



The Supreme Court of South Carolina

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June 16, 2021

The Honorable Michelle Simmons
PO Box 287
Laurens SC 29360-0287

REMITTITUR

Re: The State v. Terrance Stewart
Lower Court Case No. 2015GS3000957, 2015GS3000958, 2015GS3000959
Appellate Case No. 2019-001584

Dear Clerk of Court:

The above referenced matter is hereby remitted to the lower court or tribunal. A copy of the judgment of this Court along with the earlier decision of the South Carolina Court of Appeals is enclosed.

Very truly yours,

Daniel E. Shearouse
DS

CLERK

Enclosure

cc: Alan McCrory Wilson, Esquire
David Matthew Stumbo, Esquire
Clarence Rauch Wise, Esquire
William M. Blich, Jr., Esquire
Jenny Abbott Kitchings, Esquire

**THE STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
In The Supreme Court**

The State, Respondent,

v.

Terrance Edward Stewart, Petitioner.

Appellate Case No. 2019-001584

ON WRIT OF CERTIORARI TO THE COURT OF APPEALS

Appeal from Laurens County
Frank R. Addy Jr., Circuit Court Judge

Opinion No. 28029
Heard November 18, 2020 – Filed May 19, 2021

**AFFIRMED IN PART, REVERSED IN PART, AND
REMANDED**

Clarence Rauch Wise, of Greenwood, for Petitioner.

Attorney General Alan McCrory Wilson and Senior
Assistant Deputy Attorney General William M. Blich
Jr., both of Columbia; Solicitor David Matthew Stumbo,
of Greenwood, all for Respondent.

JUSTICE FEW: A jury convicted Terrance Edward Stewart of distribution of heroin and two crimes based on his knowing possession of illegal drugs: trafficking in heroin and what we commonly refer to as "simple possession" of

oxycodone. We issued a writ of certiorari to review two aspects of the jury instructions: (1) the trial court's definition of constructive possession, and (2) the trial court's explanation of an inference of "knowledge and possession" that the court told the jury it may draw when illegal drugs are found on the defendant's property. We find the trial court erred by instructing the jury on the inference of knowledge and possession. We reverse the trafficking and simple possession convictions and remand those charges for a new trial. However, because the erroneous jury instruction did not prejudice Stewart on the distribution charge, we affirm the distribution conviction.

I. Facts and Procedural History

A confidential informant with the Laurens County Sheriff's Office purchased five small bags of heroin from Stewart with five marked \$20 bills. The following day, the Sheriff's Office obtained a search warrant for Stewart's home, where he lived with his girlfriend and where the heroin sale occurred. The officers who searched the home found 23.83 grams of heroin in a large bag in a plastic basket on top of the refrigerator, fifty-six oxycodone tablets in a tinfoil wrapper in the same plastic basket, a digital scale with a powdery residue on it, and \$2,730 in cash. Stewart was asleep on the couch when the officers entered. When he awoke, he asked for permission to put on his pants. An officer picked up Stewart's pants and found an additional \$1,173—including the five marked \$20 bills—in one of the pockets.

During trial, the trial court provided the parties a copy of its proposed jury instructions. Stewart objected to the trial court's definition of constructive possession and to the trial court's explanation of the inference of knowledge and possession. The trial court overruled the objections and gave the instructions as proposed. The jury convicted Stewart of trafficking in heroin, distribution of heroin, and simple possession of oxycodone. The trial court sentenced Stewart to concurrent prison terms of twenty-five years for trafficking, ten years for distribution, and five years for possession. The court of appeals affirmed in an unpublished opinion. *State v. Stewart*, Op. No. 2019-UP-209 (S.C. Ct. App. filed June 5, 2019). We granted Stewart's petition for a writ of certiorari.

II. The Possession Crimes

Trafficking and simple possession are statutory crimes. Simple possession was defined in the original Controlled Substances Act of 1971. Act No. 445, 1971 S.C. Acts 800, 822. The definition is now found in subsection 44-53-370(c) of the South Carolina Code (2018), which provides, "It shall be unlawful for any person

knowingly or intentionally to possess a controlled substance" Trafficking was added to the Act in 1981. Act No. 33, 1981 S.C. Acts 42, 44-46. It is defined in subsection 44-53-370(e) of the South Carolina Code (2018), which provides in part,¹ "Any person . . . who is knowingly in actual or constructive possession . . . of . . . (3) four grams or more of . . . heroin . . . is guilty of . . . trafficking"

Beginning in 1974, this Court decided a series of four cases—*Ellis*, *Brown*, *Lane*, and *Hudson*—in which we discussed what facts the State must prove to establish a violation of the simple possession statute and related crimes based on possession. See *State v. Ellis*, 263 S.C. 12, 22, 207 S.E.2d 408, 413 (1974) ("An accused[] . . . has possession of . . . contraband . . . within the meaning of the law when he has both the power and intent to control its disposition or use."). These opinions became the foundation for our law defining constructive possession in drug cases. They later became applicable to trafficking when the charge is based on possession. See *State v. Bultron*, 318 S.C. 323, 330 n.3, 333-34, 457 S.E.2d 616, 620 n.3, 622 (Ct. App. 1995) (discussing what the State must prove on a trafficking charge based on possession, citing *Ellis*).

