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| STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA |) | IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS |
| |) | |
| COUNTY OF RICHLAND |) | FIFTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT |
| |) | |
| Teresa Cribb, |) | CIVIL ACTION No.: 2022-CP-40- <u>04778</u> |
| |) | |
| Plaintiff, |) | |
| |) | |
| vs. |) | SUMMONS |
| |) | (Jury Trial Demanded) |
| |) | |
| Richland County Sheriff's Department, |) | |
| through Leon Lott, in his Official Capacity as |) | |
| Sheriff of Richland County, |) | |
| |) | |
| Defendant. |) | |

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED and required to file an Answer to the Complaint in the Clerk of Court of the Common Pleas where this action is pending, and to serve a copy of your Answer to the said Complaint to Goings Law Firm, LLC, 1510 Calhoun Street, Columbia, South Carolina, 29201, within thirty (30) days after the service hereof, exclusive of the day of such service; and if you fail to answer the Complaint within the time aforesaid, judgment by default will be rendered against you for the relief demanded in the Complaint. A copy of the Complaint is herewith served upon you.

Respectfully submitted,

By: /s/ Robert F. Goings
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September 13, 2022
 Columbia, South Carolina

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| through Leon Lott, in his Official Capacity as |) | |
| Sheriff of Richland County, |) | |
| |) | |
| Defendant. |) | |

The Plaintiff, complaining of the Defendant herein, would respectfully show unto this Honorable Court the following:

PARTIES AND JURISDICTION

1. Plaintiff Teresa Cribb, at all times relevant herein, is, and was, a citizen and resident of Lexington County, South Carolina. Teresa Cribb was a senior employee of the Richland County Clerk of Court's office, having worked in the Clerk's Office for over thirty (30) years.
2. Defendant Richland County Sheriff's Department (hereinafter "RCSD") is an agency of the State of South Carolina and Leon Lott serves, in his official capacity, as the elected Sheriff in Richland County. The deputies and employees of the Richland County Sheriff's Department serve at the direction and pleasure of Leon Lott. Pursuant to S.C. Code Ann Section 23-13-10, the sheriff "shall in all cases, be answerable for neglect of duty or misconduct in office of any deputy."
3. Jurisdiction and venue are proper in this Court because the acts or omissions that give rise to this action occurred at the Richland County Courthouse, located at 1701 Main Street, in Columbia, South Carolina.

FACTS

4. On March 10, 2022, Teresa Cribb was the victim of an unprovoked attack by a total stranger in the hallway of the Richland County Courthouse. The attacker, armed with an open knife, seized Teresa Cribb from behind and held her in a choke hold while attempting to stab, cut, and/or slice her neck.

5. The attacker was allowed to enter the Richland County Courthouse with this weapon due to the neglect, recklessness, failure to follow security procedures, and the unconscionable misconduct of the RCSD.

6. The RCSD has a pattern and practice of failing to follow security plans and policies designed to protect the safety of courthouse personnel, judges, litigants, and members of the general public at the Richland County Courthouse.

7. Prior to this incident, employees of the Richland County Clerk of Court's office, along with other courthouse personnel, complained to RCSD about the lack of security and its deputy's failure to enforce proper security measures.

8. The RCSD was largely understaffed at the Richland County Courthouse and allowed its deputies to disregard policies requiring them to physically screen individuals entering the building. The RCSD routinely failed to monitor the building, and at times, its deputies would leave early and keep the building open without any security present.

9. RCSD is charged with, and accepted the responsibility of, taking all necessary and reasonable action to ensure that building security policies and procedures are enacted and followed, and that the Richland County Courthouse was safe and secure and that people are not allowed to enter with weapons or other prohibited items.

10. RCSD's responsibility of securing the Richland County Courthouse begins with the security screening of individuals entering the building. This involves the application of security procedures and measures designed to deter, detect, and/or prevent weapons and contraband from entering the building or areas surrounding the facility.

