

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF RICHLAND

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IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS
FIFTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

Peggy Ondrea, as Personal Representative
for the Estate of Jared Ondrea,

Plaintiff,

v.

New Hope Home Solutions, LLC, Brittany
Reynolds-Jackson, and South Carolina
Department of Mental Health,

Defendants.

C/A No. 2024-CP-40-01352

AMENDED SUMMONS
JURY TRIAL DEMANDED

TO: SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH:

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED and required to answer the amended complaint herein, a copy of which is herewith served upon you, and to serve a copy of your answer to this complaint upon the subscriber, as the address shown below, within thirty (30) days after service hereof, exclusive of the day of such service, and if you fail to answer the complaint, judgment by default will be rendered against you for the relief demanded in the complaint.

[Signature on following page]

Respectfully submitted,

s/Richard A. Harpootlian

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March 7, 2025
Columbia, South Carolina.

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA)
COUNTY OF RICHLAND)

IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS
FIFTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

Peggy Ondrea, as Personal Representative
for the Estate of Jared Ondrea,

C/A No. 2024-CP-40-01352

Plaintiff,

AMENDED COMPLAINT¹
JURY TRIAL DEMANDED

v.

New Hope Home Solutions, LLC and,
Brittany Reynolds-Jackson,

Defendants.

Peggy Ondrea, as Personal Representative of the Estate of Jared Ondrea, by and through undersigned counsel, complains of Defendants New Hope Home Solutions, LLC, Brittany Reynolds-Jackson, and South Carolina Department of Mental Health as follows:

NATURE OF THE CASE

1. This is an action for damages suffered as a result of the willful, wanton, reckless, grossly negligent, negligent, and negligent *per se* conduct of Defendants that directly and proximately resulted in the death of Jared Ondrea.

2. Plaintiff seeks monetary damages against Defendants on behalf of the Estate of Jared Ondrea for Defendants' conduct, which led to Jared's intense pain, suffering, and death, all as set forth herein.

¹ Pursuant to Rule 15(a), SCRCP, Defendants New Hope Home Solutions, LLC and Brittany Reynolds-Jackson have provided their written consent to this amendment.

PARTIES

3. Plaintiff Peggy Ondrea is the duly appointed personal representative of the Estate of Jared Ondrea and was Jared's paternal grandmother. Plaintiff was appointed as the personal representative by order of the Richland County Probate Court on January 31, 2024. Plaintiff is a resident of Richland County, South Carolina.

4. Defendant New Hope Home Solutions, LLC (hereinafter "New Hope") is a for-profit entity incorporated under the laws of the State of South Carolina with its principal place of business in Richland County, South Carolina.

5. At all times relevant, Defendant New Hope operated what it has described as a residential "care home" at 2214 Harper Street, Columbia, South Carolina.

6. At all times relevant to this Complaint, Jared lived and resided at Defendants' residential care facility located at 2214 Harper Street in Columbia, South Carolina (hereinafter the "Harper Street facility").

7. Upon information and belief, Defendant New Hope operates at least one other "care home" in Richland County.

8. Defendant New Hope is "owned and operated" by Defendant Brittany Reynolds-Jackson, who appears prominently in New Hope's advertising. Defendant Reynolds-Jackson is a resident of Richland County, South Carolina.

9. Defendant South Carolina Department of Mental Health ("SCDMH") is an agency of the State of South Carolina that is responsible for operating the State's mental hospitals, clinics, and centers, as well as providing mental health services to South Carolinians with mental illnesses. One of the centers operated by SCDMH is the Columbia Area Mental Health Center ("CAMH"). Both SCDMH and CAMH are principally located in Columbia, South Carolina.

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

10. This Court has subject matter jurisdiction over this action and the allegations set forth herein pursuant to Article V, Section 11 of the South Carolina Constitution.

11. Venue is proper in Richland County pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 15-7-30 and § 15-78-100 because the most substantial part of the alleged acts or omissions giving rise to the causes of action occurred in Richland County, South Carolina, and because all parties reside and have their principal places of business in Richland County.

FACTS

12. Jared Ondrea was a twenty-two (22) year-old vulnerable adult who suffered from lifelong mental illness. He was murdered on or about March 20, 2023 while he was a full-time resident at New Hope's Harper Street facility.