From those four decisions, it is now clear that to prove trafficking (when based on possession) or simple possession, the State must prove two elements. First—as we originally stated—the State must prove the defendant had either actual physical custody of the drugs, or the right or power to exercise control over the drugs. See *State v. Hudson*, 277 S.C. 200, 202, 284 S.E.2d 773, 774-75 (1981) ("Actual possession" requires "actual physical custody" of the drugs and "constructive possession" requires "the right to exercise dominion and control" of the drugs); *Ellis*, 263 S.C. at 22, 207 S.E.2d at 413 (similar, but stating the first element as "the power . . . to control its disposition or use"). Second—as we originally stated—the State must prove the defendant had "knowledge of [the] presence" of the drugs. *State v. Brown*, 267 S.C. 311, 315, 227 S.E.2d 674, 676 (1976); see also *Hudson*, 277 S.C. at 202, 284 S.E.2d at 774 (requiring proof of knowledge). In *State v. Lane*, 271 S.C. 68, 245 S.E.2d 114 (1978), discussing *Ellis* and *Brown*, we explained "knowledge" means "the accused must have an 'intent to control [the] disposition or use'" of the drugs. 271 S.C. at 73, 245 S.E.2d at 116. Under *Lane*,

¹ Subsection 44-53-370(e) provides other ways the State may prove trafficking—inapplicable here—that do not require the State to prove knowing possession. In all trafficking cases, the State must prove the requisite quantity of the drugs. *Id.*

the second element is now stated as the defendant must have knowledge of the drugs and the intent to control their disposition or use.

III. Constructive Possession Jury Charge

In these four decisions—*Ellis*, *Brown*, *Lane*, and *Hudson*—the Court addressed only the sufficiency of the evidence necessary for the State to prove a violation of subsection 44-53-370(c)² and to survive a motion for directed verdict.³ While these decisions accurately defined constructive possession in the context of the sufficiency of the evidence presented in those cases, none of them dealt directly with fashioning a jury instruction defining a violation of the statute. Understandably, however, trial courts and commentators began drafting jury instructions under the guidance of these cases.⁴ Later, as we will discuss in Section IV, this Court relied on these cases to direct circuit judges on how to fashion jury instructions regarding simple possession and related crimes based on possession. *State v. Adams*, 291 S.C. 132, 135, 352 S.E.2d 483, 486 (1987).

² In *Ellis* and *Brown*, we addressed the same provision but from the previous Code, subsection 32-1510.49(c) of the 1962 South Carolina Code (Supp. 1975). *Brown*, 267 S.C. at 314, 227 S.E.2d at 676; *Ellis*, 263 S.C. at 15, 207 S.E.2d at 409-10.

³ See *Hudson*, 277 S.C. at 201, 284 S.E.2d at 774 ("Appellant . . . asserts the trial judge erred in failing to direct a verdict of acquittal because the evidence was insufficient to sustain his conviction for possession . . ."); *Lane*, 271 S.C. at 72, 245 S.E.2d at 116 (appellant "argues . . . there is no evidence that he had knowledge of the presence of the marijuana at his shop"); *Brown*, 267 S.C. at 315, 227 S.E.2d at 676 ("Brown contends . . . the State failed to introduce evidence from which a jury could reasonably infer that he had possession of the marijuana"); *Ellis*, 263 S.C. at 19, 207 S.E.2d at 412 (stating the "question presented for decision is whether the trial judge erred in refusing to grant the motion of the appellants for a directed verdict on the ground that the evidence was insufficient to sustain a verdict of guilty of possession of heroin").

⁴ See, e.g., Tom J. Ervin, *ERVIN'S SOUTH CAROLINA REQUESTS TO CHARGE – CRIMINAL 161-63* (1st ed. 1994) (defining possession in reliance on *Hudson*, *Brown*, and others); F. Patrick Hubbard, *JURY INSTRUCTIONS FOR CRIMINAL CASES IN SOUTH CAROLINA: DEFENDANTS' REQUESTED INSTRUCTIONS 194-97* (1st ed. 1994) (defining possession in reliance on *Hudson*, *Ellis*, and others).

In this case, the trial court began its jury instruction correctly, informing the jury the State must prove both required elements to convict Stewart of trafficking or simple possession. The trial court stated, "To prove possession, . . . the State must prove beyond a reasonable doubt the defendant had knowledge of, power over, and the intent to control the disposition or use of the drugs involved." As the court continued, however, it informed the jury, "Constructive possession means that the defendant had dominion and control or the right to exercise dominion and control over either the drugs itself or the property upon which the drugs were found."

