 I don't think there's anything objectionable. They
10 have cleaned up a lot of what I would have objected to, Your
11 Honor, in anticipation of saving some time.

12 THE COURT: Okay. All right.

13 MS. FINCH: Just before we started those witnesses, I
14 wanted to make sure. Okay. Thank you.

15 THE COURT: Okay. All right.

16 (Off the record at 11:04 a.m.)

17 (On the record at 11:35 a.m.)

18 THE COURT: Defense is ready?

19 MS. JOHNSTON: We are, Your Honor.

20 THE COURT: All right. Bring the jury, please.

21 (Jury enters courtroom at 11:36 a.m.)

22 THE BAILIFF: All jurors are present, Your Honor.

23 THE COURT: Thank you, sir. Thank you. Ladies and
24 gentlemen, of the jury, I appreciate your patience. I know
25 we took a little bit longer break than I anticipated with

1 some technical difficulties with our microphones in the
2 courtroom. We think we've gotten those ironed out. So we
3 will resume the trial. The State may call its next witness.

4 MS. FINCH: Thank you, Your Honor. The State calls
5 Officer Tyler Wongmanee.

6 THE BAILIFF: (Inaudible).

7 MS. FINCH: I'm sorry?

8 THE BAILIFF: Out?

9 MS. FINCH: Should be. Thank you, Mr. Bolt.

10 OFFICER TYLER ISAAC WONGMANEE,
11 being duly sworn, testified as follows:

12 THE CLERK: Thank you. You may have a seat.

13 DIRECT EXAMINATION

14 BY MS. FINCH:

15 Q. Good morning, Officer. Can you please state and
16 spell your name for the record?

17 A. Tyler Isaac Wongmanee, T-Y-L-E-R I-S-A-A-C
18 W-O-N-G-M-A-N-E-E.

19 Q. And Officer Wongmanee, where are you from?

20 A. Simpsonville, South Carolina.

21 Q. Where do you currently live?

22 A. Warrenville, South Carolina.

23 Q. And where do you currently work?

24 A. Clinton City Police Department.

25 Q. Okay. What's your position with Clinton Police

1 Department?

2 A. I am a Class I police officer.

3 Q. Okay. What -- what does that job entail?

4 A. We conduct criminal investigations in as far as
5 both state and local laws.

6 Q. Okay. And how long have you worked at Clinton
7 City?

8 A. Three and a half months.

9 Q. Where did you work prior?

10 A. Laurens County Sheriff's Office.

11 Q. And how long did you work there?

12 A. Almost two years. I don't know the exact.

13 Q. Okay. Were you working with the Laurens County
14 Sheriff's Department in November of 2023?

15 A. Yes, ma'am.

16 Q. Okay. And what was your job with the Laurens
17 County Sheriff's Office?

18 A. I was a Class I deputy.

19 Q. So same -- same as what you are now?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. What you're doing now?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. Okay. And on November 25, 2023, do you recall
24 responding to a call that night?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. What time did that call come through?

2 A. Approximately 8:37.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. P.m.

5 Q. I'm sorry?

6 A. P.m.

7 Q. Okay. And when -- when you say 8:37, you mean
8 that's when you got the dispatch?

9 A. That's when it was relayed to us, yes.

10 Q. Okay. And do you recall around what time you
11 arrived on scene?

12 A. Approximately 8:39.

13 Q. Okay. So very quickly thereafter?

14 A. Yes, ma'am.

15 Q. About two minutes?

16 A. Yes, ma'am.

17 Q. And where did you go that night?

18 A. 4218 Highway 14, located in Laurens County.

19 Q. Thank you. And what was that -- that dispatch
20 that was sent out, what -- what was it in reference to?

21 A. Accident -- well, it was classified as accidental
22 gunshot wound.

23 Q. Okay. And when you -- let me back up. Who was
24 the initial officer on scene that night?

25 A. I was.

1 Q. Okay. And when you -- when you first arrived,
2 what did you think the dispatch was for?

3 A. What do you mean?

4 Q. I'm sorry?

5 A. What do you mean?

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. Can -- can you repeat that?

8 Q. Sure. When you originally arrived on scene, did
9 you believe the victim shot herself?

10 A. Yes, I believed there was a self-inflicted
11 accidental gunshot wound.

12 Q. Do you recall why you felt that originally?

13 A. I misunderstood the -- when dispatch relayed the
14 call, I misunderstood it as a self-inflicted accidental
15 gunshot wound.

16 Q. Okay. So when you got on scene who was there?

17 A. The Defendant, Camrin Smith.

18 Q. Okay. Can you identify the -- the courtroom in --
19 excuse me, the Defendant in the courtroom today? Do you see
20 him?

21 A. Yes.

22 MS. FINCH: Can you point to him, please? Your Honor,
23 I just ask that the record reflect he's been identified.

24 THE COURT: The record will reflect the identification.

25 MS. FINCH: Thank you.

1 BY MS. FINCH:

2 Q. When you first got the scene, what happened?

3 A. Initially made contact with the Defendant, who
4 came to the front entry point to the house with his hands up.
5 I asked where the victim was, he pointed to the victim laying
6 in the kitchen, and I -- be laying in the kitchen.

7 Q. Okay. So Camrin let you in the door?

8 A. He did.

9 Q. And what position was he in?

10 A. When -- during the first initial contact when he
11 opened the front entry point to the -- to the house, he had
12 his hands kind of, like -- like this.

13 Q. Okay. And were you wearing your body camera that
14 night?

15 A. I was.

16 Q. Have you reviewed that body camera?

17 A. I have.

18 MS. FINCH: Okay. I'm going to show you what we have
19 pre-marked State's Number 3 for ID, has been shared with
20 Defense and the Judge.

21 (State's Exhibit 3 marked for identification.)

22 BY MS. FINCH:

23 Q. Can you identify for me what is -- what that is?

24 A. This is a flash drive containing the body cam --
25 camera footage of that night.

1 Q. Okay. And are your initials on one side?

2 A. They are.

3 Q. And they're dated from when you reviewed that?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. And is that footage that you've seen in its
6 entirety a true and accurate depiction of the scene that
7 night?

8 A. Well, there are pieces cut, I guess.

9 MS. FINCH: Okay. You're right. Your Honor, at this
10 time, we would move in that specific section that I've --
11 I've already shared.

12 THE COURT: Okay. And what's -- what number is that
13 exhibit?

14 MS. FINCH: State's Number 3.

15 MS. JOHNSTON: Without objection.

16 THE COURT: All right. State's 3 will be admitted
17 without objection.

18 MS. FINCH: Thank you, Your Honor.

19 (State's Exhibit Number 3 admitted into evidence.)

20 MS. FINCH: Officer Wongmanee, will you bear with us
21 while we get this rolling? Oh, thank you. This -- is the
22 top one right here. Let me tell you it's all -- no, it's not
23 turned on. There you go. Okay. Now, let me see if we can
24 back it up. Make it bigger. Start it back. Okay.

25 (Video starts at 11:46:29 a.m.)

1 (Video stops at 11:46:30 a.m.)

2 BY MS. FINCH:

3 Q. Okay. Officer Wongmanee, that is the very initial
4 part of your body camera footage, is that right?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. Okay. And when did you turn that body camera on?

7 A. I believe right after I made the initial contact.

8 Q. Okay. And overall, what was the scene like that
9 night?

10 A. I mean, chaotic. We had dogs walking around
11 causing a commotion. The Defendant was in what I would
12 describe as a "state of shock" and they also had a possible
13 dead person laying in the -- in the kitchen.

14 Q. Okay. What -- what -- what were your initial
15 actions when you found Grace on the floor?

16 A. Check pulse, and then following that, did some
17 chest compressions.

18 Q. Okay. How did Grace appear when you found her?

19 A. She was cool to the touch. Blue fingers and lips,
20 eyes open, unresponsive.

21 Q. Okay. And when you -- when you checked for that
22 pulse, what did you find?

23 A. There was none.

24 Q. And you very quickly, thereon, relayed that back
25 to dispatch?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. What did you do after your initial viewing of that
3 body? What happened next?

4 A. Following that, I did chest compressions, then
5 relaying as much information to EMT or EMS and fire. And
6 then that's when Sergeant Foster arrived on scene.

7 Q. Okay. Before Sergeant Foster arrived, how did --
8 how did Camrin respond when you asked where the gun was?

9 A. He said it was in the back room and pulling it to
10 the back of the -- of -- of the -- of the house.

11 Q. Okay. What -- what was his body language like?

12 A. He didn't really have any body language. He was
13 kind of emotionless, I guess.

14 Q. Okay. And why did you ask where that gun was?

15 A. Just for officer safety reasons.

16 Q. Okay. And did you ultimately detain Camrin that
17 night?

18 A. I did not.

19 Q. Okay. How long would you say you were the only
20 law enforcement officer on that scene?

21 A. Less than five minutes.

22 Q. Okay. And you mentioned Deputy -- or Sergeant
23 Foster arrived after that?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. Once -- once Sergeant Foster arrived, what did you

1 do?

2 A. I still stayed with the victim until EMS arrived
3 on scene.

4 Q. Okay. Would you agree with me you held pressure
5 on -- on the wound?

6 A. On the chest, yes.

7 Q. Okay. And after EMS arrived, you -- you -- I
8 guess, more or less passed the body off to EMS for -- for
9 their attention?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. What'd you do after that?

12 A. Following that, I assisted Sergeant Foster and
13 Deputy Wilson with the firearm in question.

14 Q. Okay. Did -- did you do anything specific to help
15 them that night with the weapon?

16 A. I took photographs.

17 Q. Okay. And was there anything else you did as far
18 as the investigation of this case?

19 A. No, that was the extent.

20 MS. FINCH: Okay. Just one minute. Okay. No further
21 questions. Thank you.

22 MS. JOHNSTON: Your Honor, I don't have any questions
23 for this witness.

24 THE COURT: All right. Thank you, sir. You can step
25 down.

1 MS. CLEVELAND: Your Honor, the State calls William
2 Foster.

3 SERGEANT WILLIAM HUGH FOSTER,
4 being duly sworn, testified as follows:

5 THE CLERK: Thank you. You may have a seat.

6 DIRECT EXAMINATION

7 BY MS. CLEVELAND:

8 Q. Thank you for joining us today. Can you please
9 state your name and spell your name for the court reporter?

10 A. William Hugh Foster. W-I-L-L-I-A-M H-U-G-H
11 F-O-S-T-E-R.

12 Q. And where are you from?

13 A. Spartanburg, South Carolina.

14 Q. Where do you currently live?

15 A. Spartanburg.

16 Q. And where do you currently work?

17 A. Laurens County Sheriff's Department.

18 Q. How long have you worked at Laurens County
19 Sheriff's Office?

20 A. Just over three years.

21 Q. And what's your current position with them?

22 A. Shift sergeant.

23 Q. And what does that position entail?

24 A. I assist the lieutenant with coordinating shift
25 duties between the guys, checking off reports and videos.

1 Q. And in November of 2023, where did you work?

2 A. I worked at Laurens County Sheriff's Department.

3 Q. And what was your position at that time?

4 A. Shift sergeant.

5 Q. Transitioning to this specific case, how did you
6 get involved in the current case?

7 A. Dispatch notified us of a gunshot.

8 Q. And what was your involvement?

9 A. I -- I arrived second on scene, and then began
10 coordinating the scene.

11 Q. And just to clarify, what was the dispatch in
12 reference to?

13 A. Said there was a gunshot victim down. They
14 advised us it was -- I -- it was unclear with me if it was
15 accidental on purpose or suicide. It was unclear on the
16 radio.

17 Q. Okay. And what day were you dispatched to the
18 Defendant's home?

19 A. That would be November 25, 2023.

20 Q. What address were you dispatched to?

21 A. 4218 Highway 14, which is located in Laurens
22 County.

23 Q. Approximately what time did you arrive at the
24 scene?

25 A. Approximately, 8:40 p.m.

1 Q. When you arrived, how many other law enforcement
2 officers were on the scene?

3 A. There was one other deputy on scene.

4 Q. When you arrived, what was the first thing you
5 did?

6 A. Entered the residence and as I entered the
7 residence, I started observing what all my surroundings were,
8 and I noticed the suspect sitting on the couch facing away
9 from where the victim was laying.

10 Q. And what was the suspect sitting on?

11 A. He was sitting on the couch. There was a TV away
12 from the area where the victim was laying, and he was sitting
13 on the couch in the center of it, watching TV.

14 Q. Was the suspect identified at that time?

15 A. At that time, no. But we did identify him once we
16 got everything secure.

17 Q. And do you see the -- suspect today in the room?

18 A. Yes, ma'am.

19 Q. Can you identify an article of clothing he's
20 currently wearing?

21 A. He's got a pink-ish shirt on, ma'am.

22 MS. CLEVELAND: All right. Let the record reflect the
23 witness has identified the Defendant in this case.

24 THE COURT: The record will -- will -- will reflect the
25 identification.

1 MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Your Honor.

2 BY MS. CLEVELAND:

3 Q. So going back to what you were observing on the
4 scene, you observed the Defendant on the couch. Did you
5 write a report this night?

6 A. No, ma'am, I did not.

7 Q. Why is that?

8 A. Honestly, I -- I've done most of the coordination
9 on having deputies do different duties, so their reports
10 would reflect everything that they were assigned to do.

11 Q. Okay. And -- but were you equipped with a
12 body-worn camera while you were on the scene?

13 A. Yes, ma'am.

14 Q. And have you reviewed that footage before today?

15 A. Yes, ma'am.

16 MS. CLEVELAND: Handing you what has been previously
17 marked as State's Exhibit 4(a) and 4(b), for identification
18 purposes. I believe we've sent it to the Defense.

19 (State's Exhibit Numbers 4(a) and 4(b) marked for
20 identification.)

21 BY MS. CLEVELAND:

22 Q. Do you recognize what I've just handed you?

23 A. Yes, ma'am.

24 Q. And what is that?

25 A. This is a copy of the -- yes, ma'am. Report from

1 my -- or the incident from a body cam.

2 Q. And are your initials on the flash drive there?

3 A. Yes, ma'am.

4 Q. Is that footage that you previously observed an
5 accurate depiction of what you saw that night?

6 A. Yes, ma'am.

7 Q. Has it been altered in any way?

8 A. No, ma'am.

9 MS. CLEVELAND: At this time, the State moves to enter
10 State's Exhibit 4(a) into evidence.

11 MS. JOHNSTON: Without objection.

12 THE COURT: 4(a) is admitted without objection.

13 (State's Exhibit Number 4(a) admitted into evidence.)

14 MS. CLEVELAND: Permission to publish, Your Honor?

15 THE COURT: Yes, ma'am.

16 (Video starts at 11:59:22 a.m.)

17 (Video stops at 12:15:27 p.m.)

18 BY MS. CLEVELAND:

19 Q. All right. So that was a lot. That was a long
20 clip. We're just going to kind of go through your steps
21 there, okay?

22 A. Okay.

23 Q. During the course of your investigation that
24 night, was Camrin Smith ever placed into an investigative
25 detention?

1 A. Yes, ma'am.

2 Q. And who placed him in?

3 A. I did.

4 Q. Can you just explain to the jury and to us what an
5 investigative detention is?

6 A. At that point in time, you're being detained while
7 you're performing your search investigation ongoing. You're
8 not under arrest, you're just being detained for his safety
9 as well as ours.

10 Q. And what's the purpose of an investigative
11 detention?

12 A. He's not necessarily free to leave because we're
13 doing an investigation. So we've got to keep him there with
14 us, but we're also trying to keep him safe, keep us safe, and
15 keep him as comfortable as he can be.

16 Q. So to be clear, at that point in time, Camrin
17 Smith was not under arrest?

18 A. No, ma'am. At that point in time. No, ma'am.

19 Q. So where in the residence was the Defendant placed
20 in an investigative detention?

21 A. He was in -- he was -- he was on the couch facing
22 the wall when I entered the residence. I went ahead, got him
23 up, put him investigative attention and did what they call a
24 Terry frisk just to make sure he didn't have any other
25 weapons on him, and then placed him back down on the couch.

1 Q. And was that before you initiated your body-worn
2 camera?

3 A. Yeah, they -- mine -- for some reason, our old
4 cameras, they had delay, so I hid it as I was entering the
5 house and it just, it took 30 seconds to catch up.

6 Q. So while the Defendant was sitting on the couch,
7 what were you doing?

8 A. I was looking -- searching for -- with the weapon
9 searching for the weapon, trying to check to see if -- you
10 know, he had signs of life on the -- or the victim as well.

11 Q. And were you or other responding officers able to
12 locate the gun that was used?

13 A. Yes, ma'am.

14 Q. And what type of gun did the Defendant use that
15 night?

16 A. It was a .380.

17 Q. And how -- how did you know it was a .380?

18 A. He advised -- I -- from what I got from dispatch
19 is he advised him it was a .380.

20 Q. Okay. And how were you able to locate that gun?

21 A. He had told me it was in the back bedroom. Went
22 back there, seen the box, didn't see the gun. I went back
23 and asked, went -- went back and asked, he said it could
24 possibly be on the washer dryer. So I went back there, found
25 a blackened color, 9mm pistol, knew that was not what he had

1 told dispatch so then I went back and asked and then he
2 stated, again, that it was in the back bedroom. And that's
3 when we went back and located the pistol.

4 Q. And where did you ultimately find the .380?

5 A. The .380 was -- there's a blue case, openup, and
6 the .380 was placed under the blue box.

7 Q. And where is that in relation to the washing
8 machine?

9 A. That is on, further, past the residence.

10 Q. And did the Defendant say anything to you while
11 you were searching for the gun?

12 A. The only thing he told me was he didn't hide it.

13 Q. And now that -- that was a very chaotic scene,
14 understandably, there was a lot of people in and out. Was
15 the front door kept shut the entire time you were
16 investigating the scene?

17 A. To my knowledge? Yes, ma'am. Unless it was
18 responders coming in and out doing their job.

19 Q. And why would the front door be closed the entire
20 time?

21 A. It is just to keep anybody else -- and if -- they
22 shut anybody else from coming in.

23 MS. CLEVELAND: Okay. And moving on you had additional
24 body-worn camera from that night. And you have previously
25 identified that and we have admitted it into evidence.

1 Permission to publish State's Exhibit 4(b)?

4 MS. CLEVELAND: Okay. I'll lay the -- I'll lay the
5 foundation for that.

7 BY MS. CLEVELAND:

11 A. It's got 4(a) and 4(b), and on the other side,
12 it's got a date and my initials.

14 A. Yes, ma'am.

16 A. No, ma'am.

19 MS. JOHNSTON: Without objection, Your Honor.

21 (State's Exhibit Number 4(b) admitted into evidence.)

24 THE COURT: Yes, ma'am.

1 (Video stops at 12:24:50 p.m.)

2 BY MS. CLEVELAND:

3 Q. Okay. So there was an obvious change in scenery
4 and time between our -- your last body-worn camera that we
5 just showed and this one?

6 A. Yes, ma'am.

7 Q. What have you been doing prior to this body-worn
8 camera?

9 A. I was outside the residence in the yard. And at
10 that time, honestly, I cut it off, nothing was going on to
11 preserve battery life for further calls or incidents that
12 come up.

13 Q. And up until this point that we saw, where had the
14 Defendant been?

15 A. Last time I noticed, he was on the couch, and then
16 obviously he was escorted to a patrol car.

17 Q. And why was the Defendant placed in a patrol
18 vehicle?

19 A. We placed him in a patrol vehicle and get him out
20 of the residence when we started to execute the search
21 warrants and things.

22 Q. And who -- who was with you in the body-worn
23 camera, just there?

24 A. That was Investigator Brown.

25 . Q. Okay. And was the Defendant read his Miranda

1 rights?

2 A. Yes, ma'am.

3 Q. Who read the Defendant his Miranda rights?

4 A. Investigator Brown.

5 Q. And were you present when the Defendant gave his
6 statement?

7 A. Yes, ma'am.

8 Q. And based on your observations from that night,
9 how would you describe the Defendant's demeanor?

10 A. Didn't seem to have a whole lot of emotions. I
11 mean, he just kind of bland, there was no crying. No -- it
12 just seemed like he was just kind of in space while sitting
13 there.

14 Q. And after staying there with Brown, and when your
15 body-worn camera cut off, was that the end of your
16 involvement in the investigation?

17 A. Once the search warrant arrived, I did -- I did go
18 back into the residence and -- and assist in trying to locate
19 shell casing. Any other further evidence.

20 MS. CLEVELAND: I beg the Court's indulgence?

21 THE COURT: Yes, ma'am.

22 MS. CLEVELAND: No further questions.

23 CROSS-EXAMINATION

24 BY MR. ERWIN:

25 Q. Sergeant Foster?

1 A. Yes, sir.

2 Q. So I believe you testified a minute ago, I think I
3 gathered from watching your body camera that you were kind of
4 in charge of the scene that night. Is that fair to say?

5 A. Yes, sir.

6 Q. Okay. You were not the lead investigator in this
7 case, though, right?

8 A. No, sir.

9 Q. Okay. So you were not involved in the formal
10 interview that happened later with Camrin back at the
11 station?

12 A. No, sir.

13 Q. And you were also not involved with the decision
14 of what crime to charge Camrin with, were you?

15 A. No sir.

16 MR. ERWIN: No further questions.

17 THE COURT: Re-direct?

18 MS. CLEVELAND: No, Your Honor.

19 THE COURT: Thank you, sir. You can step down.

20 THE WITNESS: Thank you, Your Honor.

21 MS. CLEVELAND: Judge, do you want us to proceed with
22 our next witness, or?

23 THE COURT: You all -- you all approach really quick?

24 (Bench conference at 12:30 p.m.)

25 THE COURT: Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, looking

1 at the clock, it's probably an appropriate time to break for
2 lunch. And so, we're going to do that at this time, and I'm
3 going to ask that you be back in your jury room at 2:00.

4 We'll resume the case at that time. Don't begin your
5 deliberations, don't discuss the case amongst yourselves with
6 anybody else, don't do any research about any issue which has
7 been raised by any means whatsoever. Please leave your notes
8 and your pen in your seats, and we will see you back this
9 afternoon at 2:00. Thank you.

10 (Jury exits courtroom at 12:32 p.m.)

11 THE COURT: All right. We will be in recess until
12 2:00.

13 MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Your Honor.

14 MS. FINCH: Thank you.

15 MS. DRIGGERS: Yes, Your Honor.

16 MS. JOHNSTON: Yes, Your Honor.

17 (Off the record at 12:32 p.m.)

18 (On the record at 2:23 p.m.)

19 THE COURT: All right. Bring the jury, please.

20 (Jury enters courtroom at 2:24 p.m.)

21 THE BAILIFF: All jurors are present, Your Honor.

22 THE COURT: Thank you, sir. All right. Ladies and
23 gentlemen of the jury, we will resume the State's case.

24 MS. DRIGGERS: The State calls Deputy Wilson.

25 DEPUTY ALBERT WILSON,

1 being duly sworn, testified as follows:

2 THE CLERK: Thank you. You may have a seat.

3 DIRECT EXAMINATION

4 BY MS. DRIGGERS:

5 Q. Thank you for joining us today, Deputy Wilson.
6 Can you please state your full name and spell it for the
7 court reporter, please?

8 A. My name is Deputy Albert Wilson. A-L-B-E-R-T
9 W-I-L-S-O-N.

10 Q. And where are you from?

11 A. Laurens, South Carolina.

12 Q. And how long -- so you've lived here your whole
13 life?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. And where do you currently work?

16 A. Laurens County Sheriff's Office.

17 Q. How long have you been with the sheriff's office?

18 A. Two years.

19 Q. Two years?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. Have you ever been with another agency or just the
22 sheriff's office?

23 A. Just the sheriff's office.

24 Q. And what's your position at the sheriff's office?

25 A. I'm a road deputy.

1 Q. And were you working in that capacity in November
2 of 2023?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. And what does that position entail?

5 A. You answer every day calls for service and
6 investigate crimes.

7 Q. And did you have the occasion to get involved in
8 the case against Camrin Smith?

9 A. I did.

10 Q. What day did you get involved?

11 A. November 25, 2023.

12 Q. And how did you get involved?

13 A. We received a call for service to 4218 Highway 14
14 within the county of Laurens.

15 Q. And do you remember approximately what time you
16 got to the scene?

17 A. Approximately, 8:43.

18 Q. And you weren't the first one on the scene, so who
19 else was there when you got there?

20 A. Sergeant Foster was there and Deputy Wongmanee.

21 Q. And what did you do when you first got to the
22 scene?

23 A. When I first got to the scene, Sergeant Foster --
24 Foster directed me to go to my car and retrieve a med kit to
25 assist with the victim.

1 Q. Okay. And what'd you do after that?

2 A. After that I came back inside and he wanted me to
3 help him do a protective sweep at the residence.

4 Q. Can you explain what a "protective sweep" is?

5 A. Protective sweep is basically what we do in
6 situations like this to ensure nobody else is inside the
7 house.

8 Q. And when you conducted that sweep, who all was in
9 the house other than law enforcement?

10 A. The Defendant, Camrin Smith, and he's wearing a
11 pink shirt.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. Sergeant Foster, Deputy Wongmanee and the victim.

14 Q. Okay. So you said that's the Defendant over
15 there?

16 A. Yes.

17 MS. DRIGGERS: Okay. Your Honor, if you could let the
18 record reflect that this witness has identified the
19 Defendant.

20 THE COURT: The record will reflect the identification.

21 BY MS. DRIGGERS:

22 Q. So in conducting that sweep, did you locate
23 anything of significance?

24 A. Yes. As we were walking through the hallway, I
25 located a box with a firearm on the washing machine. As we

1 continued to walk through the residence in the back bedroom,
2 we observed another box with a .380 underneath.

3 Q. You said it was underneath?

4 A. Underneath the case. Yes.

5 Q. Okay. And you said that these items were located
6 in the back bedroom?

7 A. Yes.

8 MS. DRIGGERS: Okay. I'm going to hand you what's been
9 pre-marked as State's Exhibits 9 through 11. And if you can
10 just flip through those for me.

11 (State's Exhibit Numbers 9 through 11 marked for
12 identification.)

13 BY MS. DRIGGERS:

14 Q. Do you recognize those?

15 A. I do.

16 Q. What are they?

17 A. This is the case that the gun was under, and those
18 are the cartridges that were inside the case.

19 Q. Okay. Inside the case of the gun?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. Okay. And those are true and accurate
22 representation of the box as well as the cartridges that you
23 observed that night?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. And have they been altered in any way?

1 A. No.

2 MS. DRIGGERS: Your Honor, I'll move to admit State's
3 Exhibits 9 through 11.

4 MS. JOHNSTON: Can I just get them really quick?

5 MS. DRIGGERS: Yes. I'm so sorry.

6 MS. JOHNSTON: It's fine. Without objection, Your
7 Honor.

8 THE COURT: State's 9 through 11 are admitted without
9 objection.

10 (State's Exhibit Numbers 9 through 11 admitted into
11 evidence.)

12 BY MS. DRIGGERS:

13 Q. And then if we can publish State's 9 first and
14 then we'll go through. Okay. So this is State's 9. Can you
15 explain to us what that is that we're looking at?

16 A. That is the case that the gun was under.

17 Q. Okay. And if we can go to the next one, please.

18 And then what is this that we're looking at?

19 A. That was the case and the cartridges that were
20 inside the case.

21 Q. Okay. And then if we can go to the next one?

22 A. Those are the cartridges inside the case.

23 Q. Okay. So you said that those were on top of the
24 bed. And then where specifically did you say that you
25 located the -- the Bersa?

1 A. It was underneath the case.

2 Q. Okay. And were you wearing body cam that night?

3 A. Yes.

4 MS. DRIGGERS: I'm going to hand you what's been
5 pre-marked as State's Exhibit 5.

6 (State's Exhibit Number 5 marked for identification.)

7 BY MS. DRIGGERS:

8 Q. Do you recognize that?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. What is it?

11 A. This is my body cam footage.

12 Q. How do you know?

13 A. It's dated and my initials are on this.

14 Q. Okay. And is that footage a true and accurate
15 depiction of what you saw on the scene that night?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. Has it been altered in any way?

18 A. No.

19 MS. DRIGGERS: Your Honor, at this time, the State
20 would move to admit State's 5 into evidence.

21 MS. JOHNSTON: Without objection, Your Honor.

22 THE COURT: State's 5 is admitted without objection.

23 (State's Exhibit Number 5 admitted into evidence.)

24 MS. DRIGGERS: And then if we can publish State's 5?

25 (Video starts at 2:31:31 p.m.)

1 (Video stops at 2:33:30 p.m.)

2 BY MS. DRIGGERS:

3 Q. All right. So we were just able to see all the
4 things that you just told us that you did. So going back to
5 when you retrieved that Bersa 380, what was the condition of
6 the gun at the time?

7 A. The hammer of the firearm was locked back as if it
8 had just been fired or ready to fire with the magazine
9 inside.

10 Q. You said the magazine was inside?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. Okay. And was it loaded?

13 A. It was.

14 Q. And what did you do with it at that point?

15 A. I rendered the weapon safe, as you seen in the
16 video. I took the magazine out and racked the slide, and
17 when I did a live round did drop.

18 Q. Okay. And you say it fell from where again?

19 A. Inside the chamber of the firearm.

20 Q. Okay. And are you aware of how many cartridges
21 that magazine holds in total?

22 A. Yeah, in total, it holds -- holds eight.

23 Q. Okay. And we saw you physically checking that on
24 the -- on the body cam?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. And how many cartridges did you retrieve in total
2 from that magazine?

3 A. In the magazine? Six plus the one that fell so,
4 seven.

5 Q. Seven in total?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. Okay. And did you collect anything else with it?

8 A. I collected the firearm, the magazine, and the
9 remainder rounds and secured them in my patrol vehicle.

10 Q. Okay. And would you recognize those items?

11 A. Yes.

12 MS. DRIGGERS: All right. I'm going to hand you what's
13 been pre-marked as State's Exhibit 6 through 8.

14 (State's Exhibit Numbers 6 through 8 marked for
15 identification.)

16 BY MS. DRIGGERS:

17 Q. Do you recognize that or those, I should say?

18 A. I do.

19 Q. What are they?

20 A. This is the box that contains the Bersa 380.

21 These are the seven rounds that were got out of the magazine
22 and the chamber of the firearm.

23 Q. Okay. Can I get you to open up 6 and 7?

24 A. Yes. Someone got a -- scissors?

25 Q. I believe that there are scissors. Let me grab

1 something. And for now, just open it up right in front of
2 you, okay?

3 A. Okay.

4 Q. I am going to give you another tool to use. It
5 might be a little easier.

6 A. Yeah.

7 Q. Got that sealed up pretty good. All right. And
8 just looking inside as you're looking at it, is that in the
9 same or substantially the same condition as when you
10 collected it that night?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. Same as State's 8 as well?

13 A. Yes.

14 MS. DRIGGERS: Okay. Your Honor, at this time, the
15 State would move 6 through 8 into evidence.

16 MS. JOHNSTON: Without objection.

17 THE COURT: All right. State's 6 through 8 are
18 admitted without objection.

19 (State's Exhibit Numbers 6 through 8 admitted into evidence.)

20 BY MS. DRIGGERS:

21 Q. And be -- before we go any further, I'm going to
22 have you remove the magazine from that gun. Okay. Oh, is it
23 already out?

24 A. Uh-huh.

25 Q. Okay. And then I'm going to also have you put

1 that gun safety on it before we go further.

2 THE COURT: Ladies and gentlemen, what -- of the jury,
3 what he's doing is he's putting a device in that weapon to
4 ensure that it is inoperable and cannot be fired. So
5 obviously he's changing the composition of the weapon, but
6 that's for the safety of everyone in this courtroom.

7 BY MS. DRIGGERS:

8 Q. Okay. Thank you. And if you don't mind just
9 showing it to the jury? All right. So that was the Bersa
10 380 that you located?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. Okay. And if you can do the same for State's 8,
13 those cartridges. All right. And you said those are the
14 cartridges from the magazine?

15 A. Correct.

16 Q. Okay. Thank you. And after securing that
17 evidence, what, if anything, did you do after that?

18 A. Secured the gun in my patrol vehicle and then
19 Lieutenant McMahan notified me that the phone was taken from
20 the Defendant's father, which I then took possession of that
21 phone.

22 Q. Okay. So you secured that as well?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. And what did you do after collecting that phone
25 and putting it in your car? Did you do anything after that?

1 A. After doing that, we secured the scene and
2 basically got everybody out of the house and waited for the
3 search warrant.

4 Q. Okay. You said you secured the scene? How did
5 you go about securing the scene?

6 A. So basically, what we do, we get everybody out of
7 the house, make sure nobody goes back in and wait for
8 investigators and a search warrant.

9 Q. And why do you -- why do you all do that?

10 A. For the integrity of the -- whatever's inside.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. The evidence, body, everything.

13 Q. And did that end the involvement in this case for
14 you?

15 A. Yes.

16 MS. DRIGGERS: Okay. I beg the Court's indulgence?

17 THE COURT: Yes, ma'am.

18 MS. DRIGGERS: No further questions. Please answer any
19 the Defense may have.

20 CROSS-EXAMINATION

21 BY MR. ERWIN:

22 Q. Deputy Wilson, how are you?

23 A. Good, sir. How are you?

24 Q. I'm fine. You are not the lead investigator on
25 this case, is that right?

1 A. Correct.

2 Q. That Investigator Sweat? Is that Investigator
3 Sweat?

4 A. Yes -- yes.

5 Q. I was just looking to see if --

6 A. Oh, okay.

7 Q. He's here, right? I don't think he is.

8 A. Yes, sir.

9 Q. Okay. So you did not talk to Camrin at the scene?

10 A. No.

11 Q. You didn't take the 911 call?

12 A. No.

13 Q. You did not participate in the lengthy interview
14 of Camrin after the fact?

15 A. No.

16 Q. And you did not participate in the decision of
17 what crime to charge Camrin with?

18 A. No.

19 MR. ERWIN: Okay. No further questions.

20 THE COURT: Any re-direct?

21 MS. DRIGGERS: No, Your Honor.

22 THE COURT: You can step down, sir. Thank you.

23 THE WITNESS: Thanks sir.

24 MS. FINCH: The State calls Lieutenant Jeremy McMahan.

25 LIEUTENANT JEREMY MCMAHAN,

1 being duly sworn, testified as follows:

2 THE CLERK: Thank you. You may have a seat.

3 DIRECT EXAMINATION

4 BY MS. FINCH:

5 Q. Good afternoon. Can you state and spell your name
6 for the record, please?

7 A. It's Jeremy McMahan. First name is J-E-R-E-M-Y,
8 and the last name is M-C-M-A-H-A-N.

9 Q. How do we pronounce the last name?

10 A. McMahan.

11 Q. McMahan?

12 A. Yes, ma'am.

13 Q. Thank you. And where are you from, Lieutenant?

14 A. Well, I work for Laurens County Sheriff's Office,
15 but I live in Greenwood County.

16 Q. Okay. Just answered my next two questions. How
17 long have you worked for the Laurens County Sheriff's Office?

18 A. I have been here since 2013.

19 Q. Okay. How long have you been in law enforcement?

20 A. I've been in law enforcement for about 15 years,
21 going on 16.

22 Q. Okay. And can you just explain to the jury what
23 your position as lieutenant entails?

24 A. Yeah. I'm the road shift lieutenant for the echo
25 shift. Basically, my duties are supervising the shift. I

1 check off reports. I do payroll. I just supervise and
2 oversee the calls that all the deputies go to any resources
3 or anything like they may need for calls or equipment or
4 anything like that I take care of. And -- just general
5 supervision.

6 Q. Do you have the opportunity to respond to calls?

7 A. Yes, ma'am.

8 Q. Okay. And were you working at the sheriff's
9 office November 25, 2023?

10 A. Yes, ma'am.

11 Q. What was your title at that time?

12 A. You mean as far as rank? Road lieutenant.

13 Q. Okay. And did you respond to a call that evening
14 of November 25, 2023?

15 A. Yes, I did.

16 Q. Do you recall what that incident location was?

17 A. It was 4218 Highway 14.

18 Q. That's in Laurens County?

19 A. Yes, ma'am. Actually, Gray Court, I believe.

20 Q. Okay. Do you recall about what time you arrived?

21 A. It was approximately about 20:43, 8:43 p.m.

22 Q. Okay. And when you arrived on scene, who else was
23 there?

24 A. When I arrived initially, Sergeant Foster, Deputy
25 Wongmanee, and -- they were there. And then Deputy Wilson

1 was somewhere in the crowd. I initially laid eyes on
2 Sergeant Foster and Deputy Wongmanee first.

3 Q. Okay. Was the Defendant also present?

4 A. The Defendant and the victim as well. Yes, ma'am.

5 Q. Okay. So when you arrived, were you the ranking
6 officer on the scene?

7 A. Once I arrived, I was a ranking officer.

8 Q. Okay. What did you do upon initially arriving to
9 that scene?

10 A. I went inside, observed the Defendant sitting in,
11 I guess, the living room area, looked to the right and that's
12 when I saw Sergeant Foster, Deputy Wongmanee. They were
13 right there with the -- the victim. So I went over to them
14 to assist and attempted to render aid. They actually left
15 me, I know Sergeant -- Sergeant Foster, and then he had
16 grabbed Deputy Wilson. They went out elsewhere, I think, to
17 secure the rest of the residence. I remained there with the
18 victim until as the fire department EMS were coming in pretty
19 much directly behind me.

20 Q. Okay. Did -- did you perform any sort of
21 resuscitation on the victim?

22 A. No. My duties consisted of -- initially, I wasn't
23 sure where the injuries were. So I started cutting the shirt
24 off because we're trying to look for where the injuries are.
25 I checked for pulse and things like that, active bleeding, so

1 that's what I did. The fire department came in and brought
2 their equipment. They also assessed for pulse, any type
3 breathing, then started bringing the stuff that -- I guess,
4 checked for heartbeats and whatever else they do. So.

5 Q. Okay. So it's fair to say you were with the
6 victim for a short amount of time?

7 A. A little short period. Yes, ma'am.

8 Q. And in that time, you testified that you checked
9 for a pulse?

10 A. I did. I checked for a pulse both at her wrist
11 and I checked chest area also for any rise or fall to see if
12 she was breathing.

13 Q. What -- what did you find?

14 A. When I immediately grabbed her, she was cool when
15 I -- when I grabbed her. Did not feel anything at the -- the
16 wrist. That's why I checked around her heart area to see if
17 I could feel it beating. I could not nor could I feel or see
18 any rise of her chest. The wound had no -- no breathing or
19 -- I'm sorry, no active bleeding on it.

20 I did notice the chest area stuff to be cool too. And
21 then of course -- I don't know her original color, but she
22 looked like she had lost some color, but the lips in that
23 area had started kind of turning blue and losing the color in
24 those, so...

25 Q. Okay. Thank you. And once EMF -- EMS took over

1 working with Grace, where did you move? What did you do
2 next?

3 A. I actually stepped out of the way and let them go
4 ahead and perform their duties. I went to check and assess
5 to see what Sergeant Foster and then Wilson and Wongmanee
6 were doing. I made it as far as to the hallway where it
7 meets the living room.

8 Sergeant Foster had come out and I think they had
9 located some stuff in the back bedroom. At that time, I did
10 not know who the victim or the Defendant was, so I just
11 simply asked him what his name was, and I was trying to see
12 if he had an ID or something, which he told me his wallet was
13 over. I believe it was a nightstand or the --

14 Q. Who -- who are you talking about when you say
15 "he"?

16 A. The Defendant.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. Because at the time, I did not know his name. And
19 I asked him his name, was looking for some identification and
20 -- you have to forgive me. I call it a nightstand or a TV
21 stand that was right there in front of him. He had a wallet
22 and I grabbed it. I got his ID, so one of the other deputies
23 could run it and then I escorted him out to my patrol car.

24 Q. Okay. And you identified the Defendant as Camrin
25 Smith?

1 A. It was Camrin Smith. Yes, ma'am.

2 Q. Okay. Why did you take him out to your patrol
3 car?

4 A. At the time, I did not know what his part was.
5 One of the other deputies had detained him but also to just
6 to provide any evidence or anything inside there that may be
7 crucial, and to just get him out of the general area of where
8 the instant location was, and to put him in a safe, secure
9 place. And also, for his protection as well -- because,
10 again, I didn't know what his part was, so...

11 Q. Okay. And in -- in that interaction, what was the
12 Defendant's demeanor like?

13 A. He -- it was nothing. He did exactly what I asked
14 him to. I asked him for the wallet and stuff. He -- he told
15 me, "I -- I think it's here, maybe there." I grabbed where
16 he told me to look and that was pretty much it. He wasn't
17 excited or crying, he was just there.

18 I took him outside. I did tell him I'm not going to
19 talk to him or whatever, I'm not going to ask him anything.
20 But just went and secure him my car and if he needed
21 something, I checked on him to make sure he was okay. He
22 said, "Okay." And walked out to the car and sat in the car
23 until he would -- "Talk to you later." So...

24 Q. Okay. And as lieutenant, what -- what did you do
25 next? Did you alert that you needed an investigator on the

1 scene?

2 A. Yes, ma'am. Once I secured him in the car, I --
3 initially, we have a -- on my computer, a on-call list which
4 I later found out was not up-to-date, but I initially looked
5 to see who the on-call investigator was to make contact. A
6 little frustrated because it wasn't them. I actually went up
7 calling Captain Wilke who was over investigations and he
8 instructed me, I explained to him what was going on. Then he
9 had told me there was a change and I found out who the
10 on-call investigator was, and made contact with them.

11 And then I had got with Sergeant Foster and Deputy
12 Wongmanee to see what they had saw on their first initial
13 contact so I could gather information past an investigator so
14 we have an idea of what he was responding to.

15 Q. Okay. And did you have on your county-issued body
16 camera on the scene?

17 A. Yes, ma'am, I did.

18 MS. FINCH: I'm going to show you what's been
19 pre-marked State's 12. Excuse me.

20 (State's Exhibit Number 12 marked for identification.)

21 BY MS. FINCH:

22 Q. Can you identify that for me, please?

23 A. This is going to be the drive that contains my
24 body camera from that night, so...

25 Q. Okay. And you reviewed that footage?

1 A. Yes, ma'am, I have.

2 Q. How do you know that that's what's on there?

3 A. I reviewed it and then actually initialed and
4 dated the time that I re-reviewed it --

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. -- on the on the drive, so...

7 Q. Okay. And upon your review, that footage is true
8 and accurate depiction of your involvement, what you saw on
9 the scene that night?

10 A. Yes, ma'am.

11 Q. Okay. Have -- had it been altered at all?

12 A. No, ma'am.

13 MS. FINCH: Your Honor, at this time, the State would
14 move Exhibit 12 into evidence.

15 MS. JOHNSTON: Without objection.

16 THE COURT: State's 12 is admitted without objection.

17 (State's Exhibit Number 12 admitted into evidence.)

18 BY MS. FINCH:

19 Q. All right. Lieutenant McMahan, I'm going to go
20 through this in parts. When -- when you placed the Defendant
21 in your vehicle, do you recall what happened next?

22 A. I -- I placed him in my vehicle. I know I went
23 around to the other side when I was looking for the -- the --
24 the on-call list. I'd actually went back and talked to
25 Sergeant Foster and stuff. I came back out the patrol car.

1 And if I remember correctly, is when the parents of Mr. Smith
2 had arrived on scene.

3 Q. Okay. Tell us about that interaction, please.

4 A. When they had arrived, they came and was kind of
5 asking about Camrin. I don't remember specifically what they
6 said off the top of my head without -- without seeing the
7 camera, but they had come up and were asking questions. I
8 did advise them that Camrin was in the -- the back of the
9 patrol car. And of course, the Defendant -- which is
10 Ms. Grace, I believe she was obviously the victim, was inside
11 the house.

12 He said they arrived because they knew that -- they
13 knew the reason they were there because they said Camrin had
14 called, said he accidentally shot -- or had shot Grace.
15 Didn't know why, but that's why they responded to the call.
16 And then of course, at that point, they got to ask him
17 questions.

18 They did not apparently know at what extent they got to
19 ask him questions about why Mr. Camrin was inside the
20 vehicle, why Ms. Grace was inside the house. And then at
21 some point after three or four times, I just eventually told
22 them what happened, so...

23 Q. All right. I'm going to publish State's 12. This
24 is notated as 12 (a), the first clip.

25 (Video starts at 2:57:31 p.m.)

1 (Video stops at 3:01:05 p.m.)

2 BY MS. FINCH:

3 Q. Lieutenant, upon this interaction with John and
4 Melissa Smith, that was ultimately when you all positively
5 identified the victim, is that right?

6 A. Yes, ma'am. A positive identification are -- yes,
7 ma'am. Up until that point, I did not know what her name
8 was.

9 Q. And I think you can agree with me for all intents
10 and purposes, dad and stepmom were very cooperative, is that
11 right?

12 A. Yes, ma'am -- yes, ma'am. They were very
13 cooperative.

14 Q. Later -- later that evening in your interactions
15 with them, did you collect any evidence from -- from Mr. John
16 Smith?

17 A. I did. He -- as far as Mr. Camrin calling and
18 talking to him, I did ask him if we have an issue right now.
19 The voluntary statement. He said he would. I'm not sure if
20 he wrote it. I told him to get somebody else to help. I
21 knew he was upset.

22 I did ask for his phone just because there was an
23 interaction on the telephone -- the cell phone. He did
24 willingly hand it over and then of course told me about the
25 passcode stuff that was on it. So he willingly hand that

1 over and I collected that to the investigator used later if
2 needed to.

3 Q. Say that last part for me?

4 A. Sorry. For the investigator, whoever, to use
5 later if needed, so...

6 Q. Thank you. I'm going to fast -- fast forward a
7 little bit. I would like to at this time publish State's
8 12(b), later in the evening on your body camera.

9 (Video starts at 3:02:46 p.m.)

10 (Video stops at 3:11:56 p.m.)

11 BY MS. FINCH:

12 Q. Lieutenant, do you recall what time that was?

13 A. It was around about 22:20 -- around about 11:30.

14 Q. But you -- that was about 10:22, is that what you
15 said?

16 A. Yeah, I'm looking like 22:20 on here, so...

17 Q. Okay. Thank you.

18 A. Yes, ma'am. 10:22, I apologize.

19 Q. Okay. And what was -- what was happening in that
20 clip?

21 A. In that clip? They had wanted to go speak to
22 Camrin per -- I believe Investigator Brown allowed them to
23 come be able to speak to Camrin really quick. Like -- of
24 course, I was within eyeshot with the camera and stuff right
25 there, so...

1 Because of the -- we're still determining what
2 happened. So if anything at the time, just let him speak to
3 them. Then of course, it was freezing cold outside. That's
4 why I was checking on him to make sure he had the window down
5 or anything like that, so...

6 Q. Okay. And to your knowledge, when did law
7 enforcement reach out to Grace's family? Do you recall that?

8 A. That, I don't recall. I do know they were somehow
9 notified. As to how they were notified, I do not recall as
10 to who did that, so...

11 Q. Okay. Essentially was -- was that clip kind of
12 the end of your involvement in this case?

13 A. Yes, ma'am. After that, or a short period after
14 that, he was initially transferred to another deputy and then
15 up to the sheriff's office.

16 MS. FINCH: Okay. Nothing further from the State, Your
17 Honor.

18 CROSS-EXAMINATION

19 BY MR. ERWIN:

20 Q. Lieutenant McMahan, right?

21 A. Yes, sir.

22 Q. You are not the lead investigator on this case, is
23 that right?

24 A. No, sir, I'm not.

25 Q. Okay. So you did not participate in the lengthy

1 interview of Camrin that happened after this video?

2 A. No, sir.

3 Q. You didn't take the 911 call in this case either,
4 did you?

5 A. No, sir.

6 Q. Okay. It was not for you to say whether or not
7 the shooting was malicious, right?

8 A. It was not my determination, no.

9 Q. Okay. So you did not participate in the decision
10 of what crime to charge Camrin with?

11 A. No, I have no participation.

12 MR. ERWIN: Okay. No further questions.

13 THE COURT: Re-direct?

14 MS. FINCH: None, Your Honor.

15 THE COURT: All right. Thank you, sir. You can step
16 down.

17 THE WITNESS: All right. Thank you, Your Honor.

18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Thank you.