13. In 2022, prior to moving into the Harper Street facility, Jared was living with his paternal grandparents at their home in Chapin, South Carolina. At the time, Jared was also a mental health patient of SCDMH. At Jared's request, Plaintiff regularly drove and accompanied Jared to his health appointments.

14. In early 2023, employees of SCDMH recommended that Jared consider living in a residential care facility for the purpose of learning independent living skills and for socialization with his peer group. SCDMH, through its agents, employees, and representatives, advised Plaintiff and Jared that living with his grandparents was too sheltered of an environment and his best interests would be served by placement in a competent, qualified facility.

15. On or about mid-February, 2023, SCDMH, through its employee Ebony Hunter, specifically recommended the Harper Street facility to Jared and Plaintiff. This was the only

residential care facility recommended by SCDMH, even though other licensed and competent facility alternatives existed in Richland County and adjacent counties.

16. New Hope's Harper Street facility is approximately 1100 heated square feet with one communal bathroom and, according to New Hope's submission to the City of Columbia Zoning Board, was designed by New Hope to house up to eight residents.

17. Defendant Reynolds-Jackson, featured prominently on Defendant New Hope's website as its "owner and operator," has personally represented in documents submitted to the City of Columbia that the Harper Street facility is "designed to assist each individual in developing skills necessary to live independently within the community while maintaining one's safety and security with help from qualified staff." Defendant Reynolds-Jackson has also specifically stated that the "vulnerable population" New Hope seeks for its customer-base includes "individuals with mild to moderate mental illness."

18. In February 2023, Plaintiff and Jared met Ebony Hunter and New Hope's representatives at the Harper Street facility.

19. At the meeting, Defendants, through their agents, representatives, and employees, represented the Harper Street facility to Plaintiff and Jared as a full-time residential facility providing "housing and supportive services for vulnerable populations." Indeed, New Hope has represented that it houses "individuals with mild to moderate mental illness, the formerly homeless, or older adults who have limited resources." No mention was made to Plaintiff or Jared that the Harper Street facility served as a halfway house for released convicted criminals.

20. One of the residents of the Harper Street facility who was present when Plaintiff, Jared, and Ebony Hunter visited the facility was Marc-Anthony Cantrell:



Unbeknownst to Jared or Plaintiff, Cantrell had a significant, dangerous criminal history to include second-degree arson, multiple counts of animal cruelty, and drug convictions. In particular, Cantrell had confessed in 2018 to setting his grandmother's house on fire to cover up the fact he had brutally killed the family's three dogs in what was described by police as a "gruesome" scene. It was reported that he had also killed family pets in the past because "it felt good." Cantrell spent three years in state custody for these violent crimes and had been released on parole and probation less than a year before Jared and Plaintiff's visit to Harper Street. Further, and owing to his obviously unstable mental state, Cantrell was himself being treated by SCDMH upon his release.

21. During the Ondreas' home visit, Ebony Hunter recognized Cantrell, having seen him at SCDMH's CAMH facility where she works. He was, after all, hard to miss—during his time in prison, Cantrell had gotten devil horns tattooed on his forehead, signifying his love and worship of Satan. Ms. Hunter in fact personally spoke to Cantrell during this visit.

22. Despite knowing the obvious danger posed by a vulnerable adult like Jared living with a violent and deranged criminal like Cantrell, Plaintiff and Jared were repeatedly assured by

both SCDMH and New Hope that the Harper Street facility was suitable and safe and offered a beneficial and protected environment specifically for individuals, like Jared, who have mental illness or other disabilities. New Hope further represented to Plaintiff and Jared that the facility was locked down every night, that supervision was provided, and that Jared would be safe in the facility.

23. Based upon the Defendants' representations as set forth above and below, Jared and his family agreed to pay a monthly fee for New Hope's services and on or about February 23, 2023, Jared moved into the Harper Street facility. New Hope required Jared to agree to the "New Hope Home Solutions House Rules" as a condition of living there.

24. At all times relevant hereto, and upon information and belief, New Hope's facility, although unlicensed, operated as a community residential care facility as defined by S.C. Code Ann. § 44-7-130(6), *et seq.* and S.C. Code Ann. § 44-7-260, which require licensure of such facilities.

25. Upon information and belief, at all times relevant hereto, New Hope's Harper Street facility was neither licensed by the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control ("SCDHEC") nor certified by the South Carolina Department of Disabilities and Special Needs.

