

STATE GRAND JURY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA)
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 v.)
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)
 RICHARD ALEXANDER MURDAUGH,)
 RUSSELL LUCIUS LAFFITTE,)
)
 Defendants.)

Case No. 2022-GS-47-01

**SUPERSEDING
 INDICTMENT FOR BREACH OF TRUST
 WITH FRAUDULENT INTENT,
 COMPUTER CRIME, AND CRIMINAL
 CONSPIRACY**

At a session of the State Grand Jury of South Carolina, convened in Columbia, South Carolina, on April 14, 2022, the State Grand Jurors present upon their oath and charge as follows:

**COUNT ONE
 BREACH OF TRUST WITH FRAUDULENT INTENT
 VALUE \$10,000 OR MORE
 S.C. Code Ann. § 16-13-230
 CDR Code: 3424**

That RICHARD ALEXANDER MURDAUGH, in Hampton County, on or about December 21, 2011, did willfully, unlawfully, and feloniously convert to his own use, with intention to permanently deprive the owner of possession, goods to which he had been entrusted by the owner for the care, keeping, and possession, to wit:

While relying on his prestige and reputation as a lawyer, and the trust of Natarsha Thomas, who had come to MURDAUGH for help after a vehicular collision injured her, MURDAUGH caused a check with the description "Settlement Proceeds: Natasha Thomas", in the amount of \$325,000.00, to be made out to Palmetto State Bank and

disbursed from the Peters, Murdaugh, Parker, Eltzroth, and Detrick, P.A. (PMPED) Client Trust Account. MURDAUGH then used the \$325,000.00 trust account check – which was supposed to be compensation to Thomas for her injuries – to purchase a money order payable to a family member. Instead of compensating Thomas, MURDAUGH breached Thomas' trust and converted the money to his personal use.

All in violation of section 16-13-230 of the South Carolina Code of Laws, and such conduct involving a violation of the South Carolina Anti-Money Laundering Act, or a crime related to a violation of the Anti-Money Laundering Act, and such conduct also involving a crime involving computer crimes, or a conspiracy or solicitation to commit a crime involving computer crimes, and such conduct having not been authorized by law.

Against the peace and dignity of this State and contrary to the law in such case made and provided.

**COUNT TWO
BREACH OF TRUST WITH FRAUDULENT INTENT
VALUE \$10,000 OR MORE
S.C. Code Ann. § 16-13-230
CDR Code: 3424**

That RICHARD ALEXANDER MURDAUGH, in Hampton County, on or about August 29, 2012, did willfully, unlawfully, and feloniously convert to his own use, with intention to permanently deprive the owner of possession, goods to which he had been entrusted by the owner for the care, keeping, and possession, to wit:

While relying on his prestige and reputation as a lawyer, and the trust of Natarsha Thomas, who had come to MURDAUGH for help after a vehicular collision injured her, MURDAUGH caused a check with the description "Settlement Proceeds - Natasha

Thomas”, in the amount of \$25,245.08, to be made out to Palmetto State Bank and disbursed from the Peters, Murdaugh, Parker, Eltzroth, and Detrick, P.A. (PMPED) Client Trust Account. MURDAUGH then used the \$25,245.08 trust account check – which was supposed to be compensation to Thomas for her injuries – to purchase money orders also payable to Palmetto State Bank, and to otherwise obtain cash. Instead of compensating Thomas, MURDAUGH breached Thomas’ trust and converted the money to his personal use.

All in violation of section 16-13-230 of the South Carolina Code of Laws, and such conduct involving a violation of the South Carolina Anti-Money Laundering Act, or a crime related to a violation of the Anti-Money Laundering Act, and such conduct also involving a crime involving computer crimes, or a conspiracy or solicitation to commit a crime involving computer crimes, and such conduct having not been authorized by law.

Against the peace and dignity of this State and contrary to the law in such case made and provided.

**COUNT THREE
COMPUTER CRIME
VALUE MORE THAN \$10,000
S.C. Code Ann. § 16-16-20
CDR Code: 3110**

That RICHARD ALEXANDER MURDAUGH and RUSSELL LUCIUS LAFFITTE, in Hampton County, between on or about December 21, 2011, and on or about September 4, 2012, did wilfully, knowingly, maliciously, and without authorization and for an unauthorized purpose, directly or indirectly access or cause to be accessed a computer, computer system, or computer network for the purpose of: devising or executing a

scheme or artifice to defraud; obtaining money, property, or services by means of false or fraudulent pretenses, representations, promises; and committing any crime; to wit:

To further his scheme to misappropriate settlement proceeds that belonged to Natarsha Thomas, MURDAUGH requested transactions and thus caused the bank to access its systems in order to create money orders and other transactions. LAFFITTE as a Vice President of Palmetto State Bank and the conservator for Natarsha Thomas, did assist in causing these systems to be accessed to surreptitiously misappropriate to MURDAUGH client trust funds that LAFFITTE was entrusted and empowered to protect. These transactions exceeded \$10,000.

All in violation of section 16-16-20 of the South Carolina Code of Laws, and such conduct involving a violation of the South Carolina Anti-Money Laundering Act, or a crime related to a violation of the Anti-Money Laundering Act, and such conduct also involving a crime involving computer crimes, or a conspiracy or solicitation to commit a crime involving computer crimes, and such conduct having not been authorized by law.

Against the peace and dignity of this State and contrary to the law in such case made and provided.