This is the statement to which Stewart objected. If we considered the statement only in isolation as a complete definition of constructive possession, the statement would be problematic. The primary problem would be that the statement ignores the second element we described above. We are particularly concerned with the language "the property upon which the drugs were found." Under the four cases, if the State presents evidence the defendant had control over the property on which the drugs were located, then the trial court should deny a directed verdict motion. But, the mere existence of evidence the defendant had control over the property does not equate to a finding of constructive possession. It remains the burden of the State to convince the jury the defendant had the requisite knowledge and intent.

The legal principle of possession requires trial courts to instruct juries on both elements from *Ellis*, *Brown*, *Lane*, and *Hudson* when defining possession in cases in which the State is required to prove a violation of the statutes on trafficking (when based on possession), simple possession, and related crimes based on possession. First, the State must prove the defendant had the right and power to control the disposition or use of the drugs. For actual possession cases, the State may meet this burden by proving the defendant had actual physical custody of the drugs. For constructive possession cases, the State must prove by other evidence the defendant had the right and power to exercise control over the drugs. Second, the State must prove the defendant had knowledge of the drugs and the intent to control the disposition or use of the drugs. In slightly different terms, these are the same two elements we set forth in *Ellis*,⁵ *Brown*, *Lane*, and *Hudson*. See *Lane*, 271

⁵ In *Adams*, we stated "language found in *State v. Ellis* . . . is no longer valid." 291 S.C. at 135, 352 S.E.2d at 486. We were not referring to the *Ellis* definition of possession, but to this statement, "Ordinarily, when articles are in a dwelling house they must be deemed to be in the constructive possession of the person controlling the house in the absence of evidence to the contrary." *Ellis*, 263 S.C. at 22, 207 S.E.2d at 413. This statement is incorrect because it suggests the defendant bears

S.C. at 73, 245 S.E.2d at 116 (holding "the accused has such possession as is necessary for conviction 'when he has both the power (actual or constructive control) and intent to control its disposition or use'" (quoting *Ellis*, 263 S.C. at 22, 207 S.E.2d at 413)). In this case, the trial court instructed the jury on both elements. In addition, immediately after the potentially problematic statement, the trial court instructed the jury "mere presence at the scene where the drugs were found is not enough to prove possession." This likely had the effect of focusing the jury's attention on the second element.

If we consider the statement to which Stewart now objects only in isolation, it failed to convey both elements to the jury. However, we do not consider jury instructions in isolation, but as a whole. *State v. Herndon*, 430 S.C. 367, 371, 845 S.E.2d 499, 502 (2020). When considered as a whole, the trial court's definition of constructive possession adequately conveyed both elements to the jury. Therefore, we find no error in the trial court's definition of constructive possession.

IV. The Inference of Knowledge and Possession

Stewart also contends the trial court erred when it instructed the jury, "The defendant's knowledge and possession may be inferred when a substance is found on the property under the defendant's control." We agree.

In *Ellis*, the Court held the State presented evidence to support an inference of knowledge and possession sufficient to survive a directed verdict motion. 263 S.C. at 21-22, 207 S.E.2d at 413. Heroin belonging to the defendant's foster son was found in a guest bedroom in her home, the guest room was adjacent to her own bedroom, and she entered the guest room at least twice a week. 263 S.C. at 22, 207 S.E.2d at 413. In support of our holding, we stated "Where such materials are found on the premises under the control of an accused, this fact, in and of itself, gives rise to an inference of knowledge and possession which may be sufficient to carry the case to the jury on a charge of unlawful possession." 263 S.C. at 22, 207 S.E.2d at 413 (citing *State v. Harvey*, 187 S.E.2d 706, 714 (N.C. 1972)). In *Lane*, we found it "inferable that the appellant had the requisite intent," and thus, we affirmed the submission of the case to the jury. 271 S.C. at 73, 245 S.E.2d at 117. Similarly, in *Hudson* and *Brown*, we considered only the sufficiency of the State's evidence to survive a directed verdict motion. *Hudson*, 277 S.C. at 203, 284

the burden of proof. Otherwise, *Ellis* contains a correct explanation of the law of possession.

S.E.2d at 775 (holding there was sufficient evidence of the defendant's knowledge and possession of the heroin to take the case to the jury); *Brown*, 267 S.C. at 316, 227 S.E.2d at 677 (holding there was not sufficient evidence of the defendant's dominion and control over the marijuana). We discussed in each case the inference of knowledge and possession,⁶ but we did not suggest in any of the cases the trial court should explain the inference to the jury.