11. RCSD deputies are responsible for patrolling the interior and exterior of the building and for monitoring hallways, common areas, entryways of ingress and egress, and individual courtrooms in order to provide safety for court personnel, judges, jurors, victims, prisoners, and the general public at large.

12. The Richland County Clerk of Court's Office is located in the Richland County Courthouse.

13. Teresa Cribb began working for the Richland County Clerk of Court's Office on January 21, 1991. For over 31 years, she served the Clerk's office with distinction, working for former Richland County Clerk of Court Barbara Scott and current Richland County Clerk of Court Jeanette McBride. For most of her career, Teresa Cribb worked in the criminal division of the Clerk of Court's office, but for the last 26 years, she was the Supervisor of Criminal Records.

14. On the morning of March 10, 2022, the Richland County Sheriff's Department allowed a female, named Latasha Boyd, to pass through courthouse security and a metal detector carrying a metal knife.

15. Latasha Boyd remained inside the courthouse for over seven (7) hours without any person from the RCSD making contact with her or inquiring about the nature of her purpose there or the reason she remained in the courthouse all day.

16. Latasha Boyd remained on the fourth floor of the courthouse most of the day, a floor which RCSD rarely monitored, even though it maintained an office on that floor.

17. At approximately 3:45 p.m., Teresa Cribb was walking back from the restroom on the fourth floor of the courthouse when Latasha Boyd grabbed Teresa Cribb from behind and put her in a chokehold with an open knife blade to her neck.

18. Teresa Cribb screamed for help, but no deputy of the RCSD was present on the fourth floor.

19. As Teresa Cribb attempted to push away from Latasha Boyd, the middle elevator opened, and Assistant Attorney General Jerrod Fussnecker walked out to see Teresa Cribb being attacked and yelled “what’s going on?” Teresa Cribb was able to get out of the headlock, as Latasha Boyd yelled to her, “I’m not going back to prison....I’m going to stab you....I’m going to kill you.”

20. Latasha Boyd told Assistant Attorney General Jerrod Fussnecker that she “should have stabbed her and stabbed her deep,” referring to Teresa Cribb.

21. Teresa Cribb fled into the RCSD’s office on the fourth floor to get security, but the RCSD’s office was completely empty. Teresa Cribb then yelled for a member of her office to call for security.

22. Eventually, deputies from the RCSD arrived on the fourth floor and briefly detained Latasha Boyd after she gave deputies her knife.

23. RCSD did not arrest Latasha Boyd or take her into custody on March 10, 2022.

24. RCSD did not complete an incident report on March 10, 2022.

25. RCSD did not act reasonably or appropriately in refusing to arrest Latasha Boyd, in failing to take her into custody, or otherwise promoting the safety of the courthouse employees it has a duty to protect.

26. A RCSD deputy told Teresa Cribb that it “was near 5 o’clock and time to leave, and they were not planning to take any action against Latasha Boyd.”

27. Teresa Cribb told the RCSD deputy that she wanted appropriate action to be taken against the attacker and she was handed a blank incident report for her to fill out.

28. The RCSD deputies tried to minimize the incident by telling Teresa Cribb that it was “just a little knife” and recommended that she not press charges against the attacker.

29. Latasha Boyd was allowed to leave the Richland County Courthouse.

30. The following day, after being prompted by Teresa Cribb and the Clerk of Court’s Office, RCSD prepared an incident report.

31. Four days later, on March 14, 2022, the RCSD finally issued an Arrest Warrant for Latasha Boyd for various criminal charges, including First Degree Assault and Battery.

32. Teresa Cribb suffered traumatic bodily injuries, including significant mental and emotional distress from the attack.

33. As a result of this attack, Teresa Cribb is no longer able to work at the Richland County Clerk of Court’s Office, a job that she has loved for over three decades.