19 MS. CLEVELAND: State calls Sarah Douglas.

20 SARAH DOUGLAS,

21 being duly sworn, testified as follows:

22 THE CLERK: Thank you. You may have a seat.

23 MS. CLEVELAND: I'm so sorry. My apologies.

24 DIRECT EXAMINATION

25 BY MS. CLEVELAND:

1 Q. Can you please state your name and spell it for
2 the court reporter?

3 A. Sarah Douglas. S-A-R-A-H D-O-U-G-L-A-S.

4 Q. And Ms. Douglas, where are you from?

5 A. Spartanburg.

6 Q. And where do you live currently?

7 A. Spartanburg.

8 Q. And where do you currently work?

9 A. Laurens County EMS.

10 Q. How long have you been with Laurens County EMS?

11 A. Four years.

12 Q. What's your position with Laurens County EMS?

13 A. I'm a paramedic.

14 Q. And what does that position entail?

15 A. We respond to all emergencies within the county.
16 Medical emergencies, whether it be heart attacks, traumas,
17 any type of emergency that somebody within Laurens County
18 could have, we'll respond.

19 Q. And have you been a paramedic for another
20 department other than Laurens County?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. And how long were you?

23 A. I worked for Greenville County EMS for 16 years.

24 Q. Okay. What does -- does your role with Laurens
25 County EMS require specific training?

1 A. Yes. I went to school for two years to -- I have
2 an associate's degree in emergency medical services.

3 Q. Were you working as a paramedic in November, 2023
4 for Laurens County EMS?

5 A. Yes, ma'am.

6 Q. What was your -- and your position then was
7 paramedic?

8 A. Uh-huh.

9 Q. So just switching now from your background to the
10 present case, how were you involved in the call for service
11 involving this case?

12 A. We were dispatched to a residence on Highway 14
13 for a GSW.

14 Q. And what's a GSW?

15 A. Gunshot wound.

16 MS. CLEVELAND: Just handing you what has been
17 previously marked as State's Exhibit 13 for identification
18 purposes. Just give me a minute really quick. Okay. All
19 right.

20 (State's Exhibit Number 13 marked for identification.)

21 BY MS. CLEVELAND:

22 Q. Ms. Douglas, do you know what I just handed you?

23 A. Yes. This is a patient report -- care report.

24 Q. And what is that?

25 A. That's what we do after every call that we run as

1 EMS.

2 Q. And how do you know that's a patient report?

3 A. Because I wrote it.

4 Q. And is that report an accurate depiction of what
5 occurred that night?

6 A. Yes, ma'am.

7 Q. Has it been altered in any way?

8 A. No.

9 MS. CLEVELAND: At this time, the State moves to enter
10 State's Exhibit 13 into evidence.

11 MS. JOHNSTON: Without objection.

12 THE COURT: State's 13 is admitted without objection.
13 (State's Exhibit Number 13 admitted into evidence.)

14 MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Your Honor. Permission to
15 publish?

16 THE COURT: Yes, ma'am.

17 BY MS. CLEVELAND:

18 Q. Okay. So as we -- as you just testified, you were
19 dispatched in reference to a GSW, which we clarified that was
20 a gunshot wound. What county was this address in?

21 A. Laurens County.

22 Q. Okay. And what time did Laurens County EMS
23 receive dispatch to the address?

24 A. We were dispatched at 20:37.

25 Q. And that's 8:37 p.m.?

1 A. Yes, ma'am.

2 Q. And who were the other EMS personnel with you on
3 the scene?

4 A. My partner was EMT Lawson, and my captain, Troy
5 Eldridge.

6 Q. What time did you arrive at the scene?

7 A. 20:46.

8 Q. And that's 8:46 p.m.?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. When you arrived on the scene, who else was there?

11 A. Laurens County Sheriff's Department and
12 firefighters, I believe Gray Court. I'm not a hundred
13 percent sure what fire department was there.

14 Q. Okay. And when you arrived you saw other
15 personnel there. What did you learn upon arriving on the
16 scene?

17 A. I was informed by -- I don't remember who, but I
18 was informed that somebody had been shot and was inside the
19 residence.

20 Q. Okay. And so, after learning that, what was your
21 next step?

22 A. We got our equipment, we went inside. I saw the
23 patient laying on the kitchen floor. She was cyanotic, which
24 means her skin was blue from lack of oxygen. She had a
25 gunshot wound to her upper left chest. She -- her body was

1 cold to touch. She was pulseless and apneic.

2 Q. And did you or other EMS conduct any --
3 resuscitation efforts?

4 A. No, we did not.

5 Q. And why is that?

6 A. She was past the point of being able to
7 resuscitate.

8 Q. What does that mean?

9 A. It means that, like, her -- her body was already
10 cold. She was asystole, which is flatline on the monitor,
11 which means her heart was not beating anymore. The blood on
12 her chest was coagulated.

13 Q. What does that mean? I can't say the words.

14 A. Kind of like -- it has become, like, jelly.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. And she was not breathing and her extremities were
17 very cold.

18 Q. Okay. At any point was the patient announced as
19 deceased?

20 A. Yes. I pronounced her at 20:50. Yes.

21 Q. And who unusual -- usually announces the death?

22 A. It's -- if -- if we're out in a scene like that,
23 it's -- it's normally EMS that pronounces, and it would be
24 the paramedic on scene.

25 Q. Okay. And how was the time of death determined

1 here?

2 A. I had placed her on the heart monitor. It showed
3 that she had no electrical rhythm in her heart. And I
4 pronounced her then.

5 Q. So when someone is announced as deceased when you
6 arrive at the scene, do you know the exact time of death?

7 A. No.

8 Q. And you --

9 A. I do not.

10 Q. -- you have to go off of what you observe?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. Okay. And after announcing her -- the patient's
13 death, what did EMS do?

14 A. We -- we just kind of stepped back. We notify the
15 coroner, and we leave everything as is. We -- we normally do
16 put a sheet, a white sheet over her just to -- over the body
17 to protect any, like, evidence and stuff that could be there.

18 Q. And why does EMS wait for the coroner?

19 A. Because he's the one that then -- like once we
20 pronounce the -- the body is in our possession until the
21 coroner gets there and then we hand the body over to the
22 coroner.

23 Q. And how do -- do EMS and the coroner's office work
24 together?

25 A. Yes, ma'am.

1 Q. And how do EMS and coroner's office work together?

2 A. I mean, once -- once we've pronounced somebody,
3 then we give the report to the coroner, and we kind of tell
4 them the little bit that we know or what we know, we tell the
5 coroner and then he starts his investigation.

6 Q. And that's pretty common?

7 A. Yes.

8 MS. CLEVELAND: No further questions.

9 CROSS-EXAMINATION

10 BY MS. JOHNSTON:

11 Q. Ms. Douglas, you -- you didn't take her
12 temperature that night?

13 A. No, we don't do that.

14 Q. Okay. And you don't know what time she died?

15 A. No.

16 MS. JOHNSTON: Thank you.

17 THE COURT: Re-direct?

18 MS. DRIGGERS: No, Your Honor.

19 THE COURT: Thank you, ma'am. You can step down.

20 MS. JOHNSTON: Your Honor, may we break really quick?

21 THE COURT: Sure. All right. Ladies and gentlemen of
22 the jury, it's probably a good time for an afternoon break.
23 Probably need to get up and stretch your legs. So we're
24 going to be in recess for about 15 minutes, and only 15
25 minutes unless something happens. So I'm going to send you

1 to jury -- jury room. Don't begin your deliberations, don't
2 discuss the case amongst yourselves with anybody else. Don't
3 do any research about any issue which may have been raised,
4 and we'll get you back out here shortly. Thank you.

5 (Jury exits courtroom at 3:27 p.m.)

6 MS. JOHNSTON: Thank you, Judge.

7 THE COURT: All right. We'll be in recess for about 15
8 minutes.

9 (Off the record at 3:28 p.m.)

10 (On the record at 3:47 p.m.)

11 THE BAILIFF: All the jurors are present, Your Honor.

12 (Jury enters courtroom at 3:47 p.m.)

13 THE COURT: Thank you, sir. The State may call its
14 next witness.

15 MS. FINCH: Thank you, Your Honor. The State calls
16 Dr. Todd Lantz. Be right up here.

17 DR. TODD R. LANTZ, MD,

18 being duly sworn, testified as follows:

19 THE CLERK: Thank you. You can have a seat.

20 DIRECT EXAMINATION

21 BY MS. FINCH:

22 Q. Thank you for being here, Dr. Lantz. Can you
23 spell your first and last name please for the court reporter?

24 A. It's Todd, T-O-D-D. Last name is Lantz,
25 L-A-N-T-Z.

1 Q. And Dr. Lantz, where do you currently work?

2 A. I work at Upstate OB-GYN, part of Bon Secours
3 Mercy Health in Greenville.

4 Q. Okay. What is your position there?

5 A. An obstetrician gynecologist.

6 Q. You're a doctor?

7 A. A doctor.

8 Q. Medical doctor?

9 A. A physician. Yes.

10 Q. Are you licensed to practice medicine in our
11 state?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. How long have you been licensed?

14 A. Since 1995.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. So 30 years.

17 Q. 30 years? Okay. And is it fair for me to call
18 you an OB-GYN?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. What kind of education and training did you obtain
21 to become an OB-GYN?

22 A. I did my undergraduate at Furman University, and
23 then did my medical school at University of South Carolina
24 School of Medicine, then did a internship at Greenville
25 Memorial Hospital, which is now Prisma, and then four years

1 of OB-GYN residency after that.

2 Q. Where was your residency?

3 A. In Greenville also.

4 Q. And like attorneys, you -- medical doctors, you
5 also have to have so many continuing education hours, is that
6 right?

7 A. That's correct.

8 Q. Okay. Tell us about those criteria you have to
9 maintain?

10 A. We have to maintain 20 hours every two years to
11 maintain our license. For OB-GYN to stay board-certified for
12 that we have to do a maintenance of certification. That
13 actually gets us 20 hours every year for that, that have been
14 doing since becoming board-certified.

15 Q. And so, when you said the maintenance upkeep for
16 the OB-GYN, is that your specialty?

17 A. That's for the specialty.

18 Q. Okay. And outside of your position with Upstate
19 OB-GYN, are there any other professional positions you
20 maintain?

21 A. No.

22 Q. Okay. And generally speaking, what does an OB-GYN
23 do?

24 A. OB-GYN, we take -- do women's health taking care
25 of on the obstetric side pregnant women throughout their

1 prenatal care through delivery and postpartum time, doing
2 both vaginal deliveries and c-sections. For gynecology, we
3 do everything from annual wellness exams up through surgery
4 for things like hysterectomy, things like that.

5 Q. Okay. And approximately how many patients would
6 you say that you have treated in the last 30 years?

7 A. On the obstetric side, kind of we would do about
8 10 deliveries a month for the 26 years now being in practice.
9 But then also I have partners that we each probably have 60 a
10 month for that timeframe on the obstetric side, and probably
11 an equal number for the OB-GYN. So several thousand.

12 MS. FINCH: Okay. Your Honor, at this time, the State
13 would move to qualify Dr. Todd Lance as an expert in the
14 field of obstetrics and gynecology.

15 MS. JOHNSTON: Without objection.

16 THE COURT: Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, normally
17 a person cannot give opinion testimony. Normally, when a
18 person testifies, they must testify as to what they either
19 saw heard sense by smell or something of that nature.
20 However, there is an exception when someone is qualified
21 because of education or experience, they're permitted to give
22 their opinion in certain areas if the Court qualifies them
23 that way.

24 This witness will be qualified as an expert in the area
25 of obstetrics and gynecology to give opinion testimony in

1 that area. Now, that does not mean you must accept the
2 opinion, but it is evidence for you to use in any way you see
3 fit and give the weight and credibility you believe is
4 appropriate.

5 MS. FINCH: Thank you, Your Honor.

6 THE COURT: Yes, ma'am.

7 BY MS. FINCH:

8 Q. Dr. Lantz, can you please explain to the jury what
9 a typical course of treatment would look like for a patient
10 that comes to your office who is pregnant?

11 A. For pregnancy, what normally happens is when the
12 patient calls stating that she's pregnant, we usually bring
13 them in for an initial visit, which is with an ultrasound to
14 look for checking on dating, how far along they are. They
15 also then would meet with our OB coordinator to go over
16 information about their history and also for giving them
17 general information about the pregnancy.

18 They're then seen about every four weeks with the 20
19 weeks is the time for the routine anatomy ultrasound. And
20 then continuing at four-week intervals until 32 weeks, then
21 every two weeks at that point. And 36 weeks, then we start
22 seeing them weekly. They usually have that one -- the
23 ultrasound for the anatomy and then any follow-ups as
24 necessary.

25 Q. Thank you. And you're here today because Grace

1 Marlene Ables was one of your patients?

2 A. That's correct.

3 Q. And you have had an opportunity to review your
4 records for Ms. Ables?

5 A. Yes, I have.

6 Q. Based on that, what -- to your knowledge, when was
7 the first time Grace visited your office?

8 A. I believe the -- the -- the date was August 1.
9 She was -- was her first visit.

10 Q. Was that in 2023?

11 A. In 2023. I'm sorry, yes.

12 Q. Okay. And from review -- review of those records,
13 was it a normal visit?

14 A. It was a normal visit. That was -- she had an
15 ultrasound done at that point that showed she was 12 weeks
16 pregnant, and saw our OB coordinator that day to start her
17 routine care.

18 Q. Bear with me. You may have said this, but I want
19 to confirm. She did the ultrasound, and how far along was it
20 deemed that she was in the pregnancy?

21 A. She was 12 weeks and I believe one day at that
22 point.

23 Q. Okay. And how accurate are those scans,
24 typically, the first ultrasound?

25 A. Those scans usually within four or five days felt

1 to be accurate.

2 Q. Okay. So she could have been 12 weeks and six
3 days or a little less than 12 weeks?

4 A. A little bit less than 12 weeks. Yes.

5 Q. Okay. And from that initial meeting, was there
6 anything abnormal noted in Grace's chart?

7 A. No. It seemed normal.

8 Q. Okay. About how many times would you say Grace
9 visited your office for this pregnancy?

10 A. I believe she was seen at six -- at the 12th-week
11 visit, the 16th-week visit, 20th-week, 24th, and 28th.

12 Q. Okay.

13 A. So I believe six visits.

14 Q. And from your review of those meetings with Grace,
15 how was her pregnancy progressing?

16 A. Pregnancy appeared to be progressing very
17 normally.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. No -- no abnormal issues.

20 Q. And you mentioned an anatomy scan would be around
21 20 weeks, is that right?

22 A. Correct. That was done at 20 weeks and that was
23 -- felt to have a normal anatomy. Everything looked
24 appropriate at that point. There were some limited views,
25 which is very common that the baby doesn't turn the right way

1 for us to see all the views.

2 So she actually was brought back at her 24th-week visit
3 for a follow-up ultrasound that completed the anatomy that,
4 again, showed everything was normal and the baby was growing
5 appropriately.

6 Q. Okay. And we -- in reviewing those records had
7 Grace had her glucose test?

8 A. That was done at the last visit, 28 weeks.

9 Q. Did she pass?

10 A. She did.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. It was normal.

13 Q. You mentioned her last visit. Do you recall what
14 that date was?

15 A. It was -- I don't recall the -- remember the date
16 off the top -- top of my head.

17 Q. Okay. Would you agree with me it was November 22?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. 2023.

20 A. That -- that -- that would be right.

21 Q. Okay.

22 A. When I looked through.

23 Q. And you actually treated Grace on this day, is
24 that right?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. Normally, in these OB-GYN practices, you'll kind
2 of float around. Is that with the different doctors?

3 A. Our -- our -- our practice, we rotate patients
4 through to the different physicians. And that was the day
5 that I saw her.

6 Q. Okay. And on her last visit, how far along was
7 she deemed to be in her pregnancy?

8 A. She was 28 weeks and two days by the dating we
9 had.

10 Q. Okay. And again, on this last visit, everything
11 appeared normal?

12 A. Yes, it did.

13 Q. What testing would she have received that day?

14 A. That day, she -- we would've looked at her blood
15 pressure urinalysis, listing baby's heartbeat and doing a
16 fundal height looking at the measurements on her abdomen.
17 Along with that visit, she would've also had her glucose or
18 her sugar test that I had mentioned along with a -- a
19 hemoglobin, looking for any significant anemia.

20 Q. And was there any significant anemia in her
21 record?

22 A. She -- her hemoglobin was a little bit low. She
23 would qualify for being anemic, but it was really in a level
24 that's very acceptable in pregnancy.

25 Q. Okay. As an OB-GYN, what does viability mean in

1 -- in your field, in your practice?

2 A. Viability is the -- the gestational age at which
3 the fetus would have to be able to survive outside of the
4 womb.

5 Q. And what is traditionally considered viability for
6 an unborn fetus?

7 A. At this point, 23 weeks is generally accepted as
8 the time of viability.

9 Q. Has it ever been anything later than 24 weeks or
10 before?

11 A. It was -- I mean, when I -- I would say when I
12 started training, 24 weeks was more of that, it's kind of cut
13 down to 23 and even at -- at 22 weeks. Some consideration
14 for -- for things are looked at to say at what point -- you
15 know, there's a chance for the baby to survive. But
16 generally, 23 is where it is at this point.

17 Q. And in your professional opinion, 28 weeks is --
18 is viable?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. Okay. And Grace was 28 weeks?

21 A. She was. Yes. 28 weeks.

22 Q. Is there any possibility those measurements could
23 have been off that would deem this unborn baby not viable?

24 A. No. Not to be that far off by dating.

25 Q. Okay. So you're comfortable in -- in telling this

1 jury she was 28 weeks?

2 A. Yes. Very much.

3 Q. And at 28 weeks, the unborn baby could have lived
4 outside the mother's womb, is that right?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. Backing up a little, what -- what is considered
7 the third trimester of pregnancy?

8 A. The third trimester is starting at 26 weeks, would
9 be traditionally a time to look at the discussion of the
10 third trimester.

11 Q. So Grace was in her third trimester?

12 A. Correct.

13 Q. And in -- in your field, are you aware of any
14 statistics for chances of survival of a baby born in the
15 third trimester?

16 A. It -- yeah -- as the trimester increases, that
17 number goes up. At 28 to 32 weeks, things would show about
18 90 percent plus survival at that point.

19 Q. Okay. And to be clear, you treated Grace while
20 her baby girl was inside?

21 A. Correct.

22 Q. Have you had an opportunity to review the autopsy
23 report in this case?

24 A. I did read over that. Yes.

25 Q. And did you also review a photo taken from the

1 autopsy?

2 A. Yes, I did.

3 Q. And I don't want you to comment on -- on what that
4 photo was like, but just from your review, would that baby
5 have been viable had it been born, or was it viable at the
6 time?

7 A. It -- it appears so. It would've been.

8 Q. And did that picture appear as though that baby
9 was 28 weeks?

10 A. It did, yes.

11 Q. And in your expert opinion, Grace Ables' unborn
12 baby was viable?

13 A. Yes.

14 MS. FINCH: Thank you. Nothing further right now, Your
15 Honor.

16 THE COURT: Cross-examination?

17 CROSS-EXAMINATION

18 BY MS. JOHNSTON:

19 Q. Good afternoon, Dr. Lantz.

20 A. Hi.

21 Q. So at that last visit, you -- you deemed that
22 Grace was anemic?

23 A. I -- her -- yes. Her hemoglobin was low.

24 MS. JOHNSTON: Okay -- okay. Nothing further.

25 THE COURT: Re-direct?

1 MS. FINCH: Yes, Your Honor.

2 RE-DIRECT EXAMINATION

3 BY MS. FINCH:

4 Q. Dr. Lantz, in your professional opinion, her
5 levels from that last visit, would those have been
6 problematic for any -- for viability of that baby?

7 A. No. They were below the level that that would be
8 considered anemic, but for pregnancy, they were very much
9 within a normal range.

10 Q. And just so we're clear, what does anemia mean and
11 how would that have affected the mother?

12 A. Anemia is a decreased hemoglobin which are the
13 oxygen-carrying cells or substance within the cells. It can
14 -- if someone is significantly anemic, can affect the
15 transfer of oxygen, but that is rare to get that low and she
16 was not significantly low.

17 Q. So would not have affected the viability of the
18 baby?

19 A. It would not have affected the viability of the
20 baby.

21 MS. FINCH: Thank you.

22 THE COURT: Anything else?

23 MS. JOHNSTON: Nothing further.

24 THE COURT: All right. Doctor, you can step down.
25 Thank you very much.

1 THE WITNESS: Thank you.

2 MS. FINCH: Your Honor, may we approach --

3 THE COURT: Yes.

4 MS. FINCH: -- regarding scheduling?

5 (Bench conference at 4:05 p.m.)

6 MS. DRIGGERS: She's here, we can call her. The State
7 calls Toni Godfrey? Right here. Okay. Thank you. Thank
8 you.

9 INVESTIGATOR TONI GODFREY,
10 being duly sworn, testified as follows:

11 THE CLERK: Thank you. You may have a seat.

12 DIRECT EXAMINATION

13 BY MS. DRIGGERS:

14 Q. Good afternoon. Could you please introduce
15 yourself and spell your name for the court reporter, please?

16 A. My name's Toni Godfrey. It's T-O-N-I
17 G-O-D-F-R-E-Y.

18 Q. And I'll just go ahead and let you know that mic
19 right there does not amplify.

20 A. Okay.

21 Q. It's only so that she can hear you, so if you can
22 just speak up just a little bit.

23 A. Got it.

24 Q. And where are you from?

25 A. I'm from Pennsylvania originally. I've lived in

1 Greenville for the last five years or so.

2 Q. Okay. So you live in Greenville?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. Where do you currently work?

5 A. I work at the Laurens County Sheriff's Office.

6 Q. And how long have you been there?

7 A. A little over two years.

8 Q. And where were you before that?

9 A. The Greenville County Forensic Division.

10 Q. Okay. And what is your role at the sheriff's
11 office?

12 A. I am the crime scene investigator.

13 Q. And is there any training that you have to have to
14 get in that role as crime scene investigator?

15 A. Yes. So I received my bachelor's degree from West
16 Virginia University in forensic investigative science. Upon
17 me getting hired in Greenville County, I went through eight
18 more weeks of training there. And then I also take classes
19 throughout the years just to kind of keep up-to-date on
20 everything.

21 Q. Okay. So you kind of answered my question. So
22 you do things to keep up with your training?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. Okay. And if you can just walk us through,
25 generally, when you get to a crime scene, what does that

1 normally look like for you?

2 A. So the first thing I do when I get there is seek
3 out whoever has been on scene and has information. And I try
4 to get as much of that information as possible -- you know,
5 as to the circumstances and what we know up to that point.
6 And that just kind of gives me a general idea of the
7 direction I need to go, and I can kind of formulate a plan
8 from there.

9 Q. Okay. And did you have the occasion to get
10 involved in this particular case against Camrin Smith?

11 A. I did.

12 Q. How did you get involved?

13 A. I was contacted by my captain and told that there
14 was an incident that I was requested to respond to.

15 Q. And what day did you get involved?

16 A. It was November 25, 2023.

17 Q. And where did you report to?

18 A. It was 4218 Highway 14.

19 Q. And is that in Laurens County?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. And what did you observe when you initially got to
22 the scene?

23 A. So when I initially got there, I noticed a lot of
24 patrol vehicles a lot of deputies on scene, kind of just
25 keeping everything secure. I observed the residence. I was

1 told at that point that we were waiting for a search warrant
2 to be signed. So I waited for that.

3 Once that was signed and we were able to make entry
4 into the residence, when I walked in you noticed the living
5 room to the left kitchen area to the right, you can see the
6 victim on the floor of the kitchen. And then like I said,
7 kind of just an open floor plan there and then the rest of
8 the residents down the hallway.

9 Q. All right. So you said you waited on a search
10 warrant?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. So you waited on that to even go in and -- and do
13 your job?

14 A. Correct.

15 Q. Okay. And before we get into the specifics of
16 what you did at the scene, were you able to create a diagram
17 of part of the scene?

18 A. Yes.

19 MS. DRIGGERS: Okay. I'm going to hand you what's been
20 pre-marked as State's Exhibit 14, for identification
21 purposes.

22 (State's Exhibit Number 14 marked for identification.)

23 BY MS. DRIGGERS:

24 Q. And do you recognize that?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. What is it?

2 A. This is a sketch that I drew of the living room
3 and the kitchen area of the residence, and the items of
4 evidence in there that we collected.

5 Q. Okay. And is that an accurate depiction of the
6 scene as you saw it that night?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Has it been altered in any way?

9 A. No.

10 MS. DRIGGERS: Your Honor, the State would move State's
11 14 into evidence.

12 MS. JOHNSTON: Without objection.

13 (State's Exhibit Number 14 admitted into evidence.)

14 BY MS. DRIGGERS:

15 Q. And if we can publish that, I'm going to get you
16 to just -- you kind of just explained it, but if we can
17 explain it to the jury again. There we go -- there we go.
18 Okay.

19 A. So obviously hands on. But if you look here, so
20 this is going to be the front doors where we were going in
21 and out, I guess, said the kitchen area over there --

22 MS. DRIGGERS: Hold on just one second. I'm sorry.
23 What's that, Judge?

24 THE COURT: We need her -- we need that microphone
25 closer to her so the court reporter can -- can hear.

1 MS. DRIGGERS: All right. This one right here? Do you
2 want me to move this one?

3 THE COURT: That's the one that she's speaking into her
4 -- her face was turned towards the screen and away from the
5 microphone --

6 MS. DRIGGERS: Okay.

7 THE COURT: -- so it wasn't picking her up.

8 BY MS. DRIGGERS:

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. I'll try do it from here. Okay, so on the
11 right-hand side over here we have the kitchen, the
12 countertops and that curved area there is like a -- a table
13 similar to like an island, but it's a continuation of the
14 countertop. The door that we were using to go in and out is
15 that --

16 Q. This door here?

17 A. Directly to the left of that is a bookshelf and
18 then the living room area is to the -- on the left side
19 there. Just a general layout you know, a TV on a TV stand, a
20 couch and then the hallway that led to the rest of the
21 residence there on that back side.

22 Q. Okay. And did you also have the occasion to take
23 photographs in this case?

24 A. I did.

25 MS. DRIGGERS: All right. I'm going to hand you what's

1 Q. All right. Here's what I'm going to do. I'm
2 going to briefly take these back from you. Let's start with
3 this stack here, and we're just going to go through them
4 piece by piece. All right. So if we can publish 15 --
5 State's 15 through 18. We'll start with 15. And then if you
6 can just walk the jury myself through what we're looking at,
7 any significance of any photo that we're looking at?

8 A. So this is just going to be the exterior of the
9 residence. Basically, what I saw when I got there. So you
10 can see all the patrol vehicles, like I mentioned. They have
11 a carport there. And the yellow crime scene tape, which
12 keeps everything secure.

13 Q. Okay. Next, please.

14 A. This is just basically one little step to the left
15 where you can kind of start to see the beginning of the
16 house. And again, more to the left where you can see the
17 full front side of the house.

18 Q. Okay. And that last one?

19 A. Just closer up as we're approaching and heading
20 towards the front door.

21 Q. Okay. And then if we can start to publish 19
22 through 30. I'm going to give you the physical stack, but
23 you're welcome to keep looking at the screen if that's easier
24 for you. You can -- and you can just keep those if you want
25 put them to the side.

1 A. All right. So here we have inside the kitchen.
2 You can see the table area that I mentioned earlier with the
3 sketch and you can kind of see the victim laying there on the
4 floor. Panning to the left, a more full view of the table
5 area showing the plate of uneaten food there. And then a lot
6 of firearms and accessories and ammunition just on the table.

7 Getting closer to the table. The same thing, these are
8 two gun pieces here in the front. And then just across the
9 entire thing is basically just firearm-related items. So
10 this would be that gray container was on the table that we
11 just saw. And then these items were inside of it. So these
12 are just various firearm accessories. There's a rail that
13 you can put on a rifle basically for additional attachments.
14 Two items here. Those black ones, those are sights. The
15 flashlight there also attaches to a firearm, a grip there.
16 Like I said, just various firearm attachments.

17 So this is that same table and those same two gun cases
18 that I mentioned. And this is just the kitchen area, just an
19 overall photo. Panning to the left, the same kitchen area.
20 That same table we were just looking at is over there on the
21 side. And this is the victim down here towards the bottom.

22 So now we're on top of the table. This is just a
23 plastic hard case containing a bunch of different firearm
24 accessories and their parts. Closer up to that same box. So
25 there's some shotgun ammunition over here, some hand tools

1 that you might use to attach those different items. Gun oil,
2 ammunition there in that black tray, just closer up of the
3 same items.

4 And again, the ammunition there, different ammunition
5 under it. Those boxes, that blue box that says "federal,"
6 that's additional ammunition. And so, is that yellow one,
7 and closer up of that firearm ammunition tray.

8 Q. And you said all of that was just sitting on the
9 counter?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. Okay. And then if we can publish 31 through 50.

12 A. So this is a picture of the kitchen and again, you
13 can see the victim there lying on the floor. She's covered
14 with a white sheet. Just getting closer to her there and her
15 glasses there behind her next to the refrigerator. Just a
16 different angle. Victim again there to the left.

17 Another different angle before we've taken the sheet
18 off this is a close-up of the victim's face as she was lying
19 in the scene. And here, you can see some medical equipment
20 and the suspected gunshot wound there near her left breast.
21 Her legs over there and you can kind of see underneath her
22 knee of her right leg, that was a tray of food that she was
23 laying on top of. And again, the victim there before we took
24 -- before we took the sheet off. And again, from the side of
25 her face.

1 And so, you can see that same tray I just mentioned.
2 And her cell phone additionally in her back pocket. These
3 are her feet, just how she was lying in the scene after we
4 took the sheet off. And this is from the other side. And
5 again, her cell phone there in her pocket. This is that same
6 tray there underneath her right leg and some medical trash
7 that was left on scene.

8 That would be her hand. Close up of her hand. Just a
9 standard photograph we usually take to show positioning and
10 her other hand as well. So that would be her -- I believe it
11 was her left hand. Just how she was positioned again. So
12 this would be after we've rolled her onto her right side just
13 to examine her back and what that looks like.

14 Q. And what were you all examining her back for?

15 A. We all can just look for any injuries that might
16 be present. Especially with a possible gunshot wound to the
17 chest, we want to see if that bullet has exited. So we can
18 try and locate that in the scene if you know that's a
19 possibility. In this case, she did not have any exit wounds,
20 so we knew that that was going to be still inside. And that
21 picture just shows that there's no injury there.

22 Q. And then if I can get 51 through 56.

23 A. So this would be the living room area, which is to
24 the left of the kitchen. And you can see that cell phone on
25 the side of the couch there, that was collected. You can

1 also see some gun cases down there on the back of the couch.
2 There are firearms there. Panning to the left, the same
3 living room area.

4 And again, to the left there's the bookshelf that I
5 mentioned that's right next to the front door. And then
6 again, those same cases down there on the bottom book bag,
7 and just the living room overall behind that. That same
8 bookshelf again, this is just one more step to the left. And
9 then this would be down the hallway. The living room is kind
10 of behind it here, so then this is going back towards the
11 left side of the house.

12 Q. And then where from this picture is the bedroom?

13 A. Straight down the hallway.

14 Q. Okay. And to the right or to the left?

15 A. It's straight there at the end. That door right
16 at the end.

17 Q. Okay. Thank you. And in addition to taking these
18 photographs, did you also collect any physical evidence in
19 this case?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. What items do you recall collecting?

22 A. We collected all of the firearms that we located
23 in the house along with the ammunition. Any accessories that
24 we located. We collected the spent cartridge casing that we
25 found on the floor and the cell phones that were present.

1 Q. Okay. And what do you do with physical --
2 physical evidence that you collect, generally speaking?

3 A. Generally speaking, we take it back to the
4 evidence facility. We will enter it into our system where it
5 creates a log, and then I submit it to our evidence
6 custodians.

7 Q. And is that what you did in this case?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. And when you're collecting evidence, you and then
10 any other law enforcement officers that are doing the same,
11 do you all keep like a log of the evidence?

12 A. So -- yes, whenever we take it back and we put it
13 into the system, it creates an itemized list that we can go
14 back and view.

15 Q. Okay. So each item is given a number?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. In your system, I guess?

18 A. Yes.

19 MS. DRIGGERS: Okay. I'm going to hand you what's been
20 marked as State's Exhibit 99.

21 (State's Exhibit Number 99 marked for identification.)

22 BY MS. DRIGGERS:

23 Q. And do you recognize that?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. What is that?

1 A. This is a printout of the evidence in this case
2 from our system.

3 Q. And so, in that log would contain the evidence
4 that you collected from this case, you said?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. Okay. All right. So now that you have your
7 evidence log, let's start to kind of go through some of the
8 physical evidence that you collected.

9 A. Okay.

10 MS. DRIGGERS: I am going to hand you what's been
11 pre-marked as State's 77.

12 (State's Exhibit Number 77 marked for identification.)

13 BY MS. DRIGGERS:

14 Q. And do you recognize that?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. What is it?

17 A. This is item number seven in this case, which was
18 a blue Bersa gun case, which contained the ammunition that we
19 collected from the bed in the rear bedroom.

20 Q. Okay. And how do you know that that's what it is?

21 A. That's the description and the item number
22 corresponding to the log that we have.

23 Q. Okay. I'm going to get you to open that up. Let
24 me give you some gloves, if you don't -- okay. You have some
25 gloves right there. Do you have any scissors up here still?

1 A. No.

2 Q. Let's see if we can...

3 A. Thank you.

4 Q. Get the gloves on. Let me open it. And are those
5 items in the same or substantially the same condition as when
6 you collected them that day?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Have they been damaged or altered in any way?

9 A. No.

10 MS. DRIGGERS: Your Honor, the State would admit 77
11 into evidence.

12 MS. JOHNSTON: Without objection, Your Honor.

13 THE COURT: 77 is admitted without objection.

14 (State's Exhibit Number 77 admitted into evidence.)

15 BY MS. DRIGGERS:

16 Q. All right. Can you -- do you mind just showing it
17 to the jury?

18 A. So this is the outside of the case. You can see
19 it says so on the front. And then once we open it, if I can,
20 the inside is just foam with a tray of ammunition inside.

21 Q. And can you remind me where you found that?

22 A. This was on the foot of the bed in the bedroom at
23 the end of the hallway.

24 Q. Okay. And then you also mentioned that you
25 collected a spent cartridge casing?

1 A. Yes.

2 MS. DRIGGERS: Okay. If we could please publish
3 State's 57, which has already been admitted?

4 THE COURT: Okay.

5 BY MS. DRIGGERS:

6 Q. I am also going to hand it to you as well so you
7 have it.

8 A. Are we done with this?

9 Q. Okay. All right. What are we seeing in this
10 photo?

11 A. So in this photo you can see the corner of that
12 bookshelf that was in the living room. We've seen in
13 previous photos. She was on the floor and then if you look
14 closely by those chargers there you can see the spent casing.
15 It's right about here.

16 Q. Okay. And you collected it?

17 A. Yes.

18 MS. DRIGGERS: Okay. I'm also going to hand you what's
19 been pre-marked as State's 78.

20 (State's Exhibit Number 78 marked for identification.)

21 BY MS. DRIGGERS:

22 Q. All right. So for right now, do you recognize
23 that as 78?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. What is that?

1 A. So it would be the cartridge casing that we're
2 seeing here in this photo.

3 Q. Okay. Can I get you to open up that bag? I'm
4 going to take that bag. Okay -- okay. And I'm sorry, did
5 you say what that was?

6 A. Yes. This is the cartridge casing that we
7 collected from the living room floor area.

8 Q. Okay. And how do you recognize it?

9 A. Well, it's packaged with the original packaging
10 where -- that I submitted it with. So I can see -- you know,
11 my initials here on the evidence tape.

12 Q. And is that spent cartridge casing in the same or
13 substantially the same condition as it was when you retrieved
14 it?

15 A. Yes.

16 MS. DRIGGERS: Okay. Your Honor, the State would move
17 to admit 78 into evidence.

18 MS. JOHNSTON: Without objection.

19 THE COURT: 78 is admitted without objection.

20 (State's Exhibit Number 78 admitted into evidence.)

21 BY MS. DRIGGERS:

22 Q. And then I know it's going to be kind of hard for
23 you to do this, but if you can just show the jury if you can?

24 A. So you can kind of see it in the corner of the bag
25 down here.

1 Q. And that's what we're seeing in this photo right
2 here?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. Okay. All right. So let's go -- you said that
5 you looked at some -- some guns at the residence?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. Okay. Let's go through some of that. Let's
8 publish State's 58, which has already been admitted. And
9 what are we looking at here?

10 A. So this is a rifle located in a gun case that we
11 saw in the previous images that was behind the couch in the
12 living room. There's also some ammunition over here off to
13 the side and some magazines as well.

14 Q. Okay. So you collected some cartridges along with
15 this gun?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. And what did you do with those cartridges?

18 A. They were packaged separately and submitted to
19 evidence.

20 Q. Okay. So we see a few of those in this picture,
21 but I guess you're saying there's more than what we're seeing
22 that you collected?

23 A. There were some that aren't pictured.

24 Q. Okay. And how many in total did you -- how many
25 cartridges did you collect in total from this particular

1 case?

2 A. There were -- I believe, 52 in total.

3 Q. Okay. And then if we can please publish State's
4 59 through 61? Again, already been admitted. And what are
5 we looking at here?

6 A. So this is an additional handgun that was located
7 in the residence.

8 Q. Do you know what kind of handgun it was?

9 A. This was...

10 Q. And if it would help, I'm referring to your items
11 15, 6, and 8.

12 A. 15, 6, and 8. Okay. So -- yes, this is the black
13 can firearm and there's also a magazine in the gun and an
14 additional magazine in the case as well.

15 Q. Okay. And then if we can go to the next photo,
16 please. Is that that same gun?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. Okay. And then I think there's a few more. And
19 then are those the cartridges that you were referring to as
20 well?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. Okay. So where did you locate that firearm?

23 A. It was on top of the washing machine.

24 Q. Okay. And you said that there were some
25 additional cartridges, we can see some of them in there, but

1 were there additional besides that?

2 A. Yes. So in total from this case there were 38.

3 Q. Okay. And then if we can please publish State's
4 62 through 66 as well as 100, which again have already been
5 admitted. And what are we looking at here?

6 A. So this is the black book bag that was also seen
7 behind the couch in the living room, looking down inside of
8 it. So in this picture, this is a piece of a rifle here.
9 And then in following pictures -- go to the next one. That's
10 a better image. There's another piece there to the left of
11 it.

12 Those can be assembled to form a rifle, essentially.
13 That's the lower receiver of the same rifle I just mentioned.
14 That's a separate 9mm Dagger. That's the same firearm just
15 removed from that pocket of the book bag. And so, this is
16 the rifle that I mentioned all assembled which we did back at
17 our evidence facility.

18 Q. Okay. So we had the book bag, and then the two
19 additional firearms. And you said that you located this in
20 the living room, is that correct?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. Okay. And did you locate any other physical
23 evidence in -- in the book bag that's not pictured?

24 A. Yes. There was ammunition in the book bag as
25 well.

1 Q. How much of that did you collect?

2 A. There were 136 cartridges inside the book bag in
3 total.

4 Q. Okay. And then if I can please have 67 through 69
5 published? And what are we looking at here?

6 A. So we're back to this kitchen table area. This is
7 a gray bag that was there. And -- going to the next one.
8 There's another firearm inside of that. And you can also see
9 a magazine there next to the gun.

10 Q. And do you -- do you recall what kind of firearm
11 that was?

12 A. It's a Taurus I believe it's a 22.

13 Q. And then if we can go to the next one, is that
14 that same gun?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. Okay. And where did you say that you located
17 this?

18 A. This was inside of that gray bag.

19 Q. Okay. In the kitchen?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. Okay. And did you locate any other physical
22 evidence not pictured here?

23 A. Yes. Inside of this bag there were 77 unfired
24 cartridges.

25 Q. Okay. And then if you can please publish 70

1 through 72? And what are we looking at here?

2 A. These are the same gun cases that I mentioned
3 earlier, that are sitting kind of towards the edge of that
4 kitchen table. That's the firearm inside of it. It's a
5 Tisas handgun. And that's just a closer up photo of it. And
6 you can see that magazine that's also loaded off to the side.

7 Q. Okay. And so, what physical evidence did you
8 collect? We can kind of see it. But how many unspent
9 cartridges did you collect from this case?

10 A. There were 16 in total with this one.

11 Q. Okay. And then if we can please publish 73
12 through 76? And what are we looking at here?

13 A. This is another case for guns. There's a rifle
14 shown here and then that's the same rifle there, closer up
15 and then a shotgun on the other side.

16 Q. Okay. And then did you locate any physical
17 evidence not pictured in this case?

18 A. Yes. There were 180 cartridges in total in this
19 one.

20 Q. Okay. And where did you say that you located this
21 particular case?

22 A. I believe this one was in the living room as well,
23 if I'm not mistaken.

24 MS. DRIGGERS: Okay. I'm going to hand you what's been
25 marked as State's Exhibit 79.

1 (State's Exhibit Number 79 marked for identification.)

2 BY MS. DRIGGERS:

3 Q. Okay. Let's see if we can remove the safely. All
4 right. And do you recognize that?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. What is it?

7 A. This is the box that item number 28 was packaged
8 in.

9 Q. And can you go ahead and open that up? Okay. I'm
10 also going to hand you this gun lock now. You don't have to
11 pull it all the way out. But is that gun in the same or
12 substantially the same condition as when you collected it?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. Okay. Has it been damaged or altered in any way?

15 A. No.

16 MS. DRIGGERS: Your Honor, the State would move 79 into
17 evidence.

18 MS. JOHNSTON: Without objection.

19 THE COURT: 79 is admitted without objection.

20 (State's Exhibit Number 79 admitted into evidence.)

21 BY MS. DRIGGERS:

22 Q. Okay. So you -- like I said, you don't have to
23 pull it all the way out, but can you at least like maybe hold
24 it up just to show the jury kind of what we're referring to?
25 All right. Thank you. And to be clear, that gun right there

1 is the same one that we just saw one of those photos?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. I believe it was two photos ago maybe? Okay. And
4 how many guns were collected in total from the Defendant's
5 residence?

6 A. There were nine.

7 Q. Okay. And that would include the Bersa 380?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. And after you finished collecting all of this
10 physical evidence at the scene, taking the photos, everything
11 you did that night, did that conclude everything you did that
12 particular night?

13 A. For that night? Yes.

14 Q. Okay. And what other involvement did you have in
15 this case after that point?

16 A. I attended the victim's autopsy as well.

17 Q. And where was that?

18 A. At Greenville Memorial Hospital, down in the
19 morgue.

20 Q. And do you recall what day that was?

21 A. November 28.

22 Q. And who other than yourself was there?

23 A. It was Dr. Rose and the autopsy technicians.

24 Q. And what observations did you make at the autopsy,
25 initially?

1 A. So initially, they just had the victim still in
2 the body bag on the transfer trolley that they used.

3 Q. And did you have the occasion to take any
4 photographs there at the autopsy?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. And did you collect any additional physical
7 evidence out of the autopsy?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. And what were those items?

10 A. I collected all the victim's clothing, as well as
11 figuring out clippings, a buccal swab, and a gunshot residue
12 collection kit.

13 Q. Okay. And you were -- I guess you were also
14 present though for the removal of a projectile as well?

15 A. Yes.

16 MS. DRIGGERS: Okay. I'm going to hand you what's been
17 pre-marked as State's Exhibits 80 through 81. I am sorry,
18 you might need gloves again. I apologize. We need to open a
19 lot today.

20 (State's Exhibit Number 80 and 81 marked for identification.)

21 BY MS. DRIGGERS:

22 Q. Do you recognize those?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. What are they?

25 A. These would be the items of clothing that I

1 collected from the victim.

2 Q. Okay. And can I get you to open those up?

3 A. Uh-huh.

4 Q. And are those clothes in the same or substantially
5 the same condition as when you collected them that day?

6 A. Yes.

7 MS. DRIGGERS: Your Honor, the State would move 80
8 through 81 into evidence.

9 MS. JOHNSTON: Without objection. Is that -- which
10 one's the shirt?

11 MS. DRIGGERS: It's -- 80 is the...

12 THE WITNESS: This was -- 81 is the sweatshirt.

13 MS. JOHNSTON: Okay. So I just --

14 THE WITNESS: Let me open 81.

15 THE COURT: This without objection?

16 MS. JOHNSTON: On 80. 81 this is.

17 THE COURT: Okay. 80 is admitted without objection.

18 (State's Exhibit Number 80 admitted into evidence.)

19 MS. DRIGGERS: Thank you, Your Honor.

20 BY MS. DRIGGERS:

21 Q. And same for this one. And that clothing is also
22 in the same or substantially in the same condition --

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. -- when you collected it? Okay. The State would
25 also move 81 into evidence.

1 MS. JOHNSTON: Without objection, Your Honor.

2 THE COURT: 81 is admitted without objection.

3 (State's Exhibit Number 81 admitted into evidence.)

4 BY MS. DRIGGERS:

5 Q. And if you can just quickly hold up the
6 sweatshirt.

7 A. Okay.

8 Q. Thank you. And I -- I will have Dr. Rose go into
9 that a little more. Thank you for doing that. And I think I
10 already asked you this, but while you were present at that
11 autopsy you said that you were able to observe Dr. Rose
12 retrieving the projectile from Grace's body?

13 A. Yes.

14 MS. DRIGGERS: Okay. I'm going to hand you what's been
15 pre-marked as State's 82.

16 (State's Exhibit Number 82 marked for identification.)

17 BY MS. DRIGGERS:

18 Q. And do you recognize that?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. What is it?

21 A. This is the projectile recovered by Dr. Rose.

22 Q. And is that projectile in the same or
23 substantially the same condition as it was when you watched
24 it being retrieved?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. Has it been damaged in any way?

2 A. No.

3 MS. DRIGGERS: Your Honor, the State would move 82 into
4 evidence.

5 MS. JOHNSTON: Without objection.

6 THE COURT: 82 is admitted without objection.

7 (State's Exhibit Number 82 admitted into evidence.)

8 BY MS. DRIGGERS:

9 Q. And is there any way for you to show the jury that
10 without opening it?

11 A. So it's going to be a little bit hard to see, but
12 it'll be right here in this corner. There we go. So over
13 here in this corner, you can see it there.

14 Q. Okay. Thank you. And did that end your
15 involvement in this particular case?

16 A. Yes.

17 MS. DRIGGERS: Okay. No further questions. Please
18 answer any Defense may have.

19 CROSS-EXAMINATION

20 BY MR. ERWIN:

21 Q. Investigator Godfrey, how are you? So you were
22 the crime scene investigator in this case?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. I can see that you collected a bunch of evidence.
25 You documented a lot of the evidence in this case, right?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. But you were not the lead investigator in this
3 case, is that right?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. That was Investigator Sweat?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. Okay. So you did not listen to the 911 call --

8 A. Correct.

9 Q. -- that Camrin made? You didn't talk to Camrin on
10 scene at any point?

11 A. No, sir.

12 Q. You did not participate in the interview -- the
13 lengthy interview of Camrin after the shooting?

14 A. No, sir.

15 Q. Okay. So it's not for you to say whether the
16 shooting was malicious or not?

17 A. Correct.

18 Q. Okay. So the decision of what crime to charge
19 Camrin with is not something that you were a part of?

20 A. Correct.

21 MR. ERWIN: Okay. I have no further questions.

22 THE COURT: Any re-direct?

23 MS. DRIGGERS: No, Your Honor.

24 THE COURT: All right. Thank you, ma'am. You can step
25 down.

1 CONTINUATION OF PROCEEDINGS - JUNE 11, 2025.

2 THE COURT: Bring the jury, please.

3 THE BAILIFF: All jurors are present, Your Honor.

4 (Jury enters courtroom at 9:44 a.m.)

5 THE COURT: Thank you, sir. Good morning, ladies and
6 gentlemen. The State will continue to present their case.
7 State may call its next witness.