In *Adams*, this Court misinterpreted these decisions and directed trial courts to explain the inference of knowledge and possession to a jury. 291 S.C. at 135, 352 S.E.2d at 486. The challenged charge in this case was taken almost verbatim from *Adams*, in which we stated, "The proper charge on constructive possession is to instruct the jury that the defendant's knowledge and possession may be inferred if the substance was found on premises under his control." *Id.* (citing *Hudson*, 277 S.C. 200, 284 S.E.2d 773; *Brown*, 267 S.C. 311, 227 S.E.2d 674). Our reliance on *Hudson* and *Brown* was misplaced because neither case approves of the *trial court* explaining the inference of knowledge and possession to the jury. The inference is a valid one for the jury to draw, and the trial attorneys may argue to the jury whether the inference should be drawn. *State v. Burdette*, 427 S.C. 490, 503, 832 S.E.2d 575, 582 (2019).⁷ The *jury instruction* explaining the inference, however, is improper. We overrule *Adams* on that point. The jury charge instructing a jury it may infer knowledge or possession when a substance is found on property under the defendant's control should no longer be given.

V. Prejudice

We decided several cases recently addressing other jury charges "instructing juries on how to interpret and use evidence." *See Pantovich v. State*, 427 S.C. 555, 562, 832 S.E.2d 596, 600 (2019) (holding "the 'good character alone' charge . . . is improper" and listing cases). In one of those cases, *Burdette*, the trial court informed the jury it may infer the existence of malice from the defendant's use of a

⁶ In *Brown*, we relied on the absence of the inference of knowledge and possession, finding "the State failed to introduce evidence from which a jury could reasonably infer that he had possession of the marijuana." 267 S.C. at 315, 227 S.E.2d at 676.

⁷ In *Burdette*, we stated "some matters appropriate for jury argument are not proper for charging. 'Do jurors need the court's permission to infer something? The answer is, of course not.'" 427 S.C. at 503, 832 S.E.2d at 583 (quoting *State v. Belcher*, 385 S.C. 597, 612 n.9, 685 S.E.2d 802, 810 n.9 (2009)).

deadly weapon. 427 S.C. at 494, 832 S.E.2d at 577. We held the charge is never proper, in part because "the trial court has directly commented upon facts in evidence, elevated those facts, and emphasized them to the jury." 427 S.C. at 502-03, 832 S.E.2d at 582. In another case, *Cheeks*, we considered a "strong evidence" inference charge and stated it "unduly emphasizes that evidence, and deprives the jury of its prerogative both to draw inferences and to weigh evidence." 401 S.C. at 328-29, 737 S.E.2d at 484. The inference charge in this case had the same prejudicial effects we described in *Burdette* and *Cheeks*.⁸

The trial court's definition of constructive possession—including the requirement the State prove knowledge and intent—was followed almost immediately with the opposite statement, permitting the jury to infer the defendant's knowledge from the simple fact the drugs were on his property. To the extent the trial court earlier explained the knowledge and intent requirement, the inference of knowledge instruction negated that explanation. The improper explanation of the inference of knowledge and possession permitted the jury to find Stewart guilty of simple possession and trafficking without the State proving knowledge and intent, a scenario not permitted under the legal principle of possession as we explained it in *Ellis*, *Brown*, *Lane*, and *Hudson*.

We cannot say the error did not prejudice Stewart as to the trafficking and simple possession charges. *See Burdette*, 427 S.C. at 496, 832 S.E.2d at 578 ("[O]ur inquiry is not what the verdict would have been had the jury been given the correct charge, but whether the erroneous charge contributed to the verdict rendered." (quoting *State v. Middleton*, 407 S.C. 312, 317, 755 S.E.2d 432, 435 (2014))). As to the distribution of heroin charge, however, we find the erroneous jury instructions could not have contributed to the verdict. Proof of distribution does not require separate proof of possession. *See* S.C. Code Ann. § 44-53-370(a) (2018) (providing "it shall be unlawful for any person: . . . (1) to . . . distribute . . . a controlled substance").

VI. Conclusion

⁸ In *Cheeks*, despite finding error, we did not reverse because "the evidence was that [the defendant] was actively cooking crack cocaine when the warrant was served, and that he possessed the 650 grams of crack found on the kitchen counter." 401 S.C. at 329, 737 S.E.2d at 484. As quoted in the text of this opinion, however, the *Cheeks* Court explained the tendency of the erroneous inference charge to prejudice the defendant.

We reverse Stewart's convictions for trafficking and simple possession of heroin, and remand those charges to the court of general sessions for a new trial. We affirm Stewart's conviction for distribution of heroin.

AFFIRMED IN PART, REVERSED IN PART, AND REMANDED.

BEATTY, C.J., KITTREDGE, HEARN and JAMES, JJ., concur.

**THIS OPINION HAS NO PRECEDENTIAL VALUE. IT SHOULD NOT BE
CITED OR RELIED ON AS PRECEDENT IN ANY PROCEEDING
EXCEPT AS PROVIDED BY RULE 268(d)(2), SCACR.**

**THE STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
In The Court of Appeals**

The State, Respondent,

v.

Terrance Edward Stewart, Appellant.