34. Teresa Cribb has incurred, and will continue to incur in the future, medical expenses lost wages, loss of earning capacity, and loss of retirement benefits, and has suffered, and will continue to suffer, general damages such as physical and mental pain and suffering, mental anguish, emotional distress, and a loss of enjoyment of life, all of which are a direct and proximate result of Defendant’s wrongful acts and omission.

CAUSE OF ACTION
(Negligence)

35. Teresa Cribb Plaintiff realleges each and every allegation contained in the above paragraphs as if set forth herein verbatim.

36. RCSD owed a duty to provide security and ensure safety to all employees and patrons at the Richland County Courthouse.

37. RCSD undertook a duty to provide security and promote safety at the Richland County Courthouse through its actions.

38. RCSD's duty to provide safety and security in the Richland County Courthouse includes, but is not limited to, the duty to implement and enforce a courthouse security plan, perform security at the entrance checkpoint, physically screen individuals entering the building, utilize working metal detectors, actively monitor the inside and outside of the building, and properly staff and train its deputies on courthouse security.

39. On July 10, 2001, the Chief Justice of the South Carolina Supreme Court issued an Order concerning courthouse security in county courthouses. The Order found that "Circuit Courts, Family Courts, and Probate Courts of South Carolina have the need and authority to protect judges, parties and witnesses from physical harm and injury" and that "the methods of providing security for the Circuit Courts, Family Courts and the Probate Courts are *often unsatisfactory*, and are not uniform throughout the State." (emphasis added).

40. Based on the findings of "unsatisfactory" security in South Carolina courthouses, the Chief Justice of the South Carolina Supreme Court ordered that "to ensure courtroom safety, county governing authorities shall provide adequate equipment and/or personnel to provide reasonable physical screening of all individuals entering a courtroom. To ensure safety, law enforcement officers assigned to secure the courtroom should be properly trained to provide courtroom security."

41. Further, by Order of the South Carolina Supreme Court, dated May 28, 2019, the RCSD was responsible for establishing the local court security plan and to submit an updated security plan to the State Court Administrator.

42. RCSD routinely failed to follow the security plan implemented for the Richland County Courthouse, placing Teresa Cribb and others in harm at the courthouse.

43. RCSD was negligent, negligent *per se*, careless, reckless, grossly negligent in one or more of the following particulars, to wit:

- a. In allowing persons to enter the courthouse with weapons;
- b. In woefully understaffing deputies at the Richland County Courthouse;
- c. In staffing the Richland County Courthouse with deputies with little to no training or experience;
- d. In failing to properly and adequately train deputies to provide courthouse security;
- e. In failing to use operating metal detectors and security devices;
- f. In using metal detectors and scanners that were obsolete;
- g. In failing to provide reasonable screening of all individuals entering the courthouse;
- h. In failing to follow or enforce policies or procedures related to security checks and inspections for potential weapons or unauthorized items in the courthouse;
- i. In failing to abide by and follow the security plan for the Richland County Courthouse;
- j. In violating the security plan for the Richland County Courthouse;
- k. In failing to properly monitor each floor of the Richland County Courthouse;
- l. In failing to routinely walk the hallways to show a presence of law enforcement in and around the courthouse;

- m. In failing to properly equip its deputies to provide security to the courthouse; and
- n. In otherwise being negligent or reckless as a matter of law, as further discovery may reveal,

All of which were the direct and proximate cause of the injuries and damages suffered by Teresa Cribb.

44. Teresa Cribb is entitled to an award of actual and consequential damages against RCSD.

45. Teresa Cribb demands a jury trial.

WHEREFORE, Teresa Cribb prays this Honorable Court for judgment against RCSD, for: (a) actual damages; (b) pre-judgment interest; and (c) costs and attorney's fees in instituting this action; and (d) for such other and further legal and equitable relief as this Honorable Court may deem just and proper.

Respectfully submitted,

By: /s/ Robert F. Goings
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Columbia, South Carolina