8 MS. DRIGGERS: The State calls Investigator Jonathan
9 Brown.

10 INVESTIGATOR JONATHAN BROWN,
11 being duly sworn, testified as follows:

12 THE CLERK: Thank you. You may have a seat.

13 DIRECT EXAMINATION

14 BY MS. DRIGGERS:

15 Q. Thank you for joining us this morning. Can you
16 please introduce yourself and spell your name for court
17 reporter, please?

18 A. Yes. My name is Jonathan Brown. It's
19 J-O-N-A-T-H-A-N. Last name, Brown, B-R-O-W-N.

20 Q. And where are you from, Investigator Brown?

21 A. I was born in Utah, grew up out west, and
22 currently in Spartanburg.

23 Q. You're currently in Spartanburg, you said?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. And where do you currently work?

1 A. I work in -- at the Laurens County Sheriff's
2 Office.

3 Q. And how long have you been at the sheriff's
4 office?

5 A. Just -- just under 10 years.

6 Q. And did you work anywhere else in law enforcement
7 before that?

8 A. No, that's where I started.

9 Q. And what is your position with the Laurens County
10 Sheriff's Office?

11 A. I'm a criminal investigator.

12 Q. And what does that position as investigator
13 entail?

14 A. It entails us taking cases that have been either
15 responded to by uniform patrol. Sometimes we will respond on
16 scene as well to cases that's going to entail a -- a more
17 detailed investigation. And these can be a long-term
18 investigation and we gather information to try to deduce
19 whether or not there's probable cause to move forward on the
20 case.

21 Q. And were you working in that capacity in November
22 of 2023?

23 A. Yes, I was.

24 Q. Did you have the occasion to get involved in the
25 investigation of Camrin Smith?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. How did you get involved?

3 A. Investigator Sweat was on call that week, and he
4 had called me, told me that he was going to take his
5 daughters out ice skating, I believe, and was going to be out
6 of town. He asked to make sure -- for me to make sure that I
7 was available if something came out that I would be able to
8 -- to assist him with it. And I told him that I would. And
9 that evening, he -- he called me and told me what happened
10 and asked me to respond to the scene.

11 Q. Okay. And what day was that, that you got
12 involved in this case?

13 A. That was November 25, 2023.

14 Q. And what was the address of the incident location
15 that you arrived to?

16 A. That was 4218 Highway 14, in Laurens, South
17 Carolina.

18 Q. You said that is in Laurens County?

19 A. That is in Laurens County. Yes.

20 Q. And do you recall about what time you arrived that
21 night?

22 A. I believe it was 9:46.

23 Q. And I know -- you know, we've heard from some of
24 the other deputies that were there. So you weren't the first
25 to arrive, but were you the first investigator to arrive?

1 A. The first investigator. Yes.

2 Q. And what did you observe when you initially got to
3 the scene? Just first impressions?

4 A. First impression, there was a lot of emergency
5 vehicles there a lot of different people I went and spoke
6 with Lieutenant McMahan on scene. He was the ranking officer
7 on scene. I -- he kind of showed me what was going on. I
8 went in the house and I could see Grace Ables laying on the
9 kitchen floor. She had a gunshot wound to her chest close to
10 her sternum a little bit to the -- her left of the sternum.
11 The --

12 Q. So Grace was deceased by the time that you got
13 there?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. And after your initial observations, what did you
16 do after that?

17 A. We went to -- we went to the back room of the
18 residence. On the way, I could see multiple firearms and --
19 and stuff around the -- the living room area. There was also
20 an open fire firearms case that was on either the dryer or
21 washer in the hallway with a gun laying on top of that.

22 But I was told that the firearm that the deputies would
23 believe to be used in the incident had been located
24 underneath, there was a blue gun box on the bed in that back
25 room. They showed me what the box was kind of what the

1 condition of that was.

2 Q. Okay. And after being taken back to the bedroom
3 and observing this firearm, what did you do after that?

4 A. I -- I returned back to where Grace Ables was
5 laying, kind of took a little bit closer look. I kind of
6 looked a little bit more at the condition. I noticed that
7 she was -- she was pale.

8 She had blue fingers. They were withdrawn a little
9 bit. She was -- she was cold to the touch. She was pale. I
10 also -- I -- I -- there wasn't that much blood in anywhere
11 that I would normally assume from a gunshot wound. And that
12 was all to me, but...

13 Q. And so, after making those observations about the
14 victim, what did you do after that?

15 A. I went and I talked to -- I was told that -- that
16 the Defendant was in a patrol car and I went to speak with
17 him.

18 Q. And who -- who was that? Who was the Defendant?

19 A. Camrin Smith.

20 Q. Okay. And where was the Defendant at that time
21 when you spoke with him initially?

22 A. He was sitting in a marked patrol car out in the
23 -- the driveway of the residence.

24 Q. So another officer had already placed him in the
25 patrol vehicle?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. By the time you got there?

3 A. Before I got there, yes.

4 Q. And are you familiar with Miranda rights?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. What are those generally?

7 A. Generally, it's advising a -- a person who is
8 detained by law enforcement of their -- their rights to -- to
9 not speak to us if they wish to have an attorney with them
10 things like that. It also warns them that anything that they
11 say can be -- can be used against them.

12 Q. And did you have the occasion to advise the
13 Defendant of those rights before speaking to him that night
14 on the scene?

15 A. Yes, I did.

16 Q. And how did you do that? Did -- I know some
17 officers have a little card or did you do it verbatim? How
18 did you advise those rights?

19 A. They -- I'm not one -- one of those persons to try
20 to memorize everything, so I would will normally, and I -- I
21 did on this night where I pull out a card that has the
22 Miranda on it, and I read it out to him.

23 Q. And were you wearing a body-worn camera that
24 night?

25 A. No, I was not.

1 Q. And why is that?

2 A. Because I was not the -- supposed to be on call
3 that night. I was assisting investigator that was on call,
4 so I basically rushed to the scene. I didn't have, on, my
5 gear with me.

6 Q. You were just trying to get to the scene as fast
7 as you could, I guess?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. While you were talking to the Defendant, I guess,
10 and as well as when you were Mirandizing him, was there
11 another deputy with you at that time?

12 A. Yes. I -- because I didn't have my body camera,
13 that's -- that's important to -- to have. And so I went and
14 grabbed Sergeant Foster and brought him over. I asked him if
15 he had his body camera on, and -- and brought him over there
16 so that -- that -- that would be on camera.

17 Q. Okay. And did the Defendant ultimately agree to
18 speak to you?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. And you didn't threaten him in any way?

21 A. No.

22 Q. So he was voluntarily talking to you?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. And what did he say to you at that time?

25 A. He -- he told me that it was dumb, repeated that a

1 couple times that it was a joke, and that he...

2 Q. When he said that it was dumb, when you asked him
3 what he meant by that, what did he say to you?

4 A. He -- he said that -- that was a joke that they --
5 that he pointed it at her.

6 Q. Did he say anything else?

7 A. He -- he said a couple other things. He said that
8 he wasn't -- he knew that he wasn't supposed to.

9 Q. He wasn't supposed to what?

10 A. He said, "I'm not -- I knew I'm not -- I -- I know
11 I'm not supposed -- supposed to do that -- pointing the gun."
12 He said that he pointed the gun.

13 Q. And after you spoke to the Defendant, what did you
14 do after that?

15 A. After that, I -- I went to -- it was a bit of
16 urgency to try to get a search warrant for the residence. I
17 took off to the office to -- to type up a search warrant,
18 then meet with a Judge to get that signed before returning
19 back to the scene.

20 Q. And was that search warrant eventually executed?

21 A. Yes, it was.

22 Q. And during the execution of that search warrant,
23 did you, yourself, locate any physical evidence at the scene
24 that night?

25 A. I did. There's a lot of stuff that was just in

1 plain view, but during the search, I located a shell casing
2 that was along the -- when you first walk into the residence
3 on that front door, off to the -- to the left a little bit,
4 there was some shoes and some other items down on the floor.
5 I was looking along that wall and found a shell casing -- a
6 .380 shell casing.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. Down there amongst the shoes.

9 Q. And I'm going to hand you what's already been
10 admitted into evidence as State's 78. And do you recognize
11 that?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. Is that -- that spent shell casing that you found?

14 A. It is.

15 Q. Okay. And after you located it, what did you do
16 after that? Did you notify anyone or did you collect it
17 yourself?

18 A. No, I didn't collect it myself. I notified
19 Investigator Godfrey who was there to help process the scene
20 to photograph and collect that -- that evidence.

21 Q. And after completing that, did you have the
22 occasion at some point to interview the Defendant later that
23 night?

24 A. I did.

25 Q. Was anyone else present during that interview?

1 A. Investigator Nations helped conduct that interview
2 with me.

3 Q. And did you go straight from the scene after you
4 were doing everything there to that interview?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. Okay. And do you remember around what time the
7 interview occurred?

8 A. Sometime around 2:00 in the morning of the 26th.

9 Q. And when you and Investigator Nations conducted
10 this interview, did you advise the Defendant of his Miranda
11 rights again?

12 A. Investigator Nations did, yes.

13 Q. Okay. And were you present in the room when he
14 advised him?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. Did he agree to speak to you all?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. And again, you did not threaten him in any way?

19 A. No.

20 Q. And he also signed a waiver of rights?

21 A. He did.

22 Q. And was that interview recorded?

23 A. It is.

24 MS. DRIGGERS: Okay. I'm going to hand you what's been
25 pre-marked as State's Exhibit 83.

1 (State's Exhibit Number 83 marked for identification.)

2 BY MS. DRIGGERS:

3 Q. Do you recognize that?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. What is it?

6 A. It's a hard drive containing the video of the
7 interview.

8 Q. And your initials are on there?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. You've reviewed it before today?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. And when you reviewed it, was that an accurate
13 depiction of the interview that you were present for that day
14 with the Defendant?

15 A. The interview is very hard to hear in parts and so
16 there's some parts that it's -- you can't really hear what
17 either I or the -- the Defendant is saying. But a lot of it
18 you can.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. You can hear.

21 Q. But that footage is an accurate depiction of what
22 you heard that day?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. Okay. Has it been altered in any way?

25 A. No.

1 MS. DRIGGERS: Your Honor, the State would move 83 into
2 evidence.

3 MS. JOHNSTON: Without objection.

4 THE COURT: State's 83 is admitted without objection.
5 (State's Exhibit Number 83 admitted into evidence.)

6 MS. DRIGGERS: All right. So let's go ahead and
7 publish your portion. Seven minutes. Let's just -- like
8 sitting, see if you can jump ahead and just play it first.
9 All right. So if we want to jump ahead to where he starts
10 talking to him.

11 (Video starts at 9:59:09 a.m.)

12 (Video stops at 10:10:48 a.m.)

13 MS. DRIGGERS: Your Honor, may we approach?

14 THE COURT: Yes.

15 (Bench conference at 10:11 a.m.)

16 THE COURT: All right. Ladies and gentlemen of the
17 jury, we paused the video. And just by a show of hands I
18 want to ask the following question. How many of you are
19 having difficulty hearing what's being said on the video?
20 All right. That looks to be unanimous. So we'll allow the
21 State to presume asking questions.

22 BY MS. DRIGGERS:

23 Q. I couldn't hear either. So I -- I know that you
24 all are struggling. So here's what we're going to do,
25 Investigator Brown. If we can just go piece by piece? You

1 were there that day, so we're going to have to go based on
2 that, okay?

3 A. Okay.

4 Q. So in the very beginning of the interview, you
5 asked him what happened that day. What did he say to you?

6 A. He told us that earlier in the day he had been
7 shooting with his father. He told us that he -- I believe
8 his father had left between 4:00 and 5:00. They had brought
9 everything into the -- to the house. He had cleaned
10 everything.

11 Q. And when you say "cleaned everything," what did
12 you know what he meant by that?

13 A. He was referring to the firearms stuff that they
14 had been shooting. He said that he cleaned everything. He
15 told me that the -- that he sat down and started watching TV.
16 He and Grace started watching TV. She -- he said that Grace
17 had gotten up to start making her food. Then she started
18 making his food.

19 He said, "45 minutes go by." And she had gotten up and
20 asked him what kind of sauce he wanted. They -- he told her
21 Arby's sauce, and he got up and saw the gun sitting on the
22 counter, and said that he -- he picked it up and started
23 describing this thing where they -- they mess with each other
24 and pointing him -- pointing it at each other. And described
25 to me that he pointed it at Grace and that he -- he pulled

1 the trigger.

2 Q. Did he say anything to you about the magazine?

3 A. He said that the -- when he was describing all
4 this, he did mention that he thought the magazine had
5 dropped.

6 Q. "Had dropped"? What -- what did you take that to
7 mean?

8 A. For -- for me taking it out and -- and it's not
9 just law enforcement people who are out on a range, often
10 it's people familiar with firearms. If you're out at the
11 range and somebody says, "Go ahead and drop your mag," that
12 means to -- to however your -- your gun functions, to eject
13 that -- magazine with ammunition out of that firearm.

14 Q. Okay. So that the magazine's no longer in it?

15 A. Correct.

16 Q. Okay. And then a little bit after that, I -- I
17 don't think that you asked him another question. I think
18 that you just kind of continued him on. Do you know what
19 else he said after that, as far as what happened? Those
20 series of events?

21 A. Yeah, I -- I asked him to continue, and he -- he
22 told me that he heard -- heard the shot or the noise, and
23 then Grace screamed and fell to the ground. He said that he
24 went and shook her. Somewhere in the interview, he's -- he's
25 talking about how she has passed out in the past and that

1 he's shook her to -- to get her to regain consciousness.

2 He said that he ran to grab his phone and called his
3 father. He told me that it took about two minutes to get it
4 out and that his father had told him to call 911. And he
5 said that's exactly what he did. He -- he called and -- you
6 know.

7 Q. Did he say what he was doing, if anything, while
8 he was calling 911?

9 A. He -- he did say that he was attempting CPR while
10 he was calling 911.

11 Q. Okay. Did he explain at all how he conducted CPR?

12 A. Later in the interview, it -- it was -- we were
13 asking for clarification. He said that he had he -- he made
14 the motion that he put his hands together, and he said that
15 he pushed three times. He also mentioned that he gave her
16 mouth-to-mouth.

17 Q. Okay. And I'm sorry, I apologize. If I take
18 anything out of order, you can just correct me where it is.
19 Okay? And at one point, I think you asked him what kind of
20 gun that he shot Grace with. What did he say?

21 A. He said it was a Bersa Thunder .380.

22 Q. And when you asked him where he was when that
23 incident happened, what did he say?

24 A. He -- he told me that he was in the kitchen by the
25 counter.

1 Q. Did he say where Grace was?

2 A. He said that Grace was in between him and the
3 refrigerator.

4 Q. Okay. And then I think at one point, you kind of
5 switched gears a little bit and you asked him about Grace's
6 pregnancy. I think you asked him how far along Grace was.
7 Do you remember his response?

8 A. He told me that she was about seven months along.

9 Q. Okay. And then I think you asked him about the
10 baby. Generally speaking, do you recall what, if anything he
11 said about the baby?

12 A. I did ask him in the interview. He told me that
13 they had -- Grace had already picked out a name for the baby,
14 said Scarlet. I don't know that you can hear that in the
15 video, but I -- I confirmed with him. I -- asking if Scarlet
16 and he confirmed that.

17 Q. And then I think at one point, you did ask about
18 Grace's mental health. Do you remember what he said to that?

19 A. I did. She -- he -- he told me that she had
20 suffered from depression in the past, but since she has
21 become pregnant, that he didn't see that.

22 Q. And then you also asked him about his mental
23 health?

24 A. I did.

25 Q. And what did he say?

1 A. He -- he told me that he had some undiagnosed
2 bipolar issues, but -- that he wasn't medicated for it or
3 anything like that.

4 Q. And then -- and again, we didn't go all the way
5 into your questions on the video, but that's Investigator
6 Nations in the room with you, right?

7 A. Correct.

8 Q. Okay. And at some point in this interview,
9 Investigator Nations starts asking some questions?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. Okay. So I'm going to skip ahead and we're going
12 to call Investigator Nations, so I'm not going to ask you
13 those questions. I'm just going to stick to yours. But
14 after he finished asking questions, did you all -- did one of
15 you all ask him to write a written statement as well?

16 A. Yes, I did.

17 Q. Okay. And did he agree to do that?

18 A. He did.

19 Q. And then did you also write any sort of
20 supplemental report summarizing the statement?

21 A. Yes. Summarizing statement. Yes.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. Long interview.

24 Q. And that was much closer in time to after you
25 heard this interview than now, right?

1 A. Yes, it was a couple days later.

2 Q. And was the Defendant placed under arrest at -- at
3 some point after this interview?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. Okay. Who placed him under arrest?

6 A. They -- I informed him while we were there that --
7 that he was being placed under arrest, but the arresting
8 officer was Investigator Sweat.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. Who was the lead case agent on this.

11 Q. And then after this interview, what, if anything,
12 did you do in this case a few days later?

13 A. A few days later, I believe it was a weekend,
14 though, that I spoke with the Defendant's father, John Smith.
15 I had previously conversed with Investigator Sweat, and we
16 decided that it was not necessary to retain John Smith's
17 phone that had been taken on the scene.

18 The only things that we were needed to confirm was the
19 -- the timestamps of the phone call. So I made arrangements
20 with Mr. John Smith to meet at the evidence building to
21 return that phone to him.

22 Q. And when you say the phone call, are you referring
23 to the -- the phone call he made that night?

24 A. The -- the --

25 Q. To his dad?

1 A. Correct. That's -- that's what we were interested
2 in.

3 Q. So returning that phone back were you able
4 yourself to look at that phone call and look at the -- the
5 times of it?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. Okay. And what time did you note that the phone
8 call went out?

9 A. The -- the phone call -- well, for that phone it
10 was the phone call coming in from his son. And that was at
11 8:34.

12 Q. P.M.?

13 A. P.M. Yes.

14 Q. And did you know how long that phone call lasted?

15 A. It lasted 28 seconds.

16 Q. Okay. And then what additional involvement, if
17 any, did you have in this investigation?

18 A. I was I -- I accompanied Investigator Sweat on
19 multiple other interviews. I assisted with a secondary
20 search warrant that was issued later. Just kind of being
21 there to assist him.

22 MS. DRIGGERS: I beg the Court's indulgence?

23 THE COURT: Yes, ma'am.

24 MS. DRIGGERS: No further questions. Please answer any
25 the Defense may have.

1 CROSS-EXAMINATION

2 BY MS. JOHNSTON:

3 Q. Move, Investigative Brown, a little closer because
4 it's a bit hard to hear in here. So Camrin, he -- he had
5 every opportunity not to speak with you that night, correct?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. Okay. He spoke with you at the scene?

8 A. Yes.

9 A. All right. You read his Miranda rights?

10 A. Yes.

11 A. Which includes, he could have had an attorney
12 there.

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. We heard them again in this interview and he
15 voluntarily chose to speak with you guys?

16 A. Yes, he did.

17 Q. And then after this interview, on and off about
18 two hours?

19 A. For the interview, I think it was about two hours
20 long. Yeah.

21 Q. So after that interview, he -- he gave him an
22 additional statement, correct? Or he wrote an additional
23 statement?

24 A. During -- during those two hours.

25 Q. I Okay. During -- during, yeah. So and he

1 voluntarily sat down with you and Investigator Nations?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. Answered y'all questions?

4 A. Yes, he did.

5 Q. And at no point did he invoke his right to remain
6 silent?

7 A. No.

8 MS. JOHNSTON: I beg the Court's indulgence, one
9 moment?

10 THE COURT: Yes, ma'am.

11 BY MS. JOHNSTON:

12 Q. Investigator Brown, did you listen to the 911
13 call?

14 A. No, I did not.

15 MS. JOHNSTON: No further questions.

16 THE COURT: Any re-direct?

17 MS. DRIGGERS: No, Your Honor.

18 THE COURT: Thank you, sir. You can step down.

19 MS. FINCH: Your Honor, the State calls Investigator
20 Charles Nations.

21 INVESTIGATOR CHARLES NATIONS,

22 being duly sworn, testified as follows:

23 THE CLERK: Thank you. You may have a seat.

24 DIRECT EXAMINATION

25 BY MS. FINCH:

1 Q. Good morning.

2 A. Good morning.

3 Q. Please introduce yourself and spell your name for
4 the court reporter.

5 A. I will. Yes, ma'am. My name is Sergeant Charles
6 Nations. First name, C-H-A-R-L-E-S, last name,
7 N-A-T-I-O-N-S.

8 Q. Thank you. And where are you from?

9 A. Laurens County.

10 Q. You live in Laurens?

11 A. Yes, ma'am.

12 Q. Where do you work?

13 A. The Laurens County Sheriff's Office.

14 Q. How long have you worked there?

15 A. 14 years this month.

16 Q. Did you work anywhere before that?

17 A. I have not. No, ma'am.

18 Q. So you've been in law enforcement about 14 years?

19 A. Yes, ma'am.

20 Q. How long have you been an investigator?

21 A. Since the middle first part of 2016, so May of
22 2016. Nine years approximately.

23 Q. Okay. Generally speaking, what does an
24 investigator do? What does that position entail?

25 A. So for me, I -- I'm a sergeant in CID, but I

1 specialize in narcotics. So my job entails anything that --
2 I've had to investigate crimes from homicide all the way down
3 to thefts that involve -- you know, gang rings, things of
4 that nature. So whether it be fraud, whether it be vehicle
5 thefts, just a random amount of different crimes.

6 Q. So you're well-rounded?

7 A. Yes, ma'am.

8 Q. Okay. And in November of 2023, were you an
9 investigator in that time?

10 A. I was. Yes, ma'am.

11 Q. And did you have an occasion to get involved in
12 this case in November of 2023?

13 A. I did. Yes, ma'am.

14 Q. And how did you become involved in this case?

15 A. So on the night of the incident -- I can't
16 remember who notified me. I was notified, I think, by a road
17 member who had reached out and advised that -- of the
18 situation. So that night I reached out to Investigator
19 Sweat, who was the on-call investigator at that time, and I
20 just asked him if he needed some assistance, and he decides
21 that he would -- you know, take some help if I was able to
22 provide. So I did agree to go out and try to help him.

23 Q. Okay. And did you respond to the scene on this
24 scene?

25 A. I did. Yes, ma'am.

1 Q. Okay. What -- what did you do when you got to the
2 scene?

3 A. So, when I got there, it was kind of -- kind of
4 had a lot of people doing a lot of things. I -- I kind of
5 basically walked through really quick, looked at a few things
6 and kind of got back out. That was my, basically,
7 involvement on the scene.

8 Q. What'd you do after you left the scene?

9 A. When I left the scene, I was asked to come back to
10 Laurens County Sheriff's Office, and conduct an interview
11 with Investigator Brown and Mr. Camrin Smith.

12 Q. Okay. And did you Mirandize Camrin Smith on that
13 night?

14 A. I did. Yes, ma'am.

15 Q. That was during the interview?

16 A. That is the very first thing that we did the
17 moment that we walked into the interview room.

18 Q. Before the interview starts?

19 A. Before it ever began.

20 MS. FINCH: All right. I'm going to show you what's
21 been pre-marked State's Exhibit 84.

22 (State's Exhibit Number 84 marked for identification.)

23 BY MS. FINCH:

24 Q. Do you recognize this document?

25 A. I do. Yes, ma'am.

1 Q. What is it?

2 A. This is -- it's listed as an Advisement of Rights
3 form that we use for Laurens County Sheriff's Office. It
4 basically establishes Miranda rights.

5 Q. Okay. And is this -- is this the one that you
6 would've used on reading Miranda, the statement, to Mr.
7 Camrin Smith?

8 A. Yes, ma'am.

9 Q. Okay. And how do you know that -- that it's the
10 one you had?

11 A. This is our standardized form that we used. It's
12 -- it's got our letterhead on it. It's the advisement of
13 rights form. It has the case number identified in the top
14 left, in the middle of the date on the far right, the time.
15 It has his initials, has his signature at the bottom, has my
16 signature as a witness, as well as Investigator Brown.

17 Q. Okay. And it's in the same condition as the --
18 that night in the office?

19 A. That is correct.

20 MS. FINCH: Your Honor, I would move in State's Exhibit
21 Number 84 at this time.

22 MS. JOHNSTON: Without objection.

23 THE COURT: State's 84 is admitted without objection.

24 (State's Exhibit Number 84 admitted into evidence.)

25 BY MS. FINCH:

1 Q. We'll publish that quickly. So the jury can see
2 what we're talking about. So really quick, again, it's got
3 the case number?

4 A. Yes, ma'am.

5 Q. The date?

6 A. Yes, ma'am.

7 Q. The time?

8 A. Yes, ma'am.

9 Q. Defendant's initials?

10 A. It does.

11 Q. His signature?

12 A. It does.

13 Q. Your signature?

14 A. Yes, ma'am.

15 Q. And Investigator Brown's?

16 A. Yes, ma'am.

17 Q. Okay. Now you -- you kind of came into this
18 interview in the middle, is that right?

19 A. More or less. Yes, ma'am.

20 Q. Investigator Brown, kind of bookend, he was the
21 beginning and the end?

22 A. Yes, ma'am.

23 Q. Around what time would you say you got involved
24 asking questions in this interview?

25 A. So it would've been approximately around 2:26.

1 It's time-stamped in the video. So it'd been around that
2 time.

3 Q. Okay. And in preparation for this, have you
4 reviewed that -- that interview?

5 A. I have. Yes, ma'am.

6 Q. Okay. At length?

7 A. Yes, ma'am.

8 Q. All right. And you'll agree with me it is -- it's
9 hard to hear?

10 A. Yes, ma'am. It is. The sound system, the
11 microphone is so sensitive, it picks up like an electronic
12 squeal. So it does make it a little difficult to -- to hear.

13 Q. Well, you're going to try to -- to play your part
14 of this interview at the end?

15 A. Yes, ma'am.

16 Q. We need to -- we'll turn it off. You're a little
17 greasy -- you're little louder than Investigator Brown?

18 A. Yes, ma'am.

19 MS. FINCH: All right. Let's see if we can hear this
20 part. We're going to start publishing around 26th minute.
21 Let me turn this down or off.

22 (Video starts at 10:30:54 a.m.)

23 (Video stops at 10:40:10 a.m.)

24 BY MS. FINCH:

25 Q. All right. Investigator Nations, bear with me.

1 We're going to skip through. I would like to move to --
2 let's start at about -- all right. Just for the Court's
3 record, we pause it and we're resuming at 2:38:52 a.m.

4 THE COURT: Before we start that, attorneys may
5 approach.

6 (Bench conference at 10:41 a.m.)

7 THE COURT: All right. Ms. Finch, think (Inaudible).

8 MS. FINCH: Okay. Thank you, Your Honor. Picking up
9 we are beginning to play again at 2:38:52.

10 (Video starts at 10:45:46 a.m.)

11 (Video stops at 10:45:59 a.m.)

12 THE COURT: Stop -- stop -- stop.

13 MS. FINCH: Okay.

14 THE COURT: Nothing is heard. All right. We'll go
15 back to it really quick.

16 MS. FINCH: Thank you, Your Honor.

17 (Video starts at 10:46:03 a.m.)

18 (Video stops at 10:47:10 a.m.)

19 MS. FINCH: And we're going to jump forward to about 43
20 minutes.

21 (Video starts at 10:47:14 a.m.)

22 (Video stops at 10:47:39 a.m.)

23 BY MS. FINCH:

24 Q. All right. Investigator Nations, I'm going to
25 kind of just walk through this quickly. What's the last

1 thing Camrin just said to you?

2 A. The very last thing that he was telling us is that
3 he didn't remember racking the firearm. He -- he indicates
4 that he loaded this firearm, but he didn't remember racking
5 it. When he picked the firearm up, he said that he told
6 himself, "Mag drop," which is the removal of the magazine,
7 but he never actually checked to see if it was removed or
8 not.

9 Q. And when did he say he began handling firearms?

10 A. He expressed to me that he started handling
11 firearms in 2019, and then kind of backed up just a little
12 bit and said 2018-ish.

13 Q. Five or six years prior?

14 A. Correct.

15 Q. And you nudged him a little bit. How did he
16 respond when you asked if he had just cleaned the Bersa 380?

17 A. So originally whenever I asked him -- you know,
18 about cleaning the guns, he -- he gave us that he cleaned all
19 the guns except for two one being the Mossberg Maverick 88
20 shotgun. The other he claimed -- he stated was his dad's
21 16-inch AR rifle. So I verified with him that he for sure
22 cleaned that Bersa and that's when he said, "Well, I didn't
23 clean it, I took it apart and I inspected."

24 Q. Okay. And when did he tell you he had done that?

25 A. So he -- so he advised during the interview that

1 when he had gotten back from going shooting him with his
2 father, that's whenever he took the guns apart, cleaned them,
3 and then put them back together. During the interview, I
4 offered a timeline on it and he agreed -- I offered the
5 30-minute timeline prior to the incident occurring. And he
6 agreed to this timeline by stating, "Yes."

7 Q. Camrin described his -- his nine guns for you?

8 A. He did. Yes, ma'am.

9 Q. What descriptions did he give of those?

10 A. So when I asked him how many guns he actually
11 owned, he told me they owned nine. I'll have to look at the
12 list because it -- nine is pretty -- pretty good bit. So he
13 originally states that he has 7-inch AR-15, a 16-inch AR-15,
14 an 8.5-inch AR9, which is a nine millimeter not Cavalry for
15 223. He stated that he owned a Mossberg 88 shotgun, a Bersa
16 3 -- a Bersa Thunder .380, a Taurus TX22, Tisas 1911, PSA
17 Dagger, and a Canik TP9 SA.

18 Q. And you went through, we just saw you went through
19 every single weapon he owned and asked about what ammunition
20 he had for these weapons?

21 A. I did. I went through the calibers of the
22 weapons.

23 Q. What did he say?

24 A. So he advised -- whenever I asked him about the
25 nine millimeters to start off with, he advised that he had

1 approximately 180 rounds already stacked in magazines. He
2 also gave us the information that he had a few boxes of
3 hollow points, and that he had some additional ammunition
4 that were target loads. Then I asked him about the 22
5 calibers, because one of the firearms was a 22 caliber.

6 And he stated that both magazines were full. Well, I
7 had to re-direct and ask him, "Well, how much ammunition is
8 that?" And he advised that there were 34 rounds, each --
9 each magazine held 17 rounds. Then I asked him about the 223
10 and he gave that he had six fully 30-round magazine clips,
11 loaded. He also stated that he had 120-round magazine clip.
12 And then he said that he had three conversion 22 magazines.
13 One -- one, I believe he stated that was still completely
14 full, and then the other two were not full.

15 Q. All the magazines he described, he said were
16 loaded?

17 A. Correct. And then he also stated about the 380s
18 he stated that I -- that he has a few more boxes of hollow
19 points. He thinks two or three. The way that he described
20 it, he indicated that they may actually be open, some might
21 be missing. But then he definitely described one box being
22 in the case with it and that there would be some missing out
23 of that box. That -- that's whenever he specified that the
24 boxes -- the box in the case were the hollow points. Those
25 were the one -- ones that he normally kept in the gun. And

1 anytime that he went to shoot the firearm outside, he would
2 unload the hollow points and load it with target rounds, and
3 then he would load it again with hollow points.

4 Q. And what did Camrin say was his level of hook gun
5 expertise?

6 A. So when I talked to him in the beginning, I -- I
7 asked him -- you know, did he consider himself to be a
8 beginner with firearms? And -- and being that some people
9 don't necessarily know how to handle, or -- you know, carry a
10 firearm, things of that nature? Given the timeline of how
11 long he had said he had been handling firearms, he expressed
12 to me that he himself did not feel like he was a beginner
13 because he knew how to do drills, and he would do drills
14 every once in a while.

15 MS. FINCH: Thank you, Investigator Nations. Nothing
16 further.

17 THE WITNESS: Yes, ma'am.

18 THE COURT: Cross-examination?

19 CROSS-EXAMINATION

20 BY MR. ERWIN:

21 Q. Good morning, Investigator Nations, right?

22 A. Yes, sir.

23 Q. Okay. You were not the lead investigator on this
24 case?

25 A. I am not the lead investigator on this case.

1 Right.

2 Q. That's Investigator Sweat who, I believe, is with
3 us today, right?

4 A. That is correct, sir.

5 Q. Okay. So the question of whether the shooting was
6 malicious or not was not for you to answer?

7 A. It is not.

8 Q. And the decision of what crime to charge Camrin
9 with was not yours?

10 A. Not a final decision. No.

11 MR. ERWIN: No further questions.

12 THE COURT: Any re-direct?

13 MS. FINCH: No, Your Honor. And at this point, I would
14 request we take our morning break.

15 THE COURT: Okay. All right. Ladies and gentlemen,
16 we're going to take a break for about 15 minutes. Again,
17 please don't begin your deliberations, don't discuss the case
18 amongst yourselves or with anybody else. Don't do any
19 research on any issue raised.

20 Now, while we're on the break I've got one task I want
21 you all to do. I want you to elect a foreperson who will be
22 the jury's spokesperson, and lead the deliberations at the
23 conclusion of the trial. You can do it by any means that you
24 want. You all can do a voice vote. You all can do paper --
25 paper votes. The only limitation is that the foreperson has

1 to come from the 12 primary jurors.

2 So the alternate jurors are not eligible to serve as a
3 foreperson. So the people that would not be eligible would
4 be Ms. McGee, Mr. Hunter, and Mr. Polson. So if you would do
5 that while we're on the break this morning and when we come
6 back in, I will ask who has been elected to serve as the
7 foreperson. I will explain more about what the role of the
8 foreperson the closer we get to the end of the trial. But we
9 need to go ahead and have that in place and this is an
10 appropriate time to do it. So if you'd go to your jury room,
11 we'll bring you back out, and we'll get started in about 15
12 minutes.

13 (Jury exits courtroom at 10:55 a.m.)

14 THE COURT: We will be in recess for around 15 minutes.

15 MS. FINCH: Thank you, Your Honor.

16 (Off the record at 10:56 a.m.)

17 (On the record at 11:22 a.m.)

18 THE COURT: All right. Ladies and gentlemen, before we
19 bring the jury back in, they have selected foreperson. That
20 would be Juror Number 18, Delane Barnes.

21 THE BAILIFF: Okay. I'll bring them in.

22 THE COURT: All right.

23 THE BAILIFF: All jurors are present, Your Honor.

24 (Jury enters courtroom at 11:24 a.m.)

25 THE COURT: All right. And I received a note where

1 Juror Number 18, Ms. Barnes, has been selected as a
2 foreperson. Is that correct? All right. That'll be your
3 seat for the remainder of the trial.

4 THE COURT: All right. State may call its next
5 witness.

6 MS. FINCH: Thank you, Your Honor. The State calls
7 Investigator Steven Sweat.

8 INVESTIGATOR STEVEN SWEAT,
9 being duly sworn, testified as follows:

10 THE CLERK: Thank you. You may have a seat.

11 DIRECT EXAMINATION

12 BY MS. FINCH:

13 Q. Good morning, Investigator.

14 A. Good morning.

15 Q. Can you tell us and spell your name please for the
16 court reporter?

17 A. Yes, ma'am. Steven Sweat. S-T-E-V-E-N, and then
18 S-W-E-A-T.

19 Q. Thank you. How are you?

20 A. I'm doing good. Busy. I'm good. It's been a
21 heck of a week.

22 Q. All right. Investigator Sweat, where do you work?

23 A. The Laurens County Sheriff's Office.

24 Q. How long have you worked there?

25 A. I first started in 2007, so working on 17, 18

1 years.

2 Q. Okay. Has that been the extent of your career in
3 law enforcement?

4 A. I served shortly a couple of agencies. I was at a
5 short time with Greenwood City Police Department, Laurens
6 City Police Department, and then the Pickens County Sheriff's
7 Office as well.

8 Q. What is your official title?

9 A. Investigator.

10 Q. And what -- what does that job entail?

11 A. Essentially, following up with cases that do
12 require attention to detail. Follow up in finding the facts
13 of the case and determining whether the law applies to, if
14 there's probable cause for an arrest, if there's enough
15 sufficient evidence to prosecute to generalize its
16 information gathering, fact-finding and application of the
17 law.

18 Q. Okay. And what training have you had to become an
19 investigator?

20 A. Throughout my career I've been to crime scene
21 classes, different investigative classes, focusing on
22 specific points of investigation, whether it's interview,
23 basic investigations on the CID side, narcotics
24 investigations, numerous narcotic classes over the years.

25 Q. Okay. We have heard the acronym CID twice now.

1 What does CID stand for?

2 A. Criminal Investigations Division.

3 Q. Okay. And how long have you been an investigator?

4 A. I first came to investigations in November of
5 2014, so about 10 years or so.

6 Q. Okay. And what -- what would you say are the
7 crucial steps in a criminal investigation?

8 A. First -- first and foremost, when -- obvious, you
9 get assigned a case or you get called out to the scene. Once
10 you get to that scene, you got to secure it, make sure it's
11 safe, make sure things are under control. If you're a case
12 agent like I was in this case, you kind of direct things.
13 You got various personnel that you can utilize to make sure
14 that different tasks are delegated and taken care of by a
15 particular investigator. You allocate your resources as
16 efficiently as you can to take care of the case. You don't
17 want to use too many folks if you don't want to use to...

18 Overall, once you start doing that and gathering
19 information you take that information, apply what you got
20 develop leads, follow those leads, obtain evidence, and find
21 out as much information as you can regarding the case going
22 forward. Come up with a plan for the case.

23 Q. And you're confident you did that in this case?

24 A. Yes, ma'am.

25 Q. You mentioned you were the lead on the case we're

1 here for today, you were at the Sheriff's Department in
2 November, 2023?

3 A. Yes, I was working there, employed by them.

4 Q. And on the night of November 25, 2023, what were
5 you doing that night?

6 A. Well, I was ice skating with my family and kids at
7 Whitewater Center in Charlotte, North Carolina. This was
8 Thanksgiving weekend, and I knew that they had that going on
9 up there. So I called my partner, Investigator Brown, asked
10 him if he'd cover for me that night. This is Saturday night,
11 if I recall correctly, for that weekend. And he agreed to
12 it. So while I was down there -- yeah, I was on call, but he
13 was covering for me, and this -- this incident occurred.

14 Q. And do you recall how you became involved?

15 A. Yes, ma'am. While I was there, I received a call
16 from my supervisor, who is Captain Robert Wilkie, informing
17 me of a death investigation unfolding at 4218 South Carolina
18 Highway 14, in Laurens area of Laurens County, South
19 Carolina.

20 Q. Okay. And what did you do after you received that
21 information?

22 A. I called Investigator Brown, asked if he would
23 assist.

24 Q. Okay. And you started making your way to Laurens?

25 A. Yes. I was getting updates from Lieutenant

1 McMahan who was in control of the scene. And once
2 Investigator Brown got on scene, he would update me as well.
3 Investigator Nations also called me and asked if I needed
4 some help and I was like, "Absolutely," in Charlotte. So he
5 headed the scene and started to assist as well.

6 Q. Once you made your way to Laurens County, where
7 did you go first that night?

8 A. So the first place that I went to was Laurens
9 County, E911 dispatch.

10 Q. Speak up a little bit for me, please.

11 A. I'm sorry. The first place that I went to was
12 Laurens County, E911 dispatch.

13 Q. And why did you go there first?

14 A. I wanted to listen to the E911 call that came in
15 regarding this case.

16 Q. When -- when you got into town, was the scene
17 secure?

18 A. When I got into town, yes. The scene had been
19 secured already by the deputies that were on scene. I
20 learned that they did everything they're supposed to. They
21 got search warrants, they collected evidence, they had
22 initial interviews on scene, they collected a crime scene
23 log, they taped the place off. They went -- gone through the
24 proper steps to ensure the crime scene security.

25 Q. Was anyone still at the scene?

1 A. No.

2 Q. Okay. What did you do when you got to dispatch?

3 A. So once I got in there, I asked the dispatchers to
4 pull up the recorded E911 call that came in from the
5 Defendant regarding this case. Once they did that, I
6 listened to it several times.

7 Q. And after you felt comfortable with that call,
8 what did you do next?

9 A. Well, I took some observations from it, of course.
10 And I took note of what the Defendant said as he called into
11 dispatch, his overall demeanor, what he was asking for during
12 the 911 call. Just overall information that was conveyed
13 through it.

14 Q. Okay. Where did you go next?

15 A. From there, I left and I went to the sheriff's
16 office. I understood at that point that Investigator Brown
17 and Investigator Nations both were interviewing the Defendant
18 in our interview room, audio, video recording. It also has
19 the capability for me to be able to log into the computer
20 system, and monitor this recording live. So I began to
21 monitor the interview.

22 Q. Okay. Do you know about what time you got to the
23 Sheriff's Department that night?

24 A. Somewhere between -- somewhere between 2:00 and
25 3:00 in the morning.

1 Q. Do you recall -- were you able to watch the
2 majority of that interview live?

3 A. Yes -- yes.

4 Q. And what -- what was Camrin's demeanor during that
5 interview?

6 A. I call it "statuting."

7 Q. Speak up.

8 A. I call it "statuting." As he was talking to
9 investigators, he -- he moved very little. His voice didn't
10 -- inflection didn't change much. It was very different from
11 what I heard in the E911 call. His hands overall remained
12 either crossed or slightly open. However, he was also
13 handcuffed in front. Same thing with his feet. They
14 remained crossed or right beside each other. And I know
15 there were times that I took note of it -- you know, for 40
16 minutes, he stayed in a very relatively similar position at
17 the beginning, and then again for about another -- let's see,
18 25 minutes or so with the most significant movements being
19 that he crossed his ankles and moved his -- hold his hands
20 back and forth while he was at the table.

21 Q. Was there anything else you observed about the
22 interview?

23 A. There were contradictions in the statements and
24 things that did not make sense to me as far as the
25 circumstances regarding how Grace Ables -- how he shot Grace

1 Ables.

2 Q. Okay. And next, as lead investigator, how did you
3 review the evidence that -- that had been collected?

4 A. So with the electronic evidence, obviously
5 Investigator Brown had conducted a search warrant out there
6 on scene that night when he did with CSI Godfrey, a crime
7 scene investigator. She came out there and she collected
8 multiple pieces of evidence. She took numerous photographs
9 and she took a log of things that she collected as well as
10 entry into evidence at sheriff's office evidence holding
11 facility.

12 Further, the deputies that were on scene that night,
13 they were on body cameras. And the body cameras of course
14 captured footage of what they perceived, what they saw, what
15 they experienced, and I need to go through that, analyze
16 that, along with the photos that CSI Godfrey took while she
17 was on scene.

18 And further, I also had taken a recording for myself
19 until later production from 911 dispatch of the Defendant's
20 E911 call. I reviewed all those as the investigation
21 unfolded, but immediately on the 27th, I went to the evidence
22 facility over there near the jail and started reviewing the
23 collected evidence as far as everything that we had gotten.

24 Q. Okay. Let's back up a little bit before we get to
25 the 27th.

1 A. Yes, ma'am.

2 Q. You mentioned you reviewed all of the body camera
3 footage --

4 A. Yes, ma'am.

5 Q. -- on the scene that night?

6 A. Yes, ma'am.

7 Q. Approximately how many hours of footage was that?

8 A. Hours? I -- I have notes regarding the timeframes
9 and how much, but -- I mean, it was hours upon hours.

10 Q. Okay. And since you weren't on scene, did you
11 review the written instant reports from officers who were
12 there?

13 A. Yes. So we had written reports submitted by
14 Deputy Wilson, Deputy Gardner. Just a brief -- we got the
15 wrong date. We had Deputy Wongmanee, if I'm pronouncing that
16 correctly, Lieutenant McMahan, I believe -- make sure I'm not
17 leaving anybody out. So just bear with me, please.

18 Q. Would you agree with me the remaining were Brown
19 and Godfrey?

20 A. Yes. Investigator Brown, Investigator -- CSI
21 Godfrey.

22 Q. And you reviewed all their reports?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. And upon reviewing that evidence, are you
25 confident that all steps were taken at the scene that night

1 that should have been taken to secure this scene?

2 A. Yes, ma'am.

3 Q. The scene was made safe?

4 A. Yes, ma'am.

5 Q. The scene was taped off?

6 A. It was.

7 Q. There was a search warrant secured?

8 A. There was.

9 Q. Evidence was properly collected?

10 A. Yes, ma'am.

11 Q. And you wrote your own reports as you investigated
12 this case, correct?

13 A. Yes, ma'am.

14 Q. How long would you say your reports are for this
15 case?

16 A. Say mine's somewhere around 25 to 30 pages worth
17 of documentation on this case.

18 Q. And you noted everything you saw in your review of
19 the case?

20 A. Well, my review up to this point, how the
21 investigation went on further, the folks that I spoke with,
22 what I learned from them, what they said to me, other
23 evidence that we obtained as the investigation unfolded.
24 Yes.

25 Q. Okay. Now, I'm -- I'm going to jump a little bit.

1 A. Okay.

2 Q. We've mentioned the -- the early morning hours of
3 November 26th. The next day would've been that Monday,
4 November 27. Do you recall what you did to work this case on
5 that day?

6 A. Yes, ma'am. So on the 27th, we reviewed the
7 evidence from the case that was at the evidence facility. We
8 got out there and we collected firearms, ammunition, phones,
9 shell casing -- casings, just we -- we -- how that evidence
10 out there that we had to go through.

11 The things that stood out to me initially were the two
12 cellular devices. One of them recovered from the couch that
13 belonged to the Defendant. And then we recovered another one
14 from back, right pocket of Ms. Ables, of course, she was
15 deceased. I drafted and presented affidavits to search those
16 cell phones and was ultimately granted search warrants for
17 those cell phones.

18 Additionally, we noted a rifle that we collected that
19 was -- that met the statutory of the law requirement for what
20 is considered a "sawed-off rifle." In the State of South
21 Carolina, we cannot own a rifle or shotgun that is less than
22 a particular overall length, or has a particular -- less than
23 a particular barrel length. We find --

24 Q. All right. We'll stop you for a second.
25 Appreciate it.

1 A. Yes, ma'am.

2 Q. I'm going to show you what has been entered into
3 evidence as State's Exhibit 79. You have gloves up here?

4 A. Thank you.

5 Q. Can you open that for me, please?

6 A. Yes, ma'am.

7 Q. What's in this box?

8 A. A rifle.

9 Q. Okay. Is this the rifle you identified in
10 reviewing evidence as being the illegal sawed-off rifle?

11 A. Yes, ma'am.

12 Q. Can you, while practicing gun safety, show that
13 weapon to the jury, please?

14 A. Yes.

15 MS. FINCH: And, Your Honor, I would ask again that we
16 just make a note for the jury there is a -- a gun lock in
17 this.

18 THE COURT: Yes, ma'am. Ladies and gentlemen of the
19 jury, as I expressed to you yesterday there is a gun lock in
20 that weapon that would prevent this weapon from discharging.
21 So it is safe for a display in the courtroom.

22 MS. FINCH: Thank you, Your Honor.

23 BY MS. FINCH:

24 Q. Investigator Sweat, when you were reviewing this
25 evidence, did you measure the barrel of that rifle?

1 A. Yes, ma'am.

2 Q. And how long was the barrel of that rifle?

3 A. Approximately nine inches.

4 Q. And in your investigation, were you ever -- ever
5 able to determine or find a federal tax stamp for that
6 weapon?

7 A. No, ma'am.

8 Q. Thank you. We can put it away. Investigator
9 Sweat, you mentioned collecting a couple of phones in this
10 case?

11 A. Yes, ma'am.

12 Q. And you had a search warrant for those?

13 A. Yes, ma'am.

14 Q. What does that mean exactly?

15 A. So essentially anytime the state government wants
16 to search somebody's stuff, they have got to have probable
17 cause. It's a legal standard and a judge has to determine
18 whether or not that legal standard exists. So in such a case
19 like this one when we have electronic devices, we tend to
20 seek search warrants on those electronic devices to
21 potentially find evidence of the crime under investigation.

22 More or less without going into all the technicalities
23 of it, I guess, folks tend to talk about their day --
24 day-to-day lives through phone calls, texts, photographs,
25 videos, all kinds of different means on a cell phone.