Appellate Case No. 2016-002524

Appeal From Laurens County
Frank R. Addy, Jr., Circuit Court Judge

Unpublished Opinion No. 2019-UP-209
Submitted April 1, 2019 – Filed June 5, 2019

AFFIRMED

Clarence Rauch Wise, of Greenwood, for Appellant.

Attorney General Alan McCrory Wilson, Deputy
Attorney General Donald J. Zelenka, and Senior
Assistant Deputy Attorney General John Benjamin Aplin,
all of Columbia; and Solicitor David Matthew Stumbo, of
Greenwood, for Respondent.

PER CURIAM: Terrance Edward Stewart was convicted of distribution of
heroin, trafficking heroin, and possession of oxycodone, for which the trial court
sentenced him to a total of twenty-five years imprisonment. On appeal, Stewart

argues the trial court erred in (1) failing to suppress evidence seized from his residence when the search warrant was insufficient and the issuing magistrate had no recollection of the oral testimony given to supplement the affidavit; (2) failing to suppress evidence seized from his residence when the magistrate failed to keep records in accordance with section 17-13-171 of the South Carolina Code (2014); (3) failing to charge the jury on the lesser-included offense of possession of heroin with intent to distribute; (4) failing to dismiss the charges pursuant to section 44-53-410 of the South Carolina Code (2017); (5) charging the jury his knowledge could be inferred when a controlled substance was found on property under his control; and (6) charging the jury on constructive possession when such a charge eliminated any *mens rea* of possession. We affirm.

FACTS/PROCEDURAL HISTORY

In June 2015, a Laurens County grand jury indicted Stewart on charges of distribution of heroin, trafficking in heroin, and possession with intent to distribute oxycodone. The indictments all arose from an incident on January 22, 2015.

In April 2015, Stewart appeared in federal district court for a sentencing hearing; he had previously pled guilty to federal drug charges. During the proceeding, the federal court learned Stewart had been arrested for the instant state charges. The federal court heard testimony from Sergeant Matt Veal of the Laurens County Sheriff's Department (the Department), who described the circumstances of Stewart's arrest. The federal court found Stewart did not accept responsibility for his federal charges because he continued to involve himself with drug activity. The federal court therefore varied upward from the recommended sentence of six years and sentenced Stewart to a term of twelve years for his federal charges.

Prior to trial on his state charges, Stewart filed a motion to suppress evidence found during the search of his residence pursuant to a warrant, which he argued failed to establish probable cause. The trial court held an in-camera hearing regarding Stewart's arrest, the issuance of the search warrant, and the subsequent search.

Deputy Steven Sweat of the Department testified he received reports about a series of heroin overdoses in Laurens County. He explained one of the individuals who overdosed—Lawrence Cheatam—told police officers he bought the heroin from a man known as "Cheddar" and described the trailer Cheddar used to deal heroin. Deputy Sweat performed background research on the trailer and Cheddar; he learned Stewart owned the trailer and went by the nickname Cheddar. Cheatam

agreed to act as a confidential informant (CI) and participate in a "controlled buy." Officers gave Cheatham five \$20 bills whose serial numbers they recorded, equipped his person with a camera, and drove him in an unmarked car to Stewart's trailer. Once there, Cheatham briefly met with Stewart and returned to the car with five bags of heroin. Deputy Sweat then generated an incident report and search warrant and contacted a Laurens County magistrate.

Deputy Sweat explained he met with the magistrate in her home, where he presented the search warrant and supplemented it with sworn oral testimony. He testified he told the magistrate "about the background information, the controlled buy that occurred there, what [they] obtained during the controlled buy, the circumstances involved, [and] the audio and video surveillance of [Cheatham]." On cross-examination, he stated the magistrate did not take notes or record his oral testimony. He clarified his meeting with the magistrate spanned approximately twenty minutes, and he did not tell her anything that was not available in the incident report or video evidence.

At the conclusion of the in-camera hearing, the trial court denied Stewart's motion to suppress. The court found Deputy Sweat's oral testimony was sufficient for probable cause and noted Deputy Sweat did not present the magistrate any undiscoverable information.

Stewart later filed a pretrial motion to dismiss the state charges, arguing the state prosecution was barred on double jeopardy grounds. Stewart asserted the federal court effectively convicted him of the state crimes and punished him by increasing his federal sentence from six years to twelve. The trial court denied Stewart's motion to dismiss, finding the federal court did not convict him of his state charges.

In December 2016, the case proceeded to a two-day jury trial. Regarding the controlled buy operation, Sergeant Veal presented substantially the same testimony as he did to the federal court; Deputy Sweat gave substantially the same testimony as he did in-camera. Sergeant Veal also testified about the search of Stewart's trailer. He explained Stewart cooperated with the officers, who searched his person for contraband; in his pants pockets, they found the \$100 Cheatham used to purchase the five bags of heroin. Sergeant Veal explained officers found a large bag of "greyish powder" and "a tinfoil ball of pills" in a box on top of the refrigerator. Officers also uncovered a set of digital scales with grey powder residue on top of the refrigerator with the drugs; in other areas of the trailer, they found a pistol and several thousand dollars in cash.

