

The Grose Law Firm, LLC
404 Main Street, Greenwood, South Carolina 29646

E. Charles Grose, Jr.
Phone: 864-538-4466 Fax: 864-538-4405
E-mail: charles@groselawfirm.com
Web: GroseLawFirm.com

October 15, 2020

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OCT 19 2020

S.C. SUPREME COURT

The Honorable Daniel E. Shearouse
Clerk, Supreme Court of South Carolina
P.O. Box 11330
Columbia, SC 29211

Re: *Rickey Lee Blackwell v. State of South Carolina*
Case Number 2018-CP-42-00928
60 Day Status Report

Dear Mr. Shearouse:

This letter is the sixty-day status report pursuant to *In re Stays of Execution in Capital Cases*, 321 S.C. 544, 471 S.E.2d 140 (1996).

By letter dated February 18, 2020, we reported, "Mr. Blackwell's pre-hearing investigation is ongoing." While Mr. Blackwell's pre-hearing investigation is still ongoing, the COVID-19 pandemic has limited our investigation. To comply with social distancing guidelines, we have postponed all activities that require travel or in person interviews.

Finally, on October 13, 2020, the Department of Corrections reported 415 inmates have tested positive for COVID-19 at Broad River Correctional Institution, which is the location of our state's death row. Of this total, 202 inmates have active cases, 204 inmates have cleared cases, and nine inmates have died. Currently, death row is quarantined for the second time. The first quarantine occurred after an infected correctional officer potentially exposed the inmates to COVID-19. During the current quarantine, four inmates have tested positive for COVID-19. Mr. Blackwell is one of the inmates who tested positive. He was temporarily hospitalized at an outside medical facility, and his case remains active.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Please let me know if you have any questions or require additional information.

With kindest regards, I am

Yours very truly,



E. Charles Grose, Jr.

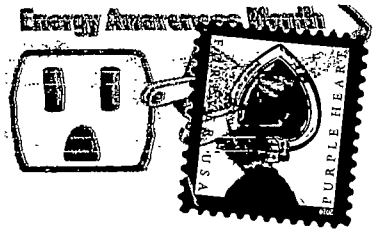
cc: The Honorable Daniel D. Hall
Lindsey S. Vann, Esquire
Melody J. Brown, Esquire
Samuel M. Bailey, Esquire

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