1 Because of that, it gives insight into their day-to-day
2 lives. And in a homicide-related investigation, it could
3 potentially provide information as far as motive or otherwise
4 for this investigation. Due to that, I sought those search
5 warrants on those electronic devices for both Ms. Grace and
6 the Defendant. The judge ended up granting those search
7 warrants.

8 Q. Okay. Once you have that search warrant, what do
9 you do after that?

10 A. We take those phones to the agency that has a
11 capability of doing the forensic extraction on those phones.

12 Q. And these phones were forensically extracted?

13 A. Yes, ma'am.

14 Q. When did you receive that report back? Do you
15 recall?

16 A. Not off the top of my head. If I can reference my
17 notes, please?

18 Q. Well --

19 A. It was late -- it was well later on.

20 Q. Okay. And you've reviewed those extractions?

21 A. Yes, ma'am.

22 Q. Okay. And continuing on the day of the 27th, did
23 you speak to anyone about the case on that day?

24 A. So on the 27th -- you know, I spoke with the judge
25 and presented the warrant affidavit for the sawed-off rifle.

1 Judge Green in that warrant. I know we went through the
2 evidence out there at the evidence facility. I also
3 conducted a couple phone interviews that day due to
4 voicemails left on my desk phone.

5 Q. And who did you talk to?

6 A. I spoke with William Ables, who is the victim's
7 father, and I also spoke with Fountain Inn Police Department,
8 Detective Paris.

9 Q. What --

10 A. Who's present here today.

11 Q. Okay. Going back what was the content of the call
12 with Mr. Ables?

13 A. He wanted to know the details of the case, and
14 wouldn't give that to him.

15 Q. Okay. And similarly with Officer Paris, what was
16 the content of that call?

17 A. The same thing. He wanted to know what was going
18 on in the case, the details of it, and I wasn't giving that
19 out yet either.

20 Q. And why would you not provide that information?

21 A. The integrity of the case. I'm protecting it.

22 Q. Okay. What -- what would be the next big thing
23 you would move forward doing in a criminal investigation
24 after the initial couple of days?

25 A. So in this case particularly, you want to be able

1 to follow up leads, find more evidence, get more insight,
2 learn as much as you can about what's surrounding this case.
3 Ultimately in this one, there was the Defendant, the victim
4 was present that night, and I need to know more about what
5 happened beforehand so I could get a good idea of what's
6 really going on here.

7 So in turn, I started asking the family about people I
8 could potentially talk to, and I gathered names as this
9 investigation developed as to potential witnesses, people to
10 provide insight regarding this case. And I did along with
11 the assistance of Investigator Brown.

12 Q. Thank you. And I'm going to ask you about those
13 interviews.

14 A. Okay.

15 Q. Not specifically what was said.

16 A. Okay.

17 Q. Okay. Do you recall who you interviewed on
18 November 28, 2023?

19 A. Yes. So we've gone up to Greenville County and
20 dropped the phones up there for forensic extraction, and we
21 went over to McKenzie Sloan's residence and spoke with her
22 about this case.

23 Q. Okay. And who is McKenzie Sloan?

24 A. She's a childhood friend of Ms. Grace.

25 Q. And who was present?

1 A. Investigator Brown, myself, and of course
2 Ms. Sloan.

3 Q. And was that interview recorded?

4 A. It was on body-worn camera.

5 Q. And you typed a report to reflect the interview?

6 A. Yes, ma'am.

7 Q. And all of that was added to the case file?

8 A. Yes, ma'am.

9 Q. And who else did you talk to that day?

10 A. So when we left there, we got some information and
11 we got some names, people to talk to when we went to speak
12 with Crystal Ables, who is Ms. Grace's sister. We went to
13 her house in Simpsonville and spoke with her there.

14 Q. And again, who was present?

15 A. Investigator Brown and I, Ms. Crystal, and then I
16 believe her -- Mr. Schmidt, if I'm -- yeah, Mr. Schmidt --
17 her -- her boyfriend, like, came in during the conversation
18 and left out, and we recorded that on body-worn camera as
19 well.

20 Q. And that -- that was recorded?

21 A. Yes, ma'am.

22 Q. And you typed a report to reflect that?

23 A. Yes, ma'am.

24 Q. Added to the case file?

25 A. Yes, ma'am.

1 Q. Anyone else you spoke to back in Laurens on
2 November 28?

3 A. Yes. I ended up speaking with Judge Wham later
4 that evening.

5 Q. Would you agree with me you spoke to the
6 Defendant's father?

7 A. Briefly.

8 Q. Do you recall that interview?

9 A. That evening -- I'm having trouble which day it
10 was, but I do know I talked to him later during the case.

11 Q. Okay. You conducted an interview with John Smith?

12 A. I'm sorry, I misunderstood you. I thought -- I
13 understand you say Defendant's father. Yes, we did speak
14 with -- yes.

15 Q. I'm sorry, I may have.

16 A. We did speak with the Defendant's father that day,
17 Mr. Smith. We had a recorded interview with him at the
18 sheriff's office earlier in that day.

19 Q. And who was present?

20 A. Investigator Brown, myself, and Mr. John.

21 Q. And it was recorded?

22 A. Yes -- yes, ma'am. This interview was conducted
23 in the audio-video room, the same as where the Defendant was
24 interviewed.

25 Q. And you typed a report to reflect it?

1 A. I did.

2 Q. It was added into the file?

3 A. Yes, ma'am.

4 Q. And during that interview, what did you do?

5 A. We asked him questions about his son's background.
6 We asked him questions about that night whether his son --
7 how his son communicated with him when his son called him,
8 took note from his phone when the Defendant called the phone
9 that he had in his possession at that time. And I added that
10 information to the case as well.

11 Q. So you reviewed the phone?

12 A. Yes, ma'am. As far as --

13 Q. Mr. Smith's phone?

14 A. John Smith. Yes, ma'am.

15 Q. He was cooperative?

16 A. Yes, ma'am.

17 Q. When -- what -- what did you see on his phone
18 about the call from that incident that evening?

19 A. He received a call from the contact listed as his
20 son at 8:34 -- may have listed elsewhere. He received a call
21 from his son about 8:34 that evening.

22 Q. How long was that call?

23 A. 28 seconds.

24 Q. Moving a few days forward, who else did you speak
25 to during the investigation of this case?

1 A. All right. So we also spoke with a friend of the
2 couple. His name is Christian Horn Thomason. We spoke with
3 him at the sheriff's office. I think that was on the 30th of
4 November, and recorded an interview with him. We spoke with
5 Dominick Waterson, AKA Nick Waterson.

6 Q. Let me back you up a second.

7 A. Okay.

8 Q. Dr. Christian, did he also provide a written
9 statement?

10 A. He -- it was written -- he wanted me to write it
11 for him as he dictated the statement.

12 Q. He reviewed it and signed it?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. All that's on recording?

15 A. Yes, ma'am.

16 Q. You typed a report to reflect it?

17 A. Yes, ma'am.

18 Q. It all went to the case file?

19 A. Absolutely.

20 Q. All right. Moving on. You mentioned Dominic
21 Waterson. Who is that?

22 A. So he is a former friend of the victim and the
23 Defendant on this case. He is also a former roommate. And
24 he lived with them from 2022 through the beginning of 2023.

25 Q. And again, was that recorded?

1 A. Yes. At the sheriff's office interview room and I
2 typed a report to reflect the interview and added it to the
3 case file.

4 Q. Thank you. Speak up for me. The air just kicked
5 on.

6 A. Yes, ma'am.

7 Q. All right. We're going to get through all these.
8 Who else did you talk to?

9 A. So as the investigation continued, we got other
10 names of people to interview. I ended up speaking with
11 another roommate of theirs. Her name is Kiersten Benton.
12 She lived with both the Defendant and victim during about the
13 same time that Mr. Waterson did at -- may know this location
14 over here at 4218 Highway 14.

15 We spoke with her at the Starbucks in Simpsonville, off
16 of Fairview Road. And in that interview, Investigator Brown
17 was with me -- me again. I used a body-worn camera to record
18 the interview and, of course, type the report to reflect the
19 interview findings and added it to this case file.

20 Q. Who else?

21 A. So I believe after that was Mr. and Mrs. Ball,
22 which would've been...

23 Q. Speak up for me please.

24 A. Sorry. Yeah. So after that was Mike and Katelyn
25 Ball. Spoke with them on December 11 at the sheriff's

1 office, northeastern substation. If any of you all are
2 familiar with Laurens County, where ZF Transmission is there
3 is a full substation right beside it where we have an office
4 in as well as Fire and EMS.

5 I met with them there that day alone. Investigator
6 Brown was preoccupied a case, and -- but I did take my
7 body-worn camera, interviewed them, and then did the report.
8 I put interview's findings with it and I added that to the
9 case file.

10 Q. Who else?

11 A. I did get to do a phone interview with the
12 pathologist regarding this case, a Dr. Rose, and she gave me
13 an initial report reflecting the -- yeah, that was actually
14 on December 1. I'm sorry. She gave me the initial findings
15 from the autopsy.

16 Q. Okay. Were there any other lay witnesses you
17 spoke to in this case?

18 A. Yes, ma'am. I'm speaking with Katelyn -- bear
19 with me.

20 Q. Did you speak with --

21 A. Cody Carter on December 12th. He's a friend of
22 the Defendant. Spoke with him in Waterloo. Spoke with him
23 alone, but I also had my body-worn camera at that point in
24 time. I did the report and the case file for that interview.

25 And then I spoke with Mary Katelyn McGee in January.

1 That was on the 22nd of '24. I spoke with her alone as well,
2 but again, recorded the interview on body camera. Did a
3 report, reflect the findings of it, added that to the case
4 file as well.

5 Q. Thank you.

6 A. Yes, ma'am.

7 Q. You spoke with over 10 people?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. What did you do on December 11? Where did you go?

10 A. December 11? Bear with me. Dates of -- copies of
11 stuff. So I think December 11, I know I went and spoke with
12 the Balls that day up there at the Nest.

13 Q. Did you go anywhere else in Gray Court that day?
14 Did you visit the incident location?

15 A. Yes. So Investigator Brown and I had a working
16 theory about the crime scene after reviewing the videos and
17 the photos from the scene bestowed, if I remember correctly.
18 This -- we went out there and we found -- let me check this
19 real quick because I have that referenced.

20 Q. You are going to have to speak up again. I'm
21 sorry.

22 A. Let me check -- I'm sorry. Let me let me check my
23 notes really quick because I have this part referenced there.

24 Q. You went to the crime scene, who was there?

25 A. The landlord.

1 Q. You spoke to the landlord?

2 A. And he had work crew that was getting ready to
3 repair the place for re-rental. So we went to the instant
4 location and like I said, we had that theory about the crime
5 scene bestowed. I noted that landlord was there. That was
6 Danny Morgan. We asked to search the residence and he gave
7 us consent at that time.

8 As we were looking around, we ended up negating the
9 theory that we had. It didn't apply, more or less had to do
10 with the oven light. It's just on when the stove's on off,
11 the stove's off is all that was. You know how some stoves
12 have like the hot countertop light that's a warning if the
13 stove's still warm. We were wondering if that's what that
14 light was, but it wasn't. It was just a power indicator.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. However, while we were also there, we ended up
17 checking the trash and we were able to find the TV dinner,
18 for lack of better term, if you guys know what I'm talking
19 about. It's like an instant meal that you put in the
20 microwave. You heat it up for a couple minutes or you put it
21 in the oven for like 25, 30 minutes, and then of course you
22 should peel the top off and eat it. We found that as well.

23 Q. Okay. Would it be fair to say you did a short
24 interview with the landlord as well?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. And you typed all that up from that day?

2 A. Yes, I noted in my investigative notes.

3 Q. Okay. Through the course of your investigation,
4 what did you learn about Camrin and his hobbies?

5 A. So the Defendant likes guns, he likes cars. He
6 had a Mitsubishi Mighty Max that was a very -- he -- he liked
7 working on his truck. And I learned that he has been
8 handling guns since -- regularly, since I think he was about
9 19 years of age, more or less.

10 He was 24 around the time this incident occurred. And
11 I learned that he had quite a few firearms and quite a few
12 firearm accessories that he exhibited very -- except for one
13 instance or one witness, most around everybody else, he
14 exhibited good firearm safety. Yeah.

15 Q. Okay.

16 MS. JOHNSTON: Your Honor, I'm sorry to object. We
17 cannot hear him really at all.

18 THE WITNESS: I'm sorry.

19 THE COURT: Yeah. We -- it is a little bit difficult.
20 I'll try -- he's kind of speaking down. You lift your head
21 up and project a little bit.

22 THE WITNESS: Yes, sir.

23 THE COURT: All right.

24 MS. FINCH: Thank you, Your Honor.

25 BY MS. FINCH:

1 Q. Moving on, Detective, did you learn anything about
2 Grace during your investigation?

3 A. Yes, I learned that she was pregnant, that she was
4 approximately seven months pregnant. That the child was a
5 viable fetus, that she had had miscarriages prior to this.
6 And was protective of this child. Very protective.

7 Q. Did you learn anything about her hobbies or what
8 she would do in her free time?

9 A. She liked to camp off road. She seemed to kind of
10 be into vehicles to some degree, but not the same as the
11 Defendant. Hers is more geared towards like mountaineering.
12 You can kind of know what I mean, going out like the
13 Appalachians, hitting dirt trails, things like that.

14 Q. Okay. And during the course of this
15 investigation, you -- you mentioned you collected phones.
16 Did you -- did you request any records for the Defendant's
17 phone?

18 A. I did. I ended up sending -- obtaining a search
19 warrant for both the Defendant's and the victim's cellular
20 records from Verizon. Investigator Brown sent that to
21 Verizon Wireless and they ended up producing records around
22 the beginning of February of '24, which we added K-5 as well.

23 MS. FINCH: Okay. I'm going to show you what's been
24 marked State's 85 and 85(a). And these have been shared with
25 the Defense, Your Honor.

1 (State's Exhibit Numbers 85 and 85 (a) marked for
2 identification.)

3 BY MS. FINCH:

4 Q. Do you recognize that?

5 A. Yes, ma'am.

6 Q. What is it?

7 A. The front page is a certification from Verizon
8 saying that these were -- they're certified records

9 Q. Don't publish yet, please. Sorry. Tell me what
10 it is.

11 A. The second page has to do with toll records from
12 our call records from that night -- the night of the incident
13 on November 25th of 2023.

14 Q. Okay. And you received these as a result of your
15 search warrant on Verizon?

16 A. Yes, ma'am.

17 Q. And they appear how you received them?

18 A. Yes, ma'am.

19 Q. They have not been altered?

20 A. The exception of the sticker number.

21 MS. FINCH: Your Honor, I would move to publish and
22 enter in State's 85 and 85(a).

23 MS. JOHNSTON: Without objection, Your Honor.

24 THE COURT: All right. 85 and 85(a) will be admitted
25 without objection.

1 (State's Exhibit Numbers 85 & 85(a) admitted into evidence.)

2 MS. FINCH: And, Your Honor, again, just for purposes
3 of the record, that's pursuant to our notice that we
4 discussed pretrial section 19-55-20.

5 THE COURT: Yes, ma'am.

6 BY MS. FINCH:

7 Q. All right. Investigator Sweat, we have published
8 State's 85. Briefly, what is this?

9 A. That is the certification record from Verizon.

10 Q. All right. I'm going to ask you to turn and
11 project a little towards me.

12 A. Yes, ma'am. That's the Verizon -- that's the
13 certification record from Verizon.

14 Q. Thank you. That is a normal certification you
15 receive when requesting these types of records?

16 A. Yes, ma'am.

17 Q. It says these are accurate records from Verizon?

18 A. Yes, ma'am.

19 Q. Okay. And then we're going to publish 85(a). And
20 what are we looking at here?

21 A. So you're looking at toll records at the very top
22 line, this section down here has to do with E911 calls where
23 they pretty much take callers advice. But up there are the
24 various calls that were made in the timeframe. The search
25 warrant. Some of them are adjusted for local time, some are

1 in GMT timeframe.

2 Q. Okay. Focusing on line five, can you identify
3 what that says for me?

4 A. That says "2023, 4/11, 4/25, 2035 (GT5)."

5 Q. All right. And that's telling us this call is
6 November 25, 2023, 8:35?

7 A. Yes, ma'am. It's converting over to standard
8 time.

9 Q. All right. And if we scroll over column K, what
10 is that number?

11 A. That would be John Smith's phone number.

12 Q. Can you read it out?

13 A. John Smith's phone number. That's the Defendant's
14 father [REDACTED]-6061.

15 Q. And that is the -- the same phone number you
16 learned from Mr. Smith was his -- his number?

17 A. Yes, ma'am.

18 Q. Okay. And have you had any sort of training in
19 reading these?

20 A. I've got a reference sheet that I use. The
21 Verizon sent it as well.

22 Q. Okay. So you reviewed that in anticipation of
23 trial?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. And can you tell this jury why it says 8:35 rather

1 than 8:34?

2 A. Yes. So if you all call back to the days of
3 prepaid calling cards and call -- call collect, phone
4 companies keep tolls from the time you call connects. So if
5 you were to call me on a collect call and it rang for 20
6 seconds, that 20 seconds, they wouldn't bill. Call begins
7 billing at the time of connection. So therefore if the phone
8 rings for say, 13 seconds, then that's when the phone company
9 log -- that the call begins to be tolled or billed.

10 Q. Thank you. Investigator Sweat, you did a lot of
11 work on this case?

12 A. Yes, ma'am.

13 Q. You reviewed all body camera?

14 A. Yes, ma'am.

15 Q. Reviewed all reports?

16 A. Yes, ma'am.

17 Q. Reviewed every piece of physical evidence?

18 A. Yes, ma'am.

19 Q. Reviewed every photo?

20 A. Yes, ma'am.

21 Q. Interviewed over 10 people?

22 A. Yes, ma'am.

23 A. Spoke to the pathologist?

24 A. Yes, ma'am.

25 Q. Reviewed records that you requested?

1 A. Obtained search warrants on some of the items that
2 we haven't even gone into.

3 Q. Speak up.

4 A. We obtained search warrants on some other items.
5 I actually went back to the crime scene the night of the 28th
6 when I spoke with Judge Wham, and served an additional search
7 warrant, the interviews lead us believe that Ms. Grace kept
8 journals. And that's what the search warrants were for. We
9 went and found those -- journals and collected them into
10 evidence. I reviewed those journals extensively as well and
11 documented my findings in my report.

12 Q. And you're confident in your charge against
13 Mr. Smith?

14 A. Yes, ma'am.

15 MS. FINCH: Your Honor, that is the extent of my
16 questions for now. I would ask to be able to recall --
17 recall Mr. Sweat if needed.

18 THE COURT: All right. Cross-examination?

19 MR. ERWIN: Thank you, Your Honor.

20 CROSS-EXAMINATION

21 BY MR. ERWIN:

22 Q. Investigator Sweat?

23 A. Yes, sir.

24 Q. You are the lead investigator in this case, is
25 that right?

1 A. Right

2 Q. Okay. So you have access to all the evidence that
3 was collected?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. You reviewed the 911 call --

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. -- like you told us? You spoke to a whole bunch
8 of witnesses in this case?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. You spoke to people who were not witnesses, but
11 were interested in the case?

12 A. I don't know if I word it like that, but I've
13 spoke to a lot of people surrounding this case.

14 Q. Well, let me just be a little more specific. You
15 spoke to Investigator James Paris?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. Okay. And he is an investigator, or at least at
18 the time, was an investigator with Fountain Inn, is that
19 right?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. Okay. And he called you?

22 A. He called -- well, when I spoke with him, I called
23 him.

24 Q. The first time you spoke to him, you called him?

25 A. Yes. He left a voicemail on my desk phone.

1 Q. I see. So he called you and you called him back?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. Okay.

4 THE WITNESS: Real quick, can I take these off?

5 MS. FINCH: Yes.

6 THE WITNESS: Okay.

7 BY MR. ERWIN:

8 Q. So he called you, you called him back. This was
9 on the 27th when you --

10 A. 27th.

11 Q. The 27th when you called him back. Shooting was
12 on the 25th. Camrin was arrested on the 26th, you -- or the
13 early morning of the 26th. And you spoke to Investigator
14 Paris on the 27th.

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. Now, Investigator Paris had not done any
17 investigation on this case, right?

18 A. No, I didn't speak to him in like a professional
19 investigator, investigative capacity.

20 Q. Right. It was a personal call?

21 A. No, it was a family member trying to find out
22 what's going on.

23 Q. Okay. So he was a family member of Grace Ables?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. But that's right?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. He's married to her sister, is that right?

3 A. I believe so.

4 Q. Okay.

5 A. I know -- I know he's married in the family.

6 Q. Married to the family? He is a fellow law
7 enforcement investigator?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. From a neighboring jurisdiction?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. And he called you to try to find out more about
12 the case?

13 A. And I did not make him very happy in that phone,
14 though.

15 Q. Okay. And again, the shooting is on the 25th,
16 Camrin is arrested on the 26th, that phone call is on the
17 27th?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. Okay. And you did all this other investigation
20 that you just walked us through, and I'm not going to ask you
21 to do it again. On December 19th, you charged Camrin with
22 murder. Is that right?

23 MS. FINCH: Your Honor, we need to approach.

24 THE COURT: Yes, ma'am. Go on.

25 (Bench conference at 12:11 p.m.)

1 THE COURT: All right. Ladies and gentlemen of the
2 jury, a matter of law has arisen that requires me to send you
3 to your jury room. Please don't begin your deliberations,
4 don't discuss the case amongst yourselves or with anybody
5 else. Don't do any research about any issue which may have
6 been raised.

7 (Jury exits courtroom at 12:12 p.m.)

8 THE COURT: All right. Ms. Finch?

9 MS. FINCH: Thank you, Your Honor. I did -- I would
10 like the opportunity, Judge -- thank you, to just put on the
11 record my formal objection. I believe it was clear from
12 Monday and Tuesday, all attorneys in this courtroom have been
13 advised to not bring up that Camrin Smith was first charged
14 with involuntary manslaughter. I understand Mr. Erwin has
15 not asked that specific question. However, I have
16 anticipated this since yesterday, and I believe if Mr. Erwin
17 goes one step further, he would be opening that door.

18 Now, Your Honor, Investigator Sweat is under oath. He
19 has to tell the truth. Mr. Erwin has just asked, "Was he
20 charged with murder December 20?" He has already confirmed
21 Camrin Smith was arrested November 26 in the early morning
22 hours by his own question.

23 That will then lead the jury to infer there was a prior
24 charge that is now out there. The seed has been planted. I
25 would like this to be addressed before Mr. Erwin goes

1 further. If we need to do anything in camera, that is fine.
2 However, this -- I want my objection noted, and I think Your
3 Honor has been clear that this line of questioning is not
4 proper or appropriate.

5 THE COURT: All right. Mr. Erwin?

6 MR. ERWIN: Thank you, Your Honor. A couple things. I
7 haven't asked that question yet, but more importantly, Judge
8 the door is open. Investigator Brown, who testified earlier
9 this morning, said that Camrin was arrested on the 27th,
10 Investigator Sweat, on his directions (inaudible) by the
11 State testified that Camrin was arrested on the 26th and was
12 very careful to say that he was arrested for the gun.

13 There was another warrant issued that day, Your Honor.
14 And I think to ignore that fact, as she said, he's sworn to
15 tell the truth. If he keeps not going to answer this
16 question, then we are hiding information from the jury. That
17 absolutely goes to reasonable doubt. I understand your
18 ruling at the beginning of this trial, Judge, or before we
19 started, and we have done everything we can to comply with
20 that.

21 We did not blurt out manslaughter. I have not asked a
22 question about manslaughter, but the fact of the matter is,
23 they have talked about the arrest multiple times at this
24 point, and I won't -- their -- their entire objection to this
25 was that it would confuse the jury. I think it's confusing

1 to talk about an arrest and leave out one of the charges that
2 he was arrested for.

3 THE COURT: Well, I think the focus is on the wrong
4 issue. The focus is that the word "accident" has been used a
5 lot. Accidental shooting. Accident -- accident -- accident.
6 I think you are within your rights to ask now you believed or
7 that it had been presented to law enforcement that this was
8 an accident. I think you could ask him, "What led you to
9 believe that this was murder and not accidental?" I think
10 that's a fair question, but in terms of arrest, arrest is --
11 there's a different standard to arrest somebody for something
12 versus what we're here today to get to. Whether this was a
13 murder beyond a reasonable doubt, or perhaps involuntary
14 manslaughter. I think that's obviously where this is headed.

15 But -- you know, charges get changed all the time. You
16 know, for example, if someone is arrested for a DUI, gets in
17 -- in an accident with somebody and a person in the opposite
18 car has no obvious visible injuries that would rise to the
19 level of great bodily injury. But then they go get checked
20 out at the hospital, the person is seen, the defendant is
21 arrested for straight DUI. And then later on it's
22 determined, "Oh. Well, they had a ruptured spleen," which is
23 great bodily injury. Then obviously that charge should be
24 upgraded. And it's not due to any nefarious conduct of the
25 officers. It's due to the evidence led to something else.

1 I don't know if they've reached the standard of proving
2 malice, but that's what we're here for. I think the question
3 you need to ask is -- frame it in terms of what they knew
4 factually versus -- at the time versus what was ascertained
5 as this investigation progressed. So I -- I think the focus
6 is on the wrong area. So if you want to ask him about
7 officers had been advised, or had been referred to as an
8 accident -- you know, that's the issue. That's the -- that's
9 the -- what this case boils down to, whether this was a
10 malicious shooting versus an accident. That's really what it
11 is. And I think -- like I said, if you want to ask him why
12 he came to the conclusion that this was a murder versus an
13 accident, I think that's fair. But in terms of, "Well, you
14 arrested him for one thing and then dismissed those charges,"
15 I -- that is squarely outside my ruling. So that's the way I
16 think this should go. I think it's -- I think that's within
17 the bounds complies with my ruling. And again, that's --
18 when you boil it all down, that's the issue in this case.

19 And so, you can craft questions and just ask him, "What
20 makes you believe this wasn't an accident?" You know, it's
21 -- but that's the heart of it. But the -- the whole arrest
22 versus non-arrest or the testimony is that he was arrested
23 for the -- for the gun, the -- the sawed-off rifle. You
24 know, no -- I don't think anybody's said he was arrested for
25 a homicide yet. I don't think that evidence is before this

1 jury, so...

2 MR. ERWIN: Fair enough, Your Honor. Thank you.

3 THE COURT: I -- I think that's where we are. I don't
4 -- I -- I don't want to get into what has been implied to the
5 jury. You know, I -- I'm certainly not going to comment on
6 facts, but -- you know, I -- I think we're kind of losing the
7 forest from trees in terms of -- of what the real issue is in
8 this case. And I'm not making light of -- you know, I'm not
9 -- it sounds callous for me to say that this case boils down
10 to that issue.

11 And I'm -- I'm not trying to sound callous; I'm just
12 talking about from a legal standpoint. You know, I don't --
13 there's been no question -- that's okay. His actions caused
14 the death of Ms. Ables and the unborn child. I think that's
15 clear based on what's been presented. So I don't want
16 anybody to take any offense the way I've characterized this.
17 I'm just talking from a legal standpoint, not making light of
18 what happened.

19 You know, obviously there's a lot more involved in this
20 case than just the malice versus non-malice. I don't want
21 anybody to -- to feel like I'm taking any -- taking this
22 matter lightly or anything of that sort. But in terms of
23 this issue that we're arguing over right now, that is the
24 heart of it. And so, I think the framework that I've laid
25 out, it would certainly be admissible, okay?

1 MS. FINCH: Thank you, Your Honor -- Your Honor. I
2 understand your ruling. I appreciate it. The -- my only
3 note, while the jury's not present, is I believe these
4 questions would be better phrased as, "What makes you believe
5 this wasn't a mistake?" Those are two different legal
6 theories, accident versus mistake, and in opening, Ms.
7 Johnston said this was not an accident. I'll just point out
8 that language.

9 THE COURT: I think what she said -- but I know what
10 has been presented to the jury. She said, "mistake." The
11 witnesses from the stand and on the body cam and the 911 call
12 says "accident." I understand that those are different
13 theories. You know, but what she said in opening is in
14 evidence, I'm constrained to what is before the jury. And
15 so, I'm not going to quibble over semantics because like I
16 said, I'm focused on what has been admitted, what this jury
17 has heard. And I think the only time "mistake" was used was
18 when the Defense was making their opening statement.

19 So I understand the rationale behind your objection,
20 but I think the word "accident" and the implication that this
21 was an accident is before the jury. So I think that using
22 that word would be a fair -- a fair characterization.

23 MS. FINCH: Thank you, Your Honor.

24 MR. ERWIN: Thank you, Your Honor.

25 THE COURT: Please bring us the jury. And before the

1 jury comes in, I think I -- I talked about not using the
2 words "involuntary manslaughter." So focus on what is before
3 this jury -- you know, the characterization of -- of what
4 classification, if the request included goes before the jury,
5 that's for later. So I think the word of "accident" is what
6 has been presented to this jury.

7 MS. FINCH: Thank you, Your Honor.

8 THE BAILIFF: All jurors are present, Your Honor.

9 (Jury enters courtroom at 12:23 p.m.)

10 THE COURT: Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, thank you
11 for your patience as we work through that legal issue. We
12 will resume the cross-examination. Mr. Erwin?

13 MR. ERWIN: Thank you, Your Honor.

14 BY MR. ERWIN:

15 Q. All right. Investigator Sweat?

16 A. Yes, sir.

17 Q. On the 911 call that Camrin made that night --

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. -- he said that the shooting essentially was not
20 malicious, correct?

21 A. He claimed that it was accidental.

22 Q. Okay. When Camrin sat for the lengthy interview
23 with investigators -- with two investigators, he said -- he
24 told them that the shooting was not malicious?

25 A. He claimed it was accidental.

1 Q. Okay. And at the outset of this case, you wanted
2 to take his story at face value?

3 A. I think we all would, but, yes.

4 Q. So that's a "Yes." You did want to take his story
5 at face value?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. And you wanted to give him the benefit of the
8 doubt?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. Okay. So at the outset of this case, giving him
11 the benefit of the doubt and taking his story at face value,
12 you believe that the shooting was not malicious?

13 A. At the outset of the case, what I had on early
14 morning hours of 11/26. At this case's inception, like,
15 we've been looking at it for -- let's see, seven and a half
16 hours at this point, we have a plethora of evidence to go
17 through. We are developing leads to follow up.

18 We are trying to get everything together that we can to
19 investigate this case, follow up with the case, get
20 information -- get good information, to examine the facts
21 around the death of this to-be mother and her unborn child at
22 the hands of the Defendant. At that point, I wanted to take
23 what he had -- he said it. However, I had a lot more to do
24 to find out whether that was true or not.

25 Q. Okay. So I'm just going to ask the question

1 again. "Yes," or "No" answer?

2 A. It's my answer. I just --

3 MS. FINCH: Your Honor, I think that's been asked and
4 answered.

5 THE COURT: He answered it. Okay. Sustained.

6 BY MR. ERWIN:

7 Q. In mid to late December, you called James Paris,
8 correct?

9 MS. FINCH: Objection, Your Honor. I think this is
10 asked and answered.

11 THE COURT: I'll overrule it.

12 BY MR. ERWIN:

13 Q. A second time, you spoke to James Paris. This is
14 later on in mid-to-late December?

15 A. I don't remember.

16 Q. If I were to show you a transcript of your
17 testimony at the preliminary hearing, would that refresh your
18 recollection?

19 A. Very.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. Yes.

22 MR. ERWIN: Hang on one second. I beg the Court's
23 indulgence?

24 THE COURT: Yes, sir.

25 BY MR. ERWIN:

1 Q. All right. Don't read it because it's not in
2 evidence, but take a look at that.

3 A. Yeah.

4 Q. It's a transcript of your testimony at the
5 preliminary hearing. Just read it and then let me know --
6 those two pages there ought to get you where you need to be.
7 Let me know when you're ready.

8 A. Okay.

9 Q. And the rules say I have to take this back.

10 A. Yeah.

11 Q. So -- sorry. Okay. So I -- I'm going to ask you
12 the same question I asked you a minute ago now that you have
13 -- well, I think I have to ask you, has your memory been
14 refreshed --

15 A. Yes, sir.

16 Q. -- by reviewing that? Okay. So now that you've
17 done that, I'm asking you the same question I asked you
18 before. Did you talk to Investigator Paris a second time?

19 A. I did. He had called me or -- I can't remember
20 who called who on that one. I think he called me, but we had
21 a conversation about the case status.

22 Q. Okay.

23 A. I updated him and that's all I can remember as far
24 as the conversation goes.

25 Q. Fair enough. So at the outset of the

1 investigation, you wanted to take Camrin's story at face
2 value?

3 A. Yes.

4 MS. FINCH: Objection, Your Honor. Asked and answered.

5 MR. ERWIN: Just summarizing.

6 THE COURT: Overruled.

7 THE WITNESS: Yes.

8 BY MR. ERWIN:

9 Q. You wanted to -- to give him the benefit of the
10 doubt?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. And then you conducted a longer investigation?

13 A. Much longer, yes.

14 Q. Which you have described to the Prosecutor?

15 A. Most of it.

16 Q. I'm not going to ask you to go through it again.
17 I'm sure we're going to hear some more about it.

18 A. Oh, yeah.

19 Q. But information that was collected during that
20 caused you to change your mind about whether or not the
21 shooting was malicious?

22 A. Yes.

23 MR. ERWIN: Okay. No further questions.

24 THE COURT: Re-direct?

25 MS. FINCH: Nothing further, Your Honor.

1 THE COURT: All right. Thank you, sir. You can step
2 down. All right. Ladies and gentlemen, it's a good time for
3 us to have our lunch break. And I know you all are tired of
4 hearing me say this: Don't begin your deliberations, don't
5 discuss the case amongst yourselves or with anybody else.
6 Don't use your phones while you're on your lunch break, do
7 any research about any issue which may have been raised.
8 Please leave your notes in your chairs, and we'll see you
9 back at 2:00.

10 (Jury exits courtroom at 12:34 p.m.)

11 THE COURT: All right. We'll be in recess until 2:00.

12 MS. FINCH: Thank you, Your Honor.

13 MR. ERWIN: Thank you, Your Honor.

14 (Off the record at 12:35 p.m.)

15 (On the record at 2:22 p.m.)

16 THE BAILIFF: All jurors are present, Judge.

17 (Jury enters courtroom at 2:23 p.m.)

18 THE COURT: All right. Thank you, sir. The State can
19 call its next witness.

20 MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you, Your Honor. The State calls
21 Travis Perricone.

22 TRAVIS PERRICONE,

23 being duly sworn, testified as follows:

24 THE CLERK: Thank you. You can have a seat.

25 DIRECT EXAMINATION

1 BY MS. CLEVELAND:

2 Q. Thank you for joining us today. Can you please
3 introduce yourself and spell your name for the court
4 reporter?

5 A. My name is Travis Perricone P-E-R-R-I-C-O-N-E.

6 Q. Okay. So it's Perricone?

7 A. Yes, ma'am.

8 Q. My apologies I said "Perricone."

9 A. It's all good.

10 Q. I'll make sure to get that right. We're just
11 going to start off with a few questions about you get to know
12 you a little bit.

13 A. Yes, ma'am.

14 Q. How old are you?

15 A. 25.

16 Q. And where are you from?

17 A. I live in Simpsonville. I'm originally from New
18 York.

19 Q. Okay. And where do you currently reside?

20 A. In Simpsonville.

21 Q. In -- okay. And what do you do for a living?

22 A. I'm a contractor in construction homes.

23 Q. Okay. Now, we're going to transition to why
24 you're here today.

25 A. Okay.

1 Q. Do you know Camrin Smith?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. Did you know Grace Ables?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. How did you know the Defendant and Grace Ables?

6 A. We went to high school together. We were
7 classmates. After high school, we roomed together in a house
8 for about a year.

9 Q. And you lived with both the Defendant and Grace
10 Ables?

11 A. Yes, ma'am.

12 Q. Okay. And when did you live with the Defendant
13 and Grace Ables?

14 A. I believe it was 2018 to 2019.

15 Q. Okay. And where did you live?

16 A. It was off of Woodruff Road. It was still
17 Simpsonville.

18 Q. Okay. And did you all live with anyone else?

19 A. Yes, my son's mother and one other roommate.

20 Q. How long -- about how long did you live together?

21 A. About a year -- at least was a year.

22 Q. And why just one year?

23 A. It was starting to butt heads. It was a small
24 house five of us living there. It was time for all of us to
25 part ways.

1 Q. What would you -- how would you describe what it
2 was like living with Grace and the Defendant?

3 A. I don't fully understand how to answer that. It's
4 -- it was over --

5 Q. Everyone get along?

6 A. For the most part. Yeah.

7 Q. Okay. What was your relationship like with the
8 Defendant when you lived with him?

9 A. For the most part? Good. We did stuff together.
10 We were friends. We really didn't have any problems until we
11 started butting heads towards the end.

12 Q. And that's just like general?

13 A. Yeah, it was.

14 Q. Living together?

15 A. Teenage boys -- being teenage boys.

16 Q. Got it. And what was your relationship like with
17 Grace when you lived together?

18 A. About the same as the Defendant. We'd all go out
19 together. Never really had any problems with Grace.

20 Q. And what was your relationship with them like
21 after moving out?

22 A. After butting heads for the last month, we lived
23 together, I -- we stopped talking to each other. I haven't
24 seen them maybe once since. So it's -- it's been a while.

25 Q. Okay. Now we're going to talk a little bit in

1 more detail about some specifics of when you lived with them.

2 A. Okay.

3 Q. When you lived on Woodruff Road with the Defendant
4 and Grace, were there guns in the house?

5 A. For a time? Yes.

6 Q. To your knowledge, did the Defendant own any guns
7 when he lived there?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. What guns did the Defendant own when he lived with
10 you?

11 A. I know of a 9mm pistol, and I believe it was a 22
12 rifle.

13 Q. And how do you know that he owns those guns?

14 A. I've seen them. I've handled them.

15 Q. And how would you describe the manner in which the
16 Defendant would show you the guns?

17 A. Safe manner. Anytime he would show a firearm,
18 always point in the safe direction, drop the magazine, check
19 the chamber, it was always safe.

20 Q. About how many times would you say you observed
21 that?

22 A. A handful. Five or six, maybe.

23 Q. And you said that he would allow you to handle the
24 guns as well?

25 A. Yes, ma'am.

1 Q. When you lived together, how often did you observe
2 the Defendant point a gun at his girlfriend?

3 A. I never saw it.

4 Q. When you lived with the Defendant, how often did
5 you observe the Defendant handle a gun in a manner you would
6 consider dangerous?

7 A. I don't recall ever seeing him do it.

8 Q. And how would you describe the level of care the
9 Defendant used when operating them?

10 A. I would say a high level of care. He was cautious
11 where it was pointed.

12 Q. And do you know about gun safety?

13 A. I do.

14 MS. CLEVELAND: I beg the Court's indulgence?

15 THE COURT: Yes, ma'am.

16 MS. CLEVELAND: No further questions, Your Honor.

17 THE COURT: Cross-examination?

18 CROSS-EXAMINATION

19 BY MS. JOHNSTON:

20 Q. Good afternoon, Mr. Perricone. You -- you just
21 testified you -- you didn't see Grace or Camrin except for
22 only one time, a -- a month after you moved out?

23 A. Yes, ma'am.

24 Q. Back in, you said, 2018-2019?

25 A. It -- it would've been after 2019.

1 Q. What -- what year is it right now?

2 A. 2025.

3 Q. And what year was it when this happened?

4 A. 2019 maybe 2020. Somewhere --

5 Q. When -- when the incident we're here for today?

6 A. Oh, that I couldn't tell you the date. I don't
7 know it off the top of my head.

8 MS. JOHNSTON: Thank you. No further questions.

9 THE COURT: Any re-direct?

10 MS. CLEVELAND: No, Your Honor.

11 THE COURT: All right. Thank you, sir. You can step
12 down.

13 MS. FINCH: State calls McKenzie Sloan.

14 MCKENZIE SLOAN,

15 being duly sworn, testified as follows:

16 THE CLERK: Thank you. You may have a seat.

17 DIRECT EXAMINATION

18 BY MS. FINCH:

19 Q. Good afternoon. Can you please state your full
20 name for the court reporter?

21 A. It's McKenzie Sloan, M-C-K-E-N-Z-I-E S-L-O-A-N.

22 Q. Thank you, Ms. Sloan.

23 A. Yes, ma'am.

24 Q. Where are you from?

25 A. Greenville, South Carolina.

- 1 Q. You live here?
- 2 A. Yes, ma'am.
- 3 Q. You still live here?
- 4 A. Yes, ma'am.
- 5 Q. Do you work?
- 6 A. No, ma'am.
- 7 Q. What -- what do you do day-to-day?
- 8 A. I'm a stay-at-home mom.
- 9 Q. How many children do you have?
- 10 A. I have two.
- 11 Q. How old are they?
- 12 A. They are four and three.
- 13 Q. Two girls?
- 14 A. Girl and boy.
- 15 Q. Switching gears, why we're here today, how did you
- 16 know Grace Ables?
- 17 A. We met each other in kindergarten.
- 18 Q. You met in kindergarten?
- 19 A. Yes, ma'am.
- 20 Q. How did you meet?
- 21 A. She was a transfer student from Oklahoma, and at
- 22 our school, we got to do a buddy system. So our front office
- 23 lady had called me in and I was Grace's buddy for the week.
- 24 Q. And you stayed friends?
- 25 A. Yes, ma'am.

1 Q. So you knew Grace the majority of your life and
2 hers?

3 A. Yes, ma'am.

4 Q. Are you familiar with Camrin Smith?

5 A. Yes, ma'am.

6 Q. Did you ever meet Camrin Smith?

7 A. I met him once.

8 Q. Do you remember when that was?

9 A. That was probably about two years after they was
10 together. I was pregnant with my daughter at that point.

11 Q. Okay. Tell us a little bit about Grace.

12 A. Always bubbly. Just kind hearted, good spirited,
13 sweet, genuine.

14 Q. What did you two like to do together?

15 A. Oh. We did everything from painting, coloring to
16 hunting and fishing. Just riding our bikes and scooters
17 around the neighborhood.

18 Q. Did you always go to school together?

19 A. We went to school together from K-5 to 8th grade.

20 Q. What happened after that?

21 A. She moved out here to Hillcrest, and I was
22 homeschooled our high school years.

23 Q. Did you maintain your friendship?

24 A. Yes, ma'am.

25 Q. You didn't still hang out?

1 A. We didn't really hang out, but we talked just
2 about every day.

3 Q. Did you still speak to Grace daily up until she
4 passed?

5 A. Yes, ma'am.

6 Q. Had you spoken to Grace recently before she passed
7 away?

8 A. The day of.

9 Q. What did you all talk about?

10 A. She was talking about her craving McDonald's. She
11 was craving chicken nuggets and buffalo sauce from
12 McDonald's.

13 Q. It's fair to say you did know Grace pretty well?

14 A. Yes, ma'am.

15 Q. Do you recall when Grace started dating Camrin?

16 A. I believe it was around 2016 because I think me
17 and her, we started dating our significant others at the same
18 time.

19 Q. From 2016 until she passed in 2023, what sort of
20 changes did you see in Grace?

21 A. She was still herself to a sense, but we -- as the
22 days got later, we really didn't get to talk as much. We
23 would mostly have our conversations in the morning, around
24 lunchtime, in the afternoon, she didn't like to speak as
25 much.

1 Q. Why all was that?

2 A. She said that her and Camrin would spend time
3 together in the afternoons.

4 Q. How did Grace act about her pregnancy?

5 A. Very excited. That was her little butterfly as
6 she called her.

7 Q. What had Grace named the baby?

8 A. Scarlet.

9 Q. Did she talk about Scarlet?

10 A. Yes, ma'am.

11 Q. While pregnant?

12 A. Yes, ma'am.

13 Q. And how far along was Grace?

14 A. I believe 27 weeks pregnant.

15 Q. You -- you kept up on your updates?

16 A. Yes, ma'am.

17 Q. She made updates?

18 A. Yes, ma'am.

19 Q. What would she send you?

20 A. I have -- she sent me Scarlet's heartbeat when she
21 first got to see it. I have her ultrasound pictures. I have
22 all her little bump updates. She made sure she sent it all
23 to me and we would talk and compare pregnancies, and...

24 Q. Were you -- were you pregnant at the time?

25 A. No, ma'am. But she was comparing mine and my

1 daughter's pregnancy to hers -- and Scarlet's.

2 Q. She asked you a lot of advice?

3 A. Yes, ma'am.

4 Q. And did you know Grace kept a journal?

5 A. Yes, ma'am.

6 Q. How do you know that?

7 A. We actually started journaling together based off
8 of a show we had watched -- watched in school.

9 Q. How old were you?

10 A. Probably eight or nine, I would say, when we
11 started.

12 Q. Did you share those journals?

13 A. We would. We would share each other's secrets and
14 compare notes from the weeks that we had and catch up through
15 them.

16 Q. Is it fair to say Grace was a private person?

17 A. Yes, ma'am. If she -- if she had a problem she
18 didn't like to show it.

19 Q. Say that again. I'm sorry.

20 A. If she had a problem or if something was bugging
21 her, she didn't like to show it. She didn't want to bring
22 other people down.

23 Q. She hid things to herself?

24 A. Yes, ma'am.

25 Q. Or (inaudible)?

1 A. Yes, ma'am.

2 MS. FINCH: Court's indulgence?

3 BY MS. FINCH:

4 Q. What (inaudible), Ms. Sloan?

5 A. Yes, ma'am.

6 Q. You previously mentioned Grace would spend time
7 with Camrin in the afternoons?

8 A. Yes, ma'am.

9 Q. Do you know what they would do together?

10 A. I'm assuming just they would -- she liked cooking,
11 she liked doing all that.

12 Q. Speak up for me. Sorry.

13 A. Oh, I'm sorry. She liked cooking and stuff. So
14 she would cook and she would, I guess, eat dinner together,
15 and...

16 Q. That was kind of their normal routine?

17 A. Yes, ma'am.

18 Q. She would cook dinner?

19 A. Yes, ma'am.

20 Q. Did you ever know -- I would raise that if -- if
21 you recall when Camrin was home?

22 MS. JOHNSTON: Objection. Your Honor, this calls for
23 speculation.

24 MS. FINCH: Your Honor, she can testify to how the
25 Defendant acted.

1 THE COURT: Y'all approach.

2 (Bench conference at 2:39 p.m.)

3 BY MS. FINCH:

4 Q. Is there a hobby that you taught Grace?

5 A. We taught each other archery.

6 Q. Speak up.

7 A. We taught each other archery.

8 Q. And you entered an archery competition?

9 A. Yes, ma'am.

10 Q. How was she?

11 A. Great. Amazing. She actually done a Robin Hood
12 shot, where you shoot an arrow in the back of another arrow
13 as she got a little bit older. Yes, ma'am.

14 MS. FINCH: No further question from the State, Your
15 Honor.

16 THE COURT: Cross-examination?

17 MS. JOHNSTON: No questions, Your Honor.

18 THE COURT: Thank you, ma'am. You can step down.

19 THE WITNESS: Thank you.

20 MS. DRIGGERS: The State calls Christian Thomasson.

21 CHRISTIAN THOMASSON,

22 being duly sworn, testified as follows:

23 THE CLERK: Thank you. You may have a seat.

24 DIRECT EXAMINATION

25 BY MS. DRIGGERS:

1 Q. Thank you for joining us today. Can you please
2 say your full name and then spell it for the court reporter,
3 please?