**COUNT FOUR
CRIMINAL CONSPIRACY
S.C. Code Ann. § 16-17-410
CDR CODE: 0049**

That RICHARD ALEXANDER MURDAUGH and RUSSELL LUCIUS LAFFITTE, in Hampton County, from on or about December 21, 2011, to about September 4, 2012, did willfully, unlawfully, and feloniously unite, combine, conspire, confederate, agree and have a tacit understanding and agreement between two or more persons, for the purpose

of accomplishing an unlawful object or lawful object by unlawful means, including violations of S.C. Code Ann. § 16-13-230, and S.C. Code Ann. § 16-16-20, to wit:

While relying on his prestige and reputation as a lawyer, and the trust of the family of Natarsha Thomas, RICHARD ALEXANDER MURDAUGH convinced the Pinckney family to consent to the appointment of RUSSELL LUCIUS LAFFITTE as conservator for Natarsha Thomas. Thereafter, MURDAUGH as the attorney for the Natarsha Thomas, and LAFFITTE as a Vice President of Palmetto State Bank and the conservator for Natarsha Thomas, did conspire to surreptitiously misappropriate to MURDAUGH client trust funds that LAFFITTE was entrusted and empowered to protect, in order in part to allow MURDAUGH to convert the funds to his personal use.

All in violation of Section 16-17-410 of the Code of Laws of South Carolina, and such conduct involving a violation of the South Carolina Anti-Money Laundering Act, or a crime related to a violation of the Anti-Money Laundering Act, and such conduct also involving a crime involving computer crimes, or a conspiracy or solicitation to commit a crime involving computer crimes, and such conduct having not been authorized by law.

Against the peace and dignity of this State and contrary to the law in such case made and provided.

**COUNT FIVE
BREACH OF TRUST WITH FRAUDULENT INTENT
VALUE \$10,000 OR MORE
S.C. Code Ann. § 16-13-230
CDR Code: 3424**

That RUSSELL LUCIUS LAFFITTE, in Hampton County, on or about December 21, 2011, did willfully, unlawfully, and feloniously convert to his own use, with intention to

permanently deprive the owner of possession, goods to which he had been entrusted by the owner for the care, keeping, and possession, to wit:

While relying on his prestige and reputation as a lawyer, and the trust of the Pinckney family, who had come to Richard Alexander Murdaugh for help after a vehicular collision injured Natarsha Thomas, Murdaugh convinced the family to consent to the appointment of RUSSELL LUCIUS LAFFITTE as conservator for Natarsha Thomas. After receiving funds intended for Natarsha Thomas, Murdaugh caused a check with the description "Settlement Proceeds: Natasha Thomas", in the amount of \$325,000.00, to be made out to Palmetto State Bank and disbursed from the Peters, Murdaugh, Parker, Eltzroth, and Detrick, P.A. (PMPED) Client Trust Account. Murdaugh then took the \$325,000.00 trust account check to LAFFITTE, who had a fiduciary duty to protect the interests and well-being of Natarsha Thomas, but who instead helped Murdaugh use the trust account funds to purchase a money order payable to a family relative of Murdaugh. LAFFITTE thereby breached the trust of Natarsha Thomas by enabling Murdaugh to misappropriate Natarsha Thomas' trust funds to pay money to Murdaugh's relative.

All in violation of section 16-13-230 of the South Carolina Code of Laws, and such conduct involving a violation of the South Carolina Anti-Money Laundering Act, or a crime related to a violation of the Anti-Money Laundering Act, and such conduct also involving a crime involving computer crimes, or a conspiracy or solicitation to commit a crime involving computer crimes, and such conduct having not been authorized by law.

Against the peace and dignity of this State and contrary to the law in such case made and provided.

**COUNT SIX
BREACH OF TRUST WITH FRAUDULENT INTENT
VALUE \$10,000 OR MORE
S.C. Code Ann. § 16-13-230
CDR Code: 3424**

That RUSSELL LUCIUS LAFFITTE, in Hampton County, on or about August 29, 2012, to on or about September 4, 2012, did willfully, unlawfully, and feloniously convert to his own use, with intention to permanently deprive the owner of possession, goods to which he had been entrusted by the owner for the care, keeping, and possession, to wit:

While relying on his prestige and reputation as a lawyer, and the trust of the Pinckney family, who had come to Richard Alexander Murdaugh for help after a vehicular collision injured Natarsha Thomas, Murdaugh convinced the family to consent to the appointment of RUSSELL LUCIUS LAFFITTE as conservator for Natarsha Thomas. After receiving funds intended for Natarsha Thomas, Murdaugh caused a check with the description "Settlement Proceeds: Natasha Thomas", in the amount of \$25,245.08, to be made out to Palmetto State Bank and disbursed from the Peters, Murdaugh, Parker, Eltzroth, and Detrick, P.A. (PMPED) Client Trust Account. Murdaugh then took the \$25,245.08 trust account check to LAFFITTE, who had a fiduciary duty to protect the interests and well-being of Natarsha Thomas, but who instead helped Murdaugh convert the trust account funds into cash through a series of money orders which remained under certain regulatory thresholds. LAFFITTE thereby breached the trust of Natarsha Thomas by enabling Murdaugh to misappropriate Natarsha Thomas' trust funds to Murdaugh's benefit.

All in violation of section 16-13-230 of the South Carolina Code of Laws, and such conduct involving a violation of the South Carolina Anti-Money Laundering Act, or a crime

related to a violation of the Anti-Money Laundering Act, and such conduct also involving a crime involving computer crimes, or a conspiracy or solicitation to commit a crime involving computer crimes, and such conduct having not been authorized by law.

Against the peace and dignity of this State and contrary to the law in such case made and provided.

A *True* Bill



FOREPERSON

Alan Wilson
ALAN WILSON (scw/jejj)
ATTORNEY GENERAL