26. In fact, upon information and belief, New Hope did not even possess a business license from the City of Columbia, nor was it appropriately zoned for the business it was conducting on Harper Street, having abandoned a previous effort to receive a zoning variance. All of this information was known or easily knowable by SCDMH had it conducted even a cursory investigation into this facility.

27. At all times relevant, New Hope and Reynolds-Jackson purported to offer long-term residential room and board for more than two unrelated adults (“residents”) with mental illness or other disabilities and represented to residents and the public that they provided a degree of personal assistance and care for their residents including but not limited to:

- a. Assisting and/or directing residents with activities of daily living;
- b. Assisting residents with bathing and grooming;
- c. Assisting residents with cleaning rooms;
- d. Providing meals;
- e. Washing residents’ laundry;
- f. Being aware of residents’ general whereabouts;
- g. Strictly controlling and monitoring residents’ movements at the facility including but not limited to curfews and requiring a “pass” to leave;
- h. Monitoring residents’ activities while on the premises to purportedly ensure the residents’ personal safety, health, and well-being;
- i. Providing access to medical care;
- j. Controlling movements in and out of the facility by locking the main door each night;
- k. Controlling bathing times for residents;
- l. Controlling meals and snacks eaten by residents;
- m. Punishing residents for non-compliance with the “house rules” by preventing residents from leaving the facility; and
- n. Providing appropriate oversight to ensure a safe environment for New Hope’s vulnerable resident population.

28. On Monday, March 20, 2023, about a month after Jared moved into the Harper Street facility, Plaintiff and another family member picked Jared up to spend a day out at the lake. Plaintiff had been on an extended vacation out of the country and was excited to be back and spend time with Jared.

29. Upon first seeing Jared, however, Plaintiff was alarmed because Jared appeared with visible bruises (that were healing) on his neck and face. When questioned about the bruises, Jared made excuses for the injuries. Family members, including Plaintiff, also observed that Jared’s appearance was unkempt, his hair was not combed, his clothes were dirty, and his nails were long and dirty. This was plainly at odds with New Hope’s promises to assist Jared with

grooming and bathing. That same day, Plaintiff took Jared to have his nails professionally manicured.

30. Plaintiff, along with Jared's grandfather, drove Jared to get snacks before returning Jared to the Harper Street facility prior to curfew. This was the last time Jared's family members ever saw him alive.

31. Two days later, on March 22, 2023, Plaintiff and Jared's grandfather arrived at the Harper Street address to pick up Jared for an appointment. However, Jared was not outside and no one at the Harper Street facility would answer the front door. Given Jared's sleep habits, it was sometimes difficult to wake him, so Plaintiff assumed he was still asleep and left.

32. The following day, Thursday, March 23, 2023, Defendant New Hope called Jared's family to report—for the first time—that Jared had been missing since Monday night, March 20, when he was dropped off by the family. Defendants' employees expressed confusion and uncertainty regarding the timing of when Jared disappeared.

33. Despite the fact that Jared had been missing for days, New Hope and Reynolds-Jackson failed to report the disappearance to law enforcement. In fact, upon information and belief, no one at New Hope *ever* reported Jared's disappearance to law enforcement.

34. Upon information and belief, New Hope and Reynolds-Jackson additionally failed to conduct any investigation of Jared's unexplained disappearance and further failed to retain the video surveillance footage for the period including the time of Jared's disappearance.

35. Upon learning from New Hope on March 23, 2023 that Jared had been missing for days, Plaintiff immediately went to the police to make a missing person's report. Plaintiff advised law enforcement that Jared was an at-risk vulnerable adult given his mental health history, his unfamiliarity with the geographic location, and his general preference for isolation in his living

quarters based upon his general discomfort and fear of people. Importantly, Plaintiff reported that Jared's disappearance was alarmingly out-of-character for Jared.

36. Plaintiff, along with Jared's family and friends and a host of volunteers, spent every available hour searching for Jared. Volunteers canvased the area, passed out fliers, and spoke to other residents at the Harper Street facility, including Cantrell. Only later did Plaintiff learn of Cantrell's prior criminal history and violent tendencies.

37. Volunteers and others who interacted with Cantrell during the search found his behavior to be odd and suspicious and noticed that other residents appeared to be fearful of Cantrell. Upon information and belief, that information was reported to law enforcement.

38. The search for Jared uncovered no leads, only questions. In early July of 2023, several months after Jared's disappearance, a second resident in the Harper Street facility, Deshea Butler, also went inexplicably missing. Deshea's body was discovered a few days later across the street in a wooded area.