4 A. Christian Thomasson. C-H-R-I-S-T-I-A-N
5 T-H-O-M-A-S-S-O-N.

6 Q. And where are you from?

7 A. Woodruff, SC.

8 Q. Have you lived there your whole life?

9 A. Just moved there recently.

10 Q. Where'd you live before that?

11 A. Fountain Inn.

12 Q. Okay. And what do you do for work?

13 A. I work at BMW Lithium Battery Plant.

14 Q. How long have you been doing that?

15 A. Since the beginning of the year.

16 Q. What did you do before that?

17 A. I worked at Lowe's Home Improvement for two and a
18 half years.

19 Q. And are you familiar with Grace Ables, the victim
20 in this case?

21 A. Yes, ma'am.

22 Q. How do you know her?

23 A. We went to high school together and I've known her
24 pretty much all my life since then.

25 Q. And can you describe what your relationship with

1 Grace was like?

2 A. She was like a sister to me. Really. She was
3 there for everything I went through and I was there for her.

4 Q. So you all were really close?

5 A. Very.

6 Q. And are you familiar with Camrin Smith?

7 A. Uh-huh.

8 Q. How did you meet Camrin?

9 A. Through Grace.

10 Q. And when was that? When did you meet Camrin?

11 A. It's been a minute, a while. I think since they
12 lived in Five Forks.

13 Q. Okay. So would you say a few years or longer than
14 that?

15 A. A few years. Yeah.

16 Q. What were your initial impressions of him?

17 A. He was, kind of, iffy. Kind of off about me, had
18 an off vibe about him, but I went along was that -- I was
19 cool with him just for her.

20 Q. You said you did it for her?

21 A. Yeah, I did it for her pretty much.

22 Q. Did you know Camrin before you knew Grace?

23 A. No.

24 Q. Okay. Would you ever hang out with the two of
25 them?

1 A. Really. Yeah, I did most of the time. Wherever
2 Grace was, he was pretty much.

3 Q. So I guess you would sort of hang out with Camrin
4 as a result of hanging out with Grace?

5 A. Yeah.

6 Q. How would you describe their relationship?

7 A. A little rocky to me, but I never really brought
8 it up to her. To me it seemed a little -- I didn't a hundred
9 percent know what went on behind closed doors, but she gave
10 me hints.

11 Q. So you just kind of let it be?

12 A. I kind of let it be, yeah.

13 Q. And was there a point in time when you ever lived
14 with them?

15 A. Yeah. They lived at my -- my parents' house for,
16 what? A year -- year or so.

17 Q. Do you remember when that was?

18 A. Not off the top of my head. I think it was around
19 2019, 2020.

20 Q. And why did you all stop living together?

21 A. They found somewhere else to go, and they moved
22 out.

23 Q. So it was just sort of a temporary situation?

24 A. Yeah.

25 Q. Did Grace ever live with you at any point after

1 that?

2 A. No.

3 Q. No? She didn't move in with you at some point
4 without Camrin?

5 A. That was before they moved in together.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. She was there before he was.

8 Q. So before you all lived together, she had lived
9 with you for a period?

10 A. Yeah.

11 Q. Okay. And how did that come to be?

12 A. An argument they had, they broke up, and she came
13 to my house to get away.

14 Q. And shifting gears a little. Were you aware of
15 Camrin Smith having guns?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. How did you know that he had guns?

18 A. He showed me pretty much all of them that he had.

19 Q. Do you remember the first time that he showed you
20 a gun of his?

21 A. Yeah, it was years ago, though.

22 Q. You said it was years ago?

23 A. Yeah.

24 Q. What was that situation like? How -- how did --
25 how did that go?

1 A. Well, he said, "You want to see one of my new
2 toys?" And I was like, "Yeah. Sure." And it was a 9mm
3 handgun.

4 Q. How did he present that gun to you?

5 A. Pretty much open-handed, handed it to me. Of
6 course I did, as I've always been taught, make sure I check
7 the chamber, make sure everything's out of it.

8 Q. And overall, what would you describe Camrin's
9 temperament to be like?

10 A. At times, it will go from zero to a hundred. I've
11 seen it. My father has seen it. I've seen it.

12 Q. You've seen him go from zero to a hundred?

13 A. Yes.

14 MS. JOHNSTON: Your Honor, objection. Asked and
15 answered.

16 THE COURT: Sustained.

17 MS. DRIGGERS: I beg the Court's indulgence?

18 BY MS. DRIGGERS:

19 Q. Going back just a little bit, you said that you
20 were aware of Camrin having guns. Did you -- you said that
21 he showed you all of his guns. Did I hear that correctly?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. How many guns would you say that he had?

24 A. At least it's under 10, I believe.

25 Q. Under 10?

1 A. Yeah. I believe, like, three handguns, two ARs,
2 12 gauge. That's all that I remember him having really.
3 There may have been more.

4 MS. DRIGGERS: I beg the Court's indulgence. No
5 further questions.

6 MS. JOHNSTON: No questions for this witness, Your
7 Honor.

8 THE COURT: Thank you, sir. You can step down.

9 MS. DRIGGERS: Your Honor, may we approach briefly?

10 THE COURT: Sure.

11 (Bench conference at 2:47 p.m.)

12 THE COURT: Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, so
13 probably a little early for an afternoon break, but we're
14 going to do it anyway. So I'm going to send you to your jury
15 room with the same instructions: Don't begin your
16 deliberations, don't discuss the case amongst yourselves,
17 with anybody else. Don't do any research, and leave your
18 notes and pens in the chairs, and we'll get you back out as
19 soon as we can.

20 (Jury exits courtroom at 2:48 p.m.)

21 THE COURT: All right. We'll be in recess, you all
22 just let me know --

23 MS. DRIGGERS: Thank you, Your Honor.

24 THE COURT: -- when the witness arrives as long as she
25 gets here within a reasonable time. If it drags on too long,

1 we may have to adjourn.

2 MS. DRIGGERS: Yes, Your Honor.

3 THE COURT: If -- if the witness is in a -- in a
4 different order than you anticipated, but we will be in
5 recess.

6 MS. DRIGGERS: Thank you.

7 (Off the record at 2:49 p.m.)

8 (On the record at 3:35 a.m.)

9 THE BAILIFF: All jurors are present, Judge.

10 (Jury enters courtroom at 3:35 p.m.)

11 THE COURT: Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for your
12 patience and we will resume the State's case.

13 MS. DRIGGERS: The State calls Kiersten Benton.

14 KIERSTEN BENTON,

15 being duly sworn, testified as follows:

16 THE CLERK: Thank you. You may have a seat.

17 DIRECT EXAMINATION

18 BY MS. DRIGGERS:

19 Q. Can you please state your full name and spell it
20 for the court reporter, please?

21 A. Kiersten Benton. It's K-I-E-R-S-T-E-N
22 B-E-N-T-O-N.

23 Q. Thank you so much for joining us this afternoon.
24 Where are you from?

25 A. Greenville, South Carolina.

1 Q. And do you currently live in Greenville?

2 A. I live in Gray Court.

3 Q. In Gray Court?

4 A. Yes, ma'am.

5 Q. And what do you do for work?

6 A. I work at Strossner's Bakery.

7 Q. Say that again.

8 A. Strossner's Bakery.

9 Q. Okay. And are you familiar with Grace Ables, the
10 victim in this case?

11 A. Yes, ma'am.

12 Q. How did you know her?

13 A. She was my best friend.

14 Q. When did you all meet?

15 A. Senior year of high school.

16 Q. And what setting did you all meet?

17 A. High school. Well, it was our second period --
18 well, first period, second day of senior year. And she
19 looked at me and she said, "I'm sitting next to you. You're
20 my best friend now."

21 Q. And you all just got really close after that?

22 A. Yes, ma'am.

23 Q. Can you describe what your relationship with Grace
24 was like?

25 A. We did anything and everything together. We would

1 go just random drives, and I couldn't spend a day without
2 messaging her, or a day without being with her.

3 Q. And are you familiar with Camrin Smith?

4 A. Yes, ma'am.

5 Q. How do you know Camrin?

6 A. I met him also senior year of high school.

7 Q. Did you meet Camrin through Grace or separately?

8 A. Through Grace.

9 Q. Was there any time that you lived with both Grace
10 and Camrin?

11 A. Yes, ma'am.

12 Q. Where was that?

13 A. It was on Revis Creek in Greenville. It was 2017.
14 Oh, sorry. 2018, right after high school.

15 Q. And that was the first time you all lived
16 together?

17 A. Yes, ma'am.

18 Q. Okay. And what was that like?

19 A. It was, it was good until I couldn't find a job
20 and I had to leave.

21 Q. You said you had to leave? Why did you have to
22 leave?

23 A. There was a major conflict that I couldn't help
24 pay my side of the rent, and I needed to deescalate the
25 situation before it got worse.

1 Q. And did you all live together a second time as
2 well?

3 A. Yes, ma'am.

4 Q. When was that?

5 A. On Highway 14.

6 Q. And when was that?

7 A. When? It was June, 2022.

8 Q. Okay. And why did you all end up not living
9 together that time?

10 A. Grace and Camrin were trying to conceive a baby,
11 and I wanted to have that room there just in case. I didn't
12 want to have to scramble looking for a place to live in case
13 she got pregnant.

14 Q. And what was it like living with the two of them?

15 A. It was -- it was good. I stayed in my room, or
16 with Grace. I didn't want to be around Camrin.

17 Q. Why didn't you want to be around Camrin?

18 A. We would constantly butt heads, and I didn't like
19 the way he treated her. He was controlling and I would --
20 I'd have to tell her we would be going places to get her
21 away.

22 Q. And so, generally speaking, when you say
23 "controlling," what do you mean by that?

24 A. What she could wear out in public.

25 Q. Like he would -- he would control her outfits?

1 A. Yes, ma'am.

2 Q. And going back just a little bit, how did he treat
3 you?

4 A. Not very nice. We would constantly butt heads.
5 We were either arguing or we wouldn't say a single word to
6 each other.

7 Q. But despite that, you and Grace were still able to
8 remain close?

9 A. Yes, ma'am.

10 Q. And how would you describe their relationship?

11 A. Outside looking in? It looked good, but being on
12 the inside, it was rocky.

13 Q. Shifting gears a little bit. Did you know Camrin
14 to like guns?

15 A. Yes, ma'am.

16 Q. When you lived with the two of them, were there
17 guns in the home?

18 A. Yes, ma'am.

19 Q. About how many guns do you know Camrin had?

20 A. About four.

21 Q. Okay. And this was -- you're saying "four" as in
22 when you lived with the two of them?

23 A. Yes, ma'am.

24 Q. Okay. And did Grace have a gun?

25 A. She did, but it malfunctioned and we weren't

1 allowed to use it.

2 Q. Who said that you weren't allowed to use it?

3 A. Camrin.

4 Q. And what happened to the gun after that?

5 A. To my knowledge, I believe they sold it, got rid
6 of it. I'm not exactly sure. It was after I had moved out.

7 Q. And you said that it malfunctioned?

8 A. Yes, ma'am.

9 Q. And did you ever shoot guns with Grace and Camrin?

10 A. Yes, ma'am.

11 Q. On how many occasions would you say?

12 A. About two times.

13 Q. And where did you all go shooting?

14 A. Our side yard. At the trailer.

15 Q. Was it just like a big, like open-range type?

16 A. Yes, ma'am.

17 Q. And when you all shot guns together, how would you
18 say that Camrin handled guns?

19 A. Around me, it was the proper way. "Don't -- don't
20 aim at -- at anything that you're willing to lose or break."

21 Q. That's what he said?

22 A. Yes, ma'am.

23 Q. Is there anything else that he taught you about
24 gun safety?

25 A. Yes, ma'am. "If you are not okay with the gun,

1 put it down or put it to your side. Facing to the ground.
2 If someone's cleaning the gun, be out of the room just in
3 case."

4 MS. DRIGGERS: I beg the Court's indulgence?

5 THE COURT: Yes, ma'am.

6 MS. DRIGGERS: No further questions. Please answer any
7 the Defense may have.

8 MS. JOHNSTON: Your Honor, I have no questions for this
9 witness.

10 THE COURT: All right. Thank you, ma'am. You can step
11 down.

12 MS. FINCH: Your Honor, the State calls Crystal Ables.

13 CRYSTAL ABLES,

14 being duly sworn, testified as follows:

15 THE CLERK: Thank you. You can have a seat.

16 DIRECT EXAMINATION

17 BY MS. FINCH:

18 Q. Hi. Your name is Crystal Ables?

19 A. Yes, ma'am.

20 Q. A-B-L-E-S?

21 A. Yes, ma'am.

22 Q. Where are you from?

23 A. Originally? Greenville, South Carolina.

24 Recently? Simpsonville for the last 10 to 12 years.

25 Q. Where do you work?

1 A. I work for the Publix Deli.

2 Q. How long have you worked there?

3 A. Almost five years now.

4 Q. In the deli, you said?

5 A. Yes, ma'am.

6 Q. And how did you know Grace Ables?

7 A. Grace is my sister, my younger sister. We've been
8 together ever since she was a baby. Helped raise her, taught
9 her a lot of things.

10 Q. You knew her her whole life?

11 A. Yes, ma'am.

12 Q. How far apart in age are you?

13 A. About 12 years or so.

14 Q. Let me back a minute. Where did Grace work?

15 A. Grace worked at the Publix Deli with me.
16 Sometimes we were on the same shifts, sometimes off shift.

17 Q. And you're familiar with the Defendant, Camrin
18 Smith?

19 A. Yes, ma'am.

20 Q. Can you tell us a little bit about Grace?

21 A. Grace was the one that you could talk to about
22 anything. She loved everybody. She loved animals. She
23 never met one person that she didn't like. Once she come
24 into your life, it was like a ray of sunshine every day.

25 There was never a dull moment with her. She would not show

1 any fear or any -- sorry. She would not show any fear or
2 anything that was bothering her. She always stayed positive.

3 Q. I know it's difficult. Crystal, is it fair to say
4 Grace was private with her own affairs?

5 A. She was. The only time I would ever get anything
6 out of her was if I literally hounded her, asking her what
7 was wrong because you could tell sometimes if she was kind of
8 down.

9 Q. When did Grace and Camrin start dating?

10 A. They started dating in high school, on and off,
11 here and there.

12 Q. Generally speaking, what was their relationship
13 like?

14 A. As far as I saw it, it was -- it was a happy
15 relationship. I know they had their arguments and their
16 fights, which is natural in any relationship. But like I
17 said, she never showed any concerns of being in any type of
18 bad situations. She was happy for the most part.

19 Q. Can you repeat that? I'm sorry.

20 A. I said she was for the most part, happy as far as
21 we all could see.

22 Q. How did you guys get to and from work?

23 A. If it was the day that Camrin was off, he would
24 drive her and pick her up. Some days she would get dropped
25 off first thing in the morning before he headed to work, and

1 I would take her home in the afternoons if we worked the same
2 shift or I'd go pick her up and take her home, or she'd come
3 to my dad's house with me, and sit until he got off.

4 Q. Why -- why couldn't she take herself?

5 A. She didn't have a license or a car.

6 Q. And when you two weren't at work, what would you
7 do together?

8 A. If I went and picked her up, we would go get
9 lunch, we'd go to stores, go shopping, just looking around.
10 We'd go to Barnes and Nobles for a while, look at books. We
11 both loved to read.

12 Q. Would you take her out to eat?

13 A. I would. She would tell me about restaurants she
14 saw and reviews people would leave, and she'd be like, "Oh,
15 that looks so good. We need to go try this." And we'd make
16 plans. We'd invite them out to dinner. We'd go to new
17 places or we'd go to places we loved and shared a meal
18 together.

19 Q. What was Grace's financial situation like?

20 A. I know she had to save a good bit of her checks
21 every week to make sure she had her bill money put up, but
22 she didn't struggle. She was like any normal young person
23 starting out, paycheck to paycheck, trying to make it up.

24 Q. Hard working?

25 A. Yes, very hard.

1 Q. Did you -- did you spend much time with Grace and
2 Camrin together?

3 A. Not together. We would go out to dinners
4 together. I did go spend some time with them. Sometimes
5 he'd be working on his car or doing something and I'd be in
6 the house with her, or when they'd come over for holidays and
7 stuff, but not a lot of time.

8 Q. How did Grace react to being pregnant?

9 A. When she found out that she was actually coming
10 into term with this baby and that she was going to carry it,
11 she was excited. We oohed and aahed over all the -- the baby
12 stuff and when she found out she was having a little girl, I
13 got excited. I have two boys, always wanted a girl. We
14 started thinking of outfits and decor for the room and
15 blankets, and she was just overally (sic) excited.

16 Q. So she had the baby room decorated?

17 A. It wasn't fully decorated, but they had started.

18 Q. When was the last time you saw Camrin before this
19 incident?

20 A. November 23rd of 2023.

21 Q. What day was that?

22 A. That was the day that we celebrated Thanksgiving
23 with her because for Thanksgiving she was going elsewhere.

24 Q. What was Camrin's demeanor on that day?

25 A. The same as usual. When he come around us, he

1 just kind of sat quietly, doesn't talk much around us. He
2 just kind of sat there and was there. If you talked to him,
3 he talked back, but normal as any other visit.

4 Q. And Crystal, did you have an opportunity to meet
5 baby Scarlet?

6 A. I did. I got to see her once.

7 Q. Can you describe her for us, please?

8 A. She was the splitting image of my sister, the most
9 precious thing in the world. I just wish I had more time
10 with her.

11 MS. FINCH: Nothing further, Your Honor.

12 MS. JOHNSTON: I don't have any questions for this
13 witness, Your Honor.

14 THE COURT: Thank you, ma'am. You can step down.

15 MS. FINCH: Your Honor, may we approach?

16 THE COURT: Sure.

17 (Bench conference at 3:50 p.m.)

18 THE COURT: Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, now is
19 going to be an appropriate time for us to stop for the day.
20 We have some witnesses that are scheduled to be here tomorrow
21 who are coming from out of town, and it's very difficult to
22 predict with absolute certainty how fast the case is going to
23 come up. So the Solicitor rightfully scheduled them to be
24 here tomorrow morning. And so we're going to adjourn for the
25 day.

1 CONTINUATION OF PROCEEDINGS - JUNE 12, 2025.

2 THE BAILIFF: All jurors are present, Your Honor.

3 (Jury enters courtroom at 10:16 a.m.)

4 THE COURT: Thank you, sir. Ladies and gentlemen of
5 the jury, we will resume the State's case.

6 MS. DRIGGERS: Thank you, Your Honor. The State calls
7 Kaylen McGee.

8 MARY KAYLEN GRISWELL MCGEE,
9 being duly sworn, testified as follows:

10 THE CLERK: Thank you. You can have a seat.

11 DIRECT EXAMINATION

12 BY MS. CLEVELAND:

13 Q. Thank you for joining us today. Can you please
14 introduce yourself and state your name and spell your name
15 for the record?

16 A. Yes. Mary Kaylen Griswell McGee. M-A-R-Y
17 K-A-Y-L-E-N, McGee, M-C-G-E-E.

18 Q. Ms. McGee, how old are you?

19 A. Twenty five.

20 Q. And where are you from?

21 A. I'm from Laurens, South Carolina.

22 Q. Where do you currently live?

23 A. Fountain Inn, South Carolina.

24 Q. Where do you work?

25 A. I work at South Carolina Regional Housing

1 Authority.

2 Q. Are you married?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. What's your husband's name?

5 A. Levi Chance McGee.

6 Q. And so, we got that introductory out of the way.

7 We'll get into the reason we're here today. Okay. Did you
8 know Grace Ables?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. How did you know Grace Ables?

11 A. We started working together at Publix and then we
12 became friends through working together at Publix.

13 Q. When was that?

14 A. She started in 2022.

15 Q. How would you describe your relationship with
16 Grace?

17 A. We were very close. We talked pretty much every
18 day. If we weren't working together, we were talking through
19 Snapchat.

20 Q. And how -- how often would you speak, generally
21 speaking?

22 A. Pretty much every day. Yeah.

23 Q. And what types of things would you talk about?

24 A. Usually, we would talk like about our dogs what we
25 were cooking that day, what we were doing that day, if we

1 weren't at work.

2 Q. And prior to Grace's death, when was the last time
3 you spoke with her?

4 A. I spoke with her November 25, 2023, at -- the last
5 message I got from her was at 8:20 p.m.

6 Q. Okay. And we'll -- we'll get to that last
7 message. We're just going to back up a little bit. What was
8 the most common way you communicated with Grace?

9 A. Through Snapchat.

10 Q. And would that be through -- I know Snapchat has
11 messages and photos. Would you text via Snapchat or would
12 you send photos?

13 A. Both.

14 Q. And what -- what mode of communication did you use
15 to speak to Grace on November 25, 2023?

16 A. Snapchat.

17 Q. And were you texting back and forth quite a bit or
18 snapchatting quite a bit back and forth?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. How much would you say you talked to her?

21 A. Pretty much all day up until probably maybe, like,
22 two hours in the middle part of the day, but then around 8:00
23 or 7:00, we -- it was back and forth.

24 Q. What time did you receive Grace's last message?

25 A. 8:20 p.m.

1 Q. Did you respond to that message?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. When did Grace respond to your message?

4 A. She did not respond.

5 Q. So that message at 8:20 p.m. is the last time you
6 ever heard from Grace?

7 A. Yes.

8 MS. CLEVELAND: Thank you for being here. No further
9 questions, Your Honor.

10 THE COURT: Ma'am, can you (inaudible).

11 THE WITNESS: I'm sorry.

12 MS. JOHNSTON: I have no questions for this witness,
13 Your Honor.

14 THE COURT: All right. Thank you, ma'am. You can step
15 down. Watch your step.

16 MS. DRIGGERS: The State calls Levi Chase McGee.

17 LEVI CHASE MCGEE,

18 being duly sworn, testified as follows:

19 THE CLERK: Thank you. You may have a seat.

20 DIRECT EXAMINATION

21 BY MS. DRIGGERS:

22 Q. Thank you for joining us this morning. Can you
23 please state your full name for the record?

24 A. Levi Chase McGee.

25 Q. And where are you from?

- 1 A. I'm from Hickory Tavern, South Carolina.
- 2 Q. And where do you currently live?
- 3 A. Fountain Inn, South Carolina.
- 4 Q. And what do you do for work?
- 5 A. I'm a supervisor at a manufacturing plant.
- 6 Q. Which plant?
- 7 A. Bosch Rexroth.
- 8 Q. And are you married?
- 9 A. I am.
- 10 Q. What's your wife's name?
- 11 A. Mary Kaylen McGee.
- 12 Q. And that's who we just heard from?
- 13 A. Yes, it is.
- 14 Q. And shifting gears to why you're here today, were
- 15 you familiar with Grace Ables?
- 16 A. I was.
- 17 Q. How did you know her?
- 18 A. I knew her through my wife. They were very close
- 19 friends.
- 20 Q. And did you ever meet her?
- 21 A. I did.
- 22 Q. When did you meet her?
- 23 A. It was September 23, 2025 -- I mean, 2023. I'm
- 24 sorry.
- 25 Q. So you kind of knew more of Grace through Kaylen?

1 A. I did, yes.

2 Q. And they were close, right?

3 A. Very.

4 Q. I think you said that sometimes their friendship
5 would take priority over you, right?

6 A. Yeah -- yeah. There's sometimes my wife would be
7 stuck on her phone quite a bit while I'd be trying to have
8 conversations with her. But, yeah. It is what it is. They
9 were friends.

10 Q. And do you know Camrin Smith?

11 A. I do.

12 Q. How did you meet him?

13 A. The same time. September 23, 2023. My wife had a
14 gathering with some work friends, and Grace was there and
15 brought Camrin along and my wife brought me along, met him
16 there. It was around other people. That was my first
17 interaction with him.

18 Q. And when did you say this was again?

19 A. September 23, 2023. Around the 23rd.

20 Q. Okay. And so, you said you all had a gathering at
21 your house, how would you describe Camrin's demeanor at that
22 party?

23 A. Reserved, shy, not very talkative at the
24 beginning.

25 Q. Did something change about that demeanor?

1 A. It took time, but eventually he started talking to
2 me. I didn't really see him communicating with too much of
3 anyone else, but over time, I guess I got him to open up a
4 little bit. We started talking.

5 Q. And did he end up showing you something at that
6 party?

7 A. He did. He was interested in showing me the
8 pistol that he carries. So he came up to me, pulled it out
9 of his waistband, ejected the magazine, cleared the rail a
10 couple times to make sure it was empty, and then handed me
11 the firearm.

12 Q. Okay. So I'm going to back you up just a minute.
13 You said that he handed you a pistol?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. Okay. And you said that he -- he showed it to
16 you? He did what again? I'm sorry.

17 A. He pulled it out of his waistband, ejected the
18 magazine, sat it on the table, grabbed -- grabbed the slide,
19 pulled back a couple times to verify that the chamber was
20 empty before handing it to me.

21 Q. And was he saying anything to you as he was doing
22 this?

23 A. No -- no. He was -- it was mainly I just saw him
24 take it out and make sure everything was good with the gun
25 and inspect it thoroughly before handing it to me.

1 Q. So how comfortable did he appear with gun safety?

2 A. Just like second nature. He didn't hesitate.

3 Soon as he pulled it out, he knew exactly what to do, and he
4 performed it.

5 Q. And what, if anything, occurred after he did this
6 demonstration of gun safety for you? Did he hand it to you?

7 A. Yes -- yes -- yes. After -- after he cleared it
8 and verified the gun was empty and everything like that, he
9 proceeded to hand me the firearm.

10 Q. And are you yourself familiar with handguns?

11 A. I am.

12 Q. And do you yourself have knowledge of guns?

13 A. I did. I do, yes.

14 Q. So, despite you having knowledge, Camrin still
15 sort of went through a safety demonstration with you?

16 A. Yes. After he handed me the gun, I was looking at
17 it, he was showing it to me, talking about how he carries it,
18 keeps it on him, and we just -- we were in that conversation.
19 After he demonstrated what he did, me and him were talking
20 back and forth, just gun safety topics, because I had noticed
21 how he had handled the firearm when he went to hand it to me.

22 MS. DRIGGERS: I beg the Court's indulgence?

23 THE COURT: Yes, ma'am.

24 MS. DRIGGERS: No further questions.

25 THE COURT: Okay.

1 MS. JOHNSTON: No questions for this witness, Your
2 Honor.

3 THE COURT: All right. You can step down, sir.

4 MS. FINCH: The State calls Michelle Eichenmiller, Your
5 Honor.

6 AGENT MICHELLE EICHENMILLER,
7 being duly sworn, testified as follows:

8 THE CLERK: Thank you. You can have a seat.

9 DIRECT EXAMINATION

10 BY MS. FINCH:

11 Q. Good morning.

12 A. Good morning.

13 Q. Can you please spell your full name for the court
14 reporter and introduce yourself?

15 A. Yes. My name is Michelle Eichenmiller.

16 E-I-C-H-E-N-M-I-L-L-E-R.

17 Q. And Ms. Eichenmiller, where are you from?

18 A. I'm from the South Carolina Law Enforcement
19 Division, also known as SLED. I work in the forensic lab in
20 the firearms department.

21 Q. Okay. And to be clear what does SLED stand for?

22 A. The South Carolina Law Enforcement Division.

23 Q. Is it okay if we use "SLED" going forward in this
24 testimony?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. Okay. How long have you worked at SLED?

2 A. I've worked at SLED for approximately 20 years.

3 Q. Okay. And generally, what is your job there?

4 A. I -- I'm a firearm and toolmark examiner, so I'm
5 trained to look at any evidence from crime scenes that are
6 related to firearms. So fired bullets, fired cartridge
7 cases, the firearms themselves. We also do other exams like
8 serial number restoration, and we also do toolmark analysis.

9 Q. Thank you. How long have you been a firearms
10 examiner?

11 A. I started at SLED in 2006, so I've been a firearms
12 examiner since then.

13 Q. So almost 20 years?

14 A. Uh-huh.

15 Q. Okay. And you -- you just answered, is there
16 anything else a firearm examiner typically will do down at
17 SLED?

18 A. No, that pretty much covers our job duties as
19 firearms and then any kind of tool mark analysis.

20 Q. Thank you. And what kind of training and
21 education have you undergone and received for this line of
22 work?

23 A. To be hired at SLED, you need a bachelor's degree.
24 So I have a bachelor in biology and psychology. I also have
25 a master of science in forensic science. In order to be a

1 firearms examiner, though, there's no school you can go to.
2 So once you're hired somewhere, it's like an apprenticeship
3 program. You learn under the examiners that are there.

4 So once I started at SLED, I was assigned a training
5 officer. I did a lot of reading and microscope work on my
6 own. And after about, it's a three- to four-year training
7 program. So after all that training, it gave me a
8 comprehensive final, I passed it and then they said I could
9 do case work on my own.

10 Q. Thank you. And do you have to maintain continuing
11 education hours for this position?

12 A. Yes. We try to attend any training that is open.
13 We rotate going to the Association of Firearm and Toolmark
14 Examiners, which is an international organization of people
15 employed in my field. So every year there's a meeting and we
16 just have to take turns going to the meeting.

17 Q. Okay. And ballpark number, how many continuing
18 educations would you say you've attended in the last 20
19 years?

20 A. I think I've been to six or seven AFTE meetings.
21 And then we are also Glock armorers at SLED, so I've attended
22 Armorers classes every three years. We also try to do --
23 I've also been to the ATF Academy for serial number
24 restoration. I've done any -- and we also try to keep up on
25 the internet with any new developments in the field.

1 Q. And when was your most recent continuing education
2 you attended?

3 A. I attended the AFTE meeting last year.

4 Q. Okay. How many times would you say you've been or
5 you've testified in court proceedings in the last 20 years?

6 A. Approximately 140 times.

7 Q. Thank you. You're familiar with firearms?

8 A. Yes.

9 MS. FINCH: Your Honor, at this time, the State would
10 request and move that Ms. Eichenmiller be qualified as an
11 expert in firearm identification.

12 MS. JOHNSTON: Without objection, Your Honor.

13 THE COURT: All right. Ladies and gentlemen, again,
14 this witness has been offered as an expert in the area of
15 firearm identification. And the Court will qualify her as an
16 expert in that area. She can give opinion testimony in that
17 area. And that does not mean you must accept the opinion,
18 but it's evidence for you to use in any way you see fit and
19 give it the weight and credibility you believe is
20 appropriate.

21 MS. FINCH: Thank you, Your Honor.

22 BY MS. FINCH:

23 Q. Ms. Eichenmiller as a firearms handler, please
24 explain to the jury the rules you guys follow at SLED for gun
25 safety.

1 A. There are four general rules that most people
2 follow. I should say all people who deal with firearms
3 follow. So it's treat all firearms as if they're loaded
4 until you inspect them and make sure that it's unloaded.
5 Even in classes that I've been to where they're firearms,
6 we're taking them apart and we know there's no ammo in the
7 room, we still have to check them every time as part of our
8 safety protocol.

9 We also -- another rule is to keep it pointed in a safe
10 direction. Don't point it at anything that you don't intend
11 to shoot. And then always be aware of your target and what's
12 behind it.

13 Q. Thank you. Sorry. All right. You fire a lot of
14 weapons as part of your job?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. And you mentioned one of your rules is always
17 treat a gun like it's loaded until you personally inspect it
18 and know that it's not that accurate?

19 A. That's correct.

20 Q. What does inspecting mean for you?

21 A. When we inspect a firearm, if it's loaded or not,
22 we'll pull the slide back, make sure the chamber's empty, and
23 then remove the magazine.

24 Q. Thank you. Now, I'm going to start basic here.
25 And we're going to identify some parts of a firearm.

1 A. Okay.

2 Q. What is -- you've mentioned a magazine. What is a
3 magazine for a -- a firearm?

4 A. A magazine is a small piece of metal -- for a
5 better -- it's a little container basically. It holds
6 cartridges. You put it into the mag of the firearm, and then
7 the cartridges will be in the firearm ready to be fired.

8 Q. Are there any other names for a magazine?

9 A. Some people might call it a "clip."

10 Q. And what is a cartridge?

11 A. A cartridge is a piece of ammunition. So it --
12 the cartridges -- the complete piece of ammunition. It holds
13 the bullet, the gunpowder, and then the cartridge case holds
14 it all together with a firing with a primer.

15 Q. What is a barrel?

16 A. The barrel is where the projectile will exit the
17 firearm.

18 Q. And what does it mean to you, in your opinion, if
19 I were to say, "Rack a firearm"?

20 A. When people refer to racking a firearm, it means
21 pulling the slide back and then letting it go forward.

22 Q. What is the slide?

23 A. The slide is on a semi-automatic pistol. The
24 slide is the top portion. So we have a frame and we have a
25 slide. The slide moves back and forth during firing. And

1 then that's the part that you can move.

2 Q. Okay. Thank you. What is a hammer?

3 A. On certain firearm, the hammer is exposed, but
4 it's the piece of the firearm that will hit the firing pin
5 that will cause the tiny explosion to cause the cartridge to
6 fire in the bullet to leave the barrel.

7 Q. And what is a thumb safety?

8 A. A thumb safety is almost what it sounds like.
9 It's a little device on a firearm that is -- can be used with
10 your thumb. You just move it in one direction to be safe,
11 and the other direction is fired.

12 Q. That -- that can affect if the firearm will shoot?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. What is the chamber of a gun?

15 A. The chamber is the part -- the part of the firearm
16 where the cartridge will go right before it's fired.

17 Q. In your expert opinion, are there any other parts
18 of a firearm we need to identify right now?

19 A. Possibly the trigger, which is the part of the
20 firearm that you would pull in order to get the hammer to
21 fall on the cartridge primer to get the bullet to fire.

22 Q. Thank you. Ms. Eichenmiller, I've passed up
23 State's Exhibits 6 and 7. Can you please open that box? You
24 may want gloves, which are up there for you. And I'm going
25 to ask that you pick up State's Number 7, the magazine.

1 A. Okay.

2 Q. Can you show that to the jury, please? This is a
3 magazine?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. And what is a pinky extension?

6 A. It's a small piece on the bottom of the magazine.
7 If this were inserted into the firearm, your pinky would rest
8 on it.

9 Q. And the magazine you're holding, Number 7, has
10 that pinky extension?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. Are you able to actually insert that magazine into
13 that firearm?

14 A. Yes. So the gun is unloaded and safe because it
15 has the gun lock through the barrel. So there's no
16 ammunition in there.

17 Q. Thank you.

18 A. So now the magazine is in the barrel and the
19 little pinky extension is sticking out. So if I were holding
20 it, my pinky's on it.

21 Q. Thank you. As safely as possible, I'd ask that
22 you please hold that up. And point to the barrel of the gun
23 for the jury.

24 A. So this is the barrel of this firearm.

25 Q. And can you please point to the hammer?

1 A. The hammer is actually back here. Can't see it
2 because the slide is open, but it's down back here at the
3 back.

4 Q. Thank you. Can you point to the trigger safety --
5 or the thumb safety, excuse me.

6 A. The thumb -- thumb safety is right here. It's a
7 lever that goes back and forth.

8 Q. Thank you. And I'm going to also show you next
9 what has been marked as State's Exhibit Number 8. What are
10 these generally speaking?

11 A. So these are unfired cartridges.

12 Q. Thank you. Those whole pieces are the cartridges?

13 A. Yes. The cartridge is the, like, the gold color
14 part here that holds all the pieces together. So there's
15 gunpowder inside of it. The bullet is in there, and then
16 there's a primer on the bottom.

17 Q. Thank you. Can you -- I -- I may mess this. Can
18 you hold those up? I know they're small and point to the
19 piece that is the actual projectile in that cartridge?

20 A. Yes. So the projectile is a copper-colored top of
21 the cartridge.

22 Q. Thank you. And did you bring any demonstrative
23 evidence with you today?

24 A. I did. We have a -- a larger version of a
25 cartridge. So this is the cartridge, a whole unfired

1 cartridge. Once the primer is hit, which is here, by the
2 firing pin of the firearm the bullet will come out and exit
3 the barrel imparting rifling on it from the barrel.

4 Q. Thank you. And again, back to basics. Can you --
5 can you hold it up? Thank you. As -- as we are speaking
6 today, the cartridge itself is all of that together, is that
7 right?

8 A. Correct.

9 Q. And the bullet is what we are going to call "the
10 projectile," is that correct?

11 A. That's correct.

12 Q. That's what comes out?

13 A. Right.

14 Q. Thank you. And in your capacity at SLED, when you
15 examine firearm-related evidence, what are the three
16 different components you're typically looking at?

17 A. Primarily in our department, we'll receive fired
18 bullets, we'll receive fired cartridge cases, and then the
19 firearms themselves.

20 Q. How do you typically examine something like a
21 cartridge case? What does that test consist of?

22 A. So when I receive evidence at SLED, I'll document
23 how I receive it. We take overall photos just to document.
24 We fill out worksheets, make caliber if we find any trace
25 evidence on it, and then I'll examine it for marks that I

1 need to say if it was fired by a certain firearm. If we only
2 receive one cartridge case and we receive a firearm, then we
3 would compare that cartridge case to the firearm. I will
4 make tests of the firearm and compare those to each other.

5 Q. Thank you. And you mentioned "trace evidence."
6 What is that?

7 A. Trace evidence is anything that I find that I
8 wouldn't expect there. So I would expect to find -- you
9 know, possibly pieces of gunpowder or jacket material or
10 anything like that. But if I found something like blood or
11 fibers or anything else that's unusual for firearms, then I
12 would document that I saw it there, and possibly collect it.

13 Q. Okay. And generally, what does the testing look
14 like when you're examining a projectile?

15 A. A projectile is the same thing. We'll fill it --
16 we'll document how we received it, examine it for trace, and
17 then fill out a worksheet. Write down the general
18 characteristics. So the caliber, if we can tell what kind of
19 jacket material, what kind of bullet the rifling
20 characteristics, so how many lands and grooves it has, the
21 direction of twist, and then what kind of rifling it is.

22 Q. So those -- those markings you just mentioned,
23 you're looking for those on the casing of the cartridge in
24 the projectile from the cartridge?

25 A. The projectile has all the rifling characteristics

1 and the cartridge case will have different marks that we're
2 looking for.

3 Q. Thank you. And I think we maybe got a little bit
4 ahead of ourselves, but you mentioned if you have a firearm
5 to examine, what do you do then?

6 A. The same thing with the firearm. I'll document
7 it, I'll examine it for trace, and then I fill out our
8 worksheets: Make model, caliber, serial number, and then I'll
9 test it for safety. And then I will test-fire it in our
10 bullet recovery tank, which is a water tank that we shoot
11 into. So we get complete and good -- in good shape
12 projectiles so that we can compare them to the firearm. I do
13 that, so I get samples that I know came from that firearm.

14 Q. Thank you. And you're doing all of this to
15 determine if these pieces came from a specific weapon?

16 A. Correct.

17 Q. Okay. And moving forward to -- to why we're here
18 today. In your role at SLED, you worked on the case, the
19 State v Camrin Smith. Is that right?

20 A. That's correct.

21 Q. What items of evidence did you receive for this
22 case? Do you recall?

23 A. I received one Bersa, model Thunder 380
24 semi-automatic pistol, .380 auto caliber with a serial number
25 of M02637, and a magazine. I also received a fired 380 auto

1 caliber cartridge case, and I received a fired bullet.

2 Q. Thank you. How did you receive those items, do
3 you recall?

4 A. Whenever evidence is submitted to the sub
5 laboratory, it will go to the evidence control department.
6 They will log it into our system where it receives a case
7 number, an item number of -- of its own, and then it also has
8 a barcode. So that barcode is scanned as it moves throughout
9 the laboratory.

10 So as it comes in, it will be scanned to an evidence
11 custodian. They will then put it on a shelf and then when I
12 notified that the evidence is there, I'll go get it, the
13 evidence custodian will take it back into their custody and
14 then give it to me, which I have my own barcode. So the
15 evidence is tracked all the way through the laboratory and we
16 call that a chain of custody.

17 Q. Thank you. So essentially in this case, the
18 Laurens Sheriff's Office would've brought it to SLED?

19 A. Correct?

20 Q. It would've been marked, given a case number, its
21 own barcode and item number?

22 A. That's correct.

23 Q. Put in the locker, stayed secured --

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. -- until an evidence tech or yourself removed it

1 to do the testing?

2 A. That's correct.

3 Q. And then it's placed back in that locker?

4 A. Correct.

5 Q. And Laurens Sheriff's Department picks it up, is
6 that right?

7 A. That's correct.

8 MS. FINCH: Okay. And I'm going to show you, now, what
9 has been pre-marked as State's Exhibit 86.

10 (State's Exhibit Number 86 marked for identification.)

11 BY MS. FINCH:

12 Q. Can you tell us what that is?

13 A. This is the chain of custody from SLED.

14 Q. What we've been discussing? Is that right?

15 A. That's correct.

16 Q. Okay. And this hasn't been altered in any way, to
17 your knowledge?

18 A. Nope. It appears to be a correct chain of
19 custody.

20 Q. Okay. And it accurate -- accurately reflects the
21 chain of hands, all three of these pieces would've gone
22 through for this case while at SLED?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. Thank you. Your Honor, at this time, I'd ask to
25 move State's Exhibit 86 in.

1 MS. JOHNSTON: Without objection, Your Honor.

2 THE COURT: State's 86 is admitted without objection.

3 (State's Exhibit Number 86 admitted into evidence.)

4 MS. FINCH: Thank you, Your Honor.

5 BY MS. FINCH:

6 Q. And briefly so the jury knows what we are
7 discussing, we're going to publish State's 86. All right.
8 And just so we can scroll through this list, every piece of
9 evidence who's touched it, where it's gone?

10 A. That's correct. In the gray box is the piece of
11 evidence. And then underneath it is when it came into the
12 laboratory and who delivered it by Laurens County Sheriff's
13 Office. And then the first person who touched it at SLED is
14 listed there along with the date and time that that person
15 scanned it into their -- or created the item in our system.

16 Q. Thank you. Okay. Ms. Eichenmiller, I have just
17 passed up in addition to what you have, State's 78 and 82. Do
18 you recognize these items?

19 A. So whenever I receive a piece of evidence in a
20 case, I will mark it with the item number, my initials, and
21 the case number, and then my seals are still here when I seal
22 them. So this is the evidence I examined in this case, the
23 fired .380 auto caliber cartridge cases.

24 Q. Thank you. And the other additional item, what is
25 that?

1 A. This also has --

2 Q. State's 82.

3 A. State's 82 is the fired bullet I examined in this
4 case. It's also marked by me, and then my seals are still
5 intact with my initials.

6 Q. And these items, 67, 78, and 82, are the ones you
7 examined for this case?

8 A. Yes.

9 MS. FINCH: Okay -- okay. And I'm now going to show
10 you what has been pre-marked as State's 102.

11 (State's Exhibit Number 102 marked for identification.)

12 BY MS. FINCH:

13 Q. Ms. Eichenmiller, do you recognize that?

14 A. Yes. These are the test specimens that I created
15 -- pardon me, to compare to the firearm in this case. I
16 test-fired the firearm, and then created these using
17 laboratory supplied ammunition.

18 Q. And how do you know those are the ones you --
19 you've used?

20 A. All of this is my writing on the front, but also
21 my seal is still in place on the back, so it does not appear
22 to be tampered with. So my mark -- my test fires are still
23 in here.

24 MS. FINCH: Thank you. Your Honor, at this time, the
25 State would move in Exhibit 102.

1 MS. JOHNSTON: Without objection, Your Honor.

2 THE COURT: State's 102 is admitted without objection.

3 (State's Exhibit Number 102 admitted into evidence.)

4 MS. FINCH: Thank you. One more thing. Okay. Lastly,
5 Ms. Eichenmiller, I'm showing you what has been pre-marked
6 State's Exhibit 87.

7 (State's Exhibit Number 87 marked for identification.)

8 BY MS. FINCH:

9 Q. Do you recognize that document?

10 A. This appears to be a copy of the report I issued
11 in this case.

12 Q. Okay. And it lists the SLED specific ID number
13 you previously mentioned?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. That was assigned to this case?

16 A. That's correct.

17 Q. And it also lists the Laurens County Sheriff's
18 Office evidence number and case number, is that right?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. And this report lists your findings from your
21 testing for this case?

22 A. Yes, it does.

23 Q. And you prepared it?

24 A. I did.

25 MS. FINCH: Your Honor, at this time, the State would

1 move in Number 87.

2 MS. JOHNSTON: Without objection.

3 THE COURT: State's 87 is admitted without objection.

4 (State's Exhibit Number 87 admitted into evidence.)

5 MS. FINCH: Okay. Thank you, Your Honor.

6 BY MS. FINCH:

7 Q. I'm going to publish 87 and let's walk through
8 your report. Thank you. All right. Ms. Eichenmiller,
9 looking at your report, what is listed as item 1.0?

10 A. Item number 1.0 is one Bersa model Thunder 380,
11 semi-automatic pistol, .380 auto caliber, with the serial
12 number M02637 and a magazine.

13 Q. And that is what has been entered as State's
14 Exhibit Number 6 in front of you?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. What type of testing did you perform on this Bersa
17 Thunder 380?

18 A. So I documented the condition that I received it
19 in, I checked it -- checked the safeties, test-fired it, and
20 then used those test-fires to compare it to any other
21 evidence I had received.

22 Q. Thank you. And what were your results of -- of
23 that testing? What did you find?

24 A. For item 1.0, I -- was physically examined. It
25 was test-fired using the magazine that I received, and it was

1 found to be in working order.

2 Q. Okay. And what is listed as item 1.1?

3 A. 1.1 is the test specimens that I created using the
4 item 1.0 pistol.

5 Q. And that -- that's State's Exhibit 102?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. And can you just generally, again, explain for me
8 how those are used in your line of work in this testing?

9 A. I use these known samples to compare to any
10 evidence that I've received in the case. So the unknowns are
11 the items received from the crime scene and then we compare
12 them to the knowns that I created myself in the laboratory.

13 Q. Thank you. And what is item 2.0?

14 A. Item 2.0 is one fired .380 auto caliber cartridge
15 case. It was listed on the submission documents as collected
16 from the living room floor.

17 Q. And that is what's been admitted as State's
18 Exhibit Number 78?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. What type of cartridge casing is that?

21 A. I have to refer to my notes. It's a .380 auto
22 caliber cartridge case manufactured by Federal.

23 Q. Thank you. And what testing was specifically
24 performed on this casing?

25 A. So this cartridge case was compared to the test

1 specimens that I created using the item 1.0 pistol using my
2 microscope, which is called a comparison microscope. It
3 looks like a pair of binoculars that I can look through and
4 see on two different sides, a piece of evidence and a
5 test-fire. I look through the binoculars, I can change the
6 lighting and the magnification to examine the marks that I
7 would need to determine if it was fired by a certain firearm.

8 Q. And in doing that testing and magnification, what
9 were your conclusions regarding this casing in comparison
10 with items 1.1 and 1.0?

11 A. So item 2.0 was physically examined and
12 microscopically compared with cartridge cases. Test fired by
13 item 1.0. Matching individual identifying characteristics
14 were found. And it was concluded that item 2.0 was fired by
15 item 1.0.

16 Q. So, layman's terms, that casing was shot from that
17 gun?

18 A. That's correct.

19 Q. Thank you. And what is listed as item 3.0 in your
20 report?

21 A. Item 3.0 is one fired bullet listed as collected
22 from chest cavity.

23 Q. And that is what's been introduced as State's
24 Exhibit 82?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. And what testing was done on this piece of
2 evidence?

3 A. So this piece of evidence was physically and
4 microscope -- physically examined and microscopically
5 compared with the bullet test-fired by item 1.0. From these
6 examinations in comparisons, the following conclusions were
7 reached based on its observable physical characteristics --
8 meaning what it looked like, and based on my experience. It
9 was most consistent with a bullet loaded into some .380 auto
10 caliber cartridges. However, due to insufficient individual
11 characteristics, the results of the microscopic comparisons
12 of item 3.0 with the bullets test-fired by the item 1.0
13 pistol were inconclusive. It could not be determined whether
14 item 3.0 was fired by item 1.0 or another similar firearm.

15 So in firearms ID, we have three different -- four
16 different conclusions we can reach. You saw on item 2.0, it
17 was fired by, the other answer is not fired by, and then the
18 third answer is inconclusive. It just means it's not marked
19 well enough for me to make a determination if it was that
20 firearm or not.

21 Q. And what would be the reason that you would not be
22 able to determine or you would -- it would lead you to an
23 inconclusive?

24 A. Sometimes firearms don't mark as well, depends on
25 their manufacturer and their care. It could also be that the

1 bullet is slightly smaller than the barrel, so it didn't
2 engage the rifling or that the rifle -- the barrel was a
3 little bit larger than the bullet. It could also be damaged
4 once it impacts the target so that the marks are difficult to
5 look at.