Shana Sorrells testified as an expert in forensic toxicology and drug analysis. Sorrells explained the five bags of heroin Stewart sold to Cheatham weighed approximately 0.38 grams altogether. She stated the bag of grey powder officers found on top of the refrigerator contained a mixture of heroin and fentanyl and weighed 23.83 grams. She also stated she received and tested fifty-six oxycodone pills.

During a jury charge conference, Stewart raised concerns regarding the definition of constructive possession, the trial court's proposed charge on inferences, and a charge on possession with intent to distribute as a lesser-included offense of trafficking. The trial court overruled his objections and instructed the jury as follows: "To prove possession, ladies and gentlemen, the State must prove beyond a reasonable doubt [Stewart] had knowledge of, power over, and the intent to control the disposition or use of the drugs involved. Possession may be either actual or constructive." The trial court defined constructive possession as "dominion and control over either the drugs [themselves] or the property upon which the drugs were found." Regarding facts and inferences, the trial court stated, "[Stewart's] knowledge and possession may be inferred when a substance is found on the property under [his] control. However, this inference is simply an evidentiary fact to be taken into consideration by you along with the other evidence and to be given the weight you think it deserves."

The jury found Stewart guilty of all charges, and the trial court sentenced him to concurrent terms of twenty-five years imprisonment on the trafficking in heroin charge, ten years on the distribution of heroin charge, and five years on the possession of oxycodone charge. This appeal followed.

STANDARD OF REVIEW

In criminal cases, this court sits to review errors of law only, and is bound by the trial court's factual findings unless those findings are clearly erroneous. *State v. Edwards*, 384 S.C. 504, 508, 682 S.E.2d 820, 822 (2009). On review, this court is limited to determining whether the trial court abused its discretion. *Id.* An abuse of discretion occurs when the court's decision is unsupported by the evidence or controlled by an error of law. *State v. Black*, 400 S.C. 10, 16, 732 S.E.2d 880, 884 (2012). The appellate court "does not re-evaluate the facts based on its own view of the preponderance of the evidence but simply determines whether the trial court's ruling is supported by any evidence." *Edwards*, 384 S.C. at 508, 682 S.E.2d at 822.

LAW/ANALYSIS

I. Search Warrants

First, Stewart argues there was no basis for the trial court to find Judge Tucker made an independent determination that probable cause existed before signing the search warrant. Stewart contends that because magistrate had no independent recollection and did not take notes or record Deputy Sweat's oral testimony, no probable cause could be established, and the trial court should have suppressed the fruits of the search. We disagree.

An appellate court reviewing the decision to issue a search warrant should decide whether the magistrate had a substantial basis for concluding probable cause existed. *State v. King*, 349 S.C. 142, 149, 561 S.E.2d 640, 643 (Ct. App. 2002). "The magistrate should make a probable cause determination based on all of the information available to the magistrate when the warrant was issued. In determining the validity of the warrant, a reviewing court may consider only information brought to the magistrate's attention." *State v. Gore*, 408 S.C. 237, 247–48, 758 S.E.2d 717, 722 (Ct. App. 2014). "The affidavit must contain sufficient underlying facts and information upon which the magistrate may make a determination of probable cause." *State v. Philpot*, 317 S.C. 458, 461, 454 S.E.2d 905, 907 (Ct. App. 1995). "A search warrant affidavit which itself is insufficient to establish probable cause may be supplemented before the magistrate by sworn oral testimony." *State v. McKnight*, 291 S.C. 110, 113, 352 S.E.2d 471, 472 (1987).

Stewart's reliance on the magistrate's lack of recollection is unpersuasive. A reviewing court's inquiry into probable cause focuses on what information was provided to the issuing magistrate, not on what information the issuing magistrate remembers. *See Gore*, 408 S.C. at 247–48, 758 S.E.2d at 722. Deputy Sweat testified during trial about his meeting with the magistrate. Specifically, Deputy Sweat explained he presented the magistrate all of the information available in the search warrant, his corresponding affidavit, and his personal involvement in the controlled buy. Deputy Sweat confirmed he did not tell the magistrate any information that was not available in his affidavit or the video recording. Because Deputy Sweat's testimony showed what information was given to the magistrate and Stewart did not dispute the sufficiency of that information in establishing probable cause, we find no error in the trial court's admission of the evidence seized during the search.