39. Based on video surveillance (which was not reviewed until days after the fact), Cantrell was arrested and charged with Deshea's murder. After his arrest, Cantrell confessed to police that he had also killed Jared and provided specific, graphic details as to how the murder was conducted and the means of disposing of Jared's body.

40. More particularly, Cantrell confessed that he killed Jared by placing a bag over his head and strangling him with a rope. He then placed Jared's body in a blue Rubbermaid bin, carried his body through the house and outside, and placed Jared's body in a City of Columbia garbage can. The garbage can was later picked up by the City of Columbia, and Jared's remains were presumably discarded at the landfill. None of this was ever discovered by Defendants until Cantrell

confessed to murdering Jared months later, despite the facility being equipped with cameras. Jared's body was never recovered, and he had to be judicially declared dead.

41. No doubt emboldened by his successful murder of Jared, Cantrell murdered Deshea months later, also by strangulation, and placed his body behind the fence of 2213 Harper Street wrapped up tightly in a black and white blanket with trash found on top of the head. A rock was found on top of the body. This time, Cantrell was recorded on camera disposing of Deshea's body. Upon viewing the video, CPD was able to locate Deshea's body in a state of advanced decomposition. CPD then obtained a warrant for Cantrell's arrest.

42. When he was interviewed, Cantrell told police that he killed Jared and Deshea because his alternate personality, Robert Baldwin, had instructed him to do so. He also told police that he had cut off one of Jared's ears, and both of Deshea's, and ate them "so he could gain their power." He further told police that, after he had strangled Deshea, he hit him in the head with one of his lifting weights so that he could drink his blood, which he did over several days from a coffee cup. Dr. Darren J. Monroe conducted an autopsy on Deshea on July 7, 2023, and his final anatomical diagnoses were consistent with Cantrell's statements:

FINAL ANATOMICAL DIAGNOSES

- I. LIGATURE STRANGULATION:
 - A. BLACK CLOTH BELT-LIKE LIGATURE WRAPPED ABOUT NECK TIGHTLY.
 - B. FRACTURE OF THE SUPERIOR THYROID CARTILAGE HORNS.
- II. BLUNT TRAUMA OF THE HEAD:
 - A. MINIMALLY LEFT PARIETAL SKULL FRACTURE.
 - B. SEE FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGY REPORT FROM THE RICHLAND COUNTY CORONER'S OFFICE.
- III. EXTERNAL LEFT EAR PREDOMINANTLY ABSENT.
- IV. BODY IN A STATE OF ADVANCED DECOMPOSITION.

- V. ADDITIONAL FINDINGS:
A. PULMONARY ANTHRACOSIS.
B. APPENDIX, PANCREAS, AND ADRENAL GLANDS NOT IDENTIFIED.

43. On September 12, 2023, a Richland County grand jury indicted Cantrell for Jared's murder. Cantrell's murder charges are pending in the Richland County Court of General Sessions.² Cantrell has also been indicted for the murder of Deshea, and that charge is also pending in the Richland County Court of General Sessions.³

44. Sadly, every bit of this was avoidable. Cantrell—who had every telltale sign of a budding serial killer—never should have been placed in a home with vulnerable adults. SCDMH, which had been treating Cantrell since his release from prison, was aware of Cantrell's living arrangements, and was also aware of his past violent crimes of arson and animal cruelty. SCDMH was further aware that Cantrell had continued to suffer from severe mental illness while in prison, and that these problems had persisted after his release from prison.

45. In fact, just a few months prior to murdering Jared, Cantrell had been placed in an in-patient psychiatric facility after he cut himself believing that there were bugs crawling under his skin. During his treatment by SCDMH, Cantrell reported auditory hallucinations that had preceded harmful and malicious behavior in the past, paranoia, suicidal ideations, and other alarming symptoms and behavior. Upon information and belief, SCDMH failed to take any appropriate steps to treat Cantrell or to otherwise prevent the obvious danger that he posed to the public and to those living in close proximity to him. The mental health counselor who was supposed to be treating Cantrell, in fact, did not even bother to review Cantrell's criminal history

² *State of South Carolina v. Marc-Anthony Rickson Cantrell*, No. 2023-GS-40-08720 (Richland Cnty. Gen. Sessions).