6 Q. Okay. And in -- in your line of work, in your
7 professional opinion, is -- is the inconclusive result
8 abnormal?

9 A. No.

10 Q. Because that projectile has been fired?

11 A. That's correct.

12 Q. And I'm going to move on to State's Number 6 here.
13 The weapon used in this case. Can you explain to this jury
14 what you generally know about a Bersa Thunder 380?

15 A. So a Bersa Thunder 380 is a semi-automatic pistol,
16 which means that as long as the magazine has cartridges in
17 it, the firearm will keep firing with every pull of the
18 trigger. Once the magazine is empty and there's nothing left
19 in the chamber, the slide will stay open, and so then you can
20 visually see that the -- the firearm is empty. It also has
21 several safety features. So it has a thumb safety, which
22 we've covered before. When it's in this position and you can
23 see the red dot, that means it's on fire. So if you had
24 cartridges in here and the magazine in it would fire, you can
25 also rotate it down and then the red is covered. So that

1 means it's safe. If we could see the hammer, the hammer
2 usually has two positions. It could be forward or it could
3 be down. If it were down and you move this safety, the
4 safety is also a decocker, so it will move the hammer back up
5 so that the firearm can't be fired.

6 Bersas are also -- I should say this, Bersa is equipped
7 with a key safety, it's a safety -- key that you get when you
8 buy the firearm and you can turn it to safe lock or unlock.
9 And then it also has a magazine safety. If the magazine is
10 out the trigger won't -- it'll go back and forth, but there's
11 no resistance, so it'll just move with, no -- not -- not
12 firing. This magazine safety is disconnecting everything
13 that would cause this firearm to fire.

14 Q. Thank you. And in your inspection of State's
15 Exhibit Number 6, did it appear this gun had been altered
16 from its manufactured settings in any way?

17 A. Nothing that I made a note of.

18 Q. And how many cartridges does this magazine hold?

19 A. This magazine will hold eight, and then the
20 firearms capacity would be eight plus one if you had one in
21 the chamber.

22 Q. Thank you. I'm going to back up a little bit and
23 try to flesh this out. Can you explain what is a magazine
24 safety?

25 A. So a magazine safety is a safety that when the

1 magazine is in the firearm will fire. If the magazine is
2 removed, the firearm will not fire.

3 Q. And this weapon has a magazine safety?

4 A. That's correct.

5 Q. With this weapon, what happens if that magazine is
6 out and you pull the trigger?

7 A. If the magazine is out and you pull the trigger,
8 you'll have no resistance. The trigger will go back and
9 forth with no weight behind it.

10 Q. And this weapon won't allow a cartridge to be
11 fired without the magazine in the gun?

12 A. That's correct -- that's correct.

13 Q. So if you hold up this gun -- generally speaking,
14 I'm not instructing you. If -- if you're holding this gun,
15 the magazine is out and you pull the trigger, a projectile
16 cannot come out?

17 A. That's correct.

18 Q. If I hold up this gun, I rack one in the chamber,
19 magazine is out, pull the trigger, what happens?

20 A. Nothing.

21 Q. And again, this weapon has not been altered in any
22 way that you can tell?

23 A. Not that I could tell.

24 Q. And this Bersa 380 you've explained has a hammer?

25 A. That's correct.

1 Q. Is it an external or an internal hammer?

2 A. It's an external hammer.

3 Q. And I know the jury can't see it because the gun
4 lock is on. In your opinion, would you say that the hammer
5 is prominent on this weapon?

6 A. Yeah. We really can't see it. It is pretty
7 prominent. It's right here. This is the -- there's a hole
8 in it and it's sticking out the back of the firearm.

9 Q. So have -- if -- if the gun lock is not on there,
10 we can see that hammer?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. Plainly?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. How does the hammer work on a Bersa Thunder 380?

15 A. So when you put the magazine in and you rack the
16 slide back, you load one into the chamber, at that point, the
17 hammer will be down. So back and the firearm is ready to go
18 because it has a magazine in it. That is what we call
19 "single action mode" because once you pull the trigger, it
20 has less pressure on it to pull. It doesn't take as much
21 weight to pull it, and the hammer will just fall forward. So
22 one action, every time the slide goes back, it the hammer.
23 So after this, it's all in single-action mode. If you had
24 put the magazine in, rack the slide, so there's one in the
25 chamber, and then decocked it, it would now be in double

1 action mode, which is when the hammer is up so forward.

2 If you took the safety off then and fired it, there's a
3 lot more weight it takes to pull the hammer back and then
4 fire it because that's two actions. So that's our double
5 action mode. So this firearm can fire in single-action or
6 double action mode.

7 Q. Thank you. I'm going to flush that out a little
8 bit.

9 A. Okay.

10 Q. What does it mean generally for this firearm if
11 the hammer is up or forward?

12 A. If the hammer is forward -- so up, the firearm
13 would be in double action mode.

14 Q. Okay. And if the hammer is pulled down or back,
15 what does that mean?

16 A. That means single-action mode.

17 Q. Okay. With this weapon, can your thumb safety be
18 on with the hammer up?

19 A. Yes. That's the resting -- after you engage the
20 thumb safety, the hammer will be forward or up.

21 Q. And with this weapon, if the safety is off and the
22 hammer is up, what does that mean for pulling the trigger?

23 A. That would be double action mode and that would
24 take more weight to pull the trigger.

25 Q. And when you say "more weight," would you agree in

1 your professional opinion it's a significant -- significant
2 difference of poundage if I'm pulling that trigger in
3 double-action mode?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. And in your expert opinion, if my safety's off and
6 my hammer's up and I am pulling that trigger, how much
7 further am I having to pull that trigger in double-action
8 mode?

9 A. It would be a -- probably a couple centimeters.
10 So the trigger in this is -- would be single-action. It's
11 back farther. Double action, it'd be up a little bit more.

12 Q. Significantly further up?

13 A. A couple of centimeters. So you could probably
14 tell the difference.

15 Q. Thank you. And in this case, with this weapon,
16 can that thumb safety be on, and the hammer down?

17 A. No. The thumb safety is a decocker as well. So
18 at the -- at the moment you move the thumb safety into the
19 safe position, the hammer will come forward.

20 Q. Thank you. And if the thumb safety's off and as
21 you just said, that hammer is down, what does that mean?
22 When I am pulling that trigger?

23 A. That will be the single-action modifier. The
24 trigger will be back a little farther and you'll pull it and
25 it -- it won't take as much to pull it.

1 Q. And again, in your professional opinion -- expert
2 opinion, if this gun is in single-action mode, I can see that
3 hammer pulled back?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. Now, is there any way for this weapon to be -- the
6 slide be racked back and stay open?

7 A. Yes. It has a slide hold open right here. So you
8 can move it with your thumb and the slide will come forward
9 and then you can push the slide back and lock it open.

10 Q. And if I am not using that physical lever, what
11 would happen if there's no magazine in that gun?

12 A. If there's no magazine, the slide would stay
13 closed.

14 Q. Thank you. And last question -- I think. With
15 this weapon, can I place one in the chamber, put the magazine
16 in, safety is off, I pull the trigger, one is expelled,
17 projected out, another cartridge is going to automatically be
18 chambered in that Bersa Thunder 380?

19 A. That's correct.

20 MS. FINCH: I beg the Court's indulgence? Nothing
21 further from the State right now, Your Honor.

22 MS. JOHNSTON: No questions for this witness.

23 THE COURT: All right. You can step down, ma'am.

24 MS. FINCH: Your Honor, may we have a morning break
25 quickly?

1 THE COURT: Yes. We can do that. Ladies and
2 gentlemen, we're going to take a brief recess. Don't begin
3 your deliberations, don't discuss the case amongst yourselves
4 or with anybody else. Don't do any research about any issue
5 that's been raised. Please leave your notes in your chairs
6 and we'll get you back out in a few moments. Thank you.

7 (Jury exits courtroom at 11:11 a.m.)

8 MS. FINCH: Thank you.

9 THE COURT: Looks like we're not at ease yet. Now, we
10 are at ease. Folks, just get -- come in when you are ready
11 to resume. Okay.

12 MS. FINCH: Thank you, Your Honor.

13 (Off the record at 11:12 a.m.)

14 (On the record at 11:46 a.m.)

15 THE COURT: All right. Everybody, before we bring the
16 jury back in, we need to put something on the record. Madam
17 Clerk needs to put something on the record.

18 THE CLERK: I had a message from alternate, I believe
19 it's alternate three, Mr. Paulson, he stated that something
20 has come up with his wife, and he had an issue for tomorrow,
21 so...

22 THE COURT: My thought on that issue is to speak with
23 him when we adjourn today, find out what his issue is and
24 then make a decision with regard to his continued service as
25 an alternate. He didn't contact the Court, he contacted

1 Madam Clerk, and so we'll just deal with that at the close of
2 business today.

3 MS. FINCH: Thank you, Your Honor.

4 MS. JOHNSTON: Thank you, Your Honor.

5 THE COURT: Bring us the jury, please.

6 THE BAILIFF: Bring the jury?

7 THE COURT: Yes, sir.

8 THE BAILIFF: All jurors are present, Your Honor.

9 (Jury enters courtroom at 11:47 a.m.)

10 THE COURT: Thank you, sir. The State can call its
11 next witness.

12 MS. DRIGGERS: The State calls Dr. Claire Rose.

13 DR. CLAIRE ROSE, PATHOLOGIST,
14 being duly sworn, testified as follows:

15 THE CLERK: Thank you. You may have a seat.

16 DIRECT EXAMINATION

17 BY MS. DRIGGERS:

18 Q. Good morning, and thank you for joining us.

19 A. Good morning.

20 Q. Can you please state your full name for the
21 record?

22 A. Claire Rose.

23 Q. And where do you work?

24 A. I currently work at the Greenville County Medical
25 Examiner's Office.

1 Q. And what's your position there?

2 A. I'm one of the forensic pathologists there.

3 Q. And are you licensed to practice medicine in this
4 state?

5 A. Yes, I am.

6 Q. When did you become licensed?

7 A. Oh, goodness. I became licensed in August of
8 2021.

9 Q. And can you tell us what forensic pathology is?

10 A. So I'll start off with "pathology." So pathology
11 is the study of disease in the human body. Forensic
12 pathology is the utilization of autopsies to determine the
13 cause and manner of death in deceased individuals.

14 Q. And what kind of education did you obtain in order
15 to be qualified to do that?

16 A. I first did four years of undergrad at the George
17 Washington University in Washington, D.C. Following that, I
18 did four years of medical school at the Medical University of
19 the Americas. Following medical school, I did four years of
20 residency training in anatomic and clinical pathology at the
21 University of Tennessee, in Knoxville, Tennessee.

22 Following residency, I did one year of fellowship
23 training in forensic pathology at the Milwaukee County
24 Medical Examiner's Office in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

25 Q. And are you board-certified?

1 A. Yes. I'm board-certified both in anatomic and
2 forensic pathology.

3 Q. And what does board-certified mean?

4 A. So board certification just means that I have the
5 necessary knowledge and skills in that particular field that
6 I am board-certified in. And I acquired those skills -- I
7 acquired those skills and knowledge by going through -- or
8 undergoing the appropriate training programs in that
9 particular field and then passing a -- qualifying examination
10 at the end of my training.

11 Q. And how long have you been a forensic pathologist?

12 A. Approximately four years now.

13 Q. And approximately how many autopsies do you think
14 you've done in your career?

15 A. Including my fellowship training? I have done
16 approximately a thousand autopsies.

17 Q. And have you ever -- I'm sorry. Have you ever
18 testified as an expert in court before?

19 A. Yes, I have.

20 Q. How many times?

21 A. About three times.

22 MS. DRIGGERS: Your Honor, the State would tenure
23 Dr. Rose as an expert in forensic pathology.

24 MS. JOHNSTON: Without objection, Your Honor.

25 THE COURT: All right. Ladies and gentlemen of the

1 jury, this witness has been offered as an expert in the field
2 of forensic pathology. And based on her education training
3 experience, I'll qualify -- qualify her as an expert in that
4 field. She is qualified to give opinion testimony in that
5 area, but that does not mean you must accept the opinion, but
6 it is evidence for you to use in any way you see fit and give
7 the weight and credibility you believe is appropriate.

8 MS. DRIGGERS: Thank you, Judge.

9 BY MS. DRIGGERS:

10 Q. And what are your duties, generally speaking, as a
11 forensic pathologist?

12 A. As a forensic pathologist, my main primary duty is
13 to assist the coroners in determining the cause and manner of
14 death in deceased individuals.

15 Q. And in what cases are autopsies done?

16 A. Typically, in any sudden unexpected, violent or
17 suspicious death.

18 Q. And who determines if one is done?

19 A. Typically, it's the coroner, but it's also at our
20 -- the forensic pathologist's discretion as well.

21 Q. Okay. And then you're also in conjunction with
22 other agencies as well?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. Can you provide us with a brief overview of what
25 an autopsy consists of generally?

1 A. Sure. So an autopsy is a specialized surgical
2 procedure that consists of two parts: An external examination
3 and an internal examination. The external examination
4 consists of first examining the individual as is. And during
5 that time, we document any clothing any personal effects or
6 any medical devices that may be present on or accompanying
7 the body. We also look for any injuries to the body.

8 And then -- so once that is complete, and once we
9 remove any clothing or medical devices, we clean the body,
10 and then repeat -- proceed onto the internal examination.
11 And that consists of opening up the body. First, examining
12 all the organs inside the body, again, looking for any
13 disease or injury, and then taking out each organ
14 individually and taking a closer look, or dissecting each
15 organ to -- again, to look for any natural disease or injury.

16 And during the autopsy process, we will also take blood
17 for toxicology. We may take pieces of tissue to make
18 microscopic slides, or we may collect any other evidence that
19 may help us determine the cause and manner of death in the
20 deceased individual.

21 Q. And you just said "cause and manner," can you
22 explain for us, cause versus manner generally speaking?

23 A. Sure. So the cause of death is the disease or
24 injury that led to one's death, and manner of death is the
25 circumstances that led to that death. It is a medical

1 determination, and we only have five options to choose from:
2 Natural, where the death occurred due to a disease or aging
3 process. We have accidents, where death is due to an injury
4 or poisoning and there's no evidence on that it occurred
5 intentionally. Then we have suicide, where death occurred
6 intentionally or by self-inflicted act. Then we have
7 homicide, where death occurred at the hands of another
8 through a violent act. And then the fifth is undetermined,
9 if one manner is not more compelling than another manner.

10 Q. Thank you. And did you have the opportunity to
11 perform an autopsy on Grace Ables?

12 A. Yes, I did.

13 Q. On what date was that?

14 A. I performed the autopsy on November 28, 2023.

15 Q. And where was that done?

16 A. That was done at the morgue, at the Greenville
17 Count -- the Greenville Prisma Health Medical Hospital.

18 Q. And who else was present during that autopsy other
19 than yourself, of course?

20 A. Other than myself, I have autopsy technicians that
21 helped me perform the autopsy, and then there was a
22 representative from the Laurens County Sheriff's Office, Toni
23 Godfrey.

24 Q. And what were your major findings of your autopsy?

25 A. So during the autopsy, my major finding that I saw

1 was that Ms. Ables had a single gunshot wound to her chest
2 and that gunshot wound went through her left breast, it went
3 through her chest plate, it went through her heart, it went
4 through her esophagus, which is a tube that transports food
5 or liquid from your throat to the stomach.

6 It then went through the aorta, which is a major blood
7 vessel that supplies blood throughout your body. And then
8 the projectile then embedded itself into her thoracic spine.
9 And that is where I recovered the projectile from.

10 Q. And were there any other significant findings?

11 A. Yes. Ms. Ables was also pregnant at the time of
12 her death.

13 Q. And before going further into those findings, when
14 conducting your external portion of the autopsy, did you
15 retrieve any physical evidence in this case?

16 A. Yes. Like I said earlier, I retrieved a
17 projectile from Ms. Ables thoracic spine.

18 Q. And I know that you didn't physically collect the
19 victim's clothing, but were you present when that took place?

20 A. Yes, I was.

21 Q. Okay. And what, if anything, generally speaking,
22 are you looking for when you look at a victim's clothing?

23 A. So when we're looking at the clothing, especially
24 in gunshot wounds, victims -- we -- we look to see if there
25 are any defects in the clothing and any evidence of --

1 elements from the firearm that may be present on the clothing
2 that may help us determine the range of firearm.

3 Q. Okay. I am going to hand you what's already been
4 admitted into evidence as State's 80 through 81. Okay. And
5 if you can look at the outside of those bags as well as the
6 contents in it, do you recognize those? Just put these
7 gloves on first.

8 A. Is there a particular one you want me to start off
9 with? Okay. So...

10 Q. Whatever your preference.

11 A. Okay. So this is an evidence bag that's labeled
12 as "T-shirt." And then do you want me to take the T-shirt
13 out?

14 Q. Yes, please.

15 A. Okay.

16 Q. And then if you can just see if you recognize the
17 contents.

18 A. Yes. So this was a T-shirt that Ms. Ables was
19 wearing at the time of her death.

20 Q. Okay. And is that T-shirt in the same or
21 substantially the same condition as when you saw it being
22 removed?

23 A. Yes. It's the same.

24 Q. Okay. And then if you can do the same for 81,
25 please? You can just leave it out if you want.

1 A. Okay.

2 Q. I'm going to have you come back to it in just a
3 little bit.

4 A. I just don't want --

5 Q. I'll just put it in.

6 A. Okay. And this appears to be the sweater that
7 Ms. Ables was wearing at the time of the death.

8 Q. Okay. And you would say that's in the same
9 condition?

10 A. Yes, it is.

11 Q. Okay. And was there anything of significance that
12 you observed from this clothing?

13 A. I'm sorry. Say that again?

14 Q. Was there anything of significance that you
15 observed from her clothing?

16 A. Yes. So the sweater had a defect corresponding to
17 the entrance, gunshot wound to her left breast.

18 Q. Okay. And I will have you go in some more detail
19 in just a minute.

20 A. Okay.

21 Q. Were you able to create a diagram of where the
22 gunshot wound was on Grace Ables' body?

23 A. Yes, I was.

24 MS. DRIGGERS: Okay. I'm going to hand you what's been
25 pre-marked as State's Exhibit 88, for identification

1 purposes.

2 (State's Exhibit Number 88 marked for identification.)

3 BY MS. DRIGGERS:

4 Q. Do you recognize that?

5 A. Yes, I do. This is the body diagram that I
6 created depicting the gunshot wound to Ms. Ables' body.

7 Q. And is that diagram in the same condition as when
8 you created it?

9 A. Yes, it is.

10 Q. Okay. And has it been changed in any way?

11 A. No, it has not.

12 MS. DRIGGERS: Your Honor, I would admit State's 88
13 into evidence.

14 MS. JOHNSTON: Without objection, Your Honor.

15 THE COURT: State's 88 is admitted without objection.

16 (State's Exhibit Number 88 admitted into evidence.)

17 MS. DRIGGERS: And then if we can publish 88, please?

18 BY MS. DRIGGERS:

19 Q. Okay. Can you explain to us what we're looking at
20 here? And if you need to step down, you can.

21 A. Oh, sure. So this is the diagram that I -- I
22 created and you can see here, it has Ms. Ables' name, her
23 age, her race, her sex, the date that the autopsy was
24 performed, and then 823745 is the unique autopsy number that
25 was given to her. And the 8 just means autopsy, the 23 means

1 the year that the autopsy was performed, and 745 just means
2 that it was a 745th autopsy that was performed that year.
3 And then on the body diagram you can see here just on the --
4 the linear aspect of her left breast, and that is where the
5 entrance gunshot wound was.

6 Q. Thank you. And while we're still focusing on the
7 external portion of your examination, did you take any x-rays
8 or photos while you were conducting the autopsy?

9 A. Yes. So knowing that this was a firearm death,
10 before the autopsy started, we took an x-ray of her torso to
11 determine if a projectile was still retained in Ms. Ables'
12 body.

13 MS. DRIGGERS: Okay. I'm going to hand you what's been
14 pre-marked as State's 89.

15 (State's Exhibit Number 89 marked for identification.)

16 BY MS. DRIGGERS:

17 Q. And do you recognize that?

18 A. Yes, I do.

19 Q. What is it?

20 A. This is an x-ray of Ms. Ables' torso.

21 Q. Okay. And is that x-ray a true and accurate
22 representation of where the projectile was located?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. Has it been altered in any way?

25 A. No, it has not.

1 MS. DRIGGERS: Your Honor, the State would move to
2 admit 89 into evidence.

3 MS. JOHNSTON: Without objection, Your Honor.

4 THE COURT: State's 89 is admitted without objection.

5 (State's Exhibit Number 89 admitted into evidence.)

6 BY MS. DRIGGERS:

7 Q. All right. And then we're going to publish it on
8 the screen, and if I can just get you to explain to the jury
9 what we're looking at generally?

10 A. Sure. So this is x-ray of Ms. Ables' torso. You
11 can see here the spine is right here, the ribs on either
12 side, and this radio -- foreign object is the projectile that
13 was recovered from her spine.

14 Q. Okay. And I'm also going to -- you were able to
15 retrieve that projectile as well?

16 A. Yes.

17 MS. DRIGGERS: Okay. I'm going to hand you what's been
18 pre-marked as State's Exhibit 90.

19 (State's Exhibit Number 90 marked for identification.)

20 BY MS. DRIGGERS:

21 Q. And do you recognize that?

22 A. Yes, I do.

23 Q. What is that?

24 A. This is the projectile that was recovered at the
25 time of autopsy.

1 Q. And is that a fair and accurate depiction of the
2 projectile that you recovered from the body that day?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. To your knowledge, has it been altered in any way?

5 A. From this photograph? No.

6 MS. DRIGGERS: Okay. Your Honor, the State would move
7 Exhibit 90 into evidence.

8 MS. JOHNSTON: No objection, Your Honor.

9 THE COURT: State's 90 is admitted without objection.
10 (State's Exhibit Number 90 admitted into evidence.)

11 MS. DRIGGERS: And then if we can publish 90?

12 BY MS. DRIGGERS:

13 Q. Okay. And is that that projectile?

14 A. Yes, it is.

15 Q. Okay. I'm also going to hand you State's Exhibit
16 82, which has already been admitted in the evidence. And if
17 you can just, I guess, move it over to the other side to
18 where you can see it, what is that?

19 A. This is the container where the projectile was
20 placed in. And then it -- it appears that the projectile's
21 on that side of the container, but this is the projectile
22 that was recovered at the time of autopsy.

23 Q. And then if you can, I think they've already seen
24 it, but if you can just show it to the jury.

25 A. Sure. So the projectile is right below the

1 container.

2 Q. Thank you. And then did you also prepare a
3 written report summarizing your findings and conclusions in
4 this case?

5 A. Yes, I did.

6 MS. DRIGGERS: Okay. I'm going to hand you what's been
7 pre-marked as State's Exhibit 91.

8 (State's Exhibit Number 91 marked for identification.)

9 BY MS. DRIGGERS:

10 Q. And what is that?

11 A. This is the -- this is the autopsy report on
12 Ms. Ables.

13 Q. And you created that report?

14 A. Yes, I did.

15 Q. Okay. Has it been altered in any way?

16 A. No, it has not.

17 Q. Would that document help you explain the
18 conclusions that you reached as far as the cause of death in
19 this case?

20 A. Yes, it would.

21 MS. DRIGGERS: Your Honor, the State would move 91 into
22 evidence.

23 MS. JOHNSTON: Without objection, Your Honor.

24 THE COURT: State's 91 is admitted without objection.

25 (State's Exhibit Number 91 admitted into evidence.)

1 BY MS. DRIGGERS:

2 Q. All right. And we will go into your findings in
3 detail in just a second. But during the autopsy, were other
4 photographs taken of Grace Ables' body and the gunshot wound?

5 A. Yes. There were.

6 MS. DRIGGERS: Okay. I'm going to hand you what's been
7 pre-marked as State's Exhibit 93 through 96.

8 (State's Exhibit Numbers 93 through 96 marked for
9 identification.)

10 BY MS. DRIGGERS:

11 Q. And if you can, just flip through those. Do you
12 recognize those?

13 A. Yes. These are the photographs that I took at the
14 time of autopsy.

15 Q. Okay. And did those photos fairly and accurately
16 show the condition of Grace's body when you performed the
17 autopsy?

18 A. Yes. Her body and the clothing, yes.

19 Q. Okay. And have they been altered in any way?

20 A. No, they have not.

21 Q. And would using those photos help you explain the
22 types and location of injuries that you found on Grace's
23 body?

24 A. Yes, it would.

25 MS. DRIGGERS: Your Honor, the State would move 93

1 through 96 into evidence.

2 MS. JOHNSTON: Without objection, Your Honor.

3 THE COURT: State's 93 through 96 are admitted without
4 objection.

5 (State's Exhibit Numbers 93 through 96 admitted into
6 evidence).

7 BY MS. DRIGGERS:

8 Q. All right. And we will publish those in just a
9 second. So based on the autopsy that you've described, were
10 you able to form an opinion as to the cause and manner of
11 death of Grace Ables?

12 A. Yes, I was.

13 Q. Based on that autopsy, what is your expert opinion
14 on the cause of death of Grace Ables?

15 A. The cause of death was gunshot wound at the chest.

16 Q. And in your expert opinion, what was the manner of
17 death as to Grace Ables?

18 A. Homicide.

19 Q. Okay. You also mentioned that Grace was pregnant
20 at the time of her death?

21 A. Yes, she was.

22 Q. And that unborn baby, it did ultimately pass as
23 well?

24 A. Yes, it did.

25 Q. Did you yourself remove that unborn baby during

1 Grace's autopsy?

2 A. Yes, I did. And did you conduct an autopsy of the
3 unborn baby?

4 A. No, I did not.

5 Q. Why not?

6 A. So at the time of autopsy, the fetus -- the female
7 fetus did not appear to be abnormally developed. I did not
8 see any injuries to it, and I did not see any other findings
9 that would explain its death apart from the gunshot wound to
10 its mother. As such, I deemed it not necessary to perform an
11 autopsy on the fetus.

12 Q. Okay. And when you said you found no injuries,
13 what do you mean by that?

14 A. Injuries that would be resulting from the gunshot
15 wound.

16 Q. Okay. So the -- the unborn baby did not have any
17 gunshot wound to itself?

18 A. Correct.

19 Q. And then you said "no gross abnormalities," and
20 what do you mean by that exactly?

21 A. It appeared normally developed, appeared normal
22 healthy female fetus.

23 Q. Okay. So ultimately the unborn baby died as a
24 result of the gunshot wound to Grace?

25 A. Correct.

1 Q. Okay. And I know that you cannot comment on the
2 viability of the unborn baby at the time of Grace's death,
3 but can you describe the baby's appearance for us?

4 A. So again, it said "well-developed," and based on
5 the gross measurements of the baby, it was approximately 30
6 weeks or seven months in gestational age.

7 Q. And you said that the baby's appearance was not
8 indicative of any underlying conditions?

9 A. Correct. Yes.

10 Q. Okay. So now going back to Grace Ables, and back
11 to the manner of death, you said that you ruled this as a
12 homicide?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. And can you tell me again what that means exactly?

15 A. So Ms. Ables died as the result of another
16 individual's violent act that was directed at her.

17 Q. Okay. And then if we can go through what led you
18 to that determination. So let's start with, were you able to
19 determine in your expert opinion the path or direction of the
20 projectile and how it entered Grace's body?

21 A. Yes, I was.

22 Q. And what was that?

23 A. So the trajectory or the pathway of the bullet as
24 it travels through the body. And because we don't know what
25 the position of -- of Ms. Ables at the time of death, we give

1 the trajectory relative to standard anatomic position,
2 meaning that the individual is standing straight up with
3 their arms at their sides and their palms facing outward.
4 And in this case, the trajectory of the projectile was front
5 to back, left to right, and downward.

6 Q. And were you able to determine the distance or
7 range of the weapon from Grace's body?

8 A. Yes, I was.

9 Q. Okay. And before we go into that, what are the
10 range -- what are the different ranges?

11 A. So when determining the range of fire -- meaning
12 the distance between the firearm and the body, so when the
13 firearm is fired, besides the projectile that exits, there's
14 also soot and unburnt or burnt gunpowder particles that also
15 exit out from the firearm. And then depending on the
16 distance of the firearm to the body, we can see certain
17 characteristics on the clothing and on the skin that help us
18 determine the range of fire.

19 And we have four different ranges of fire. We have
20 contact range, close range, intermediate range, and
21 indeterminate range. So in contact range, when the firearm
22 is directly in contact with the skin, in this scenario you'll
23 see soot or a muzzle imprint on the skin around the entrance
24 wound.

25 In close contact, meaning where the firearm is

1 generally less than six inches away from the skin, in this
2 scenario, you will see soot, you will see burning of the
3 wound edges of the gunshot wound, and you may or may not see
4 a small amount of unburned gunpowder particles or gunpowder
5 stippling on the skin. And gunpowder stippling are just tiny
6 abrasions caused by the burnt or unburnt gunpowder particles
7 that strike the skin as it's expelled from the firearm. So
8 that's close range.

9 Then we have intermediate range and that is generally
10 between six inches up to two to three feet away from the
11 body. And in this scenario, you will see unburned gunpowder
12 particles on the clothing and on the skin around the entrance
13 wound and as well as within the depths of the entrance wound.
14 Additionally, you also see gunpowder stippling. So those
15 tiny little abrasions on the skin around the entrance wound.

16 And finally, the firearms move further away, you will
17 get into the intermediate range. So that is generally more
18 than two to three feet away from the body. And in that
19 scenario, you won't see any of the characteristics that I
20 described. So you will not see a muzzle mark, you will not
21 see -- see soot on the skin or the clothing, you will not see
22 any gunpowder particles, and you will not see any gunpowder
23 stippling.

24 Q. Okay. And what was your determination as far as
25 range here in this case with Grace Ables?

1 A. In this case, the range of fire was intermediate.

2 Q. Okay. And can you tell us what that means for
3 this case?

4 A. So for this case, that means the firearm was held
5 between six, and two to three feet away from Ms. Ables.

6 Q. So maximum distance, two to three feet?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Closest distance, six inches you said?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. Okay. And can you explain to me what led to that
11 determination?

12 A. So when I examined the clothing, there were
13 evidence of unburned gunpowder particles on the sweater that
14 Ms. Ables was wearing. Also when I examined the entrance
15 gunshot wound, I saw more of those unburned gunpowder
16 particles on the skin and within the depths of the wound.
17 And also I saw gunpowder stippling around on the skin, around
18 the entrance gunshot wound.

19 Q. Okay. And now we're going to show some of those
20 photos so that you can help explain to myself and the jury
21 sort of what we're looking at, okay? If we can publish
22 State's 93 and 94? And while we're doing that, if you can
23 also grab the clothing as well and kind of show us first on
24 the clothing, what you're referring to.

25 A. Sure.

1 Q. And then if you want to use the photo to
2 demonstrate.

3 A. Is that the laser pointer? I've never seen that.

4 Q. Me either. Oh, okay -- okay. So don't touch it.
5 Thank you.

6 A. So first you said you would like me to show the
7 sweater first?

8 Q. If you can show the jury first with the physical
9 clothing, what you're referring to.

10 A. Sure.

11 Q. And then if you can use the photo behind you to
12 sort of demonstrate so you're not having to do it on the
13 clothing.

14 A. Sure. So I don't know if you got -- if the jury
15 can see, but this is the sweater that Ms. Ables was wearing
16 at the time of her death. This is the front of the sweater
17 and this is the back. So on the front here, you can see the
18 entrance defect corresponding to the gunshot wound to her
19 left breast. And it may be hard to see because -- but there
20 are unburned gunpowder particles around the defect on this
21 sweater.

22 Q. And is that what we're looking at on that screen
23 right there?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. And I can point that.

2 Q. If it's easier for you to just use the photo,
3 you're welcome to do that.

4 A. Yes. So again, this is the entrance defect on the
5 front of the sweater. And you can see here these tiny yellow
6 particles. Those are the unburned gunpowder particles that
7 were expelled from the firearm along with the bullet.

8 Q. Okay. And then if we can go to 94?

9 A. So here's a picture of the inner aspect of this on
10 front of the sweater. And again, here you can see the
11 defect. And again, you can see more of those unburned
12 gunpowder particles around the (inaudible).

13 Q. And then if we can publish State's 95 and 96, and
14 I'll have you do the same thing.

15 A. So this is the entrance gunshot wound on the
16 medial left breast. And here again it may be a little bit
17 harder because there's not as many, but you can see these
18 tiny yellow particles. And again, those are the unburned gun
19 particles.

20 Additionally, here up in this top corner, and even
21 here, here, here, and here too, that is on the gunpowder
22 stippling. So those are the tiny abrasions caused by the
23 unburnt and burnt gunpowder particles striking the skin as it
24 exits the firearm.

25 Q. And then if we can go to 96, please?

1 A. And this is just the -- a slightly closer up photo
2 of the previous photo, but again, you can see more of that
3 gunpowder stippling up here, up here, here, and here. And
4 again, more of those unburnt yellow gunpowder particles.
5 Here, here, here, and here.

6 Q. Okay. If we could go back to 95? I think -- I
7 think that one's probably a better -- okay. So those yellow
8 dots, that's what you're talking about right there?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. Okay.

11 A. Those tiny, I don't know if you -- but those tiny
12 little particles. Yeah.

13 Q. Let me see that. Okay.

14 A. So here. And again, they were better shown on the
15 sweater. But this is just a picture depicting -- oh, this
16 part. Yes. So you can see here.

17 Q. Okay.

18 A. Tiny unburnt gunpowder.

19 Q. Thank you. And were there -- was there any
20 evidence of any defensive wounds?

21 A. No, there was not.

22 Q. And were there any other findings that helped you
23 make your determination as to homicide?

24 A. No, there was not.

25 MS. DRIGGERS: Okay. I beg the Court's indulgence?

1 THE COURT: Yes, ma'am.

2 BY MS. DRIGGERS:

3 Q. Okay. Last question, Dr. Rose. Can you just
4 explain -- if you haven't already, the path that that
5 projectile took when it entered Grace's body?

6 A. Sure. So like I said before, it went through her
7 left breast, it went through her rib cage. It then went
8 through the pericardial sac, which is a sac that encases the
9 heart. It then went through the heart, again through the
10 pericardial sac. It then went through the esophagus, the
11 aorta, and then it embedded itself into her thoracic spine.

12 MS. DRIGGERS: Thank you so much. No further
13 questions. And please answer any the Defense may have.

14 CROSS-EXAMINATION

15 BY MS. JOHNSTON:

16 Q. Dr. Rose?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. One thing you can't do is determine whether or not
19 malice was present?

20 A. No. That is illegal.

21 MS. JOHNSTON: Thank you.

22 MS. DRIGGERS: No re-direct.

23 THE COURT: All right. Thank you, Doctor. You can
24 step down.

25 THE WITNESS: And then should I just leave the evidence

1 here?

2 MS. DRIGGERS: Yes, you can leave it. We'll grab it.

3 THE WITNESS: Okay. Thank you.

4 THE COURT: Yes, ma'am?

5 MS. FINCH: Your Honor, at this time, the State rests.

6 THE COURT: All right. Thank you, ma'am. Ladies and
7 gentlemen of the jury, the State has rested its case-in-chief
8 in this matter. So given the time, I'm going to send you to
9 lunch and ask that you be back at 2:00. Again, don't begin
10 your deliberations, don't discuss this case amongst
11 yourselves with anybody else. Don't do any research about
12 any issue which may have been raised in this case. Please
13 leave your notes and pens in your chairs, and we will send
14 you back until 2:00.

15 (Jury exits courtroom at 12:21 p.m.)

16 THE COURT: All right. Does the Defense have any
17 motions?

18 MR. ERWIN: Yes, Your Honor. The microphone is
19 straight, Judge. Yeah. Your Honor, at this time, the
20 Defense would move for a directed verdict on all of the
21 indictments that are at issue in this trial, as we are
22 required to do, to set the record appropriately for appeal.
23 Specifically, though, I do want to talk about the two
24 murder indictments that are at issue. And circumstances
25 being what they were. In this case, there are two

1 THE BAILIFF: All jurors are present, Your Honor.

2 (Jury enters courtroom at 2:16 p.m.)

3 THE COURT: All right. Thank you, ladies and gentlemen
4 of the jury. When we broke for lunch, the State had -- had
5 rested its case. I will now recognize the Defense.

6 MS. JOHNSTON: Your Honor, the Defense calls Camrin
7 Smith.

8 THE COURT: All right. Mr. Smith, please come forward.

9 CAMRIN JAY SMITH, DEFENDANT,
10 being sworn, testified as follows:

11 THE CLERK: Thank you. You may have a seat.

12 MS. JOHNSTON: Your Honor, I'm sorry (inaudible).

13 DIRECT EXAMINATION

14 BY MS. JOHNSTON:

15 Q. You know, tell this jury what happened that day.

16 A. It was a normal day. We woke up, Grace and I,
17 normal routine.

18 Q. Tell us as much as you can. Okay? It's important
19 we want to make sure the jury hears it.

20 A. We woke up and it was a normal routine. Let the
21 dogs out, just eat something, and kind of went on through the
22 morning kind of getting ready, because I knew my dad was
23 coming over to -- to shoot guns with me. I -- I don't recall
24 the time he got there, but I know that we shot for a couple
25 hours, and he left around 4:30 to 5:00.

1 And from there, I -- I gathered up all my guns, brought
2 them in the house. Took about three trips to get everything
3 inside. Brought everything into the living room, and pretty
4 much set all the smaller stuff on the counter. And my two
5 bigger rifle cases behind the couch are in the vicinity of
6 the living room. I got everything in, and I sat down with
7 Grace.

8 She was watching something on the TV, and she put on --
9 it was either a show or a movie that we were -- we had
10 already planned to watch. And between the incident and the
11 time of us watching TV, I was getting up and cleaning the
12 guns. And then I cleaned one, go back, sit down, clean
13 another. I think I cleaned three guns in that time. One of
14 them being the .380 Bersa.

15 The movie was over and she -- she got up, asked me if I
16 wanted anything to eat, and at the time, I told her no.
17 About another 15, 20 minutes went by. I was sitting on the
18 couch, and I called her over to the couch and I told her that
19 I was hungry. She asked me what I wanted and I told her
20 whatever was easiest for her to make, and she said that she
21 would just make me a TV dinner.

22 And I was sitting on the couch for about another five,
23 10 minutes and she told me my food was ready. And I got up,
24 walked into the kitchen and -- you know, it was -- she had
25 asked me what kind of sauce I wanted and I told her Arby's

1 sauce. And there was something said, it was sexually
2 provocative, but I do not recall what it was -- what was
3 said. And it was about that time that I kind of just -- you
4 know, turned around and picked up the gun and, stupidly, did
5 not look at the gun. And this was in response to the sexual
6 thing she said. And I raised it to my chest and pointed it
7 at her and I pulled the trigger.

8 Q. Tell us what happened after that.

9 A. I heard the gun go off, and it took about five
10 seconds to -- to process what just happened. And that just
11 when the entire mood, my brain changed.

12 Q. And then can you speak up a little?

13 A. Yeah. When the shot went off, I -- the mood
14 changed in the room, and I saw -- I saw her face go from --
15 go from happy smile to face in pain and shock. And she let
16 out -- she let out a scream. And she fell to the floor. And
17 I immediately went to the floor with her, and I grabbed her,
18 and I -- I thought she just passed out from the shock. So I
19 started to -- to shake her. She -- she had passed out in the
20 past before, and that's -- it was something that would help
21 her kind of -- kind of come back to it.

22 It was different this time. I -- I -- I ran to the
23 living room and I grabbed my phone, and I ran back to the
24 kitchen and I -- I heard her make a sound, and that's --
25 that's when I started to attempt CPR. But it wasn't long I

1 -- I realized that I did not know what I was doing, that I
2 needed to -- to call somebody. I guess it was out of
3 instinct. I -- I called -- I called my dad.

4 Q. What did you tell your dad, Camrin?

5 A. I told him that I accidentally shot Grace, and he
6 -- with no hesitation, told me to call 911. And I -- I hung
7 up the phone and I kind of -- I was fumbling. I fumbled my
8 phone, and when I picked it up, I remember that I could not
9 figure out how to get to the -- the dial pad on my phone, but
10 I -- I -- I got it and I dial 911. And when they answered,
11 they -- they asked me what had happened. I said that I
12 accidentally shot my wife. She -- she'd asked me again what
13 happened, and I repeated the same thing.

14 I don't remember in what order she asked questions. I
15 remember she asked me the address. She asked me how old
16 Grace was. She asked me where she was shot, but it wasn't
17 long into that call. And I looked at Grace. I realized that
18 she was gone. And I did my best to answer all the questions
19 that were asked, and I don't know how long it was after I
20 started the phone call that the first officer came to the
21 door.

22 And I also -- I mean, I come back -- I do remember that
23 she told me to move the guns. She asked me where it was and
24 I told her, "Beside me." She asked me to move them, and I
25 quickly picked it up and ran and threw it into the back

1 bedroom. And I started to move everything into the back
2 bedroom because I did not want to seem like a threat to an
3 officer.

4 So when the officer got there, he came in and asked
5 where Grace was, and I pointed to the kitchen. And at that
6 point, I -- I wanted to get my dogs contained to keep them
7 safe. And I vaguely remember being handcuffed on the couch
8 and being taken out to the squad car. And the only thing I
9 remember from the squad car...

10 Q. Camrin, and then did you willingly go down and
11 talk to them voluntarily at the law enforcement center?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. Okay, Camrin. Tell -- tell me about you and
14 Grace.

15 A. Grace and I met at -- at some point in 2015 and we
16 eventually got together. And in 2017 -- or 2016, December of
17 2016.

18 Q. Where'd you all meet?

19 A. We met at Hillcrest High School, and I knew about
20 a year in that -- that she was -- she was the girl I wanted
21 to spend my life with.

22 Q. Camrin, tell me about Grace.

23 A. Grace was all around, amazing. She was always
24 compassionate, caring, sweet. She was not easily -- you
25 know, like you -- you couldn't push her away. She would

1 always -- you know, seek that forgiveness. And she was
2 beautiful and loved everybody no matter what.

3 Q. Camrin, were you and Grace excited to be parents?

4 A. I've been excited for a lot of things, but that
5 was -- it was the most excited I've been.

6 Q. Were you excited to be a dad?

7 A. It is all I ever wanted with Grace.

8 Q. I'm going to get you some water really quick. All
9 right. Tell -- tell the jury the deal with -- with the joke
10 to Grace and you.

11 A. I don't remember when it first started as a joke.
12 And I know that at some point, she -- she had asked me about
13 using a gun during sex, and I told her that it was not
14 something that I could do during -- during sex. But from
15 there, it kind of became a joke between us because she
16 started with me doing it. And when I first did it, she was
17 -- she was turned on by it. And so, it was something that we
18 did to each other just because of that -- that one thing that
19 she wanted.

20 Q. Camrin, is this something you all would do around
21 others?

22 A. No.

23 Q. Why?

24 A. Because her and I both had a darker sense of
25 humor, and we tended to keep it to ourselves other than the

1 people that were around us. But when it comes to that
2 specific humor, we knew that people would disapprove and
3 judge us for it, and we just didn't want that.

4 Q. At this point, how long had you all been together?

5 A. We were together for -- it would've been seven
6 years.

7 Q. Were you guys engaged?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. All right. Camrin, let's get something clear.
10 When this happened, did you think the gun was loaded?

11 A. No.

12 Q. Why -- why would you point a gun at Grace?

13 A. It was just something that we did, and with the
14 current -- I guess, interaction between us, that was -- you
15 know, one of the times that we would do it.

16 Q. But Camrin, why wouldn't you check to see if it's
17 unloaded?

18 A. I don't know why I didn't check.

19 Q. Well, did you check to see if it was racked?

20 A. I did not.

21 Q. Why not? Do you want -- you got to answer out
22 loud for the jury?

23 A. I don't remember.

24 Q. And did you check to see if the safety was on?

25 A. I did not.

1 Q. Why not?

2 A. I don't remember.

3 Q. Well, Camrin, did you not notice the magazine was
4 in it?

5 A. I didn't.

6 Q. Why not?

7 A. I don't know.

8 Q. Is it because you didn't care or did you stupidly
9 assume?

10 A. I stupidly assumed.

11 Q. Camrin, if you ever thought you were pointing a
12 loaded weapon at Grace, would we be here today?

13 A. No.

14 Q. Was it meant as a threat to Grace?

15 A. No.

16 Q. Did it make her happy?

17 A. At the time, yes.

18 Q. Camrin, did you have any intention of hurting
19 Grace or Scarlet that night?

20 A. I never had intentions of hurting either of them.

21 Q. Camrin, looking back, how do you view your actions
22 that day?

23 A. They were dumb and careless.

24 Q. Do you think you should have known better?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. Did anyone ever tell you the rule, "Never shoot a
2 gun or never point a gun at something you don't intend to
3 shoot or kill"?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. Camrin, did you fully appreciate what that meant
6 before this happened?

7 A. No.

8 Q. Has this completely transformed how you think
9 about guns?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. Camrin, do you love Grace?

12 A. More than anything.

13 Q. Do you love Scarlet?

14 A. I do. And I always will.

15 Q. Camrin, was there anything at all to gain from
16 losing them?

17 A. No.

18 Q. Camrin, what -- what would you say to Grace and
19 Scarlet right now, if you could?

20 A. That I am sorry. And that I love and miss them
21 both.

22 Q. Camrin, was this the worst mistake you've ever
23 made in your life?

24 A. Yes.

25 MS. JOHNSTON: Okay, Camrin. Answer the questions that

1 the State has for you.

2 CROSS-EXAMINATION

3 BY MS. FINCH:

4 Q. You are not a beginner in firearms, are you --
5 were you?

6 A. I wouldn't say that I was.

7 Q. You know how guns work, right?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. You owned nine guns in November of 2023?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. You explicitly detailed these guns to law
12 enforcement?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. Did you also own at that time a lot of gun
15 accessories?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. And a lot of ammunition?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. I am going to go through some things, see your, --
20 your statements in this case. I'm going to categorize that
21 first statement as your 911 call, okay? You called,
22 "Accidentally shot my wife." Right?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. She's dead, right?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. You just testified she was gone?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. And you say, "There's no saving her." They asked
4 you specifically, "Do we need to send paramedics?" What'd
5 you say?

6 A. I don't remember.

7 Q. And then in that 911 call, you changed your
8 demeanor, didn't you? You start talking about Bersa 380?
9 Yes, or no?

10 A. I believe so, yes.

11 Q. And you did everything that dispatch told you to
12 do, right?

13 A. To my knowledge, yes.

14 Q. You got up from the couch and sat beside Grace?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. "Yes," or "No"?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. You picked the gun up. Yes?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. You took that case up?

21 A. I did not pick up the case the first time.

22 Q. Okay. What'd you do the first time you got the
23 gun and where'd you go?

24 A. I took the gun to the back room.

25 Q. Okay. And then -- all right. Picked it up. You

1 go to the back room. But you're still on the phone with
2 this?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. You come back to Grace?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. You picked up the box separately and the
7 cartridges when you go back?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. Okay. Everything you're telling you remember that
10 it -- but before that, you couldn't remember how to call 911,
11 right? Is what you just said?

12 A. I couldn't figure out how to get to the dial pad
13 in my phone.

14 Q. Okay. And then law enforcement arrived, you --
15 you talked to Investigator Brown. I'm talking about your
16 second statement, okay? Do you remember that?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. What'd you tell him then? You said it was dumb,
19 right? "I was being dumb." Right?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. "I've done it since I got a gun -- you know?" Is
22 that what you said?

23 A. I do not remember.

24 Q. Okay. It's -- it's on Sergeant Foster's body cam,
25 in evidence. And then you say, "It was a joke." Right?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. It's a game?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. "I pointed it at her since I got a gun." What'd
5 you say next? Do you remember?

6 A. I do not remember.

7 Q. Would you agree with me you say, "I know I'm not
8 supposed to do it"?

9 A. I do not recall.

10 Q. And then you confirm, "No, sir. She did not shoot
11 herself." Do you remember saying that?

12 A. I do not recall.

13 Q. Okay. And then we go to the sheriff's department,
14 you give another interview, correct?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. It's been categorized as "lengthy," right?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. Shot guns that day, right?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. Shot with your dad?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. So you wanted to teach him your hobby so he could
23 protect himself, right?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. Okay. Came in and cleaned the guns. You said you

1 were cleaning guns?