Second, Stewart argues the magistrate failed to keep records required by section 17-13-141 of the South Carolina Code (2014). He asserts this failure prejudiced him because it prevented him from knowing whether she received sufficient evidence from Deputy Sweat to establish probable cause. We disagree and find Stewart failed to show prejudice from the magistrate's ministerial lapse. See S.C. Code Ann. § 17-13-141(A) (2014) (providing every judiciary official authorized to issue search warrants must keep records reflecting, among others, the reason for issuing the warrant); *State v. Wise*, 272 S.C. 384, 386, 252 S.E.2d 294, 295 (1979) (holding the failure to fulfill a statutory ministerial requirement does not void a warrant unless a defendant can show prejudice); *State v. Sheldon*, 344 S.C. 340, 343, 543 S.E.2d 585, 586 (Ct. App. 2001) ("In the context of the application of the exclusionary rule, our supreme court held the 'exclusion of evidence should be limited to violations of constitutional rights and not to statutory violations, at least where the appellant cannot demonstrate prejudice at trial resulting from the failure to follow statutory procedures.'" (quoting *State v. Chandler*, 267 S.C. 138, 143, 226 S.E.2d 553, 555 (1976))). As discussed above, Deputy Sweat unequivocally testified he did not provide the magistrate any information that was not contained in the warrant, his corresponding affidavit, and the video recording of the controlled buy. Thus, Stewart cannot show prejudice from the absence of the magistrate's records because the State provided him the information during discovery.

II. Lesser-Included Offense

Stewart argues the trial court erred in failing to charge the jury on the lesser-included offense of possession of heroin with intent to distribute. He asserts section 44-53-370 of the South Carolina Code (2017) mandated the charge even where the weight of the heroin was not at issue. We disagree.

"The law to be charged must be determined from the evidence presented at trial." *State v. Rivera*, 389 S.C. 399, 404, 699 S.E.2d 157, 159 (2010). "Where there is evidence from which the jury could infer that the defendant committed a lesser offense, the trial [court] must submit the lesser-included offense to the jury." *Id.* "A trial [court] is required to charge the jury on a lesser-included offense if there is evidence from which it could be inferred the lesser, rather than the greater, offense was committed." *State v. Green*, 397 S.C. 268, 288–89, 724 S.E.2d 664, 674 (2012).

Section 44-53-370(a)(1) designates a number of possession-based crimes for controlled substances, including manufacturing and possession with intent to

distribute. Subsection 44-53-370(e)(3) later provides in relevant part that any person who possesses at least four grams of heroin is guilty of the felony described as "trafficking in illegal drugs." Subsection 44-53-370(e)(3)(b) further provides that a person who is convicted of possessing between fourteen and twenty-eight grams of heroin must serve a minimum sentence of twenty-five years. The floating text at the bottom of the statute clarifies that possession with intent to distribute is a "lesser[-]included offense to the offense of trafficking *based upon possession . . .*." See § 44-53-370 (emphasis added). Thus, the plain reading of the statute reflects the legislature's intent to enact a hierarchical ladder of discrete offenses and punishments based upon the weight of the drugs possessed.

Moreover, our supreme court has consistently held possession with intent to distribute is only a lesser-included offense of trafficking when the weight of the drugs is in dispute. See *Sellers v. State*, 362 S.C. 182, 190, 607 S.E.2d 82, 86 (2005) ("A defendant is not entitled to a lesser-included charge of possession with intent to distribute when there is evidence that the amount involved exceeded minimum for trafficking."), *abrogated on other grounds by Smalls v. State*, 422 S.C. 174, 810 S.E.2d 836 (2018); see also *State v. Adams*, 291 S.C. 132, 135, 352 S.E.2d 483, 485–86 (1987) ("Because the amounts of marijuana and cocaine in evidence were less than the statutory amounts that establish a presumption of possession with intent to distribute, appellant was entitled to a charge on simple possession of these substances"). Here, there was no dispute the weight of the heroin found in Stewart's trailer exceeded the minimum amount to trigger the trafficking offense. Sorrells testified the bag of grey powder found on top of the fridge, which contained a mixture of heroin and fentanyl, weighed 23.83 grams. Stewart did not contest this amount; rather, his theory of defense was that the drugs were not his. Because the 23.83 grams of heroin triggered the statutory trafficking offense and Stewart did not dispute the weight, we find the trial court did not err in refusing to instruct the jury on possession with intent to distribute because no evidence supported such a charge. See *Rivera*, 389 S.C. at 404, 699 S.E.2d at 159 ("Where there is evidence from which the jury could infer that the defendant committed a lesser offense, the trial [court] must submit the lesser-included offense to the jury.").

III. Double Jeopardy

Stewart argues the trial court erred in failing to dismiss his charges pursuant to section 44-53-410 of the South Carolina Code (2017). He contends the federal sentencing court's upward variance based on his instant charges constituted a

conviction under the statute, barring future prosecution on a state charge. We disagree.

"If a violation of this article is a violation of a [f]ederal law or the law of another state, the conviction or acquittal under [f]ederal law or the law of another state for the same act is a bar to prosecution in this [s]tate." S.C. Code Ann. § 44-53-410 (2017). The statute "bars state prosecution for the same offense once jeopardy has attached in the federal action." *United States v. Manbeck*, 744 F.2d 360, 371 (4th Cir. 1984).