³ *State of South Carolina v. Marc-Anthony Rickson Cantrell*, No. 2023-GS-40-00735 (Richland Cnty. Gen. Sessions).

or mental health records prior to treating him, and otherwise lacked the training and experience to treat someone with the kind of serious mental illnesses from which Cantrell suffered.⁴

46. Most egregiously, however, SCDMH—which was also treating Jared—affirmatively recommended to Jared that he should live with Cantrell in an unlicensed and illegal care home. SCDMH made this recommendation knowing full well the danger that Cantrell posed to himself and others, and knowing full well that New Hope’s facility had no business housing mental health patients of any sort—much less ones with the type of violent tendencies displayed by Cantrell. Allowing Cantrell to live among vulnerable adults, and placing Jared in that home with Cantrell, was a recipe for disaster that SCDMH could and should have foreseen and prevented.

47. For their part, New Hope and Reynolds-Jackson represented to prospective residents and the public that the Harper Street facility would protect residents’ “safety and security with help from qualified staff.”⁵ They did no such thing. In Jared’s case, Cantrell was able to strangle Jared with a rope within the cramped, locked confines of the 1100 square-foot facility (a space roughly the size of a half-tennis court), and did so without anyone noticing. Cantrell then, still somehow unobserved by New Hope, shoved Jared’s lifeless body into a large plastic bin, dragged the heavy bin down a common hallway and out the door of the facility, and deposited Jared’s body in one of the facility’s trashcans where it remained for days before being picked up by the City of Columbia’s trash service.

⁴ In fact, during her deposition in this case, the mental health counselor who was treating Cantrell testified that she had received a total of two (2) days of instructional training from SCDMH, and that she used Google to research mental health treatment methods.

⁵ See Defendants’ August 19, 2021 Special Exception Application to the City of Columbia, Board of Zoning Appeals.

48. Inexplicably, not only did New Hope's employees fail to prevent the murder from occurring on their watch in their facility, but they also failed to notice for *three days* that Jared—a resident and vulnerable adult in their care—was missing. Upon information and belief, New Hope's employees only noticed Jared's disappearance when Cantrell told them they should be alarmed that Jared was missing. Even then, they never called the police to search for Jared and never appeared to investigate the disappearance at all. New Hope's employees were, in fact, dismissive and uninterested in the whereabouts of Jared in their interactions with Plaintiff and others.

49. Sadly, months later, Cantrell killed a second resident inside the Harper Street facility and again did so undetected by New Hope. Just as he had done with Jared, Cantrell stuffed this second resident's body into a plastic container, carried it outside (with the body visible), and then placed the body in a trash can that he rolled across the street where law enforcement found his body in a wooded area. Although Cantrell is apparently seen on video disposing of the body, New Hope not only failed to see it in real time, but it appears the video (whether viewed by New Hope or the police) was not viewed for days after the fact.

50. Upon information and belief, New Hope continues to operate the Harper Street facility, and continues to endanger the lives of vulnerable adults in our community.

51. At no time prior to Jared's death did any of the Defendants reveal to either Plaintiff or Jared that Cantrell had a significant, dangerous criminal history or that he continued to suffer from serious mental illness that posed an obvious danger to those around him, and a particularly obvious danger to vulnerable adults like Jared. Defendants knew or, at the very least, should have known of Cantrell's violent tendencies and criminal history and the danger he posed to others.

52. Indeed, in order for Jared to be murdered, a calamity of errors had to occur. SCDMH had to fail to provide any appropriate treatment to Cantrell or ensure that he was placed in a facility that could cope with his condition. It had to recommend a facility to Jared that not only housed this violent and dangerous individual, but also failed to possess any appropriate licensure, infrastructure, or staff to care for such individuals. New Hope and Reynolds-Jackson had to operate that facility, knowing that it was not equipped to perform the kinds of services it was offering to the public, and failing to conduct any sort of background check on its residents, instead consciously imperiling the safety of its residents for the sake of financial gain. Other state agencies that are supposed to regulate facilities of this kind had to fail to detect or correct these wanton violations of state law. Local law enforcement as well had to fail to detect or correct this illegal establishment that was operating outside of local zoning ordinances and without a business license. After Jared's death, law enforcement failed to put two-and-two together and link Jared's disappearance to the violent and unstable convict living with him, allowing Jared's murder to go undiscovered for months. Even the City of Columbia's trash service failed to detect a human body among the refuse that it collected, causing Jared's final resting place to be a landfill. At every turn, the mental health infrastructure of this state failed Jared. Plaintiff brings this action to remedy those errors.