2 A. On and off. Yes.

3 Q. Okay. Today you're saying cleaning guns?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. And then you say, "I sat down and watched TV."

6 Right?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Grace is cooking supper?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. Your seven-month pregnant fiancé was making you a
11 TV dinner?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. While you were on the couch watching TV?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. Do you remember what she made herself that night?

16 A. I believe it was egg salad sandwiches.

17 Q. You didn't want that?

18 A. No.

19 Q. You wanted a TV dinner?

20 A. That is what she picked.

21 Q. And in that third statement to law enforcement,
22 you say, "45 minutes went by." Right?

23 A. I believe that's what I told him, yes.

24 Q. Today you said "Five to 10 minutes went by," you
25 said that, right?

1 A. I did, yes.

2 Q. Too much time passed. Did you want to know where
3 your TV dinner was?

4 A. I remember getting up off the couch when she told
5 me it was ready.

6 Q. 45 minutes later?

7 A. I -- I over the past year and a half I realized
8 that maybe my statement was not correct.

9 Q. Okay. Well, we'll keep going through it with you.
10 All right? You tell law enforcement in that statement at the
11 sheriff's department, "I saw the gun on the counter." Yes?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. "I messed with her. We would mess with each other
14 when we pointed at each other"?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. You just told that jury this again, right? "This
17 is a game."

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. Then you say, "I saw the mag was dropped"?

20 A. I do not recall saying that.

21 Q. Okay. "I picked it up, pointed it at her, and I
22 pulled the trigger." Do you remember saying that?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. You tell me you heard the noise?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. "And I heard her scream"?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. Did she grab herself?

4 A. I don't think so, no.

5 Q. You saw that picture of her bloody right hand?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. Scared if she knew what she did, right?

8 A. At that time, yes.

9 Q. "Started shaking her because she's passed out
10 before"?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. But you just shot her?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. So she wasn't passed out?

15 A. That's what I thought at the time.

16 Q. And then later you say, "I started some CPR"?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. You tell law enforcement you did three pumps?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. And then in that statement, Camrin, you say, "I
21 thought she started to move or something." Do you remember
22 that?

23 A. I vaguely remember. Yes.

24 Q. She's on the ground. You think she's moving,
25 right? Maybe she's not dead, right?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. And you heard that? "Yes," or "No"?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. And then a little later in this interview you say,
5 "Well, I wasn't cleaning those guns, I was inspecting them."
6 Right?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Okay. So first it was cleaning, then inspecting,
9 then it was cleaning?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. You admit, "I unloaded that Bersa, I took it
12 apart, I made sure it looked decent, put it back together."
13 Right?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. You told law enforcement that? And then you say,
16 "Well, I just assumed that magazine was out." Right?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. And then as Investigator Nations is questioning,
19 you kind of start backing up. You say, "Well, I don't really
20 carry that gun." Right?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. "I've only had it six months." Right?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. "Actually, I don't really carry it. And it's
25 fairly new, and it -- it just -- I just carry it in my

1 truck." Right?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. Okay. And he confirms with you again, "Shot it
4 that day?" Right?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. You had taken it apart, right?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Put it back together?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. Okay. And when you took it apart, you were
11 cleaning, and inspecting, you dropped that magazine, right?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. Well, that's a slide back?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. Make sure there's not one in that chamber?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. You look down that barrel and make sure there's
18 not one in that chamber, right?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. And you put it back together?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. And in putting it back together, you loaded that
23 magazine with eight cartridges, right?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. Put it back up with the gun, right?

1 A. I do not recall.

2 Q. Okay. You racked that (inaudible)?

3 A. I do not recall.

4 Q. But you put it back together?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. Then we go a little bit further. And again,
7 Investigator -- Investigator Nations asked you, "So you see
8 this gun on the island, right? Seven-month pregnant fiancé
9 cooking up TV dinner?" "See, I opened my box, pull that gun
10 out, pointed at her and squeezed the trigger." Do you
11 remember what you said?

12 A. I do not recall.

13 Q. Okay. Would you agree with me that you said, "No,
14 sir, that case was already open."

15 A. I do recall that. Yes.

16 Q. You corrected: You didn't open a case; it was
17 already open?

18 A. Yes, it was already --

19 Q. It wasn't, "This was the worst mistake of my
20 life"? It wasn't, "This was an accident"?

21 A. No.

22 Q. "It wasn't, "This was unintentional."

23 A. No.

24 Q. It wasn't, "Oh, my God. I did not mean to do
25 that. I did not mean to shoot my seven-month-old --

1 seven-month pregnant -- no"?

2 A. No.

3 Q. And then we're backing up even further and then
4 you say, "Well, I didn't even look at the gun." Right?
5 That's what you just testified to -- today too?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. And then you say, "I just told myself that
8 magazine wasn't in it." Right?

9 A. That is -- I remember telling the police. Yes.

10 Q. Okay. And then you said you don't remember
11 racking it, right?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. But you loaded the magazine, you put it in your
14 gun. You did rack it, you picked it up, you pointed at her,
15 and you pulled the trigger, right?

16 A. That is not right.

17 Q. Okay. You don't remember racking it?

18 A. No.

19 Q. Would you agree with me somebody put eight
20 cartridges in that magazine, put it in that gun, racked one
21 in the chambers, and then you picked it up, pointed it at
22 her, and intentionally pulled the trigger? Is that what
23 happened?

24 A. I do not recall.

25 Q. Okay. And then you gave a written statement,

1 right?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. Another statement? And you wrote -- you thought
4 the safety was on too, right?

5 A. I cannot recall my written statement.

6 Q. Okay. If I showed that to you, would you -- would
7 you remember?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. Okay. Take your time to read it?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. And I'll point you to about line nine.

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. Okay.

14 MS. JOHNSTON: Your Honor, objection. The statement is
15 not in evidence.

16 MS. FINCH: Refreshing his recollection.

17 MS. JOHNSTON: Well, then she needs to take that away
18 from him, Your Honor.

19 MS. FINCH: Sure. Memory has been to refreshed?

20 MS. JOHNSTON: Your Honor, if it's refreshing his
21 recollection, she can't read it into the record.

22 THE COURT: If you'll approach really quick?

23 (Bench conference at 3:00 p.m.)

24 BY MS. FINCH:

25 Q. Today, you just testified you didn't look to see

1 if that safety was on or off, right?

2 A. Yes.

3 THE COURT: Before you asked -- asked the next
4 question, let's move the microphone a little bit closer to
5 his -- his mouth.

6 BY MS. FINCH:

7 Q. And Camrin you said in your statement you owned a
8 seven-inch AR-15, right?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. And on this night, you knew that magazine wasn't
11 in that gun, didn't you?

12 A. No.

13 Q. But you knew it wouldn't shoot without it, right?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. And you felt that pinky extension, correct?

16 A. No.

17 Q. And you had to know that the gun safety was off,
18 right?

19 A. No.

20 Q. A gun safety on that gun, Camrin, has a red dot on
21 it, doesn't it?

22 A. I believe so, yes.

23 Q. And red means fire?

24 A. In most cases, yes.

25 Q. My thumb safety is either going to be up or down,

1 right?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. Because up is fire, red is hot?

4 A. I do not remember.

5 Q. Okay. And if I'm pointing this gun, I maybe can't
6 see that red dot, but I can see that safety split up, right?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. And you knew that that gun was loaded, right?

9 A. No.

10 Q. Was the hammer ever down?

11 A. I do not recall.

12 Q. That hammer is up, hasn't been pulled back from
13 it's double-action, right?

14 A. For that particular firearm.

15 Q. Okay. You've got (inaudible), right? That hammer
16 is up, means it has to go back-to-back up, right?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. One, two, double-action. So I work that firearm
19 -- so -- I mean, it is harder to pull that trigger, right?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. Because to pull it's a lot harder?

22 A. I don't remember how much harder, but yes.

23 Q. Okay. A lot. And then you have to pull it really
24 far too, right?

25 A. I don't recall for that firearm.

1 Q. No? It's not nearly as far as single. Do you
2 agree with that?

3 A. For that particular gun, I do not remember.

4 Q. Okay. You heard the SLED expert testified to that
5 earlier?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. Okay. If the hammer is not up, then the hammer is
8 back or down, right?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. I mean, you pulled it down, right?

11 A. No.

12 Q. No? Okay. But if it's down, your appointment
13 says it's down, right?

14 A. When you're pointing it, yes.

15 Q. Okay. That magazine was in, right?

16 A. I do not remember. But it has to be. Yes.

17 Q. It has to be? Yes? A gun will fire without it,
18 right?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. Magazine in?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. Eight cartridges will fire?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. One was in Grace, right?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. Seven are here, right?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. And on body camera, we see one fall out of that
4 chamber. Six are taken out of that clip, right?

5 A. I do not recall.

6 Q. Okay. But magazine is in, when you rack it,
7 right?

8 A. I do not remember racking.

9 Q. But the safety was off, right?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. A gun can't fire when safety is not off, right?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. In one way or another, that hammer told you that
14 gun was loaded, or it could fire?

15 A. From where I was holding it, I could not see it.

16 Q. But you could feel that magazine in it?

17 A. No.

18 Q. You felt that pinky extension?

19 A. No.

20 Q. To tell how hard it could have been to pull that
21 trigger. Yes?

22 A. I do not recall.

23 Q. Okay. And if we're in single-action mode, you saw
24 that hammer on that, right?

25 A. It was -- the gun was at my chest, I could not see

1 it.

2 Q. Here?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. It was near her chest too, wasn't it? Yes?

5 A. The gun was not.

6 Q. The gun wasn't on her chest?

7 A. I -- no.

8 Q. Okay. But you shot her through the heart, right?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. You cleaned your guns, you inspected your guns.

11 That day you cleaned your guns. Just want to get it right?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. Okay. "The mag was dropped. I just assumed the
14 magazine was out. I didn't even look to check. I told
15 myself the magazine was out." That's what you've said,
16 right?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. And today, you're telling this jury, "I didn't
19 even look to see if that safety was on."

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. "And I just do not remember racking that gun and
22 putting the cartridge in that chamber"?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. But you told law enforcement, you had just done it
25 30 minutes before, right?

1 A. Can you clarify?

2 Q. You told Investigator Nations not 30 minutes
3 before this gun went off, and pointed it, pulled the trigger,
4 you had taken it apart, inspected it and put it back together
5 30 minutes, right?

6 A. I had put it back together, yes.

7 Q. But you're just watching TV waiting for your
8 dinner?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. And Camrin, you testified you all played this
11 game, right?

12 A. I don't know if I'd call it a game.

13 Q. You just pointed a gun at one another?

14 A. It was more of a joke.

15 Q. It was a joke? Okay.

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. This action is a joke? Pick it up, point it, and
18 pulling a trigger. That's a joke?

19 A. To us, yes.

20 Q. Okay. And she wanted you to play this or have
21 this joke in the bedroom, right?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. You told her, "No"?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. You pointed at her, pulled the trigger while she's

1 seven-month pregnant, cooking your dinner?

2 A. As a joke, yes.

3 MS. FINCH: A joke? I beg the Court's indulgence.

4 Nothing further, Judge.

5 THE COURT: Any re-direct?

6 MS. JOHNSTON: Yes, Your Honor.

7 RE-DIRECT EXAMINATION

8 BY MS. JOHNSTON:

9 Q. Camrin, did you point and pull that trigger at
10 Grace because you hated her?

11 A. No.

12 Q. Because she deserved it?

13 A. No.

14 Q. Did you make a mistake?

15 A. Yes.

16 MS. JOHNSTON: No further questions.

17 RE-CROSS EXAMINATION

18 BY MS. FINCH:

19 Q. You pointed it, you pulled the trigger?

20 A. Yes.

21 MS. FINCH: Thank you, Judge.

22 THE COURT: All right. Mr. Smith, you can step down.

23 MS. JOHNSTON: Your Honor, at this time, the Defense
24 rests its case.

25 THE COURT: All right. Ladies and gentlemen of the

1 the week. With your jury service, you have earned that
2 three-year exemption by your service this week.

3 If you would give your badge -- your juror badge to the
4 bailiff, you'll receive payment for your services this week.
5 I don't -- don't expect to do your Christmas shopping with
6 it, but it is what law allows. So we appreciate your
7 service, and I hope if -- that this experience has been
8 educational on how our system really works. So you are free
9 to go, and thank you very much. All right.

10 JUROR NUMBER 223: Thank you.

11 THE COURT: All right. Folks, we need to have our
12 charge conference. If anybody in the gallery wants to be
13 excused, now is the time. They certainly can stay if they'd
14 like. But if anybody wants to -- to leave before we proceed
15 with discussions regarding jury charges and things of the --
16 of that nature now is the time. So the gallery is excused if
17 they choose to be.

18 All right. In terms of jury charges are there
19 anything, is there anything specific that the parties want to
20 submit to the Court for consideration?

21 MS. JOHNSTON: Your Honor, the Defense requests a
22 charge on involuntary manslaughter as well as malice. I
23 don't know if we -- we have a malice one. I'm happy to pass
24 up, give a copy.

25 THE COURT: The -- the -- the malice charge is included

1 within the standard murder charge. And I'm going to -- what
2 I'm going to do when we adjourn here, I'm going to create a
3 proposed charge and send it to everybody by email. That
4 certainly malice is -- malice has to be defined in every case
5 of its nature. And so, I think my malice charge covers what
6 -- what the law -- the current state of the law is with
7 regard to malice. And so, you're requesting the
8 lesser-included offense of involuntary manslaughter be
9 charged and submitted to the jury?

10 MS. JOHNSTON: For both counts. Yes, Your Honor.

11 THE COURT: All right.

12 MS. DRIGGERS: Did you just say "involuntary?" Judge,
13 I would argue that that not be included. So as the general
14 statute is defined, it is -- criminal negligence is defined
15 as a reckless disregard for the safety of others. However,
16 case law does break this statute down into two prongs.

17 And these prongs are consistent with all the case law
18 -- all the case laws that I found, which is, "Involuntary
19 manslaughter is the unintentional killing of another without
20 malice, but while engaged in an unlawful activity, not
21 amounting to a felony and not naturally tending to cause
22 death or great bodily harm."

23 Or the second prong would be, "The unintentional
24 killing of another without malice while engaged in unlawful
25 activity with reckless disregard to the safety of others."

1 So for the act of pointing and presenting a firearm is
2 unlawful, but it does amount to a felony. And pointing a gun
3 at someone and pulling the trigger does certainly tend to
4 cause death or great bodily injury. So I think it fails both
5 of those elements in that first prong.

6 For the second prong being that it is an unlawful
7 activity yet again, Your Honor, I would say there's a lot of
8 case law that supports pointing and presenting a firearm as
9 unlawful. Pointing a gun at someone and pulling the trigger
10 is unlawful in any instance that I can think of, other than
11 self-defense. Case law to back that up as well.

12 If they -- if the Defense wants to argue that it's
13 somehow lawful to point and present a firearm because it's
14 some joke or game, and that she consented to this game, first
15 and foremost, there is nothing to support -- there's nothing
16 to support that -- that's been brought on evidence other than
17 Defendant's testimony himself. And again, we are just still
18 well beyond a reckless disregard for the safety of others
19 standard.

20 And Your Honor, I have several cases to cite: State v
21 Sullivan. Whether the Defendant was engaged in a lawful
22 activity is of no consequence if he intentionally fired the
23 gun. And I'm happy to give Your Honor cites if you would
24 like, or I can just -- Your Honor, that would be State v
25 Sullivan, 407 S.C. 241.

1 I think it's important to know under that case law,
2 Your Honor, if -- if we allow him to say that he had no
3 intent of killing her, I think every person that commits
4 murder would just say it's unintentional. That warrants
5 involuntary charge that's very concerning to the State.

6 State v Reese, 370 S.C. 31 the court said that
7 defendant, Reese, was pointing and presenting a firearm, a
8 felony which would preclude an involuntary manslaughter
9 charge. State v Mickle, 273 S.C. 71. The court said an
10 involuntary charge was not appropriate because the defendant,
11 who is the wife, admitted that she intended to shoot the
12 firearm thus shooting her husband that precluded her because
13 of the intentional shooting of the firearm.

14 State v Cooney, 320 S.C. 107, the trial judge did not
15 air in refusing to charge involuntary because the appellant
16 admitted to shooting the gun towards the ground of the
17 victim. So he said that he was shooting at the feet, not at
18 -- at the victim, and the court said, "No you admitted to
19 shooting the gun."

20 State v Craig, 267 S.C. 262, in which the defendant
21 admitting to shooting a shotgun but testified that he meant
22 to shoot above the defendant's head court said not
23 appropriate charge involuntary. State v Smith, 315 S.C. --
24 held that it was not appropriate to charge involuntary.

25 And in fact, here the court stated, "Whether the

1 defendant intended to harm the victim was irrelevant, it was
2 clearly not a lawful act. The intentional use of a dangerous
3 instrumentality does not support an allegation of mere
4 criminal negligence."

5 And then lastly, Your Honor, I believe, State v Sams,
6 410 S.C. 303, said that a general observation, the
7 defendant's assertion that he did not intend to harm the
8 victim is not by itself entitled the defendant to an
9 involuntary manslaughter charge to find otherwise would mean
10 that a defendant could automatically obtain the instruction
11 merely by making a self-serving statement as to his intent.

12 Your Honor, I -- I think it's abundantly clear that
13 case law does not support a charge involuntary. And I think
14 again, doing so would allow not only this defendant, but any
15 other defendant to just say, "Oh, gosh. It was an accident."
16 He took all these steps, Your Honor, you've heard all the
17 evidence. He just had been on the stand. He took these
18 actions, no one else but himself.

19 It wasn't someone else that loaded this firearm. It
20 wasn't someone else that racked the firearm. It wasn't
21 someone else that pointed the trigger, pointed the gun a few
22 inches to two-feet. It was the Defendant. So if we allow
23 this to happen, I mean, but again, case law is not of in
24 support of involuntary charge.

25 THE COURT: Okay. Any response to that argument?

1 MS. JOHNSTON: Yes, Your Honor. As you know, in order
2 for it to get back to the jury. We're not talking about the
3 weight. We're -- we're talking about whether the existence
4 of evidence has come out. Your Honor, I do think Ms.
5 Driggers has a misunderstanding of the pointing and
6 presenting law in South Carolina.

7 Even in Ralph Anderson's jury charges, there is a
8 threatening manner requirement. Not all states are like
9 that, but South Carolina specifically has carved out certain
10 caveats for when it is. Okay. Self-defense one, of course.
11 But also, theatrical or theatrical-like situations or all --
12 let's see here. The -- yes. Your Honor, there has been --
13 this week, put into evidence whether through his testimony
14 today the -- the State's witness, Dr. Rose, saying there's no
15 defensive wounds. Your Honor, we understand that's their
16 argument. They can argue that to the jury as -- as to the
17 weight of what they should consider.

18 But the fact of the matter is I think we're entitled to
19 that involuntary charge because this wasn't appointing and
20 presenting. It was not done in a threatening manner. There
21 has been testimony and evidence put before the jury as to
22 that we are not a strict liability pointing-and-presenting
23 state despite what the State may feel.

24 Again, in Ralph Anderson's point of presenting a
25 firearm, they reference how South Carolina courts have -- or

1 rather, an in re Spencer R., which Your Honor is referenced.
2 In the jury charges, Your Honor, we define the phrase to
3 present a firearm in this section to offer to view in a
4 threatening manner or to show in a threatening manner.

5 Your Honor, if -- if -- if the legislator hadn't
6 intended on creating some exceptions, anytime you picked up a
7 gun and pointed at someone, boom, done. We'd be not having a
8 -- we would have no conversation. There's an interesting
9 argument in a -- a -- a Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals
10 case, Your Honor. We understand it's not on point, but it --
11 it's got some language that I think is applicable here.

12 I'll -- I'll pass it up. I'm going to pass it up to
13 the -- let's see here. Oh, wrong case. I'm sorry, Your
14 Honor. Your Honor, I think -- I think this is persuasive.
15 Although -- you know, not right on point, but it -- it's been
16 -- Your Honor, may I pass this up?

17 THE COURT: Sure.

18 MS. JOHNSTON: It -- it's been recognized by other
19 higher courts when distinguishing what's going on in that
20 case that South Carolina is different. South Carolina law
21 pointing and presenting is different. Again, Your Honor, we
22 are not arguing our case before you, we are simply asking you
23 to send back the involuntary charge to the jury because we
24 believe there has been put into evidence.

25 There exists rather evidence that this was not a

1 pointing presenting, and therefore that case does not
2 necessarily prevent the jury from having involuntary before
3 them. I -- I think that's been the main argument throughout
4 this whole week. Again, we're not talking about the wait
5 here, Your Honor. South Carolina law is clear, has to be a
6 threatening manner. If they wanted it to be a strict
7 liability law. It would've written it that way, Your Honor.

8 THE COURT: Well, I'm going to read the case law that's
9 been presented to me here this afternoon. What I'm going to
10 do is prepare a proposed jury charge that includes the charge
11 for murder and the charge for involuntary manslaughter, just
12 so you'll have it in the event that I decide to charge it,
13 okay?

14 I think just based upon my review of what's been
15 presented, I think there is evidence of criminal
16 recklessness. But I've got to read these cases with regard
17 to the acting lawful -- lawfully component. And South
18 Carolina's under -- and -- and I've looked at over the course
19 of today, looked at some case law regarding lesser-included
20 in terms of what's required to charge it. And it's kind of a
21 -- any kind of -- it is a -- if there's any evidence of -- it
22 -- you -- kind of leans towards charging. But I've -- I've
23 got to do an analysis of -- of the case law that's been
24 presented to me here today. You know, so I think that
25 whether involuntary is charged or not, it's going to hinge on

1 that acting lawfully component. Because I think the
2 Defendant's submissions about not looking at the gun, "I
3 assume the magazine was out. I didn't know it was loaded."
4 I mean, I -- I think that's criminal recklessness, but like I
5 said I think the five or six cases that Ms. Driggers cited,
6 certainly, need to be studied in detail before I make a final
7 decision.

8 And I've got a charge that I have tailored to the facts
9 of this case with regard to the possession of sawed-off rifle
10 that I'll send in the proposed charge. That shouldn't take
11 too terribly long for me to get a proposed charge together.
12 The longer exercise would be determining whether to include
13 the involuntary charge. So I just want to be clear,
14 involuntary is going to be in the email that is sent to all
15 of you. That doesn't necessarily mean that I'm going to
16 charge it to the jury or send it to the jury for their
17 consideration as a lesser-included offense. All right. Any
18 other issues with regard to charge?

19 MS. DRIGGERS: Judge, I'll just add one thing --

20 THE COURT: Sure.

21 MS. DRIGGERS: -- that I sort of missed? For State v
22 Sullivan, which I did already give you cite for that one. It
23 does say, "Whether the defendant was engaged in a lawful
24 activity is of no consequence if he intentionally fired the
25 gun." So I think that's -- I think that's important. Again,

1 we're not just talking about pointing and presenting, we're
2 talking about pulling the trigger. And I do think that's
3 where it's distinct.

4 THE COURT: Okay.

5 MS. DRIGGERS: That's the only thing I need to add,
6 Your Honor.

7 THE COURT: All right. I will -- I will review what's
8 been cited here and what's been handed up to me. Do you have
9 any, any other specific requests for jury charges?

10 MS. DRIGGERS: No, Your Honor.

11 THE COURT: Okay.

12 MS. JOHNSTON: None further from the Defense, Your
13 Honor.

14 THE COURT: I should have something together probably
15 before 5:00. And Mr. Campbell here will email it to all of
16 you, and certainly welcome any comments, suggestions,
17 criticisms, and just -- I think I mentioned this earlier, I
18 do have a matter that I've got to attend to at 9:30, so we'll
19 be prepared to go forward at 10:00. Okay?

20 MS. JOHNSTON: Thank you, Your Honor.

21 MS. DRIGGERS: Thank you, Judge.

22 THE COURT: All right. And Mr. Smith, the same
23 comments with regard to your presence here, case is going to
24 go forward. If you are not here tomorrow, and it -- if you
25 are not here, a bench warrant would be issued, but I don't

1 CONTINUATION OF PROCEEDINGS - JUNE 13, 2025.

2 THE COURT: Before we get started with the jury, there
3 are a couple housekeeping matters that we need to attend to.
4 After the Defense rested yesterday, there was mention of
5 renewing any and all motions that -- or objections -- motions
6 and objections that were made. We need to, I guess, do that
7 formally. Do you -- since you've rested, do you have any
8 specific motions?

9 MR. ERWIN: I do, Your Honor. One is that we would
10 like to renew all prior motions and objections made in this
11 case.

12 THE COURT: All right. And specifically with the
13 directed verdict motion, I would respectfully deny the
14 directed -- renewal of the directed verdict motion based upon
15 the reasoning behind the denial of the directed verdict
16 motions at the close of the State's case.

17 MR. ERWIN: I do believe we need a ruling on just any
18 and all of the motions as well.

19 THE COURT: Any -- any motions that have already been
20 made in this case I've ruled upon, I renew my rulings and
21 reasoning behind either the granting or denial of those
22 motions. Thank you.

23 MR. ERWIN: Thank you, Your Honor.

24 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Thank you, Your Honor.

25 THE COURT: Okay. The next matter is the issue that I

1 took under advisement at close of -- of business yesterday.
2 With regard to whether a lesser-included offense of
3 involuntary manslaughter would be charged as a
4 lesser-included offense of the indicted charges of murder, I
5 and my law clerk reviewed the case law submitted by both
6 sides. And in reviewing those issues -- and I believe as I
7 stated yesterday, the law in South Carolina is, if there's
8 any evidence of a lesser-included offense, that it should be
9 charged. And so, that's the standard from a starting-off
10 point.

11 So what we're dealing with in this case is involuntary
12 manslaughter. And it is a lesser-included offense of murder.
13 It is defined as the unintentional killing of another without
14 malice, while engaged in either the commission of some
15 unlawful act, not amounting to a felony, and not naturally
16 tending to cause death or great bodily harm, or doing the --
17 doing of a lawful act with a reckless disregard for the
18 safety of others.

19 The first prong of involuntary manslaughter, the
20 commission of some unlawful act not amounting to a felony and
21 not naturally tending to cause death or great bodily injury.
22 I don't think that applies because pointing or representing a
23 firearm at someone is a felony, and pointing a gun at
24 someone, I believe, would naturally tending -- would
25 naturally tend to cause death or great bodily harm if a gun

1 were fired. So the focus is on the second part, the doing of
2 a lawful act with a dis -- reckless disregard for the safety
3 of others.

4 And this decision hinges on whether, in this particular
5 case, the pointing of the firearm, it was a lawful act. In
6 South Carolina, Section 16-23-410 of South Carolina Code,
7 provides, "It's unlawful for a person to present or point at
8 another person, a loaded or unloaded firearm."

9 And there are exceptions for theatrical productions and
10 the like and self-defense. No question that self-defense
11 isn't an issue in this case. There's no evidence whatsoever
12 in this record that the Defendant was acting in self-defense.
13 So that leads to the analysis of whether pointing and
14 presenting in this case was a lawful act or not. There's no
15 evidence in the record that this is a theatrical performance
16 or the like. There is a reference to using a firearm in a
17 game or a joking manner. I think it would be a stretch for
18 me to conclude that that would put this in the realm of a
19 theatrical -- theatrical production or the like. And again,
20 there's no self-defense.

21 So in as far as the case law, I'm relying on the case
22 of State versus Reese in this matter. And that is State v
23 Reese 370.S.C. 31, 633, S.E.2d 898. I think this case is --
24 this is a 2006 Supreme Court case. It is -- well, not
25 directly on all fronts with the facts. This is a case where

1 the defendant had presented a weapon to his spouse. He was
2 talking about perhaps committing suicide.

3 The court found that by pointing or presenting the
4 weapon at his spouse, the court found that that was an
5 unlawful act that precluded the charging of involuntary
6 manslaughter as a -- as a lesser-included offense. So after
7 this analysis, based on the holding in State v Reese, I don't
8 think there's evidence in this case that warrants an
9 involuntary manslaughter charge as a lesser-included offense.

10 So I will decline to charge that based upon what's been
11 presented in this record, based on the statutes referenced,
12 and the case law which has applied those statutes, and
13 analyze this situation. All right. Anything else before we
14 go -- before we bring the jury?

15 MR. ERWIN: Your Honor, as to that ruling, I understand
16 you have ruled on it, I just want to make extra super sure
17 that we've got everything we need on the record for the
18 appeal. So please don't take this as arguing against your
19 ruling, which is -- has been made, but I do think there are
20 things we have put on the record to make sure that we're
21 clear here.

22 THE COURT: So you are -- for the record, you are
23 objecting to my decision and my ruling with regard to the
24 Court's decision to decline the charge involuntary
25 manslaughter?

1 MR. ERWIN: For the express purpose of making sure that
2 the appellate record is set.

3 THE COURT: Yeah, I -- and I certainly take no offense
4 that you're bringing this up.

5 MS. JOHNSTON: Thank you, Your Honor.

6 THE COURT: It's -- it's a proper action by -- by the
7 Defense.

8 MR. ERWIN: And I do think that we have to like
9 actually make sure that our arguments are on the record. So
10 if you'll allow me to do that, just very briefly.

11 THE COURT: Yes, sir.

12 MR. ERWIN: Ms. Johnston presented yesterday a Seventh
13 Circuit case that has somewhat commented on this pointing
14 presenting analysis. Also wanted to make sure that we
15 specifically cited both the South Carolina Constitution and
16 the United States Constitution in our argument here. So I'm
17 doing that right now.

18 And we believe that the case before you today and the
19 decision you made is factually distinct from the Reese case
20 that you are relying on. And I just want to make sure that
21 we have all of that on the record for the benefit of the
22 appellate attorney that may have to handle this case.

23 THE COURT: Understood.

24 MR. ERWIN: Thank you, Your Honor.

25 THE COURT: Thank you. And just for the record, I did

1 include a viability charge in the proposed jury charge or the
2 parties, and I discussed this matter in chambers, and the
3 viability charge will read as follows, "A viable unborn child
4 is a person within the meaning of the murder statute." The
5 child must have been capable of separate and independent
6 existence apart from the mother, that's pursuant to State
7 versus Horne, 282 S.C. 444, 319 S.E. 2d 703. All right.

8 MS. FINCH: Thank you, Your Honor.

9 THE COURT: And as far as the order of closings:
10 State, Defense, State in rebuttal.

11 MS. FINCH: Thank you, Judge.

12 THE COURT: All right.

13 MS. JOHNSTON: Thank you, Your Honor.

14 THE COURT: Bring us the jury, please.

15 THE BAILIFF: All jurors are present, Your Honor.

16 (Jury enters courtroom at 10:51 a.m.)

17 THE COURT: Thank you, sir. Ladies and gentlemen of
18 the jury, we are at the stage of the proceedings where we
19 will now commence the closing arguments of Counsel. The
20 order that we will go in will be -- I'll recognize the State
21 to give its initial closing, then the Defense will have their
22 opportunity, and finally the State will have an opportunity
23 come back before you to rebut any points that the Defense has
24 made.

25 That being said, please give the attorneys your

1 undivided attention as they give you their closing arguments,
2 and I will recognize the State for closing.

3 MS. FINCH: Thank you, Your Honor. Good morning.
4 Thank you for being here. As a representative of the State
5 and the prosecution of this case, I want to go ahead and
6 express my thanks for your service this week. 79 seconds,
7 that's how much time passed between Camrin Smith getting off
8 the phone with his father and him calling 911.

9 That's how much time passed that I can tell you, for
10 certain, we know Grace Ables was dead on her kitchen floor.
11 You've heard testimony this week: Camrin called his dad,
12 said, "I -- I accidentally shot Grace." His daddy answered
13 that phone call at 8:35 p.m. They spoke for 28 seconds. He
14 waits 79 seconds until he calls 911 for help. He couldn't
15 remember how to call 911, but he could call his dad. We know
16 Grace was alive at 8:20. She sent a Snapchat to her friend
17 Kaylen. He calls 911 for help at 8:36 p.m. What happened in
18 those 16 minutes?

19 As the State, it's my job to present to you, Camrin
20 Smith is guilty beyond a reasonable doubt. I have to show
21 you every element of every crime he's indicted with, that he
22 is guilty beyond a reasonable doubt. We hear that word a
23 lot, especially in this courtroom. Don't overthink it, but
24 simple. Beyond a reasonable doubt means you are firmly
25 convinced of the elements of the indictments and he is

1 guilty. You're firmly convinced. The first indictment I
2 want to talk to you about today is possession of sawed-off
3 rifle, that's South Carolina Section 16-23-230. "It's
4 unlawful for a person to possess a sawed-off rifle."

5 A sawed-off rifle, by statute, is a rifle having a
6 barrel or barrels of less than 16 inches in length. Camrin
7 admitted to law enforcement he had an AR-15 rifle that was
8 seven inches in length. He said a seven-inch AR-15.

9 Investigator Sweat stood up here and told you, "I went
10 through the evidence of this case. I realized this rifle was
11 not legal. I measured it. It was approximately nine inches.
12 That barrel." The rifle was collected from Camrin's home,
13 was in his possession, and that gun is in evidence. I submit
14 to you, Camrin Smith is guilty beyond a reasonable doubt of
15 possession of a sawed-off rifle.

16 Camrin Smith is also charged with possession of a
17 weapon during a violent crime. South Carolina code
18 16-23-490. I have to show to you, beyond a reasonable doubt,
19 Camrin Smith was in possession of a weapon during a violent
20 crime. Camrin Smith, by his own admission, had a gun, picked
21 it up, pointed it, pulled the trigger and killed someone.
22 Two people. Murder. Murder is a violent crime. I submit to
23 you, he is guilty beyond a reasonable doubt of possession of
24 a weapon during a violent crime.

25 Murder, in South Carolina Code section 16-3-10, is

1 simple, it's the killing of a person with malice
2 aforethought. Three elements I have to show you. Killing of
3 a person with malice aforethought. Grace Ables is dead. She
4 is a person, and Camrin Smith did it with malice
5 aforethought. Okay? She's dead because of his actions.

6 You've heard about Baby Scarlet in this case. The
7 Judge is going to tell you it's -- it's settled law in South
8 Carolina. A viable baby, a baby that can live outside the
9 womb of its mother, is considered a person in our state.
10 They have rights. Baby Scarlet was murdered. It's a person
11 killed with malice aforethought.

12 What is malice? Malice is intent. Malice is hatred,
13 ill will, hostility towards another. The intentional doing
14 of a wrongful act without an excuse, and with an intent to
15 inflict an injury. Under the circumstances, the law will
16 infer an evil intent. So this case is going to hinge on
17 malice, right? Was there hate in his heart when he pulled
18 the trigger? Two people are dead. Let's talk about that
19 third element. What shows us the malice here?

20 First, his lack of emotion. Camrin cried on the phone
21 with 911. Then it stopped. He said, "She's dead. There's
22 no saving her." Dispatch asked, "Where's the gun? "What --
23 what kind of gun?" Stops. He can tell her the gun, what he
24 shot her with. He can tell her where he is putting it.
25 Where it is. He's not crying. You haven't seen a single

1 tear on that body camera footage from this Defendant. His
2 seven-month pregnant fiancé, the love of his life he wants to
3 be with forever, is dead on their kitchen floor. Where's the
4 emotion? He's not crying.

5 He cries two hours later on Sergeant Foster's body cam
6 after he talks to his daddy. Two hours later. Has he cried
7 in here this week? Have you seen any emotion this week other
8 than yesterday up here when he's asking you for forgiveness?
9 No.

10 His actions with law enforcement. When Officer
11 Wongmanee arrived -- you heard testimony, Camrin opens the
12 door for him. Comes inside. This is what he did. You saw
13 on body camera footage. He says, "Where's the gun?" "It's
14 in the back bedroom." He's not with Grace. He's not begging
15 for help. He's not holding her. The mother of his unborn
16 child? Let me -- you've heard testimony from Dr. Claire
17 Rose, the pathologist in this case, Camrin shot Grace in her
18 heart. That projectile went through an outer sack that holds
19 our heart through the heart out the other side of that sack,
20 through her esophagus, down her body, and into her vertebrae.
21 Thank God it didn't hit that baby. Baby still died though as
22 a result of that gunshot wound right here straight in the
23 heart. That's malice.

24 You also heard testimony from Dr. Rose that max -- when
25 that gun was fired, max was three feet away from where it

1 went into her. Her arm is about three feet, maybe about an
2 inch longer. She said it could have been six inches, that
3 close. A shot in the heart. That's malice. And ultimately,
4 he pulled the trigger. That's the most telling sign of
5 malice.

6 I've had a hard time wrapping my mind around this joke,
7 this game, whatever you want to call it. If it's a joke,
8 it's a thrill, right? When you pull that trigger, the thrill
9 goes away. You pull the trigger because you have malice in
10 your heart. Hate in your heart. Even if we're giving him
11 the benefit of this doubt, they played this game, they had
12 this joke. Why pull the trigger? The thrill goes away. And
13 he waits to call 911. We know he waits to call 911 until
14 she's dead because he says it. He says to dispatch, "She's
15 dead." They say, "She's beyond help?" "Yeah, she's gone."
16 Why are we waiting 79 seconds to call?

17 He also tells a lot of different stories. He told law
18 enforcement at the -- at the sheriff's department, "45
19 minutes went by. I got up to see where my food was." His
20 seven-month pregnant fiancé making a dinner, a TV dinner,
21 watching TV. "45 minutes went by, I wanted to know it was
22 taking so long."

23 Yesterday, he told you it was only about five or 10
24 minutes. He wouldn't play this game in the bedroom. He
25 wants to say that she played this game as joke. Well, he

1 told her, "No, I'm not doing that in the bedroom." "But I'll
2 do it to you on a Saturday evening when you're seven months
3 pregnant with my -- my baby girl cooking my dinner." He said
4 he was cleaning his guns and he said he was inspecting his
5 guns. Yesterday he was cleaning them again. What was he
6 doing with the guns?

7 Regarding the magazine of that Bersa 380. "First, I
8 saw it was dropped." That means it's out. Then he says,
9 "Well, I just assumed the mag was out." Okay. "Well, then I
10 just -- I didn't even look to check. Then I just told myself
11 it was out." And yesterday he told you, "I know that gun
12 won't fire without the magazine in it." He doesn't remember
13 racking.

14 He has to, because it's only been 30 minutes since he
15 did it. Based on his statement alone, he had just put that
16 weapon back together within the last 30 minutes. Didn't
17 remember doing it. Didn't know if the hammer was up or down,
18 forward or back.

19 But I submit to you ladies and gentlemen, he did that.
20 You heard testimony. If that hammer is up, that trigger is
21 hard to pull. He could have stopped pulling it. The
22 pressure is substantially more to pull the trigger that
23 hammer is up, and it's substantially further. If that
24 hammer's back, it's easier to pull. You can see it. It's
25 right in front of your face. He told me yesterday, he agreed

1 with me. He can see it. That's malice.

2 The last contradiction I want to talk about. First, he
3 says he shook her. "She used to pass out. I thought maybe
4 she'd wake up." Then he said, "Well, then I gave her some
5 CPR, three compressions." Yesterday, he says he picked her
6 up, held her. That blood had not been touched.

7 Law enforcement gets there, has to cut her shirt open.
8 That blood is not smeared. She's laying down, it -- it falls
9 out of her like this. It's underneath her back when law
10 enforcement gets there. He hadn't moved her. There's no
11 smeared blood anywhere. None on him.

12 Now, I want to go through again, all of these steps
13 involved with this firearm he says he forgot in that
14 30-minute timeframe. He loaded the magazine -- State's
15 Number 7, put eight cartridges in it, put it in the gun,
16 fills that pinky extension, right? Couldn't turn the safety
17 off, which we know is a thumb switch, right? And he sees
18 this hammer. It's up, or it's down in front of me. It's
19 plain as day. I see it.

20 I see if this thumb switch is up, I see if it's down.
21 It's right in front of me. My finger on this trigger. I
22 pull it. I know if it's going to fire or not. I know it's
23 not going to fire without that magazine in it. I had to put
24 it in there. I know it's not going to fire with that safety
25 on. I had to take it off. That's malice. He picks it up.

1 He walks up to her. The gun is max, three feet away. Points
2 to her, pulls the trigger. Those steps leading up to pulling
3 that trigger are a lot of steps to forget.

4 Now, if you don't agree with me that everything, I just
5 told you shows malice beyond a reasonable doubt, the law says
6 malice can be inferred from conduct showing a total disregard
7 for human life. Judge is going to tell you that. Pointed a
8 loaded gun at his pregnant fiancé and pulled the trigger.
9 Total disregard for human life. Malice, check. Admits he
10 knew better, but he did it anyway. "I know I'm not supposed
11 to do it." He says that in the back of that police car on
12 Sergeant Foster's body cam, total disregard for human life.
13 He admits he didn't check to see if the gun was loaded.
14 Total disregard for human life. That's malice. Check.

15 Admits he didn't look to see if the magazine was in.
16 Total disregard for human life. That's malice. And admits
17 he didn't check the safety but I'm going to pick it up. I'm
18 going to pull that trigger. Total disregard for human life.
19 That's malice. I failed to mention thus far aforethought.
20 Real quick, aforethought means previously in the mind. And
21 in South Carolina, it can be a split second. I submit to you
22 all we've talked about thus far is malice aforethought beyond
23 a reasonable doubt. He says this is the worst mistake of his
24 life. I hope it is. I hope so. But even a mistake can be
25 malicious. I can know I'm doing something. It can be

1 intentional. I can do it with malice. I know it's going to
2 be a mistake.

3 Yesterday on the witness stand, asks for forgiveness.
4 He told me, "Everything I said almost two years ago is wrong.
5 I realize I said some things were wrong. What I'm saying now
6 is right." "You remember better now, almost two years
7 later?" He remembers better now, he's asking forgiveness.
8 You show an emotion now. You didn't then.

9 Ladies and gentlemen, I have a demonstrative piece.
10 This is not a real weapon, okay? Me telling you what he did
11 may not be enough. He loaded his magazine. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5,
12 6, 7, 8. Eight cartridges go in that magazine. We know it's
13 eight, right? One is in her six are taken from that magazine
14 when law enforcement gets there, one's in the chamber.

15 He put eight in there, and I believe Ms. Eichenmiller
16 told us they are all .380 federal autos. Loads that
17 magazine, puts it in that gun, wraps it, checks that safety,
18 checks that hammer, points it, pulls that trigger. He did an
19 awful lot to not be malicious. And you still don't believe
20 me? Still don't believe there's malice. This is one piece I
21 find really, really telling.

22 Camrin admitted to you yesterday he took two trips down
23 that hallway to remove that gun and put it in the bedroom,
24 right? He said he took the gun and then he went back for the
25 box. Here's what I think. Box, cartridges. "I take it to

1 bedroom. I looked down. I realize those 380 Federals,
2 there's eight of them missing. It looks like I know I put
3 eight in that magazine. I go back in the kitchen; I pick up
4 that other 380 cartridge. I go back down this hallway, and I
5 pop that other one in there. That's why I go down that
6 hallway two times." See it?

7 We know there were eight. They were all the same that
8 were in that magazine. Why is that one extra one there?
9 Because he did it on purpose. He did it with malice in his
10 heart, it was intentional. He looks down and he says,
11 "There's eight of those missing. I need to make it look like
12 I didn't know that, let me pop that one back in."

13 Myself and my co-counsel, we ask that you go back in
14 that jury room and find Mr. Smith guilty of murder for Grace
15 Marlene Ables. She was a person. She was killed by him, by
16 his own admission, with malice aforethought. I submit, all
17 this evidence shows that beyond a reasonable doubt.

18 I ask that you find him guilty of murder for Baby
19 Scarlet Ables. Under South Carolina law, she was a person,
20 she was viable. She was 28 weeks. She could have lived
21 outside her mother's womb, but for Camrin Smith shooting her
22 mom in the heart, person killed with malice aforethought.
23 Murder is a violent crime. He committed murder with a
24 weapon. By his own admission, he had that illegal sawed-off
25 rifle. I ask that you find Camrin Smith guilty. Thank you.

1 MS. JOHNSTON: This was a mistake. A mistake isn't
2 malice, and that's not murder. And guys, If you believe
3 Camrin, that's not malice. Why should you believe Camrin?
4 If you don't just think you'll come up with something better
5 than, "I shot my wife." He called his dad, told him he shot
6 his wife. He called 911, "I shot my wife." He told
7 officers, "I shot my wife." He told investigators, "I shot
8 my wife." And yesterday he got up on that stand and he told
9 you guys what he did. He shot his wife. He had nothing to
10 gain, nothing, by losing his high school sweetheart and his
11 daughter.

19 If you believe Camrin, this was a mistake. If you're
20 not sure right now -- right now, after seeing everything this
21 week, if you are not sure or if you don't know, that is the
22 opposite of "firmly convinced," and that is "reasonable
23 doubt." You have one question to answer back there. "Was
24 there malice?" If there's not, that's not murder.

1 (Audio stops at 11:30:33 a.m.)

2 MS. FINCH: That is a young man who made a mistake. A
3 mistake is not malice. That's not malice. "I can't believe
4 I just did that." Yeah, you can -- yeah, you can. He took
5 all these steps. I can't believe it. I just did it in the
6 last 30 minutes. But it doesn't matter because malice can be
7 inferred from conduct showing a total disregard for human
8 life; Grace Ables' life and Scarlet Ables' life.

9 I'm going to tell you the last thing I'm going to say
10 is the last thing he said to me yesterday: "I picked up a
11 gun, I pointed it at her and I pulled the trigger." A total
12 disregard for human life. Two of them. One that had not even
13 been born yet. Thank you, Your Honor.

14 THE COURT: Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, give me
15 your attention. It is now my duty as the trial judge to
16 instruct you on the law applicable to this case, and in that
17 regard, it is your duty as jurors to accept and apply the law
18 as I now state it to you.

19 Furthermore, it is your exclusive duty to decide all of
20 the issues of fact in this case and to determine the effect,
21 value, and weight of the evidence. State and the Defense
22 have the right to expect that you will carefully consider and
23 evaluate the evidence and apply the law of this case to it so
24 that in the end, both the State and the Defense have received
25 a fair and impartial trial.

1 I remind you that during this trial, you and I have had
2 certain duties to perform. As the trial judge, it is my
3 responsibility to preside over the trial of the case and I
4 also have the duty to rule on the admissibility of the
5 evidence offered during the trial. You are to consider only
6 the competent evidence before you. You're to consider only
7 the testimony which has been presented from this witness
8 stand, any exhibits which have been made a part of the record
9 in the case, and any stipulations of Counsel.

10 I have the additional duty to charge you on the law
11 applicable to this case. As the presiding judge, I'm the
12 sole judge of the law in the case and it is your duty as
13 jurors to accept and apply the law as I now state it to you.
14 If you have any idea as to what the law is, or what the law
15 ought to be and it does not agree with what I tell you now,
16 the law is you must abandon this idea because you are sworn
17 to accept the law and apply the law exactly as I state it to
18 you.

19 In every case tried in this court before a jury, the
20 jury becomes the sole and exclusive judge of the facts in the
21 case. The trial judge cannot state, comment on, or make any
22 statement to a trial jury about the facts in the case. Since
23 you, the jury, are the sole judge of the facts in the case,
24 you are not to infer from anything that I have said during
25 the progress of this trial in a ruling upon the admissibility

1 of evidence, or otherwise or anything that I say now during
2 the course of this instruction to you that I have any opinion
3 about the facts in this case. The law does not allow me to
4 have an opinion about the facts in the case. This is solely
5 a matter for you, the jury, to determine as jurors. It is
6 your duty to determine the effect, value, weight, and truth
7 of the evidence presented during this trial.

8 The indictments in this case charged the Defendant with
9 two counts of murder, possession of a weapon during the
10 commission of a violent crime, and possession of a sawed-off
11 rifle. I remind you that the fact that the Defendant was
12 arrested, charged, and indicted in this case is not evidence
13 in this case, and cannot be considered by you as evidence of
14 guilt in this case, nor does it create any presumption or
15 inference of guilt. These documents are simply the formal
16 written instruments which contain the charges made against
17 the Defendant. They are the formal documents by which this
18 case is brought before the Court.