When considering Stewart's sentence length, the federal court heard testimony from Sergeant Veal about Stewart's arrest in connection with his state charges. The federal court's inquiry was not into whether Stewart was guilty of the state charges but rather into whether he failed to accept responsibility for his federal charges by continuing to involve himself in drug activity. The federal court made clear that the state charges were still pending and found that Stewart lost his acceptance of responsibility for the federal charges, thereby varying upward and increasing Stewart's federal sentence from six years to twelve. *See* 18 U.S.C. § 3553(a) (2018) (providing factors federal courts must consider when imposing sentences); FCJ Federal Sentencing Guidelines Manual § 3E1.1 (11/1/18) (providing it is appropriate for federal courts to consider a defendant's acceptance of responsibility during sentencing).

In *Witte v. United States*, the Supreme Court of the United States addressed the issue of whether a federal court's consideration of subsequent, uncharged crime imposed a punishment for double jeopardy purposes. 515 U.S. 389, 395–406 (1995). Witte pled guilty to attempted possession of marijuana with intent to distribute. *Id.* at 392–93, 396. Subsequently, Witte was indicted for conspiring and attempting to import cocaine; the alleged cocaine-related activities occurred in the same timeframe as the marijuana-related offenses. *Id.* at 394–95. Witte moved to dismiss the cocaine indictment on double jeopardy grounds, arguing the sentencing court considered his cocaine-related activities when sentencing him on his marijuana-related activities. *Id.* at 395. The Supreme Court stated Witte "clearly was neither prosecuted for nor convicted of the cocaine offenses during the [marijuana] criminal proceeding." *Id.* at 396. The Court continued, "[W]e specifically have rejected the claim that double jeopardy principles bar a later prosecution or punishment for criminal activity where that activity has been considered at sentencing for a separate crime." *Id.* at 398.

Witte is directly on point. Given the federal court's clear findings that Stewart's state charges were used only to reduce his acceptance of responsibility for unrelated federal charges, Stewart's argument on this issue lacks merit.

IV. Jury Instructions

Stewart argues the trial court erred in charging the jury on constructive possession. He asserts the jury charge allowed the jury to infer his knowledge and possession simply because the drugs were found on his property, thereby lowering the burden of proof. Stewart further argues the charge amounted to a charge on the facts. We disagree.

"In reviewing jury charges for error, we must consider the court's jury charge as a whole in light of the evidence and issues presented at trial." *State v. Adkins*, 353 S.C. 312, 318, 577 S.E.2d 460, 463 (Ct. App. 2003). "A jury charge is correct if, when the charge is read as a whole, it contains the correct definition and adequately covers the law." *Id.* at 318, 577 S.E.2d at 464; *State v. Jackson*, 297 S.C. 523, 377 S.E.2d 570 (1989) (recognizing that jury instructions must be considered as a whole and if as a whole, they are free from error, any isolated portions that might be misleading do not constitute reversible error). "To warrant reversal, a trial [court]'s refusal to give a requested jury charge must be both erroneous and prejudicial to the defendant." *State v. Mattison*, 388 S.C. 469, 479, 697 S.E.2d 578, 583 (2010).

Here, the trial court defined constructive possession as "dominion and control over either the drugs or the property upon which the drugs were found." The trial court further stated that Stewart's knowledge and possession could be inferred when a controlled substance was found on property under his control. We find no error in the trial court's instruction, as its definition of constructive possession is a correct statement of the law as it currently exists. See *State v. Hudson*, 277 S.C. 200, 203, 284 S.E.2d 773, 775 (1981) ("Where contraband materials are found on premises under the control of the accused, this fact in and of itself gives rise to an inference of knowledge and possession which may be sufficient to carry the case to the jury."); *State v. Adams*, 291 S.C. 132, 135, 352 S.E.2d 483, 486 (1987) ("The proper charge on constructive possession is to instruct the jury that the defendant's knowledge and possession may be inferred if the substance was found on premises under his control.").

We are also unpersuaded by Stewart's contention that the jury instruction amounted to a charge on the facts. Here, the trial court began its instructions by informing

the jury it had no opinion on the facts. After its instructions on constructive possession and inferences, the trial court stated the inference of knowledge rising from control over property where the drugs were found "is simply an evidentiary fact to be taken into consideration" and weighed accordingly. *See Adams*, 291 S.C. at 135–36, 352 S.E.2d at 486 ("The trial [court] should explain to the jury that it is free to accept or reject this permissive inference of knowledge and possession depending upon its view of the evidence."). Based on the foregoing, we find the trial court's jury instructions were proper.

CONCLUSION

Accordingly, Stewart's convictions are

AFFIRMED.¹

HUFF, THOMAS, and KONDUROS, JJ., concur.

¹ We decide this case without oral argument pursuant to Rule 215, SCACR.