FOR A FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION
(Gross Negligence, Negligence, Negligence *Per Se*)
(As to Defendants New Hope and Reynolds-Jackson)

53. Plaintiff realleges the preceding paragraphs as if repeated fully herein.

54. At all times relevant to this Complaint, Defendants New Hope and Reynolds-Jackson owed Jared a duty of care arising from contract, relationship, status, special circumstances, and by way of their misrepresentations to Jared and Plaintiff that they possessed the expertise or specialized knowledge and skill that would make it reasonable for Jared to rely upon them.

55. Additionally, New Hope and Reynolds-Jackson had a duty of care toward Jared arising from statute, specifically S.C. Code Ann. § 44-7-120 *et seq.*

56. The essential purpose of the statutes referenced above is to protect from the kind of harm Jared suffered, and Jared is a member of the class of persons the statutes are designed to protect.

57. At all times relevant to this Complaint, New Hope and Reynolds-Jackson represented to Jared and Plaintiff that the Harper Street facility was:

- a. Operating in conformity with all federal, state, and local laws, rules, regulations, procedures, permitting requirements, and guidelines;
- b. Properly staffed, supervised, and equipped to meet the needs of its residents to include providing a safe and secure environment for vulnerable adults;
- c. Properly staffed, supervised, and equipped to monitor the safety of its residents;
- d. Properly staffed, supervised, and equipped to implement the curfews it had established; and
- e. Property staffed, supervised, and equipped to meet the personal care and other needs of its residents.

58. These Defendants further undertook the duty to provide care for Jared in accordance with their own internal policies, rules, and guidelines and in accordance with the prevailing and acceptable standards of care for community residential care facilities and/or residential “home care” facilities in South Carolina and nationally.

59. Although New Hope and Reynolds-Jackson held the Harper Street facility out as a compliant facility in their undertaking to provide care for Jared, these Defendants, by and through their agents, servants, directors, owners, and employees were negligent, grossly negligent, negligent *per se*, reckless, willful, wanton, and intentional in their failure to care for Jared as follows:

- a. Departing and deviating from recognized and generally accepted standards, practices, and procedures in operating community residential care facilities and like facilities;

- b. Departing and deviating from recognized and generally accepted standards, practices, and procedures in caring for vulnerable adults such as Jared;
- c. Failing to obtain the necessary licenses, permits, and certifications for operating the Harper Street facility;
- d. Operating without the necessary licenses, permits and/or certifications in blatant violation of legal requirements and in an explicit effort to avoid oversight and liability;
- e. Failing to ensure compliance with state, federal, and local laws, regulations, permitting requirements, guidelines, and ordinances to protect the safety and health of their residents, so as to constitute negligence *per se*;
- f. Failing to implement adequate policies and procedures to ensure compliance with state, federal, and local laws and regulations;
- g. Failing to have full and complete internal rules, policies, and guidelines aimed at protecting the vulnerable adults in their care;
- h. Failing to abide by their own internal rules, policies, and guidelines;
- i. Failing to provide the care, supervision, and monitoring for residents, including Jared, required under their own representations and promises to residents as to the care and supervision they would provide;
- j. Failing to properly manage and operate the Harper Street facility;
- k. Failing to provide the care, supervision, and monitoring for residents required under South Carolina, federal, and local laws to protect residents' health and safety;
- l. Failing to hire competent and educated staff in order to meet their duty of care to their residents;
- m. Failing to hire and retain a sufficient number of qualified staff in order to meet their duty of care to residents;
- n. Failing to properly train their staff in order to meet their duty of care to their residents;
- o. Failing to properly train their staff to monitor the health and safety of their residents;
- p. Failing to properly supervise their staff and residents to ensure the safety of their residential population;

