

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA)
)
COUNTY OF BERKELEY)
)

IN THE COURT OF GENERAL SESSIONS
FOR THE NINTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
INDICTMENT NUMBER: 2016-GS-08-02603
WARRANT NUMBER: 2016A0810400692

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA,)
)
Plaintiff,)
)
-versus-)
)
MICHAEL COLUCCI,)
)
Defendant.)
_____)

**MOTION *IN LIMINE* TO PROHIBIT
VICTIM IMPACT EVIDENCE**

FILED
2018 NOV 20 PM 3:40
MARY P. BROWN
CLERK OF COURT
BERKELEY COUNTY, S.C.

INTRODUCTION

Michael Colucci moves this Court to prohibit the State from introducing victim impact evidence during the trial through the testimony of State witnesses. Such testimony is void of relevance to the charged crime, unduly inflammatory and would render the trial fundamentally unfair in violation of Mr. Colucci’s right to due process under the U.S. Const. amend. XIV and S.C. Const. art. I, § 3.

ANALYSIS

Victim impact evidence or evidence that tends to show an emotional impact upon a family member or friend is not admissible. Such evidence should be excluded as irrelevant. The thoughts and feelings of a witness do not make the existence of any fact of consequence to the case more or less probable. *State v. Saltz*, 346 S.C. 114, 551 S.E.2d 240 (2001). On the contrary, evidence of this

nature serves only "to arouse the sympathy or prejudice of the jury." *State v. Langley*, 334 S.C. 643, 647, 515 S.E.2d 98, 100 (1999) (photograph excluded if calculated to arouse sympathy or prejudice of jury or is irrelevant or unnecessary to substantiate facts).

South Carolina Rule of Evidence 403 states that even relevant evidence "may be excluded if its probative value is substantially outweighed by the danger of unfair prejudice, confusion of the issues, or misleading the jury, or by considerations of undue delay, waste of time, or needless presentation of cumulative evidence." The Court must strictly limit testimony to matters descriptive of facts in issue. The Court must guard against testimony that is of little to no probative value. The introduction of emotionally-charged, victim impact testimony veiled as substantive evidence would only serve to inflame the jury and expose Mr. Colucci to unfair prejudice.

CONCLUSION

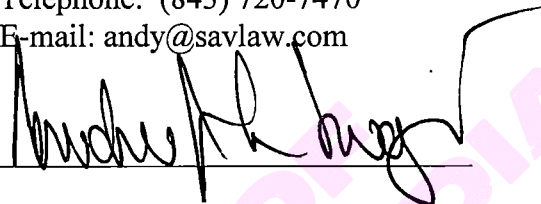
Given the nature of the charge, the State may offer the emotional testimony of witnesses that could an attempt to improperly affect the jury. The law requires strict control of emotional expressions that equal "victim impact" evidence in violation of Mr. Colucci's constitutional rights to a fair and impartial trial. The court must guard against emotional testimony that has the effect of garnering sympathy from jurors. The Court must not allow the admission of evidence, by words or demeanor, that appeals to juror sympathy.

Mr. Colucci requests this Court issue an *in limine* order that limits the testimony of witnesses for the State to facts relevant to the indictment and prohibits the introduction of victim impact evidence.

Respectfully submitted,

SAVAGE LAW FIRM
15 Prioleau Street
Charleston, SC 29401
Telephone: (843) 720-7470
E-mail: andy@savlaw.com

BY: _____


ANDREW J. SAVAGE III
SC Bar Number: 4946
ATTORNEY FOR MICHAEL COLUCCI

Charleston, SC

11/20
~~October 1~~, 2018

COURTESY OF LUNA SHARK MEDIA