19 The indictments in this case allege multiple counts
20 against the Defendant. Each indictment is a separate and
21 distinct offense. You must decide each count separately on
22 the evidence and the law applicable to it uninfluenced by
23 your decision as to any other count. The Defendant may be
24 convicted or acquitted on any or all of the charges. You'll
25 be asked to write a separate verdict of guilty or not guilty

1 for each.

2 The Defendant has pleaded not guilty to these
3 indictments, and that plea puts the burden on the State to
4 prove the Defendant guilty. A person charged with committing
5 a criminal offense in South Carolina is never required to
6 prove himself innocent. I charge you that it is an important
7 rule of law that the defendant in a criminal trial, no matter
8 what the seriousness of the charge may be, will always be
9 presumed to be innocent of the crime for which the indictment
10 was issued unless guilt has been proven by evidence
11 satisfying you of that guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

12 This presumption of innocence does not end when you
13 begin your deliberations, but it follows the defendant
14 throughout the trial until you reach a verdict of guilty
15 based upon evidence satisfying you of that guilt beyond a
16 reasonable doubt. The presumption of innocence is like a
17 robe of righteousness placed about shoulders of the
18 defendant, which remains with the defendant until it has been
19 stripped from the defendant by evidence satisfying you of the
20 defendant's guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

21 The presumption of innocence is not a mere legal
22 theory. It is not just a legal phrase. It is -- it is a
23 substantial right to which every defendant is entitled unless
24 you, the jury, are satisfied from the evidence of the
25 Defendant's guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

1 Now, what is a reasonable doubt in the law? A
2 reasonable doubt is the kind of doubt that would cause a
3 reasonable person to hesitate to act. The State has the
4 burden of proving the Defendant guilty beyond a reasonable
5 doubt. And some of you may have served as jurors in civil
6 cases where you were told that it is only necessary to prove
7 that a fact is more likely true than not true, such as by the
8 greater weight or the preponderance of the evidence. In
9 criminal cases, the State's proof must be more powerful than
10 that. It must be beyond a reasonable doubt. Proof beyond a
11 reasonable doubt is proof that leaves you firmly convinced of
12 the defendant's guilt.

13 Now, there are very few things in the world that we
14 know with absolute certainty, and in criminal cases, the law
15 does not require proof that overcomes every possible doubt.
16 If, based on your consideration of the evidence, you are
17 firmly convinced that the Defendant is guilty of the crime
18 charged, then you must find the Defendant guilty. If, on the
19 other hand, you think there is a real possibility that the
20 Defendant is not guilty, you must give the Defendant the
21 benefit of the doubt and find him not guilty.

22 There are two types of evidence which are generally
23 presented during a trial: Direct evidence and circumstantial
24 evidence. Direct evidence is the testimony of a person who
25 claims to have actual knowledge of a fact such as an

1 eyewitness. Circumstantial evidence is proof of a change --
2 chain of facts and circumstances indicating the existence of
3 a fact.

4 The law makes absolutely no distinction between the
5 weight or value to be given to either direct or
6 circumstantial evidence, nor is a greater degree of certainty
7 required of circumstantial evidence than of direct evidence.
8 You should weigh all of the evidence in the case. After
9 weighing all of the evidence, if you are not convinced of the
10 guilt of the Defendant, beyond a reasonable doubt, you must
11 find the Defendant not guilty.

12 Direct evidence directly proves the existence of a fact
13 and does not require deduction. Circumstantial evidence is a
14 proof of a chain of facts and circumstances indicating the
15 existence of a fact. Again, crimes may be proven by
16 circumstantial evidence. To the extent that State relies on
17 circumstantial evidence, all the circumstances must be
18 consistent with each other when taken -- and when taken
19 together point conclusively to the guilt of the accused
20 beyond a reasonable doubt. If these circumstances merely
21 portray the Defendant's behavior as suspicious, the proof has
22 failed. The State has the burden of proving the Defendant
23 guilty beyond a reasonable doubt and this burden rests with
24 the State regardless of whether the State relies on direct
25 evidence, circumstantial evidence, or some combination of the

1 two.

2 Ladies and gentlemen, necessarily, you must determine
3 the credibility of the witnesses who have testified in this
4 case. And credibility simply means believability. It
5 becomes your duty as jurors to analyze and to evaluate the
6 evidence and determine which evidence convinces you of its
7 truth. In determining the believability of witnesses who
8 have testified in this case, you may believe one witness over
9 several witnesses, or several witnesses over one witness.
10 You may believe a part of the testimony of a witness and
11 reject the remaining part of the testimony of that same
12 witness. You may believe the testimony of a witness in its
13 entirety or reject the testimony of a witness in its
14 entirety. You may consider whether any witness has exhibited
15 you any interest, bias, prejudice, or other motive in this
16 case. You may also consider the appearance and manner of a
17 witness while on the witness stand. The rules of evidence,
18 ordinarily, do not permit witnesses to testify to opinions or
19 conclusions. An exception to this rule exists for witnesses
20 we call expert witnesses.

21 A witness who by education and experience has become an
22 expert in some art, science, professional calling, may state
23 an opinion as to relevant and material matter in which the
24 witness claims to be an expert and may also state the reasons
25 for the opinion. You should consider any expert opinion

1 received in this case, and like any other evidence, give it
2 the weight you think it deserves.

3 If you decide that the opinion of an expert witness is
4 not based on sufficient education and experience, or if you
5 conclude that the reasons given in support of the opinion are
6 not sound, or that the opinion is outweighed by other
7 evidence, you may disregard the opinion entirely. An expert
8 witness' testimony is to be given no greater weight than that
9 of other witnesses simply because the witness is an expert.
10 Further, you are not required to accept an expert's opinion
11 even though it is not contradicted.

12 In order to establish criminal liability, criminal
13 intent is required. For example, the mental state required
14 to be proven by the State for a particular crime might be
15 purpose, intent, knowledge, recklessness, or criminal
16 negligence. Criminal intent must be proven by the State
17 beyond a reasonable doubt. Criminal intent is always a
18 matter that must be determined by the jury from the
19 circumstances surrounding the situation.

20 There is no way to prove intent to a mathematical
21 certainty. There is no way medical science can dissect a
22 person's brain to determine what the person had in mind. So
23 the law says that criminal intent may be inferred from the
24 circumstances shown to have existed. This is how you make a
25 determination of whether or not the element requiring intent

1 is present.

2 It is not necessary to establish intent by direct
3 positive evidence, but intent may be established by inference
4 in the same way as any other fact, by taking into
5 consideration the acts of the parties and all of the facts
6 and circumstances of the case. Criminal intent is a mental
7 state, a conscious wrongdoing. It is up to you to determine
8 what the Defendant intended to do based upon the
9 circumstances shown to have existed.

10 The Defendant is charged with murder. The State must
11 prove, beyond a reasonable doubt, that the Defendant killed
12 another person with malice aforethought. Malice is hatred,
13 ill will, or hostility towards another person. It's the
14 intentional doing of a wrongful act without just cause or
15 excuse, and with an intent to inflict an injury or
16 circumstances that the law will infer an evil intent.

17 Malice aforethought does not require that the malice
18 exists for any particular time before the act is committed,
19 but malice must exist in the mind of the defendant just
20 before and at the time the act is committed. Therefore,
21 there must be a combination of the previous evil intent and
22 the act.

23 Malice aforethought may be expressed or inferred.
24 These terms expressed and inferred do not mean different
25 kinds of malice, but merely the manner in which the malice

1 may be shown to exist. This is either by direct evidence or
2 -- or by inference from the facts and circumstances which are
3 proved.

4 Express malice is shown when the person speaks words
5 which express hatred or ill will for another, or when the
6 person prepared beforehand to do the act which was later
7 accomplished. For example, lying in wait for a person or any
8 other acts of preparation going -- going to show that the
9 deed was done -- was done within -- that the deed was within
10 the Defendant's mind would be expressed malice.

11 Malice may be inferred from conduct showing a total
12 disregard for human life. If facts are proved beyond a
13 reasonable doubt sufficient to raise an inference of malice
14 to your satisfaction, this inference would simply be an
15 evidentiary fact to be considered by you, the jury, along
16 with the other evidence in the case, and you may give it the
17 weight you decide it should receive.

18 A viable, unborn child is a person within the meaning
19 of the murder statute. The child must have been capable of
20 separate and independent existence apart from the mother.

21 Defendant is also charged with possession of a weapon
22 during the commission of a violent crime or attempt to commit
23 a violent crime. The State must prove, beyond a reasonable
24 doubt, that the Defendant was in possession of a firearm or
25 visibly -- visibly displayed what appeared to be a firearm

1 during the commission of a violent crime. A firearm means
2 any machine, gun, automatic rifle, revolver, pistol, or any
3 weapon which is designed to or may be readily converted to
4 expel a projectile.

5 In order to find the Defendant guilty of possession of
6 a weapon during the commission of a violent crime, you must
7 first find the Defendant guilty of either committing a
8 violent crime or attempting to commit -- to commit a violent
9 crime. And I will charge to you that murder is classified as
10 a violent crime. The State must prove beyond a reasonable
11 doubt that the weapon furthered, advanced or helped in the
12 commission of the crime.

13 Defendant is also charged with possession of sawed-off
14 rifle. It is unlawful for a person to store, keep, possess,
15 or have in possession or permit another to store, keep,
16 possess, or have in possession a sawed-off shotgun or
17 sawed-off rifle.

18 Rifle means a weapon designed or redesigned, made or
19 remade, and intended to be fired from the shoulder and -- and
20 designed or redesigned and made or remade to use the energy
21 of the explosive in a fixed cartridge to fire only a single
22 projectile through a rifle bore for each single pull of the
23 trigger. The term includes any such weapon which may be
24 readily restored to fire a fixed cartridge, but does not
25 include antique firearms.

1 Sawed-off rifle means a rifle having a barrel or
2 barrels of less than 16 inches in length, or a weapon made
3 from a rifle, which as modified, has an overall length of
4 less than 26 inches or a barrel or barrels of less than 16
5 inches in length.

6 What does "possession" mean in the law? Possession
7 means more than simply have -- simply having an object in
8 one's possession. There must be knowing possession. The
9 State must prove possession of the sawed-off rifle by the
10 Defendant, and the further fact that the Defendant knew he
11 had the sawed-off rifle in his possession. By way of
12 illustration, something may be found in the possession of a
13 person, and if the person did not know he had possession of
14 the item and had not exercised any affirmative act to get
15 possession of the item, but by some accident came into it --
16 came into his possession without his knowledge, then there
17 would be no violation of law. However, if one knowingly has
18 in his possession a sawed-off rifle, then he is unlawfully in
19 possession of that item.

20 The State must demonstrate beyond a reasonable doubt
21 that the Defendant was in possession of the object, that he
22 knew he had it in his possession, and that he knew the item
23 was a sawed-off rifle under the law of the state. The State
24 is not required to show the purpose for which the Defendant
25 may have had possession of sawed-off rifle. That it is --

1 not a part of the State's required degree -- that is not a
2 required -- a part of the required -- State's required degree
3 of proof. The State must show, beyond a reasonable doubt,
4 that there was possession of the sawed-off rifle and the
5 Defendant knew he had the sawed-off rifle in his possession.

6 There are two types of possession recognized in the law
7 of this state: Actual possession and constructive
8 possession. Actual possession occurs when the sawed-off
9 rifle is found to be in the actual physical custody of the
10 person charged with possession. In order to prove
11 constructive possession, the State must show the Defendant
12 had dominion or control or the right to exercise dominion or
13 control over either the sawed-off rifle or the premises upon
14 which the sawed-off rifle was found. Mere presence of a
15 person in an area where the object is found is not enough, in
16 and of itself, to prove possession. Proof of possession
17 requires more than the proof of mere presence of the place
18 where the sawed-off rifle is found.

19 The State must prove the Defendant had both the power,
20 that is, the actual or constructive control, and the intent
21 to control its disposition or use. Actual control occurs
22 when the sawed-off rifle is found to be in the actual
23 physical custody of the person charged.

24 Constructive control occurs when the person charged
25 with possession has dominion and control over either the

1 sawed-off rifle, or the premises upon which the sawed-off
2 rifle is found. Constructive control means the defendant's
3 knowledge. Constructive control may be established by
4 circumstantial evidence as well as by direct evidence. And
5 constructive control may be jointly shared by two or more
6 individuals.

7 The mere presence of a defendant where the sawed-off
8 rifle is found or mere association by a defendant with people
9 who possess a sawed-off rifle, is insufficient proof that the
10 Defendant himself possess the sawed-off rifle possession
11 requires more than mere presence. Evidence that an
12 individual is present at the time a sawed-off rifle is found
13 or located is not, in and of itself, sufficient proof that
14 the individual had actual constructive possession of the
15 sawed-off rifle.

16 Proof of constructive possession by the Defendant
17 requires the State show beyond a reasonable doubt that the
18 Defendant had dominion control over the sawed-off rifle or
19 had the right to exercise dominion and control over the
20 sawed-off rifle stated. In other terms, the State must prove
21 beyond a reasonable doubt that the Defendant had both the
22 power and intent to control the disposition or use of the
23 sawed-off rifle.

24 If you find from the evidence or lack of evidence that
25 the Defendant was merely present at the scene where a --

1 where the sawed-off rifle was found or merely associated with
2 persons who possessed the sawed-off rifle, and do not find,
3 beyond a reasonable doubt, that the Defendant had dominion or
4 control or the right to exercise dominion or control over the
5 sawed-off rifle, then the Defendant would be not guilty.

6 Now, ladies and gentlemen, that concludes the
7 substantive portion of the charge. At this time, I'm going
8 to hand the bailiff the verdict forms, which will be used in
9 this case. So, Mr. Bailiff, if you'd please come forward and
10 hand these to the foreperson.

11 Now, Madam Forelady, as you'll see, there is a verdict
12 form for each of the four charges in this case, and the
13 answer is for you and your fellow jurors to determine,
14 unanimously, as to each of those indictments. Now, it only
15 has one question: Guilty or not guilty? And make no
16 inference as to any opinion that I may have by the order in
17 which they're listed. I just had to choose one to put first.

18 So when you've reached a unanimous decision as to each
19 of the indictments, fill out the verdict form for each, and
20 let the bailiff know that you've reached your verdicts and
21 we'll bring you back out. Now, I've said "unanimous" a
22 couple times. That means all 12 of the jurors must agree.

23 Now, if at any time during the course of the
24 deliberations, one of the jurors has to leave the jury room
25 to use the restroom or step out for any other purpose, your

1 deliberations have to stop. Once all 12 of you are back in,
2 then you can resume your deliberations.

3 And again, I want to stress that each of you must agree
4 as to the verdict as to all four of these counts. Now, if at
5 any time, over the course of your deliberations, Madam
6 Forelady, the jury has a question or anything you feel needs
7 to be brought to the Court's attention, that question or
8 request needs to be put in writing, signed by you -- signed
9 and dated by you, the foreperson, and give it to the bailiff.
10 He'll give it to me and we'll see about answering the
11 question perhaps or rectifying whatever situation you feel
12 has arisen.

13 Now, I've been telling you this whole week the same
14 thing over and over, and I'm going to tell it to you one more
15 time. Don't start your deliberations quite yet. There are
16 some matters that the attorneys and I have to discuss before
17 you can begin your deliberation. So when I send you back to
18 your jury room here in a few moments, don't start quite yet.

19 Your signal to begin your deliberations will be when
20 the bailiff brings back the items of evidence which have been
21 admitted in this case. Once you've received the items of
22 evidence for your review, that's when your deliberations can
23 begin.

24 So ladies and gentlemen, I'm going to send you to your
25 jury room at this point in time. But don't begin your

1 deliberations until you receive the items of evidence which
2 have been admitted, all right?

3 (Jury exits courtroom at 11:56 a.m.)

4 THE COURT: Other than the objection that was
5 previously made with regard to the jury charge anything --
6 any exceptions or objections to anything that I stated to the
7 jury during the charge --

8 MS. FINCH: No, Your Honor.

9 THE COURT: -- from the State?

10 MR. ERWIN: Your Honor, just want to, again,
11 specifically renew our objection to the lack of the
12 lesser-included charge. Also, pre-trial we made a -- a
13 motion to sever the trial and since you did charge the -- the
14 sawed-off weapon charge, I think now would be a good time to
15 make sure we have a contemporaneous objection to that charge
16 as well since we did previously ask for it to be set.

17 THE COURT: All right. Those objections are noted for
18 the record, but in terms of the substance of what was
19 charged, any objections to the substance of what was just
20 presented to the jury?

21 MR. ERWIN: No, Your Honor.

22 THE COURT: All right. If the attorneys would make
23 sure that the items of evidence are in order, make sure that
24 the gun locks are reinstalled to any weapons that may go back
25 to the jury.

1 And once -- once the items of evidence are together,
2 we'll have the bailiff take them back to the jury and I will
3 bring the alternate -- alternates -- the remaining alternates
4 out and dismiss them.

5 MS. FINCH: Your Honor, there are several cartridges in
6 evidence. Do you want those to stay out of the jury room and
7 only take the guns back with the jury?

8 THE COURT: I think that would be -- I think that would
9 be appropriate. The -- the clip can be -- I'm assuming the
10 clip is empty?

11 MS. FINCH: Yes, Your Honor, and it is in the box with
12 the gun.

13 THE COURT: Okay.

14 MS. FINCH: That we will take into evidence.

15 THE COURT: Yeah, just -- just keep the -- the items of
16 ammunition here.

17 MS. FINCH: In the courtroom?

18 THE COURT: Yep. That's right.

19 MS. FINCH: Thank you, Your Honor.

20 THE COURT: And I'm assuming that the keys to the gun
21 locks were retrieved from the bench earlier when you -- when
22 you took the -- okay. I was making sure that I didn't use --

23 MS. FINCH: I was like --

24 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Actually, Judge, I don't know if
25 we ever addressed ---

1 (Off the record at 11:59 a.m.)

2 (On the record at 12:04 p.m.)

3 THE COURT: All right. Do parties confirm that the --
4 the items of evidence are complete?

5 MS. FINCH: Yes, Your Honor.

6 MS. JOHNSTON: Yes, Your Honor.

7 THE COURT: All right.

8 MS. FINCH: Thank you.

9 THE COURT: And bring us the alternates, please.

10 THE BAILIFF: Okay.

11 THE COURT: I've been informed that the jury has
12 requested the ammunition so we can -- we can do it one of two
13 ways. We can either trade back and forth, have the ammo go
14 -- go back and bring the firearms back into the courtroom, or
15 we can have courtroom security in the deliberation room. I
16 don't think that's the way we should do it. Just...

17 MS. FINCH: Your Honor, I'm fine to do the swap out.

18 THE COURT: Just -- I'm going to instruct that the jury
19 be told that -- that the firearms and the live ammunition
20 can't be in the room at the same time, and that we'll have to
21 trade them back and forth if they want to -- to do that.
22 That's just a -- from a security and safety standpoint, so...

23 MS. FINCH: No objection.

24 THE COURT: All right.

25 MS. JOHNSTON: No objection from the Defense, Your

1 Honor.

2 THE COURT: All right. Thank you.

3 MS. FINCH: So, Judge -- are you going to take that
4 with you?

5 THE BAILIFF: I'm going to remove --

6 MS. FINCH: Okay.

7 THE BAILIFF: -- the firearms first.

8 THE COURT: Yeah -- I mean, if they want to look at the
9 -- it doesn't matter which order they want to view them, I
10 just don't want them in the room at the same time.

11 THE BAILIFF: Correct.

12 THE COURT: All right. So just confirm that.

13 THE BAILIFF: Yes.

14 THE COURT: You just, you -- you stay right there.

15 Ms. McGee and Mr. Hunter you two were two of the three
16 alternates that were selected in this case. I let
17 Mr. Paulson go yesterday. He had an emergency issue with his
18 family. And I'm sure you're aware that alternates are only
19 put into service if one of the 12 primary jurors were unable
20 to complete their duties as jurors, and they have all made it
21 to the end of the trial.

22 And South Carolina law requires that once a case is
23 submitted to the jury, that the alternates be excused and do
24 not take part in the deliberation. So I'm going to follow
25 the law and excuse you now. You have earned a three-year

1 exemption from jury service, and I hope this experience has
2 been educational into how our system truly works. And you
3 have the thanks of Laurens County, thanks of the State of
4 South Carolina for your service this week. The court system
5 simply couldn't run without folks coming in under a degree of
6 sacrifice to their normal routines and daily lives.

7 So we appreciate that and if you need work excuses, the
8 clerk's office can handle that and if you would give your
9 juror badges to -- or they may have already been taken up,
10 but you are free to go and I hope you have a good weekend.
11 Thank you.

12 THE BAILIFF: Your Honor, we -- we have a -- they got
13 their notes -- I told (inaudible).

14 THE COURT: All right. And, again, one thing I didn't
15 mention, I've been telling you all not to talk about this
16 case with anybody. If someone were to contact you about this
17 case, the choice is up to you. You could discuss it if you
18 want to. You don't have to.

19 You know, if -- and if someone persists in asking you
20 questions that you don't want to answer, you notify the
21 clerk's office, they'll know how to get you in touch with
22 someone who can hopefully put that unwanted contact to an
23 end. But you are free to go and thank you very much.

24 THE BAILIFF: Your Honor, they got their lunch to go to
25 lunch, I guess?

1 THE COURT: They can stay and eat their lunch. They
2 just can't be in the room with the other jurors.

3 THE BAILIFF: Okay. Yeah, I know that. Okay.

4 THE COURT: All right. Or they can -- I think they're
5 box lunches, they can take them with them, whatever they
6 choose to do. Recess until we hear from the jury.

7 MS. FINCH: Thank you.

8 MR. ERWIN: Thank you, Your Honor.

9 (Off the record at 12:12 p.m.)

10 (On the record at 2:05 p.m.)

11 THE COURT: I understand that the jury has reached a
12 verdict, and what I'm about to say, I do in every criminal
13 case that is of a serious nature. And I'm not trying to
14 foreshadow anything or predict that anything is going to
15 happen. But when verdicts are published in a case of this
16 type, it's understandable that there could potentially be an
17 emotional response from those of you that are here in support
18 of a loved one.

19 I just want to make sure that everybody is clear that
20 when the verdicts are published that any response, whether it
21 be positive or negative in response to the jury's verdict,
22 would be a breach of courtroom decorum. So if there's anyone
23 in the gallery who feels like they may not be able to control
24 their emotions, just know that decorum is going to be
25 maintained regardless of the outcome of the case. All right.

1 Bring us the jury, please.

2 THE BAILIFF: Come on in, please. All jurors are
3 present, Your Honor.

4 (Jury enters courtroom at 2:07 p.m.)

5 THE COURT: All right. Thank you. Madam Forelady, has
6 the jury reached a verdict as to all four counts?

7 JUROR NUMBER 18: Yes, sir.

8 THE COURT: Are they all unanimous?

9 JUROR NUMBER 18: Yes.

10 THE COURT: Would you please hand the verdict forms to
11 the bailiff? Madam Clerk, can you please post the verdicts?

12 THE CLERK: Yes, Your Honor. Your Honor, this is the
13 case of the State of South Carolina versus Camrin Jay Smith.
14 "As to the charge of the possession of sawed-off shotgun, we,
15 the jury, unanimously find the Defendant guilty. As to the
16 charge of the possession of a weapon during the commission of
17 a violent crime, we, the jury, unanimously find the Defendant
18 guilty. As to the charge of murder of victim Grace M. Ables,
19 we, the jury, unanimously find the Defendant guilty. As to
20 the charge of murder of victim, unborn child of Grace M.
21 Ables, we, the jury, unanimously find the Defendant guilty."
22 Ladies and gentlemen, if that was your verdict and is still
23 your verdict, please indicate by upraising your right hand.
24 Thank you.

25 THE COURT: All right. Does the Defense request

1 rehabilitative nature to the sentence that's about to be
2 imposed. There are never winners in any case like this. And
3 I certainly doubt any brothers or -- or sisters of mine on
4 the circuit bench take any joy in making a decision of this
5 nature. But it's part of what we're charged to do when we
6 put on this black robe.

7 So taking everything into consideration, the totality
8 of what's been proven here in court, the fact that a murder
9 conviction carries a mandatory minimum of 30 years, and those
10 sentences are day-for-day, and the other two convictions,
11 I've decided upon a number, and I'm going to run all of the
12 sentences concurrent, and the number will reflect the fact
13 that they're being run concurrently.

14 I understand that these are separate and distinct
15 offense -- offenses, and I certainly don't want anybody to
16 believe that I'm putting any lesser value on either of the
17 two lives that have been lost. But the number that I have
18 reached is what I feel is appropriate based upon what's been
19 proven here in court, Mr. Smith's lack of a criminal record,
20 and what I believe is a just sentence based upon what has
21 been proven.

22 As to the murder charges, sentence of the Court that
23 Mr. Smith be committed to the Department of Corrections for a
24 term of 45 years, those will run concurrent with each other.
25 Possession of a sawed-off rifle, 10 years, concurrent. And

1 the possession of a weapon during the commission of a violent
2 crime, five, concurrent. So a total sentence of 45 years.
3 That is the sentence of the Court.

4 I'm going to hand these photographs back, Ms. Finch.
5 And ladies and gentlemen, this term of General Sessions Court
6 in Laurens County is adjourned and signed out. Thank you.

7

8

9 (THERE BEING NOTHING FURTHER, THIS HEARING CONCLUDED AT
10 2:35 P.M.)

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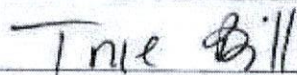
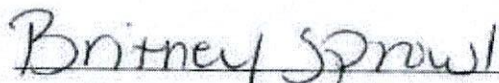
WITNESSES



Laurens County Sheriff's Department

WARRANT NUMBER

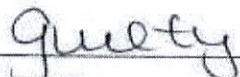
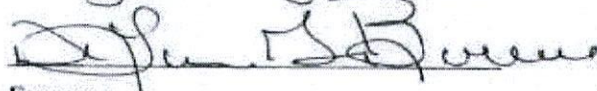
2023A3010101318



Foreman of the Grand Jury

Date: 11-22-24

VERDICT



Foreman

THE STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

COUNTY OF LAURENS

COURT OF GENERAL SESSIONS

November Term, 2024

Indictment #2024GS30-1580

THE STATE

vs.

CAMRIN JAY SMITH

INDICTMENT FOR

UNLAWFUL POSSESSION OF A MACHINE GUN
OR SAWED-OFF SHOTGUN OR RIFLE

SC Code: § 16-23-0230

CDR: 0315

I hereby waive presentment to the Grand Jury.

Defendant

Witness:

THE STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

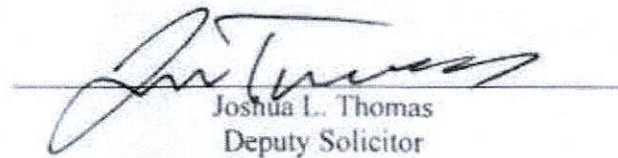
COUNTY OF LAURENS

INDICTMENT FOR**UNLAWFUL POSSESSION OF A MACHINE
GUN OR SAWED-OFF SHOTGUN OR RIFLE
§16-23-0230**

At a Court of General Sessions, convened on the 22nd day of November, 2024, the Grand Jurors of Laurens County present upon their oath:

The defendant, Camrin Jay Smith, on or about November 25, 2023, in Laurens County, South Carolina, did store, keep, possess, or have in his possession (or did permit another to do the same) a machine gun or firearm commonly known as a machine gun, military firearm, sawed-off shotgun, or sawed-off rifle, all in violation of Section 16-23-0230, South Carolina Code of Laws (1976, as amended).

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



Joshua L. Thomas
Deputy Solicitor

WITNESSES

Steven Sweet
Laurens County Sheriff's Department

WARRANT NUMBER

2023A3010101387

True Bill

Britney Spraw
Foreman of the Grand Jury

Date: 11-22-24

VERDICT

Guilty
Deputy S. Barnes
Foreman

THE STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

COUNTY OF LAURENS

COURT OF GENERAL SESSIONS

November Term, 2024

Indictment #2024GS30-1581

THE STATE

vs.

CAMRIN JAY SMITH

INDICTMENT FOR

POSSESSION OF A WEAPON DURING THE
COMMISSION OF A VIOLENT CRIME

SC Code: § 16-23-0490

CDR: 0549

I hereby waive presentment to the Grand
Jury.

Defendant

Witness:

THE STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

COUNTY OF LAURENS

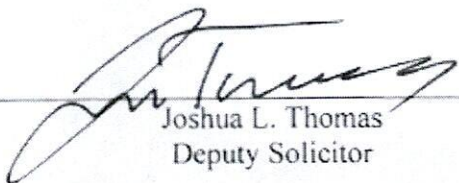
INDICTMENT FOR

POSSESSION OF A WEAPON DURING THE
COMMISSION OF A VIOLENT CRIME
§16-23-0490

At a Court of General Sessions, convened on the 22nd day of November, 2024, the Grand Jurors of Laurens County present upon their oath:

The defendant, Camrin Jay Smith, on or about November 25, 2023, in Laurens County, South Carolina, while committing the violent crime of Murder (or any lesser included violent crime), did possess a firearm in furtherance thereof, all in violation of Section 16-23-0490, South Carolina Code of Laws (1976, as amended).

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



Joshua L. Thomas
Deputy Solicitor

WITNESSES

Steven Sweet
Laurens County Sheriff's Department

WARRANT NUMBER

2023A3010101388

THE STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

COUNTY OF LAURENS

COURT OF GENERAL SESSIONS

November Term, 2024

Indictment #2024GS30-1582

I hereby waive presentment to the Grand
Jury.

Defendant

Witness:

THE STATE

vs.

CAMRIN JAY SMITH

True Bill
Britney Sprawl
Foreman of the Grand Jury

Date: 11-22-24

INDICTMENT FOR

MURDER

SC Code: § 16-03-0010 / C.L.

CDR: 0116

VERDICT

Guilty
DeJuan B. Brown
Foreman

THE STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

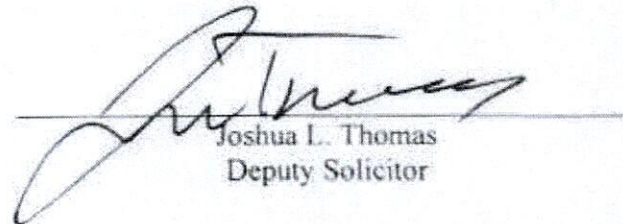
COUNTY OF LAURENS

INDICTMENT FOR**MURDER**
§16-03-0010 / C.L.

At a Court of General Sessions, convened on the 22nd day of November, 2024, the Grand Jurors of Laurens County present upon their oath:

That Camrin Jay Smith, on or about November 25, 2023, in Laurens County, South Carolina, did willfully, feloniously, and with malice aforethought kill the unborn child of Grace M. Ables by means of shooting Ms. Ables, and that her unborn child did die in Laurens County as a proximate result thereof on or about that same day, all in violation of Section 16-3-10 South Carolina Code of Laws (1976, as amended), and the common law.

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



Joshua L. Thomas
Deputy Solicitor

WITNESSES

Steven Sweet
Laurens County Sheriff's Department

WARRANT NUMBER

2023A3010101389

True Bill
Britney Spruill
Foreman of the Grand Jury
Date: 11-22-24

VERDICT

Guilty
Debra L Barnes
Foreman

THE STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

COUNTY OF LAURENS

COURT OF GENERAL SESSIONS

November Term, 2024

Indictment #2024GS30-1583

THE STATE

vs.

CAMRIN JAY SMITH

INDICTMENT FOR

MURDER

SC Code: § 16-03-0010 / C.L.

CDR: 0116

I hereby waive presentment to the Grand Jury.

Defendant

Witness:

THE STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

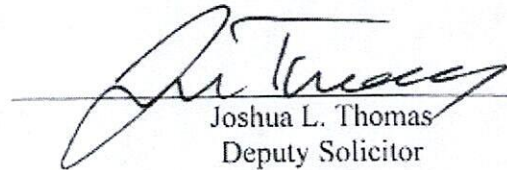
COUNTY OF LAURENS

INDICTMENT FOR**MURDER**
§16-03-0010 / C.L.

At a Court of General Sessions, convened on the 22nd day of November, 2024, the Grand Jurors of Laurens County present upon their oath:

That Camrin Jay Smith, on or about November 25, 2023, in Laurens County, South Carolina, did willfully, feloniously, and with malice aforethought kill Grace Marlene Ables by shooting her, and she did die in Laurens County as a proximate result thereof on or about that same day, all in violation of Section 16-3-10 South Carolina Code of Laws (1976, as amended), and the common law.

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


Joshua L. Thomas
Deputy Solicitor

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF LAURENS

SENTENCE ORDER

IN THE COURT OF GENERAL SESSIONS

STATE vs.

Camrin Jay Smith

AKA:

SSN: [REDACTED]

RACE: W

SEX: M

DOB: [REDACTED]

) INDICTMENT/CASE# 2024GS30-1580

) AW# 2023A3010101318

) Date of Offense: 11/25/2023

) S.C. Code§: 16-23-0230

) CDR Code # 0315

) Range of Offense: Unlawful Possession Of A Machine Gun Or Sawed-Off Shotgun Or Rifle (I)

In disposition of the above indictment comes now the Defendant who was CONVICTED OF ☒ or ☐ PLEADS

TO: Unlawful Possession Of A Machine Gun Or Sawed-Off Shotgun Or Rifle

Range of Offense Pled: I

In violation of § 16-23-0230 of the S.C. Code of Laws, bearing CDR Code # 0315

☒ NON-VIOLENT

☐ VIOLENT

☐ SERIOUS

☐ MOST SERIOUS

☐ MANDATORY GPS

☐ § 17-25-45

(CSC w/minor 1st or CSC w/minor 3rd)

The charge is: ☒ As indicted

☐ Lesser Included Offense

☐ Defendant Waives Presentment to Grand Jury

The plea is: ☐ w/o Rec/Negotiations ☐ Negotiated

☐ Recommendation

/s Elizabeth C. Able

101653

/s Jake Erwin

79941

Solicitor

SC Bar #

Attorney for Defendant

SC Bar #

The Defendant is committed to the ☒ SCDC ☐ County Detention Center ☐ Home Incarceration Program

for a determinate term of 10 days/months/years Time Served ☐ YOANTE _____ years and/or shall pay a fine

of \$ _____; provided that upon the service of 0 days/months/years Time Served and or payment

of \$ _____ plus costs and assessments as applicable*; balance is suspended with probation for _____ months/years

and subject to SCDPPPS standard conditions of probation, which are incorporated by reference.

The sentence shall run ☒ CONCURRENT or ☐ CONSECUTIVE to sentence on: 6-13-2025

☒ The Defendant is to be given credit for time served pursuant to S.C. Code § 24-13-40 to be calculated and applied by SCDC _____ days/months ☐ To include time spent on monitored house arrest prior to trial and sentencing

SPECIAL CONDITIONS:

☐ PTUP _____

☐ No Contact with Victim

☐ Domestic Violence Intervention Program

☐ Hold for Inpatient Treatment

☐ Sex Offender Registry pursuant to S.C. Code § 23-3-430

☐ SAC/MHC if necessary

☐ Central Registry of Child Abuse and Neglect pursuant to S.C. Code § 17-25-135

☐ Other: _____

☐ RESTITUTION See Separate Order (20% per S.C. Code §24-21-490(B))

§14-1-206 (Assessments 107.5%)

§14-1-211 (A)(1) Conv. Surcharge)

§14-1-211 (A)(2)(DUI Surcharge)

§56-5-1995 (DUI Assessment)

§56-1-286 (DUI Breath Test)

§14-1-212 (Law Enforcement Funding)

§14-1-213 (Drug Court Surcharge)

§34-11-70(b)and(c), and 34-11-90(c)and(d) (Admin Fraud Check Court Costs)

§50-21-114 (BUI Breath Test Fee)

§56-5-2942(J) (Vehicle Assessment)

3% to County (if paid in installments)

☐ Appointed PD or appointed other counsel. Provisio requires \$500 to be paid to Clerk during probation and shall be collected before any other fees

☐ §17-3-45(B) Unpaid Application Fee to be paid to the Public Defender Fund

Restitution

\$

FINE

\$

\$

\$100

\$ 100.00

\$100

\$

\$12

\$

\$25

\$

\$25

\$ 25.00

\$150

\$

\$41

\$

\$50

\$

\$40/ea

\$

TBD

\$ 3.75

\$500

\$

\$40

\$

TOTAL

\$ 128.75

/s K. Michelle Simmons

Clerk of Court/Deputy Clerk

Court Reporter

Judge Code

Click or tap to enter a date

Sentence Date

Presiding Judge

SCCA217B

01/27/2025

STATE vs.

Camrin Jay Smith

AKA:

SSN: [REDACTED]

RACE: W

SEX: M

DOB: [REDACTED]

) INDICTMENT/CASE#: 2024GS30-1581

) AW#: 2023A3010101387

) Date of Offense: 11/25/2023

) S.C. Code§: 16-23-0490

) CDR Code #: 0549

) Range of Offense: Possession Of A Weapon During The Commission Of A Violent Crime (I)

In disposition of the above indictment comes now the Defendant who was CONVICTED OF ☒ or ☐ PLEADS

TO: Possession Of A Weapon During The Commission Of A Violent Crime

Range of Offense Pled: (I)

In violation of § 16-23-0490 of the S.C. Code of Laws, bearing CDR Code # 0549

☒ NON-VIOLENT

☐ VIOLENT

☐ SERIOUS

☐ MOST SERIOUS

☐ MANDATORY GPS

☐ § 17-25-45

(CSC w/minor 1st or CSC w/minor 3rd)

The charge is: ☒ As indicted

☐ Lesser Included Offense

☐ Defendant Waives Presentment to Grand Jury

The plea is: ☐ w/o Rec/Negotiations ☐ Negotiated

☐ Recommendation

/s Elizabeth C. Able

101653

/s Jake Erwin

79941

Solicitor

SC Bar #

Attorney for Defendant

SC Bar #

The Defendant is committed to the ☒ SCDC ☐ County Detention Center ☐ Home Incarceration Program

for a determinate term of 5 days/months/years/Time Served ☐ YOANTE _____ years and/or shall pay a fine

of \$ _____, provided that upon the service of _____ days/months/years/Time Served and or payment

of \$ _____ plus costs and assessments as applicable*; balance is suspended with probation for _____ months/years

and subject to SCDPPPS standard conditions of probation, which are incorporated by reference.

The sentence shall run ☒ CONCURRENT or ☐ CONSECUTIVE to sentence on: 6-13-2025

☒ The Defendant is to be given credit for time served pursuant to S.C. Code § 24-13-40 to be calculated and applied by SCDC
_____ days/months ☐ To include time spent on monitored house arrest prior to trial and sentencing

SPECIAL CONDITIONS:

☐ PTUP

☐ No Contact with Victim

☐ Domestic Violence Intervention Program

☐ Hold for Inpatient Treatment

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☐ SAC/MHC if necessary

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☐ RESTITUTION See Separate Order (20% per S.C. Code §24-21-490(B))

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§14-1-213 (Drug Court Surcharge)

§34-11-70(b)and(c), and 34-11-90(c)and(d) (Admin Fraud Check Court Costs)

§50-21-114 (BUI Breath Test Fee)

§56-5-2942(J) (Vehicle Assessment)

3% to County (if paid in installments)

☐ Appointed PD or appointed other counsel. Provisio requires \$500 to be paid to Clerk during probation and shall be collected before any other fees

☐ §17-3-45(B) Unpaid Application Fee to be paid to the Public Defender Fund

Restitution

\$

FINE:

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\$100

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\$100

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\$12

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\$25

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\$150

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\$41

\$

\$50

\$

\$40/ea

\$

TBD

\$

\$500

\$

\$40

\$

TOTAL

\$

/s K. Michelle Simmons

Clerk of Court/Deputy Clerk

Court Reporter

2768
Judge Code

6-13-2025
Sentence Date

Presiding Judge

SCCA217B

01/27/2025

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF LAURENS

SENTENCE ORDER

IN THE COURT OF GENERAL SESSIONS

STATE vs.

Camrin Jay Smith

AKA:

SSN: [REDACTED]

RACE: W

SEX: M

DOB: [REDACTED]

) INDICTMENT/CASE#: 2024GS30-1582

) AW#: 2023A3010101388

) Date of Offense: 11/25/2023

) S.C. Code§: 16-03-0010

) CDR Code #: 0116

) Range of Offense: Murder (Death, Life, or NLT 30 years to Life)

In disposition of the above indictment comes now the Defendant who was CONVICTED OF ☒ or ☐ PLEADS

TO: Murder Range of Offense Pled: (Death, Life, or NLT 30 years to Life)

In violation of § 16-03-0010 of the S.C. Code of Laws, bearing CDR Code # 0116

☐ NON-VIOLENT ☒ VIOLENT ☐ SERIOUS ☒ MOST SERIOUS ☐ MANDATORY GPS ☐ § 17-25-45
(CSC w/minor 1st or CSC w/minor 3rd)

The charge is: ☒ As indicted ☐ Lesser Included Offense ☐ Defendant Waives Presentment to Grand Jury

The plea is: ☐ w/o Rec/Negotiations ☐ Negotiated ☐ Recommendation

/s Elizabeth C. Able

101653

/s Jake Erwin

79941

Solicitor

SC Bar #

Attorney for Defendant

SC Bar #

The Defendant is committed to the ☒ SCDC ☐ County Detention Center ☐ Home Incarceration Program
for a determinate term of 45 days/months/years/Time Served ☐ YOANTE 0 years and/or shall pay a fine
of \$ 0; provided that upon the service of 0 days/months/years/Time Served and or payment
of \$ 0 plus costs and assessments as applicable; balance is suspended with probation for 0 months/years
and subject to SCDPPPS standard conditions of probation, which are incorporated by reference.

The sentence shall run ☒ CONCURRENT or ☐ CONSECUTIVE to sentence on: 0-13-2025
☒ The Defendant is to be given credit for time served pursuant to S.C. Code § 24-13-40 to be calculated and applied by SCDC
0 days/months ☐ To include time spent on monitored house arrest prior to trial and sentencing

SPECIAL CONDITIONS:

☐ PTUP

☐ No Contact with Victim

☐ Domestic Violence Intervention Program

☐ Hold for Inpatient Treatment

☐ Sex Offender Registry pursuant to S.C. Code § 23-3-430

☐ SAC/MHC if necessary

☐ Central Registry of Child Abuse and Neglect pursuant to S.C. Code § 17-25-135

☐ Other:

☐ RESTITUTION See Separate Order (20% per S.C. Code §24-21-490(B))

§14-1-206 (Assessments 107.5%)

§14-1-211 (A)(1) Conv. Surcharge)

§14-1-211 (A)(2)(DUI Surcharge)

§56-5-1995 (DUI Assessment)

§56-1-286 (DUI Breath Test)

§14-1-212 (Law Enforcement Funding)

§14-1-213 (Drug Court Surcharge)

§34-11-70(b)and(c), and 34-11-90(c)and(d) (Admin Fraud Check Court Costs)

§50-21-114 (BUI Breath Test Fee)

§56-5-2942(J) (Vehicle Assessment)

3% to County (if paid in installments)

☐ Appointed PD or appointed other counsel. Provisio requires \$500 to be paid to Clerk during
probation and shall be collected before any other fees

☐ §17-3-45(B) Unpaid Application Fee to be paid to the Public Defender Fund

Restitution \$

FINE: \$

\$

\$100 \$ 100.00

\$100 \$

\$12 \$

\$25 \$

\$25 \$ 25.00

\$150 \$

\$41 \$

\$50 \$

\$40/ea \$

TBD \$ 3.75

\$500 \$

\$40 \$

TOTAL \$ 128.75

/s K. Michelle Simmons
Clerk of Court/Deputy Clerk

Court Reporter

Kama Island
Deaf

Judge Code

2768

Sentence Date

6-13-2025

Presiding Judge

[Signature]

SCCA217B
01/27/2025

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF LAURENS

SENTENCE ORDER

IN THE COURT OF GENERAL SESSIONS

STATE vs.

Camrin Jay Smith

AKA:

SSN: [REDACTED]

RACE: WSEX: M

DOB: [REDACTED]

) INDICTMENT/CASE#: 2024GS30-1583) AW#: 2023A3010101389) Date of Offense: 11/25/2023) S.C. Code: 16-03-0010) CDR Code #: 0116) Range of Offense: Murder (Death, Life, or NLT 30 years to Life)In disposition of the above indictment comes now the Defendant who was CONVICTED OF ☒ or ☐ PLEADSTO: MurderRange of Offense Pled: (Death, Life, or NLT 30 years to Life)In violation of § 16-03-0010 of the S.C. Code of Laws, bearing CDR Code # 0116☐ NON-VIOLENT ☒ VIOLENT ☐ SERIOUS ☒ MOST SERIOUS ☐ MANDATORY GPS ☐ § 17-25-45
(CSC w/minor 1st or CSC w/minor 3rd)The charge is: ☒ As indicted☐ Lesser Included Offense☐ Defendant Waives Presentment to Grand JuryThe plea is: ☐ w/o Rec/Negotiations ☐ Negotiated ☐ Recommendation/s/ Elizabeth C. Able 101653/s/ Jake Erwin 79941

Solicitor

SC Bar #

Attorney for Defendant

SC Bar #

The Defendant is committed to the ☒ SCDC ☐ County Detention Center ☐ Home Incarceration Program
 for a determinate term of 45 days/months/years/Time Served ☐ YOANTE _____ years and/or shall pay a fine
 of \$ _____; provided that upon the service of _____ days/months/years/Time Served and or payment
 of \$ _____ plus costs and assessments as applicable*, balance is suspended with probation for _____ months/years
 and subject to SCDPPPS standard conditions of probation, which are incorporated by reference.

The sentence shall run ☒ CONCURRENT or ☐ CONSECUTIVE to sentence on: 6-13-2025☒ The Defendant is to be given credit for time served pursuant to S.C. Code § 24-13-40 to be calculated and applied by SCDC
 _____ days/months ☐ To include time spent on monitored house arrest prior to trial and sentencing

SPECIAL CONDITIONS:

☐ PTUP _____☐ No Contact with Victim☐ Domestic Violence Intervention Program☐ Hold for Inpatient Treatment☐ Sex Offender Registry pursuant to S.C. Code § 23-3-430☐ SAC/MHC if necessary☐ Central Registry of Child Abuse and Neglect pursuant to S.C. Code § 17-25-135☐ Other: _____☐ RESTITUTION See Separate Order (20% per S.C. Code §24-21-490(B))

§14-1-206 (Assessments 107.5%)

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3% to County (if paid in installments)

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Restitution \$ _____

FINE: \$ _____

\$ _____

\$ 100.00

\$ _____

\$ _____

\$ _____

\$ 25.00

\$ _____

\$ _____

\$ _____

\$ _____

\$ _____

\$ _____

\$ _____

\$ _____

\$ _____

TOTAL \$ 128.75/s/ K. Michelle Simmons

Clerk of Court/Deputy Clerk

Court Reporter

2768

Judge Code

6-13-2025

Sentence Date

Presiding Judge

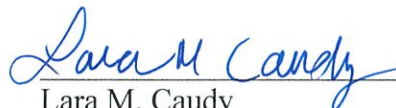
SCCA217B

01/27/2025

CERTIFICATE OF COUNSEL FOR APPELLANT

Counsel for appellant certifies that this Record on Appeal contains all material proposed to be included by any of the parties and not any other material and that this Record on Appeal complies to the best of my ability with the April 15, 2014 order from the South Carolina Supreme Court entitled "Revised Order Concerning Personal Identifying Information and Other Sensitive Information in Appellate Court Filings."

Respectfully Submitted,



Lara M. Caudy
Senior Appellate Defender

RECEIVED

Sep 18 2026

SC Court of Appeals

South Carolina Commission on Indigent Defense
Division of Appellate Defense
PO Box 11589
Columbia, SC 29211-1589

ATTORNEY FOR APPELLANT

This 18th day of September, 2026.