- q. Retaining staff who were not qualified to adequately and appropriately care for their residents;
- r. Failing to establish resident admission criteria that comply with all federal, state, and local laws and regulations;
- s. Failing to adequately and properly vet and screen residents for criminal and violent histories which vetting and screening is necessary to protect and safeguard the lives of vulnerable adults in their care;
- t. Failing to put into place safeguards to maintain the safe and controlled separation of residents with differing levels of disability, especially from those with dangerous propensities known, or which should have been discovered, by any degree of diligence;
- u. Failing to conduct minimum background searches and criminal records searches as to potential residents in order to guard against the very danger that occurred here;
- v. Allowing convicted felons with violent propensities to live amongst vulnerable adults in their care;
- w. Admitting or allowing a resident to live at the Harper Street facility who was likely to, and in fact did, endanger others;
- x. Failing to notify residents that the facility housed one or more felons with violent propensities;
- y. Failing to disclose to Plaintiff and Jared that the Harper Street facility housed felons recently released from the South Carolina Department of Corrections;
- z. Failing to notify Jared that he was living with a convicted felon who had repeatedly and brutally killed animals and set a prior residence on fire;
- aa. Failing to have security and operational security cameras on site to protect their residents, or if they had such cameras, failing to use them properly;
- bb. Failing to immediately screen and maintain surveillance footage when Jared went missing;
- cc. Failing to notice that Jared was missing;
- dd. Failing to report Jared's missing status immediately to law enforcement;

- ee. Failing to report Jared's missing status immediately to Jared's family and contacts;
- ff. Failing to ensure their residents were free from abuse and neglect, including abuse perpetuated by other residents;
- gg. Failing to investigate bruises and other injuries appearing on Jared's face, neck, and other parts of the body in the days and weeks prior to Jared's murder by Cantrell;
- hh. Failing to investigate odd behavior shown by vulnerable residents as it related to Cantrell, including other residents' fear of Cantrell and Cantrell's behavior in controlling the movements of other residents;
- ii. Failing to provide personal care to Jared, evidenced by the fact that his appearance was dirty and unkempt while under their care;
- jj. Neglecting to provide appropriate care for Jared, a vulnerable adult;
- kk. Failing to properly fund the Harper Street facility to ensure proper safety, training, and supervision of residents;
- ll. Failing to properly observe and document the movements of residents and to monitor safety concerns;
- mm. Failing to properly ensure that residents were appropriate for the level and kind of care provided at the Harper Street facility; and
- nn. In such other particular ways as may be revealed during discovery and trial in this matter.

60. The acts and omissions above constitute gross deviations from the proper standards of care.

61. The injury and death to Jared arising from these Defendants' negligent acts and omissions was foreseeable.

62. As a direct and proximate result of these Defendants' grossly negligent, negligent *per se*, negligent, reckless, willful and wanton acts and/or omissions as set forth above, Jared was in fear for his life, seriously injured, suffered needlessly both physically and mentally, and died from injuries sustained at the Harper Street facility.

63. By and through these Defendants' actions and/or omissions set forth above, and by and through their employees, agents, managers, representatives, owners, and persons as yet unknown, these Defendants demonstrated a conscious, intentional disregard and indifference to the rights, safety, and life of Jared Ondrea.

64. Plaintiff is therefore entitled to judgment against New Hope and Reynolds-Jackson for actual, consequential, and punitive damages.

FOR A SECOND CAUSE OF ACTION
(Gross Negligence/Recklessness)
(As to Defendant SCDMH)

65. Plaintiff realleges the preceding paragraphs as if repeated fully herein.

66. SCDMH had a duty to Jared, who was a patient of SCDMH, and to Plaintiff to exercise reasonable care in its dealings with and treatment of Jared.

67. In addition, SCDMH has a statutory duty to provide care and treatment to its patients that is suited to their needs, and that care and treatment "must be administered skillfully, safely, and humanely with full respect for the patient's dignity and personal integrity." S.C. Code Ann. § 44-22-50.

68. SCDMH, by and through its agents and employees, abjectly failed to meet its duties to Jared and to Plaintiff, and was grossly negligent and reckless in the following ways:

- a. By recommending to Plaintiff and Jared that he live in a facility that was not appropriately suited to his needs;
- b. By recommending to Plaintiff and Jared that he live in a facility that was operating without the necessary licenses, permits, and other qualifications required for the legal operation of such a facility;
- c. By recommending to Plaintiff and Jared that he live in a facility that was otherwise not in compliance with state, federal, and local laws;
- d. By recommending to Plaintiff and Jared that he live in a facility that lacked the appropriate staff and infrastructure to provide for his needs and his safety;

- e. By failing to investigate and/or inspect the facility before recommending it to Jared and Plaintiff as an appropriate facility;
- f. By recommending to Plaintiff and Jared that he live in a facility alongside a violent and dangerous person that it knew or should have known would likely harm Jared;
- g. By failing to warn Plaintiff and Jared that the facility it had recommended to him was not appropriately suited to his needs, lacked appropriate infrastructure and staff to ensure his safety and wellbeing, and lacked the appropriate licenses, permits, and other qualifications to conduct the business that it was conducting;
- h. By failing to warn Plaintiff and Jared that the facility housed a violent and dangerous person that it knew or should have known would likely harm Jared;
- i. By failing to appropriately care for and treat Cantrell, thereby causing a danger to the public and in particular to Jared, who it knew was living alongside Cantrell;
- j. By failing to implement adequate policies and procedures to ensure the safe placement of individuals within its care;
- k. By failing to implement adequate policies and procedures to ensure that facilities it recommends to its patients are safe and appropriate for those patients;
- l. By failing to put into place safeguards to maintain the safe and controlled placement and separation of residents with differing levels of disability, especially from those with known dangerous propensities;
- m. By failing to appropriately train, supervise, and monitor its staff to ensure that they provide appropriate care to patients;
- n. By failing to appropriately train, supervise, and monitor its staff to ensure that they are recommending residences to patients that are safe and appropriate for their needs; and
- o. In such other particular ways as may be revealed during discovery and trial in this matter.

69. The acts and omissions above constitute gross deviations from the proper and professional standards of care.

70. The injury and death to Jared arising from SCDMH's grossly negligent and reckless acts and omissions was foreseeable.

71. As a direct and proximate result of SCDMH's grossly negligent, reckless, willful and wanton acts and/or omissions as set forth above, Jared was in fear for his life, seriously injured, suffered needlessly both physically and mentally, and died from injuries sustained at the Harper Street facility.

72. By and through SCDMH's actions and/or omissions set forth above, and by and through its employees and agents, SCDMH demonstrated a conscious, deliberate disregard and indifference to the rights, safety, and life of Jared Ondrea.

73. Plaintiff is therefore entitled to judgment against SCDMH for actual and consequential damages.

FOR A THIRD CAUSE OF ACTION
(Survival)
(As to All Defendants)

74. Plaintiff realleges the preceding paragraphs as if repeated fully herein.

75. As a direct and proximate result of Defendants' negligence, carelessness, gross negligence, recklessness, and departures from standards of care as described above, Jared Ondrea suffered extreme, conscious pain and suffering and fear, as a result of which Jared Ondrea is entitled to recover a sum to compensate his estate for his conscious pain and suffering, mental anguish, loss of earnings capacity, loss of benefits, loss of enjoyment of life, and other damages pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 15-5-90. Plaintiff is also entitled to recover punitive damages to punish and deter Defendants New Hope and Reynolds-Jackson from similar conduct in the future.

FOR A FOURTH CAUSE OF ACTION
(Wrongful Death Pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 15-51-10)
(As to All Defendants)

76. Plaintiff realleges the preceding paragraphs as if repeated fully herein.

77. Plaintiff brings this action for the wrongful death of Jared Ondrea on or about March 20, 2023, pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 15-51-10, *et seq.* on behalf of the statutory heirs of Jared Ondrea.

78. As set forth more fully above, Defendants owed a duty of care to Jared.

79. As more fully set forth above, Defendants breached that duty of care.

80. Jared Ondrea's death was directly and proximately caused by Defendants' gross negligence, negligence, negligence *per se*, and their reckless, willful, intentional, and wanton conduct, described more fully above.

81. As a direct and proximate result of Defendants' conduct, Jared Ondrea's beneficiaries have been damaged, and experienced pain and suffering, emotional distress, and suffered great loss of Jared's support, benefits, services, income, companionship, love, society, and affection for the remainder of their lives and have suffered pain and suffering, mental shock, grief, and sorrow.

82. Plaintiff is therefore entitled to a judgment against Defendants for actual and consequential damages, and against New Hope and Reynolds-Jackson for punitive damages in an amount to be determined by a jury in accordance with the law and evidence in this case.

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff prays for judgment against the Defendants for actual and consequential damages, for the costs associated with this action, for her attorneys' fees, for pre- and post-judgment interest, for a jury trial, and for such other relief in law or equity as this Court deems just and proper. Plaintiff further prays for a judgment against New Hope and Reynolds-

Jackson for punitive damages in an amount to be determined by a jury in accordance with the law and evidence in this case.

Respectfully submitted,

s/Richard A. Harpootlian

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March 7, 2025

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